

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE****CONTACT:** John D. Chaffee, President & CEO – Email: [chaffee@nceast.org](mailto:chaffee@nceast.org)

*Co-Sponsored by NCEast Alliance & The Outer Banks CVB*

**Eastern NC partners update VisitNC Call Center in Raleigh**

NCEast Alliance staff member Hannah Jones, along with 4 tourism related professionals from Eastern North Carolina, spent a beautiful April day visiting North Carolina Inquiry Program/Call Center in Raleigh. Co-sponsored by The Outer Banks Visitor's Bureau, the eastern NC delegation provided lunch and a regional presentation to update the operators on current trends, upcoming events, and attraction upgrades going on across the region.

Many may not know this, but inmates from the N.C. Correctional Institution for Women staff the VisitNC Call Center and Fulfillment Center as well as much more. Open 264 days of the year, the ladies also answer calls for North Carolina sponsored lines such as Amtrak, NC DOT, NC Wine, and detailed information on fall foliage, ski, and fishing in the state. With those direct connections to potential visitors and residents of North Carolina, keeping them up to date is essential.

“Our annual trek to meet with the women who answer our 511 calls is always a heart-warming experience for me—and this year was no exception. I was amazed at how these women exhibited such a deep knowledge about our assets and, in some cases, taught us things we didn't know. The presentation that they did for us, the displays promoting our county assets; and the Jeopardy Game with questions/answers about our region were all demonstrations of how knowledgeable they are about what our region has to offer—What a wonderful experience this was.” says Carol Shields, Executive Director, Roanoke River Partners. It is evident the women have extensive knowledge of some the most popular tourist destinations in North Carolina even though some have never visited the places they receive calls about.

The Call Center is staffed by 23 inmates and a few supervisors. It is housed by two trailers within the Prison. One is where the inmates process the outgoing mail material for VisitNC and the other trailer is where the call center is located.

The NCEast Alliance is a regional, public/private, not-for-profit, economic development corporation serving over two dozen counties with over 1.4 million residents in several small metropolitan and micropolitan areas in eastern North Carolina. The region extends from the fringe of the Research Triangle to the Atlantic Coast and from Jacksonville/Onslow County to the Virginia state line. The Alliance provides community capacity building, marketing/lead generation, and assists companies with site location and expansion evaluations. For more information on the NCEast Alliance, visit us at [www.nceast.org](http://www.nceast.org) or visit one of our workforce development sites ([www.ncworkready.org](http://www.ncworkready.org) or [www.stemeast.org](http://www.stemeast.org))