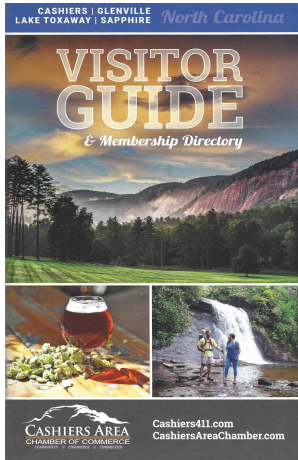


May 2019

**HIGHLIGHTS**



Play On!



The Chamber also operates the Jackson County Visitor Center at Cashiers in the Chamber building on behalf of the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority. Visitors and residents alike will find a wealth of accommodation, dining, shopping, recreation and entertainment information in our office and at [www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com](http://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com). Serving on the TDA board, chamber officials assist in the region's tourism development and destination marketing efforts.

**2019 CASHIERS AREA VISITOR GUIDE & MEMBERSHIP DIRECTORY** – 25,000 printed copies, plus online editions, of the annual visitor resource are now in distribution. Visitor center staff will deliver bulk quantities of the digest-sized booklet to accommodations, restaurants, retailers and other high traffic locations across the Plateau throughout the year. Production and advertising managed by Smoky Mountain News.



**SCENIC BYWAY TRASH COLLECTION/#TRASHTAG PROMOTION** -- Coinciding with Earth Day 2019, the Cashiers Area Chamber teamed up with the Highlands Chamber of Commerce for annual “deep clean” of the shoulders along the US 64W scenic byway between the Jackson/Macon community crossroads. More than a ton (2,200 pounds total) of debris was collected on Sunday mornings during April as part of the Plateau’s community cleanup. Ninety-four bags were accepted at no charge by the Jackson County Public Works Department staffed recycling center. Large North Carolina Department of Transportation “Litter Pickup in Progress” signage was erected to alert drivers to the roadside activity. The distinctive NCDOT orange plastic trash bags which were used are available to other groups interested in helping with clean up. Visit the Cashiers Area Chamber at 202 US Highway 64 W, just west of the Crossroads for free bags and safety vests.

The popular #trashtag campaign was started in western North Carolina in 2015 by Steven Heinhold, of Sylva, NC. Inspired by his own love of the mountains, he pitched the idea to outdoor equipment retailer UCO Gear which then launched a movement on social media. Earlier this year, a marketing educator from Arizona issued a Facebook challenge encouraging users to post photos of trash pickup up and other environmental maintenance. “Since then #trashtag and #trashtagchallenge have blown up on social media and earned notice from major outlets including Forbes, The Washington Post, British Broadcasting Company and even The India Express, half a world away,” according to Smoky Mountain News of Waynesville, NC.



**RETAILER & RESTAURANT ROUNDTABLE – Update:** Custom welcome doormats and flags will be delivered prior to Memorial Day. A handy reference guide of retail and restaurant operating hours has been distributed to businesses to promote consistency and availability. A 12'x4' Crossroads banner is in production featuring the doormat design with a “DINE SHOP PLAY STAY” message to be displayed periodically during peak traffic times.

**HIGHLANDS CASHIERS HEALTH FOUNDATION – Update:** The Foundation has approved two grant cycles in 2019 and funding recommendations are expected to be considered by the Finance Committee on 5/13/19. If approved, Requests for Proposals will be issued in May with a late-July distribution goal. The Program & Grants Committee, chaired by JCTDA ex-officio board member Stephanie Edwards of the Cashiers Area Chamber, created a framework for multi-million dollar funding deployment into local communities. Programs that address social determinants of health including access, nutrition, education, social cohesion, structure and environment, poverty, workforce development and more will be considered for financial support.

### **OTHER**

- Welcomed new Christmas Tree Farm to Glenville: Bear Valley Farm at 231 Bee Tree Road. Owners also plan to offer other year-round activities to promote tourism. Coordinating visitor information distribution through their high-profile office.
- Community Events: Annual Easter Egg Hunt on the Village Green was successful despite cooler temperatures. Other planned Easter activities were moved indoors due to rain.
- In an effort to continue the visual cues of activity before the traditional “season,” met with the Cashiers Planning Council chair to discuss organizing a community-wide daffodil plantings for blooming in early spring, followed by an iris collection in April.
- Chamber’s Annual Legislative Update 5/17/19 will feature NC Representative Joe Sam Queen, to be held at Country Club of Sapphire Valley.
- Chamber Board discussion with Southwestern Community College President Don Tomas about tourism studies and career development.
- Chamber Board discussion with Ann Self, JCTDA Chair and Executive Director of the Village Green, regarding new arts and culture facility and JCTDA strategic update (Kathy Korb, JCTDA executive committee, serves as a member of the board)
- Leadership Cashiers Education Session included tourism career development and workforce recruitment discussions. The previous Planning & Infrastructure session included discussion of visitor needs and access as well as economic development to support the hospitality industry.
- Working to obtain third estimate for visitor center parking lot paving.
- Working with Vision Cashiers community volunteers in promotion of apprentice programs in hospitality and construction trades.
- Attended the JCTDA strategic update to High Hampton Resort executives.
- Attended annual Jackson County Comprehensive Planning and Comprehensive Transportation Plan committee meeting. Inquired about ongoing NCDOT survey of US 64 and NC 107 intersection for 2027 design and funding.

- Hired contractor for Cashiers Crossroads banner stand repair and maintenance
- Cashiers Carolina Smokehouse restaurant reopening has been announced. Info to follow.
- Added lighting to Cashiers destination signs on US 64 West and NC 107 South
- Contacted Gorges State Park/JCTDA (NCDOT) re: covered signage on US 64 East (has now been removed)
- Notified JCTDA of damage to Savannah River Basin sign and guardrail at popular visitor overlook at the Jackson/Macon County line on US 64 W.
- Facilitated other hospitality business prospects with introductions to the area and referrals for data.
- Continued planning for Glenville welcome sign on NC 107 North
- Shared advertising and marketing opportunities with contracted agencies and other interested stakeholders.
- Managing Cashiers Crossroads banner stand to promote area events (including TDA grant recipients).
- Greeted walk in visitors, responded to inquiries and provided destination information.
- Fulfilled telephone, email and written destination information requests (individual, weddings and other groups).
- Reviewed and submitted TDA invoices for payment.
- Distributed Play On NC Mountains and Cashiers Area visitor guides.

