Explore Asheville
Convention & Visitors Bureau
PRESIDENT/CEO
Asheville, NC
ABOUT ASHEVILLE, NORTH CAROLINA

Filled with natural wonders and architectural treasures, you’ll soon come to understand the allure of Asheville. Discover for yourself all there is to see and do. From iconic landmarks to local favorites, these are our sure bets for a memorable mountain escape. Create your own experience with these itineraries or check out 50 things to do in Asheville. Explore our favorite winter activities, or start planning your visit with these places to stay.

Attractions – Immerse yourself in the perennial beauty of Asheville’s natural wonders, be enchanted by the by-gone era of America’s Gilded Age, or embark upon a thrilling zipline adventure through the forest canopy. With activities that appeal to every traveler, create an Asheville experience all your own through one of our many unique attractions.

Recreation and Nature – Complete with breathtaking scenic vistas and the highest peaks of the Appalachian Mountains, Asheville is an outdoor destination perfect for all-season exploration.

Places to Stay – When choosing where to stay in Asheville, you’ll discover perfect options suited to your own travel style. Wake up each morning to a stunning mountain view in one of Asheville’s hotels & resorts, get cozy in a secluded cabin hideaway, or stay steps away from the action at an uber-chic boutique in the heart of downtown.

Tours – Asheville’s attractions and tours include Art, Brewery, Winery & Distillery, Comedy, Culinary, Haunted, Historic, Outdoor and Walking.

Music – Asheville’s music scene is born of age-old traditions, nurtured by a spirit of independence and the muse of the mountain landscape.

Arts – The arts scene is buzzing, featuring fine artists, performing arts venues, mountain crafter, folk artists, art galleries and art events.

Downtown Asheville – One of America’s most vibrant small cities, Asheville is characterized by its collection of independent, shops, restaurants, art galleries and entertainment venues.

LET YOUR SPIRIT RUN FREE

The Explore Asheville CVB has earned numerous national accolades including “#1 Best in the US Destination for 2017” by Lonely Plant, Best Cities in the U.S. by Conde Nast Travel in 2018, Travel & Leisure’s 50 Best Places to Travel in 2020, and coveted space on CNN, the New York Times, and National Geographic. The in-house media relations team places hundreds of national stories annually and has achieved as many as 6 billion impressions in one year.

Explore Asheville Marketing Department also includes in-house website development, content, and research. ExploreAsheville.com attracts more than 5 million user sessions annually and generates more than 1 million downstream clicks to partners.
**MEETINGS, ELEVATED**

Long celebrated for its bohemian flavor and superb quality of life, Asheville exceeds the expectations of meeting and conference planners.

- **CVB Services** – From site selection to planning the details, the Asheville CVB Sales & Service team offers valuable support and services to meeting and convention planners.
- **Meeting Hotels** – Consider the possibilities: 8,000 hotel rooms and meeting space up to 83,000 square feet.
- **Meeting Facilities** – Asheville offers a wide variety of venues designed to give you plenty of exceptional options.
- **Unique Venues** – Options range from bluegrass and BBQ under the stars at a mountain ranch to cool jazz at a chic gallery.

**TOURISM BUILDS COMMUNITY**

**VISITOR SPENDING AT LOCAL BUSINESSES** – Visitors spend $2 billion at local businesses in Buncombe County annually. Those businesses bought goods and services from more local businesses for a total economic impact of $3.1 billion.

**LOCAL TAXES GENERATED BY TOURISM** – Tourism generated $199.1 million in state and local revenues in 2017. In total, tourism generates $53 million in property taxes – 16% of the total property tax for Buncombe County and 1/3 of the total for the City of Asheville.

- City of Asheville: $27.9 million total, $20.6 million property tax and $6.2 million sales tax.
- Buncombe County: $63.1 million total, $32.4 million property tax and $28.7 million sales tax.
- State of North Carolina: $108.2 million total, including $73.7 million of sales tax.

**PEOPLE WORKING IN TOURISM JOBS** – Tourism in Buncombe County puts 18,346 people to work at tourism-related businesses. In total, tourism supports 27,241 jobs which is 15% of employment in Buncombe County.

- Tourism generated $840 million of employee wages.
- Every industry has entry-level positions. Hotels employ only 5% of the people in Buncombe County who earn less than $12 per hour.
- In 2017, hotels in Asheville paid 19% more than their counterparts on average in North Carolina.
- Tourism supports 4,812 workers in lodging and:
  - 2,673 retail workers (16.5 % of all retail workers)
  - 6,142 restaurant workers (half of all restaurant workers)
  - 2,895 jobs in recreation and entertainment (half of rec./ent. workers).
  - More than 10,000 jobs in other categories including business services, finance, insurance and real estate.

**HOTEL DEVELOPMENT**

Buncombe County is in the midst of a construction cycle that will add more than 40% new hotel rooms to a starting inventory of 8,000, in addition to a supply of short-term rentals of several thousand. The destination has successfully absorbed the new inventory and has been able to maintain rate.
- Asheville has more than 80 hotels with over 8,000 rooms, meeting spaces up to 83,000 square feet, and a myriad of unique venues.
- With 513 guest rooms and 58,200 square feet of versatile event, banquet convention and meeting space, the Omni Grove Park Inn is the largest single property in Asheville.
- Harrah’s Cherokee Center – Asheville offers a 25,000 square foot Exhibit Hall, a Banquet Hall, a 7,700 seat ExploreAsheville.com Arena, the 2,400 seat Thomas Wolfe Auditorium and 11 additional meeting rooms. Harrah’s largely hosts special entertainment, sporting and local community events. BCTDA has dedicated more than $5 million dollars in renovation money through 2016 to various projects at the Center. The City of Asheville is responsible for the facility’s management.

ASHEVILLE BUNCOMBE COUNTY SPORTS COMMISSION

We’re good for Sports – Top notch sports facilities, a happening downtown, loads of family friendly activities, a bounty of indie restaurants and local breweries, convenient location, amazing scenery and more than 80 hotels.

The BCTDA provides funding for the sports commission which is an independent entity working in partnership with Explore Asheville to attract sports events. The destination has recently attracted high profile events including the 2018 and 2019 Fed Cup championship matches.

CVB services include:
- Contacting hotels and venues to gather rates and availability.
- Creating itineraries for site inspections of sports venues and hotels.
- Connecting you with local service providers to plan your event.

Click here for more information.

ABOUT EXPLORE ASHEVILLE CONVENTION & VISITORS BUREAU

The BCTDA/Explore Asheville has played the leading role in the advancement and development of the Asheville area tourism economy for over 35 years. The organization is “Partner Centric” rather than a member-based entity. The organization takes pride in the fact that it provides a platform for over 1,200 tourism partners to share their business and market the area as a tourist destination, all at no cost to the partners.

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is a public authority created by state law to administer the occupancy tax. As such, the organization is subject to public meetings and public documents requirements of the State of North Carolina. The BCTDA recognizes the importance of public records compliance and therefore, make all appropriate documents, emails, and other communication available for public review upon request.

Explore Asheville is funded through a 6% dedicated occupancy tax established by state statute. 4.5% of the tax is dedicated by the same statute to destination marketing and sales, and the remaining 1.5% is dedicated to the innovative Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF, see below). Explore Asheville generates a small amount of additional revenue through partner advertising on its website, which is then provided as grants to eligible festivals and events.

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The organization is built around four teams: Executive, Marketing, Sales and Public Affairs. Each team has its own goals and objectives, which are strategically aligned to provide a seamless approach to meeting the BCTDA’s mission and vision. Explore Asheville’s efforts indicate the strength of each team and the program of work accomplished to stimulate the tourism-based economy through:
• Focus on communication
• Advertising on a national and global scale
• National marketing and sales
• Partner support

• Strong use of digital platforms
• Visitor services
• Media relations and communications
• Industry advocacy

For everything above and so much more, visit the guest and community facing website here and the tourism partner and business website here.

POSITION SUMMARY

Explore Asheville is charged with fulfilling the BCTDA’s mission, “To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.” It also supports the BCTDA’s vision that, “Asheville/Buncombe County will retain its unique, authentic and environmental charm while welcoming global visitors searching for personal enrichment and memorable experiences.”

TOURISM PRODUCT DEVELOPMENT FUND (TPDF)
Designated as a funding source for the construction of capital development projects to attract overnight visitors, the Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) has developed a reputation as the gold standard among similar funding models. Hospitality industry leadership established the grant program in 2001 as an incentive pool to help projects that would serve as a destination driver. Twenty-five percent of the lodging tax is dedicated to the TPDF that has awarded $43 million to 39 community projects that attract visitors to the destination and improve the quality of life in the Asheville area — parks, theaters, museums, historic sites, sports fields, arts development, greenways and supporting infrastructure. Click here to learn more about the TPDF.

TOURISM MANAGEMENT AND INVESTMENT PLAN (TMIP)
The BCTDA launched the Tourism Management and Investment Plan to Develop Community Assets (TMIP) in March 2019. This initiative builds upon the rigorous application-based process established by the BCTDA to evaluate opportunities for TPDF investment. Cornerstones of the TMIP process include community input and collaboration with public entities to find alignment between the legislative mandate of the fund, the priorities of the residential community and opportunities to manage tourism impacts to sustain and enhance quality of place. The Tourism Management and Investment Plan will be a long-range community-based strategy that manages the impacts of visitation while continuing to take advantage of the economic benefits of tourism that have strengthened the economic vitality of Western North Carolina.

The President & CEO leads this process with consulting firm, PGAV, and support staff. The process is in final stages with a completed report anticipated in July 2020. Click here to learn more about the TMIP.

ACCOUNTABILITY

The President & CEO receives direction and guidance from the Board of Directors and the Executive Committee on annual budget and overall program plan; review of monthly financial reports; review of annual tourism marketing and sales plans, policy positions of matters of member, community or industry importance, plus additional direction as solicited or offered.
RESPONSIBILITIES

• Review and be very familiar with the corporate charter and by-laws.
• Actively promote the involvement of underrepresented groups in all aspects of Explore Asheville, including staff and board members.
• Be the official spokesperson for the tourism industry and leverage that role to create positive public relations and image enhancement for the industry.
• Develop an annual staffing and program plan which fulfills the objectives of the Board.
• Oversee the effective operation of the four major departments of the CVB (Executive, Marketing, Sales and Public Affairs) and directly supervises the work of the department heads.
• Indirect supervision of all staff to assure maximum productivity and that the plan is executed for maximum return.
• Development of the annual budget and oversee the process for ongoing management of the budget throughout the year.
• Ensure that all functions of the CVB are reviewed continuously for cost effectiveness in order to ensure optimum use of all resources; and make recommendations where changes are to be made to strengthen the organization.
• Responsible for the negotiating of and signing of all contracts as allowed by the by-Laws.
• Assure that appropriate procedures and policies are defined for the smooth and efficient operation of the organization.
• Manage the Tourism Management and Information Plan (TMIP) implementation phase and making sure the TMIP Committee is prepared and informed.
• Preparation for each Executive Committee and Board of Directors meetings in such a manner that each group has adequate information to make informed decisions.
• Develop, nurture, and maintain excellent working relationships with elected and appointed county and city officials and officials of other governmental agencies and jurisdictions, to assure and support a sense of accountability and cooperation.
• Establish close ties with the local press and media community in order to enhance the image of tourism and its development in the region.
• Direct, plan, or administer any special studies or investigations as directed by the Board of Directors and prepare reports and recommendations on any such matters.
• Proposing appropriate Committees and their members.
• Actively participate with the department heads in planning an effective annual board retreat and annual meeting.
• Represent the BCTDA and Explore Asheville on various boards and committees of City, County or State government, the national tourism industry, the business industry, and other sector organizations as appropriate.
• Provide leadership and information to the business and general community in matters affected by tourism and relative to its current and future health.
• Work closely with various tourism-related and -impacted local organizations such as Asheville Independent Restaurant Association (AIR) and the Asheville Buncombe Sports Commission.

QUALIFICATIONS

• Minimum of ten years of progressive growth and highly successful in-depth experience working in the travel, tourism and hospitality industry in an executive level position, including but not limited to group sales, marketing, advertising, public relations, and community engagement experience. DMO experience preferred.
• A minimum of a bachelor’s degree with an emphasis in marketing and business administration is desirable.
• Experienced in developing and managing a budget in the range of $20M preferred.
• Must possess strong strategic thinking and planning skills as well as a track record for accurately analyzing business situations.
• Must possess a keen understanding of business and tourism analytics and be able to interpret beyond the face value of data that is provided.
• Display exceptional interpersonal skills and have strong verbal presentation abilities.
• Provide vision, energy, and commitment to advancing the Authority and its master plan.
• Expertise in working with a Board of Directors, a collaborative management team, and multiple constituents.
• Must possess strong leadership and management skills, particularly with regard to motivation, team building, employee development, creativity, analytical perception and organization.
• Demonstrate leadership in forging new business opportunities and processes.
• Very strong organizational and supervisory skills.
• Timely in all communication. Exceptional communications skills, including an innate ability to think on your feet.
• Ability to relate effectively with a broad cross-section of individuals including government officials, community leaders, industry leaders, the agency of record, and tourism partners.
• A flexible, responsive and politically astute leader with experience in bringing communities together.
• Demonstrated record of cooperation and collaboration with other organizations in working for the advancement of community goals, tourism development and advocacy.
• Utilizes collaboration and a team player style in marshaling resources, decision-making and relationships.

CHARACTERISTICS

• Active Listener
• Approachable
• Authentic
• Community-Minded
• Consensus Builder
• Creative and Strategic Thinker
• Engaging
• Ethical
• Excellent Communicator
• Inclusive
• Network Builder
• Politically Experienced
• Resilient
• Strong Business Acumen
• Strong Leader
• Unifier
• Visible

TOP PRIORITIES

1. Lead the organization during the pandemic and through the recovery stage. Ensure the organization remains relevant, both short and long term to the community stakeholders and partners.
2. Be a good listener; build, strengthen and improve community relations with all stakeholders and maintain effective ongoing communication. Constituents include but are not limited to customers, staff, board, industry leaders, business leaders, city, county and state elected officials and citizen groups.
3. Gain credibility and community buy-in from the broader population. Educate the community on the economic impact tourism brings to the destination.
4. Lead and manage the Tourism Management Information Plan (TMIP) implementation phase. Work closely with PGAV, the contracted partner for this project.
5. Review and evaluate the organization from top to bottom, including strategic plan, processes, policies, structure, budget, team structure, and staff.

If this could be a great opportunity to extend your professional reach, please respond through the SearchWide Global website or email your resume to the following SearchWide Executive:

Kellie Henderson, Senior Vice President | SearchWide Global
www.searchwideglobal.com | info@searchwideglobal.com
703-912-7247 (direct) | 703-463-7042 (mobile)