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Greetings Partners!

Explore Asheville was proud to sponsor Fed Cup this weekend, and provide sales, marketing and operational support. Thanks and congratulations to our partners Chris Corl and Demp Bradford, their teams, and more than one hundred volunteers that made it all possible. The event shone an international spotlight on Asheville, attracting 5,000 spectators per day and generating \$3.5 million in economic impact.

Go Team USA!



See you soon!

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

Stephanie Pace Brown

**President & CEO
Explore Asheville**



The Explore Asheville team joined President & CEO Stephanie Brown on stage at the U.S. Cellular Center during the Steep Canyon Rangers and River Whyless concert to present \$1.5 million in TPDF funding for the center's new lighting, sound and curtaining system. On hand to receive the award was Asheville City Councilmember Julie Mayfield, City Manager Gary Jackson, and Community & Economic Development Director Sam Powers. Previously, the BCTDA invested \$4,175,000 in the U.S. Cellular Center for facility upgrades and improvements through three TPDF grants in 2010, 2012 and 2013, bringing the BCTDA's total support to \$5,675,000.

[Read more >>](#)

Bureau Buzz

NYC Media Mission

Director of Communications Dodie Stephens just returned from a New York City media tour where she conducted desk side visits and appointments with outlets including *USA Today*, *Food & Wine* and freelancers from *New York Post*, *Fodor's* and *Travel & Leisure*. Dodie also represented Asheville at TravMedia's International Media Marketplace (IMM) where she secured 24 appointments and networked with the 300 journalists in attendance including contacts representing *BBC Travel*, *NBC*, *TripSavvy* (the new About.com), *National Geographic Traveler*, *Departures*, and Samantha Brown's new show *Places to Love*.



Winter Media Tour in the Drive Markets

PR Specialist Sarah Lowery completed a three-day Winter Media Tour in mid-January to the drive markets of Chattanooga, Knoxville and the Tri-Cities area, promoting Asheville as an ideal winter



destination and sharing what's new in the year ahead. Messaging detailed why Asheville is a "Cozy Capital," in line with the Marketing Team's winter campaign. Sarah secured television appointments in all three markets and was able to meet with freelance writers and editors representing *Chatter Magazine*, the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, *Chattanooga Magazine*, *The Local Palate*, *Blue Ridge Country*, *West Knoxville Lifestyle*, *VIPSeen Magazine* and more.

Welcome New Members to the Explore Asheville Team

Please help us welcome Explore Asheville's new Director of Advertising, Sarah Kilgore! Sarah comes to us from Orlando, Florida, where she served as corporate marketing manager for the Kessler Collection of hotels. Prior to that, she worked as the marketing manager for the Hotel Duval. Sarah has worked in various marketing, PR and writing positions since graduating from University of Georgia

in 2005. Given her work with Kessler, she is very familiar with Asheville and counts herself as one of our biggest destination fans.



The Explore Asheville team is also thrilled to welcome Shelly Painter as our new intern! She is in her final semester at Western Carolina University, where she is majoring in Hospitality & Tourism Management and minoring in Art. Shelly will be with us on Tuesdays and Thursdays - learning about the industry by planning and attending meetings and doing project work across all EA CVB departments - until she graduates in early May.



Please join us in welcoming Shelly and Sarah to TEAM ASHEVILLE!

Notable Clips

The PR team generates significant stories about the Asheville area in national news outlets - here are a few of the most recent clips:

- *Jambase*, "[Winter Wonderland: Asheville Hosts Another Memorable Warren Haynes Christmas Jam](#)"
- *Divergent Travelers*, "[2017 Travel Review: 7 States, 7 Countries](#)"
- *Fodor's Travel*, "[10 Most Unusual Christmas Celebrations in the U.S.](#)"
- *National Geographic Traveler*, "[Cities on the Rise](#)"
- *Luxury Travel Guide*, "[What You Can't Miss in Asheville in 2018](#)"

Group Sales Highlights

Shawn Boone traveled to Atlanta and Carla McGlynn traveled to Richmond for sales calls. Dianna Pierce attended the Professional Convention Management Association annual meeting in Nashville. Carli Adams attended the Event Service Professionals Association annual meeting also in Nashville.

Sales & Services Coordinator Leann Swims, along with partners Ashley Jenkins from Biltmore, Adrienne Franklin from Hampton Inn/Homewood Suites, Teresa Cody from Grandfather Mountain, and Shawn Verbrugghe from Conundrum &



the Pubcycle, visited seven South Carolina AAA Branches January 16 – 19. The team met with over 40 agents in the Charleston, Columbia, and Greenville areas. Plans are underway for a similar trip to AAA offices in Cincinnati, Ohio in late Spring/early Summer. Please reach out to Leann (lswims@exploreasheville.com) if you are interested in hearing more about participating.

Beth McKinney and Leann Swims traveled to Charlotte for the American Bus Association Annual Meeting and Marketplace where they had one-on-one appointments with Tour Operators, hosted more than 50 people at a client event and sponsored an evening event held at the NASCAR Hall of Fame. Before heading to Charlotte for ABA, 17 motorcoach tour operators visited Asheville on January 24th and 25th for the American Bus Association Pre-FAM hosted by Explore Asheville, where they toured the River Arts District, downtown Asheville, the Asheville Outlets, and Biltmore.

Who's in Town

The CVB sales team booked 5 meetings and sporting event groups in January, resulting in 633 contracted rooms!

- The Gala 2018
- Linde Team Meeting
- Endo Innovia Leadership Meeting

- Geospatial Sales Meeting
 - United Health Group NC Agent Workshop
-



Did you know the Events Calendar is the most visited page on ExploreAsheville.com? Make sure your visitor-friendly events get maximum exposure by submitting them at least 3-months in advance. Need a refresher on what to do?

Instructions can be found [here](#) >>

In the Community

WomanUP Workshop - Women Inspiring Women

Listen to the inspiring stories of three local business women as they share how they overcame obstacles to achieve professional success at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce event on February 15. This first workshop in the 2018 series of WomanUP events will include a panel discussion with Melissa Murray, Mosaix Group, Inc., and 2017 Women Entrepreneurs, Best in Business award winner; Sarah Benoit, JB Media Institute, and 2017 Woman Executive of the Year; and Brandy Mills, T.B.M. Smallcakes- A Cupcakery & Creamery, young business owner. Register [here](#).

Participate in the Artspace Arts Market Survey

Artists, creatives, makers, performers, and leaders of cultural/creative organizations and businesses – your voice is critical to the development of affordable spaces for living and working in Asheville. The Center for Craft and the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce invite you to share your space needs by participating in the Artspace survey. This survey is the next step in a study catalyzing affordable housing and space options for Asheville's creative sector. The survey takes about 15 minutes and participants are entered to win \$250 in creative supplies of their choosing.

[keepAVLcreative.com](#) >>

Volunteers Needed for the Mountain Sports Festival

The 18th annual Mountain Sports Festival will be held Memorial Day Weekend. Support this great community event by signing up to volunteer [here](#).

FEBRUARY

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Explore Asheville 101 Orientation

Whether you're a new business or already familiar with Explore Asheville, join us to learn more about marketing and promotion initiatives, group sales efforts and meeting services, Extranet troubleshooting support including listings and event calendar management, and more.

Register >>



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