

May 31, 2017

To: BCTDA

From: Stephanie Pace Brown, Executive Director

Subject: Recap of April 2017 Staff Activities

The administration team worked diligently to accomplish the many tasks associated with the move and transition during an already demanding time of year. Jonna Reiff managed the process to establish next year's budget, while taking the lead in establishing the new payroll system, new credit cards with online processing, and a host of other details. The Operations Assistant resigned with little notice during this time period. Jonna has worked around the clock to meet the requirements of a successful transition.

Glenn Cox has managed the endless array of details associated with the new building, and he has spearheaded the implementation of employee benefits along with the establishment of the non-profit. We simply would not have been able to accomplish this without Glenn's steady and unflappable management of this work.

Staff met daily with vendors associated with the transition and the move. Key milestones were achieved, including:

- Furniture was ordered.
- Benefits enrollment for staff was completed. In addition, staff completed employment documents.
- Saturn Networks was hired to migrate and maintain IT and phone systems. Weekly IT meetings including the County as the project manager were initiated.
- After a lengthy process to identify insurance needs for the non-profit and the authority, agreements were executed.
- New credit cards were obtained and distributed to staff. Jonna spearheaded a lengthy and complicated process to adapt our process to the online system.
- Staff worked with Jennifer to set up the new payroll system and bank account.
- TPDF grants were celebrated at two ribbon cutting ceremonies.

MONTH AT A GLANCE

- A year-long partnership with National Geographic culminated with an event at their headquarters on April 28. The event was the first offered by NG to sell out. The program featured photographer Krista Rossow and was followed by a lively reception featuring Asheville food and beverages, and music by Abby Roach and the Fly by Night Rounders. DC meeting planners accepted invitations to attend, and several productive media connections were made.

- Media events were held in New York City and Washington, DC and the team logged 117 media touch points.
- The sales team held events in Atlanta and Dallas, and also traveled to New Jersey, Raleigh, Charlotte and Greenville.
- AAA Webinars attracted 42 participants and 27 AAA staff were hosted with the Blue Ridge Parkway FAM.

APRIL CVB METRICS: BY THE NUMBERS

- During April, the sales team posted 1,137 personal contacts (up 10%). March sales activities generated 67 sales leads (up 16%) and 33 convention bookings (up 10%), representing 9,946 rooms (up 235%). Ten months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are down five percent and room nights represented are up seventeen percent.
- CVB leads generated 23 group events in April (down 57%), with revenue of \$1,192,735 (down 54%). The services team assisted 36 groups (down 23%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 19,740 visitors (up 1%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion welcomed 1,045 visitors (up 40%).
- The PR team landed 81 significant placements in March (down 41%), with 117 media touchpoints (up 72%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled \$434,781 with reach of over 12 million. Online placements added \$185,952 in value and reach of over 352 million.
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 436,450 visits (up 26%), including 208,049 to the mobile site (up 30%). Our Facebook fan base grew by 2,317 (down 54%) and video views totaled 64,391 (up 12%).
- Online hotel reservations totaled 106 room nights (up 36%) with total room revenue of \$16,625 (up 27%).

HOTEL & AIRPORT RESULTS

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$24,305,660 in March, up 10.7 percent. Nine months into the fiscal year, YTD 2016-17 sales are up 15.3 percent.
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 68.7 percent during March (down 1.9%). The average daily room rate was \$126.11 (up 4.7%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$86.65 (up 2.8%). Room demand increased 1.5 percent with 152,764 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 9.8 percent to total 65,015 in March.

MARKETING & PUBLIC RELATIONS

Advertising: Nearly two months into the Spring Campaign which launched on March 20, Google Analytics indicates the effort has generated more than 160,000 ExploreAsheville.com sessions through May 15. Sizmek data is reporting 78 million impressions and 198,862 clicks from launch to May 1. TripAdvisor is performing well for its respective metrics delivering engagements and leads. TravelZoo is providing the most engaged audience with the lowest bounce rate, highest pages per session, and longest average session duration, per Sizmek

data. To complement the rollout of spring creative on native advertising platforms TravelZoo and Nativo, Cat Kessler worked with Brooke Ptaszek to develop a set of fly-in graphics to be delivered to web visitors via GetSmart Content. The fly-ins, which are specific to TravelZoo and Nativo site visitors, encourage visitors to request a visitor guide or sign up for the monthly e-newsletter. Within the first few weeks of running the content, the fly-ins were seeing a click-through rate above four percent.

Based on a marketing team strategy session, Brooke also began outlining a creative concept for a video shot from a dog's point of view. This will be the impetus of a series of pieces that will be produced and distributed by Matador Travel Network. Video production begins at the end of May. The concept will serve as a creative way (with additional viral potential) to showcase Asheville.

National Geographic Traveler Partnership

The year-long effort ended with a flourish in April with the release of the six-page content section, several substantive social activities and a final event at the NGT headquarters in D.C. The CVB showcased the new editorial content and photography on ACVB social channels. As part of a one day Instagram takeover, Jason Tarr connected with users commenting on the Nat Geo Instagram posts, reviewing hundreds of comments and replying when appropriate. The @visitasheville Instagram welcomed about 1,200 new followers in that one day as a result of the event. The culminating event on April 28 was attended by more than 200 people and featured a photography-laden event that showcased Asheville, followed by a reception which featured some Asheville food and drink and music by Abby Roach and the Fly By Night Rounders. The event also proved to be an opportunity to interact with media, as Travel Massive, a travel media networking group, received 50 passes to attend. Connections were made with notable freelancers for TravelLuxe, AFAR, U.S. News & World Report, Fodor's and major digital influencer Jeremy Miller of Travel Freak.

Paid search efforts: Compared to last April, site visits generated by paid search are up 50 percent (73,979 vs. 43,247). This was manifested, in part, due to a decrease in Google cost per click (\$1.41 to .51). Ad position for AdWords search has improved by 20 percent year-over-year. The campaign that drove the most clicks to the site continued to be the events campaign.

General Media Relations: The public relations team was extremely productive in April with major proactive efforts in NYC and D.C., as well as a large number of media inquiries and site visit requests coming in for the spring season. In total, the team logged 117 touchpoints, initiated 66 targeted pitches/appointments and hosted 11 media on the ground in Asheville. High profile media support included Wine Enthusiast (site visit), VaycayTV (influencer team site visit), Best Health Canada (site visit), Zagat, and Men's Journal, Successful Meetings (NY appointment), Martha Stewart Living & Weddings (NY appointment) and Food & Wine (NY appointment). Asheville imagery and assistance was also provided to Zagat, USA TODAY/10Best.com and Men's Journal, among other outlets.

Media Missions

Dodie and Landis traveled to NY in late March for a deskside media tour and two events hosted by Visit NC. The team secured appointments with *Food & Wine*, *Successful Meetings*, *Martha Stewart Living & Weddings*, *BBC Travel*, *USA Today* and a freelancer who writes for *NY Daily News*, *New York Times* and other national publications. Dodie and Landis also represented Asheville, networked with and pitched media at an event at Meredith headquarters (24 media attendees) and a reception hosted by Visit NC (71 media attendees). The team made a number of significant connections—including one that will bring the editor of Parents to Asheville for a site

visit in August. Later in the month, Dodie stayed in D.C. following the National Geographic event to participate in the VisitNC media mission, with 30 D.C.-based journalists, and pitched 10 media contacts for an Asheville update and secured appointments with freelancers representing *New York Times*, *Washington Post*, *Washingtonian* and *National Parks Traveler*.

Significant Placements

- *Atlanta Journal Constitution* – “Could Atlanta Someday Replace Asheville As Beer City USA”
- *Beer Advocate* – “Smoke Bone Marrow”
- *Our State Magazine* – “The Woven History”
- *Money Inc.* – “Asheville is one of America’s Ultimate Food Cities”
- *Second Chance Travels* – “Women, Food, and the Biltmore”
- *Zagat* – “A Perfect Day of Eating: 24 Hours in Asheville, North Carolina”
- *Paste* – “Sounds of the Southeast: Asheville, North Carolina”
- *10 Best* – “10 Ways to Tune into Asheville’s Free Spirit”
- *AAA Go Carolina’s* – “Editor Escape: Grab Your Girlfriends and Get to Asheville!”
- *USA Today* – “50 States: 50 Hidden Restaurants and Bars”
- *Our State* – “Women in Brewing, Breaking the Pint Glass Ceiling”
- *Our State* – “Hi Wire Brewing Balances Old and New Methods in Asheville”
- *Draft Magazine* – “Your Perfect Beer Day In: Asheville, North Carolina”
- *Oyster.com* – “4 Great Beer Cities and What to Do in Each”
- *Southern Living* – “Here’s where to go For Your Next Ladies Getaway”
- *The Food Channel* – “Our Top 10 Craft Beer Festivals”
- *The Travel Channel* – “Insider Guide to Asheville”
- *MSN Lifestyle* – “The Best Scenic Getaways”
- *USA Today* – “For the Win Bracket: America’s Best Craft Brewery Championship”
- *The Culture Trip* – “The 50 Vegan Friendly Eateries You Need to Visit in Each US State”
- *Reizen* – “No Fear of Flying”

Content Development Projects: The content team has been busy with a number of projects in April. Additionally, Cat Kessler and Jason Tarr spearheaded the recently released Faces of Tourism project that debuted at the National Tourism Week Summit. The team scheduled and conducted nine interviews over three days with community partners including attraction, restaurant, recreation, arts and municipal partners. Cat and Jason then worked to edit the desired sound bites together with b-roll transitions and natural sound pops to produce the final video. Additionally, Cat created an ad that was used for in-market sponsorship opportunities afforded by the ACVB’s new Festivals & Cultural Events Grant program. The ad encourages event participants to use ExploreAsheville.com as the official source for travel information and features the mobile version of the site.

Google Trekker

As the ACVB prepared to host the Google Trekker backpack, Dodie and Alex worked to move the extensive permitting and permissions process forward for the 17+ POIs selected to be captured as part of Google’s worldwide mapping project. Sites range from iconic hikes to waterfall walks to secured urban gardens around Asheville. Once complete, the team will leverage the 360 degree views and mapped trails through content on ExploreAsheville.com.

Easter Egg Hunt

In an effort to drive web sessions and create some excitement about Easter and the spring season, the content team, with the help of Elizabeth, put together an egg hunt giveaway on ExploreAsheville.com. Jason worked closely with Alex to develop a prize package for the contest that included a two-night hotel stay and experiences with LaZoom, Well Played Café and the Adventure Center of Asheville. The egg hunt page received more than 5,000 page views and the contest received more than 1,600 unique entries.

ExploreAsheville.com Editorial Content

- During the month of April, one new piece of editorial content was added to ExploreAsheville.com: a blog post about the Guastavino exhibit in Black Mountain.
- Cat also worked with the team at Amplified Media to shoot another Foodtopian profile video, this one with Eric Scheffer at Vinnie's Neighborhood Italian Restaurant.
- The most popular blog and story content this month was 50 Things to Do in Asheville, which received 34,895 new page views, followed by the Best Spring Hikes post, which received 7,424 page views.

Social Media Stats:

Facebook:

Visit Asheville page:

- April saw 2,317 daily new likes to Facebook for a total of 252,691.
- There were 54 new Facebook posts added to the Visit Asheville page in the month of April.
- The most popular unpaid Facebook post during the month was our new story content on the best hikes for wildflowers. It has reached 70,733 people organically, generating 2,475 total reactions and 176 comments. This was also the most engaging post this month; engaging 5 percent of users reached.
- The most popular paid post this month was a link to the National Geographic Travel piece featured in National Geographic Traveler. It reached 61,274 users in total (41,545 of those organically), generating 2,975 total reactions, 111 comments and 298 shares.

Foodtopia page:

- April saw 70 daily new likes to the Foodtopia page, for a total of 24,861 likes.
- There were 11 new Facebook posts added to the Foodtopia page in the month of April.
- The most popular post was a teaser of the Travel Channel feature on Asheville. It reached 10,622 people organically, with 414 reactions, 33 comments and 80 shares.

Video:

- There were 12,097 new organic YouTube views in April. The most popular video by organic views this month was Return Again, which received 2,459 non-paid views. The Spirit of Asheville video came in second with 1,955 new views.
- The team broadcast one new Facebook Live video in April, featuring the otters at the WNC Nature Center. The video earned nearly 13,000 views.
- Across all of our video platforms, there were 64,391 views.
- Asheville video content has received 4.8 million views since July 1, 2016 (fiscal YTD).

Pinterest:

- The combined fan total for our two accounts now totals 4,514. Foodtopia accounts for 1,368 of those. Visit Asheville – 3,146.

Instagram:

- Our VisitAsheville account has 30,838 followers.
- There were 46 new posts in April. The most popular shows the view from the Easter Sunrise Service at Chimney Rock. It received 1,680 engagements (likes and comments).
- The team created one Instagram story in April featuring the animals and exhibits at the WNC Nature Center. The first slide of story was viewed more than 3,500 times with more than 50 percent of users reaching the final of nearly a dozen slides.

Twitter:

- Across all of our accounts (no longer including AshevilleDeals and FallColorHunter), we have a total of 27,891 followers. The most popular account continues to be Foodtopia, which has 14,231 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 118,898 active subscribers.
- **Opens/Click-throughs:** In April, we sent out our monthly e-newsletter to 118,453 subscribers. We had a unique open rate of 12.9 percent and a click-through rate of 2.8 percent.

ExploreAsheville.com: In April, website user sessions for ExploreAsheville.com increased 25.8 percent year-over-year, which includes a 22.9 percent increase in organic user sessions, a 687 percent increase in social referral sessions and a 92 percent increase in paid search user sessions. Mobile visits in April increased by 34 percent year-over-year. Due to an increased investment in the spring campaign, web sessions from display advertising increased 161 percent year-over-year. Page views for the lodging pages increased 41.7 percent year-over-year in April. Page views for the event calendar pages increased by 22.7 percent year-over-year.

Trending Web Page

Great progress was made in the development of a trending web page, which will further engage visitors with new, fresh content. A limitation of the Simpleview CMS is that separate data feeds of content cannot be combined into a single display widget. Elizabeth White overcame a limitation in the Simpleview CMS by devising a way to combine several widgets with different feeds into one layout of tiled content that flows together seamlessly allowing us to pull various content into the section, including blog posts, stories, itineraries, events, coupons/packages, partner listings and static text content and, ultimately, user-generated content. The design for the page was also finalized.

Online Reservations: There were 58 orders for 106 room nights in April with a total of \$16,625 in booking revenue and \$747 in commission.

Travel Guide Requests: There were 2,421 requests for the Official Asheville Travel Guide in April, a 10 percent decrease from last April. Year-to-date, there are 21,384 travel guide requests, a 10 percent decrease from last year. The top 5 DMAs requesting guides for the month and year are: Tampa/St. Petersburg, New York, Washington, D.C., Atlanta and Chicago.

Online Travel Guide Downloads (January-December numbers)

There were 204 unique browsers for the online travel guide, a 23 percent decrease from last April. There was a total of 4,028 page views, a 25 percent decrease from last April. The average time spent viewing was 3.31 minutes, which was flat compared to last April. There were 27 clicks on links, a 17 percent increase from last April.

GROUP SALES & SERVICES

Group sales reported 33 definite group bookings in April, up 10 percent from the prior year (17 meetings/conventions, 12 weddings, and 4 group tour). The combined definite room nights total was 9,946, up 235 percent from the previous year. Sixty-seven leads (51 meeting/conventions, 11 weddings, and 5 motorcoach), representing 17,303 room nights, were distributed to Buncombe County accommodations in April. Leads distributed were up 16 percent and rooms represented were up 3 percent over the prior year.

Estimated revenue for leads issued was \$2,074,867 (up 211%). Actualized revenue was \$1,192,735 (down 54%). April 2016 was an exceptionally strong group month with 11,136 rooms reported as picked up. Of this, three large groups represented 5,667 rooms or 51 percent of the total pick up.

Sales Calls/Missions/FAMS:

- Shawn Boone hosted two consecutive client events in the Atlanta area at TopGolf locations in Midtown and Alpharetta. Twenty-two planners were in attendance at these events. Participating industry partners included The Omni Grove Park Inn, Renaissance Asheville Hotel, and Biltmore Farms. Shawn also conducted six sales calls in addition to the events.
- Carla McGlynn conducted seven sales calls in New Jersey. Of these, three were presentations to 15 planners representing three companies responsible for more than 300 meetings per year. Carla also attended the New Jersey MPI Chapter's Annual CMP/CMM Recognition Luncheon. Approximately 44 CMP/CMM planners were in attendance.
- Tina Porter hosted a Texas client event at the Dallas Arboretum. A total of 35 planners attended. She conducted seven sales calls in conjunction with the event and also attended the Dallas-Ft. Worth MPI meeting. Approximately 60 planners were in attendance at that event.
- Molly Nelson attended a trio of Luxury Meetings Summits in Raleigh, Charlotte and Greenville, meeting with 100 planners. In addition, she conducted six sales calls in the Greenville, SC, area, including a lunch presentation with three third-party planners.
- Molly also attended the MPI Central Carolinas board retreat. Molly is the Director of Leadership and Volunteer Development on the board.
- Leann executed two AAA webinars with a total attendance of 42 agents. Clubs represented were AAA Carolinas, AAA Club Alliance, and AAA South. These clubs combined cover 16 states including NC, SC, GA, TN, WI, MI, IL, MN, FL, AL, and OH. Featured industry partners were Biltmore, Adventure Center of Asheville, and the AC Hotel.
- Leann hosted 27 AAA staff representing nine clubs for the annual Blue Ridge Parkway FAM. The agents visited Grandfather Mountain, the Blue Ridge Parkway Visitor Center, Chimney Rock State Park, Biltmore, the Asheville Visitor Center, and had a guided driving tour of downtown.

- The CVB team hosted a lunch and learn with the Cultural Affairs Department of UNC Asheville. The purpose was to encourage university personnel to bring professional conferences and meetings to Asheville.
- Forty-five wedding guides were downloaded this month, compared to 33 guides in April 2016.

Site Visits/Leads: The team hosted with two site visits in April including the 2018 American Board of Physical Medicine – 220 room nights and 2018 Retail Confectioners – 175 room nights. A total of 67 leads representing 17,303 room nights were sent in April. A sampling of the leads processed include: 2018 American Association of Equine Practitioners – 817 rooms; 2018 AIS South Atlantic Regional Conference – 1,100 rooms; 2018 American Conifer Society – 100 rooms; 2018 WNG Summer and Winter Conferences – 815 rooms each; 2017 NC School Public Relations Association – 160 rooms; 2018 College Pro Summit – 518 rooms; 2017 Tesla Road Trip – 150 rooms; 2020 Public Pension Financial Forum – 1,220 rooms; 2017 Bayer US – 265 rooms, among others.

A sample of April bookings:

- 2018 Gala Gymnastics – 310 rooms
- 2019, 2020, 2021 Injured Workers of America – 233 rooms each year
- 2018 National Restaurant Association – 315 rooms
- 2017 AAA East Central – 75 rooms
- 2017 Cardinal Health Sourcing – 40 rooms
- 2017 DreamTrips – 120 rooms
- 2017 Malaysian Peach Corps Reunion – 60 rooms
- 2020 Southern Conference Basketball Championships
- 2021 Southern Conference Basketball Championships

Simpleview Summit: Leann Swims, designated super user for the department, traveled to the annual Simpleview Summit in Tucson. Classes she attended included *The Future of the Meetings Industry*, *CRM What's New*, *Secrets of CRM Success*, *Canada's Spam Legislation Update*, *Cvent RFP Integration*, and many roundtables and discussion groups. This annual training is designed to provide in-depth training covering cutting-edge trends, super-user best practices, refreshers for new and experienced users, and peer networking opportunities. As a super user, Leann conferences with the Simpleview team monthly. Leann's suggested change of adding the ability for partners to enter their group pick-up numbers *and* actualized revenue into the extranet will be a future core function of the program for all Simpleview users.

Group Sales Communications:

Work with the team's agency, Market Connections, included a meeting to discuss new concepts and collateral for the CVB's 2018 meeting planner familiarization trips. Direction was provided to Amplified Media to begin working on a compilation of video testimonials from past 48-Hour Meeting Planner Experience participants. A live editing session was also held with Amplified Media to begin work on a video that will be used to promote the CVB's *Have More Fun on Us* incentive program.

Media:

- The CVB provided answers to questions from a writer with Smart Meetings. The writer is working on a piece about Emerging U.S. Destinations for meeting and event planners. Asheville will be featured in this article in the June issue of Smart Meetings.

Mass Communications:

- An e-blast was sent to 965 NC and SC-based clients with information on CVB services and planner incentives. Opens: 217, Clicks: 26
- An invitation to the May 48-Hour Meeting Planner Experience was sent to 693 TN, SC and GA clients. Opens: 152, Clicks: 24
- An e-blast was sent to 930 D.C.-based clients with information on CVB services and planner incentives. Opens: 222, Clicks: 31
- An invitation reminder was sent to 546 Dallas area clients for a client event that will be held at the end of April. Opens: 152, Clicks: 47
- A sports client e-blast was sent to 650 clients with information on Asheville sports venues. Opens 201, Clicks: 34.
- A special Easter/ Spring greeting was sent to past participants of the 48-Hour Meeting Planner Experiences. Opens 40, Clicks: 21
- An invitation reminder was sent to 299 Atlanta area clients for two client events held at the end of April. Opens: 65, Clicks: 11

Convention Servicing:

Carli Adams met with Michelle Bennett, Volunteer Engagement Director with United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County, to discuss conference group service projects through the United Way. A hospitality table was set up at Crowne Plaza for Jr. Hi Neighbor Volleyball tournament and welcome signage was placed at AVL for the Denny's Franchisee Association.

Departmental Activities:

Carli presented information about the CVB and jobs in the hospitality industry to 8th grade students as a part of the Students@Work program. Staff worked on the FY17-18 budgets, met with various industry partners including Clarion Airport, Ramada Southeast, and Hotel Indigo. The team participated in credit card training and the insurance and benefits related meetings. Staff attended the monthly Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission and Civic Center Commission meetings.

PUBLIC AFFAIRS

The 2017 TPDF grant cycle is underway with Phase I applications due Wednesday, May 31. An Information Session was held at the Asheville Chamber for those interested in learning more about applying for the funds; 13 were in attendance.

Update on Major Works Projects

The project team for the Woodfin Greenway & Blueway Major Works Project presented their proposal for funding to the TPDF committee on April 13. The committee discussed the project and submitted a request for additional information from the applicant team. The committee will reconvene on May 11 for further discussion.

The City of Asheville created a steering committee as part of the South Slope Vision Plan process; Pat attended the kick-off meeting on April 6. City staff and CVB staff will reconvene in July to prepare for another session with PGAV, the destination management consultant hired by the BCTDA.

TPDF Award Ceremonies

The WNC Nature Center kicked off their major renovation project at a groundbreaking ceremony on April 7. The BCTDA was recognized for supporting the project with a \$313,000 Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) award. Stephanie Brown made remarks during the ceremony; Robert Foster and Ken Stamps were in attendance representing the TPDF committee.

The City of Asheville hosted a ribbon-cutting ceremony for the Riverfront Destination Development projects at New Belgium alongside the French Broad West Greenway. Robert Foster presented a check to the Mayor, recognizing the \$3.5 million that has been awarded to the City of Asheville in 2014 and 2015 by the BCTDA.

Partner Engagement:

"Economic Impact Report" Partner Forum – April 13

Originally scheduled for April 13, this forum has been rescheduled for June 22 while staff anticipates receiving the updated economic impact data. A postcard highlighting key economic impact stats is in development and will be distributed at the event.

National Tourism Week Summit – May 12

A half-day Tourism Summit event is in development and scheduled for May 12 during National Tourism Week. The event, to be hosted at the Renaissance Asheville Hotel, will be a half-day meeting featuring keynote presentations from national speakers from TripAdvisor and breakout sessions for marketing and sales teams, plus a tourism industry expo. Preparations include invitation design and communications, site visits, budget planning, speaker and lodging coordination, agenda development, AV specs, and menu selection.

Projects: Brit created 15 new partner accounts in April: Habitat Brewing Company, Turgua Brewing Company, Amazing Scavenger Hunt Adventure – Asheville, Well-Bred Bakery and Café in Biltmore Village, RAD Skatepark, Asheville Camino Trail, and eight musician/band accounts. 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 also puts special focus on outreach to music venue partners regularly to ensure they are submitting their events to the Live Music Calendar.

Brit attended the weeklong annual Simpleview Summit in Tucson, Arizona. She participated in live trainings and Q&A sessions focused on best-practices surrounding the CRM database tool that the CVB uses to feed listings, calendar events, and packages and deals into ExploreAsheville.com.

Pat conducted an audit for members of the Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR) and Asheville Brewers Alliance (ABA) on ExploreAsheville.com and found that there are currently 82 percent of AIR members and 79 percent of ABA members listed on the web site. She is developing an outreach plan to reach the businesses that are not listed.

Partner Outreach: The public affairs team hosted a CVB 101 Open Door session on April 13, with four partners including Visions of Creation, Hyatt Place Asheville, Johnson Price Sprinkle PA, and No Taste Like Home. The session included a presentation on the structure of the CVB and provided an orientation on the program of work, highlighting ways to connect and best utilize the free marketing services.

Pat collaborated with DeWayne Barton of Hood Huggers Tours to increase awareness of CVB services and improve participation among African-American owned businesses in the community that are eligible tourism industry partners. Pat hosted a CVB 101 for the businesses that are part of his tour. Pat and DeWayne will continue to work together as he schedules other sessions with additional businesses.

Community Outreach: Pat continues to attend community meetings for the South Slope Neighborhood Association to assist with their branding efforts, meets monthly with City of Asheville's Dana Frankel, and attends the 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 also attended the Creative Sector Summit hosted at The Collider by the Asheville Area Arts Council. Additionally, Brit exhibited at the Resources & Networking Fair portion of the Creative Sector Summit, where she connected with several artists about representation on AshevilleArtsAlive.org.

Pat met with members of the community representing various projects and events to discuss how best to utilize CVB support services including RiverLink, Farm Sanctuary, Asheville Museum of Science, Nantahala Outdoor Center, Vance Historic Site, Asheville Brewers Alliance, Hood Huggers Tours, Asheville Camino Trail, and LEAF.

Pat met with Asheville City staff to discuss working together to support the businesses located in the River Arts District during the construction period, which is expected to be the coming three years. The CVB offered to provide support in the way of hosting visitor information on a dedicated page on ExploreAsheville.com. The city will develop a draft of an MOU for review outlining each party's responsibilities throughout the process, including the CVB, city, RADA, and RADBA.

VISITOR SERVICES

The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 19,740 guests during the month of April 2017.

The volunteers attended a performance of "The Nerd" by Attic Salt Theatre at NC Stage, a performance at Magnetic Theatre of "Stupid Bird," and a performance of "Smokey Joe's Café" at Flat Rock Playhouse. They were also treated to a luncheon at Red Ginger Dimsum and Tapas! Future events include NC Stage, Albemarle Inn, Urban Orchard and Navitat.

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