



January 29, 2020

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

The Explore Asheville media relations team earned extraordinary praise recently that I would like to share with you. This kind of recognition is literally unheard of and speaks volumes to the exceptional level of ability that represents this community as we work to achieve national media recognition for Asheville's local businesses.

Hey Landis!

Just wanted to give you a heads up, Asheville is going to be on our list of the Best Places to Travel in 2020, so I will be putting our fact-checkers in touch with you once this package is closing!

Also wanted to say: I am on the receiving end of A LOT of tourism board press releases and newsletters—by my last count I get over a hundred PR pitches/emails a day on average—and you consistently put together among the best, most useful news digests of any CVB or tourism board out there. It's rare that these are actually breaking news we haven't already heard about from other sources, or are thoughtful and comprehensive enough to answer any and every follow-up question I might have, but yours are always full of tidbits that would've taken me ages to dig up on my own, and tick all the boxes of the kinds of details I need when pitching or writing a piece. I'm sure it takes a ton of time and effort, so I just wanted to let you know that it doesn't go unnoticed—I so appreciate all the care you put into these; it makes my life so much easier!

Warmest,
Lila

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LILA BATTIS
Senior Editor | Travel + Leisure
225 Liberty St, 8th Floor
New York, NY 10281

I was honored to be recognized at the 2019 WNC Economic Brunch hosted by Emily Breedlove of Breedlove & Company, held at the Masonic Temple on December 6, with an award for my leadership in building the local economy.

Ritchie Rozelle joined our team as Director of Content. His past experience includes posts at Land of Sky, Earth Fare, and the Kennedy Center for Performing Arts.

DECEMBER BY THE NUMBERS

- During December, the sales team posted 988 personal contacts (down 13%). December sales activities generated 72 sales leads (up 26%) and 46 convention bookings (up 59%), representing 8,045 rooms (up 58%). Six months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are down 16 percent and room nights represented are down 8 percent.
- CVB sales leads generated 24 group events in December (up 41%), with revenue of \$170,288 (down 6%). The services team assisted 13 groups (flat).
- The PR team landed 24 significant placements in December (down 76%), with 40 media touchpoints (down 29%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$2,084,156 with reach of over 7.3 million. Online placements added \$54,371 in value and reach of over 107 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 462,506 visits (up 73%), including 347,592 to the mobile site (up 85%). Our Facebook fan base total is 296,171 (up 5%) and video views totaled 43,197 (up 204%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 80 room nights (up 105%) with total room revenue of \$11,618 (up 86%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 14,925 visitors (up 38%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion is closed for the winter.

LODGING & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$42,002,121 in November (up 13%).
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 76 percent during November (up 1%). The average daily room rate was \$180.89 (up 5%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$137.52 (up 5%). Room demand increased 3 percent with 184,553 rooms sold.
- AIRDNA reported short term rental occupancy of 57.5 percent (up 10.9%), ADR of \$107.98 (up 2%), RevPAR of \$62.13 (up 13.1%). Total demand for short term rentals increased 32.1 percent to total 120,353 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 23 percent to total 139,685 in November.

IN THE COMMUNITY

- Stephanie attended the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce's Leadership Circle end of year holiday breakfast and Elevate program event.
- Kathi, Jonna, and Stephanie attended the 2019 WNC Economic Bruncheon, where Stephanie was given an award in recognition of her leadership in building the local economy.
- Stephanie attended the Asheville Area Riverfront Redevelopment Commission (AARRC) meeting.
- Stephanie attended the Greater Asheville Regional Airport Authority's board meeting.
- Glenn attended the board meeting for the Piney Grove Historic Cemetery in Swannanoa.
- Stephanie attended AIR executive committee and board meetings throughout the month.
- Stephanie attended Rotary Club of Asheville meetings every Thursday when she was available.

- As a member of the Chow Chow board and marketing committee, Dodie supported the RFP process for an integrated marketing/PR firm to support Chow Chow 2020. Work also supported Chow Chow's efforts to hire an executive director and event director.
- The PR Team met with Friends of the Blue Ridge Parkway to learn about their efforts toward major viewshed updates at overlooks, as well as several programs that may support content and PR efforts.
- Marla attended the ADA meeting and holiday board gathering. She also participated in the monthly Issues Committee meeting where she met with the newly assigned downtown police team and heard a presentation on the redrawn police districts for downtown.
- Sales team members attended Buxton Hall BBQ's Hash Tasting.
- Pat attended the Parking & Transportation Committee meeting, a sub-committee of the Downtown Commission.
- Pat attended Creative Mornings featuring tourism industry partner Kevan Frazier.
- Kathi and Marla attended the Asheville Chamber's Advocacy & Policy Committee meeting where Kathi distributed fact sheets on the occupancy tax.
- Kathi attended functions at the invitations of the Asheville Citizen Times and of BRP public radio.
- Kathi attended a function honoring the retiring CEO and the incoming CEO for Mountain BizWorks, held at the Center for Craft.
- Pat and Dianna attended the Civic Center Commission meeting at the US Cellular Center.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Staff: Explore Asheville welcomed Ritchie Rozzelle as its new Director of Content Development. He replaces Cat Kessler who left at the end of December after nine years of service to the CVB. Ritchie has held positions with Land of Sky, Earth Fare, The John F. Kennedy Center for Performing Arts in Washington, D.C. and various ad agencies.

Advertising: The holiday campaign wrapped on December 22nd. The winter campaign's "Cozy Winter" creative assets were finalized in December in advance of launch on January 6th. The Cozy Winter campaign consists of the following tactics: paid search, paid social (Facebook, Instagram & Pinterest), native, and radio, both broadcast and online. In addition to the creative assets developed by the agency, additional video assets were developed via the Facebook MobileWorks program as added value.

Paid Search: Paid search drove 80k sessions to ExploreAsheville.com in December, an increase of 104.2% YOY. The bounce rate for December was at 42.8%, an improvement of 9.9% YOY. Improvements were also seen in average session duration and pages per session YOY, up 13.8% and 12.9% respectively.

	December 2018	December 2019	YoY
Total spend	\$29,354	\$53,890	83.6%
Impressions	723,617	1,579,848	118.3%
Clicks	37,281	96,151	157.9%
CTR	5.2%	6.1%	18.1%
CPCs	\$0.79	\$0.56	-28.8%

General Media Relations: The PR Team logged 40 media touchpoints, initiated 82 targeted pitches and hosted nine media on the ground in Asheville in December. Supported site visits included media representing *Red Tricycle*, *GQ*, *Architectural Digest*, *Charleston's Post and Courier*, *NYFamily*, *American Way* and *Passport*. Story support included *Fox Carolina*, *AAA Crossroads*, *Food & Wine*, *Travel Noire*, *Group Tour Media*, *Meetings Today* and *Groups Today*. Asheville imagery and assistance were also provided to Condé Nast Traveler, Travel + Leisure (for a segment on TODAY) and Active Wealth Radio Show, among others.

Holiday Media Gift: The PR Team sent a locally handcrafted prism pendant with an art scene pitch to 72 high profile journalists. The card featured Asheville art scene news, insight about Asheville's glass art scene and a bio on glass artist Eric Meeker.

M&C / Group PR Efforts: In December, Sarah Lowery and Carli Adams helped support—via a combination of phone interviews, images and additional insight—journalists working on upcoming stories in *Group Tour North Carolina* (for an Asheville itinerary piece), *Meetings Today* (for a one-page close-up on Asheville) and *Groups Today* (for Asheville's inclusion in a state feature on North Carolina).

Significant Placements:

1. *Big 7 Travel* | *The 50 Most Festive Cities in the World*
2. *Business Insider Singapore* | *The cheapest place to travel every month of 2020*
3. *Conde Nast Traveler* | *The Best Places to Spend Christmas in the U.S.*
4. *Food & Wine* | *The Best Meals We Ate This Year*
5. *INSIDER* | *Travel + Leisure just release its list of the 50 best places to travel in 2020. Here's a look at the 7 US destinations that made the list*
6. *Lonely Planet* | *Top US wellness retreats to make this your year of yoga*
7. *Men's Journal* | *The Best Beer Runs in Asheville: Worthy Trail Runs That End at Tasty Breweries*
8. *Red Tricycle* | *Underrated & Affordable Cities Families Should Visit in 2020*
9. *Smart Asset* | *Best Cities for Beer Drinkers*
10. *Thrillist* | *Give the Gift of Travel - Ultimate Foodie Dreamlands*
11. *Travel + Leisure* | *The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020*
12. *USA Today* | *These are some of the most festive Christmas cities in the USA*
13. *Woman's World* | *Experience the holiday magic of Asheville*

Content Development Projects: The month of December saw the fruition of our 2019 Holiday website and social media content and ended with the transition to Winter seasonal homepage refresh and strategic content. Additional image and video assets were also added to the Explore Asheville library. The team also worked on development of a hand-illustrated Cozy Winter Checklist in tandem with local artist Annie Riker. Checklists have broad online appeal and the strategy is to post this new in various formats across all platforms with a lightly branded Explore Asheville watermark. The checklist along with a related online Cozy Score quiz will drive web traffic in January and connect Asheville with the idea of a cozy winter vacation.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

- During the month of December, seven new pieces of content were added to ExploreAsheville.com: a story about Asheville being named one of Travel and Leisure's 50 Best Places to Travel, a roundup of things to do in Biltmore Village, and five new "things to do this weekend" blog posts.

- The most popular blog and story content this month was “8 Places to See Holiday Lights in Asheville”, which received 28,147 pageviews, followed by “8 Ways Asheville Sparkles for the Holidays”, which received 23,606 new pageviews which both served as landing pages for paid social efforts.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- December saw 1,123 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 296,171.
- There were 19 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of December.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was a link to Condé Nast Traveler, naming Asheville one of “The Best Places to Spend Christmas in the United States”. The post reached 42,306 people organically, generating 1,265 total reactions, and 50 comments. This was also the most engaging post of the month; it engaged six percent of users reached.

Video:

- There were 9,831 new, organic YouTube views in December. The most popular video by organic views this month “Asheville, N.C.: O Little Town of Christmas Cats”, which received 1,442 non-paid views. The Black Mountain video remained in second with 1,204 new views.
- Across all our video platforms, there were 43,197 non-advertising views, with the majority coming from Facebook. There have been 319,059 views of Explore Asheville video content YTD (since July 1, 2019).

Pinterest:

- *Note: Pinterest has changed some of the stats that they display within the platform—a change that appears to be in line with the platform’s shift away from a social media model and more toward a search engine model. Our reporting moving forward will reflect this change.*
- There were 187.7k organic impressions of pins linking to Explore Asheville content, down 22 percent over the previous month. There were also 10k engagements on these pins, down 22 percent over the previous month.
- At the direction of 360i, the Social Media Manager developed nearly a dozen new Pinterest pins related to winter. The Agency then boosted these pins as part of the campaign.

Instagram:

- Our Visit Asheville account has 69,832 followers.
- There were 9 new posts in December. The most popular photo post was a photo of the downtown Black Mountain. It received 3,935 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter:

- Across all our accounts we have a total of 16,788 followers. *Please note this number is decreased recently because our Foodtopia account was compromised and our follower count (and tweets) were erased. We are working with Twitter support on the issue.
- The most popular account (with current numbers available) is Visit Asheville, which has 8,267 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 125,109 active subscribers.
- Opens/Click-throughs:
 - In December, our monthly Asheville Traveler e-newsletter went out to 125,109 subscribers. It had an overall open rate of 16.2 percent and a click-through rate of 2 percent.

ExploreAsheville.com: Website user sessions in December increased 72.5 percent compared to last year. Organic traffic was up 23.1 percent year-over-year in December. Paid search traffic was up 99.9 percent compared with last year. Referral traffic was up 25.1 percent year-over-year, while traffic from eNewsletter clicks was down 2.3 percent year-over-year in December. Social media traffic, excluding Paid Social, was down 0.9 percent compared with last year. Traffic from advertising campaigns, including Paid Social was up 710.8 percent in December compared to last year. Sessions to the booking engine increased 32.0 percent year-over-year in December and booking engine searches increased 50.7%.

Website Improvements – SEO, QA & Accessibility: In December, Explore Asheville content and web teams worked with a product called SiteImprove to assist with search engine optimization, quality assurance and accessibility efforts. Atlas Branding in Asheville was contracted to work with the team on a design refresh to modernize the site. The design and other structural improvements, including new navigation and a new events module will be fully implemented later in the spring.

Online Reservations: There were 54 orders for 80 room nights in December with a total of \$11,617.82 in booking revenue and \$367.71 in commission. The top 5 states for room nights booked in December were North Carolina, Georgia, Virginia, South Carolina and Florida.

December 2019	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
Booking Rev	\$11,618	\$6,258	86%	\$80,706	\$94,674	-15%
Commission	\$367	\$310	18%	\$1,823	\$4,437	-59%
Orders	54	28	93%	339	374	-9%
Room Nights	80	39	105%	499	585	-15%

Visitor Guide: The 2020 Visitor Guide was finalized and sent to the printer in early December. Advertising was wrapped up with a total of \$364k in ad sales. The new guide will be delivered in the first full week of January.

There were 1,606 requests of the *Official Asheville Visitor Guide* in December. Fiscal year-to-date, there have been 14,750 visitor guide requests.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES

Group sales reported 46 definite group bookings in December, up 59 percent from the prior year. Of these group bookings, 30 were for meetings and conventions, five were group tours, and 11 were weddings. The combined total definite room nights were 8,045, up 58 percent over the prior December. Seventy-two leads (54 for meeting/conventions, 12 for weddings and six for motor coach) representing 20,074 room nights were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in December. Leads distributed were up 24 percent and rooms represented were up 75 percent over the prior year.

Estimated revenue for leads issued was \$2,097,230, a 118 percent increase over the prior year. Actualized revenue was \$170,288, a one percent decrease over the prior year. Person-to-person outreach totaled 988 contacts, a 13 percent decrease from last year. Indirect outreach totaled 5,835, a 563 percent increase over the prior year. This year's numbers included a mass-mailing to our database which explains the spike.

Sales Calls/Missions/FAMS:

- Kathryn Dewey exhibited at the Association Executives of North Carolina's Annual Trade (AENC) Show in Raleigh. Approximately 150 planners stopped by the Asheville booth. Partnering industry partners included: AC Hotel, Biltmore, Crowne Plaza, Grand Bohemian, Cambria, Biltmore Farms Hotels, Renaissance Asheville Hotel, and Accents on Asheville. Sales calls were hosted prior to the trade event. A personal hygiene care kit is being donated to Western North Carolina Rescue Mission on behalf of the 50 planners who visited all the booths. Five immediate RFPs were received as a result of the show and the accompanying client event.
- A client event hosted prior to the AENC Annual Trade Show with 25 clients in attendance. Participating industry partners included AC Hotel, Biltmore, Crowne Plaza, Grand Bohemian, Biltmore Farms Hotels, Cambria, Renaissance Asheville Hotel, and Accents on Asheville.
- Shawn Boone traveled to Chicago to exhibit at Association Forum of Chicagoland's 30th Annual Holiday Showcase, partnering with The Omni Grove Park Inn and Biltmore. Approximately 80 planners came by. Sales appointments were hosted in conjunction with this visit. Staff attended SITE Chicago, MPI-Chicago Area Chapter and PCMA Holiday mixers.
- Dianna Pierce attended Travel South International, the premier marketplace event in the South. More than 100+ qualified international tour operators from 20+ countries around the globe were present. Dianna had one-on-one appointments with 39 buyers. Partnering with the CVB was Biltmore.

Association Forum of Chicagoland's Holiday Showcase featuring Chuck Fazio's

Headshot Lounge: Explore Asheville was the sole partner of the Chuck Fazio Headshot Lounge, a popular stop for planners. Approximately 200 planners came through the Lounge where they were introduced to Asheville as a meetings destination. Significant advance publicity was realized through Chuck's Facebook account, followed by hundreds of meeting industry influencers. The team created a VIP Pass whereas holders of the pass had their photo taken by Chuck Fazio. The pass was accessed when a planner visited the Explore Asheville booth. The follow up email, including the head shots, contained a promotional message suggesting planners host their next meeting in Asheville.

Site Visits/Bookings/Leads: The team hosted/assisted in four site visits in December, including 2020 HP Hotel Meeting – 348 rooms, 2020 SE Controllors Association – 220 rooms, 2021 SE Toyota Controllors/SE Comptrollors Association – 250 rooms/220 rooms, 2020 Chronos Underwriters – 80 rooms

December bookings for this and future years include:

- 2020 NC SHERM Leadership Meeting – 40 rooms
- 2020 Dental and Medical Mountain Meetings – 365 rooms
- 2021 NW AHEC Dental Meeting – 220 rooms
- 2020 NC Environmental Health State of Practice – 200 rooms
- 2020 AIA South Atlantic Regional Conference – 95 rooms
- 2020 NCARF Fall Conference – 71 rooms
- 2020 Center for Craft Board Meeting and Retreat – 22 rooms

- 2020 Cievents – 320 rooms
- 2020 Martial Arts Industry Association – 40 rooms
- 2020 LOMA Investment Committee – 30 rooms
- 2020 Georgia/Carolinas Precast/Prestressed Concrete Institute – 48 rooms
- 2020 Continuing Education Company – 460 rooms
- 2020 Porter Ride High School Art Field Trip – 24 rooms
- 2020 Fullington Trailways Fall Tour – 50 rooms
- 2020 Atlantic Region SC Leadership Meeting – 148 rooms
- 2020 NC Environmental Health State of Practice – 200 rooms
- 2021 Wake Forest University – 365 rooms
- 2022 Surety Claims Institute – 340 rooms
- 2020 Society for Pediatric Dermatology – 130 rooms
- 2020 Asheville Lacrosse Classis – Girls – 1,000 rooms
- 2020 Asheville Lacrosse Classic – Boys – 1,000 rooms
- 2020 Rural Broadband Association – 768 rooms
- 2021 Midwest Foods Association – 95 rooms
- 2020 Building Material Suppliers Association – 20 rooms
- 2020 NC Association of Rehabilitation Facilities – 71 rooms
- 2021 USI Insurance Services – 1,415 rooms

A total of eight wedding guide requests were fulfilled this month. This is down from 13 requests in December 2018.

Significant Sports Activities for the Month: The Great Smoky Mountain Grapple held its third annual event at the U.S. Cellular Center. In total, 721 wrestlers were involved. This included 31 varsity teams and 24 junior varsity teams competed. The Grapple was one of the first tournaments in North Carolina to host a girl's division and attracted 54 wrestlers. The Grapple is a homegrown event, originating with Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission. The 2017 event attracted 12 teams.

Group Sales Communications: December was especially busy with media inquiries, sponsorship and advertising deadlines. We continue to work on the brand refresh project.

Media

- CVB staff were interviewed by a staff writer for Meetings Today for a one-page "close-up" on Asheville for the January/February issue.
- Staff provided information to a writer with Groups Today working on an upcoming feature on North Carolina that will include Asheville.

Mass Communications

- An email was sent to 137 meeting planners attending the Assn Executives of NC annual trade show. Open rate: 41% Clicks: 5
- An email was sent to 214 Raleigh-area meeting planners to invite them to a client event hosted by Explore Asheville and seven industry partners. Open rate: 29% Clicks: 26
- An email was sent to 221 registered attendees of the American Bus Assn annual marketplace to invite them to a client event hosted by Explore Asheville and industry partners. Open rate: 25% Clicks: 20
- An email was sent to 447 registered attendees of Holiday Showcase trade show. Open rate: 20% Clicks: 18

- An email inviting meeting planners to view a webinar about Asheville was sent to 405 contacts who registered for an educational webinar sponsored by Explore Asheville. Open rate: 15% Clicks: 30
- Staff shared the Travel + Leisure accolade on LinkedIn and had 612 views.

Convention Service Highlights: A hospitality table was set up for the 2019 Winter Family Physicians Weekend.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tourism Product Development Efforts:

The Center for Craft received its final TPDF disbursement. LEAF submitted its first disbursement request and anticipates completing construction in time for a February 14 opening. Invitations to a ribbon-cutting ceremony are forthcoming.

All TPDF grantees in active contract were reminded Annual Reports are due on January 15.

Pat & Stephanie attended a TMIP work session with PGAV in St. Louis.

The WNC Farmers Market's visitor information signage and rack for Visitor Guide distribution will be installed in January 2020.

Partner Engagement and Events:

Explore Asheville CVB 101 Orientation: The public affairs team hosted a CVB 101 Orientation on December 11, which included eight attendees representing Asheville Museum of Science, Awakening the Spirit Healing Arts, Four Points by Sheraton Asheville Downtown, The Brewery Experience, Walk with Me Tours, and Yesterday Spaces.

New Partners: There were five new partners in December: Art Garden AVL, Asheville Free Walking Tours, Brass Monkey Photography, Hike Bike Kayak Asheville, and Home2 Suites by Hilton Asheville Biltmore Village.

Events Calendar: Charlie approved 378 events for the month of December 2019. Joe continued to reach out to Music Venue partners regularly to ensure they are submitting their events to the Live Music Calendar.

Explore Asheville Holiday Party - December 10: Partners gathered for the annual Explore Asheville Holiday Party on Tuesday December 10 at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel. The event was made possible with generous support from the Renaissance Asheville Hotel, US Foods, Asheville Brewing Company, The Omni Grove Park Inn and Biltmore. Approximately 315 partners plus staff were in attendance, many of whom contributed to the annual U.S. Marine Corps Reserve Toys for Tots Program which collected \$748 in cash donations and four bins full of toys. Additionally, four tourism partners were recognized as CVB Superstars for their standout contributions to the work we do to promote Asheville and Buncombe County as a destination including Cleaster Cotton, Ken Stamps, Brenda Durden, and Lisa White.

Attractions Partners Collaborative Meeting – December 17: A convening was held for Attractions partners. Pat, along with Marla and Dianna, presented updates on our respective departments.

Partner Forum – January 23: Planning is underway for a “Sales & Marketing Update” Partner Forum in January.

Service Day – January 30: Planning is underway for a staff service day outing at Haywood Street Congregation in January.

Projects:

African American Heritage Project: As part of the Community Engagement phase, the project team conducted seven Listening Session group calls in December with 22 community members. Additionally, 29 people have filled out the survey online. The project team is also preparing for the in-person Listening Session Workshops scheduled for January 9, 10, and 11. Pat has focused on building & expanding relationships with community members and organizations to increase awareness of the project and build a supportive network interested in collaboration.

2020 Go Local Week: Pat is collaborating with the Asheville Grown Business Alliance on promotion of the Go Local Week scheduled for February 8 – 15. Tentative plans include co-hosting a business resource event and creating a landing page on ExploreAsheville.com featuring Local Love special events submitted by local businesses.

CRM Audit: The public affairs team continues to work on the auditing process for Explore Asheville’s customer relationship management (CRM) database and is coordinating efforts with Marketing team goals for ExploreAsheville.com following a website usability study.

PUBLIC INFORMATION & COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Public Information: With other team members, Kathi responded to two Freedom of Information Act requests as well as an “Answer Man” request from the *Asheville Citizen Times*. She also led or assisted with content for various newsletters and the CVB website; responded to several requests for radio interviews; wrote and disseminated a press release on the cancelled December BCTDA board meeting; and spearheaded publicity for the African American Heritage Trail (*see below*). With Stephanie and Marla, she also met with reps from WLOS-TV to discuss potential story and advertising opportunities.

TPDF: With project team members, Kathi led or supported efforts to publicize the African American Heritage Trail listening sessions, to include: press release writing and dissemination; setting up a live radio interview (half hour) on WRES; writing a 60 minute radio spot for WRES; creating a Facebook page and Facebook events; writing other promotional content for various uses. She also met with a representative of WNC Farmers Market to discuss publicity around an event for their ceremonial check-passing and provided input into the press release for the LEAF Global Center.

Community Engagement: Kathi continued meeting with various community stakeholders and influencers, as well as local media and tourism partners. This included preparing handouts and presentations. She also identified new potential tourism partners and helped them understand the benefits. She also responded to comments and requests by citizens.

EXECUTIVE OFFICE

Human Resources: Glenn worked with Marla to coordinate the interview and hiring process for the Director of Content opening. Ultimately, Ritchie Rozzelle was selected, and Glenn began the onboarding process for him in preparation of his January 6 start date. Glenn also terminated Cat Kessler from the organization by her end date of December 31.

Event Grants: Glenn developed cover letters and grant agreements between Explore Asheville and the 21 grantees for the 2020 Festivals and Cultural Events and Major Events grantees.

BCTDA Archives: Explore Asheville contracted with WNC Archives to review over 25 years of materials that began to accumulate in the Chamber's storage area and relocated to a storage room in an adjoining building on our campus. After 10 months (approximately 40 days) of reviewing all boxes and files, the archivist completed the job, having organized the materials into 64 bankers' boxes. We have new access to materials comprising much of the history of the BCTDA.

Attraction Partners Collaborative: The APC convened on December 17 for the fourth time. In this meeting, Marla Tambellini and Dodie Stephens discussed the new ad campaigns and their strategic approach to generating national media coverage and how these tourism partners can plug in. Pat Kappes discuss the Tourism Product Development Fund, a history of the projects funded and more recently, the TPDF's support for our local cultural scene

Building: As part of a building security upgrade, Glenn met the owner of Solar Shield at the office on Sunday, December 29 to install protective laminate on the doors and window panels leading off the 2nd floor lobby. Three new monitors were installed in strategic locations within our office space dedicated to exterior and lobby security cameras.

Tourism Management & Investment Plan: Stephanie and Pat traveled to St. Louis, MO, on December 18, to meet with the PGAV team to discuss next steps in the TMIP process. Chris Cavanaugh also attended.

Stephanie Brown wins Leadership Award: At the 2019 WNC Economic Bruncheon hosted by Emily Breedlove of Breedlove & Company, held at the Masonic Temple on December 6, Stephanie was recognized with an award for her leadership in building the local economy.

<https://breedlovecompany.com/2019/12/01/inch-by-inch-its-a-cinch-stephanie-brown/>