



Jackson County TDA 2024-25 Proposed Budget

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



Presented this 15th day of May, 2024



**JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FY 2024 - 2025 PROPOSED BUDGET**

In accordance with G.S. 159, the Local Government Budget and Fiscal Control Act, the proposed budget for the fiscal year beginning July 1, 2024 and ending June 30, 2025, is hereby presented for your consideration and approval.

An in-person Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 19, 2024 at 12:55 PM.

A public notice has been published in accordance with all the requirements of G.S. 159-12 as well as other State and Federal requirements.

About the JCTDA

The Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) is a Destination Management Organization/Destination Organization responsible for managing a 4% room occupancy tax, which is collected from guests staying in Jackson County accommodations. This tax applies to the rental of rooms, lodgings, or accommodations in hotels, motels, inns, tourist camps, or similar establishments within the county that are subject to state sales tax. It does not apply to accommodations provided by nonprofit charitable, educational, or religious organizations when used for their nonprofit purposes. The TDA consists of 9 voting board members appointed by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. This “quasi-governmental” body meets monthly and includes representatives from the local visitor economy and ex-officio members.

The room occupancy tax is in addition to state or local sales tax and must be collected by any accommodation required to collect sales tax, including short-term rentals. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners, under authority granted by House Bill 96 in 2011, set the occupancy tax rate at 4% (Resolution R12-34), although they have the capacity to increase it up to 6% at a local level.

No property taxes are used to fund the Jackson County TDA.

The Jackson County TDA has two staff members: (1) its Executive Director, Nick Breedlove, and (2) its Social Media Manager, Kara Addy.

Board Makeup

Group One - (3) Lodging Properties; (2) Hotel/Resort/Inn Properties - North Jackson County; (1) from other occupancy tax remitters from establishments with 10+ units/rooms.

Group Two - (3) Lodging Properties; (2) Hotel/Resort/Inn Properties - South Jackson County; (1) from other occupancy tax remitters from establishments with 10+ units/rooms.



Group Three - (1) Tourism-related business representative from Jackson County At Large

Group Four - (1) representative from the Cashiers Chamber of Commerce in a non-lodging, tourism-related business (who is not employed by the CACOC). The Executive Director from the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce. The Executive Director will be an ex-officio member with no term limit.

Group Five - (1) representative from the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce in a non-lodging, tourism-related business (who is not employed by the JCCOC). The Executive Director from the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. The Executive Director will be an ex-officio member with no term limit.

Board Members are appointed by Commissioner at the recommendation of the JCTDA. All Board Members are considered volunteers and must pass a background check, agree to the JCTDA's conflict of interest policy and affirm their oath to office before being eligible to serve.

FY 24-25 Board

Daniel Fletcher, Chair, Hotel Cashiers*
Megan Orr, Vice Chair, Holiday Inn Express*
Ashlie Mitchell, Secretary, The Village Green*
Craig Smith, Board Member, Bear Lake Reserve*
Trevor Brown, Board Member, Tuckaseegee Fly Shop*
Robert Jumper, Cherokee NC*
Mandi Cantrell, Landmark VR, South Jackson*
Two vacancies, North Jackson*

Ex Officio Board Members

Mark Jones, County Commissioner Appointee
Julie Spiro, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce, Sylva
Vacancy, Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce, Cashiers
Darlene Fox, Finance Officer

Vision Statement

To be the premier mountain destination providing an active lifestyle, spectacular natural assets and a friendly community for citizens and visitors alike.

Mission Statement

To promote the growth of year-round tourism opportunities that benefit the Jackson County economy. The TDA's efforts put people to work, grow jobs, build community, and make our towns a vibrant place to live, play and work.

Budget Highlights

The **Advertising** budget has been broken down into advertising, website projects, and media components for a total cost of \$859,351.

24-4926-370-00	Ad Firm Media	\$561,500	65.34%
24-4926-370-01	Website Service	\$25,200	2.93%
24-4926-370-02	Creative and Production Services	\$89,500	10.41%
24-4926-370-03	Digital Campaign Reporting	\$13,200	1.54%
24-4926-370-04	Email Campaigns	\$30,800	3.58%
24-4926-393-05	Website Projects	\$39,600	4.61%
24-4926-393-06	Ad Firm Retainer - Brand Leadership	\$64,800	7.54%
24-4926-393-08	Misc. Agency Expenses	\$34,751	4.04%
		Total	\$859,351

Public Relations in the amount of \$121,000 is proposed in the following line item:

24-4926-393-01	Public Relations	\$121,000
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The public relations figure includes the retainer fee of \$81,000 and a \$40,000 allocation for PR-related projects, to host travel writers and social media content creators.

The operating contracts for the Visitor Center (for services and space rental), categorized under account number 24-4926-393-00, are proposed to be increased by three percent in order to accommodate inflation and Consumer Price Index (CPI) adjustments over the last year.

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce		
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce - Services		\$96,508
Hooper House Foundation - Space		\$13,703
Office Supplies, Water Service for Visitors		\$3,500
Copier lease		\$2,264
Total Jackson Center (Sylva)		\$115,975
Cashiers Area Chamber		
Cashiers Area Chamber - Services		\$88,466
Cashiers Area Chamber - Space		\$12,304
Office Supplies, Water Service for Visitors		\$2,000
Total Cashiers Center		\$102,770

Capital Projects

In the fiscal year 2023-24, the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (JCTDA) set aside \$1,000,000 for Capital Project Funds. This year, only one project was approved for funding: Bridge Park in Sylva (See more information on Page 12). All Capital Projects need approval from both the JCTDA Board and the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. According to state law on occupancy tax, at least two-thirds of JCTDA's funds must be allocated to advertising and public relations, and the remaining one-third of funds can be used for Capital Projects.



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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

GOALS AND STRATEGY

2024-2025 Executive Director Goals

- **Sustainable Tourism Development:** Implement initiatives that promote sustainable tourism practices to help preserve the natural beauty and resources of Jackson County. This will include promoting eco-friendly accommodations and activities, and supporting local conservation efforts. Funds have been included in this FY budget for sustainability-related items to lessen visitors impact on our environment.
- **TCPF:** Continue to promote and encourage entities to apply for our Tourism Capital Project Funds which support projects that enhance our community for visitors and residents alike.
- **Diversify Market Segments:** Continue to use our audience personas to reach deeper into our target markets and identify potential new markets for visitors.
- **Enhance Visitor Experience:** Improve the overall visitor experience by ensuring that all visitor information, such as maps and guides, is up-to-date and easily accessible.
- **Community Engagement and Involvement:** Increase community involvement in tourism development by encouraging local businesses and residents to participate in creating a welcoming environment for visitors.
- **Promote and Fund Signature Events:** Through partnerships with event organizers in our communities, identify and develop signature events that can attract visitors during off-peak seasons to help balance visitor flow throughout the year. This could be cultural festivals, culinary events, or outdoor adventure races.
- **Partnerships and Collaborations:** Strengthen partnerships with local, regional, and national organizations to leverage resources and marketing efforts.
- **Measure and Adapt:** Continue our data-driven approach and be responsive to changes in the market, changes in the economy, and visitor preferences to adapt and ensure we're on target with our programs.

Photos courtesy, L to R: ashleys_epic_adventures, justinjgartman, hayleepolak, honeybadgerimages





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

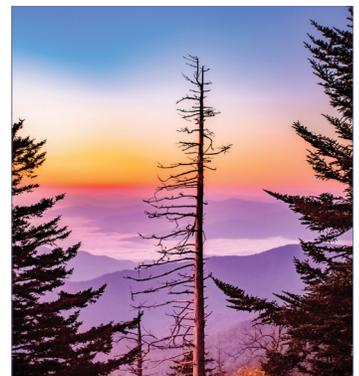
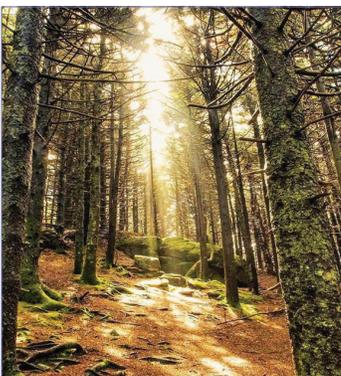
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

GOALS AND STRATEGY

2024-2025 Social Media Manager Goals

- Develop a comprehensive **social media plan** that aligns with the marketing and public relations plans and outlines the goals, target audience(s), platforms and content types for the upcoming fiscal year. A primary goal of the plan should be to increase brand engagement across the JCTDA's target audience(s) through reach and engagement metrics.
- In planning and daily implementation, stay abreast of and incorporate current **best practices, trends and innovations** in social media to stay relevant and effective. Regularly monitor social media industry/platform news and participate in learning sessions.
- Manage the monthly and annual **social media budget** to include paid (advertising) strategies to reach the goals within the annual plan. Judiciously invest the budget across platforms for the greatest return and results.
- Improve **visitor service and support**. Monitor the comments, questions and direct messages received through social media platforms and promptly address visitor concerns, questions and feedback. Improve strategy and content based on visitor feedback trends.
- Boost conversion rates and drive sales. Design social media campaigns that **encourage audiences to take desired actions**, such as signing up for our e-newsletter, downloading our visitor guide, following/liking our pages and profiles and participating in promotions. Track and analyze key performance indicators (KPIs) to optimize results.
- Maintain a comprehensive **social media calendar** and schedule for posting content. Prioritize and consistently improve upon high-quality, engaging content. Track and consider key performance indicators to create and post content that maximizes potential engagement. Consider the broader, external environment when scheduling to ensure posts are relevant and without brand risk.
- Monitor and measure **social media performance**. On a weekly, monthly, bi-annual and annual basis, collect and analyze social media performance metrics. Produce a monthly and annual report of measured results. Use tools and platforms such as Sprout Social, Meta and Flick to monitor and report metrics. Adapt and adjust strategies based on data-driven insights.

Photos courtesy, L to R: @ taylorcrossadventures, postcardlandscapes, adamgravett, and Kristi Parsons





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority GOALS AND BUDGET

Executive Director Notes for FY 2024-25 Budget

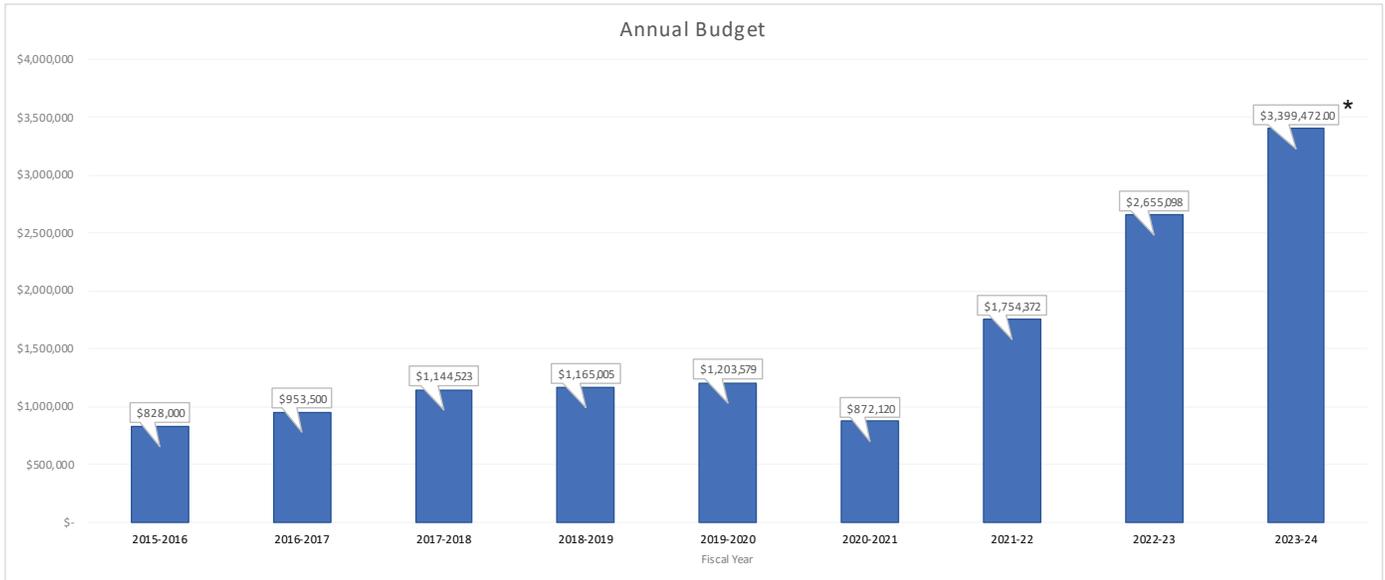
- For fiscal year 2024-2025, we anticipate maintaining our current market share with stable growth projections mirroring last year’s budget. Our marketing strategy is robust, reflecting several key initiatives aimed at enhancing visibility and engagement. Notable efforts include expanded high-profile, out-of-home advertising in Atlanta and Charlotte with strategic placements of vehicle wraps to promote Jackson County, a ramp-up in streaming audio advertisements, and high-value market-specific email campaigns. Additionally, we will conduct a multi-generational photo shoot, enhance our website’s SEO, and replace our chatbot with a new AI-driven chatbot that leverages our owned content for better user interaction. While these expanded marketing activities are designed to attract a higher volume and quality of tourists consistent with our sustainable tourism goals, they are finely tuned to target eco-conscious visitors, acknowledging the higher costs associated with reaching this valuable demographic.
- TCPF - A sizable amount of unspent funds from the capital projects budget in FY 23-24 will revert to the general fund, increasing our net financial position as we enter FY 24-25. As of this fiscal year’s close, we expended only \$367,757 of the \$1 million allocated for capital projects.
- Aligned with our strategic pillars, we increased the allocation for sustainability projects in a) donations to environmental groups in the upcoming budget and b) the introduction of a new \$25,000 line item under our Grants section for ‘Sustainable Tourism / Environmental Impact’. I will work to develop the program in the coming FY to support sustainability efforts that mitigate the impact of tourism on our environment.
- We adjusted the Visitor Center contracts to include a 3% increase to accommodate inflation and consumer price index changes. Visitor Centers received a 27-percent increase last year to account for flat increases for the previous decade.
- There is also a to-be-developed public mural funding program, funded this FY with \$20,000, to fund high-visibility art in our main community corridors and downtowns. We hope to partner with groups like the Dillsboro Merchants Association, Main Street Sylva Association and others on this venture. The application for this fund will be developed in FY 24-25.
- Economic impact study funds for the Railroad’s impact on Dillsboro have been budgeted in the amount of \$5,000. This study will analyze the spending behaviors of its passengers. This project is a multi-county project spearheaded by Smoky Mountain Host. Funds were budgeted for this in FY 23-24, however the study was delayed.
- Salary Adjustments / COLA: It is proposed to adjust salaries for staff members to align with the past two years’ inflation rates, ensuring their compensation remains equitable within the current economic climate. Notably, no salary increases were granted in the previous two years. The proposed adjustments reflect cumulative inflation rates of 3.4% in 2023 and an estimated 3.1% for 2024, totaling a 6.5% adjustment.
- Pipeline: The rebranded and remodeled Hotel Sylva will reopen in July 2024, which promises a higher daily rate than its predecessor.
- There is ongoing planning of the Kessler property in Cashiers, a significant development. No revenue is forecast in this FY budget from the Kessler property. The Jarrett House in Dillsboro is still under construction and will open in 2025, but no funds are reflected in this budget.
- As one of the few Western North Carolina counties still operating at a 4-percent tax rate, we will reassess our competitiveness and the potential benefits of a tax increase, which could support more extensive capital projects benefiting both residents and visitors.





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority BUDGET & FINANCE FY 24-25



*Increase over FY 22-23 primarily due to inclusion of Capital Project Funds

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023
Fund Balance Ending June 30	\$ 546,117	\$ 575,908	\$ 535,808	\$ 541,937	\$ 700,167	\$ 1,837,439	\$ 2,739,114	\$ 3,616,742

Tourism Impact

The facts and figures below are for calendar year 2022, released in August, 2023

- **\$452,570,000** – in annual expenditures by tourists (lodging, food service, transportation, retail, recreation & entertainment). This equates to **\$1,239,917** deposited every day into local cash registers by visitors.
- **2,400** – Jobs directly supported by tourism.
- **\$119,200,000** – Worker paychecks annually
- **\$15,200,000** – State tax revenues generated by tourists.
- **\$15,000,000** – Local county tax revenues generated by tourists.
- **\$703.38** – Tax savings per resident as a result of tourist spending

The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties. This study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics.

Year	Tax Rate	Totals	Accommodation Sales	YOY Change in Sales
FY 23-24	4%	\$2,500,000.00	\$62,500,000.00*	-5.66%
FY 22-23	4%	\$2,650,000.00	\$66,250,000.00	0.48%
FY 21-22	4%	\$2,637,438.19	\$65,935,954.75	32.30%
FY 20-21	4%	\$1,993,466.46	\$49,836,661.50	82.44%
FY 19-20	4%	\$1,092,658.09	\$27,316,452.25	-8.30%
FY 18-19	4%	\$1,191,547.46	\$29,788,686.50	10.51%
FY 17-18	4%	\$1,078,253.84	\$26,956,346.00	4.32%
FY 16-17	4%	\$1,033,643.21	\$25,841,080.25	12.12%
FY 15-16	4%	\$921,923.24	\$23,048,081.00	10.84%
FY 14-15	4%	\$831,725.84	\$20,793,146.00	10.81%
FY 13-14	4%	\$750,594.91	\$18,764,872.75	3.25%
FY 12-13	3%	\$545,218.06	\$18,173,935.33	---

*Projected; current fiscal year still in collection





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

BUDGET TRENDS

Fiscal Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24
Budget	\$ 828,000	\$ 953,500	\$ 1,144,523	\$ 1,165,005	\$ 1,203,579	\$ 872,120	\$ 1,754,372	\$ 2,655,098	\$ 3,399,472.00
Projected Tax Collections	\$ 825,000	\$ 900,000	\$ 1,080,000	\$ 1,112,400	\$ 999,600	\$ 864,120	\$ 1,375,000	\$ 2,060,000	\$ 2,500,000.00
Actual Tax Collections	\$ 921,923.24	\$ 1,033,643.21	\$ 1,078,253.84	\$ 1,191,547.46	\$ 1,092,658.09	\$ 1,993,466.46	\$ 2,637,438.19	\$ 2,650,000.00	In Collection
Investment Earnings	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,023.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 50,000.00
Penalties	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 3,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Advertising Income	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00
Capital Projects (TCPF)									\$ 1,000,000.00
Fund Balance Utilized	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 37,605.00	\$ 183,979.00	\$ -	\$ 363,372.00	\$ 579,098.00	\$ 834,472.00

Budget

FY 22-23: \$2,655,098

FY 23-24: \$3,399,472

Change: Increase of \$744,374 or approximately 28%

The budget saw a significant increase, primarily due to the inclusion of Capital Project (TCPF) funds this FY.

Projected Tax Collections

FY 22-23: \$2,060,000

FY 23-24: \$2,500,000

Change: Increase of \$440,000 or approximately 21.4%

The projected tax collections increased significantly, due to improvements in economic conditions post-COVID and the resilience of luxury travel segments.

Actual Tax Collections

FY 22-23: \$2,650,000

FY 23-24: Still in Collection (on track to meet budget)

Investment Earnings

FY 22-23: \$1,000

FY 23-24: \$50,000

Change: Increase of \$49,000

There was a dramatic increase in investment earnings, due to a large general fund balance and expenditures remaining at low levels.

Late Payment Penalties

FY 22-23: \$5,000

FY 23-24: \$5,000

Change: No change

Penalty income remained consistent, suggesting consistent compliance levels among taxpayers.

Advertising Income

FY 22-23: \$10,000

FY 23-24: \$10,000

Change: No change

Advertising income remained steady, indicating ongoing satisfaction with our Visitor Guide and its ad sales.

Capital Projects (TCPF)

FY 22-23: \$750,000

FY 23-24: \$1,000,000

Change: Increase of \$250,000

Increased allocation of capital project funds due to anticipated applications.

Fund Balance Utilized

FY 22-23: \$579,098

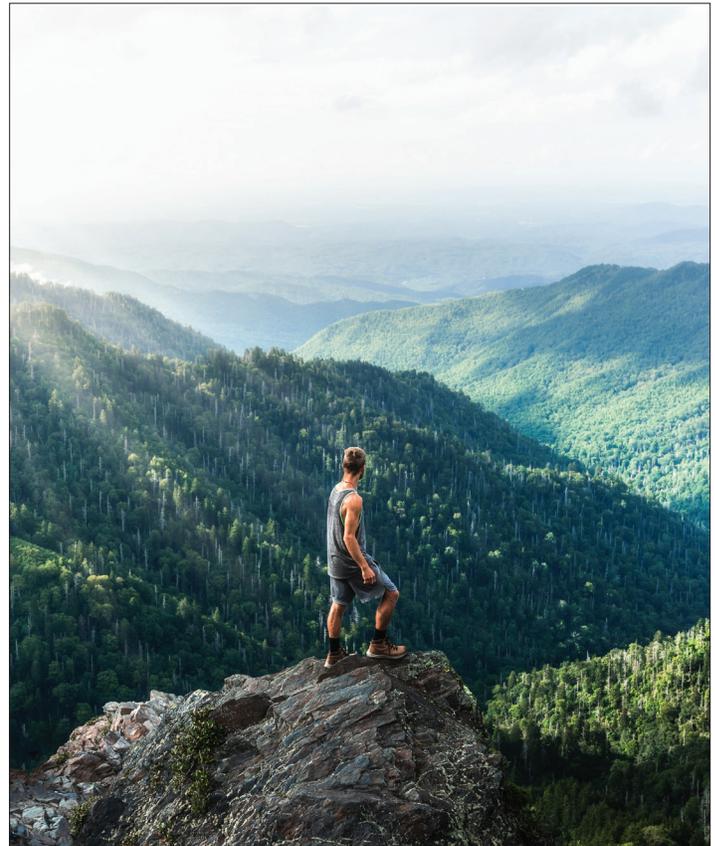
FY 23-24: \$834,472

Change: Increase of \$255,374

More fund balance was utilized as previous FY's TCPF funds were unspent and rolled back into the general fund necessitating our need to include them back in FY 23-24 and at a higher level that corresponds to the increase.

Summary

The transition from FY 22-23 to FY 23-24 shows a general trend of increased financial activity with higher budgets, tax collections, and investment earnings. The entity's financial health is robust, given the rising trends in occupancy tax collections and strategic use of reserves.

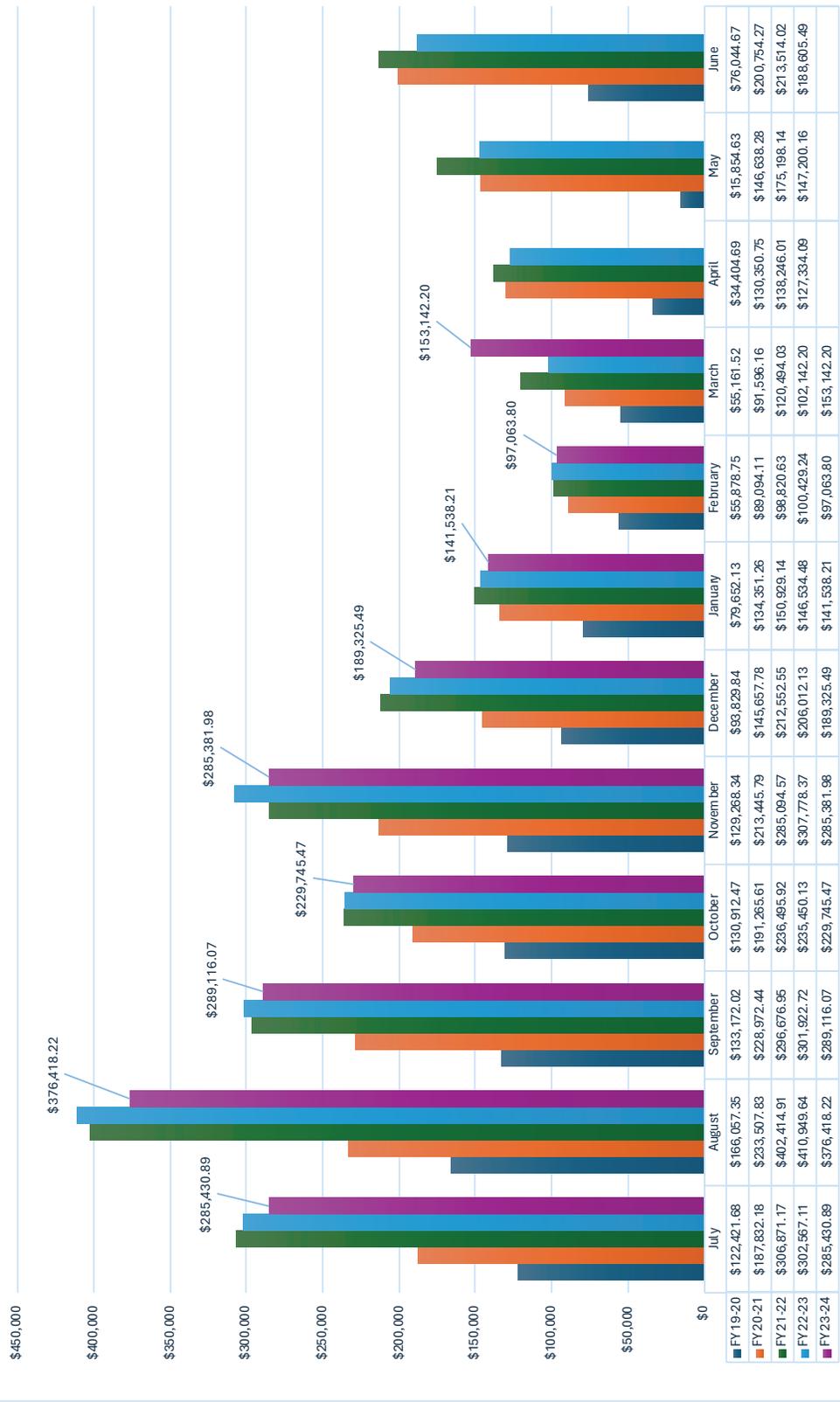




Jackson County Tourism Development Authority OCCUPANCY TAX TRENDS

NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHERS,
CHEROKEE, HILLSBORO AND SPAN.

Occupancy Tax Collections by Month





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

OCCUPANCY TAX TRENDS

Month	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
2022	41.1%	51.1%	54.4%	59.9%	54.2%	65.8%	67.0%	63.4%	60.3%	70.9%	53.9%	48.4%
2023	38.7%	45.5%	47.1%	58.1%	61.7%	68.6%	65.3%	60.9%	63.3%	68.4%	58.9%	46.4%
2024	34.1%	45.1%	50.9%									

Hotel Occupancy data courtesy: Smith Travel Research

The JCTDA budgeted in FY 23-24 for a 10-percent decline in occupancy tax collections due to inflation and economic conditions. Year-to-date the JCTDA has held market share relatively well and experienced about a 7% decline, outpacing its projections.

Other notable trends - 2023 Compared to 2022:

- There is a consistent decrease in occupancy rates in the early months (January to March), with a notable drop in March by approximately -13.5%. Overall, Jackson County held market share relative to the amount.
- From April onwards, some months like May and November show significant increases (nearly 13.8% and 9.2%, respectively).
- December shows a decrease by about -4%.

Early 2024 Trends (Only up to March, 2024 at time of this report):

Decline in Early 2024: The start of 2024 shows a continuation of the trend of decreased occupancy from the end of 2023, except for a slight rebound in March.





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority FUND RESERVE POLICY

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority Fund Balance Reserve Policy

Fund Balance Reserve Purpose

The Fund Reserve Policy is created for the following purposes:

1. Avoid cash-flow interruptions
2. Provide funding for unanticipated, non-recurring, significant expenses that cannot be absorbed with annual revenues and cannot be avoided
3. Allow the TDA to sustain operations during unanticipated emergencies

Fund Balance Reserve Establishment

Contributions can be made to the Fund Reserve gradually so as not to disrupt the Occupancy Tax available for TDA use. The Target Balance should be reached no later than 24 months past the creation of this policy.

Reserves

The Fund Reserve Balance will be an amount equivalent to 30% of the current fiscal year's budget. The target fund balance will fluctuate depending on future annual operational budgets.

An additional 8% of the unappropriated fund balance will be reserved and restricted as required by the Local Government Commission for local government entities.

Fund Balance Reserve Use and Replenishment

The Executive Director will determine when use of the Fund Reserve is needed and will present its petition to the Board for evaluation and approval.

Restoring the Fund Reserve Balance to its target level should be a priority. The Board should determine the means and time frame to replenish amounts used from the Fund Reserve.

Date Approved: November 13, 2019





Jackson County Tourism Development Authority CAPITAL PROJECTS

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

The Tourism Capital Project Fund's (TCPF) purpose is to provide leveraged investment in tourism projects that will increase visitation and attendant spending and overall economic impact for Jackson County. The TCPF offers a level of financial support to create sustainable tourism development activities at the local level that maintain and/or create jobs, attract tourists (visitors originating from outside of the County), and enhance the visit experience.

In FY 23-24 the JCTDA provided funding for \$367,757 to the Town of Sylva to assist with an expansion project at Bridge Park in Sylva. Plans include renovations to enhance the existing park area. The town utilized JCTDA TCPF funds to improve stormwater filtration, add 57 parking spaces, create a bioretention system with footbridges, and construct a viewing/fishing platform over Scotts Creek. The renovations will also include an entry arch, flexible spaces for community events and food trucks, updated plantings, and enhanced landscaping. This project aims to increase tourism, boost overnight stays, and provide a better outdoor gathering space for locals and visitors.



Project nearing completion, April 2024



**JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FY 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET**

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LAST YEAR BUDGET FY 2022-2023	CURRENT YEAR BUDGET FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR ACTUAL YTD FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR REMAINING FY 2023-2024	REQUESTED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	INC/DEC ABOVE FY 2023-2024
REVENUES								
24-3230-130-00	JACKSON COUNTY TDA	2,510,000.00	2,500,000.00	1,896,845.95	603,154.05	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	0.00%
24-3270-170-01	JACKSON TDA - PENALTY	5,000.00	5,000.00	717.35	4,282.65	5,000.00	5,000.00	0.00%
24-3270-190-00	MARKETING AND ADVERTISING	10,000.00	10,000.00	-	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	0.00%
24-3831-491-00	INVESTMENT EARNINGS	92,000.00	150,000.00	137,801.58	12,198.42	60,000.00	60,000.00	-60.00%
24-3991-000-00	FUND BALANCE	150,000.00	876,472.00	-	876,472.00	542,372.00	542,372.00	-38.12%
	TOTAL REVENUES	\$ 2,767,000.00	\$ 3,541,472.00	\$ 2,035,364.88	\$ 1,506,107.12	\$ 3,117,372.00	\$ 3,117,372.00	-11.98%
EXPENDITURES								
24-4926-121-00	SALARIES & WAGES	184,438.00	170,000.00	137,307.70	32,692.30	181,050.00	181,050.00	6.50%
24-4926-170-00	BOARD MEMBER EXPENSE	900.00	900.00	708.99	191.01	900.00	900.00	0.00%
24-4926-181-00	SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTION	13,020.00	10,540.00	8,530.32	2,009.68	11,225.00	11,225.00	6.50%
24-4926-182-00	RETIREMENT EXPENSE	25,410.00	21,845.00	17,511.12	4,333.88	24,623.00	24,623.00	12.72%
24-4926-183-00	HOSPITALIZATION INSURANCE	22,758.00	23,214.00	18,709.56	4,504.44	23,214.00	23,214.00	0.00%
24-4926-185-00	UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	3,000.00	592.00	(1,512.63)	2,104.63	628.00	628.00	6.08%
24-4926-186-00	WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION	2,330.00	2,117.00	285.00	1,832.00	2,299.00	2,299.00	8.60%
24-4926-187-00	MEDICARE TAX	3,045.00	2,465.00	1,995.00	470.00	2,625.00	2,625.00	6.49%
24-4926-190-00	PROFESSIONAL SER-COUNTY	16,250.00	16,250.00	12,187.53	4,062.47	16,250.00	16,250.00	0.00%
24-4926-191-00	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES-AUDIT	7,200.00	7,200.00	8,293.00	(1,093.00)	9,500.00	9,500.00	31.94%
24-4926-192-00	LEGAL SERVICES	2,000.00	2,000.00	382.50	1,617.50	2,000.00	2,000.00	0.00%
24-4926-260-00	OFFICE SUPPLIES AND MATERIAL	6,000.00	6,000.00	1,649.24	4,350.76	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00%
24-4926-299-00	MISCELLANEOUS	10,520.00	13,970.00	4,680.21	9,289.79	20,600.00	20,600.00	47.46%
24-4926-311-00	TRAVEL	49,550.00	28,150.00	23,933.49	3,234.51	41,050.00	41,050.00	45.83%
24-4926-321-00	TELEPHONE	5,800.00	4,600.00	4,385.76	214.24	4,600.00	4,600.00	0.00%
24-4926-321-01	TELEPHONE-VISITOR CENTERS	9,030.00	-	3,540.62	(3,540.62)	-	-	-
24-4926-321-02	TELEPHONE-TDA	-	6,000.00	2,480.96	3,519.04	6,000.00	6,000.00	0.00%
24-4926-325-00	POSTAGE	34,678.00	30,678.00	37,542.62	(6,864.62)	42,570.00	42,570.00	38.76%
24-4926-331-00	UTILITIES	3,275.00	2,700.00	2,453.61	206.39	3,200.00	3,200.00	18.52%
24-4926-341-00	PRINTING	106,741.00	97,341.00	68,796.04	12,236.52	100,341.00	100,341.00	3.08%



**JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
FY 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET**

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LAST YEAR BUDGET FY 2022-2023	CURRENT YEAR BUDGET FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR ACTUAL YTD FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR REMAINING FY 2023-2024	REQUESTED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	INC/DEC ABOVE FY 2023-2024
24-4926-351-00	REPAIRS & MAINT-BUILDING	500.00	500.00	-	500.00	500.00	500.00	0.00%
24-4926-370-00	AD FIRM MEDIA	473,310.00	294,652.00	251,414.90	43,237.10	561,500.00	561,500.00	90.56%
24-4926-370-01	WEBSITE SERVICE	23,200.00	25,200.00	30,075.00	(4,875.00)	25,200.00	25,200.00	0.00%
24-4926-370-02	CREATIVE & PRODUCTION SERVICE	90,000.00	90,000.00	70,333.25	19,666.75	89,500.00	89,500.00	-0.56%
24-4926-370-03	DIGITAL CAMPAIGN REPORTING	14,200.00	13,200.00	11,000.00	2,200.00	13,200.00	13,200.00	0.00%
24-4926-370-04	E-MAIL CAMPAIGNS	21,600.00	16,800.00	15,925.00	875.00	30,800.00	30,800.00	83.33%
24-4926-370-05	SEM MANAGEMENT	19,200.00	178,000.00	129,515.23	48,484.77	188,600.00	188,600.00	5.96%
24-4926-370-07	SOCIAL MEDIA	21,000.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
24-4926-370-08	VIDEO PRODUCTION	2,400.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
24-4926-370-09	SOCIAL MEDIA SPEND	123,000.00	136,000.00	88,560.47	43,439.53	160,000.00	160,000.00	17.65%
24-4926-393-00	VISITOR CENTER OPERATIONS	168,167.00	213,631.00	197,597.61	16,033.39	218,745.00	218,745.00	2.39%
24-4926-393-01	PUBLIC RELATIONS	105,000.00	111,000.00	95,580.99	15,419.01	121,000.00	121,000.00	9.01%
24-4926-393-02	CONTRACTED SERVICES	22,000.00	22,000.00	16,499.97	5,500.03	22,000.00	22,000.00	0.00%
24-4926-393-03	CONTRACTED SERVICES-RECORDIN	1,400.00	1,400.00	150.00	1,250.00	1,400.00	1,400.00	0.00%
24-4926-393-05	CONTRACTED-WEBSITE	12,500.00	12,500.00	4,650.00	7,850.00	39,600.00	39,600.00	216.80%
24-4926-393-06	CONTRACTED-AD FIRM RETAINER	65,910.00	60,840.00	50,700.00	10,140.00	64,800.00	64,800.00	6.51%
24-4926-393-07	CONTRACTED SERVICES-STR	8,942.00	8,280.00	10,015.44	(1,735.44)	11,600.00	11,600.00	40.10%
24-4926-393-08	CONTRACTED-AD FIRM MISC	16,442.00	22,600.00	29,903.13	(7,303.13)	34,751.00	34,751.00	53.77%
24-4926-393-11	SOFTWARE,INTERNET,MISC SERVI	64,024.00	59,758.00	34,936.54	24,821.46	32,188.00	32,188.00	-46.14%
24-4926-393-14	CONTRACTED SERVICES-HR OUTSO	7,559.00	6,920.00	5,118.60	1,801.40	6,920.00	6,920.00	0.00%
24-4926-393-15	RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS	68,500.00	68,500.00	68,427.00	73.00	73,500.00	73,500.00	7.30%
24-4926-393-16	VISTNC FARMS APP	1,500.00	-	-	-	-	-	-
24-4926-399-00	CONTRACTED SERVICES	-	48,000.00	40,000.00	8,000.00	55,200.00	55,200.00	15.00%
24-4926-412-00	BUILDING RENT	23,280.00	23,280.00	19,000.00	2,380.00	23,280.00	23,280.00	0.00%
24-4926-454-00	INSURANCE	4,047.00	3,795.00	3,569.89	225.11	3,754.00	3,754.00	-1.08%
24-4926-491-00	DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS	10,122.00	9,454.00	10,118.71	(664.71)	9,959.00	9,959.00	5.34%
24-4926-550-00	CAPITAL OUTLAY-EQUIPMENT	5,000.00	9,400.00	5,183.99	4,216.01	10,500.00	10,500.00	11.70%
24-4926-550-01	CAPITAL PROJECTS	750,000.00	1,450,000.00	197,633.61	1,252,366.39	650,000.00	650,000.00	-55.17%
24-4926-699-00	GRANTS	65,130.00	105,000.00	14,500.00	90,500.00	145,000.00	145,000.00	38.10%
24-4926-699-02	MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS	11,700.00	15,200.00	26,000.00	(11,300.00)	15,200.00	15,200.00	0.00%
24-4926-990-00	CONTINGENCY	61,422.00	89,000.00	2,326.06	86,673.94	10,000.00	10,000.00	-88.76%
TOTAL EXPENDITURES		\$ 2,767,000.00	\$ 3,541,472.00	\$ 1,782,596.03	\$ 1,735,145.53	\$ 3,117,372.00	\$ 3,117,372.00	-11.98%



JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
 FY 2024-2025 PROPOSED BUDGET

NUMBER	DESCRIPTION	LAST YEAR BUDGET FY 2022-2023	CURRENT YEAR BUDGET FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR ACTUAL YTD FY 2023-2024	CURRENT YEAR REMAINING FY 2023-2024	REQUESTED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	PROPOSED BUDGET FY 2024-2025	INC/DEC ABOVE FY 2023-2024
	FUND TOTAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 252,768.85	\$ (229,038.41)	\$ -	\$ -	



**JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY PAYROLL BUDGET
FY 2024-2025**

Dept	Emp#	Last Name	First Name	Position	FTE	FY 2023-2024	FY 2024-2025	FY 2024-2025
						Salary	6.5% COLA	New Salary
JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY								
4926	P1	Breedlove	Nicholas	Executive Director	1.00	98,000.00	6,370.00	104,370.00
4926	P5	Addy	Kara	Social Media Manager	1.00	72,000.00	4,680.00	76,680.00
TOTAL JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY						\$	\$	\$
						170,000.00	11,050.00	181,050.00



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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority INTEGRATED MARKETING



In collaboration with the Jackson County TDA's Executive Director, Buffalo Groupe Rawle Murdy (BGRM) sets strategy then plans and executes the integrated marketing programs for JCTDA. Based in Charleston, SC, BGRM has been leading successful marketing communications for travel and tourism clients for more than 45 years. The agency began working with the JCTDA in 2016.

Paid Media (Advertising)

Research, plan, buy and evaluate a variety of print, digital, and out-of-home advertising media that drives quality leads/inquiries and visits to Jackson County.

Creative Campaigns

Creation of digital, print, video and out-of-home advertising persuading travelers to choose Jackson County via compelling visual moments captured by real travelers. The 'Play On' brand is featured in all advertising and further supported through authentic imagery of Jackson County.



Website

www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com is an online platform for all brand content supporting social media, paid search, email and paid media channels. The website features information on outdoor adventures, attractions, food & lodging listings and trip planning. The JCTDA reinvests in its website annually with new features and technology to stay in the forefront of the traveler's mind.

2023 Website Sessions - 726,000

Search Engine Optimization

SEO is a digital marketing strategy that aims to improve the visibility of a website or web page in organic search engine results. By utilizing various techniques, such as keyword research, on-page optimization, and backlink building, SEO seeks to enhance a site's relevance, authority, and user experience. In 2024-2025 there is a revamp planned for on-site SEO to enhance the visibility of content from DiscoverJacksonNC.com to those searching for information on Google and other search engines.

Email

Engaging monthly emails to our database of 115,000 active subscribers promoting the happenings in Jackson County and encouraging overnight trips. The JCTDA authors the content and BGRM deploys. A welcome email series enhances the user data via enticing users to self-report their preferred travel style and activities.

outdoor adventures happened here

awesome wildlife!

a peaceful morning

OUR BIG SECRET? JACKSON COUNTY IN THE WINTER

We call it our Secret Season because it feels like it was made just for us. During this time of year in Jackson County, NC, the crowds thin out, so we get to savor the crisp mountain air, wide open trails, and the best seats at our favorite farm-to-table restaurants. It's more mountains, just a tank of gas away. What more could you ask for?

CASHIERS
CHEROKEE
DILLSBORO
SYLVA

Plan your Secret Season getaway at [DiscoverJacksonNC.com](https://www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com)



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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority INTEGRATED MARKETING



ZARTICO

Research, Reporting and Analysis

A variety of leading-edge analytics tools are used to gather and analyze data, allowing for continual performance improvement of the website and digital marketing efforts. Data is evaluated from festivals and events, hotel feeder cities, Smith Travel Research, Zartico, Visa Vue, Key Data, AirDNA, and a variety of sources that influence media buys and targeting across all platforms and campaigns.

Social Media Following @DiscoverJacksonNC



Social Media

Organic and Paid Social is handled in house by JCTDA Social Media Manager Kara Addy.

2023 Overview

Performance Summary (Organic Social Media)

Impressions across our platforms: 102,801,996
Engagements: 3,510,279
Post Link Clicks: 941,223
Audience: 405,986
Net Audience Growth: 84,815
Video Views: 5,577,226

Paid Social Media (Advertising)

Impressions: 80,447,365
Engagements: 3,685,660
Cost Per Engagement: \$0.03
Link Clicks: 925,081
Total Clicks: 2,326,861/Cost Per Click: \$0.05
Video Views: 1,898,933



Search Engine Marketing

SEM is a digital marketing strategy aimed at increasing a website's visibility in search engine results through paid advertising. It involves activities like keyword research, pay-per-click (PPC) advertising, and bid management to drive more targeted traffic to websites.

DiscoverJacksonNC.com uses SEM to enhance its online presence, and Love Communications, a Utah-based advertising agency, manages the SEM for DiscoverJacksonNC.com. The JCTDA contracted with Love Communications in 2023 for SEM.

July 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024 Statistics:

Impressions: 6,498,053
Clicks: 222,481
Click-through rate: 3.42%
Cost per click: \$0.49/avg
YouTube views: 1,005,019



TEMBO HOSPITALITY GROUP

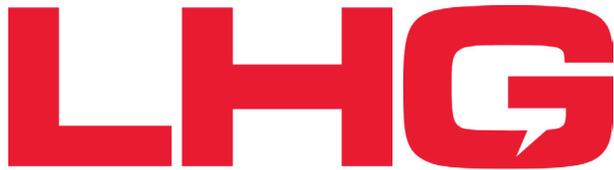
Short-Form Video Production

Tembo Hospitality Group, based in Sylva, North Carolina, is a prominent hospitality company specializing in creating memorable guest experiences through its portfolio of resorts, vacation properties, and restaurants. In 2023, the JCTDA contracted with Tembo Hospitality Group to create short-form videos for our social media channels, leveraging their expertise in marketing and advertising. The company excels in various services, including videography, photography, and digital marketing. In 2023 Tembo produced 47 videos for the JCTDA.



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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority INTEGRATED MARKETING



LOU HAMMOND GROUP

Lou Hammond Group is the Jackson County TDA's Public Relations Firm.

Each day the LHG team combs through 70 newspapers and nearly 200 websites. The team also reads 100+ regional and national magazines monthly to track client/competitor coverage and identify placement opportunities. Recaps are shared and often discussed throughout the agency. This team approach is also reflective when meeting and pitching journalists and social media influencers.

LHG Coordinated 16 media stays July 2023 – April 2024 in exchange for editorial coverage. LHG Coordinated 6 influencer July 2023 – April 2024 in exchange for social coverage.

LHG conducts the following for Jackson County:

- Strategic planning
- Aggressive media relations implementation
- Thought leadership
- Media events, missions
- Media training, as needed
- Deskside appointments
- Group and individual press trips
- Awards and accolades planning and outreach
- Synergistic partnership and promotions
- Crisis strategy and management
- Reporting
-

The annual plan includes:

- Comprehensive media relations, including national and regional print, broadcast and digital
- Coordination of 8-10 media visits, either group or individual
- Thought leadership and account administration, including
- Biweekly conference calls, monthly coverage reports; inclusion on LHG social media channels

- Crisis support
- Development industry partner relationships & ongoing strategic direction
- Events and promotional activities after budget direction

News Bureau

Respond 24/7 to media inquiries, refer coverage opportunities, give advice on trends and developments; develop & maintain fact file, image library; maintain dedicated media lists, segment & update ongoing; monitor key outlets through staff reading program, provide media clips

Media Pitching

Craft proactive pitch angles for multi-distribution with personalization, outreach across all platforms; print, digital, & broadcast. Includes segmented story ideas, dedicated pitch & editorial calendars, award outreach & tracking

Press Materials

Create press releases, review current materials, make updates

Media Missions/ Desk Sides

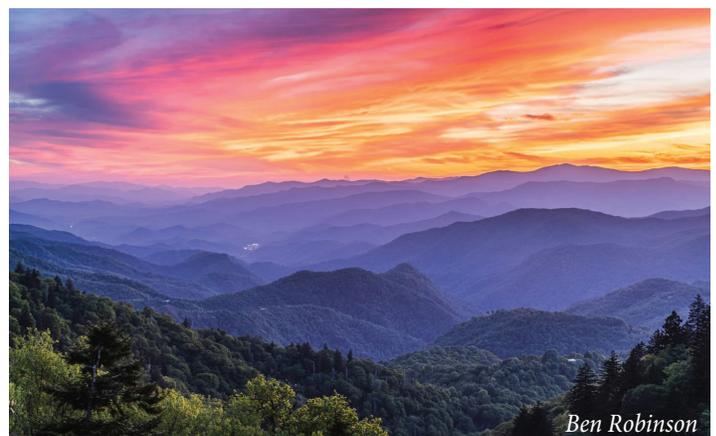
Schedule, provide briefing book, attend & follow up

Individual Visits

Schedule, provide briefing book, attend & follow up

Influencer Outreach

On a campaign basis: conduct research, determine strategies, develop targeted lists



Ben Robinson



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority INTEGRATED MARKETING

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

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

It's Worth Knowing What's Really Going On.

REGIONAL DINING SOUTHERN GETAWAYS

Sylva offers an affordable dining stop in the North Carolina mountains

EDITOR'S NOTE

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution is expanding its food and dining coverage beyond major cities to cover more of the South. As part of this effort, we're sending our food writers to explore some of the best places and people that make this region's food scene so special. Let us know what you think about our reporting. Email food and dining editor Greg Nguyen: nguyen@gajc.com.

Scene is remarkably quaint, upscale for a community of 2,600. Local and late event of Appalachian dining hub Asheville, the town of Sylva, North Carolina, quietly has drawn a sophisticated crowd of culinary entrepreneurs, make up of both natives and newcomers who hadn't even heard of the town until a few years ago. Yes, all of them share a deep connection to food, craft and community. Sylva is a breath of fresh air for food and

drink establishments to keep visitors well fed for days, and without great expense. When southeast and jay bird moved to Sylva in 2012, Jonathan started bartending at Innovation Brewing, a brewery that opened on the east edge of town in 2013. Now, the full crew White Moon Cafe and Park Tavern cocktail bar, known for breakfast sandwiches, baked goods and coffee drinks to start the day, as well as creative cocktails for the evening crowd. Innovation Brewing has a family tree of people in their 30s who formerly worked at



Dishes at Illa in Sylva, North Carolina, include squid ink spaghetti with mussels and crawfish, and gatoro carpaccio with burrata and peppers. COURTESY OF JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

Dining

continued from E1

for the brewery as bartenders and now owns and operates businesses in the area. Jonathan Butcher said, "Sylva is a really good place to live. It's a small town person who has an idea and wants to do something."

Entrepreneurs have taken advantage of the area's affordable space, sense of community and history market, creating a food and beverage scene that is remarkably consistent and upscale for a town of 2,600 people.

After operating his successful restaurants in New York, Enzo's Italian restaurant in Sylva and opened Illa's That Culture, a restaurant in the traditional Northern Italian dishes in a historic building located near a creek. She's known for her keto-friendly noodle soup, but other local favorites include stone-ground and fish sauce wings.

In 2019, Enzo's restaurant in Sylva is a testament to her former bar and spirits director at the time and now, Enzo's. Enzo's was hired to Sylva by her friends and former coworkers, chef Santiago Guzzetti and co-owner Crystal Pace, who wanted to open a Southern Italian restaurant called Illa. "It'll be three years in January. I had said of the Sylva that's the best place."

Enzo's restaurant in Sylva is a testament to her former bar and spirits director at the time and now, Enzo's. Enzo's was hired to Sylva by her friends and former coworkers, chef Santiago Guzzetti and co-owner Crystal Pace, who wanted to open a Southern Italian restaurant called Illa. "It'll be three years in January. I had said of the Sylva that's the best place."



Dal Lapa That Culture's humble appearance belies its outstanding dishes. Owner Kariyga Supahanna previously operated two successful restaurants in New York. www.illalife.com



Next door to Illa, Savio the Wine Bar offers an intimate space for gathering, with a global wine list curated by co-owner Crystal Pace. www.saviothebar.com

Hodges's wine cocktail bar is another major draw, along with the newly opened downtown Pace and Guzzetti's cell bar "part of the soul of Illa."

the more casual Mountain Pie, north, where the menu is split into two sections: Under 2020 year's final contemporary, Neapolitan-style wood-fired pizzas, while the 1980s section offers traditional, Roman-style square

IF YOU GO

- Illalife That Culture**, 605 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-477-0963, illalife.com
- White Moon Cafe and Park Tavern Cocktail Bar**, 313 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-533-0011, whitemoon.com
- Illla**, 142 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-507-0276, illalife.com
- Savio the Wine Bar**, 479 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-429-2075, saviothebar.com
- Mountain Pie**, 114 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-554-0268, mountainpie.com
- Innovation Brewing**, 414 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-580-9676, innovationbrewing.com
- The Out Cocktails Lounge**, 410 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-533-9765, outcocktails.com
- The Out Cocktails Lounge**, 410 W. Main St., Sylva, North Carolina, 828-533-9765, outcocktails.com

Cur Cocktails Lounge is a casual bar with a vintage vibe and a seasonal craft cocktail menu. Next door to Illa is Savio the Wine Bar, also from Pace and Guzzetti. All intimate spots with a global wine list curated by Pace. Savio is the perfect place to sip off a day in Sylva. Creative cocktails also are available for visitors in town to enjoy the culinary offerings. Outland Great Smoky Mountains, 203 Lane Oak Drive, Whitener, North Carolina, 828-580-0226, outlandgreatsmoky.com

GARDEN & GUN

TRAVEL

Seven Southern Hikes to Seek Out in Winter

Where to wander in the region's most underrated hiking season

By **PAIGE TRIOLA**

January 8, 2024

Throughout the South, many hiking trails that shine in summer and fall downright sparkle in winter. Trees drop their leaves and open up views for miles. Crisp temperatures keep crowds (and undesirable critters) at bay. And yes, sometimes it snows. These seven parks are particularly magical destinations for a wintertime hike.

Pinnacle Park

Sylva, North Carolina



Snowy mountains at Pinnacle Park.

Escape to the town of Sylva, North Carolina, for an idyllic hike through Fraser firs and red spruce trees. The Pinnacle Trail will present a workout as you ascend over two thousand feet in three and a half miles one way, but the 360-degree view of Appalachian peaks in clear winter air makes the climb well worth it. Another option is the relaxing half-mile Lower Loop trail; it's the only certified Forest Therapy Trail in North Carolina (and one of just twenty in the world). Listen to the online audio guide as you connect with nature at your own pace—then drop into town for a hot chocolate at [White Moon Cafe](http://www.whitemooncafe.com).

Total earned impressions: 2,584,667,985 to date*
Total media equates to \$2,764,754 to date*

Sampling of Media Coverage:

- Travel + Leisure
- Food & Wine
- Thrillist
- Southern Living
- Garden & Gun
- The Points Guy
- National Geographic
- Best Life
- The Atlanta Journal-Constitution
- HGTV

*July 23 – April 24

The Atlanta Journal-Constitution

SPRING TRAVEL

Sunday, March 10, 2024 | The A.J.C.'s Spring Travel Guide offers you a look at destinations across the South, the nation and the world. | Read more at ajc.com/travel

8 QUICK GETAWAYS BY CAR OR PLANE

Discover what's new at these destinations three hours or less from Atlanta.

By Blake Gutwry | For the A.J.C.

Spring's first blush is the perfect time to shake off those winter blues with a short jaunt to a nearby destination. Nonstop flights to myriad locations are available on a daily basis from Hartsfield-Jackson International Airport, and the interstates point in all directions for a quick getaway. Here are eight ideal spots you can get to from Atlanta in three hours or less by car, plane or, in some cases, a combination of both.

6 Sylva, North Carolina

3-hour drive

Cradled by some of the highest peaks in western North Carolina, Sylva beckons hikers, nature lovers, foodies and craft beer aficionados. For hiking, head to Pinnacle Park, where there's a seven-mile round-trip trail to the summit with a wide-open view of the surrounding mountains. A less challenging newer addition to the park is the Forest Therapy Trail. Inspired by the Japanese tradition of *shinrin-yoku*, or forest bathing, the trail is designed to immerse visitors in nature on a short hike through the towering coniferous hardwood forest. Back in town, unwind at one of four craft breweries and have dinner at [illalife.com](http://www.illalife.com), showcasing southern Italian cuisine with Appalachian influences. A few minutes outside of town, Outland Great Smoky Mountain Chalet and Suites (\$139 and up, www.stayoutland.com) provides spa-like accommodations on a mountain ridge property with views as good as the ones at Pinnacle Park. ■ Jackson County Visitor Center, 773 W. Main St., 800-962-1911, www.discoverjacksonnc.com.





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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority VISITOR CENTERS



The JCTDA provides funding to operate the county’s visitor centers located in Sylva (left) and Cashiers (right). The Visitor Centers greet thousands of walk-in visitors and tourists, providing information about activities, directions, events, accommodations and restaurants. They answer visitor telephone calls, fulfill Visitor Guide requests and stock kiosks throughout the county and ensure a good experience for visitors before, during and after their visit.

Jackson County Chamber Updates & Plans

2023-24:

- 19,715 Visitors Served
- 12,000 Visitor Guides provided to guests at State Welcome Centers
- Over 13,000 individual visitor inquiries fulfilled
- The Jackson County Chamber of Commerce celebrated its 100th Anniversary in 2023. Projects included the creation of an outdoor patio with engraved pavers. Guests to the Chamber & Visitor Center now have the opportunity to enjoy the patio year round while taking full advantage of the view of the most photographed Courthouse in North Carolina. The patio is also perfectly situated to view July 4th fireworks, parades, the Sylva Tree Lighting and holiday festivities in the downtown district.
- Interior updates to the Chamber & Visitor Center included refreshing the Explore Room with new lighting and replacing older brochure units with updated revolving displays. Additional seating was added to encourage guests to linger longer in the Center.
- Western Carolina University is now occupying the space adjacent to the Explore Room. Guests and locals alike are enjoying rotating exhibits, learning more about life at Western, and a Paws cut-out is available at all times for great photo opportunities. This is a popular space, and WCU has embraced their downtown presence and has become more actively engaged with our merchants and now with our guests.
- Concerts on the Creek was founded fifteen (15) years ago by the Chamber. Since its inception, it has grown to become a signature event in Jackson County. This spring, *USA Today* named Concerts on the Creek one of the top ten outdoor concert events in NC. Thousands of residents and guests enjoy the free

concerts each Friday night Memorial Day through Labor Day. In celebration of the 15th year of Concerts on the Creek, the Chamber is selling shirts and stickers this year with all funds going directly back to pay bands for summer series.

Cashiers Area Chamber Updates & Plans

1. Hire and Retain Key Staff: Recruit a skilled Communications Specialist and Visitor Center Manager and create an attractive work environment to retain staff.
2. Build Membership Base: Launch a membership drive to attract new members and engage existing ones.
3. Implement GrowthZone: Add value benefit for members, improve administrative efficiency, and create non-dues revenue with new advertising and sponsorship opportunities.
4. Improve Member Communication: Implement regular communication strategies like newsletters, emails, or social media updates to keep members informed and engaged.
5. Offer Enhanced Member Benefits: Create new programs, networking events, or training sessions to add value for members.
6. Strengthen Community Partnerships: Work with local businesses, government agencies, and nonprofits to build relationships that benefit Chamber members.
7. Promote Local Economic Development: Support local business initiatives and promote the area as a business-friendly location.
8. Increase Chamber Visibility: Participate in or organize local events, sponsor community activities, and engage in public relations efforts to boost the Chamber's profile.



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

Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

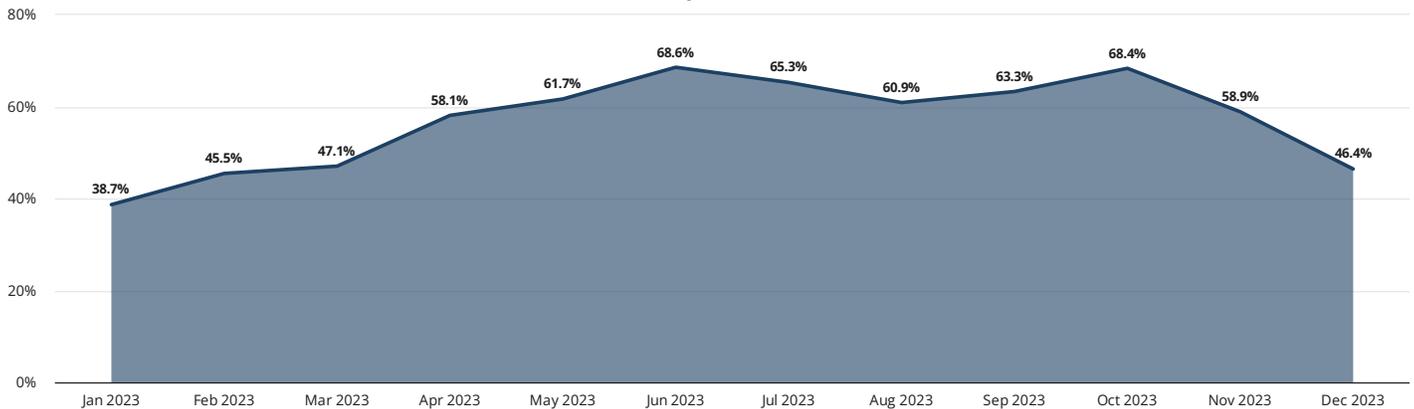
VISITOR RESEARCH

Visitation Trends, 2023 Calendar Year

Monthly ADR & RevPAR



Monthly Occupancy



Key Destination Insights

Source: STR Monthly, Zartico Geolocation Data, Zartico Geolocation Data (Summarized), Zartico Spending Data. Note: The hotel and overnight insights below are applicable to your STR Monthly Primary Geography. A Visitor-to-Resident Ratio of less than 1, tends to have little resident friction. Between 1 & 1.5 has increasing friction and for prolonged periods above 1.5 a proactive destination management plan is recommended. The Average Visitor Spending is calculated per visitor cardholder to your destination and will not display if 10 or less cardholders are present based on the filters selected.

<p>Hotel Occupancy</p> <p>56.9%</p> <p>↘ -1% change 57.5% prev. year</p>	<p>Hotel ADR</p> <p>\$150</p> <p>↗ 22% change \$122 prev. year</p>	<p>Visitor-to-Resident Ratio</p> <p>0.82</p> <p>↘ -20% change 1.02 prev. year</p>	<p>Avg. Visitor Spending</p> <p>\$170</p> <p>↘ -6% change \$180 prev. year</p>
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Source: Zartico & STR

Visitor Profile Summary

Understand a snapshot of your destination by looking at who your visitors are and the impact they make on your destination. These insights are based on a device count sample size of 155,382 and a cardholder count sample size of 48,875. Note that geolocation data less than 30 days old is subject to slight changes through the normalization process.

Key Insights

Source: Zartico Geolocation Data, Zartico Spend Data

Better understand your visitor makeup, including the visitor percentage of total devices, percentage of total visitor spend and the average visitor spend.

Visitor % of Total
43.4%

Visitor Spend % of Total
64.4%

Avg. Visitor Spend
\$170

Where are your visitors from?

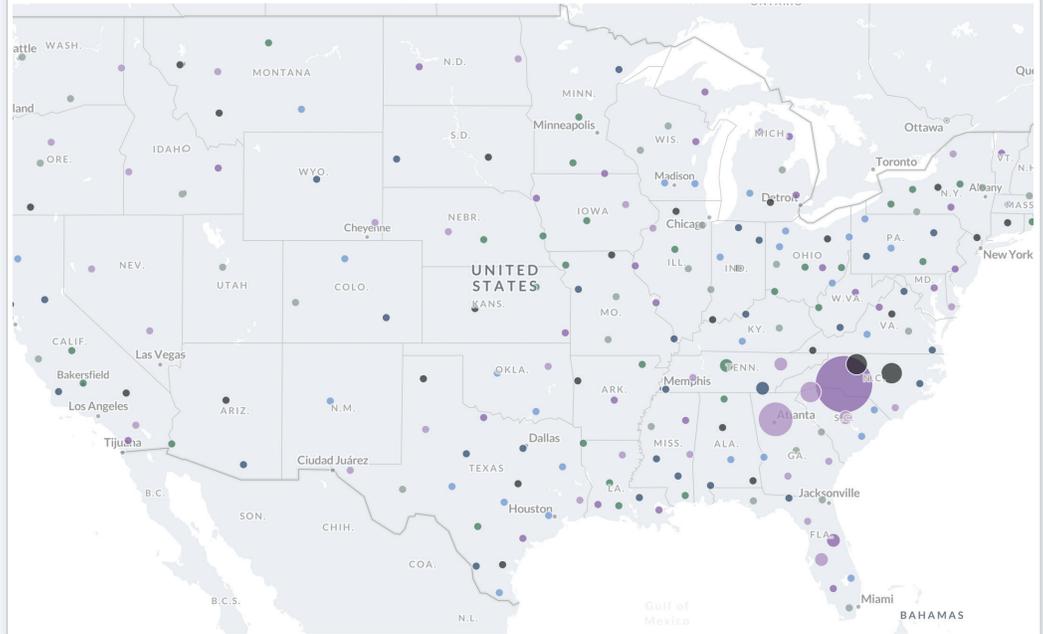
Source: Zartico Geolocation Data

Better understand where visitors are coming from, including the percentage of visitors from out-of-state, top DMAs and how they relate to the percentage of visitors, percentage of visitor spend and average visitor spend.

Out-of-State Visitors

65.6%

Top Origin Markets - In-State & Out-of-State



Visitor Market Area	% Visitors ▼	% Visitor Spend	Avg. Visitor Spend
Charlotte NC	17.2%	9.4%	\$207
Atlanta GA	13.8%	13.4%	\$158
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson	8.6%	3.9%	\$149
Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem NC	6.5%	4.3%	\$230
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville) NC	6.1%	4.9%	\$263
Knoxville TN	3.1%	2.3%	\$121
Columbia SC	2.8%	3.0%	\$151
Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota) FL	2.7%	2.6%	\$211
Nashville TN	2.3%	1.9%	\$166
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne FL	2.1%	2.1%	\$184



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority STRATEGIC PLAN

Strategic Direction

Travel to Jackson County is currently driven by leisure demand for scenic mountain beauty, Cherokee, and major WNC regional attractions. Western Carolina University and group travel are also drivers of visitation. The Jackson County TDA will drive growth in visitation and visitor spending by promoting an active-lifestyle destination and focusing on longer weekend stays, weekdays, shoulder and off-seasons. A combination of leisure and group promotion will drive maximum ROI.

Destination Marketing – Expand and promote the “play-on” brand to an active-Outdoors Mountain Brand

1. **Maintain and support the highest skilled and most dynamic sales and marketing team.** JCTDA will meet the highest standards of accreditation and performance (research driven ROI) with measurable results as a research-based DMO driven by a team of professionals.
2. **Promote and expand the active-lifestyle brand based on the market research.** Jackson County requires a brand that sets it apart as unique from other mountain destinations while capturing the active outdoors vacation/getaway experience. The brand will serve as a foundation for all marketing, sales and public relations as well as future destination development.
3. **Maintain/expand a comprehensive research/ tracking program to guide all decisions**– Track KPIs (Key Performance Indicators) for all programs with ROI reported at all Jackson County TDA Board meetings. Provides annual reports to County Commission.
4. **All plans, marketing, activities, events must be on-brand** – deliver on the active mountain lifestyle experience.

Destination Management – Enhance the Active Outdoors Lifestyle – a mountain destination unlike any other

5. **Connect Jackson County visitors with memorable experiences.** Jackson County is large and visitors must be able to find activities to engage in them. Implement county-wide directional signage and way-finding systems. Improved cellular and Wi-Fi service provides visitor with connectivity. Support traffic planning efforts to diminish traffic jams during peak periods.
6. **Support improved and expanded access to traveler experiences,** with emphasis on year-round outdoor experiences. Expand & improved parking at trail heads and waterfalls. Improved trail quality and safety. Create new trails. Support outfitters to equip visitors for biking, kayaking, canoeing, fishing
7. **Encourage and support unique mountain dining, shopping and entertainment that set Jackson County apart from other mountain destinations.**