

April 24, 2019

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

From: Stephanie Pace Brown

Subject: President's Report of March 2019 Activities

The spring advertising campaign launched March 25 with broadcast television in 12 markets and streaming video in 16 markets with strong digital support and complementary terrestrial and online radio. A media mission to Chicago included meetings with editors and freelance writers representing outlets such as *Chicago Magazine*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Lonely Planet*, *Trailblazer Magazine* and *Connect*.

The sales team hosted the TUI FAM and traveled to Atlanta for sales calls. The team hosted eight site visits. A 48-Hour Experience was held March 26-29 with planners from North Carolina, Illinois, Florida, Colorado, Missouri and Georgia. The team also led a AAA sales mission to Tennessee, visiting 50 agents in nine offices. Participating tourism partners included Biltmore, LaZoom, McKibbon Hospitality, FIRC Group, the NC Arboretum and Gray Line Trolley Tours.

The Southern Conference Basketball Tournament returned to Asheville and garnered sell out attendance for the finals. The tournament was supported by the Explore Asheville team who coordinated welcome materials for 10 host hotels and provided welcome gifts to 85 VIPs. Staff volunteered during the event and staffed information tables.

A Partner Forum "What's New in 2019" was offered in two sessions and attracted 89 participants.

An archivist has been retained to organize and preserve BCTDA historical records, and Marilyn Ball is interviewing BCTDA founders to document the creation of the occupancy tax in Buncombe County.

MARCH METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During March, the sales team posted 1,042 personal contacts (up 2%). March sales activities generated 89 sales leads (up 56%) and 67 convention bookings (up 43%), representing 7,217 rooms (up 11%). Nine months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are up 35 percent and room nights represented are down 8 percent.

- CVB sales leads generated 39 group events in March (up 77%), with revenue of \$1,242,288 (up 705%). The services team assisted 39 groups (up 39%).
- The PR team landed 24 significant placements in February (down 27%), with 51 media touchpoints (down 26%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$3,802,323 with reach of over 3.3 million. Online placements added \$90,335 in value and reach of over 131 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 337,183 visits (up 4%), including 228,630 to the mobile site (up 15%). Our Facebook fan base total is 283,612 (up 5%) and video views totaled 66,965 (down 11%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 76 room nights (down 11%) with total room revenue of \$11,789 (up 6%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 13,993 visitors (up 14%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion is closed for the winter.

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$20,975,159 in February, an increase of 6.6 percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 58.4 percent during February (up 7.0%). The average daily room rate was \$118.26 (down 2.6%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$69.02 (up 4.2%). Room demand increased 8.7 percent with 128,391 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 38 percent to total 86,469 in February.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Stephanie participated in board meetings for the airport, the Destinations International Foundation and AIR and attended the Chamber's advocacy committee meeting.
- Stephanie presented to a class at App State. She met with Jack Thompson of the Preservation Society and Barber Melton representing Asheville's neighborhoods.
- Dodie, Landis and Jason met with Molly Kummerle and Michelle Moog-Koussa of The Moog Foundation and soon-to-open Moogseum.
- The PR team toured East Fork Pottery and met with their leadership and marketing team to brainstorm future collaborations.
- The PR team toured Spicewalla and met with their leadership and marketing team.
- Dodie and Cat attended the Sunshine Sammies new menu launch.
- Sarah Lowery attended Governor Cooper's NC beer month proclamation and VisitNC media event at Highland Brewing Company.
- Marla attended several community meetings including the Asheville Downtown Association, the Downtown Issues committee meeting and in early April, she attended the Civic Center Commission meeting.
- The Sales Team attended a hard hat tour of Residences at Biltmore.
- The Sales Team held their Quarterly DOS meeting.
- Dianna and Pat attended the SoCon Elected Officials Reception.
- Tina and Shawn attended the Grand Bohemian's 10-year Anniversary Party.
- Tina attended Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission to hear NASC President speak.

- Shawn, Tina and Dianna held an IMEX meeting for interested industry partners
- Dianna attended the Civic Center Commission Meeting.
- The Sales Team attended NC Sports Association's quarterly meeting in Hickory.
- Glenn attended the Board Meeting of the Historic Piney Grove Cemetery in Swannanoa.
- Glenn attended the Black Mountain Center for the Arts Board Meeting, serving as Chair.
- Pat attended the City Council's annual retreat.
- Pat attended the African American Heritage Commission meeting.
- Pat attended the Empower Hour lunch and tour at the YWCA.
- Pat attended the City of Asheville's African American Heritage Resource Survey community event.
- Pat attended the "Lunch and Learn: YMI Cultural Center Past, Present, and Future."
- Pat attended the NC African American Heritage Commission's "Green Books' 'Oasis Spaces'" project information session.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising: In March, the agency began strategic planning for FY19-20 media strategies, creative development and research/analytics needs.

Spring Campaign:

The spring campaign was finalized and launched on March 25th. Spring broadcast television will be in the following markets: Atlanta, Birmingham, Charleston, Charlotte, Cincinnati, Columbus, Greensboro, Huntsville, Knoxville, Nashville, Raleigh, and Washington D.C. Streaming video will be in all broadcast markets plus New York and Chicago, Tampa and Orlando. The campaign will have a strong digital presence in display, retargeting, paid search, and paid social, allowing for the opportunity to both hyper-target the audience clusters and reach potential visitors in their environment. Hyper-targeted digital will also run in Greenville and Spartanburg aimed at enticing overnight visitors. Audio advertising in the form of both terrestrial and online radio will complement mass awareness and touch on target passion points. Print advertising will be utilized for inspirational messaging in *Atlanta Magazine*, *Our State*, *Travel + Leisure* and *National Geographic Traveler*. Black Mountain print ads will run in *Our State*, *Blue Ridge Country*, and *Charlotte Magazine*.

Paid Search:

Paid search in March generated over 72,482 site visits from Google and Bing combined. Paid search also netted 15 hotel bookings in March, bringing our fiscal year to date total to 99 bookings and \$42k. Other highlights:

- Sessions were up by 20 percent year-over-year
- Bounce rate decrease by 14 percent year-over-year
- Pages per visit was 3.64 for March (up 15 percent year-over-year)
- Average time on site was 3:18 in March (up 13 percent year-over-year)
- 898 Visitor Guide requests were generated by paid search in March

General Media Relations: The PR team logged 51 media touchpoints, initiated 85 targeted pitches and hosted four media on the ground in Asheville in March. Pitch numbers were high due to Spring Media Tour outreach, M&C "What's New" pitching and the media marketplace at VisitNC 365. Supported site visits included media representing Canadian outlets *Coup de Pouce* and *Dress to Kill Magazine*, Italian outlet *Golf & Turismo Magazine* and blogs *Getaways for Grownups* and *Lucindervention*. Story support included *Vice Munches*, *AAA Go Magazine*, *Thrillist* and *Sunseeker*. Asheville imagery and assistance were also provided to *Where to Retire* magazine and *Condé Nast Traveller* (UK), among others.

Spring Media Tour:

PR Manager Landis Taylor traveled to new expansion advertising market Chicago at the beginning of the month and met with editors and freelance writers representing outlets such as *Chicago Magazine*, *Chicago Sun-Times*, *Travel + Leisure*, *Chicago Tribune*, *Lonely Planet*, *Trailblazer Magazine* and *Connect*.

Visit NC 365:

At the end of the month, the PR Team traveled to Wilmington to attend the Visit NC 365 Conference. PR Specialist Sarah Lowery participated in a PR Roundtable where she delivered 90-second pitches to writers, editors and producers for national, regional and in-state outlets such as *CNN*, *AFAR*, *Condé Nast Traveler*, *Los Angeles Times*, *Southern Living*, *UNC-TV's* "North Carolina Weekend" and *Our State* magazine.

M&C / Group PR Efforts:

M&C press sheets were updated and Asheville news went out to editors for top M&C and group-travel publications, with this outreach totaling about 20 pitches thus far. Sarah continued work with TrendKite to pinpoint additional outlets and writers who previously covered "top destinations" for meetings and groups.

Explore Asheville Online News Room:

In March, the team continued to move forward with plans to revamp the online news room. Work included making updates to copy regarding image usage, adding more content in the Press Kit section and reworking the Press Trips page. The photos in the media galleries were also fine-tuned with insight from others on the marketing team. The site soft launched at the end of the month. Additional work to strengthen media protocols included the creation of a Media Visit Expense Form for stipend cards distributed to press on assignment when activity comps cannot be arranged.

Summer Press Release:

Work started on the summer press release aimed at highlighting news around Appalachian food including partner news outreach, pitch/release structure, media strategy, including the creation of a "bullseye list" to support a new Trendkite dashboard.

Significant Placements

1. *Better Homes and Gardens* | "7 Women-Run Companies That are Helping to Change the World"
2. *Brit + Co* | "12 of the Most Romantic Honeymoon Destinations in the USA"
3. *CNN Travel* | "The Southern city that aims to make better bagels than New York City"
4. *CraftBeer.com* | "The French Broad River and Her Brews"
5. *Getting on Travel* | "Junebug: Relive Retro Trailer Life in North Carolina"
6. *Knoxville News Sentinel* | "Asheville and Knoxville see tourism gains as visitors escape to the outdoors"
7. *Men's Journal* | "The Best 'Parkitecture' Hotels for Travelers Who Love the National Parks"
8. *Rolling Stone* | "Why Asheville, North Carolina, Is the New Must-Visit Music City"
9. *Southern Living* | "The South's Best Food Cities 2019"
10. *Swirled* | "These Are the Best U.S. Destinations For a Spring Getaway"
11. *Thrillist* | "The Best American Cities for Creatives (That You Can Actually Afford to Live In)"
12. *Travel Pulse* | "The Year's Top Destinations for Adventure Seekers"
13. *Washington Post* | "Canine companions taste the good life, too, in Asheville"

Content Development Projects: The content team’s work during the month of March focused on moving forward several projects, as well as creating new content that responds to multiple needs—including news value, PR value, alignment with the spring campaign, and user experience.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

During the month of March, nine new pieces of editorial content were added to the website. New stories included a guide to the South Slope neighborhood, a round-up of local wine experiences, a list of the top 11 rooftop bars, a feature on Appalachian cuisine and a list of unusual outdoor adventures. Four new “things to do this weekend” blog posts were added, and significant updates were made to articles about local gardens and Moog experiences.

The most popular blog and story content this month was 50 Things to do in Asheville, which received 29,078 page views, followed by Top Spring Events in Asheville, which received 7,412 page views.

Additional content projects included the completion of a video highlighting experiences in the South Slope neighborhood and a sizzle-style video promoting the local music scene. The team moved closer toward completing a Black Mountain video that will accompany new editorial assets launched early in the month of March.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- March saw 1,323 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 283,612.
- There were 17 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of March.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was a share of a link to our story on Biltmore Blooms. The post reached 116,376 people organically, generating 6,951 total reactions, and 595 comments. This was also the most engaging post—it engaged 6.4% of users reached.

Video:

- There were 8,537 new, organic YouTube views in March. The most popular video by organic views this month was Return Again, which received 1,035 non-paid views. The fall time lapse came in second with 912 new views.
- Across all our video platforms, there were 69,982 non-advertising views, with the majority coming from Facebook. There have been 666,432 views of Explore Asheville content YTD (since July 1, 2018).

Pinterest:

- A renewed strategic look at Pinterest as a content channel kicked off this month as Jason deployed 13 new “pins.” Impressions of Explore Asheville content on Pinterest have already increased 181% in the first month of increased activity.
- The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 5,265. Foodtopia accounts for 1,431 of those. Explore Asheville – 3,834.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 56,938 followers.
- There were 8 new posts in March. The most popular was a video by Jared Kay showing thermal inversion at Looking Glass Rock. It received 2,249 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter:

- Across all three accounts we have a total of 30,860 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 14,626 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 121476 active subscribers.
- Opens/Click-throughs: In March, our monthly Asheville Traveler e-newsletter went out to 124,289 subscribers. It had an overall open rate of 17.2 percent and a click-through rate of 3.2 percent.

Google DMO Update: The team received the first quarterly update from Miles regarding the Google DMO Partnership program. Since kicking off the program in Fall 2018, the team has uploaded 310 images that have received over 1.4 million views within search results and Google Maps. Organic Google Posts—which appear in the Asheville destination Knowledge Panel for any user who searches “Asheville” or “Asheville NC”—have received more than 2.5 million views.

ExploreAsheville.com: Website user sessions in March increased 4.33 percent compared to last year. Organic traffic was down 4.27 percent year-over-year in March. Social media traffic was up 14.5 percent year-over-year in March. Referral traffic was up 16.92 percent year-over-year, and traffic from e-newsletter clicks was down 18.29 percent year-over-year in March. Traffic from the spring advertising campaigns was up 121.8 percent in March compared to last year.

Website Improvements – SEO and CRO:

In March, Simpleview and Explore Asheville staff continue to work on efforts to improve site conversion rates based on established goals and KPIs. Several pages continue to perform particularly well in driving organic traffic, including Things to Do in Asheville This Weekend and the Top Spring Events in 2019 blog post.

Online Reservations: There were 42 orders for 76 room nights in March with a total of \$11,789.38 in booking revenue and \$547.33 commission. The top 5 states for room nights booked in March were Ohio, Virginia, Michigan, North Carolina and Georgia.

March	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
2019						
Booking Rev	\$11,789	\$11,146	5.78%	\$125,186	\$110,841	12.94%
Commission	\$547.33	\$584.85	-6.42%	\$5,807.96	\$5,129.24	13.23%
Orders	42	51	-17.65%	480	444	8.11%
Room Nights	76	85	-10.59%	779	700	11.29%

Visitor Guide: There were 3,493 requests for the Official Asheville Travel Guide in March, an 34.4% percent increase over last year. Fiscal year-to-date, there have been 29,317 travel guide requests.

Top 5 DMAs for February	# of Guides Requested	FY 2018-2019 Top 5 DMAs	# of Guides Requested
NEW YORK	159	NEW YORK	1374
ATLANTA	127	TAMPA-ST. PETE, SARASOTA	1046
CHICAGO	122	ATLANTA	1001
TAMPA-ST. PETE, SARASOTA	122	WASHINGTON DC	893
WASHINGTON DC	120	ORLANDO-DAYTONA BCH- MELBRN	847

Community Engagement:

Community Engagement Campaign:

Marla sent out an RFP to local media and evaluated proposals for a local campaign launched as part of National Tourism Week using earned revenues from Web advertising (non-room tax dollars). The campaign will launch at the end of April and continue through June.

Chow Chow:

The team continued to provide support to Chow Chow in the development of the website on the ExploreAsheville.com platform, CMS training for Chow Chow staff, support of the local/national press release announcing ticket sales and programming, and media targeting strategy.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES UPDATE

Group sales reported 67 definite group bookings in March, up 43 percent from the prior year (46 meetings/conventions, 11 weddings and 10 group tour). The combined total definite room nights were 7,217 room nights, up 11 percent from the previous year. Eighty-nine leads (61 for meeting/conventions, 19 for weddings and 9 for motorcoach) representing 18,408 room nights, were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in March. Leads distributed were up 50.8 percent and rooms represented were up 81 percent over the prior year.

Estimated revenue for leads issued was \$1,671,688 (up 24%). Actualized revenue was \$1,188,740 (up 135%). Person-to-person outreach totaled 1,042 contacts, up two percent. No indirect outreach through the internal system was conducted in March.

Mr. Daniel Bradley joined the team on March 1 as the Group Sales & Services Specialist.

Sales Calls/Missions/FAMS:

- Shawn Boone conducted sales calls in Atlanta, meeting with nine corporate, independent, and association planners. He also attended the Georgia Meeting Professionals International's TECH Summit, where Explore Asheville was a sponsor. More than 100 attendees were present including industry partners from The Omni Grove Park Inn and Kessler Collection. Podium time and the showing of the meetings video were part of the sponsorship package.

- Kathryn Dewey and Dianna Pierce attended Visit NC 365 Conference held in Wilmington where it was announced Asheville will be the host for the 2020 Visit NC 365 Conference March 22-24.
- Connie Holliday traveled to Greenville, meeting with four corporate clients.
- Tina Porter called on local bicycle shops prospecting for new sports cycling opportunities.
- Dianna hosted the TUI Germany FAM consisting of TUI's selling agents and agency owners to tour the area and site hotels used for the FIT and coach itineraries. TUI is noted as the world's leading tourism group with a portfolio consisting of more than 1600 agencies, six airlines, tour operators and more. A represent from Lieb Management and Visit NC escorted the group.
- Twenty wedding guides were downloaded this month as compared to 30 guides last March.

Site Visits/Leads: The team hosted/assisted with eight site visits in March including: 2021 International Golfing Fellowship of Rotarians – 90 rooms, 2019 Top Gun Sports – various tournaments, 2021 National Wild Turkey Federation – 290 rooms, 2019 Appalachian Regional Commission – 400 rooms, 2020 Democratic Attorney Generals Association – 115 rooms, 2020 Bush Brothers Sales Convention – 258 rooms, Bojangles' Restaurants, Inc. and Holley Events and Exhibits.

A sample of March bookings includes (but is not limited to):

- 2023 National Watermelon Conference – 1,000 rooms (February)
- 2019 Society of Air Force Nurses – 135 rooms
- 2019 Cabot Corporation – 84 rooms
- 2019 Society of Actuaries – 50 rooms
- 2019 AAA East Central – 44 rooms
- 2019 White Star (four groups) – 325 rooms
- 2019 State Farm (two groups) – 185 and 240 rooms
- 2019 GE-Current & Owens Corning – 53 rooms
- 2019 Zurich North America – 51 rooms
- 2019 Control System Integrators Association – 180 rooms
- 2019 Winsight LLC – 311 rooms
- 2018 Spartan Race Staff Rooms – 89 rooms
- 2020 Professional Construction Estimators Association – 103 rooms
- 2019 Asheville Yoga Festival – 170 rooms
- 2019 Jacksonville Corvette Club – 200 rooms
- 2019 Central North Carolina Negotiator Network
- 2020 Rotary District 7750 - – 140 rooms
- 2020 Democratic Attorney Generals Association – 125 rooms
- 2019 Bob Lewis Top Gun Series (Three events) – 300 rooms
- 2019 GoIMD Conference – 90 rooms
- 2019 American Association of State Highway and Transportation Officials - 66 rooms
- 2022 & 2023 – Injured Workers Advocates – 238 rooms each

Explore Asheville: The 48-Hour Meeting Planner Experience: A 48-Hour Experience was held March 26-29 with six direct buyers attending. Planners came from North Carolina, Illinois, Florida, Colorado, Missouri and Georgia. Of those, two had been to Asheville in the past. Attendees were vetted using a qualifying questionnaire that requests a verifiable meetings history. The DoubleTree Hilton was the host for this event.

Southern Conference Men's Basketball Tournaments: In addition to placing overnight rooms, the staff played a significant supportive role throughout the tournament. Explore Asheville provided welcome gifts for VIPs including SoCon Staff, School Chancellors, Coaches,

Faculty Athletic Reps and Athletic Directors. Staff helped coordinate a welcoming atmosphere for both teams and fans at SoCon host properties. Banners, balloons, and other personal touches helped create an exciting and memorable atmosphere for the Championships. Explore Asheville staff volunteered on-site throughout the Championships, staffing the Hospitality & Media Lounges, volunteer registration assistance and a welcome table.

Southern Conference Commissioner John Iamarino announced his retirement effective June 30th shortly after the conclusion of the tournament. The Southern Conference expects to name a replacement soon.

AAA Explore Asheville Destination Training: Leann Swims coordinated/executed a Tennessee sales Mission visiting nine AAA offices in Johnson City, Knoxville and the Nashville area. Participating partners included Biltmore, LaZoom, McKibbin Hospitality, FIRC Group, the NC Arboretum and Gray Line Trolley Tours. The team met with approximately 50 agents.

Mass Communications: An email promoting the July and November 2019 Asheville 48-Hour Experiences was sent by *Meetings Today* to 3,000 targeted meeting planner subscribers.

Convention Service Highlights: The Southern Conference Basketball Championships were supported by coordinating and delivering welcome materials to the ten host hotels and providing welcome gifts to 85 VIPs. Explore Asheville staff also volunteered in the VIP Hospitality room during the event. Staffed information tables were provided to Southeastern Employment and Training Association conference and the Appalachian Studies Association annual meeting. Registration assistance was coordinated for NC Nurses Association's Nurse Practitioner Spring Symposium. Significant planning assistance was provided for the upcoming Destinations International CEO Summit. Microsites were prepared for Asheville Yoga Festival, Mountain State Basketball Challenge and Mountain Frenzy Baseball Challenge.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tourism Product Development Efforts: Contracts for the six projects awarded funding in the 2018 cycle are complete except for the River Front Development Group and the YMI Cultural Center, both of which are still in review.

Pat continues to develop the work scope with PGAV for the African-American Heritage project work with the first phases to focus on research, community engagement, and interpretive planning. Pat has also been actively engaging with other related project stakeholders in the community to gain understanding of existing research and resources.

The second disbursement for the WNC Farmers Market was released in March, and the project is on track to complete next month.

Partner Engagement and Events:

New Partners:

Joe onboarded six new partners in March: Alley Cat, Correm, Louise's Kitchen, Red Fiddle Vittles, Tess Darling Fine Art, and The Wine and Oyster. 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.

Explore Asheville CVB 101 Orientation:

The public affairs team hosted a CVB 101 Orientation on March 13, which included representatives from Appleton Hospitality, Biltmore Farms Hotels, The Cove at Fairview, Carolina Vacation Stays, Cloud 9 Farm, Steve Trehub Photography, and Hearth + Home Rentals.

Partner Forum “What’s New in 2019”:

Tourism industry partners joined us as we turned the spotlight on their upcoming news for 2019. On March 27, partners heard from the Explore Asheville public relations team as they shared the latest updates on new offerings and events in the area in 2019. Two sessions were offered (8:30–9:30 a.m. and 3:30–4:30 p.m.) for scheduling convenience. The morning session had 43 in attendance and the afternoon session had 47 in attendance.

Tourism Week Summit 2019 – May 14:

Planning is underway for the third annual Summit to be held on Tuesday, May 14, at the Asheville Renaissance Hotel from noon to 5:00 p.m. The agency, 360i, will keynote the session, which will be followed by two breakout session options. The marketing track will be presented by Chris Cavanaugh and the sales track will be presented by Steve Rudolph. The summit will culminate with an industry resource expo and networking reception.

Opening Reception for the Creative Sector Summit – May 16:

The BCTDA is a sponsor of the Asheville Area Arts Council’s annual Creative Sector Summit. This year’s theme is equity and inclusion, and Pat is coordinating the opening reception on Thursday, May 16, from 5:30 – 7:30 p.m. to be held at the YMI Cultural Center. Dina Bailey, consultant from PGAV, will help to kick-off the Creative Sector Summit by sharing lessons she has learned from communities, in the U.S. and around the world, who are working to tell more inclusive community stories. Using her experiences as an independent consultant as well as stories from her time with the International Coalition of Sites of Conscience, the National Center for Civil and Human Rights, and the National Underground Railroad Freedom Center, Ms. Bailey will focus on how telling truthful stories is often tied to ideas about voice, scope, agency, and power.

Projects: Pat and Glenn continue to manage the process of maintaining and updating the Wayfinding system signage and met with county staff to finalize some location decisions. Geograph completed the second of the two scheduled installations which included system-wide signage updates resulting from the system assessment process, most of which occurred in downtown Asheville.

CRM Audit: Pat and Joe presented a strategy to Stephanie and Marla for conducting a multi-month auditing process for Explore Asheville’s customer relationship management (CRM) database that will work in tandem with the Marketing team goals for ExploreAsheville.com following a website usability study. They will continue to refine the approach based on feedback.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES

Administration: Glenn onboarded new Director of Finance, Jennifer Kass-Green, new Sales & Services Specialist, Daniel Bradley and new Hospitality Coordinator, Hannah Dosa.

Glenn continued to meet with Drew Pollick with Craft HR Solutions to strengthen the HR Department, continue recruiting the new Marketing Analyst and Director of Finance positions and strengthen the onboarding process for new staff.

Glenn completed a draft staff summary for Document and Communications retention, which was provided to attorney Richard Kort for review.

Glenn and Stephanie completed edits to the Employee Handbook, which range from policy changes to clarifying language. The revised version will be released to staff in April.

Wayfinding Signage: Geograph was in town to install new signage on the County's Sear's Alley (Coxe Avenue) and College Street garages. Decisions on final signage for these garages were made in partnership with County staff.

Sponsorship Grants Program: Glenn processed Sponsorship funding for the Blue Ridge Parkway Association.

Archiving BCTDA Historic Documents and Materials: Will Morgan, a student at UNC-A who is completing his master's in public history and associated with WNC Archives, continued archiving and organizing 30 years of BCTDA files in our off-site storage.