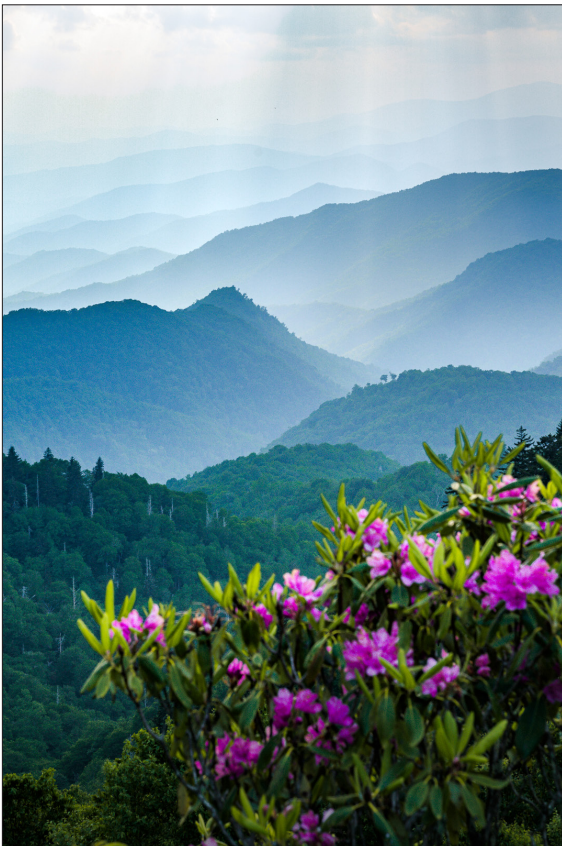




DRAFT Jackson County TDA 2025-26 Budget

www.JacksonCountyTDA.com • www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com



Presented this 21st day of May, 2025



JACKSON COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY FY 2025 - 2026 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, 2025 and ending June 30, 2026, is hereby presented for your consideration and approval.

An in-person Budget Hearing will be held on Wednesday, June 18, 2025 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 (JCTDA) is a Destination Management Organization responsible for overseeing the use of a 6% room occupancy tax collected from guests staying in accommodations throughout Jackson County. This tax applies to the rental of rooms, lodgings, or accommodations in hotels, motels, inns, tourist camps, and similar establishments that are subject to state sales tax.

Accommodations operated by nonprofit charitable, educational, or religious organizations are exempt from this tax when the facilities are used for their nonprofit purposes.

The JCTDA is governed by a board of nine voting members, all appointed by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners. This quasi-governmental body meets monthly and includes representatives from the local visitor economy, along with ex-officio members.

The room occupancy tax is collected in addition to any state or local sales taxes. It must be collected by all accommodation providers who are required to collect sales tax, including short-term rental operators. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners, under the authority granted by House Bill 96 (2011), initially set the tax rate at 4% through Resolution R12-34. This rate was increased to 6% on October 15, 2024, with the new rate taking effect on July 1, 2025.

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

Staff

Nick Breedlove, Executive Director
Samantha Nelson, Social Media and Content Director

Board Makeup

Group One: (3) Individuals from North Jackson County Hospitality and Tourism Sector

Group Two: (3) Individuals from South Jackson County Hospitality and Tourism Sector

Group Three - (1) Individual from Hospitality and Tourism Sector (county-wide)

Group Four - (1) representative from the Cashiers Chamber of Commerce in a non-lodging, tourism-related business (who is not employed by the CACOC).



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).

Group Six- The Executive Director from the Jackson County Chamber of Commerce. The Executive Director will be an ex officio member with no term limit.

The Executive Director from the Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce. The Executive Director will be an ex officio member with no term limit. The Jackson County Finance Officer shall serve as an ex officio member of the Authority and serve as the Finance Officer of the Authority. In addition, a County Commissioner or designee shall serve as an ex officio member of the Authority.

FY 25-26 Board

Robert Jumper, Chair, Cherokee NC*

Megan Orr, Vice Chair, Holiday Inn Express*

Craig Smith, Secretary, Bear Lake Reserve*

Daniel Fletcher, Hotel Cashiers*

Trevor Brown, Board Member, Jackson County Parks & Recreation Department*

Mandi Cantrell, Landmark Vacation Rentals, South Jackson*

Peter Evers, Hotel Sylva*

Dale Collins, Tuckaseegee Fly Shop*

Jack Austin, TJ Bailey's, Cashiers*

Ex-Officio Board Members:

Jenny Hooper, Jackson County Commissioner

Julie Spiro, Jackson County Chamber of Commerce

Susan Gregory, Cashiers Area Chamber of Commerce

Darlene Fox, Finance Director, Jackson County

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 \$860,000.

24-4926-370-00	Ad Firm Media	\$600,000
24-4926-370-02	Creative and Production Services	\$85,000
24-4926-370-03	Digital Campaign Reporting	\$15,000
24-4926-370-04	Email Campaigns	\$30,000
24-4926-393-06	Ad Firm Retainer - Brand Leadership	\$50,000
24-4926-393-08	Misc. Agency Expenses	\$30,000
24-4926-370-10	Media Management	\$50,000
24-4926-393-08	Misc. Agency Expenses	\$34,751
	Total	\$860,000

Public Relations The public relations figure includes the retainer fee of \$81,900, Content Production at \$12,000, and a \$40,000 allocation for PR-related projects and to host travel writers.

24-4926-393-01	Public Relations	\$133,900
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The operating contracts for the **Visitor Centers** (for services and space rental), categorized under account number 24-4926-393-00, are proposed to be increased by two percent in order to accommodate inflation and Consumer Price Index adjustments over the last year. \$10,000 is budgeted for each Chamber for for improvements directly related to the visitor experience—such as signage, informational materials, displays, accessibility upgrades, furnishings for visitor use, or other enhancements that serve the needs of travelers and guests.

Jackson County Chamber of Commerce		
Jackson County Chamber of Commerce		\$98,438
Hooper House Foundation Space		\$13,977
Office Supplies		\$3,000
Copier lease		\$2,264
Visitor Center Improvements		\$10,000
Total Jackson Center (Sylva)		\$127,679
Cashiers Area Chamber		
Cashiers Area Chamber		\$90,235
Cashiers Area Chamber - Space		\$12,550
Office Supplies, Water Service for Visitors		\$2,000
Visitor Center Improvements		\$10,000
Total Cashiers Center		\$114,785

Capital Projects

In the fiscal year 2025-26, the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (JCTDA) is allocating \$1,000,000 in Capital Project Funds. 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.

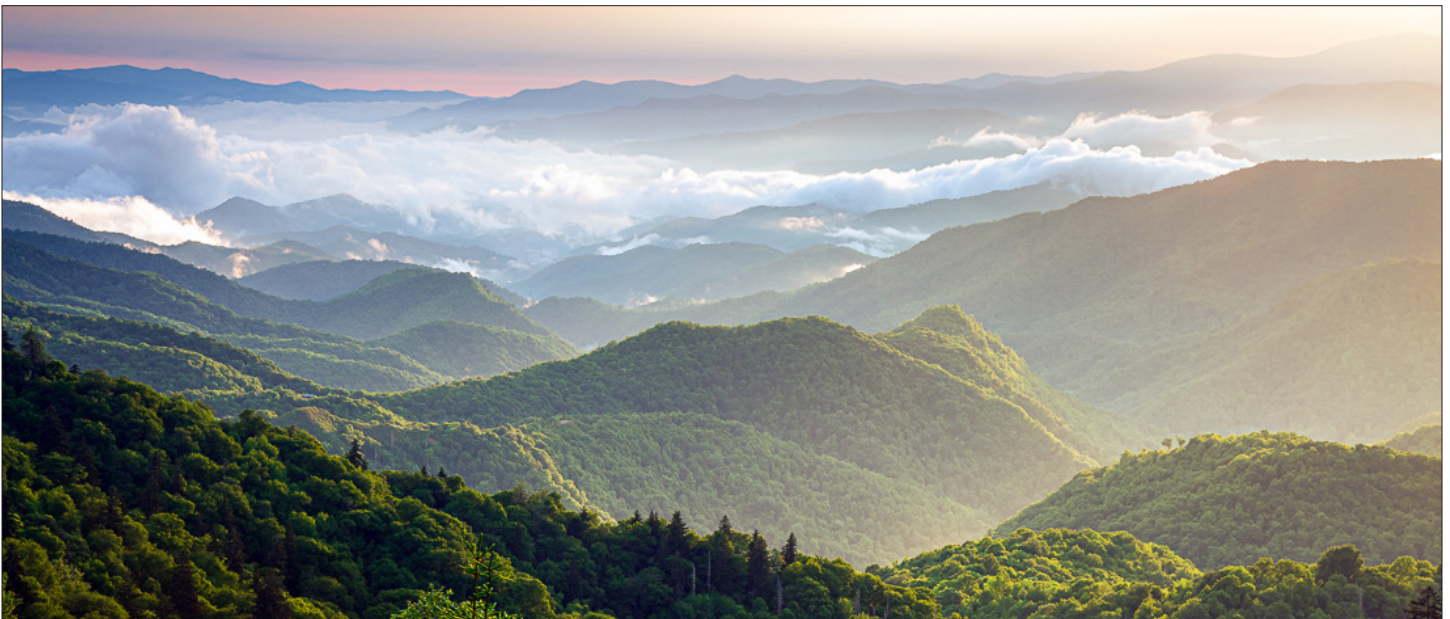


Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

GOALS & STRATEGY

2025-2026 Executive Director Goals

- **Position Jackson County as the Premier Leisure Destination:** Continue to elevate Jackson County, NC as a top-tier, affordable, and family-friendly leisure destination. Maintain strong market visibility and visitor appeal despite potential economic uncertainty or lodging market fluctuations.
- **Strategic Talent Onboarding & Digital Growth:** Onboard a new Social Media and Digital Content Director. Develop and implement forward-looking strategies to boost online engagement, expand digital reach, and align content with evolving visitor behaviors and expectations.
- **Tourism Capital Project Fund (TCPF) Enhancement:** Promote and encourage broad community participation in the Tourism Capital Project Fund (TCPF), which supports impactful infrastructure that benefits both residents and visitors. Review and refine the program—now with two funded projects—to incorporate best practices and ensure long-term sustainability and relevance.
- **Deepen Community Engagement in Tourism:** Foster stronger community ties by encouraging local businesses, residents, and stakeholders to take an active role in shaping a welcoming and authentic visitor environment. Highlight shared benefits of tourism to build pride and support.
- **Cultivate and Support Signature Events:** Identify, promote, and help fund high-impact signature events—such as cultural festivals, food & beverage celebrations, and outdoor recreation experiences—that drive visitation during off-peak periods. Focus on events that boost small business revenue and enhance Jackson County's unique identity.
- **Strengthen Partnerships & Leverage Collaborations:** Enhance relationships with local, regional, and national tourism, marketing, and economic development organizations. Seek opportunities to co-invest in campaigns, share resources, and amplify reach through strategic collaboration.
- **Data-Driven Strategy & Agility:** Maintain a data-informed approach to program evaluation. Regularly assess tourism trends, market shifts, and visitor feedback to adapt strategies and ensure alignment with county goals and emerging opportunities.



Tourism Impact

The following data reflects the 2023 calendar year and was released in August 2024. These are the most current statistics available until the next update in August 2025.

- **\$468,000,000** – in annual expenditures by tourists (lodging, food service, transportation, retail, recreation & entertainment).
- **2,470** – Jobs directly supported by tourism.
- **\$121,600,000** – Worker paychecks annually
- **\$15,300,000** – State tax revenues generated by tourists.
- **\$15,300,000** – Local county tax revenues generated by tourists.
- **\$687.05** – 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.

Budget

FY 25–26: \$3,541,549

FY 24–25: \$3,117,372

Change: Increase of \$424,177. The tax collections estimate is conservative due to potential economic conditions in 2025, however the 6% rate generates more revenue than previous years.

Projected Tax Collections

FY 25–26: \$3,476,549

FY 24–25: \$2,500,000

Change: Increase of \$976,549. Projected tax collections are up significantly, reflecting continued growth in travel and lodging demand, and the increased tax rate.

Actual Tax Collections

FY 25–26: —

FY 24–25: In Collection

Actuals for FY 24–25 are still in progress but are tracking in line with budget projections.

Investment Earnings

FY 25–26: \$60,000

FY 24–25: \$50,000

Change: Increase of \$10,000 or 20%

Investment earnings increased modestly, continuing the upward trend due to healthy fund balances and conservative spending.

Late Payment Penalties

FY 25–26: \$5,000

FY 24–25: \$5,000

Change: No change. Penalty income remained consistent, reflecting stable taxpayer compliance.

Advertising Income

FY 25–26: \$0

FY 24–25: \$10,000

No advertising revenue is projected for FY 25–26 as Smoky Mountain News will handle all production of the Visitor Guide materials.

Capital Projects (TCPF)

FY 25–26: \$1,000,000

FY 24–25: \$1,000,000

Change: No change

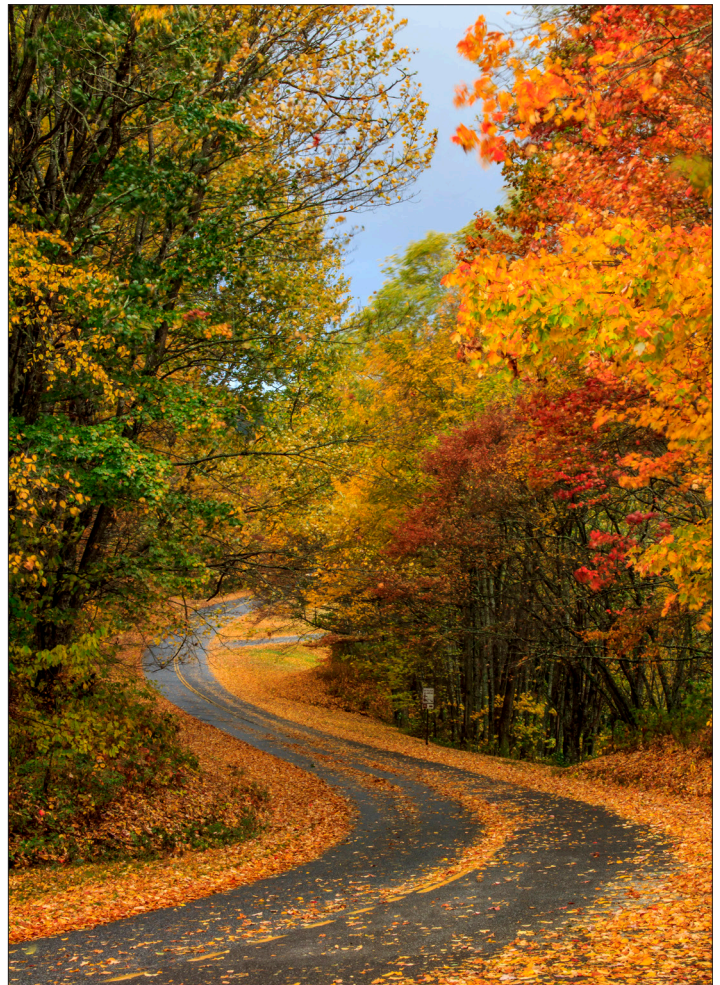
Fund Balance Utilized

FY 25–26: \$0

FY 24–25: \$834,472

Change: Decrease of \$834,472

No fund balance is budgeted for use in FY 25–26, given the six-percent tax rate which will provide additional funds for increased marketing and capital projects.

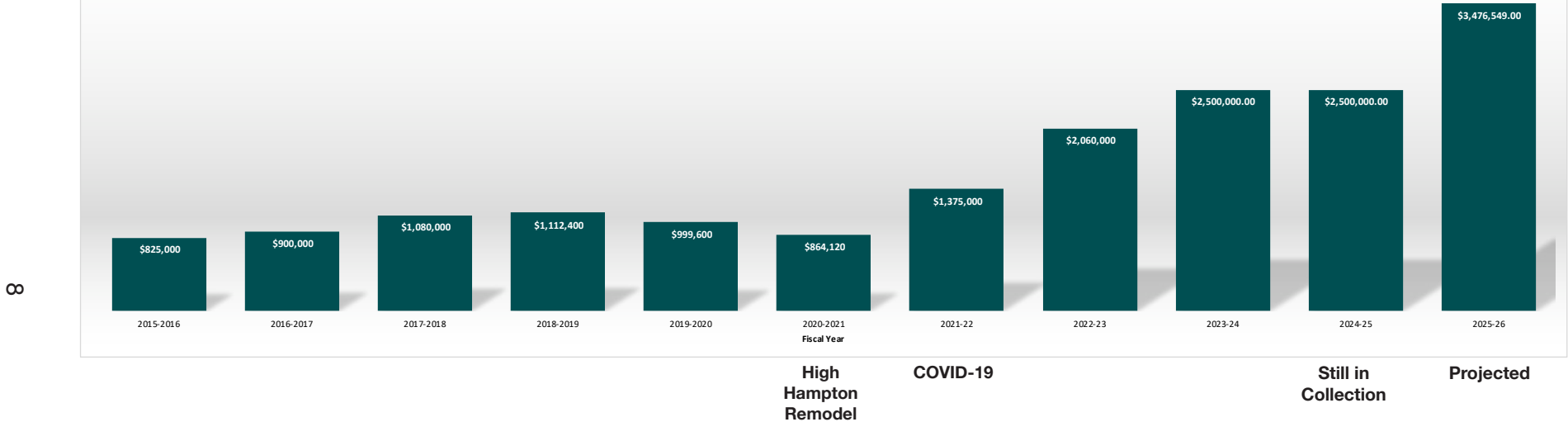




Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

BUDGET & FINANCE FY 25-26

Tax Collections, FY25-26 Projected



Fiscal Year	2015-2016	2016-2017	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-22	2022-23	2023-24	2024-25	2025-26
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	\$3,117,372.00	\$ 3,541,549.00
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	\$2,500,000.00	\$ 3,476,549.00
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	\$2,576,925.76	\$2,495,882.25	In Collection	Future Collections
Investment Earnings	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 2,023.00	\$ 2,500.00	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 60,000.00
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	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 5,000.00
Capital Projects (TCPF)									\$ 367,767.00	\$ 750,000.00	\$ 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	\$ 542,372.00	\$ -

Year	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
Fund Balance Ending June 30	\$ 546,117	\$ 575,908	\$ 535,808	\$ 541,937	\$ 700,167	\$1,837,439	\$2,739,114	\$3,616,742	\$3,851,070



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

BUDGET TRENDS

Year	Tax Rate	Totals	Accommodation Sales	YOY Change in Sales
FY 25-26	6%	\$3,495,298.00	\$58,254,966.67 *	-9.07%
FY 24-25	4%	\$2,500,000.00	\$62,500,000.00 **	0.00%
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	---

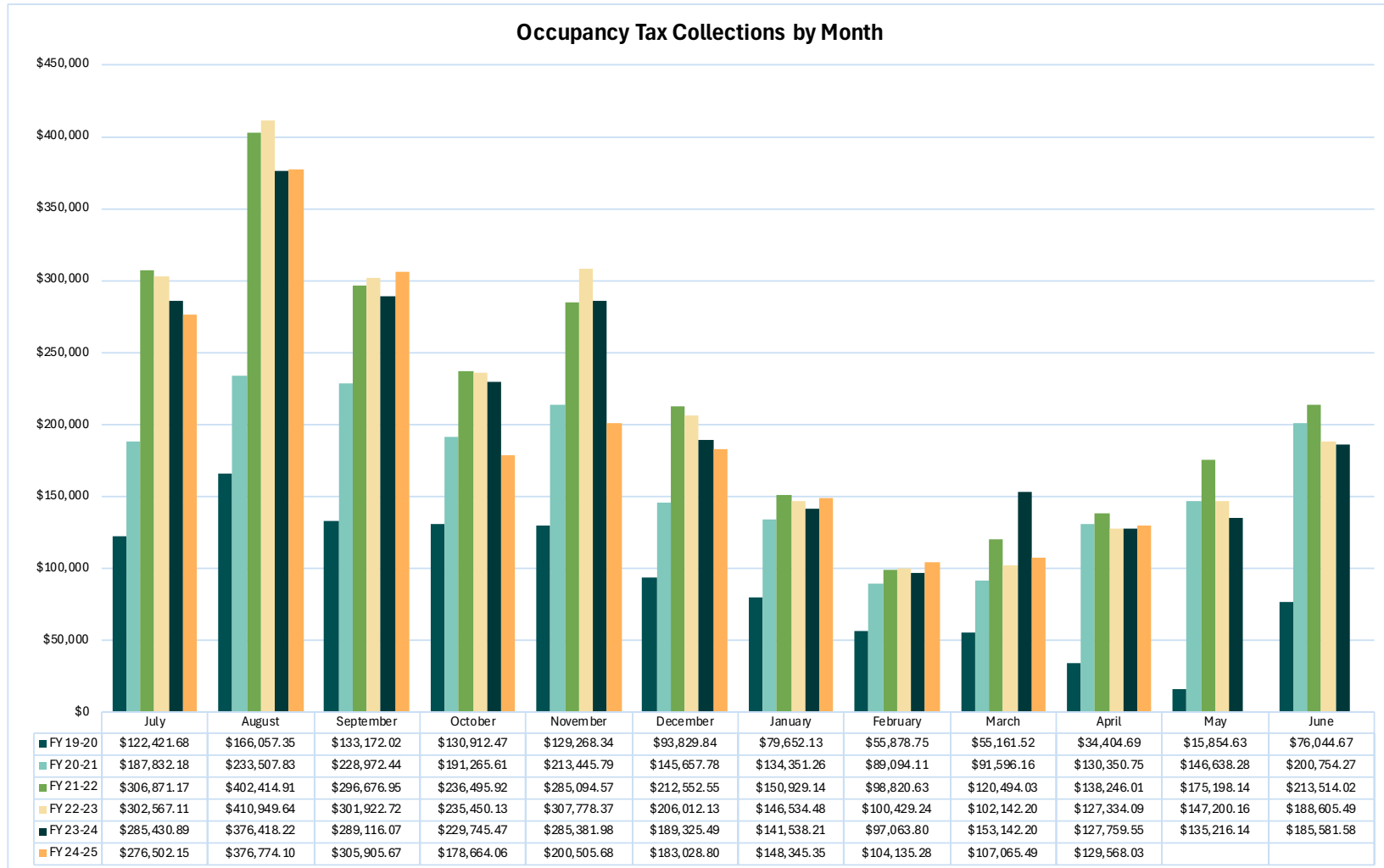
Tourism Impact

Year	Expenditures	Change	Payroll	Employment	State Tax Receipts	Local Tax Receipts	Tax Savings
2023	\$468,000,000	1.30%	\$121,600,000	2,470	\$15,300,000	\$15,300,000	\$687.05
2022	\$452,570,000	3.50%	\$119,200,000	2,401	\$15,200,000	\$15,000,000	\$703.38
2021	\$437,410,000	49.50%	\$110,400,000	2,343	\$15,600,000	\$15,600,000	\$723.41
2020	\$292,700,000	-0.80%	\$84,500,000	2,141	\$11,100,000	\$12,800,000	\$537.62
2019	\$207,480,000	0.81%	\$51,850,000	1,870	\$11,360,000	\$9,500,000	\$470.46
2018	\$205,810,000	5.30%	\$50,870,000	1,890	\$11,340,000	\$9,500,000	\$464.01
2017	\$195,440,000	3.71%	\$48,520,000	1,850	\$10,860,000	\$9,080,000	\$462.46
2016	\$188,450,000	7.12%	\$44,910,000	1,810	\$10,550,000	\$8,630,000	\$457.77
2015	\$175,920,000	2.78%	\$41,530,000	1,710	\$9,790,000	\$8,040,000	\$428.70
2014	\$171,160,000	4.99%	\$38,780,000	1,660	\$9,170,000	\$7,750,000	\$412.46
2013	\$163,030,000	4.47%	\$36,550,000	1,610	\$8,940,000	\$7,370,000	\$399.55
		%(from previous)					\$(per resident)



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

OCCUPANCY TAX TRENDS



Collections in process for FY 24-25 as of this report



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%	56.6%	57.8%	63.8%	64.3%	65.4%	56.1%	74.8%	57.3%	56.0%
2025	45.5%	54.6%	54.7%	53.4%	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

Hotel Occupancy data courtesy: Smith Travel Research, Most current data as of May 19, 2025.

The JCTDA saw a decline in September, 2024 notably due to the last week of the month and Hurricane Helene which impacted visitation. Following Helene, an aggressive reopening marketing and social media campaign took place stemming losses.

Occupancy rates climb steadily from winter through fall, starting at 34.1% in January and reaching a peak of 74.8% in October. The average occupancy rate for the year is 56.8%.

ADR (Average Daily Rate) follows a similar trend, beginning at \$89.44 in January and rising to \$172.38 in May. Rates stay high throughout the summer and early fall before dropping off toward the end of the year. The average ADR across the year is \$144.13.

RevPAR (Revenue per Available Room) moves in sync with both occupancy and ADR. It starts at \$30.51 in January and climbs to a high of \$123.91 in October, with an average of \$84.46 for the year. The figures represent increased visitation throughout the warmer months and into the fall season.





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





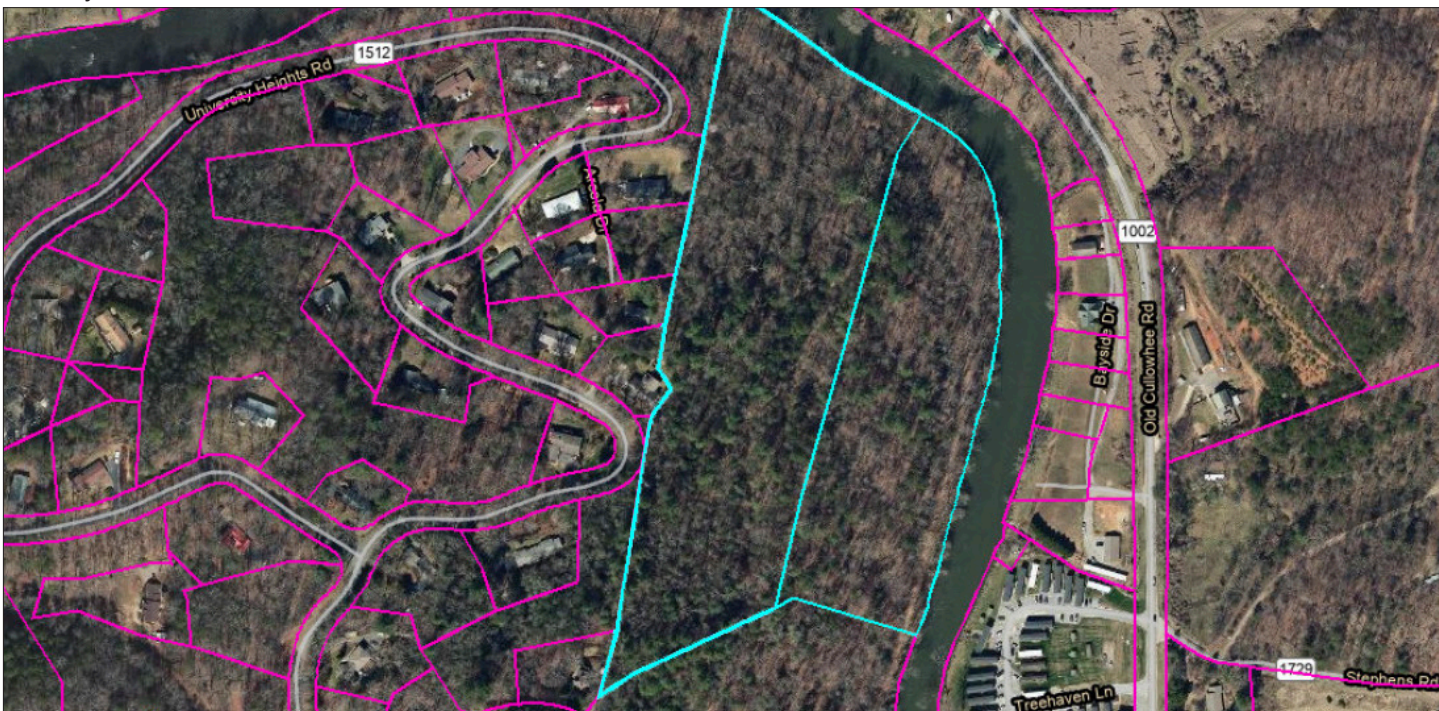
Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

CAPITAL PROJECTS

The Tourism Capital Project Fund (TCPF) is designed to support strategic investments in tourism-related projects that drive visitation, increase spending, and boost the overall economic impact in Jackson County. By providing financial support for sustainable tourism development at the local level, the TCPF helps create and retain jobs, attract out-of-county visitors, and enhance the overall visitor experience. For FY 25–26, the JCTDA has budgeted \$1,000,000 for capital projects.



In FY 24-25, the JCTDA awarded \$750,000 to Jackson County Parks and Recreation for the acquisition of a 17-acre tract along the Jackson County Greenway—supporting the expansion and enhancement of this vital community resource used by both residents and visitors.



Above: Highlighted are two parcels acquired with \$750,000 in TCPF funds provided by the JCTDA to support the expansion of the Jackson County Greenway.



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

CAPITAL PROJECTS

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.





COUNTY OF JACKSON
FY 2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET
Report dates 07/01/2024 - thru - 06/30/2025

Account Number	Description	Last Year Budget 07/01/2023 06/30/2024	Current Year Budget 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Actual YTD 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Remaining Budget 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Department Request 07/01/2025 06/30/2026	Admin Recommended 07/01/2025 06/30/2026
24-3230-130-00	JACKSON COUNTY TDA	2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	1,833,422.38	666,577.62	3,476,549.00	3,476,549.00
TAX REVENUE		2,500,000.00	2,500,000.00	1,833,422.38	666,577.62	3,476,549.00	3,476,549.00
24-3270-170-01	JACKSON TDA - PENALTY	5,000.00	5,000.00	880.17	4,119.83	5,000.00	5,000.00
24-3270-190-00	MARKETING AND ADVERTISING	10,000.00	10,000.00	120.50	9,879.50	0.00	0.00
PENALTY & INTEREST		15,000.00	15,000.00	1,000.67	13,999.33	5,000.00	5,000.00
24-3831-491-00	INVESTMENT EARNINGS	150,000.00	60,000.00	130,776.58	-70,776.58	60,000.00	60,000.00
REVENUES		150,000.00	60,000.00	130,776.58	-70,776.58	60,000.00	60,000.00
24-3991-000-00	FUND BALANCE	876,472.00	663,783.00	0.00	663,783.00	0.00	0.00
FUND BALANCE		876,472.00	663,783.00	0.00	663,783.00	0.00	0.00
DEPARTMENT TOTAL Revenue		3,541,472.00	3,238,783.00	1,965,199.63	1,273,583.37	3,541,549.00	3,541,549.00
24-4926-121-00	SALARIES & WAGES	170,000.00	181,050.00	160,159.65	20,890.35	165,022.00	165,022.00
24-4926-170-00	BOARD MEMBER EXPENSE	1,070.00	900.00	503.80	396.20	1,050.00	1,050.00
24-4926-181-00	SOCIAL SECURITY CONTRIBUTION	10,560.00	11,225.00	9,929.90	1,295.10	11,225.00	11,225.00
24-4926-182-00	RETIREMENT EXPENSE	21,845.00	24,623.00	21,781.90	2,841.10	24,623.00	24,623.00
24-4926-183-00	HOSPITALIZATION INSURANCE	21,523.00	23,214.00	19,891.49	3,322.51	23,163.00	23,163.00
24-4926-185-00	UNEMPLOYMENT INSURANCE	592.00	628.00	394.01	233.99	628.00	628.00
24-4926-186-00	WORKMAN'S COMPENSATION	2,117.00	2,299.00	0.00	2,299.00	2,299.00	2,299.00
24-4926-187-00	MEDICARE TAX	2,465.00	2,625.00	2,322.32	302.68	2,625.00	2,625.00
24-4926-190-00	PROFESSIONAL SER-COUNTY	16,250.00	16,250.00	13,541.70	2,708.30	16,250.00	16,250.00
24-4926-191-00	PROFESSIONAL SERVICES-AUDIT	8,293.00	9,500.00	12,072.00	-2,572.00	9,500.00	9,500.00
24-4926-192-00	LEGAL SERVICES	5,278.00	2,000.00	3,275.00	-1,275.00	2,000.00	2,000.00
24-4926-260-00	OFFICE SUPPLIES AND MATERIALS	6,000.00	6,000.00	1,684.44	4,315.56	6,000.00	6,000.00
24-4926-299-00	MISCELLANEOUS	13,970.00	20,600.00	10,810.31	8,433.09	11,640.00	11,640.00
24-4926-311-00	TRAVEL	28,150.00	41,050.00	15,984.89	24,315.11	36,000.00	36,000.00
24-4926-321-00	TELEPHONE	4,600.00	4,600.00	6,949.76	-2,349.76	4,600.00	4,600.00
24-4926-321-01	TELEPHONE-VISITOR CENTERS	3,350.00	0.00	-320.08	320.08	0.00	0.00
24-4926-321-02	TELEPHONE-TDA	6,000.00	6,000.00	4,876.32	1,123.68	6,000.00	6,000.00
24-4926-325-00	POSTAGE	43,428.00	42,570.00	32,214.03	9,983.18	55,570.00	55,570.00
24-4926-331-00	UTILITIES	2,975.00	3,200.00	3,197.21	2.79	3,200.00	3,200.00
24-4926-341-00	PRINTING	97,341.00	100,341.00	72,378.64	20,483.06	129,941.00	129,941.00
24-4926-351-00	REPAIRS & MAINT-BUILDING	500.00	500.00	0.00	500.00	500.00	500.00
24-4926-370-00	AD FIRM MEDIA	316,892.00	561,500.00	436,801.35	124,698.65	600,000.00	600,000.00



COUNTY OF JACKSON
FY 2025-2026 PROPOSED BUDGET
Report dates 07/01/2024 - thru - 06/30/2025

Account Number	Description	Last Year Budget 07/01/2023 06/30/2024	Current Year Budget 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Actual YTD 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Remaining Budget 07/01/2024 06/30/2025	Department Request 07/01/2025 06/30/2026	Admin Recommended 07/01/2025 06/30/2026
24-4926-370-01	WEBSITE SERVICE	39,350.00	25,200.00	30,958.85	-5,758.85	35,200.00	35,200.00
24-4926-370-02	CREATIVE & PRODUCTION SERVICES	94,460.00	89,500.00	130,149.93	-40,649.93	85,000.00	85,000.00
24-4926-370-03	DIGITAL CAMPAIGN REPORTING	14,300.00	13,200.00	11,000.00	2,200.00	15,000.00	15,000.00
24-4926-370-04	E-MAIL CAMPAIGNS	20,125.00	30,800.00	35,300.00	-4,500.00	30,000.00	30,000.00
24-4926-370-05	SEM MANAGEMENT	178,000.00	188,600.00	157,309.66	31,290.34	207,520.00	207,520.00
24-4926-370-09	SOCIAL MEDIA SPEND	136,000.00	160,000.00	116,407.93	43,592.07	168,000.00	168,000.00
24-4926-393-00	VISITOR CENTER OPERATIONS	216,911.00	218,745.00	200,974.62	-0.04	242,465.00	242,465.00
24-4926-393-01	PUBLIC RELATIONS	111,000.00	121,000.00	83,783.09	37,216.91	133,000.00	133,000.00
24-4926-393-02	CONTRACTED SERVICES	22,000.00	22,000.00	18,333.30	3,666.70	22,000.00	22,000.00
24-4926-393-03	CONTRACTED SERVICES-RECORDING	1,400.00	1,400.00	450.00	950.00	1,400.00	1,400.00
24-4926-393-05	CONTRACTED-WEBSITE	12,500.00	104,600.00	95,220.00	9,380.00	0.00	0.00
24-4926-393-06	CONTRACTED-AD FIRM RETAINER	65,910.00	64,800.00	54,000.00	10,800.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
24-4926-393-07	CONTRACTED SERVICES-STR	10,080.00	11,600.00	12,480.00	-880.00	12,200.00	12,200.00
24-4926-393-08	CONTRACTED-AD FIRM MISC	35,100.00	34,751.00	37,021.08	-3,479.78	30,000.00	30,000.00
24-4926-393-11	SOFTWARE, INTERNET, MISC SERVICE	59,758.00	32,188.00	31,862.37	60.27	45,936.00	45,936.00
24-4926-393-14	CONTRACTED SERVICES-HR OUTSOUR	6,920.00	6,920.00	5,105.80	1,814.20	9,600.00	9,600.00
24-4926-393-15	RESEARCH AND ANALYTICS	77,360.00	73,500.00	64,468.98	9,031.02	70,469.00	70,469.00
24-4926-399-00	CONTRACTED SERVICES	48,000.00	55,200.00	41,400.00	13,800.00	62,450.00	62,450.00
24-4926-399-09	MEDIA MANAGEMENT	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	50,000.00	50,000.00
24-4926-412-00	BUILDING RENT	23,280.00	23,280.00	20,900.00	2,380.00	23,280.00	23,280.00
24-4926-454-00	INSURANCE	4,295.00	3,754.00	4,913.00	-1,159.00	3,754.00	3,754.00
24-4926-468-00	DEPRECIATION EXPENSE	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00	0.00
24-4926-491-00	DUES AND SUBSCRIPTIONS	10,724.00	9,959.00	10,422.92	-463.92	9,739.00	9,739.00
24-4926-550-00	CAPITAL OUTLAY-EQUIPMENT	10,800.00	10,500.00	2,459.98	8,040.02	1,000.00	1,000.00
24-4926-550-01	CAPITAL PROJECTS	1,400,000.00	745,000.00	745,000.00	0.00	1,000,000.00	1,000,000.00
24-4926-699-00	GRANTS	105,000.00	50,000.00	6,000.00	44,000.00	100,000.00	100,000.00
24-4926-699-02	MISCELLANEOUS DONATIONS	46,000.00	71,611.00	67,111.00	4,500.00	11,700.00	11,700.00
24-4926-990-00	CONTINGENCY	9,000.00	10,000.00	0.00	10,000.00	10,000.00	10,000.00
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TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY		3,541,472.00	3,238,783.00	2,811,481.15	398,097.68	3,541,549.00	3,541,549.00
=====		=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
DEPARTMENT TOTAL Expense		-3,541,472.00	-3,238,783.00	-2,811,481.15	398,097.68	-3,541,549.00	-3,541,549.00
=====		=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
FUND TOTAL TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTH		0.00	0.00	-846,281.52	1,671,681.05	0.00	0.00
=====		=====	=====	=====	=====	=====	=====
REPORT TOTAL		0.00	0.00	-846,281.52	1,671,681.05	0.00	0.00
*****		*****	*****	*****	*****	*****	*****



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

INTEGRATED MARKETING



MADDEN

simpleview

In collaboration with the Jackson County TDA's Executive Director, Madden Media sets strategy then plans and executes the integrated marketing programs for JCTDA. The agency began working with the JCTDA in 2025.

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 'More Peak Moments' brand is featured in all advertising and further supported through authentic imagery of Jackson County.

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 2025-2026 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 80,000 active subscribers promoting the happenings in Jackson County and encouraging overnight trips. The JCTDA authors the content and Madden deploys. A welcome email series enhances the user data via enticing users to self-report their preferred travel style and activities.

Website

www.DiscoverJacksonNC.com is an online platform for all brand content supporting social media, paid search, email and paid media channels. In May 2025, the JCTDA launched its new website, an upgrade from the site built in 2017. The new website features information on outdoor adventures, attractions, food & lodging listings, a book-direct engine, 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.

2024 Website Sessions - 818,000 (Increase of 12%)



SAVOR SPRING'S *Elevated Flavors*

With warmer weather, longer days, and an abundance of fresh flavors, spring is the perfect time for a culinary adventure in Jackson County, NC. Whether it's sophisticated comfort food and inventive cocktails in a charming downtown restaurant or farm-to-table dishes with views of some of the oldest mountains in the world, more peak moments are waiting for you here.



PLAN YOUR SPRING GETAWAY AT [DISCOVERJACKSONNC.COM](https://www.discoverjacksonnc.com)



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

INTEGRATED MARKETING



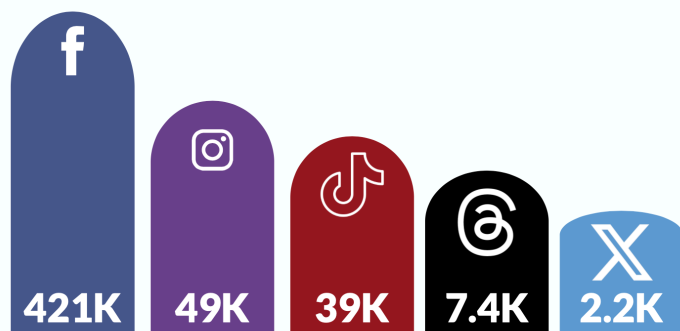
TOURISM
ECONOMICS

AN OXFORD ECONOMICS COMPANY

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, Tourism Economics' Symphony Platform, 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 the JCTDA's Social Media Manager.

2024 Overview

Performance Summary (Organic Social Media)

Impressions across our platforms: 61,533,016

Engagements: 3,420,128

Post Link Clicks: 357,556

Audience: 405,986

Net Audience Growth: 95,778

Video Views: 11,098,920

Paid Social Media (Advertising)

Impressions: 39,178,985

Engagements: 3,612,325

Cost Per Engagement: \$0.03

Link Clicks: 1,994,713

Video Views: 2,431,222



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, 2024 - March 30, 2025 Statistics

Impressions: 8,755,579

Clicks: 305,685

Click-through rate: 3.49%

Cost per click: \$0.39/avg

YouTube views: 1,143,082



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.



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

INTEGRATED MARKETING



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 8 journalists and 4 influencers from May 2024 to present.

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

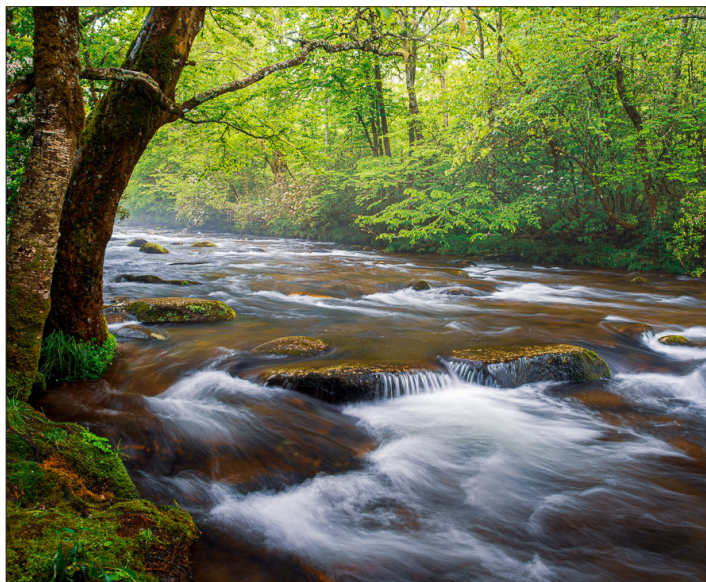
Schedule, provide briefing book, attend & follow up

Individual Visits

Schedule, provide briefing book, attend & follow up

Influencer Outreach

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





Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

INTEGRATED MARKETING

Experience A Hallmark Holiday Throughout Small Town U.S.A.

A Hallmark experience, often synonymous with Christmas, can be found in small towns throughout the country that offer visitors the opportunity to enjoy a wide variety of holiday activities.

Roger Sands Contributor @

Roger Sands covers travel, culinary trends and hospitality design.

Follow

📌 0

Dec 2, 2024, 06:44am EST



The town's holiday parade is always a big attraction. visit jackson county

Sylva, North Carolina

To celebrate the joy of the holiday season, Sylva, in the Blue Ridge Mountains, transforms each year into a magical winter wonderland with scenic mountainside landscapes illuminated by dazzling Christmas lights and festive downtown shopping. Sylva, with its iconic Courthouse perched overlooking the historic downtown, goes all out for the holidays. The courthouse even has mini Christmas trees throughout the lawn to kick the festivities up a notch. There are continuous ways to get into the holiday spirit, like the annual Sylva Christmas Parade featuring marching bands, floats and Santa. Every Thursday in December leading up to Christmas, Downtown Sylva's Shop & Stroll is taking place with seasonal cheer and late-night shopping.

<https://tinyurl.com/45idfjwp>

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

Southern Living

These North Carolina Towns Are Open And Need Your Business

"We appreciate your support to our local economy this fall, as we rely on this season heavily."

By Lisa Cericola Published on October 16, 2024



PHOTO: NORTH CAROLINA MOUNTAIN TOWNS OF CASHIERS, CHEROKEE, DILLSBORO, AND SYLVA / FACEBOOK

Cashiers

Immerse yourself in nature in this outdoorsy village. Cashiers is encouraging people to "visit thoughtfully," saying that "most of our trails, waterfalls and outdoor sites are open, except for the Blue Ridge Parkway, where assessments are still taking place."

- **Things to do:** Reel in some trout on this portion of the [Western North Carolina Fly Fishing Trail](#), take in dramatic views from Whiteside Mountain Trail, hear live music or check out a festival at [The Village Green](#), enjoy local beer at [Whiteside Brewing Company](#)
- **Where to stay:** [High Hampton](#), [Hotel Cashiers](#), [The Wells Cashiers](#)

EXPLORE CASHIERS

The best destinations to book an Airbnb this summer

Alexandra Dublin
July 10, 2024 • 9 min read

Jackson County, North Carolina



The Upper Whitewater Falls in the Nantahala National Forest. EIFEL KREUTZ/GETTY IMAGES

Swap the urban bustle of a big city for a tranquil natural environment in the Appalachian Mountains. Sitting at the crossroads of the Blue Ridge and Great Smoky Mountain ranges, Jackson County is a great summertime destination. It offers dramatic landscapes, comforting Southern fare and family-friendly outdoor adventures — including excellent trout and fly fishing.

During the summer months, temperatures can be cool enough in the morning and evening to escape the intense heat characteristic of many southern destinations. Still, days are warm



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

- 16,411 Visitors Served
- 15,300 Visitor Guides provided to guests at State Welcome Centers & Asheville Airport
- Over 14,000 individual visitor inquiries fulfilled
- Highway 107 Project: In the early fall of 2024, the Chamber concluded a two-year project as the Highway 107 liaison, visiting impacted businesses numerous times, and disbursing a total of 22 relocation grants. We have assisted many businesses with relocation needs, from new signage to new spaces.
- The Chamber served as the Hurricane Helene grant liaison. We visited repeatedly with every impacted business in Dillsboro. In partnership with the TDA and JCED, we disbursed 28 grants to businesses. We have continued to follow up by sharing additional resources.
- Over the past two years, the Chamber has been part of the statewide Multi Sector Plan On Aging - All Ages, All Stages NC, collaborating monthly with more than 275 individuals and agencies across the state. The implementation of phase one is underway statewide, and now our role will be to serve on the "Strengthening Communities for a Lifetime", to support thriving at all stages and ages in Jackson County.
- The Chamber served on the BLOOM committee over the past 6 months, securing a complementary venue location for the county's inaugural Business & Industry Appreciation Dinner held in March 2025 with 146 business owners in attendance.
- Support for affordable and available childcare: This has been an ongoing challenge in our region since the closure of seven facilities in WNC in October of 2023. The Chamber has partnered with our WCU Leadership Team to continue to keep this important topic on law makers and leaders minds. In April 2025, we have a coalition of team members attending the legislative session in Raleigh. Proposed legislation in North Carolina could have significant implications for businesses by increasing workforce participation, particularly among parents, and alleviating childcare-related challenges that affect employee productivity and retention. Senate Bill 593, known as the "Grant Our Kids Care Act," proposes the establishment of a two-year statewide pilot program to provide childcare expansion assistance grants. The initiative aims to support childcare providers employed full-time by licensed programs, facilitating the recruitment and retention of staff necessary to expand childcare availability for children from birth through five years of age. Additionally, a bill has been introduced to ease access to capital for childcare start-ups and another bill aims to streamline childcare regulations. Together, these could create a spark that ignites much-needed growth in childcare businesses.
<https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/s680>
<https://www.ncleg.gov/BillLookup/2025/s528>
- Fireworks: After 10 years of the Chamber financially providing the July 4th fireworks display, Jackson County Governmental Unit will be taking over the duty in 2025. The Chamber will continue to be the lead event producer, with responsibility for the band, marketing, set up, and kids activities promo.
- Events: We will continue with Concerts on the Creek, now in its 16th season. This has become a signature event in the county!
- As always - we refreshed our space and added new things, such as handmade items and new cabinet lighting. Most recently, we have had the privilege of assisting the TDA with the rollout of branded merchandise for sale. We look forward to our guests' feedback on these items and have enjoyed being part of the process.



Cashiers Area Chamber & Visitor Center FY 25-26 Goals

Hire and Retain Key Staff

We hired a summer intern to serve as our Communications Specialist through the NC State RuralWorks! Program. This intern is assisting with digital outreach and content creation across platforms. In July 2024, we welcomed a Visitor Center Manager to oversee guest services and daily operations. This role not only strengthens our visitor experience but also supports member retention. We are cultivating an inclusive, mission-driven workplace that emphasizes professional development, flexibility, and a strong sense of purpose in serving our unique mountain community. Additionally, we've prioritized enhancing Visitor Center operations by updating brochure displays and other features designed with the visitor in mind.

Build Membership Base

This year's membership drive focuses on both acquisition and retention. We're leveraging targeted outreach using our new GrowthZone member platform, Chamber-hosted events, and improved social media marketing to attract new businesses while re-engaging existing members through personalized check-ins and spotlight opportunities.

Continue GrowthZone Implementation

Our rollout of GrowthZone is well underway. This system improves administrative efficiency and offers a new member portal with enhanced benefits, including a business directory, event promotion tools, and an online payment system. We're also launching new non-dues revenue opportunities through GrowthZone's integrated advertising and sponsorship packages.

Improve Member Communication

We are in the process of implementing a consistent

schedule of email newsletters, timely event reminders, and social media updates across platforms to keep members in the loop. Our summer intern is also helping us build out a content calendar using new brand templates to spotlight members and share important news.

Offer Enhanced Member Benefits

New programming includes expanded Business After Hours, an Intern Appreciation Event, seasonal promotions like Burger Week, our inaugural Kindness Challenge promotes members' Kindness events, and the Leadership Cashiers initiative. We're also developing curated member spotlights to increase visibility and collaborating with other nonprofits to host our 4th Annual Community Volunteer and Resources Expo.

Strengthen Community Partnerships

We are working closely with local businesses, nonprofits, and government agencies, including the TDA, to support shared initiatives like the Visitor & Community Resources Expo and the Thomas Taulbee Kindness Challenge—both designed to foster meaningful community collaboration.

Promote Local Economic Development

By supporting small business growth, offering internship connections through NC State's Rural Works! program, and maintaining a comprehensive community calendar, we help highlight Cashiers as an entrepreneurial, business-friendly destination.

Increase Chamber Visibility

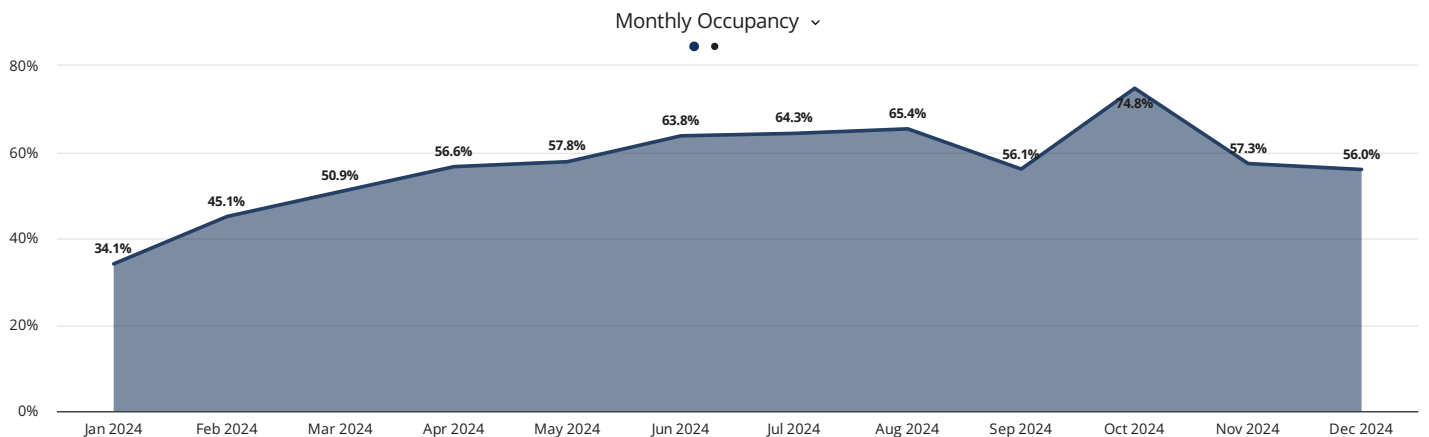
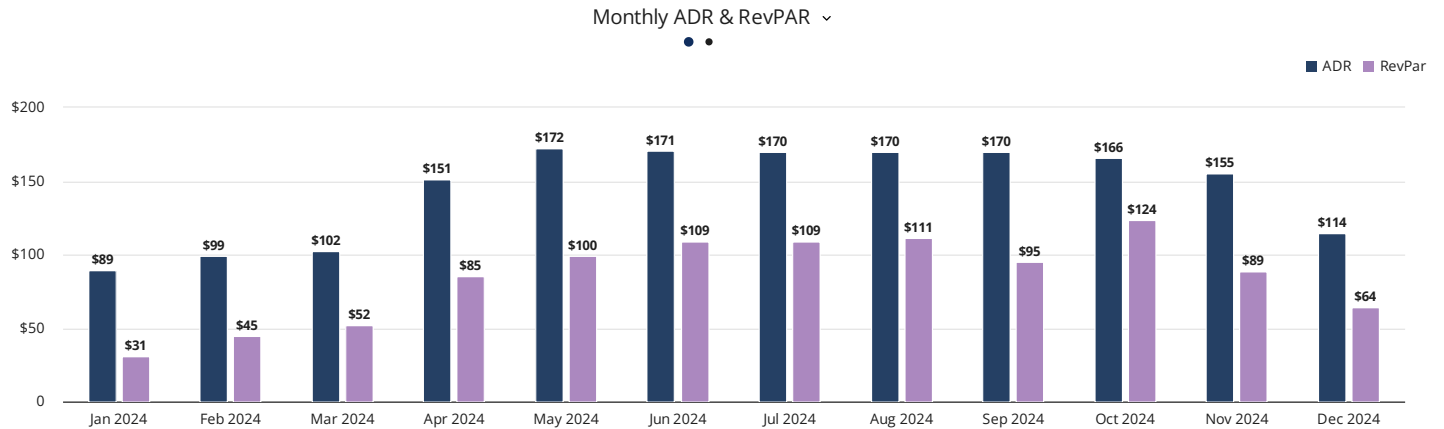
We are boosting our public presence by sponsoring and participating in local events, refreshing our branding and promotional tools (e.g., new Welcome Mats and Visitor Center displays), and enhancing our media outreach to celebrate Chamber initiatives and spotlight member achievements. We are hosting a tent at Groovin' On the Green twice during the summer concert series to boost the Chamber's profile.



Jackson County Tourism Development Authority

LODGING STATISTICS

Visitation Trends, 2024 Calendar Year



Source: Zartico & STR

Visitor Snapshot Summary

Understand your visitor makeup, where they come from, how they spend and where they go within your destination. Note that geolocation data less than 30 days old is subject to small changes through the normalization process.

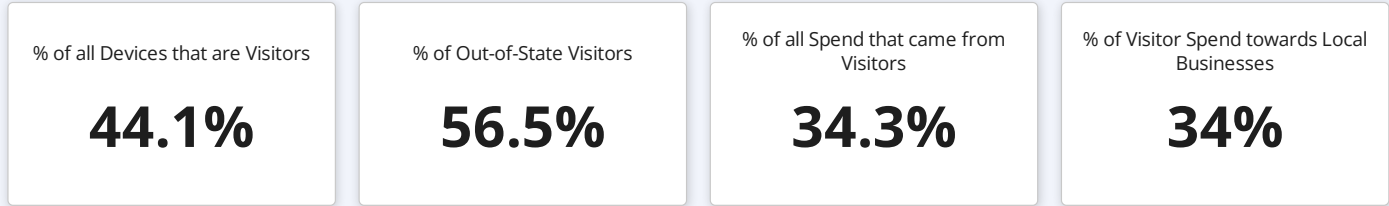
These insights are based on a device count sample size of 70,602 and a cardholder count sample size of 13,915.

These insights are based on a date range 2024-01-01 to 2024-12-31.

Key Visitor Insights

Source: Zartico Geolocation Data, Zartico Spend Data

Better understand your visitor makeup, including the share of total visitation and spending that comes from visitors, and their share of total spending towards local businesses.



Where are your visitors from?

Source: Zartico Geolocation Data

Within this map, the size of a bubble is based on % of visitors from that market. The shading is based on avg. visitor spending. The darker the shade the higher avg. visitor spend from that market.



Top 10 Visitor Markets		
Visitor Market Area	% of Visitors ▼	% of Visitor Spend
Charlotte NC	20.8%	18.9%
Atlanta GA	10.0%	8.6%
Greensboro-High Point-Winston Salem NC	8.7%	4.7%
Raleigh-Durham (Fayetteville) NC	8.1%	8.4%
Greenville-Spartanburg-Asheville-Anderson	7.4%	3.4%
Tampa-St. Petersburg (Sarasota) FL	3.1%	6.6%
Orlando-Daytona Beach-Melbourne FL	2.3%	3.2%
Columbia SC	2.1%	1.0%
Knoxville TN	2.0%	0.8%



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.**