



TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FISCAL YEAR 2022-23 ANNUAL REPORT





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I. BOARD AND SUPPORT TEAM





A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

I am grateful that I have had the opportunity to serve as chair of this organization for several years. It has been rewarding to be included in the organizational restructuring and long-term planning process during the transition and I am confident that these changes have prepared the TDA to be very effective in both tourism marketing and destination management over the next decade. We have a very committed board, Executive Director, and support staff that I have enjoyed working with.

As this report describes, it has been a very dynamic five-year period. This past year has been unique with our slight decline in visitation but still experiencing a successful tourism economy. We have fared much better than other counties, and I am optimistic for the continued protection and sustainability of our local assets, provision for enhanced visitor experiences, and benefits to our local economy that the tourism industry offers to this wonderful county.

Thank you for allowing me to serve.

Layton Parker
TCTDA Chair

BOARD MEMBERS

Layton Parker, **Chair**

Dee Dee Perkins, **Vice Chair**

Dana Antonuccio

Isaac Allen

Madeline Magin

Ali Lien

Larry Chapman

Aaron Baker

Jessica Whitmire

SUPPORT TEAM

Clark Lovelace

Executive Director

Virginia Watkins

Operations and Outreach

Mollie Gordon

Marketing and Communications

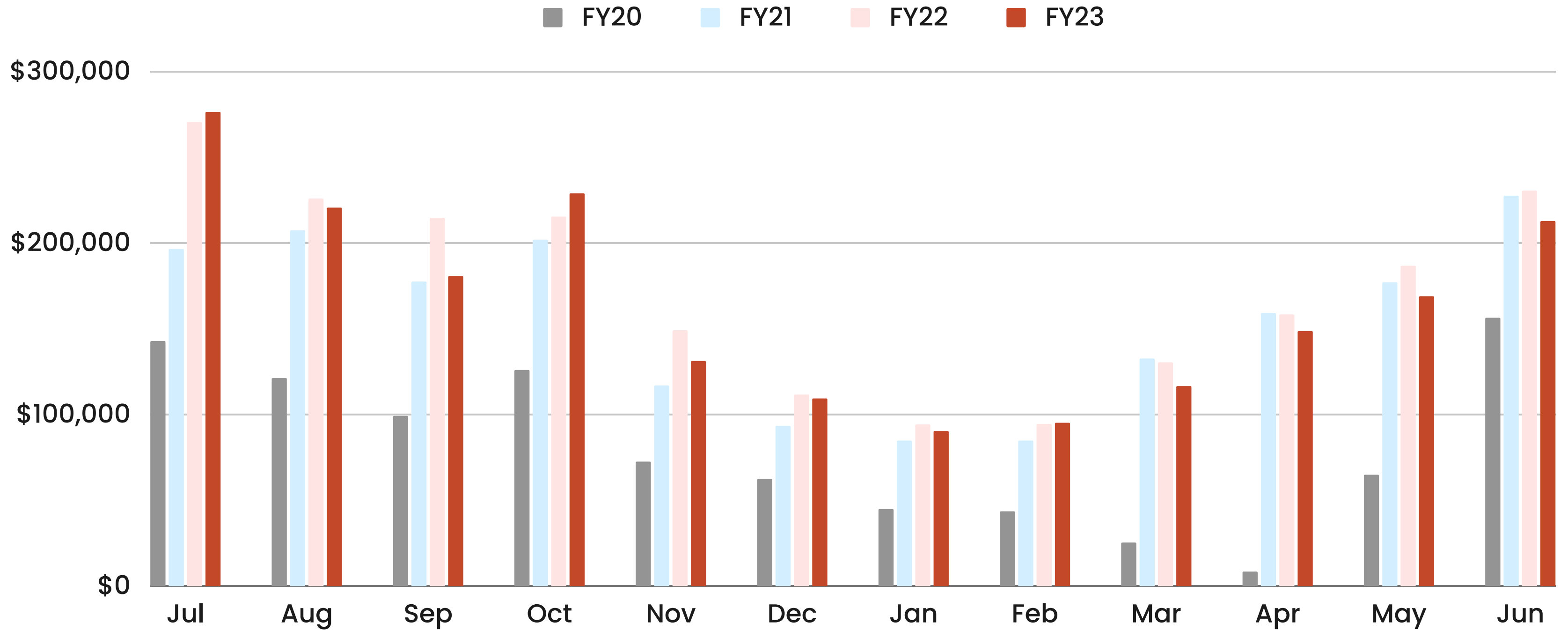
Market Connections

Marketing and Advertising

II. OCCUPANCY AND VISITOR INSIGHTS



MONTHLY OCCUPANCY TAX PROCEEDS VS. PRIOR YEARS



ANNUAL OCCUPANCY TAX PROCEEDS

FY23: \$1,978,372

↓ **4.9%** vs. prior year

↑ **6.5%** vs. FY21

↑ **104.5%** vs. FY20

SHORT-TERM RENTAL DATA

Transylvania County vs Prior Year				
	Available Units	Occupancy	ADR	
FY23	1,755	57%	\$283	
FY22	1,576	59%	\$273	
Percent Change	+11%	-3%	+4%	

Total Available Units vs. Comp Markets

	Transylvania County	Buncombe County	Henderson County	Jackson County	Haywood County	Macon County
FY23	1,755	7,360	1,920	1,674	2,391	1,825
FY22	1,576	6,642	1,640	1,425	2,191	1,574
% Change	11%	11%	17%	17%	9%	16%

Additional Information:

- Approximately 42% of STR units are located in Brevard, 40% in Western Transylvania (Lake Toxaway, Balsam Grove, Rosman, TC portion of Sapphire), and 18% in Eastern Transylvania (Pisgah Forest, Penrose, Cedar Mtn).
- Approximately 52% of total occupancy tax proceeds were attributed to STR with the remaining 48% attributed to traditional accommodations (hotels/motels/inns/B&Bs). These percentages match the prior year.

*Data sourced from AirDNA for July 1, 2022 - June 30, 2023. STR = short-term rental. ADR = average daily rate.

VISITOR INSIGHTS (ZARTICO)

KEY VISITOR INSIGHTS COMPARED TO THE OVERALL NC AVERAGE

Visitor-to-Resident Ratio
Compared to Statewide Average

+11%

0.45 vs. 0.40 statewide

Avg. Visitor Spend
Compared to Statewide Average

-71%

\$300.84 vs. \$1,029.17 statewide

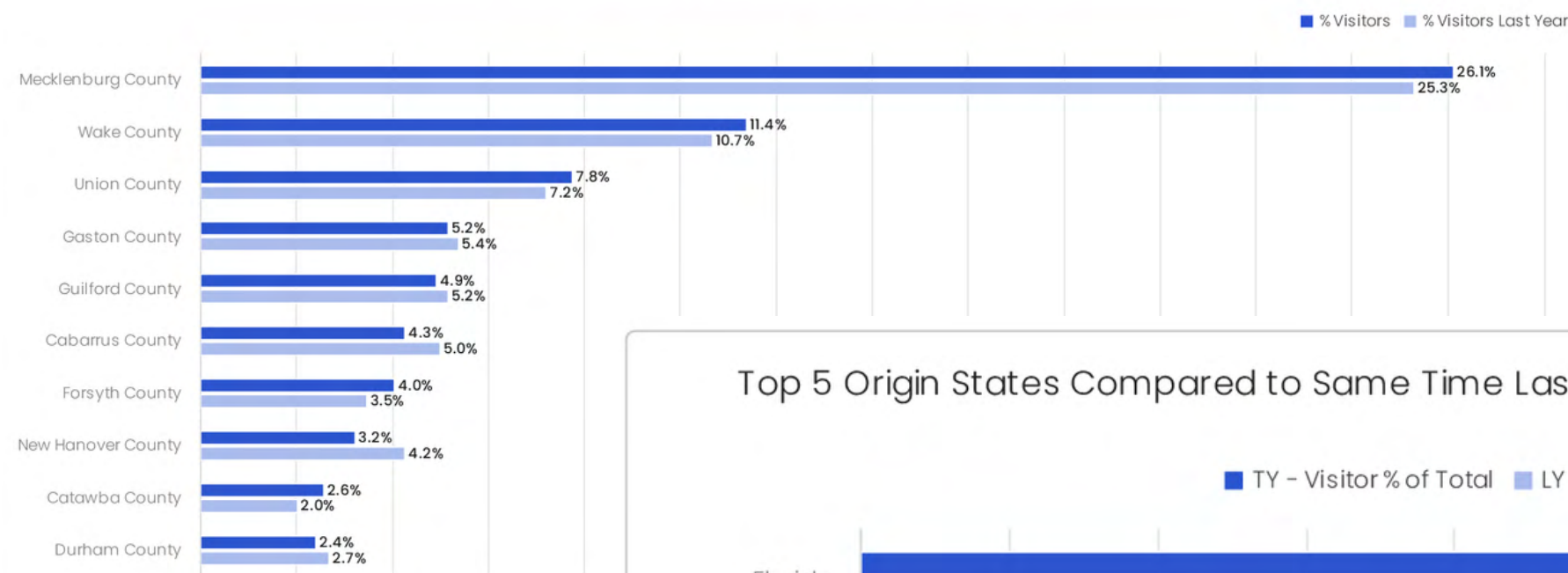
% Out-of-State Visitors
Compared to Statewide Average

+8%

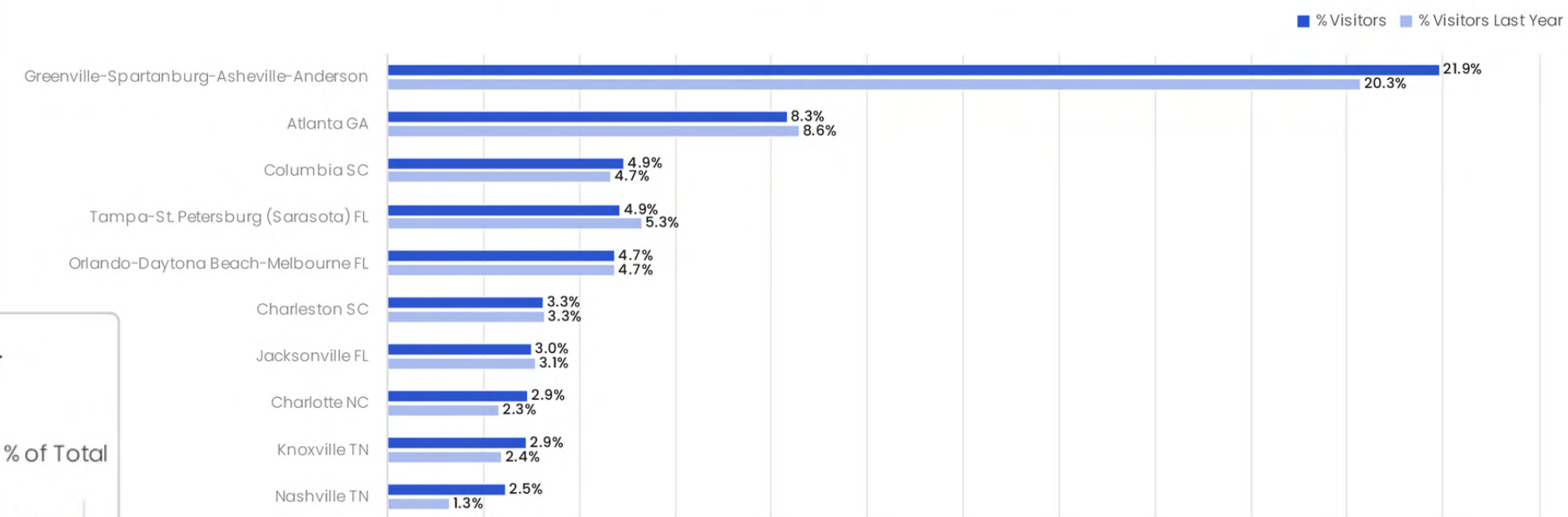
76.3% vs. 70.4% statewide

WHERE DID VISITORS TO YOUR DESTINATION COME FROM LAST YEAR?

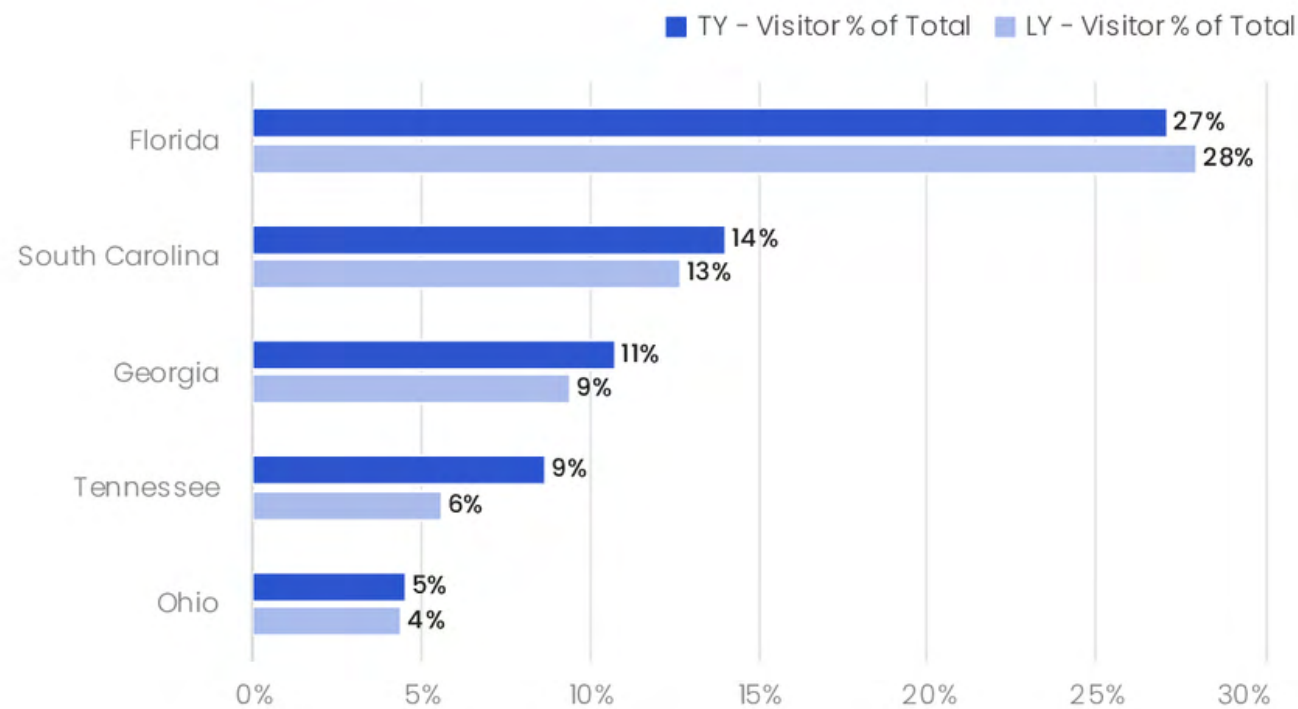
Top 10 In-State Origin Counties, Compared to Last Year



Top 10 Out of State Origin Markets, Compared to Last Year



Top 5 Origin States Compared to Same Time Last Year



Source: Near, Affinity. Near data is anonymized mobile location data. A visitor is defined as a device with a home OR work location (to exclude commuters) more than 30 miles from your county. This visitor device must visit one of the points of interest Zartico mapped out in your county. Affinity is anonymized spend data by credit and debit cards. It includes insight from Visa, Mastercard, and some American Express and Discover.

Data compiled by Zartico Insights. LY = Last Year, TY = This Year.

VISITOR INSIGHTS (MEDIA ONE)

AD DRIVEN FOOT TRAFFIC VISITATION

Cumulative Foot Traffic 1 Hour Visitors

89,588

1 Hour Visitors

	DMA	Exposed Visitors by Impression DMA	% Δ
1.	Charlotte	41,346	-
2.	Nashville	24,604	-
3.	Locations outside of DMA boundaries	14,896	-
4.	Greenville/Spartanburg/Asheville/Anderson	14,475	-
5.	Atlanta	11,869	-
6.	Raleigh/Durham	10,073	-
7.	Knoxville	5,668	-
8.	Orlando/Daytona Beach/Melbourne	4,926	-
9.	Charleston-Sc	4,917	-
10.	Greensboro/High Point/Winston-Salem	3,780	-

Cumulative Foot Traffic 18 Hour Visitors

24,770

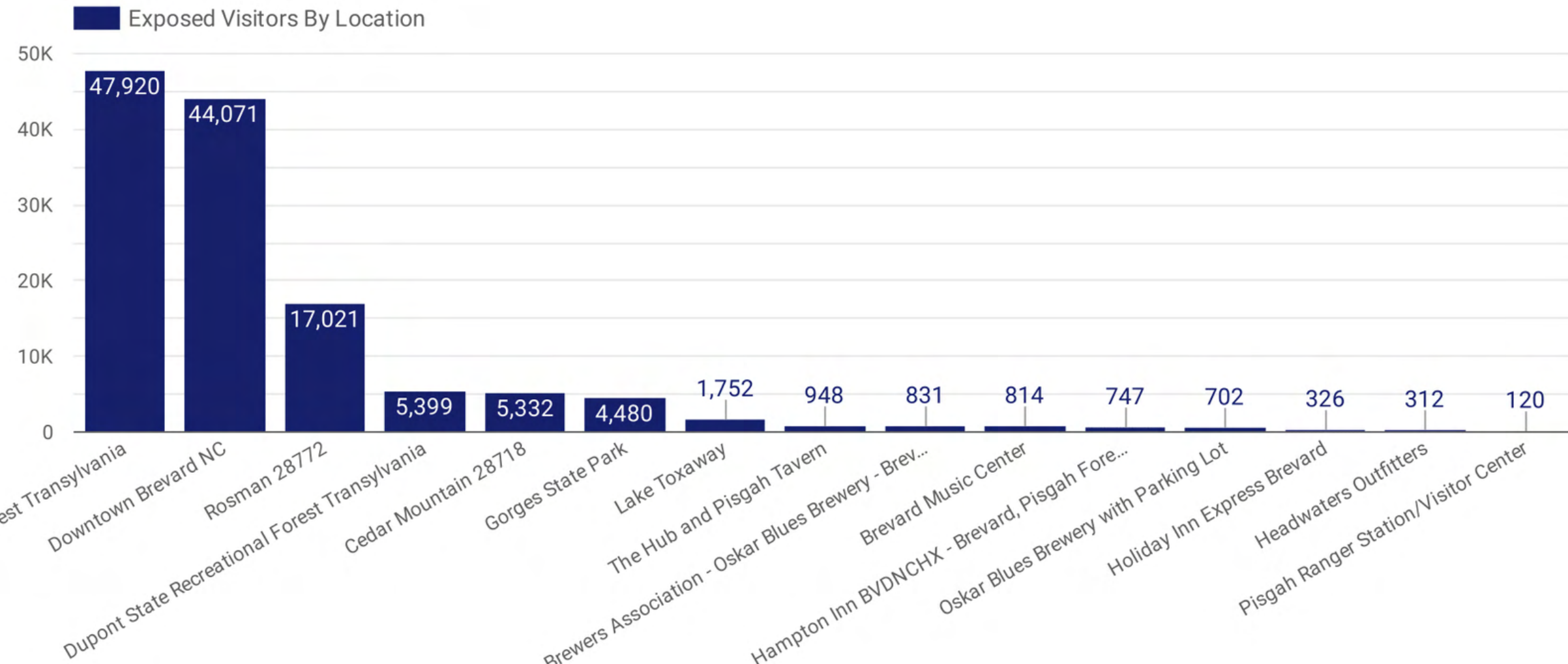
18 Hour Visitors

	DMA	Exposed Visitors by Impression DMA	% Δ
1.	Charlotte	5,895	-
2.	Charlotte, NC	4,610	-
3.	Locations outside of DMA boundaries	2,257	-
4.	Nashville	2,232	-
5.	Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson, SC-NC	2,051	-
6.	Atlanta	1,270	-
7.	Greenville/Spartanburg/Asheville/Anderson	1,223	-
8.	Raleigh/Durham	1,114	-
9.	Nashville, TN	751	-
10.	Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville), NC	721	-



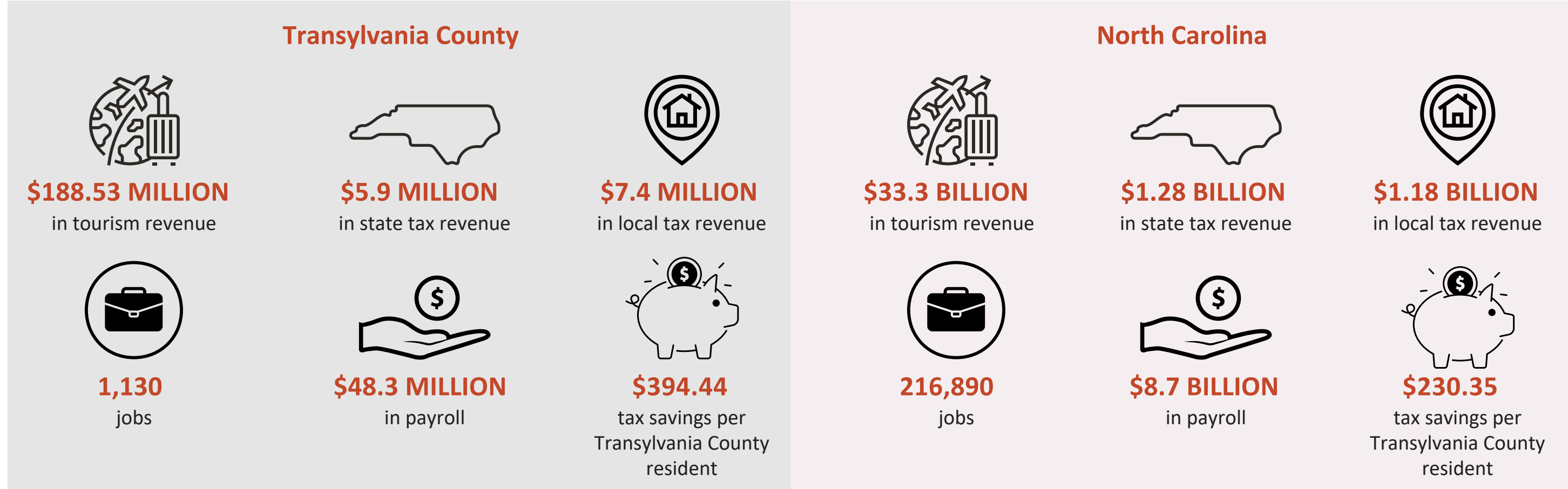
Tracked Points of Interest - 1 Hour Visits

Jul 1, 2022 - Jun 30, 2023



Data compiled by Media One through third-party specialists. For this report, mobile data is used to track visitor behavior of users who have been “tagged” as having previously seen digital ads for Explore Brevard, providing data on the effectiveness of our digital ads and additional insights into visitor behavior.

2022 VISITOR IMPACT



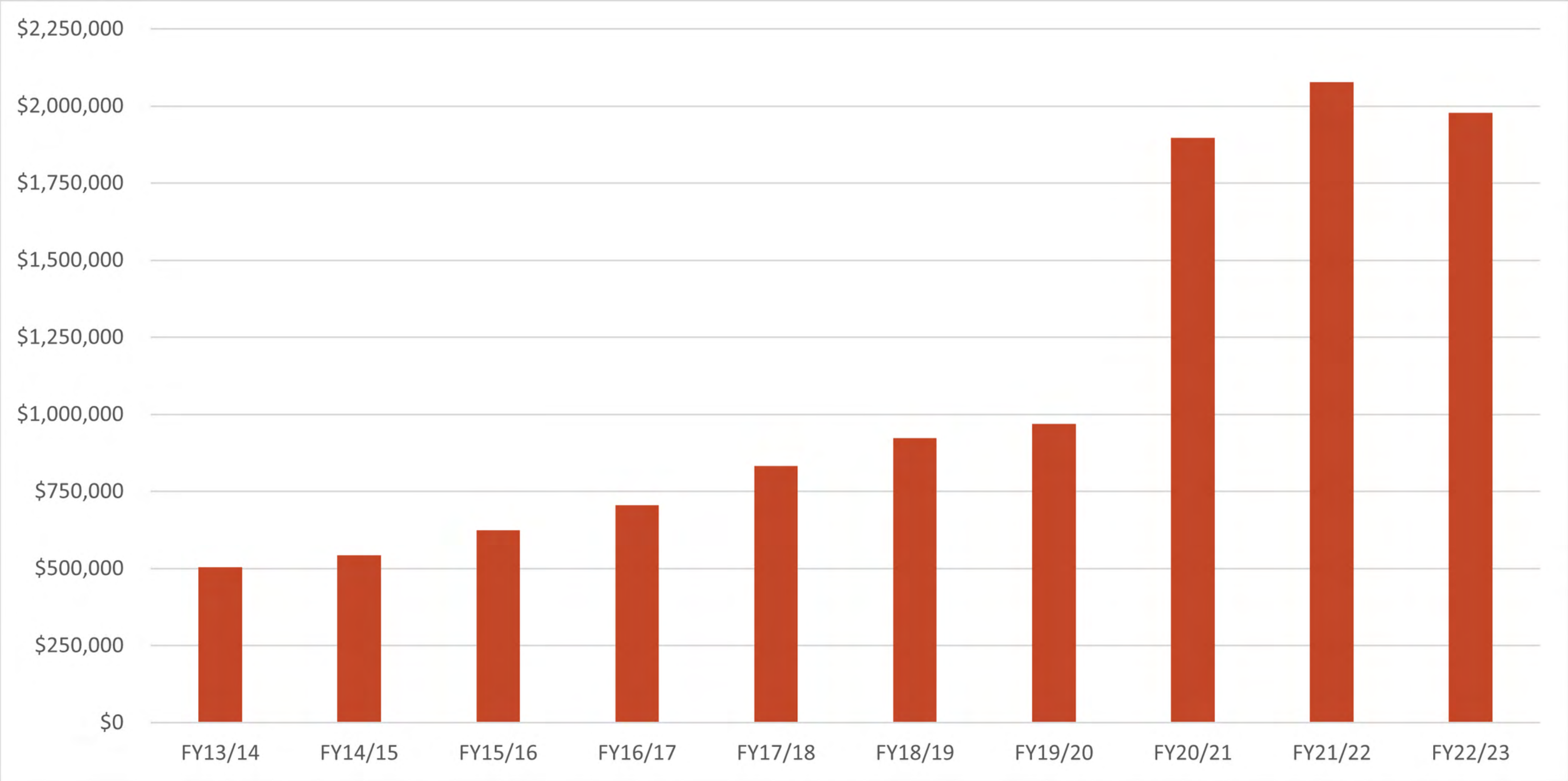
Visitor Spend in Transylvania County (in millions)

	Total Spend	Lodging	Food & Beverage	Recreation	Retail	Transport
2021	\$178.18	\$45.94	\$53.90	\$25.41	\$16.52	\$36.41
2022	\$188.53	\$47.13	\$55.36	\$26.33	\$17.05	\$42.66
% Change	5.8%	2.6%	2.7%	3.6%	3.2%	17.2%

*Data sourced from Tourism Economics, who completed a study for all NC counties for Visit NC

**Information is for calendar years

OCCUPANCY TAX PROCEEDS: 10 YEAR VIEW



OCCUPANCY AND VISITOR INSIGHTS

As FY23 was approaching, there was optimism that visitation to Transylvania County would continue to grow, albeit at a slower rate than the prior two years and during months when tourism partners and public lands had capacity. As FY22 came to a close and FY23 began, it became apparent that the inevitable drop off from the pandemic era's outdoor-focused travel boon had begun and was coupled with trip hesitation and reduced spending in some travelers due to inflation and other factors. In the end, FY23 finished with occupancy tax proceeds approximately 5% lower than in FY22. Of course, that was a record year, so FY23 was still the second-highest year for occupancy tax proceeds in Transylvania County.

The TCTDA embarked on a market study in FY23 to better understand the travel habits and decision-making factors of our visitors, to gain perspective on how we compare with competitive destinations, and to gain insights from local tourism stakeholders. This study included three primary components: 1) Visitor Profile, 2) 3rd Party Reporting, and 3) Stakeholder Survey and Input Session.

The Visitor Profile was performed by SMARInsights, a data collection and reporting specialist in the tourism realm. Key elements of that report can be found at <https://explorebrevard.com/quarterly-reports-to-comissioners/>. Some insights, like the fact that we're known for our waterfalls and that all competitive destinations utilized (five in WNC and one in Eastern Tennessee) are seen as excelling in outdoor recreation, were not surprising. Others, like the fact that we're also seen as standing out among our peers in healthfulness and rejuvenation and that 20% of those who reported not having visited Brevard/Transylvania had in fact visited one of our attractions, were surprising.

We have also been using 3rd party reporting to support our marketing efforts and other decision-marking. This includes data shared in this annual report, including the short-term rental report with information supplied by AirDNA, as well as the mobile reports from Zartico and Media One.

A final element was a survey of local tourism partners and a subsequent gathering with respondents to dive deeper into their responses. Their feedback helped inform marketing strategies and partner programs and offerings for the year ahead.



III. MARKETING AND PROMOTION HIGHLIGHTS



MARKETING PRIORITIES & TACTICS

Characteristic of counties across the state as visitor travel self-corrected post-pandemic, visitation to Transylvania County (TC) leveled off and dropped slightly in FY23. Compared to some of our neighbors, we continued to enjoy steady visitation, including visitors from some new and emerging markets. Travelers continue to seek fresh air, our authentic small town, epic outdoor adventure and recreation, and unique local culture. Highlights of FY23 included significant market research on a regional and local level to better define markets, assets, and opportunities to inform strategies so that marketing initiatives could be streamlined and targeted for more effectiveness. Explore Brevard's "Be Cool" campaign received high ratings among visitors and potential travelers. TC continued to capture the attention of regional and national media resulting in a flurry of excellent stories and notable media coverage. In the end, TCTDA's **marketing efforts reached more than 130 million potential visitors in FY23.**

FY23 Marketing Goals

- Increase occupancy at TC accommodations during shoulder seasons (midweek in April, May, and September) and slow season (seven days a week in January, February, March, November, and December).
- Convert day trippers staying in other WNC destinations and playing in Brevard to overnight stays in TC.
- Drive visitors to experience all that TC has to offer, not just the popular attractions.
- Increase day trippers during shoulder and slow seasons.
- Build awareness of and engage visitors in sustainable practices and responsible tourism that respects the community, its fragile natural advantages, its businesses, and its people.
- Continue building regional and national awareness of TC and Brevard as a unique destination for nature, adventure, community, and culture.
- Increase outreach to more diverse audiences, and drive visitation from those audiences.
- Increase promotion of non-outdoor recreation assets – arts, music, culture, and outlying communities (Cedar Mountain, Pisgah Forest, Toxaway/Sapphire).
- Inspire conversion of summer visitor stays to other seasons when traffic is less.

FY23 Marketing Strategies

- Inform and guide visitors around and into different areas, attractions, assets, and communities within the county.
- Enhance sustainability messaging, communications, and partnerships.
- Develop creative messaging and employ tactics that highlight "Play & Stay" opportunities and thinking, especially among day trip visitors.
- Build holiday and winter visitation through specific creative and tactical campaigns.
- Expand digital marketing: Native, Display, OTT, YouTube, Pre-roll, SEO, Geofencing, Foot Traffic, Retargeting, Accu Weather, Single Tracks, Outside/Pink Bikes, Romantic Asheville, Visit NC, Trip Advisor, Facebook/Instagram, and Sponsored Content.
- Continue to identify and expand new and emerging markets (niche and geo).
- Develop key sub-brands to enhance niche markets.
- Stay nimble: Consistently track and measure the success of tactics and adjust responsively to new opportunities and needs.
- Expand public relations initiatives through targeting panning, FAM tours, and media missions/pitches.
- Complete multi-year marketing plan/market research.

FY23 MARKETING PLAN BUDGET



- Digital- 25%
- Print- 7%
- TV/Radio - 9%
- Production - 10%
- Marketing - 9%
- Web Updates - 3%
- Billboards - 9%
- Social - 2%
- Adventure Guide - 6%
- Partner Marketing - 2%
- Public Relations - 5%
- Special Projects - 10%
- Contingency - 6%

Total Budget \$1.4 M

ADVERTISING OVERVIEW

Our approach to advertising in FY23 was dynamic, consistently evolving to meet the diverse needs of our audiences. Campaigns were updated seasonally to reflect our changing target market throughout the year. Every campaign worked to highlight the best features of Brevard and Transylvania County, showing off our exceptional experiences, adventures, and charm.

During the summer season, our advertising efforts were characterized by a focus on conveying the essence of summer through captivating imagery across print, digital, and social media platforms. Our primary target demographic during this period was families seeking travel opportunities while their children were out of school. Our content aimed to resonate with this audience, highlighting the allure of summer activities and experiences.

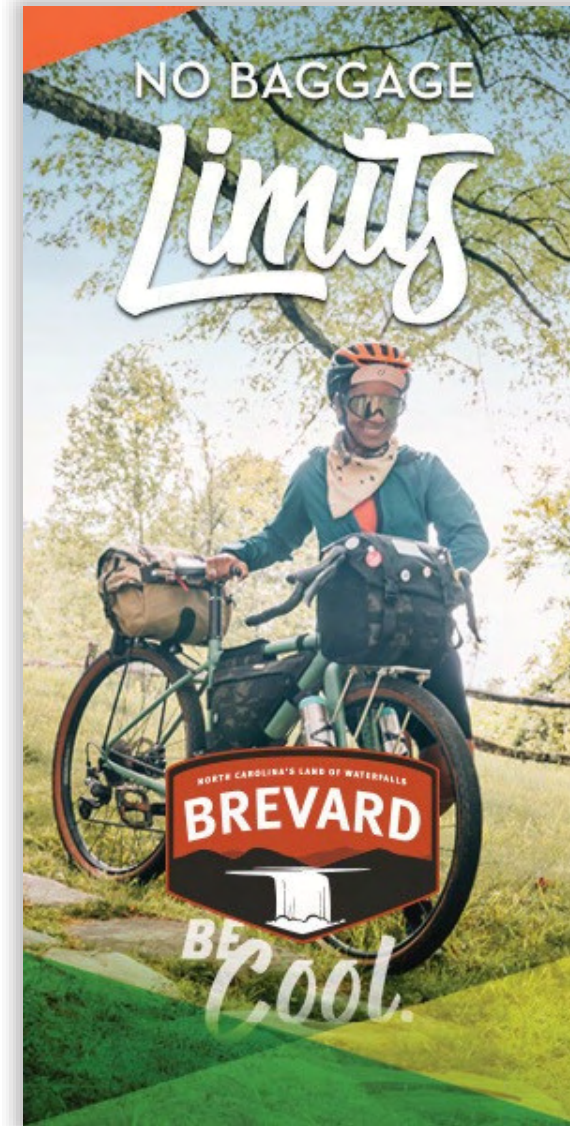
Transitioning into the shoulder season and fall months, our advertising approach shifted toward engaging two distinct audience segments: leisure travelers interested in outdoor and cultural activities and young professionals who have embraced remote work arrangements, allowing them to visit for extended periods. Our messaging revolved around showcasing the appeal of autumn experiences, the beauty of fall colors, and accessible outdoor adventures. Notably, we featured a model in a wheelchair accompanied by his service dog to emphasize our commitment to inclusivity.

Our holiday and winter advertising campaigns commenced in October and ran through December. During this period, our focus was on themes of wellness, romance, and remote work opportunities. We strived to convey the charm of wintertime experiences and the potential for a rejuvenating holiday season. These efforts were geared toward capturing the imagination of our audiences and encouraging them to explore our offerings during the colder months.

Spring advertising strategy shifted back to a primary focus on families, while also targeting seasonal adventure seekers and people interested in cultural and lifestyle experiences. Our messaging highlighted the vibrancy of springtime and the multitude of adventures and experiences awaiting our visitors.



ADVERTISING: DIGITAL

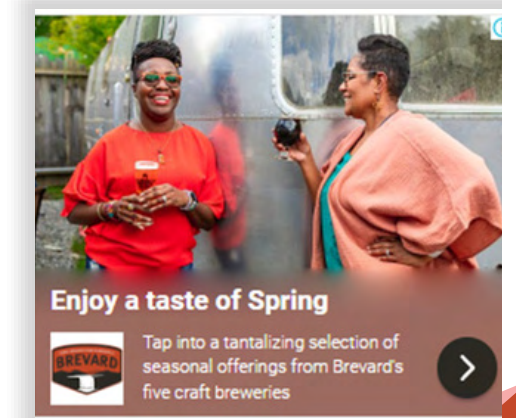


Our use of digital marketing continues to grow as a more extensive part of our marketing efforts. Unlike most other areas of marketing, digital marketing allows destinations to promote numerous diverse messages to very specific target audiences (geographically, demographically, habits, interests, etc.) while driving traffic to websites or partners in a measurable way. Additionally, messaging can be adjusted quickly and easily to reflect seasonality or other timely information. Our digital advertising encompassed a wide array of channels and formats, including paid keyword search, native ads, digital display ads, re-targeted display ads, digital pre-roll, geofencing, and Meta advertising.

Underpinning our digital advertising campaigns was the theme "Be Cool." This emphasized the appeal of adventures, arts, culture, accessibility, and sustainability. It aimed to evoke a sense of excitement and aspiration among our audiences.

Our digital ads found prominent placement on websites known for relevance and reach within our industry, including Blue Ridge Outdoors, Blue Ridge Parkway, Romantic Asheville, Visit NC, Outside Online, Accuweather, Trip Advisor, Travel Spike, and Single Tracks. YouTube was also utilized in our digital strategy.

We sponsored an "Explore Brevard" site takeover on singletracks.com, featuring a site wrap, podcast, and a 2,500-word blog titled "A Winter Mountain Biking Weekend in Brevard, NC", thoughtfully written by local rider Matthew Busche.

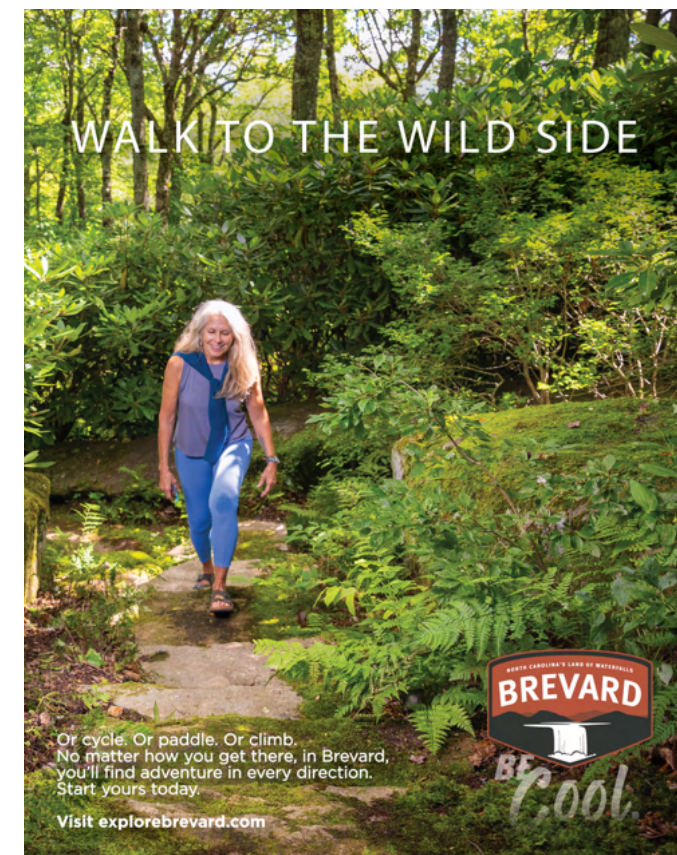
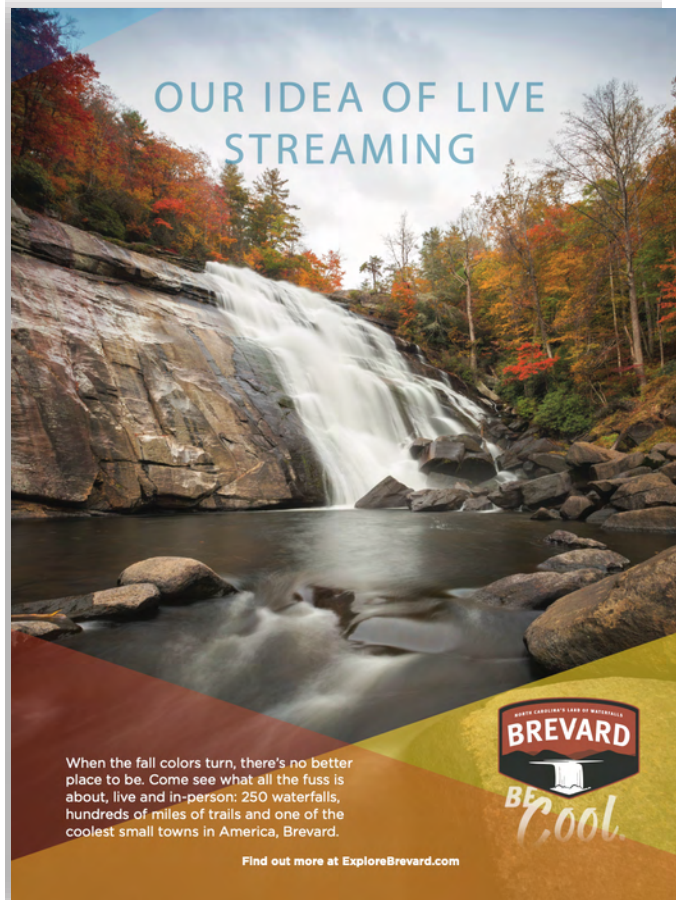


ADVERTISING: PRINT

Our strategic print advertising has played an integral role in expanding our reach and connecting with diverse visitor markets. Our print advertising campaigns exemplified a strategic fusion of seasonality, geographic targeting, and collaborative partnerships. This approach ensured that our messaging was both timely and relevant to our audiences. Additionally, we continued our collaborative efforts with local partners by offering co-op print advertising.

Our efforts included seasonal and co-op ad placements in influential publications, including *Blue Ridge Outdoors Magazine*, *The Laurel of Asheville*, *WNC Magazine*, *Our State Magazine*, *Garden & Gun Magazine*, *AAA Go*, and *Blue Ridge Parkway Official Guide*. In October, we strategically placed a full-page ad in the “Mountain Getaways” issue of *Our State Magazine*. This allowed us to capture the attention of readers seeking mountain-based adventures.

We secured a prestigious placement in *Garden & Gun Magazine* through our partnership with Visit NC, showcasing our destination to a vast audience. Additionally, we expanded our presence in *Southern Living Carolinas* and *Southern Living South* to reach readers in South Carolina, Georgia, and Florida.



ADVERTISING: TV, VIDEO, & RADIO

TV & VIDEO

The “Be Cool” campaign was filmed, rolling out 30-second TV spots in several markets, including Raleigh, Charlotte, Jacksonville, Charleston, Orlando, and Knoxville. March Madness, CBS Sunday Morning, and live streaming channels were also utilized targeting NC, SC, GA, FL, AL, TN, OH, VA, and DC. The goal of the campaign was to increase shoulder season visitation, midweek travel, and responsible tourism, with a focus on wellness, romance, and couples working remotely.

Film and various videos were utilized in pre-roll platforms like YouTube and through social media advertising.

RADIO

Select NC and SC radio stations broadcast live DJ reads of weather updates and weather-related activities in Brevard and Transylvania County during winter. The live DJ reads were triggered when forecasts call for weather that is sunny and warm for the season.



E-BLASTS & BLOGS

E-BLASTS

We produced two e-blasts each month, The Adventurist and Field Notes, which were delivered to almost 27,000 opt-in subscribers. The Adventurist, Explore Brevard's signature e-calendar of events, was distributed at the end of each month, highlighting top events of interest for the following month, and inviting visitors to enjoy unique offerings of the area. Field Notes offered a deep dive into various topics, highlighting the characteristics that make our destination so special. One topic was picked each month, ranging from waterfalls to practices promoting sustainability.

TOP PERFORMING ADVENTURISTS:



March 2023
March in Transylvania County



May 2023
May in Transylvania County

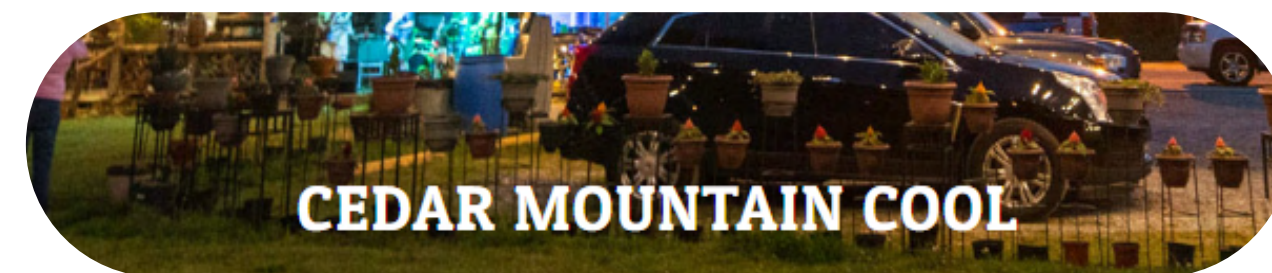
TOP PERFORMING FIELD NOTES:



February 2023
Mountain Love Song



March 2023
On the Water with Jack Henderson



BLOGS

Eleven Blogs were posted on explorebrevard.com in FY23. The four top performing blogs were "Land of Waterfalls for All", "Waterfalls Worth The Hike", "Leave It Better" and Be Like Trashquatch", and "Cedar Mountain Cool". The most viewed blog was "Land of Waterfalls for All", with 2002 views.

SPONSORED CONTENT E-NEWSLETTERS

In FY23, paid features in special newsletters by *Blue Ridge Outdoors*, *Our State*, *Romantic Asheville*, and *Outside Magazine* were used in marketing efforts. These partnerships allowed us to engage with a diverse and engaged audience, providing valuable exposure for Brevard and Transylvania County. Our State e-blasts reach an impressive audience of over 115,000 recipients.



North Carolina is the Great Trail State. And there's no better place to celebrate the Year of the Trail than in Transylvania County. Home to Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Recreational Forest, Headwaters State Forest, and Gorges State Park, our beautiful county is almost 50% public lands, resulting in a richness and diversity of trails unmatched in North Carolina.

With hundreds of trails to choose from, it can be difficult to decide where to start. The good news is that no matter what your interest – hiking, mountain biking, paddling, birding, horseback riding – we've got an amazing trail for you. For your convenience, we've compiled a curated list of great trail experiences to help get you started down the Year of the Trail.



Andy Cove Nature Trail, Pisgah National Forest
Perfect for: Families hiking with children

Our State
CELEBRATING NORTH CAROLINA

Find Your Chill



BROUGHT TO YOU BY EXPLORE BREVARD.

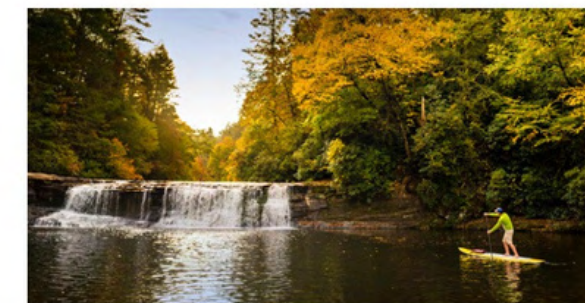
In Brevard, breathtaking mountain views, 250 waterfalls, acres of public lands, and a lively downtown offer visitors a chance to step out of their day-to-day lives and into a world where wonders never cease. Whether your idea of a springtime getaway involves unforgettable art, delicious dining, live music, or enjoying a stunning sight at the end of a hike – or from a cozy cottage with the people you love – you'll find what you need to spring into the season.

[Learn More](#)

Outside

Join Us →

A message from our partner



Achieve the perfect flow state in Brevard, NC

Start with 250 unforgettable waterfalls. Add 100,000 acres of public lands that are prime for every conceivable outdoor adventure – hiking, mountain biking, rock climbing, horseback riding, paddling, fly fishing, and canyoneering. Then top it off with one of the hippest small towns in America – Brevard, NC – where you can tap into our craft beer culture and live music, music scene.

[Explore Brevard](#)

BILLBOARDS & SIGNAGE

In FY23, three billboard ads were strategically selected to reach individuals as they travel to other locations in Western North Carolina. The billboards contributed to our “Play and Stay” efforts, which were designed to convert day trip visitors into overnight visitors. Large seasonal billboard posters are currently placed on I-40, coming west from Hickory; I-85 near the Hwy 74 turn-off toward Asheville; and I-26 at the Asheville Airport, which serves as a directional board. These three billboards are annual placements and the image/message changes twice during the year. These three billboards are strategically placed to attract travelers to Transylvania County and Brevard in the future.

In addition, a new Brevard and Transylvania brand/identification board welcomes visitors and residents alike on Hwy 280 near the Transylvania County line. This billboard is strategically placed to remind travelers of the county’s iconic assets. It was secured based on data from the 2022 market study indicating that some visitors do not associate the Brevard area or Transylvania County with some of our most well-known attractions.



I-40 Seasonal Activity



I-26 Iconic Brand Asset | Directional



I-85 Seasonal Activity



Hwy 280 Welcome | Claiming Destination and Iconic Asset

PUBLIC RELATIONS

We implemented various public relations initiatives, primarily focusing on unpaid media coverage, due to its high level of effectiveness. Unpaid media is often viewed as more credible by audiences because it carries a perception of objectivity and impartiality. It can be particularly effective with our destination due to its incredible natural beauty and many one-of-a-kind attractions. Simply put, a lot of folks fall in love with Brevard and Transylvania County once they get here. With all of this in mind, we place a high value on this area of marketing and have built and nurtured essential relationships with travel writers and the public relations team at Visit NC. Below you'll find a list of key media relations efforts from this past year, followed by editorial highlights.

FAM & Media Relations

- Hosted 10 FAM trips, some for a specific article or story and others, like Elizabeth Hudson, the editor-in-chief of *Our State Magazine*, to maintain a strong connection, with the hope of generating future articles.
- Supported many travel writers and editorial staff from afar by providing local insights, fresh story ideas, innovative angles, upcoming events, high-quality photos, and connections with locals who were willing to share their stories, traditions, and expertise.
- Attended various media missions:
 - Canadian media mission, hosted by Travel South and Visit NC
 - Media sessions during the NC 365 Tourism Conference, hosted by Visit NC
 - Virtual PechaKucha style presentation to Meredith Travel Marketing for story ideas for the *2023 NC Travel Guide*, coordinated by Visit NC
- Sent approximately 10 press releases covering newsworthy topics ranging from the launch of our 2023 Leave It Better campaign to introducing new staff members.
- Selectively connected with and provided support for influencers who we felt had the number of followers and type of messaging to provide high ROI for our resources.

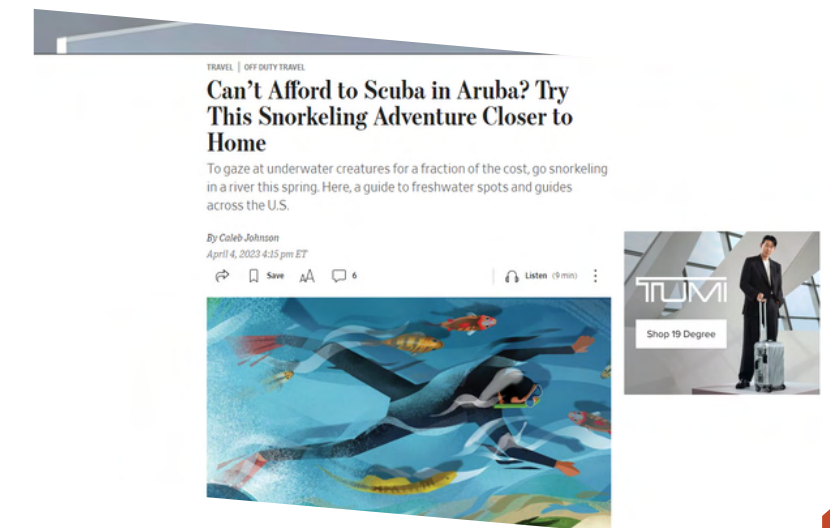
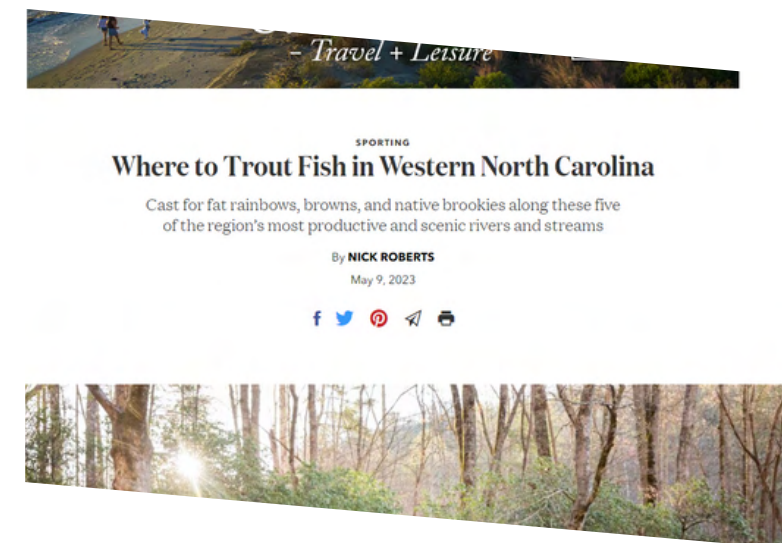
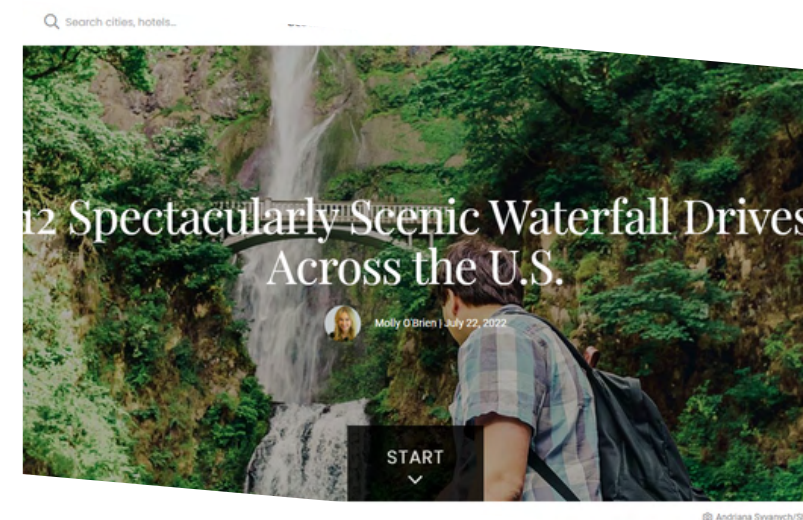


PUBLIC RELATIONS

The editorial features listed below were often produced with the help of our media relations and FAM tour efforts. Some articles derived inspiration from past relationships, others were meticulously crafted with our support and resources, and some surfaced unexpectedly.

FY23 Editorial Highlights

- *Fodors Travel* "12 Spectacularly Scenic Waterfall Drives Across the U.S."
- *The Morning Show* (Canada's equivalent of The Today Show): "North Carolina Week" - One of 3 NC destinations chosen to be highlighted.
- *Yahoo! News* Featured the Charlotte Observer Article: "Downtown vibes: 55 best towns in the Carolinas and what to do at each, according to you."
- boingboing.net: "Take A Trip to the White Squirrel Capital of the World."
- NCTripping.com: "25+ Beautiful Waterfalls near Brevard."
- *Well Defined*: "Discover Inner and Outer Wellbeing in North Carolina's Blue Ridge Mountains"
- *Good Housekeeping*: "25 Best Spa Weekend Getaways in Every Region of the U.S."
- *The Wall Street Journal*: "Can't Afford to Scuba in Aruba? Try This Snorkeling Adventure Closer to Home"
- *Our State Magazine* March Issue: "A Local's Guide to Brevard & Beyond"
- *Business View Magazine* March Issue: "Small Town, Big Adventure - How Brevard, NC Keeps its Cool"
- SMU Data Arts & Various Arts Publications: Top 40 Most Arts-Vibrant Communities in US (In Top 10 in South)
- *Garden & Gun* May Issue: "Where to Trout Fish in WNC" - Featured the Davidson River and Kevin Howell.
- *Our State Magazine* May Issue: "Grand Olde Station"
- *Winston-Salem Journal* May Issue: "The Little Mountain Town Of Brevard Has A Big Personality"
- *Charlotte Parent*: "PARENT CAMP: Why should kids have all the fun this summer?"
- WSPA: "Zip Trip" - Feature on Brevard with 26 live interviews and 3 pre-recorded stories, played throughout the day on Friday, the first day of White Squirrel Weekend, to highlight the excitement and draw day trippers.



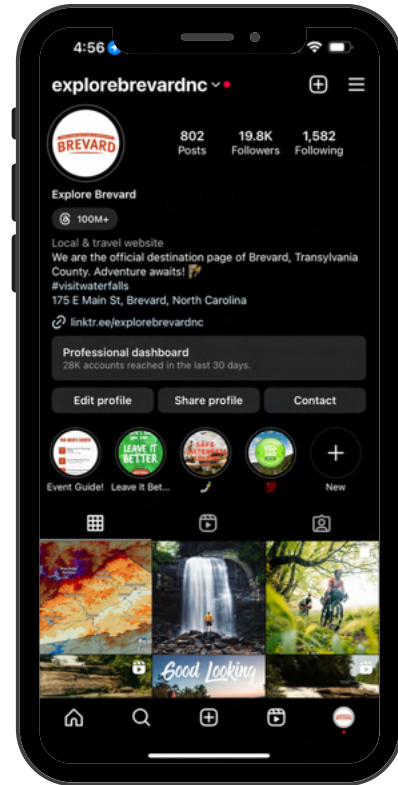
For a full list of articles and stories, visit explorebrevard.com/press/recent-stories.

ELECTRONIC & DIGITAL METRICS

INSTAGRAM

19,825

FOLLOWERS

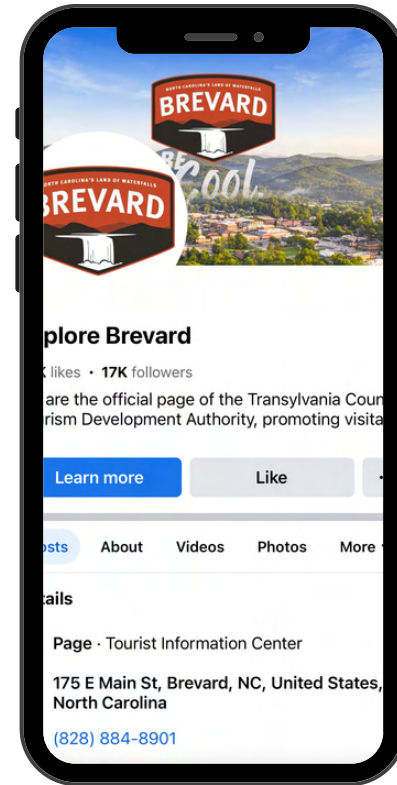


7%
OVER PRIOR
YEAR

FACEBOOK

17,471

FOLLOWERS



4.8%
OVER PRIOR
YEAR

E-NEWSLETTERS

26,953

SUBSCRIBERS

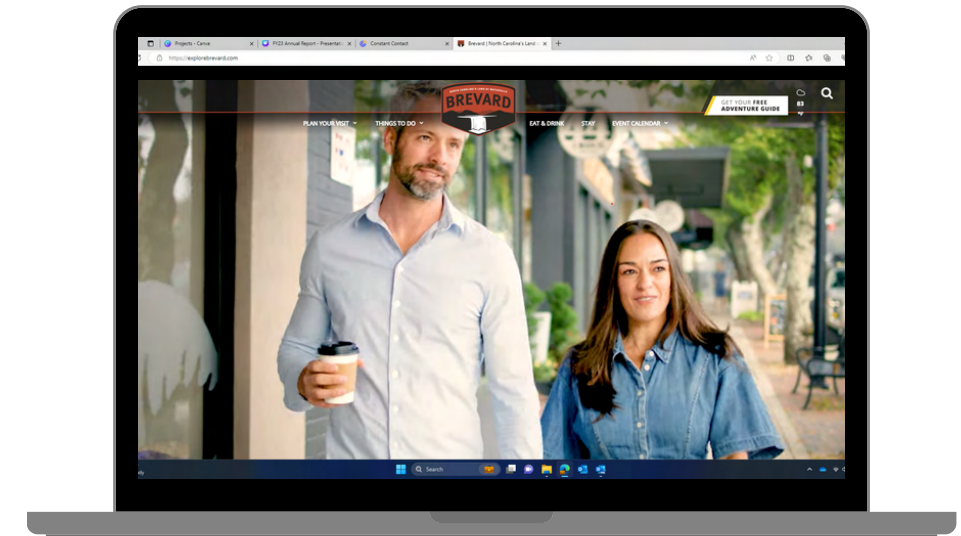


12.9%
OVER PRIOR
YEAR

EXPLOREBREVARD.COM

291,570

VISITORS



10.8%
OVER PRIOR
YEAR

SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a crucial part of Explore Brevard's larger marketing strategy. Social media is unique in that it provides the opportunity for engagement with visitors and potential visitors in real-time, allowing us to answer inquiries, offer recommendations, and foster a sense of community among our followers. Our key social media platforms for the year included Instagram, Facebook, and YouTube. The highly visual component of these platforms enabled us to showcase our destination's beauty and create compelling visual narratives, captivating and inspiring travelers near and far. Facebook and Instagram offer two types of posts: feed posts, which live on the account profile and show up in the newsfeed of followers, and stories, which disappear after 24 hours. Stories give us the ability to repost partner content, share time-sensitive information like events, and connect with followers by sharing their posts of the area. We used Instagram to connect with younger audiences using videos with trending audio and great imagery. Facebook was used to reach an older crowd, with longer captions and relevant links. YouTube allowed us to reach a wide range of demographics. We utilized organic tactics and paid advertising on social media platforms to reach more people. Hashtags involve tagging posts with keywords so they will show up to users in search and on the explore page to users with interests similar to the keywords. Boosted posts allowed us to put our content in front of more potential visitors, and we collaborated with Media One to create social media and digital ads, further spotlighting our area. Targeted advertising allowed us to reach very specific audiences, ensuring our message reached potential travelers who would enjoy the offerings in our area and would not have encountered our content otherwise. We used all platforms to direct people to helpful content on our website and ultimately to get them to visit. Additionally, we were able to communicate our sustainability initiatives Leave It Better and Be Waterfall Wise on all of our platforms, helping them reach a wide audience.



INSTAGRAM

METRICS

Reach for the Year- 1,699,863

Top Performing Post - 18,981 Views

The reel of the US Capital's Christmas tree leaving the forest was the top performing post for the year. It helped us promote Pisgah National Forest and remind of the incredible natural wonders found in our public lands.

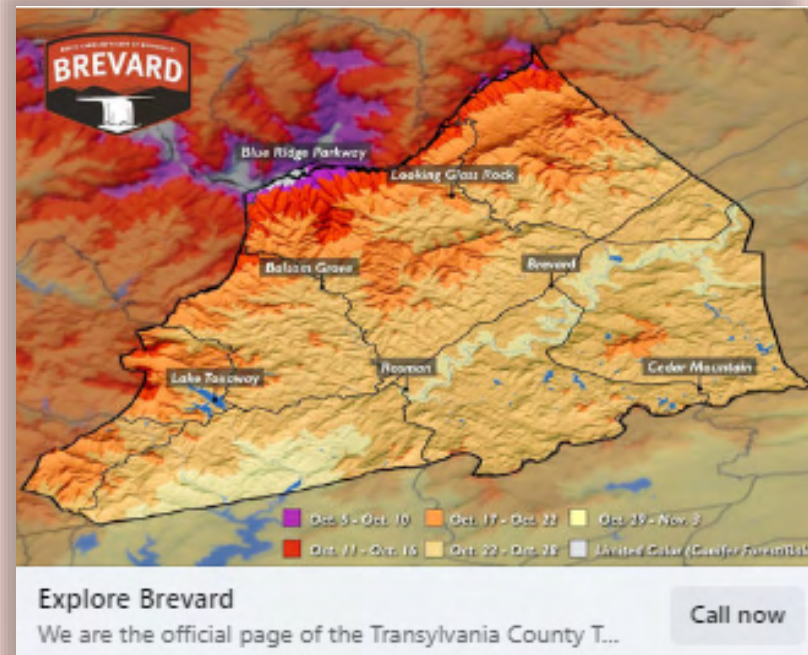
FACEBOOK

METRICS

Reach for the Year- 120,265

Top Performing Post - 14,079 Views

The image of the fall foliage map was the top performing post for the year. The gorgeous fall colors that are found here help to draw in thousands of leaf-lookers. The map provided a helpful tool to visitors as they made their fall plans.



YOUTUBE

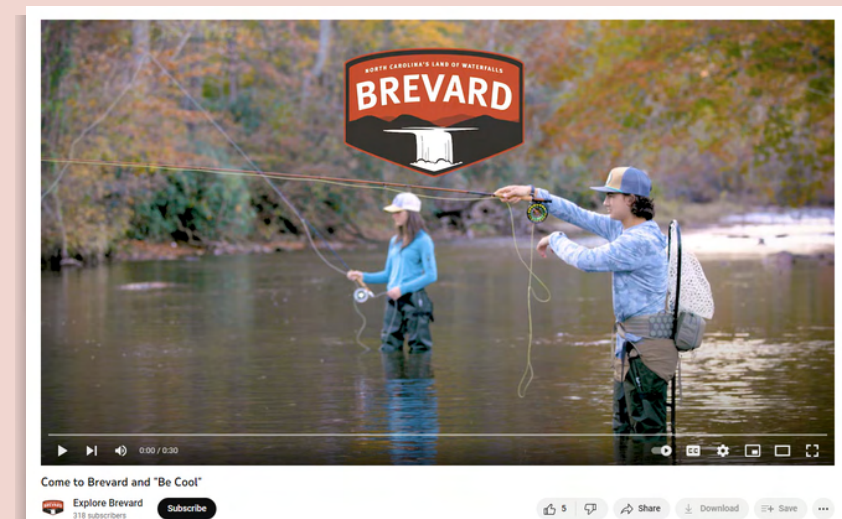
METRICS

Subscribers- 318

Reach for the Year- 93,643

Top Performing Post - 14,052 Views

The video inviting people to come to Brevard and "Be Cool" was the top performing video for the year. It highlighted many of the outdoor recreational activities the area offers, stunning waterfalls, vibrant music scene, and picturesque downtown.

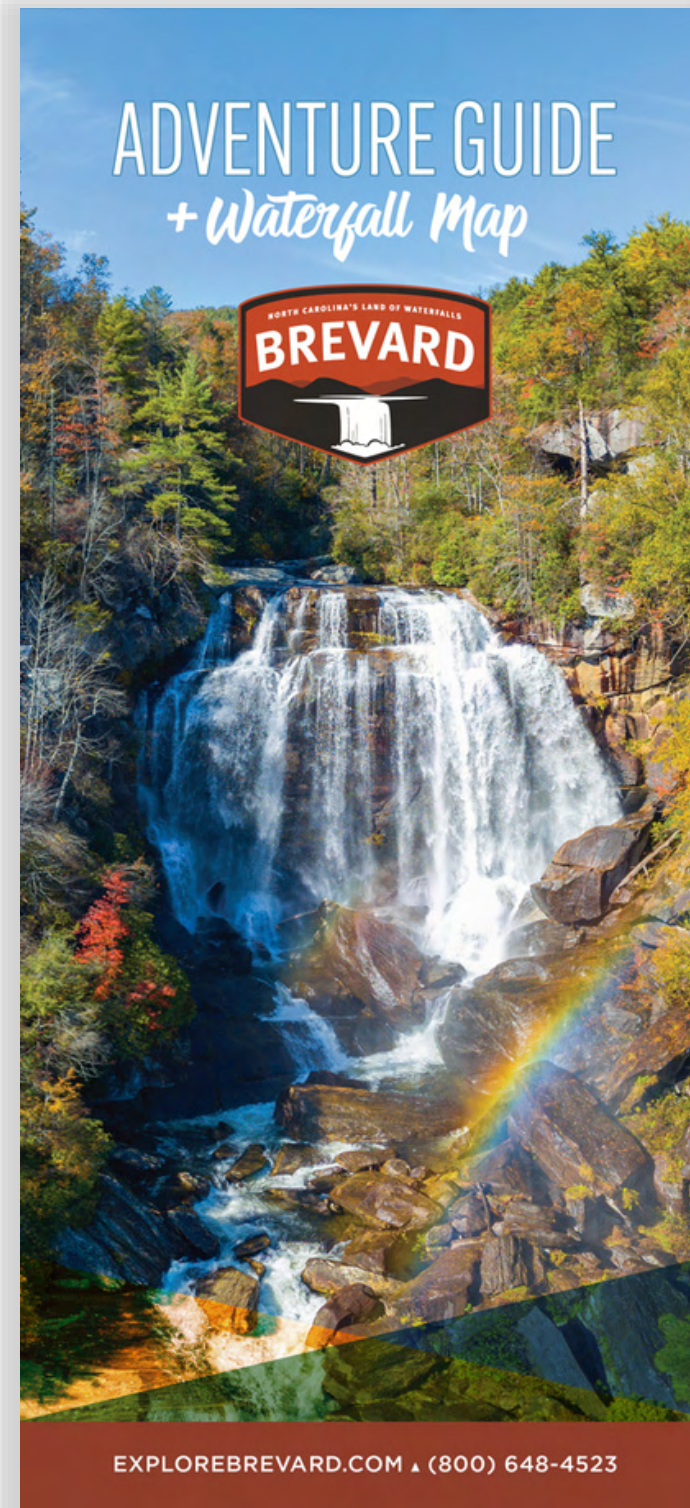


PRINT COLLATERAL

ADVENTURE GUIDE

Each year, the TCTDA produces an Adventure Guide, which serves as a signature piece for Explore Brevard marketing. The 52-page booklet highlights the area's natural assets, activities, adventures, arts and culture, museums, festivals, communities, music, food, breweries, and much more. It includes complete directories of accommodations, dining, camps, resources, and more, as well as a fold-out waterfall map and guide covering difficulty levels and directions.

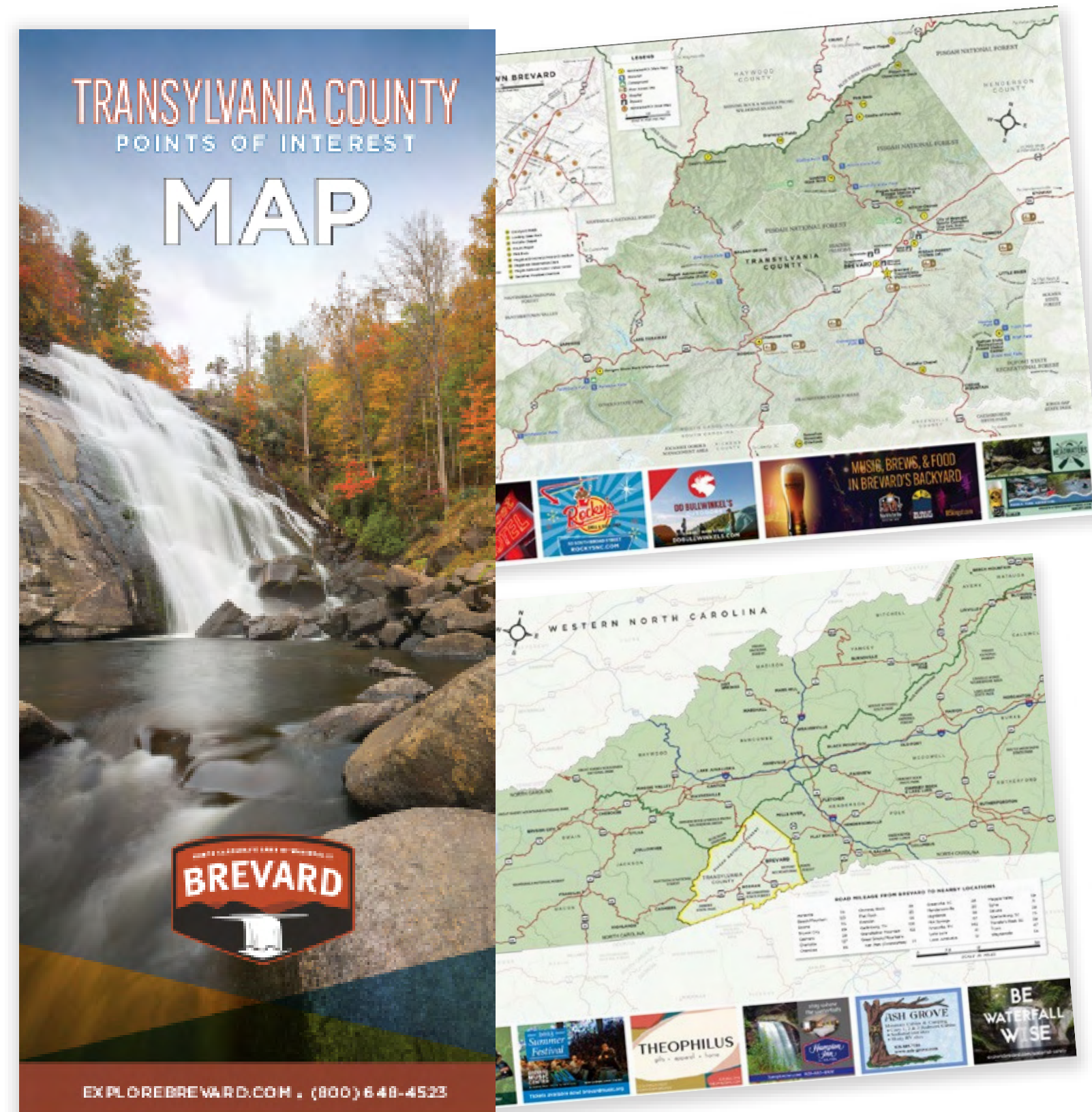
The Adventure Guide includes advertising from local partners. The primary purpose of this piece is to entice visitors to visit by showing them all that Transylvania County has to offer. This year, the TCTDA produced 90,000 Adventure Guides, which are delivered to strategic locations locally and in surrounding counties and are shipped to visitor centers throughout the region and individuals worldwide.



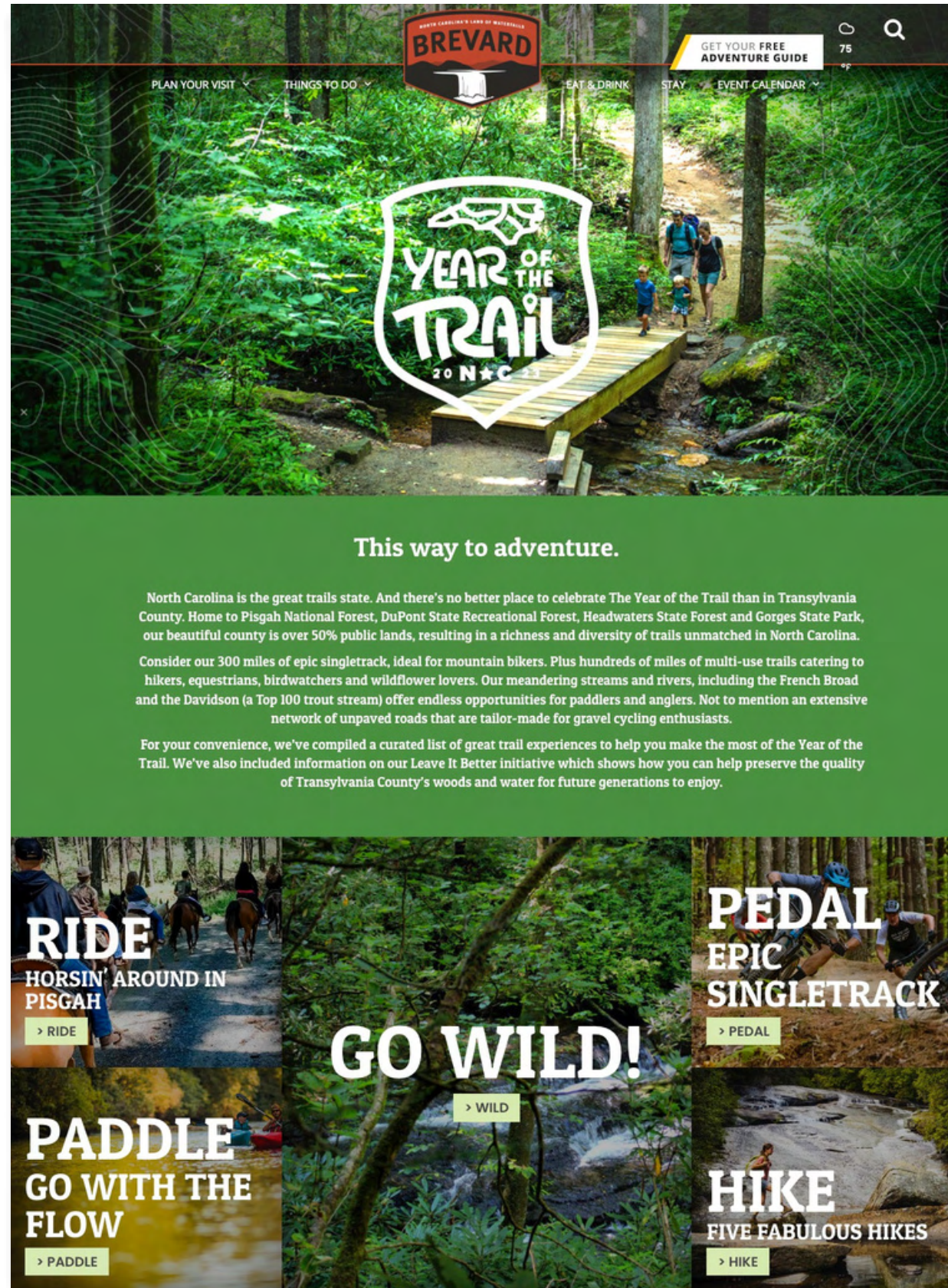
PRINT COLLATERAL

POINTS OF INTEREST MAP

The TCTDA produces a stand-alone map that features Transylvania County with over fifty points of interest, river put ins, and waterfalls on one side and a regional map centered on Transylvania County on the other. Advertisements from local partners are included as well. The goal is to get this informative map into the hands of visitors already in Transylvania County to help them navigate their time here and hopefully visit many of our varied points of interest. 50,000 POI maps are produced and distributed to strategic locations within Transylvania County.







2023 NC YEAR OF THE TRAIL



This year marks the state’s special, collaborative initiative, “North Carolina’s Year of the Trail.” With hundreds of miles of distinctive and memorable trails of all kinds, Explore Brevard launched its own Year of the Trail (YOT) Campaign, including a new YOT landing page on our website, featuring 13 blogs showcasing various kinds of trails that visitors can enjoy. A press release was created to announce this special campaign, and social media, along with digital media, was used to promote it. explorebrevard.com/2023-year-of-the-trail/

More Trails to Explore

 <p>Leave it Better As you venture forth into our woods and waterways during the Year of the Trail, we invite you to learn more about our “Leave it Better” program.</p>	 <p>Taps & Trails Brevard and Transylvania County serve up incredible mountain biking and amazing craft beers.</p>	 <p>Kid-Friendly Trails Transylvania County is an ideal vacation destination for families.</p>	 <p>Waterfalls Worth the Hike One of the great joys of hiking in Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Recreational Forest, and Gorges State Park is that there is often a “reward” for your effort...</p>
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We Love Our Trails

As proof of how much we love our trails, we’ve put our money where our mouth is. In just the last three years, the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority has provided \$300,000 in funding to local projects that support our forest lands and waterways through our Transylvania Always initiative.

In addition, the TCTDA has pledged \$1,000,000 in local matching funds toward the Ecusta Trail, which will provide almost 20 miles of a multi-use greenway connecting Brevard and Hendersonville along an old railway corridor. For more information about this exciting rail-to-trail project, visit www.ecustatrail.org.

IV. DESTINATION MANAGEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS

Transylvania Always (TA) is an initiative, fully funded and managed by the TCTDA, that blossomed in 2017, with a resolute mission to protect and preserve the precious natural resources and public lands that define the heart and soul of Transylvania County. Rooted in a deep love for our community and a commitment to its ecological well-being, TA has become a leader in ensuring our public lands remain vibrant and inviting for generations to come. The initiative owes much of its success to the collaborative efforts of a dynamic committee, made up of TCTDA board members and staff, outdoor recreation enthusiasts, and public land experts. United by a shared vision, the Transylvania Always Committee (TAC) directs TCTDA funding support to local partners to enable efforts that align with the TA mission. The TAC addresses a spectrum of conservation and sustainability priorities, from enhancing trails and recreational spaces to advocating for responsible land use practices. Be Waterfall Wise and Leave It Better are two of the most impactful campaigns carried out by TAC, underscoring the necessity of responsible outdoor enjoyment and environmental stewardship. Other significant efforts include the development of the Strategic Master Plan for the French Broad River Blueway and nominating and securing Transylvania County's designation as a "Top 100 Destination Sustainability Stories" by Green Destinations, a global organization focused on responsible tourism.

In FY23, the sustainability and enhancement of the French Broad River continued to be a priority for the TAC. MountainTrue's French Broad River Paddle Trail Manager, Jack Henderson, met quarterly with the committee on the French Broad River Blueway Plan. Projects seen as top priorities were wayfinding signage and kiosks along the river and a comprehensive website that offers maps, campsite bookings, safety notices, trip planning and navigational tools.

On the following pages you will find that the annual campaign pushes for Be Waterfall Wise and Leave It Better were the most extensive to date, as was TA's impact on sustainability through more than \$200,000 in funding for local projects.



TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS

BE WATERFALL WISE

The Be Waterfall Wise campaign continued this year, with updated messaging and signage. The TA Committee met with local land managers over the winter, resulting in the need for updated signage. Those land managers raised concerns about visitors with a first language other than English or Spanish. With this in mind, a new poster was developed indicating “WATERFALLS ARE DANGEROUS” in nine different languages. All of the posters are posted at strategic locations in our public lands and throughout the county at areas of high visitation. Additionally, the campaign received a push via social media, a press release, digital ads, and more, to educate people on how to be safe around waterfalls.

Social Media Launch



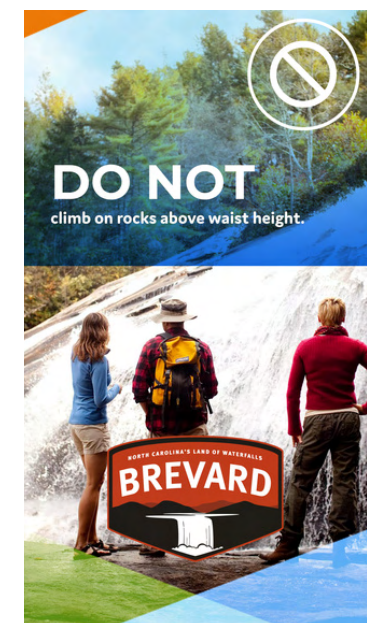
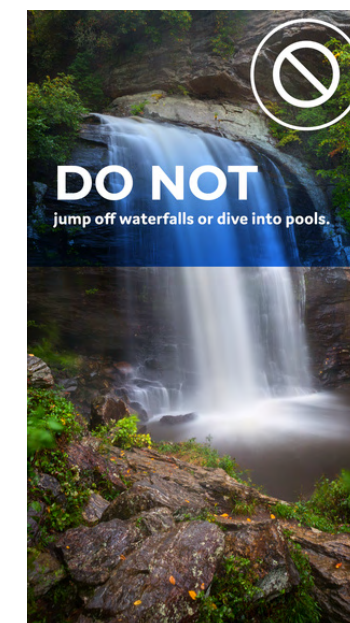
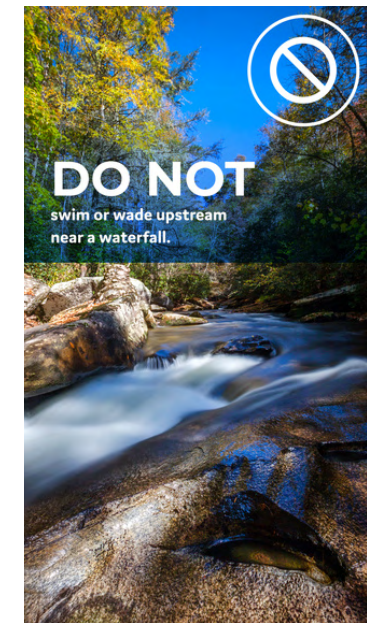
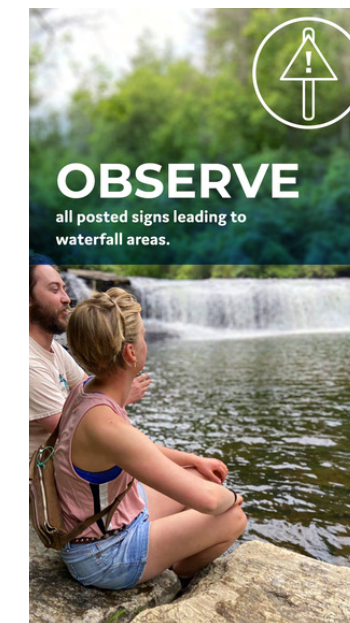
Be Waterfall Wise Poster



Spanish Translation Poster



Multi-Language Poster



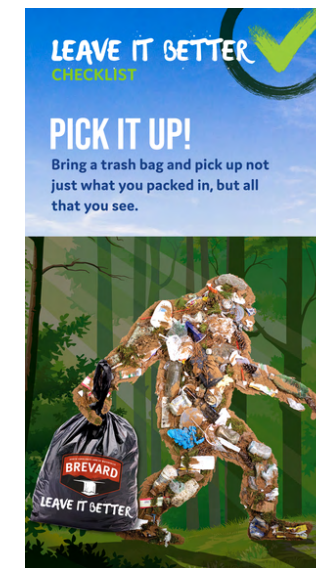
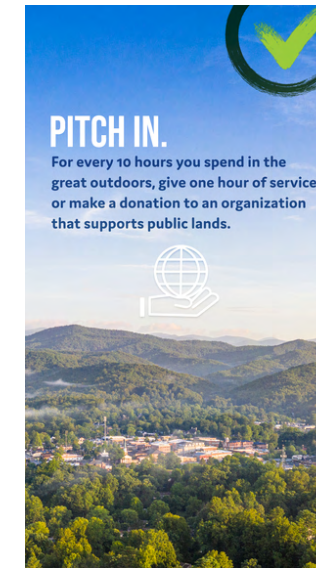
TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS

LEAVE IT BETTER

The Leave It Better campaign is a ground-breaking initiative that launched in 2020, under the stewardship of Transylvania Always. Committed to safeguarding our natural resources, this campaign has been nothing short of transformative. Since its inception, Leave It Better has stood as a testament to our collective dedication to preserving the beauty of Transylvania County. The unmistakable face of the campaign, Trashesquatch, inspired visitors to take responsibility for their impact on public lands. In addition to typical annual work like a press release, digital and print ads, e-blasts and blogs, 2023 campaign efforts included a radio interview with Trashesquatch, a new billboard in Pisgah Forest, window cling and life-size cardboard stand-up at the Visitor Center for selfies, a new QR code to promote his messaging, new posters, website pop-ups, social media posts, promotion through Comporium's local channel and free wi-fi service, and a broadsheet in the Transylvania Times. With the enthusiasm garnered by the campaign's success, we are excited that its momentum continues to grow.



Primary poster available in 8.5"x11" and 18"x24"



Social Media Launch

Transylvania Times Broadsheet Insert



Billboard on Hwy 64 coming out of PNF



7' Trashesquatch cutout at Brevard/Transylvania Visitor Center

GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS FUNDING

Projects that are aligned with the mission of the TCTDA's Transylvania Always initiative, which is to be a leader in the effort to take care of Transylvania County's natural resources in order to create a safe and enjoyable user experience and ensure that these assets are here for future generations. Funding for FY23 is listed below.

Q1

- **Friends of DuPont Forest: "DuPont State Forest Master Recreation Plan" \$49,000**
 - A supplement to the 2022-2023 North Carolina Budget for the same plan, the development and implementation of this master recreation plan are designed to address the environmental impact of exponential visitation growth for a trail system, facilities, and parking that were never originally designed for 1 million annual visitors.
- **Pisgah Area SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association): "Butter Gap Trail Project" \$45,000**
 - Currently identified as unsustainable by the US Forest Service (USFS) and negatively impacting the environment, Butter Gap Trail will be rebuilt as an environmentally sustainable trail alternative while decommissioning the existing trail through a collaborative effort between Pisgah Area SORBA and the USFS.



Q3

- **The Pisgah Conservancy: "Pisgah Project Day" \$10,000**
 - This day of collaborative volunteer efforts on Earth Day is designed to tackle a long list of improvement projects in the Pisgah Ranger District in a single day, with TCTDA funds earmarked for the creation of a new bridge and stream restoration on the Cat Gap Trail.
- **Pisgah Area SORBA (Southern Off-Road Bicycle Association): "Trail Counter Project" \$23,290**
 - In a collaborative effort to purchase and install trail counters in the Pisgah Ranger District, this first-of-its-kind quantitative gathering of hiking, biking, and equestrian traffic will help in maintenance and sustainability efforts as well as a future economic impact study of the benefits associated with the use of our local trails.
- **DuPont State Recreational Forest: "The Forest Passport Program" \$10,000**
 - The program is aimed at educating hikers of all ages about forestry and environmental best practices. Six information displays along the waterfall corridor will teach specific topics, with a corresponding metal rubbing token to capture in the hiker's free "passport" and be kept as an educational souvenir.



GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TRANSYLVANIA ALWAYS FUNDING CONTINUED

Q4

- **Friends of DuPont Forest: “Mini Excavator” \$17,500**

- In a joint effort with Henderson County’s TDA, the purchase of this Kubota allows staff at DuPont State Recreational Forest to respond to trail maintenance issues, downed trees, ongoing erosion, and other repairs of their heavily used trail system quickly and effectively by 1.2 million visitors annually, thus providing a safer and better visitor experience.

- **Friends of Pisgah Collective: “Transylvania County Kids’ Guidebook” \$1,500**

- A child-designed booklet designed to introduce our youngest visitors to the special aspects of the area through teaching tools, activities, and how to responsibly engage with our public lands. Project funded by RootEd with TCTDA assistance in print production.

- **Southern Highlands Reserve: “Green-Light the Greenhouse” \$50,000**

- Construction of an updated greenhouse that doubles current capacity while adding cost- and energy-efficient technology, thus greatly assisting the U.S. Forest Service through the propagation of native species (like red spruce trees) while ultimately securing a legacy of healthy public lands for our region. (Total grant allocation is equally split between Transylvania Always and Destination Infrastructure funding pathways.)

Total FY23 funding: \$206,290



GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

DESTINATION INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING

Projects that make a substantial impact on the tourism infrastructure of the destination, with cycling, downtown Brevard, entryways to our public lands, arts, music, and outlying communities being identified as priorities. These are typically brick and mortar projects. Funding for FY23 is listed below.

Q4

- **City of Brevard: “Downtown Streetscape Improvements” Initiative \$175,000**
 - Designed to enhance the attractiveness, safety, and accessibility of downtown sidewalks along Main Street between Caldwell and Gaston streets.
- **Southern Highlands Reserve: “Green-Light the Greenhouse” \$50,000**
 - Construction of an updated greenhouse that doubles current capacity while adding cost- and energy-efficient technology, thus greatly assisting the U.S. Forest Service through the propagation of native species (like red spruce trees) while ultimately securing a legacy of healthy public lands for our region. (Total grant allocation is equally split between Transylvania Always and Destination Infrastructure funding pathways.)
- **Heart of Brevard: “Heart of Progress/Downtown Construction Support” \$4,900**
 - Provides foundational support to downtown businesses during the infrastructure project to lessen its impact on business revenue while providing communication that enhances the experience of visitors and locals alike.



Total FY23 funding: \$229,900

PLEASE PARDON OUR MESS!

HEART OF PROGRESS
The multi-phase project kicked off in March 2023 and will improve both East and West Main Streets. The project includes maintenance and upgrade of critical infrastructure, removal and replacement of invasive trees, sidewalk reconstruction, addition of ADA curb ramps, crosswalk painting and repaving.

WATCH US GROW
We are excited that this project will incorporate native shrubs and plants, along with the following trees into the final design:
• American Linden
• Sweetbay Magnolia
• American Yellowwood
• White Fringetree

TEMPORARY SIDEWALK CLOSURES BEGINNING: APRIL 3, 2023

SUBSTANTIAL COMPLETION: MAY 25, 2023

LANDSCAPING COMPLETION: JUNE 30, 2023

MAIN ST. REPAVING: LATE SUMMER 2023

THANKS FOR VISITING DOWNTOWN BREVARD AND SUPPORTING OUR LOCAL BUSINESSES!
Scan the QR code to learn more information on the streetscape project, view our 2023 events and stay up to date on all things downtown!

www.brevardnc.org @heartofbrevard

GRANT & PROJECT FUNDING

TOURISM MARKETING FUNDING

Projects that are designed to generate overnight visitation and/or add significant value to the visitor experience. Strong preference is given to efforts that impact traditionally slower periods of visitation. These projects are often events but can also be programs or other initiatives. Funding for FY23 is listed below.

Q1

- Transylvania County Historical Society: "McGaha Chapel Brochure" \$312
- Friends of Gorges State Park: "Mountain Monarch Festival" \$2,500
- Transylvania County Parks & Recreation: "Christmas in the Park" \$4,999
- Friends of Silvermont: "Silvermont Pumpkin Fest" \$3,000



Q2

- Transylvania Heritage Museum: "Aluminum Christmas Tree Display" \$1,500
- Rotary Club of Pisgah Forest: "Assault on the Carolinas" \$3,500
- Transylvania County Historical Society: "Civil War Trails Membership" \$200



Q3

- Blue Ridge Bicycle Club: "2023 WNC Flyer" \$2,000
- Porsche Club of America - Appalachian Region: "2023 Luft Wasser Porsche Show" \$900
- Veterans History Museum of the Carolinas: "A Walk Through History" \$4,999
- Heart of Brevard: "2023 Marketing and Programming" \$10,000



Q4

- Friends of Gorges State Park: "Mountain Monarch Festival" \$3,000
- Transylvania Heritage Museum: "Appalachian Folk Festival" \$4,700
- Conserving Carolinas: "RiverFest 2023" \$4,450

A Walk Through History
Hear WWII Historians Nov. 3 & WWII Veterans Nov. 4

 Author Alex Kershaw D-Day Normandy	 ALEX KERSHAW THE FIRST WAVE	 George Sattos LST Motor Machinist, D-Day
 Author Jonathan Jordan Battle of the Bulge	 Brothers Rivals Victors	 Ed Cottrell, P-47 Pilot Battle of the Bulge
 Author James Scott The Doolittle Raid	 TARGET TOKYO	 Joe Cooper, US Navy Kamikaze Survivor

This event made possible by a grant from:

BREVARD TOURISM

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

A Walk Through History
Nov. 3-4, 2023 (1 1/2 days)
55 E Jordan Street, Brevard NC 28712
Registration: \$125
Group rates: 828-506-6671

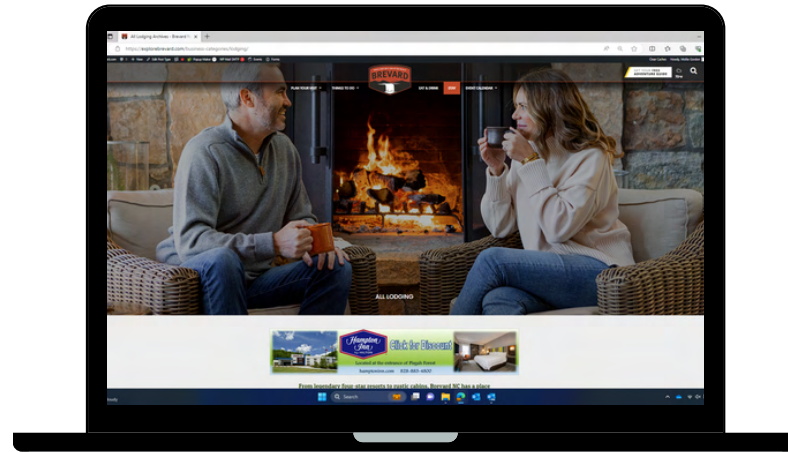
Scan this code to learn more

Total FY23 funding: \$46,060

TOURISM PARTNER SUPPORT

In FY23, our commitment to supporting our valued tourism partners has been unwavering. Through a range of strategic initiatives, we have empowered our partners to thrive and reach new heights. Below are examples of this work in FY23.

WEBSITE ADS



Partners benefited from extensive exposure through paid advertisements on the Explore Brevard website, ensuring maximum visibility to our online audience. Strategic page placements were chosen to increase effectiveness. We offered 39 ads spots with 15 participating partners.

ADVENTURE GUIDE

We had 28 partners secure ad spots in our 2023 Adventure Guide, which had a print run of 90,000. This gave their businesses broad exposure.



SPOTLIGHTS



Newsletter content provided by Nero Coffee Hikes
Love hiking and coffee? You need to know about Nero Coffee Hikes.

**Nero Coffee Hikes
Spotlight**



Newsletter content provided by Brevard Music Center
"Gather your friends and family in the serene natural beauty of our campus, sit amongst fellow music lovers in our open-air auditorium or the new Parker Concert Hall, or bring a

**Brevard Music Center
Spotlight**



Newsletter content provided by D.D. Bullwinkel's Outdoors
Meet Brevard's Premier Outdoor Retailer

**D.D. Bullwinkel's Outdoors
Spotlight**

POINTS OF INTEREST AND REGIONAL MAP

We had nine partners secure ad spots in our 2023 Points of Interest and Regional Map, which had a print run of 50,000. This gave their businesses exposure to visitors already in the area.



Partners enjoyed the spotlight with paid features sent to almost 27,000 subscribers, showcasing their unique offerings and attracting an enthusiastic audience. Seven spotlights were distributed in FY23, highlighting six partners and our "Be Cool Winter Getaway Sweepstakes."

TOURISM PARTNER SUPPORT

TOURISM PARTNER NEWSLETTER



Partners harnessed the power of our newsletter to disseminate updates and important news, fostering direct connections with other tourism partners. Our newsletter was sent out monthly to over 500 local partners to keep them updated on TCTDA efforts and provide information and other tools to support their marketing and operations.

SWEEPSTAKES



Find Your Chill This Winter in Brevard

Brevard in winter is a truly magical place. Acres of forest, miles of trails, and the spectacular waterfalls that make this such an unforgettable place, stay open year-round and are ready for adventure in any season. And while the temperatures may drop, Brevard and Transylvania really warm up with delicious dining, great shopping, live music, and countless opportunities to relax and enjoy a warm fire and gorgeous view with the people you love. And what better way to experience it all than to enter our Brevard "BeCool" Giveaway.

[Enter to Win!](#)

The "BeCool" Giveaway is open for entries January 6 - January 25, 2023. Automated, anonymous drawing will take place January 31, 2023 and winner will be notified.

The Winner Receives:

- Two nights' accommodations for two at Ash Grove Mountain Cabins and Camping.
- 2-hour private instruction for two people at Mud Dabber's Pottery. (Winner can select throwing on the potter's wheel or hand-building.) Glaze and fire included.
- \$50 gift card for the Tasty Weasel Taproom at Oskar Blues Brewery and a gift basket full of Oskar Blues swag.
- \$500 VISA gift card for meals and local retail.

Ash Grove Mountain Cabins and Camping
Tucked into a forested mountainside of 14 acres, [Ash Grove](#) provides a year-round escape to nature's tranquility. Your cozy cabin in the woods comes with a large outdoor fire pit for s'mores, a full kitchen for making hot chocolate, a gas fireplace to keep the home fires burning, and so much more!

Mud Dabbers Pottery of Brevard
Roll up your sleeves for a 2-hour private instruction for 2 people either throwing on the potter's wheel or hand-building by [Mud Dabbers Pottery](#) owner and artist, John Dodson, in their working studio. After you select from their custom glazes and head home, John will glaze and fire your piece. In 2-3 weeks' time, you will receive by mail your one-of-a-kind memento of your sweepstakes adventure!

Oskar Blues' Tasty Weasel Taproom
This round is on us! Enjoy your \$50 gift card for the [Tasty Weasel Taproom](#) at Oskar Blues and a gift basket full of Oskar Blues swag to make you look like their #1 fan!

Dine Out & Shop Around
Winners will receive a \$500 VISA gift card that can be used for dining and shopping while enjoying their stay.

Our innovative sweepstakes campaigns continued to promote participating partners, driving interest and encouraging visitors to explore all that Transylvania County has to offer. In a thrilling three-week run, our "Be Cool Winter Getaway Sweepstakes" generated remarkable enthusiasm, accumulating an impressive 6,047 entries, double that of previous sweepstakes. This captivating campaign showcased three participating partners, attracting eager participants and driving interest in Transylvania County as a top winter destination. We are proud to have provided this valuable platform for our partners, fostering engagement and excitement within the community and throughout various markets.

CO-OP ADS



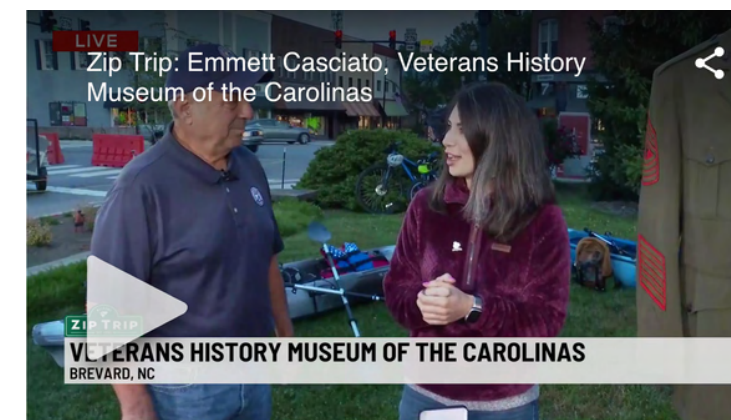
Co-op ad in WNC Magazine



Co-op ad in The Laurel of Asheville

Our co-op ad offerings in five publications provided partners with cost-effective marketing opportunities, amplifying their presence in key markets. We ran 10 co-op ads, offering 30 ad opportunities to 10 participating partners.

MEDIA EXPOSURE



We work with our partners to get them media exposure for their businesses whenever possible. A great example is the "Zip Trip" that appeared on WSPA, featuring 26 live interview segments and three pre-recorded stories about Brevard. We also highlight partners in editorial pieces and FAM tours.

V. ORGANIZATIONAL UPDATES



FINANCIAL SUMMARY

The prior two years of unprecedented increases in occupancy tax proceeds significantly impacted the budgeting mindset and goals and objectives for FY23. There was an assumed 5% increase in occupancy tax proceeds, which was considered conservative based on the more than 100% growth that had occurred over the prior two years. Expenditures were budgeted aggressively, with a desire to begin spending down the fund balance that had accumulated during that recent growth.

As covered earlier, as the year progressed, it became clear that the inevitable drop off from the pandemic era's outdoor-focused travel boon had occurred and revenues would finish below FY22 levels. The Board decided not to reduce expenditures to match this revenue shortfall, and in fact, increased local project funding to fund two requests that were deemed to have significant return on investment to the local tourism industry. With year-end expenditures exceeding year-end revenues, the fund balance, which saw a considerable accumulation of funds over the prior two years, would be utilized. This would move the fund balance closer to pre-pandemic levels.

Below are financial highlights for FY23.

REVENUES

- Total revenues (\$2,080,549) were even with prior year
- Occupancy tax proceeds (\$1,971,957) were down 4% from prior year (and up 6% over FY21)
- The TCTDA's fund balance was placed in an interest-bearing account resulting in \$75,345 of revenue

EXPENDITURES

- Total expenditures (\$2,332,047) were up 69% over prior year
- Marketing plan expenditures (\$1,333,964) were up 48% over prior year
- Non-marketing expenditures* (\$530,250) were up 134% over prior year

*Non-marketing expenditures are defined as funding of local grants and projects, as well as other program work related to the Transylvania Always and Destination Infrastructure initiatives.

FUND BALANCE

- The year began with a fund balance of \$1,969,331 with \$1,000,000 in funds pledged to the development of the Ecusta Trail
- \$251,498 from the fund balance was utilized in FY23, leaving a year-end fund balance of \$1,717,833
- There continues to be \$1,000,000 in funds pledged to the Ecusta Trail, with \$250,000 of those funds included in the FY24 budget

ORGANIZATIONAL SUMMARY

The past year and a half has been the most active period for the TCTDA in the entity's history. The long-standing contract with the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce (BTC) was adjusted to continue to cover visitor center operations and lease of office and visitor center space, but no longer included the provision of administrative and operational services to run the day-to-day operations of the organization. That shifted to having TCTDA staff who report to the TCTDA Board of Directors and are employed through Transylvania County. This period also included the passing of Transylvania County Resolution #35 – 2021 (TCR 35-21), which is the enabling legislation for the TCTDA and includes the foundational structure and protocols that dictate the makeup of the Board, financial and operational procedures, total number of staff members, and more.

FY23 was a bit of a learning curve for the Board and staff as adjustments were made to follow many new requirements. From contract protocols to new office space to the structure of board meetings, there was a lot of change. It is worth noting that in some cases, adjustments were made to TCR 35-21 to create a more practical fit with the needs of the TCTDA.

In the midst of all of this change, the TCTDA had the second-highest level of visitation (based on occupancy tax proceeds) in the history of Transylvania County. It also took major strides in its efforts to focus more resources on the management of the destination, as opposed to the marketing of it. As covered in this report, almost \$500,000 in local project funding was provided in FY23, from local events to projects supporting the infrastructure of the destination to projects enabling sustainable natural resources, the most ever in the TCTDA's history by a wide margin. Important messaging efforts like Leave It Better and Be Waterfall Wise were renewed and designed to reach an even larger audience than in prior years.

All of this could not have been accomplished without a dynamic and dedicated staff. Executive Director Clark Lovelace, Operations and Outreach Specialist Virginia Watkins, and new Marketing and Communication Specialist Mollie Gordon have done great work and are poised to do it again for the new fiscal year. Chair Layton Parker played a key role in the transition the organization made over the last year and a half, spending a great deal of time involving and keeping the board informed, interacting with County staff and BTC leaders, and supporting TCTDA staff, all while focusing on what is truly best for the future of tourism and our community. Looking ahead, Mr. Parker will be handing the Board of Director Chair reigns over to Vice Chair Dee Dee Perkins in 2024. The TCTDA Board of Directors is optimistic that the growth and great strides that have been made over the past year have set the organization and tourism industry in Transylvania County on a successful path for many years to come.

