

# Biggest Travel Year In History Predicted

RALEIGH — North Carolina's travel industry is gearing itself for the biggest season in history, while plans for expansion this year and next are proceeding rapidly.

The industry, which brought an estimated \$175,000,000 into the state in 1941, peak year, is anticipating as much—or more—in 1946, according to a survey made by the State Advertising Division. The expectation is based upon advance bookings, inquiries, and the predictions of national travel officials. And 1947, when new cars will be on the road and facilities increased, is already being hailed as a travel boom year.

One resort hotel in western North Carolina already (in February) reports a complete sell-out for July and August, and many reservations for June. Another place, opening March 1 for the first time, reported it had "substantial" reservations immediately upon announcement of its early opening. Asheville hotel and tourist home operators predict a larger-than-ever season. Waynesville, Hendersonville, Blowing Rock and other places confirm the prediction. Inquiries to resort Chambers of Commerce are coming in earlier than usual.

Some hotels are requiring deposits with their reservations to protect themselves against irresponsible "shoppers" who sometimes ask for reservations at a number of places.

Coastal resorts are having similar experiences. Naz's Head, Atlantic Beach, Wrightsville, Carolina and other beaches report unusually early activity. Even the lake resorts — White, Waccamaw and others — usually catering mostly to local vacationists, are feeling the pressure of vacation-bound Americans.

In an effort to partly meet the demand for accommodations, some resorts are announcing earlier openings this year. The State Advertising Division will concentrate on trying to spread the vacation season so as to relieve pressure on July and August facilities. Tourists are being told of the forest display in May-June, and the "leaf" season in the autumn. Fishermen are being advised that spring and fall are the best seasons to go salt-water fishing.

The Sandhills hotels report the busiest winter season in fifty years at operations. Many of them will run through May to accommodate late spring vacationists.

Meantime, in spite of building restrictions, some additions are being made to existing facilities. All the hotels occupied by the military last year are now back in civilian use. A number of resorts which closed during the war are reopening this season. A new hotel is going up at Marshall City and another at Atlantic Beach, and plans are being made for additional facilities at Wrightsville and Carolina.

Waynesville will have additional tourist court accommodations. The old hotel at Banner Elk has been purchased by St. Petersburg interests and a modern tourist court will replace it by 1947. Two hotels are contemplated at Southport within a year. TVA is expected shortly to sign a lease with interests to operate the construction village at Fontana as a huge resort, complete with cabins, cafeteria, recreation hall, and boat docks.

Lakeview, on Rt. 1, has reopened as a year-around resort. Plans for travel development have also been announced at White Lake, Little Switzerland, Hatteras and other widely scattered places.

There will be more boats and guides along the coast, too, for a new army of sportsmen. State Park accommodations will be improved this year, according to the Division of Forests and Parks.

Auxiliary to such facilities, but sharing substantially in the trade, there will be reopening or establishment of souvenir shops, filling stations and other roadside industries. The Cherokee Nation plans to go into the souvenir and tourist business for the first time. Even post-card salesmen are picking up new business.

The North Carolina activity is merely a fragment of the larger travel picture which embraces both America. A five-billion dollar year is forecast by most agencies.

with most of it going into domestic or Latin-American travel. It will be the largest "industry" in America, at that figure.

At least six new travel magazines have appeared as if by magic, and travel agents, who handle tickets and reservations on commission are back in business. Travel Bureaus, operated by oil companies and others, are flourishing again. Map printers are hard-pushed to meet orders, and a rainbow of colorful literature is flooding the nation as the various states or regions jostle for competition.

Pressing coming events is an announcement that visitors to Smoky Mountains Park and the National Forests of North Carolina are steadily increasing in numbers each month, and that current auto traffic already is within 11 per cent of 1940 levels.

Communities are reestablishing their tourist attractions, too. LOST COLONY opens again in July, and there will be an array of festivals, games, regattas and other events either in 1946 or 1947.

North Carolina, realizing that its tourist "crop" brings in more money than any other crop except

to bacco, is launching an aggressive campaign to hold its place which is pre-eminent in the South in dollars, Florida only excepted. Advertisements are appearing in magazines and newspapers, and a follow-up service is maintained to give information to vacation shoppers.

However, other Southern States have entered the race to get a slice of this industry. South Carolina and Georgia both this year launched tourist-attracting campaigns, and Florida will spend \$300,000 for a drive in 1946. 33 of the states of the union now have such advertising funds.

daughter, Mrs. C. D. Hammock, Mr. Hammock and baby, Virgil Clayton, in Orange, Texas.

Miss Betsy Webster, student at Appalachian State Teachers col-

lege and member of the Appalachian Play Crafters, will attend the district meet at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, which is scheduled for April 4, 5, and 6.



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If there is any project or program that any citizens wish to discuss with me, I shall be glad to hear from them and promise to do all in my power to carry out the wishes of Murphy people if elected.

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**W. M. FAIN**



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