



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

To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: March 15, 2023
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

1. I would like to remind you that our upcoming Board Meeting on March 15, 2023, will be held in Cashiers at the Village Green at 1 p.m. Please mark your calendars accordingly.
2. We are pleased to announce that our 2023 Visitor Guide is now available, and we are in the process of distributing it to our partners. We are also preparing the online Flipbook version. The guide includes exciting new information, such as Year of the Trail highlights, Leave No Trace messaging, and updates on culinary offerings and lodging listings. I will bring copies of the guide to the meeting to share with all board members.
3. The Executive Committee has reviewed two grant requests and has recommended their approval. Please review these requests in advance of the meeting, as they are linked with the agenda. Additionally, we expect to receive a grant application soon from the Green Energy Park for \$6,000. The grant will fund construction to make glass blowing classes accessible to wheelchair users, providing a unique opportunity for visitors with disabilities to participate in activities while in Jackson County.
4. We have recently issued two press releases, one regarding **our new hire Kara** and the other announcing our annual '**Cleaning Up the Mountains**' donation. Both have received excellent coverage in local media.
5. Our Executive Committee attended a planning session with staff and our partners from BGRM and LHG to generate a start to our Marketing and Communications plan for the upcoming fiscal year. Our staff also attended the Visit NC 365 conference in Asheville, where we submitted our co-op advertising program preferences to be entered into their lottery for ads. Due to high demand, we may not receive all requested placements, but we expect to receive a good number of the ones we applied for.
6. According to a recent study, 93% of travelers are still planning on taking trips this year, despite inflation. However, a presentation by Tourism Economics at the VisitNC 365 conference predicted a recession in Q2 of this year. Since they have successfully

predicted all past recessions, we have confidence in their predictions.

See below for the release:

Despite Inflation and Interest Rates, Travelers Are On The Move

According to the latest Longwoods International tracking study of American travelers, 93% of them have trips planned in the next six months, the highest level in three years. A fifth of them have trips planned within a month, a quarter will travel in one to two months and almost a third have travel planned in three to five months.

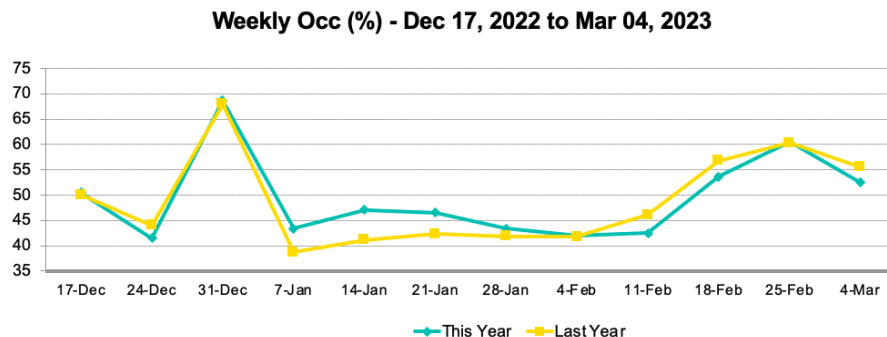
“Inflation, higher interest rates and other economic headwinds are no match for consumer demand for travel,” said Amir Eylon, President and CEO of Longwoods International. “The outlook for spring break travel and summer travel is very positive.”

The travel planned for the next six months is even more impressive when you consider that a quarter of all travelers report that concerns about their personal financial situation will greatly impact their travel decisions in the next six months. And a third of travelers say that inflation will greatly impact their travel plans in that same time period.

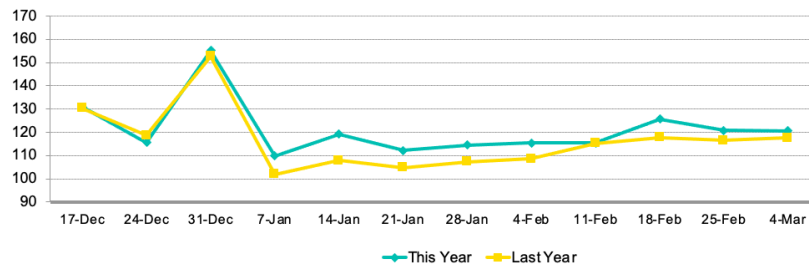
The survey, supported by Miles Partnership, was fielded March 1, 2023 using a national sample randomly drawn from a consumer panel of 1,000 adults, ages 18 and over. Quotas were used to match Census targets for age, gender, and region to make the survey representative of the U. S. population.

7. Although there has been some softening in demand for hotel rooms compared to last year, other sectors, such as short-term rentals, have remained steady. Therefore, considering several factors, we expect to budget on the conservative side this coming fiscal year.

Please see below for the Occupancy and ADR charts YTD



Weekly ADR - Dec 17, 2022 to Mar 04, 2023



Source: STR

The positive news apart from a slight decline in occupancy is that ADR is holding up when compared with last year.

In other networking and updates:




- Attended VisitNC 365 Conference in Asheville
- Continuing Certification in Advanced Hospitality and Tourism Analytics with three more weeks remaining before exam and project
- Met with WCU Marketing Team and WCU Bardo Arts Center Director for updates and shared mutual interests
- Attended Destinations International Q1: EDI Committee Meeting
- Presented updates to VisitNC & Meredith Publishing staff for 2024 Travel guide
- Completed 40 hours of onboarding the week of Feb 27 with Kara Addy
- Hosted counterparts from Oconee South Carolina with understanding Zartcio data for actionable marketing.
- Lastly, we have launched our second giveaway of the year with Stay Outland, the renovated Chalet Inn in Whittier. If any lodging partner would like to participate in a giveaway, please let us know, and we will add you to our calendar. These giveaways have proven to be beneficial in building social media following for our partners, as we ask our entrants to follow our partners' social accounts to enter to win.



In social media, while Kara gets acquainted with her role and customizing reporting metrics, we have the following to share on behalf of social media marketing efforts.

Profiles

Review your aggregate profile and page metrics from the reporting period.

Profile ▲	Audience	Net Audience Growth	Published Posts	Impressions	Engagements	Engagement Rate (per Impression)	Video Views
Reporting Period Feb 1, 2023 - Feb 28, 2023	310,221 ↗ 2.1%	6,428 ↗ 46.1%	127 → 0%	7,068,653 ↗ 11.4%	369,197 ↗ 24.8%	5.2% ↗ 12%	312,664 ↗ 155.1%
Compare to Jan 1, 2023 - Jan 31, 2023	303,826	4,400	127	6,344,414	295,741	4.7%	122,557
 @VisitJacksonNC	2,172	7	5	954	61	6.4%	78
 discoverjacksonnc	30,459	634	93	397,947	14,225	3.6%	116,200
 North Carolina Mountain Towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, and Sylva	277,590	5,787	29	6,669,752	354,911	5.3%	196,386

In other positive news, our TikTok account continues to grow significantly with 16,500 followers and 83,700 likes.

Overview	Content	Followers	LIVE
Feb 09 - Mar 08		Last 28 days ▼	
Engagement ⓘ >			
▶ Video views	358K (+6.46%)		
📄 Profile views	2,697 (+5.02%)		
♥ Likes	24K (+1.15%)		
💬 Comments	702 (-38.48%)		
➦ Shares	2,804 (+116.69%)		
Followers ⓘ >			
16,401 in total			
Net +3,331 in Feb 09 - Mar 08			