



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

To: Full TDA Board

From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Director 

Date: June 15, 2018

Subject: Updates for TDA Board Meeting

June 20 Meeting

Reminder – Location change

Our June 20 meeting is at the Jackson County Public Library Conference Room. Upon entering the foyer, take a right, through the double doors, and turn left. The conference room is located to the left of the staircase. Please allow additional time for parking.

Executive Committee: Please be reminded of our special meeting prior to the full board meeting at 11:30 June 20 to review RFP responses for strategic planning and research.

July Meeting Information

As a reminder, the full board does not have a July meeting. The July 18 Executive Committee meeting has been moved to July 25; media has been notified and this has been posted to our website and bulletin board.

At the July 25 Executive committee meeting at the JCTDA Office the Executive board will interview finalists for our Strategic Planning and Research project from 1 to 2:30 p.m.

From 2:30 to 5 p.m. a workshop will be held with Chamber Directors to discuss potential Visitor Center improvements.

Strategic Planning and Visitor Research

We have already received several proposals for strategic planning and research ahead of the June 17 deadline. I sent the RFP to over ten firms who specialize in the field of work, to the *Asheville Citizen-Times* for publication, and to Travel News Now and Hospitality (nationwide e-newsletters with large followings in travel and tourism). The RFP was also posted on the Southeast Tourism Society's website and the Travel and Tourism Research Association message

board along with being sent to their members. I consider our campaign to get the RFP out there a success.

Next steps:

June 18 – Director to review proposals

June 20 – Review proposals with Executive Committee

June 22 – Notify finalists and schedule interviews

July 25 – Interview finalists by telephone at JCTDA Office with Executive Committee, finalize selection of firm to recommend to full board

August 15 – Execute contract with selected firm

July 2018 *Our State* Magazine Issue

Jackson County received 34-pages of publicity in the July, 2018 *Our State* Magazine.

This coverage resulted from me calling Pineapple asking them to investigate how we could be featured in the magazine almost a year and a half ago. Pineapple worked with the magazine to field a potential visit and in June, 2017, they sent a team with an art director, creative director and their Executive Editor Elizabeth Hudson for a multi-day FAM trip to see what we had to offer.

After hooking her first ever trout, Elizabeth was hooked on Jackson County! I have complimentary copies of the magazine to share with the board at our meeting.

With a print run of 219,703 and a total readership of 1,098,515, this is one of the top PR-reaches in the TDA's history. The earned media PR value of this feature is \$1,455,540. The coverage also complements the recent feature on Lulu's on Main that was a result of their trip to Jackson County.

On the next page are photos from their initial trip along with the cover of the July issue.

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Top left: July 2018 Issue; **Top right:** Tourism Director Nick Breedlove (second from left) showing *Our State* Executive Editor Elizabeth Hudson (second from right) around Panthertown Valley in June, 2017, on an initial visit to Jackson County; **Lower left:** Brookings' Matt Canter guides Elizabeth Hudson to hook her first-ever trout; **Lower Right:** The crew explores downtown Sylva from the Courthouse steps.

Airport Advertising

The JCTDA will now have its Visitor Guide prominently displayed in the Asheville Regional Airport beside the luggage carousel at the information kiosks. The JCTDA purchased two premium placement racks to display the Visitor Guide and the WNC Fly Fishing Trail® map. Along with the displays we receive a poster above our brochures, displaying key imagery to draw attention to the brochures. I will share a photo of our display as soon as it is stocked (below is an example of Navitat's placement). In 2017, they had 956,634 passengers and 1.65 million people travel through the airport. We anticipate going through a few thousand brochures a year at this location. With this strategic placement and the new program to stock 180+ locations throughout WNC with our guides, this marks a significant opportunity to drive additional visitors and revenue to our county.



Grant Program Review

The Grant Review Committee will soon meet to review our grant program to ensure it is serving our stakeholders well, along with fulfilling our goal of increasing room nights and tourism to Jackson County. I have supplied that committee's chair, Ann Self, with several neighboring county grant program models along with some from out-of-state to study for best practices or potential opportunities to enhance our program. After the grant program review committee meets and formulates recommendations, those recommendations will go to the committee that reviews the actual grant applications from applicants for a joint work session before it heads to the full board for approval. All this work should be complete in time to relaunch the program in January 2019.

PR Milestone

We have now surpassed over \$30 million in earned media coverage for Jackson County through Pineapple PR's efforts. This takes into account since they began working for us in February 2014.

In addition to that substantial sum, we have surpassed more than 1,000,000,000 (BILLION) impressions/touchpoints on those earned media placements. We will celebrate this huge accomplishment at our August board meeting.

ProStart

I am meeting with Jackson County Public School leaders Tuesday, June 19 to discuss the ProStart Hospitality training program which has been highly successful throughout the state in early training in the hospitality and tourism sector. Cashiers Area Chamber Executive Director Stephanie Edwards will also be at the meeting and we hope for a productive dialogue as we learn more about whether this program could be a good fit for our students here. ProStart came out of discussions from our Cashiers Workforce Summit held earlier this year; this is the second meeting with school officials following the JCTDA board's approval for me to hold dialogue with the school system regarding this potential opportunity.

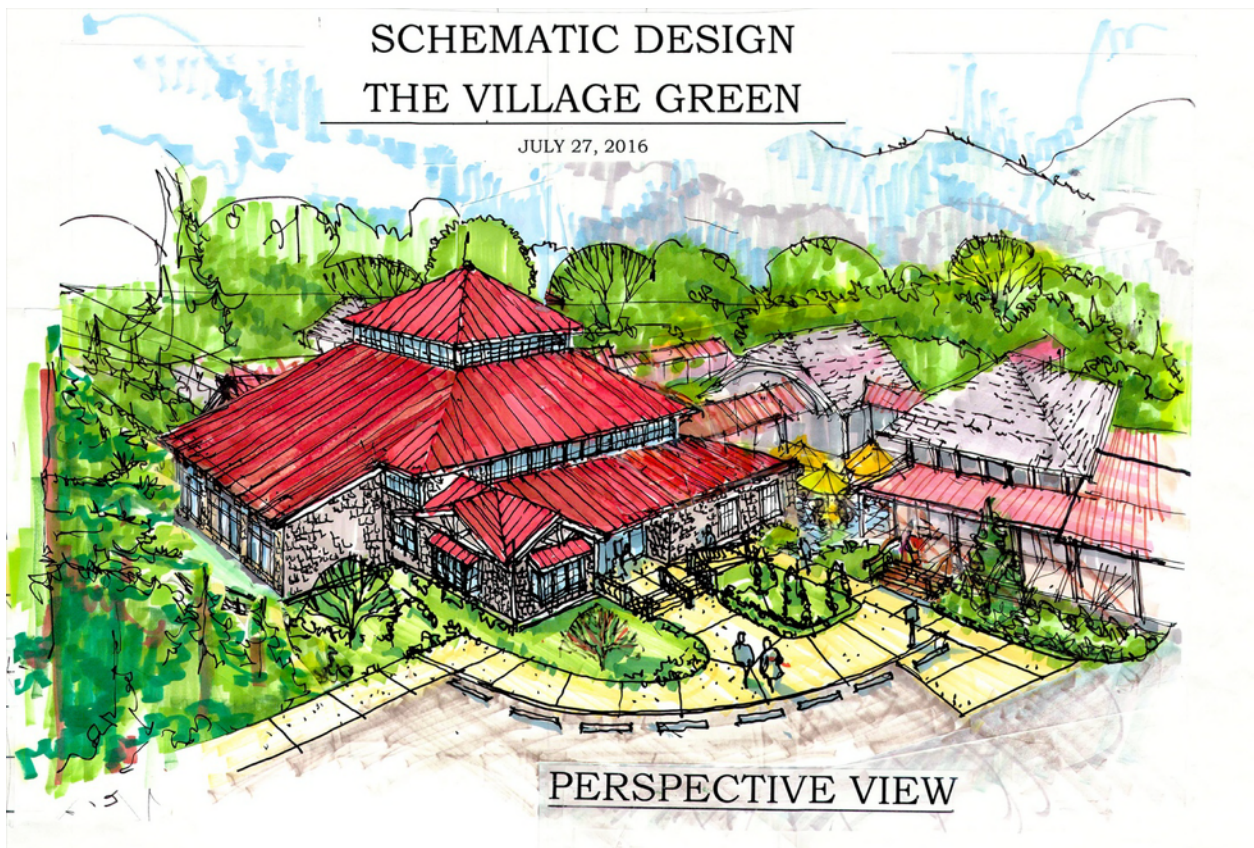
Your Trip/Maps

Our recently launched 'Your Trip' button on the JCTDA homepage has received significant use with 3,200+ pageviews in May alone. The tool consolidates all trip-planning resources in one section. Next month we'll be adding a map page with PDF's of all frequently-requested maps, knowing that visitors may enjoy exploring them digitally before or during their trip.

Director engagement/other updates:



-Attended groundbreaking ceremony for the new Community Cultural Events Center at the Cashiers Village Green with board members Ron Mau and Ann Self.



-Gave a presentation to the NC Institute of Transportation Engineers and NC DOT on the 2017 Total Solar Eclipse and the successes and lessons learned in coordinating the event in Jackson County.



-Created a new 'Visitor Info' sign for Sylva's Bridge Park information kiosk.

-Worked with the Executive Board for determining how Airbnb listings should be handled on the JCTDA website. Our website will soon feature a button for Airbnb on the lodging accommodation types which links to the Airbnb page.

To obtain a listing on our website, accommodations must have their own occupancy tax remitter account number; Airbnb remits as one remitter on behalf of every Airbnb accommodation, which does not qualify hosts for their own listing.

The justification behind this is not attempting to duplicate the functionality that Airbnb likely already does, and does better, with the limited staff, time, and resources the JCTDA has.

-Continuing work on the upcoming Partner e-newsletter.

-Working with Pots on the Green & Great Balsam Bike Relay events on promotion across social media and public relations channels.

-Working on various website-related User Experience feedback and future website projects related to Crowdriff UGC Integration; regular submission of trouble tickets to web team.

-Hosted travel writer Marilyn Jones for a tour of the *Three Billboards* film locations and *The Fugitive*. Coordinated with GSMR and businesses to tour properties.

- Interviewed with NC Business Insider for upcoming feature on *Three Billboards*.
- Worked with Pineapple to review and provide feedback for June 22-24 FAM trip; assembled welcome bags for trip.
- Finalized 2018-19 Promotional Items with Marketing Committee.
- Attended WCU Economic Dashboard introduction with MountainWest Partnership.
- Attended Main Street Sylva Association meeting.

Upcoming engagement

- I will attend the Southeast Tourism Society's Marketing College, which represents my third and final course for the Travel Marketing Professional certification. The session is held June 24-29 in Dahlonega, Ga.
- As part of a delegation traveling from North Carolina, I will represent STS and the state at the Congressional Summit on Tourism July 16-20 in Washington, D.C.
- I am honored to share that the Blue Ridge Parkway Association has named me to their Board of Directors. My first board meeting will be Sept. 20 in Virginia. I look forward to joining several colleagues who serve on that board and advancing our mutual goals in promoting one of our greatest assets.