



July 21, 2025

Jackson County Commissioners  
401 Grindstaff Cove Road  
Sylva, NC 28779

Dear Commissioners,

At our July 16 Tourism Development Authority meeting, the board reviewed two applications submitted through the Tourism Capital Project Fund program.

Our Board is recommending both projects be fully funded. In accordance with governing legislation (R12-34), final approval is required from the Jackson County Commissioners.

While the full project packets are included in your meeting materials, a brief summary is provided below:

**Project Rise** - \$500,000 in Funding - Submitted by Jackson County Economic Development

Jackson County Fair Grounds will be a transformative 28-acre tourism complex adjacent to the Great Smoky Mountains Railroad corridor in Whittier. The development includes two major facilities: a 24,000 sq. ft. enclosed event venue and a 48,000 sq. ft. open-air pavilion. These multi-use spaces will support a variety of activities, such as cultural events, educational programming, regional festivals, and potential rail-themed excursions.

Construction is scheduled to begin in July 2025 and is expected to conclude by May 2026. The project anticipates generating 33,000+ room nights annually and creating up to 40 seasonal jobs. With 80% of the \$4.53M project budget spent locally, this investment supports sustainable tourism growth, community enrichment, and long-term economic vitality. The county is requesting \$500,000 in Tourism Capital Project Funds toward development.

**Dillsboro Link** - \$250,000 in Funding - Submitted by the Town of Dillsboro

The Town of Dillsboro is seeking support to acquire a 2.06-acre parcel at 66 Dills Street for the construction of a pedestrian boardwalk linking the historic downtown to the Monteith Farmstead and Appalachian Women's Museum. This infrastructure will provide safe, walkable access between two key cultural and recreational assets, encouraging extended visitor engagement and supporting local businesses.

Scheduled to break ground in August 2025, the boardwalk will enhance Dillsboro's appeal as a walkable heritage destination. With a projected useful life exceeding 50 years, the \$675,000 project is fully locally funded through combined contributions from the Town of Dillsboro (\$175,000), Jackson County (\$250,000), and a \$250,000 TDA grant request. Maintenance will be covered through the Town's parks budget.

Thank you for your consideration. We look forward to partnering with you on these impactful projects.

Sincerely,

Nick Breedlove  
Executive Director, JCTDA



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