

DISTINCTLY **FAYETTEVILLE**™

2022-2023 **Strategic Plan**

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Introduction

The Fayetteville/Cumberland County area is a terrific community in which to live, work and play. It is a multi-faceted community that can boast of combining, charm, faith, patriotism, and education with a strong workforce and work ethic. All of these, along with our entertainment, recreation, lodging, and other visitor services, make for a vibrant tourism destination. Coming off two years of a challenging period related to the challenges the entire worldwide tourism industry had with the COVID-19 pandemic, the Fayetteville/Cumberland County Tourism Industry is poised for growth and prosperity. In Cumberland County, the Fayetteville Area Convention & Visitors Bureau (FACVB) doing business as DistiNctly Fayetteville is the tourism marketing arm of the community, fueled by research-based marketing, and is leading the way in telling our story and promoting our area in the very competitive visitor marketplace.

While DistiNctly Fayetteville's primary focus is to bring conventions, meetings, sporting events, and leisure travel to our area we are, in addition, focused on the local community and the importance of our area's population to be educated about the many attributes and attractiveness of the Fayetteville/Cumberland County area as a visitor destination. With a major segment of our visitors coming as "visiting friends and families," we need to have everyone knowing about the many tourism assets to showcase to those coming in. Whether it be a Fort Bragg soldier's family and friends coming in to visit or a family coming in to visit the grandkids, and everyone in between, we are continually striving to educate our local community and Board of Directors.

As DistiNctly Fayetteville moves into a new fiscal year, with this Strategic Plan, we have outlined plans to continue to address the community's and Tourism Industry's recovery from COVID-19 and a strategy moving forward. A focus for the team is to build and/or maintain exceptional relationships with our clients, the hospitality industry, and the community. All the efforts point to generating demand for the destination, thereby increasing the economic health of our area.

A Destination Market Organization's (DMO) value is much greater than just generating room nights. All members of the DistiNctly Fayetteville Team look forward to working with community partners to stimulate tourism growth to benefit Fayetteville/Cumberland County. Please join us in this vital community effort by helping us tell our community's terrific story.

Our Core Values



OUR CORE VALUES



TRANSPARENCY

DistiNCtly Fayetteville, at all times, exists and operates in a transparent manner, with our core values being ones of clarity, our finances above reproach and our dealings with partners - both internal and external - being open and honest.

VISIBILITY

DistiNCtly Fayetteville will be visible, both in the market, where we will promote and sell Fayetteville and Cumberland County daily, and in our community. We will be a leading force in helping build community pride and positively affecting quality of life and understanding of the depth and expanse of the tourism product we have here in our community. Our goal is to consistently answer the often-asked question, "What is there to do in Cumberland County?"



RESPECTABILITY

There is, within the Team DistiNCtly Fayetteville, the understanding that respect is earned - not freely given. Therefore, it is the objective of the Team to actively seek to earn the internal and external respect of the community, our partners and those we ask to visit us - whether business or leisure travelers.

PARTNERSHIP

DistiNCtly Fayetteville will be an open and active partner, both within the Fayetteville and Cumberland County community and with external meeting and sporting event planners, along with all other visitor business partners. Through partnership comes strength and positive economic growth.



LEADERSHIP

DistiNCtly Fayetteville will strive to consistently be in a leadership role within the community, providing sound advice and support to the hospitality industry as well as community leaders - both business and government.

From the Chief Executive Officer

DistiNctly Fayetteville exists to represent the Fayetteville/Cumberland County area, as the strategic marketing arm of the community, for conventions, meetings, sporting events, and leisure travel. To successfully carry out this mission, DistiNctly Fayetteville must operate each day under five core principles, outlined in "Our Core Values," seen on the previous page.

This Strategic Plan is a roadmap for the coming year for DistiNctly Fayetteville to successfully market Fayetteville/Cumberland County, under these Core Principles, to our business and leisure traveler customers. It outlines how we will affect the positive growth and economic health of Fayetteville and Cumberland County. Our impact will be felt throughout the area by the work we do in bringing visitors from all our target markets to our area who in turn will bring increased revenue to businesses, throughout the area.

Our appreciation goes out to Cumberland County and its leadership, the City of Fayetteville, Hope Mills and Spring Lake and their leadership, the Tourism Development Authority (TDA), DistiNctly Fayetteville's Board of Directors, and our area's hospitality and business community, for their support. Together we will succeed in our objective of creating increased revenue through visitor spending.

Thank you for your time in reviewing the DistiNctly Fayetteville's FY 23 Strategic Plan. As always, we are open to questions and comments.

We appreciate all you do for Fayetteville/Cumberland County's Tourism Industry!

Sincerely,

Randy Fiveash
Interim President and
Chief Executive Officer (CEO)

About DistiNctly Fayetteville

DistiNctly Fayetteville is Fayetteville/Cumberland County's DMO responsible for travel and tourism promotion for leisure and business travel, and visitor services. It devises strategies to enhance a visitor's experience and encourage future visitation, thereby stimulating the local economy. DistiNctly Fayetteville operates on a Fiscal Year calendar from July 1 through June 30.

DistiNctly Fayetteville is accredited by the international, independent Destination Marketing Accreditation Program (DMAP) as meeting the highest standards and best practices of destination marketing.

Mission

To position Fayetteville/Cumberland County as a destination for conventions, tournaments, and individual travel.

Vision

DistiNctly Fayetteville strives to be the leading destination authority by supporting and marketing the Cumberland County branded visitor experience and advocating community tourism benefits.

Tourism Marketing

DistiNctly Fayetteville is the Tourism Marketing Arm of Fayetteville/Cumberland County fueled by Research-Based Marketing.

Tourism Industry Overview

Information outlined below for both the impact of visitor spending on Cumberland County and information on visitors to Cumberland County is from 2021. The Foundational Tourism Research is current as of January 2022. The comparison of Average Daily Rate (ADR), Occupancy and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPar) is for June 2021 versus June 2022.

Impact of Visitor Spending

The following information was provided by “The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties”, prepared for Visit North Carolina by the U.S. Travel Association for 2021:

- Cumberland County’s travel and tourism industry employs 4,556 people with a payroll totaling nearly \$163.2 million.
- Travel spending generates \$46.3 million in local and state taxes.
- Cumberland County ranks 12th out of North Carolina’s 100 counties in economic impact from tourism.
- Travel to Cumberland County is worth \$608.85 million to our local economy. This translates to a tax savings of \$138.49 county resident.



[Link to the full report.](#)

Research Plan

This research will be conducted by the DistiNctly Fayetteville’s research partner, H2R Market Research.

- Regional Traveler Profile Plus - Travel Sentiment, Regional Travel Trends, Fayetteville Visitor Profile, Top Area Activities and Seasonal Brand Insights – Plus Brand Assessment in May 2023.
- Visitation/Lodging Multiplier Model - Projection of Fayetteville/Cumberland County’s Overall Visitation & More
- Updated Scout Report - Measure Where Fayetteville/Cumberland County Travelers Come from Nationwide including an Overall Profile.
 - Added 2 new polygons (Cool Spring Downtown District and the Crown Complex).
 - Scout Report is now updated on a monthly basis.

Stakeholder Study

The Stakeholder Study was conducted January 2022 and provided insights from local stakeholders.

Topline Takeaways

Some of the key takeaways' community stakeholders offered include:

- Fayetteville/Cumberland County's Defining Characteristics. Area stakeholders feel Fayetteville/Cumberland County most excels in the areas of Military/Government, Downtown District, Accommodations & Food, Arts & Entertainment and Travel & Tourism. That is, stakeholders feel the community serves as a gracious host that excels at welcoming and entertaining residents and tourists alike.
- Key Points of Interest (POI). As a gracious and welcoming host for regional travelers, it is no surprise that many of the region's most compelling POI or attractions include Military/Historic Sites, the Airborne & Special Operations Museum (ASOM), Cape Fear Botanical Garden, Spectator Sports, and Museums among other things. Thus, stakeholders feel that visitors to the community would benefit most by exploring the history of the area, embracing its beauty, and enjoying spectator sports. The intent in the next step will be to determine which POI tourists themselves say they are most interested in visiting.
- Fayetteville/Cumberland County's Brand Perception as a Tourist Destination. Stakeholders were most likely to describe the area with words and phrases such as A place with a sense of history and military presence that inspires a culture of readiness & action, a city with lots of diversity, a great place to meet interesting people, and being a destination, whose diverse strengths may be unknown to many, but the stage is set for a welcome surprise.



[Link to the full report.](#)

If you are reading this on paper, go to DistinctlyFayettevilleNC.com/research/ and look for Foundational Tourism Research.

Scout Report

The Scout Report provides real-time data (phone signals) to be able to show the geographic distribution of Fayetteville/Cumberland County's visitors fueled by visitors from outside Cumberland County.



[Link to the interactive report.](#)

Tourism Market Study

The Tourism Market Study was conducted in January 2022 and targeted regional travelers to assess and measure traveler sentiment, brand health, visitor profile, and barriers to visitation.

Some key takeaways:

- Fayetteville/Cumberland County is not currently viewed as a travel destination. Both leisure travel (vacations/weekend getaways) and business travel (business/work/combination with leisure) account for only 19% and 13% of all visits collectively. Meanwhile, visiting friends & family accounts for nearly one-third of all visits and even just passing through ranks higher at 21%.
- Plenty of upside. Yet, plenty of upside exists across the region in both leisure travel and 48%. Likewise, both its conversion and retention rates are also competitive slightly below average, but still in the ballpark.
- Reputation and a lower share of voice complicate matters. Part of the challenge has to do with having a positive opinion of the area, ranking it fifth out of the destinations tested and well any marketing/advertisements for Fayetteville/Cumberland County in the past six months.
- Differentiated by patriotism. Another challenge for the mass travel audience across the indexes 76% higher than average, it falls below average on every other attribute evaluated including Downtown (77), Charm (79), Museums (86), and Spectator Sports (99).



[Link to the full report.](#)

Multi-Segment Report

The following information was provided by Smith Travel Report (STR) and shows the Occupancy percentage (OCC), Average Daily Rate (ADR), and Revenue Per Available Room (RevPAR).

The chart below shows STR data from February 2021 to February 2022 for Cumberland County and how we compare against the whole state of NC. This section of the strategic plan will be updated once this information becomes available for the full fiscal year, in mid-July.

Year to Date (YTD) June 2021-June 2022												
State	OCC%		ADR		RevPAR		Percent Change from YTD 2021					
	2022	2021	2022	2021	2022	2021	OCC	ADR	Rev PAR	Room Rev	Room Avail	Room Sold
North Carolina	60.8%	54.5%	\$115.33	\$96.25	\$70.15	\$52.45	11.6%	19.8 %	33.7%	36.0%	1.7%	13.5%
Cumberland County, NC	66.7%	67.8%	\$96.50	\$85.69	\$64.39	\$58.13	1.6%	12.6 %	10.8%	10.1 %	-0.6%	-2.2%

Challenges & Opportunities

In leaning on additional third-party research to support this project, DistiNctly Fayetteville looked to a national research company, Tourism Economics. In November 2021, they published an article titled *Rural destinations fare better as consumer preferences shift*. The high-level takeaways include, "Rural destinations have come out on top against cities during the pandemic to date. Recovery is now underway for both rural and urban tourism driven by pent-up demand as travel restrictions ease and global vaccination rate increase, but effects will persist."

"The COVID-19 shock has led to a structural shift in consumers' choice of travel destinations, as travelers increasingly have moved away from urban centers towards rural locations and rural destinations will retain an elevated share of demand for some time."

Minchin, J. (November 2021). Tourism Economics. Rural destinations fare better as consumer preferences shift.

Challenges

DistiNctly Fayetteville continues to recognize the challenges that Fayetteville/Cumberland County's Tourism Industry has. Some of the challenges include:

- Visitors are still concerned about safety regarding travel restrictions.
- Lack of adequate lodging facilities near key sports and meeting facilities.
- Residents' lack of awareness of Cumberland County's tourism assets.
- Continue to overcome visitors' perceptions about travel safety.
- Post-pandemic staffing issues causing difficulties serving clients.
- Fayetteville/Cumberland County Welcome Center locations not easily accessible from I-95.

Opportunities

With every challenge, there is an opportunity.

- Partner with lodging properties, attractions, and other community businesses to better serve clients.
- Communicate the value that DistiNctly Fayetteville brings to Fayetteville/Cumberland County with other area organizations.
- Investigate opportunities and the impact of a Welcome Center location near I-95 in Cumberland County.
- Improve our community involvement to obtain more sales leads, knowledge, and general information.
- Initiate a volunteer program to increase DistiNctly Fayetteville's visibility at large events and provide services to clients bringing their event to Fayetteville/Cumberland County.
- Increase awareness, partnerships, and involvement in Heroes Homecoming.

- I-295 expansion into Western Fayetteville and Hope Mills will allow visitors easier access to that part of the county.
- Educate local audiences on the value of Fayetteville’s tourism efforts and continue improving our community involvement.

Team DistiNctly Fayetteville

During FY 2023 the organization restructured, and this plan was updated to reflect the new structure of the team that occurred during the 2nd Quarter.

DistiNctly Fayetteville is made up of the following teams: Administration/Human Resources, Finance and Operations, Information Technology, Sales, Tourism Marketing and also our [Board of Directors](#).

Administration/Human Resources

The Director of Administration/Human Resources supports and is the point of contact for the CEO and maintains all contracts and upkeep of legal documents for DistiNctly Fayetteville and documents for the Board of Directors meetings. Works hand in hand with attorneys to ensure the overall protection of DistiNctly Fayetteville's assets and contracts. All Human Resources functions are also this position's responsibility.

Organizational Leadership

- **Works** closely with the President/CEO to develop and implement the organization's policies, procedures, and goals.
- **Participates** in strategic planning meetings to provide input in policies, goals, and work plans.
- **Works** closely with the Director of Finance and Operations to assist with the organization's financial needs and goals.

Administrative Management

- Point of Contact for the CEO
- **Manages** the CEO's correspondences and meetings.
- **Manages** the Board of Directors meetings including setting up meeting, creating and distributing documents.
- **Maintains** the organization's contracts, legal documents, and assets.
- **Works** directly with attorneys to ensure proper measurements are taken with government entities.
- **Responsible** for the organization's internal documents such as minutes, contracts, policies, and procedures.

Human Resources Management

- **Develops and implements** team building exercises to boost morale.
- **Responsible** for the upkeep of personnel files.
- **Responsible** for the development of policies and procedures.
- **Responsible** for the organization's hiring process and personnel reviews.
- **Mediates** complaints and concerns from team members.

Finance and Operations

The Director of Finance and Operation works closely with all of the Directors and is primarily responsible for providing day-to-day financial accounting and bookkeeping services, along with Operations for DistiNctly Fayetteville. The Director of Finance and Operations ensures the data integrity of the financials and operations of the organization, special products, and team-oriented assignments.

FY 22/23 Results
Favorable Annual Audit

Activities include:

Organizational Leadership

- **Work** closely with the President/CEO and the Director of Administration and Human Resources to establish goals and to develop, implement, monitor, and assess strategies to achieve the goals.
- **Participates** in strategic planning meetings to develop policies, objectives, and an annual work plan.

Financial Management

- **Accounting – Supports** all of DistiNctly Fayetteville’s financial accounting, processes including banking and bookkeeping services, invoicing, maintaining the general ledger system, financial statements and reports, payroll, benefits administration, and contributions recordkeeping, maintaining financial accounting files.
- **Bookkeeping – Works** with the Team Members to maintain “process integrity” related to daily cash deposits, code’s revenue, and expenses into the accounting system through Accounts Payable and Receivable modules, handles month-end close out to include general journal entries, payroll reconciliation spreadsheet, monthly bank settlements (bank reconciliation), fundraising database reconciliation, regularly maintain all balance sheet reconciliation including pre-paid accounts and schedules, and external reporting reconciliation.
- **Payroll/Benefits – Coordinates** payroll and benefits processing bi-monthly for both salaried and hourly Team Members; prepares new hire paperwork related to payroll processing/system orientation, including time sheet orientation, and timekeeping procedures related to timesheets; maintains updated timesheet allocations for Team Members; and explains expense reimbursement, check request procedures, and ordering process procedures to new Team Members. Responsible for timely filing and payment of all payroll-related tax deposits and filings.
- **Cash Flow – Monitors** cash inflow and outflow daily to anticipate routine cash needs and keeps the President/CEO updated.
- **Financial Reporting – Generates** financial and grant reports for use by the President/CEO and management.
- **Audit Preparation – Coordinates and prepares** fiscal documentation for grantors and external auditors. Responds in a timely manner to questions by the auditor.

- **End-of-the-year Duties** – tax reporting, organizational reporting, end of year close out work, including inventory/fixed asset management and annual accrual entries.

Operations Management

- **Responsible** for upkeep and maintenance of the phone system.
- **Oversees** the facilities and grounds of DistiNctly Fayetteville; processes work orders or contracts with outside suppliers to perform necessary maintenance and repairs to the DistiNctly Fayetteville building and equipment.
- **Oversees** mailroom operations, postage budget, bulk mail permits, and processing of mass mailings and incoming mail.
- **Responsible** for inventory of equipment and furniture and all DistiNctly Fayetteville property.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Director of Finance and Operations will:

- **Transition** to a new accounting system
- **Create** organization and departmental budget for the upcoming Fiscal Year.

Information Technology

The Director of Information Technology and Database Management manages the technology DistiNctly Fayetteville uses to efficiently conduct business. This includes the Tourism Industry Standard Database, Simpleview; and Microsoft Office 365, including Teams.

FY 21/22 Results

- Presented results of Foundational Tourism Research to numerous boards and partners.
- Upgraded Board Room Audio/Visual equipment.

Activities

- **Provide** monthly reports, metrics, and graphs for both internal and external partners and present as requested.
- **Act** as the Quality Control checkpoint on all material that leaves DistiNctly Fayetteville.
- **Create** microsites, landing pages, and web content for upcoming bookings, as needed.
- **Photograph** events and points of interest, as needed.
- **Develop and distribute** monthly and quarterly Bureau News report for TDA and the DistiNctly Fayetteville Boards.
- **Coordinate and manage** the redesign of DistinctlyFayettevilleNC.com website.
- **Maintain and share** weekly, monthly, and yearly metrics associated with DistiNctly Fayetteville operations.
- **Monitor, update and maintain** the DistiNctly Fayetteville’s Simpleview database continuously auditing for accuracy.
- **Point of contact** for 3rd party partners for Network Computers, Databases, Website and Research.
- **Create** policies and guidelines for input into the Simpleview Database which feeds the website and ensures compliance and quality control.

Sales

The Sales Team consists of industry professionals responsible for identifying new meeting, convention, and tournament opportunities, converting those into definite bookings and delivering an exceptional experience to ensure repeat business.

Meeting and Convention Sales

Investment

The Sales Team offers a unique value as a free resource with unparalleled local expertise. The primary goal of the Sales Team is to bring city-wide meetings and conferences to Fayetteville/Cumberland County, generating a significant impact on the local economy.

FY 21/22 Results

- 3 pieces of business valued at \$1,106,256
- Created 49 new accounts.
- Generated 979 Traces.

Facilities

Cumberland County is home to several event facilities, the Crown Complex, Freedom Sports Complex and Segra Stadium just to name a few. There are 72 hotels scattered throughout Cumberland County consisting mostly of select-service properties with small meeting spaces and four full-service hotels.



The Sales Team will:

Religious

- **Attend** key events and tradeshow to attract religious planners from across the country to Fayetteville/Cumberland County.
 - Religious Conference Management Association (RCMA)
 - Connect Faith - Southeast
- **Network** within the Cumberland County ministerial council to uncover leads and make connections at the regional and state levels.
- **Conduct** quarterly sales missions to increase state, local, and regional religious meetings to Cumberland County.

Military

Work closely with local military organizations (Disabled Veterans, Military Retiree Association, Veterans of Foreign Wars, American Legions, and the Warrant Officers Association) to bring more military reunions and other meetings and conferences to Cumberland County.

Associations

The Association Market is one of the largest markets in the industry and will allow Fayetteville the opportunity to cast a larger net to attract regional, and local meetings.

Attend key events and tradeshow.

- Connect Marketplace
- Association Executives of North Carolina
- National Coalition of Black Meeting Professionals Annual Conference

Government

- **Maintain** membership with the Society of Government Professionals (SGMP).
- **Attend** the Annual Education Conference.
- **Attend** SGMP North Carolina meetings and events.

Special Interest

- **Identify** specialty groups and city-wide businesses that fit Fayetteville/Cumberland County.
- **Establish** relationships with planners and local chapters.

For the fiscal year, Meetings and Conventions will:

- **Hold** quarterly Director of Sales/Sales Manager meetings with hoteliers.
- **Conduct** site visits with planners to show the benefits of bringing their meetings to Fayetteville/Cumberland County.
- **Assemble** a Customer Advisory Board
- **Conduct** two annual FAM (Destination Preview) trips with local hoteliers to generate business that fits full-service as well as limited-service hotels. One in the Spring and one in the Fall.
- The Sales Team believes a critical strategy is needed to expand our reach to minority meeting planners. The team will **identify** minority and women owned businesses and organizations to bring to Fayetteville, such as:
 - Native Americans
 - African Americans
 - Asian Americans
 - Hispanic Americans

Sports Marketing

The Sales Team offers a unique value as a free resource with unparalleled local expertise. The primary goal of the Sales Team is to bring youth and collegiate sports to Fayetteville/Cumberland County, generating a significant impact on the local economy. For the fiscal year, Sports will:

- **Focus** on national youth sports and sports organizations
- **Attend** key conferences and tradeshows to generate leads.
- **Work** closely with our sports facilities along with local Parks and Recreation organizations to secure national and regional sporting events to include the E-Sports market.
- **Maintain** partnerships with Cumberland County sporting venues.

FY 21/22 Results

- Secured 10 pieces of business with an estimated economic impact of \$326,610. million July 2021-February 2022.
- Created 68 new accounts and completed 1,583 traces (action items) in Simpleview related to working with clients.
- Attended the two Sports Express Conferences, Sports ETA Conference, E-Sports Business Summit, TEAMS Conference, S.P.O.R.T.S. The Relationship Conference resulted in 65 new accounts. Negotiations are actively in place with five of these new accounts to bring events to Fayetteville/Cumberland County including 2 E-Sports events, Kick-It 3v3 soccer, pickleball, and broomball.

Tourism Marketing

The Tourism Marketing Team consists of Tourism Marketing, Communications and Visitor Services.

Tourism Marketing

In Fiscal Year 21-22, DistiNCTly Fayetteville went through a Request for Proposal (RFP) process and secured new external partners. Tourism Marketing led that process with key members of the team as well as board and community members being part of the decision-making committee. Those new external marketing partners include **Mythic**, a full-service marketing communications firm that combines strategic brand development, business-building expertise, and insight-driven creativity to build our clients' brands for the long haul while driving immediate business results. **Eckel & Vaughan** is a full-service strategic communications agency. They are the Public Relations (PR) arm of our marketing agency, Mythic. Helping their clients find their voice. And when they get the right people talking about their clients, the right way, through the right channels, that is what leads to not only getting noticed but making their clients successful. **Adams & Knight** is a branding and marketing consultancy specializing in results-driving advertising, digital marketing, PR, social media, content marketing, and marketing technology services. **H2R Market Research** has the expertise and insight that other market research firm's envy. They know research and simply put: H2R reveals answers. H2R's areas of expertise include quantitative analysis, focus group moderation, advanced statistical analysis, questionnaire development, fieldwork across multiple data collection methodologies, and more.

FY 21/22 Results

- Successfully conducted the first-ever Request for Proposal (RFP) process for our new marketing and creative agency of record and initiated an 18-month contract with our new agency, Mythic.
- Executed a successful Heroes Homecoming IX, November 6-13, 2021: Over eight days: 24 events, 32 partners/organizations, 98 Missing Man Kits and Honor Chairs deployed across the county, distributed 2,300 parade Thank you signs, 10,000 event brochures distributed.



The Tourism Marketing Team has been charged with overseeing and managing DistiNtly Fayetteville's marketing efforts, including overseeing our partner agencies' contracts on the creative and media buying sides. Ensuring best practices are followed, all messages follow brand standards, and have a clear call to action. The team will also ensure that all advertising efforts expressed by Team Members are consistent with the focus and direction DistiNtly Fayetteville is headed. Product development, grant writing, and orchestrating the community initiative, Heroes Homecoming, are also in the realm of responsibilities. The Director of Tourism Marketing serves as a primary point of contact with events awarded TDA grant dollars to ensure they are aware of requirements, provided the tools required by the TDA, and ensure reports are shared with all stakeholders. The Tourism Marketing Manager will create and manage DistiNtly Fayetteville's client concierge program to include a volunteer list. The Tourism Marketing Manager will also assist the Communications Manager with engagement on social media platforms, as well as serve as a contributing writer of in-house blogs/stories alongside the Communications Manager.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Tourism Marketing Team will:

- **Lead and manage** Heroes Homecoming, a county-wide initiative. Coordinating theme, community partners, the planned events, needed collateral, and execution of the initiative.
- **Continue** to identify ways to amplify awareness within the community and surrounding areas and work with our PR agency to generate more media attention for the Heroes Homecoming initiative.
- **Ensure** refreshed brand and brand guide is available to all community partners, and all marketing efforts are fueled by research, follow standards, and industry best practices.
- **Conceptualize, plan, and execute** the inaugural DistiNtly Fayetteville Annual Meeting.
- **Launch** a Community Liaison program for those businesses that are listed on our website. Meet with them, educate them about our services and show them how to use our products.
- **Manage** the North Carolina Welcome Center Program and Call Center Visits, including welcome center visits, National Tourism Week events, and visits to 1-800 VISIT NC call center.
- **Establish** a new client concierge program. This program aspires to be the Convention Services Division of the sales effort. The program is designed to distribute information and be a resource to convention attendees, tournament participants, and spectators, sell DistiNtly Fayetteville merchandise, assist in data collection (room nights consumed/hotels used), and provide other resources to our clients and visitors.
- **Initiate** a new Volunteer Program to operate information tables through the client concierge program, community events, and welcome centers.
- **Investigate** new opportunities within consumer or leisure shows that would be beneficial for attracting more leisure market visitors based on our foundational research.
- **Assist** with engagement on social media platforms via social media best practices.

- **Manage** current and develop future tourism products.
- **Obtain** sponsorship dollars for the purchase, branding, and retrofitting of a Mobile Visitor Center.
- **Continue to manage** content associated with the Cultural Heritage Trails web pages.
- **Secure** grants to promote new initiatives or programs DistiNctly Fayetteville would embark upon.
- **Participate** in community development projects that benefit tourism and visitors, such as wayward signage creation, trail development, etc.
- **Work** alongside the Media Buying agency to analyze metrics of efforts in the digital media arena to ensure our Key Performance Indicators are on track and providing the return on investment.

Communications

The Communications Manager works with the Director of Tourism Marketing to create a media strategy to attract potential visitors to the area and position Fayetteville/Cumberland County as an emerging, unique, urban travel destination. The goal is to increase awareness of DistiNctly Fayetteville’s mission as well as be responsible for the dissemination of information to key constituencies, the execution of a strategic communications plan, and the development of messaging for use both inside and outside of the organization through PR efforts, social media, and content on Distinctly Fayetteville NC website. The Communications Manager collaborates with Eckel & Vaughan, our PR firm to secure and track placements in targeted travel media; ensures tracking and reporting of PR results. Manages the annual scope of work, including biweekly scope check-ins and quarterly reviews in collaboration with the Director of Tourism Marketing and Tourism Marketing Manager. Maintains day-to-day PR agency relationships and has oversight of all communications developed by the agency to ensure a positive public image and are aligned with strategic goals and relevant plans for growth. Provide topics and relevant local information to establish a strategic social media content calendar alongside the Adams & Knight team to capitalize on engagement and grow brand awareness. Works to attract and build relationships with travel writers, industry publication bloggers, and influencers to visit and share their experiences while visiting the Fayetteville/Cumberland County area.

FY 21/22 Results

- Streamlined social media strategy procedures with Mythic and Adams & Knight.
- Defined best practices with Eckel & Vaughan for efficient communication to achieve strategic organizational goals.
- Established relationships with local PIO’s through a monthly meeting created by the County.
- Researched and executed a new e-newsletter platform.
- User-Generated Content platform was implemented to assist online strategies.

For the fiscal year, the Communications Manager will:

- **Raise awareness of the area.** This includes the development and management of targeted news releases, pitches, and news events to key media, influencers, and bloggers to drive positive coverage for Fayetteville/Cumberland County as a destination. Will manage content for consumer and industry marketing communications, including e-newsletters and content on the Distinctly Fayetteville, NC website.
- **Secure media coverage,** in collaboration with Eckel & Vaughan, in top-tier regional media outlets by promoting business, leisure, and group (corporate) travel. Leverage ongoing arts, culinary and unique events to secure top-tier media features in publications. Develop story ideas, select media for targeted pitches, and create and distribute news releases for placements in local, top-tier regional, and national media outlets.
- **Creatively plans and executes** innovative strategy for the day-to-day organic social media as it aligns with the strategic content calendar. Approves and executes the social media content calendar alongside Adams & Knight and the Tourism Marketing Manager and ensures it aligns with the DistiNctly Fayetteville brand guidelines and supports the research evidence of audiences and target market areas. Oversee analytics to ensure ROI.
- **Generate** more buzz and word-of-mouth for the area by capturing and sharing exceptional experiences online through social media channels and leisure blog, working alongside the Tourism Marketing Manager.
- **Utilize** a User Generated Content (UGC) platform to assist in telling our brand's authentic story from the eyes of locals and visitors.
- **Refresh website imagery and content** as related to seasons, new image assets, and SEO guidelines working closely with the Director of Information Technology and Database Management.
- **Update and monitor** the Media and Blog webpages with new content, i.e., in-house written press releases, blogs, and local coverage plus continue to update the image library (Flickr) for media access and other efforts.
- **Manage tourism-related crisis communications and act as PIO.** This includes coordination and activation of messaging across DistiNctly Fayetteville-owned channels, media outreach, and response, representing DistiNctly Fayetteville in local and statewide groups convened to address crisis conditions.
- **Create itineraries** to attract and host visiting travel writers and influencers to deliver strong content to their audience; manage logistics for these itineraries and participate as needed.
- **Advocacy.** Builds positive working relationships with tourism industry partners, as well as local government agency communications personnel and the local community.
- **Construct new monthly content and distribute** the DistiNctly Fayetteville e-newsletter for consumers and industry partners through the new platform with branded templates.
- **Assist in reviewing and editing of DistiNctly Fayetteville collateral,** including the Visitor Guide and other publications and content as needed.
- **Plan** media blitz events/desk-side meetings, and attends conventions related to the industry.

- **Represents DistiNctly Fayetteville** at relevant industry events, conferences, and stakeholder meetings.
- **Collaborate with the Sales Team** to identify key publications and media outlets in the meetings and tournament market. Build a relationship with said media contacts and familiarize them with the Fayetteville Area and what we have to offer to increase meeting and sports events and maintain open communication.
- **Supports the Sales Team** on social media with upcoming events and marketing of destination for conventions and sporting events.

Visitor Services

Visitor Services manages two welcome centers. Welcome Centers are located at the main office at 245 Person Street and at the Fayetteville History Museum at 325 Franklin Street.

Welcome centers are an important promotional tool of DistiNctly Fayetteville. DistiNctly Fayetteville strives to enhance the visitor's experience as well as influence the length of their stay, route selection, attractions visited and future trips, simultaneously providing an increase in economic impact.

The team provides a wealth of local expertise to everyone who comes through the doors. Often, they are providing the first impression of the community. In addition to providing information and services to locals in our community, the team fulfills orders placed with the Tourism Marketing Department for North Carolina welcome centers and American Automobile Association (AAA) offices throughout the country.

For the upcoming fiscal year, the Visitor Services Team will:

- Develop and nurture ongoing relationships with local businesses to build awareness of the Bureau and to keep visitor services current.
- Work with the CEO and all Directors to evaluate future Welcome Center location alternatives.
- Participate in community events to increase visitor engagement and increase future visits i.e., parades, festivals, etc.

Conclusion

Tourism is vital to the economic health of any destination's economy, including Fayetteville/Cumberland County. In 2019, before the pandemic, domestic visitors infused \$601 million into our economy. Taxes collected totaled \$44.5 million. In fact, the taxes collected represented a \$134.14 tax savings to each county resident.

As the county, state and the nation move forward into continued COVID-19 recovery, DistiNctly Fayetteville will work alongside hospitality industry partners to move tourism back to and beyond its pre-pandemic impact.

In this document, we have outlined our plans to secure more meetings, conventions, sporting events and leisure travel for Fayetteville/Cumberland County. Additionally, we will encourage the visitors that we welcome to stay longer. One of the ways we will accomplish this is by educating our residents to bring their visitors out to enjoy all that this community has to offer.

For many years, DistiNctly Fayetteville has spearheaded Heroes Homecoming, a county-wide initiative to recognize veterans around Veteran's Day. DistiNctly Fayetteville is committed to expanding our involvement in community activities and look forward to partnering with other organizations to raise the community's profile.

We are the tourism marketing arm of Fayetteville/Cumberland County fueled by research-based marketing. DistiNctly Fayetteville will offer measurable objectives and results and will report on a quarterly and annual basis.

The DistiNctly Fayetteville Team is proud to represent Fayetteville/Cumberland County, a community we love and call home.

As always, should you have any questions, please give any member of our Team a call. We welcome the opportunity to talk with you.

Important Links

To download a digital version of this Strategic Plan, go to



<https://www.distinctlyfayettevillenc.com/research/>

Organization Chart



[Link to Organization Chart.](#)

Budget



[Link to FY 2022-2023 Budget](#)

Results

DistiNCTly Fayetteville will update results on a quarterly basis.

1st Quarter, Fiscal Year 2023

Administration

Administration and Human Resources

- Began process to terminate Higher Logic contract, ongoing.
- Started the trademark process for the new DistiNCTly Fayetteville brand campaign.
- Worked with Human Resource Consultant (HRC) for end-of-year raises.
- Worked with HRC to complete year-end performance reviews.

Finance and Operations

- Prepared for the audit conducted in August 2022.
- Hired the new Director of Finance & Operations, Kimberly Dixon.
- Continued to work on closing out September finances.

Information Technology

- Created and maintained the Hurricane Ian Hotel Availability Microsite.
- Provided reports and information for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and DistiNCTly Fayetteville Board of Directors meetings.
- Updated settings/defaults within our database requested by Sales.
- Approved, updated, and rejected Calendar of Event submissions.
- Created new polygon maps for use by our research partner.
- Completed quarterly Dining Guide for the Visitor Center.
- Completed end-of-month reports for internal and external customers.
- Continue to audit and update the database.
- Provided ad hoc reports and searches as requested.
- Created a "Meet the Team" image for the Sales Team for use on LinkedIn for Connect Marketplace held in Detroit, MI.
- Provided Information Technology information requested for the annual audit by Cherry Bekaert LLP.
- Added new blogs from Tourism Marketing and formatted them for the website.
- Worked with the Sales Team on procedures for the newly established incentive program.

Sales

Convention, Meetings & Sports

- Attended Destinations International’s Annual Conference in Toronto, Canada.
- Attended the Cool Springs Downtown District Committee meeting to foster relationships with Cool Springs Downtown District and keep informed on the new visions for the city.
- Attended Convention Sales and Community Service committee meeting. As a member of Destinations International committee involvement is to learn and share best practices, ideas, and any new enterprises that will assist in the duties of a convention’s services position.
- Worked with Director of Information Technology to establish new reporting measurements for Sales activities.
- Conducted a two-day site visit with two Military Reunion Planners that we met during last month’s Military Reunion Network conference.
- Conducted site visit with the Draughn Family Reunion at the Embassy Suites by Hilton Fayetteville Fort Bragg.
- Christy Martin All American Title Boxing tournament was held at Freedom Court July 2-24, 2022.
- Attended the Cumberland Fayetteville Parks & Recreation Advisory Committee meeting to be the liaison between DistiNctly Fayetteville, Parks & Recreation, and sporting facilities and to keep abreast of new facilities planned for Cumberland County.
- Attended the Connect Sports, Association, and Specialty Conference in Detroit, MI on August 7-11, 2022.
- The Sales Team met with the Director of Information Technology to discuss changes in Simpleview for reporting as well as updating the new lead templates.
- Attended the Hotel/Motel Safety Meeting at Embassy Suites on August 4, 2022. Cumberland County Police Department addressed crime taking place in our city and surrounding areas and how everyone can work together.
- Participated in the North Carolina Restaurant & Lodging Association Town Hall regarding rebuilding the NC Hospitality Workforce in the community.
- Attended the Fayetteville Mustang’s Arena Football team press conference on August 23, 2022. This was an exciting introduction to Fayetteville’s new Indoor American Football Team. Speakers were the owner, National Arena League Commissioner, Dr. Robert Twadell, and Head Coach, Charles Gunnings.
- The Sales Team conducted the first quarter Director of Sales/Sales Manager Meeting.
- Worked with Jim Bramson and Fort Bragg to bring the 2022 PFL Marshall Arts Competition to Fayetteville.
- Conducted research and identified three similar-sized communities with close proximity to military bases to determine if they are experiencing similar challenges as in Cumberland County.
 - Columbus, GA –Fort Benning
 - Killeen, TX –Fort Hood
 - Jacksonville, NC –Camp Lejeune

- Created and sent to hotels, the new Hotel Update Form to have filled out with any staffing changes, upcoming renovations, hotel name changes, etc.
- Conducted a site visit with AAU tournament directors from Charlotte, NC, on September 9-10, 2022, for their December 2022 Basketball Tournament.
- Met with Rob Patton – Economic Development, to create a better working relationship.
- Attended the NC Sports Association quarterly Meeting and Board Meeting on October 4, 2022, in Rocky Mount, NC.
- Conducted a site visit at the Embassy Suites for DoDEA – Mid-Atlantic Regional Meeting scheduled for March 2023.
- Finalized the Incentive Program process and procedures.
- Sales Team – conducted multiple hotel partner visits.
- Met with three Military Reunion Planners in High Point, NC.
- Secured appointments for the TEAMS Conference scheduled for October 2022.
- Secured the Youth Basketball Association of America (YBOA), bringing tournaments to Robinson Courts. Robinson Courts is now a licensee for the YBOA and will hold three to four tournaments there per year.

Tourism Marketing/Communications

- Worked with our agencies on brand and campaign efforts.
- Worked to orchestrate registration gift with other NC Southeast Tourism Society (STS) members since the annual conference will be held in Concord, NC, in September 2022.
- Hosted Heroes Homecoming meetings; planned and coordinated events with partners.
- Wrote blogs to be posted and used on social media.
- Brainstormed with Adams & Knight and Eckel & Vaughan on content calendar lockdown.
- Secured partnership with Dirtbag Ales Brewing for a new branded beer to coincide with Brand Launch.
- Established contact and secured an interview for Spectrum with a Paraclete representative for a media piece brought in by our PR Partner, Eckel & Vaughan.
- The Director of Tourism Marketing was officially voted in as the NC representative on the Southeast Tourism Society’s Board of Directors.
- Hired Communications Manager with a start date of October 4, 2022.
- Executed email teasers internally and in partnership with the Fayetteville Chamber to announce the Brand Launch event.
- Worked hand in hand with agency and production team for video/drone/photo assets for the new marketing campaign.
- Worked on Brand Launch and items for collateral, giveaways and program.

Visitor Services

- Changed distribution companies and are focusing on visitor locations.
- Reached out to local restaurants to update information in the database, ensuring visitors and residents had the most accurate and current information.
- Audited and updated 250+ restaurant information in the database (which feeds the DistiNCTly Fayetteville's website).
- The Visitor Center now has two part-time volunteers.
- Closed the gift shop in preparation for new brand merchandise.

2nd Quarter, Fiscal Year 2023

DistiNCTly Fayetteville restructured during this quarter and that is reflected in the Teams below.

Administration/Human Resources

- Team Members have gone through several training sessions, and the Human Resources procedure documents have been updated, along with job descriptions.
- Worked directly with attorneys to ensure acceptance of the trademarks by the United States Patent Trademark Office and update the organization's URL list.
- Board of Director books are being updated with the new brand and meeting updates were approved by the Board of Directors and calendar invites were sent out for the January Board of Directors meeting.

Finance and Operations

- Audit concluded. Cherry Bekaert concluded that in their opinion the financials were presented fairly and In accordance with generally accepted accounting principles.
- Director of Finance and Operations started employment.
- September finances were closed out.

Information Technology

- Provided reports and information for the Tourism Development Authority (TDA) and DistiNCTly Fayetteville Board of Directors meetings.
- Updated settings/defaults within our database requested by Sales.
- Approved, updated, and rejected Calendar of Event submissions.
- Created new polygon maps for use by our research partner.
- Completed quarterly Dining Guide for the Visitor Center.
- Completed end-of-month reports for internal and external customers.
- Continue to audit and update the database.
- Provided ad hoc reports and searches as requested.
- Added new blogs from Tourism Marketing and formatted them for the website.
- Worked with the Sales Team on procedures for the newly established incentive program.
- Updated database for website branding relaunch.
- Launched newly branded website.
- Auditing new website and submitting tickets to the developer to fix issues and glitches.

Sales

Conventions, Meetings & Sports

- Attended Small Market Meetings Conference (SMMC) – Wichita, KS
- Attended Destinations International Certified Destination Marketing Executive (CDME) Class – Bloomington, MN
- Met with the Fort Bragg Garrison Commander about streamlining the process of getting larger groups on base for military reunion tours
- Attended Travel, Events, and Management in Sports (TEAMS) – Oklahoma City, OK
- Approved incentive funding for the South Carolina Amateur Athletic Union (AAU) – Winter Classic Basketball Tournament
- Followed up with Paul Sheehan at the Winston/Salem Visitors Bureau – October 2022 TEAMS conference
- Vetted Sports Request for Proposals received from TEAMS and followed up with contacts
- Conducted conference call with Betty Esperanza, Skateboard Festival for the Summer of 2023
- Worked with Jeremy Bodenaarain of AAU Winter Classic Basketball with our newly implemented incentive program – December 17-18, 2022. He was awarded \$4,500 toward venue rental at Freedom Courts
- Attended CityView Community Impact Awards
- Hosted the Director of Sales/General Manager Hotelier Meeting
- Attended National Coalition of Black Meetings Professionals from November 16-19, 2022
- Attended AENC Annual Tradeshow & EXPO – Raleigh December 7-8, 2022
- Attended SGMP Chapter Meeting in Chapel Hill
- Met with Fort Bragg Garrison Commander about military reunion efforts
- Review Draft Detailed Sales Plan Presentation with sales and the HR consultant
- Completed Sales processes plan for presentation to Randy Fiveash in January
- Hotel Visits:
 - Courtyard
 - Fairfield Inn
 - Hampton Inn on Skibo
 - Wingate
 - Comfort Inn/Quality Inn
 - Country Inn & Suites
 - Sleep Inn & Suites
 - Residence Inn
 - TownePlace Suites
 - Hampton Inn Fayetteville – Fort Bragg

Tourism Marketing

Tourism Marketing

- Hosted Heroes Homecoming X. Heroes Homecoming consisted of 35 Partners and 15 events over a 6-day period, including a Family Fun Day at Sweet Valley Ranch hosted by DistiNtly Fayetteville.
- Deployed over 100 Missing Man Tables to community organizations to display for the entire month of November.
- Entire DistiNtly Fayetteville team hosted an amazing Brand Launch event at the Airborne & Special Operations Museum on November 1, 2022.
- Assembled 150 swag bags for the Community Impact Awards DistiNtly Fayetteville sponsored.
- Secured key partnership with VisitNC at the VisitNC Tourism Conference in March 2023 to be held in Asheville, NC.
- Hired Donnie Byers as Communications Manager. He will begin in early January 2023.
- Worked with agencies on creative assets to be used in January 11, 2023 campaign launch, "Have you done It 'Yette?", for social media, digital placements, and some static placements.
- Procured items for DistiNtly Fayetteville PR direct mail pieces to targeted media for the campaign launch which will be deployed by Eckel & Vaughan, our PR agency.

Communications

Produced and posted nine blogs to DistiNtly Fayetteville's website and promoted them with paid social media posts.

Visitor Services

- Fulfilled 133 online requests for information and served 2,701 walk-in visitors. 1,428 of the walk-in visitors were from the Dicken's Holiday event.
- Fielded approximately 148 tourism and informational calls.
- Distributed a total of 4,476 pieces of collateral.
- Solicited 66 of 85 local area attractions for collateral, discovered only 17 produce collateral.
- Served as Team Captain with #WalkToEndAlz for Team DistiNtly Fayetteville. Sponsored & hosted the 2nd Annual Bowl to End Alzheimer's Tournament. The DistiNtly Fayetteville Team raised \$2,130 for the Alzheimer's Association and ended up in the top 10 of all teams for the Fayetteville walk for money raised.

DISTINCTLY **FAYETTEVILLE**



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