

# Jackson County TDA

## *Year in Review - 2021*

12.15.2021



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

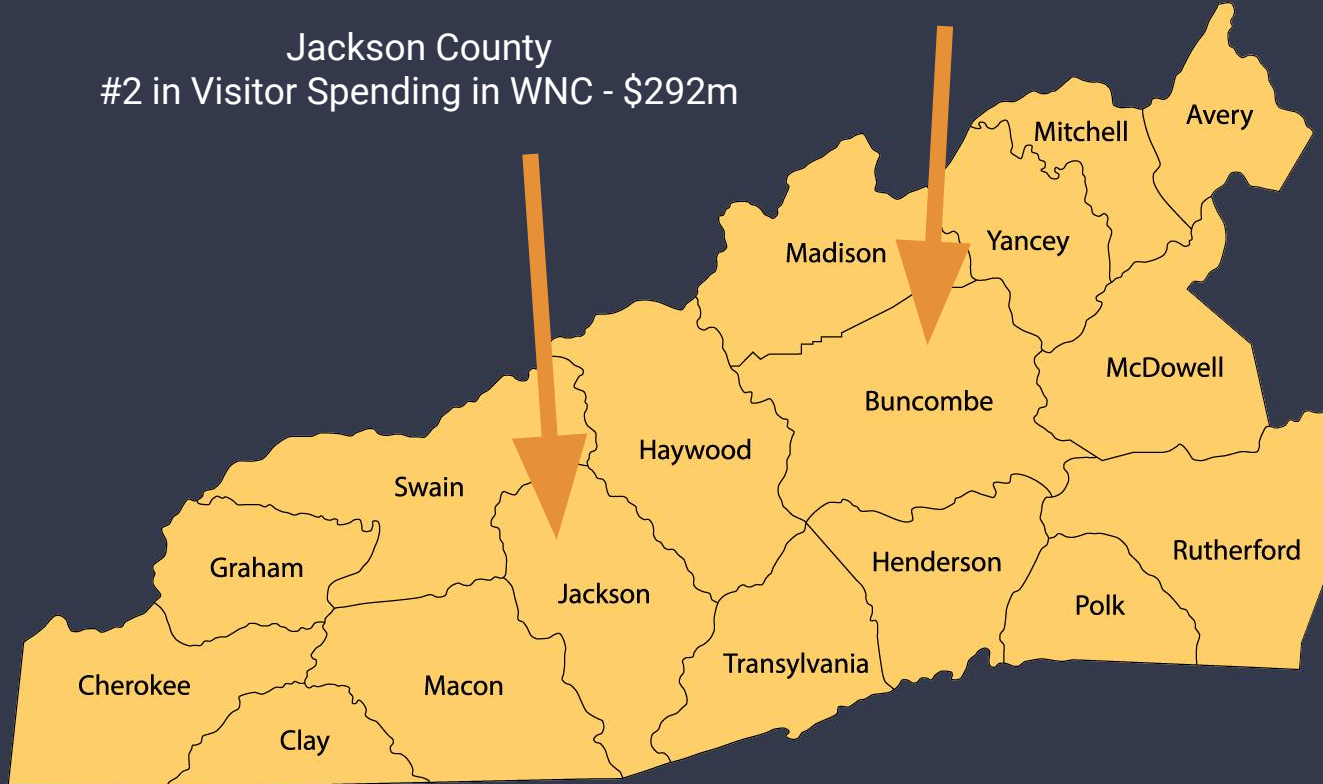


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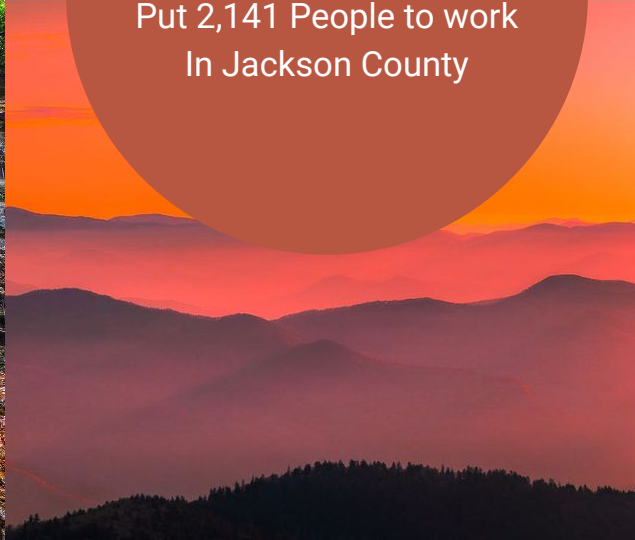
**Nick Breedlove, CDME, TMP, CDTP, CHIA**  
Executive Director  
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

Buncombe County  
#1 in Visitor Spending in WNC - \$1.4B

Jackson County  
#2 in Visitor Spending in WNC - \$292m



Source: Tourism Economics & VisitNC, 2021

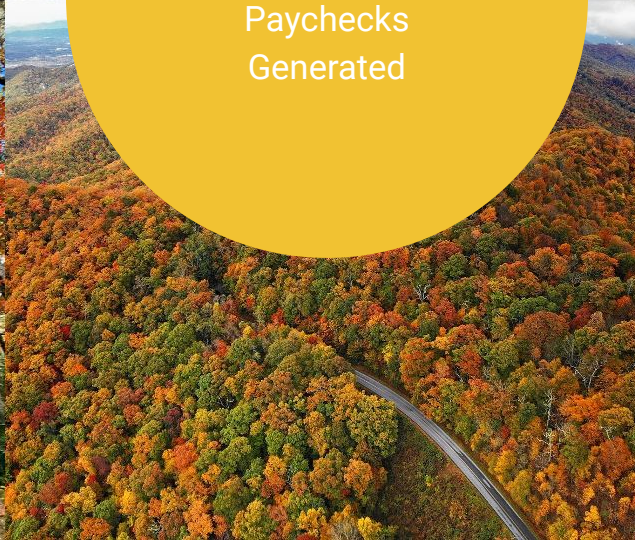


**People Visiting  
Jackson County**  
Put 2,141 People to work  
In Jackson County



**\$84.5 Million in  
Jackson County**

Paychecks  
Generated

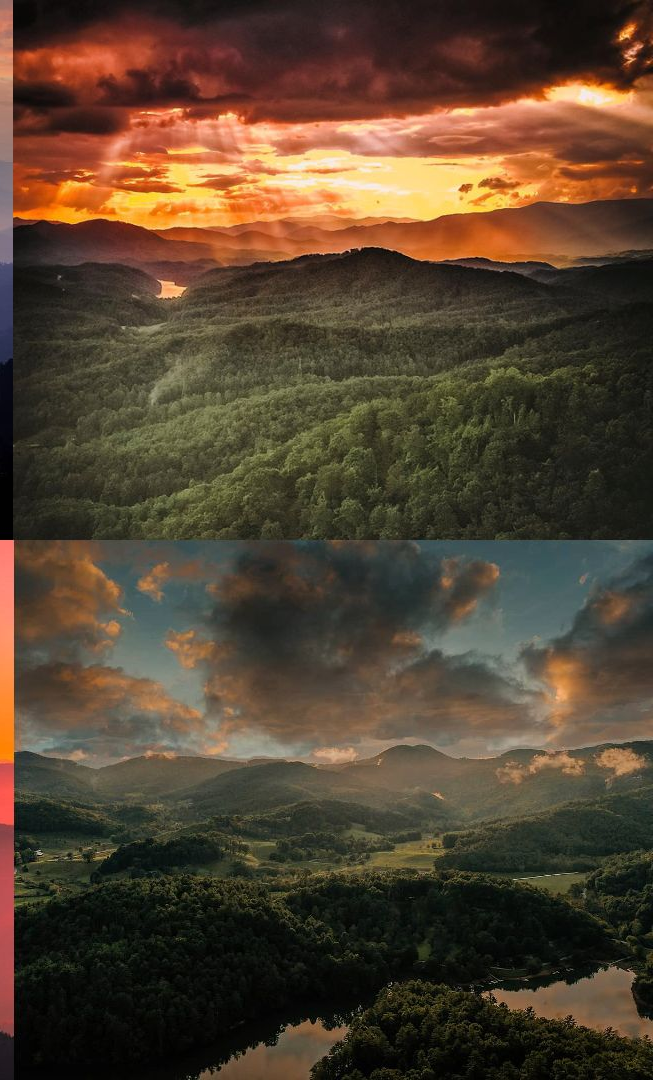




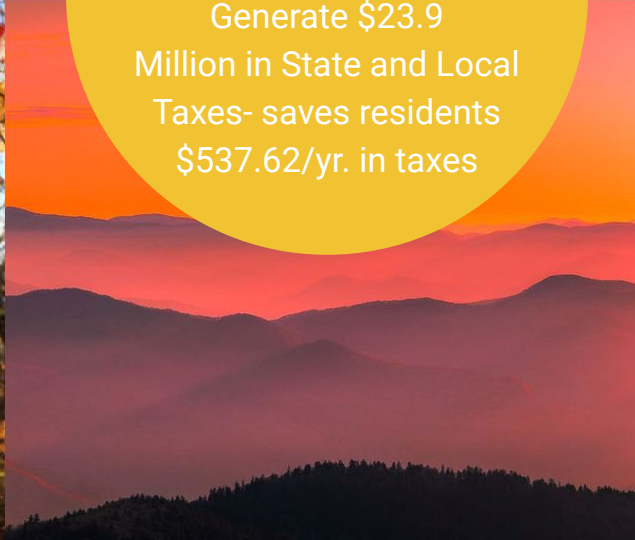
## People Visiting Jackson County

Spend \$292 million  
at Local Businesses





**Visitors Deposit**  
**\$801,917 / day**  
into local Cash Registers



**People Visiting  
Jackson County**

Generate \$23.9  
Million in State and Local  
Taxes- saves residents  
\$537.62/yr. in taxes



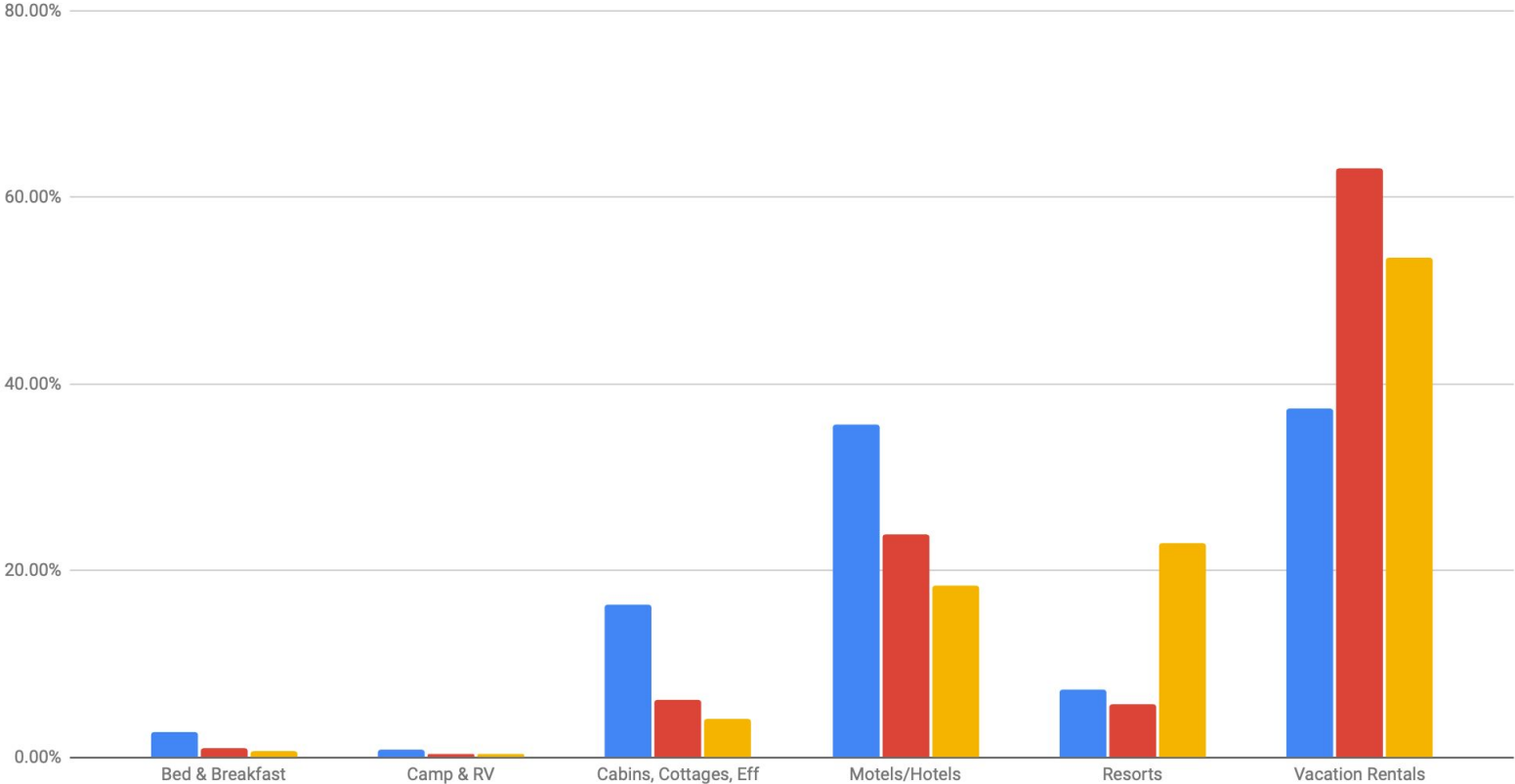
# *Trends*

# Airbnb Collections



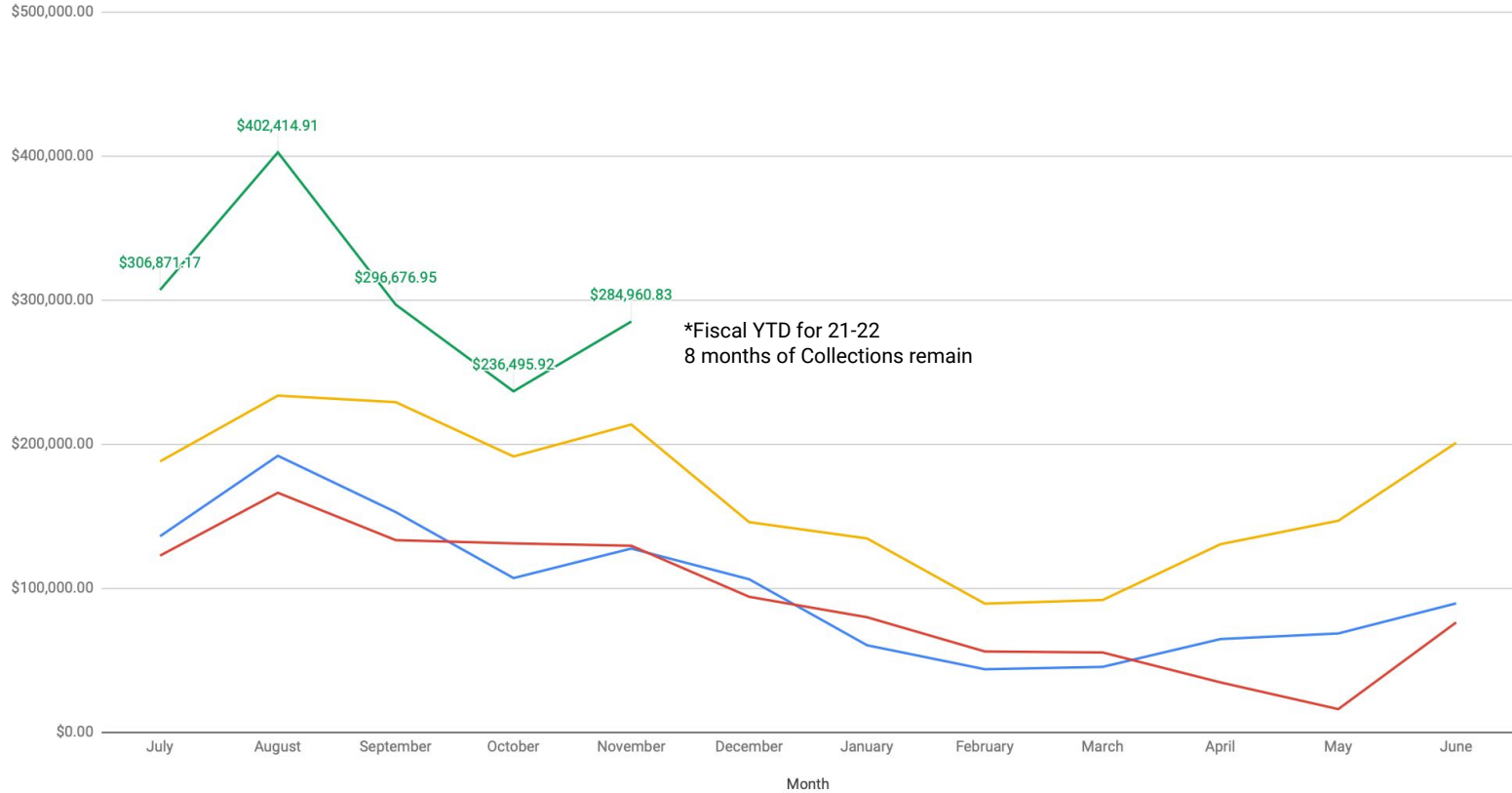
# Share of Lodging Market

2018-19 2019-20 2021-21



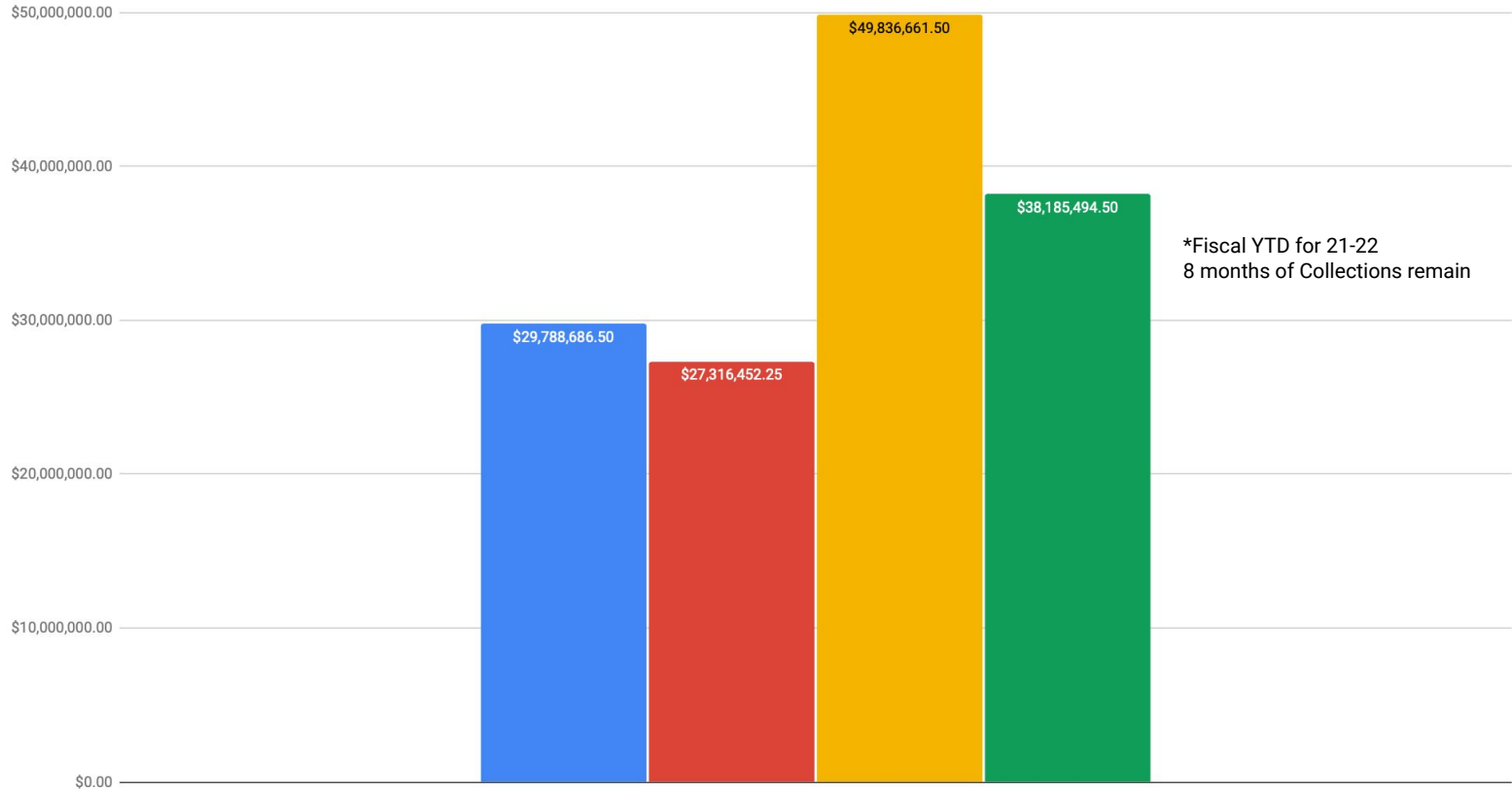
# Occupancy Tax Collections by Month

FY 18-19   FY 19-20   FY 20-21   FY 21-22



# Accommodation Sales

FY 18-19   FY 19-20   FY 20-21   FY 21-22



# *2021 Year in Review*

# 2021 Wrap-up – Staff

## Staff Education & Industry Involvement

Nick Breedlove was re-elected to the Board for Southeast Tourism Society as the representative for North Carolina; he was also named co-chair of Destinations International Small Destinations Committee. He was elected to a second term on the Blue Ridge Parkway Association.

Breedlove earned his Certified Diversity Travel Professional credential from Travel Unity, which focuses on Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion. He also earned certificates in High Impact Leadership and Effective Managerial Communication from Western Carolina University.

Caleb Sullivan earned his Professional in Destination Management (PDM) Certificate, Facebook Social Media Marketing Certificate, Digital Marketing Certificate from Western Carolina University and is working toward his Tourism Marketing Professional Credential. He was elected class president for 2023. He was named one of Destinations International 30 Under 30 for 2021 and co-chairs the Southeast Tourism Society Group Sales monthly meetups. Caleb, this year, put into action Jackson County's first group sales plan and has represented us at seven sales shows nationwide, with more to come in 2022.

# 2021 Wrap-up – Capital Projects

- Since the inception of the JCTDA, Capital projects (brick-and-mortar projects) have been at the forefront of the conversation. What should we build to enhance the visitor and resident experience? We took a detailed look at the best way to approach these.
- For the last year, staff examined best practices and talked with other destinations throughout the country to understand the best approach to consider these types of requests. We formed a subcommittee consisting of JCTDA Staff, Board Members, Community Leaders, and Stakeholders and developed a draft application and guidelines.

The Committee finalized its draft and sent the draft Capital Projects application and guidelines to Magellan Strategy Associates, who the JCTDA has worked on several consulting projects. We implemented many recommendations, and now the application is undergoing a review by legal and finance.

We hope to open up the application in Q1 or Q2 of 2022.

This process is a milestone in our organization as it will open the door for many opportunities to improve our communities for residents and visitors alike.

*\*All Capital Projects must be approved by County Commissioners per our R12-34 Establishing Legislation.*



# 2021 Wrap-up – Grants

- The JCTDA spent the last year reworking its grant program to offer more opportunities to initiatives that positively impact the community, grow the vibrancy of the County, and make it a great place to live, play and work.
- Since the new grant fund launched, we've issued two grants:
  1. \$35,000 for future growth planning in the Cashiers area through the Urban Land Institute
  2. \$3,800 to the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area to produce videos of artisans in Dillsboro to generate awareness of our Appalachian crafts.



# 2021 Wrap-up – Sustainability

- As one of its new subcommittees, the JCTDA Sustainability and Stewardship Committee has been working hard over the last year to ensure our mountains are here for generations to come.

A key focus of ours is not bringing more and more visitors here for quantity-sake, but bringing a better quality visitor here.

Essential work product and outcomes from the Committee so far in 2021 include:

- We've funded over \$2,000 in Litter Pickup tools for the 'Keep our Mountains Clean and Green' Initiative.
- We increased our annual donations to the Pinnacle Park Foundation and Friends of Panthertown Valley for Trail maintenance.
- The JCTDA Staff participated in the Leave No Trace® Nationwide Hotspot for Panthertown Valley.



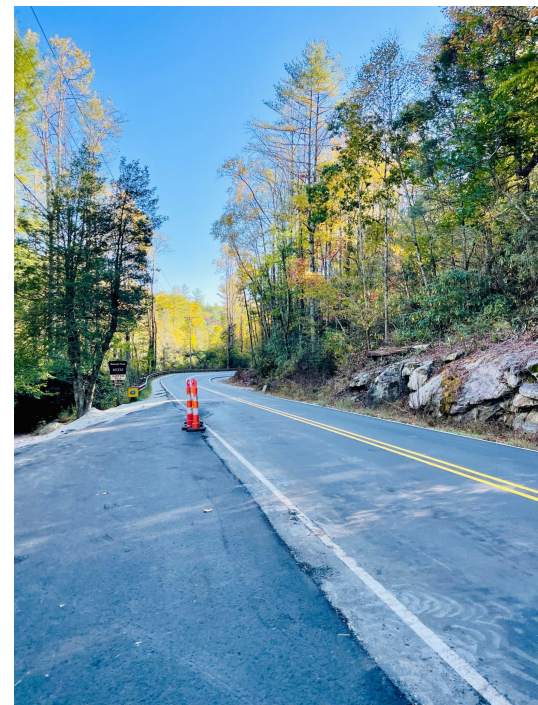
- We funded \$10,000 in electronic trail counters for Panthertown Valley to better understand the use (and potential overuse) of trails and how to disperse visitors better.
- We are a top-tier contributor & supporter of the 'Outdoor NC' effort, which focuses on Leave No Trace® for our visitors.
- We obtained and placed 15 Leave No Trace® signs using grant funding at our trailheads and river put-ins.
- We received a grant for Bear-Proof recycling containers for the County and worked with Parks and Rec and others to install four throughout the County at places Bears frequent.
- We received a grant for 9,000 KIND food bars to help distribute to outdoor groups doing conservation work.
- The JCTDA partnered with the Town of Sylva to have Pinnacle Park designated a Certified Forest Therapy Trail. The trail will be one of few in the United States that focuses on reconnecting with nature, meditation, and wellbeing.





Caleb Sullivan  
Volunteering  
For Leave No  
Trace®  
Hotspot Week





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



# 2021 Wrap-up – Community

- From day one with the onset of the Pandemic through present, we have put our community first and foremost in the work we do and have balanced it with bringing back visitation safely. We've been on dozens of webinars and calls with our hospitality industry to help ensure they have every resource to recover.
- Created breakfast campaign in Downtown Sylva and Dillsboro to highlight dining options to catch pass-through traffic. Restaurants report increased patronage for breakfast.



# 2021 Wrap-up – Group Sales

## Sales

- Represented Jackson County's lodging industry at two virtual and five in-person group sales shows
- Met with 35 Group Leisure Travel Planners
- Met with 75 Association, Corporate, and Small Meeting Planners
- Building the framework for a vibrant small meeting industry for filling our hotels & event venues during need periods (winter).

## Public Relations/Media

- Represented Jackson County at the VisitNC Media Mission in Raleigh - a one-on-one event for travel writers and destinations
- Worked with PR Team to secure 7 'Media Meetups' with regional and national travel writers



# 2021 Wrap-up – Social Media Organic Reach

## Year over Year Highlights: 2021 vs. 2020

- Recognized a **171% increase** in Impressions (number of times someone has viewed our posts) to over **67 Million**
- Recognized a **119% increase** in engagements (likes, shares, comments) to nearly **3.4 Million**
- Drove **288,000** link clicks to our website with a 6.6% increase over 2020.
- Our Social Media Audience is over **255 Thousand** fans, an increase of 11% over 2020

- October 2021 was the highest performing month in **JCTDA History**, with nearly **23 Million** impressions and almost **1.5 Million** engagements
- Reached over **25k Followers** on Instagram
- Reached over **228k Page Likes** on Facebook





# 2021 Wrap-up – Advertising

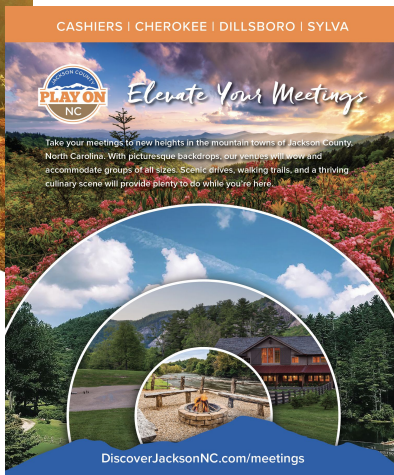


**CONQUER  
SUMMITS,  
NOT STAIRS.**

In Jackson County, the allure of the outdoors is hard to resist. And why would you want to? The mountain towns of Cashiers, Cherokee, Dillsboro, and Sylva offer 360-degrees of outdoor adventure, from action-packed whitewater rafting on the Tuckasegee River to leisurely hikes in search of hidden waterfalls.

Whatever you choose, Jackson County helps you take inside outside, Outside of your living room, outside of your comfort zone, and outside of the ordinary. What adventures will you find on your next visit?

DISCOVERJACKSONNC.COM



Take your meetings to new heights in the mountain towns of Jackson County, North Carolina. With picturesque backdrops, our venues will wow and accommodate groups of all sizes. Scenic drives, walking trails, and a thriving culinary scene will provide plenty to do while you're here.

DiscoverJacksonNC.com/meetings

## Jan. 1 - Nov. 30, 2021 Website Statistics

- 380,000 users
- 470,000 sessions
- 873,000 page views
- 17,100 goal completions (requesting a Visitor Guide, signing up for e-news, etc)
- 70% mobile users

## Programmatic ad campaigns (summer and fall)

- Impressions: 4.1 million
- Clicks: 9,000+
- Conversions: 400+

Average Click Through Rate: .22% (above industry standards)

# 2021 Wrap-up – Public Relations

October 11, 2021  
UMV: 4,209,287

## POPULAR SCIENCE

### How to beat the crowds and enjoy the best hiking trails

Large numbers of people can harm the

For years, national park visitation numbers have been on a steady upward trend, and the mental and physical benefits of spending time outside. Unfor- and crowds make peace and quiet in the woods nearly impos-

But overcrowding doesn't just dampen the outdoor experi- can also wreak havoc on the pristine landscapes and natural resources. Fortunately, there are ways to get outdoors—yes, even to our favorite spots—but reduce your impact on the lands we love to love.

Crowding by the numbers In fact, we may be loving them too much. National parks are sweeping vistas, diverse wildlife, and ample recreation opportunities aren't, however, visiting all national parks equally. According to a new study, visits in 2020 occurred in only six parks, which represent just 1 percent of the total number of visits.

Overall, visitation numbers jumped from slightly less than 27 million in 2019 to 30 million in 2020, with a 15 percent increase in the most visited national park by far was Great Smoky Mountains National Park.

Managing those multitudes means the trails and campsites are often crowded. It's important to curb the number of visitors. Many other parks still have delicate roadside flora, and excessive litter.

Gateway communities to these natural spaces know these parks are a big part of their identity. In one of them, the Cal Authority (and local Cub Scout den leader) spends a fair amount of time on the trails, but the kinder to the

Why crowding matters Inconvenience of congested trails aside, the truth is that the search for shortcuts or new vistas, and even visitors endangering the environment. These actions can create eyesores, attract animals, pollute the

<https://bit.ly/3pdxyl2>

GREENVILLE JOURNAL

October 21, 2021  
UMV: 450,000

### Travel: Mountain pursuits in Cashiers



In the Upstate, fall starts and stops several times. Just when we think cooler temperatures are here, a warm front moves in and almost mocks us, just to say, 'we're not done yet.' It's on those days a road trip beckons: The faraway horizon of the Blue Ridge Mountains, gold and red hues and to bask in the trees with a crisp breeze. This is the time to explore the towns of Cashiers and Sapphire.

Located atop a plateau with an elevation of about 3,500 feet, Cashiers has long been a popular destination. Its small-town feel, nearby lakes and hiking trails make for a getaway full of scenic views and outdoor activities.

First, check-in at the retro-chic Hotel Cashiers. This refurbished motor lodge site up with Scandinavian furnishings. The new owners completely redesigned and refur-

Once settled, set out to explore. One way to get acquainted with the area is to take a walk on Lake Glenville. Wise is a U.S. Coast Guard licensed captain and a wealth of local knowledge. The man-made lake is the highest lake in the Eastern U.S., and features several islands. In fact, there's an ecologically diverse climate that is second only to the Amazon, a most beautiful lakes on the planet." Wise says. It's easy to see why.

Several hiking trails in the area are also worth exploring. Panthertown Valley offers some of the best views of the mountains and waterfalls.

<https://bit.ly/3pdxyl2>

Shadow Living

Nov/Dec, 2021  
Circulation: 11,000



– The JCTDA signed with a new Public Relations firm – Lou Hammond Group. We've been very pleased with the work they've done for us so far in the few months they've been on board. They're more connected to markets we haven't tapped into before and have already hosted seven media in destination.

Key accomplishments/metrics:

– PopularScience.com (4,209,287 UMV), conducted phone interview with writer and Caleb Sullivan; his quotes were featured in a piece about environmental impact on hiking trails, etc.

– Greenville Journal (450,000 UMV, 30,000 print circ.), hosted writer Sherry Jackson who produced a story about a mountain pursuit to Cashiers

– SW Georgia Living (11,000 print circ.), hosted writer KK Snyder who produced 6-page print travel feature of JC

– Travel + Leisure (6,295,488 UMV), secured feature of Cashiers highlighting Shadow of the Bear in "Best Small Towns for a Fall Getaway" story

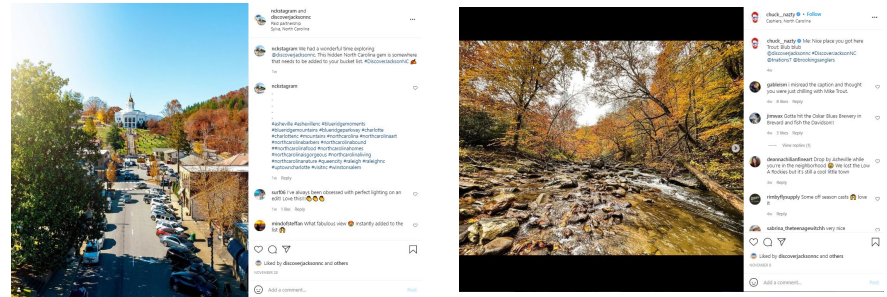
– Connect Meetings (44,000 print circ.), hosted Stephanie Davis-Smith, will be featuring destination meeting & event spaces in future coverage

# 2021 Wrap-up – Public Relations

## Key accomplishments/metrics (cont.):

### – Influencer

- @nckstagram (36.1k followers) – hosted in exchange for social coverage of Sylva. Total reach = 22.6k.
- @chuck\_nazty (Colorado Rockies baseball player, 129k followers) - hosted in exchange for social coverage of Cashiers. Total reach = 178.3k.



### – Deskside Meetings (virtual and in-person in ATL)

- Lauren Wicks (VERANDA); future visit secured
- Lauren Bowman (TravelPulse)
- Amanda Macas (BELLA Magazine); future visit secured
- Caroline Eubanks (USA Today, Garden & Gun, Southern Living, etc.)
- Jennifer Bradley Franklin (Simply Buckhead, Southern Living, Conde Nast Traveler, etc.)
- Jan Schroder (The Travel 100)



# 2021 Wrap-up – Other Updates



- The JCTDA purchased three billboards along US 441 from Franklin, Hwy 74 from Asheville, and 23/74 from Cherokee advertising our culinary, brewery, and shopping. The goal is to get people who might otherwise be passing through on the highway into our small towns to support our local businesses.
- We partnered with Castle Ladyhawke and Bear Lake Reserve on a national giveaway to give a dream wedding to a front-line worker who had to postpone their wedding due to COVID-19. The wedding was valued at over \$40,000 and it was held Nov. 4.
- The JCTDA moved into a larger office space located at 98 Cope Creek Road, Suite D. The larger space allows for future staff/internships and a place for the Board and Community Stakeholders to meet. We are located beside WNC Internal Medicine.

## 2021 Wrap-up – Other Updates

- The JCTDA spent the last year working on the Ale Trail pass that rewards those who visit four of our breweries within a one year time period.
- Those who check-in receive a free pint glass and an Ale Trail sticker of their choice.

## CALLING ALL CRAFT (BEER) LOVERS

Get rewarded for hopping along our famed Ale Trail with the Jackson County Ale Trail Pass!

Sign up for your pass, visit 4 of the participating breweries, and check-in while you're there to receive a limited edition Jackson County pint glass.



## HOW IT WORKS



Scan the QR code to receive a text message with instructions for redeeming your passport.

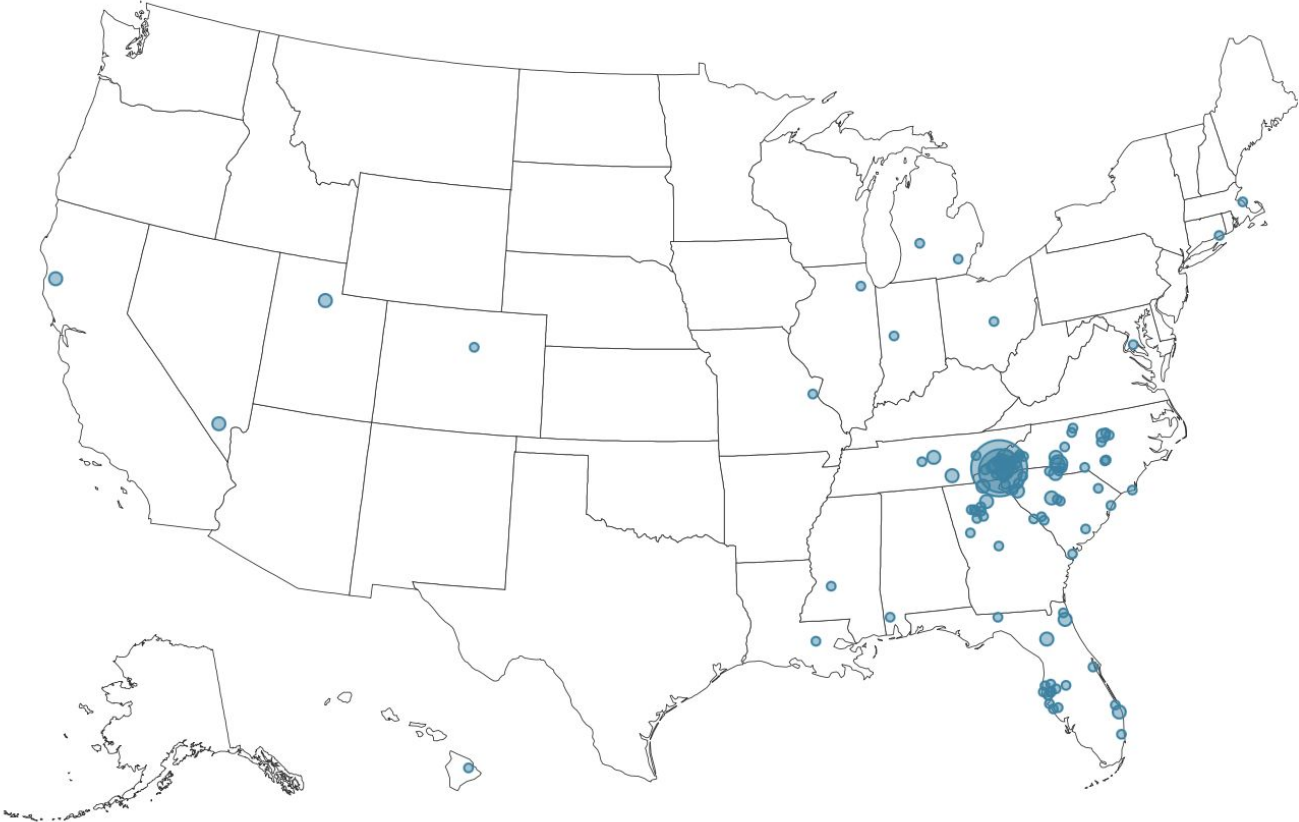


After you sign up, your passport link will be delivered to your phone via text or email and is ready to use immediately! There's no app to download and you have the option to



When visiting a participating brewery, ask for the PIN code from the bartender to check in.

# Ale Trail Pass Redemptions - first two weeks









# *Industry Developments – Culinary*



JAME, Sylva



ILDA, Sylva

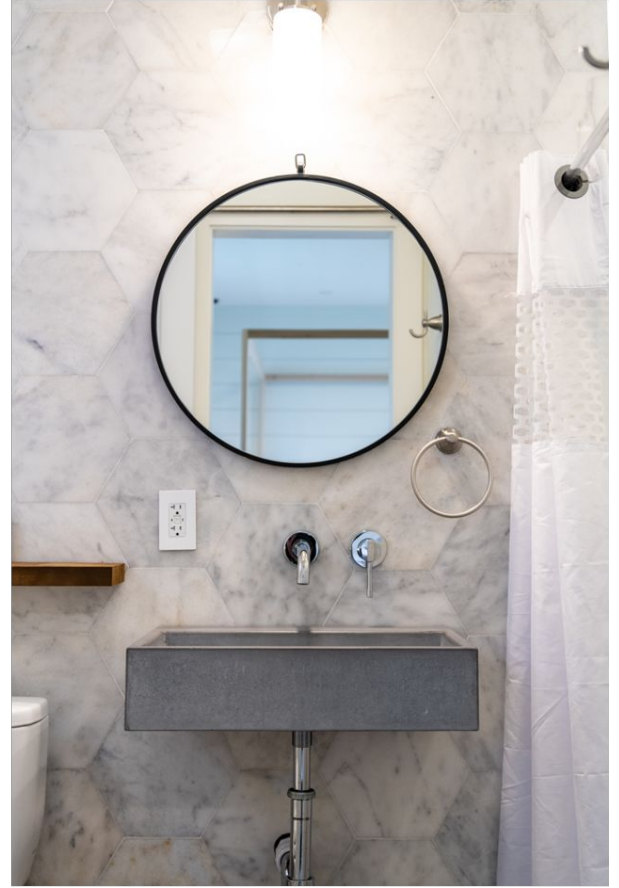
# *Industry Developments - Lodging*



Clarion Pointe rebranding (former Quality Inn, Sylva)



High Hampton Resort Reopening



The Wells Hotel Cashiers reopening (formerly Laurelwood Inn)



Hotel Cashiers remodel (formerly Cashiers Village Inn)



*Research*  
*Strengthening Return on Investment*  
*To our Partners*

# Domestic Visitor Dashboard [Export Charts](#)

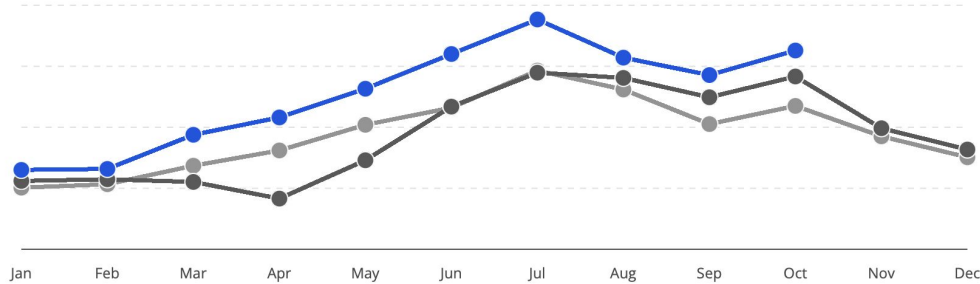
SPEND ▼

...

MONTHLY ✓

YEAR-TO-DATE

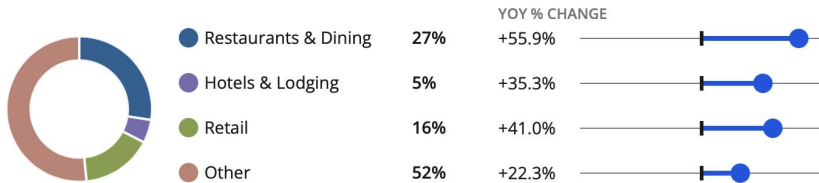
● 2019 ● 2020 ● 2021



## MARKET SEGMENTS

Current Period: JAN (01) - OCT (10) 2021

Here is a breakout of your primary market segments and year-over-year change. Click in the box for more detailed information.



## VISITOR ORIGIN

...

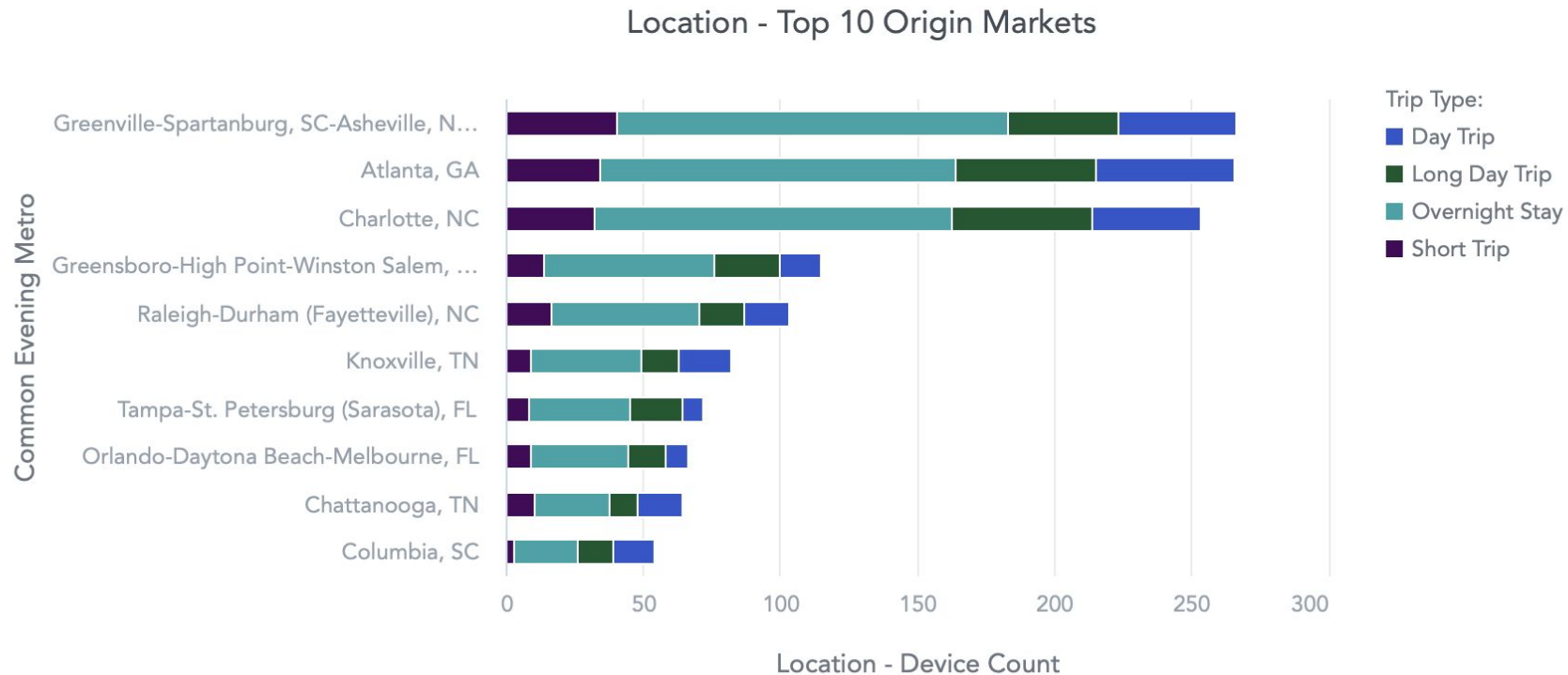
These are your top reporting CBSA. Click in box for more detailed information.

Current Period: JAN (01) - OCT (10) 2021

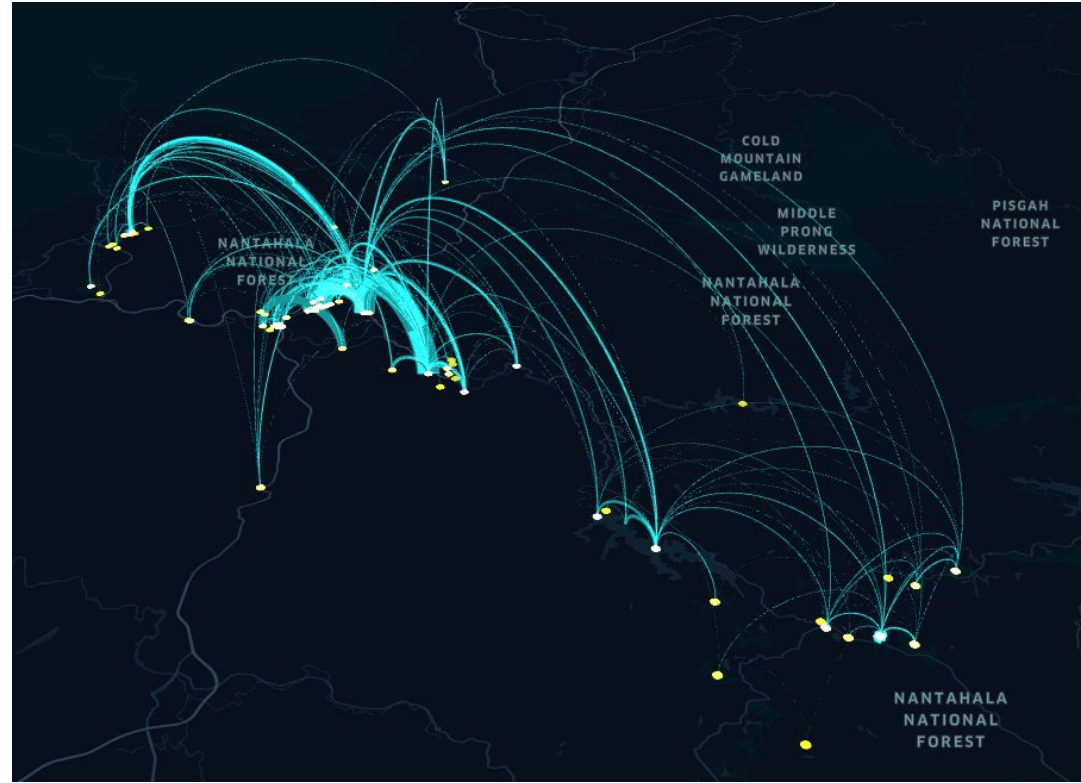
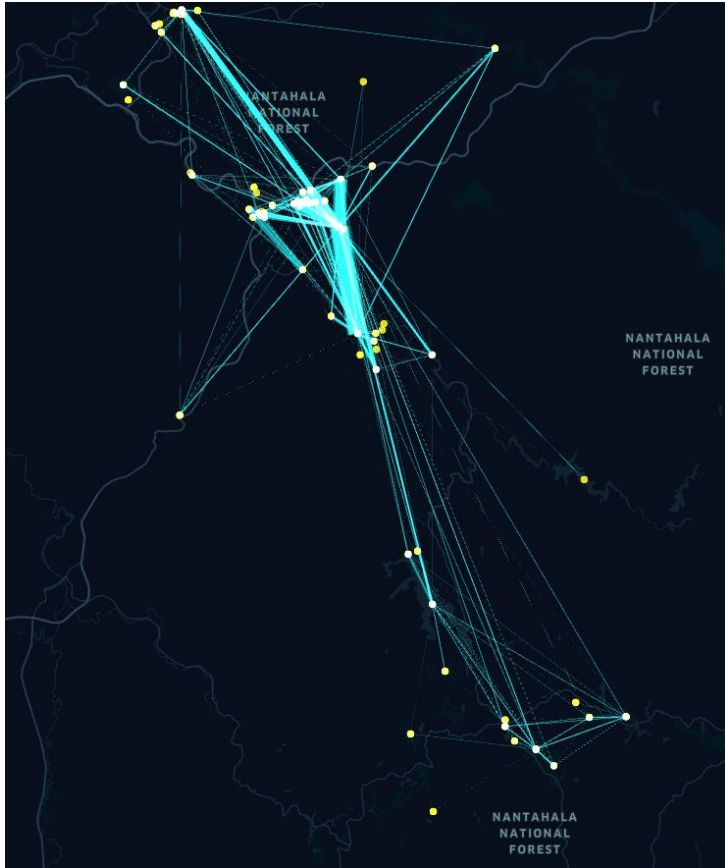
Origin CBSA	Card Count
All US	477.7 K
Asheville, NC	52 K
Atlanta-Sandy Springs-Roswell, GA	40 K
Charlotte-Concord-Gastonia, NC-SC	32 K
Tampa-St. Petersburg-Clearwater, FL	10 K
Miami-Fort Lauderdale-West Palm Beach, FL	8 K
Greenville-Anderson-Mauldin, SC	16 K
Jacksonville, FL	7 K
Raleigh, NC	12 K
Orlando-Kissimmee-Sanford, FL	7 K
Charleston-North Charleston, SC	7 K

# What are your top origin markets & how do they travel to your destination?

Source: Near

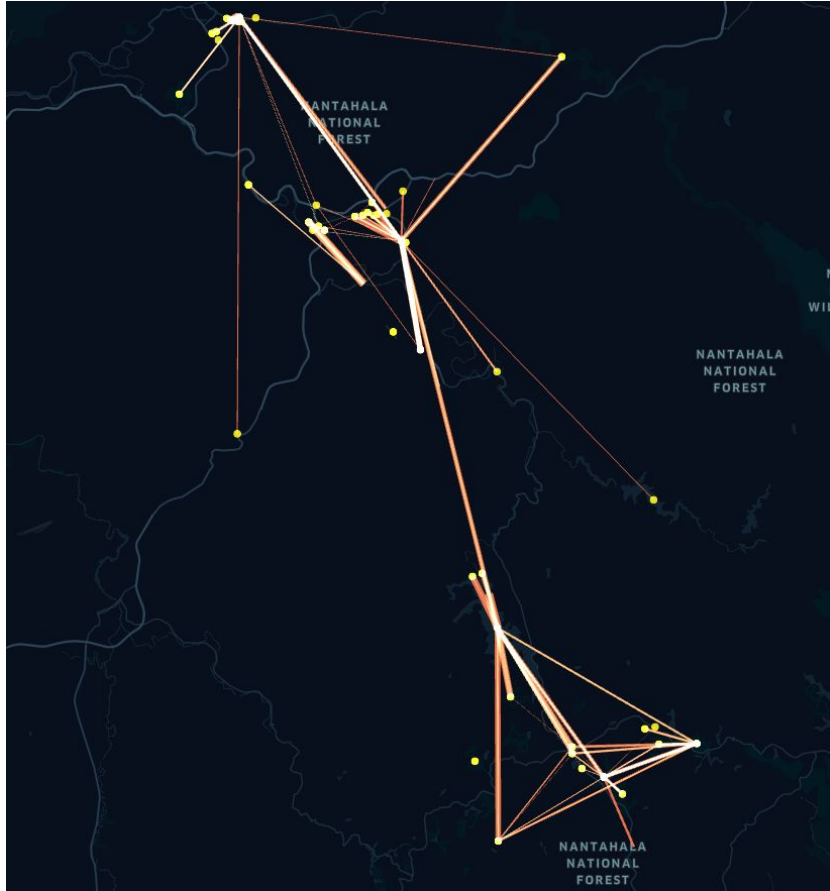


# Residents



Observed time: June 1 - August 31, 2020

## Out-of-State Visitors



Dispersed throughout the County



*Thank you!*