



December 17, 2019

CVB 101 | Research & Reports | Sales & Marketing

Greetings!

During this festive season, there's much to celebrate.

Last week we learned that *Travel + Leisure* named Asheville one of "The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020" – *one of only five* US destinations! The next day, we hosted well over 300 of our tourism partners at the annual Holiday Party, where we were delighted to present Explore Asheville CVB Superstar Awards to four individuals who have made stand-out contributions to the work we do to promote Asheville and Buncombe County as a destination. [Check out the pictures on our Facebook page.](#)

In the past few weeks cultural landmarks in the heart of downtown Asheville completed major expansions and renovations, made possible in part by funding from a portion of the occupancy tax paid by overnight visitors. We're thrilled to have partnered with these nonprofits with grants totaling nearly \$3.2 million from Buncombe County TDA's Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF).

As we close out another great year, all of us at Explore Asheville thank you for the opportunity to serve you, our tourism partners. We look forward to 2020 and to seeing you again soon.



Cheers!

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

Stephanie Pace Brown

President & CEO

Explore Asheville

UPCOMING EVENTS

JANUARY

9-11

SAVE-THE-DATE: African American Heritage Trail Listening Session Workshops

You are invited you to participate in the community-led process to develop the African American Heritage Trail in Asheville. Complete the survey and attend a workshop in January; learn more [here](#).

JANUARY

23

SAVE-THE-DATE: "Sales & Marketing Update" Partner Forum

Mark your calendars for Thursday, January 23, at 8:30 a.m. to hear an update from the sales and marketing teams. Stay tuned for details.

Bureau Buzz

You're Invited: Workshops Seeking Community Input on the African American Heritage Project

In the 2018 TPDF grant cycle, the BCTDA awarded funding to support a community-driven process to create an African American Heritage Trail in downtown Asheville that honors and preserves the rich heritage of the African American community in Asheville.



The project team is seeking community input on the process and trail content through an online survey and Listening Session Workshops in January.

For more information, a schedule of workshops and the link to the online survey, please check: <https://www.ashevillecvb.com/african-american-heritage-project/>

Image: Artist rendering of future African American Heritage Trail

Asheville's Legacy of Art, Craft and Creativity Supported with Grants from the BCTDA

The past few weeks have been a whirlwind of activity as cultural landmarks in the heart of downtown Asheville celebrated long-awaited expansions, bolstering the area's legacy of art, craft and creativity. We're thrilled to have partnered with Asheville Art Museum (awarded \$1.5 million), Center for Craft (awarded \$975,000), and Wortham Center for the Performing Arts (awarded \$700,000) in supporting cultural enrichment for people of all ages who live and visit here.



These are just three of the TPDF grant recipients within a few blocks of one another downtown. [Learn more here.](#)

1. Asheville Art Museum
2. The Wortham Center
3. Center for Craft
4. Asheville Community Theatre
5. Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center
6. YMI Cultural Center
7. African American Heritage Museum at Stephens-Lee
8. Pack Square Park
9. The Collider
10. Asheville Museum of Science
11. Grove Arcade
12. US Cellular Center

PR & Sales Teams Seeking Spring 2020 News, Due January 15

The Explore Asheville PR team is setting its sight on the coming spring. Journalists and editors are planning this content now, so the team's seasonal outreach is already starting. Also, in addition to a spring release and media outreach, the team will be creating specific content around Asheville's spring offerings.

SHARE YOUR NEWS: We'd love to hear what you've got going planned this spring. Think business openings, new tours, new experiences, packages themed around big Asheville events, or any other news you'd like to share with us!

The Explore Asheville Sales Team is also looking for new experiences that are suitable for groups. Please make a note if your news or experience is group-friendly when submitting!

Please feel free to reach out if any questions; and send your news to news@exploreasheville.com by **Wednesday January 15**. If you have news but don't have all the details yet, we'd still love to know about it so it's on our radar for next year!

Oh, What Fun! Tourism Superstars + Pix from Holiday Party

The 2019 Holiday Party was great fun, thanks to 300+ tourism partners who joined in what many call the networking event of the year. It was a grand occasion, thanks to our incredible sponsors, Renaissance Asheville Hotel, US Foods, Asheville Brewing, The Omni Grove Park Inn and Biltmore. And many thanks to all who contributed to the Toys for Tots drive – a total of four boxes full of toys and \$748 in cash donations!

As is our tradition, we recognized four tourism partners who've made standout contributions to the work we do at Explore Asheville to attract customers to our local businesses. Congratulations and thanks to Brenda Durden (Asheville Hotel Group), Cleaster Cotton (Artist & Educator), Ken Stamps (Navitat Canopy Tours), and Lisa White (White Labs). [Read all about their contributions here.](#)

Miss the fun? Or want to re-live it? [Check out more photos here.](#) (And feel free to tag yourself!)

Notable Clips

The PR team generates significant stories about the Asheville area in national news outlets. We're particularly excited about **Travel + Leisure** naming Asheville one of "[The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020](#)" – one of only five destinations in the US to be selected! Here are a few other recent clips:

- **Artsy** | ["Artists of Appalachia Push Back on Regional Stereotypes"](#)

- **Chowhound** | ["Chow Chow is the Blissful Marriage of Pickles & Coleslaw We've Been Waiting For"](#)
- **Conde Nast Traveler** | ["The Best Places to Spend Christmas in the U.S."](#)
- **Esquire** | ["22 New Best Restaurants in America"](#)
- **Thrillist** | ["**Give the Gift of Travel: Ultimate Foodie Dreamlands**"](#)



Explore Asheville's Director of Communications Dodie Stephens appears on Fox Carolina with journalist Cody Alcorn after Travel + Leisure names Asheville as one of "The 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020."

Group Sales Update

Tina Porter traveled to Anaheim, CA with the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission for the TEAMS conference where they met with more than 40 sports event planners. Connie Holliday exhibited at the Tennessee Society for Association Executives annual trade show and Shawn Boone attended the Financial & Insurance Conference Planner organization's annual meeting. Beth McKinney hosted a local wedding industry partner social event.

The sales team hosted the final Asheville 48-Hour Experience for 2019. This November FAM welcomed nine meeting planners from all over the country who experienced two full days in Asheville. A huge thank you to all the local partners that helped us give these planners a first-hand look at Asheville's meeting resources!



Who's in Town?

The sales team booked a total of 1,633 rooms for nine groups and five weddings traveling to Asheville in December!

- The Great Smoky Mountain Grapple 2019
- Christ Cathedral Church of Deliverance Women's Society
- Genentech Carolinas Division EOY Meeting
- 2019 McGill & Associates Holiday Party
- NC Academy of Family Physicians
- North Carolina Local Government Budget Association Winter Conference
- Strong Bonds AC-FY19-00567
- Synnex Corporation Meeting
- US Foods Raleigh Q3 TM Promotion

In the Community

Large matching grant offered to establish Trails & Views Forever Fund for Blue Ridge Parkway

Just in time for the holiday giving season, the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation is announcing a matching grant for the organization's new Trails & Views Forever Fund. An anonymous donor is offering a challenge grant of \$300,000 to jump-start this initiative to repair trails, picnic areas, campgrounds, overlooks, and other amenities on the Blue Ridge Parkway.

"The National Park Service is facing an astonishing price tag to repair all aspects of the Blue Ridge Parkway," explains Carolyn Ward, CEO of the Blue Ridge Parkway Foundation. "Sadly, because there are so many needs, the care of Parkway trails, campgrounds, and overlooks is falling to the bottom of the long list of priorities."

Gifts can be made at BRPFoundation.org/trailsandviews.

City of Asheville to Begin Haywood Streetscape and Infrastructure Improvements in January

Major streetscape infrastructure improvements are underway. Construction is scheduled from January - September 2020.

Improvements include new and replaced infrastructure - sewer and/or waterlines, new and replaced wider sidewalks, granite curbing, street trees, sidewalk amenities, and asphalt paving.

For more detailed project information including design, schedule and construction updates, please visit www.ashevillenc.gov/haywoodstreetscape

Create a Coupon & Get Featured on the SoCon Microsite

The Southern Conference Basketball Championships will return to Asheville March 5-9, 2020. Engage with visiting fans with a coupon listing on the ExploreAsheville.com [SoCon microsite](#)! This page will be promoted by the conference and member schools to help people get excited about visiting Asheville and will provide exposure to your business. [Click here](#) for Explore Asheville Extranet coupon instructions. Use the coupon category "SoCon".

Join in on March Madness! Tickets for the 2020 Ingles SoCon Basketball Championships presented by General Shale are now on sale and can be purchased [here](#).



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