

Onslow County  
**PIRATE**  
**Fest**  
Swansboro, NC



**Onslow County Parks and Recreation**  
**Swansboro Parks and Recreation**

# Event History

A historical cannon mounted on a wooden carriage with large spoked wheels, positioned in a field of tall grass. The cannon is angled towards the right. The background is a bright, slightly overexposed outdoor setting.

- **Event has been in held in Swansboro for 14 years**
- **Prior to 2017 event was held at Hammocks Beach State Park**
- **In 2017 Onslow County Parks & Recreation partnered with Swansboro Parks & Recreation to bring the event to Downtown Swansboro**
- **Event is now held on the second Saturday in May**
- **The event has grown to bringing 6-7,000 visitors to Downtown Swansboro in a six-hour period, which is an increase of 77% since 2019**
- **In 2022 we had a logo designed that represents Swansboro as well as Onslow County**



**Cutlass Skills**



**Pirate Encampments**



**Sea Shanties**



**Live Mermaids**



**Sword Fighting Demonstrations**



**Interactive Displays**

# Combined Marketing Efforts

A treasure chest is open, revealing a map, a compass, and a key. The scene is dimly lit, with a warm glow emanating from the chest, suggesting a hidden treasure or a path to discovery. The map shows a compass rose and various markings, while the key is ornate and metallic.

- **Social Media Platforms**
- **Websites**
- **Billboards**
- **Media Interviews**
- **G-10 Television**
- **Exclusive radio partner, 5 radio stations, reaching 18+ demographics**
- **Work with ad agency that handles marketing for Visit Swansboro NC**



## PILLAGE & PLUNDER

SWANSBORO

The boom of cannon fire reverberates across downtown Swansboro as pirates invade Front Street during PirateFest each May. While musical group The Motley Tones roams the event, singing sea shanties, the *MEKA II*, a replica of a 17th-century pirate brigantine, patrols the harbor. Anywhere from 3,000 to 6,000 attendees can watch unchoreographed sword-fighting demonstrations or learn to fight with a cutlass, tie knots, or fish using 18th-century methods. Kids shoot a cannon — with a foam ball — or complete a scavenger hunt for prizes like pirate treasure. "It's such an interactive event," Anna Stanley, director for Swansboro Parks and Recreation, says of the joint effort between the city and Onslow County Parks and Recreation, which created PirateFest. "I love seeing everybody dressed up and having fun."



At PirateFest each year, Capt. Horatio Sinbad — who has lived aboard his 54-foot brigantine, *MEKA II* (opposite), continuously for more than 50 years — leads a mock attack on Swansboro.

# What does the event cost?

- Estimated to cost \$14,000
- Onslow County pays for more than 50% of the cost
- Onslow County provides staff for the event

Detail	2022 Actuals	2023 Actuals	2024 Actuals	2025 Projections
<b>Entertainment</b>				
Performers	\$5,150.00	\$7,305.00	\$10,880.00	\$11,700.00
Hotels	\$1,440.00	\$1,852.00	\$1,100.00	\$1,600.00
Supplies	\$84.00			\$260.00
Rentals	\$613.00	\$508.11	\$413.11	\$450.00
Advertising	in-kind	in-kind	in-kind	in-kind
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$7,287.00</b>	<b>\$9,665.11</b>	<b>\$12,393.11</b>	<b>\$14,010.00</b>

## PIRATEFEST FUNDING

Funding	2022	2023	2024	2025	Notes
Federal	\$0.00	\$0.00	\$0.00		
Local-STDA				\$2,000	Funded
County TDA-OCPR	\$6,000	\$7,500	\$7,500	\$8,000	Funded
Onslow County Parks & Recreation				\$1,000	
Swansboro Parks & Recreation	\$2,823	\$3,513	\$3,753	\$3,000	Requesting
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$8,823</b>	<b>\$11,013</b>	<b>\$11,253</b>	<b>\$14,000</b>	



# Benefits to the Town

- Significant growth in attendance-reflects community's and the events' appeal, drawing residents and visitors to downtown
- Collaborative effort and shared resources-this partnership minimizes the financial burden on the town while maximizing community benefits
- Strengthening community identify and engagement
- Economic impact

<b>Tourism Related Impacts</b>	<b>2022</b>	<b>2023</b>	<b>2024</b>
Attendance	4,000	7,100	6,100
Overnight Stays -pd by County	13	12	98
Economic Impact-Day	\$23,250.00	\$41,268.75	\$35,456.25
Economic Impact-Overnight	\$2,509.00	\$2,316.00	\$18,914.00
Economic Impact-total	\$25,759.00	\$43,584.75	\$54,370.25



**Questions?**

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Swansboro Parks and Recreation**