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Sunday, December 24 10:30 p.m.

to be followed by

"The Nativity of Our Lord Jesus Christ" Holy Eucharist: Rite II at 11 p.m.

The community is invited.

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THE EXPRESS • December 13, 2023 • Page 2 New Podcast Series Gives Voice to NC Civil Rights Journey

The N.C. Civil Rights Trail adds a new avenue with today's launch of a podcast series amplifying the student-led protest story that anchors the International Civil Rights Center & Museum in Greensboro. The free podcasts, which accompany a newly extended guide at *VisitNC.com*, can be accessed through Simplecast, Apple, Spotify, Audible and other major platforms with a "U.S. Civil Rights Trail" search.

"Most people know the essential story of the Greensboro Four, the students who took a stand against segregation with their sit-in at the Woolworth lunch counter," said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit North Carolina. "The three new podcasts trace the overarching story and add details and insights while introducing other people who played important roles. It's striking how many of them are women, from 15-year-old Dorothy Counts in Charlotte to the Bennett Belles at Bennett College and student organizer Ella Baker."

The podcasts, produced by Tanner Latham of Ingredient Creative, represent a partnership of Visit NC, the state's tourism marketing organization; the N.C. African American Heritage Commission (*aahc.nc.gov*) architects of the N.C. Civil Rights Trail (*aahc.nc.gov/programs/civil-rights-trail*); and the U.S. Civil Rights Trail Marketing Alliance (*civilrightstrail.com/partners*). The series advances these organizations' efforts to direct travelers to places significant to the pursuit of civil rights.

The first podcast, "NC Students Start a Revolution," begins in 1957 with Dorothy Counts braving abuse as she enters Harding High School in Charlotte, then continues to Greensboro, where a 1958 speech by Martin Luther King Jr. has inspired students at Bennett College and N.C. A&T to act. The second episode, "The A&T 4 Sit Down," delves into the planning of the Woolworth sit-in, the events of Feb. 1, 1960, and the aftermath. The third episode, "Greensboro Sparks a Movement," travels east to a W.T. Grant lunch protest led by students at Elizabeth City State Teachers College (now University) and then reaches Shaw University in Raleigh, where Ella Baker organized the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee.

"Hearing the voices of history-makers underscores how vital these stories remain," Tuttell said. "It also stirs the desire to visit the sites that preserve, present and interpret the actions that led to transformation."

Greensboro, Raleigh and Durham, which are home to North Carolina landmarks on the U.S. Civil Rights Trail (*civilrightstrail.com/state/north-carolina*), make ideal starting points, Tuttell said. The newly updated guide at VisitNC.com adds multidimensional experiences in Fayetteville, Wilmington, Shelby and High Point to a trip plan that highlights designated stops on the N.C. Civil Rights Trail . The VisitNC.com feature also connects users to the stories behind the state trail's 27 markers, including one for the Elizabeth City sit-ins. The state trail's website adds more depth by pinpointing Harding High, other protest sites, meeting spaces, and places tied to legal action and visits by Civil Rights icons.

"The more we understand our history, the better our ability to chart our future," Tuttell said. "The podcasts create a meaningful way to extend our knowledge and inspire us on a critical journey to learn more." For more information to inspire a trip, stop by *VisitNC.com*.

About the N.C. African American Heritage Commission Created in 2008, the African American Heritage Commission is a division of the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources. The commission works across the department to preserve, protect and promote the state's African American history, art and culture for all people. Its endeavors include the identification of heritage sites, compiling resources for educators, extending the work of national programs such as the National Park Service's Network to Freedom Underground Railroad, and independent initiatives including Oasis Spaces: Green Book Project. *aahc.nc.gov*

About the U.S. Civil Rights Trail The U.S. Civil Rights Trail is a collection of churches, courthouses, schools, museums and other landmarks primarily in the Southern states where activists challenged segregation in the 1950s and 1960s to advance social justice. Developed as a collaboration among the 14 member states of the Travel South USA consortium, the trail highlights such key sites as the former F.W. Woolworth in Greensboro, site of the landmark 1960 sit-in; Edmund Pettus Bridge in Selma, Ala.; Little Rock Central High School in Arkansas; the National Civil Rights Museum at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis, Tenn.; and Dr. King's birthplace in Atlanta. The people, locations and destinations included in the Civil Rights Trail provide a way for families, travelers and educators to experience history firsthand and tell the story of how "what happened here changed the world." For details about dozens of significant sites and to see interviews with civil rights foot soldiers, visit *CivilRightsTrail.com*.

Application Forms Approved for Sports Betting Licenses

The North Carolina State Lottery Commission approved applications for sports betting licensure on Wednesday, November 29, taking a major step forward in the licensing of sports betting operators in North Carolina. The approval allows for the commission to begin accepting applications for interactive sports wagering operators as well as the associated sports betting suppliers and providers.

"We know North Carolinians are wondering when the first bets can be made," said Ripley Rand, chair of the commission. "Lots of work still needs to be completed. The commission is going to be thoughtful and thorough in its rulemaking. We are committed to being open and transparent in what we do. And we are committed to ensuring fairness for everyone involved."

As commissioners approved the application forms, they reviewed what steps still must be done. The steps included:

- Know exactly how many applicants we have for licenses.
- Complete the initial rulemaking process for sports betting.
- Complete background checks on applicants and their key individuals.
- Approve provisional licenses for suppliers.

• Make sure that licensed operators' proposed internal controls are robust and compliant, and that their key equipment and software have been certified by an independent laboratory

Rand advised the commission that some key parts of the timetable are not in its control, but that of sports betting operators and others who will play a major role in how quickly sports betting can begin. Applicants need to:

• Submit their complete applications as soon as possible. The commission's staff anticipate that it will need applications in and complete by Dec. 27 so that a fair "go live date" for operators can be set.

• Obtain a "written designation agreement" that will accompany operators' applications.

These agreements are a unique requirement in North Carolina's sports betting law.

They are private business agreements that must be established between an operator applicant and a sports team, a sports league, or venue.

Be ready to show full compliance with rules and show internal control systems are in place to protect bettors.
Demonstrate a responsible gaming program has been established and is ready to go. "We see questions about whether sports betting will be up and running in time for the Super Bowl," Rand said, "It's clear, however, with all the work remaining to be done and the timetable set out in state law that unfortunately won't be the case. Approving applications is a major step forward. With all the progress we've made, we expect to be in a position early in the New Year to announce when sports betting can begin in North Carolina."

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Better Business Bureau Provides 8 tips for Dealing with Holiday Pop-up Shops

Some retailers turn to outdoor pop-up shops during the holiday shopping season at local festivals and events. These temporary storefronts give shoppers the opportunity to browse for merchandise in person, and indoor pop-up shops allow landlords to fill vacant retail space in downtown areas and suburban malls.

The Better Business Bureau receives complaints each year about temporary retail locations, reporting everything from poor-quality merchandise to difficulty obtaining refunds after temporary stores have closed their doors. Pop-up shops can be fun, but keep the following BBB tips in mind if you choose to buy from one of them:

• Research store headquarters. If you are interested in trying a new or unfamiliar online merchant, ask the company for its physical location (address and phone number) so you can check its BBB Business Profile at *BBB.org*.

• Ask how long a store will operate. If you are buying from a seasonal store, ask whether it will be open after the holiday and whether it will accept returns when the season is over. If not, consider buying elsewhere or taking more time to be sure the item is exactly what you want before making the purchase.

• Review purchase policies. Determine the company's refund and return policies before you buy. If pop-up shops cannot offer concrete commitments on how they will handle any potential problems you may have with their products or services, reconsider doing business with them.

• Shop around. Pop-ups often focus on unique or high-quality gifts that you may not find elsewhere, but some are simply mini versions of discount retailers, offering holiday-themed goods that may be available for less at a traditional retailer.

• Pay attention to quality. Occasionally, pop-ups sell counterfeit products, so be cautious when purchasing designer goods or that latest "must have" gift. Prices that are dramatically lower than regular retail stores may be a red flag that the items are either stolen or counterfeit.

• Know the terms of any product or service guarantees. If you are purchasing anything that comes with a manufacturer's warranty, ask how you will be able to get the product serviced if needed.

• Guard your personal information. For small items, you might be better off paying in cash so you don't have to share any personal information. Just be sure you understand that you probably won't have any recourse if something is not right. For larger items, paying with a credit card can provide additional protections if there are problems and the retailer disappears. Make sure you hang on to the receipt to match it against your credit card statement.

• Consider whether the gift is for a hard-to-please recipient. If you are planning a gift for someone who might need or want to return it, consider buying from a retailer with a long-standing business, strong reputation, and well-established return policies, instead of a pop-up shop. Whenever possible, ask for a gift receipt that would make a return or exchange easier, if necessary.