

# Rutherford County Tourism

## August 2018

- Financial Review
  - Year End 2017-2018
  - Budget 2018-2019
- Year End Review
- Project Priorities for 2018-2019
- Internal Marketing Update
- A2D Program
- Tourism Master Plan Update

### TDA Board Members

#### Executive Committee

Board Chair:

1<sup>st</sup> Vice: Dave Long

2<sup>nd</sup> Vice: Richard Lundy

#### Other Members

Amy Bridges (Treasurer)

Barbara Meliski

Chuck Martell

Jim Masek (Secretary)

Kitty McCammon

Lynn Brown

Mary Jaeger-Gale

Ruthie Hanson

Willard Whitson

#### Ex-Officios

Eddie Holland

Paula Roach

**Rutherford County Tourism**  
**Rolling Financial Forecast**  
**2017-2018 End of Year**

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<b>Revenue/Expense</b>					
Occupancy Tax	\$ 913,248.07	\$ 1,000,000.00	\$ 1,114,846.91	\$ 114,846.91	Occupancy Tax Continues to Remain Strong + 1% increase + New Lodging
Penalties and Interest	\$ 2,655.04	\$ 1,800.00	\$ 4,688.92	\$ 2,888.92	
Fund Balance Appropriated	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Miscellaneous	\$ 506.01	\$ -	\$ 79,737.50	\$ 79,737.50	Sale of Mobile Unit + Towns Tourism Plan Partnership 1st Year Ad Sales Projection
Vacation Guide Ads	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 9,925.00	\$ 9,925.00	
Website Ads	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$ 916,409.12</b>	<b>\$ 1,001,800.00</b>	<b>\$ 1,209,198.33</b>	<b>\$ 207,398.33</b>	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<b>Expenses</b>					
Salaries/Wages Regular 121-00	\$ 148,610.45	\$ 156,000.00	\$ 185,703.88	\$ 29,703.88	Reflects new marketing positions and Welcome Center changes
Salaries/Wages P/T 126-00	\$ 29,794.26	\$ 33,100.00	\$ 11,880.78	\$ (21,219.22)	
<b>Total Salaries and Wages:</b>	<b>\$ 178,404.71</b>	<b>\$ 189,100.00</b>	<b>\$ 197,584.66</b>	<b>\$ 8,484.66</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>					
Fica 181-00	\$ 11,240.78	\$ 10,827.00	\$ 11,157.44	\$ 330.44	
Medicare 181-01	\$ 2,628.89	\$ 2,532.00	\$ 2,609.40	\$ 77.40	
Retirement 182-00	\$ 25,240.18	\$ 24,310.00	\$ 26,509.51	\$ 2,199.51	
NC Retirement 182-01	\$ 5,263.33	\$ 4,683.00	\$ 5,915.80	\$ 1,232.80	
Health and Life Insurance 183-00	\$ 24,128.85	\$ 25,200.00	\$ 29,774.25	\$ 4,574.25	
Café Administration 189-01	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 30.00	\$ 30.00	
Workers Comp. 186-00	\$ 689.72	\$ 6,160.00	\$ 393.42	\$ (5,766.58)	
Unemployment Comp. 185-00	\$ 743.00	\$ 770.00	\$ 542.23	\$ (227.77)	
<b>Total Benefits:</b>	<b>\$ 69,934.75</b>	<b>\$ 74,482.00</b>	<b>\$ 76,932.05</b>	<b>\$ 2,450.05</b>	
<b>Total Wages and Benefits:</b>	<b>\$ 248,339.46</b>	<b>\$ 263,582.00</b>	<b>\$ 274,516.71</b>	<b>\$ 10,934.71</b>	

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Marketing and Advertising: 370-00</u>					
Advertising/Marketing	\$ 35,645.45	\$ 43,000.00	\$ 45,767.89	\$ 2,767.89	
Fam. Tours/Media Tours	\$ 1,533.22	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 6,123.52	\$ 1,123.52	Aggressive Fam Tour program
Events	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Website	\$ 53,570.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,500.00	\$ 500.00	Reflects new website optimization program
Graphic Designer	\$ 6,859.50	\$ 13,000.00	\$ 13,099.46	\$ 99.46	
Print Advertising	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Marketing & PR Communications	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 144,000.00	\$ 80,448.00	\$ (63,552.00)	Retainer adjustment due to more work in house
Signage/Welcome Center/Billboards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Photography	\$ 13,353.28	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,987.00	\$ (7,013.00)	Internal Savings
Other	\$ 1,704.16	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Social Media	\$ 955.00	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 1,250.00	Enhance Social Media Plan
TDA Internal Graphic Design and Mkt.	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,635.55	\$ 635.55	
Printing Cost / Vacation Guide	\$ -	\$ 35,000.00	\$ 29,706.08	\$ (5,293.92)	
Other Marketing Costs 14-15	\$ 1,660.84	\$ 5,000.00	\$ -	\$ (5,000.00)	
Total Marketing and Advertising:	\$ 242,031.45	\$ 302,000.00	\$ 227,517.50	\$ (74,482.50)	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Administrative and Operations</u>					
Lease/Rent Expense: 431-00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,276.42	\$ 276.42	
Telephone: 321-00	\$ 3,758.85	\$ 3,600.00	\$ 3,119.96	\$ (480.04)	
VOIP 980-15	\$ 1,533.16	\$ 1,560.00	\$ 1,546.95	\$ (13.05)	
<u>Utilities: 331-00</u>					
Gas/Electric	\$ 4,410.47	\$ 5,285.00	\$ 3,204.78	\$ (2,080.22)	
Water/Sewer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<u>Janitorial: 394-00</u>	\$ 3,245.99	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 3,390.50	\$ (1,609.50)	In-House Cleaning
Total Rent and Utilities:	\$ 19,448.47	\$ 21,445.00	\$ 17,538.61	\$ (3,906.39)	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Office Expense</u>					
Office Supplies:260-00	\$ 5,424.44	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 4,966.44	\$ (2,533.56)	
Printing 341-00	\$ 2,926.48	\$ 7,000.00	\$ 3,669.02	\$ (3,330.98)	
Postage: 325-00	\$ 5,100.09	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 6,805.73	\$ (1,194.27)	
Equipment 510-00	\$ 1,219.74	\$ 4,000.00	\$ 2,806.68	\$ (1,193.32)	
Equipment Rent: 431-01	\$ 4,312.78	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 4,272.00	\$ (528.00)	
Dues and Subscriptions: 491-00	\$ 12,295.91	\$ 14,600.00	\$ 11,340.13	\$ (3,259.87)	
Total Office Expense:	\$ 31,279.44	\$ 45,900.00	\$ 33,860.00	\$ (12,040.00)	

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Repairs and Maintenance:</u>					
Building and Repairs Maint. : 351-00	\$ 24,841.32	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 4,311.80	\$ (20,688.20)	Adjustments to LL Welcome Center Program
Computer Repairs and Maint. 980-16	\$ 163.52	\$ 500.00	\$ 73.59	\$ (426.41)	
Total Repairs and Maint. :	\$ 25,004.84	\$ 25,500.00	\$ 4,385.39	\$ (21,114.61)	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Travel 311-00</u>					
Lodging	\$ 3,505.30	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 2,999.45	\$ (0.55)	
Conference Fees	\$ -	\$ 2,750.00	\$ 1,900.00	\$ (850.00)	
Meals	\$ 183.91	\$ 750.00	\$ 60.18	\$ (689.82)	
Travel	\$ 6,369.13	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 5,333.61	\$ (2,166.39)	
Total Travel	\$ 10,058.34	\$ 14,000.00	\$ 10,293.24	\$ (3,706.76)	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Professional Fees</u>					
Accounting / Prof. Serv. 192-00	\$ 4,900.00	\$ 25,050.00	\$ 21,017.58	(4,032.42)	Additional professional fees requested
Consulting 194-00	\$ 5,424.50	\$ 5,000.00	\$ 11,893.75	6,893.75	
General Fund Indirect 980-00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	-	
<u>Insurance Fees</u>				-	
Insurance Bonding 453-00	\$ 333.00	\$ 250.00	\$ 175.00	(75.00)	
Total Prof/Ins Fees:	\$ 50,657.50	\$ 70,300.00	\$ 73,086.33	2,786.33	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Project / Programs</u>					
Wayfinding Sign Maint. 510-03	\$ 194,062.90	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 131,350.00	\$ 106,350.00	Wayfinding Signs in Rutherfordton, LL, CR, FC, and Spindale
TAF 299-01	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ -	
Strategic Plan 191-00	\$ 39,696.45	\$ 49,800.00	\$ 265,301.62	\$ 215,501.62	Tourism Master Plan Expanded Per Town
Strategic Plan Imp. / Funding	\$ -	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 30,000.00	Forest City Rail Trail Bridge Enhancement + timing adjustment on towns imp.
Community Programs	\$ -	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 385.32	\$ (49,614.68)	
WEG Promotion	\$ -	\$ 25,000.00	\$ 20,675.14	\$ (4,324.86)	Community events less than projected
Promotional Events/Group Sales	\$ -	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 2,869.33	\$ (7,130.67)	
Total Project / Programs:	\$ 243,759.35	\$ 199,800.00	\$ 490,581.41	\$ 290,781.41	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Budget	17-18 RFF	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Totals</u>					
Total Revenue	\$ 916,409.12	\$ 1,001,800.00	\$ 1,209,198.33	\$ 207,398.33	Strong Occ Tax and 1% Tax Increase
Total Expenses	\$ 870,578.85	\$ 942,527.00	\$ 1,135,557.03	\$ 193,030.03	Wayfinding and Tourism Strategic Master Plan
Total Cash Flow (Revenue over Expenses)	\$ 45,830.27	\$ 59,273.00	\$ 73,641.30	\$ 18,146.14	
Cash Fund Balance	\$ 671,777.00	\$ 731,050.00	\$ 745,418.30	\$ 14,368.30	

**2018-2019 Budget**  
**Rolling Financial Forecast**  
**2018-2019 Budget RFF**

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<b>Revenue/Expense</b>					
Occupancy Tax	\$ 913,248.07	\$ 1,114,846.91	\$ 1,400,000.00	\$ 285,153.09	New Product, Tourism Growth, 1% Occupancy Tax Increase, WEG
Penalties and Interest	\$ 2,655.04	\$ 4,688.92	\$ -	\$ (4,688.92)	
Fund Balance Appropriated	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Miscellaneous	\$ 506.01	\$ 79,737.50	\$ -	\$ (79,737.50)	
Vacation Guide Ads	\$ -	\$ 9,925.00	\$ 16,000.00	\$ 6,075.00	Additional Ads and Slight Price Increase
Website Ads	\$ -	\$ -	\$ 11,400.00	\$ 11,400.00	New Website Program for Stakeholders
<b>Total Revenue:</b>	<b>\$ 916,409.12</b>	<b>\$ 1,209,198.33</b>	<b>\$ 1,427,400.00</b>	<b>\$ 218,201.67</b>	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<b>Expenses</b>					
Salaries/Wages Regular 121-00	\$ 148,610.45	\$ 185,703.88	\$ 195,000.00	\$ 9,296.12	
Salaries/Wages P/T 126-00	\$ 29,794.26	\$ 11,880.78	\$ 8,050.00	\$ (3,830.78)	
<b>Total Salaries and Wages:</b>	<b>\$ 178,404.71</b>	<b>\$ 197,584.66</b>	<b>\$ 203,050.00</b>	<b>\$ 5,465.34</b>	
<b>Benefits</b>					
Fica 181-00	\$ 11,240.78	\$ 11,157.44	\$ 11,050.00	\$ (107.44)	
Medicare 181-01	\$ 2,628.89	\$ 2,609.40	\$ 2,860.00	\$ 340.00	
Retirement 182-00	\$ 25,240.18	\$ 26,509.51	\$ 30,550.00	\$ 4,040.49	
NC Retirement 182-01	\$ 5,263.33	\$ 5,915.80	\$ 6,760.00	\$ 844.20	
Health and Life Insurance 183-00	\$ 24,128.85	\$ 29,774.25	\$ 33,000.00	\$ 3,225.75	
Café Administration 189-01	\$ -	\$ 30.00	\$ -	\$ (30.00)	
Workers Comp. 186-00	\$ 743.00	\$ 542.23	\$ 800.00	\$ 257.77	
Unemployment Comp. 185-00	\$ 689.72	\$ 393.42	\$ 1,000.00	\$ 606.58	
<b>Total Benefits:</b>	<b>\$ 69,934.75</b>	<b>\$ 76,932.05</b>	<b>\$ 86,020.00</b>	<b>\$ 9,087.95</b>	
<b>Total Wages and Benefits:</b>	<b>\$ 248,339.46</b>	<b>\$ 274,516.71</b>	<b>\$ 289,070.00</b>	<b>\$ 14,553.29</b>	RCTDA Staff Benefits

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Marketing and Advertising: 370-00</u>					
Advertising/Marketing	\$ 35,645.45	\$ 45,767.89	\$ 65,000.00	\$ 19,232.11	Additional Ad Campaign
Fam. Tours/Media Tours	\$ 1,533.22	\$ 6,123.52	\$ 8,000.00	\$ 1,876.48	Aggressive Fam Tour program
Events	\$ 1,500.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Website	\$ 53,570.00	\$ 40,500.00	\$ 52,000.00	\$ 11,500.00	Website and Optimization Program
Graphic Designer	\$ 6,859.50	\$ 13,099.46	\$ 17,000.00	\$ 3,900.54	Additional graphics needed for vacation guide and New Ad Campaign
Print Advertising	\$ 250.00	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Marketing & PR Communications	\$ 125,000.00	\$ 80,448.00	\$ 81,600.00	\$ 1,152.00	Retainer for marketing agency
Signage/Welcome Center/Billboards	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Photography	\$ 13,353.28	\$ 2,987.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 3,013.00	Continue to Grow Photo Library
Other	\$ 1,704.16	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
Social Media	\$ 955.00	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 3,750.00	Enhance Social Media Plan - Continue to Grow
TDA Internal Graphic Design and Mkt.	\$ -	\$ 6,635.55	\$ 6,000.00	\$ (635.55)	
Printing Cost / Vacation Guide	\$ -	\$ 29,706.08	\$ 50,000.00	\$ 20,293.92	Additional cost for printing vacation guide for Ad sales
Other Marketing Costs 14-15	\$ 1,660.84	\$ -	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 6,000.00	Miscellaneous
Total Marketing and Advertising:	\$ 242,031.45	\$ 227,517.50	\$ 297,600.00	\$ 70,082.50	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Administrative and Operations</u>					
Lease/Rent Expense: 431-00	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 6,276.42	\$ 6,000.00	\$ (276.42)	
Telephone: 321-00	\$ 3,758.85	\$ 3,119.96	\$ 3,240.00	\$ 120.04	
VOIP 980-15	\$ 1,533.16	\$ 1,546.95	\$ 1,560.00	\$ 13.05	
<u>Utilities: 331-00</u>					
Gas/Electric	\$ 4,410.47	\$ 3,204.78	\$ 4,300.00	\$ 1,095.22	
Water/Sewer	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	\$ -	
<u>Janitorial: 394-00</u>	\$ 3,245.99	\$ 3,390.50	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,609.50	Additional Supplies Needed for Welcome Center Expansion (LL)
Total Rent and Utilities:	\$ 19,448.47	\$ 17,538.61	\$ 21,100.00	\$ 3,561.39	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Office Expense</u>					
Office Supplies:260-00	\$ 5,424.44	\$ 4,966.44	\$ 7,500.00	\$ 2,533.56	
Printing 341-00	\$ 2,926.48	\$ 3,669.02	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 2,330.98	
Postage: 325-00	\$ 5,100.09	\$ 6,805.73	\$ 16,729.00	\$ 9,923.27	Mailing new vacation guide and WEG mailings - Increased Distribution
Equipment 510-00	\$ 1,219.74	\$ 2,806.68	\$ 3,000.00	\$ 193.32	
Equipment Rent: 431-01	\$ 4,312.78	\$ 4,272.00	\$ 4,800.00	\$ 528.00	
Dues and Subscriptions: 491-00	\$ 12,295.91	\$ 11,340.13	\$ 12,500.00	\$ 1,159.87	
Total Office Expense:	\$ 31,279.44	\$ 33,860.00	\$ 50,529.00	\$ 16,669.00	

	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Repairs and Maintenance:</u>					
Building and Repairs Maint. : 351-00	\$ 24,841.32	\$ 4,311.80	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 1,688.20	Welcome Center Program - Maintenance
Computer Repairs and Maint. 980-16	\$ 163.52	\$ 73.59	\$ 500.00	\$ 426.41	
Total Repairs and Maint. :	\$ 25,004.84	\$ 4,385.39	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 2,114.61	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Travel 311-00</u>					
Lodging	\$ 3,505.30	\$ 2,999.45	\$ 6,500.00	\$ 3,500.55	Additional Travel for Travel conferences and media and staff training opportunities
Conference Fees	\$ -	\$ 1,900.00	\$ 6,000.00	\$ 4,100.00	Additional Conference Fees
Meals	\$ 183.91	\$ 60.18	\$ 2,250.00	\$ 2,189.82	Additional travel for marketing manager to media conference and staff training opportunities
Travel	\$ 6,369.13	\$ 5,333.61	\$ 6,250.00	\$ 916.39	
Total Travel	\$ 10,058.34	\$ 10,293.24	\$ 21,000.00	\$ 10,706.76	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Professional Fees</u>					
Accounting / Prof. Serv. 192-00	\$ 4,900.00	\$ 21,017.58	\$ 16,000.00	(5,017.58)	STR Annual Fee Reduction + 5,500 for audit
Consulting 194-00	\$ 5,424.50	\$ 11,893.75	\$ 4,500.00	(7,393.75)	No professional fees
General Fund Indirect 980-00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	\$ 40,000.00	-	
<u>Insurance Fees</u>					
Insurance Bonding 453-00	\$ 333.00	\$ 175.00	\$ 175.00	-	
Total Prof/Ins Fees:	\$ 50,657.50	\$ 73,086.33	\$ 60,675.00	(12,411.33)	
	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
<u>Project / Programs</u>					
Wayfinding Sign Maint. 510-03	\$ 194,062.90	\$ 131,350.00	\$ 129,512.00	\$ (1,838.00)	Wayfinding Program Complete
TAF 299-01	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 10,000.00	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 50,000.00	Additional Funds Provided for Tourism Funding Campaign + Implementation
Strategic Plan 191-00	\$ 39,696.45	\$ 265,301.62	\$ 2,000.00	\$ (263,301.62)	Tourism Master Plan Complete
Strategic Plan Imp. / Funding	\$ -	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 300,000.00	\$ 240,000.00	Forest City Rail Trail + Town Partnerships (ENG)
Community Programs	\$ -	\$ 385.32	\$ 60,000.00	\$ 59,614.68	Continue to grow program
WEG Promotion	\$ -	\$ 20,675.14	\$ 30,000.00	\$ 9,324.86	Maximize RC benefit
Promotional Events/Group Sales	\$ -	\$ 2,869.33	\$ 20,000.00	\$ 17,130.67	Enhance group tours and Agri-tourism program
Total Project / Programs:	\$ 243,759.35	\$ 490,581.41	\$ 601,512.00	\$ 110,930.59	
Totals	16-17 Actual	17-18 Actual	18-19 Budget	Variance	Comments - Variance From Prior Year
Total Revenue	\$ 916,409.12	\$ 1,209,198.33	\$ 1,427,400.00	\$ 218,201.67	
Total Expenses	\$ 870,578.85	\$ 1,135,557.03	\$ 1,347,986.00	\$ 212,428.97	
Total Cash Flow (Revenue over Expenses)	\$ 45,830.27	\$ 73,641.30	\$ 79,414.00	\$ 5,772.70	Reserve for Future Projects
Cash Fund Balance	\$ 671,777.00	\$ 745,418.30	\$ 824,832.30	\$ 79,414.00	Fund Balance Growth to Support Future Master Plan Implementation

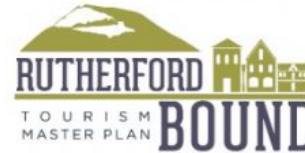


# Year End Review

## Fiscal Year 2017-2018

### Goal 1: Tourism Strategic Plan Completion

In March of 2017, the TDA approved the process to develop a countywide Tourism Strategic Plan. During the early planning process, the individual towns generated enthusiasm to develop a Tourism Asset Development Plan for each town and do a “deeper dive” per town. The “deeper dive” generated a Town/TDA partnership to fund the additional scope of work/planning. The new plan will be completed in early July of 2018 with a plan celebration and implementation kick off in late July of 2018. The planning effort involved each Towns Steering Committees, Stakeholders, and Citizens input. The planning process has been labeled a success.



### Goal 2: Funding Campaign for Tourism Strategic Plan

The planning process took on an enhanced scope of work and therefore an extended timeline for completion. This extended scope of work delayed the Funding Campaign. The TDA has put in place a potential committee, known as the Funding Allocation Committee, to assist the TDA with Funding Allocation recommendations. The TDA has also contracted with IPDC to facilitate the responsibilities of the committee. The committee is comprised of all of the Town Managers or Mayors, the Rutherford County Manager, and a few key Stakeholders/Leaders across Rutherford County. The initial meeting of this committee is tentatively scheduled for mid-July of 2018.



### Goal 3: Strategic Plan Implementation

All good plans must have an implementation and funding strategy. The option of doing nothing is not an option. Therefore, the TDA will be working with the Funding Allocation Committee, Towns, Stakeholders, Tourism Advisory Committee, and the TDA Board to develop an implementation process for the strategic plan. This process will be crucial to the success and future of Tourism development in Rutherford County.





#### Goal 4: Occupancy Tax Monitoring Program



In July of 2017, the TDA sent out occupancy tax inserts in all Rutherford County Tax Bill notifying residents of what occupancy tax is and if they should be paying it or not. From this insert, properties began being added weekly to the rental list where renters in Rutherford County were becoming compliant.

In October of 2017, The TDA purchased access to Bear Cloud Software under the umbrella of Short Term Rental (STR) Helper. The goal of this software was to analyze all of the known marketing websites weekly to help us identify and enforce compliance of all short-term rental properties in Rutherford County.



The STR software found 602 active marketing listings within Rutherford County. Of the 602 active listing, the TDA was able to confirm 367 unique properties (84 of which are not marketing within the system) that are actively marketing their lodging. Only 78 of these properties are currently compliant in paying their occupancy tax. There are 205 unique properties who do not currently have a record of paying occupancy tax.

Wrapping up the 2017-2018 fiscal year, the TDA will be sending out letters to the 205 properties without record of occupancy tax requesting their proof of payment if they are doing so, or otherwise explain to them how to be in compliance.

During the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the TDA has several goals: 1) the TDA will continue to grow this program and make sure that all eligible lodging property are in compliance with Rutherford County law and occupancy tax. 2) The TDA will send out tax insert forms again in July 2018 (a repeat of July 2017) with the new 6% occupancy tax rate. 3) The TDA will be monitoring the STR software and any external marketing tools with the World Equestrian Games approaching, to ensure that any new properties that come online are in compliance.

The TDA has and will continue to work closely with the Rutherford County Revenue Department, the Rutherford County Finance Department, and the TDA Attorney/County Attorneys to accomplish the long-term goal to ensure that all potential tax collectors are in compliance with state/local laws.



Goal 5: Develop Relationships with County and State Representatives, Stakeholders and Partners (Towns and State Elected Officials)



(Senator Ralph Hise)

The TDA meets and presents a TDA update to the County Commissioners on a quarterly basis, at the regularly schedules County Commissioner's meetings. The TDA Staff also attends and presents updates to the Town Councils on an as needed basis. This year, the TDA was able to move forward with the Wayfinding program for the towns. In addition, this year, the TDA continued to be involved with the Travel and Tourism Coalition and gained information and tourism support.

The TDA met with Rutherford County Senator, Ralph Hise. The TDA looks forward to growing relationships and contacts in Raleigh.



(Patrick McHenry)

Goal 6: Maximize Tourism Marketing Efforts and Efficiencies

This year the TDA hired a Marketing and Communications Coordinator, Amy Brevard, to ensure, coordinate and execute all TDA marketing strategies and effectiveness of all marketing



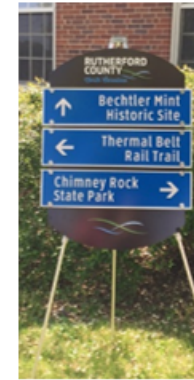
initiates in house. In her role, she has implemented a combination of marketing, public relations and communications management to increase and promote tourism in our county. She has facilitated active relationships with stakeholders, attractions, lodging, all tourism related groups and has worked diligently to cultivate community relationships. The TDA has stayed under marketing budget allocation and can attribute that to strategic efforts alongside creative grass roots marketing and media strategies. In the past, the TDA had

contracted with an outside advertising/marketing agency to implement the Marketing Plan. With the hiring of Amy, the TDA brought a number of marketing programs in house while contracting only a limited scope of work. This effort produced an amazing marketing campaign while saving the TDA thousands of dollars. The programs included print advertising, social media program, web-site optimization, stakeholder and visitor newsletters, and coffee talks with our stakeholders. The TDA will continue to develop and grow Tourism for Rutherford County.



#### Goal 7: Finalize Wayfinding Program-Monitor Program for the Future

The TDA spent the majority of the year working through the engineering issues. The Board determined that an acceptable resolution was not possible in the near future therefore; the TDA Board allocated additional funding and hired ACSM to complete the Wayfinding Program. The TDA is moving the Wayfinding program forward and anticipates that all of the signs in Chimney Rock, Lake Lure, Rutherfordton, Spindale, and Forest City will be installed by August 31<sup>st</sup> 2018, in time for the World Equestrian Games. The TDA Staff has worked with ACSM and NCDOT to complete the Wayfinding packets for Chimney Rock, Lake Lure, Rutherfordton, Spindale, and Forest City. The packets should be approved in late June or early July of 2018.



#### Goal 8: Enhance Stakeholder Communication



The TDA continues to build stakeholder relationships and improve on all communication efforts. In this goal year, we have increased and conducted consistent quarterly coffee talks meetings and are pleased to report an increase in attendance. In addition, we have produced several stakeholder e-newsletters and updates to further communications and promote available opportunities to all. We have also been committed to sharing updates and information with local Chambers, Civic Organizations, local community Groups, media and municipalities to

ensure updates and information have been properly shared and to enhance visibility to all of Rutherford County.

#### Goal 9: Produce New Vacation Guide

The brand new Rutherford County 2018 Travel Guide was launched and distributed in May 2018. The new guide was an internal production including coordination of the cover,



concept, content and editorial process. We also were able to implement a new editorial campaign to



stakeholders for additional advertising features. This new program generated and offset production cost of \$12,000. The new Travel Guide is now available online in digital format or a hard copy can be shipped directly to anyone in the world via our website link. We have also increased distribution locations and

obtained heavy traffic locations to promote and market Rutherford County. Plans to distribute over 50,000 guides this year are now in place.

#### Goal 10: Develop Group Tour Program

The TDA did a survey of all Tourism Stakeholders that provided a group tour master inventory report that groups could utilize for planning tours to the area. This report involved determining all possible lodging, dining, and activities in Rutherford County that could handle group business. The TDA then contacted each venue to determine their willingness and capacity opportunities to entertain group businesses. The information for group business will be available on the TDA Tourism Website to promote group businesses. The initial planning for marketing and promoting Rutherford County to potential group tours has begun with completion and implementation to take place in the 2018-2019 fiscal year.





### Goal 11: Enhance the RC Trails Program and Itineraries Promotion

The TDA has partnered with ROC this year to enhance and grow our trail promotion. The partnership included a Kiosk at the Lake Lure Welcome Center that displays ROC website and trails. The partnership allows for access to all of the trails and mapping. We also have reciprocal links on our websites. The TDA also provided an extensive amount of research, photography, and GIS



locating of the Historical Markers in Rutherford County. This information was used to create a Rutherford County Historical marker Brochure that will assist our Historical Tourism.

### Goal 12: Develop Community Program/Events

In the 2017-2018 budget, the TDA allocated \$50,000 to the community programs line item. In November of 2017, the TDA implemented a grant funding campaign to assist Rutherford County organizations that host events that draw in visitors, with marketing dollars. In April of 2018, the TDA approved \$21,000 in grant funding that was allocated to several events throughout the County. These events include; Springo in Chimney Rock, The Hickory Nut Gorge Olympiad in Lake Lure, Dirty Dancing Festival in



Lake Lure, Dirty Dancing Festival After Party in Lake Lure, The Flowering Bridge in Lake Lure, Hot Nights Cool Rides in Forest City, Hometown Holidays in Forest City, and Mayfest in Rutherfordton.

In the 2018-2019 fiscal year, the goals for the TDA are to increase the funding allocation to \$60,000 and allocate all dollars to eligible community events.



### Goal 13: Maximize Rutherford County's WEG Benefit/Support

TDA has developed a comprehensive and aggressive marketing strategy to promote Rutherford County before, during and after the WEG games. We have an intense focus on promoting Rutherford County's small towns and main streets enticing visitors to stay and play here with us. Our end goal is to capture lodging and increase occupancy during the games as well as promote attractions, shopping and dining visitors can experience. The TDA will also execute a separate targeted media plan to initiate coverage and create interest for future coverage. We will continue to foster media relationships both locally, regionally and internationally and have many familiarization tours scheduled as well as media access during games onsite at TIEC.



Billboard for WEG

The TDA team has also carefully researched and developed an informative customized Rutherford County hospitality program available at no cost to any stakeholder, business, organization, group or resident wishing to participate. This new customized program offers innovative hospitality/customer service skills specific to our county, tourism and will vastly enhance knowledge of our history and remarkable uniqueness. We also had a WEG specific module designed to educate and excite participants in the WEG experience and equine terminology. After completion of this complimentary online program, TDA staff will also offer a live class offered monthly and as needed countywide.

The TDA has served on many WEG committees throughout our county and will continue to coincide all marketing efforts with each town or municipality. We have also developed a brand awareness campaign and new distribution for our Travel Guides specifically targeting WEG attendees or equine enthusiasts. We will continue to implement our social media platforms and utilize our cross promotions with stakeholders, media and visitors. With these highly creative campaigns, we feel confident we can succeed in highlighting our county to potential visitors and effectively deliver the message of being a destination to visit with close proximity to TIEC.



Sample Banner Ad for WEG





# 2018-2019 Goals

1. Promote Tourism Master Plan Success and Collaboration
2. Tourism Plan Implementation and Funding
3. Maximize Tourism Occupancy Tax Receipts
4. Continue to Grow and Develop Relationships with County, Town, State Representatives, and Stakeholders
5. Implement TDA Marketing Plan
6. Develop Hospitality Program for Rutherford County
7. Implement Group Sales Program
8. Implement Trails and Itinerary Program
9. Grow Community Program/Events
10. Maximize Rutherford County's Benefit to WEG
11. Complete County-Wide Wayfinding Program
12. Research and Develop Rutherford County Agri-Tourism Program
13. Enhance and Develop Welcome Center Presence in Lake Lure and Rutherfordton
14. Rutherford County – Keep Rutherford County Beautiful
15. Provide TDA Staff with Education Opportunities
16. Strive to Develop RCTDA to be one of the Leading Rural Tourism Development Organizations in the State of North Carolina



# Internal Marketing Updates

- Rutherford County Photoshoot for summer completed (see photos below for sample images)
- Continue to execute WEG Marketing plan, budget and unique marketing campaigns for upcoming games
- Monitoring SEO/Website program for TDA website: [www.visitncsmalltowns.com](http://www.visitncsmalltowns.com)
- Continued to collect community event calendar from stakeholder for The Mountain Breeze and other local event calendars or sites





Ad Samples



**Lake Lure &**  
the Blue Ridge Foothills  
Rutherford County, NC

THE PERFECT GETAWAY  
VisitNCSmallTowns.com



**Lake Lure &**  
the Blue Ridge Foothills  
Rutherford County, NC

THE PERFECT GETAWAY  
VisitNCSmallTowns.com

TIME OF YOUR  
*Life*  
adventure



*Feed your soul...*

**Lake Lure &**  
the Blue Ridge Foothills  
Rutherford County, NC

VisitNCSmallTowns.com

family-oriented | outdoor adventures | southern hospitality | lasting memories



*Feed your soul...*

family-oriented | outdoor adventures | southern hospitality | lasting memories  
THE PERFECT GETAWAY  
VisitNCSmallTowns.com

TIME OF YOUR  
*Life*  
Rutherford Co.

**Lake Lure &**  
the Blue Ridge Foothills  
Rutherford County, NC

# Internal Marketing Updates



Summer Ad Campaigns as well as WEG ad campaigns have been executed.

Publications include:  
Our State Magazine, USA Today  
Travel, WNC Magazine,  
Everything Rutherford, Blue  
Ridge Country, SC Living, TIEC  
Destination Guide, The Mountain  
Breeze, and Charlotte Parent.



# Travel Guide



Travel Guides will be featured at TIEC for the remainder of the year as well as during WEG.

Copies have been distributed in Rutherford County to lodging, attractions, dining and other key community locations.

# TDA Everywhere!



TDA Night – Owls Game



Love Meg



TDA Night – Owls Game



Trash Pickup



Whistle Stop Bakery-TG Delivery

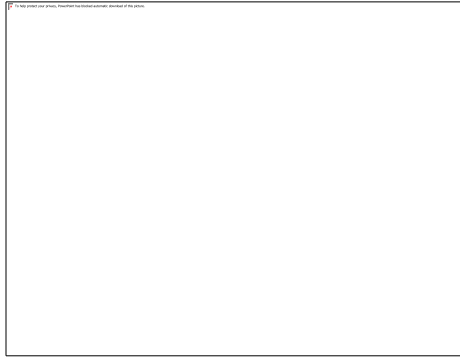


Baseball Contest





# Rutherford County Tourism Coffee Talks



This Event is  
Free to ALL  
Stakeholders!

Join us for Coffee Talks at one of these Locations

Wednesday, August 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Burntshirt Tasting Room at 8:30 A.M.

438 Main St.

Chimney Rock, NC 28720

OR

Thursday, August 9<sup>th</sup>, 2018

Days Inn and Suites at 8:30 A.M.

2600 US Hwy 74A BYP

Forest City, NC 28043

Join us as we chat about:

- Internal Updates
- Hospitality Training
- The World Equestrian Games
- Marketing Highlights
- Plus FREE Marketing Tools!

# A2D Hospitality Training

**SPORTS**  
All-county baseball/B1

## THE DAILY COURIER

Wednesday, June 27, 2018 • \$1.00 • Serving Rutherford County • www.thedigitalcourier.com • Local Matters

### TDA launches hospitality training program

BY TAYLOR JOHNSON  
TJOHNSON@THEDIGITALCOURIER.COM

RUTHERFORDTON— The Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) launched a free hospitality training program this week, which is available for any Rutherford County citizen, business or organization.

According to the TDA website [visitsmalltowns.com](http://visitsmalltowns.com), the "Rutherford County Visitor Journey A2D™" is a new tourism awareness training that helps everyone in our destination create positive visitor experiences from their Arrival to Departure, or from A2D.

The first part of the program is an online course, which will take participants approximately 75-90 minutes to complete. The online course includes seven modules that are filled with videos, quizzes and activities concerning the area and helping visitors.

"The beauty of that online program is that they can go through the module at their own pace," TDA Marketing and Communications Manager Amy Breward said.

The online program also includes a segment on the upcoming World Equestrian Games (WEG), which will be held in neighboring Polk County in September. The WEG is expected to have a significant community impact with approximately 500,000 visiting the area over two weeks and approximately \$400 million of expected revenue generated. There are 72 countries which will be participating in the games.

"I think being educated and aware of what is actually going on out there at the Equestrian Center may be informative and helpful," TDA Executive Director Don Cason said.

Photo courtesy of the Rutherford County TDA

Laura Thompson (left) and Beau Lunsford (right) are pictured at Coffee on the Rocks in Chimney Rock.

SEE TDA PAGE A8

- New Hospitality Training Program launched June 15<sup>th</sup>
- Next live monthly class scheduled in August.
- Private large group live classes scheduling has begun.
  - Rumbling Bald Resort will be held on August 1<sup>st</sup>.

Complimentary RUTHERFORD COUNTY'S FAVORITE NEWSPAPER

## RUTHERFORD WEEKLY

SMALL TOWN FRIENDLY, BIG TIME RESULTS

ISSUE NO. 20 JULY 19, 2018 RutherfordWeekly.com 888-248-1408

### Southern Hospitality

Welcome to Rutherford County. We're glad you're here!

Rutherford County Visitor Journey A2D

Visitor Journey A2D™ is a new tourism awareness training program that helps everyone in our destination create positive visitor experiences from their Arrival to Departure, or from A2D. Highly customized for our area, this course helps our entire community learn more about the richness of what we offer visitors. This program was designed to increase awareness of how all of the tourism sectors fit together to build the visitor's total experience. And, how one person's actions can create a snowball effect of negative - or positive - encounters.

Rutherford County Visitor Champion A2D

Visitor Journey A2D™ is a blended-learning program presented in two parts. The first part is an online course. There are seven short modules filled with videos, activities and quizzes about our area and helping visitors. The entire course takes about 75-90 minutes to complete, but you can come and go and finish it at your own pace. Next you can attend a 90-75 minute live class. The engaging class gives you the opportunity to share what you know and to learn from others in our community. For those that complete both parts, you'll achieve your Rutherford County Visitor A2D Champion™ certificate! For non-industry visitors, you're welcome to go as far as you desire. For industry workers, your employer may require completion.

INSIDE THIS WEEK

Summit & Stone Homes	1	Local News	1
Dark Hopping	1	Rutherford County News	1
Love in New York	1	Local News	1
Dear Mr. X	1	Local News	1
Local News	1	Local News	1

Photo courtesy of the Rutherford County TDA

- Sent program out to County, Stakeholders, Chambers, Towns, and other key partners to promote.
- Partnering with ICC for live class at Fall/Winter Coffee talks

## Tourism Strategic Plan

### County-Wide Plan

- Tourism Plan process completed on June 30<sup>th</sup> 2018
- Tourism Plan Document Review started in mid-July
- Towns and County steering committees to review plan document 7/25-8/5
- Implementation and funding committee initial meeting met July 19<sup>th</sup>
- Implementation and Funding committee to meet on July 30<sup>th</sup> to develop a program of work for implementation/funding
- Tourism Master Plan release to public TBD or by mid-late October

Remember: “The option of doing nothing is not an option.”

“When you build a better place to live, work and play, you build a place people want to visit”.

