



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

To: TDA Board

From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Caleb Sullivan, TDA Sales & Marketing Manager

Date: August 14, 2020

Subject: Updates for TDA Board

Executive Director Report – Nick Breedlove

1. Occupancy taxes collected for the month ending June 30 are in excess of \$180,000, marking our largest tax collections for June in our TDA history. Airbnb and VRBO were the major drivers of increases for June with more than doubling last year’s collections; keep in mind Airbnb remits based on when the trip is booked, not when the stay occurs. Similar trends occurred at our neighboring county DMOs. July collections for June remittances go into last fiscal year’s budget. By placing those funds back into fund balance and not expending them we are able to meet the minimum as required by our November 2019 Fund Balance policy. Those reserves will assist us in maintaining proper cash flow in the event of another wave of the pandemic or unforeseen revenue trends.

Our trends for the most recent STR weekly report show 78-percent occupancy, which is above neighboring counties. In speaking with hoteliers this week, construction projects in the area are helping boost the bottom line, especially during the week, while leisure is a key driver on weekends.

Also up significantly is our website traffic for the last month, which is the highest it has been since the August 2017 Total Solar Eclipse. We had 33,526 web sessions.

2. The Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce forwarded the TDA a complaint about unsafe conditions at Silver Run Falls related to ingress and egress of traffic. Following the JCTDA Executive Committee meeting, the consensus was to work with County leadership to request the NC DOT look at improving safety at this site and the Shadow of the Bear.

3. In looking at Airbnb and VRBO/Homeaway trends via AirDNA Sylva, Cullowhee, and Cashiers are seeing 63-70 percent occupancy out of all listed rentals. In Sylva and Cullowhee, the average booking window is 32-35 days whereas in the Cashiers market it is 70 days.
4. TDA staff is in the process of reworking our 20-21 Visitor Guide for the next reprint. As a reminder, we printed only 15,000 in April to better understand the impacts of COVID-19 on our attractions, events, and destination before printing a larger quantity. With better insights related to COVID-19, we can incorporate the appropriate messaging into our reprint which will be done soon as Visitor Centers are exhausting current stock of the first printing.
5. Due to the virtual landscape of tourism industry meetings this year, staff is able to attend a number of additional educational meetings at a fraction of the cost this year including the Marketing Outlook Forum and the Skift Global Forum. Each of these typically cost \$2,500 in fees and travel per person, and we are able to attend for one-tenth of that virtually.
6. In partnership with the NC Outdoor Industry Office, we've added tips for visitors to 'Recreate Responsibly' which combines guidance similar to Leave No Trace and COVID-19 best practices. Those tips include:

Know Before You Go – Check the status of the place you want to visit. If it is closed, don't go. If it is crowded, have a backup plan.

Practice Physical Distancing – Keep your group size small. Be prepared to cover your nose and mouth and give others space. If you are sick, stay home.

Plan Ahead – Prepare for facilities to be closed, pack lunch, and bring essentials like hand sanitizer and a face covering.

Play it Safe – Slow down and choose lower-risk activities to reduce your risk of injury. Search and rescue operations and health care resources are both strained.

Explore Locally – Limit long-distance travel and make use of local parks, trails, and public spaces. Be mindful of your impact on the communities you visit.

Leave No Trace – Respect public lands and waters, as well as Native and local communities. Take all your garbage with you.

Build an Inclusive Outdoors – Be an active part of making the outdoors safe and welcoming for all identities and abilities.

7. I attended an informational session with the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce on a proposed hotel, housing, and mixed-use development project near the intersection of

US 64 and NC 107. The 55+ acre tract may close this year with construction beginning next year and is a partnership between Stephen Macauley, Lew Oliver, and P Allen Smith. The project will go before the Cashiers Planning Council on Sept. 21 before going to the Jackson County Planning Board. We will update the board on this development at our Full Board Meeting.

8. Dashboards:

There are a number of dashboards that you can utilize to track COVID-19 cases locally.

[Jackson County Department of Public Health](#)

[Johns Hopkins](#) – has a few additional statistics

[NC DHHS](#)

[WCU Case Dashboard](#)

As there are delays in data, you will see different case counts on all of the above dashboards at different points in time.

9. Many events for the remainder of this calendar year have been postponed until next year or shifted to virtual events. As events have been canceled, postponed, or changed, we have been making updates to our website (HL), VisitNC (state tourism office), and our Facebook event listings.

Social Media & Blog Status Report – Caleb Sullivan

Cross Channel Report June 1 – 30 vs. May 1 – 31

- Total Audience Growth increased by 0.3% MOM (620) (215,859 total)
 - Total Instagram Followers (16,195)
 - Total Facebook Page Likes (197,594)
- Total Impressions decreased by .9% MOM. (1,594,136)
- Total Engagement increased by .3% MOM (113,619)
 - This suggests a leveling off of June, due to April's dismal numbers and with an uptick in May, as posting and paid social return to more normal levels.

Google Post/Event Platform

- Total Impressions for June totaled 12,384.
- Total Engagements for June totaled 1,719.

Instagram Stories

- Instagram Story Impressions totaled 11,309 for June, a 63% increase over May.



Pinterest

- Total Impressions for June totaled 65,551.
- Total Engagements for June totaled 1,463.

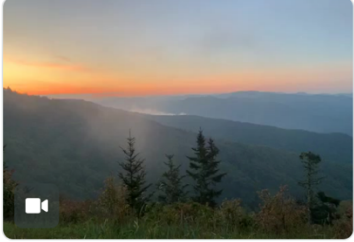
Updates

- The Hammock Capital of the USA Instagram Giveaway continues to be a strong campaign. We've seen a significant increase in Instagram followership and engagements due to this campaign.
- Created my first e-newsletter. It deployed July 8, 2020.
- June 2nd saw tremendous Facebook Engagement due to a live sunrise captured from Waterrock Knob. The video was reformatted into a time-lapse which has also performed well on various platforms.
- Our Pinterest Profile has been revamped and I have been recycling posts on other platforms to be used on our Pinterest page. It has been performing well overall.



Top Performing Posts for June

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Tue 6/2/2020 3:00 am PDT

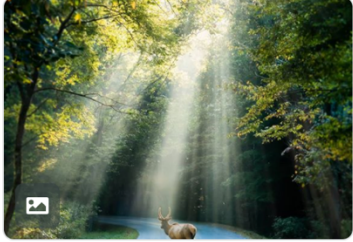
Waterrock Knob Sunrise 🌄





Total Engagements	8,622
Reactions	2,792
Comments	250
Shares	250
Post Link Clicks	3
Other Post Clicks	5,327

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Tue 6/23/2020 7:31 am PDT


You never know what you'll see on a ride through the Great Smoky Mountains National Park. 🦌 🐾 🌲 Elk are common





Total Engagements	5,586
Reactions	3,799
Comments	121
Shares	385
Post Link Clicks	24
Other Post Clicks	1,257

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Sat 6/20/2020 6:46 am PDT


Happy first day of summer from Jackson County, NC! ☺️ 🌲 Enjoy the crisp, clean, & cool mountain air on your next getaw





Total Engagements	5,238
Reactions	2,428
Comments	373
Shares	366
Post Link Clicks	112
Other Post Clicks	1,959

  discoverjacksonnc
Wed 6/3/2020 7:49 am PDT

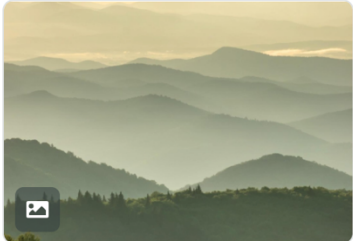
We are continuing our WEEKLY giveaway of Jackson County branded @ENOHammocks! With all that is





Total Engagements	648
Likes	539
Comments	93
Saves	16

  discoverjacksonnc
Mon 6/1/2020 7:52 am PDT


Mondays don't have to be mundane. 🙄😞
Let these majestic mountain layers help brighten up your week, wherever you



Total Engagements	594
Likes	560
Comments	5
Saves	29

  discoverjacksonnc
Wed 6/17/2020 8:08 am PDT

Happy trails 🐾 and tails 🐾 abound in Jackson County. We've got plenty of room for you and your pup to spread o



Total Engagements	527
Likes	506
Comments	7
Saves	14

Blogs

Completed 2 blogs for the month of June:

[Take Back 2020](#) – Posted 6/12/20

[Recreation and Relaxation; the New R&R](#) - Posted 6/26/20

Social Media & Blog Status Report – Caleb Sullivan

Cross Channel Report July 1 – 31 vs. June 1 – 30

- Total Audience Growth increased by 1.3% MOM (2,789) (216,533 total)
 - Total Instagram Followers (16,463)
 - Total Facebook Page Likes (200,070)
- Total Impressions increased by 50.6% MOM. (2,378,322)
- Total Engagement increased by 35.5% MOM (153,728)
 - These upticks in followers, impressions and engagement correlated with the reintroduction of Facebook ad dollars, along with harmonious organic social media efforts.

Total Spend			
\$1,969 ↗ 310%			
Impressions	CPM	Engagements	CPE
726,760 ↗ 238%	\$2.71 ↗ 21.3%	35,250 ↗ 892%	\$0.06 ↘ 58.7%
Clicks	CPC	Web Conversions	CPCon
31,587 ↗ 1,249%	\$0.06 ↘ 69.6%	0 → 0%	- -
Audience Metrics		Totals	% Change
Fans		200,070	↗ 1.25%
Net Page Likes		2,521	↗ 1,270.11%
Organic Page Likes		843	↗ 62.74%
Paid Page Likes		2,108	↗ 100.00%

Google Post/Event Platform

- Total Impressions for June totaled 78,654
- Total Engagements for June totaled 3,137
 - highest number of impressions since I've tracked by nearly 20,000

Instagram Stories

- Instagram Story Impressions totaled 20,073 for July, a 147% increase over June.
 - Increase due to higher frequency in posting (45 slides over 16)

Pinterest



- Total Impressions for July totaled 39,789.

- Total Engagements for June totaled 1,030.


Updates

- The Hammock Capital of the USA Instagram Giveaway continues to be a strong campaign. We've seen a significant increase in Instagram followership and engagements due to this campaign.
- Captured Facebook Live Sunrise from Rhodes Big View Overlook in Cashiers on July 20. Video had 12,800 views and over 900 engagements.
- On July 30, we received our 200,000th page like on Facebook and also have over 16,500 followers on Instagram. Thank you to Estelle and the RM team for continuing to bolster our efforts in growing our audience.
- Created first Facebook & Instagram posts featuring masked visitors. Facebook had some negative comments, while Instagram received it positively.
- Attended Destinations International Annual Convention, July 14-15. Heard a lot of great ideas from thought leaders in the industry. Director Breedlove presented our Accessibility Guide, a project I worked diligently on while interning and he and I have received very positive feedback from it.



Top Performing Posts for July

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Tue 7/7/2020 11:33 am PDT

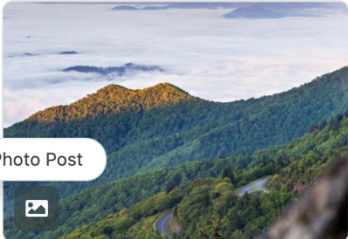
Stunning mountain views along the Blue Ridge Parkway! 🌈 Ed Green captured this image at the Lake Junaluska





Total Engagements	11,627
Reactions	7,623
Comments	376
Shares	1,067
Post Link Clicks	2
Other Post Clicks	2,559

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Sun 7/12/2020 4:56 pm PDT


The Blue Ridge Parkway is America's celebrated motor route. 🌄 🚗 Enjoy an early morning sunrise, an afternoon tre





Total Engagements	7,043
Reactions	4,508
Comments	200
Shares	568
Post Link Clicks	120
Other Post Clicks	1,647

  North Carolina Mountain ...
Tue 7/28/2020 7:32 am PDT


Some views are just better in person. 😍
📸 🚗 Make sure to check out the Blue Ridge Parkway on your next visit to





Total Engagements	4,927
Reactions	3,699
Comments	55
Shares	258
Post Link Clicks	31
Other Post Clicks	884

  discoverjacksonnc
Sun 7/26/2020 5:15 am PDT

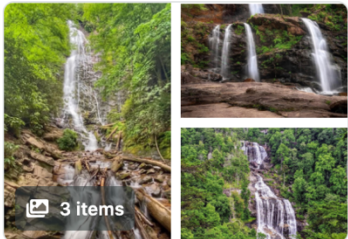
Today we celebrate the 30th-anniversary of the passage of the Americans with Disabilities Act. ❤️ 🌱 🌊 Our friends at





Total Engagements	755
Likes	719
Comments	2
Saves	34

  discoverjacksonnc
Fri 7/10/2020 7:09 am PDT


Looking for something to do this weekend? How about chasing some waterfalls in the WNC Mountains? Here



Total Engagements	670
Likes	591
Comments	6
Saves	73

  discoverjacksonnc
Tue 7/7/2020 11:41 am PDT

Stunning mountain views along the Blue Ridge Parkway! 🌈 Ed Green captured this image at the Lake Junaluska



Total Engagements	669
Likes	631
Comments	11
Saves	27

Blogs

Completed three blogs for July:

[This is Why you Should Visit the Hammock Adventure Capital of the U.S.A](#) – Posted 7/3/20
(authored by Pineapple)

[48 Hours of Fun in the NC Mountains](#) – Posted 7/24/20

[Top 10 Must-See Waterfalls in the NC Mountains](#) – Posted 7/31/20