

# BCTDA Annual Report

FISCAL YEAR 2022-2023



EXPLORE  
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY  
Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority

# Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board Members



**Matthew Lehman**, The Grand Bohemian Asheville  
Vice Chair  
City Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Bartender



**HP Patel**, BCA Hotels  
Treasurer of the Nonprofit  
County Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Laundry Attendant



**Elizabeth Putnam**, Mosaic Lifestyle Realty  
County Appointed  
First Service Job: Sales Clerk



**Andrew Celwyn**, Herbiary  
City Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: College Dining Hall



**Larry Crosby**, The Foundry Hotel  
City Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Banquet Server



**Michael Lusick**, FIRC Group, Inc.  
City Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Night Auditor



**Kathleen Mosher**, Biltmore Chamber Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Marketing Firm with Hospitality Clients



**Scott Patel**, Pure Hospitality  
County Appointed  
First Hospitality Job: Front Desk Agent



**Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore**  
Asheville City Council  
Ex-Officio Member



**Commissioner Terri Wells**  
Buncombe County Commission  
Ex-Officio Member

## 40 YEARS OF THE BCTDA

Join us as we reflect on the significant milestones that have shaped our leisure and hospitality industry and fueled the community and economic growth of Asheville and Buncombe County over the past four decades.

**1983**  
State legislation established a 2% occupancy tax and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA)

# ALWAYS ASHEVILLE

## A Message from Explore Asheville and the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Dear Partners and Friends,

We are pleased to share our Fiscal Year 2023 Annual Report, a comprehensive reflection of the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority and Explore Asheville's performance and achievements over the past year. As we navigate the evolving post-Covid landscape for our industry and our community, we are proud and grateful for the resilience, dedication, and innovation of our community, partners, and our team.

**This year, we celebrated two major milestones: the 40-year anniversary of the founding of the Tourism Development Authority and 20 years of community investments through the Tourism Product Development Fund.**

We also celebrate new benchmarks, including the record-breaking \$2.88 billion spent by visitors in 2022, which supported all categories of businesses in our visitor economy as well as municipal and county budgets, capital projects, and community initiatives.

The creative work of the Explore Asheville team garnered more than 7 million website sessions for potential visitors, booked nearly 400 groups and events, and shared more than 1,000 leads with our hotel partners.

We encourage you to flip through these pages to celebrate our collective achievements and where we're headed together. Take a moment to reflect on the many significant milestones captured on the 40-year timeline flowing throughout this report.

We remain dedicated to the long-term sustainability and responsible growth of our community, with you and for you, powered by visitors.



**Victoria Isley**  
Victoria Isley  
President & CEO  
Explore Asheville  
Buncombe County TDA  
First Hospitality Job: Restaurant Server



**Brenda Durden**  
Brenda Durden  
Asheville Hotel Group  
BCTDA Board Chair  
First Hospitality Job: Front Desk Agent

# Destination Performance

The BCTDA's mandate is to attract overnight visitors for the economic development of Buncombe County. Lodging occupancy is a leading indicator of destination performance and visitor spending in our community.

## Average Occupancy by Lodging Type

In 2022, hotel occupancy nearly returned to pre-pandemic levels before slightly settling in the first half of 2023. Vacation rental occupancy rose during Covid-19 years and has now leveled off to pre-pandemic rates.

■ = HOTELS  
 ■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)  
 H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023  
 Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA  
 Average Occupancy = Percentage of rooms occupied for the period

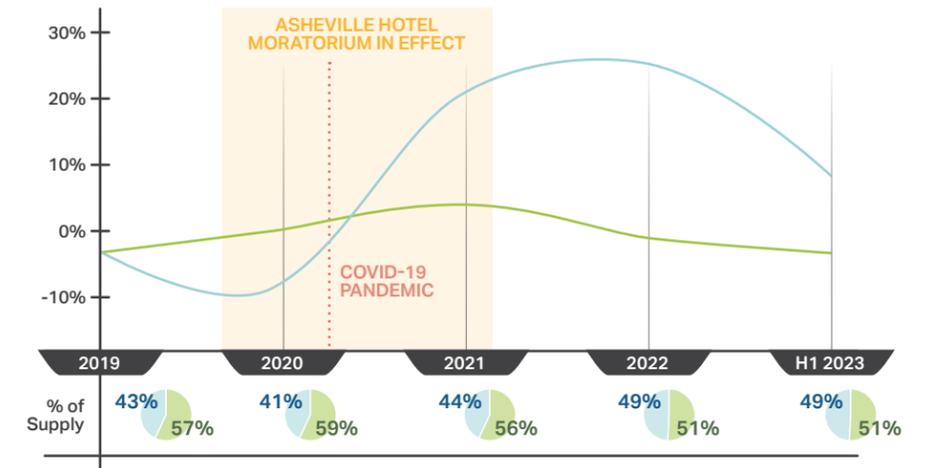


## Vacation Rentals Outpace Hotel Growth

During the Asheville City Council's hotel moratorium and the pandemic, vacation rentals grew exponentially in both supply and demand compared to hotels.

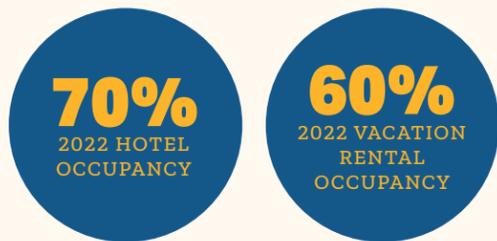
In 2019, hotels and vacation rentals maintained a 14% difference in supply. Last year that gap decreased to 2%.

■ = HOTELS  
 ■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)  
 H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023  
 Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA  
 Room Supply = Total number of hotel rooms or vacation rental rooms available during a period



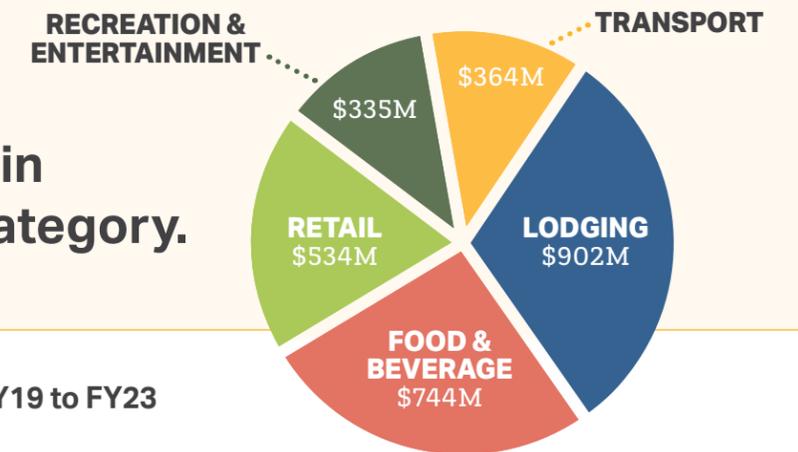
## Why Lodging Occupancy Matters

While overnight visitors make up 37% of visitation, they contribute 73% of total visitor spending, equaling \$2.88 billion in 2022. The majority of visitor spending, nearly 70%, takes place in local businesses like restaurants, shops, tour providers, art galleries, attractions, etc. (not inside lodging facilities).



Visitors spent **\$2.88 billion in 2022**, exceeding 2021 levels in every local business category.

Source: Tourism Economics, Visit NC



## 2022 Yields Highest Annual Hotel and Vacation Rental Demand

Hotel roomnight demand grew 7.5% from 2019 to the end of 2022. Vacation rental roomnight demand grew 62% during the same period.

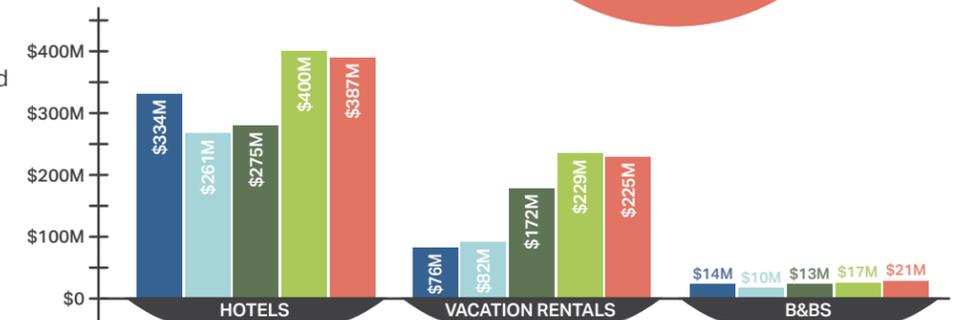
■ = HOTELS  
 ■ = VACATION RENTALS (Entire Place)  
 H1 2023 = FIRST HALF OF 2023  
 Source: Smith Travel Research & AirDNA  
 Room Demand = Total number of hotel rooms or entire place vacation rental rooms (Airbnb or Vrbo/HomeAway) sold or rented (excludes complimentary rooms)



## Total Lodging Sales Grew 49% from FY19 to FY23

Over the course of five years, hotel sales grew 16%, vacation rental sales grew 196%, and Bed & Breakfast sales grew 42%.

■ = FY19  
 ■ = FY20  
 ■ = FY21  
 ■ = FY22  
 ■ = FY23  
 FY = JULY - JUNE



**1985**  
County occupancy tax was increased to 3%

**1997**  
Uniform guidelines of the occupancy tax were established

**2000**  
Foodtopia campaign launched

**2001**  
Lodging tax was increased an additional 1% to create the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF)



**2002**  
With TPDF support, the Grove Arcade reopened, marking the rebirth of downtown Asheville

# Organizational Productivity



**\$71M**  
DIRECT SPEND  
BY GROUPS &  
MEETINGS



**394**  
EVENTS &  
GROUPS  
BOOKED

**65,123**  
GROUP ROOMS  
BOOKED

**5,342,110**  
WEBSITE USERS  
Up 1.25% from FY22

**7,169,277**  
WEBSITE SESSIONS

**12** TRADE  
SHOWS  
ATTENDED

**1,047**  
LEADS ISSUED  
TO HOTEL  
PARTNERS  
Up ~11% from FY22



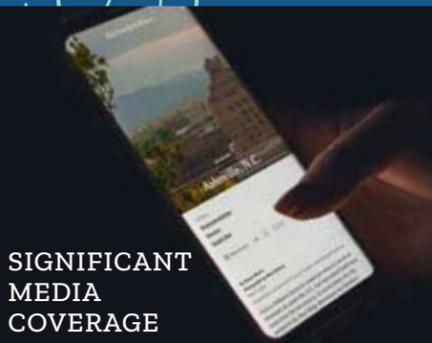
**FACEBOOK**  
14.7% organic  
engagement rate  
774K organic post clicks  
1.1M organic impressions  
+324K followers



**INSTAGRAM**  
63M organic impressions  
1% organic engagement rate  
+674K organic  
engagements  
+139K followers



**YOUTUBE**  
+137K views  
+578K impressions  
4,427 subscribers



**SIGNIFICANT  
MEDIA  
COVERAGE**

**EATER:** *Where to Eat in 2023*

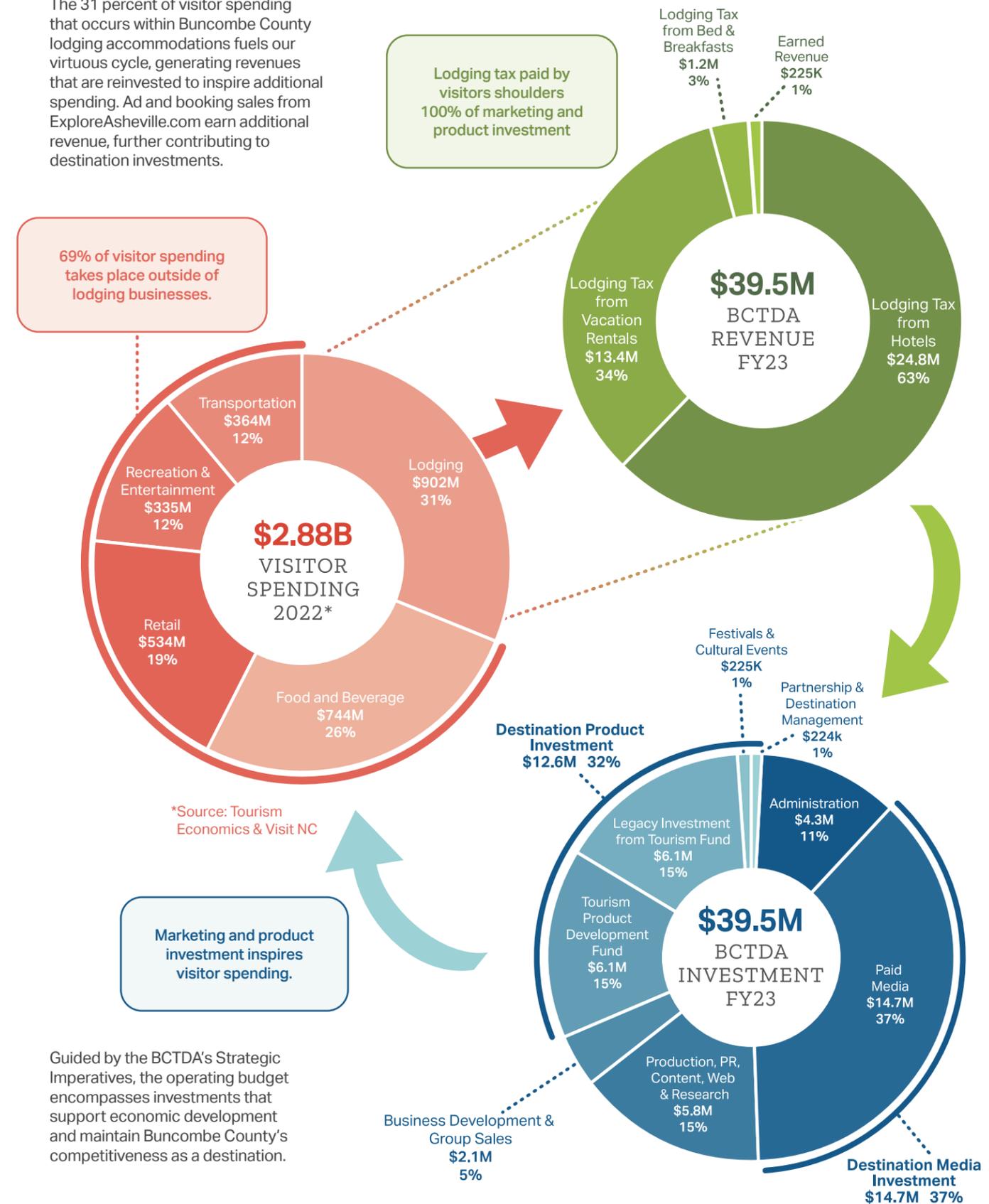
**MEN'S JOURNAL:** *What's Behind Asheville, North Carolina's Huge Success as a Craft Beer Hub? You'll Have to Visit to Find Out*

**THE WASHINGTON POST:** *The Latest Hot Food Destination is Nestled in the Blue Ridge Mountains*

**THE NEW YORK TIMES:** *36 Hours in Asheville, N.C.: Things to Do and See*

# THE VIRTUOUS VISITOR CYCLE

The 31 percent of visitor spending that occurs within Buncombe County lodging accommodations fuels our virtuous cycle, generating revenues that are reinvested to inspire additional spending. Ad and booking sales from ExploreAsheville.com earn additional revenue, further contributing to destination investments.



# BCTDA Investments Powered By Visitors



## Tourism Product Development Fund

The BCTDA has committed \$80 million to 45 community tourism projects since the fund's inception, with more than half invested in City-owned or operated amenities. The Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) is solely funded through a lodging tax paid by visitors who stay overnight in Buncombe County in commercial lodging facilities including hotels, vacation rentals, and bed-and-breakfasts. Investment in these transformational projects reinforce Asheville's sense of place through the preservation of historical community assets, modernization of our cultural destinations, and enhancement of natural amenities.



Scan this QR code  
to learn more about  
TPDF's legacy

## HISTORIC McCORMICK FIELD INVESTMENT

The BCTDA approved nearly \$23 million in multi-year funding for the City of Asheville's McCormick Field Centennial Restoration & Capital Improvements Project. This investment marks the **first debt service project** and the **largest TPDF investment ever granted**.

This investment will modernize the stadium into a multi-use public facility with the necessary infrastructure to operate year-round events. The project also includes the necessary capital improvements for McCormick Field to meet new Minor League Baseball facility standards passed in 2019. Construction is expected to begin Sept. 2024 and be completed by March 2026.

## 2022 TPDF Grant Cycle Recipients

In addition to approving \$15.6 million for new investment in 12 community projects, the BCTDA recently approved McCormick Field improvements through the Major Works Pathway for the benefit of both visitors and residents.

**City of Asheville**  
Swannanoa River Greenway  
Asheville Muni. Golf Course Phase I  
WNC Nature Center

**UNC Asheville Foundation**  
Karl Straus Track Renovation  
& Expansion

**RiverLink, Inc.**  
Karen Cragnolin Park –  
Greenway Phase

**North Carolina Glass Center**  
Glass Center in Black Mountain

**Asheville on Bikes**  
AVL Unpaved Phase I

**Asheville Museum of Science (AMOS)**  
Museum Beautification Project

**Wortham Center for the Performing Arts**  
The Wortham Center Phase II

**Buncombe County Government**  
Woodfin Greenway & Blueway  
Enka Recreation Destination



**2002**  
John B. Lewis Soccer  
Complex became the  
first project to receive  
TPDF investment

**2004**  
Pack Square Park received its first  
allocation of \$2.55 million in total  
TPDF investments

**2009**  
Asheville was first  
recognized as "Beer  
City USA" by Imbibe  
Magazine



# Supporting Local Culture & Events through Grants & Sponsorships

## Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund

Contributing to the financial viability and long-term sustainability of festivals and cultural events, the Festivals & Cultural Events Support Fund (F&CE) seeks to stimulate new events and expand on existing ones that are enjoyed by residents and visitors.

**\$90,000** was invested in 22 festivals and cultural events in this year alone.

More than **\$783,000** has been invested in festivals and cultural events since the creation of the support fund.



## Event Sponsorships

Sponsorship funding is available to Buncombe County-based nonprofits providing professional and community development opportunities that serve the local community.

In FY23, Explore Asheville offered 27 sponsorships to local community partners, totaling **\$132,500**.

## 2022 F&CE Support Fund Recipients

**Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program**  
ASAP Farm Tour | \$5,000

**Asheville Celtic Group**  
Asheville Celtic Fest | \$5,000

**Asheville Creative Arts**  
Peace Gardens and Market  
Annual Spring Fling! | \$5,000

**Asheville Downtown Association**  
Asheville Holiday Parade | \$5,000  
Downtown After 5 | \$5,000  
Pritchard Park Summer Series | \$3,850

**Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR)**  
Taste of Asheville | \$5,000

**Asheville Makers Inc.**  
Maker Faire Asheville | \$2,500

**Asheville Mardi Gras**  
Asheville Mardi Gras Parade & Queen's Ball | \$4,000

**Asheville Symphony Society, Inc.**  
Symphony in the Park | \$5,000

**Aurora Studio & Gallery, Inc.**  
Zelda Fitzgerald Week | \$800

**Black Mountain Swannanoa Chamber of Commerce**  
Sourwood Festival | \$5,000

**Black Mountain College Museum + Arts Center**  
{Re}HAPPENING 11 | \$3,500

**Blue Ridge Pride**  
Blue Ridge Pride Festival | \$5,000

**Center for Honeybee Research**  
Asheville HoneyFest | \$5,000

**Connect Beyond Festival**  
Connect Beyond Festival | \$5,000

**Green Built Alliance**  
CiderFest NC | \$3,500

**Johnny Shields Productions LLC (Open Doors Asheville)**  
Beer City Comic Con | \$2,500

**LEAF Global Arts**  
LEAF Downtown AVL | \$5,000

**Outdoor Gear Builders of WNC**  
Get in Gear Fest | \$2,500

**Swannanoa Valley Museum**  
Walk Through History | \$2,000

**The Center for Craft, Creativity, & Design Inc.**  
Krafthaus | \$5,000

## 2022 Sponsorship Recipients

**Skyview Golf Association**  
Skyview Golf Tournament

**East End/Valley Street Neighborhood Association**  
East End/Valley Street  
Community Heritage Festival

**Chow Chow Asheville**  
Chow Chow Asheville Food Festival

**Asheville Museum of Science**  
Under the Stars 2022

**American Institute of Graphic Arts**  
Asheville Design Weekend

**Center for Craft**  
Cherokee Basket Public Art Project:  
Opening Weekend & Celebration

**Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Project (ASAP)**  
ASAP's Business of Farming Conference

**UNC Asheville**  
UNCA Our Turn to Play  
Scholarship Dinner  
Asheville Ideas Festival

**Daniel Boone Council — Boy Scouts of America**  
80<sup>th</sup> Annual Distinguished Citizen Dinner

**The North Carolina Arboretum**  
Bloom with a View

**Asheville Symphony Society, Inc.**  
Asheville Amadeus Festival 2023

**Asheville Choral Society**  
A Sonic Diaspora: Music of Life

**Black Wall Street AVL**  
GrindFest AVL (May 2023)

**Weaverville Business Association**  
Music on Main

**Hola Carolina**  
Hola Asheville

**The Blue Ridge Bonsai Society**  
Bonsai as Fine Art

**The Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Association of Asheville and Buncombe County**  
Celebrating the History and Legacy of Juneteenth

**Southern Highland Craft Guild**  
Southern Highland Craft Guild July Fair

**Black Mountain Center for the Arts**  
Art in Bloom

**Asheville Tennis Association**  
Asheville Open Tennis Championships

**Leicester Artists**  
Come to Leicester Artists Studio Tour

**Folk Heritage Committee**  
Shindig on the Green (July 1, 8, 15, 22, August 12, 19, and 26, 2023)  
Mountain Dance & Folk Festival (August 3, 4, and 5, 2023)

**ArtsAVL**  
ArtsAVL Arts Trolley

**James Beard Foundation**  
James Beard Taste of America Series

### 2010

County-wide wayfinding program funded through the TPDF launched with more than 300 vehicular, pedestrian, and informational signs and kiosks



### 2012

Asheville was named "Most Beautiful Place in America" by Good Morning America



### 2014

River Arts District received its first allocation of more than \$7 million in total TPDF investments

### 2015/2016

The occupancy tax was increased from 4% to 6%, and began including short-term vacation rentals. 1.5% of tax revenue is dedicated to the TPDF



Explore Asheville's strategic imperatives emerged from extensive community listening sessions and broader community goals that frame and guide our work

# Delivering Balanced & Sustainable Growth

## GOALS

- » Balancing resident and visitor needs, recognizing the necessary role that sustainable, long-term growth of travel has in achieving a healthy, collective economy
- » Focusing on the quality of each visit to our community — balancing growth across the seasons, business and leisure travel, and throughout Asheville and Buncombe County

## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Invested \$38.6M in community capital projects and nearly \$223,000 in festivals and cultural events this year for both residents and visitors to enjoy



Introduced a new brand anthem and storytelling foundation to further differentiate Asheville and Buncombe County from competing destinations and inspire higher quality visits



Improved the quality of each visit by inspiring a two percent increase in weekday business from last fiscal year, with 61 percent of room nights now booked from Sunday to Thursday



Convened current and potential council members of the Asheville Business Events Council (ABEC) for the first time since the pandemic



## Majority of Residents Agree that Tourism Benefits their Community

Each year, Explore Asheville surveys Asheville and Buncombe County residents for their perspectives on tourism. In the early 2023 survey, an **overwhelming majority (84%) of residents agreed that tourism benefits their community.**

- » Seven out of 10 resident respondents agree that investment in tourism via the lodging tax collected by overnight visitors fuels the local economy.

**Asheville residents are proud of their community, the emphasis on inclusivity and diversity, and the culture and character of Asheville.**

- » 88% agree that visitors help support the number and variety of independent businesses, including restaurants, retail shops, and entertainment opportunities.

**Residents are proud of the natural beauty of Asheville and emphasize the importance of sustainable tourism.**

- » In alignment with Explore Asheville's strategic imperative to deliver balanced and sustainable growth, resident respondents agree that dispersing visitors throughout the county (70%) and throughout the year (76%) are important initiatives.

For more key insights from the 2023 Resident Sentiment Survey, scan the QR code.



**Foodie Cities of 2022**  
— YELP



**100 Most Loved Travel Destinations Around the World**  
— TOURISM SENTIMENT INDEX



**50 Best Places to Travel in 2023**  
— TRAVEL + LEISURE



WEAVERVILLE

## Spotlighting our neighborhoods

Buncombe County is home to distinct and vibrant communities. This year we shined a spotlight on Weaverville and Black Mountain to boost visitation and dispersal throughout the county.

Scan the QR codes to view each Neighborhood Spotlight video.



BLACK MOUNTAIN



**2018**  
TPDF reached \$44 million investment milestone in 39 projects

**2019**  
Asheville Music Project integrated campaign garnered *Rolling Stone* headline "Why Asheville, North Carolina, Is The New Must-Visit Music City"

# Encouraging Safe & Responsible Travel

## GOALS

- » Engaging residents and visitors with shared values to care for and respect natural, cultural, and human resources vital in delivering quality guest experiences
- » Collaborating with community organizations, local businesses, and environmentally focused partners to support the sustainability and growth of our outdoor economy

## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Leveraged Volta EV charging stations to reach like-minded visitors with a destination message that was rooted in sustainability in fall and spring campaigns



Bringing more purpose and meaning to our visitors, we connected four visiting groups to participate in community projects



Collaborated with and sponsored this year's Outdoor Business Alliance's Get In Gear Fest to grow recognition of our region as a top outdoor destination



Partnered with Outside Magazine and the PBS Docuseries The Good Road to spotlight not only our incredible landscapes but also the people that make our community so enchanting



## Making History by Celebrating our Trails

2023 marks a significant milestone in North Carolina's outdoor recreation history with the state's first-ever **Year of the Trail** designation, bringing together communities across the state to celebrate our trails.

As part of this campaign, Explore Asheville continues to recognize our region's vast network of trails and the people, organizations, and businesses who contribute to them. We launched a new webpage and spotlighted guided hikes, clean-ups, education events, or group outings that all took place on trails. We are even partnering with the Great Trails State Coalition to sponsor a video on trail safety that will be released in late 2023.

★ **15<sup>th</sup> Favorite City in the United States**  
— TRAVEL + LEISURE READERS, 2023

★ **Seven Hottest Honeymoon Destinations of 2023**  
— PUREWOW

## Hosting Adventure Travel Industry Leaders

The **Adventure Travel Trade Association™ (ATTA)**, the largest global network of adventure travel leaders, announced Asheville as the 2024 host city for its annual conference, **AdventureELEVATE North America**.

Asheville is the first city in the Southeastern US to host the conference in its 8th year. Considered one of the preeminent regionally focused industry events for adventure travel professionals, AdventureELEVATE includes an active Day of Adventure followed by two days of inspiring speakers, intensive educational workshop sessions, and one-on-one networking opportunities. We look forward to inviting leaders from the adventure travel community next June.



**2020**  
\$5 million Tourism Jobs Recovery Fund grant program launched, supporting nearly 400 local independent businesses

**2022**  
Visitors spent a record \$2.88 billion in Buncombe County

# Engaging & Inviting Diverse Audiences

## GOALS

- » Extending a genuine invitation to Black travelers and other diverse audiences including LGBTQIA+ visitors — connecting them with local neighborhoods, businesses, and entrepreneurs — creating more opportunities for all to win
- » Supporting product development, placemaking, and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community

## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Established a partnership with Black Enterprise and Essence magazine to share the stories of local Black entrepreneurs and extend an authentic invitation to Black travelers



Wrote our first Spanish language press release and translated our top Explore Asheville articles to Spanish



Hosted an Everyone Welcome training for Explore Asheville staff and engaged LGBTQIA+ audiences through PRIDE media and Passport magazine



Retooled and expanded our partner diversity designations to properly demonstrate the depth of diversity within our destination

## Skyview Golf Tournament



**Skyview Golf Tournament**, one of the nation's oldest African American golf tournaments, hosted its 63rd annual tournament here in Asheville. In addition to granting F&CE support, we provided a print placement in the June issue of African American Golfer's Digest, display banners and video running across Black-owned sites, and brought in stars from Love & Hip Hop: Atlanta as part of a multifaceted approach to engage and invite more diverse audiences and connect them with the community.

★ **Silver Visionary Award 2022**  
— PREVUE

★ **Best Summer Travel Destination**  
— USA TODAY, 10 BEST READERS' CHOICE TRAVEL

★ **Platinum Choice Award**  
— SMART MEETINGS



## Celebrating Diverse Asheville Stories

As part of Explore Asheville's partnership with NOMADNESS Travel Tribe, founder Evita Robinson conducted several in-depth interviews with local BIPOC entrepreneurs, artists, and community leaders for a new video series, sharing the rich tapestry of Asheville's Black and Latinx communities.

## Bringing Affrilachian Culture to ATL

Explore Asheville teamed up with NOMADNESS Travel Tribe to host an event for the BIPOC travel network's Atlanta-based members. The Affrilachian gathering brought together 60 Black travel writers and influencers for an intimate dinner prepared by James Beard Award finalist and Chef Ashleigh Shanti. This event positioned Asheville as a destination that welcomes diversity, highlighting the outdoors through conversations about Black food traditions and its ties to the land.



**2022**  
TDPF relaunched

**2022**  
Hotel owners successfully advocated for long-awaited change in occupancy tax legislation, which increased the amount of funds to be invested in community projects and created the Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fund

# Promoting & Supporting Asheville's Creative Spirit

## GOALS

- » Sharing stories of creators and makers who differentiate our destination through food and drink, visual and performing arts, experiences, and more
- » Supporting product development, placemaking, and community connections, enabling new experiences and business opportunities throughout our community

## ACHIEVEMENT HIGHLIGHTS



Engaged local arts organizations in a discovery process aimed at increasing attendance at indoor venues



Paired local culinary delights with Appalachian music for a Washington D.C. roadshow and "What Does Music Taste Like" event



Showcased local businesses and talent through nineteen activations at our partner events



Launched the Gift Bag Guide to better spotlight locally crafted goods to incoming meetings and groups

## Capturing Asheville's Fall Colors

Our content team partnered with six local photographers to capture the best and brightest color in the region from October to November. Each week these local foliage experts shared their recommendations on where to catch the latest changes to our stunning landscapes.



★ **7 Best Fall Travel Destinations**  
— FARE COMPARE

★ **Award of Excellence**  
— MEETING MAGAZINE

★ **10 Best Cities for Art Lovers**  
— YELP



## Hosting the 2022 Made in the South Awards

An 18-month partnership with Garden & Gun magazine culminated with a multi-day local celebration of Asheville's creative spirit and the **2022 Made in the South Awards**. The judges selected two local businesses, Biscuit Head and Poppy Popcorn, for top honors in the food category.

## Using Music to Encourage Exploration

Explore Asheville and TripAdvisor produced intimate bluegrass concerts in unexpected, unique settings in Asheville to encourage visitors to disperse and explore the entire Asheville area beyond top attractions. By creating an exclusive music experience, we drew visitors to Asheville and told stories through songs, highlighting Asheville as a destination where music matters.



**2023** \$23M has been committed to renovating McCormick Field into a year-round multi-use facility, making it the first debt service and the largest project in the history of the TPDF



## Expanding our Partner Network

**Approximately 1,900 Businesses and Organizations are Partnered with Explore Asheville**

Our partners make Asheville and Buncombe County a top desired destination and we are proud to shine a spotlight on the local artists, restaurants, tour providers, retail shops, and other attractions that make this place so special.

## Warm Welcome to our 115 New Partners

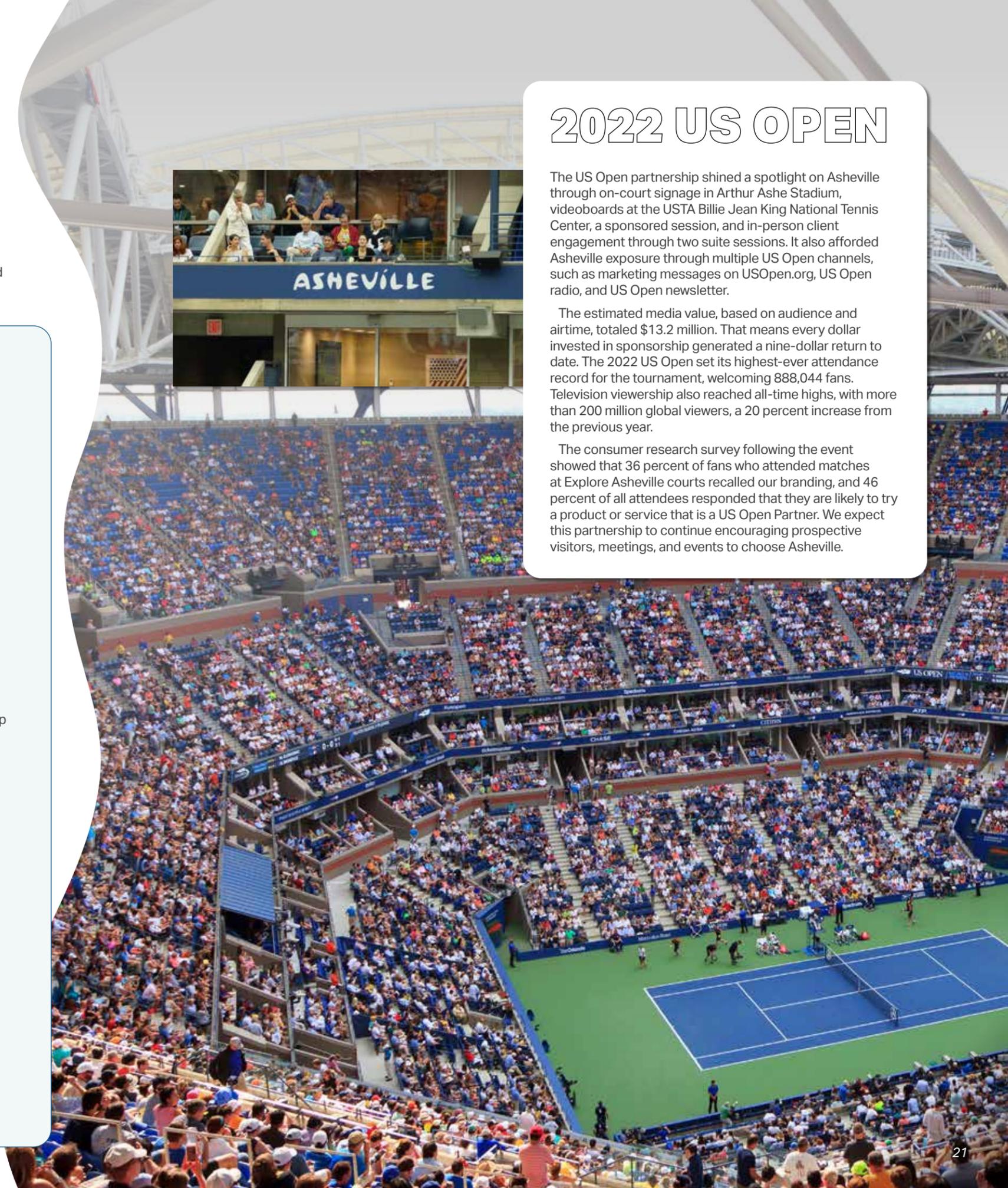
- |   |   |  |                                      |
|---|---|--|--------------------------------------|
| Adventure Mountain Off-Road Tours             | El Cielito                                | Marked Tree Asheville                        | Tahini Jar                           |
| Amanda McLenen Fine Art                       | El Kimchi                                 | Mikasa Criolla                               | Tall John's                          |
| ArtPlay Studio                                | Element Tree Essentials                   | Modern Muse Gallery                          | Tastee Diner                         |
| Asheville Guides and Gear LLC                 | Elevated Kava Lounge                      | More To Love, Plus Size Consignment LLC      | The Booth Fairy Project              |
| Asheville Outdoor Experiences                 | Ella Asheville                            | Morgan's Transportation and Rentals Services | The Cottage Collections              |
| AVL City Shuttle                              | Farm Burger                               | Mountain Mural Tours                         | The Crow and Quill                   |
| Banjoe Vacations                              | Fermenti                                  | Mountaineer Motor Tours                      | The Flat Iron Hotel                  |
| Black Mountain Herbal                         | Fioreously Delicious                      | Nantahala Outdoor Center                     | The Galaxy Room                      |
| Blunt Pretzels                                | Garage BBQ                                | French Broad Rafting                         | The Mule                             |
| Board and Brush Creative Studio Asheville     | GET HYPNOTIZED Live On Stage in Asheville | Narayani Gaia, Energy Healing                | The Outpost                          |
| Breeze Yoga Space                             | Ginger's Revenge                          | Nature Spirit Weddings                       | The Planning Asheville               |
| Brined and Cured Catering by Chef Steven Goff | South Slope Lounge                        | NC Wine Gals                                 | The RailYard Blk Mtn                 |
| Buckeye Antiques Mall                         | Half Light Honey                          | Never Ending Finds, LLC                      | The Rhu                              |
| Bun Intended                                  | Hilltop Event Center                      | New Origin Brewing                           | The Smokin' Onion                    |
| Carolina Avian Research and Education         | Hilltop Ice Cream Shop                    | Outsider Brewing Company                     | The Times Bar & Coffee Shop          |
| Cats at Play Café                             | Hoffer Art and Design                     | Over The Selvage                             | The Whale :: A Craft Beer Collective |
| City Brew Tours Asheville                     | Howdy Homemade Ice Cream                  | Paintings by Shirley Bavonese                | The Whale Outpost                    |
| Cloud Cottage Creative Co.                    | Indigo Sun                                | Pashnia                                      | There There                          |
| Codega Fiber Studio                           | Indulge Images                            | POP Rentals                                  | Torched AVL                          |
| Coffee Curious Workshops                      | Inspired Getaway                          | RadHaus Studios                              | Tyger Tyger Gallery                  |
| Damn Good Beer Bus                            | Julia Nicole Weddings and Events          | Re.Imagine Gallery and Studios               | Van in Black                         |
| Darë Vegan Cheese                             | KidCycle Club                             | Retro Coffee                                 | Van In Black Asheville Wine Tours    |
| Darrell Cassell Photography                   | Kirsten Alexandria Photography            | Reverie Asheville                            | Village Pub                          |
| Del Vecchios                                  | Laurel Falls Weddings                     | rEvolve buy-sell-trade                       | Ware                                 |
| Different Light Band                          | Leche Photography                         | RIVETER                                      | Weaver House                         |
| Different Wrld                                | Little Bee Woods                          | Rocket Fizz of Asheville                     | Weaving Rainbows                     |
| DJ Molly Parti                                | Locals Only Gifts and Goods               | Serenity Sound Healing of Asheville          | Well Played Board Game Café          |
| Dogwood Cottage Baking                        | Lotus Herban Spa                          | Smoke and Mirrors Skincare + Waxing          | Zen Mountain Tours                   |
|   | Love + Logistics Co.                      | Spirit Rose Wellness                         | Zen Skincare and Waxing Studio       |
|   | Marissa Irene Photography                 | Story Parlor                                 |                                      |

## 2022 US OPEN

The US Open partnership shined a spotlight on Asheville through on-court signage in Arthur Ashe Stadium, videoboards at the USTA Billie Jean King National Tennis Center, a sponsored session, and in-person client engagement through two suite sessions. It also afforded Asheville exposure through multiple US Open channels, such as marketing messages on USOpen.org, US Open radio, and US Open newsletter.

The estimated media value, based on audience and airtime, totaled \$13.2 million. That means every dollar invested in sponsorship generated a nine-dollar return to date. The 2022 US Open set its highest-ever attendance record for the tournament, welcoming 888,044 fans. Television viewership also reached all-time highs, with more than 200 million global viewers, a 20 percent increase from the previous year.

The consumer research survey following the event showed that 36 percent of fans who attended matches at Explore Asheville courts recalled our branding, and 46 percent of all attendees responded that they are likely to try a product or service that is a US Open Partner. We expect this partnership to continue encouraging prospective visitors, meetings, and events to choose Asheville.



# Fostering Connections within Our Industry

**+1,000**  
ATTENDEES  
FROM ALL  
EVENTS



## The Summer Social

JULY 2022

The Summer Social was held at Marquee within the River Arts District in celebration of Asheville's creative spirit. Nearly 275 partners joined us for a fun afternoon of networking surrounded by the talented artistry and wares.

## Annual Meeting

SEPTEMBER 2022

The 2022 Annual Meeting brought 250 partners together for an afternoon of inspiration, storytelling, celebrating, and connections. Our partners heard from keynote speaker Wendy K. Smith on Both/And thinking and enjoyed a storytelling update from MMGY.



## The Year Ahead

JANUARY 2023

Debuting this year, nearly 250 partners received a preview of what's to come in the year ahead for our community. We celebrated the 20th anniversary of the Tourism Product Development Fund and honored the 10th Annual CVB Superstars, whose standout contributions helped establish Asheville and Buncombe County as a world-class destination.

## Hospitality Outlook

MARCH 2023

The 2023 Hospitality Outlook offered a Tourism Economics' market-specific forecast on Asheville and Buncombe County's lodging and travel sector a national and market forecast to 85 local lodging leadership managers and sales team partners.



## National Travel & Tourism Open House

MAY 2023

In celebration of National Travel and Tourism Week, more than 120 partners joined us for an Explore Asheville Open House. We celebrated travel and tourism's role in stimulating economic growth, cultivating vibrant communities, creating quality job opportunities, and inspiring new business.



# Meet the Explore Asheville Team

### EXECUTIVE TEAM



**Vic Isley (She/Her)**  
President & CEO



**Julia Simpson (She/Her)**  
Manager, Executive & Strategy

### CULTURE & BUSINESS AFFAIRS



**Jennifer Kass-Green (She/Her)**  
Vice President of Culture & Business Affairs



**Josh Jones (He/Him)**  
Systems & Operations Manager



**Glenn Ramey (She/Her)**  
Human Resources Coordinator



**Anna Harris (She/Her)**  
Office Assistant

### MARKETING



**Marla Tambellini (She/Her)**  
Senior Vice President of Marketing



**Luisa Yen (She/Her)**  
Director of Public Relations



**Emilie Soffe (She/Her)**  
Director of Content



**Carli Adams (She/Her)**  
Group Marketing Manager



**Maggie Gregg (She/Her)**  
Social Media & Content Manager



**Cass Herrington (She/Her)**  
PR Manager



**Mickey Poandl (He/They/Them)**  
PR Manager



**Elizabeth White (She/Her)**  
Web Manager



**David Thompson (He/Him)**  
Digital Communications Manager



**Nick Kepy (He/They)**  
Marketing Manager



**Holly (Oakley) Watts (She/Her)**  
Marketing Coordinator



**Sha'Linda Pruitt (She/Her)**  
PR Coordinator

### BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT



**Michael Kryzaneck (He/Him)**  
Vice President of Business Development



**Connie Nuckolls Holliday (She/Her)**  
Director of Sales



**Shawn Boone (He/Him)**  
Senior Sales Manager



**Tina Porter (She/Her)**  
Senior Sales Manager



**Kathryn Dewey (She/Her)**  
Sales Manager



**Khal Khoury (He/Him)**  
Sales Manager



**Emily Crosby (She/Her)**  
Group Service Manager



**John Dawson (He/Him)**  
Group Service Coordinator



**Ali Wainright (She/Her)**  
Group Sales Coordinator



**Mia Brown (She/Her)**  
Sales & Marketing Assistant

### PARTNERSHIP & DESTINATION MANAGEMENT



**Penelope Whitman (She/Her)**  
Vice President of Partnership & Destination Management



**Tiffany Thacker (She/Her)**  
Director of Grants



**Ashley Greenstein (She/Her)**  
Public Information Manager



**Kimberly Puryear (She/Her)**  
Destination Project Manager



**McKenzie Provost (She/Her)**  
Partner Events Coordinator

The background of the entire page is a topographic map with white contour lines on a blue background. The lines are of varying thickness and style, including solid and dotted lines, representing different elevations and terrain features.

# EXPLORE ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY  
Buncombe County Tourism  
Development Authority



[EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM](https://www.exploreasheville.com)



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