

The word "ASHEVILLE" is written in a stylized, colorful font. Each letter is composed of overlapping shapes in shades of blue, red, yellow, and green, giving it a vibrant, multi-colored appearance.

ASHEVILLE

# *The Brand Book*

The Marketing & Communications Plan of the  
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

The background features large, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of orange, olive green, and blue, creating a modern, abstract design.

2009 - 2010

# Message to the Industry

As expected, it's been a tough year for the tourism industry, both nationwide and here at home. Yet, we see glimmers of light on the horizon. The mid-summer rebound of the stock market and signs of a stabilizing economy point to a waning recession, according to some economic forecasters. That's certainly good news for the tourism industry which relies so heavily on discretionary income and strong consumer confidence.

Although the tourism industry saw unprecedented declines during the past year, our region held its own against competitive Southeast destinations, posting occupancy rates, average daily rates (ADR) and revenue per available room (RevPAR) second only to Charleston. Collectively, our industry's aggressive marketing approach, willingness to creatively figure out how to better leverage dollars and determination to remain cutting edge have allowed us to tread water in an economic storm.



Kelly Miller

No doubt the year ahead holds challenges. With fewer dollars and staff, the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), under the direction of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), is undertaking an ambitious program of work. Realistically, we expect recovery will be slow and may create what some are calling "the new normal." The Asheville area brand, combined with our positioning on affordability and value are helping us become a beacon for travelers hoping to preserve their vacations and getaways. Continued efforts at extolling the region's unique culinary culture through our Foodtopian Society campaign is generating buzz as well.

**Affordability continues to be the platform we will push in all areas of our program of work slated for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.**

Much of our advertising is based around affordability and our PR and social strategies are focused on complementing that message. We continue to align and integrate our advertising, PR, promotional, and online strategies to create razor sharp focus in our marketing efforts. Additionally, with a new interactive agency on board, we think our increased investment in online efforts will work harder than ever. Utilizing sophisticated analyses and a re-targeting program, the aim is to overcome traveler hesitation and close the deal. Aggressive negotiations in the purchase of traditional media, particularly in TV, will allow us to maintain impressions at a reduced cost. Staff is also concentrating on Web 3.0 efforts that include a comprehensive strategy for video integration and distribution.

**Relationship building and one-on-one communication is central to our ability to close the deal, yet we realize in a busy and ever-changing world that incorporating technology into the mix allows us to operate more efficiently and be more "green."**

The Asheville CVB has been the first destination in the state to tap into webinars to ensure AAA agents are abreast of activities, deals and packages that can be shared with their travelers. The tool is also being used to stay in touch with North Carolina welcome center operations. Social outreach is just one of the tools our convention sales and services staff are using to better connect with busy planners as well as groups that may be more recession resistant, such as religious, some government, and hobby, sports, collectables, and auto/motorcycle events. Use of technology also goes hand-in-hand with the CVB's efforts to build sustainable initiatives that are in keeping with the Asheville area brand. Led by the convention team, efforts include a partnership with Warren Wilson which promotes the use of a local "offset" program that can be used by planners who are looking for ways to further green their meetings.

**On the ground in Buncombe County, it will be exciting to see the wayfinding and signage project take shape during the next few months.** BCTDA, in partnership with local towns and cities, had the foresight to recognize the impact that a well-planned, on-brand signage program could have on this community. After significant input and hours, this project is finally coming to fruition with more than 300 signs, kiosks and gateway elements set for installation this fall.

As always, we will continue to work hard to promote this beautiful region in order to increase the economic opportunity for all of us. Don't hesitate to call your CVB staff, as we are here to support you!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly".

Kelly Miller, CDME  
Executive Vice President, CVB Executive Director  
*a proud member of the Asheville CVB team*

# Table of Contents

Message to the Industry	Page 2
Industry Snapshot	Page 4
The Asheville Area Brand	Page 5

## Convention & Visitors Bureau Overview

<b>Marketing &amp; Public Relations Department</b>	<b>Page 6</b>
Advertising	Page 7
Planned Media Schedule	Page 9
Research	Page 11
Public Relations	Page 12
Online Relations	Page 13
Web Development	Page 14

<b>Tourism Department</b>	<b>Page 15</b>
Tourism Promotions	Page 16
Group Tour	Page 17
International	Page 17

<b>Convention Sales &amp; Servicing Department</b>	<b>Page 18</b>
Convention Sales	Page 19
Convention Services	Page 20

<b>Visitor Services</b>	<b>Page 21</b>
Visitor Center	Page 22
Chamber Concierge Services	Page 22
The Asheville Shop	Page 23

<b>Executive Office</b>	<b>Page 24</b>
The CVB Team	Page 25
Tourism Promotion in Asheville	Page 26
Tourism Product Development Fund	Page 27
Buncombe County	Page 29
Tourism Development Authority	Page 30
2009-2010 Industry Calendar	Page 30
Glossary of Terms	Page 32

[www.ExploreAsheville.com](http://www.ExploreAsheville.com)

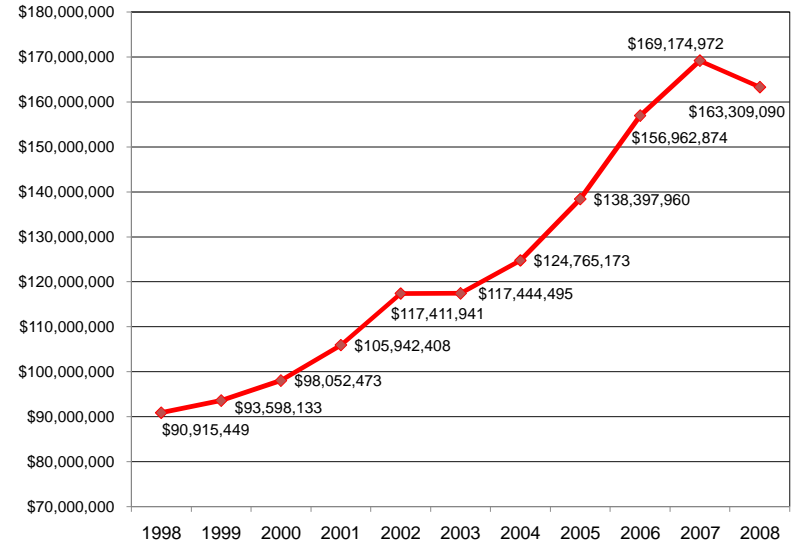
[www.AshevilleCVB.com](http://www.AshevilleCVB.com)

# Industry Snapshot

Asheville is not unlike other destinations being affected by the national, regional and local economic downturns. Listed below are key industry measurements, which mostly showed decreases when compared to the previous year. The declines in several Southeast destinations have been much more significant than the Asheville/Buncombe area, and we hope to see these numbers trend upwards as the nation gets back on its economic feet.

- Hotel sales decreased 8.5% (2008-2009 fiscal year)
- RevPAR decreased 12.9% (2008-2009 fiscal year)
- Average daily rate increased 2.7% (2008 calendar year) and is currently down 7.2% (2009 calendar through June)
- Occupancy decreased 5.3% (2008 calendar year) and is currently down 11.4% (2009 calendar year through June)
- Asheville Visitor Center patronage decreased 7.1%, but still welcomed over 178,000 visitors
- User sessions on ExploreAsheville.com increased 14.4%

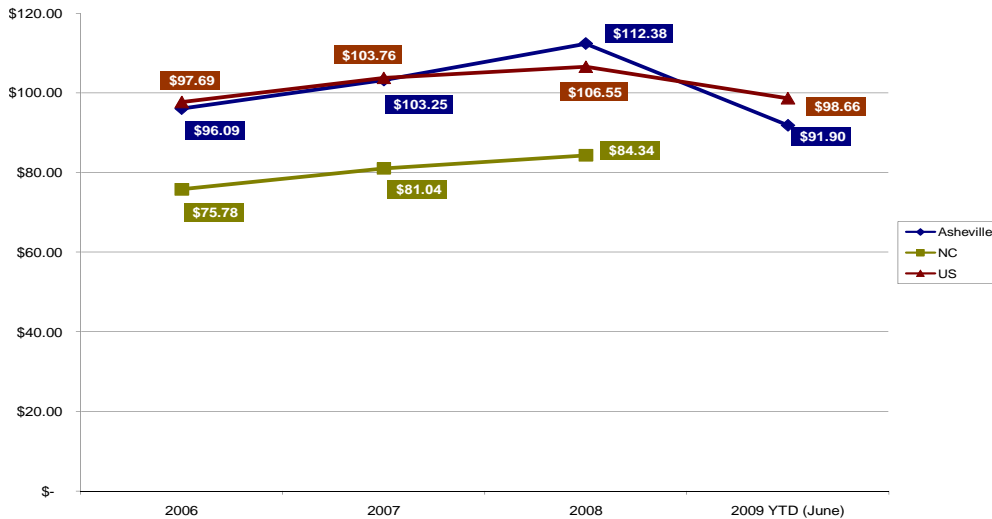
## Buncombe County Hotel Sales



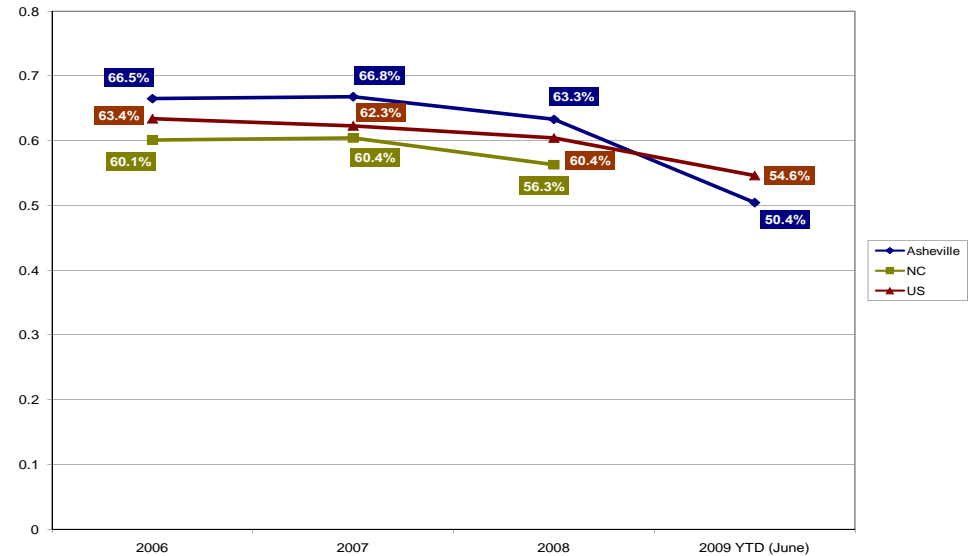
## 2009 - 2010 Tourism Marketing Business Objective

10% decrease in revenue for the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

## Average Daily Rate



## Occupancy



# The Asheville Area Brand

## Brand Strategy

The Asheville area brand is the representation of the sum total of our reputation and image as a tourism destination. The underlying brand proposition, "Enrich Your Life," speaks to the emotional benefits of an Asheville area getaway versus the physical attributes (mountain scenery, attractions and vacation offerings) that were so prevalent in past advertising efforts and, in many ways, common among many destinations.

By playing on the very personal, often unscripted, but transformational nature of the Asheville area, the destination carves out a category that is distinctive and strengthens its competitive advantage. While the mountains, beautiful scenery and attractions are important, it is the combination of these physical attributes, along with interesting people and diverse interests, that evolve into a distinctive experience that empowers visitors. It is the resulting emotional connections visitors have with the Asheville area that come to the forefront in advertising, marketing and sales efforts.

Asheville's brand promise serves as a guarantee to each guest who visits the area. Delivering on the promise, while ensuring that the core destination values of welcoming, natural and vibrant are met, is paramount. It is the responsibility of the tourism industry and the community to continue to create the warm, embracing and creative environment that makes this area distinctive and empowers guests to find their own unscripted, memorable experience.

## Brand Culturalization

Brand culturalization - identifying and impacting each visitor touch-point to authentically deliver the brand promise and ensure each visitor is able to live the brand in an emotionally compelling manner - is the most important on-going brand strategy for the BCTDA.

The idea of enrichment permeates the program of work undertaken by the CVB on behalf of the BCTDA and how the area manages its future. While it is critical that the CVB incorporates the brand, it is equally important that each partner understands and communicates the brand values to ensure an underlying consistency in the visitor experience.

**Want to learn more?** To learn how to incorporate elements of the Asheville area brand or find out how to better deliver the promise at your organization, contact Marissa Jamison, marketing/PR coordinator at the Asheville CVB, by calling 828.258.6135 or e-mailing [mjamison@exploreasheville.com](mailto:mjamison@exploreasheville.com).

## The Asheville Area Brand Promise

*We guarantee you a life enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It's personal, personal to you. And it is personal to us. We live this same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits and allow you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.*

**ASHEVILLE**  
*any way you like it*®

# Marketing & Public Relations Department

The CVB's mission through marketing & public relations is to promote the Asheville area as a premier travel destination through a variety of methods. The department oversees the relationship with the BCTDA's online and traditional advertising agencies as well as its Web vendor; works with national and regional media outlets to generate substantial editorial and broadcast coverage; executes viral and social media efforts; conducts ongoing research and statistical examination of the industry; maintains ExploreAsheville.com, AshevilleCVB.com and BCTDA.org; and proactively manages and markets the Asheville area brand. Educating the community and serving as liaison to traditional and non-traditional partners is also of prime importance as part of the ongoing effort to develop the area as a sustainable destination. Staff also assists in fostering new product by overseeing the BCTDA tourism product development funding process.

In response to current economic conditions, the CVB has repositioned advertising and marketing efforts to focus on an affordability and value message aimed at consumers who are increasingly motivated by "the deal." With lower gas prices, the target audience has again shifted to embrace a wider geographic area and marketing efforts specifically incorporate key Florida markets back into the media plan. Advertising will be concentrated in print, TV and online opportunities, including rich media ads, pay-per-click and sponsored search.

The region's rich culinary offerings continue to be a focus. Both online and traditional advertising that features the epicurean scene will be enhanced by promotional efforts and media relations, with an emphasis on driving consumers to FoodtopianSociety.com.

A personal approach to both media and online relations will continue with the aim of encouraging editorial coverage, conversation and buzz about the Asheville area and surrounding communities. Customized pitches and outreach, one-on-one visits and relationship development are the cornerstone of our online and media relations strategies. Keeping the region in the spotlight enhances awareness and complements the dollars spent on advertising.



**Marla Tambellini**  
Assistant Vice President/  
Director of Marketing & PR  
828.258.6138  
mtambellini@exploreasheville.com



**Dodie Stephens**  
Public Relations Manager  
828.257.4959  
dstephens@exploreasheville.com



**Sherida Buchanan**  
Online Relations Manager  
828.257.4960  
sbuchanan@exploreasheville.com



**Tim Lee**  
Web Manager  
828.232.2243  
tlee@exploreasheville.com



**Cate Marvill**  
Tourism Product Development/  
Community Relations Manager  
828.210.2724  
cmarvill@exploreasheville.com



**Marissa Jamison**  
PR/Marketing Coordinator  
828.258.6135  
mjamison@exploreasheville.com

## Marketing / Public Relations Calendar

Date	Event	Location
Aug. 21, 2009	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
September 2009	Fall Media Tour	Interstate 40, NC
Oct. 26-28, 2009	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Little Rock, AR
Nov. 6, 2009	PR/ Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Feb. 5, 2010	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Winter 2010	NC Media Mission	New York City, NY
May 7, 2010	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC

# Advertising

Two strategic marketing initiatives are funded in the 2009-2010 media plan. These campaigns will use the existing campaign creative materials that are consistent with the Asheville area brand, but they will have messages tailored to specific audiences and opportunities.

**Value Brand Campaign** – The current recession has caused more and more consumers to re-evaluate the best way to spend their travel dollars. BCTDA will use the existing value creative as a means of driving brand awareness of Asheville as an affordable destination among travelers. New value print and TV creative began running in March 2009 and will continue in all forms of media (print, TV, interactive) through the end of the 2010 fiscal year. Priority markets for this campaign include Atlanta, Charlotte, Orlando, Raleigh and Greensboro.

**Foodtopia Campaign** – The goal of this campaign is to build awareness of the Asheville area’s thriving restaurant and culinary scene among travelers for whom good food is a vacation decision variable. Print media to be used includes full-page and half-page ad units.

In addition, a limited budget will be used to support a destination weddings effort in 2010. Media to be used will be print and interactive.

The initiatives outlined above are supported by a \$2 million net advertising budget. This budget allows the CVB to expand online efforts, run TV in five markets and to place ads in 12 magazines. Plans include maintaining both the print and online 2009 cooperative ad efforts.



## Visitor Inquiries

	2007-2008	2008-2009
July	4,915	8,197
August	4,939	8,366
September	7,516	6,523
October	6,151	6,448
November	3,305	3,086
December	3,548	3,352
January	13,798*	8,620
February	5,934	5,393
March	8,541	8,376
April	12,535	11,508
May	8,532	13,242
June	7,530	10,222

**TOTAL 87,244 93,333\*\***

\*ABC News' 20/20 segment aired Jan. 11, 2008, naming Asheville the "happiest place in America."

\*\* Total 2008-2009 visitor inquiries include more than 10,000 bonus leads.

## Online Visitor Guide Requests

	2007-2008	2008-2009
July	3,415	3,981
August	3,083	3,803
September	2,766	3,313
October	1,318	2,851
November	1,390	1,679
December	1,178	2,365
January	7,684*	7,119
February	3,189	3,892
March	3,724	3,948
April	3,211	4,005
May	3,173	4,441
June	3,729	3,827

**TOTAL 37,860 45,224**

\*ABC News' 20/20 segment aired Jan. 11, 2008, naming Asheville the "happiest place in America."

## Strategies and Tactics

### Drive awareness of Asheville as a travel destination within key markets:

- Concentrate message delivery against a core audience of women 35-64 with a household income of \$100K+.
- Focus the majority of media exposure during peak decision-making times to affect business during the top three seasons (spring, summer and fall), which in turn commands the most return on investment opportunity due to higher average daily rates.
- Target branding in the Southeast, with special focus on the following key markets:
  - Tier 1: Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh, Orlando
  - Tier 2: Georgia, North Carolina, South Carolina
  - Tier 3: Southeast
  - Tier 4: East of the Mississippi

### Maximize the impact of the strategic initiative campaigns:

- Use primarily half-page ad units in order to extend geographic reach.
- Utilize rich media ads online to better engage consumers and maximize click-through.
- Use creative customized to the campaign topic, media environment, and, in the case of pay-per-click, keywords.

### Continue to support Foodtopian Society campaign launched in the 2007-2008 fiscal year:

- Use half-page and full-page print units to support the campaign.

### Improve effectiveness of the spot television portion of the campaign:

- Use shorter, more targeted prime schedules.
- Increase the level of spot cable targeted to affluent neighborhoods.
- Insert Orlando back into the schedule as a priority market.
- Use Value broadcast creative.
- Coordinate the Asheville CVB TV schedule with the TV schedules of Asheville tourism partners, such as Biltmore.

### Use advertising to increase lead generation and Web site visitation that will drive growth of bookings:

- All creative units to include a dual call-to-action, driving potential visitors to ExploreAsheville.com (or CoolAshevilleSavings.com) and 877.GO.TO.AVL.
- Use geo-targeted buying for online advertising.
- Evaluate various advertising media and creative units for their effectiveness in driving Web traffic and/or phone calls.


### Build strategic partnerships that leverage the brand, expand buying power and create media efficiencies:

- Explore viable partnerships with like brands to enhance and augment the Asheville area destination brand while maximizing media efficiencies.

- Use Asheville Cooperative Ad Program to continue offering cooperative advertising opportunities for local partners while expanding media budget and reach.
- Participate in cooperative opportunities offered through industry organizations such as NCDTFSD, AdvantageWest and Blue Ridge Mountain Host.

### Leverage synergies between print, broadcast, online components and media relations to maximize financial efficiency and increase reach:

- Seek added value opportunities for media buys that focus on online initiatives.
- Create integrated campaigns that weave traditional print and broadcast media with online initiatives and media relations efforts to create broader, deeper reach and increases brand engagement.



Having your breath taken away has never been more affordable.

**Cool Stuff In The Asheville Area That Won't Cost You A Penny**

**Free Outdoor Adventures**  
Walk or bike trails for all skill levels or enjoy water falls and swimming holes found throughout the Blue Ridge Mountains.

**Free Asheville Urban Trail**  
Take a stroll through Asheville's outdoor art and history museum without walls.

**Free Asheville Drum Circle**  
The famous drum circle is a long-standing tradition each warm-weather Friday evening.

**Free Inspiration for Art Lovers**  
Asheville is one of the top arts destinations in the nation, featuring hundreds of art galleries and working art studios.

**Free Entertainment**  
Watch street theater, enjoy traditional mountain music and dance, or catch a live show at one of the many area festivals.

The economy isn't exactly at its best. We get it, and we want to help in a way that only Mother Nature's hometown can. Right now you can escape the stresses of your daily life in a setting that's not only soothing to your soul but also comforting to your pocketbook. In fact, there's plenty to do in the Asheville area that's absolutely free.

So, if you'd like to spend some time in a place where the view is breathtaking and the unexpected is waiting around every corner, hit the road and head to the mountains of Asheville.

**ASHEVILLE**  
any way you like it.®

Decompress for less.  
Go to [CoolAshevilleSavings.com](http://CoolAshevilleSavings.com) or call 877.GO.TO.AVL







# Research

## Strategies and Tactics

Follow an integrated research approach to ensure information-driven decision making on marketing, advertising and sales messages, as well as destination management issues:

- Provide research updates to staff and tourism community through the AshevilleCVB.com Web site.
- Stay abreast of cultural and industry trends.
- Evaluate measurement of all marketing efforts, including social.

Understand the profile and pulse of the traveling consumer and Asheville visitor in order to make effective marketing decisions:

- Use research as part of the creative messaging process to ensure wide appeal to targeted audience.
- Implement consumer product research as needed to determine interest and viability of potential new tourism product opportunities that evolved from the charrette process.
- Use Internet research shareware on an as needed basis to conduct input research utilizing the e-newsletter database.

Conduct economic impact calculations in order to outline the contributions of the tourism industry:

- Utilize Implan economic modeling software to create economic impact reports based on visitor volume data from D.K. Shifflett & Associates.

### Tourism Creates Jobs

In the Asheville area, tourism generates a payroll of more than \$683 million and directly impacts more than 25,000 jobs.

- Contract with Smith Travel Research for historical overview of hotel statistics including occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and competitive standing.
- Maintain relationships with county officials who assist in providing key tax data that is used in various tourism economic impact reports.
- Use Internet research shareware to survey industry partners and community on an as-needed basis.

Utilize public and private research resources and partnerships to maximize resources:

- Attend industry events such as TIA Marketing Outlook Forum and the NC Governor's Conference.
- Partner with Advantage West and NCTFSD on international research through VISA.
- Partner with regional organizations to expand knowledge of the Asheville visitor (i.e., shared zip code research from Biltmore and research information through NCDTFSD).

### Asheville Visitor Profile

- Age: 50s
- Household Income: Approximately \$100,000
- No children in the home (i.e. empty nesters)
- More than half employed full-time, more than 1/3 retired
- Married
- Traveling as a couple
- Has Internet Access
- Average Party Size: 2.6 people
- Average Length of Stay: 2.3 days
- Average Spend: \$171.45 per person, per day

Occupancy		Average Daily Rate		RevPAR	
Destination	Average	Destination	Average	Destination	Average
Charleston, SC	61.50	Charleston, SC	\$107.47	Charleston, SC	66.79
<b>Asheville MSA, NC</b>	<b>59.59</b>	<b>Asheville MSA, NC</b>	<b>\$106.32</b>	<b>Asheville MSA, NC</b>	<b>64.72</b>
Savannah, GA	58.13	Wilmington MSA	\$101.51	Richmond Downtown/Airport	53.69
Chattanooga, TN-GA	54.65	Richmond Downtown/Airport	\$99.37	Wilmington MSA	53.57
Richmond Downtown/Airport	53.77	Savannah, GA	\$88.04	Savannah, GA	51.48
Wilmington MSA	52.72	Myrtle Beach, SC	\$85.43	Myrtle Beach, SC	44.57
Roanoke MSA	51.32	Williamsburg, VA	\$81.11	Roanoke MSA	40.62
Gatlinburg / Pigeon Forge	50.85	Roanoke MSA	\$78.88	Chattanooga, TN-GA	38.56
NC West / Cherokee	49.51	NC West / Cherokee	\$75.10	NC West / Cherokee	38.14
Myrtle Beach, SC	47.37	Chattanooga, TN-GA	\$70.23	Williamsburg, VA	35.63
Williamsburg, VA	41.18	Gatlinburg / Pigeon Forge	\$67.95	Gatlinburg / Pigeon Forge	35.35

Asheville is pacing ahead of competitive Southeast destinations, posting occupancy rates, average daily rates and revenue per available room second only to Charleston.

# Public Relations

## Strategies and Tactics

Continue a proactive media outreach program to generate earned media with an emphasis on relationship-building, customization and targeting to ensure the brand message is conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements:

- Continue to create customized pitches aimed at journalists, bloggers and online editors who produce for specific media outlets.
- Continue to create and disseminate multimedia news releases that are optimized for a variety of news mediums with digital imagery, video and background materials via embedded links.
- Encourage journalists on assignment to expand and infuse stories with brand messages, seasonal and niche story ideas and online resources.
- Conduct media trips and continue targeting broadcast media as part of trip efforts: North Carolina fall blitz; winter NYC media mission (in conjunction with NCTFSD), and opportunity quick trips as needed.
- Maintain and promote Asheville's RSS news feeds to inspire story ideas and disseminate news.
- Identify and respond to pitch opportunities generated through outside sources such as SATW, HARO, NCDTFSD and TIA.
- Target key media for individual site visits.
- Target viable cable outlets such as Travel Channel, HGTV, Food Network, CNN and The Weather Channel.

Work in tandem with online relations manager to broaden use of social media as an integrated tool for media outreach, relationship development and targeted pitching:

- Promote and facilitate development of dynamic digital content—engaging photography, video, RSS feeds and interactive online features—to inspire journalists, engage bloggers and generate awareness to drive visitation.
- Develop and maintain best practices for online media relations to grow credibility and relationships in the social media community.
- Continue to refine and update the online newsroom to keep pace with the changing landscape of media relations.

Enhance seasonal and niche advertising campaigns with an added emphasis on drive markets and online relations:

- Identify packages, programs or innovative ideas for creating buzz through integrated marketing efforts.
- Pitch broadcast media, particularly in conjunction with seasonal opportunities such as fall foliage, spring activities and the holidays.
- Leverage popular fall foliage season to generate maximum media

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Generate more than \$2 million in advertising value.

exposure, particularly in broadcast and online.

- Identify placement opportunities in niche publications, seasonal features, themed issues and special sections.

Continue to target emerging and existing niche markets, especially culinary, budget travel, weddings and the arts:

- Cultivate relationships with food writers and continue to expand opportunities with existing culinary bloggers and writers.
- Update and develop media materials and pitch ideas for specific content areas to generate media placement.
- Work with agencies to identify and capitalize on promotional tie-ins to advertising initiatives.

Educate the region about the benefits of tourism in order to maintain support of marketing efforts:

- Continue to tell the story of the value of local tourism through awareness campaigns and media relations that include: continued media outreach surrounding National Tourism Week, cultivation of local media relationships and continued development of AshevilleCVB.com to ensure communication.
- Utilize BCTDA.org as a forum for background and positioning statements on key issues.
- Continue to develop the PR/Marketing Committee as a forum to educate, update and share key messages with tourism partners and fellow communicators.

Complement sales efforts through media relations efforts:

- Target trade publications for possible editorial.
- Maintain focus for general coverage on key markets also targeted by the CVB's sales team.
- Respond to media leads from select trade publications seeking input and story ideas.
- Build relationships with trade magazine editors during media trips.

Utilize measurement tools to gauge effectiveness of existing and new projects:

- Continue to track effectiveness of media relations efforts and examine the value of specific projects by utilizing a clip service, tracking contacts, fulfilling e-mail requests and assessing online and broadcast placements.
- Identify and evaluate emerging tools to measure the value and reach of online media relations efforts and social media placements.

# Online Relations

## Strategies and Tactics

### Identify and develop relationships with influential bloggers:

- Develop opportunities to interface with influential bloggers through giveaways, contests and FAM opportunities.
- Maintain a list of major blogs to streamline outreach efforts.

### Use the Asheville blog to support marketing efforts, increase awareness of Asheville and generate redistribution of content:

- Update blog at least three times weekly and maximize SEO.
- Use blog to highlight accolades, events, seasonal videos and imagery and extend reach of marketing efforts.
- Utilize engaging content to encourage re-distribution and engagement.
- Explore opportunities for guest blogging with key industry experts.

### Continue to implement online outreach to maximize traffic to Web site and interest in e-mail newsletters:

- Target e-zines, bloggers and travel-oriented Web sites for editorial placement and links.
- Look for viral marketing opportunities and other triggers to increase traffic to the Web site and generate awareness of Asheville.
- Look for opportunities to use social media applications to spread word of mouth for Asheville and generate brand awareness.
- Use online efforts to drive growth of the Asheville Traveler and Foodtopian Society e-mail databases.

### Create brand awareness, boost Web site visitation and build community using Asheville video:

- Create video content that reflects Asheville in a positive manner and generates buzz.
- Upload video content to YouTube's Explore Asheville video channel.
- Identify influential Web sites ripe for viral video opportunities and distribution.
- Promote new Asheville video on Web site and in Asheville Traveler e-newsletters.

### Use Asheville twitter accounts to support the Asheville destination brand:

- Develop relationships with media and key bloggers on twitter in key areas: travel, culinary travel, mommy bloggers, outdoors.
- Build awareness of Asheville as a travel destination through regular tweets and a steady increase of followers.
- Look for opportunities to increase Asheville awareness through "re-tweets."

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Increase twitter followers and Facebook fans by 20% and generate more than 20 blog mentions.

### Create buzz through social media sites and tools:

- Leverage Asheville's presence on key social media sites such as Facebook, MySpace, Eons, and Flickr.
- Use StumbleUpon and bookmarking tools to increase buzz and awareness.

### Continue to build brand awareness through social networking sites such as Facebook, MySpace and Eons:

- Use social bookmarking sites (i.e. StumbleUpon, Digg) to generate awareness.
- Incorporate call to action for social bookmarking sites in Asheville Traveler and Foodtopian Society e-newsletters.
- Build a network of brand ambassadors from community partners and fans that can assist with social bookmarking efforts.

### Monitor, measure and evaluate effectiveness and outcomes of online efforts:

- Gauge traffic to BCTDA-operated sites and social media pages.
- Use Web tools such as Google Analytics, Tube Mogul, Technorati and other free tools to monitor buzz and trends.
- Provide quarterly reports on specific projects in order to evaluate ROI.

The screenshot shows the Asheville Travel Blog homepage. The main heading is "Asheville Travel Blog". Below it, the date "Wednesday, August 12, 2009" is displayed. The featured article is titled "Menu Details for Tomato Walk on Aug. 20". The article text describes the event and lists participating restaurants. A list of participating restaurants includes: Bistro 1896, Bouchon, Early Girl Eatery, ED Boudreaux's Bayou Bar-B-Que, Laurey's Catering and Gourmet to Go, The Lobster Trap, The Market Place, Posana Café, and Rosetta's Kitchen. There is also a section for "Secret Menu Details" mentioning that Laurey's and Bouchon will offer tomato samples on the street. On the right side of the page, there is a sidebar with a "Subscribe to Asheville Travel Blog" button, an "About Us" section listing staff members (Tim Lee, Dodie, Jreed3, Sherida), and an "Asheville" section with links to various local resources like "Explore Asheville Home", "Asheville Blog Home", "Spring in Asheville", "Where to Stay", "Where to Eat", and "What to Do".

# Web Development

## Strategies and Tactics

Maintain and expand a dynamic Web site (ExploreAsheville.com) that includes significant content opportunities and user-generated information that will maximize visitor conversions:

- Promote and encourage more user-generated content, including video and photo submissions from visitors and industry partners.
- Promote Google map mashup, which allows users to build itineraries through maps, view itineraries on a map and search for category specific listings by map location.
- Create Web pages to complement seasonal and marketing promotions.
- Develop and enhance content pages on the site, including:
  - Creation of a listening room in the music section to showcase a variety of local talent.
  - Development of a birding section.
  - Enhancement of hiking section.
  - Creation of new itineraries.
- Maintain ongoing, comprehensive calendar of events listings.
- Evaluate navigation changes and home page updates as necessary.

Utilize micro-sites to appeal to specific target audiences and build awareness among travelers less familiar with Asheville as well as repeat visitors:

- Add new content to FoodtopianSociety.com and PremierAshevilleWeddings.com.
- Update and add seasonal content to CoolAshevilleSavings.com in order to motivate consumers who are driven by deals and value.
- Leverage media and consumer interest in the fall foliage season by posting weekly fall color reports and other information on the Web site and funneling it through FallintheMountains.com.

Continue an online outreach program that incorporates e-mail newsletters and viral marketing opportunities utilizing a more customer-focused approach:

- Continue to explore opportunities aimed at building the e-newsletter subscriber database.
- Experiment with development of niche content for e-newsletters aimed at segmented audiences.
- Maintain a year-round effort to promote package deals/opportunities through the Web site.
- Look for viral marketing opportunities and other visitation-generators to increase traffic to the Web site and awareness of Asheville.

Maximize traffic to the Web site through online efforts including search engine optimization and links strategy that complement other marketing efforts aimed at driving Web traffic:

- Employ search optimization tactics and findings from Google Analytics when developing new content pages and in seasonal updates.
- Continue to monitor organic search engine placement and maintain positioning.
- Implement partner link strategy to promote search engine optimized niche content pages to help boost traffic to ExploreAsheville.com for general travel-related phrases, e.g. romantic getaways, romantic vacations, mountain vacations, family vacations, hiking vacations, mountain biking vacations, etc.

Monitor and analyze Web metrics to more effectively review marketing efforts and Web programs to ensure the largest ROI:

- Create a quarterly digital index to evaluate efforts.
- Use Google Analytics and online ad reports to examine trends and impacts.
- Stay abreast of new tools to assist with monitoring online conversations.

Utilize the Web to increase communication with industry partners and provide general tourism business information:

- Maintain and update AshevilleCVB.com with relevant information.
- Further develop BCTDA.org for information about the BCTDA, its efforts and impact.



ExploreAsheville.com homepage



FoodtopianSociety.com homepage

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Increase traffic to ExploreAsheville.com to more than 2,000,000 annual site visits as measured by Google Analytics.

# Tourism Department

The tourism department promotes the Asheville area as a premier travel destination in the leisure, group travel and international markets. Out of these key markets, the leisure market is the largest area of focus. Working in conjunction with the local tourism community, the leisure travel manager aids in the development of interesting and distinct packaging opportunities, enabling visitors to explore the area's cultural landscape. Utilizing ExploreAsheville.com, the tourism department offers marketable opportunities for industry partners to engage visitors and encourages visitation through a variety of authentic experiences.

In the 2009-2010 fiscal year, the department will develop a series of Web-based training programs to complement seasonal and year-round marketing promotions. The aim of the training programs is to keep the Asheville area top-of-mind with key influencers, thereby increasing awareness of Asheville among competitive travel destinations. Programs aimed at increasing overnight visitation from Southeast-based AAA clubs will continue, including AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training and AAA marketplaces.

The department will partner with the Charlotte CVB to host "City Streets to Mountain Peaks," a joint tour operator FAM designed to build on the success of the 2009 American Bus Association's Annual Marketplace that was held in Charlotte. Attendance at strategic industry marketplaces will also continue.

Strong regional partnerships will remain critical in all international sales efforts undertaken by the department. Attendance at key international marketplaces and the hosting of international buyers will also remain a priority in the program of work in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

Tourism Department Calendar		
Date	Event	Location
Sept. 15-18, 2009	AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training	Florida
Sept. 24, 2009	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 20-22, 2009	AAA Superbowl of Knowledge	Charlotte, NC
Dec. 17, 2009	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Jan. 15-19, 2010	American Bus Association	National Harbor, MD
March 18, 2010	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 2010	AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training	TBA
Spring 2010	Joint Charlotte/Asheville Tour Operator FAM	Charlotte, NC & Asheville, NC
April 10-14, 2010	Travel South Showcase	Birmingham, AL
Late April 2010	AAA Blue Ridge Parkway 75th Anniversary FAM	Asheville, NC
May 15-19, 2010	POW WOW International Marketplace	Orlando, FL
May/June 2010	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 2010	North American Journeys East Coast Summit	New York, NY

Community Overview (Motorcoach)			
	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	Variance
Groups	565	444	(21%)
Room Nights	16,591	12,393	(25%)
Economic Impact	\$2,515,196	\$2,267,919	(10%)
*The numbers shown reflect a sample of motorcoach groups for 24 reporting accommodation properties.			



Dianna Pierce  
 Director of Tourism  
 828.258.6108  
 dpierce@exploreasheville.com



Heather Backer  
 Leisure Travel Manager  
 828.258.6139  
 hbacker@exploreasheville.com

# Tourism Promotions

## Strategies and Tactics

Raise awareness and working knowledge of the area among AAA counselors and call centers in the Southeast:

- Develop a series of Web-based Explore Asheville! Destination Training programs to complement seasonal and marketing promotions for year-round use by southeast AAA clubs.
- Conduct in-office AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training visits, to include AAA South and a second location TBD.
- Participate in the Blue Ridge Parkway Association's 75th Anniversary AAA FAM trip.
- Distribute the Asheville Visitor Guide and other leisure market materials to AAA auto touring agents across the country.
- Conduct staff training at AAA Carolinas Super Bowl of Knowledge Annual Meeting and Marketplace.

Develop strategic alliances with leisure travel industry partner organizations:

- Develop a series of Web-based Explore Asheville! Destination Training programs to complement seasonal and marketing promotions for year-round use by NC welcome center personnel.
- Coordinate and execute niche-focused speed packaging sessions, bringing traditional

and non-traditional partners together to develop experiential overnight packages for placement on ExploreAsheville.com as well as partner sites.

- Expand wedding pages on ExploreAsheville.com, capitalizing on Asheville's areas of distinction as a wedding destination.
- Post industry-initiated packages and special value offers on ExploreAsheville.com.

Work in conjunction with industry associations for additional exposure in leisure markets:

- Work with BRPA, DMANC, NCDTFSD and other groups on joint marketing efforts.
- Coordinate Asheville's participation in consumer travel shows.

Utilize measurement tools to gauge the effectiveness of existing and new projects.

Provide information and materials to consumers and travel specialists in an effort to convert inquiries into overnight visits:

- Work closely with Journal Communications to enhance and publish the 2010 Visitor Guide, incorporating value-added opportunities for advertisers.
- Expand use of the online Visitor Guide by making available a specially designed "widget" for placement on social media and non-traditional partners' Web sites.

## 2009 - 2010 Objectives

Increase package page views on ExploreAsheville.com to 890,000.  
Increase wedding landing page views on ExploreAsheville.com by 50% (52,835 page views).

## Package Page Views

Overall package page views on ExploreAsheville.com

Date Range	Page Views
Sept. 2007 - June 2008	556,204
Sept. 2008 - June 2009	712,234

Variance +28%



A motorcoach group at the Visitor Center at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce.



The Asheville CVB's Tour & Travel Development Committee participate in a "Service Day Project," which involved graffiti removal on Lyman Street in June 2009.



# Group Tour

## Strategies and Tactics

Attend key industry events to locate new sources of business and maintain current operator relationships:

- Partner with local, regional and state organizations on joint marketing program/sales missions and association events when the opportunities arise.
- Attend American Bus Association (ABA) and Travel South Showcase marketplaces.
- Host inaugural Charlotte-Asheville joint tour operator FAM with Visit Charlotte.

Increase traffic to motorcoach Web pages on ExploreAsheville.com:

- Continuously update the motorcoach homepage to reflect seasonal and new product content.
- Encourage sales during soft demand periods by highlighting partner specials/added value programs.
- Build area interest through delivery of a quarterly e-newsletter that links to motorcoach homepage.
- Add new product profiles and expand itinerary samples.

---

# International

## Strategies and Tactics

Partner with NCDTFSD and regional tourism bureaus in international marketing efforts:

- Maintain a close relationship with North Carolina's international sales representatives responsible for promoting travel to the Asheville area from Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom.

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Increase the Asheville area's market share of international visitors traveling through the region's gateway cities.

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Generate a 100% increase in motorcoach homepage views on ExploreAsheville.com (15,550+).

Educate industry partners about motorcoach travel to maintain support of motorcoach sales efforts and increase motorcoach travel to the area:

- Continue to track motorcoach tours, travelers and economic impact of motorcoach travel to the area.
- Explore and evaluate trends, programs and innovative ideas with partners for possible implementation.
- Host quarterly Tour and Travel Development meetings.
- Use Web-based training to introduce new sales personnel to motorcoach booking needs/requirements.

Provide buyers with the tools needed to package and sell tours to the Asheville area:

- Provide support services to operators after the initial sale.
- Distribute Group Tour Profile, DVDs and other promotional materials on demand.
- Maintain Asheville's presence on TheTourOperator.com, hosted by North American Journeys, targeting domestic and international operators.

- Work with NCDTFSD to accurately gauge current market share of international visitors to North Carolina in general, and to Western North Carolina specifically.
- Host international FAMs whenever possible.

Raise awareness of the area among international tour operators and domestic-based receptive service operators:

- Attend North American Journeys East Coast Summit (New York) and POW WOW (Orlando).
- Partner with NCDTFSD in sales missions targeting domestic-based receptive operators.
- Post suggested multi-day itineraries on key industry sites, encouraging buyers to include overnight stays in the Asheville area as part of larger regional visits.

# Convention Sales & Servicing Department

The CVB's mission through the convention sales & servicing department is to offer a staff of experts and myriad services that will increase revenues for Asheville's hospitality industry and, subsequently, tax dollars to the region through booking meetings and conventions. The sales team uses direct sales efforts, sales trips, site inspections, industry trade shows and various marketing techniques to meet with potential clients and position the Asheville area as a distinctive meetings and conventions destination for new and repeat business travel.

As the Asheville brand conduit for meeting attendees, the servicing team enhances the visitor experience through customer service excellence and providing travel planning resources. Programs that will add value are integrated into the program of work, ensuring that groups have fun, stay longer and tell others of their experience.

An aggressive program of work in the 2009-2010 fiscal year will focus on the advancement of electronic communication and sales outreach tasks in order to attract and motivate increased group business. Groups will be reached and inspired about the Asheville area through the department's engagement in social media channels, the development of new customized familiarization tours (FAMs) and site visits (including two programs, Web-i-FAM and Ironplanner), and through enlisting the help of area experts to market Asheville to potential group business.

The 2009-2010 fiscal year will also advance the successes enjoyed during the previous year with incorporating an overlay of sustainability to Asheville area meetings. Asheville looks forward to hosting the Carolinas Recycling Association in 2010 and continuing to offer a new local offset program in partnership with Warren Wilson College to assist planners with greening meetings.



Tim Lampkin, CDME  
Director of Destination Gurus  
828.258.6105  
tlampkin@exploreasheville.com



Terry Bemis  
Destination Guru  
828.258.6133  
tbemis@exploreasheville.com



Kinsay Sand  
Destination Guru  
828.258.6121  
ksand@exploreasheville.com



Carli Adams  
Enrichment Counselor  
828.258.6106  
cadams@exploreasheville.com



Desiree Monstrola  
Sales & Service Coordinator  
828.258.6102  
dmonstrola@exploreasheville.com

Convention Sales			
	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	Variance
Leads Distributed	279	194	(30.6%)
Room Nights in Leads	83,199	82,937	(0.3%)
Booked Room Nights	45,004	27,087	(39.8%)
Conversion	54.1%	32.7%	(39.6%)
Economic Impact of Booked Business	\$26,377,938	\$14,878,479	(43.6%)

# Convention Sales

## Strategies and Tactics

### Review and identify new market opportunities:

- Identify partnerships with local stakeholders who have an advantage in attracting and soliciting business in niche market areas.
- Increase the number of leads received from interactions with traditional and nontraditional partners. Offer formal recognition as an incentive for industry partners to provide leads and conduct outreach for potential new business.
- Leverage partnerships with sales contacts at CVBs in competitive destinations in a lead trade/referral program.

### Maximize Asheville's visibility for meetings and conventions and continue to seek creative ways to relay the Asheville destination message to key meeting planners:

- Work in conjunction with the CVB marketing team, advertising agency and interactive agency to leverage synergies between sales and leisure travel messaging and campaigns.
- Implement a destination guru twitter account to build awareness of Asheville as a premier meetings and conventions destination through regular tweets and a steady increase of followers. Look for opportunities to increase awareness of the Asheville area through "re-tweets."
- Pursue opportunities to build awareness through social media networks specific to meetings and conventions, such as i-Meet and LinkedIn.
- Develop and enhance Web presence for meeting planners by providing resources customized to meet individual groups' needs, including itineraries, imagery, video and area listing information.
- Revise and reprint "Think Better Here" meeting planner guide.
- Develop and conduct two new familiarization tours for planners. Web-i-FAM will ask planners to spend 10 minutes exploring Asheville over the Web. Ironplanner will offer an adventure competition for planners to explore the area during a site visit.
- Offer integrated co-op advertising opportunities to promote off-season specials and deals and to increase opportunities for partner involvement in specific offers.

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

Produce 40,000 group room nights.

### Convention Sales & Servicing Department

Date	Event	Location
July 28-30, 2009	DMAI Annual Convention	Atlanta, GA
Aug. 15-19, 2009	ASAE Annual Meeting/ Exposition	Toronto, Canada
Aug. 27-28, 2009	Connect Marketplace	Las Vegas, NV
Sept. 11, 2009	AENC Luncheon	Raleigh, NC
Sept. 15, 2009	GaMPI Monthly Educational Program	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 16, 2009	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 17-18, 2009	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Sept. 22, 2009	SCSAE Luncheon	Columbia, SC
Sept. 23, 2009	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 17, 2009	AENC Luncheon	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 18, 2009	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon, Awards & Annual Business Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 19-20, 2009	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Raleigh, NC
Dec. 3, 2009	Group Business Development Team Holiday Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 9, 2009	GSAE Holiday Luncheon/Silent Auction	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 10, 2009	AENC Tradeshow/Meeting	Raleigh, NC
Jan. 21, 2010	SCSAE Tradeshow	Columbia, SC
Feb. 3, 2010	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
February 2010	GSAE Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Feb. 20-23, 2010	MPI Professional Education Conference	Cancun, Mexico
Feb. 25, 2010	DMAI Showcase	Washington, D.C.
April 2010	GSAE Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
May 15, 2010	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 2-4, 2010	GSAE Annual Meeting	Columbus, GA
June 6-8, 2010	SCSAE Annual Conference	Asheville, NC
June 13-15, 2010	AENC Annual Meeting	Concord, NC

# Convention Services

In these challenging economic times, the convention services team recognizes the need for increased focus on building attendance at meetings and conventions. The 2009-2010 fiscal year sees an increased budget for helping meeting planners increase attendance in a number of ways, including customized Web pages for groups, assistance with development of meeting themes and logos, incentives for early bookings and proactively generating buzz and excitement about the Asheville area through social media channels.

Last fiscal year saw significant growth for opportunities in the weddings market, especially with the creation of a new weddings fulfillment piece. The 2009-2010 year will build on this success and continue to grow the weddings market.

**2009 - 2010 Objective**  
 Increase groups impacted by services by 3%.



Convention Services			
	2007 - 2008	2008 - 2009	Variance
Groups Served	321	232	(38.4%)
Motorcoaches Served	30	34	11.8%
Hospitality Tables	25	35	28.6%
Conventions Welcomed	4	3	(33.3%)

### Strategies and Tactics

Assist meeting planners in increasing the number of attendees booked at Asheville area meetings and conventions:

- Increase video resources to produce quality videos to provide to planners that generate excitement for the Asheville area as the upcoming conference/event site.
- Attend conferences the year prior to the Asheville conference year to create enthusiasm for the Asheville event.
- Customize Web pages and utilize social media communication, such as twitter, to generate buzz about events, spread word of mouth for the Asheville area and generate brand awareness.
- Utilize customized Web pages and social media channels to highlight accolades, events and videos that encourage attendance at Asheville area conferences/events.
- Develop e-mail blasts to be distributed by media planners that offer pre and post event incentives to book early and extend stays in the Asheville area.

Drive awareness of the Asheville area as a prime location for destination weddings:

- Develop and update an Asheville weddings blog to support marketing efforts, increase awareness and interface with those looking to plan a destination wedding.
- Revise, update and reprint the Asheville Wedding Guide.
- Build a library of wedding imagery.
- Develop relationships with regional wedding planners to educate them on the services and resources available.
- Advertise in *Martha Stewart Weddings*.

# Visitor Services

Often the first stop for visitors, the Asheville Visitor Center (housed within the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce) is a 4,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility, offering a wide array of services to the approximately 200,000 visitors welcomed throughout the year. Knowledgeable volunteers staff the Asheville Visitor Center to offer insider advice and ensure that each visitor begins living the brand as soon as he or she walks through the door. The center offers opportunities for the community to showcase the area's offerings with the goal of educating visitors and extending their stay.

The Visitor Center is also home to the Asheville Shop. As a premier destination for Asheville area memorabilia, the Asheville Shop is the only place to purchase merchandise bearing the destination logo. In addition, the shop carries gifts authentic to the Western North Carolina region, including pottery, music, food items and books by local authors and of local interest.

Recognizing that some travelers to the area wish to make the transition to residents, the Asheville Visitor Center offers an assortment of relocation information and assistance.

A unique feature of the Asheville Visitor Center is the on-site concierge services program, providing visitors personalized assistance with booking local accommodations tailored to individual preferences and tastes.

The majority of positions in the visitor services department are paid by the Chamber. Therefore, each employee not only works to assist each visitor, but also to ensure that members of the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce reap the benefits of membership and maximize their exposure to visitors.

By delivering enriching experiences and educating area visitors, the department helps to further the Asheville area brand and mission of the BCTDA.



Tom Roberson  
Director of Visitor Services  
828.258.6103  
troberson@exploreasheville.com



Mary Ramsey  
Retail Manager  
828.210.2721  
mramsey@exploreasheville.com



Charlie Reed  
Information Specialist  
828.258.6109  
creed@exploreasheville.com



Elaine Rich  
Concierge  
828.210.2720  
erich@exploreasheville.com

Part-time Staff: Bryant Calloway, Bill Anderson, Tracey Turner and Ann Perkins

# Visitor Services

## Asheville Visitor Center

Located at 36 Montford Avenue in the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce building, the Asheville Visitor Center is the prime location for visitors to get directions, tickets to area attractions and book their rooms at local accommodations.

Knowing that the center is Asheville's front porch and often a first impression, every detail was carefully considered in its design -- from brochure racks that open for extra storage and quick stocking, to an event kiosk that's centrally located and updated daily with community events and information. Visitors also find free Wi-Fi Internet access and parking that's capable of holding 150 cars as well as motorcoaches and RVs.

For guests looking for the tastiest restaurants, most comfortable rooms and most exhilarating attractions, trained volunteers and an on-site concierge serve as a primary touchpoint. In addition, a light-board allows for a visual representation of accommodations, tours, attractions and restaurants in the area. Phones are available at these stations to encourage visitors to call immediately to book reservations.

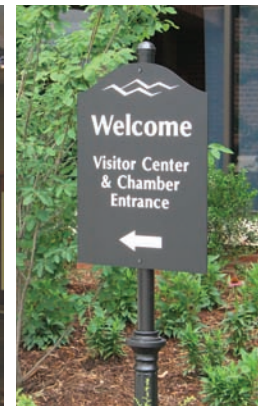
Moving Sidewalk Tours operates out of the Asheville Visitor Center, taking visitors through downtown on Segways. The center is also the prime operations headquarters for the Asheville Historic Trolley and Gray Line Trolley Tours of Asheville. A Biltmore representative staffs the information desk each day.

Sponsorship opportunities for Chamber members are located throughout the Asheville Visitor Center to ensure that members' businesses are prominently showcased for the approximately 200,000 visitors expected to walk through the center's doors in the 2009-2010 fiscal year.

## Chamber Concierge Services

The Chamber's concierge services program, managed by Concierge Elaine Rich, provides visitors with convenient trip planning and personalized service. Chamber member accommodations are welcome to register for the program. All Chamber member properties are visited by the concierge, regardless of whether or not they choose to participate in the program, to learn the amenities available at each property to promote to inquiring visitors.

The concierge works to personalize each guest's experience by ensuring that accommodation recommendations match the style and preference of what is desired by the visitor. Extended vacations lasting as long as eight days have been booked through the program.



## The Asheville Shop

The Asheville Shop is the only gift shop that sells merchandise sporting the Chamber logo and the Asheville destination brand logo. It's also home to a wide assortment of items authentic to the Western North Carolina region, including pottery, culinary delights, soap, postcards, jewelry, books, music and more.

Tickets to many Asheville attractions and tours are also sold through the Asheville Shop. Some include Go Blue Ridge cards, Haunted Asheville Ghost Tours, Asheville Tourists baseball games, the WNC Dining Guide, among other seasonal events and tours.

Number of Travelers to the Asheville Visitor Center		
	2007-2008	2008-2009
July	21,767	21,029
August	20,457	20,258
September	17,575	16,460
October	21,940	24,024
November	15,391	13,321
December	12,587	11,081
January	8,353	6,065
February	7,357	4,950
March	12,852	9,676
April	15,506	14,812
May	18,016	16,921
June	20,468	19,686
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>192,269</b>	<b>178,283</b>

## 2009 - 2010 Objective

To improve the quality of the Asheville area experience by providing trained staff and volunteers to assist visitors with Chamber member collateral.



## Strategies and Tactics

Continually improve the types of services offered to Asheville Visitor Center guests:

- Manage all visitor-related activities in the Asheville Visitor Center, including the accommodations concierge service.
- Provide trained, knowledgeable volunteers and staff to relay information to visitors.
- Distribute relocation information to those who are considering moving to the Asheville area, a motivator for 25% of all visitors to the Asheville area.



Utilize the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center services to increase the length of stay of visitors to the Asheville area:

- Utilize the concierge service to promote longer overnight stays in Asheville.

Create awareness of the Asheville area brand and improve the Asheville experience for visitors:

- Develop the volunteer program with training sessions, FAM trips and appreciation receptions.
- Increase involvement in community issues that ultimately affect visitors by participating in D.O.V.I.A., Citizen's Corporate and Police Academies.
- Provide enhanced Asheville destination brand logo items for the Asheville Shop.



# Executive Office

Serving as the liaison to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA), the executive office maintains communication with board members to develop and implement long-range strategic and operational planning.

In an effort to ensure the voice of Asheville tourism echoes throughout the community and regional hospitality industry, the executive director serves as a board member of the NC Travel & Tourism Coalition, Asheville Art Museum, Pack Square Conservancy, National Council of Destination Organizations, and the Southeast Tourism Society's Foundation. The executive team also works closely with local, state and national elected officials on numerous issues.

The executive office oversees budget and financial issues and all departmental personnel and operations. Support is provided for BCTDA meetings as well as many Tourism Product Development Fund Committee functions (TPDF).

Statistical information on the tourism industry is compiled for monthly reports that are presented to the board and also available to the industry and general public. Additional administrative assistance is provided to all CVB departments on a project or ongoing basis.



The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) hosted town hall-style meetings in Weaverville, Black Mountain and Asheville in May 2009, to get feedback from the community related to the future of the local tourism industry.

BCTDA board members gave a brief presentation about the agency's mission, marketing initiatives, and the economic impact of tourism before taking questions from nearly 100 local business owners, public officials, non-profit representatives, and area residents. In this photo, BCTDA Vice Chair Eric Scheffer addresses the Asheville meeting attendees.

## Executive Office Calendar

Date	Event	Location
July 28-30, 2009	DMAI Annual Convention	Atlanta, GA
Aug. 20-21, 2009	DMANC Meeting	High Point, NC
Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2009	Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)	Reno/Tahoe, NV
Sept. 9-10, 2009	STS Fall/Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Oct. 26-28, 2009	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Little Rock, AR
Nov. 5-6, 2009	DMANC Meeting	Dobson, NC
Dec. 3, 2009	BCTDA/CVB Holiday Open House	Asheville, NC
Dec. 7-8, 2009	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Jan. 14-15, 2010	DMANC Meeting	Davidson, NC
March 21-23, 2010	NC Governor's Conference	New Bern, NC
March 22-24, 2010	STS Spring Meeting	Nashville, TN
April 8-9, 2010	DMANC Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 8-16, 2010	National Tourism Week	Asheville, NC
June 2010	DMANC Meeting	Sunset Beach, NC
June 18-19, 2010	STS Board of Directors Meeting	TBA



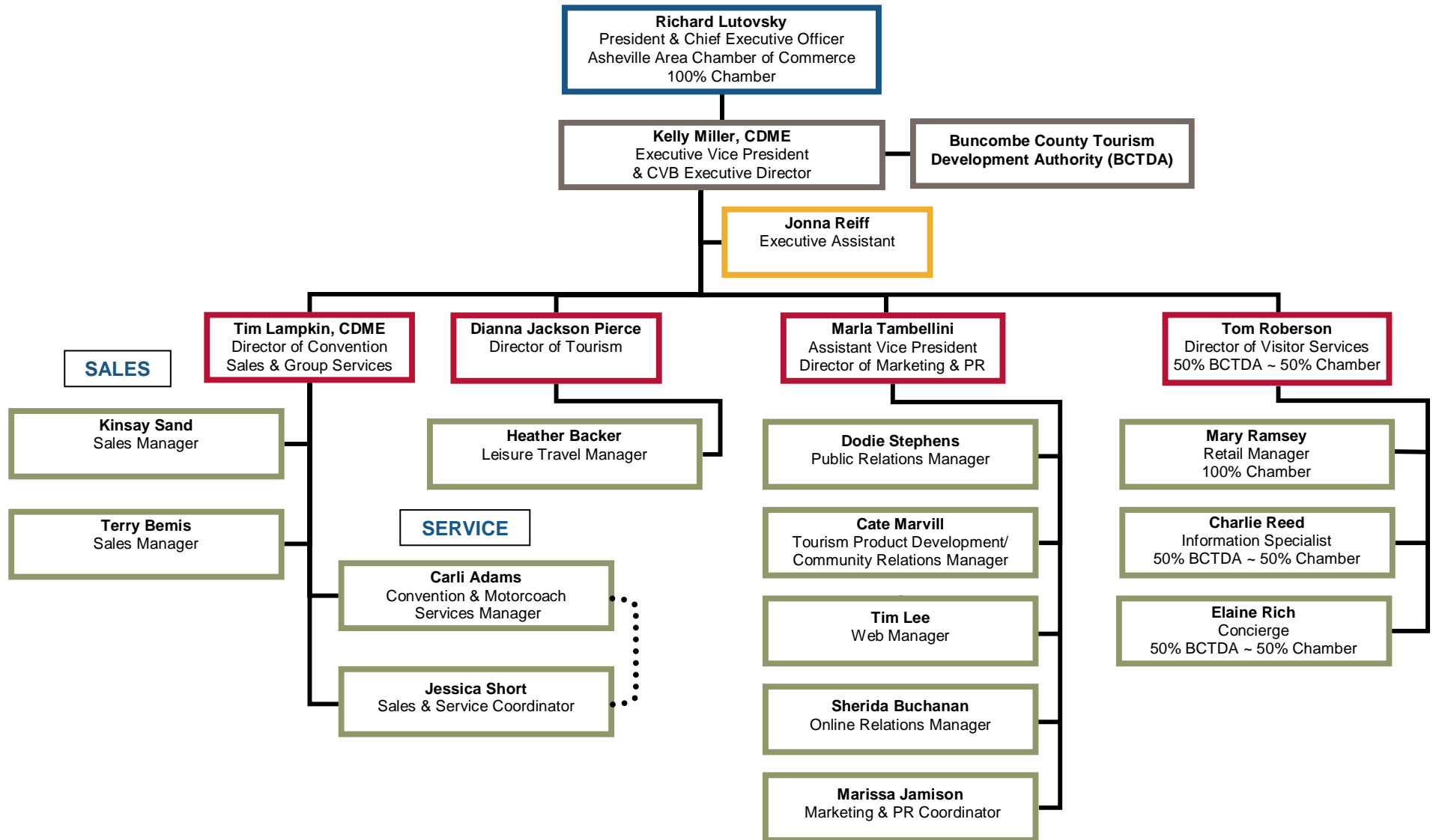
Kelly Miller, CDME  
Executive Vice President /  
Executive Director  
828.258.6104  
kmiller@exploreasheville.com



Jonna Reiff  
Executive Assistant  
828.258.6111  
jreiff@exploreasheville.com



# The CVB Team



# Tourism Promotion in Asheville

There are as many ways to organize and fund a marketing and promotional effort for tourism development as there are cities in America. Each community structures its work in a slightly different way. In Asheville, the implementation of a room tax in 1983 led to the current organizational structure. Before that, the Chamber of Commerce, through the efforts of its Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), served as the primary tourism promotion agent with the assistance of partnership dollars from area attractions and hotels.

## Marketing Asheville

---

As other Southeast destinations became prominent, the tourism industry in this area recognized the need for a dedicated source of marketing funds if it was going to compete. In 1983, hoteliers in this community agreed to tax themselves and earmarked the proceeds toward tourism marketing. The enacted legislation created the authorization to levy a two percent room occupancy tax on the rental of rooms furnished by hotels, motels and inns with five or more units. The BCTDA was established to administer the proceeds of the tax with the caveat that they could expend funds only to further the development of travel, tourism, and conventions in the county through state, national and international advertising and promotion. To implement the marketing plan, the BCTDA turned to the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, which was already the tourism marketing agent for the Asheville area. The Chamber's mission, "to enrich the region's livability by advancing its economic vitality," is a natural fit with the efforts of the BCTDA.

With an additional one percent tax approved in 1985, the advertising campaign for Buncombe County began to pay off for the community. Within 20 years of the legislation, the economic impact of tourism grew 400 percent in Buncombe County and now accounts for more than \$1.8 billion in direct and non-direct spending from overnight visitors. More than 2.76 million leisure visitors stay overnight in our community, attracted by the enriching experiences they find here.

## Managing the Destination

---

A critical shift occurred in 2001, when the industry went back to state legislators with a bill designed to create an innovative funding process for tourism product. The NC General Assembly passed the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) bill which increased the room tax by one percent to total a four percent tax. The bill dedicates the proceeds from the one percent increase to the development of new tourism products that demonstrate the ability to generate substantial new room nights in Buncombe County. Rather than just a marketing organization, the BCTDA took a leap forward in becoming managers of the destination, ensuring its viability and sustainability.

## Planning for Development

---

In 2006, the BCTDA became more proactive in its development efforts. It partnered with the City of Asheville and several community organizations to bring in a destination consultant who addressed the need for signage and wayfinding to better direct visitors throughout the community. Additionally, the BCTDA hosted a first-of-its-kind charrette, which brought in product experts from around the nation to Asheville for three days of dialogue with community leaders and citizens.

The tourism experts agreed that future product development efforts must build on the differentiating aspects that define the Asheville area brand. From this feedback, along with advisory reports from tourism experts and public survey intelligence, the Strategic Destination Development Plan was written. The plan serves as a directional and guideline document to ensure that future projects align with the Asheville brand platform, "enrich your life," and serve as destination drivers that will attract visitors to the Asheville area while maintaining the integrity of the community.

Through dialogue with its partners and constituent groups throughout the community, the BCTDA continues to work toward a sustainable, vibrant destination that will generate revenue for all sectors of the community.

# Tourism Builds Community

## Tourism Product Development Fund

The one percent occupancy tax collected by the lodging industry for the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) currently amounts to nearly \$1.6 million annually. The fund was established to provide financial assistance for tourism capital projects that will significantly increase patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County, creating a greater economic benefit for the entire community. Also of importance is that the funded projects support Asheville's brand identity of a welcoming, natural and vibrant destination.

The TPDF committee, a nine member committee appointed by the BCTDA, is responsible for managing the fund, reviewing applications and making project recommendations to the BCTDA.

### Funding Process & Criteria

All projects must demonstrate feasibility and go through the formal funding process, which includes completion of the application, applicant interviews and possibly a site visit. As guided in the legislation, requested funds must be used for capital costs (i.e., bricks and mortar) only. The TPDF committee may award funds to qualified projects as grants, guaranteed loans or pledges of debt service.

Nine criteria principles are used in evaluating submitted projects. All projects must meet the core criteria of destination brand alignment, economic impact on the region and return on investment based on estimated new room nights generated. If a project meets the core criteria, additional criteria principles are assessed including: community value, feasibility of the project, timeline of project completion, the current financial picture, partnership funding structure, project costs and the ability of the project to leverage additional development for the community.

The BCTDA approves final funding following recommendations from the TPDF committee. In return for funding, projects provide annual updates to the BCTDA on their progress.

The next funding cycle begins in 2010 with applications due on July 9, 2010. Recommendations for funding will be given to the BCTDA in late August and awards will be formally announced in September. A copy of the TPDF application can be found in the *Product Development* section of AshevilleCVB.com.

### Tourism Product Development Fund Awarded Projects

Since its inception, twelve projects have received funding through the TPDF. With nearly \$12 million awarded to area projects, the BCTDA has become one of the largest granting organizations in Western North Carolina. The BCTDA continues to shape the destination of tomorrow by being a catalyst for smart growth and development. These projects that benefit the residents and visitors of Buncombe County demonstrate that tourism truly does build community.

“The \$600,000 grant awarded to the Bob Moog Foundation from the TPDF has been crucial to the development and fundraising efforts to build a Moogseum in Asheville, N.C. This funding has given us significant leverage and strength with which to approach other donors and granting organizations. The support of Asheville's tourism industry will play a major role in bringing the Moogseum to life, and thus attracting a new class of visitors to the Asheville area. “

- Michelle Moog-Koussa, Executive Director  
of the Bob Moog Foundation

# Tourism Product Development Fund Awards

Tourism Product Development Fund Projects		
Project Funded	Amount Funded	Funding Cycle
John B. Lewis Soccer Complex at Azalea Park	\$400,000	2002
	\$400,000	2004
	\$500,000	2009
The Grove Arcade Public Market	\$500,000	2002
Bonsai Garden at The NC Arboretum	\$750,000	2003
Asheville Visitor Center	\$750,000	2003
Pack Square Park	\$500,000	2004
	\$1,500,000	2007
	\$500,000	2009
The Health Adventure / Momentum: Science & Health Adventure Park	\$500,000	2004
	\$1,000,000	2007
	\$500,000	2009
Asheville Art Museum	\$1,000,000	2007
	\$500,000	2009
Western North Carolina Veteran's Memorial	\$67,000	2007
Buncombe County Civil War Trails	\$16,500	2007
Asheville Area Wayfinding Program	\$1,650,000	2007
Bob Moog Museum	\$600,000	2009
The Orange Peel	\$300,000 loan guaranty/ funding	2009

“Funding from the TPDF was an important factor in the Grove Arcade's revitalization and growth. The rebirth of the Arcade was an outstanding public/private partnership. The BCTDA funds provided vital support as the building developed into a resource that continues to attract merchants, tenants and businesses.”

*- Ruth Summers, Executive Director of The Grove Arcade*

“The TPDF made possible the construction of the Bonsai Exposition Garden at The NC Arboretum, one of the finest of its kind in North America. In addition to creating a sustainable attraction that has boosted the Arboretum's visitation substantially, this funding has also increased the length of visitor stay and garnered extensive national media coverage, broadening the Arboretum's draw of out-of-market visitors.”

*- George Briggs, Executive Director of The North Carolina Arboretum*

# Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

**Mr. Eric Scheffer, Chairman**

Vinnie's Neighborhood Italian Restaurant & Dining Innovations  
641 Merrimon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804  
P. 253.1077 F. 252.6776  
efscheffer@gmail.com

**Mr. Ron Morin, Vice Chairman**

The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa  
290 Macon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804  
P. 252.2711 F. 253.7053  
rmorin@groveparkinn.com

**Ms. Julie Hanser**

The Biltmore Company  
One N. Pack Square, Asheville, NC 28801  
P. 225.6180 F. 225.6139  
jhanser@biltmore.com

**Mr. Brad Brasher**

Bella Luna Inn  
99 Terry Estate Dr., Black Mountain, NC 28711  
P. 664.9714  
bellalunainn@charter.net

**Ms. Paige Wheeler**

The Health Adventure/ Momentum  
PO Box 180, Asheville, NC 28802  
P. 254.6373 F. 257.4521  
paiged@thehealthadventure.org

**Mr. Bob Patel**

Bhuna Corporation/ Quality Inn & Suites  
1430 Tunnel Road, Asheville, NC 28805  
P. 298.5519 F. 298.4739  
bpatel@holidayinnbiltmore.com

**Mr. Ron Storto**

Biltmore Farms, Inc.  
PO Box 5355, Asheville, NC 28813  
P. 209.2011 F. 209.2150  
rstorto@biltmorefarms.com

**Asheville City Council**

**Ex-Officio Member**

**Councilman Jan Davis**

209 Patton Avenue, Asheville, NC 28801  
P. 253.5634 F. 253.8029  
jandavis@main.nc.us

**Buncombe County Commission**

**Ex-Officio Member**

**Commissioner K. Ray Bailey**

Buncombe County Commissioner's Office  
60 Court Plaza, Suite 206, Asheville, NC 28801  
P. 250.4001 F. 255.5535  
rbailey0922@aol.com

## Mission Statement

*To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.*

## BCTDA Board Meeting Schedule

Date	Event	Location
July 22, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Aug. 26, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 30, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Oct. 28, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 24, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 16, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Jan. 27, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Feb. 24, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 11-12, 2010	BCTDA Strategic Planning Retreat	Asheville, NC
March 12, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 28, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 26, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 23, 2010	Public Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 23, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC

# 2009 Industry Calendar

Date	Event	Location
July 22, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
July 28-30, 2009	DMAI Annual Convention	Atlanta, GA
Aug. 15-19, 2009	ASAE Annual Meeting/ Exposition	Toronto, Canada
Aug. 21, 2009	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Aug. 20-21, 2009	DMANC Meeting	High Point, NC
Aug. 26, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Aug. 27-28, 2009	Connect Marketplace	Las Vegas, NV
Aug. 30 - Sept. 1, 2009	Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)	Reno/ Tahoe, NV
Sept. 9-10, 2009	STS Fall/Annual Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 11, 2009	AENC Luncheon	Raleigh, NC
Sept. 15, 2009	GaMPI Monthly Educational Program	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 15-18, 2009	AAA Explore Asheville: Destination Training	Florida
Sept. 16, 2009	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 17-18, 2009	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Charlotte, NC
September 2009	Fall Media Tour	Interstate 40, NC
Sept. 22, 2009	SCSAE Luncheon	Columbia, SC
Sept. 23, 2009	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 24, 2009	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 30, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Oct. 26-28, 2009	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Houston, TX
Oct. 28, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 5-6, 2009	DMANC Meeting	Dobson, NC
Nov. 6, 2009	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 17, 2009	AENC Luncheon	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 18, 2009	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon, Awards & Annual Business Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 19-20, 2009	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Raleigh, NC
Nov. 20-22, 2009	AAA Superbowl of Knowledge	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 24, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 3, 2009	Group Business Development Team Holiday Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 3, 2009	BCTDA/ CVB Holiday Open House	Asheville, NC
Dec. 7-8, 2009	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 9, 2009	GSAE Holiday Luncheon/ Silent Auction	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 10, 2009	AENC Tradeshow/ Meeting	Raleigh, GA
Dec. 16, 2009	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 17, 2009	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC

# 2010 Industry Calendar

Date	Event	Location
Jan. 8, 2010	PR/ Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Jan. 14-15, 2010	DMANC Meeting	Davidson, NC
Jan. 15-19, 2010	American Bus Association	National Harbor, MD
Jan. 21, 2010	SCSAE Tradeshow	Columbia, SC
Jan. 27, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Winter 2010	NCDTFSD Media Mission	New York, NY
Feb. 3, 2010	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
Feb. 20-23, 2010	MPI Professional Education Conference	Cancun, Mexico
Feb. 24, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
February 2010	GSAE Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Feb. 25, 2010	DMAI Showcase	Washington, D.C.
March 11-12, 2010	BCTDA Strategic Planning Retreat	Asheville, NC
March 12, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 18, 2010	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 2010	AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training	TBA
March 22-24, 2010	STS Spring Meeting	Nashville, TN
April 2010	GSAE Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Spring 2010	Joint Charlotte/Asheville Tour Operator FAM	Charlotte, NC & Asheville, NC
April 8-9, 2010	DMANC Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 10-14, 2010	Travel South Showcase	Birmingham, AL
Late April 2010	AAA Blue Ridge Parkway FAM	Asheville, NC
April 28, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 7, 2010	PR/ Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 8-16, 2010	National Tourism Week	Asheville, NC
May 15, 2010	Group Business Development Team Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 15-19, 2010	POW WOW International Marketplace	Orlando, FL
May 26, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May/ June 2010	Tour & Travel Development Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 2010	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 2010	DMANC Meeting	Sunset Beach, NC
June 2010	North American Journeys East Coast Summit	New York, NY
June 2-4, 2010	GSAE Annual Meeting	Columbus, GA
June 6-8, 2010	SCSAE Annual Conference	Asheville, NC
June 13-15, 2010	AENC Annual Meeting	Concord, NC
June 18-19, 2010	STS Board of Directors Meeting	TBA
June 23, 2010	BCTDA Public Budget Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 23, 2010	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC

# Glossary of Terms

**AAA** — American Automobile Association — Not-for-profit organization with approximately 1,000 offices serving more than 50 million members in the U.S. and Canada.

**ABA** — American Bus Association — A national association of private inter-city bus companies, travel industry organizations, motorcoach tour organizers and associates offering a marketplace where buyers and sellers meet in one-on-one prescheduled appointments.

**Association Organizations** — Organizations of association executives who meet regularly and host annual meetings, conventions and trade shows.

ASAE — American Society of Association Executives

AENC — Association Executives of North Carolina

CMCA — Christian Meetings and Conventions Association

GaMPI — Georgia Meeting Professionals International

GSAE — Georgia Society of Association Executives

RCMA — Religious Conference Managers Association

SGMP — Society of Government Meeting Professionals

**BCTDA** — Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority — A nine-member board responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the county's four percent room occupancy tax revenues. The board is comprised of seven members with voting status (three appointed by Buncombe County, three by the City of Asheville, and one by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce), as well as two ex-officio, non-voting members.

**B-roll** — A broadcast term that refers to video with natural sound on tape.

**Blog** — An online diary; a personal chronological log of thoughts published on a Web page; also called Weblog. Many Weblogs allow visitors to leave public comments which can lead to a community of readers centered around the blog.

**Brand** — A genuine brand is the internalized sum of all impressions received by customers and consumers resulting in a distinctive position in their mind's eye based in perceived emotional and functional benefits.

**BRPA** — Blue Ridge Parkway Association — A membership organization representing over 600 businesses and destination marketing organizations serving visitors along the Blue Ridge Parkway.

**CDME** — Certified Destination Marketing Executive — Recognized by the CVB industry as its highest educational achievement, CDME is an advanced educational program for veteran and career-minded CVB executives looking for senior-level professional development courses. The focus of the program is on vision, leadership, productivity and the implementation of business strategies.

**Charrette** — A workshop to stimulate ideas and involve interested parties and the public at large in a community or sectoral planning process. The purpose is to harness the talents and energies of all involved to create and support a feasible plan that represents transformative change by building community consensus on a designated vision through

active involvement and visualization.

**CMS** — A shortened term for Content Management System. It allows users to enter content without any knowledge of Web coding. The ExploreAsheville.com Web site is maintained and edited through a CMS.

**Conversion Study** — A study conducted to determine the number of visitors requesting visitor information who actually visit the area.

**DMAI** — Destination Marketing Association International, formerly IACVB, International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus — A professional organization for the convention and visitor industry across the world. Educational opportunities are provided at seminars and its annual convention.

**DMANC** — Destination Marketing Association of North Carolina, formerly NCACVB, North Carolina Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus — A private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the promotion of North Carolina as a convention and visitor destination. Comprised of more than 30 destination marketing organizations, the group works on cooperative marketing projects in partnership with the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development (NCDTFSD).

**DMC** — Destination Management Company — A local company that specializes in the organization and logistics of meetings and events. Such organizations base their business on a claim to have in-depth knowledge of the destination as well as offering the services that a meeting and convention planner would offer.

**ESTO** — Educational Seminar for Tourism Organization — The premier learning and knowledge-sharing forum for U.S. destination marketing professionals. Hundreds of participants from state and territory tourism offices and destination marketing organizations across the nation come together at ESTO each year to discuss fundamental and pressing issues affecting destination marketing.

**FAM** — A shortened term for familiarization tour, a common marketing tool used in the travel industry. A FAM is an invitation-only, complimentary trip hosted by a destination for the purpose of "familiarizing" a specific group (media, motorcoach operator, meeting planner, etc.) with the attributes of the area.

**Group Leaders** — Non-professional travel planners associated with religious, social and/or senior clubs. Group leaders work with pre-formed groups drawn from the organization's membership, rather than individuals brought together by a professional tour operator.

**Gateway City** — A city with an airport servicing direct international flights.

**HARO** — HelpAReporterOut.com — Free mailing list utilized by the CVB's PR department that distributes media leads/queries. Each day, e-mails distribute 10-25 queries from various media outlets, freelancers, blogs and Web sites.

**HSMIA** — Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International — A global organization of sales and marketing professionals representing all segments of the hospitality industry, strongly focused on education, and operating as a leading voice for both hospitality and sales and marketing management disciplines.



**Mashup** — Combining information from two Web sites or data sources on one Web page. An example of this would be a Google map with Flickr photos shown geographically, allowing visitors to select points of the map to see pictures taken in those locations.

**Media tour** — A tour of a city or cities in a core market in which appointments are scheduled with media for interviews and to distribute information about visiting the Asheville area in hopes of obtaining editorial and broadcast coverage.

**MPI** — Meeting Professionals International — The leading professional society of meeting planners and suppliers. The organization hosts an annual meeting along with a trade show which the Asheville CVB attends. In addition, state chapters also host their own annual meetings and trade show opportunities.

**NAJ** — North American Journeys — A trade organization of and for companies who sell/arrange international travel. NAJ hosts an East Coast marketplace, bringing together domestic-based receptive tour operators and suppliers.

**NCDTFSD** — North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development — A division of the Department of Commerce which oversees tourism and marketing for NC.

**NCMA** — North Carolina Motorcoach Association — A North Carolina state association whose membership consists of tour and charter operators in the state and those suppliers who provide services for motorcoach operations.

**NCRLA** — North Carolina Restaurant and Lodging Association — The leading advocate and resource for the state's \$17.5 billion restaurant and lodging industries. NCRLA represents the interests of more than 16,000 businesses throughout NC, that combined employ 10 percent of the state's workforce.

**NCT&TC** — North Carolina Travel and Tourism Coalition — A non-profit trade association comprised of associations, businesses, industries, resorts, attractions, convention and visitor bureaus and other organizations throughout North Carolina, all working together to promote public policies that encourage the growth and development of North Carolina's travel, tourism and hospitality industry.

**NTA** — National Tour Association — NTA is a non-profit trade organization of and for individuals who package both retail and wholesale tours. The NTA member company is the "middle man" who sells and/or arranges interstate pleasure tours and motorcoach tours for compensation. The marketplace is designed for buyers and sellers to meet on a one-on-one basis in pre-scheduled appointments.

**POW WOW** — Organized by the U.S. Travel Association, this is the major marketplace in the U.S. for domestic suppliers and international buyers and is structured with pre-scheduled appointments. The organization was created to promote unbiased, accurate and interesting reporting on travel destinations, facilities, and services. The group holds an annual convention as well as regional meetings and educational forums.

**PRSA** — Public Relations Society of America — The national professional organization of public relations practitioners and communicators. Each year, the Travel and Tourism Section of the organization plans a conference that brings media and travel communicators together in an educational setting.

**RSS** — Really Simple Syndication — A family of Web feed formats used to publish frequently updated content such as blog entries, news headlines and podcasts in a standardized format. A RSS document (which is called a *feed* or *channel*) contains either a summary of content from an associated Web site or the full text. RSS makes it possible for people to keep up with Web sites in an automated manner that can be fed into special programs or filtered displays.

**SATW** — Society of American Travel Writers — A not-for-profit professional association of writers, photographers, editors and electronic media.

**SMERF** — An acronym for the meeting market segments that comprise social, military, educational, religious and fraternal groups.

**Social Media** — The online tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, thus facilitating conversations and interaction online between groups of people. These tools include blogs, message boards, podcasts, micro blogs, livestreams, bookmarks, networks, communities, wikis, and vlogs.

**State Motorcoach Associations** — State associations of member motorcoach operators who work together to promote safe travel by motorcoach through networking with other operators and suppliers and by positively influencing state legislation. Each state association holds an annual meeting and trade show to offer supplier members an opportunity to meet with tour planners and/or group leaders.

**NCMA** — North Carolina Motorcoach Association

**STS** — Southeast Tourism Society — STS is the private sector voice in the travel industry in 10 Southeastern states, including North Carolina. Membership in STS affords an opportunity for educational seminars, joint trade show ventures and networking.

**Travel South Showcase** — The annual marketplace organized by Travel South USA, the Official Regional Destination Marketing Organization, promoting travel to and within the 12 southern states. The marketplace is designed for buyers and sellers to meet on a one-on-one basis in pre-scheduled appointments.

**TPDF** — Tourism Product Development Fund — Established in 2001, the TPDF is a dedicated fund representing one percent of the occupancy tax earmarked to fund capital projects in the Asheville area, with the goal of increasing overnight lodging stays.

**TPDF Committee** — Tourism Product Development Fund Committee — A nine-member sub-committee of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) who researches requests for the funding of capital projects, making recommendations for recipients of TPDF dollars to the BCTDA.

**U.S. Travel Association (formerly TIA, Travel Industry Association)** — The national, non-profit organization representing all components of the \$740 billion travel industry. U.S. Travel's mission is to promote and facilitate increased travel to and within the United States.

**Viral Marketing** — A marketing concept in which an unusual, interesting or funny message promoting the area is distributed to consumers in hopes that they will forward the message to other people. This method is most often used in e-mail marketing.



Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau  
Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce  
P.O. Box 1010 | Asheville, NC 28802  
36 Montford Avenue | Asheville, NC 28801  
P. 828.258.6102 | F. 828.254.6054

[www.ExploreAsheville.com](http://www.ExploreAsheville.com)

---

[www.AshevilleCVB.com](http://www.AshevilleCVB.com)