



Rise of tourism in Forsyth boosts local economy

See WGXA's 5pm news report: <http://wgxa.tv/news/local/rise-of-tourism-in-forsyth-boosts-local-economy>

Following is the digital news report:

by Maggie McGlamry | Friday, December 16th 2016



Forsyth tourism has spiked in the past year, which is good for businesses and citizens / Eric Mock (WGXA)

FORSYTH, Ga. -- Tourism in Forsyth is growing according to leaders there.

Gilda Stanbery, Executive Director of the Forsyth Convention and Visitors Bureau (CVB), said they have seen an 18 percent increase in collections from the hotel/motel tax in the surrounding

area. The CVB was created in 2015 and has already seen the effects of tourism.

Tourism, including attractions and hospitality, has provided the city with \$31 million in the last year, according to CVB Board Chairman Kennie Bowman. For a town as big as Forsyth, that's a big deal.

The main attraction in the area is the small town of Juliette, where the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes* was shot. Many people stop by visit the Whistle Stop Cafe.



*Meet Kelly Outlaw and her aunt who stopped in Juliette on the way to FL to see where the movie *Fried Green Tomatoes* was filmed! @WGXAnews*

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The area also has High Falls State Park and the Rose Theatre in downtown Forsyth. Stanbery said downtown is a perfect place to stop on the way to Atlanta or Savannah.

"One of the things that's been really helpful is we've got all of downtown businesses, buildings filled up," Bowman said. "People come in and

they see the growth in Forsyth, and as long as the interstate keeps increasing, we're going to keep increasing."



The CVB has recently increased its advertising as well. There are now billboards in town to attract travelers to the town.

Twenty percent of the revenue generated from tourism goes to the city of Forsyth for whatever they need. Forty percent goes to Forsyth Main Street and another 40 percent is given to the CVB administration.

Stanbery said the spike in tourism is great for businesses and citizens alike. The more money the city can generate through tourism, the less citizens have to pay in taxes.

Tourism supports 300 jobs in the Forsyth area. The CVB wants to hire more full-time employees, but they need an increase in budget so they're taking that to the city council.