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Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority Monthly Newsletter



Issue 7

August 2012

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Visit our [Events Calendar](#) for a complete list of county activities. To add your events to our complete calendar, please contact Jackie Wallace at 828-287-6113 or [click here to email her.](#)

Hello Tourism Stakeholders,

August is one of our busiest months here in the tourism world, and recent cooler temperatures are a welcomed relief! We are thrilled to announce the passing of the lease agreement between the Town of Lake Lure and the TDA for the visitor center building in Lake Lure. Read more on that below!

In event news, Lake Lure just celebrated its 3rd annual Dirty Dancing Festival and Forest City held its 21st annual "Hot Nights, Cool Rides" event. The 8th annual Lake Lure Olympiad is Aug. 24-26 and is also the venue for the 2012 USMS 1 Mile Open Water National Championship with athletes from 20 states and one foreign country already signed up.

Keep reading to learn more about:

- Rutherford County's exciting growth in North Carolina's tourism industry
- Ways the TDA is advertising to people traveling to the Democratic National Convention
- News about speakers for the TDA Alliance Conference

There is rarely a dull moment in our world, so while there's much to tell, we know you are busy and we try to use your time wisely. Please keep us update on happenings on your end, and let's continue to give each and every visitor to Rutherford County the most excellent experience possible. We are all a part of this incredible team - thanks for all you do!

Sincerely,

The Team at Rutherford County TDA

State Office Update Summary for Rutherford County

Of the Top 26 counties (of 100) in North Carolina, Rutherford County remains 26th overall and 5th from Western NC in total expenditures according to the NC Department of Commerce's latest annual county-by-county report of the economic impact of travel.

Quick Links

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Pass It On

Please help us spread the word and pass this newsletter along to other Rutherford County businesses you know in the tourism industry whose email we may not have. Our list is growing, but we are still missing many.

Otherwise, please contact us with any questions, comments or concerns at:

Rutherford County TDA
T: 828-287-6113

As always, thank you for being a part of Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills and its wonderful network of accommodations, events, restaurants and attractions.

Sincerely,

Michelle Yelton
Communications Manager,
Rutherford County TDA

With the 2nd highest growth in 2010 in Western NC, and the 1st highest growth in Western NC in 2011, however, we are gaining ground in Western NC, - closing in on the next two mountain counties above us, Henderson (#17) and Watauga (#19). See the data, below.

The numbers below represent how much we closed the gap between what visitors spent here in Rutherford County (26th) and the two mountain counties above us, (in millions \$):

Closing the Gap

#17 Henderson:

73.84 (2010) 67.66 (2011)

Rutherford County Closed the Gap -6.18

#19 Watauga:

60.52 (2010) 55.83 (2011)

Rutherford County Closed the Gap -4.69

Growth %

#17 Henderson:

3.7 (2010) 3.1 (2011)

#19 Watauga:

5.9 (2010) 4.1 (2011)

#26 Rutherford:

8.3 (2010) 9.7 (2011)

-Rutherford County generated an economic impact of \$141.73 million in 2011. This was a 9.66% change from 2010.

-More than 1,120 jobs in Rutherford County were directly attributed to travel and tourism.

-Travel generated \$19.44 million in payroll.

-State and local tax revenues from travel to Rutherford County amounted to \$12.50 million. This represents a \$185.08 tax savings to each county resident.

"Everyone in NC's tourism industry should be pleased," said Michelle Whitaker, Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) executive director. "I believe that those of us in

Rutherford County, particularly, have a lot to cheer about."

Rutherford County tourism businesses and leaders can learn more about the latest developments and news of the industry in the county, state and beyond at the TDA's November 8th [Alliance Conference](#) at the Foundation Performing Arts Center. This topic will be one of the many discussed about the tourism industry. To learn more about the conference or to register, visit www.TDAAlliance.com.

To view the state's report, please go to:

<http://www.nccommerce.com/tourism/research/economic-impact/teim>

For more information on the Rutherford County TDA, please visit www.RutherfordTourism.com or call 828-287-6113.

TDA & Town of Lake Lure Approve Lease Agreement; Visitor Center Improvements On the Way

After a highly-anticipated, unanimous vote on both sides, the TDA and Town of Lake Lure approved a lease agreement today giving the TDA use of the building to operate a visitor center. Immediate plans are to hire a full-time employee to manage the visitor center and internal customer relations for stakeholders in the area.

Additional plans include cosmetic and structural improvements to the building and enhanced customer service for both visitors and stakeholders in the county. Look for more exciting updates in the coming months.

"View It or Do It" TDA Launches Billboard Campaign; Prepares for DNC Tourists



In an effort to capitalize on the influx of visitors traveling to the Charlotte area for the Democratic National



Convention next month, the TDA recently implemented a billboard campaign that includes premier billboard real estate on the famous EpiCenter building in Downtown Charlotte.

The three digital billboards on the EpiCenter building feature a :15 video and four distinct photos related to the TDA's ongoing campaign for Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills.

Additional billboards sporting the tagline "View It or Do It" were placed in specific locations in the region directing travelers to Rutherford County. The tagline lets visitors know they can come to this area to sit back and relax, or tackle outdoor adventure. Here are a few examples of those billboards:



Cycle NC Selects Rutherford Co. - Lodging and Other Services Needed!

Several towns across Rutherford County were chosen for the 14th annual [NC Amateur Sports Cycle NC](#) "Mountains to Coast" Fall Ride. This statewide tour begins on Sunday, Sept. 30 with the first overnight stop in Lake Lure. The majority of cyclists will camp overnight at Morse Park Meadows where live music and food, beverage and craft vendors will be provided. Riders are expected to arrive around 11am and be active in the Hickory Nut Gorge area until 9pm.

The ride continues on Monday, Oct. 1 with a rest stop in Downtown Rutherford giving cyclists time for lunch, shopping and historic tours. Once rejuvenated, the route winds its way through Forest City and includes short breaks at the Bostic Lincoln Center and Ellenboro's Train Depot Museum before heading onto Shelby.

Each year, the organizers behind Cycle NC internally select towns as overnight stops and rest areas along their pre-determined route. Rutherford County is thrilled to have been chosen!

The organization already has **920** riders signed up (plus at least one guest each) for this statewide ride. Here are some ways your business can get capitalize on this rush of tourists through Rutherford County:

- **Available Lodging?** While most of the cyclists are camping out in Morse Park Meadows, several are still looking for available lodging for them and/or their guests in the Lake Lure and Chimney Rock area. The Cycle NC staff has requested lodging availability in these specific locations only. Please email michelle@mcconnellgroup.biz with a list of how many vacancies you have for Sept. 30 to be included on Cycle NC's vendor list.
- **Welcome Tent:** A welcome tent for cyclists and their guests will be set up at both Morse Park Meadows and off of Main Street in Rutherfordton, so TDA stakeholders are invited to display your brochures and marketing materials at this location. Please contact Michelle Yelton

at michelle@mccconnellgroup.biz or 828-980-2883 to participate.

- **Stay Open!** Businesses in the Lake Lure and Chimney Rock area are encouraged to be open for business on Sunday, Sept. 30 as cyclists will be looking for things to do once they arrive in town. A shuttle system will be in place for cyclists to get to and from Chimney Rock, so take advantage of this opportunity by keeping your shops open on this Sunday. **Businesses on Main Street in Rutherfordton** are also encouraged to do the same between the hours of 11am and 2pm on Monday, Oct. 1st.
- **Offer Discounts:** Give cyclists and their guests a discount for showing their Cycle NC badge. If you plan to offer any specials or discounts, please email that info to michelle@mccconnellgroup.biz so the info can be included in the welcome program.
- **Booth Space in Morse Park Meadows:** Showcase your business to the 1000+ people who will be milling around through Morse Park Meadows on this one day! Food, beverage, arts, crafts, retail and real estate businesses welcome. Booth spaces are limited as most of the park space is reserved for campers. Please email michelle@mccconnellgroup.biz for details and to reserve you spot or for questions.



**TDA Alliance
Speakers
Announced;
Website Launched**

The TDA is excited to announce its lineup of speakers for the inaugural 2012 TDA Alliance Conference on Tourism on Thursday, November 8th from 8 a.m. - 3:30 p.m. at the Foundation Performing Arts Center. If you aren't one of the 100 people already signed up for this much-anticipated event, please visit this link to register today:

<http://allianceconference.eventbrite.com/>

Speakers and sessions for the conference include:

Lynn Davis Minges, Assistant Secretary of Tourism, Marketing, and Global Branding for NC

The AWEN Group - *"Making the Web Work for You: Tricks of the trade to increase business" AND "Intro to TDA Partner Programs: Ways to give your customers even more"*

Meik Bartoschek, CPC CPMC founder and CEO of MBglobaltraining - *"It Pays to be Nice: Providing the best visitor experience possible"*

Chris Cavanaugh, Magellan Strategy Group - *"Tomorrow's Tourism: Industry trends"*

Angie Chandler, Executive Director of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area - *"Arts & Crafts: Exploring ways for musicians and artists to plug into heritage tourism outlets"*

Susan Dosier, principal of the DK Communications Group - *"But I Don't Have a Marketing \$\$: Social media & PR tricks of the trade anyone can do"*

Alex Naar, Director of Outreach at the Center for Sustainable Tourism and the Office of Engagement, Innovation, and Economic Development at East Carolina University - *"Niche Marketing: Exploring the "growing" demand for agriculture, sustainable & heritage tourism"*

Andre' Nabors, Tourism Development Manager for N.C. Division of Tourism, Film & Sports Development - *"Niche Marketing: Exploring the "growing" demand for agriculture, sustainable & heritage tourism"*

David Robinson, Vice-President of the International Institute of Butlers, Director of Guest Relations at the Greenbrier Resort - *"Welcoming from the Inside Out: Customer service tips"*

J. Mark Teague, PE, CPM is a Licensed Professional Engineer and Certified Public Manager - *"It's a Sign: Plugging into the TDA's Wayfinding and Guide Signs Program"*

Michelle Whitaker, TDA Executive Director - *"It's a Sign: Plugging into the TDA's Wayfinding and Guide Signs Program" AND "Intro to TDA Partner Programs: Ways to give your customers even more"*

For complete bios and photos of these speakers and more details about the conference, please visit

www.TDAAlliance.com

TDA Staff & Board Members

Michelle Whitaker - Executive Director
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Michelle Yelton - Communications Manager & Media Relations
The McConnell Group Public Relations
828-980-2883; michelle@mcconnellgroup.biz

TDA Board Members:

A directory of the current TDA Board members can be found by [clicking here](#).

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