



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

To: Full TDA Board

From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Director 

Date: August 9, 2018

Subject: Updates for TDA Board Meeting

August Meeting Information

At the August 15 meeting, Executive will meet at 11:30 at our regular meeting location in Cordelia Camp, prior to the full board meeting, with Chamber Directors to discuss potential Visitor Center improvements and next steps.

Our 1 p.m. meeting is in the Cordelia Camp Building. Please park in the white spaces.

Strategic Planning and Visitor Research

The Executive Board of the JCTDA has selected Young Strategies Inc. and Berkeley Young to put forward to the full board as a unanimous recommendation to carry out our Strategic Planning and Visitor Profile Research. At our Aug. 15 meeting Mr. Young will have a brief presentation for the board and we will approve his contract at that time. Following the meeting, I will meet with Mr. Young at my office to begin some initial onboarding. We are very pleased to have Mr. Young with us on the 15th. The project timeline from start to finish is approximately eight months; the fee for services is \$58,240.

As we go through onboarding with Young Strategies, there may be the need for potential additional meetings of board members, stakeholders, and others. I do know they will come here in late August and will likely talk with several key leaders, both on our board and in the county. Please realize how crucial this feedback is in our planning and visitor research during their initial trip and make yourself as available as you can when called upon.

Occupancy Tax Collections

It is notable that we experienced significant year-over-year and all-time high collections for June, 14.3-percent over last year, which as you recall was a record year in itself. Airbnb totals for June were \$10,428, which is higher than any other month's collections since Airbnb began remitting and more than double the same time period last year.

Partner e-news

The JCTDA's first Partner Connect e-news was sent July 11 to 496 tourism partners including accommodations, restaurants, attractions, local government and other stakeholders. The open rate on the e-news was an impressive 33.9% and click rate was 10.9%, both significantly higher than any other e-mail newsletters. I consider the first issue a success with useful information for our partners and to share the work the JCTDA does on behalf of its stakeholders.

Tax Bill notice

On Monday, Aug. 13, Jackson County tax bills will go out to approximately 40,000 households with a notice advising property owners they are legally obligated to remit occupancy tax if they are renting their homes. Both legal and finance approved the final version, which will be printed on a neon, bright paper.

Video Shoot

We had a successful video shoot on Aug. 4 & 6 in Sylva for social media campaigns. Included in the shoot were several partners including White Moon Café, Guadalupe Café, City Lights Bookstore, Baxley's Chocolates, and Tuckaseegee Fly Shop. We had great weather, excellent model and talent and could not have asked for a better shoot. As part of my role, I oversee these shoots from start to finish and am the contact person in Jackson County reaching out to businesses, confirming, talking with our agency partners involved, working with the videographer and the on-site person collecting model releases and ensuring the shoot is a success.

STS Congressional Summit

Twelve DMO and Tourism leaders from North Carolina participated in the STS Congressional Summit on Tourism held in Washington, D.C. and I was fortunate to attend this important delegation. We met with staff from both NC Senators' offices and five House leaders and advocated for Deferred Maintenance in our National Parks, Modernization of the Craft Brewing Act, and establishing a standardized framework for reauthorization of our National Heritage Areas. Many good connections, conversations, and networking came from this annual event.



STS Marketing College

I attended my third year of STS Marketing College from June 24-29. Next year I will receive my Travel Marketing Professional certificate, which is an industry-led and industry-recognized certification.

Visitor Guides

With increased visitation and interest in our County, we are going through visitor guides at a faster pace than expected. In three months, we have utilized approximately 57-percent of our guides for the year. This figure excludes those allocated for airport and regional kiosks. After we mail guides out to welcome centers this fall, I will assess whether an additional printings is needed.

Cashiers Maps

The Cashiers map is now complete and in the hand of visitors who love the new product. A big thank you to Stephanie Edwards, Kathy Korb, Ann Self, past board members Sarah Jennings and Mary Lanning, and others who all worked with me on the project. We went through several concepts, revisions and now the finished product is fantastic. Rawle Murdy also did an excellent job at taking the 28 illustrations on the map and really turning them into a beautiful finished product we can all be very proud of.

Your Trip/Maps

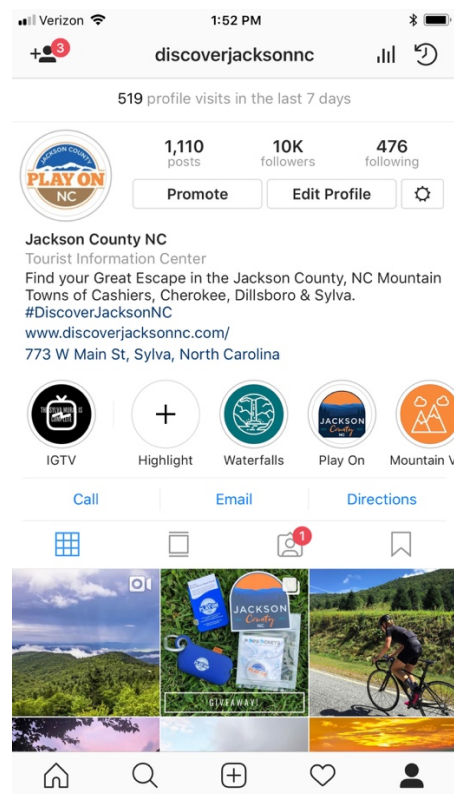
In addition to the new printed map, I asked Rawle Murdy to create a digital map section on our website as a valuable feature for pre-trip planning and in-destination visitor information. The new page can be accessed by clicking 'Your Trip' and 'Maps' on our website. <https://www.discoverjacksonnc.com/your-trip/maps/>

Tours and Experiences

A new category will soon be live on our website under attractions called 'Tours and Experiences' which will house tour company listings like Leap Frog Tours, Waterfall Cruises and those who offer experiences that might appeal to tourists like art classes, cooking and more.

10K Milestone

We have been waiting quite some time to get to the 10,000-follower count on Instagram. This milestone is a significant one. When I began as Director, we had around 1,600 followers and two weeks ago we hit 10,000. The milestone is substantial because it enables additional features for us as a 'larger' account which allows us to direct more traffic to our website directly from our stories. A few weeks before the expected milestone, I worked with Rawle Murdy's social team to put together a plan to capitalize on the expanded toolset we now have available and we are not only utilizing it but evaluating results of each new campaign.





Portable Cell Charger



Custom Notebook



Pop-Socket



Mobile Wallet

Promotional Items

We received a shipment of several new promotional products which will be deployed at our August Raleigh Media Mission to select media. These promotional items are of a higher quality than typically given out at tradeshow. I will bring samples of these items to our meeting. These items are not aimed at visitors, but for visiting and potential travel writers.

Where to Retire



I worked with *Where to Retire* magazine who needed images of a beautiful destination in the fall, and provided them with many image selections to choose from. They selected Sylva as one of eight destinations in the country to feature in their fall print issue that has a print run of 200,000+. For their cover, they shared a beautiful photo of Whitewater Falls, located a short drive from Sylva.

Director engagement

- Filmed a video for WCU's Welcome Back campaign for their social media for the 18-19 school year.
- Multiple calls with partner agencies (RawleMurdy, Pineapple, Chambers) on a daily basis.
- Provided VisitNC photos for promo materials related to filming in North Carolina.
- Enrolled two new members in the newly created JCTDA Partner Photos Program.
- Reviewed and provided feedback on multiple advertising proofs, website projects and PR-related items.

- Networking and lunch with RawleMurdy's President, Bruce Murdy, in Cashiers
- Updated event information on JCTDA website and state website
- Held introductory call with Paul Robeshaw / Cashiers Leadership Initiative
- Discussed sidewalks in Cashiers with NCDOT as requested by Exec. Board. Stephanie Edwards to update board on pedestrian mobility efforts to date at Aug. 15 meeting.
- Compiled fall photos for the Appalachian Regional Commission
- Regular curation and updating of Crowdriff website galleries. Worked with RawleMurdy to create a new summer gallery. <https://www.discoverjacksonnc.com/your-trip/visitor-galleries/summer-visitor-gallery/>
- Fielded many advertising opportunities on phone and over e-mail and shared for consideration with RawleMurdy.
- Worked with photographer on talking through photography of July 4 and Cashiers Plein Air Festival.
- Assembled contract for Young Strategies, Inc. and reviewed with Legal
- Held meeting with Ann Self, regarding a review of our Grant Program
- Issued purchase orders for funding and sponsorship of WCU Outdoor Conference and Economic Development's Sept. 18 event at the JC Airport.
- Designed and ordered Custom USB flash drives for Raleigh Media Mission containing pitch sheets and high-resolution imagery.
- Coordinating lodging for VisitNC and iExplore to visit in September
- Presented to Sylva's Rotary Club on Tourism in Jackson County
- Met with Daniel Allison, TDA Director from Graham County and shared onboarding process for new board members and sample policies (ethics, conflict of interest) from our files.
- Compiled onboarding materials for YSI ready for delivery after Aug. 15 meeting
- Reviewed JCTDA 'Play On' trademark for renewal date, calendared for future action.
- Held call with local rep. from this area's chapter of Back Country Hunters & Anglers about potential partnership opportunities in Jackson County.

- Attended ribbon cutting for Balsam West
- Participated in webinar from Miles Partnership - Google DMO Program
 - Worked with Miles to obtain additional features on our online platforms
- Created new signage for Visitor Information Kiosk in Sylva's Bridge Park working with JC Chamber and Town.
- Created Waterfall Safety posters for Visitor Centers and social media campaign
- Reviewed NC Travel Guide listings for 19-20 guide
- Provided photos from Social Media Video shoot back to partners who participated for their use.
- Compiled and provided promo items to the Great Balsam Relay; worked with social media team and race organizer to continually optimize advertising to drive race registrations.
- Provided interview to Business Insider North Carolina's David Perlmutter whose article about *Three Billboards* appears in the August, 2018 issue. Also worked with *The Laurel* on their August 2018 feature on *Three Billboards*. Ongoing work with film-writer Marilyn Jones whose feature on *Three Billboards* will be in a Philadelphia-area publication.
- Reviewed and processed grant evaluations, invoices and travel reimbursements to finance for payment.
- Delivered boxes of new Cashiers map to JC Chamber for local distribution.
- Provided marketing materials and maps to both Cullowhee River Club and Harris Regional Hospital.
- Authored letter in Support of Blue Ridge National Heritage Area Craft Trails
- Authored letter in support of MainSpring and Panthertown Valley's inclusion in USFS Threatened Treasures funding program
- Delivered copies of the new Cashiers map and promo items to Jackson County Commissioners and the County Manager.
- Discussed mailing issues with JCTDA Visitor Guide with Asheville post office and relayed new regulations to JC Chamber.

Continued on next page

Upcoming engagement

- Filming segment on bass fishing with Austin Neary / Dreamcatcher's for Social Media
- Meeting with Pineapple PR to discuss enhancing blog offerings and measurement and metrics to track success of that program.

At the links below, you can see select images that are from recent photo and video shoots. These are just a small sampling of what we received from each shoot that we can use for advertising and public relations going forward. We will have many great new assets:

-Greening Up the Mountains

-Cashiers Plein Air Festival

-Pots on the Green

-Fourth of July

-Culinary stills from Social Media Video shoot

-Fly Fishing stills from Social Media Video shoot