



Explore **ASHEVILLE**  
Convention & Visitors Bureau

# MONTHLY HIGHLIGHTS

October 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.

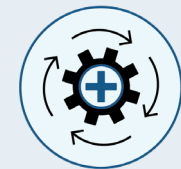
Support product development, place making and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community.



## 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.

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



## Run a Healthy & Effective Organization

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

# DELIVER BALANCED RECOVERY & SUSTAINABLE GROWTH

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

- Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF): Committed \$9.042 million of investments in 10 community projects; [set a record of TPDF investments for one year](#) with a total of \$15.68 million
- Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund: [Approved \\$90,150 of investments](#) in 22 festivals & cultural events scheduled to occur in 2023
- Wayfinding: Installed new signage and repaired existing signage

## Protect and evolve Asheville's brand to further differentiate from competing destinations and inspire higher quality visits

- TikTok: Generated more than 5 million views and grew TikTok audience by nearly 400% with [first viral TikTok](#) featuring Grove Arcade

## Collaborate with broader community leaders to ensure sustainable growth & alignment

- Going Pro in Sports: Participated in a series produced by Kemper Lesnik that teaches high school students about professions that deal in athletics; highlighted CVB roles and plugged 2-year tourism program at AB-Tech

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

- [IMEX Tradeshow](#): Attended in Las Vegas, NV, with 12,000 attendees (4,000 were vetted event planners), and met with over 100 clients, hosting one-on-one appointments with more than half
- [Sports ETA 4S Summit](#): Attended in Sarasota, FL; this is one of the most essential resources for sports commissions, sports destinations, sports event owners, and industry partners
- [MPI Georgia Chapter's Fall Classic](#): Attended in Atlanta, GA, with a record of 160 attendees and ratio of 60% planners to 40% suppliers; sponsored golf balls logoed with Omni Grove Park Inn to 60 participating golfers
- Sponsorships: Donated three luxury 2-night stays in Asheville to [MPI-Georgia](#), [MPI-Carolinas](#) and [SITE Northeast](#) silent auction events

# ENCOURAGE SAFE & RESPONSIBLE TRAVEL

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

- Garden & Gun Magazine: Launched custom advertorial in [Saving the Wild South](#) (October/November 2022) issue that emphasizes responsible travel
- AFAR: Continued content partnership with [column in The Journeys Issue](#) (Fall 2022) that spotlights both cultural and scenic sightseeing opportunities
- [Fall Color Report](#): Created new Fall Color Hunter campaign consisting of six local photographers and distributed weekly via social media, web and e-mail

# ENGAGE & INVITE MORE DIVERSE AUDIENCES

## Extend a genuine invitation to diverse audiences

- Bilingual Blogging: Published an English version and [Spanish version](#) of the blog [Celebrating a Generation of Asheville's Latinx Community](#) that shares how Latinx immigration has contributed to the evolution of Asheville

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

- [Indigenous Walls Project](#): Supported the Intertribal Graffiti & Mural Jam with public relations efforts and influencer connections; helped secure 329 posts about this first-of-its-kind event and amplify native and indigenous voices

## Increase outreach in recruiting diverse meetings and events

- LGBT-MPA: Attended LGBT-MPA reception during IMEX and networked alongside 200 others

# PROMOTE & SUPPORT ASHEVILLE'S CREATIVE SPIRIT

## **Elevate Asheville's creative experiences to differentiate and inspire visits**

- Event Grants and Sponsorships: Supported the following events in October
  - [CiderFest NC](#) - October 8
  - [WMC The Basket Public Art Opening Celebration](#) - October 15
- Halloween: Shared roundups of [events](#) and [haunted spots](#) for Halloween

## **Actively promote creative community and resources to groups and events**

- Group Services: Utilized local companies and products for amenities provided to group VIPs; amplified service offerings via [Meet in Asheville LinkedIn page](#)

# RUN A HEALTHY & EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

## Demonstrate organizational commitment to local, diverse creators, makers & vendors

- Visitor Guide Distribution: Received and fulfilled 1,328 individual requests and 35 out-of-market orders, totaling 131 cases, or 6,550 guides; 28 local partners ordered 86 cases of visitor guides, or 4,300 guides
- ExploreAsheville.com
  - Partner Listings: Created 21 new free partner listings and updated 155 partner listings
  - Partner One-on-Ones: Held 8 partner support meetings
  - New Partner Outreach: Sent emails to 31 businesses
  - Event Calendar: Posted 393 events to our online calendar
  - Package & Deals: Added 8 packages and deals

## Increase team performance and effectiveness

- New Hires: Welcomed four new employees to the team in October: Michael Kryzanek, VP of Business Development; Ashley Greenstein, Public Information Manager; Jay Tusa, Director of Marketing; and John Dawson, Group Service Coordinator

## Focus on events and communications strategy to increase community engagement

- President & CEO Presentations: Addressed AB-Tech Foundation, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association, Asheville Symphony Orchestra Board, Carolina Chamber, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association Membership, and Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Board on various topics

## Focus on events and communications strategy to increase community engagement (continued)

- E-Newsletters, E-Alerts: [3 sent in October](#); delivered to a total of 5,631 with open rates as high as 51% and an average of 46%
- Local News & BCTDA/ Explore Asheville Coverage:
  - General
    - Citizen Times: [Asheville tourism slump? Businesses report declines in traffic, sales](#)
    - Citizen Times: [Asheville Airport on Pace for Recording Breaking Passenger Numbers, Best Year Ever](#)
  - Tourism Product Development Fund
    - Citizen Times: [Muni Golf Course, City, County Big Winners in TDA Funding Grants](#)
    - WLOS: [Buncombe County TDA approves more than \\$9M for 10 Community Projects](#)
    - WLOS: [Asheville on Bikes kicks off end-of-year fundraising campaign, hopes to raise \\$125,000](#)
    - City of Asheville: [City of Asheville announces projects funded by BCTDA Tourism Product Development Fund](#)
  - Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund
    - Mountain Xpress: [Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority approves \\$90K for 22 festivals & cultural events in 2023](#)