

The word "ASHEVILLE" is written in a stylized, multi-colored font. Each letter is composed of overlapping shapes in shades of blue, red, yellow, and green, giving it a vibrant, artistic appearance.

ASHEVILLE

Brand Alive 2.0

The Marketing & Communications Plan of the
Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

The background features large, overlapping, semi-transparent shapes in shades of orange, olive green, and blue, creating a modern, abstract design.

2007 - 2008

Message to the Industry

Mark Twain once quipped, “Not all horses were born equal. A few were born to win.” Twain’s words are very appropriate to the tourism outlook for the Asheville area and this year’s marketing and communications plan.

There are several highlights worth mentioning in this year’s plan. For the first year ever, the total dollars allocated for direct media will exceed \$3 million, or 51 percent of the total Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority’s budget. New niche creative campaigns developed by our advertising agency, Luckie & Company, will run heavily in key drive destinations, along with our overall destination advertising, which will continue to use the “Signs” creative. Advertising will also be heavily concentrated in Atlanta with the aim of better penetration in this important market.



Kelly Miller

A Buncombe County-wide comprehensive wayfinding program will be rolled out this fiscal year, making it easier for visitors to navigate. The easier our guests can find attractions, shops, restaurants and cultural districts, the more likely they will spend additional dollars in our community and, hopefully, another night!

Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) staff will be exploring several niche markets based around destination weddings and culinary tourism, as well as redefining tourism packaging to be more inline with best practices. Staff will also continue to push the envelope on viral marketing efforts similar to the Five Day Weekend campaign. We must continue cutting through the marketing clutter found in today’s overly messaged society.

The highly acclaimed Asheville Visitor Center has certainly become a first stop for many of our guests. Adding onsite bookable experiences such as accommodations via the Asheville Concierge Service, Segway, river rafting and trolley tours provide visitors enriching, on-brand experiences designed to create memories. Staff will work diligently to continue enhancing this valuable asset in our product mix.

Speaking of product, the Tourism Product Development Fund process, created to financially support community projects that generate additional room nights in Buncombe County, will once again gear up this fiscal year. Last year, the room tax collecting accommodation properties granted more than \$3.5 million to five projects through the fund.

We are also committed to helping our industry define a “green destination.” Asheville’s tourism industry needs to take a leadership role on not just marketing our destination, but managing the economic impact it has upon the brand.

Finally, your CVB team is committed to delivering on the destination brand promise. Every visitor interaction, each customer touch needs to reinforce this Asheville promise:

We guarantee you a life enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It’s personal, personal to you. And it is also personal to us. We live that same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits us, and allow you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.

As always, your continued feedback is greatly appreciated. Without your support and partnership, the Asheville 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 team with ideas for improvement whenever possible. To keep abreast of current CVB programs and activities, regularly visit a newly re-designed ashevillecvb.com in early 2008. We look forward to a prosperous and enriching 2007-2008!

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Kelly". The signature is fluid and cursive, written in a professional but personal style.

Kelly Miller, Executive Director
a proud member of the Asheville CVB team

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www.exploreasheville.com

www.ashevillecvb.com

Industry Snapshot

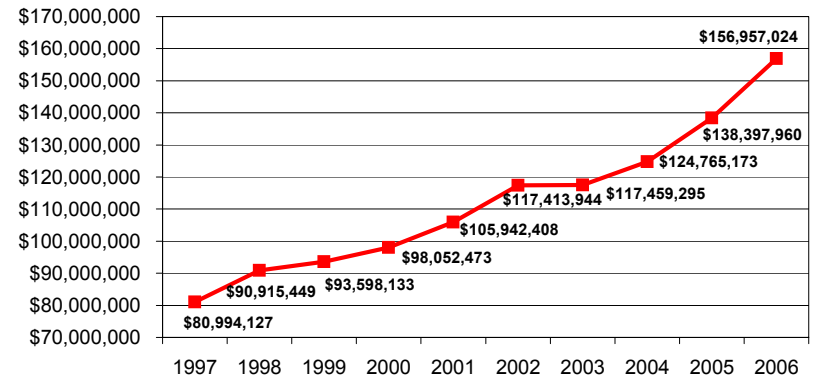
The projects undertaken by the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau during the 2006 - 2007 fiscal year contributed to yet another productive year in Asheville area tourism. Led by a board committed to managing the destination, not just marketing it, the Asheville area tourism industry realized the following significant successes:

- Five community projects were awarded \$3,583,500 in grants from the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF), provided by occupancy tax collected by the Buncombe County lodging industry
- Hotel sales increased 9.6%
- RevPAR increased 10.4%
- Average Daily Rate increased 9.8% (2006 calendar year)
- Occupancy increased 3.0% (2006 calendar year)
- Asheville Visitor Center patronage increased 14.8%
- Convention bookings were up 8.5%; room nights generated increased 10.1%
- CVB group tour (motorcoach) initiated bookings were up 63.5%; room nights generated increased 18.6%; and sales leads distributed were up 100%
- User sessions on exploreasheville.com were up 36.3%

**2007 - 2008
Tourism Marketing
Business Objective**

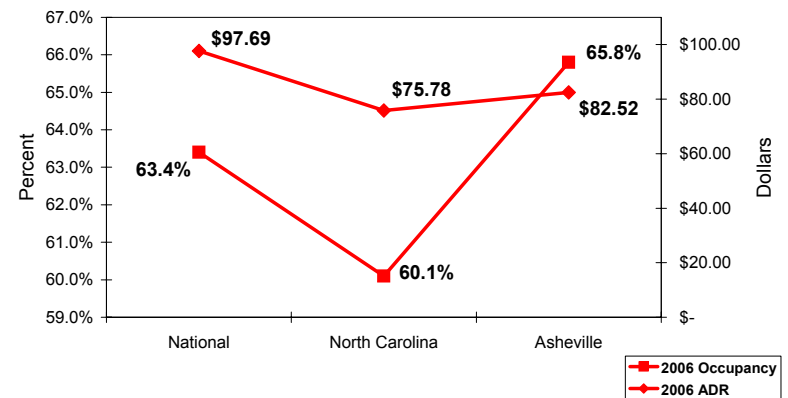
**To increase accommodation sales
by 8.5% in fiscal year 2007 - 2008.**

Buncombe County Hotel Sales



Occupancy & Average Daily Rate

	2005		2006	
	Occupancy	ADR	Occupancy	ADR
National	63.1%	\$90.89	63.4%	\$97.69
North Carolina	58.2%	\$70.50	60.1%	\$75.78
Asheville	64.0%	\$75.50	65.8%	\$82.52



The Asheville Area Brand

Brand Strategy

The Asheville area brand is the representation of the sum total of our reputation and image as a tourism destination. After more than a year and a half of research, the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB) unveiled the destination brand's repositioning and new graphic identity in October 2005. The underlying brand proposition, "Enrich Your Life," speaks to the emotional benefits of an Asheville area getaway versus the physical attributes (mountain scenery, attractions and vacation offerings) that were so prevalent in past advertising efforts and, in many ways, common among many destinations.

By playing on the very personal, often unscripted, but transformational nature of the Asheville area, the destination carves out a category that is distinctive. While the mountains, beautiful scenery and attractions are important, it is the combination along with the interesting people and diverse interests that evolve into a distinctive experience that empowers visitors. It is the resulting emotional connections that come to the forefront in advertising, marketing and sales efforts.

The idea of enrichment permeates the program of work undertaken by the CVB on behalf of Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA). Staying true to the brand governs the tactics taken by the CVB, the details in the work and how this area manages its future.

Asheville's brand promise serves as a guarantee to each guest who visits the area. Delivering on the promise, while ensuring the core destination values of welcoming, natural and vibrant are met, is paramount. It is the responsibility of the tourism industry and the community to continue to create the warm, embracing and creative environment that makes this area distinctive and empowers guests to find their own unscripted, memorable experience.

Strategies and Tactics

This year, the BCTDA continues the brand culturalization phase, meaning that CVB staff makes every effort to ensure each visitor truly lives the brand promise when visiting our area. While it is critical that the CVB incorporates the brand, it is equally important that each partner understands and communicates the brand values to ensure an underlying consistency in the visitor experience.

Continue brand education efforts through an ongoing and flexible approach that adapts to the transitional nature of the tourism business:

- Implement a program for front-line employees that can be adopted as part of an organization's orientation process.
- Continue speaking to larger employee groups.
- Consult on a one-on-one basis regarding the Asheville area brand as needed.
- Educate community members about the brand, including how each person has contributed to its formation and how each can deliver on the promise.

Maintain ongoing efforts to ensure that all CVB programs are on-brand:

- Stay in touch with task forces and new program discussions to ensure brand engagement.
- Conduct brand audits including interviews with key staff and partners.
- Develop immersion experiences appropriate for the brand.
- Work with product development manager to ensure that brand alignment is part of the funding process for new product.

Secure opportunities for appropriate brand partnerships:

- Use merchandising vendor to provide logo merchandise to partners at wholesale rates.
- Pursue partnership programs with companies that can advance the Asheville area brand and leverage it with additional outside advertising dollars.

Want to learn more? To learn how to incorporate elements of the Asheville area brand or find out how to better deliver the promise at your organization, contact Brand Marketing Manager Beth Anne McPheeters by calling 828.257.4960 or e-mailing bmcpheeters@exploreasheville.com.

The Asheville Area Brand Promise

We guarantee you a life enriching experience each and every time you visit Asheville. It's personal, personal to you. And it is personal to us. We live this same genuine experience and want to share it with you. We empower you to discover a collection of experiences that is as unique and varied as each individual who visits and allows you to do so in a warm, embracing and creative environment.

ASHEVILLE
any way you like it[®]

Marketing & Public Relations Department

The CVB's mission through Marketing & Public Relations is to promote the Asheville area as a premier travel destination through a variety of methods. The department oversees the relationship with the BCTDA's advertising agency of record; works with a variety of national media outlets to generate substantial editorial and broadcast coverage; executes viral and social media efforts; conducts ongoing industry-wide research and statistical examination of the tourism industry; maintains exploreasheville.com, ashevillecvb.com and a newly created site, bctda.com; and proactively manages and markets the Asheville area brand. Educating the community and serving as the liaison to traditional and non-traditional partners is also of prime importance as part of the ongoing effort to develop the area as a sustainable destination. Staff also assists in fostering new product and oversees the BCTDA tourism product development funding process.

In addition to our ongoing "Signs" campaign, we will focus on romance and culinary travelers with integrated marketing efforts that combine targeted creative messages along with promotion, PR and social media efforts. Additionally, Atlanta will be a prime geotarget this year with a substantial effort in place to educate travelers about the close proximity to the Asheville area. During phase two of the upgrade of exploreasheville.com, interactive components will be installed that encourage more consumer engagement and content. By creating an ongoing dialogue with "Asheville enthusiasts," we hope to turn them into brand loyalists and ambassadors for the region.



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Marketing / Public Relations Calendar		
Date	Event	Location
Aug. 3, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
September 2007	I-40 Media Tour	North Carolina
October 2007	SATW Annual Convention/Marketplace	Manchester, UK
Oct. 5, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Oct. 22-25, 2007	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Charlotte, NC
Dec. 7, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
February 2008	Winter Media Tour	New York, NY
Feb. 1, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 2008	PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference	Pittsburgh, PA
April 4, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 6, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC



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Advertising

The BCTDA will continue with an umbrella brand campaign, using the existing “Signs” creative. Media to be used includes spot TV, print, Internet and co-op media opportunities. Also, four strategic marketing initiatives are funded in the 2007 - 2008 media plan. These campaigns use new creative material consistent with the Asheville brand, but tailored to specific audiences and opportunities. The four strategic opportunities are:

- **3 ½ Hour Campaign** – Research indicates that many Atlantans don’t realize how close they are to Asheville. The objective of this campaign is to change that perception by making Atlantans aware of the fact that Asheville is only 3 ½ hours away. Media to be used includes television, Metro Traffic sponsorships, outdoor, newspaper and mall kiosks.
- **Romance Campaign** – Inject Asheville into a couple’s consideration set for a romantic getaway, ideally positioned with Charleston and Savannah. Media to be used will be full-page and half-page ads, two-page insert, cinema slides and a nontraditional/strategic partnership.
- **Epicurean Campaign** – Build awareness of Asheville’s thriving restaurant scene among travelers for whom good food is a vacation decision variable. Media to be used includes a four-page insert, full-page and half-page ads, mini-book insert and nontraditional sponsorship.
- **Five Day Weekend** – Funding for extending and sustaining the momentum from the initial April - May 2007 launch.

The initiatives above are supported by the \$3 million net advertising budget, which is the largest net media budget in BCTDA’s history. This budget creates the opportunity to expand online efforts, run TV in seven markets and place ads in 30 magazines. Plans include a significant radio and outdoor presence in the key market of Atlanta, and maintaining both the print and online 2007 cooperative ad efforts.

To view all print and television ads, please visit www.exploreasheville.com.



Visitor Inquiries		
	2005 - 2006	2006-2007
July	8,369	6,669
August	8,589	5,553
September	8,535	14,075
October	7,795	6,920
November	6,263	4,271
December	6,481	2,776
January	8,251	4,623
February	7,831	6,452
March	15,600	13,813
April	13,745	10,305
May	11,317	7,742
June	9,100	6,182
TOTAL	111,876	89,381

Online Visitor Guide Requests		
	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007
July	2,957	2,849
August	3,357	3,185
September	2,454	2,223
October	2,379	1,852
November	1,538	1,264
December	1,070	734
January	3,788	2,624
February	3,441	3,725
March	4,330	3,711
April	3,239	3,812
May	3,216	3,068
June	4,326	2,907
TOTAL	36,095	31,954

Strategies and Tactics

Drive awareness of Asheville as a travel destination within key markets:

- Concentrate message delivery against a core audience of women 35-64 with a household income of \$100K+.
- Focus the majority of media exposure during peak decision-making times to affect business during the top three seasons - spring, summer and fall - which in turn commands the most return on investment opportunity due to higher average daily rates.
- Target brand awareness campaigns in the Southeast, with special focus on the following key markets:
 - Tier 1: Atlanta
 - Tier 2: Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh
 - Tier 3: Jacksonville, Orlando, Charleston

Place special emphasis on generating visitors from the Atlanta metro area:

- Run a campaign specifically for Atlanta to communicate how convenient Asheville is to Atlanta residents.
- Use higher-impact ad units in the Atlanta market.
- Run more weeks of TV advertising in Atlanta than in other key markets.
- Run additional print insertions in local Atlanta magazines or in Atlanta editions of national or regional magazines.

Maximize the impact of the strategic niche initiative campaigns:

- Use high-impact ad units such as inserts and mini-books to launch the niche campaigns.
- Use creative customized to the campaign topic and to the media environment.
- As available, use nontraditional media placements/programs to extend the reach of the traditional media schedule.
- Develop creative executions that complement and extend the brand promise from the Signs campaign.

Improve the effectiveness of the spot television portion of the campaign:

- Run shorter, more intense flights that feature more Prime programming to build broader reach earlier in the flight.
- Complement spot TV through the use of spot cable to focus on networks and neighborhoods that skew closer to the target audience.
- Focus more television weight on closer-in drive markets.
- Coordinate the BCTDA TV schedule with the TV schedules of other Asheville tourism destinations, such as Biltmore.

Increase Web site visitation and lead generation to drive bookings growth:

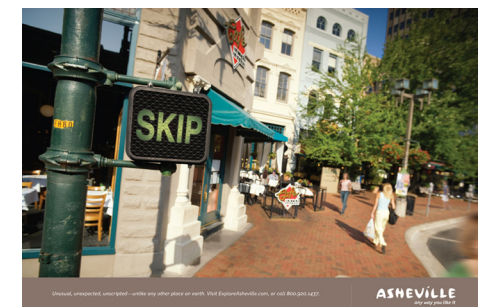
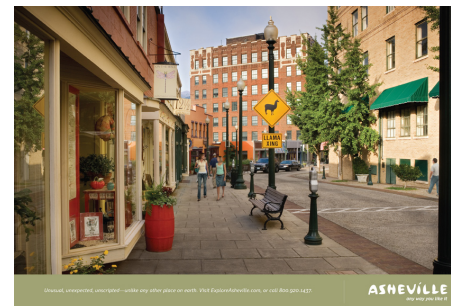
- Include a dual call to action in all creative units to drive potential visitors to exploreasheville.com and 877.GO.TO.AVL.
- Use geotargeted buying for online advertising.
- Evaluate various advertising media and creative units as to their effectiveness in driving Web traffic and/or phone calls.

Build strategic partnerships that leverage the brand, expand buying power and create media efficiencies:

- Explore viable partnerships with like brands to enhance and augment the Asheville area destination brand while maximizing media efficiencies.
- Use Ad Fair to continue offering cooperative advertising opportunities for local partners while expanding media budget and reach.
- Participate in cooperative opportunities offered through industry organizations such as the NCDTFSD, AdvantageWest and Blue Ridge Mountain Host.

Leverage synergies between print, broadcast and online components to maximize financial efficiency and increase reach:

- Seek added value opportunities for media buys that focus on online initiatives.
- Create integrated campaigns that weave traditional print and broadcast media with online initiatives and media relations efforts to create broader reach.



Planned Media Schedule - page 1

FY 08 Media Plan	JUL				AUG				SEPT				OCT				NOV				DEC				JAN				FEB				MAR				APR				MAY				JUNE								
Media	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23
Asheville Umbrella																																																					
Print																																																					
AAA Go - Carolinas																																																					
AAA Going Places South (FL/GA/TN)																																																					
Frommer's Budget Travel (East of Mississippi)																																																					
Cottage Living (East of Mississippi)																																																					
Southern Living (GA, NC, SC)																																																					
National Geographic Traveler (East of Mississippi)																																																					
Oprah Magazine (East)																																																					
MORE - Atlanta, NC, SC																																																					
NC Signature																																																					
Television																																																					
Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh																																																					
Charleston																																																					
Jacksonville, Orlando																																																					
Atlanta																																																					
Romance																																																					
Real Simple																																																					
Conde Nast Traveler (Southeast)																																																					
Coastal Living																																																					
MNI Home - Atlanta (Cooking Light, Country Living, Food & Wine, House Beautiful, This Old House)																																																					
AD INK Women's Buy- Atlanta (Good Housekeeping/Redbook/Woman's Day)																																																					
Cinema Slides/Movie Sponsorship Atlanta, Charlotte, Greensboro, Raleigh																																																					
Kiosk Ads - Lenox and Phipps (Mall of GA Bonus) - 28 units																																																					
Romance Partnership																																																					
Internet																																																					
Online Campaigns																																																					
Keyword/PPC																																																					
Meetings & Conventions																																																					
Print Ads																																																					
Parkway Destination Center																																																					
I-Wall																																																					

Planned Media Schedule - page 2

FY 08 Media Plan	JUL				AUG				SEPT				OCT				NOV				DEC				JAN				FEB				MAR				APR				MAY				JUNE								
Media	25	2	9	16	23	30	6	13	20	27	3	10	17	24	1	8	15	22	29	5	12	19	26	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	4	11	18	25	3	10	17	24	31	7	14	21	28	5	12	19	26	2	9	16	23
NEWSPAPERS/NEWS INSERTS																																																					
<i>Spg/Sum 07 NC Travel Guide (Granite)</i>																																																					
<i>Atm 2006 NC Travel Guide (Granite) Includes Brochure & listing</i>																																																					
<i>USA Weekend</i>																																																					
GUIDES/DIRECTORIES																																																					
<i>NC Official Travel Guide (Co-Op)</i>	2007: Gatefold/Inside Front Cover (4 pages)																								2008: Gatefold/Inside Front Cover (4 pages)																												
<i>NC Outdoor Rec Guide 07 (Granite)</i>	2007: Directory Listing																								2008: Directory Listing																												
<i>Blue Ridge Pkwy Directory & Travel Plnr 07</i>	2007: 1/2P Formatted																								2008: 1/2P Formatted																												
<i>Blue Ridge Mtn Host Visitor Guide</i>	2007: 1/2p4C AVL & Black Mountain																								2008: 1/2p4C AVL & Black Mountain																												
CO-OP																																																					
<i>Bluc Ridge Mountain Host Co-op*</i>																																																					
<i>Asheville TDA Co-op/Online Focus TBD</i>																																																					
<i>State of NC Co-op Contingency</i>																																																					
Five Day Weekend																																																					
TBD																																																					
3 1/2 Hour Campaign																																																					
2 col x 2" Ads in the AJC -34 ads																																																					
30 Sheet Posters - 100 Showing - 203 boards																																																					
Metro Traffic - 900 sponsorships																																																					
3 1/2 Hour Campaign Online																																																					
Weather.com (Impressions) Atlanta																																																					
AOL (Impressions)																																																					
11 Alive News (Impressions)																																																					
PointRoll Rich Media (Impressions)																																																					
Epicurean																																																					
Cooking Light																																																					
Our State Magazine																																																					
MNI Luxury - Atlanta Food & Wine, InStyle, Town & Country																																																					
Atlanta Magazine																																																					
Travel and Leisure - NC, SC, GA, FL, TN																																																					
Southern Living (GA, NC, SC)																																																					
Cooking Light Supper Club/Bon App Podcast or Sponsorship																																																					

Research

Strategies and Tactics

Follow an integrated research approach to ensure information-driven decision making on marketing, advertising and sales messages, as well as destination management issues:

- Continue to follow the previously developed long-term research plan that addresses information needs over time.
- Provide research updates to staff and tourism community through the ashevillecvb.com Web site.
- Stay abreast of cultural and industry trends.

Understand the profile and pulse of the traveling consumer and Asheville visitor in order to make effective marketing decisions:

- Undertake research that will assist in defining customer perceptions of the current brand of Asheville as a destination.
- Use research as part of the creative messaging process to ensure wide appeal to targeted audience.
- Implement consumer product research as needed to determine interest and viability of potential new tourism product opportunities that evolved from the charrette process.
- Use Internet research shareware on an as needed basis to conduct input research utilizing the e-newsletter database.

Conduct economic impact calculations in order to outline the contributions of the tourism industry:

- Purchase visitor volume data from D.K. Shifflett & Associates on an every other-year basis and use Implan economic modeling software to create economic impact reports.
- Contract with Smith Travel Research for historical overview of hotel statistics including occupancy, average daily rate (ADR) and competitive standing.
- 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 to survey industry partners and community on an as needed basis.

Utilize public and private research resources and partnerships to maximize resources:

- Attend industry events such as TIA Marketing Outlook Forum and the NC Governor's Conference.
- Partner on research projects when opportunities arise such as the updated intercept study or data from the annual Travel Monitor.
- Partner with regional organizations to expand knowledge of the Asheville visitor (i.e., shared zip code research from Biltmore and research information through NCDTFSD).

The Typical Asheville Visitor

- Average age is early 50s
- Traveling as a couple
- Income of \$100,000 or more
- Attended college
- Stays for three days
- No children at home
- More than half employed full-time

Tourism Creates Jobs

In the Asheville area, tourism generates a payroll of more than \$600 million.

Approximately 18,000 people are employed in tourism-related jobs.

Public Relations

Strategies and Tactics

Continue the successful proactive media outreach program with an emphasis on relationship-building, customization and targeting to ensure the brand message is conveyed in editorial, broadcast and online placements:

- Create customized pitches aimed at journalists who produce for specific media outlets.
- Continue to write and electronically distribute news releases formatted to include digital imagery, multimedia and background materials via embedded links in order to maximize coverage opportunities in all versions of each media outlet.
- Maintain updated story idea sheets and post online.
- Identify and respond to pitch opportunities generated through outside sources such as SATW and TIA.
- Attend SATW and PRSA marketplaces.
- Utilize editorial calendars to organize a list of placement opportunities.
- Target key journalists for individual site visits.
- Conduct media trips and continue targeting broadcast media as part of trip efforts: North Carolina I-40 (fall); New York City (winter); series of close-in one- or two-day market blitzes as needed.
- Target viable cable outlets such as Travel Channel, HGTV, Food Network, CNN and The Weather Channel.

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

- Identify packages, programs or innovative ideas for "creating buzz" through integrated marketing efforts.
- Pitch radio shows particularly in conjunction with seasonal opportunities such as fall foliage and the holidays.
- Send B-roll to pre-qualified TV news producers for seasonal promotions (fall foliage, rhododendron bloom, geocaching, etc.)

Public Relations Placements			
	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	Variance
Advertising Value (through May)	\$6,860,594	\$2,902,062	(57.7%)
Column Inches (through May)	20,014	10,701	(46.5%)
Circulation (through May)	155,821,067	139,234,502	(10.6%)
Significant Placements (through May)	366	291	(20.5%)

2007 - 2008 Objective
Generate \$5 million in ad value.

Continue to use media efforts to target niche markets, especially romance and culinary-oriented venues to integrate with advertising efforts:

- Cultivate relationships with food writers and maintain ongoing relationships with culinary bloggers.
- Work with agency to identify and capitalize on promotional tie-ins.
- Pitch specific TV production companies that provide destination-related programming.

Ramp up social media and word-of-mouth marketing efforts:

- Utilize information gained through blogging FAM to better target bloggers.
- Identify opportunities for viral marketing efforts that would also create buzz.
- Maintain presence on key social marketing sites such as MySpace and Eons.

Utilize imagery and editorial that is in keeping with the brand to encourage interest and additional pick-up:

- Update photography and expand video library.
- Incorporate key brand messaging in collateral.
- Maintain online press room and ensure that it meets the needs of journalists.

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

- Continue local tourism awareness campaign which includes: continued use of National Tourism Week as a forum for promoting the industry, developing a BCTDA Web site, continue to maintain updated statistics on ashevillecvb.com and utilize it for ensuring partnership communication.
- Use the newly created BCTDA.com Web site as a forum for background and positioning statements on key issues.
- Develop collateral that can be used as an educational tool for industry employees.

Complement sales efforts through media relations efforts:

- Target trade publications for possible editorial.
- Maintain focus for general coverage on key markets also targeted by sales: Charlotte, Atlanta and Raleigh.
- Respond to media leads from select trade publications seeking input and story ideas.
- Build relationships with trade magazine editors during NYC media trip.

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

- Continue to track effectiveness of media relations efforts and examine the value of specific projects by utilizing a clip service, tracking contacts, fulfilling e-mail requests and assessing online and broadcast placements.

Web Development

Strategies and Tactics

Maintain and expand a dynamic Web site that includes significant content opportunities and user-generated information that will maximize visitor conversions:

- Continue improvements to the redesigned site with new and expanded features including new video upload mechanism that allows more sharing by visitors and providing interactive itineraries that can also be shared.
- Add a new Google map mashup which will allow users to build their itinerary through maps, view their itineraries on a map and search for category specific listings by map location.
- Enhance the database for better organization of the existing fields and categories.
- Add Web cams to provide views of the city and nearby mountains.
- Develop and produce search-engine optimized niche content pages to boost awareness of Asheville.
- Create Web pages to complement seasonal and marketing promotions.
- Research, write and distribute fall and spring themed Web sections.
- Maintain ongoing, comprehensive calendar of events listings.
- Post online, interactive Visitor Guide on site.
- Create enhancements for meetings, group events and motorcoach sections of the Web site.

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

- Upgrade search engine on the site.

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

- Develop Web-specific promotions and possible micro-sites.
- Create new e-newsletter template and continue distribution to subscriber list.
- Explore ideas that will increase the subscriber database.
- Maintain a year-round effort to promote package deals/opportunities through 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 review marketing programs and Web programs to create the largest ROI.

2007 - 2008 Objective

Increase the number of user sessions from 2.5 million to 3 million annually.

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

- Target e-zines, bloggers and travel-oriented Web sites for editorial placement and links.
- Employ Pay Per Click / keyword buys to maximize exposure in search engines.
- Continue to aggressively pursue organic search engine placement and positioning.

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

- Redesign, update and create CMS to allow ease of posting and editing content on ashevillecvb.com for enhanced partner communications.



exploreasheville.com home page

Tourism Department

The Tourism Department's extensive program of work stretches through multiple markets including leisure tourism, group travel and international. Of these, leisure travel promotion is the largest area of focus. The Leisure Travel Manager position looks to the community for interesting and distinct experiences in which visitors can dive into Asheville's cultural landscape. Using exploreasheville.com, the CVB makes available to visitors creative opportunities to engage with the destination in authentic ways that represent marketable opportunities to industry partners.

Established programs aimed at increasing overnight visitation from Southeast based AAA clubs will continue, including AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training and state and regional AAA marketplaces. The Tourism Department will work to maintain relationships with tour operators in the motorcoach market with the aim of keeping the area top of mind. The CVB will take an active role in planning for American Bus Association's 2009 Annual Marketplace scheduled to be hosted in Charlotte, NC. Coordination with area partners and internationally focused associations as an effort to capture positive international leads for the area also remains a priority for the year.

Group Tour (Motorcoach)			
	2006 - 2007	2007 - 2008	Variance
Leads Generated	67	134	100%
Bookings	63	103	64%
Room Nights	4,916	5,832	19%
Economic Impact	\$745,265	\$884,131	19%

*The numbers shown reflect tours the CVB worked directly with instead of community-wide numbers.

Tourism Department Calendar		
Date	Event	Location
July 19, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Aug. 15-18, 2007	Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)	Phoenix, AZ
Sept. 20, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Sept. 26-27, 2007	TIA Travel Leadership Summit	Washington, DC
Nov. 1-6, 2007	National Tour Association	Kansas City, MO
Nov. 16-18, 2007	AAA Superbowl of Knowledge	Pinehurst, NC
Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2007	Rhythms of the South	New Orleans, LA
Dec. 13, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Jan. 26-29, 2008	NC Motorcoach Association	Asheville, NC
Feb. 2-7, 2008	American Bus Association	Virginia Beach, VA
March 2008	AAA Travel & Expo Marketplace	Louisville, KY
March 20, 2008	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
April 2008	AAA Explore Asheville! Training	TBD
May 2008	AAA Blue Ridge Parkway FAM	Asheville, NC
May/June 2008	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
May 31-June 4, 2008	POW WOW	Las Vegas, NV
June 17-18, 2008	North American Journeys East Coast Summit	New York, NY



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Tourism Promotions

Strategies and Tactics

Continue to raise awareness and working knowledge of Asheville among AAA auto touring counselors and call center operators in Southeast markets:

- Participate in Blue Ridge Parkway Association's annual AAA FAM trip.
- Conduct one AAA Explore Asheville! Destination Training trip. Candidate locations include AAA Alabama, AAA South – Tennessee and Georgia branch offices and AAA East Tennessee.
- Continue to distribute Visitor Guide and other leisure market materials to AAA auto touring agents in core and venture market areas.
- Coordinate and execute a 3-month in-office display at AAA South's headquarters office in Tampa, Florida.
- Attend AAA Carolinas Super Bowl of Knowledge and AAA Travel and Marketplace Expo.

Continue to explore and develop strategic alliances with corporate entities.

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

Work with industry associations for additional exposure in the AAA markets:

- Work with NCACVB, NCDTFSD and Southeast Tourism Society on joint marketing efforts.
- Coordinate Asheville's participation in consumer travel shows.
- Continue to develop marketing opportunities within the different clubs that incorporate services offered by our industry partners.
- Investigate and inform the community of opportunities available in AAA initiated products promoting consumer packages.

Provide information and materials to consumers as well as travel specialists in order to convert inquiries to visits:

- Work closely with Journal Communications to enhance and publish the 2008 Visitor Guide.
- Continue to include an online Visitor Guide on exploreasheville.com using the best program available on the market.

2007 - 2008 Objective

To increase the number of AAA booked room nights by 3% over fiscal year 2006 - 2007.



Industry partners participating in phase II of 'The Secrets of Dynamic Packaging.'



Groups departing for a day of touring.



AAA Explore Asheville! Familiarization Tour

Group Tour

Strategies and Tactics

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

- Work in conjunction with NCDTFSD, NCACVB and tour operators on joint marketing programs/sales missions and association events that match Asheville's client profile.
- Participate in the following trade shows: National Tour Association and American Bus Association.
- Work in conjunction with Visit Charlotte's local organization committee to prepare for ABA 2009 to be hosted in Charlotte, NC.

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

- Distribute the Destination Planning Guide (hardcopy and CD ROM), group tour DVD, brochure shells and CD ROM of slides/images to tour operators and qualified group leaders.
- Maintain Asheville Web presence on thetouroperator.com with North American Journeys targeting domestic and international tour operators.

2007 - 2008 Objectives

To maintain an Asheville presence in significant regional and national group tour markets.

Continue to refine effective ways to communicate with decision-makers:

- Issue quarterly editions of the group tour e-newsletter.

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

- Provide content for updated Web pages along with an updated version of the Destination Planning Guide to show product and itinerary suggestions, obtain sales leads and announce new group tour opportunities for community partners.

In coordination with our accommodations partners, continue to trend the number of motorcoach tours and travelers into the Asheville area:

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

International

Strategies and Tactics

Work closely with the NCDTFSD international marketing efforts:

- Maintain a close relationship with North Carolina's international sales representatives 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.

2007 - 2008 Objective

To increase the area's market share of international visitors traveling through the region's gateway cities.

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

- Attend the following marketplaces: North American Journeys East Coast Summit (New York), Rhythms of the South – Delta's Global Showcase (New Orleans) and POW WOW (Las Vegas).
- Explore and pursue additional regional marketing alliances that foster inclusion of Asheville in receptive operators' product offerings to their international clients.

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

- Maintain Asheville Web presence on thetouroperator.com with North American Journeys targeting domestic and international tour operators.

Convention Sales & Servicing Department

2006 - 2007 marked the first complete year of a combined Convention Sales and Service Department and the success of the combined efforts continues to build. At the end of the previous fiscal year, the convention sales team posted its second consecutive year of double digit sales growth while the service department strengthened its effectiveness as the brand conduit for meeting attendees. In the coming year, the department will capitalize on the building momentum of current efforts, particularly in the Atlanta market, while seeking leading edge activities to make Asheville distinct in the meeting planners' eyes.

Asheville offers a solution to the pressure faced by conference planners to provide meetings to their organizations which yield great impact. Planners confirm that meetings coming to Asheville set attendance records with attendees who cannot wait to return for personal trips. In 2007 - 2008, the sales team will reach out to more groups, encouraging planners to rejuvenate their organizations by meeting in Asheville.

Asheville is a powerful tourism destination for nearly 10 months a year and the sales team is striving to impact Sunday through Thursday business. In addition, our team will strengthen its proactive approach to provide upscale leads for high demand times and vigilantly research groups that can impact winter months. The 2007 - 2008 plan of work outlines ways to position the destination in the minds of new customers through clear reach-out activities and creative solutions.

Convention Sales			
	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	Variance
Leads Distributed	251	242	(3.6%)
Room Nights in Leads	71,236	68,494	(3.9%)
Booked Room Nights	40,688	44,787	10.1%
Conversion	75.1%	53%	(29.4%)
Economic Impact of Booked Business	\$18,135,548	\$23,194,006	27.9%



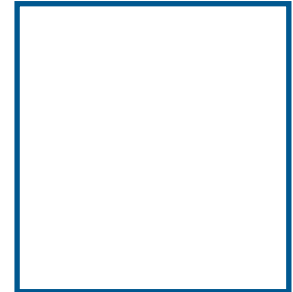
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Convention Sales

2007 - 2008 Objective

To produce 50,000 group room nights.

Strategies and Tactics

Continue to seek creative ways to bring the Asheville destination message to key meeting planners:

- Send six direct mailings to the Atlanta area showcasing the effect of a meeting held in Asheville on organizations. In addition, video capturing the destination will be distributed with the goal of spreading the Asheville area message virally.
- Execute two sales promotions in Birmingham, AL and Louisville, KY.
- Make 11 sales trips to the Atlanta market with a minimum of two days focused on sales call activities. The trips are usually held in conjunction with the monthly meetings of GSAE and GaMPI.
- Conduct six sales trips to the Charlotte area with a minimum of two days containing approximately 15 calls per trip.
- Strive to have a larger influence in South Carolina by being more active in the Carolinas Chapter of Meeting Professionals International and joining the South Carolina Society of Association Executives.

Improve meeting planner resources on exploreasheville.com to better inform and engage in a manner consistent with the destination brand:

- Post reports highlighting personal testimony from planners who have experienced Asheville in the last six months, thereby positioning the city as a destination that will set attendance records.
- Personalize the sales staff by producing Web pages for each team member to showcase who they are and what they value.
- Structure the site to connect planners to meeting specific information with ease.
- Promote a meeting based URL for Asheville.
- Make use of specific pages to assist niche markets such as weddings, board retreats, motivational meetings, car and motorcycle clubs, etc.
- Provide planners with ideas and tools (i.e., suggestions of activities and high quality photos) to make the destination experience clear to attendees.

Convention Sales & Servicing Department		
Date	Event	Location
July 17, 2007	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	Charlotte, NC
July 19-20, 2007	MPI Carolinas Meeting	TBD
July 24, 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Aug. 11-14, 2007	ASAE Annual Meeting/Exposition	Chicago, IL
Aug. 21, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
September 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 14, 2007	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Sept. 17, 2007	GaMPI Annual Golf Classic	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 18, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 19, 2007	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 20-21	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Concord, NC
Oct. 16, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 7, 2007	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	Raleigh, NC
Nov. 13, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 14, 2007	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 15-16, 2007	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 27, 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Dec. 6, 2007	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Dec. 11, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 12, 2007	GSAE Holiday Luncheon/Silent Auction	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 13, 2007	AENC Tradeshow/Mid-Year Meeting	Raleigh, NC
Jan. 26-29, 2008	NC Motorcoach Association	Asheville, NC
Feb. 7, 2008	DMAI Destinations Showcase	Washington, DC
Feb. 15, 2008	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	TBD
Feb. 20, 2008	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
March 3, 2008	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
April 11, 2008	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	Cary, NC
April 16, 2008	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
May 2008	AENC Golf Tournament	TBD
May 8, 2008	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
May 28-30, 2008	GSAE Annual Meeting/Tradeshow	Athens, GA
June 8-10, 2008	AENC Annual Meeting	Myrtle Beach, SC

Convention Services

The last year has seen significant growth for the service department as Carli Adams became the new manager. The service department acts as a brand conduit for groups of all sizes and backgrounds and provides assistance with planning minutia. These important functions not only contribute to the total success of the meeting, but allow sales staff more time to focus on obtaining new business. The service department has formulated ideas to make an even bigger impact on meeting planners' and attendees' experiences in the 2007 - 2008 fiscal year.

2007 - 2008 Objective
 Increase groups impacted by services 6%.

Convention Services			
	2005 - 2006	2006 - 2007	Variance
Groups Served	295	282	(4.4%)
Motorcoaches Served	49	33	(32.7%)
Hospitality Tables	34	41	20.6%
Conventions Welcomed	3	4	33%

Strategies and Tactics

Enhance a group's visit by bringing the brand alive and providing Asheville-style hospitality. As the first, and often times, most powerful connection to the brand, it will be the service department's responsibility to set the stage for a successful and unique meeting which will encourage attendance and repeat visits to Asheville:

- Design an effective and vibrant Asheville preview mailer to encourage meeting attendance and educate attendees about the area with the goal of encouraging early conference arrivals and late stays.
- Ensure our meeting attendees receive the highest level of quality, the service department will research best practices, and will visit other innovative CVB service departments. It is our goal to be one of the leading and most creative CVB service departments.
- Provide strong support to meeting planners allowing the Destination Guru's time to be spent selling new accounts.
- Create a new comprehensive resource to Asheville for meeting planners which will assist in all aspects of a successful convention/meeting planning.

Be proactive in providing conference planners environmentally friendly information on the Asheville area as the need for green meeting destinations continues to evolve:

- Conduct research and educate staff to be more equipped to offer options for green meetings and to provide planners with tools, tips and resources for green meetings.
- Develop an information piece about green meetings and placed in the servicing kit provided to planners.
- Purchase more eco-friendly giveaways and strive to implement green practices inside the CVB.



Visitor Services

Since it's usually the first stop for visitors, knowledgeable volunteers staff the Visitor Center to ensure visitors begin living the Asheville area brand once they walk in the door. The center allows opportunities to showcase the area's offerings in the hope of educating visitors and extending their stay.

In January 2006, the Visitor Center relocated to the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce headquarters at 36 Montford Avenue. At 4,000 square feet, the state-of-the-art facility is five times larger than the previous center. We are able to offer many more services to the approximately 200,000 guests we welcome throughout the year.

Our Concierge Services program booked more than 374 rooms with a value of over \$45,000 last year. The Concierge assisted nearly 6,000 callers with information about Asheville's accommodations and offerings. The duties of the Concierge have been extended to aid callers in making dining reservations and booking packages.

The Asheville Shop is home to retail items from throughout Western North Carolina and is actually the size of the entire old Visitor Center. The shop includes gifts authentic to the Asheville area including pottery, music and books by local authors. The Asheville Shop is one place to buy an assortment of merchandise with the Asheville destination logo, which can make a nice welcome gift for clients, family or friends.

The majority of positions in the Visitor Services department are paid, in full, by the Chamber. Therefore, each employee not only works to assist each visitor, but also to ensure that Chamber members reap the benefits of membership and exposure to visitors. Delivering enriching experiences and educating area visitors truly helps to further the brand and mission of the BCTDA.



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Visitor Services

Asheville Visitor Center

Located at 36 Montford Avenue in the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce building, the Asheville Visitor Center is first-class in every way. As visitors arrive they find a parking lot capable of holding around 150 cars, as well as motorcoaches and RVs.

Knowing that the Visitor Center is Asheville's front porch, every detail was carefully considered from brochure racks which open, not only for extra storage, but also for quicker stocking, to an event kiosk, which is centrally located and updated daily with community events and information.

One of the best features is the open floor space. Most days, benches are in place for visitors to rest before embarking on their Asheville journey. But, some days, the benches are pushed aside for locals who come demonstrate talents from basket-making to painting to slow-dancing and square-dancing.

Sponsorship opportunities for Chamber members are located throughout the Visitor Center to ensure that a member's business is prominent and showcased for the approximately 200,000 visitors that are expected to visit in the coming year.

An expanded attractions and accommodations board allows visitors to call directly to make reservations at accommodations, tours, attractions and even restaurants.

Chamber Concierge Services

The Chamber Concierge Services program, managed by Concierge Elaine Rich, assists in trip planning. Chamber member accommodations sign up for the program and provide the distressed inventory information to Elaine who can then pass it on to visitors. Each property that signs up is visited by the concierge who learns the property's amenities to then pass along to the visitor.

It helps to personalize each guest's experience by ensuring that the accommodation is exactly what is desired by the visitor. Vacations as long as eight days have been booked utilizing the program.



The Asheville Shop

The Asheville Shop is the place to come for Asheville souvenirs like key chains, postcards and other usual trinkets. But it's also home to local pottery, soap, honey, books and music, as well as Asheville shirts, with both the Chamber logo and the Asheville destination brand logo. Currently, The Asheville Shop is the only place visitors can purchase the new Go Blue Ridge Card in our area. Admission to more than 25 of the best attractions, outdoor activities and tours are included with the Go Blue Ridge Card. Visitors can do as much as they like each day for one low, affordable price.

Number of Travelers to the Asheville Visitor Center		
	2005-2006	2006-2007
July	18,523	21,759
August	16,254	20,085
September	12,637	16,664
October	17,594	21,612
November	10,758	12,011
December	8,828	9,530
January	5,564*	6,643
February	8,455	6,980
March	11,841	12,012
April	14,596	16,461
May	15,823	19,733
June	17,752	19,385
TOTAL	158,625	182,875
*Note: The new Visitor Center opened on January 13, 2006.		

2007 - 2008 Objective

To improve the quality of the Asheville area experience by providing trained staff and volunteers to assist visitors with Chamber member collateral.

Strategies and Tactics

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

- Manage all visitor-related activities in the Visitor Center, including the accommodations concierge service.
- Continue to offer foreign translations of information that highlight area attractions.

Utilize the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce Visitor Center services to increase the length of stay of visitors to the Asheville area:

- Utilize the concierge service to promote relocation to and longer overnight stays in Asheville.

Create awareness of the Asheville area brand and improve the Asheville experience for visitors:

- Continue to develop the volunteer program with training sessions, FAM trips and appreciation receptions.
- Become more involved in community issues that ultimately affect visitors.
- Provide enhanced Asheville destination brand logo items for The Asheville Shop.



Executive Office

Serving as the liaison to the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority, the Executive Office maintains communication with board members to develop and implement long-range strategic and operational planning.

In an effort to ensure the voice of Asheville tourism echoes throughout the community and regional hospitality industry, the Executive Director serves as a board member of NC Travel & Tourism Coalition, NCDTFSD, Asheville Art Museum and Pack Square Conservancy. On that note, the Executive Office also works closely with local, state and national elected officials on numerous issues.

The Executive Office oversees budget and financial issues and all departmental personnel and operations. Support is provided for all BCTDA meetings as well as many Tourism Product Development Committee functions. Statistical information on the tourism industry is compiled for monthly reports that are presented to the board.

Executive Office Calendar

Date	Event	Location
July 27-30, 2007	DMAI Convention	Pittsburgh, PA
Aug. 2-3, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Wilmington, NC
Aug. 15-18, 2007	Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)	Phoenix, AZ
Sept. 5-7, 2007	STS Fall/Annual Meeting	Lake Charles, LA
Sept. 26-27, 2007	TIA Travel Leadership Summit	Washington, DC
Oct. 4-5, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Salisbury, NC
Oct. 22-25, 2007	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 29-30, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Chapel Hill, NC
Dec. 6, 2007	CVB Holiday Open House	Asheville, NC
Dec. 10-11, 2007	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Marietta, GA
Feb. 7-8, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Mount Airy, NC
March 16-18, 2008	NC Governor's Conference	Winston-Salem, NC
March 31-April 2, 2008	STS Spring Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 10-11, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Greenville, NC
May 10-18, 2008	National Tourism Week	Asheville, NC
June 4-6, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 20-21, 2008	STS Board of Directors Meeting	TBD



In June 2007, the Tourism Product Development Fund Committee awarded more than \$3.58 million in grants to tourism products throughout the community.



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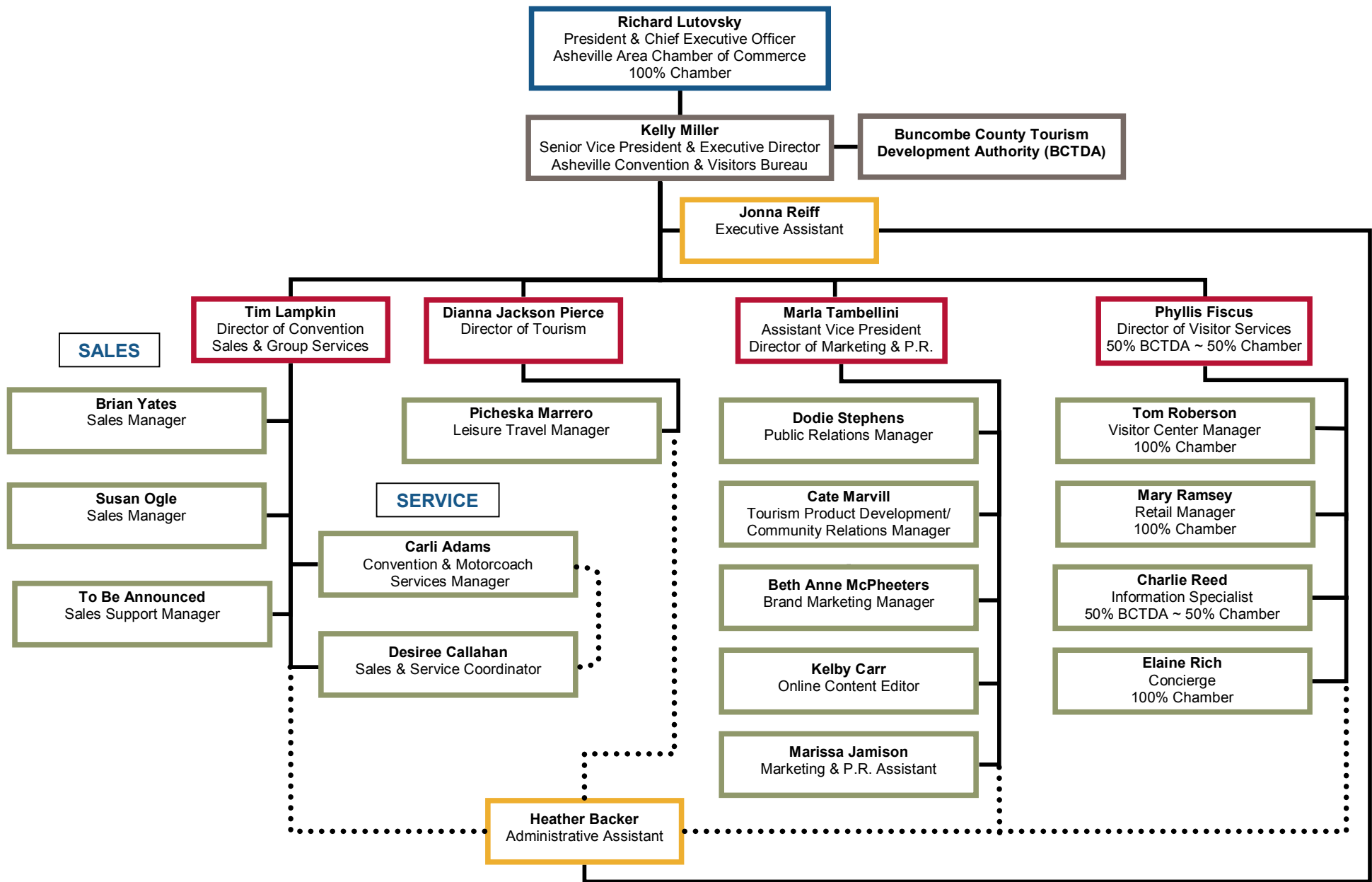


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The CVB Team



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. In Asheville, the implementation of a room tax in 1983 led to the current organizational structure. Before that, the Chamber of Commerce, through the efforts of its Convention & Visitors Bureau (CVB), served as the primary tourism promotion agent with the assistance of partnership dollars from area attractions and hotels.

Marketing Asheville

As other Southeast destinations became prominent, the tourism industry in this area recognized the need for a dedicated source of marketing funds if it was going to compete. In 1983, hoteliers in this community agreed to tax themselves and earmarked the proceeds toward tourism marketing. The enacted legislation created the 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 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. To implement the marketing plan, the BCTDA naturally turned to the Asheville Convention & Visitors Bureau at the Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce which was already the tourism marketing agent for the Asheville area. The Chamber's mission, "to enrich the region's livability by advancing its economic vitality," is a natural fit with the efforts of the BCTDA.

With an additional one percent tax approved in 1985, the advertising campaign for Buncombe County began to pay off for the community. Within 20 years of the legislation, the economic impact of tourism grew 400% in Buncombe County and now accounts for more than \$1 billion in direct and non-direct spending from overnight visitors. More than 2.76 million leisure visitors stay overnight in our community, attracted by the enriching experiences they find here.

Managing the Destination

A critical shift occurred in 2001, when the industry went back to state legislators with a bill designed to create an innovative funding process for tourism product. The NC General Assembly passed the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) bill which increased the room tax by one percent to a total of four percent tax. The bill dedicates the proceeds from the one percent increase to the development of new tourism products that demonstrate the ability to generate substantial new room nights in Buncombe County. Rather than just a marketing organization, the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority took a leap forward in becoming managers of the destination, ensuring its viability and sustainability.

Planning for Development

In 2006, the BCTDA became more proactive in its development efforts. It partnered with the City of Asheville and several community organizations to bring in a destination consultant who addressed the need for signage and wayfinding to better direct visitors throughout the community. Additionally, the BCTDA hosted a first-of-its-kind charrette, which brought in product experts from around the nation to Asheville for three days of dialogue with community leaders and citizens.

The tourism experts agreed that future product development efforts must build on the differentiating aspects that define the Asheville area brand. From this feedback, along with advisory reports from tourism experts and public survey intelligence, the Strategic Destination Development Plan was written. The plan serves as a directional and guideline document to ensure that future projects align with the Asheville brand platform, "enrich your life," and serve as destination drivers that will attract visitors to the Asheville area while maintaining the integrity of the community.

Through dialogue with its partners and constituent groups throughout the community, the BCTDA continues to work toward a sustainable, vibrant destination that will generate revenue for all sectors of the community.

Tourism Builds Community

Tourism Product Development Fund

The one percent occupancy tax collected by the lodging industry for the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) currently amounts to nearly \$2 million annually. The fund was established to provide financial assistance for tourism capital projects that will significantly increase patronage of lodging facilities in Buncombe County, creating a greater economic benefit for the entire community. Also of importance is that the funded projects support Asheville's brand identity of a welcoming, natural and vibrant destination.

The TPDF committee, a nine member committee appointed by the BCTDA, is responsible for managing the fund, reviewing applications and making project recommendations to the BCTDA.

Funding Process & Criteria

All projects must demonstrate feasibility and go through the formal funding process, which includes completion of the application, applicant interviews, and possibly a site visit. As guided in the legislation, requested funds must be used for capital costs (i.e., bricks and mortar) only. The TPDF committee may award funds to qualified projects as grants, guaranteed loans or pledges of debt service.

Nine criteria principles are used in evaluating submitted projects. All projects must meet the core criteria of destination brand alignment, economic impact on the region and return on investment based on estimated new room nights generated. If a project meets the core criteria, additional criteria principles are assessed including: community value, feasibility of the project, timeline of project completion, the current financial picture, partnership funding structure, project costs and the ability of the project to leverage additional development for the community.

The BCTDA approves final funding following recommendations from the TPDF committee. In return for funding, projects provide annual updates to the BCTDA on the progress of their project.

"Funding from the TPDF was an important factor in the Grove Arcade's revitalization and growth. The rebirth of the Arcade was an outstanding public/private partnership. The BCTDA funds provided vital support as the building developed into a resource that continues to attract merchants, tenants and businesses, resulting in 100% occupancy for the first time since re-opening to the public."

- Ruth Summers, Executive Director of The Grove Arcade

"The TPDF made possible the construction of the Bonsai Exposition Garden at The NC Arboretum, one of the finest of its kind in North America. In addition to creating a sustainable attraction that has boosted the Arboretum's visitation substantially, this funding has also increased the length of visitor stay and garnered extensive national media coverage, broadening the Arboretum's draw of out-of-market visitors."

- George Briggs, Executive Director of The North Carolina Arboretum

Tourism Product Development Fund Awarded Projects

Since its inception, nine projects have received funding through the TPDF. With \$7.4 million awarded to area projects, the BCTDA has become one of the largest granting organizations in Western North Carolina. The BCTDA continues to shape the destination of tomorrow by being a catalyst for smart growth and development. These projects that benefit the residents and visitors of Buncombe County demonstrate that tourism truly does build community.

Tourism Product Development Fund Projects		
Project Funded	Amount Funded	Funding Cycle
John B. Lewis Soccer Complex	\$800,000	2002 & 2004
The Grove Arcade Public Market	\$500,000	2002
Bonsai Garden at The NC Arboretum	\$750,000	2003
Asheville Visitor Center	\$750,000	2003
Pack Square Park	\$2,000,000	2004 & 2007
The Health Adventure	\$1,500,000	2004 & 2007
Asheville Art Museum	\$1,000,000	2007
Western North Carolina Veteran's Memorial	\$67,000	2007
Buncombe County Civil War Trails	\$16,500	2007

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Mission Statement

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.

BCTDA Board Meeting Schedule

Date	Event	Location
July 25, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Aug. 22, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 19, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Oct. 31, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 20, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 19, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Jan. 23, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Feb. 27, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 18-19, 2008	BCTDA Strategic Planning Retreat	Asheville, NC
March 19, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 23, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 28, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 25, 2008	Public Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 25, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC

2007 Industry Calendar

Date	Event	Location
July 17, 2007	AENC Meeting / Luncheon	Charlotte, NC
July 19, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
July 19-20, 2007	MPI Carolinas Meeting	TBD
July 24, 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Charlotte, NC
July 25, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
July 27-30, 2007	DMAI Convention	Pittsburgh, PA
Aug. 2-3, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Wilmington, NC
Aug. 3, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Aug. 11-14, 2007	ASAE Annual Meeting/Exposition	Chicago, IL
Aug. 15-18, 2007	Educational Seminar for Tourism Organizations (ESTO)	Phoenix, AZ
Aug. 21, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Aug. 22, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
September 2007	I-40 Media Tour	North Carolina
September 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 5-7, 2007	STS Fall/Annual Meeting	Lake Charles, LA
Sept. 14, 2007	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Sept. 17, 2007	GaMPI Annual Golf Classic	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 18, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 19, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Sept. 19, 2007	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Sept. 20, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Sept. 20-21, 2007	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Concord, NC
Sept. 26-27, 2007	TIA Travel Leadership Summit	Washington, DC
October 2007	SATW Annual Convention/Marketplace	Manchester, UK
Oct. 4-5, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Salisbury, NC
Oct. 5, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Oct. 16, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Oct. 22-25, 2007	TIA Marketing Outlook Forum	Charlotte, NC
Oct. 31, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 1-6, 2007	National Tour Association	Kansas City, MO
Nov. 7, 2007	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	Raleigh, NC
Nov. 13, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 14, 2007	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Nov. 15-16, 2007	MPI Carolinas Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 16-18, 2007	AAA Superbowl of Knowledge	Pinehurst, NC
Nov. 20, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Nov. 27, 2007	HSMAI Meeting	Charlotte, NC
Nov. 29-Dec. 2, 2007	Rhythms of the South	New Orleans, LA
Nov. 29-30, 2007	NCACVB Meeting	Chapel Hill, NC
Dec. 6, 2007	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Dec. 6, 2007	CVB Holiday Open House	Asheville, NC
Dec. 7, 2007	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Dec. 10-11, 2007	STS Board of Directors Meeting	Marietta, GA
Dec. 11, 2007	GaMPI Meeting	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 12, 2007	GSAE Holiday Luncheon/Silent Auction	Atlanta, GA
Dec. 13, 2007	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
Dec. 13, 2007	AENC Tradeshow/Mid-Year Meeting	Raleigh, NC
Dec. 19, 2007	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC

2008 Industry Calendar

Date	Event	Location
Jan. 23, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
Jan. 26-29, 2008	NC Motorcoach Association	Asheville, NC
February 2008	Winter Media Tour	New York, NY
Feb. 1, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
Feb. 2-7, 2008	American Bus Association	Virginia Beach, VA
Feb. 7, 2008	DMAI Destinations Showcase	Washington, DC
Feb. 7-8, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Mount Airy, NC
Feb. 15, 2008	AENC Meeting/Luncheon	TBD
Feb. 20, 2008	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
Feb. 27, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 2008	AAA Travel & Expo Marketplace	Louisville, KY
March 3, 2008	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
March 16-18, 2008	NC Governor's Conference	Winston-Salem, NC
March 18-19, 2008	BCTDA Strategic Planning Retreat	Asheville, NC
March 19, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
March 20, 2008	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
March 31-April 2, 2008	STS Spring Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 2008	AAA Explore Asheville! Training	TBD
April 2008	PRSA Travel & Tourism Conference	Pittsburgh, PA
April 4, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
April 10-11, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Greenville, NC
April 11, 2008	AENC Meeting/ Luncheon	Cary, NC
April 16, 2008	GSAE Quarterly Luncheon	Atlanta, GA
April 23, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 2008	AAA Blue Rige Parkway FAM	Asheville, NC
May 2008	AENC Golf Tournament	TBD
May/June 2008	Tour & Travel Development Committee	Asheville, NC
May 8, 2008	Convention Development Committee	Asheville, NC
May 10-18, 2008	National Tourism Week	Asheville, NC
May 28, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC
May 28-30, 2008	GSAE Annual Meeting/Tradeshaw	Athens, GA
May 31-June 4, 2008	POW WOW	Las Vegas, NV
June 4-6, 2008	NCACVB Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 6, 2008	PR/Marketing Committee Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 8-10, 2008	AENC Annual Meeting	Myrtle Beach, SC
June 17-18, 2008	North American Journeys East Coast Summit	New York, NY
June 20-21, 2008	STS Board of Directors Meeting	TBD
June 25, 2008	BCTDA Public Meeting	Asheville, NC
June 25, 2008	BCTDA Meeting	Asheville, NC

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 U.S. and Canada.

ABA — American Bus Association — A national association of private intercity bus companies, travel industry organizations, motorcoach tour organizers and associates offering 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

CMCA — Christian Meetings and Conventions Association

GaMPI — Georgia Meeting Professionals International

GSAE — Georgia Society of Association Executives

RCMA — Religious Conference Managers Association

SGMP — Society of Government Meeting Professionals

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.

Charrette — A workshop to stimulate ideas and involve interested parties and the public at large in a community or sectoral planning process. The purpose is to harness the talents and energies of all involved to create and support a feasible plan that represents transformative change by building community consensus on a designated vision through active involvement and visualization.

CMS — A shortened term for Content Management System. It allows users to enter content without any knowledge of Web coding. The exploreasheville.com Web site is maintained and edited through a CMS.

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

DMAI — Destination Marketing Association International, formerly 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 its annual convention.

DMC — Destination Management Company

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.

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.

HSMAI — Hospitality Sales & Marketing Association International — A global organization of sales and marketing professionals representing all segments of the hospitality industry, strongly focused on education, and operating as a leading voice for both hospitality and sales and marketing management disciplines.

Mashup — A mashup is when the information from two Web sites or data sources is combined on one Web page. An example of this would be a Google map with Flickr photos shown geographically, allowing visitors to click on points of the map to see pictures taken in those locations.

Media tour — A tour of a city or cities in a core market 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 which the Asheville CVB attends. In addition, state chapters also host their own annual meetings and trade show opportunities.

NCACVB — North Carolina Association of Convention & Visitors 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 North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development.

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.

NCMA — North Carolina Motorcoach Association - A North Carolina state association whose membership consists of tour and charter operators in the state and those suppliers who provide services for motorcoach operations.

NAJ — North American Journeys — A trade organization of and for companies who sell/arrange international travel. NAJ hosts an East Coast marketplace bringing together domestic-based receptive tour operators and suppliers.

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 NCDTFSD.

NTA — National Tour Association — NTA is a non-profit 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.

POW WOW — Organized by TIA, this is the major marketplace in the U.S. for domestic suppliers and international buyers and is structured with pre-scheduled appointments. 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.

SATW — Society of American Travel Writers — A not-for-profit professional association of writers, photographers, editors and electronic media.

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

Social Media — the online tools that people use to share content, profiles, opinions, insights, experiences, perspectives and media itself, thus facilitating conversations and interaction online between groups of people. These tools include blogs, message boards, podcasts, micro blogs, livestreams, bookmarks, networks, communities, wikis, and vlogs. (Brian Solis of SocialMediaToday.com)

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 holds an annual meeting and trade show to offer supplier members an opportunity to meet with tour planners and/or group leaders.

NCMA — North Carolina Motorcoach 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, non-profit 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 — Established in 2001, the TPDF is a dedicated fund representing one percent of the occupancy tax earmarked to fund capital projects in the Asheville area, with the goal of substantially increasing overnight lodging stays.

TPDF Committee — Tourism Product Development Fund Committee — A nine-member sub-committee of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) who researches requests for the funding of capital projects, making recommendations for recipients of TPDF dollars to the BCTDA.

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.



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