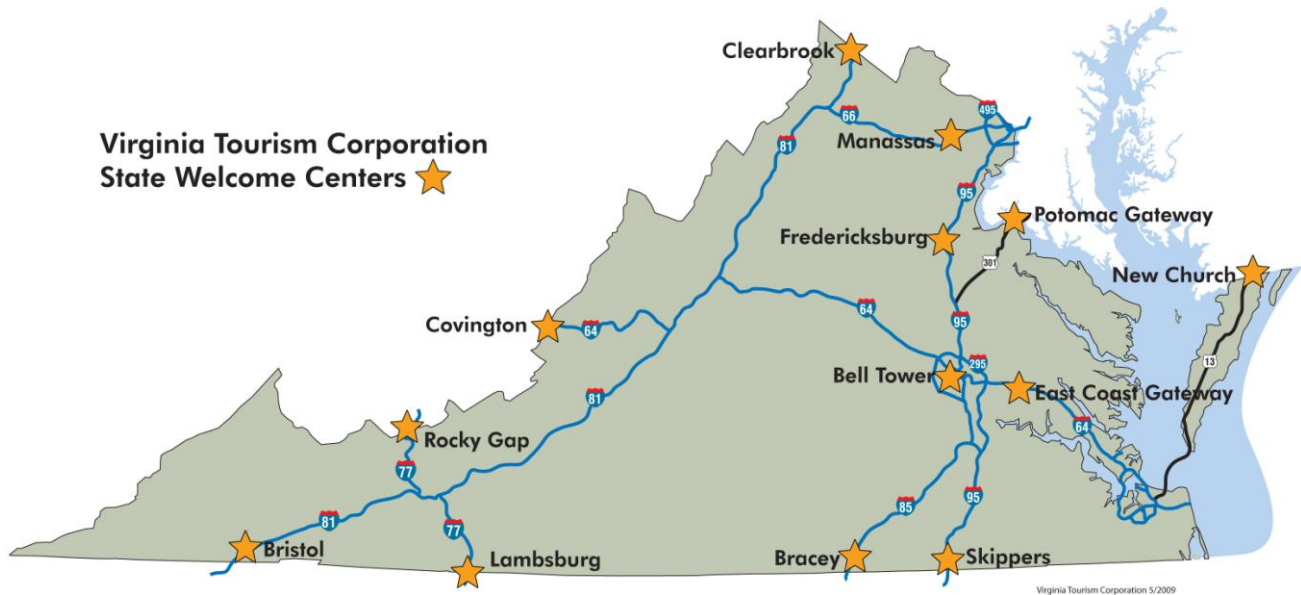


# 2008 Virginia Welcome Center Visitation and Usage Report



## Background

Virginia's Welcome Centers play an instrumental role in providing quality service to the traveling public as well as to Virginia residents. They are usually the first place that travelers stop upon entering the state and provide a full range of services for visitors. From maps, directions, weather forecasts, attraction information and lodging reservations, travelers are treated to warm hospitality by Welcome Center Counselors all year long.

The past few years have brought numerous changes to Virginia's Welcome Centers, and 2008 was no exception. A brief summary of notable events that occurred at Virginia Welcome Centers during the past three years is provided below:

**Clear Brook:** The Clear Brook Welcome Center underwent complete reconstruction from May 2006 until April 2008. During the reconstruction, the Welcome Center staff was temporarily relocated to Winchester Visitor Center. Therefore, the numbers for 2008 include Clear Brook from April 2008 until December 2008 only.

**East Coast Gateway:** The New Kent Rest Area was converted into the East Coast Gateway Welcome Center as of November 2007.

**Fredericksburg:** The Fredericksburg Welcome Center underwent complete reconstruction from October 2006 until October 2007. The Welcome Center staff was temporarily relocated to King George/Potomac Gateway Visitor Center. Also, in January and February of 2008, the temporary solar-powered traffic counter turned off at night when insufficient sunlight was provided. Therefore, the numbers are skewed (low estimate).

**Lambsburg:** The Lambsburg Welcome Center underwent extensive renovations from January 2006 until July 2007. During the renovations, the Welcome Center staff was temporarily relocated to Blue Ridge Plateau Visitor Center in Carroll County. In reference to the data for 2008, a permanent traffic counter was installed in April 2008.

**Potomac Gateway:** The King George Visitor Center was converted into the Potomac Gateway Welcome Center as of August 2007. Subsequently, due to state budget reductions, the Potomac Gateway Welcome Center shut down December 1, 2008. Therefore, the 2008 numbers do not include December of 2008. Note that the Potomac Gateway Welcome Center did not have a traffic counter.

**All Welcome Centers:** From December 2008 to May 2009, all Virginia Welcome Centers were unstaffed on Tuesdays and Wednesdays as part of state budget reductions.

## **Welcome Center Traffic**

The table on the following page presents important figures about the traffic to each welcome center. The Mainline column represents the number of vehicles that drove along the highway adjacent to each welcome center. Mainline traffic counters are positioned before or after the Welcome Center ramp and do include those that visit the Welcome Center.

The Ramp column indicates the number of vehicles that exited off of the Mainline and onto the ramp that leads to each welcome center parking lot.

The Door Count column refers to the number of people that entered the staffed information area of the Welcome Center. This area is only accessible during staffed hours. These numbers do not include those that merely used the restrooms or waited in the parking lot while others collected information.

In order to compare the number of door counts to total number of people that at least entered the parking lot, the number of cars who exited on the ramp was multiplied by 2.2 persons and added to the number of trucks who exited on the ramp, multiplied by 1.2 persons. These estimates were based on data collected by the Virginia Department of Transportation. Virginia residents are included, because the numbers are generated by automated systems. Note that Bell Tower is a downtown welcome center. Therefore, there is not a highway adjacent to it, nor a ramp. Also, Potomac Gateway did not have a traffic counter in 2008.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>Mainline</b>	<b>Ramp</b>	<b>Ramp as % of Mainline</b>	<b>Door Count</b>	<b>Door Count as % of Total Passengers</b>
Bell Tower	---	---	---	9,545	---
Bracey	4,224,620	440,327	10%	202,467	23%
Bristol	6,215,633	220,439	4%	147,852	31%
Clear Brook*	6,648,090	318,261	5%	65,965	12%
Covington	1,472,643	153,821	10%	73,871	22%
East Coast Gateway	11,631,436	918,364	8%	703,330	38%
Fredericksburg	24,415,164	605,584	2%	236,625	20%
Lambsburg**	6,534,703	671,532	10%	137,812	10%
Manassas	33,378,841	288,018	1%	69,122	12%
New Church	6,224,181	137,121	2%	99,773	34%
Potomac Gateway	---	---	---	38,602	---
Rocky Gap***	4,921,682	412,038	8%	71,123	9%
Skippers	6,856,454	598,427	9%	237,570	18%
<b>Total</b>	<b>112,523,446</b>	<b>4,763,932</b>	<b>4%</b>	<b>2,093,657</b>	<b>---</b>

\*Clear Brook Closed Jan - March 2008

\*\*Lambsburg Ramp Traffic not available Feb - April. Ramp traffic estimated from 506,414 vehicles during available months

\*\*\*Rock Gap Mainline not available Sept - Dec. Mainline traffic estimated from 3,281,121 vehicles between Jan - Aug.

## Welcome Center Truck Usage

The following table shows the number of trucks that entered the ramp to each welcome center and the percentage of all vehicles entering each ramp that were trucks. Bell Tower and Potomac Gateway are not included as neither welcome center has a traffic counter. These numbers are not adjusted for periods when traffic counters were not available.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>Number of Trucks</b>	<b>Trucks as % of Total Ramp Traffic</b>
Bell Tower	---	---
Bracey	82,477	19%
Bristol	10,053	5%
Clear Brook*	129,657	41%
Covington	5,495	4%
East Coast Gateway	176,014	19%
Fredericksburg	151,468	25%
Lamburg**	152,856	30%
Manassas	52,874	18%
New Church	9,511	7%
Potomac Gateway	---	---
Rocky Gap*	111,689	27%
Skippers	13,765	2%
<b>Total</b>	<b>895,859</b>	<b>19%</b>

## Electronic Door Counts

In 2008, electronic door counters placed at the entrance to each of the centers indicated that 2,090,623 people entered the centers. This is a 49.7% increase over the 2007 figure of 1,396,836. Both of these figures do not include those people who only used the restroom facilities or who may have waited outside while a companion sought help inside.

The following table details the total number of visitors to each center and the percent of the total that each center represents.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b># of Visitors to Center</b>	<b>% of Total Visitors</b>
Bell Tower	9,545	0.5%
Bracey	202,467	10%
Bristol	147,852	7%
Clear Brook	65,965	3%
Covington	73,871	4%
East Coast Gateway	703,330	34%
Fredericksburg	236,625	11%
Lambsburg	137,812	7%
Manassas	69,122	3%
New Church	99,773	5%
Potomac Gateway	38,602	2%
Rocky Gap	71,123	3%
Skippers	237,570	11%
<b>Total Visitors</b>	<b>2,093,657</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Reservation Service

In March of 2003 the VTC began a reservation service at the welcome centers whereby Travel Counselors actively assist travelers with making lodging reservations for a part of their trip.

In 2008, there were 5,771 reservations made at the centers, a 6.4% increase over the 5,425 reservations made in 2007. These 5,771 reservations turned into 5,960 room nights for local Virginia lodging establishments, directly attributable to the work by the Counselors.

The following table shows the number of reservations made at each welcome center.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b># of Reservations</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Bell Tower	---	---
Bracey	179	3%
Bristol	543	9%
Clear Brook	808	14%
Covington	127	2%
East Coast Gateway	39	1%
Fredericksburg	514	9%
Lambsburg	992	17%
Manassas	237	4%
New Church	248	4%
Potomac Gateway	60	1%
Rocky Gap	423	7%
Skippers	1,601	28%
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,771</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Guest Registers

In 2008, the 13 welcome centers collected data on origin states, zip codes, and primary destination in Virginia from 121,850 travelers who signed the guest registers. This sample, while not scientifically based, is large enough that it can provide some insight into visitors who use welcome centers and who will willingly fill out a guest register. These travelers may be slightly different from those who do not fill out the guest register, but the available data is helpful in better answering the basic questions found in the guest register.

The table below presents the number of visitors (both Virginia and non-Virginia residents) who signed the guest register at each welcome center.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>Number of visitors who signed guest register</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Bell Tower	911	1%
Bracey	10,107	8%
Bristol	10,199	8%
Clear Brook	10,292	8%
Covington	12,244	10%
East Coast Gateway	2,844	2%
Fredericksburg	6,751	6%
Lambsburg	12,919	11%
Manassas	5,351	4%
New Church	19,801	16%
Potomac Gateway	5,174	4%
Rocky Gap	9,650	8%
Skippers	15,607	13%
<b>Total</b>	<b>121,850</b>	<b>100%</b>

## Average Travel Party Size

Of the 119,176 visitors who told us how many people were in their travel party, the average travel party size was 2.7 persons, while the median and mode were 2.

The table below displays the average travel party size for the visitors to each welcome center. The median and mode for each individual welcome center was 2.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>Average Party Size</b>
Bell Tower	2.6
Bracey	2.5
Bristol	3.3
Clear Brook	2.3
Covington	2.9
East Coast Gateway	5.6
Fredericksburg	2.6
Lambsburg	2.5
Manassas	2.3
New Church	2.5
Potomac Gateway	2.2
Rocky Gap	2.5
Skippers	2.7

### Average Number of Nights Spent in Virginia

Of the 74,176 visitors who told us how long their visit to Virginia would be, the average number of nights spent in Virginia was 3.2 nights, while the median was 2 nights and the mode, or the most frequent response, was 1 night.

The table below displays the average number of nights spent in Virginia by the visitors to each welcome center, as well as the median and mode for this variable.

<b>Welcome Center</b>	<b>Average Number of Nights Spent in Virginia</b>	<b>Median</b>	<b>Mode</b>
Bell Tower	5.2	4	3
Bracey	4.5	3	1
Bristol	4.4	2	1
Clear Brook	2.9	2	1
Covington	4.6	4	2
East Coast Gateway	4.2	3	2
Fredericksburg	3.2	2	1
Lamburg	1.2	0	0
Manassas	3.3	2	1
New Church	2.5	2	0
Potomac Gateway	2.3	2	0
Rocky Gap	2.3	1	1
Skippers	3.7	2	1

## Origins & Destinations

In order to take a more accurate look at travelers to the welcome centers, the state and Designated Marketing Area (DMA) of origin tables, as well as the primary destination in VA table, will be based solely on non-VA resident travelers. While many Virginia residents use the resources of the welcome centers, these visits can occur on both the outbound and inbound portion of their trip, potentially skewing the data.

### Top 10 States of Origin

Representing 70% of non-VA resident travelers, the following table shows the percent of travelers from the top 10 states of origin.

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
North Carolina	13%
Pennsylvania	10%
Maryland	9%
Florida	9%
New York	7%
Ohio	6%
New Jersey	5%
South Carolina	4%
West Virginia	4%
Georgia	4%

## Top 25 DMAs of Origin

Representing 62% of non-VA resident travelers, the following table shows the percent of all travelers from the top 25 DMAs of origin.

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Philadelphia	7%
New York	6%
Baltimore	4%
Washington, D.C. (Hagerstown)	4%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	4%
Charlotte	3%
Atlanta	3%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	2%
Salisbury	2%
Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota)	2%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson	2%
Charleston-Huntington	2%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem	2%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	2%
Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	2%
Pittsburgh	2%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	2%
Columbus, OH	1%
Wilkes Barre-Scranton	1%
Hartford-New Haven	1%
Greenville-New Bern-Washington	1%
Knoxville	1%
Detroit	1%
Cincinnati	1%
Jacksonville	1%

## **Top places visited**

The following list shows the top 20 places that travelers said was their primary destination in Virginia. Again, these numbers are based on non-VA residents to avoid counting the Virginia residents returning home from their trips.

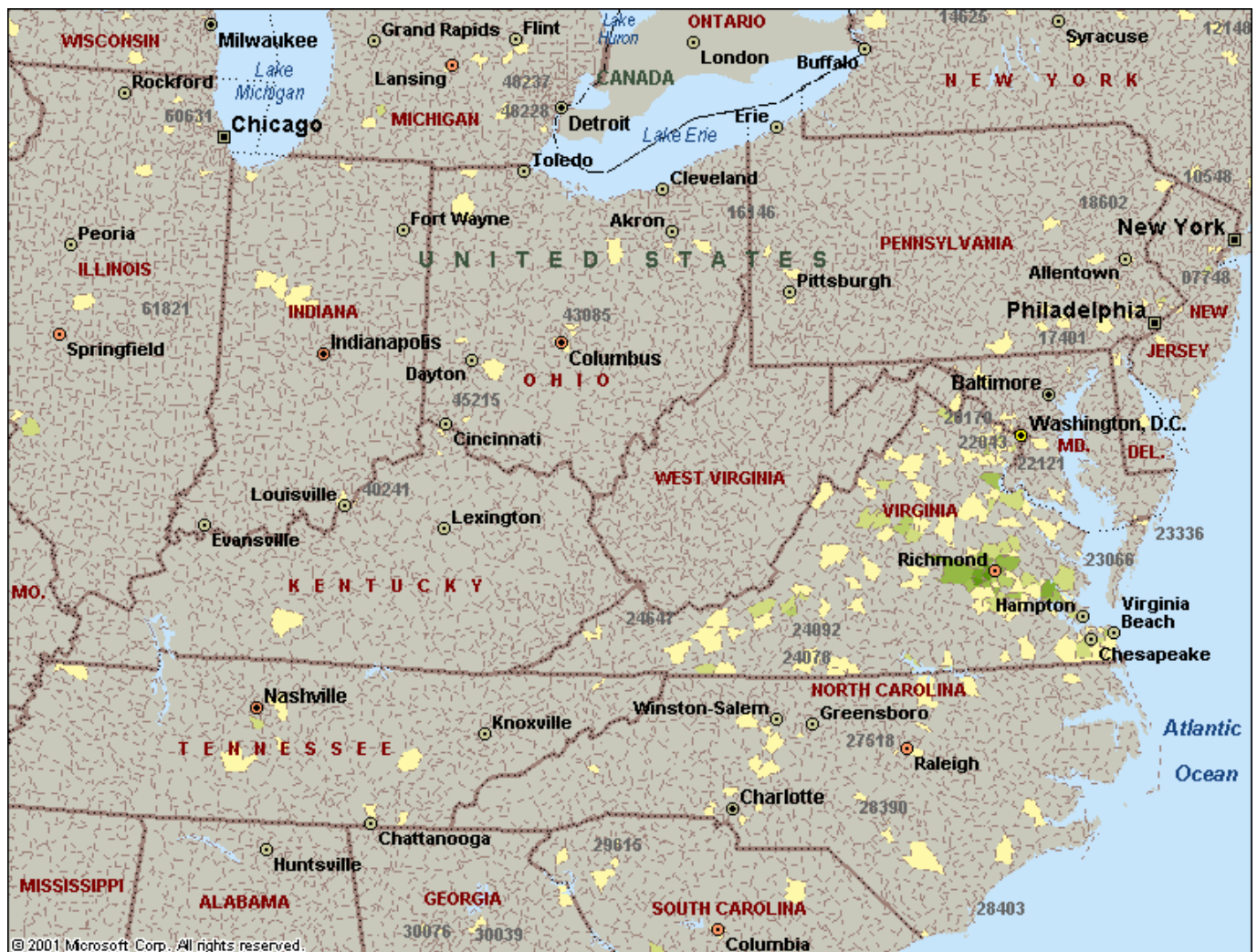
- **Williamsburg**
- **Virginia Beach**
- **Richmond**
- **Norfolk**
- **Washington, DC**
- **Chincoteague**
- **Charlottesville**
- **Fredericksburg**
- **Roanoke**
- **Hampton**
- **Newport News**
- **Lynchburg**
- **Chesapeake**
- **Arlington**
- **Alexandria**
- **Winchester**
- **Lexington**
- **Harrisonburg**
- **Shenandoah National Park**
- **Blue Ridge Parkway**

## Maps and Charts

The following maps depict where visitors to each welcome center are coming **from**. This includes Virginia residents as well as non-residents. Each map represents a separate welcome center. For perspective, the darker the coloring of an area, the more travel parties that reported coming from that DMA.

Unlike the maps, the charts below each map do not include data on Virginia residents.

## Bell Tower



### Top places visited (not shown on map)

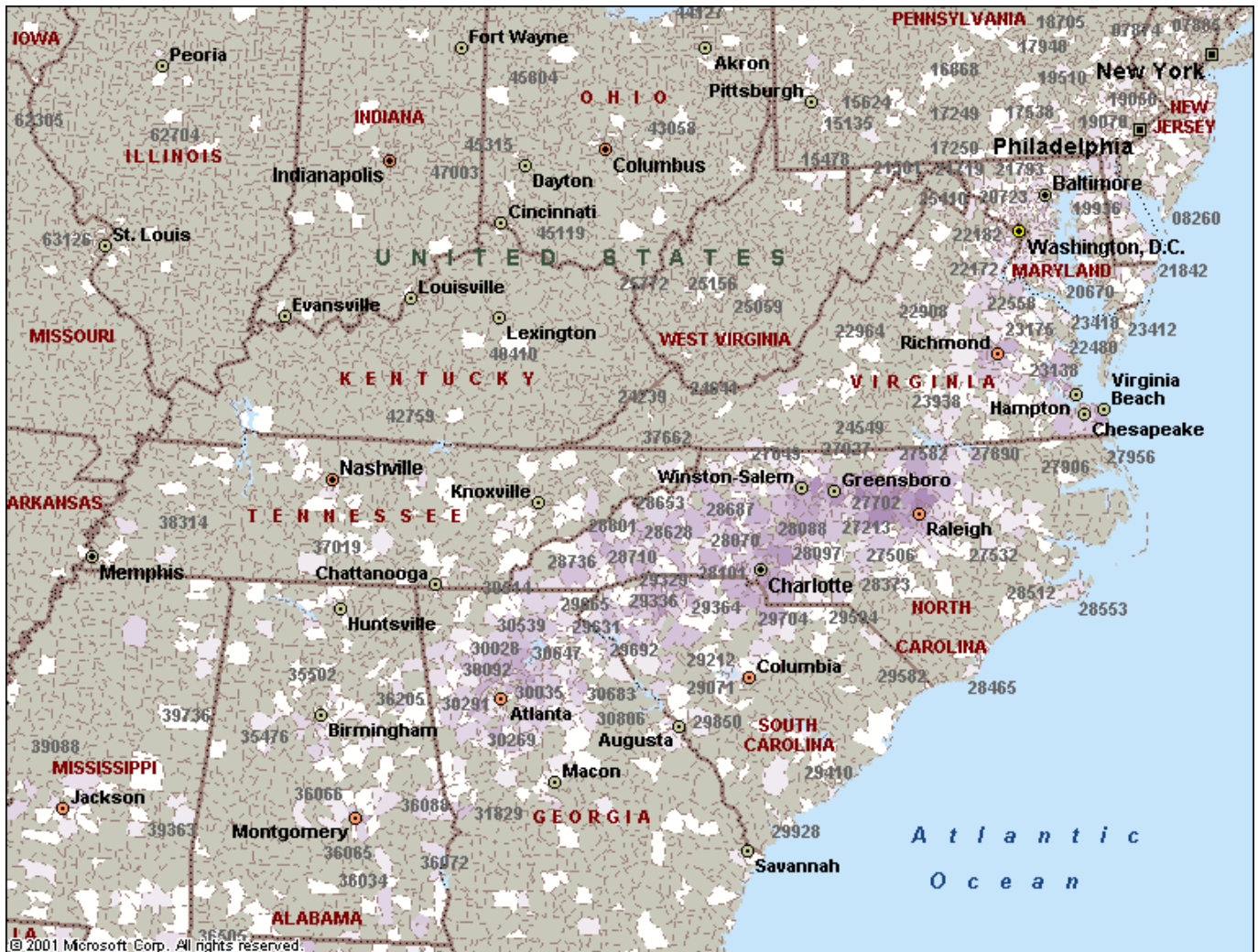
- Richmond
- Williamsburg

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
California	13%
New York	7%
Florida	7%
Pennsylvania	6%
Texas	6%
North Carolina	6%
Massachusetts	4%
Ohio	4%
Illinois	4%
Maryland	3%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
New York	7%
Philadelphia	5%
San Francisco-Oakland-San Jose	4%
Los Angeles	4%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	4%
Washington, D.C. (Hagerstown)	3%
Dallas-Fort Worth	2%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	2%
Chicago	2%
Seattle-Tacoma	2%

# Bracey



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Williamsburg
- Washington, DC
- Richmond
- Virginia Beach
- Norfolk

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
North Carolina	39%
Georgia	12%
South Carolina	7%
Maryland	5%
Florida	5%
Texas	4%
Alabama	4%
New York	3%
Pennsylvania	3%
Louisiana	3%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	15%
Charlotte	12%
Atlanta	11%
Greensboro- High Point- Winston-Salem	10%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville	8%
New York	4%
Washington, D.C. (Hagerstown)	3%
Philadelphia	3%
Baltimore	2%
Mobile-Pensacola (Fort Walton Beach)	2%



## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Tennessee	20%
Texas	11%
Pennsylvania	6%
North Carolina	6%
Alabama	6%
Georgia	5%
Florida	5%
Louisiana	5%
New York	4%
Maryland	3%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Knoxville	10%
Nashville	5%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville	5%
Atlanta	4%
Chattanooga	3%
Dallas-Fort Worth	3%
New York	3%
Philadelphia	3%
Houston	3%
Huntsville-Decatur (Florence)	3%

# Clear Brook



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Winchester
- Williamsburg
- Roanoke
- Harrisonburg
- Skyline Drive

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

State	% of Total
Pennsylvania	22%
New York	14%
Florida	10%
North Carolina	6%
New Jersey	5%
Georgia	3%
Connecticut	3%
South Carolina	3%
Maryland	3%
West Virginia	3%

DMA Name	% of Total
New York	9%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	8%
Philadelphia	7%
Wilkes Barre-Scranton	5%
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	5%
Tampa-Saint Petersburg (Sarasota)	3%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	3%
Hartford-New Haven	3%
Atlanta	2%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson	2%

# Covington



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

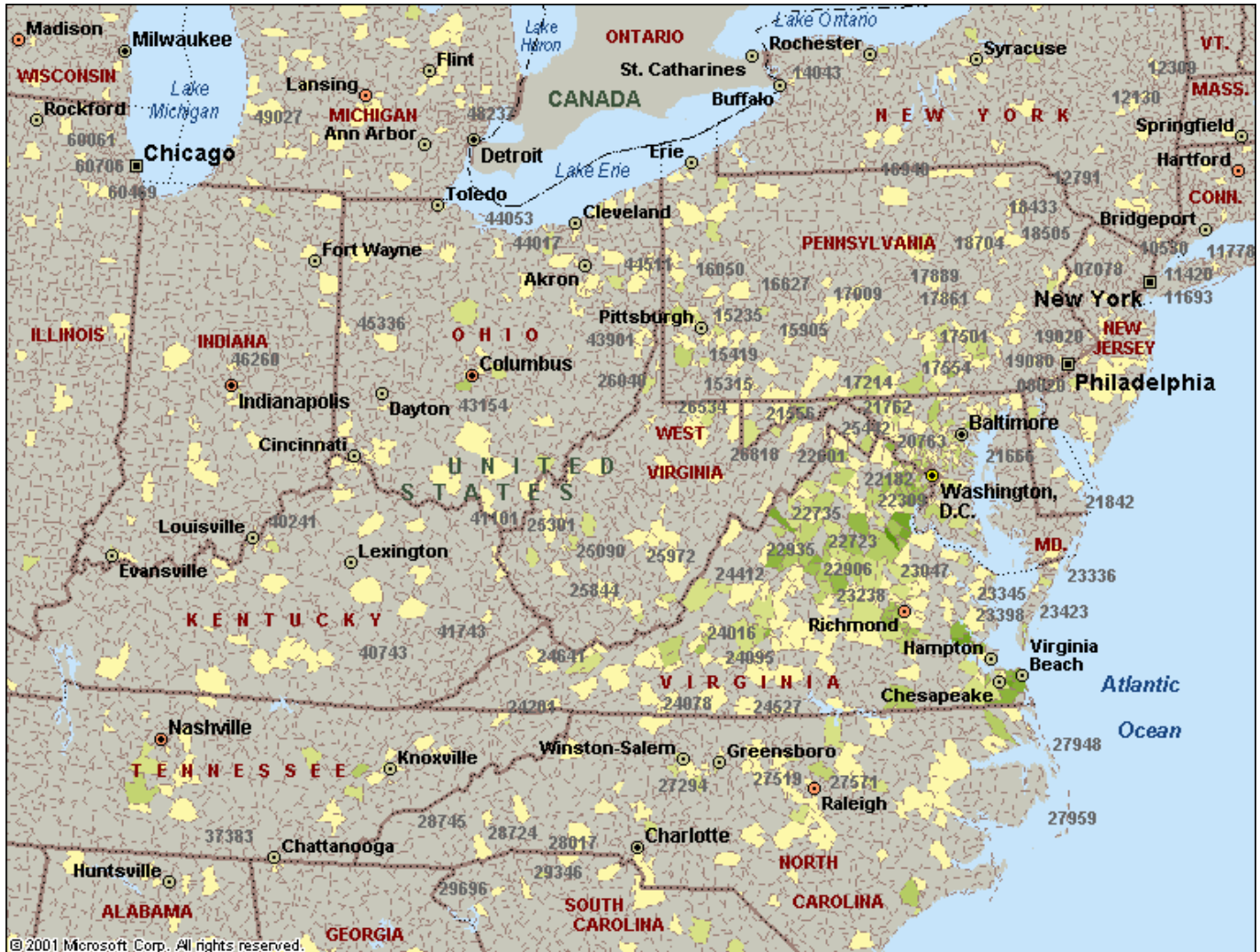
- Williamsburg
- Virginia Beach
- Richmond
- Charlottesville
- Norfolk

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

State	% of Total
Ohio	19%
West Virginia	16%
Kentucky	11%
Indiana	9%
Illinois	8%
Missouri	6%
Michigan	4%
Florida	3%
Wisconsin	2%
North Carolina	2%

DMA Name	% of Total
Charleston-Huntington	11%
Cincinnati	6%
Columbus, OH	5%
Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill	5%
St. Louis	4%
Lexington	4%
Louisville	4%
Indianapolis	4%
Chicago	3%
Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	3%

# East Coast Gateway



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Williamsburg
- Virginia Beach
- Norfolk
- Newport News
- Hampton

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

State	% of Total
Maryland	13%
Pennsylvania	13%
North Carolina	6%
Ohio	6%
New York	5%
Florida	5%
West Virginia	5%
California	5%
Michigan	4%
Texas	3%

DMA Name	% of Total
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	9%
Baltimore	6%
New York	4%
Pittsburgh	4%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	4%
Philadelphia	3%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	2%
Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	2%
Charleston-Huntington	2%
Los Angeles	2%



## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Maryland	16%
Pennsylvania	15%
Florida	9%
New York	9%
North Carolina	8%
New Jersey	7%
South Carolina	3%
Michigan	3%
Texas	3%
Ohio	3%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
New York	9%
Philadelphia	9%
Baltimore	9%
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	9%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	4%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	3%
Pittsburgh	3%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	3%
Tampa-Saint Petersburg (Sarasota)	2%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	2%

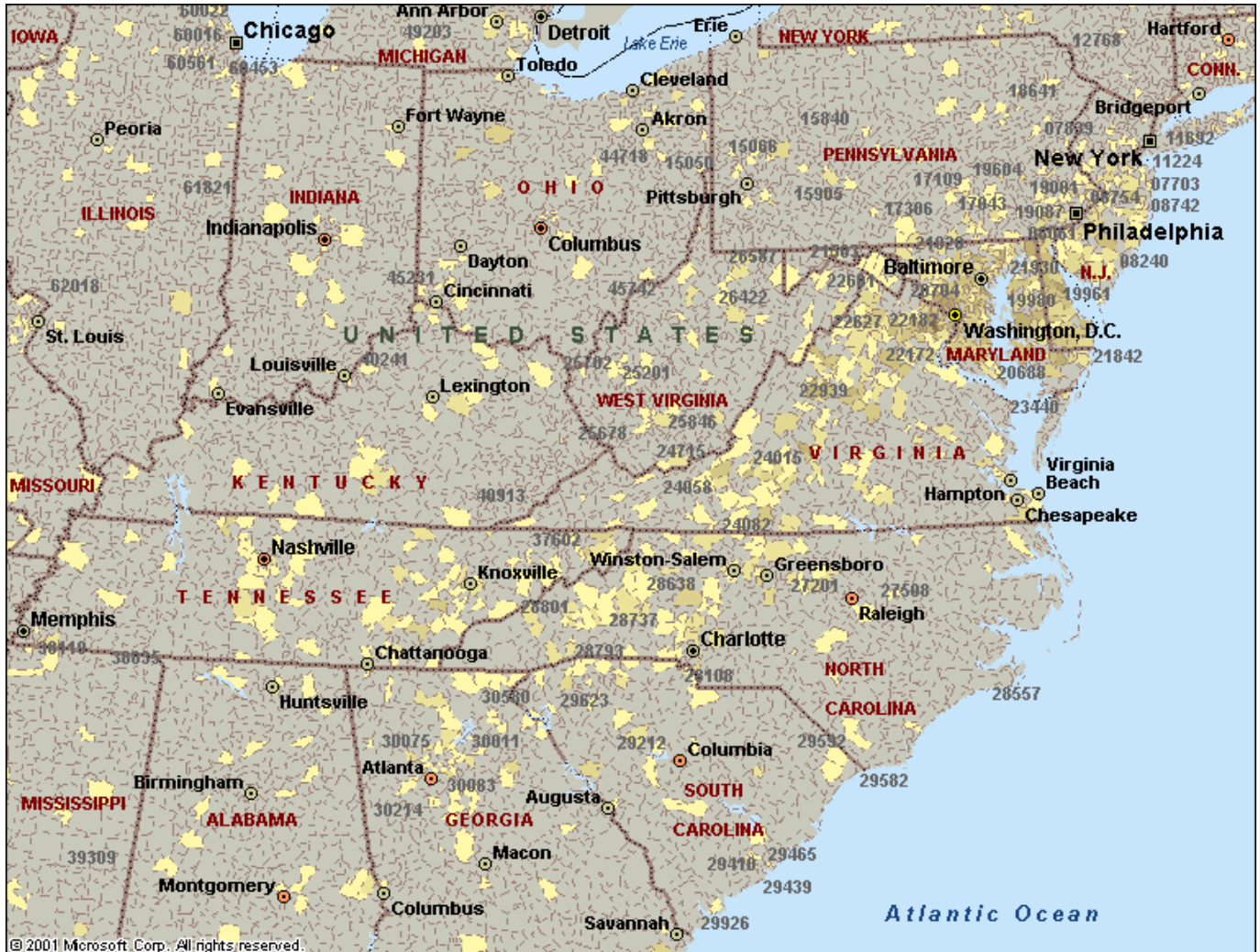


## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
North Carolina	24%
Florida	14%
South Carolina	10%
Ohio	9%
Georgia	7%
Pennsylvania	6%
New York	5%
Michigan	4%
West Virginia	3%
Maryland	2%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Charlotte	11%
Greensboro - High Point – Winston-Salem	6%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	5%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson	5%
Atlanta	5%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	4%
Cleveland-Akron (Canton)	4%
Tampa-Saint Petersburg (Sarasota)	3%
New York	3%
Pittsburgh	3%

# Manassas



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Charlottesville
- Luray
- Manassas
- Shenandoah
- Skyline Drive

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Maryland	29%
New Jersey	7%
Pennsylvania	6%
Delaware	5%
Florida	5%
Texas	4%
North Carolina	4%
New York	4%
Tennessee	3%
California	3%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	16%
Baltimore	14%
Philadelphia	10%
New York	6%
Salisbury	3%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	2%
Atlanta	2%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	2%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem	1%
Charlotte	1%

# New Church



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Virginia Beach
- Chincoteague
- Williamsburg
- Norfolk
- Chesapeake

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Maryland	16%
Pennsylvania	16%
New Jersey	15%
Delaware	11%
New York	11%
North Carolina	5%
Florida	4%
Connecticut	3%
Massachusetts	3%
South Carolina	1%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Philadelphia	21%
New York	16%
Salisbury	12%
Baltimore	8%
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	3%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	3%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	3%
Hartford-New Haven	2%
Wilkes Barre-Scranton	2%
Albany-Schenectady-Troy	2%

# Potomac Gateway



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

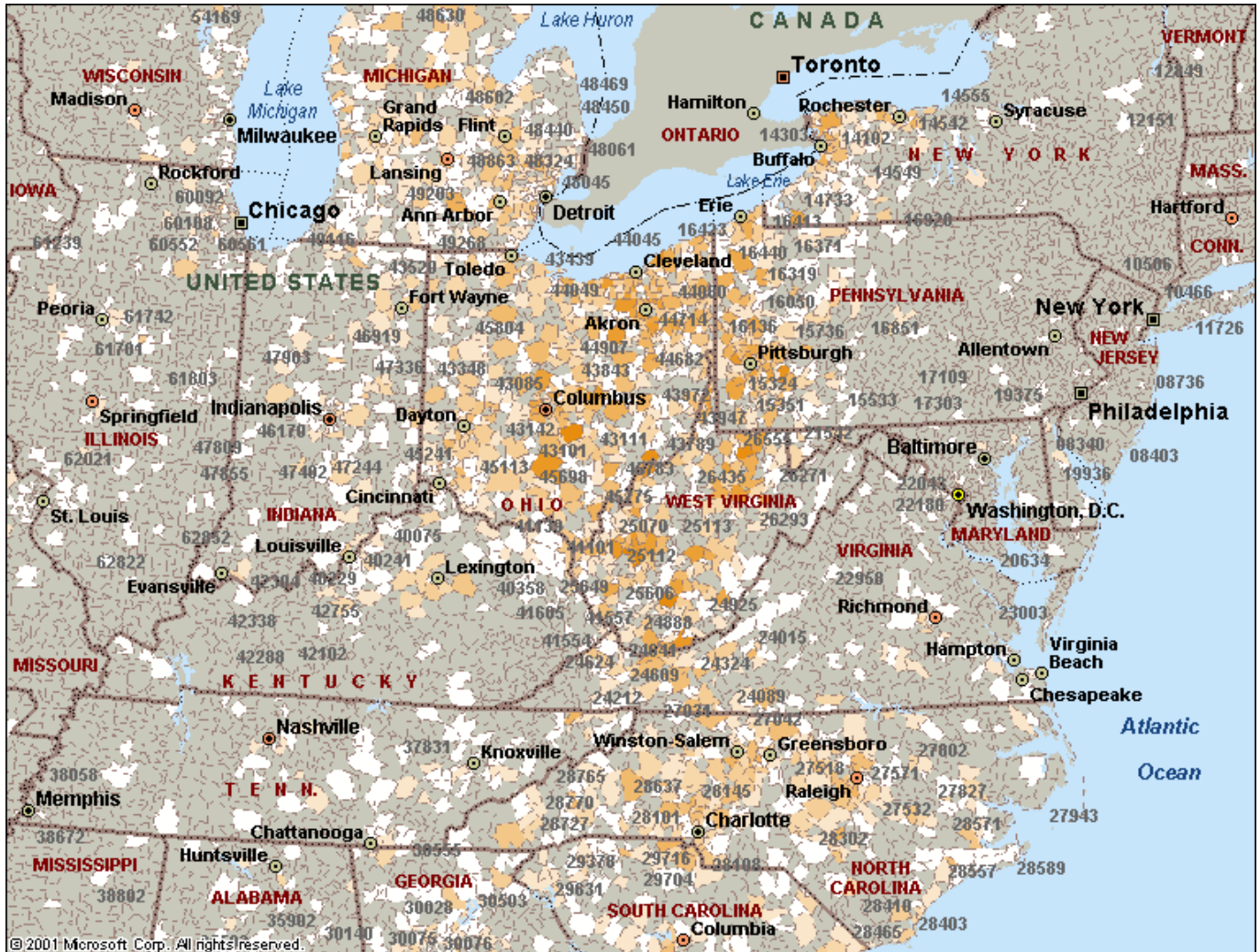
- Williamsburg
- Richmond
- Virginia Beach
- Fredericksburg
- Norfolk

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Maryland	52%
Pennsylvania	7%
North Carolina	7%
New Jersey	7%
Delaware	5%
Florida	4%
New York	3%
South Carolina	2%
Connecticut	1%
Georgia	1%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Baltimore	28%
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	25%
Philadelphia	11%
New York	5%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	3%
Salisbury	2%
Harrisburg-Lancaster-Lebanon-York	2%
Boston (Manchester, NH)	2%
Hartford-New Haven	1%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	1%

# Rocky Gap



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

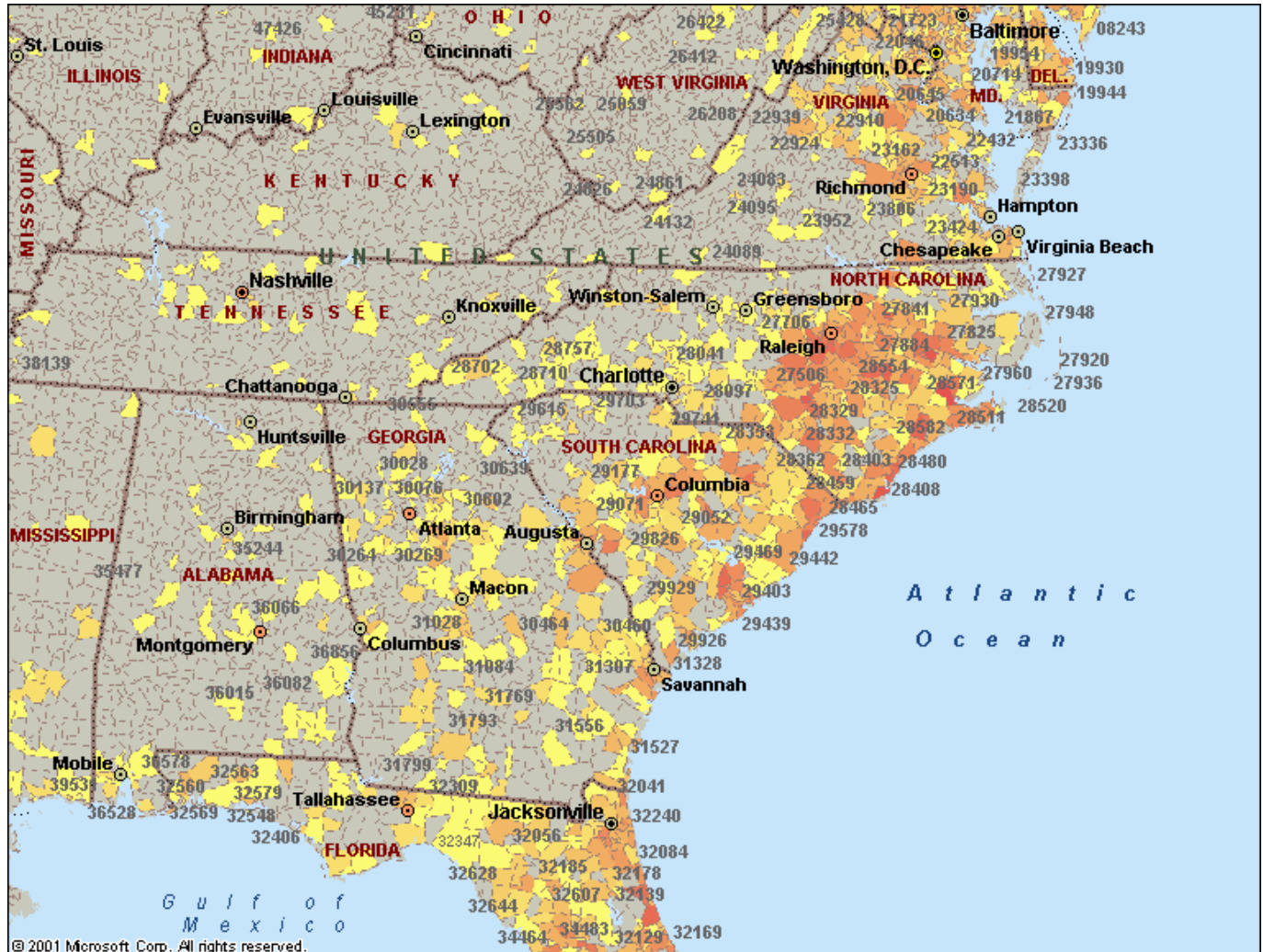
- Wytheville
- Abingdon
- Danville
- Blue Ridge Parkway
- Martinsville
- Roanoke

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

State	% of Total
Ohio	24%
West Virginia	12%
Michigan	11%
Pennsylvania	10%
North Carolina	9%
Florida	6%
New York	5%
South Carolina	4%
Indiana	3%
Georgia	3%

DMA Name	% of Total
Cleveland-Akron	10%
Pittsburgh	8%
Charleston-Huntington	8%
Columbus, OH	5%
Detroit	5%
Buffalo	3%
Charlotte	3%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	3%
Bluefield-Beckley-Oak Hill	2%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston-Salem	2%

# Skippers



## Top places visited (not shown on map)

- Williamsburg
- Virginia Beach
- Richmond
- Norfolk
- Fredericksburg

## Top Out-of-State Visitor Origins:

<b>State</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Florida	23%
North Carolina	19%
Pennsylvania	9%
New York	8%
South Carolina	8%
Maryland	6%
New Jersey	6%
Georgia	3%
Massachusetts	2%
Connecticut	2%

<b>DMA Name</b>	<b>% of Total</b>
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville)	10%
New York	8%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne	7%
Tampa-Saint Petersburg (Sarasota)	6%
Philadelphia	6%
Greenville-New Bern-Washington	4%
Washington, DC (Hagerstown)	3%
Wilmington	3%
Baltimore	3%
Myrtle Beach-Florence	3%