



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority
Update to Jackson County Commissioners
May 5, 2016

15 Member Board

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FY 2015-16

- Budget is \$828,000
(estimating \$875,000 through end of this FY)
- Funds are used to market Jackson County and bring visitors and tourists to the area for overnight stays.
- Positive outlook for future tourist spending in Jackson County

Tourism Trends in Jackson County

Yearly 2014 Tourist Activity in the County

- Generated **\$171.16 million** per year in direct tourist spending
- Generated **1,660 jobs** per year
- Generated **\$46,356 daily** in combined state & local tax revenues

2014 Tourism Tax Relief on County Households

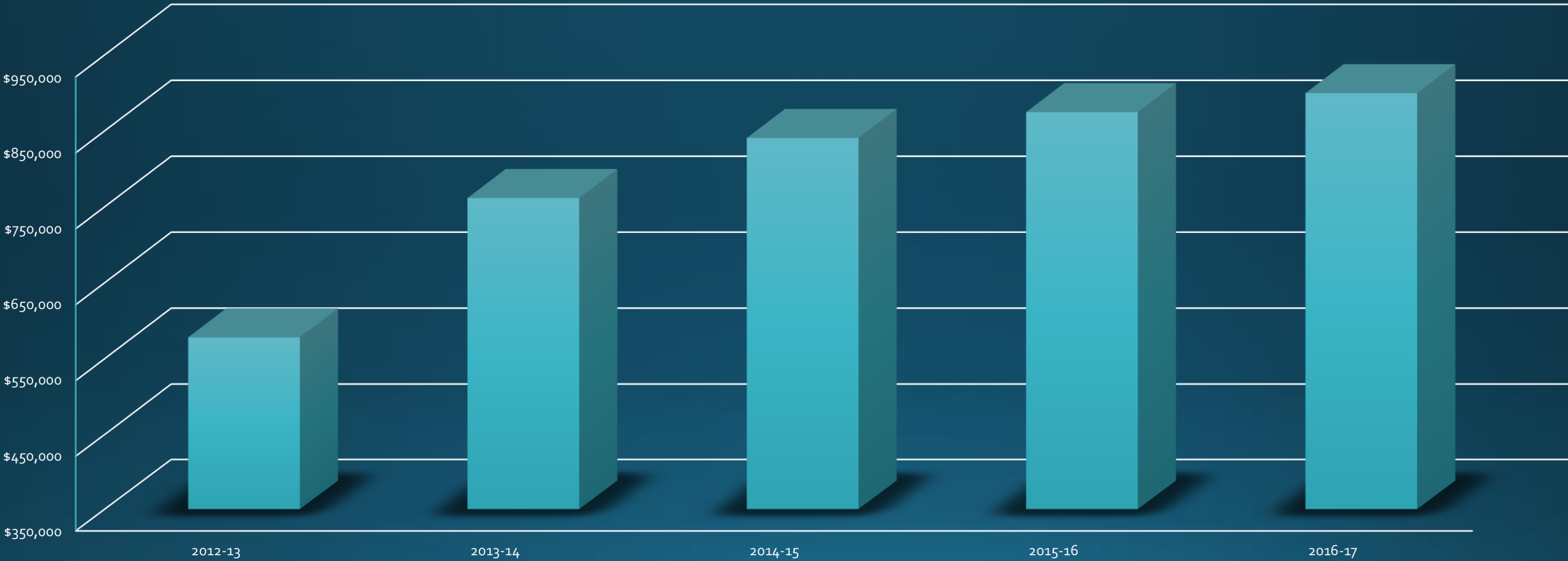
- As a result of taxes generated by tourist spending in Jackson County... Each of the 26,574 Jackson County households pay **\$626 less** in local and state taxes. In other words, if tourism did not exist, each household would have to pay \$626 more in state and local taxes to replace the taxes generated by tourist spending.

Sources: [1] "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties." (2009-2014) This study was prepared for the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development by the U.S. Travel Association, Washington, D.C.

[2] Additional analysis by Dr. Steve Morse, Economist, Western Carolina University, and HT 438—Hospitality & Tourism Strategy class, Fall Semester 2015.

[3] U.S. Census Bureau, Number of Household Units in North Carolina Counties, 2014; www.census.gov

Occupancy Tax Collections in Jackson County

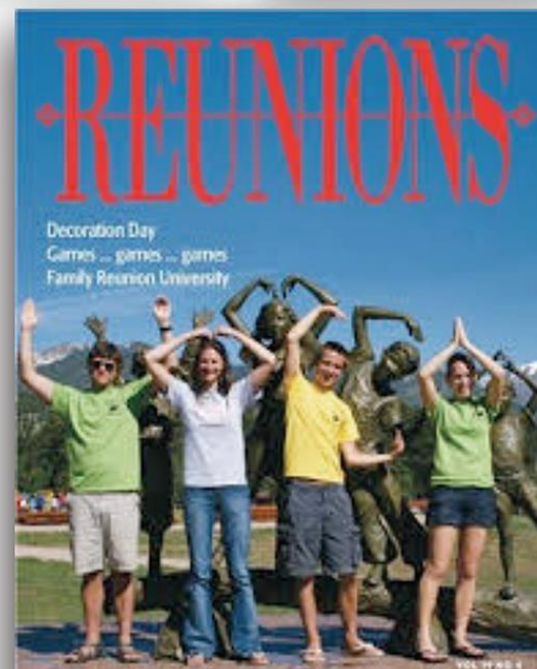
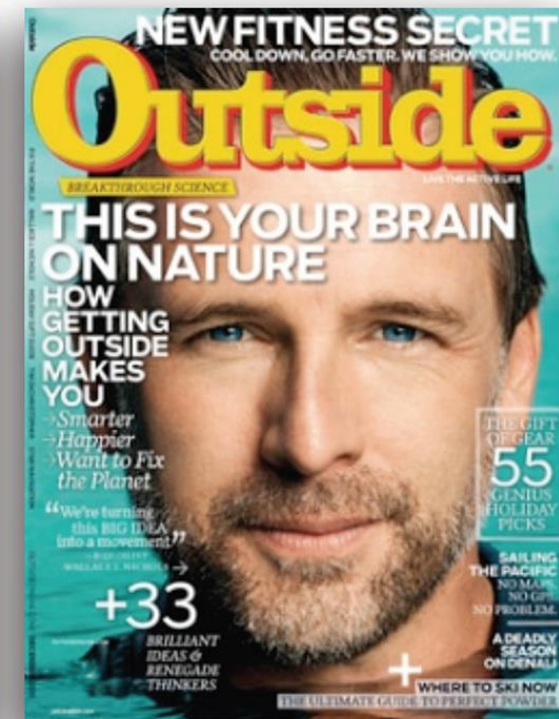
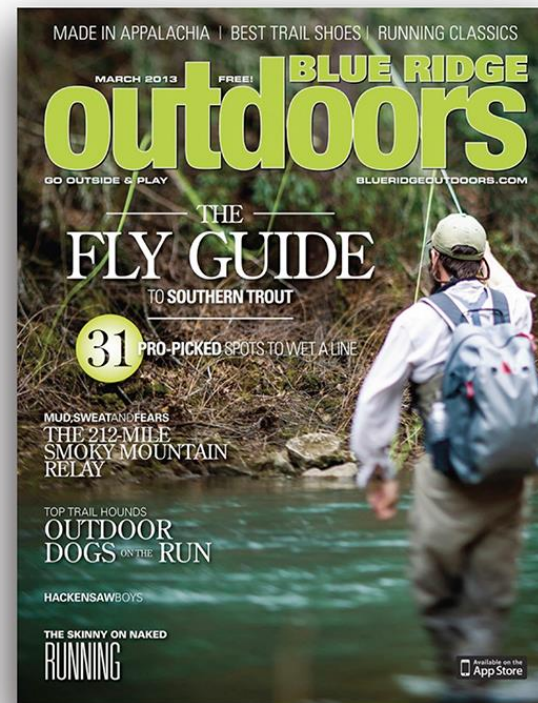
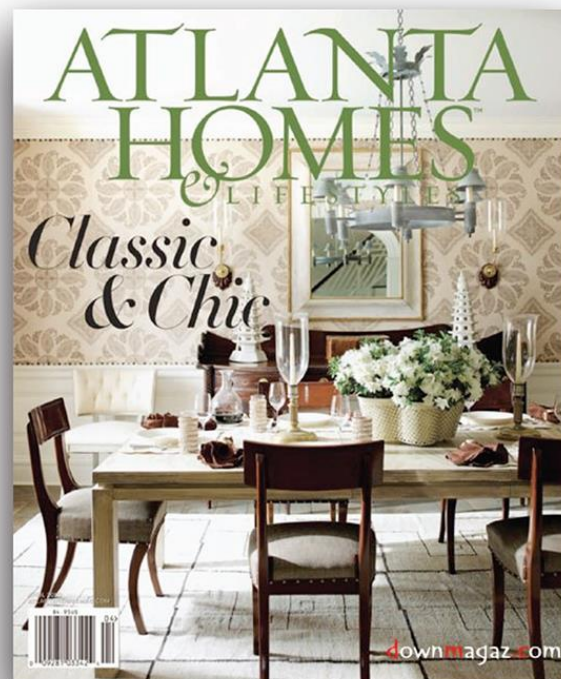


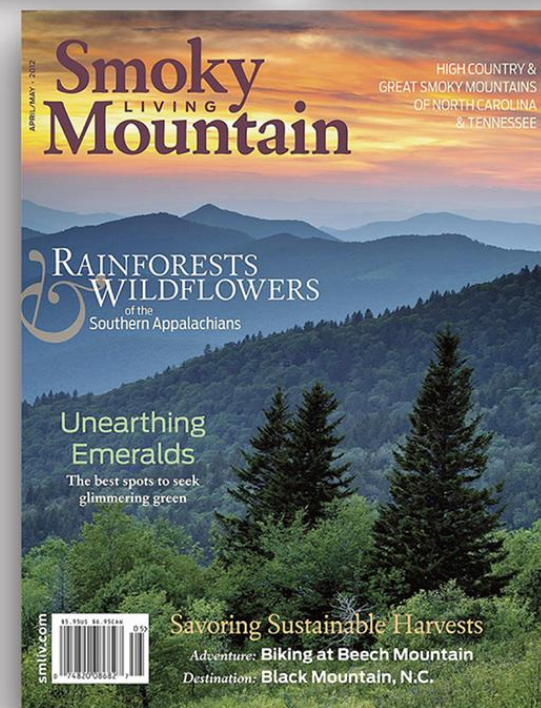
Annual collections

- FY 2012-2013 - \$578,452
- FY 2013-2014 - \$761,837
- FY 2014-2015 - \$840,968
- FY 2015-2016 ~ \$875,000
- FY 2016-2017 budgeting for \$900,000

How do we use those funds?

- The largest majority goes to Advertising and Marketing
- We market to drive markets NC, SC, GA, TN, AL, FL
- Ad spend is largest portion of budget at around \$300,000 per year. Looking to spend \$380,000 in coming FY 16-17
- Invest every available dollar in advertising
- Funds are also spent for public relations, social media management, printing, postage, providing funding for our chambers and our local grants program.







NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS, CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

Drop In Anytime

Your senses will run wild in the heart of the Blue Ridge Mountains of Jackson County, N.C., where you can nourish your adventurous spirit with rafting, kayaking, hiking and fishing, or experience some serious rejuvenation through golfing, historic resorts and cultural treasures.

Visit us online to Plan, GET AWAY AND PLAY ON.

MountainLoversNC.com • 1-800-962-1911



NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS, CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO AND SYLVA

And Reshape Culture

Your story begins in the Great Smoky Mountains of Jackson County, N.C., where you can choose from rafting, fishing, golf and hiking trails that climb all altitudes to historic resorts, casinos and cultural treasures. Visit us online to Plan, **GET AWAY AND PLAY ON.**

MountainLoversNC.com | 1-800-123-4567

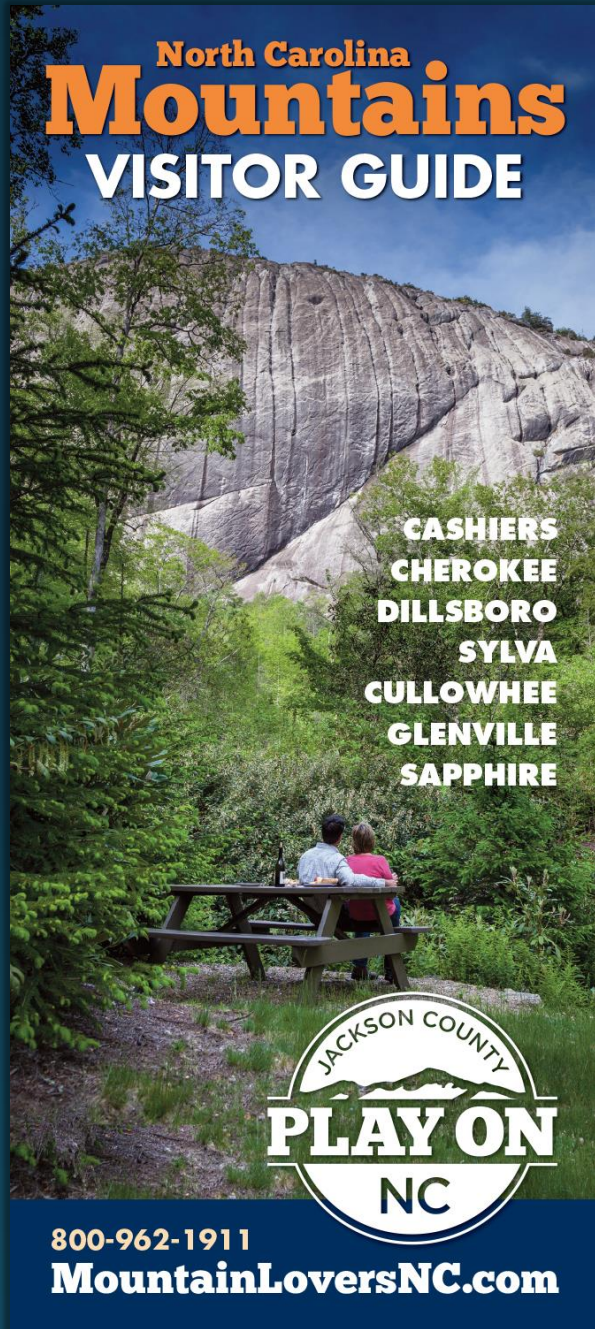




And Skim New Surfaces

Your story begins in the Great Smoky Mountains of Jackson County, N.C., where you can choose from rafting, fishing, golf and hiking trails that climb all altitudes to prehistoric resorts, casinos and cultural treasures. **Visit us online to Plan, Get AWAY AND PLAY ON.**

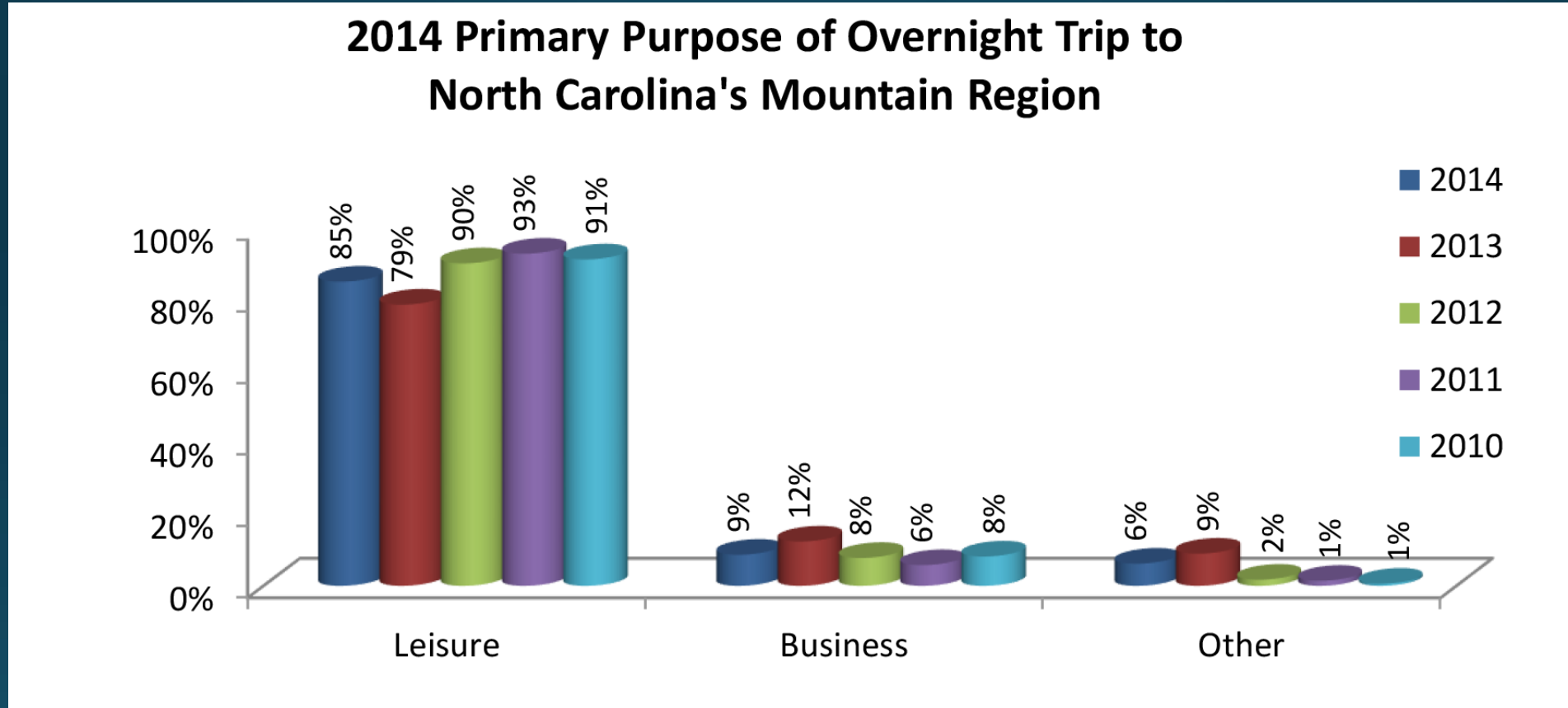
MountainLoversNC.com | 1-800-962-1911



2016-17 Visitor Guide

- Delivery this week
 - Over 2 months ahead of last year's schedule (delivery last year was July 2)
 - 26% more pages (last year's guide 50 pages, this year 63 pages)
 - New this year:
 - Focus on beautiful imagery to sell Jackson County; worked with local photographers to acquire scenic photos
 - Six pages of 'Favorite things to do in Jackson County'
 - Focus on nightlife, events, weddings & positioning Jackson County as a four-season destination
 - Focusing on 'Leave No Trace' camping to promote environmental stewardship and sustainable tourism

Why travel to the mountains?



Source: VisitNC









Favorite Things To Do In Jackson County

There's plenty to do in Jackson County, certainly more than what can be experienced in a single trip.

Arts & Culture

- Mountain Heritage Center at Western Carolina University
- Fine Art Museum at WCU
- Arts and Cultural Events series at WCU
- Art galleries and craft shops including It's by Nature Gallery in Sylva, Dogwood Crafters and pottery shops in Dillsboro, Cashiers' Mountain Mist and Blue Valley
- Visit our independent bookstores: City Lights Bookstore, Friends of the Library used bookstore, Harry Alter Books (rare, used and out-of-print books) and Cashiers Community Library Used Bookstore

Attractions

- Harrah's Cherokee Casino and Resort
- Great Smoky Mountains Railroad
- Cashiers Village Green (12-acre park with concerts, art festivals and educational programs)
- Santa's Land Amusement Park
- Green Energy Park in Dillsboro, which uses reclaimed methane gas from the old landfill to power glassblowers, blacksmiths, and more

North Carolina towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, Sylva, Cullowhee, Glenville, & Sapphire

Activities

- Shopping in our historic towns
- Craft brewery tours and tastings along the Jackson County Ale Trail, an easy one-mile walk through downtown Sylva
- Antiquing stores and collectibles dealers
- Seasonal farmers markets – Cullowhee at Forest Hills, Sylva at Bridge Park and Cashiers Farmers Market at the Crossroads along with Cashiers Tailgate market
- Fine dining at our area's farm-to-table restaurants, southern BBQ, NY-style pizza, local chocolatiers and world-renowned chefs
- Jackson County's new Tuckaseegee River Greenway
- Recreation and fitness centers; county and town parks
- Unwind and relax at one of our spas with breathtaking mountain views
- Discover our area by stopping at Visitors Centers located in Cashiers, Dillsboro and Sylva



Outdoors

Water

- The WNC Fly Fishing Trail (The first and only place in the nation with a designated fly fishing trail, with more than 3,000 miles of trout streams and 1,100 miles of hatchery-supported trout waters)
- More coldwater-stocked fish in our rivers than any other county in the state — 92,800 fish in 2016
- More Mountain Heritage Trout waters than anywhere else in the state
- Lake fishing along our county's popular lakes
- We have many hikes and waterfalls *See excursions at MountainLoversNC.com*
- Experience Sliding Rock — a natural slide down a rock face into a large swimming pool near Cashiers
- River Access Areas (Locust Creek, Barkers Creek, C. J. Harris, Shook Cove, East LaPorte, & Whittier)

- East LaPorte River Park with sand volleyball, basketball, covered pavilion and picnic area
- Whitewater rafting, kayaking, canoeing, stand up paddle boarding and tubing on rivers
- Canoe and float trips
- Pines Recreation area for picnicking and beach swimming on Lake Glenville
- Boat, kayak, pontoon rentals and champagne lake cruises

Activities

- Numerous public/private golf courses (some of the top-rated courses in the country)
- Disc golf at Jackson County Parks and Recreation
- Ralph J. Andrews Campground on Lake Glenville
- Western Carolina University's 6.8-mile mountain bike/hiking trail system
- Bicycle rentals through Motion Makers of Sylva (*call ahead to reserve*)

- Winter activities – skiing, snowboarding, tubing and outhouse races at Sapphire Valley
- Ziplining at Sapphire Valley
- Take a dip at Sylva's and Cashiers' swimming pools

Hiking & Driving

- The Blue Ridge Parkway (which at 17 million visitors last year attracted more people than the Grand Canyon, Eiffel Tower or Great Wall of China)
- Richland Balsam, the highest point on the Blue Ridge Parkway at 6,410 feet
- The Great Smoky Mountains National Park (10.7 million visitors last year - highest visitation of any of the 59 national parks)
- Mountains-to-Sea Trail
- Panthertown Valley, often referred to as the "Yosemite of the East," near Cashiers is 6,295 acres of Nantahala

- National Forest land with 30 miles of backcountry hiking and mixed-use trails, cascading waterfalls, trout streams, panoramic views, and sheer granite cliffs. We recommend you bring a map! *Find out more at panthertown.org*
- Pinnacle Park in Sylva, 1,100 acres of protected watershed with a 3.5-mile moderate-to-rugged hiking trail leading to panoramic views, waterfalls with free camp sites along the route
- Horseback riding
- "Shadow of the Bear" in Cashiers – Around six weeks visibility – mid-October through early November and mid-February thru early March

See photo, top of page 36

North Carolina towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, Sylva, Cullowhee, Glenville, & Sapphire



THINGS TO DO



For additional information, contact the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce at 800-962-1911 or the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce at 828-743-5191.



Entertainment

- Harrah's Cherokee Casino
- "Unto These Hills" outdoor drama in Cherokee
- Live music nightly at venues in Sylva and Cashiers
- Memorial Day through Labor Day: Concerts on the Creek, Sylva's free Friday night concert series at Bridge Park; Groovin' on the Green, Cashiers' free Friday night concert series at the Village Green; and free summer outdoor concerts at WCU

- Turn off your phone, unplug, and enjoy a sunset
- Highlands-Cashiers Music Festival (duration of entire summer with changing venues)
- Summer Concerts on the Slopes (Sapphire Valley)
- Galaxy of Stars events at WCU's Fine and Performing Arts Center
- "First Thursdays" mountain music series at WCU
- Catamount athletics (football, basketball, baseball, softball, soccer, cross country, track and field) at WCU

Heritage

- Mountain Heritage Center, WCU
- Judaculla Rock
- Grimshawes Historic Post Office – Country's smallest post office
- Historic Jackson County Courthouse (now part of Jackson County Library) and home of Jackson County Genealogical Society office and Jackson Co. Museum

- Webster Historic Walk, Sylva Heritage Walk, Dillsboro Heritage Walk, Cashiers Historic Walk
- Dillsboro Quilt Trail
- Zachary Tolbert House
- Highlands-Cashiers Land Trust Nature Trail
- Oconaluftee Visitor Center and Mountain Farm Museum, Great Smoky Mountains National Park
- Museum of the Cherokee Indian, Cherokee



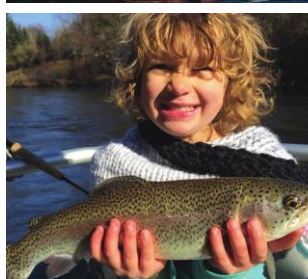
Signature annual events you won't find anywhere else

- Greening up the Mountains Festival
- Western North Carolina Pottery Festival
- Mountain Heritage Day
- Taste of Sylva
- Fourth of July Fireworks over the historic towns of Sylva and Cashiers with live bands and entertainment
- Assault on Blackrock Trail Race
- Tuckaseegee River Cleanup, the nation's largest single-day effort to remove trash from a river
- Tour de Cashiers extreme mountain cycling challenge
- Dillsboro Lights and Luminaries festival
- Cashiers Plein Air Festival
- Cashiers Designer Showhouse
- Dillsboro Easter Hat Parade
- Mountain Wildlife Days (Sapphire Valley)
- The Outhouse Race (Sapphire Valley)
- Blues, Brews & BBQ in Cashiers
- See page 34 for more events

North Carolina towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, Sylva, Cullowhee, Glenville, & Sapphire



GO PLAY OUTDOORS



Blue Ridge Parkway The 469-mile Blue Ridge Parkway is a celebrated motor touring route, its elegantly designed curves opening up to breathtaking views as it hugs the ridgelines. But the Parkway is also a jumping off point for hiking, backpacking, bird watching, waterfall visiting, cycling and a host of other outdoor adventures.

In Jackson County, you will discover dozens of overlooks, including the Richland Balsam sign at mile marker 431 proclaiming "The highest point on the Blue Ridge Parkway" (6,053 feet). About a third of a mile north of this overlook is the second Richland-Balsam overlook and parking area, where there is a trail to the peak of Richland Balsam (at 6,410 feet, the highest on the Parkway). Waterrock Knob (Milepost 451.2) has a parking area and restrooms and is a favorite spot to watch sunsets, picnic, take a hike, or just sit back and take in the stars.

Other Parkway highlights near Jackson County include the Devils Courthouse Overlook and Trail, Graveyard Fields, and the Pisgah Inn and Campground.

Great Smoky Mountains National Park Known as the crown jewel of the southern Appalachian Mountains, the Great Smoky Mountains National Park includes more than 800 square miles of the most ecologically diverse wilderness in the eastern United States.

Highlights on the North Carolina side of the GSMNP are the reintroduced elk herd in Cataloochee Valley, and the visitor center at the Oconaluftee entrance to the park.

A motor road — U.S. 441 — cuts through the park from North Carolina to Tennessee, passing the famous Newfound Gap overlook that straddles the North Carolina-Tennessee border.

Panthertown Valley is one of the most stunningly scenic areas in the mountains and is often referred to as the "Yosemite of the East."

Located near Cashiers, Panthertown is 6,295 acres of Nantahala National Forest land with 30 miles of backcountry hiking and mixed-use trails, cascading waterfalls, trout streams, panoramic views, and sheer granite cliffs.

This isolated wilderness area protects the headwaters of the Tuckaseegee River. Find out more at panthertown.org.

LEAVE NO TRACE The future of wilderness camping, hiking and other sustainable outdoor recreation depends on more people adopting what's known as Leave No Trace principles.

LEAVE NO TRACE SEVEN PRINCIPLES

1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

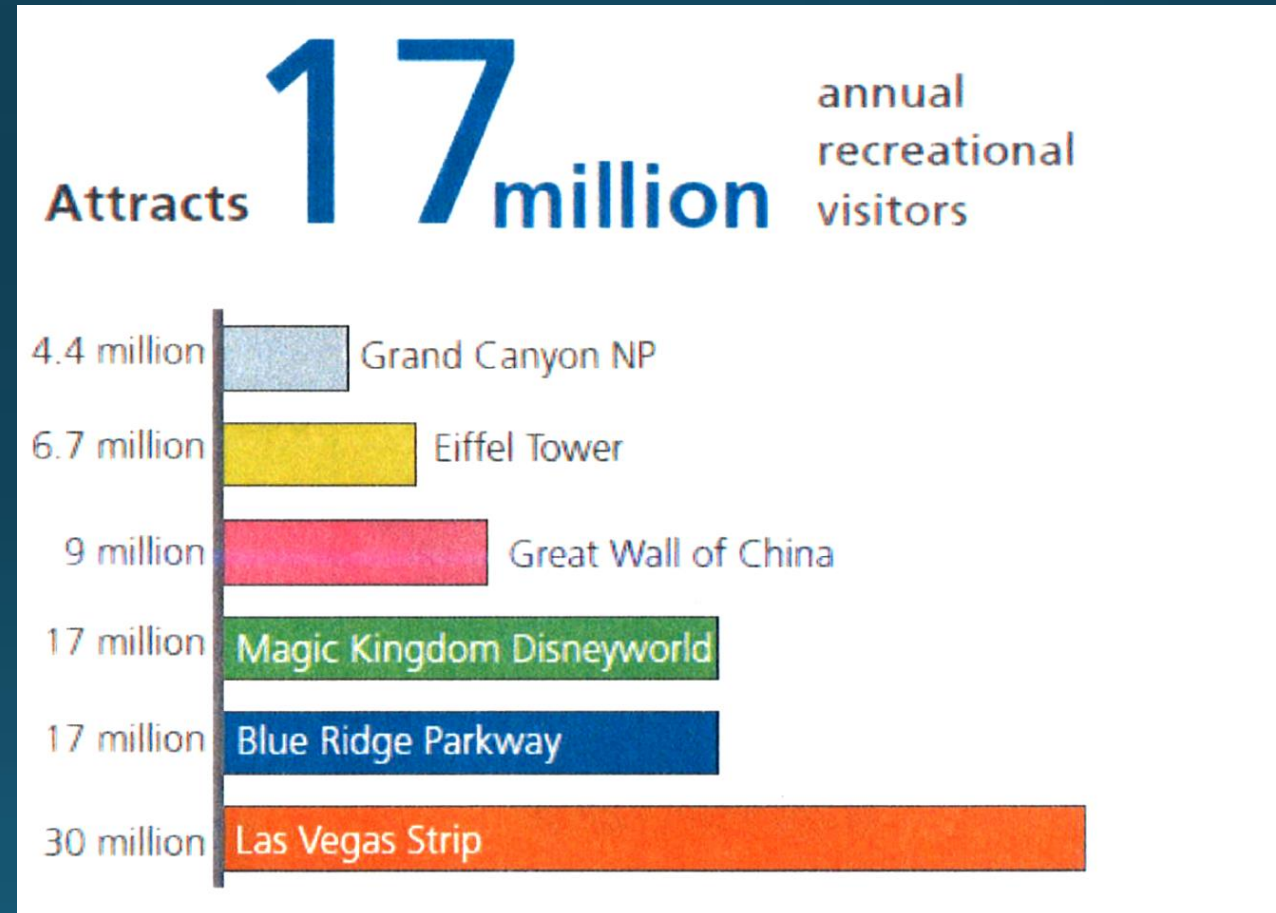
For more details, visit www.lnt.org

©1999 by the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics

North Carolina towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, Sylva, Cullowhee, Glenville, & Sapphire



Blue Ridge Parkway



Great Smoky Mountains National Park

Last year visits topped **10.7 million**, the highest visitation in the Park's history and more than any of the other 59 National Parks

Environmental Stewardship

- Tourism has to be sustainable and respect our great natural resources, preserving them for future generations to enjoy. To that extent we are promoting Leave No Trace:



1. Plan Ahead and Prepare
2. Travel and Camp on Durable Surfaces
3. Dispose of Waste Properly
4. Leave What You Find
5. Minimize Campfire Impacts
6. Respect Wildlife
7. Be Considerate of Other Visitors

Building business-to-business relationships



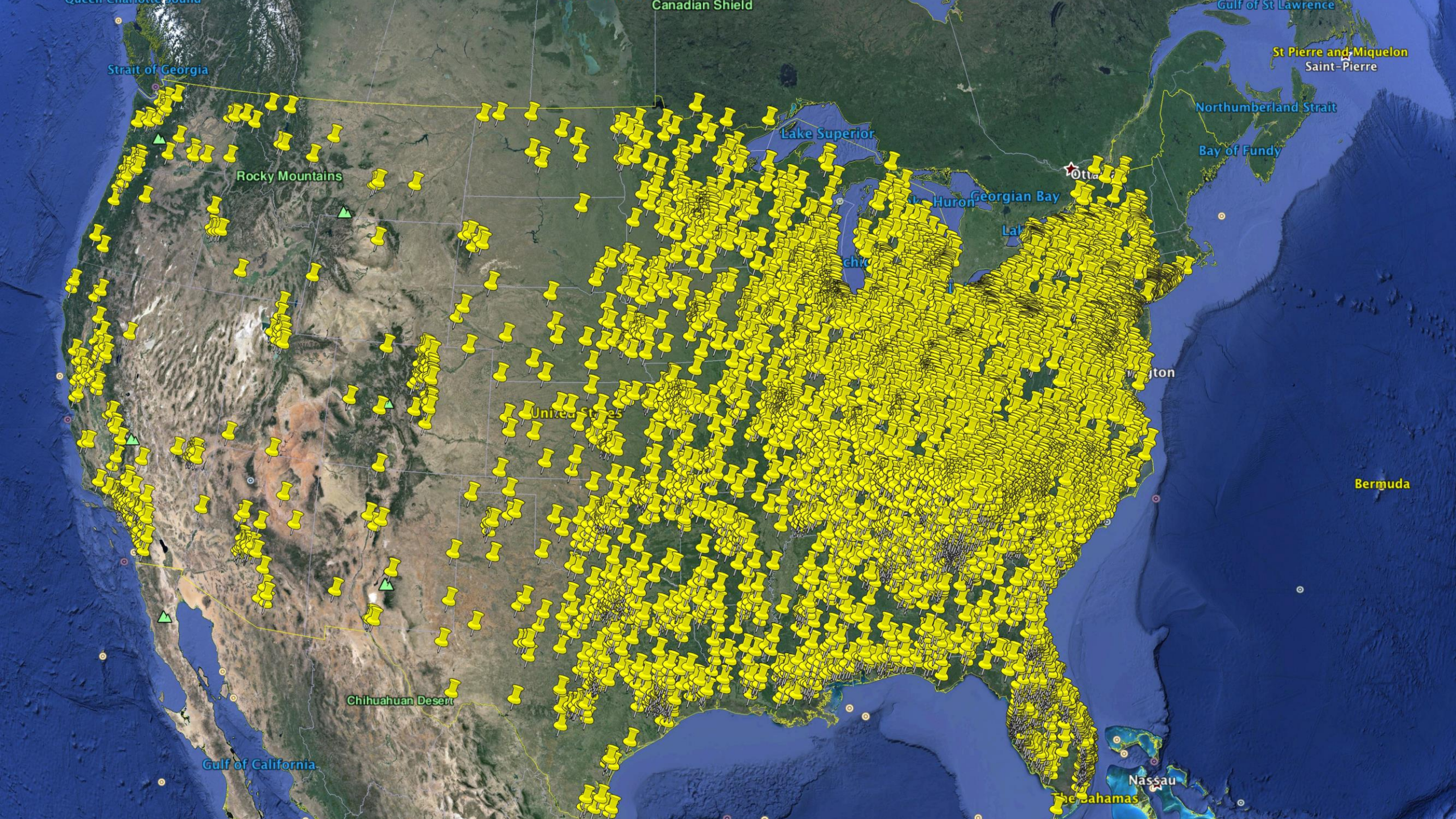
Biltmore's Gracious Hospitality Course held April 4 at SCC - Regular cost \$995, through grant funding and Partnerships, offered to participants at a cost of \$35. The BRNHA partnered with Duke Energy, ARC and the JCTDA on this effort. We had a class of 45 participants learning 'Plus One' customer service & hospitality skills.

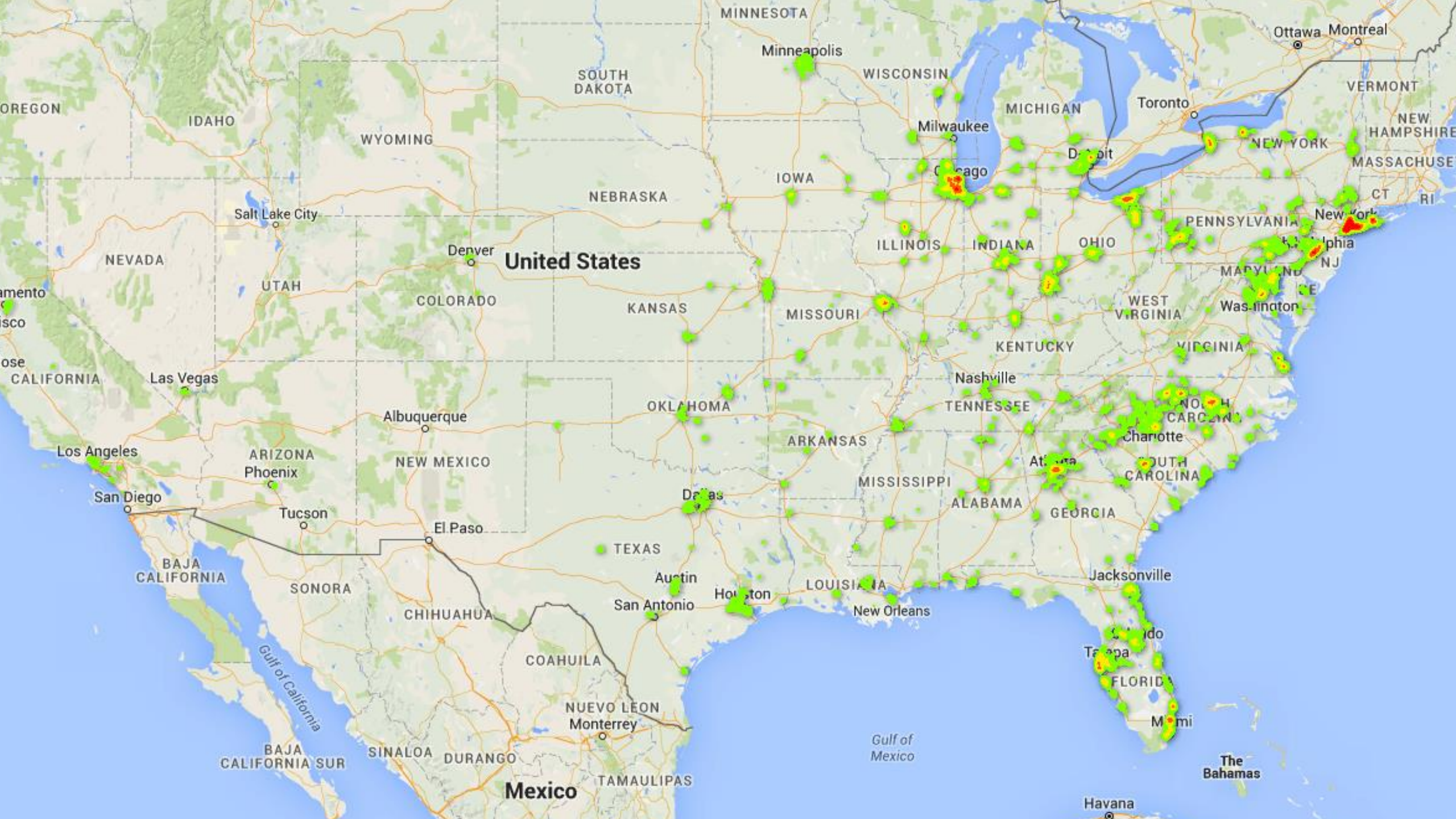
Analysis of Tourist Data

We are analyzing multiple data points to make the most strategic use of advertising dollars. We're factoring the following into marketing decisions:

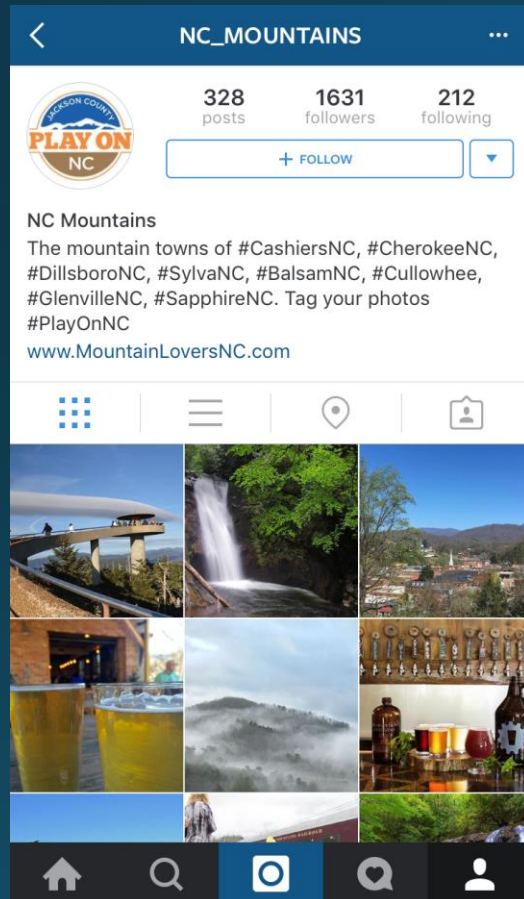
- Social Media Analytics
- Website Analytics
- Lead Data (visitor information requests)
- Hotel visitor feeder cities analysis
- Smith Travel Research Data (new partner)

My office recently analyzed 8,213 visitor inquiries from last July to present. We took the data and plotted zip codes to see where most interest about Jackson County was coming from. The results confirmed and validated our existing marketing program goals but also presented new opportunities to consider and study further.





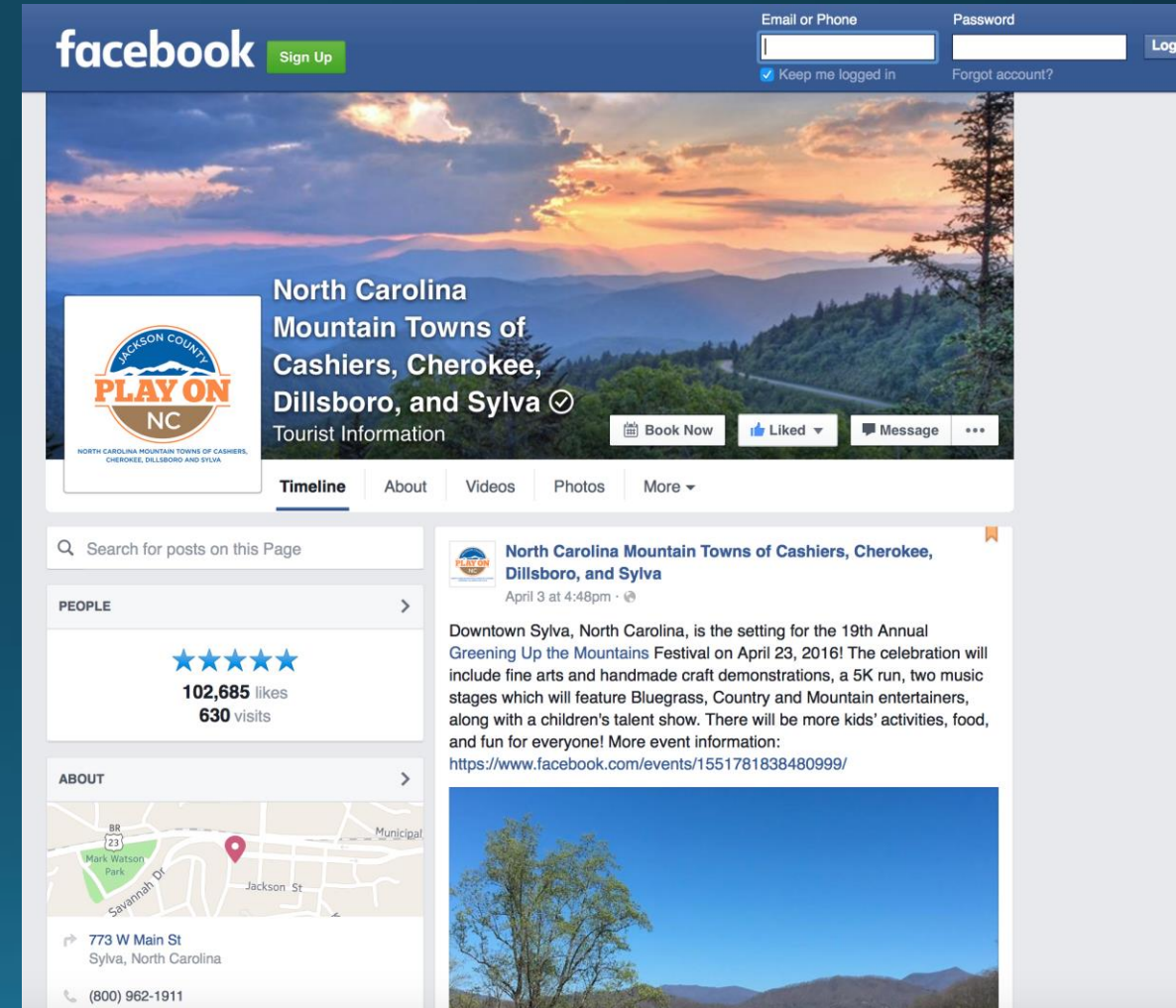
Social Media



Instagram: @nc_mountains



Twitter: @nc_mountains

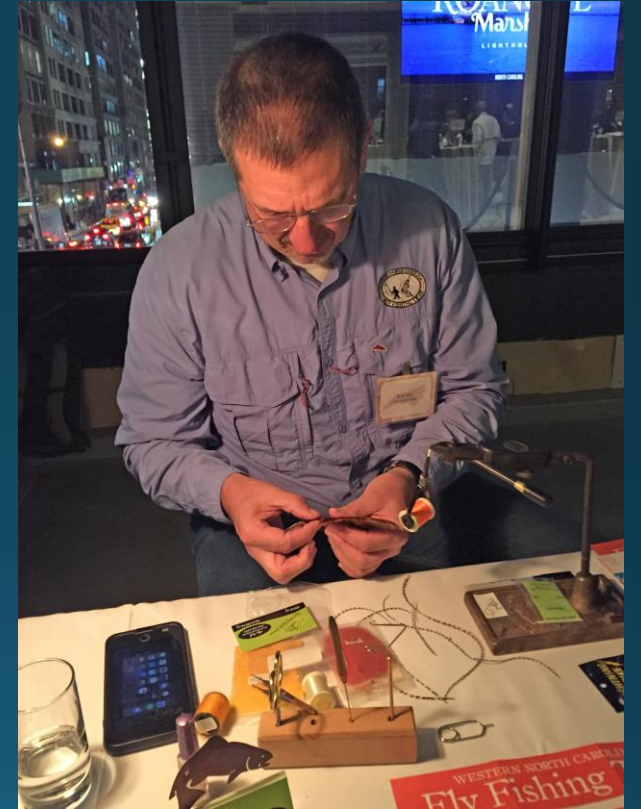


Facebook: fb.com/MountainLoversNC

FAM (familiarization) trips

- Bring media to Jackson County to showcase best it has to offer – lodging, dining, recreation.
- 2-3 media attendees per trip
- April – NC Beer month FAM
- June – Fitness FAM
- October – Leaf looking FAM
- Coverage of FAM trips appears in magazines, newspaper and online. Takes up to a year for placement.

NYC Media Mission – Jan. 26



A reception-trade show hybrid offers partners a chance to network with key editors, writers, producers, bloggers and qualified freelance travel writers in the New York area. This year over 120 media attended. Interest from Nat Geo Traveler & Self Magazine.

NC Beer Month FAM Trip

April 15-17, 2016

Chris Chamberlain

Contributor

Contributes To: *Nashville Scene, Nashville Lifestyles, Local Palate, Edible, FoodRepublic.com, and Conde Nast Traveler*



Jim Dykstra

Editor

Beer Connoisseur



Reid Ramsey

Founder and Editor

Beer Street Journal



TRAVEL

NORTH CAROLINA

Want to really get away?

No TVs, telephones in High Hampton rooms.

Formal dinners, rustic decor make your visit like a trip back in time.

By Blake Guthrie
For the AJC

High Hampton Inn doesn't have TVs or telephones in its rooms. And cell service is spotty to nonexistent in the mountainous setting. It's a place to unwind but — by necessity — you'll also be disconnected.

That's by design as much as topography. High Hampton sticks proudly to its old-fashioned ways. And the families who've been vacationing at the western North Carolina mountain retreat in Cashiers each summer for generations

know it that way. Now in its 53rd season of operation, tradition reigns in High Hampton. Men must wear a coat and tie to dinner, and women aren't allowed in the evenings. If you show up to the breakfast buffet wearing a baseball cap, you'll be asked to leave it.

Tea and cookies are served in the lobby every afternoon, and the evening entertainment might consist of old-fashioned parlor games, mountain music or a natural story presentation. Whatever it takes to bring people together in conversation is the motto. If it sounds like an Appalachian version of Downtown Abbey, so be it. In the modern age, it's hard to find a vacation experience quite like High Hampton.

The accommodations are comfortably rustic, with wooden floors that creak when you walk down the hall, and each room and cabin is differently different from the next. One of the best things about staying at High Hampton is the feeling of going through a time tunnel and arriving at a pristine lakeside resort in the mountains as it might have appeared when your grandparents were kids.

Many families get their start at the resort, because the lush, serene setting lends itself to honeymoons. The Hunters, anyone can dine at Canyon Kitchen or have a spa treatment at Canyon Spa, both part of Lonesome Valley but outside the main gate and open to the public.

Dining at Canyon Kitchen is an experience, not just a meal. The restaurant resembles a fancy wooden barn that could pass for a ski lodge in another setting. The pay-one-price menu changes week to week, but what is available in the garden outside the kitchen door. Under the guidance of chef John Flier, Canyon Kitchen has flourished. If you're seeking the ultimate date night around Cashiers, this is the place.

Five miles north of Cashiers, Lake Glenville is a shimmering oasis for those who need to get out on the open water while in the mountains. Said to be the highest man-made lake east of the Mississippi, it's also big enough for power boating, a rarity in



Lake Glenville, a shimmering oasis five miles north of Cashiers, is big enough for power boating and water skiing and is said to be the highest man-made lake east of the Mississippi. CONTRIBUTED BY JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY



Canyon Kitchen at Lonesome Valley has become one of the top dining spots in the mountains of western North Carolina, the ultimate date night in Cashiers. CONTRIBUTED BY KEVIN WAGGAMAN

you have the place to yourself at Lonesome Valley.

It's located in a box canyon of soaring stone-faced mountains, and only residents or those staying in the cottages can explore the valley. However, anyone can dine at Canyon Kitchen or have a spa treatment at Canyon Spa, both part of Lonesome Valley but outside the main gate and open to the public.

Dining at Canyon Kitchen is an experience, not just a meal. The restaurant resembles a fancy wooden barn that could pass for a ski lodge in another setting. The pay-one-price menu changes week to week, but what is available in the garden outside the kitchen door. Under the guidance of chef John Flier, Canyon Kitchen has flourished. If you're seeking the ultimate date night around Cashiers, this is the place.

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these parts. Lakeshore Pontoon Rentals is the only boat rental company on the lake. Owners Chris and Regina Hunter also provide guided tours, including sunset cruises. The Hunters know all the hidden coves, so if you don't take a guided tour, be sure to get directions to these scenic, peaceful spots where waterfalls tumble into the lake.

Waterfalls abound in the Cashiers area, and so do trails to reach them. From Whitewater Falls — at 41 feet the highest in the east — to Little Slide Rock — where, as the name suggests, you can slide down the falls — you can find all manner of cascading water on the plateau. High Hampton has a waterfall map with directions, available in its lobby. Upcoming area events include Blues, Brews and BBQ over Memorial Day weekend, Taste of the Plateau culinary festival June 26-28, the Lake Glenville Majesty Over Water fireworks display July 5, and the Rotary Club of Cashiers Valley Arts and Crafts Fair held over Memorial Day and Labor Day weekends, bookending summer in Cashiers.

IF YOU GO

Cashiers, N.C., is a two-and-a-half hour drive from downtown Atlanta. Take I-85 north to Exit 1 in South Carolina. Follow S.C. 11 and S.C. 107 north to Cashiers.

Where to stay

High Hampton Inn. The 2015 season runs until November. Rates start at \$154 a night and include three meals a day in the lodge dining room. There's a two-night minimum on weekends. 1525 Highway 107 South, Cashiers, N.C. 800-334-2551, highhamptoninn.com.

Lonesome Valley. Guest cottages have two bedrooms, two bathrooms, a full kitchen, family room with fireplace, breakfast area and back porch for \$325 a night. 94 Lonesome Valley Road, Sapphire, N.C. 828-743-7696, lonesomevalley.com/project/canyon-kitchen.

Where to eat

Canyon Kitchen. The seasonal menu changes weekly depending on what is growing in the garden. \$53 per person includes all courses. 94 Lonesome Valley Road, Sapphire, N.C. 828-743-7696, lonesomevalley.com/project/canyon-kitchen.

Slab Town Pizza. Casual, kid-friendly, order-at-the-counter pizzeria featuring handmade artisanal pies, calzones, salads and plenty of local craft beer on tap. Whole pies start at \$12. 45 Slab Town Road, Cashiers, N.C. 828-743-0020, slabtownpizza.com.

Visitor information
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority, 800-962-1911, mountainloversnc.com.

TUESDAY'S TRAVEL EXTRA

Bonus digital section for subscribers

India pulses with the noise and energy of 1.2 billion people. There's so much to take in that you risk sensory overload. Get a solid strategy for visiting Mumbai and Jaipur in Tuesday's Travel Extra. Make the most of your subscription on myAJC.com/travelextra and on AJCPaper.



BEYOND OUR
domain

Cashiers, N.C.

SERVES UP COOL SUMMER TEMPS

BY VICKI STOUT

PULSE GETAWAY

Perched in Southwest North Carolina at 3,487 feet above sea level, the village of Cashiers has a population of around 1,700 in summer and number can swell upwards of 35,000 in summer and fall. And for good reason.

In summer months, residents, travelers and seasonal residents alike are bathed in refreshing cool mountain breezes. Come autumn, Mother Nature paints dramatic wide swaths of reds, oranges and egg yolk yellows across the Blue Ridge Mountain vistas and alongside clear lakes and streams.

The village is scattered, but certainly not far or wide. Filled with boutiques, galleries, outdoor stores and acclaimed eateries, Cashiers is a balm for the soul for devout nature lovers and city dwellers alike. The only high rises here are the mountains themselves.

Hiking trails are numerous; many of which are dotted by roaring, raging waterfalls that spill over into idyllic pools of peace below. Anglers enjoy their sport, particularly fly fishermen, and golfers play on the lush manicured courses.

Long alluring to "flatlanders," the area has been home to High Hampton Inn & Country Club for 93 years. A rustic destination resort on the

National Register of Historic Places, it invokes iconic old flick, "Dirty Dancing."

While the resort's name says "country club," it's not stuffy. Though golf is a calling card, it's just on the menu. The resort offers tennis, hiking, shuffleboard and savoring the three R's — reading, rocking and r

The main inn has a massive four-sided stone hardwoods, fresh blooms and comfy furnishings o from home experience. The dining rooms' hardw antique tables providing ample seating for guests.

And seating here is a big deal. It's determined by seniority. The prized tables are

donws which open for summer breezes and overlo

A Place for All Seasons

From fly fishing to waterfall hunting, Highlands and Cashiers, North Carolina, keep outdoor enthusiasts busy year-round. BY KRISTEN HANSEN

LIKE WATER BEING WRUNG FROM A TOWEL, THE twisting mountain road to Highlands, North Carolina, seems to rinse all worries and troubles away. As travelers drive along a picturesque incline, they can catch glimpses of cascading waterfalls, as well as die-hard cyclists making the ascent until, as if out of nowhere, the tiny mountain town comes into view at an elevation of 4,118 feet.

Highlands is just as its 1875 founders named Truman Kahay and Clinton Carter Huchenshaw, likely imagining a charming trading outpost tucked into a corner of the state where the commercial demands of Georgia, South Carolina and North Carolina meet. But unlike the industrial hub and subsequent deconstruction that once was planned for the area, contemporary Highlands and nearby Cashiers are all about lush wooded forests for the affluent and year-round adventure for out-of-town residents.

Summer highs of 79 degrees and winter lows of 43 make this destination an easy choice for visitors wanting to indulge in the area's best offerings. In fact, it's difficult to be idle with so many adventures at hand. Venture out onto one of the dozens of hiking trails, across the Highlands and Cashiers area for views of the southern Appalachians' endless shallow peaks. From 10-minute ambles to full-day treks, the area has something for everyone. Access to the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, the most visited national park in the country, is less than an hour's drive away. A great starting point is Highland Hiker (highlandhiker.com), a small trail chain with locations in Highlands

and Cashiers where visitors can pick up gear and maps.

Dubbed "The Land of Waterfalls," the area's close proximity to the Eastern Continental Divide — where the

water flows either toward the Gulf of Mexico or the Atlantic Ocean — translates into a multitude of gushing waterfalls and deep lagoons. More than a dozen can be accessed by road or on foot, including Upper Whitewater Falls, which cascades 411 feet to the Joazeiro Gorge area.

Anchor your stay at either Old Edwards Inn and Spa (oldeidwards.com), a posh lodge spread across several blocks of downtown Highlands, or at High Hampton Inn (highhamptoninn.com) in Cashiers, a family-style, all-inclusive resort open each year spring through fall.

Old Edwards Inn is known for its award-winning spa and restaurants, doing service and historic aesthetics. The inn delights year-round, but is especially enjoyable in the fall and winter when you can warm yourself beside a cozy fire in a room fireplace following a day spent hiking through the area's glorious foliage or riding at nearby Sapphire Valley Ski Area.

Within the 1,400-acre High Hampton estate, families — many who have made this resort part of their summer travel plan for decades — also have recreational fun doing scenic trails, play golf on the 18-hole course, join the kids' day camp, and paddle canoe the

pristine lake where Back Mountain, a majestic peak towering over the inn, is reflected in the glassy water.

The Inn, which are raised at a nearby farm and often double as golf caddies, sometimes join the evening party on the lawn where, after a full day of activities, families come together for snacks and cocktails.

The resort is also a great starting point for the Western North Carolina Fly Fishing Trail (flyfishingtrail.com), a series of 15 fly fishing locales where brook, brown and rainbow trout abound in chilly creeks and streams. A fishing license is required (cost of the property, but it's not necessary on High Hampton's private lake, where licenses are offered by AFB Fly Fishing Guide Service (afbfly.org).

Often referred to as the "Venice of the South," Cashiers is a draw for rock climbers whose no-concrete steep cliffs such as White Side Mountain, which has the highest sheer face in the Appalachian mountain chain, lead to be one of the oldest mountains in the world. Whitewater is between Highlands and Cashiers and overlooks the Nantahala National Forest, spanning over 4,750 feet.

A two-mile loop trail takes hikers to the summit, but climbers head for the 1,000-foot vertical cliff to reach the mountain's south side. Fox Mountain Guides and Climbing School (foxmountainguides.com) is one option for guided trips for beginners, as well as advanced climbers.

Back at the inn, a massage, a hearty meal and a good night's sleep will provide fuel for more exploring the following day. ■

TRAVEL TIPS

No matter what time of year you choose to visit the Highlands/Cashiers area, there is something to do at every level of activity and adventure.

- Allegiant Airlines flies direct to Asheville Regional Airport out of Orlando Sanford International Airport. From Asheville, it's a 70-minute drive to Highlands/Cashiers.
- High season for this part of North Carolina is summer and fall, which means that you can usually get a better deal on hotel rates during the spring and winter months.
- If you plan to do some hiking, be sure to pack shoes that are comfortable and suitable for walking the trails. Another consideration: insect spray. The gnats can be bothersome.
- From mid-December through February, the Cashiers Valley Ski Area in the Blue Ridge Mountains near Cashiers makes its own snow (snowmakingequipment.com).
- Remember to bring your golf clubs: there are numerous public and private courses in the Highlands/Cashiers area.



PULSE / DECEMBER 2014 / ORLANDOMAGAZINE.COM

PR Investment and ROI

\$54,000 investment = \$1,000,000 Return on Investment

Earned Media Coverage, or publicity is one of the most trusted and credible forms of media used to generate awareness for Jackson County. It carries the unbiased third-party endorsement of an independent expert- the writer, editor, blogger or broadcast anchor – who is recommending the destination and sharing their experience. In addition, these stories can live on long past the immediate impact of advertising and gain additional “legs” as content for social and digital (web) platforms further spreading the word.

Director's Role

Taking on the Director's role January 1 has been a rewarding opportunity to help influence and grow tourism in Jackson County.

Since Jan. 1, by the numbers:

- Over 90 meetings held with local, regional and state tourism, business, community members and stakeholders
- 6 professional development conferences & workshops attended
- 6 presentations to community groups on TDA efforts
- Assisted with planning for Greening Up the Mountains & working with planners for Mountain Heritage Day (our two largest events)

Activity updates

- Office established in Dillsboro Visitor Center
- Created a countywide photo library of attractions, lodging, events & activities. I continue to document our events to build on out the library for marketing and promotional purposes.
- Created a video library that continues to grow. Plans call for using clips to create a Jackson County promotional video this fall.
- Created a comprehensive accommodations database for Jackson County
- Conducting a tourism resource audit to best understand what tourism assets we have in place in our county.

Activity updates

- Created a countywide events calendar (from both Chambers, communities, WCU, Harrah's and others)
- Create a TDA news library with every historical story about the TDA since 2011 from all area newspapers.
- The JCTDA partnered with Smith Travel Research to better understand changes in occupancy trends in Jackson County and will utilize that data for better marketing decisions.
- Partnership with Kevin Adams, author of NC Waterfalls to license comprehensive county waterfall information on JCTDA's new website.
- Developed and distributed a county-wide survey on facilities that can be utilized for business conferences and sports-related tourism

Film in Jackson County



Dirty Dancing
Filming May 8-13 at High Hampton Inn

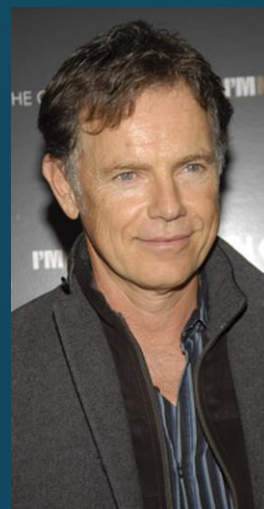




Colt Prattes



Casper Smart



Bruce Greenwood



Billy Dee Williams



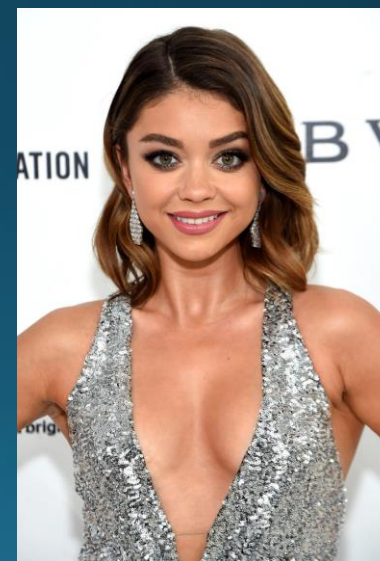
Debra Messing



Abigail Breslin



Nicole Scherzinger



Sarah Hyland

Three Billboards

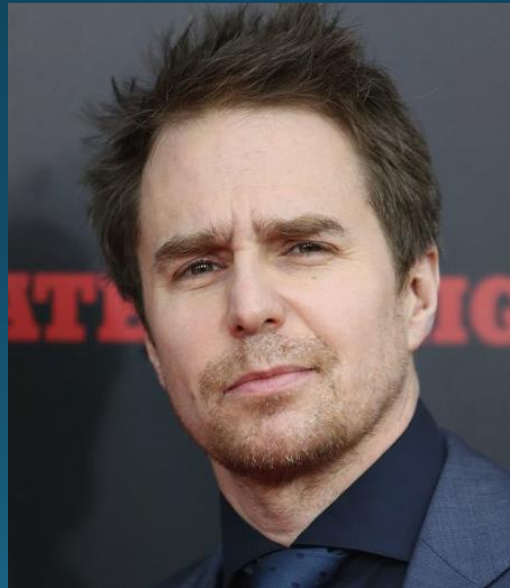
- Filming May 2-3, 10-13, 16, & 18-20



Woody Harrelson



Frances McDormand



Sam Rockwell



Peter Dinklage









Anglers & Appetites

- Jackson County is filming a third season of Anglers & Appetites this week (May 3-6) across Jackson County.
- Television show focuses on fishing and dining.
- Estimated reach of 25 million viewers for last season
- Airs on Fox Sports South and Fox Sun



Anglers & Appetites

This season will feature:

- Lulu's, Guadalupe & City Lights Café in a Badia Spices Challenge
- Flip 'N Whip food truck, Cashiers' Ugly Dog Pub and High Hampton Inn
- Kyle Fronrath / Fontana Guides spinning reels on the Tuckasegee
- Matt Canter / Brookings doing a Float trip on the Tuck
- Austin Neary / Dreamcatcher guides lake fishing at Bear Lake
- Flyfishing with Alex Bell / AB Flyfishing on the Tuck





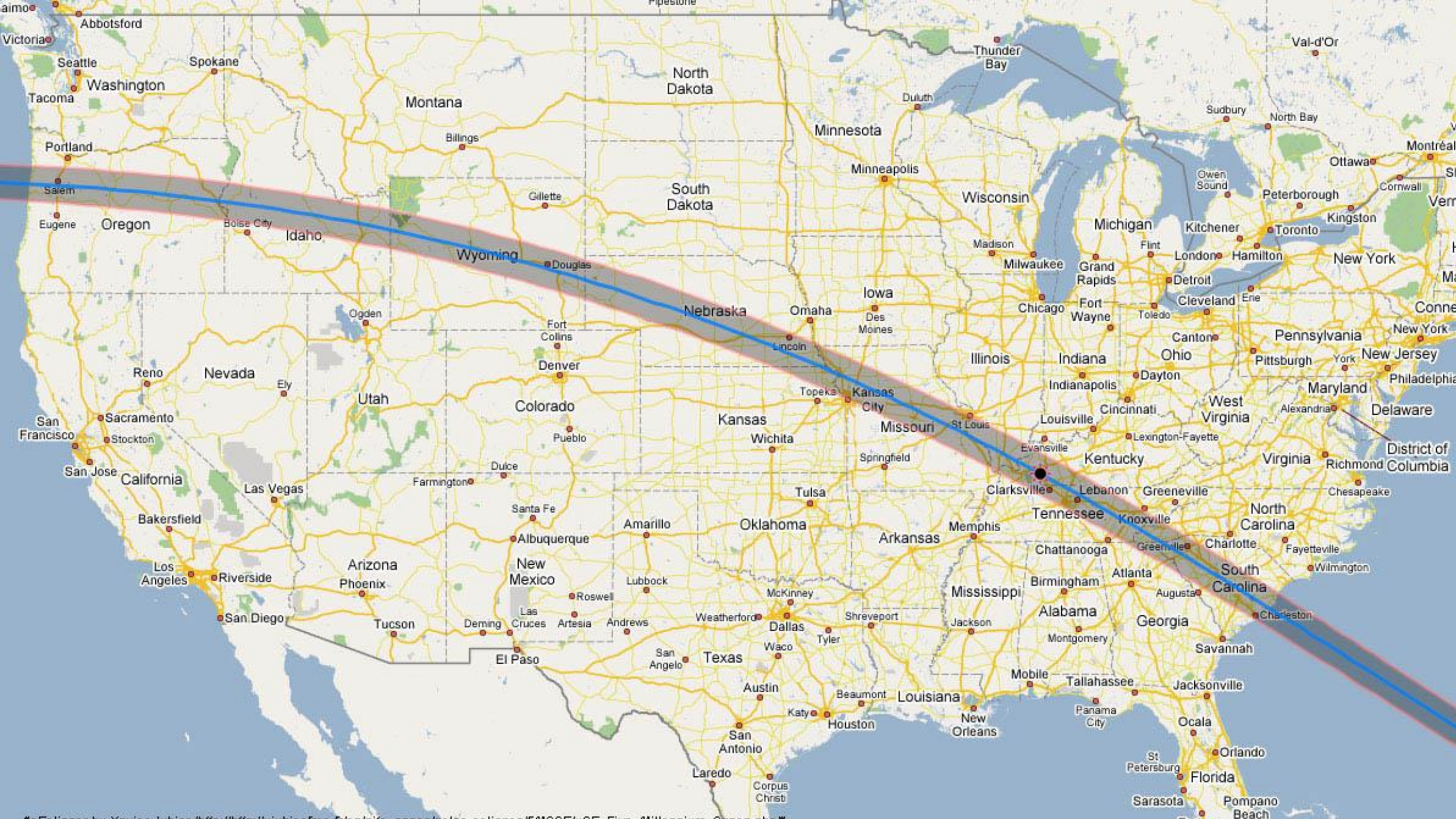
Sports Tourism



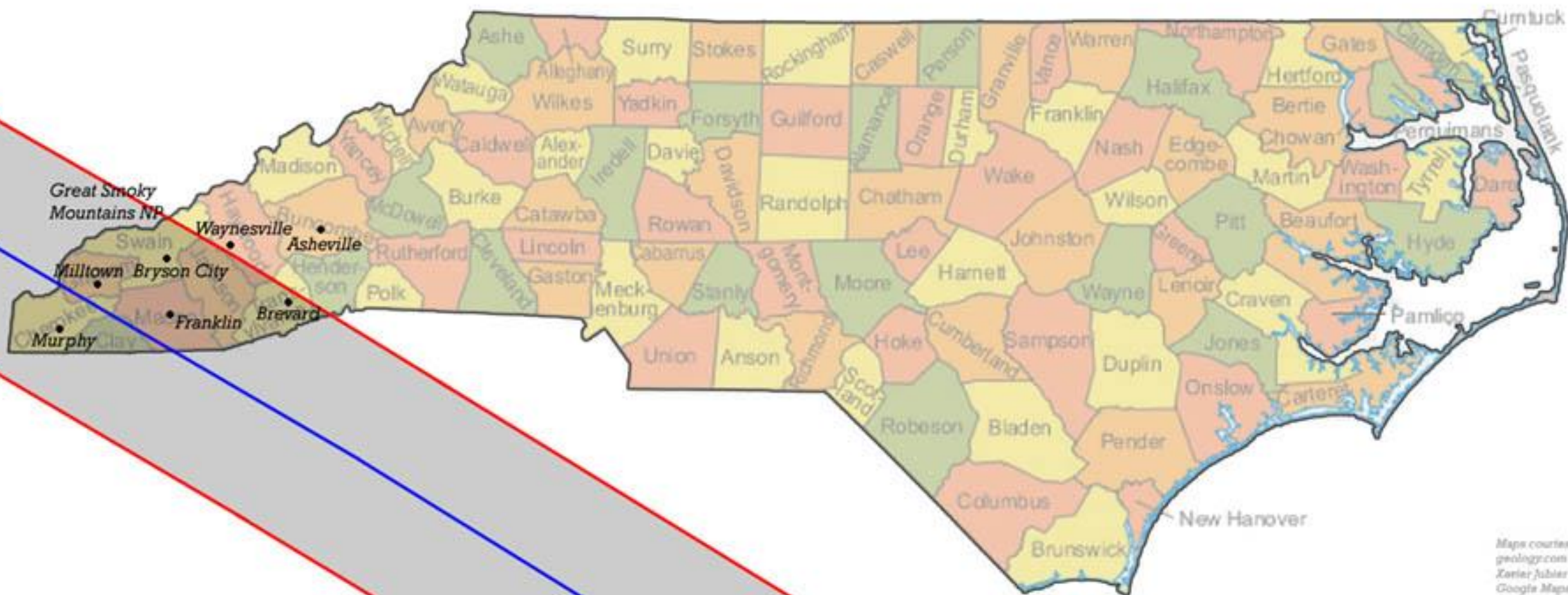
The JCTDA is beginning discussions with Western Carolina University to understand better how we can promote their sports events and in turn, drive more overnight visits to Jackson County. There's tremendous opportunity in a joint partnership with WCU.

Total Solar Eclipse - Aug. 21, 2017

We are beginning planning efforts related to events surrounding the Aug. 21, 2017 Total Solar Eclipse. Jackson County is in the prime viewing area for this event. It's expected to draw thousands from out of town to view. We'll be holding stakeholder meetings in the coming months to plan for events & public safety concerns surrounding the once-in-a-lifetime event.



Map showing the path of the transcontinental railroad from the Pacific Northwest to the Southeast, passing through the Great Plains and the Appalachian region.



Maps courtesy of:
geology.com
Xavier Jubier
Google Maps
Eclipse2017.org

	Location	Most recent totality	Next scheduled Totality	Number of years between eclipses
	Anchorage, Alaska	1943, Feb. 4	2399, Aug. 2*	456.5
	Atlanta, Ga.	1778, June 24	2078, May 11	299.5
	Boston, Mass.	1959, Oct. 2	2079, May 1	119.6
	Calgary, Alberta	1869, Aug. 7	2044, Aug. 23	175.0
	Chicago, Ill.	1806, June 6*	2205, July 17	399.1
	Dallas, Texas	1623, Oct. 23	2024, April 8	401.5
	Denver, Colo.	1878, July 29	2045, Aug. 12	167.0
	Halifax, Nova Scotia	1970, March 7	2079, May 1	109.1
	Hamilton, Bermuda	1532, Aug. 30**	2352, Feb. 16	819.5
	Honolulu, Hawaii	1850, Aug. 7	2252, Dec. 31	402.4
	Houston, Texas	1259, Oct. 17**	2200, April 14	940.5
	Las Vegas, N.V.	1724, May 22	2207, Nov. 20	483.5
	Los Angeles, Calif.	1724, May 22	3290, April 1	1565.9
	Mexico City, Mexico	1991, July 11	2261, Dec. 22	270.4
	Miami, Fla.	1752, May 13*	2352, Feb. 16	599.8
	Montréal, Quebec	1932, Aug. 31*	2024, April 8*	91.6
	New Orleans, La.	1900, May 28	2078, May 11	178.0
	New York, N.Y.	1925, Jan. 24*	2079, May 1	154.3
	Phoenix, Ariz.	1806, June 16	2205, July 17	399.1
	St. Louis, Mo.	1442, July 7**	2017, Aug. 21*	575.1
	San Francisco, Calif.	1424, June 26**	2252, Dec. 31	828.5
	Seattle, Wash.	1860, July 18	2645, May 17	784.8
	Toronto, Ontario	1142, Aug. 22**	2144, Oct. 26	1002.2
	Washington, D.C.	1451, June 28**	2200, April 14	748.8
	Winnipeg, Manitoba	1979, Feb. 26	3356, Sept. 16	1377.6

Why is this event so special?

The average number of years between eclipses turns out to be nearly 534 years. Considering our relatively small survey of 25 cities, this is reasonably close to the once-in-almost four-century rule.

Source: <http://www.space.com/25644-total-solar-eclipses-frequency-explained.html#sthash.4KpMLxvV.dpuf>

Thank you!