



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS,  
CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

To: Full TDA Board

From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Director 

Date: April 12, 2018

Subject: Updates for TDA Board Meeting

### **National Travel and Tourism Week**

May 6-12 is designated as National Travel and Tourism Week by the U.S. Travel Association. As part of celebrating this week, I prepared a proclamation for Jackson County Commissioners to pass at their April 16 meeting in Cashiers proclaiming May 6-12 as National Travel and Tourism week in Jackson County. The proclamation celebrates the impact and success of our efforts. Other campaigns are planned through both social media, public relations and an op-ed in the newspaper to highlight this year's theme of 'Then and Now'. The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce will host an open house that week as part of the celebration.

### **Visitor Guide**

We have the 2018-19 Visitor Guides in hand. They arrived Thursday, April 5, a full two months ahead of earlier productions. We are very pleased with the quality of the guides, the content and our distribution plan. I delivered boxes of the new guides to the Jackson County Chamber and Visitor Center to begin mass distribution and have also shared them with government offices both at the Town of Sylva and Jackson County. I've asked Pineapple to send them to travel editors with a personal note. We also issued press releases in local media announcing the new guide. I will deliver copies of the new guide to the board at our April 16 meeting. A digital version of the guide with clickable links is online at this [link](#).

### **Grants**

The grant committee met April 4 to review grant applications for FY 18-19. At our April 16 meeting I will present the committee's recommendations for the full board's consideration and action. Grant funding requests received total \$19,250 and the committee is recommending funding \$14,000 of those requests.

### **Three Billboards**

Our efforts to capitalize on the continued success of Three Billboards have paid off and we're seeing good results with increased visits. I installed the vinyl sidewalk stickers last week and a number of people are stopping to view them. The link on the sticker goes to our *Three Billboards* behind the scenes and film tour blog. It also lets them know a copy of the tour is available at the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce in Sylva. To date, the Chamber has handed out several dozen of the tour sheets. Our online feature has received 3,720 visits since February and visitors spend an average of 6 minutes and 11 seconds on the page; second to the homepage, it is the most visited link on our site during that two-month span.

### **Changing Tourism Focus2020**

A research study by Paramore and Shannon Gray Research was recently released and contains several timely topics that we and other DMO's are facing. It aligns with many of the challenges and opportunities we have. A copy of the executive summary is available online [here](#) and the [full report](#) is available here. I would highly recommend our board members take time to read the full report, as there are many valuable insights into how tourism is evolving and changing and our role in the process. As you guide our strategy going forward, I think these insights are helpful.

### **May meeting**

Our May 16 meeting will be a three-hour meeting. We have a number of items to cover that are all time sensitive, so we cannot break them into a June meeting. On slate for May 16 is:

- Visitor Center improvement study conducted by Magellan Strategy Group and discussion – 1 hr
- Draft of our 2018-19 Budget – 30 minutes
- Marketing plan presented by Rawle Murdy – 40 minutes
- PR plan presented by Pineapple PR – 30 minutes
- Renewal of agency contracts (Pineapple PR & Rawle Murdy) and Chamber contracts and other regular business – 30 minutes

### **Director engagement:**

- Reviewed latest proof of Cashiers Area Attractions and Waterfall map with committee; scheduled follow up meeting with map maker to deliver feedback for next round of proofs.
- Delivered new creative assets to Smoky Mountain News for the new Cashiers Visitor Guide of events, attractions, waterfalls, brewery scenes, restaurants and more.
- Attended the Tourism Resource Assistance Center workshop held with VisitNC staff on April 11 in Haywood County.
- Sent all restaurants and accommodations information on applying for the [NCGreenTravel](#) designation, certifying them as 'green'. The designation is fairly easy to earn, and I'm not sure why we don't have more businesses with the recognition, as I think a number of them qualify.

-Southeast Tourism Society asked me to be the State Chair of the Congressional Caucus on Tourism they lead to D.C., however due to workload and being a staff of one, I had to graciously decline.

-Met with Economic Development Director Rich Price to discuss their use of our brand video footage in their Economic Development video. We are ready to supply them with clips at no cost if given an opportunity to review that final placements and edits are satisfactory.

-Worked with Pineapple PR on pitches, blog posts, multiple media trip schedules/itineraries.

-Worked with Rawle Murdy on numerous creative and web projects throughout the month.

-Met with WCU's Executive Director of Community and Economic Engagement and Innovation Arthur Salido to discuss the Oct. 5 LEAD: Outdoors conference.

-Attended Greening Up the Mountains planning meetings. Director will volunteer on day of festival.

-Presented vinyl sidewalk sticker proposal to Sylva Town board for approval March 29

-Conducting a new board member orientation April 17 with incoming board member Andrew Harlfinger, pending Commissioner Appointment April 16.

Upcoming engagement:

-Attending Southeast Tourism Society's April 23-25 Connections Conference