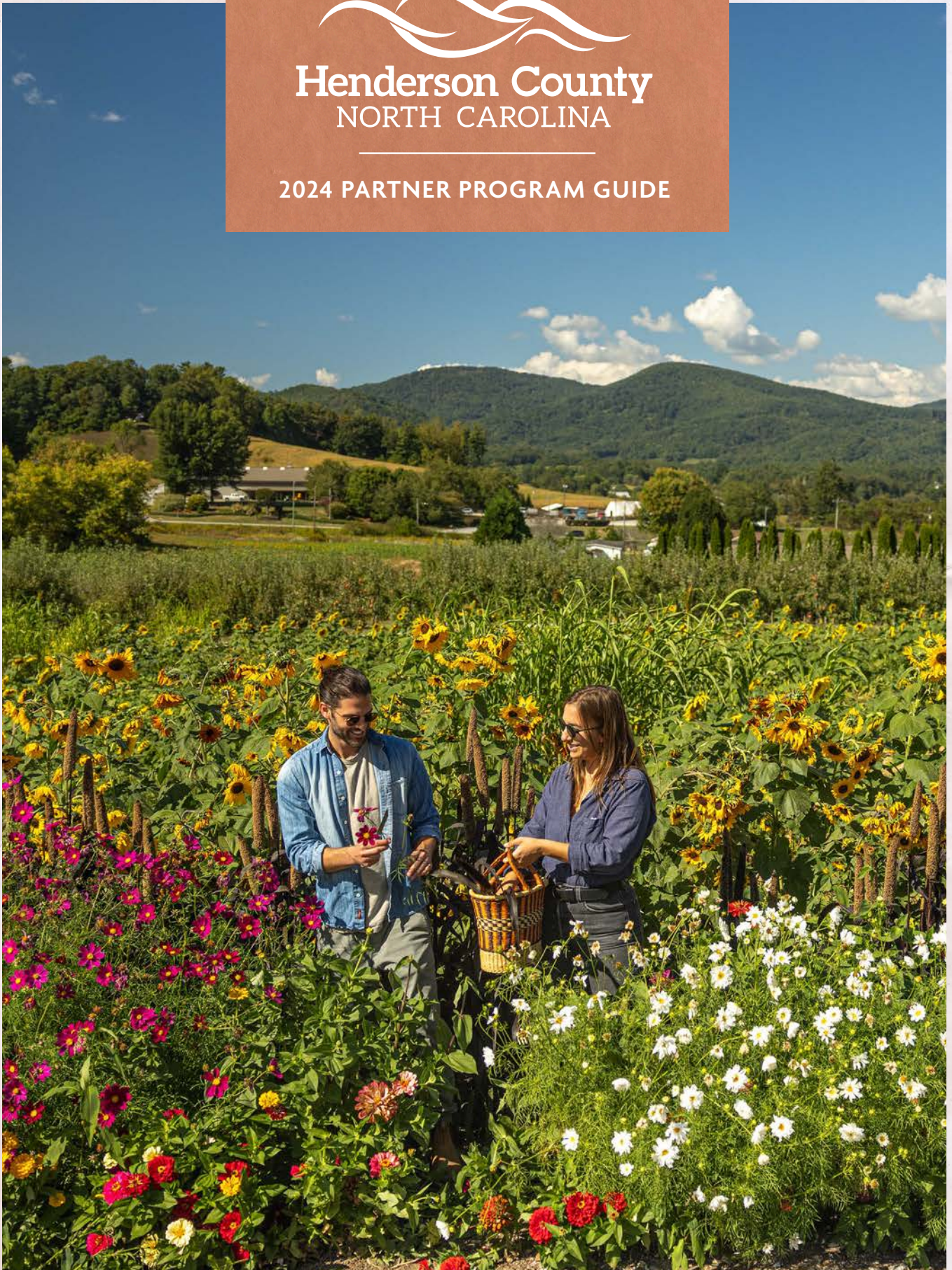




# Henderson County NORTH CAROLINA

2024 PARTNER PROGRAM GUIDE



# TABLE OF CONTENTS

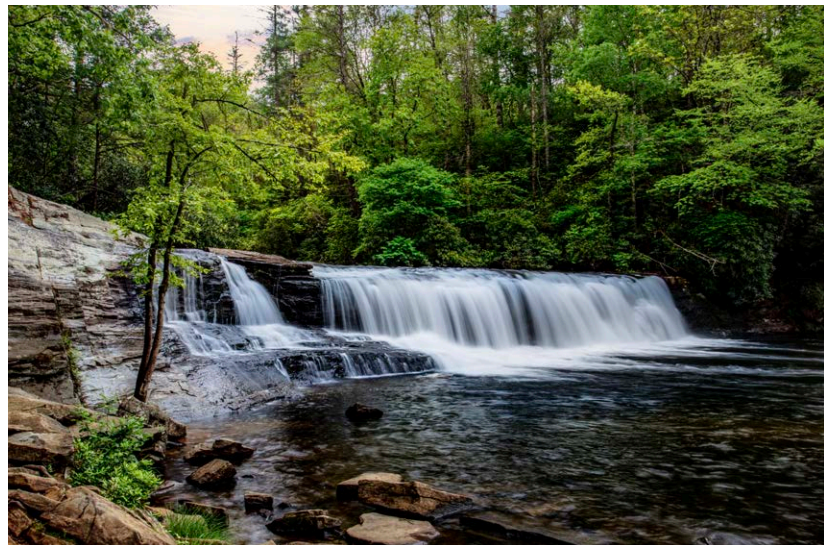
- Welcome ..... 3
- Meet the TDA Staff..... 4
- A Little Background Info.....5
- Partner Opportunities ..... 6
  - Partner Resources .....6
  - Marketing Your Business ..... 10
  - Industry Collaboration.....18
  - Grants + Funding Opportunities.....20

# TDA BOARD MEMBERS

- Richard Rhodes, Chair  
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- Danielle Stepp McCall, 1st Vice Chair  
*Stepp's Hillcrest Orchard*
- Brittany Jones Brady, 2nd Vice Chair  
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- Debi Smith  
*Cascades Mountain Resort*
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*Oklawaha Brewing Company*
- Selena Einwechter  
*Bed & Breakfast on Tiffany Hill*
- Julie Hall  
*WNC Mountain Rentals*
- Jeremy Weber\*  
*Blue Ghost Brewing Company*

\*Denotes Community Outreach Committee Members

Board members all work in the tourism industry, and are appointed in accordance with our enabling legislation by Henderson County Commissioners, municipalities and the Chamber of Commerce.



# WELCOME FROM THE EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

## DEAR TOURISM PARTNER,

Partnering. Team building.

Those terms are used often in the tourism realm, but what do they truly mean? My first understanding of team building and partnering occurred as a camper and later as a counselor on the ropes course at Camp Tekoa. It was there I realized coming together as a team leads to success in challenging situations, and I've carried that with me ever since.

While we aren't in the woods on a rope bridge 25 feet above the ground, everything we do at the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) is focused on partnering to build things – and get from one place to the next. To build a larger clientele for our tourism businesses. To build better marketing strategies to attract visitors to Henderson County. To build unique partner programs that increase your revenues. Partnering. Team building. For me, that's how you work together to get things done. When it's something that matters, it's worth the effort.

The importance of tourism in our area cannot be overstated. Annual visitor spending in Henderson County reduces the tax burden on every county resident by \$265.57. Our community's quality of life, from recreational activities to dining and shopping options, is greatly enhanced by the influx of tourism revenue.

As a vibrant sector of our local economy, tourism is constantly evolving with new trends and opportunities. The HCTDA strives to keep you informed and ahead of the curve, doing our best to help your business thrive in this dynamic industry.

As the primary promoter of tourism for Hendersonville and Henderson County, HCTDA is committed to growing this sector of our economy. A key part of that commitment involves partnerships with tourism-related businesses.

This Partner Program Guide is a comprehensive resource detailing how the HCTDA's skilled team can assist the growth and success of your business through tourism. Partner offerings range from digital promotions on our website and social media platforms to cooperative marketing, from educational programs for you and your staff to funding opportunities and grants for events.

We are grateful for your past partnership and eager for continued collaboration. Please give this guide a thorough read to learn about advancements in our Partner Programs that can build off the success of last year's initiatives. And, as always, do not hesitate to reach out to us with ideas and suggestions. No team on a ropes course ever made it through without talking through the challenges together.

**Michelle Owens**, Executive Director  
Henderson County Tourism Development Authority

## MEET THE TDA STAFF



*Michelle Owens*

Executive Director



*Melanie Black*

Manager of Communications



*Amy Boswell*

Manager of Partner Programs



*Ashley Downer*

Communications Coordinator



*Julie Hayes*

Tourism Outreach Coordinator



*Dara Hossley*

Operations Coordinator

### WHAT IS A TDA?

A Tourism Development Authority (TDA) is a vehicle created by the North Carolina Legislature that lets counties levy occupancy taxes and spend that money promoting themselves to visitors from outside their boundaries. Nearly every one of North Carolina's 100 counties has a TDA.

### HOW IS THE TDA FUNDED?

The Henderson County TDA (HCTDA) is funded entirely by the 5% occupancy tax collected in Henderson County from overnight stays at local hotels and short-term accommodations. The HCTDA does not receive funding from the Henderson County property taxes or other government support.

### WHAT DOES THE HENDERSON COUNTY TDA DO?

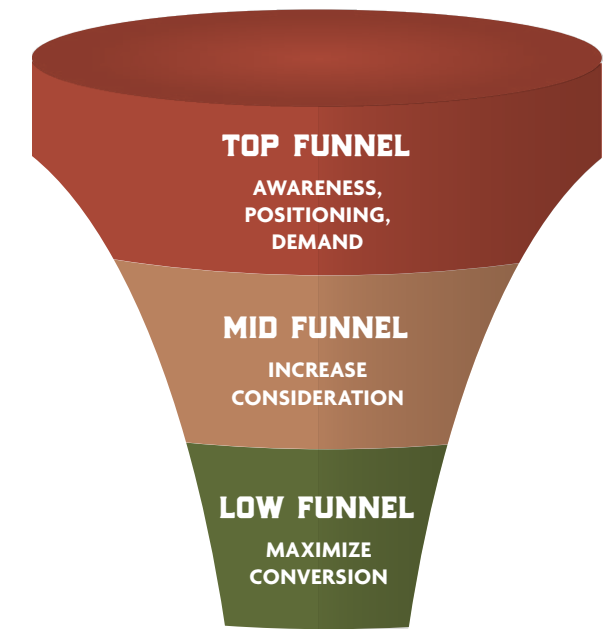
At the Henderson County TDA (HCTDA), our mission is "promoting travel to Henderson County for the economic benefit for all." The HCTDA is the official destination management organization (DMO) for Henderson County. That means the HCTDA promotes Henderson County to visitors through a variety of methods, including paid advertising, travel media, and our own social media channels. We work with our industry partners to inspire travelers to experience the natural beauty, local culture, and amazing adventures that make Henderson County unique. Henderson County currently ranks in the top 17 destinations in North Carolina for visitor spending. The \$413 million per year that visitors bring into the community boosts our local economy from top to bottom and sustains more than 2,603 local jobs.

For more information about partnership opportunities or to contact TDA staff, please reach out to Tourism Outreach Coordinator Julie Hayes at 828-693-9708 or [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov).

## A LITTLE BACKGROUND

### HOW DOES THE HENDERSON COUNTY TDA DO ITS JOB?

The HCTDA operates at the top and the middle of the "marketing funnel," a term used to describe the steps visitors take from awareness to action. From its position at the top of the funnel, the HCTDA works to increase awareness of Henderson County among potential visitors. Through advertising, marketing, and public relations, we tap into travelers' curiosity and desire to explore new places while also reinforcing the loyalty we have developed in our longtime visitors. Our work drives visitors to book stays at local hotels, buy tickets to local shows and activities, and reserve tables at local restaurants, ultimately boosting the community across the board.



### WHAT IS THE VALUE OF TOURISM TO THE HENDERSON COUNTY COMMUNITY?

Tourism is invaluable to Henderson County, North Carolina, providing significant economic value and enhancing the community. Visitors' expenditures on accommodations, dining, and activities generate revenue and job opportunities. The industry's ripple effect benefits various sectors, including hospitality and retail. Beyond the financial impact, tourism boosts the community's reputation, preserves local heritage, and instills a sense of pride. By offering diverse recreational opportunities and contributing to a vibrant atmosphere, tourism improves the overall quality of life for Henderson County residents.





# PARTNER OPPORTUNITIES

## PARTNER RESOURCES

### FREE ONE-ON-ONE ASSISTANCE

The HCTDA's skilled staff members stand ready to help our tourism industry partners make use of all our organization has to offer. Whether your business is new or deep-rooted, we welcome you to schedule a personal meeting with the HCTDA's Tourism Outreach Coordinator, Julie Hayes, to review all the programs offered by the HCTDA and find those that fit your needs. In the process, you'll receive direct guidance on the best way to take advantage of all these services. We love to brainstorm and share what we have learned from other businesses in your same situation. It's a wise investment of your time.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Log in to your Portal account to book directly into Julie's calendar or call the Tourism Outreach Coordinator and schedule a meeting!

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Developing a relationship with the HCTDA and our Tourism Outreach Coordinator is a great way for you to learn how the TDA can help you move your business forward through tourism. Plus, this is the easiest way to learn about these highly productive programs – all of them paid for through occupancy taxes.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



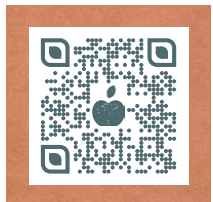
## PARTNER RESOURCES

### “SO...HERE'S THE THING” TOURISM INDUSTRY E-NEWSLETTER

Our semimonthly e-newsletter keeps our tourism partners up-to-date on events they can participate in, as well as educational and networking opportunities, industry news, trends, and insider information. Topics can include updates in the industry, best-in-class marketing practices, interesting tourism stories and articles, podcasts we're listening to, updates on the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority, and more.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

To receive the newsletter, scan the QR code to the right and sign up at [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/partner-newsletter](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/partner-newsletter). If your business has been featured in the media, won an award, or has any upcoming events or promotions, “So...here's the thing” is a great way to share your news with your industry partners!



#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

The newsletter is chock-full of information, stories, and resources that you will find helpful and informative. It will also keep you in-the-know about ways you can get more involved with the HCTDA, such as attending our annual Tourism Conference, getting involved in upcoming partner initiatives, and more.

### PARTNER RESOURCES

As a partner of the HCTDA, you have access to valuable industry insights and other resources through the partner section of our destination's website. There you'll find the latest market research, details about industry programs and grant applications, and more. Go to [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/tda-resources](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/tda-resources) for more details.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



## PARTNER RESOURCES

### PHOTOGRAPHY PROGRAM

A new program started in summer 2023, the HCTDA has contracted with a local professional photographer to offer complimentary services to Henderson County tourism partners, including photography and limited videography (only b-roll is available at this time). Upon approval, you will work with HCTDA staff and the photographer to set a shoot date, create a shot list, and potentially provide some props and/or models for the shoot. Both HCTDA and you will be given unlimited access to the photos/video after they are edited. A win-win for both the HCTDA and you!

Additionally, the HCTDA does have an extensive photo library. If you are looking for photos of your business or general destination images, go to [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/gallery](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/gallery) or contact Melanie Black at [MBlack@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:MBlack@HendersonCountyNC.gov).

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Through this agreement, all partners need to do is sign into their Portal account and complete a short form to request services. There are a few requirements (see form for details), but the main thing to know is that we need 2 month's notice for all requests, so you cannot wait until the last minute to request. Slots are limited and do fill up.

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

This is a wonderful way to build out your own photo library at no expense to your business. Photos can be used on your website, social media channels, marketing materials, and more! Video b-roll is also available, which won't provide you with a final product, but will provide you with the materials needed to create something on your own or to share with a paid video editor, saving you both time and money.

### WEBINARS AND WORKSHOPS

As part of HCTDA's dedication to keeping our partners up-to-date on industry trends and best practices, we will be offering our partners educational opportunities through online webinars and in-person workshops hosted by our staff, and featuring the latest information from our marketing agencies and industry experts. Topics will be based on the interests of our partners. The schedule will be announced in the "So...here's the thing" e-newsletter.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Sign up to receive the "So...here's the thing" e-newsletter so that you are informed of the webinar schedules and topics. To receive the newsletter, sign up at [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/partner-newsletter](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/partner-newsletter).

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

## PARTNER RESOURCES

### OUTDOOR NC TOOL KIT

As one of North Carolina's premier outdoor destinations, the HCTDA encourages Henderson County's tourism businesses to make use of the resources available through Outdoor NC, whose partners include Visit North Carolina (the state's tourism marketing agency) and the Leave No Trace Center for Outdoor Ethics.

Outdoor NC promotes responsible outdoor recreation by educating visitors and locals on the ways they can avoid leaving a negative impact on the state's natural resources. This year, Outdoor NC is offering three new programs: **Make it Your Nature**, **Accessible Outdoors**, and the **Trail Town Designation and Visitor Guide**. As a member of Outdoor NC, the HCTDA has access to resources it can share with our industry partners.

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

The Outdoor NC program provides tools to communicate with visitors about the importance of acting as stewards of our public lands, outdoor attractions, and natural beauty. These resources exist for all of us to share, so protecting and preserving them promotes the health and welfare of local communities while ensuring that Henderson County remains a place visitors enjoy returning to year after year. The **Make it Your Nature** program's purpose is to help businesses amplify responsible recreation through dynamic visuals and storytelling. **Accessible Outdoors** focuses on empowering businesses to share information about the accessibility of outdoor recreation for people with disabilities. Lastly, the **Trail Town Designation & Visitor Guide** provides Trail Towns with a toolkit to amplify destination stewardship and recognize their efforts through a specialized Visitor Guide.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Visit [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/OutdoorNC](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/OutdoorNC) to access the toolkit, which includes graphics, photos, and other resources.

### VISIT NORTH CAROLINA FARMS APP

Agritourism is among the industry's fastest-growing sectors as visitors seek out fresh, locally grown food, and want to learn more about where that food comes from. We create itineraries, organize events, and send push notifications through the app, and can even incorporate non-farm locations, such as farm-to-table restaurants and breweries. Moreover, in an effort to boost app usage and incentivize visitors to support local businesses, we offer complimentary fridge magnets with QR codes to provide more information (subject to availability) to accommodations partners.

The Visit North Carolina Farms App connects the dots in rural communities across North Carolina. Using cell phone technology, residents and visitors can find farms closest to them with products and activities that interest them. Visitors can use the app to explore farms, farmers markets and local restaurants that are off the beaten path and unique to each community.

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

As North Carolina's top apple-producing region and one of the U.S.'s newest wine regions, Henderson County can benefit from promoting the use of the Visit North Carolina Farms app. The app connects millions of residents and visitors with local farms and fisheries, local food and drink, farmers markets and U-pick opportunities. It promotes local shops, farm stays and lodging, tours and trails, and special agricultural events across the state that include our county/region. Even if you aren't a farm partner, your guests can use this valuable tool to explore all the agritourism that Henderson County has to offer.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## HCTDA WEBSITE

**VisitHendersonvilleNC.org** is the official tourism information website for the HCTDA. Qualifying tourism-related businesses in Henderson County, such as accommodations, restaurants, and attractions, can be listed on the website **free of charge**. We work with and rely on industry partners to keep their information on the website current and relevant. Any Henderson County-based business listed on the website is able to register for a Portal account, where they can manage their own listing. HCTDA staff manages all “unclaimed” listings. Each partner listing includes space to tell the business story, a link to that business’ website, social media accounts, and more.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Attractions and restaurants are automatically added to the website. The sooner we learn about your business, the sooner we can get it added. Accommodations typically require follow-up information before they can be added, as they are required to register with the Henderson County Finance Department for us to list. The Finance Department is located at 113 N Main Street, Hendersonville, 828-697-4821. More information about registering your accommodation is available at **VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/tda-resources**. Once your business is listed, contact contact Melanie Black at **MBlack@HendersonCountyNC.gov** to claim your listing and obtain a Portal account.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

A listing on the HCTDA’s website provides additional exposure for your business thanks to the 40,000 unique users who visit the website each month. Having your business listed also increases your own website’s search engine optimization (SEO).

## PARTNER WEBSITE PORTAL

In 2023, the HCTDA unveiled its Partner Portal, where tourism-related businesses can claim and manage their own business listings on the **VisitHendersonvilleNC.org** website, as well as access additional tools to benefit their businesses. Through the portal, partners can do more than simply update their listings (which we recommend they review at a minimum of once per month), they can also request complimentary photography service through the HCTDA’s Photography Program; apply to be featured on the blog, partner newsletter and social media; book meetings directly into Julie Hayes’ and Amy Boswell’s calendars; and update their room availability (for accommodations only). Coming soon, partners will also be able to see a list of available Stay & Play Programs, and update their available packages (for accommodations only). We are always looking for new ways to provide more opportunities for partners to grow with us.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Contact Melanie Black at **MBlack@HendersonCountyNC.gov** to claim your existing business listing on the site or to inquire about whether your business qualifies to be listed on the site.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Branding and consistency are important to businesses, large and small. Maintaining your own listing on our site ensures your business’ story is accurately told and any changes to your business are always up-to-date on our website, which is often a starting point for people planning a visit to Hendersonville.

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, **JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov** or **828-693-9708**.

# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## PARTNER SPOTLIGHT

New this year, we have begun to feature Henderson County businesses and their owners, where you tell your story about your business and your favorite things about living in Hendersonville. This unique form of PR helps to give potential visitors an accurate view of what life is like in Hendersonville by showcasing places the locals love and telling behind-the-scenes stories of area businesses.

Businesses that are selected will be included on the website’s blog, and are likely to also be featured at some point in the “So...here’s the thing” partner newsletter, on social media and the visitor newsletter.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

This is a little more work-intensive than some of the other programs offered by the HCTDA. You are the best person to tell your own story, so we ask that you are the one to write the first draft! Through the form found in the Partner Portal, we will ask you directed questions to help understand your story, what brought you to Hendersonville, the story of how you began your business, and what you love about living in Hendersonville, plus a list of your top 5 things in Henderson County which should include one business that would be considered a competitor. We may also rely on you to share photos of your business, depending on what we already have in our photo library. This is also a great way to utilize our Photography Program.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

The HCTDA has multiple channels of content to share about your business, including our website, social media channels and PR efforts. This is a great way to get your business name and story in front of new audiences, and the best part is that this only requires effort from you once.

## ONLINE CALENDAR OF EVENTS

As a service to visitors, the community and our partners, the HCTDA maintains a listing of events happening in the area on our website. This is consistently one of the top-10 most visited pages on our site. We ask all our partners to submit their special events, upcoming activities, live music and more to be listed. Events must qualify based on our guidelines to be included.

### HOW DO I GET INCLUDED?

You can find the criteria for being included on the calendar by visiting **VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/criteria-for-submitting-events**.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Submit your events as far in advance as possible, giving as much information as possible.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

This is how the HCTDA learns about your events. We use the online calendar to develop the Weekly Happenings calendar that is distributed to accommodations for their guests and disseminated at our Welcome Center. It helps us know what to promote on our social media channels. Additionally, Welcome Center volunteers use this information to inform visitors about events.

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, **JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov** or **828-693-9708**.

# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## WEEKLY PRINTED CALENDAR OF EVENTS

A weekly printed list of special events that take place in and around Henderson County is given out in the Welcome Center, as well as sent out to accommodations to share with visitors.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Let us know if you'd like the weekly calendar in your inbox.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Your guests will appreciate this item! Many accommodations leave this in their guest rooms or in a common area, such as a front desk. Other businesses may find it beneficial to have copies available as well.

## SOCIAL MEDIA EVENT PROMOTION

Invite @VisitHendersonvilleNC to co-host your event on Facebook! Any event geared to attract visitors and located in Henderson County, or a neighboring county, may be eligible. (\*\*Please note, not all will be approved.)

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

When creating an event, add the HCTDA as a co-host.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

If your event is approved, this will help it reach a larger audience – the 20,000+ followers of @VisitHendersonvilleNC on Facebook.

## VISITORS GUIDE

This magazine-style publication helps visitors plan their trip to Henderson County and Western North Carolina. Attractions, restaurants, and accommodations are currently included.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

We will reach out to you as we update the Visitors Guide. Make sure your business is listed on our website so that you are not overlooked. To obtain copies, come to the Henderson County Welcome Center at 201 S Main Street, Hendersonville.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Your business may be listed or featured in the Visitors Guide, giving you added exposure. Approximately 50,000 Visitors Guides are mailed out annually. Additionally, Visitors Guides are available (in any quantity) free of charge for you to display and give to your guests. You are encouraged to keep and distribute copies at your business.



### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## E-NEWSLETTER INCLUSION

The “So... here’s the thing” newsletter goes out semimonthly to more than 850 industry partners and includes multiple sections that discuss partners: including the Partner Spotlight (see page 11 for details), Business Updates, Local News and Updates, and Media Coverage.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

If you have any business updates or news to share, let anyone at the HCTDA know! To be featured in the Partner Spotlight, complete the form found in the Portal.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

This is an easy way to share your business info and updates with people working across the local tourism industry, which can lead to new, better and stronger relationships in the future.

## PUBLIC RELATIONS INITIATIVES

The HCTDA regularly pitches stories to regional, national and international media, as well as works with influencers, bloggers and journalists. Each influencer, blogger or journalist we work with must keep his or her target audience in mind, so we approach lodging and attractions we believe will be best suited for that media outlet. A media visit never guarantees coverage, but we strive to bring relevant, working media whose outlets reach potential future visitors to Hendersonville.

### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

We are always looking for partners to share new angles, information and stories with us. Keep HCTDA staff up-to-date about new aspects of your business, and be ready to accommodate influencers, bloggers and journalists when we reach out. It is hard for us to keep up with so many businesses and their frequent changes, so hearing from you directly is immensely helpful. Additionally, if you line up any influencers or writers on your own, please let us know in advance in case there is any way that we can help, and so we can share their content when it is published.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Having someone else talk about your business in a positive light is often more effective than promoting yourself. This is also a great way to get more eyes on your business and attract visitors.

## TRAVEL WRITERS + BLOGGERS + INFLUENCERS

As a tourism partner, you can offer discounts, free meals, tickets to experiences or stays to travel writers, bloggers, or influencers when they visit.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

By offering your good or service, you are more likely to be featured in the writer’s work. Travel writers typically want their accommodations and the places they visit to reflect the audience of the publication or their social media followers. Doing so increases the likelihood that your business will resonate with their readers/followers. This means that not every destination is right for every writer.

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

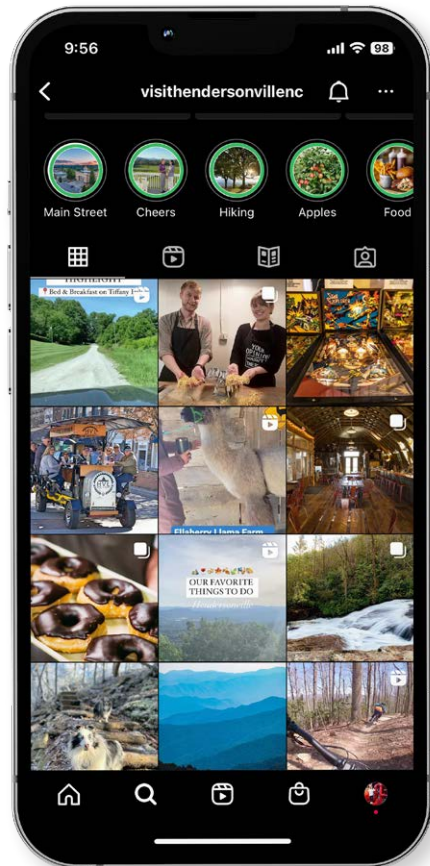
Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## SOCIAL MEDIA EFFORTS

Social media sites such as Facebook and Instagram are an important way for people to share their travel experiences while also dreaming and learning about new experiences. The HCTDA has its own Facebook and Instagram accounts through which we share information about our partners, their events, and activities to inspire visitation to Henderson County.

The HCTDA Communications Coordinator, Ashley Downer visits partners approximately 4 times per month to capture content to be featured on our social media accounts. This is based on our own content calendar, not partner requests, so while no action is needed from partners, please be on the lookout for communications from Ashley about stopping by your business.



## SHARE YOUR CONTENT

The HCTDA exists to promote Henderson County and our partners, **but we can't do it alone.** That's why we invite all our partners to share their events, stories, and announcements with us so that we can help you spread the word through our multiple channels. To share your post with us, tag **@VisitHendersonvilleNC**, that way, we will see your post. We plan out our social media calendar a month in advance, so the more notice, the better.

## HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Sharing your content with HCTDA ensures that your business gets the exposure it deserves as our team promotes Henderson County to visitors across the region, the country, and the world. Our destination is a collection of individual businesses who all thrive by working together through the HCTDA to increase awareness of all the things visitors can experience here.

 [Facebook.com/VisitHendersonvilleNC](https://www.facebook.com/VisitHendersonvilleNC)

 [@VisitHendersonvilleNC](https://www.instagram.com/VisitHendersonvilleNC)

## WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



# MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

## CHEERS! TRAIL PASSPORT PROGRAM

This program was developed to promote the craft beverage industry in Henderson County, and includes all Henderson County producers of craft beer, wine, cider, spirits and mead. The intent of the Passport is to encourage visitors to explore the county, stopping at all venues through multiple visits to the area. Passport holders must have their booklets stamped by at least 12 venues before they can return to the Henderson County Welcome Center to receive prizes. This is promoted as a great experiential gift idea. Additionally, it is positioned as an opportunity for visitors to immerse themselves in the experience of our destination's craft beverage scene.



## WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

You may sell Cheers! Trail Passports at your place of business. Request them for free in quantities of 50 to sell for \$10 each. You keep the profits!

## HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

The Cheers! Trail Passport is a great way to package an experience or to add value to an existing package you already offer your guests to make them more robust.

## WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.





## MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

### HCTDA WELCOME CENTER SERVICES + LITERATURE DISPLAYS

The Hendersonville Welcome Center is currently undergoing a complete renovation, but we have a temporary center open on-site. We plan to open the newly renovated Welcome Center in summer, 2024. Our knowledgeable volunteers and staff are dedicated to answering questions and making guests feel welcome.

Tourism partners are encouraged to share their promotional/marketing materials with the Welcome Center to be displayed in the Center's display racks. The primary focus is on tourism-related businesses located in Henderson County, with a secondary focus on day-trip options in nearby counties for visitors staying in local accommodations.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Reach out to Julie Hayes, Tourism Outreach Coordinator, to display your rack cards, for sizing specification information, or for printing and design suggestions.

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

Welcome Centers are the first places that visitors go with questions about where to shop, dine and stay, as well as the can't-miss attractions and more! Welcome Center volunteers are dedicated to knowing the area and answering all visitor questions to the best of their ability.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

## MARKETING YOUR BUSINESS

### LITERATURE DISPLAYS AT NC INTERSTATE WELCOME CENTERS

Like the Hendersonville Welcome Center, the North Carolina Welcome Centers, located along NC interstates, display rack cards and provide tourist information. These Welcome Centers, run by the North Carolina Department of Commerce, direct guests to destinations throughout the state and region. Qualifying accommodations and attractions are eligible to display rack cards. The criteria for approval can be found by scanning the QR code.



#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

In 2023, more than 7.6 million people passed through the doors of the nine NC Welcome Centers, so having your business rack cards displayed at any of these locations will provide invaluable exposure for your business.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



## INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

### ANNUAL TOURISM CONFERENCE

This annual day-long informational and educational conference was created for those in the Henderson County tourism industry. It is a key event that brings together stakeholders from the tourism sector. It serves as a platform for networking, collaboration, and knowledge sharing among professionals, businesses, and organizations involved in tourism. The conference focuses on industry trends, best practices, innovations, and strategies for sustainable growth. It provides an opportunity to discuss challenges, exchange ideas, and forge partnerships that contribute to the development and promotion of tourism in a region or destination.

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Watch for info on the Tourism Conference in your inbox! Invitations will be included in our semimonthly newsletter and special one-off e-newsletters. You are required to register for this event. Be sure you are signed up for the "So...here's the thing" e-newsletter at [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/partner-newsletter](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/partner-newsletter).

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

This is a way to build out your network and educate yourself.

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

## INDUSTRY COLLABORATION

### INDUSTRY FAMILIARIZATION (FAM) TOURS

The HCTDA hosts four unique tours for tourism-related business management and frontline staff to familiarize them with Henderson County attractions and other industry partners. Tours are curated to cover all corners of Henderson County and all aspects of the industry. Between stops, you will have an opportunity to network, discover new attractions, and learn insider marketing info from HCTDA staff. These experiences are open to anyone in our local tourism industry, but they're particularly effective at educating lodging partners' frontline staff. Tours repeat annually, so once you've completed all 4 tours, you won't need to repeat again for a few years.



#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Watch for information on the Industry FAM Tours in your inbox! Invitations will be included in our semimonthly newsletter. You are required to register for these free events, as space is limited. Sign up for the newsletter, "So...here's the thing," at [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/partner-newsletter](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/partner-newsletter).

#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

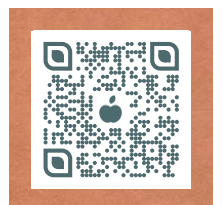
This is a great way for you and your staff to discover all there is to do in Henderson County, which you can in turn share with your guests. Happier, more informed visitors are more likely to stay longer and make a return visit.

### HENDERSON COUNTY TOURISM INDUSTRY FACEBOOK GROUP

The Facebook group called Henderson County Tourism Partners, which is moderated by HCTDA staff, was created to encourage open conversations among industry partners, keep partners up-to-date, and introduce interesting topics and trends. We invite you to join the group and join in the conversation!

#### WHAT DO I NEED TO DO?

Join the group! The QR code to the right will take you to Facebook, to share your story, accomplishments, relevant articles, and unique knowledge. This is also a great place to ask and answer peer questions and to give your reaction to stories shared in our semimonthly e-newsletter. Please start a conversation and discuss other topics relevant to tourism.



#### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

This is your opportunity to join a supportive community of people in the industry, and to brainstorm, learn, find new partners, and develop long-lasting relationships. Keep your finger on the pulse of what is trending in tourism around the country and right here in Henderson County. Join today and share an update about your business!

#### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Julie Hayes, [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



## GRANTS + FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### GRANT PROGRAMS

The HCTDA is empowered to allocate grant funding to its tourism partners under the authority granted by its enabling legislation, Session Law 2013-61, House Bill 545, Section 1, (e) Use of Tax Revenue: “The county shall, on a quarterly basis, remit the net proceeds of the room occupancy and tourism development tax levied under this act to the Henderson County Tourism Development Authority. The Authority shall use at least two-thirds of the net proceeds of the room occupancy tax levied under this act to promote travel and tourism in Henderson County and shall use the remainder for tourism-related expenditures.”

The HCTDA and a grants committee composed of representatives from the Henderson County tourism sector appointed by the HCTDA Board determine the eligibility of applicants and approve all investments of funds from the program. This program is paid for entirely by occupancy taxes paid by overnight visitors staying in lodging in Henderson County.

### HOW DOES IT HELP ME?

HCTDA grants can offset the costs of promoting events or other activities that drive visitation to Henderson County. They can also underwrite the investment in capital projects designed to attract visitors and boost tourism in the county.

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Amy Boswell, [ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.



## GRANTS + FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### WHAT KIND OF GRANTS ARE AVAILABLE?

HCTDA offers three different types of grants:

**Destination Marketing Grants** support Henderson County tourism partners with marketing that promotes visitation. Grants range from \$500 to \$20,000. Permitted uses of this type of grant include (but are not limited to) brochures and other print collateral; out-of-market advertising (including print, television, radio, billboard, digital, etc.); out-of-market trade and consumer show registration fees; PR efforts; design costs; and more. To qualify for a HCTDA Destination Marketing Grant, the applicant must:

- Be a tourism-related business or other organization located in Henderson County that attracts visitors from outside the county.
- Be organized under the laws of North Carolina or, if organized under the laws of another state, registered to do business in North Carolina.
- Be registered as a federally recognized nonprofit, if applicable.
- Have been in operation in Henderson County for at least one (1) year prior to the deadline for application submission.
- Not be a property primarily used for lodging.
- Demonstrate its intent to attract visitors to Henderson County.
- Have a specific plan for how the requested funding will be invested to reach visitors or audiences outside of the Greenville-Spartanburg-Anderson DMA.

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Amy Boswell, [ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

## GRANTS + FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

**Destination Enhancement Grants** support tourism-related capital investments in Henderson County to promote visitation and enhance the destination. Grants start at \$8,000. Permitted uses of this type of grant include (but are not limited to) construction, expansion, renovation, rehabilitation, replacement or acquisition of structures or tourism-related infrastructure; purchase of major equipment; design and engineering studies; and more. To qualify for a HCTDA Destination Enhancement Grant, the applicant must:

- Represent a project located in Henderson County, NC.
- Represent a project that will enhance Henderson County as a destination.
- Have been in operation as an organization for at least one (1) year.
- Be organized under the laws of North Carolina or, if organized under the laws of another state, registered to do business in North Carolina.
- Be registered as a federally recognized nonprofit, if applicable.
- Not be a property primarily used for lodging.
- Applicant must be able to provide a match equal to at least 50% of the grant amount being requested from the program.
- Utilize the funding received from the program for capital assets only.

**Destination Event Grants** support tourism-related events that generate overnight visitation to Henderson County. Grants run from \$500 to \$20,000. Permitted uses of this type of grant include (but are not limited to) entertainment expenses; event operational expenses; lodging and expenses for event performers; local government or security-related event expenses; signage; equipment; officiating crew; apparel for event staff or officials; and more. To qualify for a HCTDA Destination Event Grant, the applicant must:

- Represent an event held in Henderson County, NC, that will attract attendees from outside Henderson County and help generate overnight visitation to the county.
- Be organized under the laws of North Carolina or, if organized under the laws of another state, registered to do business in North Carolina.
- Be registered as a federally recognized nonprofit, if applicable.
- Not be a property primarily used for lodging.
- Have a specific plan for how the requested funding will be invested in the event and the attraction of attendees from outside Henderson County.

### ADDITIONAL INFORMATION

More information is found on the HCTDA's website at [VisitHendersonvilleNC.org/grants](https://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/grants)

### WHO DO I CONTACT?

Amy Boswell, [ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:ABoswell@HendersonCountyNC.gov) or 828-693-9708.

## GRANTS + FUNDING OPPORTUNITIES

### 2024-2025 GRANTS TIMELINE



[www.grantsfortourism.com](https://www.grantsfortourism.com)

### HAVE AN IDEA HOW WE CAN HELP?

As the TDA and its Community Outreach Committee continue to develop partner programs, do you have an idea that would help you? Reach out to Julie Hayes at [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov).



**Henderson County**  
NORTH CAROLINA

**Henderson County Tourism Development Authority**

828-693-9708

[VisitHendersonvilleNC.org](http://VisitHendersonvilleNC.org)

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**Partner Questions:**

Julie Hayes | [JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov](mailto:JHayes@HendersonCountyNC.gov)

