



DRINK IT IN.

2017/18 FISCAL YEAR
REPORT TO THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS

TRANSYLVANIA TOURISM

TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



GRANT BULLARD

A MESSAGE FROM THE CHAIR

On behalf of the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority (Transylvania Tourism), I am delighted to share this report with you. Transylvania Tourism is deeply and passionately engaged in promoting our extraordinary community to the wider world while creating a greater awareness and appreciation for tourism's vital economic, cultural and social value to our community. This past year has been especially momentous with record occupancy tax revenues and the development of our new visitor and organizational brands, and the development of our new visitor website (which launched in September). We invite you to explore these and many other highlights in the following pages.

AUTHORITY MEMBERS

Grant Bullard, Chair
Aaron Baker
Mike Hawkins
Charlie Landreth
Layton Parker
Lori Roberts
Billy Smith

TCTDA STAFF

Clark Lovelace
Executive Director

Prentiss Brewer
Tourism Development Coordinator

Sally Burnett
Visitor Center Coordinator

Market Connections
Marketing and Advertising



HISTORIC METRICS



A VIBRANT VISITOR ECONOMY EQUALS LOWER TAXES AND MORE JOBS



\$99.85 MILLION
in tourism revenue



\$3.87 MILLION
in state tax revenue



840
jobs



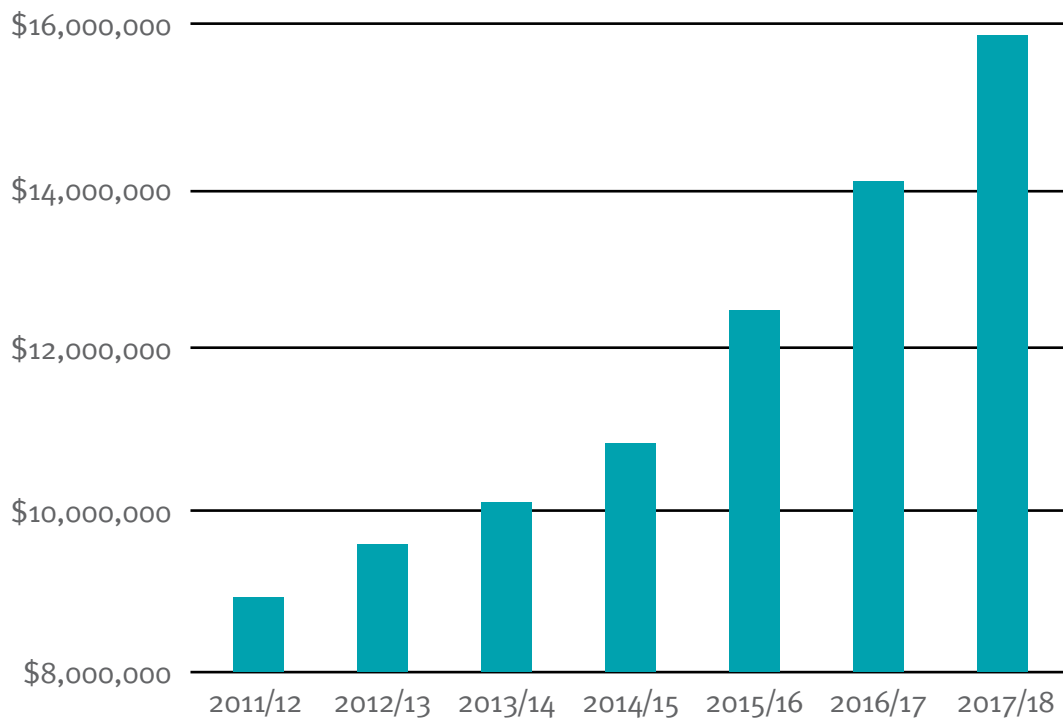
\$19.46 MILLION
in payroll



\$4.64 MILLION
in local tax revenue

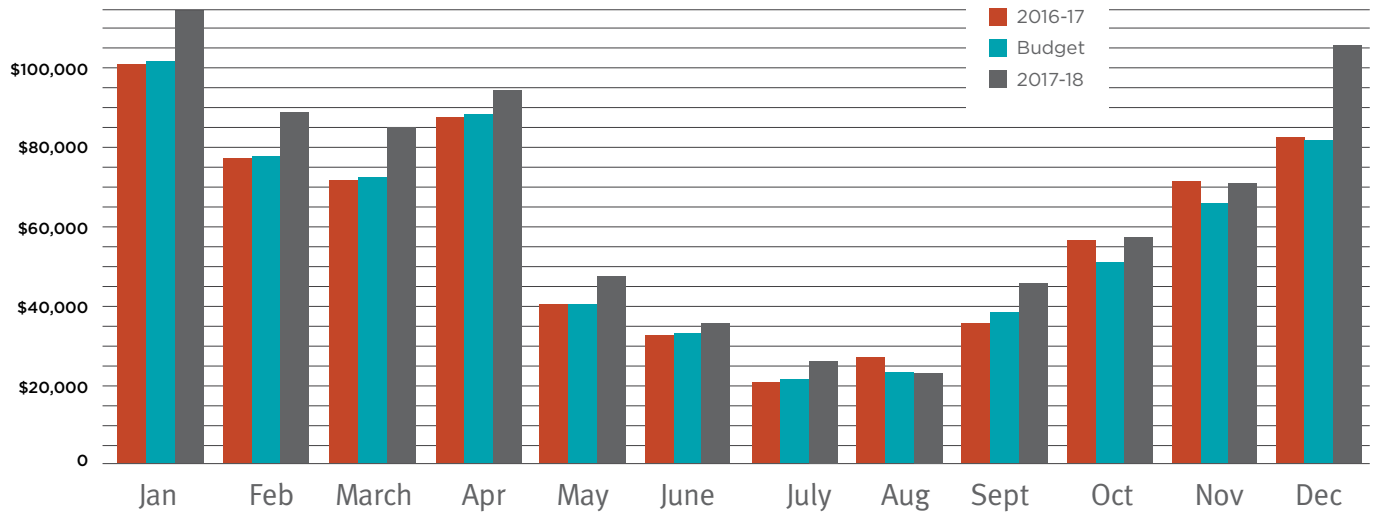
\$246
Tax savings per
Transylvania County resident

ANNUAL ACCOMMODATIONS REVENUE





ACCOMMODATIONS REVENUE 2016/17 - 2017/18 COMPARISON CHART



KEY 2017/18 ACCOMMODATIONS STATS

69.77% Hotel/Motel/Inn Occupancy	DOWN 8.6%	\$126.11 Average Daily Rate (ADR)	UP 1.2%
\$793,876 Total Occupancy Revenue	UP 12.5%	\$124,127 Airbnb Collections	UP 88.6%

TRENDS, INSIGHTS AND FORECASTS

Supply vs. Demand

- Overnight visitation has grown to record levels. Overnight rooms rented for FY18 were 17.4% greater than for FY16.
- Traditional occupancy supply (hotels, motels, inns, B&Bs) has essentially been stagnant over the last two years as new accommodations (Pilot Cove, The Bromfield Inn) have been matched by reductions (Earthshine Discovery Center, Transylvania River House). Current estimated supply is 430 traditional accommodations rooms. It is worth noting that the forthcoming 86-room Holiday Inn Express will greatly increase total supply.
- Short-term rental (STR) occupancy supply has grown at a tremendous rate. Information on STR is particularly difficult to find. However, based on a number of factors, we estimate there are 650 STR in Transylvania County. Additionally, based on the lump sum occupancy tax collection monthly payments made by Airbnb to Transylvania County, we can indicate that July and August of 2018 are up more than 300% versus those same months two years ago.

Playing without Staying

- An extremely high percentage of visitors to our public lands are staying outside of Transylvania County.
- In an effort to convert those into overnight visits, Transylvania Tourism created a Play and Stay campaign, which has included local/regional advertising, a billboard, kiosks and more.

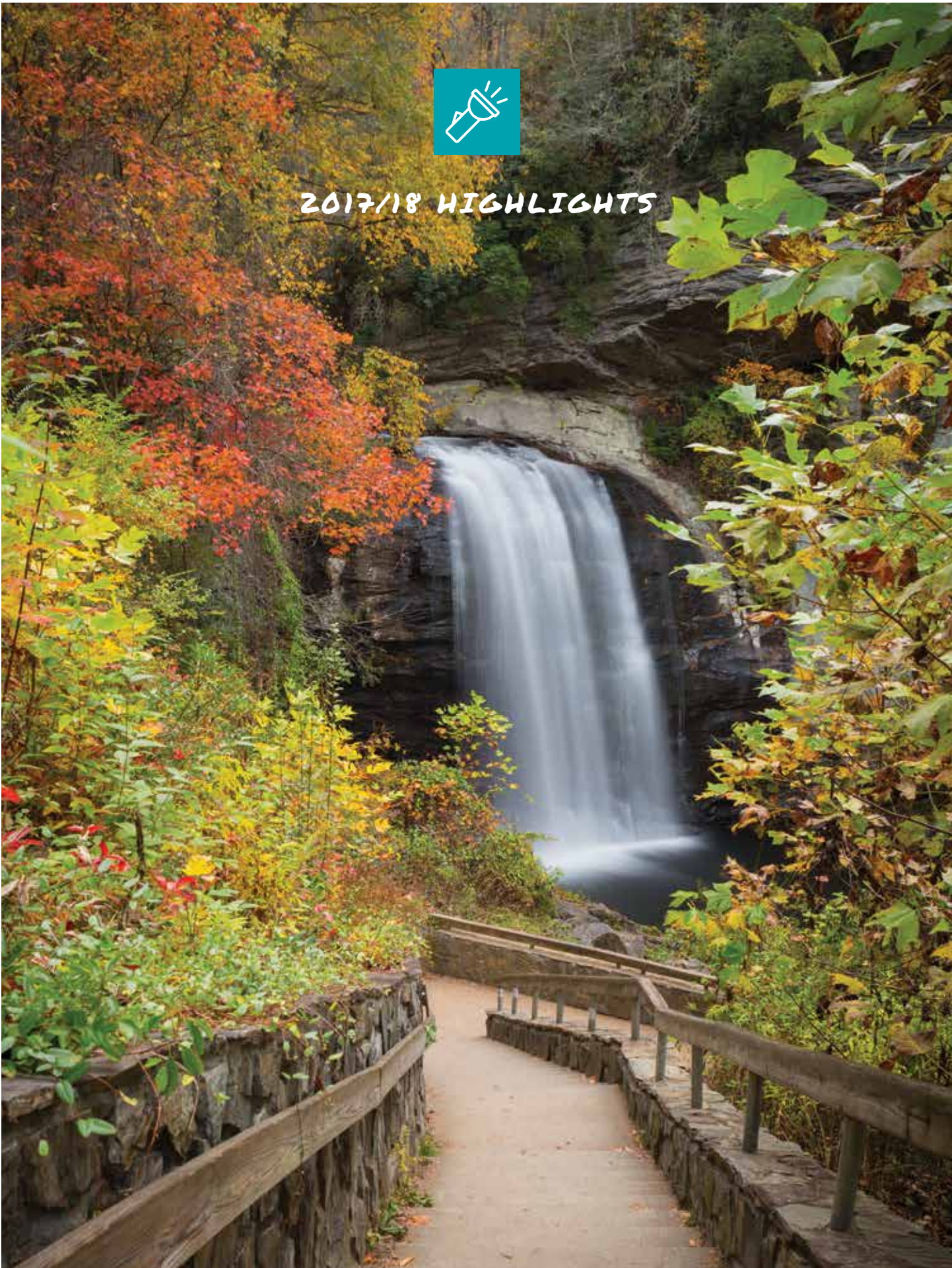
Seasonality

- Thanks to our multi-year marketing plans with their long term emphasis on shoulder and off season time periods, Transylvania County has gone from a six months out-of-the-year destination (May-Oct) to a nine months out-of-the-year destination (March-Nov).
- Since 2008/2009, occupancy revenue has increased 159%. When occupancy is calculated by month, it is up 412% in March, 277% in April and 177% in November during the same time period.
- In its effort to make the county a year-round destination, Transylvania Tourism is pushing more resources into shoulder and off-season than ever. (see page 22)

**The Greystone Inn and Brook Trout Inn in Lake Toxaway and Sapphire have re-opened with new owners, but this has not resulting in growing total supply.*



2017/18 HIGHLIGHTS



MARKETING AND ADVERTISING



Our 2017/18 marketing plan reached over 32 million+ potential visitors through targeted print and digital advertising, television, radio and social media.

Print publications included Our State, Garden & Gun, Atlanta Magazine, Southern Living, Woman's Day, Good Housekeeping, BIKE Magazine, Blue Ridge Parkway Directory and Travel Guide, The Laurel of Asheville, Blue Ridge Outdoors and WNC Magazine.

In 2017/18, cable television advertising again ran in Atlanta, GA, Charlotte, and Raleigh, NC, and Greenville, SC. Additionally, new markets were added to Transylvania Tourism's traditional buys and included the new markets of Jacksonville, FL and Nashville, TN.

Transylvania Tourism also ran promotional advertising messages on WNCW-FM.



For the second year, Transylvania Tourism utilized billboards to spread its message. The organization was able to secure a high profile billboard at the intersection of NC280 and I-26 (Airport Exit) in early 2018.



ELECTRONIC & DIGITAL



FACEBOOK

UP
12.2%



INSTAGRAM

UP
22%

SOCIAL MEDIA reaching consumers in dynamic new ways

CONTINUATION OF popular Adventure Guide and Get OUT Guide



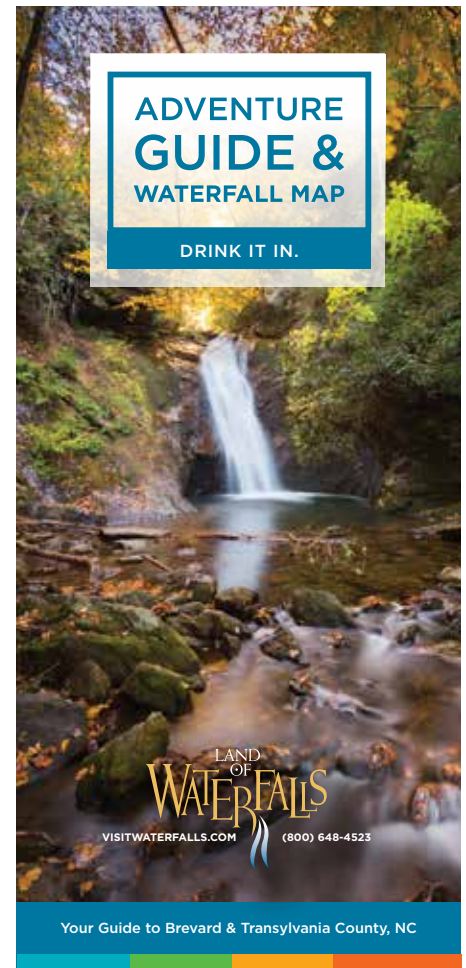
Dear Traveler:
Mornings in January can be a quest, if only some to stand in the forest and reflect on our New Year's Resolutions. And while I'm planning to sit back on holiday sweets and maybe spend a bit more time working on my "to Read" list, it'd offer up that "Spend more time in Transylvania County" is a perennial favorite on the Resolution lists of the truly adventurous. Now is a great time to start making plans, maybe even come up for an exploratory visit. Even now, in the early season, there are still plenty of one-of-a-kind events and adventures to savor your whole for what's yet to come throughout 2017 and beyond.

Have a Happy New Year!
The Adventurist



WEEKLY EVENTS

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GROWTH OF
The Adventurist up
12.5% over previous
year

UP
12.5%

VISITOR CENTER

Our visitor center, staffed by dedicated volunteers,
welcomed over

18,116 GUESTS IN 2017/18.



TOLL FREE CALLS

1,561

BULK MAIL

12,234





PUBLIC RELATIONS:

Public relations continues to represent one of the best returns on investment of Transylvania Tourism’s marketing dollars. In 2017/18, your TCTDA hosted several familiarization tours for journalists, many of them around the Total Solar Eclipse that occurred on August 21, 2017.

Additionally, Transylvania County was represented at important media missions sponsored by Visit NC in New York and Canada. Transylvania Tourism was also represented at Visit NC’s annual 365 Conference, which was held in Winston-Salem.

Highlights of 2017/18 include:

- Developed and spearheaded a public relations campaign around the 2017 Total Solar Eclipse that resulted in over 100 pre- and post-eclipse stories in local, regional and national media outlets
- Hosted Canadian cycling journalist Yvan Martineau in September, 2017
- Hosted the VisitNC team for a marketing update that included LGA, the state’s agency of record for tourism, along with staff from other regional TDA’s
- Promoted a sweepstakes in the Canadian market in late spring that included a trip to Transylvania County
- Hosted digital influencer Mitch Summers in May, 2018
- Hosted a 3-day familiarization tour for the editor of Our State Magazine, Elizabeth Hudson in June, 2018.
- Organized a Waterfall Safety News Conference in June, 2018
- Wrote and distributed over a dozen news releases



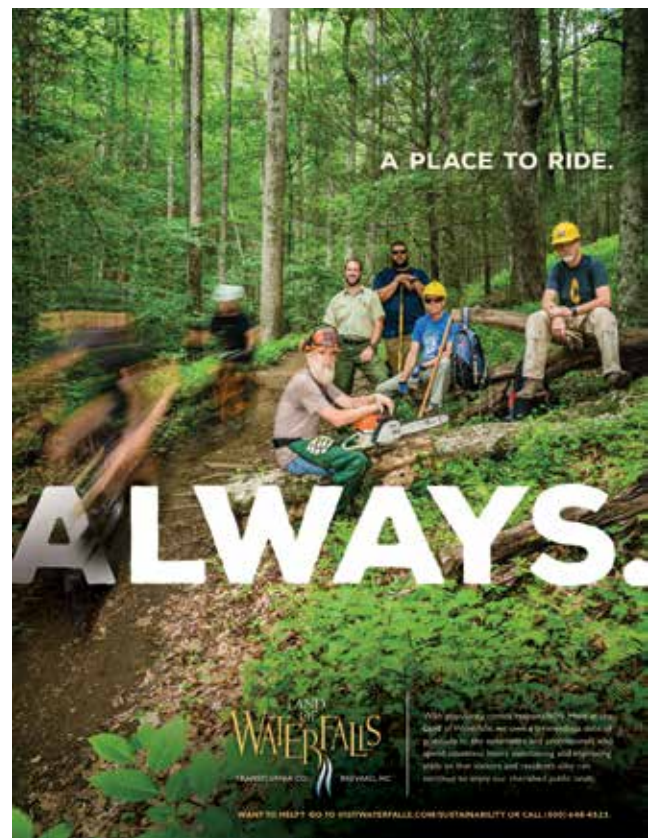
A Sampling of Stories

- Canadian Cycling – Sweepstakes Winner Story
- Charleston magazine – Brevard, Bikes and Beer
- Charlotte Observer – Waterfall Story
- Asheville Citizen-Times – Waterfall Story
- Only In Our State – Halloweenfest
- Quintessential Charlotte – Pisgah Hidden Gem
- Our State – Charles and Jean Brendle’s Brevard Home
- AAA Go Magazine – Cover Story on Waterfalls
- Singletracks.com – Biking in Transylvania County

SUSTAINABILITY

Transylvania Tourism developed a series of sustainability ads that focused on river clean up and trail maintenance. The ads were featured in a media campaign that included insertions in the Transylvania Times and WNC Magazine.

A series of waterfall safety posters were printed and distributed to Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Recreational Forest, Gorges State Park and other locations to help raise awareness among visitors of waterfall dangers. The poster was also inserted into the Transylvania Times.





GRANTS AND PARTNERSHIP FUNDING

In fiscal year 2017/18, Transylvania Tourism provided over \$60,000 in funding to more than 20 projects to local organizations and events that benefit our tourism economy. These included:

Tourism Grant Program

Sixteen grants were approved by the Grant Committee, totaling \$22,000 in funding to support events/activities that help build overnight visitation.

Special Grants

Heart of Brevard, Brevard Music Center and PARI were awarded special grants totaling \$23,000 to promote festivals and one-of-a-kind events like the Total Solar Eclipse.

Sustainability Grant

Transylvania Tourism contributed \$20,000 to the Cantrell Creek project, a significant trail rehabilitation initiative in collaboration with Pisgah Conservancy, Trout Unlimited, REI, Backcountry Horsemen, Mountain True, and Pisgah Area SORBA.



PARTNER SERVICES

Co-op Campaign

This popular campaign allows stakeholders (local retail, accommodations and attractions) the opportunity to participate in Transylvania Tourism’s marketing effort in a variety of high profile publications, including Our State, Blue Ridge Outdoors, WNC Magazine and Southern Living. Market Connections, our marketing partner, was able to leverage our relationships and buying power to secure these co-op spaces for our tourism stakeholders at substantial discounts.

Adventure Guide Distribution

Each year, 115,000 copies of our Adventure Guide and Waterfall Map are distributed on a strategic basis throughout the region including to local businesses, state Visitor Centers, Pisgah National Forest, DuPont State Recreational Forest and Gorges State Park. They are also distributed at a number of local events and at the Transylvania Tourism Visitor Center. Additionally, copies are sent both nationally and internationally to visitors who request the publication through Transylvania Tourism’s visitor website.

Event Promotion

Through its online calendar, monthly Adventurist Newsletter and monthly Get OUT Guide, Transylvania Tourism has made it easier than ever for visitors and prospective visitors to get the information they desire about activities, attractions and events.

Stakeholder Planning Calendar

What started as a calendar for notable camp session dates (sessions starts and endings) has become a master calendar of significant events and activities taking place in the county. This calendar has become an invaluable tool to help alert businesses to opportunities for marketing and staffing up to meet demand.

Transylvania Tourism has also developed specific content for summer counselors and parents to help them make the most of their visit to the area and support local businesses.

Photo Use

Transylvania Tourism assists dozens of businesses, organizations and media outlets with photos from our extensive photography library, both for editorial use and for decorative purposes.

Travel Writer Support

Transylvania Tourism supported the efforts of a number of journalists visiting the county either as a result of our own initiatives or through our stakeholders, including providing FAM tours (personalized tours of specific attractions/events) and accommodations support.



SPECIAL PROJECTS



Gorges Kiosk

Gorges State Park served as the location for the fifth installation in Transylvania Tourism’s popular kiosk program. An outdoor kiosk was strategically located at the entrance to the park’s Visitor Center. Additionally, Gorges State Park management generously allowed Transylvania Tourism to install signage, maps and information in the exhibition area of its Visitor Center.

SPECIAL PROJECTS CONTINUED

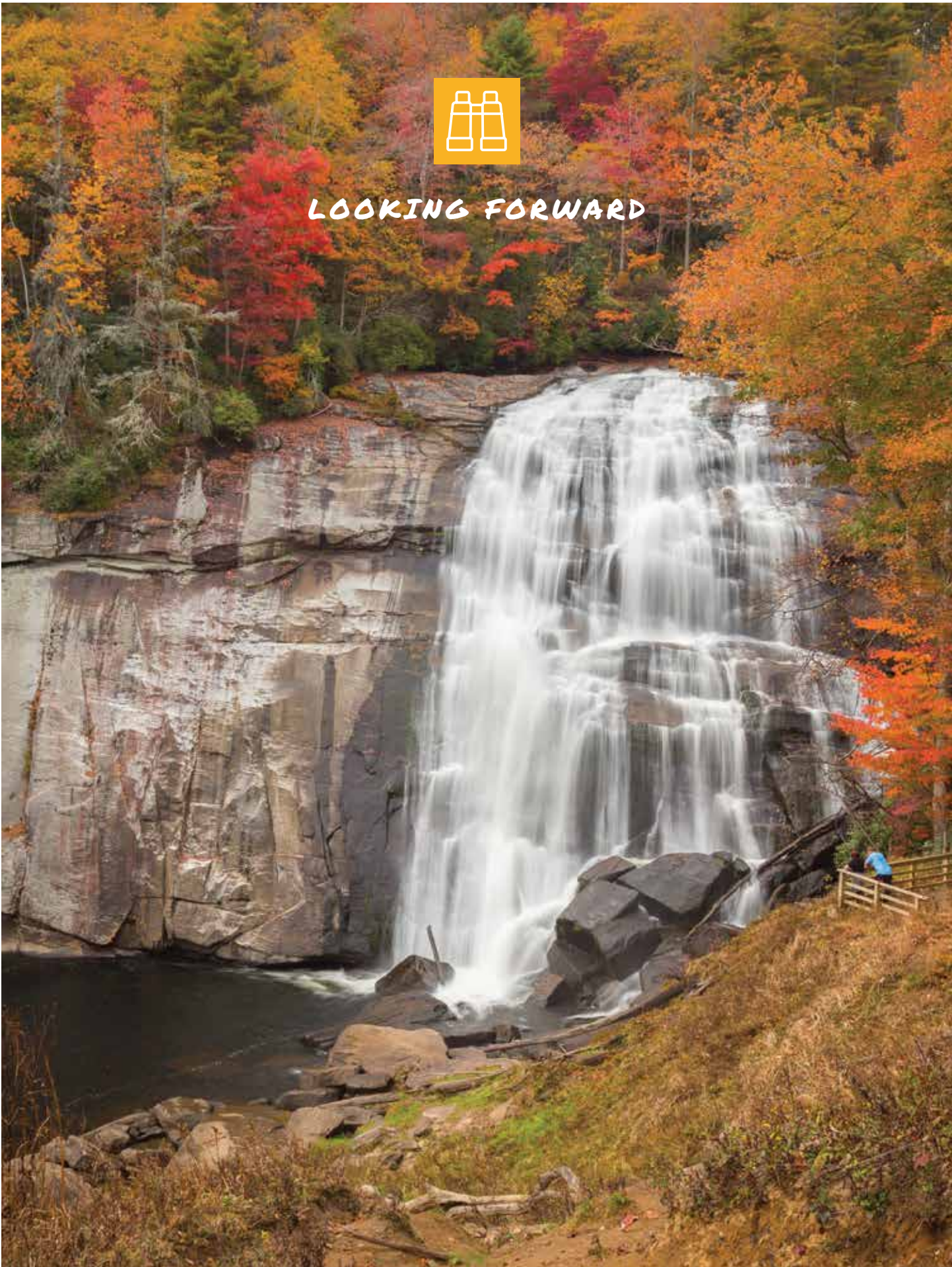


County Wayfinding

This collaboration between TCTDA, County and State governments resulted in 11 attractive wayfinding signs being installed in strategic locations across county.



LOOKING FORWARD



BRAND INITIATIVES OVERVIEW

Positioning Brevard, Transylvania County and Land of Waterfalls for the future.



Visitor Brand

In 2017, the Transylvania Tourism board decided to explore options to the Land of Waterfalls brand logo based on insights the organization had gleaned from visitors through quantitative and qualitative research.

One of the most telling research insights was to a multiple choice survey question answered by over 750 visitors in multiple surveys: By what name do you best know us? The answer choices were, “Transylvania County,” “Brevard,” and “Land of Waterfalls.”

The overwhelming majority of respondents (64%) chose “Brevard” as the name they most associated with the area over “Land of Waterfalls” (21%) and Transylvania County (15%).

Peer research of neighboring tourism destinations also revealed that the majority of county tourism development organizations use the community that has the highest name recognition in their county as the basis for their brand identity. Examples include Asheville for Buncombe County, Boone for Watauga County, Lake Lure for Rutherford County, and Bryson City for Swain County.

These insights resulted in a re-examination of the Land of Waterfall brand and the development of a new brand logo by TCTDA’s marketing partner, Market Connections.

The new brand was rolled out to the community with much fanfare at a special event on September 13th, 2018.

The new brand still utilizes “Land of Waterfalls,” which has been used to describe the area since the early 1900’s, but ‘Brevard’ has now been moved to the forefront.

While the brand identity that is directed towards visitors has been changed, Transylvania Tourism will continue doing what it has always done: faithfully represent all of Transylvania County in its marketing, including the many wonderful communities and the county’s public lands, including Pisgah, DuPont, Gorges and the newest, Headwaters State Forest.



TRANSYLVANIA TOURISM

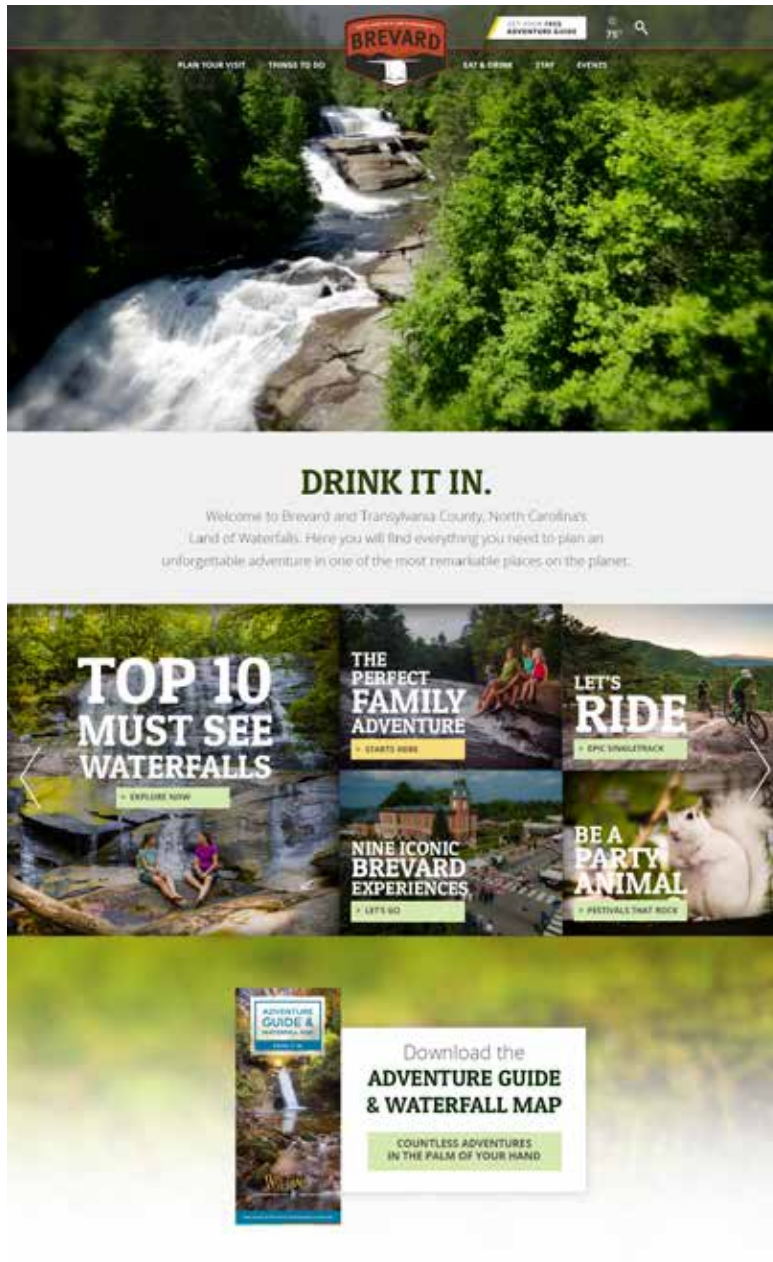
TRANSYLVANIA COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Organizational Brand

As part of its brand examination, the board of the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority also looked at its organizational brand: Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority. In an effort to shorten the name and make it more easily understandable within the community, the organization has also adopted a new brand logo.

WEBSITE REDEVELOPMENT

In development during the 2017/18 fiscal year, the new ExploreBrevard.com website was launched on September 13th. The new site employs the latest web standards and takes our primary visitor portal to new heights, including: improved navigation, more user-friendly content and an inviting new look



STRATEGIC PLANNING

At the Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority Board retreat earlier this year, there was a realization that while the organization is doing more than ever, particularly with regard to contributions and efforts beyond traditional marketing and advertising for Transylvania County, many of these special projects, grants, or initiatives were dealing with tourism in Transylvania County today.

There was a desire to focus on tourism in Transylvania County in five years, ten years, and beyond, and to take steps now, that help get us to a future that melds what we want to be, what we are capable of, and what fits with where the tourism industry is headed. With that in mind, we enlisted the services of Chris Cavanaugh and Magellan Strategy Group to support this strategic planning process. This project has just started with the goal of finishing in the first quarter of 2019.



CHRISTMAS AND WINTER CAMPAIGNS



Transylvania Tourism, in an effort to build shoulder and off-season visitation, has embarked on an ambitious program to promote holiday activities during November and December and wintertime activities from January through March. Over \$20,000 in marketing dollars are being deployed in a strategic manner through digital and print media to promote these vital seasons and help continue building a vibrant year-round tourism economy.

AND ONE FINAL NOTE...

In March of 2018, Transylvania Tourism took best of “Best of Show” at Asheville’s ADDY Awards for its sustainability campaign. This the third time in the last nine years that Transylvania Tourism has won “Best of Show” for its marketing and advertising efforts in this prestigious competition against the region’s strongest advertising efforts.



A PLACE TO PADDLE.

ALWAYS.

LAND OF WATERFALLS
TRANSYLVANIA CO. BREVARD, NC

Here in the Land of Waterfalls, we take tremendous enjoyment from our legendary waterways. But we're equally committed to giving back. That's why we're so proud to support those who devote their time and energy to efforts like the annual French Broad River Clean-Up.

TO BECOME A STEWARD OF THE WATER AND THE LAND, GO TO VISITWATERFALLS.COM/SUSTAINABILITY OR CALL (800) 648-4523.



ExploreBrevard.com

