



# *Jasper County, South Carolina*

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## **Travel and tourism inject millions to Jasper County annually, impacting upgrades to roads and airports**

Travel and tourism inject about \$10 million annually into the Jasper County economy, making it a huge factor in local and state decisions about roads, airports and other infrastructure.

Statewide, tourism is a \$23.8 billion industry, supports one in every 10 South Carolina jobs, and generates \$1.8 billion in state and local taxes.

As Jasper County, South Carolina and others across the United States celebrate the 40<sup>th</sup> annual National Travel and Tourism Week May 7-13, there's newfound appreciations for what the industry means to the Lowcountry and especially Jasper County.

“When people travel to and through Jasper County, they not only spend money in our hotels and motels, our restaurants and our shops, but they also see a wonderful place they may want to relocate to in the future, to come and buy or build a home,” Jasper County Administrator Andrew Fulghum said.

“We look at the tourism industry as an economic driver for Jasper County. We encourage businesses to relocate to Jasper County or to start-up here for a number of reasons, including our natural beauty but also because we are affordable and business-friendly, but still close to the amenities of Savannah, Beaufort and Hilton Head,” he said.

Jasper County is celebrating National Travel and Tourism Week from May 7-13. Established in 1983, National Travel & Tourism Week is an annual tradition to celebrate the US travel community and travel's essential role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities, creating quality job opportunities, inspiring new businesses, and elevating the quality of life for Americans every day.

On May 12, Devonte J. Genwright, Jasper County director of parks and recreation, will join state tourism leaders at the I-95 Welcome Center in Hardeeville from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Their goal is to greet visitors passing through and to thank them for stopping in Jasper County.

“We are coordinating our county celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week with the Jasper Chamber of Commerce,” Genwright said. “This is an important part of the Lowcountry economy, because so much of it passes along on I-95.”

Progress on the \$42 million widening of US Highway 17 through Jasper County, construction of a new fire station at Marsh Cove, the state’s scheduled widening of Interstate 95 through the county and continued expansion of the Ridgeland-Claude Dean Airport showcase economic growth in Jasper County fueled, in part, by travel and tourism.

The 2020 Census showed Jasper County grew by 28 percent over the previous decade, from 24,948 residents to 31,925 in 2020.

As an example of tourism value, the PGA Tour CJ Cup golf event in October 2022 was expected to generate almost \$54 million in media coverage value and have an estimated \$80 million economic impact on the region.

Since the PGA tour first came to Jasper County and Congaree Golf Club in 2021, the Ridgeland-Claude Dean airport expanded its services to include a 3,600-square foot temporary terminal with a passenger waiting area, pilot lounge and line service work area. Other airport improvements are being planned.

“Those improvements, and airport improvements still to come, are part of our county infrastructure investment that will continue to pay dividends as more people utilize the airport to visit our area,” Fulghum said.

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