



To: TDA Board
From: Nick Breedlove, TDA Executive Director
Date: June 13, 2025
Subject: Monthly Director's Brief

Dear Board Members,

Please see below for updates.

1. **FY2025 Draft Budget**

A reminder that our meeting begins promptly at 12:55 p.m. next week for the public budget hearing. Please plan to arrive by 12:50 p.m. to ensure we have a quorum to approve the budget. This is an important meeting not to miss, as we'll also be previewing our upcoming media plan for the year, prepared by Madden Media.

2. **Offboarding & Onboarding Processes**

Over the past month, I've been working with BGRM on offboarding tasks to ensure we've obtained all previous creative files, graphics, documents, slide decks, and other assets for future reference. Concurrently, we've been onboarding Madden Media, which includes sharing some of these assets and other key materials to bring them fully up to speed.

At this week's meeting, Madden will present their FY 25-26 media plan during a 30-minute session, which will include sample creative designs for upcoming placements. They've put in considerable work, and I'm pleased with how it's come together. A major area of focus this year is weddings, as we've heard repeatedly that this is a critical



investment for our region—generating overnight stays and spending. Madden will highlight their approach to this initiative at the meeting.

We'll also be introducing a dedicated SEM ad line item with Love Communications focused on weddings to help capture couples in the planning stage, encouraging them to consider Jackson County and Western North Carolina.

Additionally, we've continued Samantha's onboarding process, and she's doing a great job managing our social media. Last week, we toured some of our hotels and towns with her, helping familiarize her with Sylva and Dillsboro, and we'll continue expanding this in the coming months. We had unspent funds within our social media budget line, which we are applying this month to increase regional awareness. There's still lingering sentiment online about the hurricane, and this enhanced campaign should help counterbalance that.

3. **New Chamber Leadership Team**

You may have seen that the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce has announced its new leadership team: Director Todd Vinyard and Assistant Director Holly Bryant, both starting June 23. It was an honor to serve on the search committee, and we conducted the interviews at the TDA office. We look forward to welcoming them both. Todd Vinyard will join our Board of Directors as the Chamber's appointee at the next meeting. See the press release [here](#).

4. **Tourism Outlook**

We're heading into June with solid occupancy numbers—up compared to last year—which is encouraging. Recent research indicates this will likely be a “short-trip summer”, with average stays expected to be one to two days shorter due to economic factors. While we may see some softness in budget travel, the luxury lodging segment remains resilient and is likely to offset losses in the mid-upper, mid-range, and lower lodging tiers.



5. **Networking & Engagement**

This week, I had the privilege of presenting to the Leadership Cashiers 2025-26 class, sharing insights on our work, operations, and programs under the umbrella of destination marketing and management. I also connected with regional TDA directors at a networking lunch hosted by the Swain TDA at Nantahala Outdoor Center. We also met Johanna Fein, who will be succeeding Kaye McMahan, the retiring Director of the Highlands TDC and Chamber.

Looking ahead, Sam and I will attend the Destinations International Annual Conference in Chicago, July 9–11. We're excited about the valuable sessions being offered this year.

6. **Website**

We've been implementing some minor updates to the new website, and we're very pleased with how it turned out. Since last week, we've added our custom Jackson County map to the homepage—feel free to take a look. The site offers a wealth of information, and we're continuing to make improvements.

Our new birding guide is now live: [Birding in Jackson County](#)

An important feature of our website is the e-newsletter signup, and Madden is working to streamline the process to ensure top-notch performance. This includes cleaning our existing list, verifying valid subscribers, and validating new sign-ups. With approximately 77,000 subscribers, maintaining a clean list is critical—invalid entries skew our open rates, so this step ensures more accurate analytics.

7. **Tourism Dashboard**

We're transitioning our reporting to the new Tourism Economics Symphony platform. Over the past two months, I've been working with their team to integrate our datasets and key points of interest across the county. This will allow us to analyze visitor behaviors and provide insightful data on spending and activities. I look forward to showcasing what we're learning soon.

