



BE  
Cool

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
FISCAL YEAR 2024 | 1st QUARTER MARKETING REPORT



# Q1-JULY - SEPTEMBER 2023

## MARKETING OVERVIEW

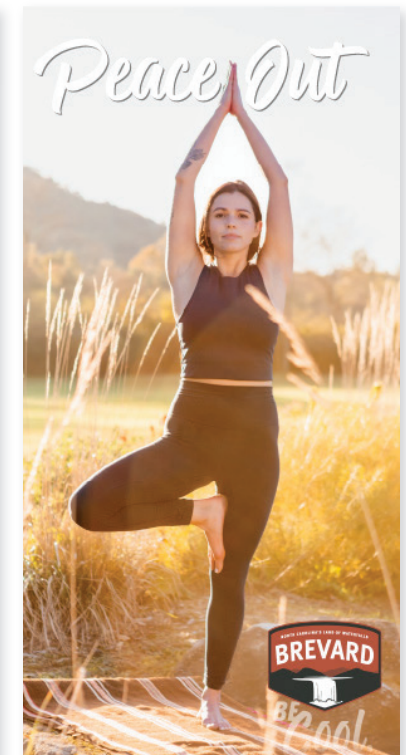
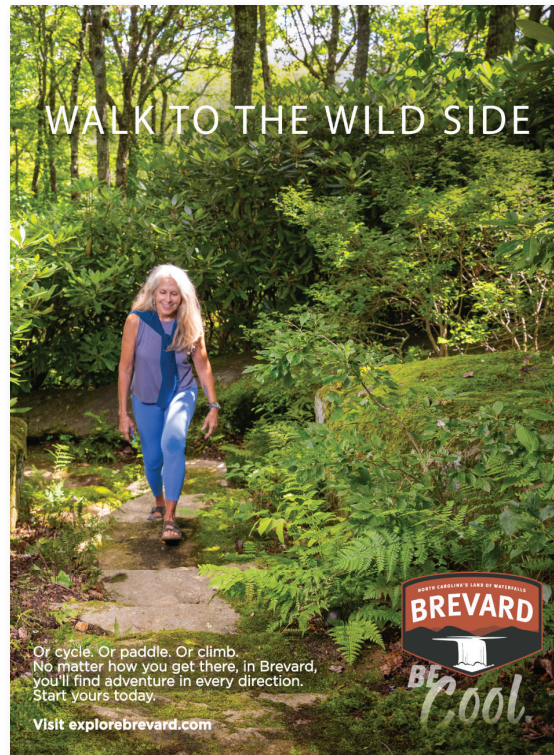
As TCTDA began Fiscal Year 2024, first-quarter marketing strategies and tactics were increasingly aimed at building local awareness for in-market visitors, along with regional and national markets where Brevard and Transylvania are recognized as unique destinations for nature, adventure, authentic small-town charm, and culture.

Explore Brevard's late summer and fall messaging and media tactics shifted more toward niche adventurers (singles and groups), a slightly older demographic, and couples as creative focused on seasonal adventure, culture, and lifestyle opportunities.

Q1 marketing strategies included the following:

- Continued focus on mid-week and extended-stay opportunities, especially targeted to those who can work remotely.
- Focused on fly and drive markets, including those within 200-mile radius
- Continued recapture of Brevard's iconic brand imagery: waterfalls, rivers, trails, downtown, festivals, and attractions
- New brand positions: wellness, romance, sustainability, and authentic small town.
- Expanded broadcast to new SE markets; A/B testing with creative messaging
- Strengthened digital campaigns by broadening creative messages and distribution across platforms and new targets. Development of strong, responsive seasonal campaigns teeing up advance interest in upcoming shoulder seasons.

- Continued Year of the Trail Campaign
- Continued and enhanced Leave it Better and Be Waterfall Wise campaigns in support of Transylvania Always
- Began planning 2024 Adventure Guide/Map
- Developed new 2024 Partner Marketing Program
- Began process and planning for new Explore Brevard website
- Continue to position TCTDA for new earned media/PR opportunities through Media Missions, FAM Tours, pitches and queries.



## ADVERTISING: DIGITAL



Explore Brevard aimed new fall messaging at closer geographic markets to drive traffic with higher likelihood of seasonal visitation to the website, our partners, and the community. The late summer and fall campaigns highlighted adventure opportunities, downtown, arts and culture, accessibility, nature, festivals, music, breweries, and more. The campaign targeted new customers based on their demographics, geography, habits, and interests.

Digital advertising utilized refreshed, seasonal creative content across multiple platforms, including digital display ads, native ads, keyword search, pre-roll, Facebook, geofencing, and more. These ads retarget those already familiar with the brand while prospecting for new viewers. Other 1st Quarter digital outlets included YouTube, Blue Ridge Parkway Association, Blue Ridge Outdoors, Romantic Asheville, Single Tracks, Pink Bikes, AccuWeather, Garden & Gun, Our State featured e-newsletters, and various Visit NC partner co-op digital programs.

Facebook advertising targeted social media audiences across designated point-of-origin areas. (NC, SC, AL, FL, OH, VA, TN, GA, TX, Canada, and more.) This tactic proved highly successful in driving qualified traffic to the website for more information. For the quarter, Facebook ads had 495,470 impressions and resulted in 5,287 clicks (an increase of 26%) through to the Explore Brevard website.



## ADVERTISING: PRINT

With greater focus on digital marketing opportunities, only a handful of print placements were utilized to reach expanded visitor markets during the first quarter. Explore Brevard advertised in AAA Go, the Blue Ridge Parkway Guide, and Blue Ridge Outdoors.



Kick back and enjoy the cool temperatures and magical colors of autumn in the Land of Waterfalls.



**MUD DABBER'S POTTERY**  
Discover the largest selection of local pottery, representing the work of over 25 artists. In a historic general store just south of Brevard. Open year-round.

[MUDDABBERS.COM](http://MUDDABBERS.COM)  
(828)864-5131

Mud Dabber's Pottery of Brevard  
Since 1989



**NERO COFFEE HIKES**  
Love hiking and coffee? Nero Coffee Hikes offers both private guided and group tours to waterfalls in and around Transylvania County.

[NEROCOFFEE.ORG](http://NEROCOFFEE.ORG)  
(678) 967-9377



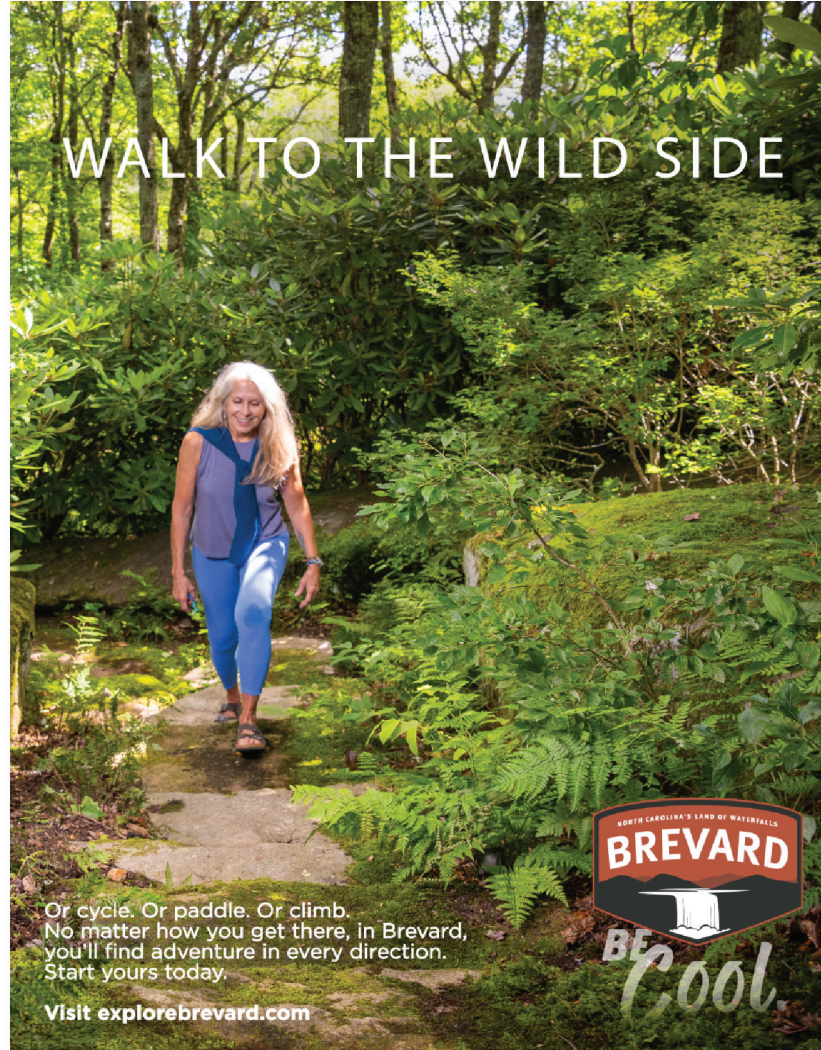


**MERAKI ESCAPE**  
Enjoy this romantic mountain getaway and charming pet-friendly cabins with hot tubs, fireplaces, covered porches, exceptional amenities and on-site activities with three waterfalls on premises.

[MERAKIESCAPE.COM](http://MERAKIESCAPE.COM)  
(828) 463-7440




[explorebrevard.com](http://explorebrevard.com) | 800.648.4523



# WALK TO THE WILD SIDE

Or cycle. Or paddle. Or climb. No matter how you get there, in Brevard, you'll find adventure in every direction. Start yours today.

Visit [explorebrevard.com](http://explorebrevard.com)





## ADVERTISING: TV/VIDEO



### ADVERTISING: TV & VIDEO

Explore Brevard's :30 second "Be Cool" and "Heart of Adventure" TV spots began running in several markets, including Raleigh, Charlotte, Atlanta, Jacksonville, Charleston, Nashville and Orlando. Atlanta continues to generate significant metrics overall. Film and various videos were utilized in You Tube and pre-roll platforms as well as through social media advertising.





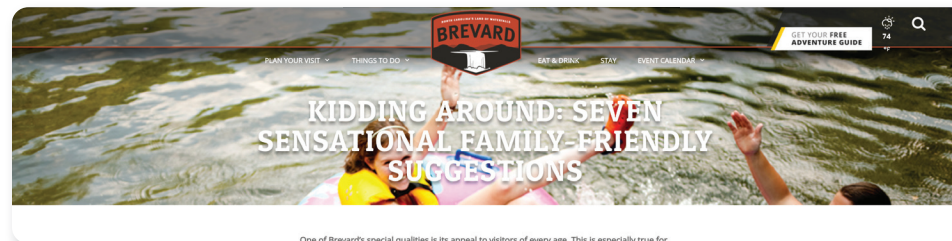
# E-BLASTS & BLOGS

## E-BLASTS

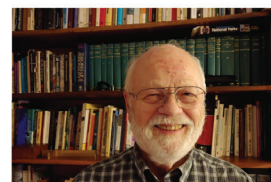
First Quarter FY 24, three **Field Notes** were distributed to 26,106 opt-in subscribers. In July, “Kidding Around: Seven Sensational Family-Friendly Suggestions” highlighted a range of activities especially targeted families with children. August’s Field Notes featured a forest therapy interview focused on “Forest Bathing, Renewal, and Rejuvenation through Nature.” In September, “The Legacy of Indigenous People in Transylvania County” shared the story of the Cherokee and more as early inhabitants in our area.

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.

In August, a special Partner Marketing Program **Spotlight** featured SylvanSport. This sponsored E- Newsletter was read by 8,501 viewers.



As a part of North Carolina's Year of the Trail celebration, "Wellness and Trails" is the theme for August. In conjunction with that theme, this month's blog is about Forest Bathing, which has become a popular activity for folks who love the outdoors. If you're new to the concept, you'll enjoy this fascinating interview we conducted with Dr. Mattie Decker, a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide, mindfulness teacher and a retired professor of education.



North Carolina has the largest population of Indigenous people east of the Mississippi River and the eighth largest Indigenous population in the United States. With their rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories, Indigenous people have made important contributions to our state and country. As we celebrate North Carolina's "Year of the Trail," we're delighted to share an interview we had with Mattie Decker, whose fascinating and varied life experiences have contributed to his knowledge and insights about Indigenous cultures, specifically the Cherokee in Transylvania County.

Mattie grew up in Quantz Brook with Cherokee neighbors, attending their schools and participating in graduation from Brevard High School and went on to earn a B.A., Ed. D., Ph.D., and EdD, Analytical Psychology degrees from multiple institutions, including Berea College, Southern Seminary and the U.S. Army Institute of Health, Health & Behavior Research Institute. He served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Navy, where he led the primary emergency team for NAM's recovery program (ensuring personnel plus stress as a benefit). Later, he taught counseling and history at a theological seminary in Zurich for more than two decades. In addition to publishing numerous articles on history, church history, and psychology, he has written extensively about Transylvania County and Cherokee history. Most notably, Mattie is the author of Seven Cherokee Myths: Creation, Fire, the Pitman's Mill, the Nurses of 1918, the Family, Universal Suffering, and Communal Obligation.

### Field Notes

BY THE ADVENTURIST  
explorebrevard.com



#### Forest Bathing: Renewal and Rejuvenation through Nature

As a part of North Carolina's Year of the Trail celebration, "Wellness and Trails" is the theme for August. In conjunction with that theme, this month's blog is about Forest Bathing, which has become a popular activity for folks who love the outdoors. If you're new to the concept, you'll enjoy this fascinating interview we conducted with Dr. Mattie Decker, a certified Nature and Forest Therapy Guide, mindfulness teacher and a retired professor of education.

#### Mattie, tell us a little about yourself.

Dr. Mattie Decker is a retired professor of psychology, currently a part-time professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has a Ph.D. in Analytical Psychology from the University of Zurich, Switzerland, and a M.A. in Analytical Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has also completed his M.A. in Analytical Psychology from the University of North Carolina at Charlotte. He has been a part-time professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for over 10 years. He has also been a part-time professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for over 10 years. He has also been a part-time professor at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte for over 10 years.

#### What is forest bathing and how long has it been around?

Forest bathing is a practice that involves immersing oneself in a forest environment to promote physical, mental, and emotional well-being. It is a form of forest therapy that has been practiced for centuries. The practice is based on the idea that being in nature can have a positive impact on one's health and well-being. It is a form of forest therapy that has been practiced for centuries. The practice is based on the idea that being in nature can have a positive impact on one's health and well-being. It is a form of forest therapy that has been practiced for centuries.

### Field Notes

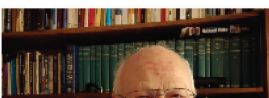
BY THE ADVENTURIST  
explorebrevard.com



#### The Legacy of Indigenous People in Transylvania County

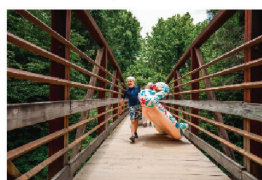
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### Field Notes

BY THE ADVENTURIST  
explorebrevard.com



#### Kidding Around: Seven Sensational Family-Friendly Suggestions

One of Brevard's special qualities is its appeal to visitors of every age. This is especially true for kids. Offering a list of seven fun things to do in the outdoors is a great way to experience the beauty and wonder of our area. Whether you're looking for a fun activity for your family or a new place to explore, we've got you covered. Here are seven sensational family-friendly suggestions for your next outdoor adventure.

1. Forest Discovery Center at the Death of Fireway  
This fascinating history center dedicated to the history of forest conservation and preservation is a must-visit for anyone interested in the outdoors. The center features a variety of exhibits, including a large-scale model of a forest fire and a collection of historical artifacts. It is a great place to learn about the importance of forest conservation and the impact of fire on our environment.



## BLOGS

Three **Blogs** were posted on explorebrevard.com in the first quarter. Each Blog captured Field Notes content for that particular month and transitioned it to explorebrevard.com.



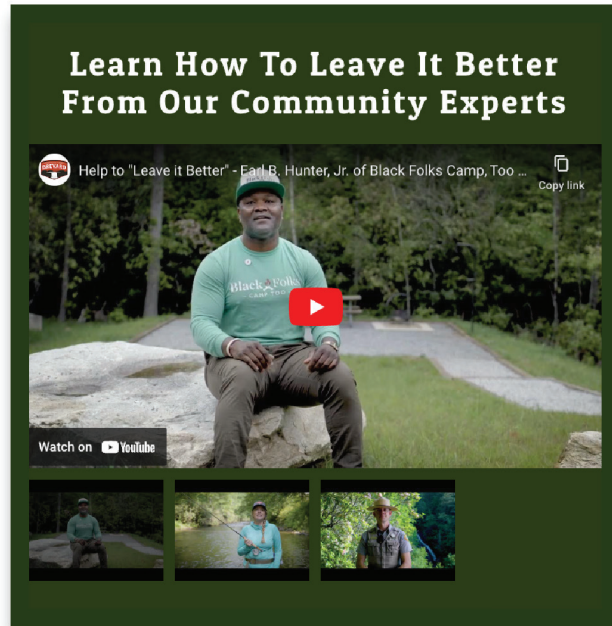
# EXPANDING THE TCTDA RESOURCE LIBRARY

In the first quarter of 2024, Explore Brevard completed a new photoshoot designed to capture new imagery of downtown, wellness, families, and romance. In addition, several new waterfall shots were taken to update TCTDA's library and to showcase responsible visitation and waterfall safety in the area.



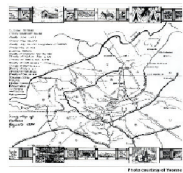


# NEW WEBSITE FEATURES

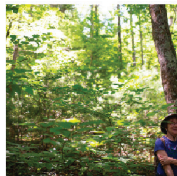


Be on the lookout around Brevard and Transylvania County for glimpses of our forest steward promoting the "Leave It Better" campaign. You can even stop by the Visitor Center in Downtown Brevard to take a photo with a life size cutout of our 7 foot mascot! For more information on "Leave It Better" and to learn about our legendary mascot, Trashesquatch, visit [here](#).

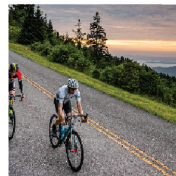
## Related Posts



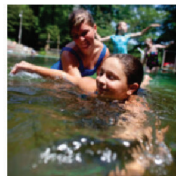
The Legacy of Indigenous People in Transylvania County



Forest Bathing: How To Cleanse Your Spirit



Year of the Trail: Wheely Fun



Kidding Around: Seven Sensational Family-Friendly Suggestions

Each month, TCTDA staff and Market Connections work together to update the Explore Brevard website with more relevant content and features. First Quarter website updates included the following:

- Continued updates and new blogs on the Year of the Trail landing page
- Addition of new blogs plus Creation of a blog archive
- New "Leave It Better" spokesperson videos added to the homepage slider and Trashesquatch Landing page
- Fall foliage map was added to the homepage



The Legacy of Indigenous People in Transylvania County  
North Carolina has the largest population of indigenous people east of the Mississippi River and the eighth-largest indigenous population in the United States. With their rich and diverse cultures, traditions, and histories, indigenous people... [Read More](#)



Forest Bathing: How To Cleanse Your Spirit  
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Year of the Trail: Wheely Fun  
Memorable Road Rides: Wheely Fun  
Transylvania County has earned a worldwide – and well-deserved – reputation for its spectacular mountain biking. Yet the road cycling opportunities here are just as rich, varied and rewarding, whether... [Read More](#)



Kidding Around: Seven Sensational Family-Friendly Suggestions



7 Easy Ways To Be Waterfall Wicca



Come to Your Senses



NORTH CAROLINA'S LAND OF WATERFALLS  
**TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY**  
**TOURISM**  
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



## BILLBOARDS AND SIGNAGE

Explore Brevard is now advertising on four targeted billboards in the region. Large seasonal billboard posters are currently placed on I 40, coming west from Hickory; I 85 near the 74 turn-off toward Asheville, and I 26 at the Asheville Airport, which serves as a directional board. All three of these large boards featured spring/summer imagery during the first quarter, with the Asheville board featuring Transylvania's iconic Looking Glass Falls. These three billboards are annual placements, and the creative will change twice during the year in fall and spring. These three billboards are strategically placed to attract travelers to Transylvania County and Brevard in the future.



I-40 Seasonal Activity

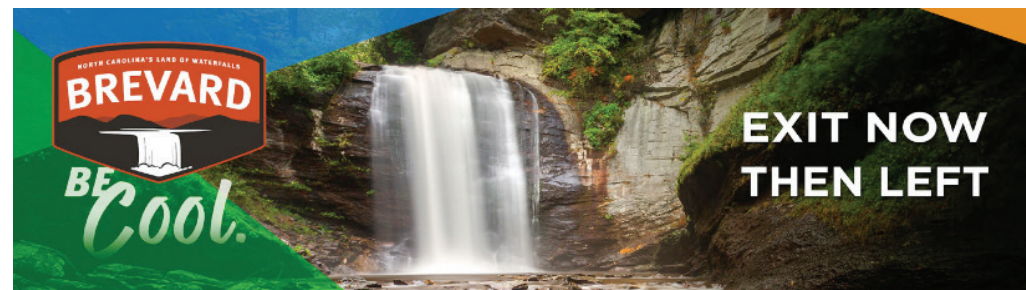


HWY - 280 Welcome | Claming Destination and Iconic Asset

In addition, a new Brevard and Transylvania local brand board welcomes visitors and residents alike on 280 near the Transylvania County line. While this board can be changed out seasonally. During the first quarter, it featured Sliding Rock but changed recently to showcase Rainbow Falls in autumn. This billboard is strategically placed to remind travelers of the county's iconic assets.



I-85 Seasonal Activity



I-26 Iconic Brand Asset | Directional



# PUBLIC RELATIONS

Since July, Brevard and Transylvania County have enjoyed multiple press inquiries and earned media opportunities that have resulted in excellent press showcasing the area. Coverage ranged from local to national. Earned media is an important part of a successful marketing plan and Explore Brevard continues to engage journalists who can tell the area's story. A sampling of first quarter media relations efforts and published stories includes:

## FAM TRIPS & MEDIA RELATIONS

### UPROXX EMILY HART JULY 12-13 VISIT

In July, TCTDA hosted travel writer Emily Hart with UPROXX, an entertainment and culture website. Emily visited four WNC communities during her trip, posting to social media. Her UPROXX article was published in August.

### VISIT NC WASHINGTON, DC, MEDIA MISSION AUGUST 14 -16.

Mark Johnson attended the DC Media Misson on behalf of Explore Brevard. This special mission included only Six major journalists providing serious one-on-one time for interviews. The focus of this misson was outdoor adventure and included media outlets such as NAT GEO, Garden and Gun, The Sierra Club, The Smithonian, and other world renowned media.

### VISIT NC'S IN-STATE MEDIA MISSION SEPTEMBER 19.

Explore Brevard was one of 33 Visit NC destination partners from across the state that shared our stories with media representatives from print, broadcast and digital outlets at Visit NC's annual in-state media mission.

## ARTICLES

### CHARLOTTE PARENT & CHARLOTTE OBSERVER

July Article: "PARENT CAMP: Why should kids have all the fun this summer?"

### WSPA-TV'S YOUR CAROLINA

July Interview: "Be Waterfall Wise!"

### NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC ONLINE

July Online Article: 10 best things to do in North Carolina

### STRAVA ONLINE

July Online Article: " Top 10 Mountain Bike Destinations in the USA: 2023"

### BREVARD NEWSBEAT ONLINE

August Online Article: "Transylvania: Not Just Home to a Tourism Economy, but a Purveyor of Joy"

### UPROXX ONLINE

August Online Article: "Road Trip From Charlotte To Asheville: The Ultimate Western North Carolina Adventure Guide"

### KIDDING AROUND GREENVILLE ONLINE

August Online Article: "Float Down a Lazy River with Brevard Tubing in NC"

### PBS NC'S TEN TO TRY

August Broadcast: "Three Waterfalls Hike, DuPont State Forest"

### TRANSYLVANIA TIMES

August Article: "Brevard in the running for Magazine's "Top Adventure Town"

### TRAVEL + LEISURE MAGAZINE

September Article: "This Small Town in North Carolina's 'Land of Waterfalls' Has Famous White Squirrels and Great Live Music and Art Scenes"

### CBS SUNDAY MORNING TV

September Story: "Gisele Bündchen on modeling, divorce, and her true self"(Gissele is the new spokesperson for Gaia Herbs, and it was featured in the story)



# SOCIAL MEDIA

Social media is a crucial part of Explore Brevard's larger marketing strategy. Our key social media platforms include Instagram, Facebook, Twitter, Pinterest, and YouTube. Through Explore Brevard's active and popular social media accounts, we are able to engage a younger audience that often uses these platforms to make decisions on where they travel and visit.



## YOUTUBE

### METRICS

Subscribers - 324  
63 Videos - 6 new videos in this quarter - "Leave It Better"  
Spokesperson videos

### Top Performing Video - 1.05K Views

The video above encourages the audience to come to Brevard and "Be Cool."

## FACEBOOK

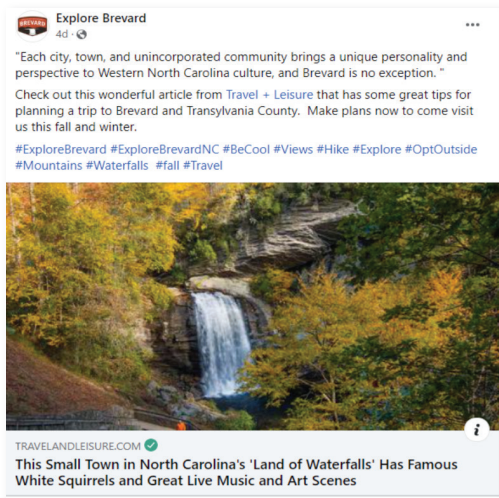
### METRICS

Followers - 17.5 K  
409.4 K - Reach

### Top Performing Post Post 2.6K Reach

The post at right features an article in **Travel + Leisure** about Brevard.

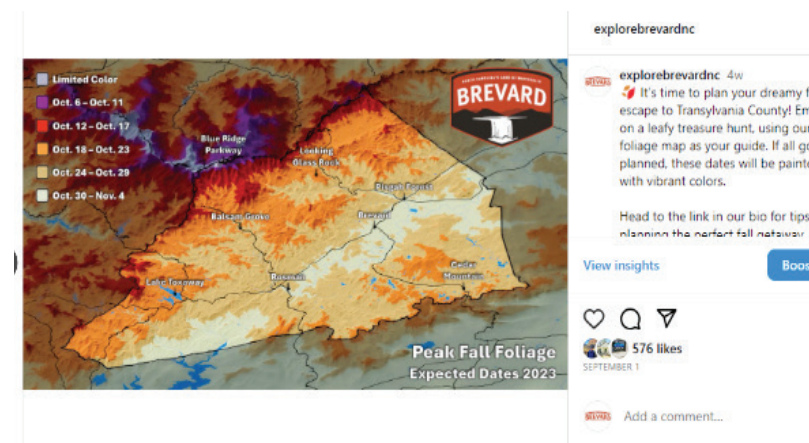
*On Facebook and Instagram, reach represents the number of unique users who see your post or page.*



## INSTAGRAM

### METRICS

Followers - 19.9K  
44,978 - Reach this quarter  
**Top Performing Organic Post - 11.7 K**  
Fall foliage forecast for Transylvania County.



## INFLUENCERS

Explore Brevard now has an online application for interested influencers. Market Connections and TCTDA staff vet requests as they come in. Visit NC also brings influencers into the county.

### VNC - SOCIAL MEDIA INFLUENCER "ASIPOFTEE" AUGUST VISIT

Tee George, a social media influencer from Atlanta visited Transylvania County and 4 others. While in Transylvania County, she hiked to Rainbow Falls and to John Rock. She also went rock climbing and spent time in Downtown Brevard. Her trip was documented on social media and in her online blog.