

**RUTHERFORD COUNTY
TDA BOARD**

- ◇ **Sally Leshner**
Chairperson - TDA Board
Chairperson - Executive Committee
- ◇ **Dan Hegeman**
1st Vice Chair - TDA Board
Executive Committee
Chairperson - VIN Wayfinding Committee
- ◇ **Lisa Sullivan**
2nd Vice Chair - TDA Board
VIN Information Committee
- ◇ **Jeff Bradley**
VIN Information Committee
- ◇ **Tim Ferris**
VIN Wayfinding Committee
- ◇ **Dwayne Harris**
VIN Information Committee
- ◇ **Dawn Hemmelgarn**
Chairperson - VIN Information Committee
- ◇ **Denise Holland**
VIN Information Committee
- ◇ **Ann Washburn Hutchins**
VIN Wayfinding Committee

Ex-Officio Members

- ◇ **Eddie Holland**
County Commissioner
- ◇ **Paula Roach**
Rutherford County Finance Director

TDA Staff

- ◇ **Michelle Whitaker**
Executive Director
- ◇ **Adrienne Wallace**
Assistant Director VIN
- ◇ **Jackie Wallace**
Administrative Assistant
- ◇ **Deborah McCormick**
Tourism Information Assistant



**Rutherford County Tourism
Development Authority**

117 West Court Street
Rutherfordton, NC 28139
828.287.6113
www.rutherfordtourism.com

AGENDA

Thursday, December 6, 2012

Christmas Board Luncheon
12:00 p.m.

Lavender Bistro
Rutherfordton, NC

- 12:00 p.m. Lunch served
- 12:15 p.m. Welcome & Call to Order..... Sally Leshner
- 12:20 p.m. Additions/Deletions to the Agenda Sally Leshner
- 12:25 p.m. Review Minutes - October 11, 2012 Sally Leshner
- 12:30 p.m. TDA Activity ReportsMichelle Whitaker
- 12:45 p.m. Visitor Center UpdateAdrienne Wallace
- 1:00 p.m. VIN - Information Committee Report Dawn Hemmelgarn
- 1:15 p.m. Adjourn

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December 6, 2012**

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**RUTHERFORD COUNTY TOURISM
DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY
MEETING MINUTES
OCTOBER 11, 2012
BECHTLER HOUSE MUSEUM & VISITOR CENTER
RUTHERFORDTON, NC**

Members Present: Tim Ferris, Dan Hegeman, Dawn Hemmelgarn, Denise Holland, Ann Washburn Hutchins, Lisa Sullivan

Members Absent: Jeff Bradley, Dwayne Harris

Staff Present: Jackie Wallace, Michelle Whitaker

Others Present: Michelle Yelton (McConnell Group), Paula Roach (Ex-Officio), Chris Roberts (Finance), Eddie Holland (Ex-Officio)

Call to Order

Sally Leshar called the meeting called to order at 12:05 p.m.

Sally Leshar welcomed our newest board member, Tim Ferris. Leshar also announced the resignation of board member Adrienne Wallace.

Agenda

There were no additions or deletions to the agenda. Motion to accept agenda as amended by Denise Holland. Seconded by Lisa Sullivan. Motion carried.

August 23, 2012 Minutes

Corrections to the August 23 minutes were made adjustments added the names of who made and seconded motions. Following the adjustments, Lisa Sullivan made a motion to accept minutes as amended. Seconded by Denise Holland. Motion carried.

TDA Activity Reports

Michelle Whitaker, presenting

Financial Report

Paula Roach indicated that finances were down 8% for August, down 9.3% for July, and up 5.58% for August up. Also this will be the first year that there is a separate audit for TDA for 11-12. Preliminary fund balance as of June 30, 2012 is \$592,000. This meant about \$58,000 was added to fund balance; \$20,000 was allocated to the mint site. Motion to accept by Dawn Hemmelgarn. Seconded by Lisa Sullivan. Motion carried.

Bechtler Mint Park

Through the TDA Assistance Program we gave \$20,000 to help develop the Bechtler Mint Park. Signage is complete and being installed and the county is putting in more lighting and security. The ribbon cutting ceremony is tentatively set for Friday, October 26th at 12:30 p.m. with a reception to follow.

Bechtler Press

Arranging to get the press on loan at the Bechtler House was a joint effort between the TDA, the Town of Rutherfordton, and the owners of the Bechtler House.

Premiere & Open House

On Saturday, September 29th, there were approximately 75 visitors to the house and a couple of private tours of the mint site. The premiere of the documentary was a success with approximately 850 in attendance.

Friends of Bechtler

Denise Holland, Sally Leshar and Dan Hegeman helped to operate "Friends of Bechtler" tables at the Premiere and the Hilltop Festival. Michelle Yelton developed a website for Friends of Bechtler – go to www.visitncgold.com or www.rutherfordgold.com The Rutherford County Historical Society is the umbrella organization for Friends of Bechtler.

Cycle NC

This was the first year Lake Lure has been chosen as an overnight site for this annual event. 800 people camped out on Morse Meadows, with approximately 200 staying in lodging properties. The next day, they traveled through and stopped at spots throughout the county.

Alliance Conference

100 participants have registered. We are fortunate to have each of our speakers, some of the best and most knowledgeable in the field of tourism. A lot about what the TDA is doing will be discussed, as well as the unveiling of the Mobile Unit.

Marketing

Sample ads are available in the board appendices packet.

PR

Five United Kingdom journalists and two senators toured Chimney Rock, went on a boat tour, and toured the Lake Lure Inn. Fall colors is our next plug.

VIN

The assistant direction position has been filled; Adrienne Wallace begins on Monday. Robin Lattimore resigned his part-time position.

A joint meeting of the VIN Info and VIN Wayfinding committees will take place on October 19th at 9:30 a.m. in the County Commissioners Room at the County Annex. This meeting will be to put together the pieces for the Alliance conference.

The mobile unit came in \$5,000 under budget. The Santa House is underway as a VIN location, and the holes have been dug for the Info Stand in Spindale. The Lake Lure Visitor Center has a lot happening with a tentative timeline set for renovations. Adrienne Wallace will be primarily working out of this space.

Wayfinding

The first three signs have been approved. We are still working on signage for the Bechtler Site and the Bill's Creek/64-74A intersection.

New member Tim Ferris was added to the VIN-Wayfinding committee.

Web and Internet

Awen has been managing this and in about six week's time they have moved the website along a great deal.

Executive Committee Report

Sally Leshar, presenting

With the board departure of Adrienne Wallace, Lisa Sullivan has agreed to serve in the position of second vice chair. Motion to appoint Lisa Sullivan to the position of second vice chair was made by Ann Hutchins. Seconded by Dan Hegeman. Motion carried.

Information Committee Report

Dawn Hemmelgarn, presenting

New members have joined the committee. They are: Shannon Baldwin (Lake Lure Town Planner), Jessica Moss (Director of KidSenses), Valerie Wrobel (Carolina Properties), and Lisa Sullivan. Actual renovations of the Visitor Center will begin after the first of the year. A formal bid process is not required, so we are going through an informal bid process.

Motion to adjourn by Dan Hegeman. Seconded by Lisa Sullivan. Motion carried. Meeting adjourned at 1:21 p.m.

Financial Reports (see appendices pgs 2-9)

Revenue & Expenses Report (Budget) (ending 10/31/12)

- Total Revenue \$ 51,259.57
- Total Expenses \$ 59,772.50
- Revenue Exceeds Expenses -\$ 8,512.93
- Encumbrances \$140,041.27
- Available Budget \$459,927.64

Occupancy Tax Report (for October 2012)

- Total Tax Collected \$50,761
- -6.23% (from October 2011)
- Cash Balance \$650,635
- Category Comparison (for October 2012)
 - Bed & Breakfast -58.00%
 - Cabins & Campgrounds 0.77%
 - Hotel/Motel -1.27%
 - Resorts -2.07%

Revenue & Expenses Report (Budget) (ending 11/30/12)

- Total Revenue \$ 61,103.50
- Total Expenses \$ 60,866.24
- Revenue Exceeds Expenses \$ 237.26
- Encumbrances \$ 117,954.46
- Available Budget \$ 421,057.91

Occupancy Tax Report (for November 2012)

- Total Tax Collected \$ 60,407
- 4.16% (from November 2011)
- Cash Balance \$ 642,251
- Category Comparison (for November 2012)
 - Bed & Breakfast -48.38%
 - Cabins & Campgrounds 6.88%
 - Hotel/Motel 13.47%
 - Resorts 12.41%

Mid-Year Line Item Transfers

Transfer funds totaling \$3,646.72 from 325-00 to the following line items:

299-07 \$ 1,858.10
299-10 \$ 638.14
321-00 \$ 1,323.80
370-00 \$ 96.63

Transfer funds totaling \$18,000 from 510-03 to 190-03

Stakeholder Assistance Request

Request to allocate \$2,500 to the Bostic Lincoln Center for BRNH Signage Program
Request to allocate \$2,500 to the Bechtler Mint Park for BRNH Signage Program

Bechtler Feasibility Study

Transfer \$2,000 from Fund Balance

Asset Development

Bechtler Mint Site & Friends of Bechtler

- Ribbon cutting and Press unveiling was held on Friday, October 26th; was enthusiastically received
- Adrienne Wallace is working with Lynn Padgett on staffing the home with volunteers
- Leadership and directions questions at an informal October meeting led to the recommendation of a feasibility study to:
 - ◆ **Learn what we already know.**
In 2005 and 2006, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area partnered with many in Rutherford County to create an incredible heritage plan. This document and other similar resources need to be studied and understood, so efforts from past leaders are not duplicated, but wisely utilized.
 - ◆ **Consult with the experts and ask the questions.**
We need experts to look at the Bechtler story and advise us on what we should do with this asset given their knowledge of best practices of cultural heritage tourism.
 - ◆ **Figure out the short and long term plan given our current economic and political climate.**
After we know the background and talk to the experts, the next step is to figure out what needs to happen next and who needs to do it.

Internal Customer Relations

- **Alliance Conference**
 - ◆ More than 100 in attendance for inaugural TDA Alliance Conference_2013
Conference scheduled for Tuesday, November 12, 2013

Marketing (see appendices pgs 10-13)

- **Current Projects**
 - ◆ Outdoor Visitor Kiosk - Design/Development
 - ◆ Mobile App & QR Code - In Development
 - ◆ 2012/2013 Media Plan - Implementing
 - ◆ 2012 Rutherford County highlight short-format video and side trip video - in production
 - ◆ Mobile Website - In production

Public Relations (see appendices pg 14)

- **Press/Press Releases**
 - ◆ Media tours/visits from ***Getaways for Grownups, Carolina Epicurean, Charlotte Food & Wine***, and a freelance Atlanta-based travel writer
 - ◆ Featured press hits: Carolina Epicurean, WNC Magazine (Blue Ridge Distilling Co.), and Asheville Citizen-Times (Rutherford County Christmas)

VIN—Information

Mobile Unit

- Debuted at the Alliance Conference
- Use guidelines in development

Bechtler House

- See “Asset Development”

Lake Lure

- A great deal of movement has been made at this site, both operationally and in preparation for renovations. More details in further reports during today’s meeting.

VIN—Information - continued

Lead & Visitor Information (see appendices pgs 15-17)

- Lake Lure Visitor Center
 - 2,882 visitors for October 2012
 - 1,754 visitors for November 2012
- Rutherfordton (Bechtler House)
 - 134 visitors for October 2012 (*all guests from press unveiling did not register*)
 - 52 visitors for November 2012
- Leads from Publications, Phone Calls & Website
 - 2,183 *total of all leads (October 2012)*
 - *Top Three Publications (only two this month)*
 - ◆ Better Homes & Gardens - 1309
 - ◆ Travel Guides - 611
 - *Other Leads - 23 total*
 - ◆ Large Quantity Requests - 0
 - ◆ International Leads - 3
 - *Telephone & Web Report (October 2012)*
 - ◆ 17 Contacts
 - ◆ Top Three States: North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina
 - Top "HOW THEY HEARD?": Other linked sites, Internet
- Leads from Publications, Phone Calls & Website
 - 567 *total of all leads (November 2012)*
 - *Top Three Publications*
 - ◆ Travel Guides - 121
 - ◆ Carolina Living - 94
 - ◆ Better Homes & Gardens - 38
 - *Other Leads - 6 total*
 - ◆ Large Quantity Requests - 0
 - ◆ International Leads - 3
 - *Telephone & Web Report (November 2012)*
 - ◆ 8 Contacts
 - ◆ Top Three States: North Carolina, Florida, South Carolina
 - ◆ Top "HOW THEY HEARD?": Internet, Publications/Newspapers

VIN—Wayfinding Signs

- Attended and assisted with the Alliance Conference production. Gathered comments and currently compiling the information.
- Requested and continuing to pursue Bechtler Mine historical directional signs
- Received approval for some of the original requested directional signs and continuing to pursue

Web & Internet

- In the next two months and in the face of a rapidly changing marketing, we are revisiting our web-based efforts. More to come on this.

Other Activities & News

- Produced packet for and spent day touring with a film director scouting locations for a \$5.5 million project
- Meetings with County Manager over Airport/Tourism connections
- Attended marketing study sessions with the Town of Lake Lure



JOINT VIN INFO AND WAYFINDING COMMITTEES

OCTOBER 19, 2012

Commissioner Room -- County Annex, Rutherfordton

This meeting was an opportunity for both committees to meet jointly and to review the materials being presented for public input at the Alliance Conference. Mark Teague and Michelle Whitaker presented the boards that would be up for public review. These were discussed and changes made.

In addition, the Info Committee reviewed the proposals for design and construction of the Welcome Center in Lake Lure. This project called for an informal process, and the applicants were each looked at carefully. The committee chose Knight Strategies/Roundtable Construction for the project.

PUBLIC INPUT STAKEHOLDERS MEETING @ THE ALLIANCE CONFERENCE

NOVEMBER 8, 2012

The Foundation – ICC, Spindale

Moderated by Vic Knight of Knight Strategies and Mark Teague and Associates, initial renderings of all portions of the VIN plan were presented for public comment.

VIN-INFO COMMITTEE

NOVEMBER 16, 2012

Welcome Center, Lake Lure

Using the input gained from the Alliance Conference, Vic Knight of Knight Strategies presented renderings for the Welcome Center in Lake Lure. The upcoming continued public input, design, construction, and operations were all discussed. In particular, the format of and goals for the November 30th and December 3rd meetings were outlined. The group agreed that Memorial Day is the goal to complete renovations.

PUBLIC INPUT STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

NOVEMBER 30, 2012

Welcome Center, Lake Lure

With about 50 persons in attendance, Knight Strategies, Roundtable Construction and the TDA presented a newly reviewed and further refined set of renderings for renovations of the Welcome Center. In addition to an extended Q & A session about Welcome Center and, in particular, the renovation concepts, attendees were also afforded the opportunity to give input on eight specific aspects of the renovation project: roofing, flooring, exterior paint, interior paint, outdoor seating, outdoor paving, landscaping, and furnishings.

PUBLIC INPUT STAKEHOLDERS MEETING

DECEMBER 3, 2012

Commissioner Room -- County Annex, Rutherfordton

A repeat of the November 30th meeting, a smaller group attended and offered input into the design of the Welcome Center.

VIN-INFO COMMITTEE

DECEMBER 6, 2012

Lavender Bistro – Rutherfordton

This meeting is scheduled for 11:00 am the day of the board meeting. An oral report will be given at this board meeting.