

— VISIT —
HAYWOOD
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

HAYWOOD COUNTY
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

September 24, 2025| Board of Directors Meeting



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WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

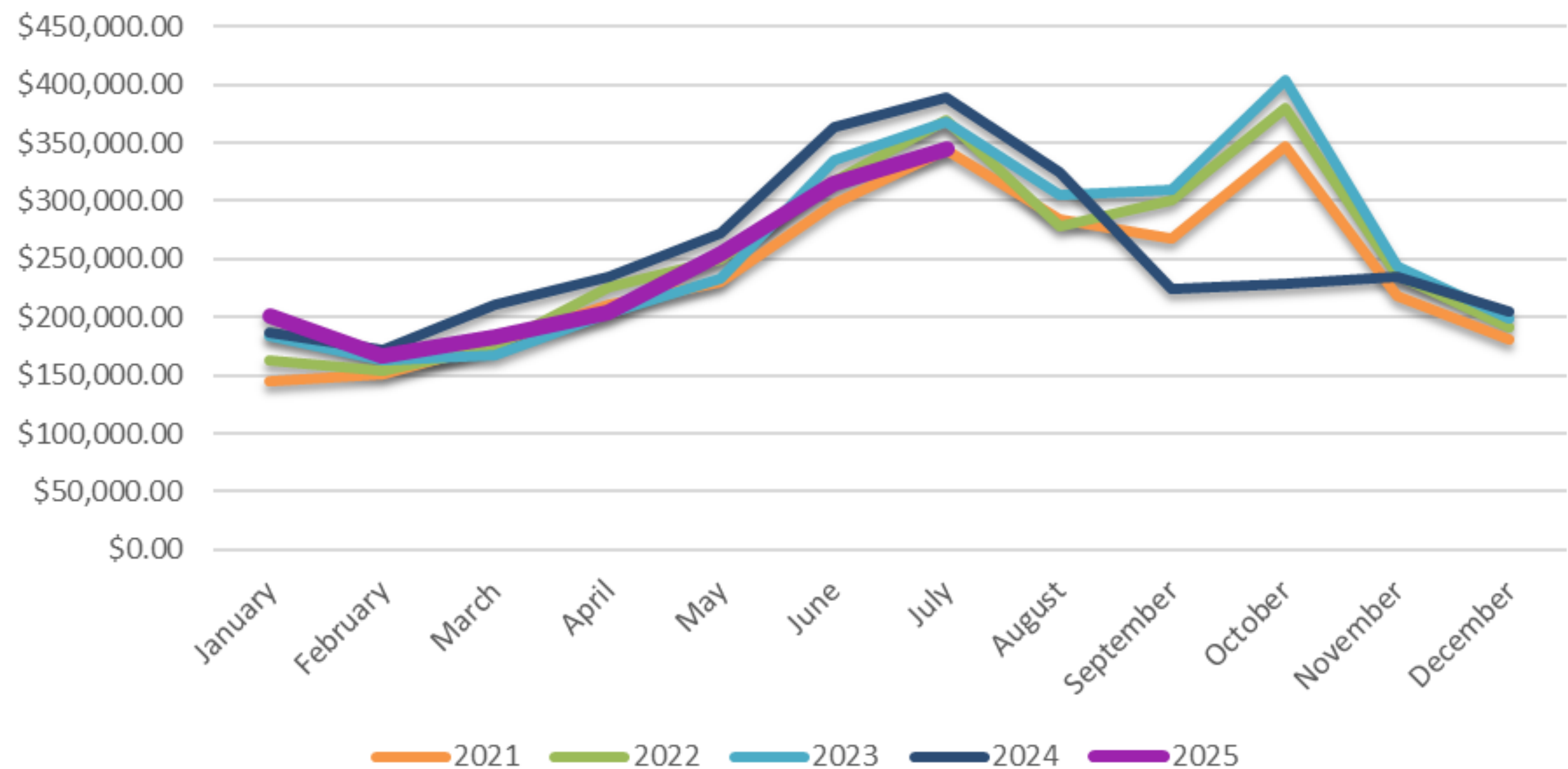
Occupancy Tax & Lodging Data

Fiscal Year Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison (Gross)

					\$ Change from Previous Year	% Change from Previous Year
	2022-2023	2023-2024	2024-2025	2025-2026		
July	\$369,695.58	\$367,752.94	\$388,684.72	\$345,170.63	(\$43,514.09)	-11.20%
Canton	\$26,879.79	\$19,497.12	\$25,455.96	\$23,596.53	(\$1,859.43)	-7.30%
Clyde	\$12,404.07	\$19,607.12	\$21,166.77	\$23,515.31	\$2,348.54	11.10%
Lake Junaluska	\$39,626.65	\$40,797.83	\$43,022.88	\$41,873.31	(\$1,149.57)	-2.67%
Maggie Valley	\$177,268.47	\$170,417.23	\$175,808.74	\$141,219.00	(\$34,589.74)	-19.67%
Waynesville	\$113,516.60	\$117,433.64	\$123,230.37	\$114,966.48	(\$8,263.89)	-6.71%

[Link to Online Version](#)

YOY Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison



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Old Business

Church Street Festival Grant Rollover Request

- Applicant stated the objectives outlined in the grant application were not able to be executed in time for the October 11, 2025 event.
- Applicant requests to rollover the grant and allow the funds to be used for next year's show on October 10, 2026.
- There will likely be slight changes to the budget and marketing plan. Applicant will submit updated documents by January.

Original Grant Award Date	May 29, 2025
Original Grant Award Amount	\$13,450



An aerial photograph of a scenic landscape. In the foreground, a calm lake reflects the sky. To the left of the lake, there is a small cluster of houses and trees. The middle ground is filled with dense green forests. In the background, rolling mountains are visible under a blue sky with scattered white clouds.

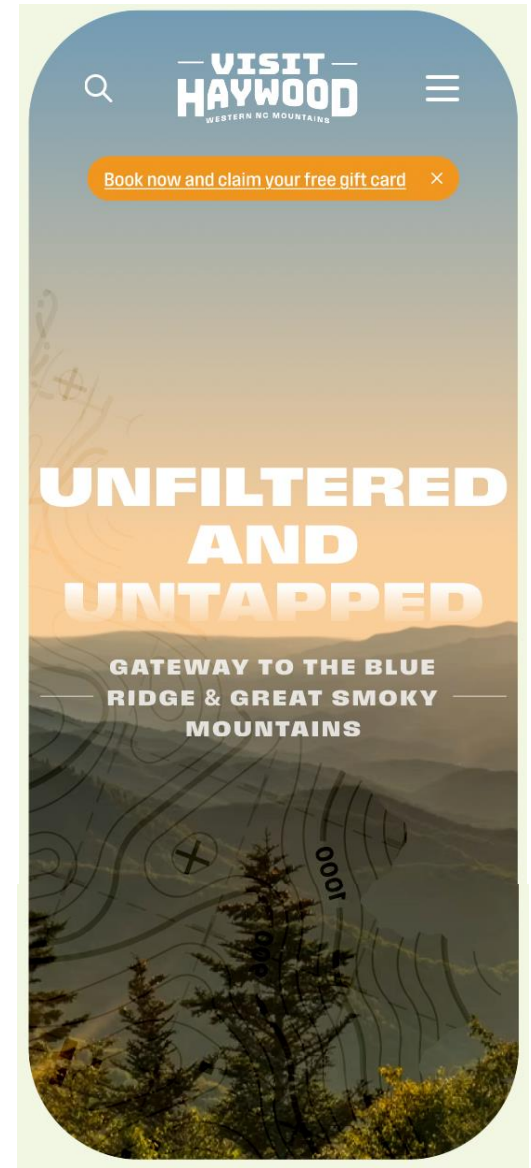
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New Business

Website Contract

- Request For Proposals Published - May 28, 2025
- Received 49 Proposals by deadline of July 23, 2025
- 3 Finalist were selected for in-person interviews on August 28, 2025
- Unanimous recommendation by Marketing Committee to move forward with One Net



Website Contract

- Contract is in three parts:
 - Master Service Agreement includes overall terms and conditions.
 - Schedule A includes specific plan of work with budget to complete the Website Strategy at a fixed price of \$15,000.
 - Initial proposal is referred to in Schedule A.
 - Schedule B will be finalized leveraging the findings of the Website Strategy and will include all Execution of Website Design & Development, SEO and Content Migration. Estimated costs \$139,516 to \$160,436, plus out-of-pocket expenses and contingency.



Request: Motion to approve the Master Services Agreement and Schedule A as presented, and to approve Corrina Ruffieux to negotiate and sign Schedule B up to \$175,000

Resolution For Phase 2 Photography & Videography



- Authorizes a piggybacking exception to the competitive bidding process under N.C.G.S. § 143-129(g), which allows reuse of a previously awarded bid.
- Original bid awarded Dec 4, 2024 to New Union Films & Sam Dean Photography in the amount of \$160,000.
- Approves contracting the same vendors for winter videography & photography, for no more than \$160,000



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FY 25-26
Capital Grant Applications

REMINDER: Conflict of Interest Policy

The purpose of this policy is to protect the integrity and transparency of the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) by ensuring that all decisions and actions are made in the best interest of the Authority and the public it serves.

1. Procedures for Disclosure and Management of Conflicts

- An Interested Person must disclose any actual or potential conflict of interest.
- After disclosure, the Board or Committee will determine by a majority vote whether a conflict of interest exists.
- Interested Persons with conflicts must:
 - Recuse themselves from discussions and votes on matters where a conflict exists.
 - Not attempt to influence decisions related to the conflict.
 - Ensure meeting minutes reflect the disclosure and recusal.

2. Procedures for Addressing a Conflict of Interest

- After due diligence, the Board or Committee will determine whether the transaction is fair, reasonable, and in the best interests of HCTDA.
- The Board or Committee may approve the transaction with a majority vote of disinterested members.

3. Record Keeping

All disclosures, recusals, and actions taken to address conflicts shall be documented in meeting minutes.

Powered By Visitors

Visitors who spend the night in Haywood County lodging facilities (Hotels, Motels, B&Bs and Short-Term Rentals) pay 4% occupancy tax on their accommodations. Lodging properties collect the assessment, then remit it per state law for the HCTDA to leverage and invest on behalf of Haywood County - all through the lens of our travel economy and local residents.

3% of these funds are used for HCTDA operations and county-wide programs. The remaining 1% is split by zip code, used for destination marketing and reinvested into each zip code via grant programs.



Occupancy Tax Restrictions

Per Session Law 2007-337, House Bill 1013:

The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority shall use at least two-thirds of the funds to **promote travel and tourism** in the county and shall use the remainder for **tourism-related expenditures**.

Promote Travel & Tourism:

To advertise or market an area or activity, publish and distribute pamphlets and other materials, conduct market research, *or engage in similar promotional activities that attract tourists or business travelers to the area.*

Tourism-Related Expenditures:

Expenditures that, in the judgement of the HCTDA, are designed to increase the use of lodging facilities, meeting facilities, and convention in the county by attracting tourists or business travelers to the county. The term *includes tourism-related capital expenditures.*

Capital Grant Guidelines – Eligibility Criteria

- **Location:** The project must be entirely located in Haywood County.
- **Long-Term Impact:** Projects must demonstrate a lifespan of at least ten (10) years.
- **Tourism Impact:** Projects must have the potential to attract visitors from more than 50 miles outside Haywood County and generate overnight stays.
- **Alignment with Destination Master Plan:** Projects must align with the strategic pillars and goals outlined in the Haywood County Destination Master Plan.
- **Minimum Budget:** Projects must have a minimum total budget of \$25,000.
- **Match Requirements:** Applicant must provide a 100% match to the grant funding (i.e., for every \$1 requested, the organization must match \$1) and must show how the 1:1 match will be achieved. In-kind contributions (i.e., the value of donated goods, services, or volunteer labor) do not count toward the match requirement.
- **Lodging Restriction:** Per state law, project must not solely benefit a single lodging owner or property or be situated on a lodging property.
- **Proof of Ownership / Rights to Use Property:** At the time of application, the applicant must have legal control of the property through a recorded deed or long-term lease agreement. If property is owned by a municipal partner, applicant must provide a letter of support or other agreement from the municipality.

Capital Grant Guidelines – Ineligible Projects & Expenses

- Projects that replicate, or are similar to, programs currently being undertaken by the TDA
- Temporary or short-term projects that do not have a lifespan of at least ten (10) years (ie: installations).
- Expenses incurred or projects completed prior to the grant award date.
- Real estate purchases or acquisition of land or property.
- Feasibility studies or planning such as research, studies, or master planning projects, including market analysis, site feasibility assessments, or preliminary design work.
- Costs associated with obtaining permits, licenses, or fees for zoning, environmental compliance, or construction approvals.
- Operational expenses, including salaries, wages, benefits, utilities, leases, or other day-to-day operating costs of a business
- Routine maintenance, including but not limited to, repairs or upkeep of existing facilities, such as repainting, replacing HVAC systems, or routine landscaping.
- Installation or upgrades to utilities (e.g., water, sewer, electrical connections) unless directly tied to the capital project and clearly benefiting tourism.
- Purchases of movable or non-fixed items such as office furniture, laptops, or vehicles that are not permanently integrated into the project.
- Paying off existing loans, mortgages, or other debts.
- Projects that do not demonstrate a clear and measurable benefit to Haywood County's tourism economy or ability to attract overnight visitors.
- Contingency funds for unexpected expenses or overages.

Waynesville Capital Grant Request Overview

Project	Total Cost	Grant Request	Average Score	PDC Rec	EC Rec
Raccoon Creek Bike Park	\$250,000 / \$2,873,584	\$125,000	16.5	Fully Fund	Fully Fund
Waynesville Dog Park	\$30,000	\$15,000	15.6	Fully Fund	Fully Fund
Waynesville Arch Mural	\$36,000	\$15,000	12.1	Don't Fund	Don't Fund
Roots to Sky Sculpture	\$32,500	\$12,500	11.9	Don't Fund	Don't Fund

The Product Development Committee suggested that the Town consider developing an art-focused master plan. Such a plan could help identify larger, more impactful projects that align with long-term goals, rather than funding smaller, one-off initiatives.

FY25-26 Funding Request: \$167,500

FY25-26 Budgeted Amount: \$84,122

Fund Balance Available: \$303,000

FY25-26 Budgeted County Grants: \$215,000

FY25-26 Budgeted PD Other: \$100,000

Scoring Guidelines:

18-20

High priority for funding

15-17

Recommended for funding

12-14

Consider funding if resources allow

0-11

Not recommended for funding

Lake Junaluska Capital Grant Request Overview

Project	Total Cost	Grant Request	Average Score	PDC Rec	EC Rec
Stuart Auditorium Infrastructure	\$350,000	\$175,000	9.3	Doesn't Meet Current Guidelines, refer to EC	Doesn't Meet Current Guidelines

The Executive Committee recommended encouraging the applicant to reapply with a closer adherence to the grant guidelines.

FY 25-26 Funding Requests:	\$175,000
FY 25-26 Budgeted Amount:	\$28,040
Fund Balance Available:	\$68,000
FY25-26 Budgeted County Grants:	\$215,000
FY25-26 Budgeted PD Other:	\$100,000

Scoring Guidelines:

18-20	High priority for funding
15-17	Recommended for funding
12-14	Consider funding if resources allow
0-11	Not recommended for funding



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Staff Reports

Marketing College Graduation



**Congratulations to
Amie for earning her
TMP, FEP certifications!**



2026 Visitor Guide Advertising Available

Reach Thousands of Visitors & Locals

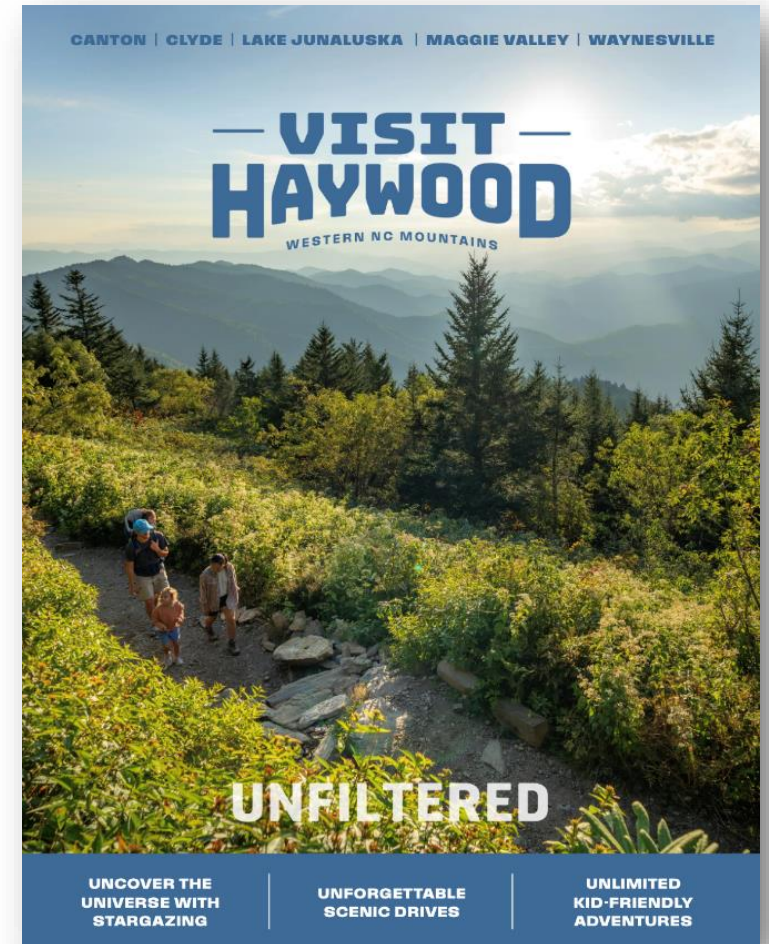
- Distributed across North Carolina and the Southeast
- Available at NC Welcome Centers, local businesses, and online
- The official resource for trip planning in Haywood County

Why Advertise?

- Year-long exposure: Printed guide + digital flipbook
- Targeted audience: Visitors actively planning their trip

Reserve Your Space Today

- Deadline: October 10, 2025
- Contact Ashley@VisitHaywood.com or Hayley@VisitHaywood.com



2026 Important Happenings Needed!

Help us tell your good news! Share exciting milestones you have coming up in 2026 such as:

- A new business opening
- A special anniversary
- A new event on the calendar

One example: Waynesville Inn & Golf will be celebrating its 100th anniversary next year. Travel writers are already showing interest, and we're gathering stories now that highlight what's happening in Haywood County in 2026.

Email Amie Newsome, at amie@visithaywood.com



Marketing Committee Openings

The Marketing Committee supports the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) in creating and implementing marketing strategies and campaigns that inspire travel to Haywood County.



There are currently two openings on the committee:

- One Waynesville representative
- One County-Wide representative

Ideal candidates will have a strong background in marketing and/or communications.

Application Deadline: September 30, 2025.

[Link to Application](#)

Gift of Haywood Seasonal Campaign

- 🎁 New Shop Local Incentive offering a "Buy One, Gift One" opportunity.
- 🎁 Purchase a digital Elk Bucks gift card and receive a free second card of the same value! (Up to \$200, while supplies last.)
- 🎁 Gift the gift card ... or spend it yourself!
- 🎁 Elk Bucks digital gift cards can only be redeemed at participating Haywood County businesses.
- 🎁 Campaign Dates: October 8, 2025 to January 4, 2026.

Not Yet Signed Up? Fill out the [sign-up form](#) by September 30!

**Elk Bucks cannot be spent on lodging but lodging partners can still promote their business with this BOGO opportunity as a great incentive to book more stays!*





INSPIRING TRAVEL
THROUGH RESPONSIBLE JOURNALISM





2026 ANNUAL CONVENTION

Haywood County featured in Southern Living!

Southern Living (Circulation: 2,813,988)

Celebrate The Return Of Fall In One Of North Carolina's Most Scenic Spots

Put This Luxurious Mountaintop Ranch In The Smokies On Your Travel Bucket List

There's no better place to unplug than Cataloochee Ranch and the mountains of western North Carolina.



<https://www.southernliving.com/haywood-county-nc-11808568>

<https://www.southernliving.com/cataloochee-ranch-nc-11808599>

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The background of the entire image is a vibrant photograph of a park. In the foreground, a woman with long brown hair, wearing a red and blue plaid shirt, is swinging joyfully on a rope swing. To her right, a man in a dark green shirt and jeans is leaning against the thick trunk of a large, leafy tree. The park is filled with green grass, various trees, and a small pond in the distance. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

**NEXT MOUNTAIN MORNINGS:
NOVEMBER 13 | CATALOOCHEE RANCH | 8:30AM**



Next Board Meeting
November 5, 2025 | 9 AM
Gaines Auditorium

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