

February 22, 2017

To: BCTDA

From: Stephanie Pace Brown, Executive Director

Subject: Recap of January 2017 Staff Activities

MONTH AT A GLANCE

- The winter ad campaign launched on January 2 with a mix of broadcast TV, radio, display advertising and content marketing.
- The winter media tour achieved 13 appointments (4 TV, 3 magazine, 4 freelancers, 2 online) in Knoxville, Columbia and Greenville.
- The sales team traveled far and wide, attending: Financial & Insurance Conference Planners' Winter Symposium in Boston; MPI—CC in Raleigh; American Bus Association in Cleveland; and MPI in Atlanta. Sales managers also conducted sales calls in these cities.
- The Workforce Development Task Force secured a \$150,000 Career Pathways Implementation grant.
- The Fiduciary Task Force selected the Asheville Office Park to relocate the CVB in June.
- The January Partner Forum, "Social Media & PR Tips," attracted 70 partners for expert tips by the CVB marketing team. Attendees were extremely enthusiastic about the quality and usefulness of the program.
- Thirteen new partner accounts were created.
- The CVB team volunteered at Green Opportunities, assisting with new student enrollment, working in the construction shop, and preparing lunch in the Southside Kitchen.

JANUARY CVB METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During January, the sales team posted 994 personal contacts (up 29%). January sales activities generated 73 sales leads (up 7%) and 31 convention bookings (up from 30), representing 6,004 rooms (down 8%). Seven months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are down nine percent and room nights represented are up five percent.
- CVB leads generated nine group events in January (down 10%), with revenue of \$529,846 (up 231%). The services team assisted 14 groups (up 40%).

- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 7,078 visitors (up 34%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion is closed for the winter.
- The PR team landed 150 significant placements in January (up 38%), with 59 media touchpoints (down 37%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$456,305 with reach of over 13.4 million. Online placements added \$264,579 in value and reach of over 506 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 274,751 visits (up 13%), including 163,159 to the mobile site (up 18%). Our Facebook fan base grew by 8,410 (up 59%) and video views totaled 1,725,737 (up 4,664%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 121 room nights (up 57%) with total room revenue of \$17,295 (up 61%).

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$29,600,031 in December, up 13.9 percent. Six months into the fiscal year, YTD 2016-17 sales are up 16.8 percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 69.8 percent during December (up 0.2%). The average daily room rate was \$161.92 (up 8.2%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$113.10 (up 8.4%). Room demand increased 3.2 percent with 155,297 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 19.8 percent to total 66,196 in December.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising: The winter campaign launched on January 2 with a mix of broadcast TV, radio, display advertising and content marketing. Radio is frontloaded and ends in late February. The TV buy runs through March 19. The retail-focused creative features messaging around the lowest rates of the year and drives to customized page on the aRes booking site within ExploreAsheville.com. The campaign also features the first use of a custom content delivery platform (GetSmart Content) to strategically deploy onsite messaging to complement the campaign. Efforts to optimize both the campaign and the winter content on ExploreAsheville.com are ongoing. Advertising has generated nearly 30,000 user sessions on the landing page. Transactions have nearly doubled January 1 through February 11, year-over-year, with the advertising-related transactions accounting for more than half of all the bookings.

The agency and marketing team reviewed fresh digital creative for the spring infusing the Lonely Planet accolade into the messaging. A retail-oriented ad will also be tested. Preparations for the Union Station takeover and National Geographic event, both slated for April, also continued. Staff worked with the Peter Mayer team in early February to finalize the spring broadcast schedule and media plan. Both teams also met to begin

discussions for the upcoming fiscal year as part of the marketing retreat which also included Simpleview staff.

Paid search efforts:

Google search CTR has improved 256 percent year-over-year (5.70% vs. 1.60%). Bounce rate has come down 11 percent year over year. Ad position for AdWords search has improved by 53 percent year over year (2.0 vs. 4.2). The Events and Things to Do campaigns are generating more than half of the click-throughs to the site.

General Media Relations: The unusual flurry of activity experienced by the public relations team in December continued in January. The team logged 59 touchpoints, hosted six site visits and pushed out 38 targeted pitches. High profile media support included New York Magazine (site visit), Andrew Evans (site visit), Lonely Planet Magazine, Smart Meetings, Zagat, Southern Living, USA Today, Time Warner Cable News, and AAA World. Each of January's site visits followed detailed itineraries created by the PR team, requiring facilitation of details with dozens of local hospitality partners. The River Arts District piece filmed by Richard Green of Time Warner Cable News is a great example – requiring facilitation with 16 partners over the span of two days. Outreach to meetings and group sales publications included pitches to Going on Faith, Group Travel Leader and Small Market Meetings.

Winter Media Tour: Sarah executed her first solo media tour in January for the drive markets of Knoxville, Columbia, and Greenville. Across the three markets, Sarah secured 13 appointments: four TV interviews, three magazines, four freelancers and two online.

SIGNIFICANT PLACEMENTS IN JANUARY

- *Those Crazy Nelsons* – “Winter Travel Made Extra Easy, A Helpful Asheville Itinerary”
- *Zagat* – “8 Hottest Restaurants and Bars In Asheville”
- *Maxim* – “Grass to Glass Why Foraging For Cocktail Ingredients Is a Wild New Drink Trend”
- *USA Today* – “Asheville NC Beer Trail”
- *Only In Your State* – “12 Restaurants You Must Eat In 2017”
- *American Way* – “Asheville Is Ready For Its Day In The Sun”
- *Harpers Bazar* – “The Best Places To Travel In 2017”
- *Esquire* – “The Best Places To Travel In 2017”
- *USA Today* – “The Top 10 Winners In The Category Best New Restaurant Are As Follows”
- *Letters From Earth* – “Old Dirt”
- *New York Post* – “These 10 Tiny Bars Will Give You The World's Biggest Buzzes”
- *Paste* – “Learn The Real Food Miles In 4 Asheville Farm To Table Restaurants Food Lists Local Food”
- *Atlanta Journal Constitution Online* – “Travel From Atlanta: What's New In Asheville For 2017”
- *Mornings With Fox 43* – “Fun, Romantic Getaways In Asheville NC”

- *Travelzoo* – “10 Reasons Why You Can’t Wait Any Longer To Visit Asheville” (Paid)
- *Liquor.com* – “Here’s How to Build a Cocktail Destination In A Beer Town”
- *Tasting Table* – “Where To Travel In 2017”
- *Chattanooga Times Free Press* – “Asheville Mountain Vistas Are the Perfect Scene For a Romantic Getaway”
- *In Honor of Design* – “Travel Diary: Asheville NC”
- *Smart Meetings* – “Meet On Top of the World: Mountain Meeting Destinations
- *Bizarre Foods* – “Andrew Zimmern Digs Deep Behind the Scenes of Bizarre Foods”
- *Our State* – “The Artistry, Economics & Trade of Cloth in Western North Carolina”
- *Travel & Leisure* – “18 Best Cities in America For Solo Travelers”
- *Meetings Today* – “North Carolina’s Foodtopia”

Content Development Projects: New winter content was optimized and added to the site and existing stories were updated in advance of the campaign. In an effort to support Asheville Restaurant Week, the content team created a blog post “guide” to the special offers (received 3,712 page views), hosted two Facebook Live broadcasts from participating restaurants (about 8,000 total views) and deployed GetSmart Content as a test for engaging local web visitors.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content:

- During the month of January, three new blog posts were added to ExploreAsheville.com: a guide to Asheville Restaurant Week, a round-up of winter music and theater events, and an announcement regarding a new restaurant reservation system.
- The most popular blog and story content this month was 50 Things to Do in Asheville, which received 13,640 new page views, followed by the Lonely Planet accolade blog post, which received 5,667 new page views.

CVB Produced Video: The CVB continues to put additional focus on its video efforts which continue to pay off. In early January, the Facebook Live video of Abby the Spoon Lady and the Fly By Night Rounders—already somewhat of a viral success with more than 700,000 views—saw a sudden, and unexplained, burst of new viewership. Over the weekend of January 6-8, jumped to 1.3 million and topped 2 million within the week. By the end of January, the video had been viewed more than 2.3 million times. During the height of interest surrounding the video, Jason was fielding more than 200 Facebook comments each hour, answering questions, providing relevant web links and taking full advantage of the opportunity to share Asheville with thousands of new users. In an effort to follow-up on this success and connect with new Facebook fans brought in by the video, Jason coordinated a second Facebook Live with the music group, focusing on performance, answering some FAQs and a quick spoon tutorial by Abby. More than 6,000 people watched the video live – one of the largest live audiences to date (second only to the first busker video). The video has been viewed nearly 40,000 times to date.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page

- January saw 8,410 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 249,464.
- There were 38 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of January.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was Facebook Live broadcast of Abby the Spoon Lady and the Fly By Night Rounders. It has reached 144,076 people organically, generating 4,504 total reactions, 704 comments and 722 shares.
- The most popular paid post this month was a link to the What's New for 2017 content on ExploreAsheville.com. It reached 116,115 users in total (26,580 of those organically), generating 3,944 total reactions, 193 comments and 519 shares. It was also this month's most engaging post, engaging 6 percent of the users reached.

Foodtopia page:

- January saw 805 daily new likes to the Foodtopia page, for a total of 24,919 likes.
- There were 14 new Facebook posts added to the Foodtopia page in the month of January.
- The most popular post—a link to a Huffington Post review of Hole Doughnuts—reached 12,221 people organically, generating 267 reactions, 45 comments and 76 shares.

Video:

- There were 9,661 new organic YouTube views in January. The most popular video by organic views this month was the Fall Time Lapse, which received 1,922 non-paid views. The Return Again video came in second with 1,688 new views.
- New Facebook Live videos in January included Asheville Restaurant Week broadcasts from The Market Place and Chestnut restaurants, as well as a reprise of Abby the Spoon Lady & the Fly By Night Rounders.
- Across all of our video platforms, there were 1.7 million views, with 99 percent of views coming from Facebook. ***See viral video note above.*
- Asheville video content has received 4.4 million views since July 1, 2016 (fiscal YTD).

Pinterest:

- The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 4,375. Foodtopia accounts for 1,355 of those; Visit Asheville – 3,020.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 24,846 followers.
- There were 22 new posts in January. The most popular—a downtown skyline from a snowy day—received 1,323 engagements (likes and comments).

Twitter:

- After considerable research and a review of best practices, staff implemented a plan to consolidate its Twitter accounts in order to streamline the brand message. The plan effectively phased out two less active accounts (@FallColorHunter and @AshevilleDeals), in order to focus on the remaining three. Over the course of about two weeks, many of the followers were successfully converted to @VisitAsheville, which saw an increase of nearly 200 followers (about 5%). Through direct outreach to the most influential followers of the defunct accounts, @VisitAsheville also added 15 new followers who alone bring a combined audience of 227,600 followers. Across all of our accounts we have a total of 33,960 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 13,941 followers.

Asheville Traveler E-newsletter:

- Subscribers: We have 116,567 active subscribers.
- Opens/Click-throughs: In January, we sent out our monthly e-newsletter to 116,480 subscribers. We had a unique open rate of 13 percent and a click-through rate of 2.2 percent.

ExploreAsheville.com: Elizabeth worked to implement the ExploreAsheville Radio icon throughout the site. Elizabeth created several Google Analytics dashboards to make it easier for the marketing team to understand data related to ExploreAsheville.com. These included dashboards for the Peak Perks campaign and the online reservations booking engine. Elizabeth will continue to work with the team to ensure that proper dashboards are set up for the Spring 2017 advertising campaign.

Online Reservations: There were 76 orders for 121 room nights in January with a total of \$17,295.10 in booking revenue and \$739.59 in commission. The top 5 states for room nights booked in January were North Carolina (34), South Carolina (25), Georgia (24), Tennessee (13), and Virginia (6).

January 2017	Current Month	This Month Last Year	Variance Monthly	YTD Actual	YTD Last Year	Variance YTD
Booking Rev	\$17,295	\$10,760	61 %	\$76,556	\$113,568	-33 %
Commission	\$740	\$463	60 %	\$3,195	\$4,542	-30 %
Orders	76	42	81 %	251	403	-37 %
Room Nights	121	77	57 %	449	708	-40 %

*Room Nights/Orders no longer reflect cancellations, as previously reported.

Travel Guide: There were 2,307 requests for the Official Asheville Travel Guide in January, a 30 percent decrease from last January. Year-to-date, there are 13,613 travel guide requests, a 13 percent decrease from last year. The top 5 DMAs requesting guides for the month and year are: Chicago, NYC, Atlanta, Philadelphia and Tampa/St. Petersburg.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES

Group sales reported 31 definite group bookings in January, up three percent from the prior year (29 meetings/conventions & weddings, two group tour). The combined total definite room nights were 6,004 room nights, down eight percent from the previous year. Seventy-three leads (70 for meeting/conventions and weddings and three for motorcoach) representing 16,567 room nights were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in January. Leads distributed were up 7.4 percent and rooms represented were up 14.4 percent over the prior year.

Estimated revenue for leads issued was \$1,655,975 (down 22%). Last year, there were six large groups (USA Cycling Cyclo-cross National Championship) ranging from \$177,625 to \$474,373 in estimated revenue compared to this year which had three comparable sized groups ranging from \$132,575 to \$567,030 in estimated revenue. Actualized revenue was \$529,846 (up 231%). Person-to-person outreach totaled 994 contacts, up 29.4 percent. Indirect outreach totaled 4,877, up 45.7 percent.

Sales Calls/Missions/FAMS:

- Carla McGlynn attended Financial & Insurance Conference Planners' Winter Symposium January 24-26, 2017 in Boston, MA, meeting with 44 attending planners. The CVB was a sponsor of the event, receiving logo exposure on FICP's event website, event-related materials, podium talk time and recognition at main stage. This was a first-time event for staff. Carla made sales calls to Boston-based pharmaceutical and professional association accounts while in town. One RFP was received during the visit.
- Molly Nelson attended the MPI-CC meeting in Raleigh, combining the visit with eight sales calls. One of the sales calls was a lunch and learn presentation for nine planners.
- Beth McKinney attended the American Bus Association Marketplace in Cleveland, OH, January 14-17, meeting with 54 operators during the event. The CVB shared a booth with Biltmore. The ACVB was a sponsor of the closing event, partnering with Visit Charlotte, the host destination for the 2018 ABA Marketplace.
- Shawn Boone traveled to Atlanta for the Meeting Planners International Educational Luncheon. The ACVB was a sponsor of the event, providing logo and website links on all promotional materials and on the education program website page; podium talk time; message via MPI Georgia's social media sites, etc. Approximately 80 registered members attended. Asheville partners joining in were Renaissance Asheville Hotel and The Omni Grove Park Inn. In addition, 10 sales calls were scheduled around the event.
- The ACVB supported the Professional Fraternity Executives Association meeting held at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel, January 5-8. Attending were 10 members representing 13 professional associations ranging from Delta Sigma Pi, Professional Business Fraternity, to Lamda Kappa Sigma, Co-Ed Pharmacy fraternity. The ACVB hosted the opening breakfast, providing a presentation of Asheville as a future meeting destination. In addition, the ACVB assisted in coordinating an evening in the South Slope area.

- Thirty-five wedding guides were downloaded this January, as compared to 74 in January 2016.

Site Visits/Bookings/Leads: The team hosted two site visits in January. They included: 2017 Foundation for Strategic Sourcing – 225 room nights (48-Hour FAM participant) and 2018 Antique Fan Collectors Association – 165 rooms.

January bookings included, among others:

- 2017 Michelin SE Zone Meeting (48-Hour Participant) – 214 room nights;
- 2017 Scale Dealers Association – 75 room nights;
- 2018 NC Society of Surveyors – 184 room nights;
- 2017 Husqvarna Sales Meeting – 425 room nights;
- 2017 Georgia Home Builders Association – 140 room nights;
- 2017 American Association of State Climatologists – 100 room nights.

Group Sales Communications:

Work with the team’s agency, Market Connections, included various small projects related to advertisement placement deadlines including banner ads and editing a short video. Staff met to discuss the Online Marketing Analysis & Recommendations for Group Sales marketing and communications strategies. Initial steps were developed including planning a review of the meetings web section content and organization and the development of editorial content related to meeting planning.

Media Coverage included:

- Asheville came in at #1 of this (alphabetical) Mountain Meeting Destinations list by *SmartMeetings*.
- The CVB reached out to and provided updates and news to *Association News* for possible inclusion in the February issue featuring NC.
- The January issue of *MeetingsToday* featured a wonderful article, “North Carolina’s Foodtopia: Fresh and local are the keys to fostering Asheville’s flourishing community.” The CVB was a great partner to the writer. The digital version of the magazine featured a video interview with Dianna Pierce.
- The CVB helped another writer with *MeetingsToday* working on a future article on the thriving cultural and crafts scenes throughout North Carolina. We assisted by providing extensive information about Asheville’s history, meeting resources, and Asheville’s art and culture.
- Beth McKinney was featured in *Destinations*, the official publication of the American Bus Assn., in an article that featured the New Year’s goals of ABA members.
- CVB PR Specialist, Landis Taylor, sent a total of 4 pitches to *Group Travel Leader*, *Going on Faith* and *Small Market Meetings*.

Mass Communications included:

- An e-blast was sent to 420 Group Tour Operators in advance of the ABA Marketplace show. Open Rate: 36 percent; Click Through Rate: 6 percent.
- An e-blast featuring the *Have More Fun on Us* meeting planner incentive program was sent to 4,456 targeted clients who have not had a meeting in Asheville for the last 3 years. Open Rate: 15 percent; Click Through Rate: 16 percent.

Convention Servicing:

- The Gala gymnastics competition was hosted at the U.S. Cellular Center in early January. This marks the 6th annual event in Asheville and has been a great early January boost for visitor travel. The CVB staff helped set-up for the event, had a welcome table, and volunteered during the competition.
- The CVB helped to host a meeting of the SoCon staff and the team host hotels where plans were made to welcome SoCon teams and fans.

Departmental Activities:

Staff hosted the Citywide Task Force, two AAA Task Force meetings, and a planning meeting for the SCSAE Trade Show in January. Staff assisted with registration for Partner Forum and during the Chamber Open House. Meetings attended included the monthly Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission and Civic Center Commission meeting, toured The Block and the Asheville Masonic Temple. Staff volunteered at Green Opportunities as part of a CVB service initiative.

STRATEGIC PLAN AND OTHER ADMINISTRATIVE INITIATIVES**Workforce Development for the Hospitality Sector:**

Robert Foster and the Doubletree Hotel hosted a regional meeting of the Hospitality and Tourism Industry in partnership with Mountain Area Workforce Development. This meeting announced the approval of a \$150,000 Career Pathways Implementation grant and Amplified Media as the selected agency to handle the industry's marketing and communications strategy.

Wayfinding:

On January 26, Geograph's Greg Freudiger came to town and he and Glenn toured the sites where his team is to reinstall damaged signs and install three new signs. Beginning that day and ending on Monday, January 30, Geograph installed or reinstalled eleven (11) signs or sign faces, including the addition of New Belgium Brewing to four signs, at the expense of New Belgium.

Transitioning:

On January 4, the Fiduciary Task Force (FTF) met and toured the three building finalists for CVB relocation. Out of that meeting, the FTF recommended that the BCTDA select 31 College Street in the Asheville Office Park, owned by Martin Lewis. On January 23, the FTF convened again to discuss the process and language for creating BCTDA, a

NC nonprofit, which was acted on and approved at the January 25 BCTDA meeting. Additional meetings held in relation to the transition:

- January 4 – Met with Gary Hannah of Hilliard Lyons who manages the 401K plan we currently have through the Chamber. There will be no issues in transferring all current balances, including the BCTDA match.
- January 10 – Met with Matt Bradley (ASI) to discuss moving to a new health insurance plan and disability coverage.
- January 24 – Met with Gene Adams (ASI) to discuss BCTDA member and Board D&O and Liability, plus liability and other coverages for staff.
- January 24 – Met with Tim Flora (CFO) and the Buncombe County IT Director and her team to discuss the County managing the installation and ongoing management/maintenance of our IT system.
- January 31 – First meeting with the architectural team developing the floor plan for 31 College Place. Team Members: John Fisher, Jakub Markulis and Maria Rusafova.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

Tourism Product Development Efforts:

Contract development for the 2016 TPDF awards is currently in progress. Pat continues to meet with the awardees to finalize project scopes and contractual details.

Annual Reports

Pat has been assisting TPDF awardees as they prepare their submissions for the annual report update due on January 15 of each year. The reports will be compiled and presented to the BCTDA in early 2017.

NC Glass Center

The NC Glass Center, awarded \$200,000 in the 2015 TPDF cycle, has informed staff there has been a change in the overall direction of the organization. They do not intend to pursue construction of the facility on Riverside Drive as proposed and, therefore, will rescind acceptance of the award. No funds have been distributed.

Partner Engagement:

“Social Media & PR Tips” Partner Forum – January 24

The January Partner Forum was widely popular with 70 partners in attendance. The event was co-presented with AIR (Asheville Independent Restaurant Association). The marketing and PR team presented an overview of the Explore Asheville’s social channels and press relations, and provided several practical steps for partners to implement in their own business. Partners also had the opportunity to ask questions during a panel discussion. The presentation materials are archived in AshevilleCVB.com for reference.

Hospitality Outlook – February 24

Planning is underway for the annual Hospitality Outlook scheduled for Friday, February 24, from 1:30 – 3:00 p.m. at the Diana Wortham Theatre. The event is designed to provide business insights for tourism industry partners. Chad Church of Smith Travel Research will present the annual lodging performance report for 2016, and a forecast for 2017. Chris Cavanaugh, president of Magellan Strategy Group, will present an overview of tourism in Buncombe County.

The event will be followed by an Investors Reception for lodging owners to be held at Posana from 3:00 – 4:00 p.m. Attendees will have the opportunity to discuss the information presented with Chad Church.

SoCon VIP Appreciation Reception – March 3

The Asheville CVB and the Sports Commission are hosting the reception to welcome the Southern Conference Basketball Championships to Asheville. Community leaders and key stakeholders are invited to attend the reception on Friday, March 3, at 4:00 p.m. in the Champions Club Suite, to be followed by the Game 1 matchup at 5:00 p.m.

Projects:

AshevilleCVB.com Redesign

The updated partner website has been reorganized to serve as a more useful resource for partners, community members, and new businesses or organizations interested in working with the CVB. It now provides easy access to news updates, the industry events calendar, research reports, marketing and sales information, and helpful instructions for managing listings on ExploreAsheville.com. The website also incorporates a new BCTDA meeting calendar feature with BCTDA board materials including agendas, minutes, financial reports, the performance Index, and the monthly staff Recap report.

The CVB supported members of AIR during their transition to the new Reserve online reservation system by updating their website listings to reflect the new links.

Brit has begun a new auditing project, with Elizabeth White, to ensure that all listing categories and subcategories are represented on ExploreAsheville.com.

Brit worked on the design of a PowerPoint presentation to be used in the community, giving a broad overview of tourism and its positive economic impact in Asheville, as well as explaining how the BCTDA and Asheville CVB utilize the Occupancy Tax to draw more visitors to the area.

Partner Outreach:

Thirteen new partner accounts were created in January – Forge Mountain Photography, Fesiuk Films, Elena Events, Inspired Design of NC, Base Camp AVL, Asheville Event Paintings, The Montford Rooftop Bar, Sweet Peas Hostel, Cab Hound, J and J Cab, Yellow Tie Photo Booth, Old World Levain Bakery (OWL Bakery), Calypso, and

Tacobilly. Brit and Pat continue to reach out to qualified partners to submit information for a listing as well as service the partners who request listings.

Brit has continued to reach out to Music Venue partners to ensure they are submitting their events to the Live Music Calendar and has seen an uptick in the number of Live Music events submitted.

Four partners attended the January CVB 101 Open Door Session – Altamont Theatre, Base Camp AVL, Story Window, and Asheville Event Paintings. Attendees learned about the structure of the CVB and received an orientation on the CVB's program of work, and ways to connect and partner with the CVB. Brit assisted each person with their own personal needs concerning their accounts and listings on ExploreAsheville.com. CVB 101 Open Door Sessions are scheduled on a monthly basis; ten people are registered for the upcoming session in February.

Community Outreach:

The CVB staff participated in its second CVB Service Day in January. The team volunteered at Green Opportunities assisting with new student enrollment, working in the construction shop, and preparing and serving lunch in the Southside Kitchen. Green Opportunities connects youth and adults from low-wealth neighborhoods to sustained employment opportunities that support families and improve community and environmental health.

Pat has joined the South Slope Neighborhood Association's marketing committee and is providing CVB assistance as the group works to define a new brand identity for the area.

Pat is also regularly attending the monthly Leadership Roundtable on Riverfront Development to stay abreast of construction plans as it relates to partners located in the River Arts District and the visitor experience. She has also attended Asheville city staff-hosted meetings with the artists to develop communication strategies for the area businesses during the upcoming construction.

VISITOR SERVICES

The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 7,078 guests during the month of January 2017. The Pack Square Park Pavilion is closed for the season.

The annual volunteer appreciation party in the Visitor Center was held January 10, 2017. It was attended by 72 volunteers and spouses/travel companions. Thirty generous partners participated by donating an abundance of food and staying to thank the volunteers for their service!! Asheville CVB staff assisted with set-up and breakdown.

The volunteers attended a performance of “Jeeves in Bloom” at NC Stage Co. Future events include NC Stage Co., Magnetic Theatre, Blackbird Restaurant, Albemarle Inn, and Urban Orchard.

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