

Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority

Coffee Talk
June 2016

General Updates

Richard Lundy, TDA Board Chair

Tourism Strategic Plan

Don Cason, TDA Executive Director

Developing the Tourism Strategic Plan for Rutherford County

Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Board

- Authorize Funding for Plan
- Approve Contracts
- Adopt Plan

Tourism Development Authority (TDA) Staff

- Logistical Support
- Communication with stakeholders

Consulting Firm (TBD)

- Facilitation of process & meetings
- Plan development

Strategic Plan Advisory Board

Members	Duties
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDA Board Chair • TDA Board Vice Chair • TDA Director • RC Chamber Director • HNG Chamber Director • County Manager • Mayor or Manager of each Town: Rutherfordton, Forest City, Lake Lure, Chimney Rock Village, Spindale, Bostic, Ellenboro, Ruth • Chimney Rock State Park GM • Isothermal Community College • County Sherriff • Realty Company • County EDC Director • Industry Representative • Tourism Media • Tourism Asset Foundation. • Rutherford Regional Health System • Rutherford Young Professionals 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vendor selection • Scope definition • Contract negotiation • Project oversight (plan development) • Vendor point-of-contact • Preliminary plan approval • Advisory support to TDA board

Tourism Stakeholders

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • TDA Board and Staff • EDC Director & Board • RC Chamber • HNG Chamber • Interested Citizens 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • County Manager • County Commissioners • County & Municipal Planners • Municipal Managers, Mayors, Council • Isothermal Community College 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chimney Rock Park • Tryon Int'l Equestrian Center • Rumbling Bald Resort • Tourism businesses (lodging, attractions, restaurants, retail) • Real Estate Brokers
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- Attend facilitated workshops and interviews
- Provide input (local tourism industry knowledge, experience, issues, needs, strategic recommendations)



Tourism Strategic Plan for Rutherford County

Action Steps

- **Meet with Town Mayors and Managers one on one site visit**
- **Meet with potential Advisory Board members one on one**
- **Tourism SP (TDA Board / Advisory Board) Workshop – Education Session**
 - **Trust Building / Team Building Session**
 - **Tourism Strategic Plan RFP**
 - **Facilitator Selection Process**
 - **Develop Timeline and Plan**
- **Develop Capital Campaign to support Tourism Plan**
 - **Raise Capital for Tourism Implementation**
 - **Implement County Tourism Strategic Plan**

Wayfinding Update

Don Cason, TDA Executive Director

Wayfinding Update

Sign Implementation

- Total Project Cost: \$ 302,620
- Number of Signs

<u>Town</u>	<u>Number Needed</u>
County Wide	48 signs
Rutherfordton	30 signs
Forest City	25 signs
Lake Lure	20 signs
Chimney Rock	5 signs
Spindale	5 signs
Ruth	5 signs
Bostic	5 signs
Ellenboro	5 signs

- County and Towns to determine information on signs
- Goal of completion date: June 2017



Marketing Plan

Michelle McConnell Yelton
FY16-17



New Brand Campaign

- In response to the visitor research compiled and the county's famous history as the backdrop of the film "Dirty Dancing," a new brand campaign was built with this movie history as the inspiration.
- The Dirty Dancing Facebook page has a fan base of over 17 million Likes and continues to grow so it is evident that there is an untapped market we can leverage.
- The new brand campaign will invite Visitors to the area will be invited to "Have the Time of Your Life in Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills".

Example:

*Have the
time of your life
this Summer*

with us in Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills of Rutherford County, I



Target Audiences

Based on market research and demographics collected the following are the top visitors to Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills:



Baby Boomers

- Biggest spending audience, but losing quickly to millennials
- More flex time
- Take longer trips



Millennials

- Rapidly surpassing Baby Boomers as biggest spenders on travel
- Most interested in unique experience; less interested in things
- Receptive to strong photography & videos
- Digitally dependent



Couples

- Looking for romantic getaways
- Honeymoons, Anniversaries, Weddings

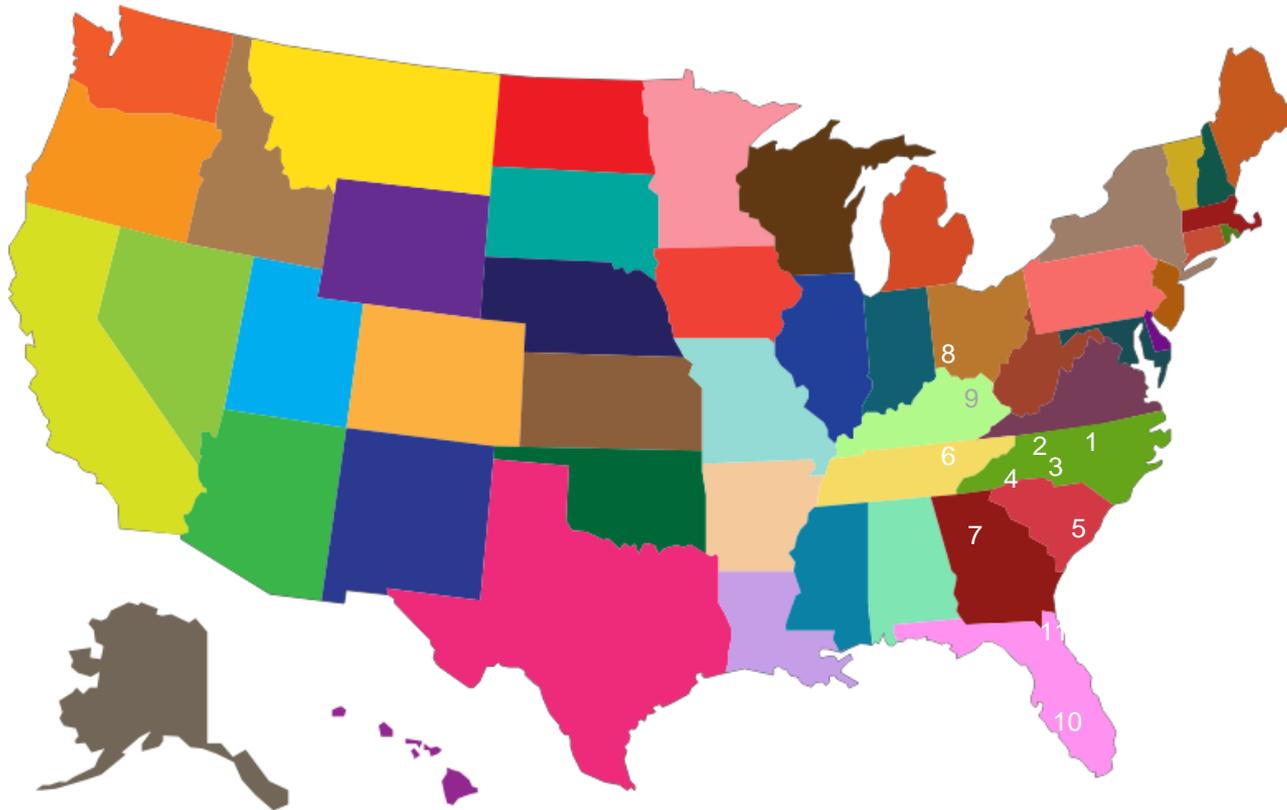


Families

- Focused on kids activities
- Looking for ways to plug kids into nature and unplug from technology

Target Markets

Based on the target audience personas and past visitor research and activity, combined with available resources, the following cities will be targeted in this marketing plan using a focused, digital-heavy approach:



1. Raleigh, NC
2. Greensboro, NC
3. Charlotte, NC
4. Regional Carolina:
WNC and SC
Upstate
5. Myrtle Beach &
Charleston, SC
6. Knoxville, TN
7. Atlanta, GA
8. Cincinnati, OH
9. Lexington, KY
10. Naples/Ft. Meyer,
FL
11. Jacksonville, FL

Messages & PR

Based on the audience personas created above and past visitor research and activity combined with available resources, the following cities will be targeted in this marketing plan:



Experiences
Over Things



Tips, Lists,
Itineraries
& Visitor
Testimonials



More Dynamic
Photos &
Videos

[Sample Video 1](#)
[Sample Video 2](#)



Website As
Content Hub
for All Media
Channels

Show how visitors can have the time of their lives!

Marketing Strategies



Website As
Main
Marketing Tool



Travel
Guide



Visitor
e-Newsletters



Stakeholder
Partnerships

Implementation Strategy

Content + Social Media



Implementation Example

Sample Ad:



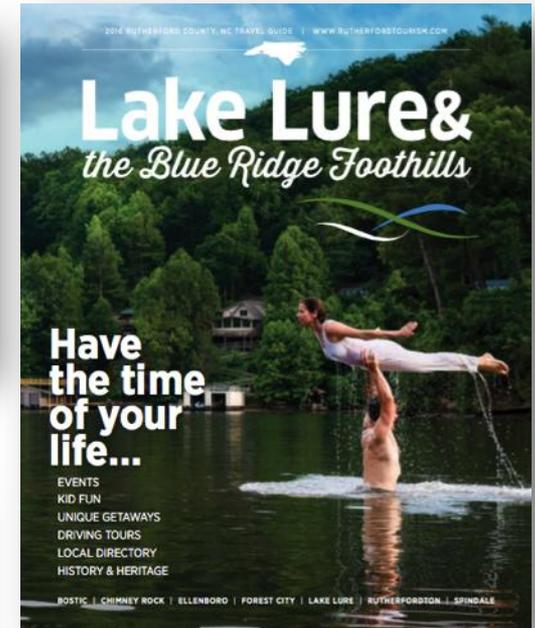
Social Media Pin/Post:



Alternate Size Ad:



Travel Guide



Social Media/Website Banner:



Implementation Example cont.





LAKE LURE & THE BLUE RIDGE FOOTHILLS, NC

Hike, bike, paddle or tube on 10+ scenic trails in Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills. Home to Chimney Rock State Park and 27 miles of Lake Lure shoreline, spend the day, weekend or season sampling a variety of trails designed for outdoor enthusiasts.







GO OUTSIDE AND PLAY!

- » Climb Mother Nature's "Ultimate Stair Master" by taking the 499 steps to the top of Chimney Rock at **Chimney Rock State Park** where a rewarding 75-mile panoramic view awaits you.
- » Known as one of the best biking trails in western N.C., **Buffalo Creek Park** is 4.5 miles custom engineered for mountain biking.
- » Hike, walk or run on the 7.8-mile **Thermal Belt Rail Trail** that passes through the quaint towns of Rutherfordton and Spindale.
- » The **Broad River Paddle Trail** is 42 miles of class III paddling and tubing adventures. With three access points, the river is broken into three sections allowing you to choose your adventure.

-  LakeLureBRF
-  VisitRCNC
-  VisitLakeLureBlueRidgeNC



VisitBlueRidgeNC.com | 800-849-5998

Additional Ad Concepts:

Have the time of your life...

In Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills of Rutherford County, NC











Have the **TIME OF YOUR LIFE** in Lake Lure & the Blue Ridge Foothills, famous for its starring role in the film "Dirty Dancing!" The quaint towns of Rutherford County are conveniently located within minutes of Tryon International Equestrian Center, making it the ideal springboard to a bevy of regional attractions. With outdoor adventures, scenic driving tours and iconic landmarks like Chimney Rock, we invite you to unplug from your daily grind and recharge your mind, body and relationships.

- » Driving Tours
- » Spring Events
- » Trail Maps
- » Water Sports
- » Family Fun

- » Historic Downtowns
- » Outdoor Adventures
- » Daytrips
- » Live Music Concert Series
- » Local Directory

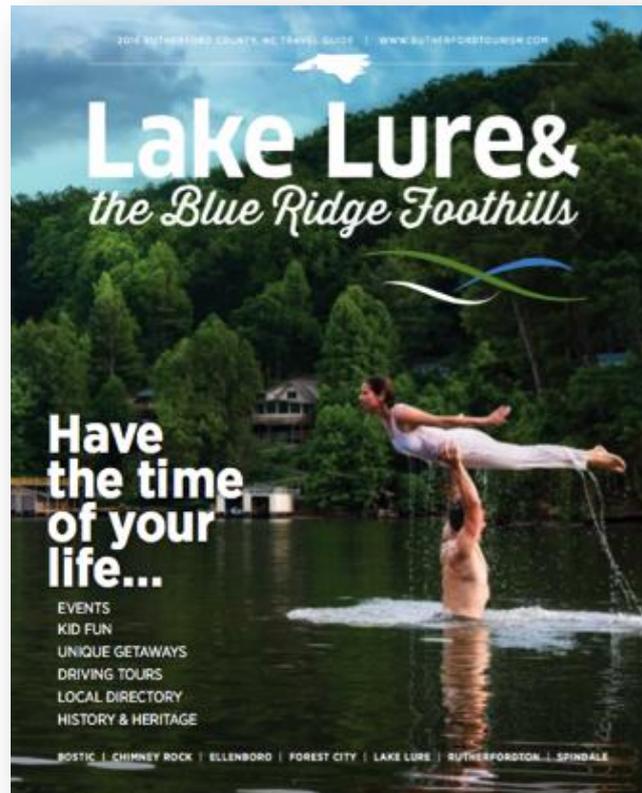
Download our travel guide online at TimeOfYourLifeNC.com or pick up a copy in the **TIEC Welcome Center**



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New Visitor Guide

Rutherford County, NC





Water Traffic by City
Top 10

City	Visitors	Revenue	Hotels	Restaurants
Lake Lure	100,000	\$1,000,000	100	100
Chimney Rock	80,000	\$800,000	80	80
Forest City	60,000	\$600,000	60	60
Rutherfordton	40,000	\$400,000	40	40
Spindale	30,000	\$300,000	30	30
Union Mills	20,000	\$200,000	20	20
Bostic	15,000	\$150,000	15	15
Ellenboro	10,000	\$100,000	10	10



Rutherford County TDA Staff

Interim Executive Director: [Don Cason](#)
 Project Manager: [Karen Tegen](#)
 Administrative Assistant: [Taylor Hardin](#)

Welcome Center

Information Services Director: [Wesley Alexander](#)
 Hostess:
[Sherri Seay](#)
[Kayley Hargett](#)

Email:
tourisminfo@rutherfordcountync.gov

Rutherford County Tourism Website

www.VisitBlueRidgeNC.com
www.TimeOfYourLifeNC.com

Rutherford County TDA Website

www.rutherfordcountync.gov/tourismdevelopmentauthority

800.849.5998

WELCOME CENTER

In Lake Lure
 2932 Memorial Hwy. (US-64/74) Lake Lure, NC 28746

828.287.6113

Lake Lure, Chimney Rock and "Small Town Friendly" Destinations
 Chimney Rock, Lake Lure, Forest City, Rutherfordton, Spindale, Union Mills, Bostic, and Ellenboro.

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