

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

# 2005-2006 Marketing & Communications Plan





# Message to the Industry

The 2005-2006 Marketing/Communications Plan reflects a new strategic direction for the upcoming fiscal year. It is based on the considerable input from the tourism industry, direction from the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) and guidance from BCTDA's new advertising agency, Cramer-Krasselt, along with the outcome of a major brand study and platform.

The brand promise, which guarantees visitors a life enriching experience, dictates the need for a new creative expression. The BCTDA and Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) will roll out a brand blueprint and brand bible this fall. At the same time, we will share the new advertising campaign that is being built to launch the Asheville brand. A brand marketing manager will be hired to facilitate the implementation, ensure ongoing brand equity and to seek out partnerships and other opportunities that further the Asheville tourism brand.

In order to maximize the initial roll-out campaign of the new brand, BCTDA is enhancing its television focus to incorporate more spot TV buys. Television will also be accompanied by a significant print campaign and Internet promotions. In fact, the total net media buy is a record \$1.75 million.

The CVB will also move into the new Visitor Center and Chamber building later this year. The expanded space in the Visitor Center will provide opportunities to better showcase the region and service travelers in order to encourage additional overnight stays in the area. We are excited about our new offices and invite you to stop by once we move in later this year.

The CVB prides itself on the service that it provides to our partners, the tourism industry and the entire community. At our core, it is our aim to be dynamic and dependable while exhibiting integrity in everything we do.

As always, your continued feedback is greatly appreciated. Without your support and partnerships, the CVB would not be able to undertake such an extensive program of work. We encourage you to read the plan and continue providing the CVB staff with ideas for improvement whenever possible. To keep abreast of current CVB programs and activities, regularly visit [www.ashevillecvb.com](http://www.ashevillecvb.com). We look forward to a prosperous 2005-2006.

Your CVB Team





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# **Annual Report**

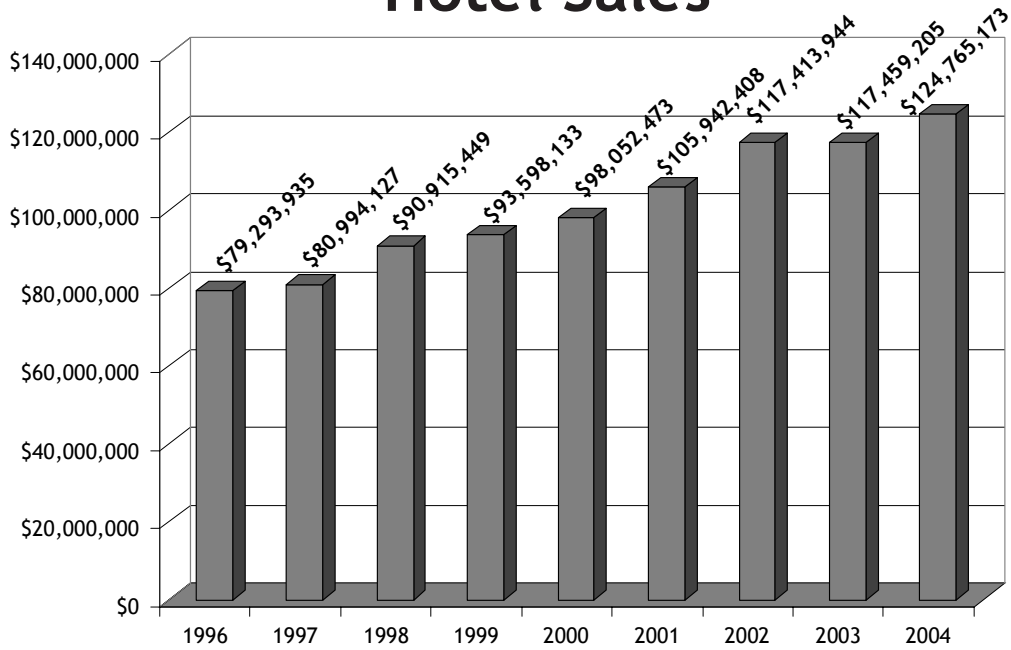
## **A Review of 2004-2005**



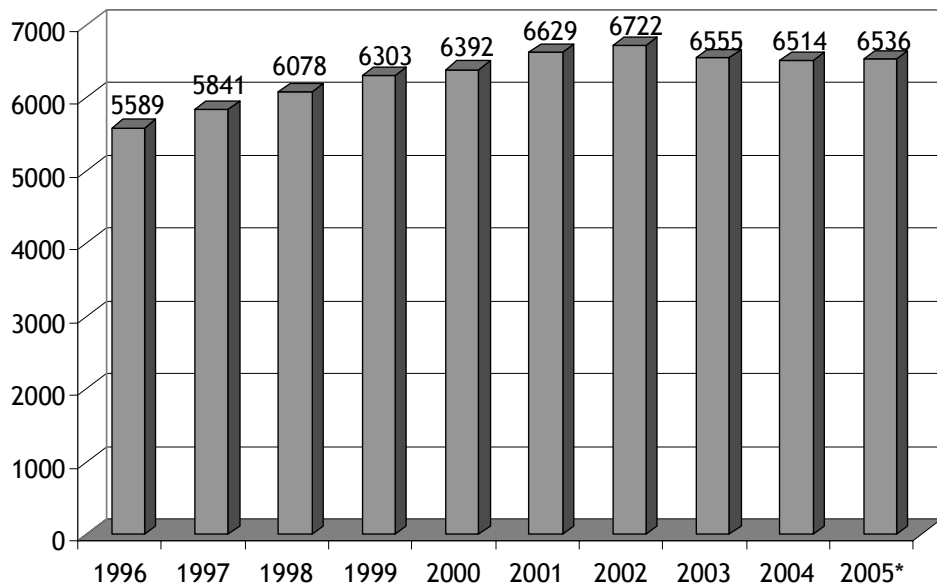


# General Tourism

## Hotel Sales



## Number of Accommodation Rooms in Buncombe County



\*Count as of July 8, 2005

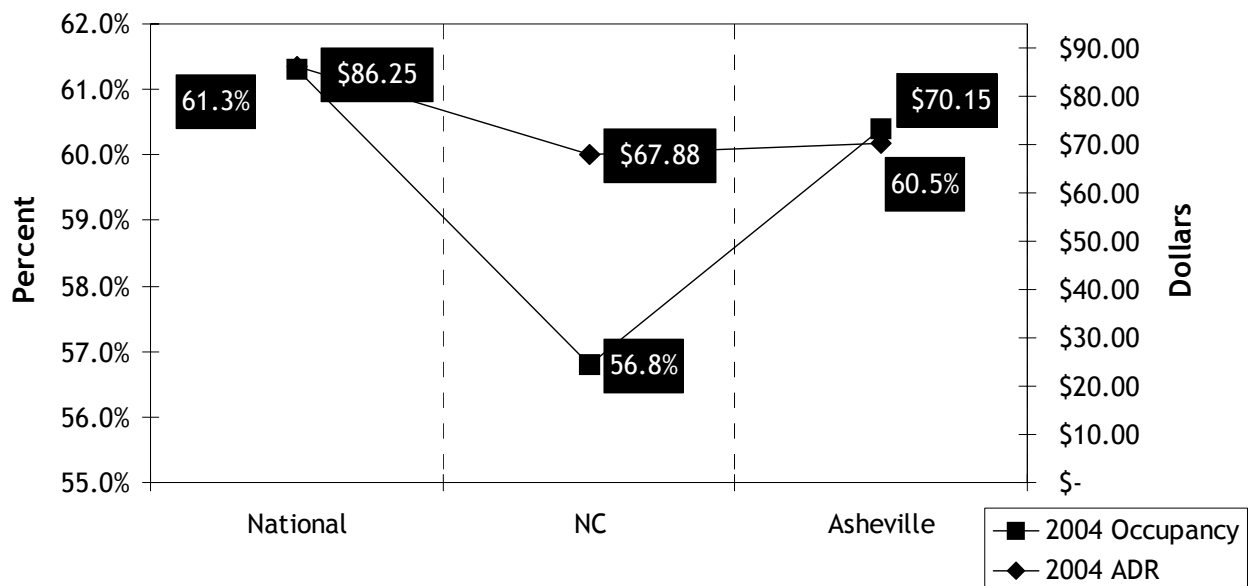


# General Tourism



## 2004 Occupancy & Average Daily Rate

	2003		2004	
	Occupancy	ADR	Occupancy	ADR
National	59.2%	\$82.93	61.3%	\$86.25
North Carolina	55.7%	\$65.89	56.8%	\$67.88
Asheville	58.1%	\$68.33	60.5%	\$70.15



Research provided by:  
Smith Travel Research (December 2004 Report)



# Marketing & Public Relations

## Public Relations Placements

2003-2004		2004-2005		Variance
Advertising Value (through May)	\$ 7,559,397.40*	Advertising Value (through May)	\$5,049,937.39	(33.2)
Column Inches (through May)	43,794	Column Inches (through May)	26,687	(39.1)
Circulation (through May)	270,806,493	Circulation (through May)	212,161,534	(21.7)
Significant Placements (through May)	494	Significant Placements (through May)	426	(13.8)
Journalists Assisted	327	Journalists Assisted **projected	280	(14.4)

\*Note that Advertising Value figures for 2003-2004 included \$1.6 million for coverage received as a result of the Cold Mountain campaign.

## Visitor Inquiries

	2003-2004	2004-2005
July	16,091	38,813
August	16,397	15,111
September	13,167	16,603
October	6,880	17,018
November	5,513	5,609
December	3,698	8,733
January	6,418	3,309
February	10,358	5,298
March	15,782	10,678
April	18,875	14,180
May	12,723	7,762
June	18,028	12,330
<b>Total</b>	<b>143,930</b>	<b>155,444</b>

## Online Visitor Guide Requests

	2003-2004	2004-2005
July	3,102	2,460
August	3,427	2,176
September	3,674	3,902
October	2,366	2,219
November	1,555	700
December	1,471	1,361
January	2,509	2,533
February	2,065	3,067
March	3,916	3,536
April	2,705	2,320
May	1,933	2,310
June	3,197	3,377
<b>Total</b>	<b>31,920</b>	<b>29,961</b>

## Visitor E-mail Newsletter Subscribers

	2003-2004	2004-2005
July-September	35,070	37,531
October-December	36,038	36,997
January-March	36,382	37,477
April-June	36,910	38,760

# Meetings & Conventions

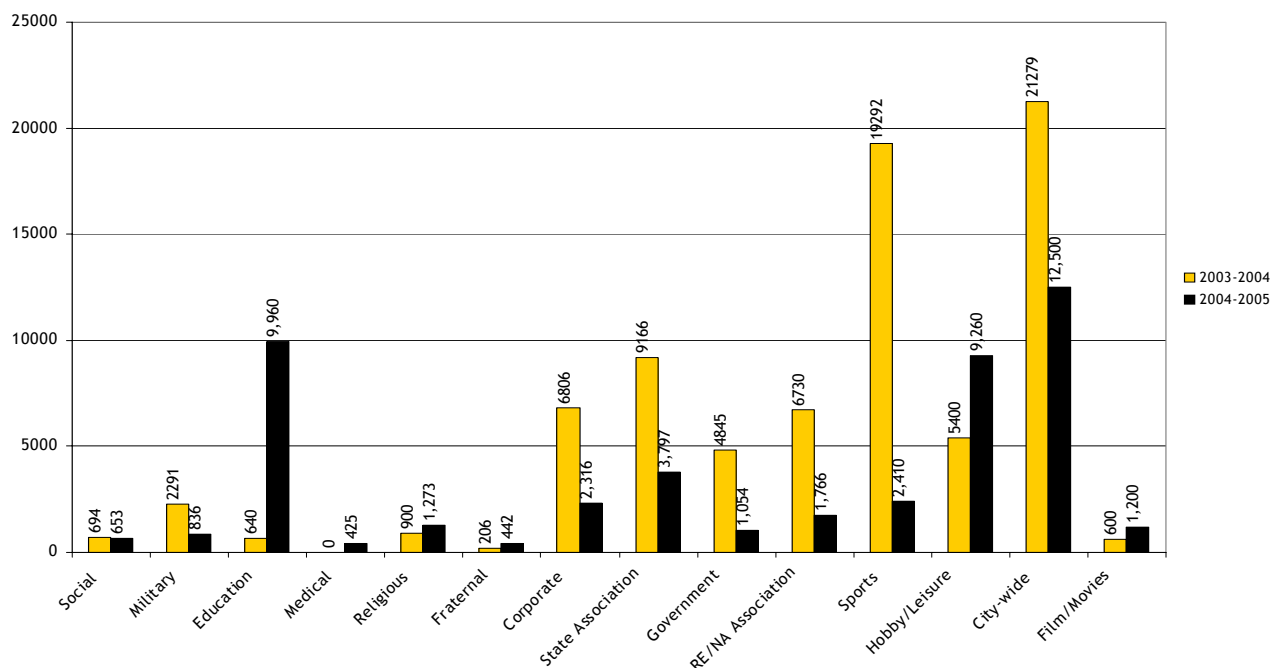


	2003-2004	2004-2005	Variance
Leads Distributed	224	160	(28.6%)
Room Nights in Leads	88,144	57,611	(34.6%)
Booked Room Nights	57,805	35,932	(37.8%)
Conversion	69.5%	61.5%	(8%)
Economic Impact of Booked Business	\$23,540,991	\$17,767,734.77	(24.5%)

## Booked Room Nights by Market

	2003-2004	2004-2005
Social	694	653
Military	2,291	836
Education	640	9,960
Medical	0	425
Religious	900	1,273
Fraternal	206	442
Corporate	6,806	2,316
State Association	9,166	3,797
Government	4,845	1,054
RE/NA Association	6,730	1,766
Sports	19,292	2,410
Hobby/Leisure	5,400	9,260
City-wide***	21,279***	12,500***
Film/Movies	600	1,200

\*\*\*Numbers calculated in other market segments.





# Visitor Center

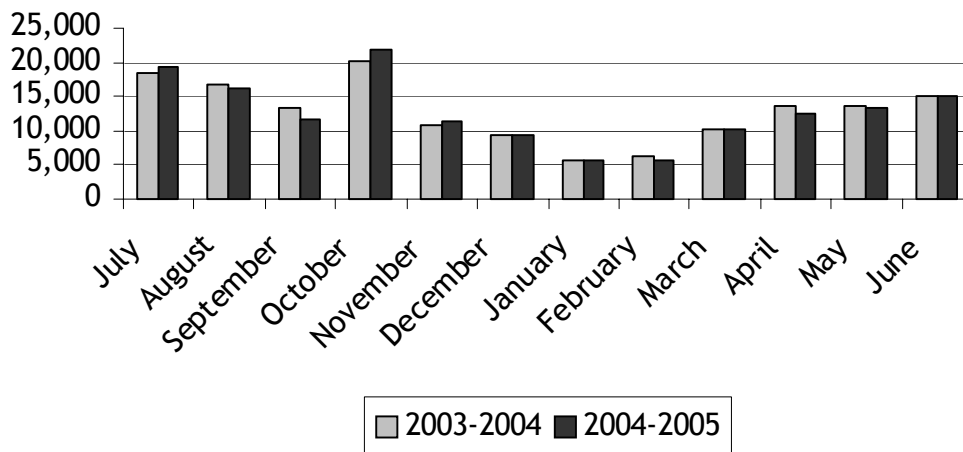
## Number of Travelers to the Asheville Visitor Center

	2003-2004	2004-2005
July	18,352	19,203
August	16,663	16,263
September	13,416	11,664
October	20,296	21,882
November	10,686	11,258
December	9,397	9,455
January	5,822	5,809
February	6,384	5,744
March	10,231	10,095
April	13,602	12,449
May	13,621	13,389
June	15,191	15,193
<b>Total</b>	<b>153,661</b>	<b>152,404</b>

The new Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center, scheduled to open in November 2005, is 4,000 square feet with state-of-the-art technology. With a concierge, receptionist, gift shop and demonstration area, Asheville visitors will truly feel welcome in our city.



## Number of Travelers to the Asheville Visitor Center



# Convention Services



	2003-2004	2004-2005	Variance
Groups Serviced	341	268	(21.4%)
Motorcoaches Serviced	68	67	(1.5%)
Economic Impact	\$33,387,327	\$30,875,185	(7.5%)
Hospitality Tables	40	44	10%
Conventions Welcomed	5	5	0.0%
Walk-ins/Call-ins Serviced	356	84**	(76.4%)

\*\* Variance due to new allocation of groups not included in "Groups Serviced."

## Group Tour (Motorcoach)

	2003-2004	2004-2005**	Variance
Leads Generated	179	94	(47.5%)
Actual Tours	729	527	(27.7%)
Room Nights	21,395	15,761	(26.3%)
Economic Impact	\$3,259,654	\$2,386,099	(20.5%)

\*\*Based on projected figures for June 2005. Actual figures were unavailable at print time.



**2005-2006**

**Marketing &  
Communications Plan**





# Advertising

## Tourism Marketing Business Objective

To increase hotel/motel sales by 6.5% in fiscal year 2005-2006.

### Media Objectives

To build awareness of Asheville as a brand.

To build awareness of Asheville as an overnight destination within key markets.

To increase Web site visitation, generating quality inquiries that lead to increased bookings.

To generate quality inquiries leading to increased bookings.

### Media Strategies

Concentrate branding message through media coverage east of the Mississippi.

Augment local market branding initiatives, weekend and spontaneous visits, proportionate to market opportunity.

Deliver the message to more targets, more often.

Concentrate message delivery against core audience of adults 35-64 with a household income of at least \$40-\$50K; during peak decision-making times; in a conducive, quality environment; at primary points of interaction; within selected geography.

### Specific Geographic Targeted Markets:

#### Top Markets

Atlanta  
Charlotte  
Greensboro/Winston-Salem  
Raleigh/Durham  
Washington DC/Northern Virginia

#### Other Key Markets

Charleston, SC  
Cincinnati, OH  
Columbia, SC  
Columbus, OH  
Dayton, OH  
Jacksonville, FL  
Nashville, TN  
New York City  
Richmond, VA  
Tampa/Sarasota, FL



# Advertising



## Media Tactics

Primary Magazines:

AAA Go	Country Living
AAA Going Places	National Geographic Traveler
AAA World	Oprah
AARP	Our State
Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel	Reader's Digest
Conde Nast Traveler	Southern Living
Cottage Living	USA Weekend

Print coverage is concentrated east of the Mississippi, particularly in the Southeast and mid-Atlantic regions, or in markets within 100 - 700 mile radius.

Print ads will primarily be a combination of full page and half page four-color ads that will drive both reach potential and frequency of message.

Television and cable advertising will be a mix of 15 and 30 second branding spots placed in a quality, quantifiable environment.

A well-defined series of Internet placements and promotions will be utilized to drive traffic to [exploreasheville.com](http://exploreasheville.com).

In general, the majority of media exposure will happen during peak decision-making times to affect business during the top three seasons: spring, summer and autumn.

The Ad Fair will continue to promote cooperative advertising partnerships.

Specific cooperative participation with the NC Division of Tourism is also planned.



# Media Selections

Print Selection	Circulation	Geographic Coverage
AAA Go	872,000	NC/SC
AAA Going Places	2,255,000	FL/GA/West TN
AAA Going Places	1,910,000	NY/OH/PA/VA/AL/East TN
AAA World	2,200,000	NJ/East PA/DC/VA
AARP	1,121,000	AL/FL/GA/MS/NC/SC/TN
Arthur Frommer's Budget Travel	525,000	East of the Mississippi
Conde Nast Traveler	290,530	SC/TN/LA/TX/MO/IL/KY/MI/ OH/DC/MD/AL/FL/GA/MS
Cottage Living	408,200	East of the Mississippi
Country Living	750,733	East of the Mississippi
Natational Geographic Traveler	715,000	East of the Mississippi
NC Travel Council Newspaper Insert	775,000	
Oprah	700,000	East of the Mississippi
Our State	110,000	North Carolina
Reader's Digest	1,990,000	AL/FL/GA/LO/MI/NC/SC/TN/VA/ SE Newsstand
Southern Living	1,195,000	MD/DC/VA/NC/SC/GA/FL/NJ/PA
USA Weekend	2,700,000	NC/SC/GA/FL
Blue Ridge Mountain Host	100,000	Official guide of BRMH
NC Official Travel Guide	700,000	Official state travel guide





## **Tactics**

Undertake research that will assist in defining customer perceptions of the current brand of Asheville as a destination.

Maintain contract with Smith Travel Research to assist in the ongoing monitoring of the Buncombe County tourism industry and its competitive standing.

Upgrade data obtained through the Web in order to create a customer relationship management effort (CRM) that can be used with Web communications and can assist the CVB with better profiling of its customers.

Maintain contract for visitor volume research on an every other year basis.

Use e-mail database as a resource for quick surveys, as needed.

Maintain relationship with County officials who assist in providing key tax data that is used in various tourism economic impact reports.

Use Internet research shareware on an as needed basis to conduct input research such as the community stakeholder survey.

# Public Relations



## Objective

Generate earned media that exceeds \$5.5 million in advertising value.

## Strategies

Continue a proactive media outreach program with an emphasis on relationship-building, customization and targeting.

Complement seasonal advertising campaigns with media outreach, an added emphasis on venture markets and Web-based PR.

Continue to use media efforts to target niche markets, especially family-oriented venues.

Educate the region about the benefits of tourism in order to maintain support of marketing efforts.

Use research to help guide marketing efforts and to gauge perceptions of customers and the community.

Maintain measurement tools to gauge the effectiveness of existing and new projects.

## Tactics

Create customized, researched pitches aimed at specific journalists at targeted media outlets.

Continue to write and distribute news releases and story idea sheets.

Identify and respond to pitch opportunities that are generated through outside sources such as SATW and TIA.

Conduct media trips:

- North Carolina (fall)
- Atlanta/Nashville/Chattanooga (holidays)
- Philadelphia/NE (spring)

Attend SATW and PRSA marketplaces.

Target key journalists for individual site visits.

Create a culinary media symposium to showcase the rich culinary story possibilities of the region.



# Public Relations

## Tactics, continued

Continue an increased emphasis on targeting specific niche areas including the family market and culinary-related outlets.

Identify opportunities for “creating buzz” through integrated marketing efforts.

Continue to seek television and radio placement through the following activities:

- Sending b-roll to pre-qualified TV news producers for seasonal promotions.
- Pitching specific TV production houses that provided destination-related programming. Targeting viable cable outlets such as Travel Channel, HGTV, Food Network, CNN and The Weather Channel.
- Targeting of broadcast media as part of media tour efforts.
- Pitching radio shows particularly in conjunction with seasonal opportunities such as fall foliage and the holidays.

Utilize editorial calendars to organize a list of placement opportunities. Develop pitches that coincide with selected editions.

Maintain online press room and ensure that it meets the needs of journalists.

Assist with sales efforts by targeting trades and securing coverage in selected markets.

Continue local tourism awareness campaign which would include the following:

- The continued use of National Tourism Week as a forum for promoting the industry.
- Upgrade statistics section on ashevillecvb.com site.
- Utilize ashevillecvb.com site to post more community information to keep partners informed.

Continue to use measurement tools to track effectiveness of media relations efforts and examine the value of specific projects by:

- Utilizing a clip service.
- Tracking through D3000.
- Measuring Internet usage, e-mail requests and online placements.

# Web Development & Online Marketing



## Objectives

Increase the number of Web site visits by 25% over 2004-2005.

## Strategies

Utilize Web site content to maximize conversion potential.

Provide reasons to drive potential travelers to the Web site.

Provide methods for optimal navigation and searchable criteria that consumers indicate they want in a travel Web site.

Further develop an online outreach program that incorporates e-mail newsletters and viral marketing opportunities utilizing a more customer-focused approach.

Utilize PR placement and search engine optimization to maximize traffic generation to the Web site.

Utilize the Web to increase communication with industry partners and provide general tourism business information.

## Tactics

Redesign Web site to embrace the dynamic nature of the database, reflect the new brand positioning and to address needs identified in a strategic assessment of the site.

Create Web pages to complement seasonal and marketing promotions.

Develop Web-specific promotions and possible micro-sites.

Maintain a year-round effort to promote “hot deals” and packaging opportunities through the Web site.

Research, write and distribute fall color and spring bloom Web pages.

Upgrade existing portions of the Web site as needed.

Maintain ongoing, comprehensive calendar-of-events listings.

Maintain and further develop ashevillecvb.com site for enhanced partner communications.

Target e-zines and travel-oriented Web sites for editorial placement and links.

Continue to aggressively pursue search engine placement and positioning, utilize strategies for effective placement, and actively identify new opportunities for portal listings.



# Web Development & Online Marketing

## Tactics, continued

Maintain integrated media campaign, utilizing traditional advertising, online ads and media relations program to drive potential visitors to the Web site.

Create segmented newsletter subscriber database in order to segue into customer relationship management activities.

Produce online newsletter that is sent to e-mail subscriber list.

Look for viral marketing opportunities and other visitation generators to increase traffic to the Web site and increase awareness of Asheville.

Monitor and analyze Web metrics to more effectively adjust marketing programs and Web programs to create the greatest ROI.

Explore Web partnership opportunities.

Add availability of Destination Planning Guide online.





# Tourism Promotions



## Objective

To increase the number of AAA booked room nights by 5% over 2004-2005.

## Strategies

Continue to raise awareness and working knowledge of Asheville among AAA auto touring counselors and call center operators in core and venture markets.

Enhance communication with auto touring counselors so they are aware of current package offers, community events, product updates, etc.

Work with NCACVB for additional exposure in AAA markets.

Continue to develop marketing opportunities within the different clubs that incorporate services offered by industry partners.

Continue to explore and develop strategic alliances with corporate entities.

Maintain measurement tools to gauge the effectiveness of existing and new projects.

Provide information and materials to consumers as well as Visitor Specialists in order to convert inquiries to visits.

## Tactics

### AAA Marketing

Participate in Blue Ridge Parkway Association's annual AAA FAM trip.

Issue the AAA Explore Asheville! e-mail newsletter five times per calendar year.

Investigate and inform the community of opportunities currently available in AAA driven publications promoting short-term consumer packages.

Conduct two AAA Explore Asheville! collective training trips. Candidate locations include AAA South - Atlanta branch offices; AAA South - Florida branch offices; and, AAA Ohio Auto Club.

Create Web pages specifically geared toward addressing the needs of an auto touring agent.

Continue to distribute Visitor Guide, leisure market video and Asheville poster to AAA auto touring agents in core and venture market areas.

Host a AAA training session for local industry on AAA packaging practices and trends.



# Tourism Promotions

## Tactics continued

### Marketing Promotions

Expand Explore Asheville! collective training opportunities to include other reservation centers/travel agency groups.

Conduct one 1-800-VISITNC collective operator training session at NC call center.

Work closely with Journal Communications to enhance and publish the 2006 Visitor Guide.

Include an online Visitor Guide on exploreasheville.com.

Work in conjunction with NCACVB, NCDTFSD and Southeast Tourism Society on joint marketing efforts.

Coordinate Asheville's participation in consumer travel shows.



2005 AAA FAM

# Meetings and Conventions



## Objective

To book 56,000 room nights in the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

## Strategies

Focus on the niche markets for room night maximization.

Identify and utilize internal and external resources for market segment growth.

Utilize telemarketing for prospecting and pre-qualifying.

Create better communication between CVB and industry partners.

Create collateral for niche markets.

Showcase area to planners one-on-one.

## Tactics

Focus on niche markets for room night maximization:

- Corporate - Insurance, Incentive, Pharma/Medical
- Third-Party Planners
- State and Regional Associations through niche markets (Garden, Horticulture, Arts/Crafts)
- Federal Government
- Hobby/Leisure - Car Clubs, Motorcycle Clubs
- Religious

Match industry partner expertise/experience with niche market efforts:

- Enlist the help of NC Arboretum, Biltmore Estate and HandMade In America to identify garden group prospects, build menu of activities focused on gardening, build speakers guide for garden groups, etc.
- Utilize past planner expertise and ideas to capture additional similar groups, i.e. car clubs, motorcycle clubs, collectors clubs

Develop Web pages for car clubs, garden groups, arts/crafts groups and other niche areas as identified through research.

Create garden and car club “steering” committees to assist with matching focus of sales efforts with area inventory.

Attend regional garden shows to identify possible meetings from vendors, i.e. corporate, related professional associations and hobby/leisure groups.

Increase the number of phone/e-mail solicitations for business.

Continue in-depth research to identify additional planners/meetings within niche market areas.



# Meetings and Conventions

## Tactics, continued

Conduct scheduled trips for niche corporate and association markets (medical, insurance, 3rd party planners, incentive).

Attend the following trade shows:

AENC	ICPA SE Educational Conference
ASAE	SGMP Regional Educational Conference
CMCA spring & fall	

Conduct two FAMS: post ASAE and pre/post CMCA (if Asheville is selected).

Organize and participate in the ASAE dine-around.

Work with industry partners on AENC pre/post event, focusing on top current and potential producers.

Assist with area MPI-PEC FAM.

Attend GAMPI, GSAE, SGMP-Atlanta, ICPA, and HSMAI monthly meetings on a rotational basis.

Develop e-mail newsletters throughout the year to target niche markets.

Work with Chamber members to identify personal associations (professional and hobby) that could be brought to Asheville.

Organize professional sales training seminar for industry partners.

Develop and conduct two mini-workshops/seminars that will focus directly on industry partners:

- Seminars will focus on hotel sales teams to teach them about how to handle leads and the importance of communicating
- Focus on smaller hotels that may not be aware of system
- Three-year plan to include more workshops

Participate in NCACVB relevant group promotion events.

Work collectively with PR to utilize media placements when visiting specific geographic areas.

Conduct mini-FAMS and site inspections on a consistent basis.

# International



## Objective

To capitalize on the increasing market share of international travel through regional gateway cities.

## Strategies

Maintain alliance partnership with MountainSouth USA.

Work closely with the NCDTFSD and MountainSouth USA in their international marketing efforts.

Provide international tour operators and domestic-based receptive service operators with the tools needed to sell the Asheville area.

Expand the number of catalogues that include Asheville and Western North Carolina product.

## Tactics

Participate in the following trade shows and marketplaces:

- POW WOW - MountainSouth USA to be primary booth holder - Orlando, FL
- Rhythms of the South - Delta's Global Showcase - Louisville, KY

Work closely with MountainSouth USA in the development of itineraries, hosting of FAM trips and inclusion in the MountainSouth USA Web site to promote international travel from the UK and Germany.

Explore and pursue additional regional marketing alliances that foster inclusion of Asheville in receptive operators' product offerings to international clients.

Maintain Asheville presence on North American Journey's [www.thetouoperator.com](http://www.thetouoperator.com) which targets domestic and international tour operators.

Maintain a close relationship with North Carolina's international sales representatives who are responsible for promoting travel to Asheville from Canada, Germany and the United Kingdom.

Continue research to accurately gauge current market share of international visitors to North Carolina in general and to Western North Carolina specifically.



# Visitor and Convention Services

## Objective

To increase the assortment of services and promotional items for meeting planners, attendees and leisure visitors, effectively improving the quality of the Asheville experience.

## Strategies

Continually improve the types of services offered to Visitor Center guests.

Create awareness of the Asheville brand.

Improve and expand collateral material promoting Asheville, including pre-promotion.

Provide meeting planners the marketing tools needed to bring conventions to Buncombe County.

Increase the assortment of services for convention attendees and leisure visitors.

Improve the Asheville experience for visitors.

To utilize the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center services to increase the length of stay of visitors to the Asheville area.

Educate industry partners, especially front-line employees, through the CVB about promoting Asheville and the services available.

Attend trade shows to create awareness of the Asheville CVB convention services that are available.

## Tactics

Continue adding items to online services, including e-cards and pre-promotional services.

Develop “traveling” hospitality table for pre-promotion - large groups (attend previous year’s convention).

Make postcards and brochures available to groups for pre-promotion.

Continue to provide wedding and speaker guides, trivia book, outdoor activity guide, convention service packets, theme lists and itineraries, welcome posters, CD-ROMs and PowerPoint presentations. Also incorporate Asheville brand into all publications.

Attend NCMA and AENC to identify groups that could utilize Asheville CVB convention services for scheduled meetings.

# Visitor and Convention Services



## Tactics, cont.

Attend NC Governor's Conference to research ideas for next Asheville visit.

Develop training for front-line employees at area hotels to educate them about area attractions, restaurants and events to enable them to assist visitors.

Continue to offer foreign translations of information that highlights area attractions.

Continue to utilize Diplomats to service groups.

Continue to develop the Diplomat volunteer program with training sessions, FAM trips and appreciation receptions.

Provide enhanced Asheville logo items for gifts and door prizes for meeting planners to use when promoting future meetings.

Become more involved in community issues that ultimately affect visitors.

Respond to requests from meeting planners so as to assist in building convention attendance or provide opportunities to extend visitation.

Manage all visitor related activities in the new Visitor Center, including the new accommodations concierge service.

2005 North Carolina Governor's Conference Reception at the Grove Arcade.





# Group Tour (Motorcoach)

## Objectives

To book 3,200 group tour room nights in the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

Work to maintain sales production numbers in the 2005-2006 fiscal year.

## Strategies

Attend key marketplaces, trade shows and conventions to maintain current tour operator relationships and locate new sources for leads.

Provide tour operators, group leaders and travel agents with the tools needed to package and sell tours to the Asheville area.

Continue to refine effective ways to communicate with decision makers.

Provide services to tour operators after the initial sale has been made.

In cooperation with accommodation partners and Biltmore Estate, continue to track the number of motorcoach tours and group tour travelers into the Asheville area.

## Tactics

Issue five editions, per calendar year, of the group tour e-mail newsletter.

Work in conjunction with NCDTFSD and NCACVB on joint marketing programs.

Participate in the following trade shows:

- National Tour Association
- American Bus Association
- Pennsylvania Bus Association Sales Retreat and Winter Meeting

Coordinate an area sales mission to Pennsylvania, targeting qualified tour operators capable of bringing motorcoach travel to Asheville.

Distribute the Destination Planning Guide (hard copy and CD-ROMs), group tour video, poster, brochure shells and CD-ROMs of slides/images to tour operators and qualified group leaders.

Provide content for updated Web pages including obtaining sales leads and announcing new group tour opportunities for community partners as well as highlighting an online version of the Destination Planning Guide that shows product and itinerary suggestions.

Maintain Asheville Web presence on North American Journey's site, [www.thetouropoperator.com](http://www.thetouropoperator.com), which targets domestic and international tour operators.

Utilize telemarketing to supplement the sales staff efforts.

Continue to meet with industry partners to keep the lines of communication open.







# **Convention & Visitors Bureau**

## **Overview**





# Tourism Promotion in Asheville

There are as many ways to organize and fund a marketing and promotional effort for tourism development as there are cities in America. Each community structures its work in a slightly different way. The earliest record we can find of Asheville's efforts to promote tourism dates back to 1898, when someone mistakenly reported in the *New York Journal* that Biltmore Estate had been a total failure and that George Vanderbilt left Asheville furious—never to return again. A group of business people joined together with the goal to correct this atrocious error and to establish Asheville as an outstanding resort area in the United States. They called themselves the Asheville Board of Trade, which was later changed to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber has continued to keep tourism promotion as a high priority for more than 100 years.

Our community's presence in the tourism arena was advanced in a big way in 1983 after an historic event took place. During the 1983 session of the NC General Assembly, Buncombe County was among the first counties in our state to be granted authorization to levy a two percent room occupancy tax on the rental of rooms furnished by hotels, motels and inns with five or more units. The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) was established to administer the proceeds of the tax with the caveat that they could expend funds only to further the development of travel, tourism and conventions in the county through state, national and international advertising and promotion. In 1985, an additional one percent tax was approved. Then, in 2001, legislators passed the Tourism Product Development Fund bill which earmarks proceeds from an additional one percent to creation of new tourism product. Qualifying projects must demonstrate the ability to generate substantial new room nights.

The Tourism Development Authority had the option of setting up its own organization and staff to carry out this mission or to contract with an existing organization to do so. The TDA decided to contract with the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce, which had been in the tourism promotion business for approximately 85 years at that point.

This marketing plan and program of work represent how the Chamber of Commerce, through its Convention & Visitors Bureau, and the Buncombe County TDA will strive to bring even more economic impact from visitors into the community. All of the revenue collected from the three percent portion of the occupancy tax (minus a small collection fee retained by the County) is dedicated to this effort. There are many avenues open to industry partners to join in this effort. We look forward to working with all of you to make this an even more attractive and sought-after destination.

## **Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Mission**

*'To Be a Leader in the Economic Development of Buncombe County By Attracting and Servicing Visitors, Generating Income, Jobs and Tax Revenues Which Make the Community a Better Place to Live and Visit.'*

## **Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Mission**

*'To Enrich the Region's Livability by Advancing Its Economic Vitality.'*

# Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority



**Mr. Herman Turk, Chairman**  
Renaissance Asheville Hotel  
One Thomas Wolfe Plaza, Asheville, NC 28801

252-8211  
254-1374 Fax  
hermanturk@aol.com

**Mr. Craig Madison, Vice-Chairman**  
The Grove Park Inn Resort & Spa  
290 Macon Avenue, Asheville, NC 28804

252-2711  
253-7053 Fax  
cmadison@groveparkinn.com

**Mr. Mark Rosenstein**  
The Market Place Restaurant  
20 Wall Street, Asheville, NC 28801

252-4162  
253-3120 Fax  
mkrostein@charter.net

**Ms. Nancy Schnepf**  
Inn Around the Corner  
109 Church Street, Black Mountain, NC 28711

669-6005  
innaroundcorner@bellsouth.net

**Ms. Ruth Summers**  
Grove Arcade  
One Page Avenue, Suite 225, Asheville, NC 28801

225-5100  
225-3191 Fax  
ruth@grovearcade.com

**Mr. Victor Trantham**  
Haywood Park Hotel  
One Battery Park Avenue ~ Asheville, NC 28801

252-2522  
253-0481 Fax  
hotel@haywoodpark.com

## **Vacant - City Appointment**

### **Asheville City Council Ex-Officio Member**

**Ms. Terry Bellamy**  
City Council  
PO Box 728, Asheville, NC 28802

251-5330  
251-0180 Fax  
terryb@buncombe.main.nc.us

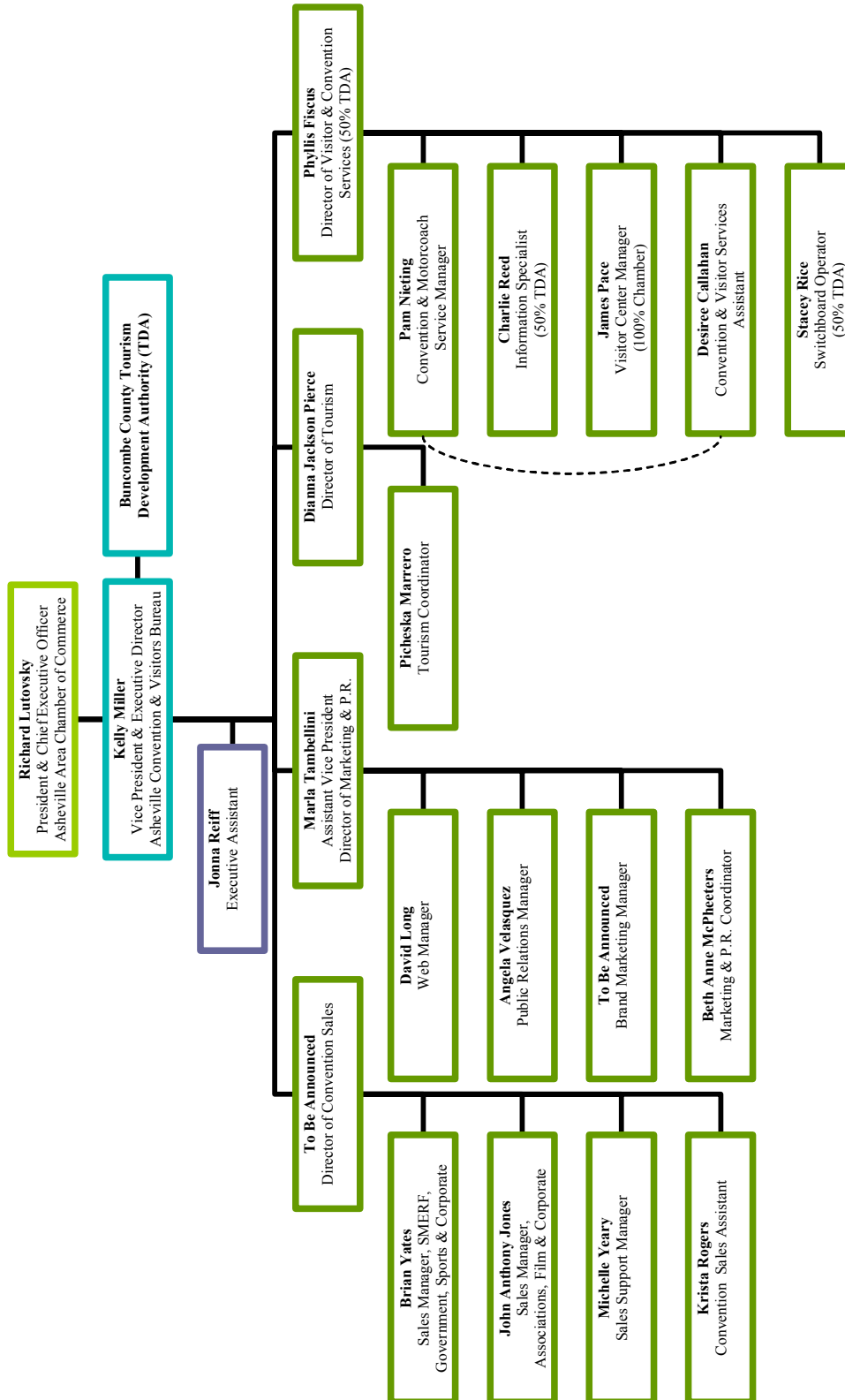
### **Buncombe County Commission Ex-Officio Member**

**Mr. David Young**  
Fugazy Travel  
1550 Hendersonville Road, Asheville, NC 28803

274-2555  
274-4212 Fax  
davidy@fugazync.com



# Convention & Visitors Bureau Organizational Chart



# Executive



## Kelly Miller

### Vice President/Executive Director

(828/258-6104, kmiller@exploreasheville.com)

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Serves as liaison to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board (BCTDA)
- Develops long-range strategic and operational planning
- Oversees budget and financial issues
- Oversees all CVB personnel and operations
- Works with local, state and national elected officials
- Manages product development initiatives
- Carries out community relations
- Serves as a board member of NC Travel & Tourism Coalition, Southeast Tourism Society, NC Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development, NCACVB, Asheville Art Museum and the Pack Square Conservancy
- Acts as liaison to the Chamber of Commerce Executive Committee and Board of Directors



## Jonna Reiff

### Executive Assistant

(828/258-6111, jreiff@exploreasheville.com)

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Provides administrative support to the Executive Director
- Maintains information on hotel supply and demand
- Staff Assistant to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board (BCTDA) and Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) Committee
- Coordinates BCTDA and TPDF meetings and minutes
- Coordinates BCTDA strategic planning retreat
- Coordinates BCTDA Marketing Plan Presentation
- Processes and compiles statistical information for monthly and annual reports
- Prepares letters, memoranda and materials related to the CVB





# Marketing and Public Relations

## **Marla Tambellini**

**Assistant Vice President/Director of Marketing & Public Relations**  
(828/258-6138, mtambellini@exploreasheville.com)



### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Oversees integrated marketing program including advertising, public relations, Internet efforts and tourism-related research
- Serves as liaison to advertising agency
- Works with advertising agency to produce cooperative ad opportunities
- Acts as media spokesperson for tourism and CVB-related issues
- Serves on executive committee of PRSA Tourism Section and as a chapter treasurer for SATW
- Serves as liaison to Blue Ridge Mountain Host

## **Angela Velasquez**

**Public Relations Manager**  
(828/257-4959, avelasquez@exploreasheville.com)



### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Oversees day-to-day efforts of proactive media relations efforts
- Plans and executes media tours and familiarization programs
- Works one-on-one with journalists, providing background materials, pitching story ideas and creating itineraries for individual site visits to Asheville
- Develops and writes media materials for local, regional, national and international press
- Works with the NCDTFSD on specific promotions, domestic and international FAMs, and other publicity opportunities
- Develops trade-oriented media relations aimed at the convention and motorcoach markets
- Serves as liaison to Media Tour and Media FAM task forces

## **David Long**

**Web Manager**  
(828/232-2243, dlong@exploreasheville.com)



### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages [exploreasheville.com](http://exploreasheville.com) and [ashevillecvb.com](http://ashevillecvb.com) Web sites
- Designs, develops content and maintains Web pages
- Administers [exploreasheville.com](http://exploreasheville.com) database
- Produces Asheville tourism visitor e-mail newsletter, "The Asheville Traveler"
- Produces special Web promotions such as fall and spring color reports for media and consumers
- Oversees search engine optimization



# Marketing and Public Relations



## To Be Announced

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### Brand Marketing Manager

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Coordinates and manages implementation of the brand and its ongoing equity
- Develops communication plans to explain and communicate brand concepts to internal and external audiences
- Works within community to facilitate consistent and timely brand implementation among key business and community leaders
- Ensures brand consistency in campaigns, sales efforts and promotions
- Actively looks for ways to integrate the brand into as many channels and media as possible

## Beth Anne McPheeters

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### Marketing and Public Relations Coordinator

(828/258-6135, bmcpheters@exploreasheville.com)

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Provides support to the marketing department
- Assists with fulfillment of media requests
- Prepares committee and task force meeting minutes
- Manages media and committee databases and oversees news release distribution
- Prepares clip reports
- Coordinates media leads
- Develops copy for tourism-related newsletters
- Assists with marketing analysis
- Evaluates media editorial calendars for placement opportunities and writes and submits pitches accordingly
- Maintains photo files and coordinates shoots
- Fulfills media photography requests



### Services Provided by the Marketing & Public Relations Area Include:

Professional Media Assistance	Media Leads
Asheville Tourism Press Kits	Media Materials for Editorial Use:
Cooperative Media Tours and FAMs	• News Releases
Collateral Development	• Video
Proofing Assistance for Tourism Materials	• Slides and Digital Images
Cooperative Advertising Opportunities through Ad Fair	Media Site Visits
	Tourism Research



# Tourism

## **Dianna Jackson Pierce**

### **Director of Tourism**

(828/258-6108, dpierce@exploreasheville.com)



#### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages leisure promotional programs
- Manages AAA marketing
- Manages domestic motorcoach/group tour (series) markets
- Serves as liaison to Tour & Travel Development Committee, AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training Task Force, and other task forces established.
- Serves as liaison to Journal Communications for production of Official Asheville Visitor Guide
- Manages international market and related trade shows
- Holds membership with TIA

## **Picheska Marrero**

### **Tourism Coordinator**

(828/258-6139, pmarrero@exploreasheville.com)



#### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Maintains database of tourism business in Buncombe County and provides this information to NCDTFSD
- Coordinates all Tourism task force meetings
- Provides administrative support to the Director of Tourism
- Manages domestic motorcoach/group tour sales and related trade shows
- Produces AAA and Group Tour e-mail newsletters
- Manages all leisure package programs
- Holds membership in ABA, NTA, PBA

### **Services Provided By the Tourism Area:**

- |                            |                         |
|----------------------------|-------------------------|
| Tour Itinerary Planning    | Promotional Video       |
| Destination Planning Guide | Sales Leads             |
| Collateral Development     | Promotional Assistance  |
| Site Inspections           | Asheville Visitor Guide |

# Meetings and Conventions



## To Be Announced

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**Director of Convention Sales**  
(828/258-6105)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages all meetings and conventions markets
- Manages City-Wide market
- Serves as liaison to the Convention Development Committee

## John Anthony Jones

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**Convention Sales Manager - Association, Corporate and Film**  
(828/258-6121, jjones@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages national, regional and state association markets, incentive and insurance corporate markets, film markets.
- Coordinates all related tradeshows to above markets
- Serves as a liaison to the ASAE and AENC task forces
- Holds membership in SCSAE, GSAE, TSAE, ASAE, ICPA, MPI



## Brian Yates

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**Convention Sales Manager - SMERF, Government, Sports and Corporate**  
(828/258-6133, byates@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages social, military, educational, religious, fraternal markets
- Serves as a liaison to the CMCA task force
- State and Federal Government, Sports and Medical related corporate markets
- All related tradeshows to above markets
- Holds membership with CMCA, RCMA, HCEA, HSMIAI, SGMP, TRN





# Meetings and Conventions

## Michelle Yeary

### Sales Support Manager

(828/258-6125, myeary@exploreasheville.com)

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Management/Training of D3000 database
- Organizes of FAMS and blitzes
- Handles research for account prospects
- Oversees telemarketing to qualify new accounts
- Serves as direct contact with hotels for lead follow-up
- Develops and manages niche e-mail newsletters



## Krista Rogers

### Convention Sales Assistant

(828/258-6110, krogers@exploreasheville.com)

#### Key Areas of Responsibility:

- Provides administrative support to Sales Managers and Director of Convention Sales
- Coordinates the distribution of weekly leads, convention calendars, booked business subscriptions, monthly reports
- Maintains monthly numbers logs
- Coordinates task force and Convention Development Committee minutes



### Services Provided by the Meetings & Conventions Area Include:

- |                            |                                |
|----------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Convention Calendar        | Co-op Sales Blitzes and FAMS   |
| Convention Bids            | Booked Business Subscriptions  |
| Sales Leads                | Co-op Trade Show & Marketplace |
| Destination Planning Guide | Efforts                        |
| Site Inspections           |                                |

# Visitor and Convention Services



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## Phyllis Fiscus

**Director of Visitor & Convention Services**  
(828/258-6100, pfiscus@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Directs Visitor Center operation and retail operation
- Oversees volunteer participation and manages display spaces
- Oversees convention and motorcoach services
- Manages information sales and servicing



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## James Pace

**Manager, Visitor Center**  
(828/258-6103, jpace@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Manages Visitor Center operation and the retail operation
- Manages Chamber member brochure stock and maintenance
- Purchases and catalogs retail merchandise
- Coordinates all mailings, Internet and credit transactions
- Manages volunteer participation/scheduling



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## Charlie Reed

**Information Specialist**  
(828/258-6109, creed@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Answers daily tourism and relocation calls
- Fulfills all relocation package requests and processes credit transactions
- Serves as liaison to Daniels Communications for visitor inquiry fulfillment and operator training
- Markets to and trains potential clients for subscription and fulfillment inquiry lists
- Coordinates and fulfills subscription reports for tourism and relocation inquiries



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## Pam Nieting

**Manager of Convention and Motorcoach Services**  
(828/258-6106, pnieting@exploreasheville.com)

**Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Services booked groups in all market segments
- Services meetings and social groups without booked rooms
- Services motorcoach groups
- Coordinates hospitality training for front line staff
- Coordinates the National Tourism Week program on behalf of the Chamber of Commerce
- Oversees hospitality tables and Hospitality Table Diplomat Volunteer Program





# Visitor and Convention Services

## **Desiree Callahan**

**Visitor & Convention Services Assistant**  
(828/258-6102, dcallahan@exploreasheville.com)



### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Maintains Wedding Guide
- Oversees set-up and operation of hospitality tables
- Maintains follow-up for conventions and motorcoach groups
- Services booked groups
- Coordinates compilation of theme lists, resource guides, itineraries and menu book
- Supports Visitor Center staff
- Provides administrative support to the Director of Visitor and Convention Services and Manager of Convention and Motorcoach Services
- Serves as receptionist to the CVB

## **Stacey Rice**

**Switchboard Operator**  
(828/258-6101, srice@exploreasheville.com)



### **Key Areas of Responsibility:**

- Greets visitors, both on the phone and in person, making the important first impression
- Will direct guests to the correct portal of information in the new Visitor Center

## **Tracy Turner, George Pickering, Bryant Calloway**

**Visitor Center Counselors**

### **Services Provided by the Visitor and Convention and Motorcoach Services Area: (Some available only to Chamber members)**

- |                                               |                             |
|-----------------------------------------------|-----------------------------|
| Agenda/Brochure Shells                        | Convention Service Packets  |
| Brochure Display                              | Hospitality Tables          |
| Visitor Inquiry Fulfillment                   | Hospitality Training        |
| Tourism Inquiry Subscriptions                 | PowerPoint Presentation     |
| Foyer and Mantle Display Opportunities        | Promotional Video           |
| Retail Area                                   | Resource Guides             |
| Accommodation Board                           | Sightseeing Itineraries     |
| Wedding Guide                                 | Tour Itinerary Planning     |
| Attraction/Dining Board                       | Trivia Book                 |
| Pre-Promotional Items                         | Promotional Items           |
| Relocation Packages & Inquiry Subscriptions   | Images -Color Slides and CD |
| Retirement Inquiry Subscriptions              | Arrange Mayor Welcome       |
| Foreign Translations for Selected Attractions |                             |

# CVB Committees and Task Forces



## Convention Development Committee

Offers educational networking opportunities and conducts joint promotions to recruit conventions. Meets every other month. Committee members may elect to serve on the following task forces:

- Trade Show Task Force
- ASAE FAM / Dinearound
- CMCA FAM (tentative)

## Tour & Travel Development Committee

Offers educational networking opportunities and conducts joint promotions to increase Asheville's exposure to tourism marketing including motorcoach operators and AAA auto counselors nationwide. Meets every other month. Committee members may elect to serve on the following task forces:

- Pennsylvania Trade Mission Task Force
- Explore Asheville! Destination Training Task Force

## National Tourism Week Task Force

Provides input for implementation of National Tourism Week promotion. Meets as needed.

## Public Relations/Marketing Committee

Offers educational networking opportunities and conducts media efforts to promote tourism in the area. Meets every other month. Committee members may elect to serve on the following task forces:

- Media Tour Task Force
- Media FAM Task Force

## Visitor Center Volunteers & Hospitality Table Diplomats

Volunteers and Diplomats give information and assistance to tourists and people within our community.



**2005-2006**

**Addendum**







# Industry Trends

## Marketing/Leisure Travel Trends 2005

### Historical Trends

Overall U.S. domestic travel volume has grown 9.8% since 1994. Household trip volume has increased by 2.9% during that time. *TIA*

Leisure travel volume of person-trips is up 16.1% from 1994, while business/convention travel is down 15.1% from 1994. *TIA*

U.S. domestic air travel posts a 4.7% decrease in volume of person-trips between 1994 and 2003, while auto travel posts 12.4% growth. *TIA*

Person-trips are most likely to be taken to destinations within the traveler's state of residence (42%). Destinations that are out of the traveler's state, yet still within the census division account for one in five (21%) person-trips. The remaining 37% of person-trips are taken to destinations even farther away, outside the census division of resident. While the majority of trips include one destination, some include multiple destinations. *TIA*

### Economic Trends

The U.S. economy is humming, but employers are still finding ways to increase production without adding workers, providing little hope that a sustained pickup in job creation is around the corner. The latest evidence of sluggish job creation came Tuesday, when one report showed the percentage of CEOs who expected to add workers in the next six months fell from a previous survey, while another report showed factory job growth slowed in February. *USA Today, March 2005*

The soaring cost of crude oil is pushing gasoline prices higher, even as refiners report ample fuel supplies well ahead of the summer driving season, the *Wall Street Journal* reported Monday. Analysts at the U.S. Department of Energy's Energy Information Administration (EIA) expect the average price for unleaded gasoline in the U.S. to peak this spring near last year's high of \$2.06 a gallon, held in check by stocks that are more than 8% above year-ago levels. Nevertheless, officials are concerned prices at the pump could rise higher still on strong demand, with some analysts predicting prices as high as \$2.50 a gallon. *Wall Street Journal, February 28, 2005*

The *ABC News/Washington Post* Consumer Comfort Index stands at -9 on its scale of +100 to -100 this week, exactly matching its average in weekly polls since late 1985. It's hovered between -8 and -11 since the start of the year, after a recent high of -5 in mid-December. *ABC News, March 2, 2005*

# Industry Trends



The Conference Board's Consumer Confidence Index, after improving in January, dipped in February. The Index now stands at 104 (1985 = 100), down from 105.1 in January. The Present Situation Index increased to 116.4 from 112.1. The Expectations Index, however, declined to 95.7 from 100.4 last month. Consumers' overall assessment of current conditions continues to improve. Those claiming business conditions are "good" eased to 24.9% from 26.1%, but those claiming conditions are "bad" declined to 15.6% from 18.1%. Consumers' outlook for the next six months lost ground in February. Those anticipating business conditions to improve declined to 17.8% from 22%, but those expecting business conditions to worsen held steady at 7.8%. The outlook for the labor market was also somewhat less optimistic. *Conference Board, February 23, 2005*

## Travel Growth

According to TIA's Annual Travel Forecast, overall traveler spending by domestic and international visitors in the U.S. is forecast to increase 6.9% by year-end to nearly \$593 billion up from \$555 billion in 2003. An additional 5.3% increase in 2005 will bring expenditures to well beyond the \$600 billion mark to \$624 billion. TIA forecasts leisure travel volume will grow 2.9 % this year up from a 1.9% increase in 2003. It will increase once again in 2005 by nearly 2%. [www.hotelonline.com](http://www.hotelonline.com) *November 2004*

TIA's Spring 2005 Travel Forecast indicates strong spring travel volume. Americans plan to take nearly 281 million trips during March, April, and May, representing an increase of 1.2% over spring 2004. "Americans are upbeat," said Dr. Suzanne Cook, Senior Vice President of Research. "They feel good about the economy, and they feel positive about their own finances. These key factors point to a record spring travel season." Americans are expected to take nearly 223 million leisure trips in spring 2005, up 1% from last spring. Business and convention travel volume continues to recover, increasing 2% from 2004 with 47.1 million business/convention trips forecast for spring 2005. *TIA March 2005*

Auto travel was up about 3% for 2004, and the industry predicts modest growth (2-3%) in 2005. On average, auto travelers spend U.S. \$317 per trip; and 30% of trips include children. (AAA) *As reported IACVB Special Report - 2005 Forecast, January - International Association of Convention & Visitors Bureaus*

Orlando and Orange County's tourism rebound continued at a torrid pace in December, with another record month and a record calendar year for the county's resort tax. The 5-cent levy on hotel rooms and other short-term rentals generated \$8.6 million in December, up 25% from the same month a year ago. That capped a record year at \$114.8 million, county officials said Wednesday. The tax pays for expansion of the massive Orange County Convention Center and tourism promotion through the Orlando/Orange County Convention & Visitors Bureau. *Orlando Sentinel.com/Business*

Generation X now spends more per trip than the wealthier baby boomers – and the travel industry is taking note. Last year, Xers – the 60 million Americans from age 25 to 40 – spent an estimated \$2,140 per capita on overall travel involving a hotel stay, vs. boomers' \$2,016, according to a preliminary estimate from travel researcher D.K. Shifflet & Associates. The larger



# Industry Trends

boomer population still dominates on a total dollar basis – about \$157 billion last year, vs. \$130 billion for Xers. Vacation spending by Xers has soared 66% per trip in the past five years, vs. 25% among boomers, ages 41 to 59. The generational change has significant implications for the travel industry. Compared with the 78 million boomers, Gen Xers are less brand loyal, less likely to call a travel agent and less likely to plan far in advance. They're more likely to book online and pay for eye-catching extras, such as a Sierra Madre expedition in the Mexican outback. *USA Today, February 8, 2005*

## Hotel Trends

U.S. hotel companies will be booking, cooking and smoking-hot for the next few years, as a stronger economy and an uptick in business customers driver more travelers into hotel rooms, pushing rates higher. After being paralyzed by a three-year downturn in travel following 9/11, the war in Iraq and the SARS epidemic, U.S. hotels began raising room rates in mid-2004. "Get ready to pay more for a hotel room in 2005," Bear Stearns analyst Joe Greff said in a recent note, adding that room rates will get a boost from expanding corporate travel budgets, large group conference bookings and slow growth in new supply. The three biggest U.S. hotel chains—Marriott International, Hilton Hotels and Starwood Hotels & Resorts Worldwide—expect to raise rates further this year. *Reuters; CNN.com*

Manhattan lodging market will have experienced the most spectacular come-back of any hotel market in the nation over the past twenty years if present trends continue through 2005, according to report released last week by Hotel Investment Management LLC, a hospitality consulting firm based in Maplewood, New Jersey.

Unprecedented growth in demand has helped average daily rate growth, which is expected to grow dramatically by over 14% to about \$230 in 2005. This beats the previous high in October 2000. *Travel Mole.com February 25, 2004*

A significantly lower proportion of leisure travelers prefer chain hotels to independents. This illustrates the increased emphasis placed by leisure travelers on uniqueness and authenticity. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners, Inc.*

The U.S. lodging industry enjoyed a 3.7% increase in occupancy last year, to 61.3%, according to full-year figures released Thursday by Smith Travel Research. Average room rate increased 4.0% to \$86.41 and revenue per available room—the combination of occupancy and average room rate—gained 7.8% to \$52.93. Industry room supply increased 1.0% in 2004, while demand gained 4.6%. Industry-wide full year 2004 room revenue increased 8.8% to \$86.2 billion, STR said. "We expect another good year in 2005," said Mark Lomanno, president of the Hendersonville, Tenn., research firm. Room rate increases should be the primary driver of RevPAR growth this year. Occupancy improvement should continue, although at a somewhat slower pace," he said. *STR special to Travel Advance, January 2005*

The hotel industry will raise its spending on renovations by 37% next year, speeding up improvements now that travel is rebounding, according to a new study. Hoteliers will spend \$4.1 billion on upgrades and renovations in 2005, compared with \$3 billion this year, according to the study, conducted by Pricewaterhouse-Coopers Hospitality & Leisure Practice in New York. *Page B4, Wall Street Journal*

# Industry Trends



Hotels are courting picky business travelers with amenities like flat-screen televisions and plush bedding, but there is little worry about the cost now that demand is strong and room prices can be raised. “Costs are going up, but as long as rates are rising, it’s not a problem,” Joe Greff, an analyst at Bear Stearns, said this week at the Reuters Hotels and Casinos Summit. Major hotel chains are projecting high-single-digit gains in room revenue this year, driven in part by growing business and convention travel as well as a flat supply of hotel rooms. *Reuters*

One of the hottest trends among luxury resorts has been to develop some kind of ownership program, offering high-end “fractionals” (fancy time-shares), condominiums or even houses. Among the resorts in Florida alone that have condo projects in the works are Cheeca Lodge & Spa in the Florida Keys, Miami Beach’s Fontainebleau Hilton, the Venetian Grand Resort in Orlando and Fort Myers Beach’s Pink Shell Beach Resort. The phenomenon has spread to other locales, including Las Vegas and Chicago. Even the 200-year-old Greenbrier, in West Virginia is getting into the ownership game. *Page D1, New York Times, January 28, 2005*

One of the big trends in the hotel industry today is the creation of permanent residences within a hotel property with the additional offering of the regular hotel services. Starwood Hotels have created a whole floor of permanent residences at the prestigious St Regis in New York and their W Hotel chain are now provide opportunities to buy into the Wonderland lifestyle. In fact it’s happening all over the U.S. from Vegas, to Aspen to Florida. [www.psfk.com](http://www.psfk.com)

## Travel Planning

The destination is the first consideration. Setting a budget remains second, followed by obtaining background trip information and then deciding on mode of transportation, choosing a hotel or resort and selecting activities. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners Inc.*

Because of the order of planning, it is vital for destination marketers to be in the consideration set of places consumers think about when making vacation plans. This observation underscores the value of top-of-mind awareness in the increasingly competitive market place. Furthermore, because of this decision-making pattern, it behooves hoteliers to create strong strategic alliances with their respective local and state tourism promotion organizations and to be linked to their Web sites. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners Inc.*

Leisure travelers begin planning, on average, over two months in advance of the departure for their extended trips. Weekday and weekend trips are typically planned approximately six weeks in advance. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners Inc.*

## Trip Activities

There are five clusters that are addressed with respect to what consumers want in a leisure travel experience:

- Experiential/Fantasy/Ambiance. These attributes are clues about the magnitude of interest in experiential dimensions of travel and predispositions toward novelty and change.
- Physical activities. These attributes reflect sporting and adventure activities.
- Other activities. These attributes address dimensions that round the vacation experience.



# Industry Trends

- Familiarity and control. These attributes create a sense of safety, control and comfort of familiarity while on vacation.
- Pricing.

Overall, consumers are more interested in experiential vacation attributes this year compared to last. This is consistent with their predisposition toward new experiences and novelty and change. A significantly higher proportion of leisure travelers want to go somewhere they have never been before. And, overall, today's consumers are likely to be looking for beautiful scenery and beach experiences in the new places they visit. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners, Inc.*

Soft adventure and trips aboard are two of the biggest trends in travel as the tourism industry continues to rebound from its post-9/11 slump. The weak dollar didn't keep Americans from going to Europe. According to the European Travel Commission, "2004 is shaping up as the second-best year ever for travel to Europe," with a projected 12.7 million Americans crossing the pond, 20% more than in 2003 and near 2000's record-setting 13.1 million. *Philadelphia Inquirer.com/Travel*

As revealed in our 2004 National Leisure Travel Monitor, "going to a spa" on vacation is now of interest to 34% of active leisure travelers. Not surprisingly, females (41%) express a higher degree of interest in this recreational activity than males, yet fully one out of every four (25%) active male travelers is also interested in going to a spa on vacation. When considered in light of other recreational options, spa-going is not as popular as "getting exercise" on vacation, but is twice as popular as "playing golf" and six times as popular as "playing tennis." *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners, Inc.*

All-inclusive pricing continues to be of great interest to leisure travelers. In fact, a significantly higher proportion of leisure travelers say they prefer and all-inclusive resort price (one that includes accommodations, food, beverages, and recreation) this year compared to last. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners, Inc.*

## Media Trends

Readership surveys indicate that the audience for news magazines is holding steady, while the audience for pop culture, entertainment and lifestyle magazines is growing. This fits with the trends in ad pages and revenues and suggests one of two things: Either the market for news magazines is more or less at its capacity or the genre needs to be reinvented. *Journalism.org January 2005*

In what may be the biggest effort yet – and the biggest potential threat to The Weather Channel's franchise – the NBC network and its affiliates have launched WeatherPlus, a joint venture that combines national and local weather data, forecasts, graphics and video. By year's end, about 60% of the USA's TV households will be able to watch NBC affiliates' local weather channels – provided they have a TV or cable box that can receive digital signals. *USA Today, February 4, 2005*

# Industry Trends



## Advertising Trends

Jupiter Research forecast \$7.6 billion will have been spent in the U.S. on all forms of online advertising by the end of 2004 (up 20% from 2003). We can expect that this trend will continue in 2005 as the importance of relevancy in online advertising continues to grow. Today's busy, technologically savvy consumer demands advertisements about products and services they care about; ads that are too general or not contextually relevant will die off as more sophisticated campaigns will prosper. *iMediaConnection, January 24, 2005*

Demand for online video ads by Ford Motor, Colgate-Palmolive and others will contribute to a breakout year for online advertising in 2005 – and spell trouble for newspapers and TV, financial analysts say. A surge in text ads on search sites Google and Yahoo – combined with more high-speed Internet users – also will help push online ad spending over \$10 billion for the first time, analysts say. It would mark the second-consecutive year that online ad spending in the U.S. improves 20%. The last medium to grow that fast was cable TV from 1988-90, says analyst David Hallerman of researcher eMarketer. *USA Today, January 17, 2005*

Many marketers are legally challenging advertising statements made by the competition. Some marketers avoid truth challenges by building brand identities around aspiration or identification. Practitioners of this school include Nike, with its “Just Do It” slogan; Sprint, with “Business Is Beautiful;” and the United States Army, with “An Army of One.” *New York Times article Dec. 29, 2004*

Paid search will continue to grow faster than any other sector of online advertising, increasing from \$2.6 billion in 2004 to \$5.5 billion in 2009. *Jupiter Research 2005*

## Internet Trends

Consumer utilization of the Internet to plan some aspect of a future trip, whether for business or pleasure, continues to rise, according to new data released today from the YPB&R/Yankelovich Partners 2004 National Leisure Travel Monitor. The rate at which consumers now use the Internet to actually book travel services is growing even faster, however, suggesting that consumers are likely to use the Internet to purchase travel services with even greater frequency in the months ahead. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners*

As consumers rush to the Internet to buy travel, a battle is brewing over whether the industry will look more like search company Google or virtual shopping mall Amazon.com. Travel search providers who see themselves as the next generation of online travel companies said on Thursday they were adding features to lure consumers with the offer of more than rock-bottom prices. Sidestep and Kayak.com, the oldest travel search company and one of the sector's newest entrants, both see Web travel evolving into a referral service more like Google than an Amazon.com-like Web. [www.hotelnewsresources.com](http://www.hotelnewsresources.com) *March 2005*

A new Harris Poll shows that U.S. adults who are online are using the Internet more often for new and different purposes. While e-mail (66%), research for work or school (46%), checking news and weather (43%), getting information about hobbies or special interests (40%) top the list of online activities which are used “very often” or “often,” large numbers of adults are online



# Industry Trends

often, or very often, to make travel plans or reservations, up 11 points, from 15% to 26%; and, those who go online often, or very often, to look for information about health or diseases, up six points from 15% to 21%. This survey shows that Internet growth continues for two quite different reasons: The proportion of the population who are online continues to grow steadily. Those who use the Internet use it for more purposes than they did in the past. *Harris Interactive Inc. November 2004*

Top 10 Internet Uses of Adult Online Users (% of respondents)

	Very Often	Often	Sometimes	Rarely	Never
To send or receive e-mail	30%	36%	14%	11%	9%
To do research for work or school	18	28	19	10	24
To check on news updates, weather, etc.	16	27	26	18	14
To get information about a hobby or special interest	15	25	38	15	8
To gather information about products and services	14	24	38	10	15
To surf to explore new and different sites	10	24	34	22	10
To make travel plans and reservations	8	18	25	18	31
To obtain information on local amusements and activities	6	17	36	21	20
To obtain information about health or diseases	8	13	38	26	16
To pay bills	7	9	15	9	60

*Harris Interactive Inc. November 2004*

The number of U.S. at-home broadband users increased 36% in 2004, accounting for 55% of the total U.S. at-home users by the end of December, according to the latest data from [Nielsen//NetRatings](#). If this robust adoption rate continues, almost 70% of all U.S. home users will have broadband connections by the end of 2005, according to forecasts based on Nielsen data in the “January 2005 Bandwidth Report” by [WebSiteOptimization.com](#).

Internet users between the ages of 25 and 34, with household incomes over \$75,000, are more active online than the overall U.S. Web population. Most of these “young affluents online” are male and connected to broadband as well, according to a report by [JupiterResearch](#). “We’ve isolated a demographic that can be classified as early adopters,” said Vikram Sehgal, senior analyst at JupiterResearch. “They are predominantly tech-savvy males, with higher incomes, higher broadband connectivity, with the desire and ability to purchase new products. So to marketers, they constitute an attractive group to target, on and offline, because they have a lot of purchasing power.” The report finds a full 74% of this upper-income demographic are male, compare to 49% of the overall online population. Some 55% are connected to broadband, compared to 33% of overall Web users. *Jupiter Research/ ClickZ January 6, 2005*

About 65% of these young, online affluents are upbeat about the Web. They believe the Internet increases the efficiency of their daily lives, as opposed to the 43% of the overall online population who hold that view. *ClickZ, January 6, 2005*

Want proof that traditional media are running scared at the sound of encroaching blogs? A heated round table discussion between *The New York Times*’ managing editor, Jill Abramson, and a few of the blogosphere’s finest is good evidence that print journos are leaning towards the defensive. The discussion—in which Abramson turned just the least bit snarky when it was suggested that



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perhaps her newsrooms were about to be rendered obsolete by bloggers—took place at the recent two day “Blogging, Journalism and Credibility” conference at Harvard University. While admitting that blog writers represent a major pool of talent on which the news media might draw, Abramson essentially dismissed the notion of blogs as “competition.” But with 27% of adults reading blogs daily, and her own newspaper promoting a blog by its columnist Nicholas Kristoff on their site, how long does Abramson figure she can keep sneering at what’s inevitable? *adbumbinc.com*

Google is adding TV to its mix with the release of the new test version of Google Video. According to the Washington Post, “users who search for a phrase spoken on a TV program that Google has recorded and indexed since December will see a still image from the show.” Click on that image and five more show up, along with other sound bites from the program. So far the deal is limited, allowing search for content only in programs viewed on PBS, C-SPAN, Fox and a few other stations—but Google has serious visions for the near future. Much like TiVo, Google Video plans to give users the ability to replay their favorite TV shows on their computers, and with a forthcoming personalization feature, users will be able to type in their Zip codes to find out when and where shows will next air. *adbumbinc.com*

## Generational Trends

Sharpen your vision of the future: Generations are on the move.

- Echo Boomer values are the values of the new crop of adults; 36% have joined the ranks of “head of household.”
- Xers will start turning 40 in 2005; 60% are now parents.
- Boomers will start turning 60 in 2006; 34% are already grandparents.
- Matures are not all out of the work force; 21% of all Matures work full-time 34% of 55-70-year-olds are employed full-time).
- Boomer Empty Nesters, currently numbering 16 million, are estimated to reach 31 million by 2010.

## Lifestyle Trends

Family Networks: Major purchases, from autos to vacations, were once mostly adult-only choices. Child-oriented goods were bought on the “kids nag, parents pay” plan. Now there’s often an ongoing dialogue across generations. Shared decision-making is morphing into shared tastes and preferences. *YPBR/Yankelovich Partners, Inc.*

“Destination Weddings” are a growing trend, by some estimates accounting for 10% of the nearly \$120 billion industry, according to Destination Wedding and Honeymoon Magazine. Even the most affluent couples seek value-priced alternatives to bring scores of family and friends to exotic and sometimes remote locales. *Destination Wedding and Honeymoon Magazine*

In the past three years, it turns out four out of ten Americans have traveled alone on leisure trips that have lasted at least two nights. Driving the lone-travel trend is that increasingly popular demographic: the aging baby boomer. More are finding themselves widowed or divorced; many simply have adopted the single lifestyle by choice. *Fodor’s Travel Publications*



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For the American family in particular, 2004 was a year of continued evolution. With issues such as gay marriage and civil unions making headlines, people have had to rethink their definition of family. While a substantial number continue to believe in the traditional marriage and family, the world continues to chip away at that institution and change is ever present... What constitutes a family is also changing. Not just the same-sex household but households with adopted or step-members are becoming more prevalent than before. But, there are a few things that seem to never want to change - teens don't want to become their parents, parents yell at their kids and kids cost a lot to raise (an average of about \$178,590 from birth to age 17).

For those planning family travel packages, these are trends to monitor. As the non-traditional family unit continues to evolve, it will be more and more important to include things in a package that speak to those outside the traditional family unit. One final thought to consider - the information above speaks only to the American point-of-view regarding family. As you begin to market to other cultures, their definitions of family and comfort-level with what many would consider non-traditional family structures will vary based on their culture, religion, etc. *The Trend, January 2005 - CrossSphere - Source: Research Alert, Vol. 23, No. 1*

The oldest, leading-edge Boomers are now in their late 50's and rapidly approaching "senior" status - a milestone that is generally thought to start at age 65. As has been typical for the Boomers, they are intent on changing the face of aging as they near this mark. As the first generation of Internet users, Boomers are likely to live very differently from the "seniors" that preceded them. They are less likely to retire and more likely to remain in their homes when they become empty-nesters instead of relocating to southern climes than the generations before them.

Boomers are also feeling the effects of caring for the needs of their parents on one hand and their children on the other - truly becoming the "sandwich generation." But, as their children are aging, empty-nest Boomers have more time and money to spend on themselves.

One final trend affecting Boomers is that their children can "boomerang" - a growing phenomenon of adult children returning to the nest as KIPPERS or Kids in Parents' Pockets Eating Retirement Savings. *The Trend, February 2005 - CrossSphere - Source: Research Alert, Vol. 23, No. 1*

Consumers' increased frequency of a hotel stay when vacationing and more limited and controlled discretionary spending are driving sales in the bundled, or packaged, travel arena. Given the ability to drive margins, both market leaders and underdogs will be emphasizing vacation packages - online and off.

The majority of combination purchasers create their own air, care and/or hotel packages over purchasing ones that are pre-packaged. Given the importance of packages to the profitability of online players, the dynamic package buyer represents a new and important segment in the online leisure arena... *As Reported in The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey, Sixth Edition, Page 8.*

# Industry Trends



The “Experience Economy” Affluent Americans, those with household incomes of \$100,000 and above, were surveyed recently by Stevens, PA-based luxury marketing consultancy Unity Marketing. One thing that stood out from this study is that the wealthy favor experience over materials when searching for satisfaction.

Nearly six of ten survey respondents stated that they get the most satisfaction from their purchase of luxury experiences. Such experiences include upscale restaurants, travel, entertainment and cultural/art events, sports events, personal health and beauty services and home services. The message - when marketing to the affluent, focus on their desire for an experience! Whether that is shopping, eating, seeing a show or touring.

Most of the affluent consumers surveyed chose to get to their destination inexpensively and splurged on hotels, food and other activities. The trend here is being referred to as the “mass” and “class” phenomenon. “Affluent consumers choose to travel with the masses and sleep and dine with the classes,” states Danzinger.

There is a lesson here for travel packagers who would like to capture this affluent market. Focus on the experiences once the traveler is in the destination and put the dollars there. Fine dining, top hotels, front-row tickets to the opera, a private lesson with a famous chef, one-on-one attention at the finest stores. As these two surveys pointed out - they’ll fly coach but, when they get there, they want the finest experiences money can buy. *As Reported in the Trend - CrossSphere - Source: Research Alert, Vol. 23, No. 1*

## Motorcoach/International Trends

### Travel Agent Trends

In a world full of online travel news, it may seem like travel agents are a thing of the past. Nothing could be farther from the truth. The role of the traditional travel agent has evolved with the emergence of online travel, but they remain a powerful and essential partner for the travel industry. According to the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), travel agents sell 70% of all airline tickets, 95% of cruises, 90% of all tours and packages, 40% of all car rentals and about 25% of all hotels. Buying travel is a lot like choosing a restaurant. A self-service restaurant is right for some nights but other occasions call for white tablecloth treatment. Likewise, there’s room—and customer demand—for both self-service and full-service in the travel industry. Some trips— family reunions, multi-city business meetings, or a trip around the world—are best planned with an expert’s help due to their importance, complexity, or exotic location. With access to the most current information, professional travel agents offer travelers in-depth knowledge, one-stop shopping, personalized service, and often, the inside track on the best value for your money.

More Information:

- According to the American Society of Travel Agents (ASTA), travel agents sell 70% of all airline tickets, 95% of cruises, 90% of all tours and packages, 40% of all car rentals and about 25% of all hotels.
- TravelCLICK’s eMonitor results for the first quarter of 2004 show that worldwide hotel room nights booked electronically grew 9.5%. Revenue from travel agents rose 13.3%



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from last year, the biggest increase in over two years. Travel agent bookings still form 83% of the total room nights booked through the GDS's.

- On average, Galileo (helps connect approximately 44,000 travel agency locations to 470 airlines, 24 car rental companies, 56,000 hotel properties, 430 tour operators and all major cruise lines throughout the world) handles more than 192 million requests for information per day. At peak times, the company's systems process more than 250 million messages per day.

*As reported by Cendant Travel Distribution Services - www.cendant.com, May 24, 2004.*

Business soared in 2004 for home-based travel agents. According to agents surveyed by the Outside Sales Support Network (OSSN), more than 40% of agents who responded to the survey reported overall business increases up to 35% over 2003. At the same time, however, retailers said that their overhead expenses also jumped. Agents apparently have learned that survival is based on their ability to develop a niche: almost 74% stated they do have a niche for their travel business. Those surveyed also gave high marks to industry suppliers, with more than 85% saying that "most" suppliers are providing ample – if not increasing – support for agents' businesses.

*As reported February 21, 2005 by TheTourOperator.com*

As online technology has become more sophisticated and booking engines easier to use, more online travelers are gravitating toward online agencies and supplies overall compared to 2002. Ratings for traditional agencies have suffered as online travelers have grown more accustomed to making reservations online. While customer service and reliability still drive usage of traditional agencies, this channel has lost ground on these and all performance measures in 2003. *As reported by 2004 PhoCusWright Inc., The PhoCusWright Consumer Travel Trends Survey Sixth Edition, Pg. 8*

## Motorcoach Trends - Niche Markets

Active Adult Retirement Communities (AARC) are prime prospects for group travel. Consider the following: 1) Residents have discretionary income; 2) They have time to travel; 3) They are prone to participate in group activities (one of the benefits of the community); 4) Residents enjoy the company of their peers; 5) They enjoy living life to the fullest.

The convergence of three factors: the doubling of the senior population by 2030; their inheritance of close to \$10 trillion from their parents' generation; and the idealistic "worry free" environment that these communities provide in a world filled with worries paints a rosy picture for this industry for the next generation.

As the Bank Travel Market is to the group travel industry in the early to mid 1990's, Active Adult Retirement communities have the potential to be in the coming decade. *As reported by Premier Tourism Marketing Special Report on Active Adult Residential Retirement Communities 1999-2004*

# Industry Trends



## Motorcoach Trends

In the first and second quarters of 2004, 58% and 60% of tour operators respectively experienced an increase in overall sales volume. With the impact of the Internet on travel in the last few years, group travel providers are working to use online packaging to continue to increase sales. *As reported in the IACVB Special Report - 2005 Forecast January 2005 - International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus*

In February 2004 a Web-based survey was e-mailed to a database of 533 NTA tour operator members. Ninety-six tour operators completed the survey for a response rate of 18%.

- The following responses were received when asked “Does your company currently have a Web site?” 85% of the operators responded yes, 11% responded no and 4% indicated it was currently in development.
- The following responses were received when asked “My company and our staff members use the Internet for the following reasons”:
  - E-mail - 99%
  - Destination/partner research - 85%
  - Booking employee travel - 54%
  - Advertising and marketing - 50%
  - Online sales - 45%
  - Lead generation - 45%

*As reported in the February 2004 NTA Technology Survey Results*

## International Trends

Overall, the number of international tourist arrivals in the first eight months of 2004 was 526 million - an increase of 58 million arrivals (+12%) compared to the same period in 2003. *As reported in the IACVB Special Report - 2005 Forecast January 2005 - International Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus*

U.K. - U.S. passenger arrivals heading for records in 2004 and 2005. At just under 4 million, U.K. passenger arrivals in the U.S., up to November 2004, recorded a year-to-date increase of 10% over 2003. Assuming this growth rate is maintained into December, ten total annual arrivals in 2004 will have reached c. 4.35 million, becoming the second highest ever year for U.K. - U.S. arrivals. And, on top of a highly successful 2004, early signs are already indicating that 2005 will go on to become the very best year ever!...Visit USA members are reporting record U.S. booking levels and, at this stage, it seems likely that the 4.7 million arrivals recorded - pre 9/11 - in 2000, will be overtaken in 2005. *US Arrivals Release 140205.doc*

International Arrivals from Top 25 Overseas Markets report that from January-September 2004 Canada - Arrivals 9,728 (000) - Percent Change '04-'03 +9.3%; UK - Arrivals 2,770 (000) - Percent Change '04-'03 +12.9; Germany - Arrivals 864 (000) - Percent Change '04-'03 +17.8  
*www.thetouropoperator.com February 2, 2005*

International Marketing - N.C. 18<sup>th</sup> most visited US state; N.C. one of 2 states not to lose market share; Canada - Visitation to U.S. to increase 31% by '06; 330,300 Canadians visited N.C. in



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2002; First Quarter 2003 arrivals to N.C. up 7.6%... As reported by Lynn D. Minges, Executive Director, N.C. Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development - 2004 Governor's Conference

## Meetings and Convention Trends 2005

The surge in meetings business throughout the country, along with quicker management approval for meeting budgets, has predictably prompted planners to book small meetings further in advance than last year and the year before. A six-month lead time is now common. *MeetingNews, December 13, 2004*

Groups in the insurance and financial services fields are holding more meetings at resorts for senior executives, top sales people and valued customers. Across the industry segments, boutique hotels have gained renewed favor among planners of small meetings. *MeetingNews, December 13, 2004*

Planners are shortening the typical length of their meetings by squeezing in more meeting sessions per day at the expense of entertainment. Association and corporate planners are the leaders in this category. *Meetings South, January 2005*

Associations are incorporating more spousal program outings when compared to 2004. Corporate, on the other hand, are decreasing their spousal programs. *Meetings South, January 2005*

Association activities include using attractions and theme parks (up 13.2% over 2003 survey) and spa activities (up 12.1%); corporate planner use of spas has decreased 9.4% in the same time frame. *Meetings South, January 2005*

Ninety percent of all meeting planner respondents say they will either hold the same amount or more meetings in 2005; 34% expect their number of meetings to increase up to 10% in 2005. *Meetings South, January 2005*

Growth in communication techniques is leading to an increased demand for face-to-face meetings. With the general deterioration of social skills in society, more meetings focusing on relationship building skills need to be developed. *Meetings South, January 2005*

In the social and health services arena, the hot markets include medical and insurance; holistic medicine is a rising star, however. *Meetings South, January 2005*

In the last two years, the number of meetings held in all categories increased by margins ranging from nearly 30% to more than 183%. Two years ago, meeting planners reported that they planned an average of 0.6 incentive trips annually. In 2004, planners reported an average of 1.7 incentives held. Training and education meetings are also up by 55%. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

The emergence of niche lobby groups such as gays and lesbians are having a positive economic impact on cities and countries. As their needs are identified and communicated, additional meetings and events will continue to be developed and held in cities where they are heard and respected. *Meetings South, January 2005*

# Industry Trends



There is an increase in environmental meetings and special events, especially in the area of recycling. In the meetings industry, there is a growing awareness of Green Meetings standards. *Meetings South, January 2005*

Rest and relaxation: There is an emerging need for events dealing with the inner self, such as retreats, spiritual centers and holistic medicine. *Meetings South, January 2005*

With the exception of training and education meetings, the average number of attendees has decreased significantly over the last two years in every category of meetings. Even though incentives are being planned overall, the criteria for qualification on those trips have clearly become far more stringent, thus decreasing size of attendees. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

For the training and education meetings, planners report the number of attendees to those meetings increased by nearly 25% over the last two years. As new products are introduced, sales forces and customers must be trained. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

The medical industry seems to be the healthiest in terms of meetings, while manufacturing seems the weakest. In 2004, medical and health care planners held the most corporate conventions (14.8) while manufacturing held the fewest (6.3). *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Nearly 30% of planners expect to see an increase in the number of management meetings. Only 7% expect any decreases for 2005. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Organizations are becoming aware of the importance of meetings and meeting planners. Planners are being asked to think strategically about meetings and to generate quantifiable efficiencies through the planning process. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Almost 40% of respondents to the 2004 State of the Industry survey were required to show return on investment for their meetings, up significantly from 25% in 2000 and 32% in 2002. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Scrutiny of meetings is different at each organization as are the new guidelines for pharmaceutical companies. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Corporate planners are likely to collaborate with procurement or travel management executives. This doesn't change the role of the meetings managers. The collaboration just gives planners more guidance on how to approach meeting planning and link it to the best interests of the company. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

Planners have become more focused on factors affecting the overall meeting experience, the productivity of the attendee, and - in the case of incentives and association conferences - the marketability of the event. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

As for amenities, planners are not swayed so much by the softer stuff like spas services and spouse programs. Rather, they rated business-related services highest, with Internet access in guest rooms and meeting rooms second and third. Most planners said having high-speed Internet connectivity was a must-have. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*



# Industry Trends

Nearly 10% of management meetings and sales get-togethers are planned in less than three weeks and nearly 35% of corporate planners think lead times will shorten in 2005. *SUCCESSFUL MEETINGS, January 2005*

A third of respondents (1/3 of 184) are designing incentives to deal with targeted goals such as growing product awareness or increasing sales or a particular product; that only one in four respondents is using outsource partners such as incentive houses and independent planners to help with incentive travel logistics. *MeetingsNet, February 1, 2005*

81% of respondents gear their incentive programs to salespeople, and about 35% ran dealer/distributor programs. *MeetingsNet, February 1, 2005*

Number of Insurance Conference Planner Association members that budget a room rate of \$200 or more for an incentive program: 85%. *MeetingsNet, February 1, 2005*

## Convention and Visitor Services Trends

Baltimore's long-delayed visitor center has gone undercover—now cloaked in a floor-to-ceiling drape designed to heighten local excitement in the days leading up to its May 7th opening. Tourism officials are counting on the new 8,000-square-foot glass structure, being built at cost of \$4.5 million, to boost the number of Baltimore tourists, estimated at about 12 million a year, and to extend their stays. Visitors will be able to buy attraction tickets, make hotel reservations and study restaurant menus in one stop. Tourism officials have worked for eight years to get the visitors center completed. *Tribune Business News, March 26*

The American Bus Association will press for increased funding of motorcoach security, higher grants for retrofitting buses for wheelchair travelers and passage of the highway bill. *A Travel Advance Special Report, January 10, 2005*

A soon-to-be-released report—"The Impact of Motorcoaches on Society"—finds that buses more extensively serve rural locations, and are more likely to serve elderly, female and minority populations. The motorcoach industry serves 89% of rural areas—70% more than airlines and 42% more than rail, according to the report. *Special to TA, February 8, 2005*

Meet the newest business travel accessory: Mom and Dad. As air fares get cheaper and the number of retirees grow, some parents are now tagging along with their road-warrior children. In Atlanta, the Four Seasons says it has seen a 10% increase over the past year in elderly people accompanying their children on business trips. The Renaissance Chicago O'Hare Hotel plans to launch a "Bring Your Parents on Your Business Trip" offer next month, including a second room at half price. *Wall Street Journal, January 21, 2005*

It used to be that spas shunned children. But these days, a handful of spas are going to great lengths to become baby- and new-mother friendly, adding amenities like expensive strollers and organic baby shampoos, as well as services ranging from postnatal massages to child care. *New York Times, January 21, 2005*



# Industry Trends



We still don't see throngs of commuters Segwaying to work, but flocks of gliding tourists riding the self-balancing, electric-powered "human transporter" may become a common sight, says Newsweek. Guided Segway tours have become big business for both Segway distributors and traditional tour companies. In the last few months, Segway tour groups, which charge \$50 to \$85 per person, have announced new tours in Austin, Texas; Phoenix, Ariz.; Steyr, Austria, and Lille, France. With ecotravel all the rage, Segways are a hip and environmentally-friendly alternative to the tour bus, says Newsweek. *Newsweek.com, February 7, 2005*

Americans have always had a reputation for linguistic laziness, and since much of the business world is willing to conduct business in English, their deficiency tends not to hold them back. But now an increasing number of Americans realize that going the extra step to hone skills in a foreign language can provide a professional edge or grease the wheels of deal-making. *The New York Times, February 1, 2005*

Boone, NC - January 2005: Recognizing - from hundreds of reader inquiries and targeted Web site surveys - that many visitors want more information on moving/relocation, schools, jobs, income, population and government entities in/around the High Country, BooneNC.com has evolved into a "one-stop" information portal for a multitude of these requests. Travel and destination information remains the most sought-after topic. *<http://hospitality-1st.com/PressNews/BooneNC-013105.html>, February 4, 2005*

The Focus of the New York Times Sunday "Travel" section was on family vacations. In one feature, the paper reported that the travel industry has discovered that extended families are a hot new market. Resorts, hotels and tour operators are courting them in ways that go far beyond "children stay free," with everything from baby-sitting and family yoga to reconfigured suites, free family portraits and personal concierges to plan events for large groups. Zagat, for example, is offering a new guide to family travel, with parent ratings and reviews on resorts (TA, 5/26). *New York Times, January 28, 2005*

Rising hotel occupancies and room rates are pushing most hotel stocks to their highest levels since before 9/11. "Right now the recovery is very strong," said J.W. 'Bill' Marriott, chairman of Marriott International. "Business travel is up, leisure travel is up, international arrivals are up. The urban markets are on fire," said Mike Barnello, chief operating officer of LaSalle Hotel Properties in Bethesda, Md., a real estate investment trust. *Washington Post, January 28, 2005*

After only a one-year tryout, the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration is rethinking its use of five-day tropical forecasts. The move comes after the tourism industry complained that travelers were canceling their plans unnecessarily because of the long-range forecast and its wider impact. Tourism officials want NOAA to go back to a three-day storm track because of the greater margin of error with the five-day forecast. They say the three-day forecast still gives communities enough time to respond to the threat of a storm. *Tribune Business News; Hotel-Online.com, January 26, 2005*



# Glossary of Terms

**AAA** – American Automobile Association – A not-for-profit organization of some 90 motor clubs serving more than 42 million members in the United States and Canada.

**ABA** – American Bus Association – A national association of private, intercity bus companies, travel industry organizations, motorcoach tour organizers and associates. The ABA offers a marketplace where buyers and sellers meet in one-on-one pre-scheduled appointments.

**Association organizations** – Organizations of association executives who meet regularly and host annual meetings, conventions and trade shows.

- ASAE** – American Society of Association Executives
- AENC** – Association Executives of North Carolina
- CMA** – Christian Management Association
- GSAE** – Georgia Society of Association Executives
- GWSAE** – Greater Washington Society of Association Executives
- PCMA** – Professional Conference Managers Association
- RCMA** – Religious Conference Managers Association
- SCSAE** – South Carolina Society of Association Executives
- SGMP** – Society of Government Meeting Planners
- TSAE** – Tennessee Society of Association Executives

**BCTDA** – Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority – A nine-member board responsible for overseeing the expenditure of the county’s four-percent room occupancy tax revenues. The board is comprised of seven members with voting status (three appointed by Buncombe County, three by the City of Asheville, and one by the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce) as well as two ex-officio, non-voting members.

**B-roll** – A broadcast term that refers to video with natural sound on tape.

**Blog** – An online diary; a personal chronological log of thoughts published on a Web page; also called Weblog. Many Weblogs allow visitors to leave public comments which can lead to a community of readers centered around the blog.

**Brand** - A genuine brand is the internalized sum of all impressions received by customers and consumers resulting in a distinctive position in their mind’s eye based in perceived emotional and functional benefits.

**CMCA** - Christian Meetings and Conventions Association

**Conversion study** – A study conducted to determine the number of visitors requesting visitor information who actually visit the area.

**DMC** - Destination Management Company

**E-zine** – A magazine published electronically for Internet consumption.

**FAM** – A shortened term for familiarization tour, a common marketing tool used in the travel industry. A FAM is an invitation-only complimentary trip hosted by a destination for the purpose of “familiarizing” a specific group (media, motorcoach operator, meeting planner, etc.) with the attributes of the area.

**GAMPI** – Georgia Meeting Professionals International

**Group leaders** – Non-professional travel planners associated with religious, social and/or senior clubs. Group leaders are working with “preformed groups” drawn from the organization’s membership, rather than individuals brought together by a professional tour operator.

**Gateway city** – A city with an airport servicing direct international flights.

# Glossary of Terms



**HSMAI** – Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International – An organization of hospitality industry professionals including representatives from hotels, restaurants, attractions and service companies.

**IAAP** – International Association of Administrative Professionals

**IACVB** – International Association of Convention and Visitors Bureaus – A professional organization for the convention and visitor industry across the world. Educational opportunities are provided at seminars and at the annual convention.

**Media tour** – A visit to a city or cities in a market or region in which appointments are scheduled with media for interviews and to distribute information about visiting the Asheville area in hopes of obtaining editorial and broadcast coverage.

**MPI** – Meeting Professionals International – The leading professional society of meeting planners and suppliers, the organization hosts an annual meeting along with a trade show. In addition, state chapters also host their own annual meetings and trade show opportunities.

**NCACVB** – North Carolina Association of Convention & Visitor Bureaus – A private, not-for-profit corporation dedicated to the promotion of North Carolina as a convention and visitor destination. Comprised of more than 30 destination marketing organizations, the group works on cooperative marketing projects in partnership with the NCDTFSD.

**NCDTFSD** – North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development – A division of the Department of Commerce which oversees tourism affairs and marketing for North Carolina.

**North Carolina Golf Marketing Alliance** – A not-for-profit corporation formed to promote North Carolina as a primary golf destination for international visitors, the alliance conducts joint marketing ventures in conjunction with the North Carolina Travel & Tourism Division.

**NTA** – National Tour Association – NTA is a nonprofit trade organization of and for individuals who package both retail and wholesale tours. The NTA member company is the “middle man” who sells and/or arranges interstate pleasure tours and motorcoach tours for compensation. The marketplace is designed for buyers and sellers to meet on a one-on-one basis in pre-scheduled appointments.

**PITV** – Per Inquiry Television – Advertising program through which the advertiser pays a pre-negotiated, cost-controlled rate for leads generated from television commercials.

**POW WOW** – Organized by TIA, this is the major marketplace in the U.S. for domestic suppliers and international buyers and is a marketplace structured like ABA and NTA with pre-scheduled appointments, journalists and public relations executives. The organization was created to promote unbiased, accurate and interesting reporting on travel destinations, facilities and services. The group holds an annual convention as well as regional meetings and educational forums.

**PRSA** – Public Relations Society of America – The national professional organization of public relations practitioners and communicators. Each year the Travel and Tourism Section of the organization plans a conference that brings media and travel communicators together in an educational setting.

**RSA** – Receptive Services Association – A professional organization designed to help receptive operators serve international tour companies through partnerships with North American suppliers.

**RSS** – Really Simple Syndication – RSS, or an RSS feed, which is the term more commonly heard, is technology that allows people to display content for Web distribution or syndications. An RSS feed provides news or other information that Web site owners can access and place on their own Web sites. The content is fed to the Web site via the RSS feed. By supplying an RSS feed, the content owner still controls what information is syndicated in the feed.



# Glossary of Terms

**SATW** – Society of American Travel Writers – A not-for-profit professional association of writers, photographers, editors and travel public relations associates.

**SMERF** – An acronym for the meeting market segments that comprise social, military, educational, religious and fraternal groups.

**State Motorcoach Associations** – State associations of member motorcoach operators who work together to promote safe travel by motorcoach through networking with other operators and suppliers and by positively influencing state legislation. Each state association typically holds an annual meeting and trade show to offer supplier members an opportunity to meet with tour planners and/or group leaders.

**GMCA** – Georgia Motorcoach Association

**NCMA** – North Carolina Motorcoach Association

**PBA** – Pennsylvania Bus Association

**STS** – Southeast Tourism Society – STS is the private-sector voice in the travel industry in 10 Southeastern states, including North Carolina. Membership in STS affords an opportunity for educational seminars, joint trade show ventures and networking.

**TIA** – Travel Industry Association of America – The Washington, D.C.-based national, nonprofit association that serves as a unifying organization for all of the U.S. travel industry, which is the second largest employer and third largest retail industry in the nation.

**TPDF** - Tourism Product Development Fund - A sub-committee of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority who researches and selects grant recipients from the 1% occupancy tax collected to expand tourism in Buncombe County.

**Travel South** – Travel South is an organization composed of 11 Southeastern states including North Carolina. Travel South Showcase is a marketplace structured like NTA and ABA, but limited to Southern suppliers.

**Viral marketing** – Marketing concept in which an unusual, interesting or funny message promoting the area is distributed to consumers in hopes that they will forward the message to other people. This method is most often used in e-mail marketing.

**Wiki** - Wiki, which means quick, is software that allows people to quickly and easily add content to a Web site which can be edited by others. A wiki site is different from a blog because a blog's content is generally controlled by one owner, and a wiki site supports collaborative content by allowing for multiple content providers.

# Industry Calendar - 2005



<b>JULY</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
14-17	Insurance Conference Planners Association	Austin, TX
14-15	STS Council Meeting	Atlanta, GA
20	SGMP - Atlanta Meeting	Atlanta, GA
27	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
28-29	NCACVB Meeting	Greenville, NC
<b>AUGUST</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
3-6	IACVB Annual Meeting	San Diego, CA
5	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
13-16	ESTO Educational Seminar for Tourism Org.	Coeur d'Alene, ID
13-16	ASAE Trade Show	Nashville, TN
17	SGMP - Atlanta Meeting	Atlanta, GA
17-20	ASAE Post-FAM	Asheville, NC**
24	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
25	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
<b>SEPTEMBER</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
7-9	STS Annual Meeting	Charleston, SC
12-15	Corporate/Association Calls	Atlanta, GA
14-16	GSAE/GAMPI Sales Calls	Atlanta, GA
15	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
18-23	SATW Annual Convention/Marketplace	Las Vegas, NV
20	HSMIA Educational Seminar	Charlotte, NC
21	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
23-25	SGMP Annual Golf Outing	Augusta, GA
27-29	Corporate Calls	Atlanta, NC
TBD	Fall Media Tour	North Carolina**
TBD	Pennsylvania Tour Operator Sales Mission	Pennsylvania**
TBD	AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training	Ohio**
<b>OCTOBER</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
4	Chamber Annual Golf Classic-Walnut Cove	Asheville, NC
7	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
11-14	PCMA SE Meeting	Atlanta, GA
18-21	SGMP -Atlanta Meeting & Corporate Calls	Atlanta, GA
19	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
20-21	NCACVB Meeting	Huntersville, NC
25	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
26-28	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Seattle, WA
27-30	SGMP - SE Regional Education Conference	Tybee Island, GA
29-Nov. 1	Delta Rhythms of the South Marketplace	Louisville, KY
TBD	ICPA Sales Calls	Southeast
TBD	CMCA Meeting	TBD
<b>NOVEMBER</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
4-8	National Tour Association	Detroit, MI
15	HSMIA Educational Seminar	Charlotte, NC
15-17	SGMP -Atlanta Meeting & Corporate Calls	Atlanta, GA
17	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
18-20	AAA Carolinas Superbowl of Knowledge IX	Pinehurst, North Carolina**
22	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
TBD	Winter Media Tour	Atlanta & Tennessee**
<b>DECEMBER</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
1-2	NCACVB Meeting	Chapel Hill, NC
2	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
6	CVB Holiday Open House	Asheville, NC
8	AENC Trade Show	Durham, NC**
12-13	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Florence, AL
15	Convention Development Committee	TBD**
20-21	HSMIA Educational Seminar & Corp. Calls	Charlotte, NC
21	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC

\*\*Opportunities for community involvement.  
 Dates are subject to change. Please call 828/258-6102 to confirm.



# Industry Calendar - 2006

<b>JANUARY</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
6-8	ACOM Annual Conference	Philadelphia, PA
14-16	NC Motorcoach Association	Winston-Salem, NC
19	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
25	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
<b>FEBRUARY</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
2-3	NCACVB Meeting	Burlington, NC
3	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
3-8	American Bus Association	Nashville, TN
22	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
23-26	NCMA Annual Marketplace	Charlotte, NC
23	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
28-Mar. 1	STS Congressional Summit	Washington, DC
TBD	ICPA Sales Calls	TBD
<b>MARCH</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
16	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
23-24	TDA 2005-2006 Strategic Planning Retreat	Asheville, NC
24	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
27-29	STS Spring Meeting	Florida
30-31	NCACVB Meeting	Blowing Rock, NC
TBD	VisitNC Presentation	Raleigh, NC**
TBD	Spring Media Tour	Philadelphia/New York**
TBD	AAA Explore Asheville! Training	Florida**
TBD	Pennsylvania Bus Association Marketplace	Pennsylvania
<b>APRIL</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
4-6	NC Governor's Conference	Durham, NC**
7	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
26	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
27	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
TBD	CMCA Spring Show	TBD
TBD	GSAE/GAMPI & Sales Calls	TBD
TBD	AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training	Atlanta, GA**
<b>MAY</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
12	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC**
13-21	See America Week/National Tourism Week	Asheville, NC**
15-19	TIA - Pow Wow	Orlando, FL
24	TDA Board Meeting	Asheville, NC
TBD	HSMAl Leadership Conference	TBD
TBD	Corporate Calls - Atlanta	TBD
TBD	Blue Ridge Parkway AAA FAM	Asheville, NC**
<b>JUNE</b>	<b>MEETING/EVENT</b>	<b>LOCATION</b>
2	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC**
7-11	SATW ACC Chapter Meeting	Mackinac Island, MI
18-20	PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference	Washington, DC
21	TDA Board Meeting/ Budget Public Hearing	Asheville, NC
22-23	STS Board of Directors Meeting	TBD
TBD	NCACVB Annual Meeting	TBD

\*\*Opportunities for community involvement.

Dates are subject to change. Please call 828/258-6102 to confirm.

# Notes





# Notes



