



September 9, 2020

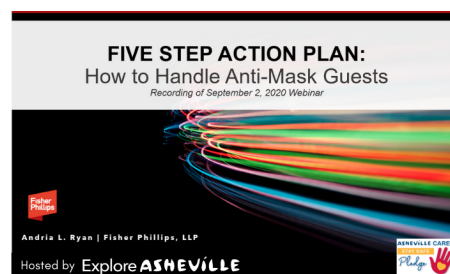
FAQs on Phase 2.5 of 'Safer at Home' Reopening

North Carolina is gradually easing restrictions, with the Sept. 4 implementation of Phase 2.5 of the governor's "Safer at Home" reopening plan. Highlights include increases on mass gathering limits (now 25 indoors, 50 outdoors), with large venues and wedding receptions and other private events subject to those limitations. Museums are now allowed to reopen at 50% capacity, while bars are still closed. Restaurants remain subject to capacity limits, with the 11 p.m. curfew on the sale of all alcoholic drinks continuing. Get details below.

- [Governor Cooper's Executive Order 163](#)
- [FAQs on 'Safer at Home' Phase 2.5](#)
- [FAQs on the current alcohol curfew](#)

Mask Mandate Expanded

Masks are still mandated, inside and out, at all public places (including "private" events), with few exceptions. The mandate is now extended to include all individuals from age 5 and up (previously age 12).



- [North Carolina's mask mandate](#)
 - [Recording of webinar hosted by Explore Asheville: '5-Step Action Plan for How to Handle Anti-Mask Guests'](#)
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Upcoming Events

SEPTEMBER

23

Partner Webinar: Maximizing Your Digital Brand on Google

How can your business maximize your digital brand on Google? Explore Asheville's agency of record, 360i, will provide tips at this partner webinar, Wednesday September 23, 10 – 11 a.m. [Reserve Your Spot Today >>](#)

OCTOBER

7

Save the Date: Our First VIRTUAL Annual Meeting!

Mark your calendar: October 7, 2020, at 3:30 p.m., when Explore Asheville presents the Buncombe County TDA Annual Meeting. Watch for details on this virtual event!

Group Sales Update: Virtual Site Visits & More

Although the pandemic has put many conferences and group travel plans on hold, the Explore Asheville sales team is working as hard as ever to support Asheville and Buncombe County's hospitality community. Here's a quick look.

Virtual Site Visits

Meeting planners are still seeking locations for future meetings when it is safe to gather again. But how do you do that when site visits are typically done in person? Explore Asheville recently partnered with licensed aerial drone and 3D imaging operator Destination Virtual Tours to produce stunning virtual site tours of Asheville's primary meeting hotels. Explore Asheville Group Sales is using the top-quality footage (and sharing with local hotel sales teams) to continue promoting Asheville to meeting planners.

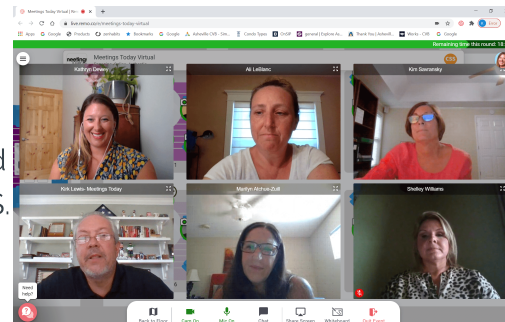
Earlier in the summer, the team produced a video highlighting Asheville's meeting resources and offering support to meeting planners during the pandemic. Among the ways the team promoted the video was through an email to [Convention Planit's](#) database of 38,000+ professional planners, drawing enthusiastic endorsements.

- [Presentation to Buncombe County TDA with sample virtual site visit footage](#)
- [11-minute video highlighting Asheville's meeting resources](#)
- [USAE](#) and [PCMA](#) trade publication articles on virtual experiences featuring Explore Asheville



Virtual Trade Show

Explore Asheville recently participated in a hosted buyer event, Meetings Today Virtual, and conducted virtual, one-on-one appointments with 10 independent and third party meeting planners from all over the U.S. Meetings Today's e-handbook, "Navigating the New Meetings Landscape," available to the planners to download, also featured Explore Asheville.



In The News: Industry Partners & Mountain Region

Telling the Asheville story and keeping our vibrant Blue Ridge mountain region top-of-mind for media nationwide is a constant focus of Explore Asheville's Public Relations team. We've compiled a sampling of recent news clips mentioning local industry partners, events, projects and more, many of which are a result of the PR team's efforts. Bookmark this page and check back often!

- [Notable clips featuring the Asheville area in regional and national news outlets](#)

Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund

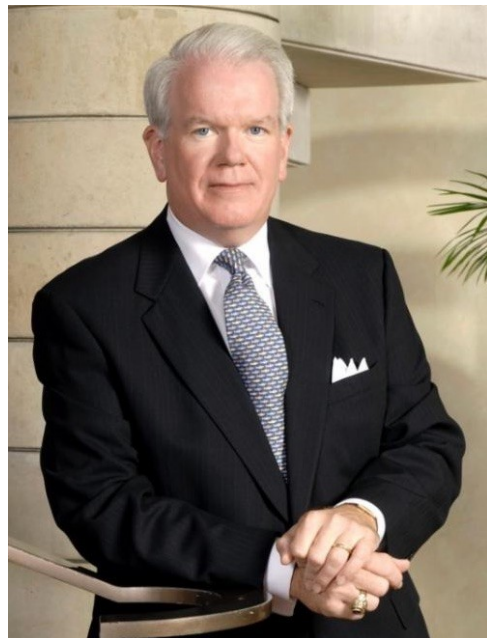
Meanwhile, 394 local businesses that provide a visitor experience received grants from the [\\$5 million Buncombe Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund](#) to help them safely and sustainably reopen, covered in several local media stories. The fund was created by the Buncombe County TDA using occupancy tax collections designated for tourism product development.

- [Local media coverage featuring industry partners receiving Tourism Jobs Recovery grants](#)
-

Remembering Industry Legends

Tom Ruff

We were saddened to hear of the loss last month of [Tom Ruff](#), former Attraction Division President for Biltmore and a member of the Buncombe County TDA board for about a year and a half before his retirement earlier this year. Among the many achievements throughout his career, Tom was honored as "Man of the Year" by the School of Hospitality at Penn State University.



Charlie Price

Our community also recently lost [Charlie Price](#), founder of Price/McNabb advertising and PR agency. While not technically in the tourist industry, we considered him one of the pioneers of the Buncombe County TDA, since Price/McNabb was Buncombe County TDA's first ad agency, which helped

develop messaging to attract visitors here. You may remember seeing an interview with Charlie in a [video on the history of the Buncombe County TDA](#) shown at last year's Annual Meeting.



Pioneers of BCTDA



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