



September 25, 2019

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
From: Stephanie Pace Brown
Subject: President's Report of August 2019 Activities

MONTH AT A GLANCE

The Explore Asheville team implemented several key initiatives in August, spanning every department.

- The new advertising campaign was fully implemented.
- The sales team traveled to three events around the country.
- The public affairs team hosted a marketing seminar for 200 attendees, an Open House for the Homestay Network, and a CVB 101 Orientation while planning the Annual Meeting.
- TMIP was in full swing including a Community Leadership Council meeting, three Public Input Workshops, a resident survey and a visitor survey.
- And, many team members helped support the inaugural culinary event Chow with website, PR, content and logistics support.

We are seeing signs of slowdown in performance metrics and we are digging in on our own advertising performance as well as comparable markets and national trends.

AUGUST METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During August, the sales team posted 1,161 personal contacts (down 3%). August sales activities generated 90 sales leads (up 13%) and 35 convention bookings (down 33%), representing 3,968 rooms (down 47%). Two months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are down 30 percent and room nights represented are down 38 percent.
- CVB sales leads generated 75 group events in August (up 9%), with revenue of \$3,450,209 (up 93%). The services team assisted 72 groups (down 3%).
- The PR team landed 42 significant placements in July (up 50%), with 73 media touchpoints (up 62%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$13,650,534 with reach of over 12.6 million. Online placements added \$56,050 in value and reach of nearly 151 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 447,120 visits (down 4%), including 318,490 to the mobile site (down 2%). Our Facebook fan base total is 291,606 (up 5%) and video views totaled 43,009 (down 73%).

- Online hotel reservations totaled 93 room nights (down 36%) with total room revenue of \$15,138 (down 38%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 20,986 visitors (down 1%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion welcomed 2,112 visitors (down 10%).

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$44,345,723 in July, an increase of six percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 83.4 percent during July (up 2%). The average daily room rate was \$165.89 (up 1.9%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$138.32 (up 4%). Room demand increased 3.7 percent with 205,861 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 46 percent to total 163,269 in July.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Landis and Sarah met with some of the M-Squared team (who handles PR for Aloft Asheville Downtown, AC Hotel Asheville Downtown and Capella on 9) while they were in town to discuss ways to work together regarding media, etc.
- The team went to Highland Brewing to meet Eeva Redmond (communications and community outreach) for a tour and discussion of how the two teams can best work together.
- As a board member for Blue Ridge Mountain Host, Dodie attended the annual planning and visioning retreat for this multi-county marketing organization aimed at promoting the central mountains of Western NC.
- Marla attended the Building Our City seminar series in August, featuring Kristen E. Jeffers, founder and editor-in-chief of The Black Urbanist.
- Marla joined Stephanie and Tina Kinsey from the Asheville Regional Airport to host several airline planners at a dinner in Asheville.
- Beth McKinney and Shawn Boone attended the re-opening of the Buxton Hall event space.
- Shawn, Dianna, Tina, Beth and Carli attended a hardhat tour of Kimpton Arras Hotel.
- CVB Staff coordinated and attended a Marketing Seminar presented by 360i on August 6 at the US Cellular Center.
- Stephanie attended the NC Travel & Tourism Coalition and NC Travel & Tourism Board meetings in Raleigh.
- Stephanie was a presenter and panelist at Leadership Asheville's Summer Breakfast Buzz Series, on the topic of Vision for a Connected Community. Other presenters included City Manager Debra Campbell, County Manager Avril Pinder, Lakesha McDay with Dogwood Health Trust, and UNC Asheville Chancellor Nancy Cable. Seven other CVBers attended the breakfast.
- Stephanie attended the Chamber Elected Officials Reception at the Asheville Visitor Center.
- Glenn attended the WNC Diversity Engagement Coalition Lunch-and-Learn on the subject of "Creating a Culture of Inclusion."
- On August 21, the CVB hosted an Open House and shared a tourism overview for the Homestay Network. Stephanie and other staff members shared a PowerPoint highlighting the BCTDA/Explore Asheville's program of work and how it benefits the local economy, including short-term rentals.

- Stephanie, Marla, Dianna and Glenn attended the Sweet Dreams, Full Plates Kick-Off event at the Crowne Plaza.
- Stephanie attended AIR and Chow Chow executive committee and board meetings throughout the month.
- Stephanie attended Rotary Club of Asheville meetings every Thursday when she was available.
- The BCTDA was the sponsor of the performance tent at Black Mountain's 2019 Sourwood Festival. The BCTDA banner was front and center of the stage.
- Glenn attended the Board Meeting of the Black Mountain Center for the Arts.
- Pat met with West Asheville business owners representing a larger group of business owners on Haywood Road regarding concerns of crime and desire for increased tourism.
- Pat attended the City of Asheville's community meeting about Mountainside Park and Memorial Stadium improvements.
- Pat attended the Civil War Trails informational meeting at the Western Office of the Department of Natural & Cultural Resources.
- Pat attended the Downtown Commission meeting.
- Pat attended the Downtown Associations' Building Our City with Kristen Jeffers presentation.
- Pat presented at the Arts Alliance meeting, sharing details on WelcomeToAVL.com and TMIP Workshops.
- Pat attended the Block Community Collaborative's monthly meeting at the YMI Cultural Center.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising: The new logo with the tagline "Let your spirit run free" was finalized and rolled out with the new campaign in early August. As part of the late summer campaign, the new spots launched on broadcast and streaming along with new paid social creative. The creative is driving to a campaign landing page with an engaging video. Two additional days of still photo shoots were executed in various locations throughout Asheville. In addition to the advertising creative, the new tagline was rolled out on owned and operated channels such as the Explore Asheville YouTube page, social media pages, press sheets and exploreasheville.com.

Paid Search: As of July 1, paid search management was shifted from Simpleview to 360i. In early September, Marla and Sarah met with the agency about the strategy and new opportunities to better optimize search campaigns. Over the next few months, the agency will be working to expand reach by increasing campaign budget caps, aligning paid search with new campaign creative and reducing any inefficient traffic.

	August 2018	August 2019	YoY
Total Spend	\$50,629	\$45,287	-10.6%
Impressions	1,554,556	1,093,520	-29.7%
Clicks	91,570	90,825	-0.8%
CTR	5.9%	8.3%	41.0%
CPCs	\$0.55	\$0.50	-9.8%

General Media Relations: The PR team logged 73 media touchpoints, initiated 73 targeted pitches and hosted 7 media on the ground in Asheville in August. Supported site visits included media representing Good Grit, the new PBS Show "100 Days, Drinks, Dishes and Destinations," *Style Blueprint* and *Your Tango*. Story support included *New York Times*, *Sunseeker*, *Garden & Gun*, *Group Travel Leader* and *Small Market Meetings*. Asheville imagery and assistance were

also provided to AFAR.com, The Dallas Morning News, The Epoch Times and Money.com, among others.

M&C / Group PR Efforts: Sarah Lowery and Carli Adams helped support – via phone interviews, images and additional insight – journalists working on pieces in *The Group Travel Leader* magazine (for a story highlighting the River Arts District among several locations across the U.S. where visitors can see artists in action) and *Small Market Meetings* magazine (for a roundup on creative after-hours offerings for meeting planners to incorporate into their conferences). They also provided copy and photos requested by *Groups Today* magazine for Asheville's inclusion in their Readers' Choice Awards editorial and assisted a writer for *Connect* with interviews for an upcoming wellness-focused feature.

Fall Media Outreach: The Explore Asheville PR Team crafted a "What's New in Asheville for Fall 2019" press release in August after extensive partner outreach. The release was distributed via PR Newswire and picked up 166 times with a potential audience of 49 million. It was also distributed via MailChimp to 554 subscribers and media friends of Explore Asheville and individually pitched to 44 targeted journalists. The team also connected with area biologists and fall color experts late-August and began crafting an additional Fall Forecast message to be distributed in early September.

Explore Asheville Press Room: Final tweaks to the online press room's press trips page were made in August, as well as the three new media intake forms. These forms, with the purpose of streamlining the process to gather details for media site visit requests, were launched late-month.

Significant Placements:

1. *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* | "Three beaches and three cities where spending a three-day weekend would be a treat"
2. *CNN Travel* | "Say Cheers to the 15 Best Beer Cities Around the World"
3. *Food Network* | "Best Rooftop Restaurants in the Country"
4. *Garden & Gun* | "Warren Haynes's Music Guide to Asheville"
5. *Jetsetter* | "The 9 Best Mountain Towns in America"
6. *National Geographic* | "Hear the 10 essential sounds of America"
7. *Reader's Digest* | "25 Most Stunning Mountain Towns in America"
8. *South Magazine* | "Asheville: A Weekend in the Land of the Sky"
9. *Thrillist* | "The 33 Best BBQ Joints in America"
10. *Trip Advisor* | "14 Idyllic Fall Family Vacations Across the U.S."
11. *USA Today* | "10 places to get stars in your eyes"
12. *Wall Street Journal* | "A Dash More Delicious"

Chow Chow: In August, the Explore Asheville PR team began placing media with the three partnering hotels. The team also conducted phone calls with five of the journalists and influencers to make connection points and offer suggestions for Chow Chow ticket requests and Asheville itineraries. As part of her volunteer role on the PR committee, Dodie wrote a national press release announcing major Chow Chow headliners and promoting ticket offerings at Pickled in the Park Grand Tasting. The release was distributed by Chow Chow.

The Content Team continued efforts to spread the word about the festival through ongoing social media posts and email.

Facebook posts to date (including ads) have reached 290,000 users, with additional reach on Twitter and Instagram. A dedicated Facebook ad campaign generated 3,464 landing page views, with an emphasis on Pickled in the Park ticket sales.

A second dedicated Chow Chow email was sent to the full list of 120,000 subscribers this month. It had an open rate of 18.1 percent and 1,049 total clicks.

Content Development Projects: The Content Team's work during the month of August included production and support of multiple video projects, including the Pioneers of the BCTDA documentary video and the scenic video to accompany the debut of the "Be Still Moses" collaboration between the Asheville Symphony and Steep Canyon Rangers—both of which were shown at the Annual Meeting in early September.

Production began on an overview video featuring Historic Biltmore Village, the next in our series of videos—and accompanying content—to cover nearby towns and neighborhoods in Buncombe County. To date footage has been captured at 20+ locations that will be included in the video.

The team also put together a short explainer video on the thermal inversion phenomenon to complement a recent website article. The video used existing time lapse footage to illustrate the wonders of the Blue Ridge Mountains' "sea of clouds."

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

- During the month of August, five new pieces of content were added to ExploreAsheville.com: The Surprising Fall Adventures press release and four new "things to do this weekend" blog posts.
- The most popular blog and story content this month was 50 Things to do in Asheville, which received 30,870 new pageviews, followed by 9 Unique Outdoor Adventures, which received 6,495 pageviews.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- 1,715 daily new likes to Facebook were generated for a total of 290,495.
- There were 18 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of August.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was the share of Nicole Kidman's Instagram post from Biltmore. The post reached 31,542 people organically, generating 1,004 total reactions, and 87 comments. This was also the most engaging post of the month—with 9.9 percent engagement of users reached.

Video:

- There were 10,502 new, organic YouTube views in August. The most popular video by organic views this month was our overview of Black Mountain, which received 1,127 non-paid views. The Biltmore Estate video came in second with 1,084 new views.
- Across all our video platforms, there were 43,009 non-advertising views, with the majority coming from Facebook.

Pinterest:

- The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 5,529. Foodtopia accounts for 1,461 of those and Explore Asheville totals 4,068.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 62,468 followers.
- There were five new posts in August. The most popular was a photo of a young woman in front of a West Asheville mural. It received 3,342 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter:

- Across all our accounts we have a total of 31,003 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 14,515 followers. We continue to provide a mix of proactive response to travel inquiries and pushes of website and Instagram content.

Asheville Traveler E-newsletter:

- 124,649 active subscribers.
- Opens/Click-throughs:
 - In August, our monthly Asheville Traveler e-newsletter went out to 120,528 subscribers, with an overall open rate of 17.4 percent and a click-through rate of 2.8 percent.
 - The 2019 Visitor Sentiment Survey was sent to 116,110 out-of-market subscribers. It had an open rate of 14.5 percent and a click-through rate of 1.8 percent.

ExploreAsheville.com: Website user sessions in August decreased 3.66 percent compared to last year. Organic traffic was up 6.34 percent year-over-year in August. Referral traffic was down 6.06 percent year-over-year, while traffic from eNewsletter clicks was up 8.68 percent year-over-year in August. Social media traffic, excluding Paid Social, was down 24.24 percent compared with last year. Paid Search traffic in August improved 2.36 percent compared with last year. Traffic from advertising campaigns was down 35.45 percent in August compared to last year.

Website Improvements – SEO, QA & Accessibility: In August, Explore Asheville worked with a new product, SitelImprove, to assist with search engine optimization, quality assurance and accessibility efforts. Elizabeth, Cat, Josh and Jason will continue to work with SitelImprove dashboards to improve search engine rankings, content quality and site accessibility.

Online Reservations: There were 54 orders for 93 room nights in August with a total of \$15,138 in booking revenue and \$390 commission. The top five states for room nights booked in July were North Carolina, Tennessee, Georgia, Missouri and Florida.

August 2019	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
Booking Rev	\$15,138	\$24,531	-38%	\$29,891	\$43,022	-31%
Commission	\$390	\$1,108	-65%	\$650	\$2,037	-68%
Orders	54	83	-35%	124	163	-24%
Room Nights	93	146	-36%	188	255	-26%

Visitor Guide: Editorial for the 2020 Visitor Guide has been in the works and staff is currently reviewing drafts of stories that will be included. First drafts of the design layout will be ready in early-mid-October. Sales are pacing nicely with half the ads for the 2020 guide have been sold.

There were 2,752 requests of the *Official Asheville Visitor Guide* in August. Fiscal year-to-date, there have been 5,727 visitor guide requests.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES UPDATE

Group sales reported 35 definite group bookings representing a 32.5 percent decrease from the prior August. Of these group bookings, 19 were meetings and conventions, four were group tour and 12 were weddings. The combined total definite room nights in August were 3,968 room nights a 46.7 percent decrease over the prior year. The estimated revenue for leads turned definite in August was \$646,219 representing a 55 percent decrease. Actualized revenue was \$1,813,543, a 42 percent increase from the prior year.

Ninety sales leads (70 for meeting/conventions, 15 weddings and five for motorcoach) representing 25,796 room nights were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in August 2019. This represents an increase of 13 percent in number of sales leads issued and a 23 percent increase in room nights represented. Person-to-person outreach totaled 1,161 contacts in August as compared to 1,194 the prior year, a 3 percent decrease year-over-year. Indirect outreach totaled 36,255 contacts compared to 9,514 the prior August.

Sales Calls/Missions:

- Tina Porter attended Connect Corporate Marketplace in Louisville, KY and conducted 40 one-on-one appointments with planners. She also attended the networking receptions and educational events. One RFP for 1,350 room nights was received.
- Shawn Boone traveled to Chicago to host a client event and make sales calls. Eight Chicago based planners and their guests attend the Ravinia Festival. Additionally, 15 sales calls were made with two immediate RFP for 401 rooms resulted from the trip.
- Connie Holliday attended Meeting Professionals International's Sunshine Education Summit (a cooperative effort between four MPI Florida Chapters) in Orlando, Florida. One-on-one appointments with 15 planners gleamed 12 RFPs worth an estimated 2,982 room nights. Connie attended networking events, meals and educational functions during this multi-day event. An initial LinkedIn post had 560 views while two follow-up posts on LinkedIn had 1,312 views.

American Society of Association Executives Activities: Tina Porter and Shawn Boone attended the American Society of Association Executives Annual Meeting & Expo "ASAE" held August in Columbus, Ohio. Accents on Asheville, Biltmore and Renaissance Asheville Hotel also participated. In the continuing effort to place Asheville in a larger consideration set, the CVB co-sponsored the Chuck Fazio HeadShot LOUNGE with the ASAE Foundation.

Expo: The CVB again partnered with Raleigh CVB to create a NC beer themed booth, complete with local beers served. The booth backdrop spanned 10 x 30 feet and portrayed two outdoor settings, one unique to each destination. Pub tables, Edison lights and outdoor games rounded out the theme. More than 150 planners stopped by the booth, with one RFP for 246 room nights received on-site. Approximately 58 percent of attendees were classified as buyers and 42 percent were suppliers. A pre-show email blast was sent to 1318 registered attendees of the ASAE Annual Trade Show with an open rate of 24 percent and a click to open rate of 13 percent. An email was sent to 1318 registered attendees of the ASAE Annual Expo with an open rate of 24 percent, with 99 click throughs. Staff participated in industry networking events, including the Foundations Classic Golf Pairing Event drawing approximately 90 planners.

ASAE Foundation Leadership Lounge featuring Chuck Fazio's HeadShot Lounge: The CVB partnered with the ASAE Foundation and Chuck Fazio to host the Lounge, a popular stop for executives throughout the meeting. Approximately 350 planners came through the Lounge where they were introduced to Asheville as a meetings destination using on-site marketing

materials, video presentation, branded items, inclusion in printed on-site guide, hosted receptions and more. Tina staffed the Lounge.

Meeting Professional International's Sunshine Summit CMP Breakfast: As a Gold sponsor or the CMP/CMM breakfast, we received presentation time during the breakfast, post conference-video on MPI SES website, logo recognition and conference attendee list. Forty-two planners attended the event. Connie was our designated representative.

Site Visits/Bookings/Leads: One independent site visit was hosted in August with a corporate client for future incentive business.

A sample of August confirmed bookings include:

- 2021 American Public Works Association – NC Chapter – 252 rooms
- 2020 AutoTeam America Meeting – 72 rooms
- 2019 ABYSA Kepner President's Cup – 525 rooms
- 2019 Bob Lewis Park GameOn Sports – 300 rooms (two events)
- 2019 Beer City Beatdown – 175 rooms
- 2019 USTA Southern Sectional Adult Championships – 140 rooms
- 2019 Chrysler Museum of Art – 23 rooms
- 2020 APEX Adventure Camp Reunion – 50 rooms
- 2019 Ivester Jackson Blackstream Christie's – 10 rooms
- 2019-2020 Collette Vacations – 180 rooms (four tours)
- 2020 Property and Liability Resource Bureau – 40 rooms
- 2021 NC Public Health Association – 550 rooms
- 2019 SAP America – 54 rooms

A total of 22 wedding guide requests were fulfilled in August as compared to 25 last year.

Group Sales Communications: The Elevate Campaign, focusing on Asheville reaching new levels of growth in terms of conference space options and airlift and centering around a 15-minute educational webinar, continued in August. Promotion of the webinar led to more than 130 views in August, exceeding the goal of 100 views.

Media

- Staff was interviewed by a writer with *Small Market Meetings* magazine writing a story about creative after-hours events.
- Staff assisted a writer working on an article about arts districts for *Group Travel Leader* magazine.
- Asheville was voted the **BEST Beer or Wine Trail** by the readers of *Groups Today*.

Mass Communications

- A postcard promoting the educational webinar was sent to 5,116
- An email was sent to 1,318 registered attendees of the ASAE Annual Expo. Open Rate: 24 percent Clicks: 99
- An email was sent to 328 clients inviting them to an Explore Asheville reception during the IMEX America event. Open Rate: 29 percent Clicks: 34
- An email was sent by AENC to 704 AENC members focusing on Explore Asheville services for meeting planners. Open rate: 35 percent Clicks: 49
- An email was sent to 30,072 contacts in the Convention Planit database promoting Explore Asheville's webinar for meeting planners. Open rate: 5 percent Clicks: 989

IMEX Email Communications: Email blasts sent through the internal IMEX system for the four weeks prior to the start of the show to secure appointments were:

- Week one – 1,607 buyers
- Week two – 1,403 buyers
- Week three – 1,444 buyers
- Week four – 2,684 buyers

Convention Service Highlights: Staff hosted a planning meeting with the planners of The American College of Trust and Estate Council 2020 Summer Conference. Three microsites for GameOn, Beer City Beatdown and Kepner President's Cup were completed.

Simpleview CRM Training: Staff attended two days of CRM training aimed towards introducing best practices and to review how to utilize the system best in day-to-day prospecting and record keeping.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tourism Product Development:

TMIP: Led by PGAV, A Community Sentiment Survey was distributed and three Public Input Workshops were held in August. Workshops were held at different times of the day at the US Cellular Center and at the Edington Center in an effort to increase accessibility and participation. Approximately 130 members of the community attended a workshop. The next community meeting will include a Phase I Report presentation on October 23. The Community Leadership Council met on August 14.

The Wortham Center for Performing Arts submitted drawings for naming of the outdoor plaza in recognition of the BCTDA's support. The signage will be unveiled at a donor recognition event on October 15.

The City of Asheville, the NC Arboretum and the Center for Craft submitted disbursement requests.

Pat continues to work on a plan for visitor information kiosk-type signage at the WNC Farmers Market and a ribbon-cutting event planned in coordination with other happenings at the Farmers Market this fall.

Partner Engagement and Events:

Explore Asheville CVB 101 Orientation: The public affairs team hosted a CVB 101 Orientation August 14, which included eight representatives from Asheville Goods, Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation, Dogwood Mountain Escapes, Food Fire + Knives, Lightheart LLC, Montford Neighborhood Association, Super 8, and UNC Asheville.

New Partners: Five new partners were onboarded in August: Axeville Throwing Club, Benjamin Walls Gallery, Food Fire + Knives, Nadine Charlsen Gallery, and Noble Cider – The Greenhouse Restaurant. Joe and Pat continue to reach out to qualified partners to submit information for a listing as well as service the partners who request listings.

360i Marketing Seminar – August 6: Explore Asheville was pleased to host a marketing training seminar with 360i for approximately 200 attendees made up of tourism industry partners and area nonprofits. The full day session was held at the US Cellular Center with breakfast and lunch provided. A follow-up survey was issued afterward, and reviews were very positive.

Homestay Network Open House – August 21: Explore Asheville hosted an open house and informational presentation for members of the Homestay Network with approximately 30 members in attendance.

BCTDA Annual Meeting – September 5: Planning is underway for the 2019 BCTDA Annual Meeting to be held at the Omni Grove Park Inn. Explore Asheville will present the Annual Report, a status update on the Tourism Management & Investment Plan and will unveil the new advertising campaign. The program will also include a preview of key elements of the FY19-20 marketing & sales plan, a short film highlighting the early history of the lodging tax and creation of the BCTDA. 350 are registered for the event.

Projects:

RAD Wayfinding: Two Public Input Sessions for Wayfinding in the River Arts District were held on August 19. Approximately 15 members of the community attended and provided input on MERJE's conceptual designs.

African-American Heritage Project: Planning is underway for the development of an information packet and community engagement workshop. Additionally, Pat attended the Civil War Trails informational meeting, and has scheduled a follow-up with the program director in September to discuss the existing trail markers in Asheville that reference African American history.

CRM Audit & Visitor Guide: Pat and Joe continue to work on the auditing process for Explore Asheville's customer relationship management (CRM) database and refine approach as new listing category structure issues arise. They are reviewing best practices and support options with SimpleView and have received a preliminary assessment to help guide next steps. The audit also supports other major projects such as the Visitor Guide listings and the marketing team's website usability updates.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE/ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Administration: On August 1, Stephanie and Glenn presented the revised Team Member Handbook at the CVB staff meeting. The majority of revisions were based on providing greater clarity and refinement to earlier policies. The handbook was presented to the BCTDA board at its June meeting for an opportunity to review and provide input.

Glenn onboarded new Web Manager, Josh Jones, into all employee benefits prior to his 90th day of employment on August 24.

Glenn organized an orientation for five recently hired staff members on August 20 with presentations provided by Stephanie, Marla, Dianna and Pat.

Grants Utilizing Earned Revenue: The application and program guidelines were posted on AshevilleCVB.com and through a media release for the 2020 funding round for Festivals & Cultural Events and Major Events. A deadline of September 30 was provided.

A \$1,000 sponsorship was provided to the Organic Growers School for their Fall Harvest Conference.

Wayfinding Signage: Glenn completed a revised version of the Interlocal Agreement for Wayfinding with Buncombe County, City of Asheville, Town of Black Mountain, Town of Weaverville and Town of Woodfin. The revised version was submitted to Attorney Sabrina Rockoff for review. To reintroduce the partners to the agreement and the system, Glenn met with Weaverville's Town Manager Selena Coffey on August 21. Glenn already met with Black Mountain's leadership and has requested a similar meeting with Woodfin.

Archiving BCTDA Historic Documents and Materials: Will Morgan, a student at UNC-A who is completing his master's in public history and who is associated with WNC Archives, continues to archive and organize 30-years of BCTDA files in our off-site storage. On August 26, Stephanie and Glenn visited the storage rooms with Will to review his work.

Building: Glenn reviewed the Security Survey for the building provided by Lockdown International. Recommendations were noted and separated into categories such as policy and procedure additions/changes, cost vs. no-cost, and training. The leadership team will further review the report in September.

BCTDA Annual Meeting Awards & Pioneer Dinner: Jonna coordinated the finalization of the William A.V. Cecil Leadership and Outgoing BCTDA Chairman awards to be given out at the Annual Meeting with Blackbird Frame & Art and Portfolio Metalwork. She also coordinated details for the Tourism Pioneer Appreciation Dinner, hosted by Stephanie and taking place at The Omni Grove Park Inn following the meeting, scheduled September 5, to express gratitude to those who were instrumental in establishing Buncombe County's occupancy tax and the BCTDA back in 1983.