



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

To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: September 10, 2021
Subject: Updates for TDA Board

Executive Director Report – Nick Breedlove

1 . Since August, we have been exploring options to expand our existing office space or to find a larger office space to rent to allow us to bring on an additional part-time employee / interns. We do not believe an expansion in our current space would be ideal after examining the site footprint. We located an office space which meets our current and future needs. The office is about five minutes away from our current space on Cope Creek Road. The rent with a five-year lease is \$1,900 / mo. We believe the five-year lease is our best option, so we have a stable location to serve us and our stakeholders going into the future.



Chair Robert Jumper toured the space with staff and the Executive Committee is in favor of the move and the associated expenditures. We will have four office rooms, two storage rooms, and

a conference room we can utilize for TDA and public meetings. In the past, we have struggled to find a suitable location that is always available for our meetings. The office also has ample parking and is accessible.

There will be an increase to our budget expenditures with outfitting the new space as an office for the TDA, adding access control, furniture and fiber optic internet and telephone systems. The budget required for this move is as follows on Page 2.

We believe this move will set us up for success and while the cost is not insignificant it is an investment in growing our organization to the appropriate scale and allowing for ample office space for such growth. We cannot grow in our current space. Our budget has ample reserves to fund the request.

ITEM	COST	BUDGET CODE	BUDGET CATEGORY SUB
Wifi Access Points - 7	\$ 480.00	24-4926-299-00	
Conference Room Video Adapter	\$ 144.00	24-4926-299-00	
Lamps/Lighting	\$ 300.00	24-4926-299-00	
Bookshelf	\$ 170.00	24-4926-550-00	
Wall Mount for TV	\$ 50.00	24-4926-299-00	
Access Control System for Office External Doors - NCI	\$ 4,500.00	24-4926-299-00	
Miscellaneous Office Supplies Increase	\$ 3,000.00	24-4926-299-00	
Photo Prints for Office Walls	\$ 2,000.00	24-4926-299-00	\$ 10,174.00
One time fees - purchase three handsets / conf. phone	\$ 700.00	24-4926-321-02	
Fiber Install - one time fee	\$ 1,500.00	24-4926-321-02	
Misc. Networking Work	\$ 1,000.00	24-4926-321-02	
Balsam West Internet	\$ 4,500.00	24-4926-321-02	\$ 7,700.00
Managed Print Service	\$ 3,600.00	24-4926-341-00	
Water Service to Building paid to Leasor	\$ 480.00	24-4926-412-00	
ADT Security	\$ 600.00	24-4926-412-00	
Additional Rent required to be added to line item	\$3,500	24-4926-412-00	\$ 8,180.00
Insurance	\$ 1,000.00	24-4926-454-00	\$ 1,000.00
Conference Room Video Conference System	\$ 1,349.00	24-4926-454-00	
New Employee Computer	\$ 1,699.00	24-4926-550-00	
Conference Room TV	\$ 1,300.00	24-4926-550-00	
Conference Tables - 6	\$ 2,994.00	24-4926-550-00	
Conference Room Chairs - 16	\$ 1,759.84	24-4926-550-00	
Refrigerator	\$ 699.00	24-4926-550-00	
Employee Break Area	\$ 1,878.99	24-4926-550-00	\$ 10,330.83
Contingency for Office Move	\$3,500	24-4926-412-00	
			\$ 42,703.83

We would ask the Board to approve the lease, the budget amendment, and authorize the Chair to enter into agreements as necessary to complete the above work associated with the move.

2. In July 2021 we had over \$10 million in accommodation sales, marking our highest occupancy tax month in our organization’s history. Those accommodation sales generated a record \$402,414.91 in Room Occupancy Tax. Vacation rentals make up 55.78-percent of the month’s tax collections, trailed by resorts at 22.45-percent and hotels at 16.26-percent. Two months into the new fiscal year we are already at 51.5% of our budget.

Our Finance Officer, Darlene Fox, calculated our available fund balance. This amount is after setting aside 30-percent of the budget as reserves. Our available balance is \$1,310,229.36. That amount represents our highest fund balance in our organization's history.

3. We are presenting a grant request to the full board for funding a good portion of planning efforts in Cashiers with the Urban Land Institute. The massive influx of visitors combined with development and growth has necessitated the need to planning efforts to study best practices going forward in Cashiers. Not being a municipality and having a tax to fund this type planning places the burden on stakeholders to fund this effort. The Cashiers Area Chamber is organizing the funding of the study, which will be framed by the following:

1. Preservation of community character and heritage;
2. Density and siting (residential, commercial and mixed use);
3. Local needs (services, hospitality, retail, housing diversity, childcare, public amenities etc.);
4. Most appropriate and sustainable uses for large acreage parcels within the village districts;
5. Transportation management (traffic volume/flow; pedestrian mobility and safety, public transit);
6. Environmental conservation (scenic quality, natural resources, "green space");
7. Infrastructure development and prioritization (water resources (wastewater/wells/stormwater); and
8. Purview, plan and next steps for ordinance codification.

Through the ULI process, Cashiers can grow sustainably with a clearly delineated framework in place.

All the issues we face in Cashiers – traffic, need for affordable housing, transportation, infrastructure – all relate to the visitor economy and need to be carefully studied and reviewed.

The [grant request](#) and [white paper](#) are linked for your review. Please take ample time for review prior to our board meeting.

The Cashiers Area Chamber submitted a grant request to the Board to fund a portion of the cost for the process. The amount requested is \$35,000 and funding is critical to begin the work. Staff has reviewed the proposal, grant request, and is strongly in favor of approval of this request.

4. I had an opportunity last week to talk with Sen. Burr and Sen. Tillis' legislative staff to advocate for issues affecting us in Jackson County. The call was part of our Southeast Tourism Legislative session, normally held in DC, but this year held on Zoom. I talked with Sam Lupas, Tillis' staffer, whose parents live in Cashiers. We expressed our concern for the ongoing workforce shortage and asked that the Senators assist in any way they can to help with the challenge we have here in the mountains. Without sufficient workforce, we cannot continue to

thrive as a top destination in the Southeast. Additionally, we stressed the importance of funding our National Park sites with appropriate levels of staffing and support to address the significant demands our parks have seen as people recreate outdoors in record numbers.

5. We're getting closer to the launch of the Jackson County Ale Trail Brew Pass with rewards for visitors who check out three breweries in Sylva/Dillsboro. We've been working with Bandwango on creating the pass and RawleMurdy on collateral development. We think this will drive significant interest and spending downtown. The promotion should launch the first week of October.

6. JCTDA Staff participated in the weeklong events at Panthertown and Leave No Trace®. Through planning and input sessions, we've established a good framework to grow our sustainable efforts not just in Panthertown, but county wide. We are grateful for the opportunity to be thought leaders in the industry as it relates to our efforts. Please see our [recent blog](#) outlining how we commit to our environmental stewardship.

7. We recently compiled a new 'Meeting and Events' planner two-pager and had it printed just in time for our Sales and Marketing Manager Caleb Sullivan to take it to Raleigh for MPICC meet ups with travel planners. Later this month, Sullivan will travel to Cheyenne, Wyoming to attend Small Market Meetings to represent Jackson County and the opportunities that abound when hosting a meeting here. With most business travel questionable amidst the delta variant of COVID-19, we hope to create a strong desire and interest in Jackson County for when travel resumes. Making multiple touchpoints is key.

8. Our summer video production is well underway at over 14 locations throughout Jackson County. We'll be showcasing assets we've not previously captured having secured permits for filming on the Parkway and at other locations. Additionally, we're working with over 30 local and regional talent to ensure we capture the authentic and real people that make up our destination. We should have the final videos in Q3/Q4 this year to then begin promoting next spring.

9. We'll begin receiving daily credit card spend data through Zartico as part of a recent deal they made with Affinity Solutions. While it's similar to the VISA data we currently receive, this will be per day as opposed to per month. We'll be able to track events that generate economic impact to our communities and use that data to better target our prospective visitor. After the initial rollout we understand that they may make additional consumer data available that would help refine our marketing even further.

Other Items:

- Director Breedlove was recently asked to serve a second term as Co-Chair of the Small Destinations Committee for Destinations International. Through this position, Breedlove can advocate on behalf of small destinations like ours throughout the Americas and Europe. This committee focuses on the needs of our small destinations and generates great ideas for dealing with challenges we all face.

- Staff will attend Southeast Tourism’s Connections conference in Spartanburg, SC from Sept. 27-30. Breedlove was recently named to a second term on their Board of Directors being selected as the sole North Carolina representative.
- We’re beginning initial work on the VisitNC Farms App assets to showcase locally grown food, farmers markets, and such in Jackson County. We expect this data to be live in Q1 of next year. Our part-time employee, once hired, will assist with this additional workload.

Social Media & Sales Status Report – Caleb Sullivan

Organic Cross Channel Report August 1 – 31 vs. July 1 – 31, 2021

- Total Audience Growth increased by 1.4% MOM (246,936)
 - Total Instagram Followers (23,865)
 - Total Facebook Page Likes (220,021) – Organic Increase of (1,217)
- Total Impressions **Increased by 40.7% MOM. (4,198,008)**
- Total Engagement **increased by 58.7% MOM (203,720)**
- Facebook Post Link Clicks decreased by 5.5% (25,817)

**Decreases in engagement and impressions may be more typical moving forward due to changes in Facebook/Instagram Algorithm and IOS 14.5. The new Paid Social Strategy adopted should alleviate these impacts moving forward.*

Facebook Ad Performance

Overall, we’re seeing good results with our Facebook Ad campaigns, with slightly increased CPR for August. This has been mitigated for September and we’ve already begun to see record low CPR. Boosted posts continue to perform well.

- Total Impressions 1,805,417
- Total Reach 666,734
- Result Per Campaign
 - Visitor Guide Leads: 359/ \$2.79 CPR
 - Newsletter Leads: 1,470/ \$.62 CPR
 - Page Like Campaign: 1,843/ \$.27 CPR
 - Web Traffic Campaign: 5,510/ \$.18 CPR
- New Campaigns
 - Micro Campaigns: 4,143/ \$.18 CPR
 - Blog Post Campaigns: 3,032/ \$.16

Pinterest

- Total Impressions for August totaled 45,870. (11% Decrease MOM)
- Total Engagements for June totaled 1,390. (10% Decrease MOM)

Updates


- Attended U.S. Travel Association’s “Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations” (ESTO) Conference in Los Angeles, CA. I made many new connections and learned many invaluable tactics around Accessibility, inclusivity, and best practices for the JCTDA. VisitNC was awarded the Mercury Award for Advocacy and Grassroots Campaign (pictured below).
- Worked with Director Breedlove to create our new [Meetings & Events Planner](#) for Meeting industry tradeshows.
- Aug 30 – Sep 3, I attended week-long “Leave No Trace Hot Spot Training” both in person and virtually. I also participated in the Panthertown Valley Campsite Cleanup for my first staff volunteer day (pictured below).
- Sep 9-10, I represented the JCTDA at Meeting Planners International Carolinas Chapter Marketplace in Raleigh, NC (pictured below).
- I’ve begun scheduling appointments for Small Market Meeting Sales Show in Cheyenne, WY Sep 25 - 26.



Top Performing Posts for August

PLAY ON NC **North Carolina Mountain Towns of Cashie...**
Mon 8/2/2021 5:21 am PDT


❤️❤️❤️ @burgerplex



Total Engagements	24,115
Reactions	16,261
Comments	1,292
Shares	1,390
Post Link Clicks	2
Other Post Clicks	5,170

PLAY ON NC **North Carolina Mountain Towns of Cashie...**
Mon 8/9/2021 5:26 am PDT


Mountain sunsets never disappoint! 🌄 Check out our Top 8 spots to enjoy here: <https://jax.on/Chase-Sunsets> @mbosch1024



Total Engagements	14,621
Reactions	9,976
Comments	562
Shares	1,115
Post Link Clicks	497
Other Post Clicks	2,471

PLAY ON NC **North Carolina Mountain Towns of Cashie...**
Tue 8/17/2021 6:52 am PDT

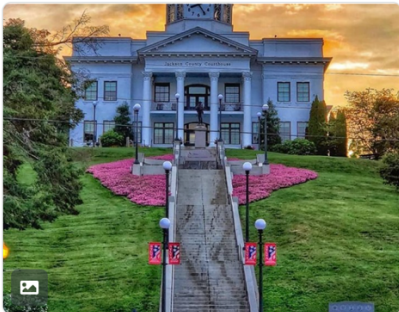
Did you know the Jackson County Courthouse in downtown Sylva is one of the most photographed buildings in the state? 📸 Make sure to check it out!



Total Engagements	13,897
Reactions	6,630
Comments	647
Shares	703
Post Link Clicks	187
Other Post Clicks	5,730

PLAY ON NC **discoverjacksonnc**
Mon 8/16/2021 5:45 pm PDT


Built in 1914, the Jackson County Historic Courthouse now serves as the Public Library. 📖 Check it out on your next trip to Sylva. Link in Bio. . @phanatic22



Total Engagements	1,169
Likes	1,126
Comments	6
Saves	37

PLAY ON NC **discoverjacksonnc**
Wed 8/25/2021 5:33 pm PDT


Greening Up the Mountains returns for its 24th year, this Saturday, August 28th. 🌿 Enjoy this socially distanced outdoor festival. Over 100 vendor booths, local crafts.



Total Engagements	1,124
Likes	1,086
Comments	9
Saves	29

PLAY ON NC **discoverjacksonnc**
Wed 8/4/2021 5:12 pm PDT

Whitewater Falls is always showing off. 🌿 At 411 Feet, this massive cascade is one of the highest east of the Rockies. Find it on our website. Link in Bio. . @trind



Total Engagements	1,084
Likes	996
Comments	11
Saves	77

Blogs

Authored two blogs in August:

[Stargazing in the NC Mountains](#) – 8/6/2021

[Leave No Trace® in Jackson County, NC](#) – 8/27/2021

E-News

Authored e-Newsletter for June. Deployed on 8/10/2021

[Hidden Gems and More to Explore in the NC Mountains](#)