

BY THE NUMBERS: THE VALUE OF VISITORS TO OUR COMMUNITY

- **\$2.2 billion in the cash registers of local businesses:** People who visit our community spent \$2.2 billion in 2019 at local businesses, many of those being small, independent operations who depend on visitors to survive and thrive – and on BCTDA’s sales and marketing programs to attract those customers. By category, this includes:
 - Food & Beverage - \$610 million (27%)
 - Lodging - \$609 million (27%)
 - Retail Shopping - \$468 million (21%)
 - Recreation & Entertainment - \$300 million (13%)
 - Air & Local Transportation - \$255 million (11%)
- **\$3.3 billion total impact:** Visitor spending at local businesses in 2019, combined with the goods and services local businesses then purchased from *other* local businesses generated \$3.3 billion in total economic impact.
- **\$213 million in taxes generated:** People visiting Buncombe generated \$213 million in state and local taxes in 2019, providing revenue for services and social investments. That \$213 million would cover the starting salaries of more than 5,100 public school teachers in NC.
- **28,000 jobs:** Visitors to Buncombe County directly supported 18,890 jobs at tourism-related businesses in 2019 and 27,938 jobs in total – that’s 15% of Buncombe’s employment.
- **43:1 return on investment:** Every \$1 invested in tourism advertising generates \$43 in spending at local businesses, plus \$3 of sales tax. This promotion comes at no cost to these local ventures.
- **\$44 million:** Thanks to occupancy taxes paid by visitors, Buncombe County TDA has been able to award \$44 million to 39 projects for the enjoyment of residents as well as visitors, such as parks, greenways, heritage and cultural arts, sports and recreation facilities, and more.
- **1,300+ tourism-related businesses:** There are more than 1,300 active, qualified tourism industry partners and friends in the Explore Asheville CVB database. These are businesses that benefit not just from the customers we work to attract, but also from the free educational networking opportunities we provide throughout the year – plus the free listings businesses get on ExploreAsheville.com.

Explore Asheville commissions a study of the economic impact of visitors every other year. These statistics from Tourism Economics are for calendar year 2019. Numbers for calendar year 2020 will be available later in 2022.