

Explore **ASHEVILLE**
Convention & Visitors Bureau

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

April 2022

MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS OVERVIEW

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) has charted a new course for tourism aligned with broader community priorities. This includes the adoption of [strategic imperatives](#) (outlined below) that are informing and guiding the direction of Explore Asheville's program of work and community investments going forward.

The [Monthly Highlights](#) report, released at the BCTDA Board meetings, provides a brief update of our progress toward these strategic imperatives. You can also find information from the discussions and presentations at [Buncombe County TDA meetings](#), in our [newsletters](#), at [partner events](#), and via other communication channels.



Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth

Balance resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy.

Focus on the quality of each visit to our community – balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County.



Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel

Engage residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences.

Collaborate with community organizations, local businesses and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy.



Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences

Extend a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQ visitors – connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses and entrepreneurs – creating more opportunities for all to win.

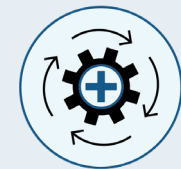
Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.



Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit

Share stories of creators and makers who help differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences and more.

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Run a Healthy & Efficient Organization

Invest in people, policies and practices to serve our community with integrity within the organization's legislative requirements.

DELIVER BALANCED RECOVERY & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

Improve quality of each visit by inspiring increased length of stay & dispersal

- Travel Desk: Launched new display banners specific to Black Mountain
- eTarget: Sent dedicated email blast promoting a 5-day itinerary, outdoor adventure, neighborhoods, summer travel and our food scene
- Geofencing Campaigns: Shared target-specific messaging during events
 - Masters Tournament Geofencing: Shared an outdoors message during the tournament (April 7-10); post-event retargeting will follow in May
 - MO Summit: Shared destination brand message throughout the [MO Summit](#) (April 19-20), a gathering of impact CEOs; post-event retargeting will follow in May
- Mobilefuse: Showcased different Asheville neighborhoods in interactive map
- TripAdvisor: Launched a branded hub and three branded trips with themes of Creative Spirit, Nature and Foodtopia
- Organic Spa: Deployed Asheville-dedicated email blast to the Organic Spa audience about “The Healing Traditions of Asheville”
- Earned Media Coverage:
 - Washingtonian: [5 Fun Destinations That Are Now Easier to Get to From DC – Washingtonian](#)
 - Travel Weekly: [Destinations are using geolocation data to manage tourism growth](#) [Isley speaking at Mountain Travel Symposium]

Accelerate proactive sales efforts to increase net new business to the destination

- Blue Ridge Parkway Association (BRPA): Attended BRPA’s spring meeting
- Sports Events & Tourism Association: Attended the virtual annual membership meeting

Drive revenue in need periods through updated group sales strategy

- Double Incentive Offer: Sent email to 10,990 clients promoting the last month of the promotion for new meeting RFPs
 - Results: Booked 16 groups representing 2,495 room nights with final total still rising as requests are processed
- Meeting Professionals International: Locked in [MPI MedUp](#) webinar sponsorship for April 12, including logo/video inclusion, chat opportunity during webinar and polling question; Marshall attended and got great feedback and will get list of attendees
 - Mountain Meetings Magazine: Finalized full-page ad and advertorial

DELIVER BALANCED RECOVERY & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH (CONTINUED)

Balance quality of life for residents & experience for visitors through project investments

- Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF): Updated [landing page](#) and sub-pages with 2022 program guide, new policies and application link; application deadline for Phase 1 is June 1
 - Public Awareness Campaign: Launched multimedia campaign (funded using earned revenue) to promote TPDF and 2022 grant cycle; it consists of underwriting on Blue Ridge Public Radio, [advertising](#) in Asheville Citizen Times, Mountain Xpress, Facebook in Buncombe only
 - TPDF Media Coverage:
 - Mountain Xpress: [Voters may decide on \\$70M in Buncombe borrowing this year](#)
 - Mountain Xpress: [Council discusses budget priorities, concerns in work session](#)
 - Religion Unplugged: [Easter PBS Documentary Follows Creation Of Church Fresco, Depicts Asheville's Impoverished And Homeless](#)
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Opening of Woodfin's Silver-Line Park a milestone for larger project, Whitewater Wave](#)

Collaborate with broader community leaders to ensure sustainable growth & alignment

- Workforce Development: Participated in a [career fair](#) with 20+ partners for 400 high school students from nine Buncombe County Schools
- [Asheville Ideas Fest](#): Sponsored upcoming event at UNC Asheville
 - Promotional Support: Partnered on microsite creation and finalized full-page print ad for inclusion in the 2022 Power List publication which will be mailed statewide with Business North Carolina's May issue
 - Local media: Explore Asheville was mentioned and Isley quoted in [UNC Asheville Announces Inaugural Asheville Ideas Fest on June 14-18, 2022](#); coverage on [WLOS](#), [Mountain Xpress](#), Asheville News Online.

ENCOURAGE SAFE & RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

Influence visitors to respect, protect and preserve natural, cultural and human resources

- Outside Magazine: Continued content partnership
 - “The Locals' Guide to Asheville“: [Digital article](#) and social promotions included a gear giveaway including local outdoor brands LiquidLogic, ENO, Rockgeist, Astral, Sylvan Sports and Kitsbow
 - “Enjoying the Outdoors Responsibly“: Deployed Asheville-dedicated email to the Outside audience
- Afar: Continued content partnership
 - ["Unpacked Ethical Traveler"](#): Debuted column in print Earth issue with Explore Asheville as the ongoing primary sponsor and Asheville advertorial alongside the column
 - Sustainability Ads: Launched banner ads on Travel for Good channel
- Pack Smart: Published new [Instagram Reel](#) and [YouTube video](#) with local content creator Nathaniel Flowers focused on responsible recreation and WNC outdoor gear brands
- eTarget: Deployed "Celebrate the Beauty of Earth in Asheville" sustainability and Earth Day e-blast
- AdTheorent: Launched rich media units promoting sustainability on April 18

Encourage partners to embrace sustainable and responsible tourism practices

- Earth Week: Participated in the [Downtown Cleanup](#) on April 19 and encouraged partners to [join our sustainability journey](#)
- Media coverage of cleanup included:
 - WLOS: [More than 700 pounds of trash collected in downtown cleanup day by 200 volunteers](#)
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Downtown Asheville litter cleanup draws record turnout, cleans 700 pounds of trash](#)
 - Mountain Xpress: [Spring clean: Asheville organizations, volunteers clean up downtown](#)

Sponsor and attend outdoor industry events promoting unique outdoor assets

- Outdoor Economy Conference: Attended in Cherokee, NC and learned about [B Local Asheville + WNC](#); secured follow-ups with group's leadership

ENGAGE & INVITE MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES

Extend a genuine invitation to diverse audiences

- The Root Content Partnership: Co-created custom content to highlight BIPOC culture in Asheville
 - Article 1: Published "[Your Perfect Three-Day Trip through Asheville's Black Culture and History](#)" on April 13, along with superhero marquee unit
 - Article 2: Published "[Asheville Artist, Bee Blanton, Highlights the City's Best Attractions](#)" on April 18 and featured Blanton's illustrations
- Influencer Visit: Hosted digital influencer [Ashlee Major Moss](#) for a week of pillar-aligned experiences
 - Itinerary: [Hood Huggers](#) driving tour, lunch at [Soundspace @ Rabbits](#), a hike with Asheville Adventure Tours, and glassblowing and gallery visits with [Asheville Art Studios Tours](#)
 - Local Spotlight: Covered in the podcast, newsletter and social media of Stu Helm Food Fan: [Asheville Impresses London Based Travel Bloggers](#)
- iHeart Radio: Launched audio ads and host-reads on Baratunde Thurston's "[How to Citizen](#)" podcast; these will run through June
- LGBTQ+: Created [LGBTQ+ filter](#) for ExploreAsheville.com events calendar
- TravelDesk: Launched banner ads in Atlanta Black Star and Essence travel section
- Diverse Display Ads: Finalized new diversity-specific display banners

Develop and invest in community projects that attract and engage diverse audiences

- [WNC Black Business Expo](#): Sponsored and exhibited at the inaugural expo on April 8
 - Local Coverage: Event was well covered by local media, including WLOS: [Inaugural WNC Black Business Expo draws crowd in Asheville](#)
- [BLACKALACHIA](#): Hosted a sold-out film screening and Q+A with local artist Moses Sumney and moderated by music journalist Marcus Dowling on April 8 at the Masonic Temple
- Billie Jean King Cup: Covered by WLOS [\\$8 million impact expected from Billie Jean King Cup in Asheville](#) (Isley interviewed)

Increase outreach in recruiting diverse meetings and events

- [Marcus Anderson Jazz and Coffee Escape](#): Worked with this group to rebook hotel blocks for August 2022 and discussed looking ahead to a multiyear booking for future

PROMOTE & SUPPORT ASHEVILLE'S CREATIVE SPIRIT

Elevate Asheville's creative experiences to differentiate and inspire visits

- [AVL Beer Week](#): Created a new microsite page on ExploreAsheville.com for the AVL Beer Week in coordination with the Asheville Brewers Association
- Causal IQ: Launched digital out of home (OOH) video on electric vehicle charging stations with a sustainability message in Atlanta, Boston, Charleston, Chicago, Dallas, NYC, Philadelphia, DC and West Palm Beach
- Dwell: Launched custom content piece #1 "[A Design Lover's Guide to Asheville, North Carolina](#)" and supporting display media; finalized full-page print ad for May/June issue
- Garden & Gun: Justin Friede local team member with MMGY captured photo assets at Citizen Vinyl for inclusion in our upcoming June/July advertorial
 - Advertorial Highlights: Asheville's music scene, Citizen Vinyl/Vinylkey and will include a few quotes from Moses Sumney
- Mobilefuse: Launched creative spirit rich media unit
- AdTheorent: Launched rich media units promoting creative spirit on April 18
- Earned Media Coverage:
 - National Geographic: [10 of the world's best destinations for blooms](#)
 - Saturday Evening Post: [Dreaming of Asheville](#)

Increase partner appreciation and usage of Explore Asheville's assets and resources to further amplify Asheville's distinctive creative spirit

- New Partners: Added nine new accounts to ExploreAsheville.com: [Arcadian Ave](#), [Asheville Coffee Tours](#), [Bespoke Experiences LLC](#), [Dragon Phoenix](#), [Elevation Lofts Hotel](#), [Embrace the Space Between](#), [Lumen Concierge LLC](#), [Pete Key Properties](#) and [Susan Stowell Bridal Services](#)

RUN A HEALTHY & EFFICIENT ORGANIZATION

Prioritize professional development and training

- Simpleview Summit: Attended the Simpleview Summit in Phoenix, Arizona
 - Panel: Whitney Smith sat on panel focused on Sustainable Tourism

Increase team performance and effectiveness

- New Hire: Welcomed Social Media & Content Manager Maggie Gregg on April 18

Improve employee wellness

- April Wellness Focus: Eight staffers committed to completing the Chamber Challenge 5K on May 6
 - Local Spotlight: Explore Asheville's involvement in the 2021 Chamber Challenge 5k was featured in [Chamber's weekly newsletter](#) on April 20

Achieve reaccreditation through Destination International's DMAP Program

- [Destination Marketing Accreditation Program \(DMAP\)](#): Submitted DMAP reaccreditation application to Destinations International on April 29; results are expected mid-June
 - DMAP Standards: Documented adherence to 92 required standards in the categories of governance, strategic planning, stakeholder engagement/advocacy, finance, human resources, management and operations, technology, research and marketing intelligence, brand management, marketing, communications, sales and services, visitor services, partnerships, and destination development; also documented aspirational standards

Communicate regularly to stakeholders about TDA/CVB actions, pillars and progress, events

- E-newsletters, E-alerts: [6 sent in April](#); a total of 10,039 were delivered with open rates as high as 50.3% and an average of 45%.
- Local News & BCTDA/Explore Asheville coverage:
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [13 months after hotel moratorium, officials, others opine Asheville's new regulations](#); this article also used in NCRLA newsletter on April 20 and picked up by Asheville News Online
 - Asheville Citizen Times: [Buncombe wants a lobbyist in Raleigh to tackle hotel, property taxes, vacation rentals](#); this article also picked up by Asheville News Online and WNC Business Today
 - AVL Today: J Hackett and Bruce Waller named Vic Isley as a top local leader in a [profile piece](#), later picked up by Asheville News Online
 - WLOS: [Connect Beyond Festival, Sundance Collab, create panel on music, film, storytelling](#) (Sponsor logo visible in coverage)
 - Mountain Xpress: [The Fritz, Abby Bryant and the Echos kick off Downtown After 5 on April 15](#) (Explore Asheville mentioned as sponsor)
 - Business NC: [Destination NC: Corporate & leisure travel, home remedy mentions Asheville in section on outdoor recreation](#)