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**Contact:**

Clark Lovelace, Executive Director

Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority

(828) 884-8900

[clark@explorebrevard.com](mailto:clark@explorebrevard.com)

**Brevard, NC** – On June 23, 2022, the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (TCTDA) Board appointed Clark Lovelace as the executive director of the organization.

Lovelace, who grew up in Brevard, spent his early career in the hospitality industry working for his family at The Greystone Inn in Lake Toxaway. After graduating from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Lovelace spent five years at The Greenbrier Resort in West Virginia. In 2003, Lovelace returned to The Greystone Inn to assume the role of General Manager. A decade later, when the family sold the business, Lovelace accepted the role of executive director with the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce (Chamber), which included fulfilling a service contract to cover the operational and administrative duties of the TCTDA. Lovelace and his wife, Cherilyn, have two daughters, Annabelle (12) and Cate (10). “I’m so lucky to be living and raising my kids right where I want to be, my hometown.” says Lovelace, “And I get to do something that allows me to truly impact my community. I’m incredibly proud of the work I have done over the past eight years for the Chamber and the TCTDA, and I’m excited to be able to give full focus to continue and grow the great work of the TCTDA.”

The tourism industry has changed considerably since the TCTDA was first created in 1986, with exponential growth over the last two decades. Basic promotion via print advertisements, a website, a brochure, and a helpful Visitor Center was the norm at the turn of the century. Now, priorities have changed, and the tactics are different. The TCTDA’s mission serves to manage the destination, not just market it. The current marketing plan focuses on driving visitation in the shoulder and slow seasons (November through March), ensuring sustainability in local public lands, and encouraging appropriate visitor behavior. The TCTDA has worked to create campaigns like *Be Waterfall Wise*, a waterfall safety initiative, and *Leave It Better* to encourage positive visitor behavior. The organization’s *Transylvania Always* initiative has contributed over \$300,000 to projects focused on the sustainability of public lands in Transylvania County since its inception in 2017. Earlier this year, the TCTDA Board indicated its

intention to allocate \$1,000,000 to the City of Brevard for the development of the Transylvania County portion of the Ecusta Trail, providing the City's Rebuilding American Infrastructure with Sustainability and Equity (RAISE) grant application is approved.

“This has been the most exciting and productive year for the TCTDA throughout my 20-year involvement with the entity,” says Layton Parker, Chair of the TCTDA Board of Directors. “We had the opportunity to strengthen the TCTDA by appointing Clark Lovelace as the new Executive Director of Tourism, establishing a new personnel plan with Transylvania County Government and redefining our relationship with the Chamber for the Visitor Center to make all three organizations more effective in enhancing tourism and protecting our beautiful resources here. We are confident that these new strategies have prepared us to be good stewards of the occupancy tax collection and tourism management for many years to come.”

Since the late 1990s, the TCTDA has contracted with the Chamber to fulfill the operational and administrative needs of the organization. Services ranged from answering calls and fulfilling brochure requests to managing the relationship with the marketing partner agency to representing the TCTDA at local and regional meetings. The agreement also included the operation of a vibrant Visitor Center. Recently, both organizations determined that the growth of both parties over the life of this nearly twenty-five-year agreement required a new approach. The Chamber recently hired a new executive director, Melissa Driver, to oversee operations of their organization. With Lovelace’s appointment, the TCTDA now has a director and team staffed through Transylvania County that is fully focused on tourism. Lovelace reports directly to the TCTDA Board with a team that includes MJ Gordon as Marketing and Communications Specialist, and a currently unfilled Operations and Outreach Specialist position. Anyone interested in the open position is encouraged to reach out to Lovelace at [clark@explorebrevard.com](mailto:clark@explorebrevard.com).

The TCTDA and Chamber still maintain a strong relationship that includes a lease of office space on the second floor of the downtown Brevard building owned by the Chamber at 175 East Main St., as well as TCTDA funding of the Chamber-operated Visitor Center in the same building.

Angela Owen, Board President of the Chamber says, “While both entities process organizational changes, our commitment to serve the community with excellence remains the same. The Chamber is grateful for the strength of partnership with the TCTDA and looks forward to continued collaboration moving forward.”

### **About the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority**

The TCTDA’s mission is to “generate and enhance tourism opportunities in Transylvania County through strategic promotion coordinated with tourism-related businesses and local government and to contribute to a vibrant, sustainable economy.” Funding for the organization is provided by a 5% occupancy tax on overnight visitors to Transylvania County accommodations.

In addition to advertising and promotion, the TCTDA annually sets aside funds for projects and grants to help support tourism-oriented events and initiatives, including their Transylvania Always initiative focused on the sustainability of the area's natural recreational resources. The TCTDA is headquartered at the Brevard/Transylvania Visitor Center, located at 175 East Main Street in downtown Brevard. To learn more, go to [explorebrevard.com](http://explorebrevard.com) or contact Executive Director Clark Lovelace or Marketing and Communications Specialist Mary Jo Gordon at (828) 884-8900.