



To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: August 27, 2025
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

Dear Board Members,

Please see below for my monthly brief.

1. Board Member Recruitment

We are recruiting three new members for the TDA Board. Applications will be forwarded to the County Commissioners for consideration.

A notice will run in *The Sylva Herald* this September encouraging qualified candidates to apply at www.JCTDABoard.com. The form is quick and simple. Please share this opportunity with colleagues in Jackson County who meet the criteria.

Open Seats:

- North Jackson Hospitality & Tourism (3-year term)
- South Jackson Hospitality & Tourism (3-year term)
- At-Large Hospitality & Tourism (countywide, 3-year term)

Qualifications:

- Primary: Owners/managers of lodging establishments (5+ accommodations remitting occupancy tax).
- Secondary: Professionals in hospitality/tourism (event management, resorts, restaurants, destination marketing, etc.).



- Tertiary: Operators of major tourist attractions in Jackson County.

Board members meet 10–12 times annually, typically the third Wednesday at 1:00 p.m.

2. Tourism Capital Project Fund (TCPF)

At the August 5 Commissioners' meeting, two projects were approved:

- Fairgrounds at the former Drexel site (Whittier): \$500,000 contribution
- Dillsboro Link Project: \$250,000 toward transforming a 2-acre property into a boardwalk between Monteith Park and Front Street

We are proud to support these projects, which will deliver long-term community benefits. \$250,000 remains available in this fiscal year's budget for future proposals (through June 30, 2026).

3. New Lodging & Visitor Reporting

This month we introduced a new reporting format through our data partner, Tourism Economics, which also manages reporting for VisitNC.

Key data sources include:

- Lodging data: Smith Travel Research, KeyData, AirDNA
- Spending data: TransUnion

This platform provides better insights at a lower cost compared to our previous provider. I'll walk through the new report at our meeting Wednesday.

4. Waterfall Safety

As summer winds down and October approaches, we are reinforcing visitor safety messaging.

- Signage: **Available [link]** for lodging partners and businesses to display.
- Recent Incident: A serious fall at Paradise Falls required airlift rescue (note: this is a hazardous site we do not promote).



- Improvements Completed: Cherokee's Soco Falls entry and viewing platform is now open. Mingo Falls will reopen in early September following safety upgrades.

5. Advertising Personas

We are aligning marketing personas across all channels with our new agency of record.

Previous personas: High Adventure, Evergreen Explorer, Budget Friendly, Luxury

Goal: Standardize targeting across SEM, social, PR, and advertising to ensure consistency.

Timeline: Completion expected within the next month.

6. Partner & Community Engagement

Recent and upcoming engagement efforts include:

- 2025 Report to the Citizens – Annual report highlighting JCTDA's value and impact.
- Presentation to County Commissioners – Scheduled Sept. 2.
- Balsam Mountain Inn Investor Event – Shared Jackson County data and info with developers/investors.
- Outdoor Economy Conference (Sept. 15–18, Cherokee) – JCTDA sponsoring and tabling alongside Economic Development.
- Regenerative Tourism Workshop (Aug. 26, Sylva) – Free hands-on program in partnership with UPLIFT, Great Trails State Coalition, and others.
- Cycle NC Ride (Aug. 1–3, Sylva) – Sponsored event brought several hundred riders; positive feedback despite rain. **Video Link.**

7. Grants for Board Consideration

The Executive Committee recommends approval of:

- \$5,000 for *Mountain Heritage Days*
- \$4,000 to *WATR* for water quality research in local rivers

