



To: TDA Board  
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director  
Date: April 11, 2025  
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

Dear Board Members,

Please see below for updates.

1. **FY2025 Budget Planning**

We are preparing a conservative budget in anticipation of a potential recession this year. It's more prudent to budget cautiously and come in under projections than to exceed them. While the budget-travel segment may face challenges, luxury travel to southern Jackson County is expected to help offset those losses. We're also accounting for potential cost increases in two of our highest expense categories: print materials and postage. A draft budget, estimating \$3.49 million in revenue based on the new 6% occupancy tax rate, will be presented at the May board meeting. In a typical year, this rate would generate approximately \$3.75 million, but given current economic uncertainty, a more conservative projection is appropriate.

2. **New Visitor Guides**

The new visitor guides have arrived and look fantastic. Smoky Mountain News, our printing and design partner, did an outstanding job. Julie and Susan have been distributing the guides to kiosks and accommodations across Jackson County. Additionally, they're being delivered to over 180 locations throughout WNC via Mountain Information Systems. The Asheville Regional Airport has already confirmed receipt and distribution of the updated guides.



### 3. **Website Launch Ahead of Schedule**

Our redesigned website, [DiscoverJacksonNC.com](https://DiscoverJacksonNC.com), will launch ahead of schedule on May 21. This project began in August of last year, and we're excited to unveil a more dynamic and user-friendly experience for visitors looking to plan and book their trips.

### 4. **Contract Management & Agency Transitions**

We're currently preparing several contracts, which will be approved in phases—some at this month's meeting and the remainder in May. While the May meeting is typically our longest of the year, we anticipate a shorter session. Our new agency will implement an interim media plan for the first 60 days, followed by a comprehensive annual plan. Without a media plan presentation, the May meeting will feature our public relations partner, Lou Hammond Group, who will present their annual PR plan.

### 5. **Social Media Position Recruitment**

We received over 80 applications for the new social media position. Interviews are scheduled for April 14 and 15. We aim to have the selected candidate in place by mid-May, noting that many applicants are from across the country.

### 6. **Lodging & Market Sentiment**

Lodging metrics remain steady and are in line with this time last year. While social media sentiment continues to reference wildfires and hurricanes, we're actively reinforcing the message that our region is unaffected and open for visitors.

### 7. **TCPF Revisions**

We are in the process of revising the Tourism Capital Projects Fund (TCPF) application based on lessons learned and best practices from two successful funding cycles. The updated application is currently under legal review.

### 8. **Social Media Guidelines Update**

We've implemented new best-practice guidelines for our social media platforms. These outline how we interact with and moderate public comments. The updated policy can be found here: [jax.onl/social](https://jax.onl/social)



## 9. Spirit of North Carolina Award

At the VisitNC Annual Tourism Conference held last week, Jackson County TDA received a 'Spirit of North Carolina' Award for their efforts during Helene to help neighbors.



**VisitNC Director Wit Tuttel, JCTDA Director Nick Breedlove, JCTDA Vice Chair Megan Orr, N.C. Secretary of Commerce Lee Lilley.** After Jackson County's swift recovery from the worst of the storm's effects, **The Jackson County TDA** redirected \$56,411 in advertising revenue to support communities that were more seriously impacted by Helene. Many of the 14 recipients – which included Samaritan's Purse, MANNA Foodbank, Mountain Bizworks and Legal Aid of NC – serve populations beyond Jackson County.

## 10. Pinnacle Park

Sylva recently completed its master plan for Pinnacle Park, which the JCTDA assisted with through a \$50,000 grant. The entire master plan is available online **here**.



## 11. **Tax Collections – March Comparison**

While March 2025 collections appear lower compared to last year, it's important to note that the March 2024 figure was unusually high due to a late filing that artificially inflated the total. When accounting for this anomaly, the March 2025 collections are more in line with expectations.

March 2023: \$102,142

March 2024: \$153,142 (impacted by late filing)

March 2025: \$107,065

