

November 17, 2021

To: Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

From: Vic Isley

Subject: President & CEO's Report of October 2021 Activities

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### **OCTOBER BY THE NUMBERS**

- During October, the sales team posted 859 personal contacts (down 6%). October sales activities generated 77 sales leads (up 108%) and 26 convention bookings (up 117%), representing 5,004 rooms (up 100%). Four months into the fiscal year, year-to-date bookings are up 77 percent and room nights represented are up 115 percent.
- CVB sales leads generated 54 group events in October (up 116%), with corresponding revenue of \$959,035 (up 773%). The services team assisted 57 groups (up 21%).
- The PR team landed 20 significant placements in October (down 50%), with 70 media touchpoints (down 45%). The publicity value of print and broadcast placements totaled more than \$785k with reach of over 6 million (up 6%). Online placements added \$1.9 million in value and reach of more than 1 billion (up 84%).
- ExploreAsheville.com attracted 731,201 visits (up 13%), including 551,808 to the mobile site (up 21%). Our Facebook fan base total is 303,301 (up 2%) and video views totaled 126,476 (up 146%).
- In October 2021, there were 1,820 Asheville Visitor Guide requests compared to 1,890 the previous year.
- Online hotel reservations totaled 64 room nights (down 18%) with total room revenue of \$14,113 (up 14%).
- The Asheville Visitor Center welcomed 22,790 visitors (up 46%), and the Pack Square Park Visitor Pavilion remains closed. The Black Mountain Visitor center welcomed 4,491 visitors (up 7%).

### **LODGING & AIRPORT RESULTS**

- Buncombe County Finance reported lodging sales totaling \$53,014,937 in September (up 45%).
- Smith Travel Research reported hotel occupancy of 75.4 percent during September (up 27%). The average daily room rate was \$184.75 (up 30%), and RevPAR (revenue per available room) was \$139.33 (up 64%). Room demand increased 27 percent with 194,434 rooms sold.

- AirDNA reported short term rental occupancy of 64.5 percent (down 6%), ADR of \$117.02 (up 12%), and RevPAR of \$75.53 (up 5%). Total demand for short-term rentals increased 27 percent to total 150,371 rooms sold.
- Passengers at the Asheville Regional Airport increased 162 percent to total 132,022 in September.

## Deliver Balanced Recovery & Sustainable Growth

### Community Engagement

- Earned Revenue Events Funding: Thirty-three funding requests were received for the 2021 Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund Grant Cycle totaling \$161,600. The Grant Review Committee assessed the submissions and provided recommendations to the board at the October meeting. The BCTDA Board approved 26 out of the 33 requests for a total of \$110,000, which exhausts the amount of earned revenue that was allocated for this grant application cycle.

### Sales Activities

- Asheville Business Events Council (ABEC): The first meeting of the Asheville Business Events Council was held on October 7 at the Kimpton Hotel Arras and hosted by the Explore Asheville sales team and Economic Development Coalition for Asheville-Buncombe County.
  - More About ABEC: ABEC is a cross-section of local leaders who aim to leverage the power and success of our travel and hospitality community to lift other business sectors of the local economy. They will meet three times over the next twelve months with discussions designed to help us strengthen our market approach, gain understanding and access to new opportunities. A primary initiative of this group is to connect professional networks to the Explore Asheville group sales team.
  - Follow-Up: Sales team members connected with several attendees of the event about future partnerships, including representatives from GE Aviation, Salvage Station, NC Institute for Climate Studies, and NC Biotech.
- Trade Show: Tina attended the HPN Global Annual Partner Conference in Los Cabos, Mexico. She conducted one-on-one appointments and attended networking and educational events.
- IMEX America Prep: The booth design was finalized and highlights Asheville's accessibility, top attributes for planners, and includes images of activities – inspiring planners to envision “What Experience Will You Create?” at an Asheville meeting. In the first week of booth appointment promotion, seven messages were sent to a total of 13,667 targeted buyers registered for the show. For the second week of appointment promotion, 3,387 messages were sent to buyers – primarily targeting third party planners. 78 appointments with buyers (a record number) have been secured on Connie and Marshall's books. Four leads have been received in connection to this trade show so far. An invitation to a Happy Hour event was also sent to potential clients attending the show. IMEX will take place November 7-11.
- Industry Meeting: Marshall met with the HelmsBriscoe Regional team in Charlotte to discuss partnership opportunities for Asheville.
- Hotel Partner Engagement: Sales staff connected with hotel partners at Brookstone Lodge and Biltmore Farms Hotels.
- B-Corp Prospecting: October's monthly sales meeting included a presentation about B-Corps (what they are, how a company obtains B-Corp status, and the B-Corp community in Asheville) from Keith McDade, Ph.D., Associate Professor of Sustainability Studies and Director of the Reese Institute for Conservation of Natural Resources at Lenoir Rhyne University. Information received will assist in the development of messaging for prospecting.

- MINT+: Admin training was held for some of the sales team in preparation of Explore Asheville's subscription to the MINT+ database, a comprehensive collection of group business information with CRM integration.
- 48-Hour FAM Update: All 12 spots for the November 16-19 FAM have been filled.
- 2022 SoCon Basketball Championships: Carli attended the first (Zoom) meeting of the Local Organizing Committee. For now, holding ancillary events (Downtown Dribble, etc.) is undetermined.
- Recognition: The questionnaire to move forward with Explore Asheville's *2021 Smart Meetings CVB Platinum Choice* award nomination was completed.

#### Advertising

- Monocle Paid Content Partnership: The team finalized content and worked with agency on advertising to accompany 20-page print editorial feature that will be in market in January.
- Asheville Championship: Components of sponsorship delivered, including ads that will air nationally as part of game coverage on the ESPN Network the weekend of November 12.
- Holiday Advertising: Holiday and seasonal brand advertising will roll out in early November across digital and paid social channels.

#### Content/Web

- Fall Color Features:
  - Fall Color Reports: [Weekly fall color report series](#) distribution continued via email, social and posts on ExploreAsheville.com.
  - Fall B-roll: Shot B-roll of fall content downtown as part of ESPN television package for upcoming Asheville Championship basketball tournament.

#### Public Relations

- Media Site Visit Support:
  - *Good Morning America* "Rise & Shine" filmed live from Biltmore and ran a story package on the resilience of Asheville's wedding industry. Team support included connections to JuneBug Retro Resort and wedding/event planner Shay Brown, both of whom were featured along with #AshevilleStrong, a homegrown hospitality initiative to support the community during the pandemic.
  - Marcus Dowling for *Billboard* and *The Bitter Southerner* site visit for LEAF in Black Mountain. This multi-pillar music and art immersion visit also encompassed the Diverse Audiences and Creative Spirit pillars.
  - *WTHR 13/NBC* Indy came to shoot "Chuck's Big Adventure" series with meteorologist Chuck Lofton. This 10-day shoot was for a week-long series to air week of November 15. Team made pitches and connections to Black Mountain businesses and many others across the community.
  - Site visit support for Randy Mink, senior editor for *Premier Travel Media* (*Leisure Group Travel* and *Destination Reunions*). Mink is planning a handful of stories regarding groups and family reunions, in addition to Biltmore.
  - Additional Story Support and Pitch Work: Writer for Barron's/PENTA, *The Local Palate*, *Eater Carolina*, *Home Design & Décor*, *Town Magazine* and *52 Perfect Days*.
- Recent Clips:
  - *Good Morning America*: [How the wedding industry in Asheville, North Carolina, survived during COVID-19](#) #CVBClip #MultiPillar #CreativeSpirit #BalancedRecovery (Site Visit)
  - *Travel Awaits*: [5 Amazing Waterfalls To Visit Near Asheville](#) #CVBClip (Site Visit)
  - *FamilyVacationist*: [5 Fun & Kid-Friendly Things to Do in Asheville](#) #CVBClip (Site visit)
  - *WTHR/NBC 13*: [Chuck's Big Adventure Preview: Asheville, NC](#) #CVBClip #Dispersal

## Public Information

- Local Media & Other Coverage:
  - Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund: The following featured the #RecoveryFund.
    - WLOS-TV: [Majority of Buncombe County businesses that received emergency funds still open, TDA says](#) #BCTDA #LocalNews #RecoveryFund (This story was also promoted throughout WLOS' channels, including e-newsletters and text alerts.)
    - [Ginger's Revenge](#): Instagram post about the #BCTDA #RecoveryFund
    - *Mountain Xpress*: [Women hit their stride in Asheville's brewing and distilling industries](#) (Ginger's Revenge owner credits #BCTDA #RecoveryFund; BCTDA board member Leah Ashburn was also interviewed.)
    - One Buncombe Fund: Simpleview: [Explore Asheville gives \\$90,000 back to community with DTN Revenue](#) (Story on #BCTDA contribution to One Buncombe with mention of #RecoveryFund was published on Simpleview's website and newsletter. #LocalNews)
    - *Mountain Xpress*: [TDA to unveil plan for tourism grant funds by end of year](#) #BCTDA #LocalNews #RecoveryFund (This story was also promoted in Mountain Xpress's daily newsletter and picked up by [AVL Today](#) and [Guide Global](#).)
  - Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF): The following featured TPDF.
    - WLOS-TV: [Buncombe TDA to lift pause on tourism grant funds](#) #BCTDA #LocalNews (This story was also picked up by [MSN](#).)
    - WWNC/iHeart Radio: [Hotel Tax Funds To Be Released](#) #BCTDA
    - *Business North Carolina Daily Digest*: [\\$8M in hotel taxes to start flowing into Asheville-area projects](#) #BCTDA
  - Legislation: *Asheville Citizen Times*: [Asheville, Buncombe hotel tax legislation: Hoteliers 'advocating at highest levels'](#) #BCTDA #LocalNews (This article was also picked up by *WNC Business Today*.)
  - City of Asheville Business Inclusion Office Newsletter: Promoted Explore Asheville.
  - Short-Term Rentals: *Mountain Xpress*: [Bust, boom and then: What happens to short-term rentals in the long run?](#) #LocalNews (This article has drawn multiple letters to the editor from both sides of the issue.)
  - BCTDA Meeting Coverage: *Citizen Times*: [Leaf peepers give Blue Ridge Parkway, WNC tourism strong October](#) #BCTDA #LocalNews
  - Economic Impact: *Outer Banks Voice*: [Study shows Dare County tourism dollars declined by only 2% in 2020](#) (Buncombe mentioned in economic impact research.)
  - Other:
    - Leadership Asheville Breakfast Buzz: Publicity in various outlets on the local economy mentioned Vic as a panelist.
    - Jane Anderson's AIR Resignation: The William A.V. Cecil Tourism Leadership Award was mentioned frequently in ongoing coverage of past recipient Jane Anderson's resignation from AIR.

## Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel

### Sales Activities

- 48-Hour FAM: The sales team will encourage safe and responsible travel during the November 16 – 19 FAM by adding a service project and implementing COVID protocols.
  - COVID Protocols: Attendees must provide proof of vaccination or negative test results. Use of larger event spaces and a larger coach to transport attendees will allow for social distancing. Locally made masks were purchased for distribution to attendees.
- Convention Services: [Carli](#) and [Glenn](#) are reaching out to 2022 booked meetings to encourage them to do a service project or make a donation to benefit the local community.

- United Way: Carli spoke with United Way of Asheville and Buncombe County's new Volunteer Engagement Director, Sarah Roth, about service project options tailored for conference groups.

#### Advertising

- Pledge for the Wild: Married philanthropic component to the Asheville Championship Partnership with a raffle submission providing opportunity to win an Asheville Championship branded kayak from local maker Liquidlogic.
- Matador Paid Partnership: Video assets from outdoor content to be shared in November on TikTok via Matador channel with more than one million followers.

#### Content/Web/Social

- Responsible Recreation: Published new [Instagram Reel](#) by local content creator Nathaniel Flowers highlighting fall color and responsible recreation during leaf season.

#### Public Relations

- Media Support:
  - Site Visit: Sandra Chambers of *Sunseeker* and *TraveltheSouthBloggers.com* was hosted by Biltmore Farms for holiday travel story.
  - Site Visit: Jennifer Nalewicki of *Smithsonian* was given destination insights, pitches included sustainability at America's Largest Home, Black Mountain College history/tours, architecture, RAD and greenways and Asheville fall news. This multi-pillar pitch also covered the Balanced Recovery, Engage Diverse Audiences and Creative Spirit pillars.
  - Accolade: Asheville recognized by *Blue Ridge Outdoors* "Best Mountain Towns". Team provided connections and insights on outdoor-related partners. Team is working with *Blue Ridge Outdoors* on rollout of winners, plus responsible travel message inclusion.
  - Additional Support: *TravelwithPlan.com*, *FamilyVacationist*, *freelancer for Travel + Leisure and Plane and Simple Living*.
- Recent Clips:
  - *CBS 17 Charlotte* | [Looking for some fall color? Here are the best times and places to view peak foliage in North Carolina](#) #CVBClip
  - *Charlotte Parent* | [From the Mountains to the Beach: 3 Fall Kid-Less Getaways for Charlotteans](#) #CVBClip
  - *UrbanDaddy.com* | [Take a Digital Detox in Asheville](#) #CVBCLip
  - *WRAL* | [NC fall foliage: warm weather has slowed down fall colors :: WRAL.com](#) #CVBClip
  - *BRIT + CO* | [18 Places To See \\*Gorgeous\\* Fall Foliage](#) #CVBClip
  - *Charlotte Observer* | [Road trips at the ready: Our guide to enjoying Asheville's food, sights and hotels](#) #CVBClip
  - *Business Insider* | [Asheville boasts one of the longest foliage seasons in the US— these 10 central hotels offer striking views](#) #CVBClip (site visit)

#### COVID-19

- Mask Mandate Extension: Updated the Coronavirus Resource page on AshevilleCVB.com with extension of mask mandate in Buncombe County through November 30, 2021.
- Mask Concerns: Team continues to respond to resident and visitor concerns about local safety protocols, in particular, the mask mandate. As a reminder, Explore Asheville hosted a webinar on how to handle anti-mask guests. [Find the recording here](#).

## Engage & Invite More Diverse Audiences

### African American Heritage Trail

- Community Engagement Efforts: The phase two community engagement effort ended October 17, and 160 survey submissions were received. Dewayne Barton of Hood Huggers Tours was contracted to assist in these efforts. The project team has started to assess the feedback, which will be used to determine additional items to research.
- Advisory Committee Development: Team is coordinating with Aisha Adams to create an advisory committee to review the feedback and provide direction on next phase.

### Sales Activities

- 48-Hour FAM: Team has purchased amenities from and planned activities with woman-, BIPOC-, and LGBTQ-owned local businesses for the upcoming November 16 – 19 FAM.

### Content/Web/Social

- Hispanic Heritage Month: Created new blog post story on Latinx-owned Businesses in Asheville in both [English](#) and [Spanish](#), written by Adriana Chevala of Hola Carolina. Businesses/owners include Adriana Chevala/Hola Carolina, Elio Gonzales/Miss Gay Latina Asheville, Cecilia Marchesini/Cecilia's Kitchen and Francisco Troconis/Contemporaneo Gallery. Amplified on social media.
- LGBTQ Blog Post: Published new [LGBTQ blog post](#) and Instagram Story series written by Authentic Asheville (Erin McGrady and Caroline Whatley) and Jefferson Ellison (Jawbreaking Creative) as part as National Coming Out Day on October 11.

### Public Relations

- Site Visit: Freelancer Amanda McCracken researching *Nat Geo Travel* pitches. Team provided insight on The Block, Benne on Eagle and other storylines because of interest in restaurants with history.
- Story Support: Assisting Mariette Williams from *Signature Bride Magazine*. Team provided insights on new Benne on Eagle chef de cuisine, Ophus Hethington, as well as Mountaintop to Rooftops Tour and Joyride Slingshot rentals.
- Story Support: Assisting Lawrence Ferber for *TripSavvy* with images from Asheville LGBTQ bars and Blue Ridge Pride.
- IGLTA Connections: Team followed up with media connections from IGLTA Convention.
- Additional Support: *Two Femme Gems* with focus LGBTQ travel.

### Public Information

- CVB Social Media: Posts in October featured Phil the Culture and re-shared the Asheville YMCA's social post about the African American Heritage Trail.

## Promote & Support Asheville's Creative Spirit

### Community Engagement

- Partner Updates: Five new partners were added in October: The Aventine, Bliss Your Soul, Cellarest Beer Project, Dog and Pony Show, and The Track at Asheville. One account, Hill House Bed and Breakfast, was cancelled due to permanent business closure.
- One-on-One Wednesdays: Four one-on-one sessions were held in October.
- Event Listings: In October, 308 calendar event listings were processed, and 38 partner listings were updated, including 11 Attractions, 1 Cabins/Vacation Rental, 7 Food & Drink, 4 Hotels/Motels, 7 Retail, 1 Bed & Breakfast, and 1 Wedding Service.
- Annual Calendar: Finished Annual Event Calendar Master for 2022 Asheville Visitor Guide and Explore Asheville Event Calendar in CRM.

- Visitor Guide Distribution: 1,820 Individual Out-of-Market requests were fulfilled; 1,892 books (or 43 cases) of In-Market deliveries were made to 10 industry partners; 9,576 books (or 218 cases) of Out-of-Market were delivered to 43 welcome centers, AAA offices, etc.

#### Partner Events

- Partner Salon: Planning is underway for the “Packaging Matchmaker” event on November 10. The agenda to include presentations by Community Engagement and PR teams and facilitated networking time.
- Holiday Party: Planning is underway for Explore Asheville’s Annual Holiday Party on December 8. Team plans to include a variety of partners and local vendors for food and beverage, activities, and entertainment.

#### Wayfinding

- Maintenance: Geograph, the sign vendor, postponed November’s maintenance trip due to staffing issues. Sign maintenance, which includes repairs and the updates to the kiosk content banners throughout the county, is still expected to be completed by end of 2021.

#### Sales Activities

- 48-Hour FAM: The upcoming FAM will promote and showcase Asheville’s creative spirit.
  - Welcome Reception: Local entertainment has been booked for the opening reception.
  - Wellness Break: Examples of unique and creative wellness experiences that a planner could incorporate into a meeting agenda will be showcased.
  - Creative Activities: Attendees will also have several opportunities within the FAM agenda to experience some of the other creative activities Asheville has to offer.
- Partner Engagement: The sales team connected with owner of North Carolina Wine Academy, Yellymary Montalvo, regarding working with groups and Explore Asheville, and will find a time to see the space and learn more about their group offerings.

#### Advertising

- Garden & Gun Partnership: Explore Asheville’s sponsorship and hosting of the 2022 Made in the South Awards to be announced at this year’s ceremony on November 5 in Charleston.
- Holiday Gift Guide: Advertising begins in early November to drive consumers to the Gift Guide and downstream to Asheville area makers to drive product sales.

#### Content/Web/Social

- Glass Blowing Feature: Published new [Instagram Reel](#) and photo gallery highlighting Asheville’s glass “pumpkin patches,” including the NC Glass Center.
- Upcoming: Curating submissions for 2021 online holiday gift guide to launch on November 3 as part of Garden & Gun “Made in the South” Awards.

#### Public Relations

- Outreach/Press Release: Disseminated 2021 holiday news and winter wellness press round-up: [“Iconic Holiday Traditions Return in Person.”](#) Destination insights included “Under-the-radar Towns with Over-the-top Charm”; Winter Lights at NC Arboretum, pulling forward their conservation and environmental education programs; BIPOC-owned partners; and creative self-care experiences. This multi-pillar pitch also covered Balanced Recovery, Responsible Travel, and Engage Diverse Audiences pillars.
- Media Support:
  - Site Visit: Coordinated accommodations for Kelly Grey via Element for “places to stay” inclusion in a TBD major outlet (1.2 million subscribers) regarding Appalachian food.
  - Site Visit: Many creative spirit partners connections for WTHC/NBC Indy including Jerry Read Smith dulcimers; Adoratherapy at Grove Arcade; LaZoom; Asheville Guitar Bar in

- RAD; Folk Art Center; ballad singer Donna Ray Norton; and poets Ryan Ashley and Eddie Cabbage.
- Site Visit: Assisted *The Weather Channel* with destination insights and local connections for Scott Kurtz, national assignment editor.
- Site Visit: Provided fall trip and what's new insights for Terry Ward, AARP freelancer and SATW member.
- Site Visit Support: Team is working with a writer from *Home Design & Decor* magazine for an October quick trip.
- Site Visit: Pet-friendly accommodation insights were provided to *USA Today 10 Best* for possible site visit, but the trip has been temporarily cancelled.
- Recent Clips
  - #CVBClip: *ShermansTravel* featured Asheville in [The Most Haunted Places in Every State](#) (This clip resulted from pitch provided to VisitNC.)

#### Public Information

- Local Media and Other Coverage:
  - WLOS: [Art out helps people experience beauty of WNC through painting in nature](#) #LocalNews
  - AVL Today: [Publicity](#) for submissions for Explore Asheville Holiday Gift Guide #LocalNews
  - Asheville Made Magazine: [South Slope Mural Trail Is Revealed in Plain Sight](#). This article mentions Explore Asheville as a collaborator.
  - AVL Today: [Festivals and Cultural Events Grant Fund recipients](#) featured in news brief.
  - Creative Summit Sponsorship: Asheville Area Arts Council publicity of the Creative Summit mentions #BCTDA as a sponsor.
- Partner Outreach:
  - Calls for Holiday Gift Guide and Partner Salon Participation:
    - [CVB Holiday News & Gift Guide Alert](#) call for partner submissions sent on October 5. Stats: 1,792 delivered; 32.5% open rate.
    - [Alert sent on October 19](#) to promote Holiday Gift Guide, call for 2022 news, and "Packaging Matchmaker" partner salon in November. Stats: 1,689 delivered, 31.3% open rate.
    - [Alert sent on Nov. 3](#) to promote "Packaging Matchmaker" Partner Salon. Stats: 1,7916 delivered; open rate 30.2%.
- CVB Social Media: Posts included the Good Morning America segment, a call for entries for the Asheville Holiday Parade, Asheville No. 19 on Livability Top 100 Cities, and a call for Holiday Gift Guide submissions.

## Run a Healthy & Efficient Organization

#### Exec Office

- New Explore Asheville Staff: Crystal Sherriff was hired in the role of Community Engagement Manager and will start on November 15.
- Benefit Enrollment: Recent hires Julia Simpson, Sha'Linda Pruitt, and Michael Poandl were onboarded into medical and personal benefits following 30 days of full-time employment.
- PTO Policy: A PTO conversion and policy document was transferred to attorney Sabrina Rockoff to ensure it meets all DOL and IRS requirements. The new PTO plan is slated for implementation on January 1, 2022.
- Short-Term Disability Policy: Materials and required data was provided to Insurance Service of Asheville for the purposes of shopping a new Short-Term Disability policy for all full-time team members. A plan with Lincoln Financial Group was selected in time for a November 1 implementation date.



- Remote Working Policy: A policy document was drafted and vetted by department heads before being shared with all team members in the October 18 staff meeting. Implementation of the new policy will commence on November 8.
- COVID Policy: The revised COVID Policy Guide for the Explore Asheville team that was provided on August 30 remained in effect throughout the month of October.
- Team Building Staff Retreat: The Explore Asheville team engaged in off-site, facilitated, all-team and leadership retreats on October 19 – 20. The “R” Pillar Workgroup coordinated the retreat venue selection and logistics.
- FY22 Budget: Completed first quarterly review of budget with department heads. Updated FY22 expense forecast to be reviewed at the November directors’ meeting.
- FY21 Total Rewards Statement: Finalized FY21 total rewards statements to be shared with staff.

#### BCTDA Board

- New Board Members: The Buncombe County Board of Commissioners appointed HP Patel and Scott Patel to the BCTDA. An in-person orientation was provided to the new board members in advance of their first board meeting.
- Monthly Meeting: At the October 27 virtual BCTDA meeting, new board members were introduced, the board approved the Festivals & Cultural Events funding recommendations, Sybil Tate and Nathan Pennington provided an overview of Buncombe County’s Comprehensive Plan, and a Blue Ridge Parkway update was provided by Superintendent Tracy Swartout. Vic shared her President’s Report and Marla presented a staff update on the Encourage Safe & Responsible Travel pillar. The PowerPoint, recording, and other docs [can be found here](#).
- November Meeting: The next BCTDA meeting is on Wednesday, November 17, at 9:00 a.m., via Zoom.
- Presentation: Vic provided a BCTDA update to the Buncombe County Board of Commissioners on October 5.
- Local Media & Other Coverage:
  - Media Advisory: for the BCTDA meeting sent and picked up by *Mountain Xpress*, *AVL Today* and *Mountain Xpress*’s daily newsletter, resulting in attendance by *Citizen Times*, WLOS-TV, Sunshine Request, and a freelancer who frequently writes for *Mountain Xpress* and *AVL Watchdog*.
  - *Mountain Xpress*: BCTDA board hopefuls were shared in advanced notice of the Buncombe County Commissioners.

#### Public Information

- BCTDA Annual Report: The 2020-2021 report completed and can be [viewed/downloaded here](#) or from the Research & Reports page or from homepage of ExploreAshevilleCVB.com.
- Newsletters:
  - [Tourism Community Update](#) newsletter published following BCTDA meeting. Stats: 1,833 delivered; open rate 27.1%, with more than 100 click-throughs (above average for this communication) related to the Festivals & Cultural Events Grant Fund article.
  - [CVB October Newsletter](#): October’s newsletter was published on October 13. Stats: 1,835 delivered, open rate 22.3%, with high click-through rate for viewing the Good Morning America segment.
  - These newsletters are gaining interest with several requests made to be added to mailing list by new subscribers.
- Public Records Requests: Completed and delivered public records requests on marketing expenditures for June 2021 and June 2019 (*Mountain Xpress*); TPDF expenditures since creation of the fund (private citizen).



**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.



**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.



**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.



**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.