



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

To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: September 16, 2022
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

1. We are shaping up for a good fall season; according to KeyData about 40% of our vacation rentals managed by vacation rental firms are already booked.

According to AirDNA, which monitors Airbnb and VRBO listings, the occupancy for October weekends in the Cashiers area is about 56%.

In Sylva, we're trailing behind Cashiers in reservations for STRs in October, but it is worth noting that the Oct. 1 weekend is at 73% occupancy due to WCU's family weekend. I've let our merchants' association know so they can prepare for larger crowds in town.

2. August set a record for occupancy tax collections in our organization's history across all months – we brought in \$410,949.64 in taxes, representing \$10.2 million in accommodation sales. Looking at credit card spending data, both visitor and resident spending are up from 2021 and up significantly when compared to 2020.

August KPI's:



3. The Tourism Capital Project Fund application has been updated on our website reflecting the change with the TDA Board effectively serving as the selection committee.
4. STR Regulation – Sylva recently updated its zoning regulations about short-term rentals. A good article outlining the changes and regulations is available in the Smoky Mountain News at this link: <https://smokymountainnews.com/news/item/34213-sylva-reins-in-short-term-rentals>

5. All our marketing campaigns are getting off the ground across all platforms. We're excited about the new DO BOTH campaign that BGRM recently rolled out to our media placements. In addition, we just started this week with Crowdriff's Localhood program placing themed stories at the top of Google on mobile devices, similar to an Instagram story but taking up most of the screen when searching on Google. You'll also see these visual stories displayed prominently on our homepage.

In content marketing, our team has been performing exceptionally well. In the last 90 days, our Facebook unpaid reach has gone up 85% year over year to reach 6.19 million people, and the paid reach has increased 162% year over year to reach 1.2 million potential travelers. We also recently surpassed 500 followers on our new TikTok channel, and Tiffany Collins works daily to produce excellent content for that channel.

6. In networking and other functions, attended:
 - Convened with regional TDA leaders in Highlands at the beginning of September
 - Concluded my second term on the STS Board of Directors at their meeting this month in Concord
 - Worked with VisitNC on providing recommendations for an upcoming photoshoot on fly fishing in the Cashiers area
 - Continuing to work with LHG on project with the Leave No Trace center for youth education in Jackson County in conjunction with Jackson County Public Schools
 - Working with WCU and the Green Energy Park to provide data for an economic impact study of the GEP's operations
7. As a reminder, we have no October Board of Directors meeting. I hope everyone has a terrific autumn!