

ASHEVILLE

August 31, 2016

To: BCTDA
From: Stephanie Pace Brown, Executive Director
Subject: Recap of July 2016 Staff Activities

The CVB welcomed three new team members. Joe Weber joined the CVB as our new group sales and services coordinator, replacing Brit Martin who was promoted. Alex Mitchiner fills the marketing and PR assistant role vacated by Sarah Lowery, who was promoted, and Rachel Baumgardner was hired in the new operations assistant position that reports to Jonna.

We are in the process of hiring a National Sales Manager (new position) and replacing Brenda Taylor who is retiring. The CVB is proud to be the capstone of Brenda's 30-year career in hospitality sales.

JULY CVB METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During July, the sales team posted 627 personal contacts (down 14%). July sales activities generated 45 sales leads (down 30%) and 27 convention bookings (down 25%), representing 7,582 rooms (down 20%). One month into the new fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are also down 30 percent and room nights are down 20 percent.
- CVB leads generated 36 group events in July (up 16%), with revenue of \$1,823,896 (up 142%). The services team assisted 39 groups (flat).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 26,334 visitors (up 4%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion welcomed 1,123 visitors (up 23%).
- The PR team landed 31 significant placements in July (down 69%), with 46 media touchpoints (down 69%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$244,452 with reach of over 7 million. Online placements added \$382,190 in value and reach of over 451 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 330,840 visits (down 15%), including 207,553 to the mobile site (down 4%). Our Facebook fan base grew by 5,982 (up 33%) and video views totaled 22,266 (up 3%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 126 room nights (down 59%) with total room revenue of \$21,460 (down 52%).

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$31,421,334 in June, up 14.2 percent. Fiscal YTD 2015-16 sales are up 17.6 percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 81.8 percent during June (up 1.2%). The average daily room rate of \$147.02 was up 4.7 percent, and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$120.28 (up 6%). Room demand increased 7.3 percent with 187,212 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 2.2 percent to total 83,616 in June.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS UPDATE

New Hire: The Marketing and PR department welcomed Alex Mitchiner, who was offered the job of Marketing/PR Assistant at the end of July and started in mid-August. Alex is a recent graduate from Western Carolina University with hospitality experience at the DoubleTree by Hilton Asheville - Biltmore. Alex also spent time with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce and the Convention & Visitors Bureau as a City of Asheville Youth Leadership Academy (CAYLA) intern while she was in high school.

Advertising: The Harvest campaign launched August 1 and runs through September 30 with an estimated reach of 218M+ impressions. The campaign features the new “*Let the Magic Find You*” brand creative and includes separate iterations with specific messaging targeted to music, outdoor, food and art enthusiasts. Brooke Ptaszek and Marla Tambellini are working with the agency to develop additional opportunities to extend out of home (OOH) coverage in the D.C. Capital Region. Details of the partnership with National Geographic Travel are being worked out and is expected to include a combination of social media influencers and a spread in the spring issue of the magazine. Similarly, a content partnership with Matador continues with the third article in series of four (this one titled: *Asheville Might Just Be The Top Outdoors Town In America. Here’s Why*) that went live at the end of July. In preparation for 2018 Travel Guide, staff met with representatives from SagaCity and included local partners to discuss a suite of in and out of market materials and distribution. Media planning also began for the upcoming Holiday campaign.

Paid search efforts

Compared to paid media efforts in July 2015, sessions were down 13 percent: 41,245 vs. 47,472. Search bounce rate remains incredibly low – 50 percent overall. Mobile bounce rate was 55 percent which, according to Simpleview, is excellent for PPC on mobile devices. AdWords CTR was 223 percent above industry average (7.06 percent vs. 2.18 percent) while Bing CTR was 33 percent above industry average (2.90 percent vs. 2.18 percent). Simpleview spent quite a bit of time in July optimizing a handful of the campaigns and towards the end of the month, we started to see those campaigns improve. The goal is to get sessions back up year-over-year without sacrificing performance and engagement.

General Media Relations: The PR team connected with 46 media this month including *Travel + Leisure*, *Gear Patrol*, *Food & Wine*, *Smarter Travel* and *TravelGirl* magazine. The team also hosted a number of high profile journalists and media contacts during the month of July. Highlights include:

- **Amber Gibson** | Assignment for a “day in Asheville” piece for *Fodor’s* and also works with various outlets like *Rabbit Hole Magazine*, *Departures* and inflight pubs | The team partnered with Biltmore and worked out a detailed itinerary with numerous touchpoints on the ground. Connection via Dodie at PRSA and Visit NC.
- **Jane Black** | *Conde Nast Traveller* (UK) (via Visit NC) | Jane was working on an “Appalachia” piece for the outlet and was looking for itinerary ideas and assistance with meal costs and restaurant connections. Jane also writes for *New York Times* and *WaPo*.
- **Andrew Nelson** | *National Geographic Traveler* | A connection made through PRSA, the team was able to leverage media attendance at new editor in chief George Stone’s Asheville wedding (booked by the sales team). While we couldn’t connect directly with the groom, the PR team hosted activities and shared insight with Nat Geo’s new editorial projects director, Andrew Nelson, and the director of communication. The team also provided an Asheville activity guide that was used on the official wedding website—highlighting a variety of local opportunities for high-profile media attendees.
- **Dorothee Baer-Bogenschutz** | Landis and Sarah worked on the itinerary and hosted visiting German journalist (*die Kunstzeitung*; circulation 200,000 and *Badisches Tabblatt*; circulation 33,000).

Sarah Lowery transitioned to her new position of Public Relations Specialist II, jumping in to offer a higher level of media support including efforts with Fred Ekert of *Creator’s Syndicate*, responses to HARO media leads and on-the-ground media support. The PR team also worked with a variety of other media providing various levels of support from assisting on location ideas for an upcoming Food & Wine photo shoot with Katie Button to developing b-roll for the TV show *Tiny House Hunting* to fielding routine photo requests. Ongoing media support of the Asheville Wine & Food Festival ramped up in July as the event drew closer. Activities included an itinerary and local connections for *Beautiful Booze* as well as support for a site visit for *Bon Appetit’s* new assistant web editor, beer expert and manager of the outlet’s Snapchat account.

SIGNIFICANT PLACEMENTS IN JULY

- *Huff Post* – “7 Sinful Eateries You Must Try in Asheville”
- *PasteMagazine.com* – “City in a Glass, Asheville”
- *Condé Nast Traveler* – “The 50 Most Beautiful Places in America”
- *Travel + Leisure* – “The Best Cities in the United States”
- *Travel + Leisure* – “All About North Carolina’s Sliding Rock”
- *Vagabondish.com* – “There’s No Taste Like Home, Foraging Wild Edibles in North Carolina”
- *TravelChannel.com* – “Eight Great Budget Travel Destinations”
- *CraftBeer.com* – “Beer Lover’s Guide to the Asheville South Slope”
- *Charlotte Today* – “Places to Eat, Stay and Explore in Asheville”
- *WRAL.com* – “3 Hungry Guys Explore Asheville”
- *SouthPark Magazine* – “Peak Retreat”
- *Prevue Meetings* – “Culinary Fervor Is Unleashed in Foodtopia”
- *Day Spa Magazine* – “Subterrestrial Treasure”
- *AAA Go Magazine* – “Over the Top”
- *AmexEssentials.com* – “America’s All-Star Diners”
- *Blue Ridge Outdoors* – “Farm to Fork”
- *Matador Network* – “A Guide to the Best Mellow Adventure + Beer Pairings Across North Carolina”
- *DogVacay Official Blog* – “Road Trip, Taking the Dog to Asheville, North Carolina”
- *Eater.com* – “The 21 Best New Restaurants in America”

- *Fodor's* – “10 Budget-Friendly Summer Trips”
- *TravelPulse.com* – “Highlights on Asheville, NC’s Urban Trail”
- *Travelroads.com* – “Asheville Wines, Dines & Entertains”
- *Travelroads.com* – “Asheville, The Call of Mountain Adventures”
- *Getaways for Grownups* – “Bunn House”

Music Initiative: Cat Kessler and Dodie Stephens developed playlists for ExploreAsheville Radio that will align with media outreach and social pushes. The team met with Jessica Tomasin of ACME to discuss curated playlists and prioritize licensing needs in order to ensure a diverse set of local artists. Explore Asheville Radio includes 14 licensed artists to date, and the team is nearing completion on the first, mixtape-style playlist to be rolled out as part of a music-centric press release in August.

Content Development Projects: Cat and Brooke wrapped up a busy schedule of photo shoots and purchases. Shoots completed during the month of July included a family scene at the Hickory Nut Gap Farm Barn Dance, friends gathered at Salsa’s and Smoky Park Supper Club, a couple touring the Thomas Wolfe House, and eating and drinking at Hole Doughnuts, Sunny Point Café, Buxton Hall, The Rhu and others. Photographers involved included Keith Wright, Art Meripol and Erin Adams. These photos, as well as some others that were purchased from existing stock, will be used in website editorial, advertising, social media and public relations efforts. Jason also worked with Pat and tourism partners to capture some service and lodging related images to be used in upcoming partner communications. Work progressed on development of a trending section for ExploreAsheville.com. The section will present users with an at-a-glance view of all that is new and notable in the destination, including recent and seasonally appropriate editorial coverage, significant accolades or media placements, video, photos, and user-generated content. Further development of this section is on hold pending the findings of the SEO audit.

With Jason on board, social media efforts have ramped up significantly. This position is also allowing the team to create more social integration with the advertising campaign flights.

Video & Facebook Live:

In preparation for the upcoming Harvest Campaign and in connection with the “*Let the Magic Find You*” messaging, Cat worked with Brooke to brainstorm a schedule of live broadcast opportunities that would communicate the “magic moments” that make Asheville unique. Jason will be implementing this plan via Facebook Live in August and September and will integrate with a broader strategy of live video planned for the fiscal year. Opportunities for the upcoming months include sunsets at scenic spots around town; arts demonstrations; kitchen scenes at favorite restaurants; live music performances; festivals and outdoor adventure experiences.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

- During the month of July, four new stories or blog posts—all written by Jason Tarr—were added to ExploreAsheville.com. Topics included an itinerary surrounding the release of the second Serafina young adult novel, an arts piece for a Harvest Campaign landing page, and blog posts about the Pokémon Go phenomenon and the LEAF Art Dash 5k.
- The most popular story content on the site this month was “50 Things to Do in Asheville,” which received 20,546 new page views during July. The second most popular story was “60-Foot Natural Waterslide & Other Water Adventures,” which received 7,382 new page views.

- Cat Kessler began outreach for a new series of “Meet the Foodtopians” profiles and partnerships to add to the website. Committed partners include Gan Shan Station and Medea’s Real Food Café.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- July saw 5,982 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 210,442.
- There were 30 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of July.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was a photo of a field of sunflowers at Biltmore. It reached 69,981 people organically, generating 4,287 total reactions, 271 comments and 675 shares.
- The most popular paid post this month was a link to Travel + Leisure’s “Best Cities in the U.S.” story. It reached 181,327 users in total (106,208 of those organically), generating 6,591 reactions, 626 comments and 1,285 shares.
- The most engaging post this month was photo featuring a Pokémon character in the Visitor Center. It engaged 15 percent of the 1,284 users reached.

Foodtopia page

- July saw 810 daily new likes to the Foodtopia page for a total of 20,983 likes.
- There were 10 new Facebook posts added to the Foodtopia page in the month of July.
- The most popular post—a link to a Huffington Post story, “7 Sinful Eateries You Must Try in Asheville, N.C.”—reached 19,565 people organically, generating 344 reactions and 61 comments.

Video:

- There were 12,835 new organic YouTube views in July. The most popular video by organic views this month was the “The Spirit of Asheville,” which received 5,826 non-paid views. The fall time lapse video came in second with 2,828 new views.
- Across all of our video platforms, there were 22,266 views.
- Asheville video content has received 22,266 views since July 1, 2016 (fiscal YTD).

Pinterest: The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 4,083. Foodtopia accounts for 1,330 of those. Visit Asheville – 2,753.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 16,422 followers.
- There were 63 new posts in July. The most popular—a scenic shot of sunflowers in a field at Biltmore—received 895 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter: Across all of our accounts we have a total of 31,869 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 12,936 followers. We continue to provide a mix of proactive response to travel inquiries and pushes of website and Instagram content.

Asheville Traveler E-newsletter:

- Subscribers: We have 115,604 active subscribers.
- Opens/Click-throughs: In July we sent out our monthly e-newsletter to 115,522 subscribers. We had a unique open rate of 11.2% and a click-through rate of 1.9%.

Online Reservations: There were 44 orders for 86 room nights in July with a total of \$15,699 in booking revenue and \$674 in commission. The top 5 states for room nights booked in July were Georgia (14), South Carolina (11), North Carolina (9), Kentucky (9), and Florida (8).

July 2016	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
Booking Rev	\$15,699	\$25,236	-38%	\$15,699	\$25,236	-38%
Commission	\$674	\$1,019	-34%	\$674	\$1,019	-34%
Orders	44	96	-54%	44	96	-54%
Room Nights	86	185	-54%	86	185	-54%

Travel Guide: In preparation for 2018 Travel Guide, staff met with representatives from SagaCity and included local partners to discuss a suite of in- and out-of-market materials and distribution. Brit Martin continued work on 2017 Travel Guide listings and finished the Eat & Drink, Do, and Sleep category exports. These lists will continue to be refined and proofed as the layouts are finalized by Journal.

There were 2,283 requests for the Official Asheville Travel Guide in July, a 19 percent decrease from last July. Year-to-date, there are 2,283 travel guide requests, a 19 percent decrease from last year. The top 5 DMAs requesting guides for the month and year are:

Top 5 DMAs for July 2016	# of Guides Requested	FY 2016-2017 Top 5 DMAs	# of Guides Requested
New York	89	New York	89
Atlanta	84	Atlanta	84
Tampa, St. Pete	83	Tampa, St. Pete	83
Charlotte	77	Charlotte	77
Chicago	70	Chicago	70

Online Travel Guide Downloads: There were 211 unique browsers for the online travel guide, a 69 percent decrease from last July. There were a total of 4,715 page views, a 62 percent decrease from last July. The average time spent viewing was 3.22 minutes, a 17 percent increase from last July. There were 36 clicks on links, an 87 percent decrease from last July.

July 2016	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual (Jan-Dec)	YTD Last Year (2015)	Variance YTD
Unique Browsers	211	683	-69.1%	1,723	7,900	-78.2%
Opens/Visits	231	736	-68.6%	1,898	8,491	-77.6%
Page Views	4,715	12,511	-62.3%	39,590	106,536	-62.8%
Avg. Time Spent (Minutes)	3.22	2.75	17.1%	2.99	17	-82.1%
Avg. Page Views (Per Open)	20.41	17	20.1%	20.98	103	-79.6%
Clicks on Links	36	284	-87.3%	290	2,297	-87.4%

ExploreAsheville.com: Elizabeth White worked with Marla, Cat, Brooke and Dodie to refine and distribute an RFP for a Search Engine Optimization Website Audit. The team sent the RFP to local and national vendors they identified, and posted the RFP on the AshevilleCVB.com website. PaperStreet was selected to perform the audit. The results of the audit are expected by the end of August and will be implemented in house in order to boost organic search referral

traffic. Elizabeth also worked with Brooke on the development of new landing pages for the Harvest ad campaign. As part of a collaborative effort with the Urban Trail Task Force, the CVB will be incorporating more expansive trail information into ExploreAsheville.com. Using designs provided by Jay Fields, a long-time art director and member of the task force, Elizabeth developed mockups of for the Wandering Asheville section which will include map points, photos and content about the Urban Trail, art deco architecture, public art and murals in Asheville.

In July, Simpleview released several new features for the CMS. One of the most important is functionality ACVB requested that keeps an event page live on the site even after the event has passed. This will be useful in managing events that recur yearly and create more stickiness for event keywords. Nine new partner accounts were created in June, of which three are related to the Music Initiative project.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES UPDATE

Group sales reported 27 definite group bookings in July as compared to 36 the prior July, representing a 25 percent decrease. Of these group bookings, 19 were meetings & conventions, two were group tours and six were weddings. The combined total definite room nights in July were 7,582 room nights as compared to 9,447 room nights the prior July, a 19.7 percent decrease over the prior year. The estimated revenue for leads turned definite in July was \$1,391,860 as compared to \$1,692,155 the prior July, representing a 17.7 percent decrease. These decreases can be attributed to several large groups that were turned definite the prior July. These three groups accounted for 5,215 room nights and an estimated revenue of \$1,027,031 combined. Actualized revenue was \$1,823,896, a 142 percent increase from the prior year.

Forty-five sales leads (29 for meeting/conventions, 11 weddings and five for motorcoach) representing 10,403 room nights were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in July as compared to 64 sales leads representing 21,939 room nights the prior July. This represents a decrease of 29.7 percent in sales leads and a 52.6 percent decrease in room nights represented. In July 2015, there were five large leads that account for the decrease this year. One lead represented 1,000 room nights, one lead represented 1,899 room nights, and three leads represented 2,640 room nights each last year. Person-to-person outreach totaled 627 contacts in July as compared to 732 the prior year, representing a 14 percent decrease. There was no indirect outreach for the month of July.

Staff Changes: Several staffing changes to the group sales department occurred in July. Senior Sales Manager Brenda Taylor has tendered her resignation effective August 30. Brenda is retiring from the industry after more than 30 years of hospitality sales. Her depth and breadth of the industry will be missed. The CVB also hired Joseph Weber as the new group sales and services coordinator. Joseph brings with him an extensive background in non-profit and arts experience. The department continues to interview for the vacant sales positions.

Sales Calls/Missions:

- Asheville was the host city for the 3rd Annual Spotlight on the Southeast, a group tourism conference held at DoubleTree, July 11-13. Spotlight was identified as one of “6 Trade Shows That Should Be On Your Radar” by Leisure Group Travel Magazine. The CVB’s sponsorship included a delegate welcome reception, local sightseeing tours, and a closing event at Highland Brewery, in addition to providing planning and marketing support of the

conference at large. A total of 32 buyers and 43 suppliers attended. An immediate outcome included commitments from several tour operators to bring future groups to Asheville. Other major sponsors included: Visit NC, Young Transportation, Biltmore Farms Hotels, Biltmore, and Highland Brewery.

- The CVB sponsored MPI's Georgia Chapter luncheon, hosting 50 Atlanta based planners/partners. Sponsorship included a hospitality table, talk time and the playing of the Asheville meetings video. Sales calls were also conducted as part of the visit.
- Staff attended Florida Society of Association Executives' Annual Conference in Bonita Springs, July 13-15. This was the first time the CVB has attended. Total registration was over 400 people with approximately 150 being association executives. The conference provided education and networking opportunities. The ACVB's meetings message was well received.

Site Visits/Bookings/Leads: Two independent site visits were hosted in August for all future years: 2017 NC Pretreatment Consortium – 260 room nights and 2018/2019 NC Society of Radiological Technological – 150 room nights.

Significant bookings for July include:

- ABYSA's 2016 Riverside Summer Shootout – Girls' and Boys' Weekends – combined 2,750 room nights
- 2019 DMAI CEO Forum – 450 room nights
- 2017 MDI Expo – 639 room nights
- 2016 Buffalo Wild Wings Tennessee Division – 22 room nights
- 2017 GeoWoodstock Asheville – 490 room nights
- 2019 NCACPAs – 728 room nights, among others

A total of 39 wedding guide requests were fulfilled in July as compared to 42 in July 2015.

Group Sales Communications

- Completed marketing pieces in July include: the CVB service handout for the wedding market, a new e-blast template for pre-tradeshows communications, a new 48 Hour Meeting Planner Experience e-blast design, and two new banners for tradeshows highlighting the ongoing RFP contest and the new *Have More Fun on Us* incentive program.
- Staff met with Market Connections to discuss the new design for full page advertisements and the marketing project timeline for the new fiscal year

Mass Communications/Media Coverage:

- Asheville was featured in July/August issue of *Prevue* – in the "Bureau Buzz" section. Staff provided information to the writer.
- Staff assisted a writer with Business North Carolina inquiring about the economic impact of meetings and events in North Carolina.
- Updates were sent to touroperatorland.com to enhance Asheville's online profile.

Convention Servicing:

36 groups that met in July were assisted or contacted by the convention service manager during planning. Services in the month included a staffed hospitality table for the Psychometric Society. The service coordinator prepared travel guides and maps for four meetings/weddings and six deliveries to hotel meeting sites in July.

Specific assistance for future meetings included various information for the planners of the NC SHRM conference. Microsites listing hotel rates were created for UNCA Athletics Hall of Fame & Homecoming weekend, GeoWoodstock 2017 and the Big South Cross Country Championship.

Carli Adams attended the first meeting of the Southern Conference Championships LOC.

Departmental Activities:

- Staff attended the ABRSC reception to welcome Demp Bradford
- Presented the 16-17 sales plan to the community at the July Partner Forum
- The twice-yearly Citywide Task Force met
- Transitioned the AAA program to Leann Swims to handle this FY
- Attended the UNC Asheville meeting regarding hosting Big South Cross Country Championship

STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Administration – Strategic Initiatives

Music Task Force: Invoices were submitted for licensing payment to the first artists on ExploreAsheville Radio.

Workforce Development for the Hospitality Sector: The Workforce Development Steering Committee met on July 12 with Kathy Sinclair of NCWorks as the guest. Kathy provided information on the NCWorks services as related to hotel needs. Primary focus was on creating a roundtable discussion with a broader range of service agencies to see how the hospitality industry can better connect with them for recruitment purposes. The Mountain Area Workforce Development board announced that the hospitality industry's application for a \$30,000 planning grant was approved.

Wayfinding Program: Discussions began on a review of the Wayfinding System to respond to changes, including new qualified destinations, changes in location, changes to names, the 3-year RADTIP development and the focus on the South Slope.

Event Grant Program: Fielded questions from potential applicants on the Festivals and Cultural Events Funding Program with an August 31 application deadline.

Tourism Readiness: Continued to research examples across the Country and layout the process for implementing the program in FY17-18.

Job Postings: The open positions of Operations Assistant, the National Sales Manager Northeast and Sales Manager Southeast were posted on AshevilleCVB.com, LinkedIn and DMAI. Interviews began for the Operations Assistant position.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS UPDATE

Tourism Product Development Efforts:

The 2016 Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) cycle is well underway with applicants working on their Phase II application submissions in anticipation of the August 31 due date. Pat has been assisting the applicants throughout this process.

The TPDF Committee met to review the submission from the Asheville Community Yoga Center and voted to invite the applicant to participate in Phase II. As noted in last month's recap, the applicant submitted a \$650,000 grant request. Staff does not have record of receiving the application, but the applicant provided a copy of the sent email indicating it was sent by the deadline. Staff consulted with our IT department and sought legal counsel, and determined the appropriate process was to accept the submission.

Nine applicant organizations with a total ask of \$8,159,400 have been invited to participate in Phase II.

The City of Asheville staff will meet with CVB staff and destination development consultant, Mike Konzen of PGAV, in early September to kick-off discussions on the \$20 million Major Works request from the City of Asheville for South Slope enhancements.

Partner Engagement:

July Partner Forum – July 19

A Sales & Marketing Update was presented at the July Partner Forum. Members of the marketing team and sales teams presented the upcoming program of work, including strategies and tactics. Thirty-six partners attended and gained insight into media relations, content development, and group sales strategies

BCTDA Annual Meeting – September 28

Planning is underway for this year's BCTDA Annual Meeting, which will be held at the Lioncrest at Biltmore. The keynote speaker will be George Zimmermann, renowned tourism destination marketing and research expert. In addition to the Annual Meeting presentation, industry partners will have the opportunity to hear George at the BCTDA board meeting in the morning and at a VIP speaker's reception prior to the annual meeting. Details are in development. In preparation for the meeting, Pat, with Brit's assistance, is developing the invitation communications, the BCTDA Annual Plan, and the Sales & Marketing Report.

October Partner Forum – October 20

Preliminary planning is underway for the October forum where we plan to host a CVB engagement training. Partners will have the opportunity to learn about CVB offerings, attend a training on the new extranet and meet with DTN ad sales representative, Lia Wik.

Outreach:

CVB 101 orientations were provided to new tourism industry partners or additional information for existing partners, including the new membership director of AIR, Lex 18 Moonshine Bar and Restaurant, Team Ecco Aquarium, Karen Tessier with Market Connections and the Brevard Music Center.

Brit and Pat continue to reach out to qualified partners to submit information for a listing as well as create and service the partners who request listings. Nine new partner accounts were created, three of which are related to the Music Initiative project. Accounts and listings for the

Music Initiative are being created and turned live as directed by ACME through Cat as the CVB's point person. Brit continued work on 2017 Travel Guide listings and finished the Eat & Drink, Do, and Sleep category exports. Brit will continue to refine these lists and audit the layout drafts as proofs come in. Brit also enlisted the help of CAYLA intern, CeeCret, to assist with researching 2017 events for the Travel Guide.

Projects

Brit is heading up the Simpleview CRM extranet 4.0 roll-out, and developing a plan to inform and train partners. The roll-out is expected to take place in November with a partner training scheduled for the October Partner Forum.

Pat is working on the redesign of the AshevilleCVB.com website, which is expected to launch in late September. The BCTDA.org website content will be incorporated into the new AshevilleCVB.com website.

VISITOR SERVICES UPDATE

The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 26,334 guests during the month of July 2016. The Pack Square Park Pavilion welcomed 1,123.

The Volunteers attended a performance "Capital Liar" at Magnetic Theatre, "A Rash of Stories" at NC Stage, "Man of LaMancha" at Asheville Lyric Opera, and an open house at The Crossings of Reynolds Village. Future events include NC Stage, Asheville Community Theatre, Magnetic Theatre, Asheville Aerial Arts, and Homewood Suites.

Training for the volunteers continued with email updates along with "on the job" daily briefings from staff members.