

A Region of Southern Distinction

new HORIZONS



Wilmington welcomes new friends and customs, while retaining its enduring sense of being a distinctly Southern coastal city.

While the region has experienced a tremendous influx of residents from other states who have brought new services, different customs and previously unfamiliar local accents, the essential fabric of Greater Wilmington has remained intact. In fact, it is said that newcomers, instead of transforming Wilmington, are themselves transformed into Wilmingtonians.

One of Wilmington's greatest resources is its location nestled between the Cape Fear River and the Atlantic Ocean. An enduring relationship with the water is interwoven through the city's history, which resulted in Wilmington being the largest city in North Carolina at the turn of the 20th century.

The city's colonial history began with explorations through Frying Pan Shoals and up the Cape Fear River in 1524, and its commerce was tied to the sea. Just as colonists relied on the water for transportation of goods to build the region, so does 21st-century Wilmington rely on it to attract visitors, import and export materials from and to the world through the N.C. State Ports, and summon newcomers who choose to relocate and establish businesses here.

In true Southern sense, this is a place filled with comfortable contradiction: Wilmington emphasizes tradition, yet embraces positive innovation. This is a region where the past is honored through painstaking preservation of North Carolina's largest collection of historic buildings and homes downtown. But it is also a place where the building of a modern art museum in the suburbs—designed by the architect of the addition to the world-famous Guggenheim—elicits enthusiastic community support.

This is also a region of compelling visual contrast. The historic character of the National Historic Register District downtown offers a lively streetscape of restaurants, outdoor cafes, coffee shops, banks, governmental offices, and retail stores all framed against the backdrop



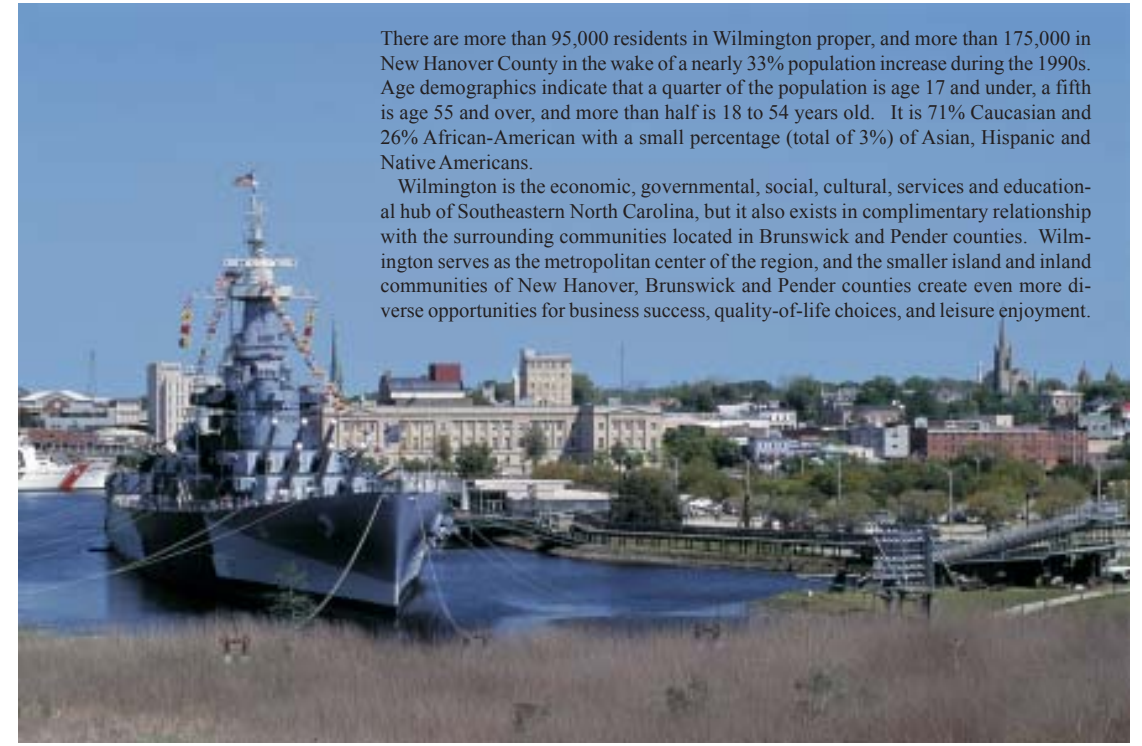
of the Cape Fear River. As night falls and the sun sets over the west bank, downtown sparkles as the entertainment Mecca for the region with a seemingly endless list of theatrical productions, concerts, dance bars, and seasonal venues.

Just minutes from downtown Wilmington, the river offers the solitude of the coastal wilderness with diverse flora and fauna. A short drive across town to one of the area beaches reveals the open sky and the special quality of light that was vividly described in the journals of Wilmington's honored artist, the late Claude Howell. Even the beaches contrast with each other, from quiet residential neighborhoods to lively areas of play to undeveloped barrier islands.

While the Greater Wilmington area is geographically located two to three hours away from North Carolina's larger central

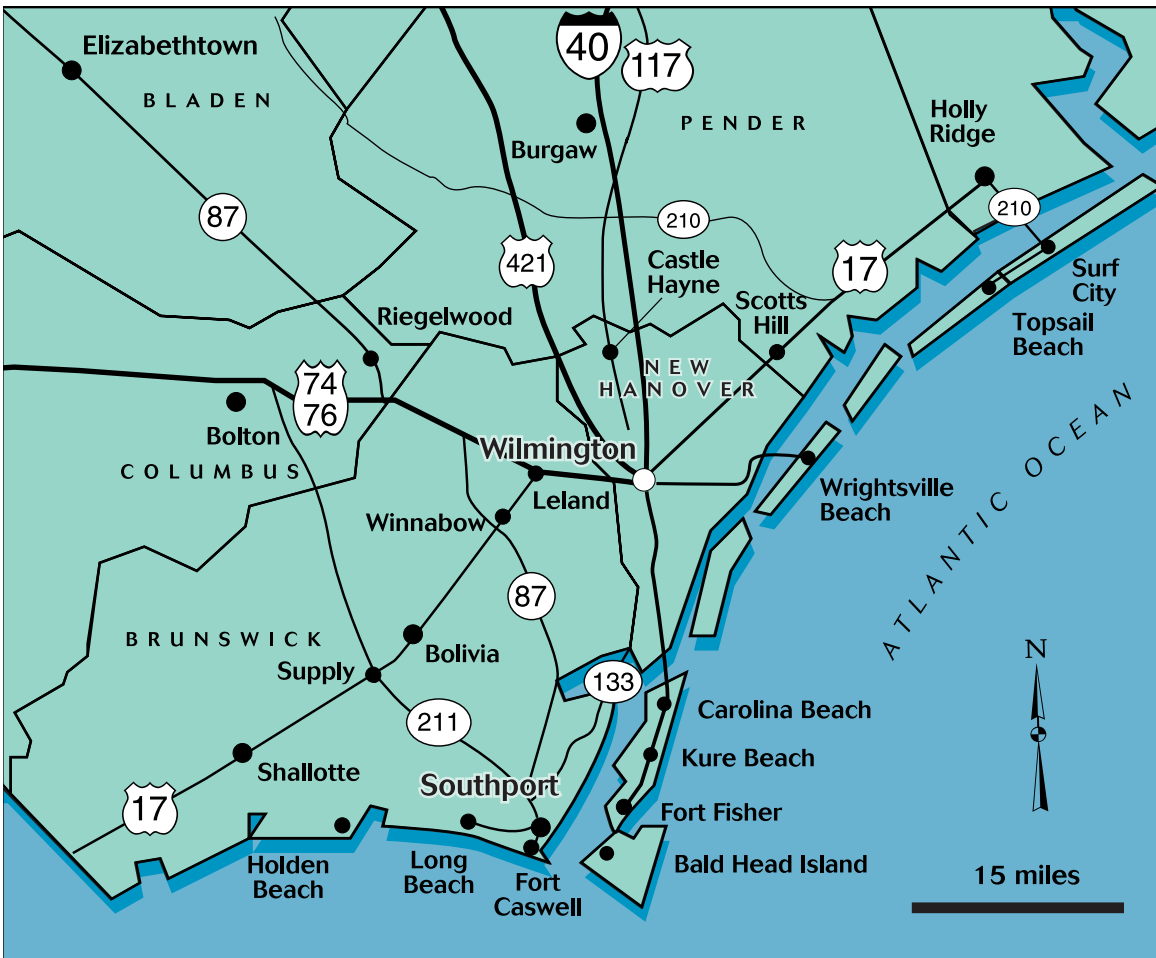
cities, it has high quality services and institutions on par with any in the state. Wilmington enjoys state-of-the-art medical facilities and programs, the significant educational, cultural, and economic benefits of being home to the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, and the advantages of being a tourist and retirement destination.

The people of the Greater Wilmington area represent a diverse mix of ethnicity: European, African, Hispanic, Asian, and Native Americans. Spiritual philosophies include Christianity, Judaism, Buddhism, Islam and more. An international port, Wilmington also embraces a global population, welcoming citizens from around the world to add their own distinctive threads to the community fabric.



There are more than 95,000 residents in Wilmington proper, and more than 175,000 in New Hanover County in the wake of a nearly 33% population increase during the 1990s. Age demographics indicate that a quarter of the population is age 17 and under, a fifth is age 55 and over, and more than half is 18 to 54 years old. It is 71% Caucasian and 26% African-American with a small percentage (total of 3%) of Asian, Hispanic and Native Americans.

Wilmington is the economic, governmental, social, cultural, services and educational hub of Southeastern North Carolina, but it also exists in complimentary relationship with the surrounding communities located in Brunswick and Pender counties. Wilmington serves as the metropolitan center of the region, and the smaller island and inland communities of New Hanover, Brunswick and Pender counties create even more diverse opportunities for business success, quality-of-life choices, and leisure enjoyment.



Brunswick County

Wilmington's neighbor to the south, Brunswick County, is one of the fastest growing areas in the state.

For decades, the county maintained a reputation for being a slow, steady quarter for farming, commercial fishing, and seaside vacationing. Brunswick County was recognized as a prime spot for development during the 1970s and 80s. Between 1990 and 2000, the county population rose 43% to 73,143. Since then it has risen to over 85,000. Area residents are carefully monitoring growth to maintain positive progress.

Ask a North Carolinian to describe the state's southern-most county and they will likely mention historic Southport, Bald Head Island, and the seafood restaurant capitol, Calabash. While many may consider these areas the very essence of Brunswick County, today's view offers much more.

With 19 incorporated towns, more than any county in the state, Brunswick is striving to increase services for each new urban area. A

number of improvements are in place, including an emergency telephone service, a countywide water system and expanded health care facilities. Most municipalities offer some type of recycling program. County planners and elected officials are addressing environmental concerns and zoning issues. They are fast becoming keenly aware that service-related issues are vital to an expanding population, and to tourism, the county's number one industry.

Visitors to Brunswick County have a variety of diversions to choose from: six major beaches, 38 golf courses, fine shopping and dining, and exclusive resort communities, such as Bald Head Island, Ocean Ridge Plantation, Brunswick Plantation, Winding River Plantation, Rivers Edge Plantation, Sea Trail Plantation and St. James Plantation. History buffs will appreciate that Brunswick County was the site of the first settlement in the colony of Carolina in 1663. Two popular tourist attractions are Orton Plantation Gardens (c. 1725) and Old Brunswick Town (c. 1726).

Leland is closest to Wilmington and home to the 2,200-acre Leland Industrial Park. Several large companies call Brunswick County home, including DAK of America (polyester fiber manufacturing), Progress Energy (elec-

tricity), and Archer Daniels Midland Co. (citric acid, sodium citrate, & potassium citrate).

The Center for Economic Development and Forecasting Office, Cameron School of Business at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington, predicts an annual economic growth rate of 7.0-7.5 percent for the coastal area through 2010.

To find out more, contact:

Brunswick County Chamber of Commerce
4948 Main Street
Shallotte, NC 28459
(910) 754-6644
1-800-426-6644
Southport/Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce
4841 Long Beach Rd, SE
Southport, NC 28461
(910) 457-6964
1-800-457-6964

North Brunswick Chamber of Commerce
151 Poole Road
PO Box 638
Leland, NC 28451
(910) 383-0553
1-888-383-0553

Pender County

A wide variety of geographic features, from wide sunny beaches to abundant water resources and deep forests teeming with wildlife, await discovery in Pender County.

The county offers a relaxing return to a lifestyle that has become extinct in other parts of the nation. Deer, black bears and alligators in cool woodlands and marshes, elegant waterfront residential communities, saltwater and freshwater fishing . . . this is Pender County. A place where small towns and closeness is a way of life; a hideaway from stress and pressure. Quiet and unhurried, yet a short drive from metropolitan areas for shopping and entertainment, Pender County is a vacation area where vacationers may never want to leave.

Pender County is the fifth largest county in land area in North Carolina, comprising 864 square miles with a population of 41,082. The county is served by U.S. Highways 17, 117 and 421; North Carolina Highways 11, 53, 133 and 210; and Interstate 40.

Incorporated towns in Pender County include Atkinson, St. Helena, Surf City, Topsail Beach, Watha and Burgaw. Centrally located Burgaw serves as the county seat, offering the services of fifteen government departments and agencies providing health, education and welfare programs.

Students of history are interested to find, situated among the creeks and savannahs of western Pender County, the site of a brief

but violent clash that brought the American Revolution to the southern colonies. At daybreak on February 27, 1776, at Moore's Creek Bridge, patriots defeated a larger force of loyalists on their way to rendezvous with a British expeditionary squadron expected on the coast. It was a small battle, but one of crucial importance, because the patriots' victory ended royal authority in the colony. The victory helped to forestall a full-scale invasion of the South and encouraged North Carolina to instruct its delegation to the Continental Con-

gress in Philadelphia to vote for independence—the first colony to act.

Pender County is host to many different industries, including DEL Labs (cosmetics, pharmaceuticals), Chloride Systems (emergency lighting), W.R. Rayson (medical/dental paper products), Holt Hosiery, Wieland (electrical components), Windsor Fiberglass, Cardinal Metal Works (precision metal fabrication), American Skins (pork products), Prestige Labels (boxes/containers), and LL Building Products (home building material manufacturers).



To find out more about this area, contact:

The Burgaw Area Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 1096
Burgaw, NC 28425
(910) 259-9817
(910) 259-5071 Fax

The Greater Hampstead Chamber of Commerce
P.O. Box 211
Hampstead, NC 28443
(910) 270-9642
1-800-833-2483
Fax: (910) 270-4000

Area Population

	1980	1990	2000	2005	2010*
New Hanover County <i>(total includes the following)</i>	103,471	120,284	160,307	179,553	197,324
Carolina Beach	2,000	3,630	4,701	5,095	
Kure Beach	611	619	1,507	1,517	
City of Wilmington	44,000	55,530	75,838**	94,600	
Wrightsville Beach	2,910	2,937	2,593	3,182	
Brunswick County	35,777	50,985	73,143	89,162	94,224
Pender County	22,262	28,855	41,082	46,429	53,240
Columbus County	51,037	49,587	54,749	54,746	59,847

* Projected

** In 2002, Wilmington's population increased to 90,000 due to annexation.

County Elevations

New Hanover: 38 feet
Brunswick: 40 feet
Pender: 49 feet

Area (Square Miles)

City of Wilmington: 54.3
New Hanover County: 198.93
Brunswick County: 856.51
Pender County: 870.76