



2022 THE BLOOM REPORT



75th North Carolina Azalea Festival
www.ncazaleafestival.org
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THE MORE YOU KNOW

ABOUT US

The North Carolina Azalea Festival is Wilmington’s annual community celebration and the largest festival of its kind in the state. Founded in 1948, the Azalea Festival has emerged as Wilmington’s premier event. The Festival’s concerts, fairs and special events are attended by an **estimated 300,000 people**. Each event is a celebration, beginning with the arrival of Queen Azalea at the official opening of the five-day event. Everywhere the blooming azaleas offer colorful testimony to the rich heritage of coastal Carolina.

Staging the Azalea Festival – **every year for seventy-five years** – is a real community effort, and everyone who works on, participates in, or simply enjoys the Festival can be proud of these honors. They are a positive reflection on the greater Wilmington area as well. The North Carolina Azalea Festival’s mission is to encourage volunteerism and civic participation as it contributes to the region’s economy. In 2011, the University of North Carolina Wilmington completed a year-long study on the economic impact the Azalea Festival has on the City of Wilmington and the region. Results of this study concluded that the Azalea Festival has an over **\$50,000,000 impact on our local community annually**.

MISSION

The mission of the North Carolina Azalea Festival is to be nationally recognized as a showcase for our community's rich array of artwork, gardens, history, and culture through recreational, educational and family-oriented events. The Festival **encourages volunteerism** and civic participation as it **contributes to the region's economy** and promotes the unique qualities of Wilmington's river-to-the-sea community.

\$50 Million
Dollar Impact
Annually



Our Festival
Family

- 5 Directors on the Board (Volunteers)
- 3 Full-Time Staff
- 4 Part-Time Seasonal Staff
- 134 Volunteer Chair/Co-Chair Leaders
- 28 Emeritus Volunteers
- 1,000+ Volunteers
- 13 Youth Committee Volunteers (AFYC)
- 6 Interns

The North
Carolina
Azalea Festival is a
501(c)3 non-profit

First Queen Azalea Jacqueline White, 1948
Photo Courtesy of the
New Hanover Public Library



Carrie
Underwood,
2006



Queen Azaleas, 2015
Mallory Hagan (2015)
Jacqueline White Anderson (1948)



Queen Azalea
Debra Paget
and Ronald
Reagan, 1959



FESTIVAL EVENTS



FESTIVAL EVENTS

Airlie Luncheon Garden Party
Art Unveiling
Azalea Sweep
Azalea Suite
Azaleas on Tour Porch Parade Presented by Custom Colors
Azalea Sun Run Presented by Harris Teeter
Boxing Presented by US Army
Brigade Boys & Girls Club Visit
Celebrity Reception
Chefs' Showcase Presented by LM Restaurants Family of Brands
Concert Series
Fireworks Presented by Corning Credit Union

Governmental Press Conference
Hospital Visit
Parade Presented by Dollar General
Past Presidents' Party
Patrons' Party Gala
Piedmont Natural Gas Performing Arts Stage
Queen's Coronation Celebration Concert
Queen's Dinner & Dance Party
Scholarship Princess Pageant
School Visit
Street Fair Presented by DGX
Tunes & Blooms Presented by
Wilmington Grill

FESTIVAL PROGRAMMING

AFYC (Azalea Festival Youth Committee)
Cadet Escorts
Diversity & Inclusion
Festival Fun Guide Presented by PuroClean
High School Writing Contest

Jean A. Lawler Emeritus Program
Past Presidents' Program
Pin Pal Program Presented by Wilmington Grill
Queen's Court
Volunteer Appreciation
Youth Art Contest

FESTIVAL ASSOCIATED EVENTS

Associated Events are predominantly organized/planned by an entity other than the Azalea Festival. The Azalea Festival uses its marketing reach and other Festival resources to help ensure these events are a success, with proceeds largely benefiting the individual entity. This is a way for the Azalea Festival to broaden our reach while supporting other groups in the community.

Ambassador Tea...with the Cape Fear Garden Club
Azalea Festival Children's Tea...with the Cape Fear Volunteer Center
After Garden Get Down...with LM Restaurants
Cape Fear Garden Club Azalea Garden Tour and Ribbon Cutting ©
...with the Cape Fear Garden Club
Capt'n Bills East Coast Open...with Capt'n Bills
Coin Show...with the Lower Cape Fear Coin Club
Comedy Show
Historic Wilmington Home Tour...with Historic Wilmington Foundation
Juried Art Show and Sale...with the Wilmington Art Association
Little Shop of Horrors... with Thalian Hall
Paws on Parade, The Official Dog Garden Paw-ty...with paws4people®
Port City Duck Dash... with Cape Fear Habitat for Humanity
Wine Dinner...with LM Restaurants



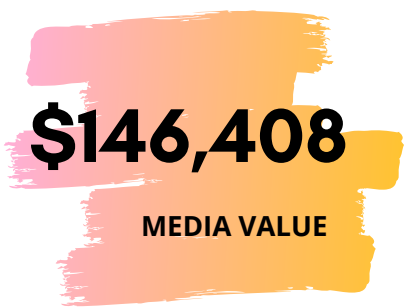


PRESS COVERAGE

As it is our mission to become nationally recognized, we know we need our media partners to help spread the **Festival spirit**. Throughout the year, we keep our media friends up-to-date on current Festival events through **press releases** and meetings to determine **coverage**. As one of the largest events in the state, local and regional (and sometimes national!) coverage is saturated with Festival happenings Festival week.

PURCHASED AND TRADE MEDIA

The Azalea Festival works with many **regional media partners** to promote the Festival. We use multiple media platforms, including **radio, print, cable** and **network TV, outdoor billboard, mobile billboards**, and **digital**. Ads are purchased and also offered on trade for Festival tickets.



\$45,945 Radio Buys

\$1,908 Print Buys

\$14,340 Cable and Network TV Buys

\$12,000 Digital Buys

\$72,215 Estimated Total Trade Media

MEDIA PARTNERSHIPS

The Azalea Festival in the Media in 2022

Azalea Festival is back in bloom

TWO-YEAR BREAK ENDS FOR MANY TRADITIONAL EVENTS

April 8, 2022 North State Journal Staff Article, Features, News



North Carolina Azalea Festival brings more than \$50 million to local businesses

April 6, 2022 by Peyton Furtado



Large crowd gathered in downtown Wilmington for the 75th annual NC Azalea Festival Parade

April 9, 2022 by Celeste Smith



Wilmington's 2022 Azalea Festival announces queen, new concert act for 75th celebration

John Staton, Wilmington StarNews

March 9, 2022 · 3 min read





MARKETING OUTREACH

The Azalea Festival also uses Festival marketing channels to keep various audiences updated on Festival events. Three platforms heavily utilized are our website, e-marketing emails, and social media.

925,885

WEBSITE PAGEVIEWS
www.ncazaleafestival.org
(August 1, 2021 - August 1, 2022)

233,188

EMAILS OPENED
(August 4, 2021 - August 4, 2022)

229,788

WEBSITE USERS
www.ncazaleafestival.org
(August 1, 2021 - August 1, 2022)

23,374

EMAIL SUBSCRIBERS

62,964

SOCIAL MEDIA FOLLOWERS
(Facebook, Instagram, Twitter)

WEBSITE

The Festival Website is used to provide **event information** and to **promote event ticket sales**. It is also used heavily for **registration** and **application** purposes: Volunteer, Street Fair vendor, Parade, Scholarship Pageant, Boxing Competition, Azaleas on Tour Porch Parade, and local/regional musical performers. The website is also used to funnel **donations** and a place for **sponsor logo recognition**. Additionally, the website is used to **showcase our Invited Guests** and houses Festival **historical photos**.

E-MARKETING

Festival E-marketing is also used to provide **event information** and to **promote event ticket sales**. Through our E-marketing campaigns, the Festival is able to drill down audiences into specific groups, targeting those more likely to purchase certain event tickets or merchandise based on past sales. We are also able to **target specific event attendees**, informing them of **weather delays** or other **necessary event information**. Festival Concert attendees receive an email the day prior to their show with relevant information, and Street Fair Vendors receive information about what else is happening during Festival week, in case they should want to join the festivities. Emails are also used to **stay in communication** with our volunteer chairs, Emeritus volunteers, and Past Presidents. **Press releases** are sent out through our E-marketing platform, which makes them more visually-appealing and informative. Higher-level sponsors are listed on every email, which provides an amazing amount of **sponsor exposure**. The Festival also has a monthly E-newsletter, "**Here's the Dirt**," which provides insider access and special perks to our fans. We boast a **30.3% e-mail open rate**; the average email open rate for all industries is only 21.33%.

SOCIAL MEDIA

Festival Social Media is also used to provide **event information** and to **promote event ticket sales**. The Festival relies heavily on **contesting** on its social media, giving away over 300+ event tickets annually. These contests **drive social media engagement**, **promote events**, and (since they are often tied to our sponsors), provide great **sponsor exposure** and **interaction**.



HERE'S THE DIRT

April 2022

WHAT'S NEW

**Buzzin' Blooms Launch Party
You are Invited!**

WICKED WEED
BREWING



North Carolina Azalea Festival at Wilmington, Inc.
Published by Planoly · April 9 ·

Meet some of our most special guests at the Dollar General Parade: the Budweiser Clydesdales! This stunning team will be walking in the parade, so make sure to keep an eye out!



8,625

People reached

586

Engagements

↑ +2.9x higher
Distribution score

Boost post

👍❤️ 243

21 Comments 26 Shares



Search









Celebrating 75 Years of the North Carolina Azalea Festival!

161 views Apr 1, 2022 ...more

Sent (85)

Between Aug 4 - Aug 4

	Sent on August 2, 2022 August HTD 2022	Recipients 23,426	Open Rate 34%	Click Rate 1.2%
	Sent on July 1, 2022 July 2022 HTD	Recipients 23,484	Open Rate 36%	Click Rate 0.7%
	Sent on June 7, 2022 Street Fair 2022 Public Survey	Recipients 23,445	Open Rate 37%	Click Rate 1.0%
	Sent on June 1, 2022 June 2022 HTD	Recipients 23,608	Open Rate 37%	Click Rate 0.6%
	Sent on May 1, 2022 May 2022 HTD	Recipients 23,681		
	Sent on April 28, 2022 2022 Volunteer Party Reminder	Recipients 140		



Get more likes, comments and shares
When you boost this post, you'll show it to more people.

11,941 People reached 1,533 Engagements [Boost post](#)

98 6 Comments 10 Shares

The North Carolina Azalea Festival Thanks Its Sponsors!



City of Wilmington	Coca-Cola
Cloudwyze	Corning
Coastal Kia	Michael & Russell, PLLC
Dollar General	Miller-Motte College
DGX	PNC
Duke Energy	Prestige Beverage Group
End of Days Distillery	Shipman & Wright, LLP
Hotel Ballast	Southeast Foundation & Crawl Space Repair
New Hanover Printing	Wilmington Convention Center
Stella	WWAY
Truist	Academy Sports
Wicked Weed	The Business Growers
Blade & Bow	Carolina Hurricanes
Coastal Massage & Periwink	Coming Credit Union
Flow Automotive	CPI Security
LM Restaurants Family of Brands	Custom Colors
South State Bank	Harris Teeter
Tanqueray	Home Paramount Pest Control
UNCW	Mullinix Mortgage Group
Hawthorne Residential Partners	Nothing Bundt Cakes
NC Ports	PuroClean
North Carolina Education Lottery	T-Mobile
Star News	Tidal Wellness
DFS Agency	Trillium
Piedmont Natural Gas	US Army Recruiting
Sarah E. Pless, DDS: Renaissance Dental Studio	Wilmington Health
US Cellular	Wyndham Vacation Ownership
Village at Riverland	Azalea Limousine Services
Wells Fargo	Camille's of Wilmington
Wilmington Eye	Dynamic Digital
Wilmington Grill	Matthew's Motors
Accellacare	Port City Lawn Games
Chart Local	Rex and Sons RV
	Ward and Smith

HOW TO HELP

Sign Up FOR FREE for the
Azaleas on Tour Porch
Parade!

Love your house decorated for
the holidays? Give it some
spring decor Festival week and
be a stop on our Azaleas on
Tour Porch Parade!

**Sign Your House Up
HERE!**

CONTEST CORNER

It's ornament season!
Use discount code MERRY to get \$1
off the 2015 commemorative
ornament...making it just \$2!

*Good the whole month of
December!





2022 PLANTINGS

NEW IN 2022!

With **75 years of history**, the North Carolina Azalea Festival has many **traditions** and heritage events. However, we still love to **plant new events and programming** in efforts to stay fresh and relevant with today's trends and culture. Take a look at the new events and programs held in the 2022 Festival year!



Queen's Coronation Celebration Concert

A fourth concert with high levels of community engagement.

Tunes & Blooms

A FREE all-day local music festival at the gorgeous Greenfield Lake Amphitheatre.



Queen's Dinner & Dance Party

A welcome event for our visiting queens and friends.

DJ Welcome at the Garden Party

A dance party to kick off the biggest event of the year!



Clear Tote Merch

Merchandise tie-in to a Festival event, with link on ticket purchasing site. This item sold out!

Royalty Performances

FREE performances by Queen Azalea and the Queen's Court at the Piedmont Natural Gas Performing Arts Stage.





SEEDS OF TOMORROW

FESTIVAL VISION AND STRATEGIC PLAN

Every non-profit needs a good vision and strategic plan to ensure **proper growth** and **stability**. In 2018 the Azalea Festival Board of Directors and staff came together to **develop** our next strategic plan and vision to take us into 2024.

VISION

By 2024 the North Carolina Azalea Festival will be a nationally recognized North Carolina signature event with an expansive network of support and financial stability.

A few of the **enhanced visions** we are working on as part of our strategic plan...

- A highly engaging 75th anniversary in 2022
- \$100,000+ revenue generation in "off season"
- Estimated attendance of 500,000
- Partnership/membership in 5-10 statewide organizations/associations
- 5-10 events/programs specifically tailored to a new, niche, and/or minority crowd
- High level of community engagement and partnerships
- Build staff bench and appreciation
- \$500,000 in a "Rainy Day" fund
- \$1 million in sponsorship revenues annually
- \$50,000 in grant revenues annually
- 15% growth in Main Stage concert ticket sales





OUR PROGRESS

Check out just some of the progress we made in 2022 on our Strategic Plan and 2024 Vision...



Queen's Coronation Support

New **community partnership** with both the City of Wilmington and New Hanover County to provide \$5 and \$10 tickets to Girl Named Tom at the Queen's Coronation Celebration Concert.

Queen's Dinner & Dance Party

A new event focused on a **niche crowd** - our visiting queens coming in for the Parade.



Past Presidents' Float

Engaged our Festival's past with a special tribute float to Past Presidents for our **75th Anniversary**.



Pin Pal Partners

Intentional reach to include **minority-owned** businesses resulted in 13 new Pin Pal Partners of black women-owned businesses.

MORE PROGRESS...

- Had an increase of \$385,628 in sponsor revenue (totaling \$800,228), helping towards our goal of **\$1 million in sponsorship revenues annually**.
- Through our sponsor partner Dollar General, \$5,000 was donated to a New Hanover County School and \$5,000 to the Brigade Boys & Girls Club, **enhancing community engagement and partnerships**.
- Added a fourth concert to work towards a **15% growth in concert ticket sales**.
- Rebranded event to Tunes & Blooms to continue to highlight our support of local artists and garner **new local support**.
- **Partnered** with Habitat for Humanity for the Port City Duck Dash - **enhancing community engagement**.

FESTIVAL SUPPORTERS

AZALEA FESTIVAL SPONSORSHIPS

As a 501(c)3, the Azalea Festival relies on the generous support of sponsors for the funding needed to put on an event of this magnitude and **impact to our community**. Sponsors are treated as **Festival family**; Festival staff truly wants what is best for each sponsor and to make sure the sponsor goals and objectives are met. Some sponsor levels are set to a specific price and package; these sponsors appreciate a **Festival ticket package** and **sponsor logo recognition Festival-wide**. Other sponsorships are more **tailored** to fit an individual sponsor's brand, needs, and goals. As a 501(c)3, some of the Festival sponsorship monies are tax-deductible for our sponsors.



GLEN DALE EVENT SPONSORS: Blade & Bow, Coastal Massage & Spa & Periwink, Flow Automotive, LM Restaurants Family of Brands, South State Bank, Tanqueray, UNCW

BENEFACITOR SPONSORS: Hawthorne Residential Partners, NC Ports, North Carolina Education Lottery, Star News

GABLE EVENT SPONSORS: Village at River Landing, DFS Agency, Piedmont Natural Gas, Sarah E. Pless DDS; Renaissance Dental Studio, US Cellular, Wells Fargo, Wilmington Eye, Wilmington Grill

DONOR SPONSORS: Acellacare, Chart Local, Coca-Cola, Corning Incorporated, Michael & Russell PLLC, Miller-Motte College, PNC, Prestige Beverage Group, Shipman & Wright LLP, Southeast Foundation & Crawl Space Repair, Wilmington Convention Center, WWAY

EVERGREEN EVENT SPONSORS: Academy Sports, Coach Reggie - The Business Grower, Carolina Hurricanes, Corning Credit Union, CPI Security, Custom Colors, Harris Teeter, Home Paramount Pest Control, Mullinix Mortgage Group, Nothing Bundt Cakes, PuroClean, Spectrum News, T-Mobile, Tidal Wellness, Trillium, US Army Recruiting, Wilmington Grill, Wilmington Health, Wyndham Destinations

TRANSPORTATION SPONSORS: Azalea Limousine Service

RV TRANSPORTATION: Rex & Sons RVs

LEGAL REPRESENTATION BY: Ward and Smith, P.A.

OFFICIAL STYLIST FOR OUR ROYALTY: Camille's of Wilmington

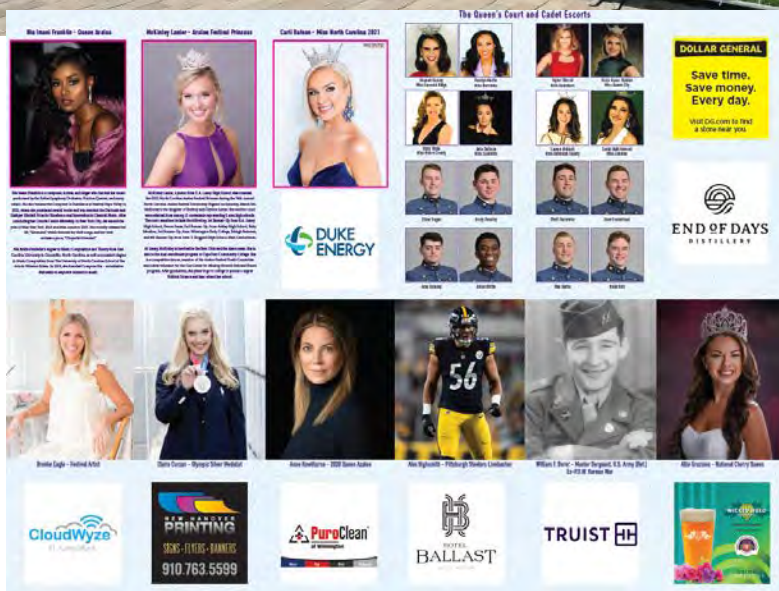
SPONSOR RECOGNITION

Website Home Page & Sponsor Page Footer

Festival Sponsors



Our Glen Dale, Benefactor, Gable, Donor Sponsors, Evergreen Sponsors and Community Partners



PATRON PACKAGES

Patron packages are available for individuals and businesses looking for a comprehensive Festival ticket package. As a financial way to support the Festival, these packages are the foundation of Festival fundraising. Patrons receive a sponsor listing on the Festival website.

E-mail Footer, All Marketing E-mails

The North Carolina Azalea Festival Thanks Its Sponsors!



City of Wilmington	Coca-Cola
Cloudwyze	Corning
Coastal Kia	Michael & Russell, PLLC
Dollar General	Miller-Motte College
DGX	PNC
Duke Energy	Prestige Beverage Group
End of Days Distillery	Shipman & Wright, LLP
Hotel Ballast	Southeast Foundation & Crawl Space Repair
New Hanover Printing	Wilmington Convention Center
Stella	WWAY
Truist	Academy Sports
Wicked Weed	The Business Growers
Blade & Bow	Carolina Hurricanes
Coastal Massage & Periwink	Corning Credit Union
Flow Automotive	CPI Security
LM Restaurants Family of Brands	Custom Colors
South State Bank	Harris Teeter
Tanqueray	Home Paramount Pest Control
UNCW	Mullinix Mortgage Group
Hawthorne Residential Partners	Nothing Bundt Cakes
NC Ports	PuroClean
North Carolina Education Lottery	T-Mobile
Star News	Tidal Wellness
DFS Agency	Trillium
Piedmont Natural Gas	US Army Recruiting
Sarah E. Pless, DDS: Renaissance Dental Studio	Wilmington Health
US Cellular	Wyndham Vacation Ownership
Village at Riverland	Azalea Limousine Services
Wells Fargo	Camille's of Wilmington
Wilmington Eye	Dynamic Digital
Wilmington Grill	Matthew's Motors
Accellacare	Port City Lawn Games
Chart Local	Rex and Sons RV
	Ward and Smith

39 Diamond Patrons

164 Patrons





SPONSOR BLOOMS

We know there is A LOT to take in during Festival week - so you may have missed these awesome ways to interact with some of our sponsors and sponsorships. Take a peek at just a few of our favorites...



Dollar General Literacy Grants

Our friends at Dollar General donated \$5,000 to College Park Elementary and \$5,000 to the Brigade Boys & Girls Club towards their literacy programs during our Festival visits!

Buzzin' Blooms

Our friends at Wicked Weed unveiled an Azalea Festival beer, Buzzin' Blooms, with our LM Partners at the Bluewater launch party.



Budweiser Clydesdales

Our sponsor partner, Adams Beverages, helped us secure the Clydesdales for a week-long visit!

Coastal Massage & Spa | Periwink

Our friends at Coastal Massage & Spa | Periwink provided tea and coffee at many Festival events, and even \$50 massage gift certificates for all our sponsors!



Other fun sponsorship notes...

- We were thrilled to welcome two new Major Sponsors to the Festival Family: Coastal Kia and Truist!
- For the first time we had a Presenting Sponsor of Boxing - thank you U.S. Army Recruiting!
- Coastal Kia, a new Major Sponsor, shared that a Festival concert attendee saw a Kia on display at the Concerts, and bought a car the next day!
- We had our first Presenting Sponsor of Azaleas on Tour Porch Parade - Custom Colors - in only our second year of this event.
- We had our first Presenting Sponsor of our Festival Fun Guide - PuroClean - in only our second year of this item.

THANK YOU!

