



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

To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: April 14, 2023
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

Dear Board Members,

1. Recent Smith Travel Research hotel reports reveal a downward trend in occupancy rates, averaging around a 10% decline from the previous year. However, the current rates align with the record-high levels seen in 2019, indicating a normalization of post-COVID-19 travel interest.
2. The budgetary process is progressing, with a draft budget accounting for inflation, tightening budgets in some travel market segments, and overall market concerns. The draft budget will be presented at the May meeting, which requires in-person attendance as we review the budget, approve annual contracts, and discuss Marketing and Communication plans from LHG & BGRM.
3. In our budget discussions with the Chamber and Visitor Center Directors, we noted that contracted services and rent have remained stagnant for several years. Based on the consumer price index, we have proposed adjustments to address this discrepancy, which will be included in the draft budget.
4. Kara, our new social media specialist, is settling in well, optimizing our campaigns and demonstrating great skill in managing our accounts. Her efforts will lead to long-term optimization and improvements in our social media presence.
5. The Board will review a [contract](#) with Tembo Hospitality Group to replace the video creation position previously held by Tiffany. The Executive Committee has recommended approval of this \$4,000/month contract to cover the remainder of this fiscal year and the next. The early presentation of this contract is necessary to maintain momentum in our short-form video production.
6. The Town of Sylva has approved a \$50,000 funding level for the Pinnacle Park Master Plan, with plans to approach Jackson County for the remaining required funds. The TDA's support last month has helped facilitate this process.
7. Airbnb's recent [press release](#) revealed Jackson County hosts earned \$11,164,000 in 2022, ranking 13th out of 79 counties. This contributed \$446,560 in taxes to the TDA's budget.

Additional updates:

- I recently guest lectured at two Western Carolina University Hospitality and Tourism classes, sharing insights into our organization's work.
- I will be meeting with Dillsboro's Planning Board next week to discuss trends and issues that could help them with planning efforts for the next 8 to 10 years.