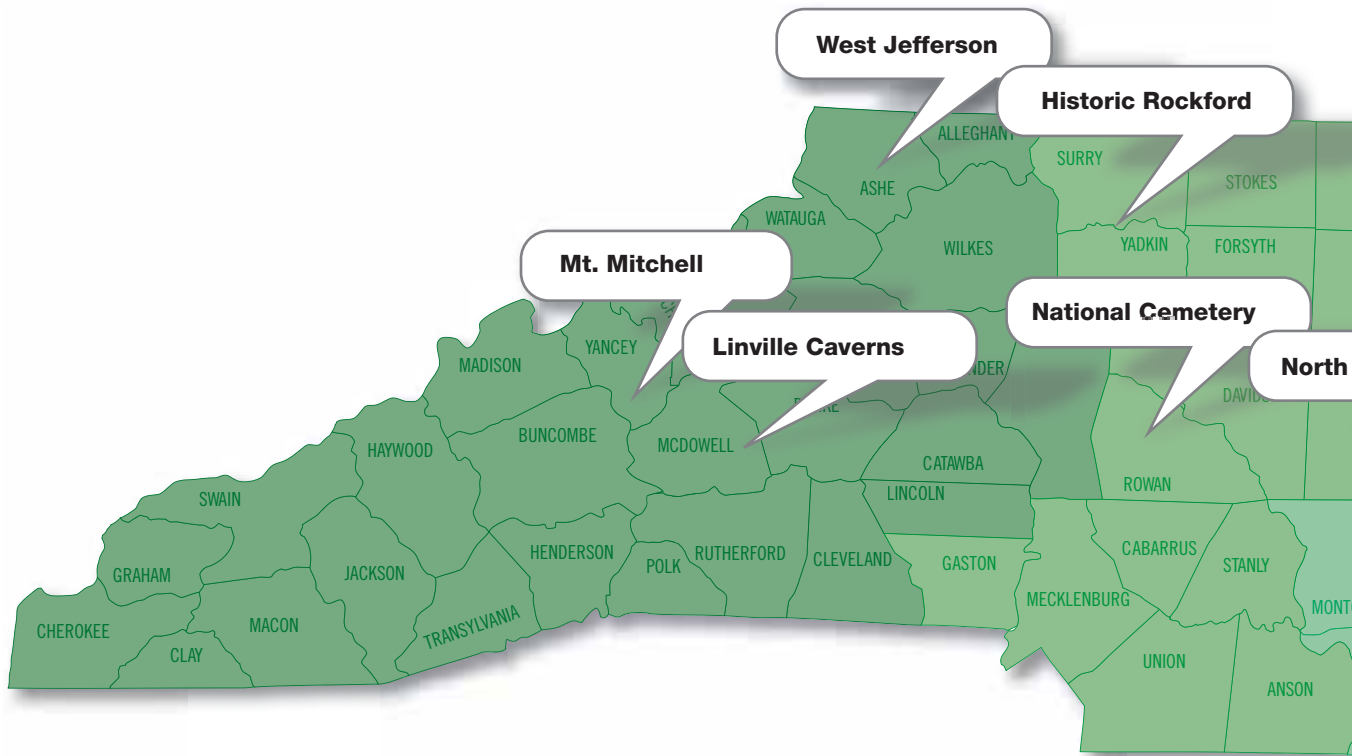




2010 Touchstone Energy 
Travel Guide

15 Carolina Country Adventures Ahead



2010 Touchstone Energy Travel Guide

From one end to the other, North Carolina is about as diverse as any state in the nation. We've got hard gemstones in the west, soft crabs on the coast and red clay in the middle. The tobacco we grow in the mountains is different than what we grow in the east. What we live in, how we drive, what we eat and how we talk varies from one region to another.

Our annual Touchstone Energy Travel Guide encourages you to experience this variety firsthand.

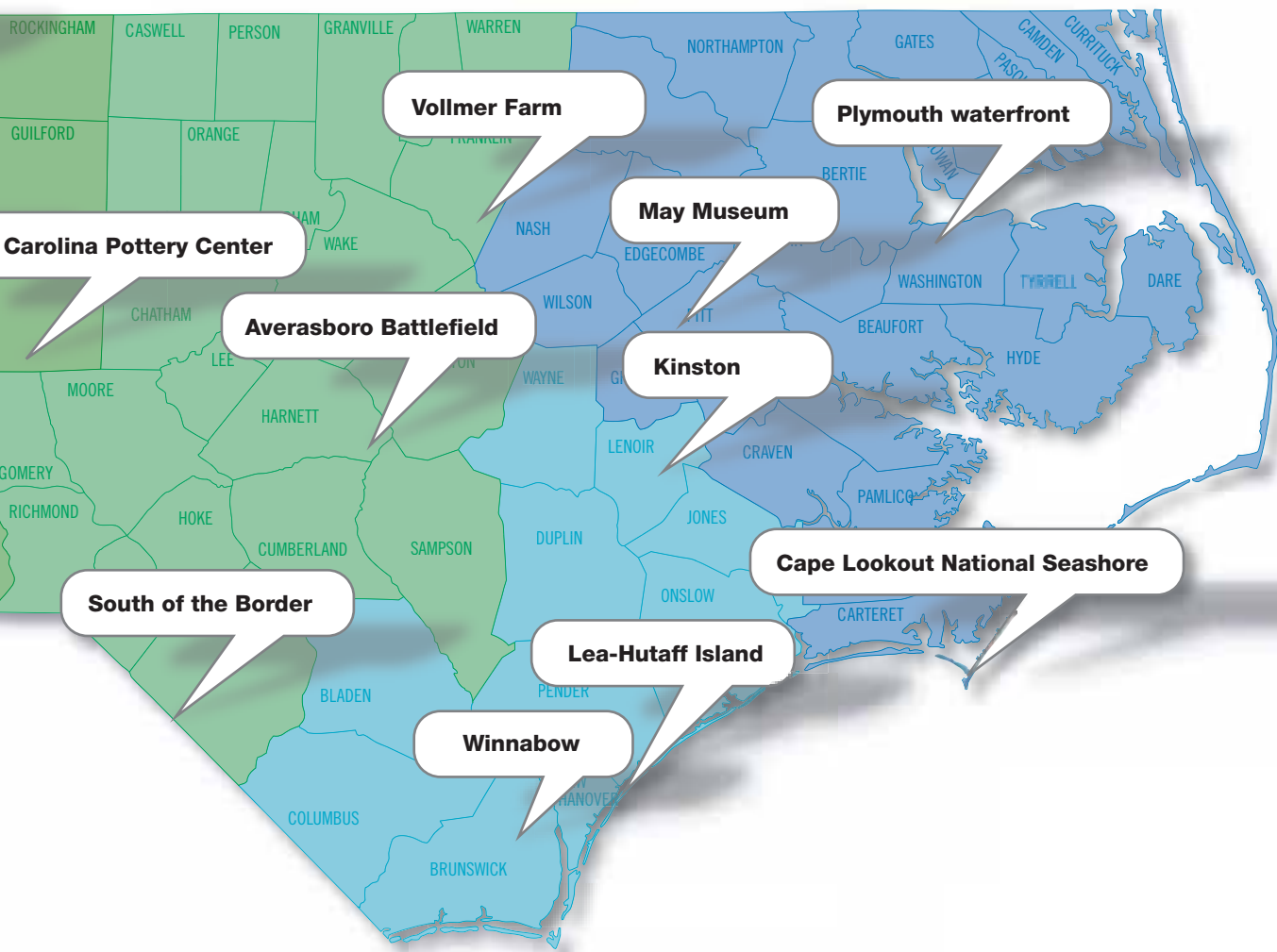
This year we've updated the primary sources of general information about each of five regions and accompany them with a set of Carolina Country Adventures. Among the three adventures for each region are some well-known standbys and some not so familiar, some historical, some recreational, some just plain fun.

As you make your way through this guide and through the countryside, you can be assured that a Touchstone Energy cooperative is nearby.

Thanks to everyone who helped us compile this guide, and to our sponsors: the cooperatives and the advertisers on pages 40 to 43.



Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives
of North Carolina
The power of human connections®



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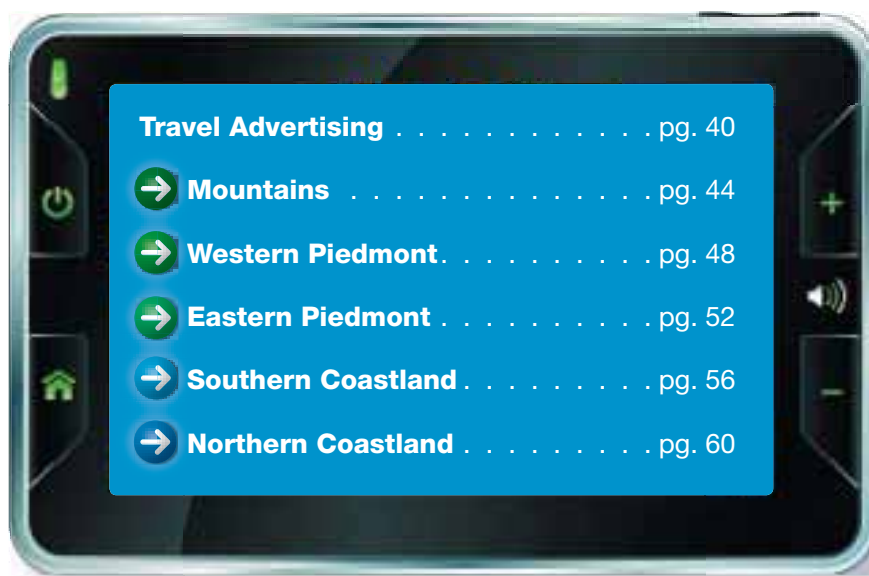
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This supplement to Carolina Country is brought to you by North Carolina's Touchstone Energy cooperatives, serving nearly 2 million people in 93 North Carolina counties. We bring the power of human connections to all regions of North Carolina. Touchstone Energy cooperatives nationwide are committed to integrity, accountability, innovation and community involvement.

Lea-Hutaff Island

Pender County

By Carla Burgess



Black skimmers, above, skim the water with their beaks to catch fish. Bird on the right is a sanderling.



➔ With abundant birding, boating and fishing opportunities, Lea-Hutaff Island is a superlative recreation destination on North Carolina's southern coast. The hitch is you can only get there by boat. A lack of development, docks or other public facilities contributes to its status as one of three undeveloped barrier islands left in the state. A fairly flat, narrow swath of sand, nearly bereft of dunes, the island is bordered by salt marsh and sea. It stretches 4 miles from tip to tip and comprises only 5,650 acres.

The island is an important breeding site for shorebirds, notably the black skimmer and least tern, whose overall populations are declining—hundreds of nesting pairs raise their offspring on the open sands. Birdwatchers observe innumerable species of shorebirds, waterfowl, marsh birds and wading birds on the island. Kayakers explore sinewy pathways in tidal marshes. The surf is a hot spot for red drum, luring anglers to the beach and inlet shorelines, while beachcombers are wowed by the impressive amount of sand dollars and seashells.

Island formation and ownership

Lea-Hutaff was once a pair of islands that joined until an inlet between the two shoaled in. Hurricanes battered

the islands in the mid- to late 1990s, causing extensive overwash. The island is now bound by Topsail Inlet at the north end and Rich Inlet at the south. Topsail Island and Figure Eight Island are its northern and southern neighbors, respectively. At one time entirely privately owned, Lea Island was subdivided into 30 lots and sold to individuals. Hutaff has a single owner. Only one home exists. Hoping to permanently protect wildlife habitat, the N.C. Coastal Land Trust has been gradually buying small parcels of Lea Island, 28 acres so far, and deeding them to the state parks system.

Protected species call the island home

N.C. Audubon oversees protection of the island's bird habitat. During breeding season, around mid-April to August, Audubon cordons off some areas to protect nests and chicks from human disturbance. (Alternate pathways are provided by which visitors can get from the sound to the beach.) The piping plover, a tiny shorebird, nests in few numbers on the island. It is listed as a threatened species under the Endangered Species Act, as is the loggerhead turtle, which also nests here. Female loggerheads come ashore in summer, dig nests on the

Lea Island Conservation Initiative

National Audubon Society
North Carolina State Office
7741 Market Street, Unit D
Wilmington, NC 28411

(910) 686-7527

www.nc.audubon.org

LAT: 35.917

LONG: -81.938



beach, lay and bury their eggs and then return to the ocean. It is illegal to interfere with nesting of protected species. Visitors are asked to respect all wildlife nesting sites. For more information, visit www.nc.audubon.org.

If you go

To find public boat ramps nearby, visit www.carolinanow.com or www.ncwildlife.org/Boating_Waterways/Boating_Maps_Locations.htm. N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission provides free coastal boating maps at www.ncwildlife.org or call (919) 707-0150. Check with local outfitters about guided tours. 📍

Kinston

Lenoir County

By Tara Verna



Above right, the CSS Neuse II, a full-sized replica of a Confederate gunboat, rests in downtown Kinston. Below right, the Kinston Indians, a minor league baseball team.

➔ From one of only three remaining Civil War ironclads to a history steeped in blues and jazz music, put Kinston on your radar as a worthwhile place to explore North Carolina's heritage.

CSS Neuse

The state site off of Vernon Avenue preserves the remnants of the world's only commissioned Confederate ironclad, the CSS Neuse. Covered in iron confiscated from railroad tracks, this ram was designed to collide with and sink enemy boats. Take a free tour to learn about the ship's construction, her short life and her 100-year sleep beneath the waters of the Neuse River. The site also offers a museum that tells the story of Richard Caswell, North Carolina's first elected governor. Open 9 a.m. to 5 p.m., Mondays through Fridays.

Later this year, the CSS Neuse will be moved to the new 30,000-square-

foot CSS Neuse Museum in downtown Kinston. In addition to the ship, the museum will showcase nearly 12,000 related artifacts, a cannon with a functioning carriage, a theater and more.

Not far from the museum, visitors can view a full-sized replica of a Confederate gunboat, the 158-foot-long CSS Neuse II, that rests quite close to the "cat hole" in the Neuse River where the original ironclad was fitted with iron plating.

The Heart of Kinston—Jazz, Blues & Gospel

Back in the 1930s, Kinston was right up there with Chicago and New York as a popular stop for big jazz and blues bands. Music lovers poured into Kinston's tobacco warehouses for concerts—as many as 3,000–4,000 people per performance. The music scene was so big that record executives made a special trip to Kinston to learn why a city of 9,000 was purchasing more than 45,000 records per year!

Among the great musicians hailing from Kinston are brothers Melvin Parker, a drummer for James Brown, and Maceo Parker, a saxophonist who also played with James Brown; plus Ray Charles, Dizzy Gillespie and James Taylor.

With a history so rich in jazz, blues and gospel music, Kinston was a natural starting point for the African-American Heritage Music Trail, a project already five years in the making. The trail will include stops in seven other eastern counties: Edgecombe, Greene, Jones, Nash, Pitt, Wayne and Wilson.

Kinston's Art Center, the initiator of the project, is working to create lots of interactive public art in a 3.5-acre park, including sound walls, sound mounds, an interactive canopy, an electronic billboard to showcase musicians' performance schedules, and more. Next phase of the project involves the development of interactive kiosks, maps and a travel guidebook. Project completion is slated for 2011.

A couple of upcoming events in Kinston include "Eastern NC Bluegrass" on April 10 and May 8 from 8 a.m.–12 p.m. and "BBQ Festival on the Neuse" April 28–May 1. The BBQ festival includes a Plein aire art show, BBQ cook-off, bands and entertainment. See www.bbqfestivalontheneuse.com to learn more. 📍

Kinston/Lenoir County Visitor's and Information Center

101 East New Bern Road
Kinston, NC 28504

(252) 523-2500

(800) 869-0032

www.visitkinston.com

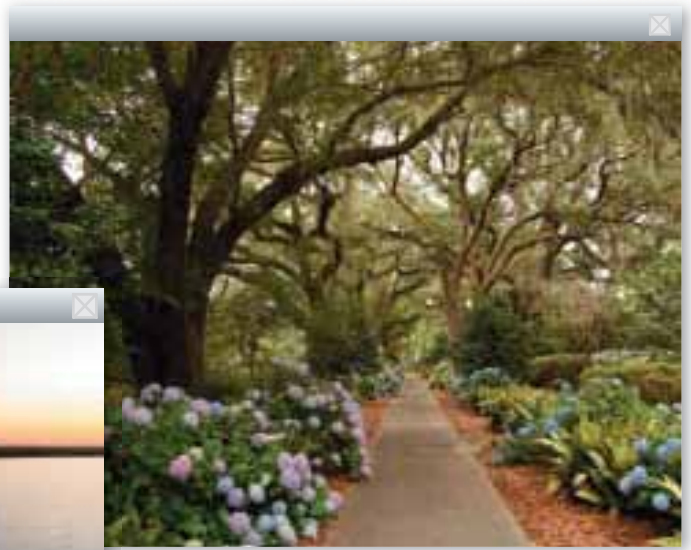
LAT: 35.267

LONG: -77.581





NC Division of Parks and Recreation



Carla Burgess

→ Southern Coastland Travel Resources

Bald Head Island Information Center

(800) 432-7368
www.baldheadisland.com

Beulaville

(910) 298-4647
www.townofbeulaville.com

Brunswick County, Shallotte

(800) 426-6644/(910) 754-6644
www.brunswickcounty-chamber.org

Brunswick County Tourism Development Authority

(910) 755-5517
www.ncbrunswick.com

Cape Fear Coast CVB

(Wilmington, Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Wrightsville Beach)
(877) 406-2356
www.gocapefearcoast.com

Columbus County Tourism

(910) 640-2818
www.discovercolumbuscounty.org

Coast Host

Information on attractions and accommodations
www.coasthost-nc.com

Duplin County Tourism

(877) UNCORK0/(910) 296-2181
www.uncorkduplin.com

Elizabethtown-White Lake

(910) 862-4368
www.elizabethtownwhitelake.com
www.bladeninfo.org

Fair Bluff

(910) 649-5998
www.fairbluff.com

Faison

(877) UNCORK0/(910) 267-2721
www.uncorkduplin.com

Greater Goldsboro Travel & Tourism

(866) 440-2245/(919) 734-2241
www.greatergoldsboro.com

Greater Hampstead Chamber

(800) 833-2483/(910) 270-9642
www.hampsteadchamber.com

Greater Jacksonville-Onslow

(800) 932-2144/(910) 347-3141
www.jacksonvilleonline.org
www.onslowcounty-tourism.com

Kenansville Area

(877) UNCORK0/(910) 296-2181
www.uncorkduplin.com

Kenly Chamber

(919) 284-5510
www.kenlynorthcarolina.com

Kinston CVB

(800) 869-0032/(252) 523-2500
www.visitkinston.com

Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber

(252) 527-1131
www.kinstonchamber.com

LaGrange

(252) 527-1131
www.lagrangenorthcarolina.com

Mt. Olive Area Chamber

(919) 658-3113
www.moachamber.com
www.ncpicklefest.org

Nash County Visitors Bureau

(800) 849-6825/(252) 972-5080
www.RockyMountTravel.com

NC Ferries

(800) BY-FERRY
www.ncferry.org

Onslow County Tourism

(800) 932-2144/(910) 347-3141
www.onslowcounty-tourism.com

Pender County (Burgaw)

(888) 576-4756/(910) 259-1278
www.visitpender.com

Pleasure Island (Carolina Beach, Kure Beach, Fort Fisher)

(800) 631-1460/(910) 341-4030
(800) 641-7082/(877) 406-2356
www.gocapefearcoast.com
www.carolinabeachgetaway.com
www.explorekurebeach.com

Southeastern Welcome Center

(I-95 South, Rowland)
(910) 754-2505

Southport Visitor Center, Southport

(910) 279-4616/(910) 457-7927
www.downtownsouthport.org

Southport-Oak Island Chamber

(800) 457-6964/(910) 457-6964
www.southport-oakisland.com

Tabor City Chamber

(252) 946-9168
www.angelfire.com/nc/taborcitychamber

Tabor City Visitor Center

(910) 653-9712/(910) 653-4141
www.taborcitync.org

Greater Topsail Area

(800) 626-2780/(910) 329-4446
www.topsailcoc.com

Wallace

(910) 285-4044
www.wallacechamber.com

Warsaw Chamber

(910) 293-7804
www.warsawnorthcarolina.com
www.townofwarsawnc.com

Wayne County Chamber

(919) 734-2241
www.waynecounty-chamber.com

Greater Whiteville

(888) 533-7196/(910) 642-3171
www.whitevillechamber.org
www.discovercolumbusfirst.com

Wilmington/Cape Fear Coast Visitors Center

(800) 650-9106/(910) 341-4030
http://www.cape-fear.nc.us

Wrightsville Beach Visitors Center

(800) 650-9106/(910) 256-8116
www.visitwrightsville.com