

I. Campaign Overview

Title:

“Book Now, Explore More: Haywood is Open”

Objective:

Combat a 20–23% drop in short-term vacation rental (STVR) future bookings from June to September by driving urgent, early bookings and correcting negative perceptions about Haywood’s visitor readiness post-Hurricane Helene.

Campaign Period:

Launch Mid-June 2025 – Labor Day Weekend 2025

Target Audiences:

- Regional drive-market travelers (NC, SC, GA, TN, FL)
- Past Haywood visitors
- Outdoors & adventure-seeking millennials, Gen X families

II. Key Strategies

1. “Book Now” Promotion with Elk Bucks Incentive

Concept:

Encourage travelers to book immediately by offering **Elk Bucks**, local vouchers redeemable at Haywood businesses.

Incentive Levels:

- \$50 in Elk Bucks for 2-night stays, Sun-Thurs only (\$25/night)
- \$100 in Elk Bucks for 3-night stays, Sun-Thurs only (\$33/night)
- \$200 in Elk Bucks for 5+ night stays, one Fri/ Sat okay (\$40/night)

Eligibility Conditions:

- Must book through campaign-specific page or use a special code
- Must stay in a participating Haywood County STVR or lodging partner between June 21–September 1, 2025
- Elk Bucks expire after Labor Day and are only valid at participating Haywood businesses

Business Reimbursement:

- Visit Haywood will fully reimburse participating businesses post-campaign
- No requirement for local businesses to offer discounts

2. Redemption Guidelines for Visitors

- Use Period: Must be used during their stay or before Labor Day 2025.
- Eligible Locations: Redeemable only at participating Haywood County businesses.
- Form: Physical voucher cards or monopoly type cash (TBD).
- Limit per stay: One voucher per reservation to limit abuse.
- Non-transferable (name must match booking confirmation).
- Cannot be exchanged for cash or gratuity.
- No partial redemptions or carryover. Must be used in full, like a gift card.

3. Business Participation Terms

- **Participating businesses must:**
 - Agree to accept vouchers like cash
 - Submit redemptions by a set deadline (e.g., September 15)
 - Display “Elk Bucks Accepted Here” signage

Reimbursement Terms: Reimbursed by HCTDA 100% at face value within 30 days post-campaign.

Additional Suggestion

- Add a countdown timer on the campaign landing page to add urgency

II. “Haywood is Open” Perception Rebuilding Campaign

Goals:

- Reinforce that Haywood is safe, scenic, and fully ready to host summer travelers
- Showcase the region’s resilience and ongoing recovery

Tactics:

- Storytelling through social and digital video about business reopenings, road repair, and vibrant summer activities
- Leverage UGC and local testimonials

3. VRBO/Expedia Partner Campaign

Objective:

Use paid placement on major vacation rental platforms to increase visibility and immediate booking intent for Haywood listings.

Execution:

- Paid native placements and banners on VRBO, Expedia Group sites
- Geo-targeting based on users who have searched Western NC or Blue Ridge destinations
- Link ads directly to the “Book Now” campaign landing page

IV. Measurable Goals & KPIs

- **STVR bookings:** Close the 20–23% gap by end of August
- **Landing page traffic:** 50K+ unique visitors
- **Voucher redemptions:** Track participation and business lift