

Minutes of  
CHEROKEE COUNTY  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY  
February 23, 2012

The Cherokee County Tourism Development Authority met at 10:00 a.m. on February 23, 2012 in the board room of the courthouse annex.

Members present were Eric Carlson, David Wood, Gil Hargett, Karen Nash, Danny Slucher, Callie Moore and Phylis Blackmon. Absent was Candy Roberts. Guests present were Bob Ferreira, Lillian Threlkeld, and Donna Decker and Sam Davis from the county's 911 Addressing Office.

The meeting was called to order by Eric Carlson. After a moment of silence and the pledge to allegiance, Eric Carlson welcomed the guests.

After motion made by Callie Moore, seconded by Karen Nash and unanimously adopted, the minutes of the January 31, 2012 meeting were unanimously approved.

The agenda was approved after additions were made.

David Wood had invited Donna Decker and Sam Davis from the 911 Addressing Office to explain how that office could assist with the signage needs being identified to assist with increasing tourism. It was the consensus of the board that a considerable savings could be obtained by utilizing those resources.

Karen Nash presented copies of a draft brochure being published by the Andrews Chamber of Commerce. The board agreed with her recommendation that the brochure state that the Andrews Chamber operates the Depot Visitors Center "with assistance from the Tourism Development Authority."

The next item on the agenda was a discussion of the upcoming Freestyle Kayaking Events. Eric Carlson stated that the media center had been awarded to Bryson Center. After discussion, it was agreed that we should still target specific media/journalists, especially those not arriving through Asheville, to stay in Cherokee County and to write about Cherokee County while they are covering the events. Gil Hargett stated that he would not be available to coordinate an event due to work obligations. The Kayaking Event Committee will meet on March 8, at 9:00 a.m. at The Daily Grind in Andrews and will discuss how we determine who are accredited journalists and how to determine which ones to invite.

The group reviewed and approved the presentation Phylis Blackmon had prepared, with input from Eric Carlson and Callie Moore, to be presented at the Tourism Partnership Forum in Stecoah. Motion was made by Gil Hargett, seconded by Callie Moore, and unanimously adopted to reimburse Phylis Blackmon for mileage for the trip.

The next item of discussion was the invitation for a small group of the TDA board to meet with a small group of the Board of Directors of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce. Several members preferred for the entire board of each organization to meet together rather than small groups. It was agreed that the TDA would hold its next regular meeting at 11:00 a.m. on Monday, March 19, 2012, with the board of the Cherokee County Chamber of Commerce joining at noon for a joint meeting. Phylis Blackmon stated that the Chamber would provide a light lunch. She is to find a suitable location for the joint meeting and will notify the boards of the two groups.

Phylis Blackmon described an opportunity for the TDA to submit a pitch-sheet to be provided by the North Carolina Department of Tourism to a select group of travel writers at their upcoming Washington, D.C. Media Mission. Motion was made by Gil Hargett, seconded by Danny Slucher, and unanimously adopted to approve the \$75.00 fee to participate in the media mission.

Phylis Blackmon also discussed the approaching deadline to have an ad included in the Smoky Mountain Host 2012 Guidebook. After discussing the various options, no action was taken.

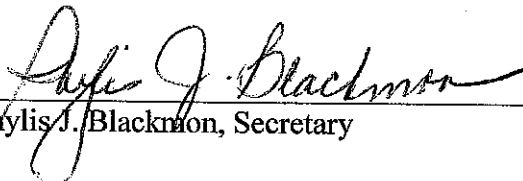
The next item of discussion was the finalization of the strategic plan. Motion was made by Phylis Blackmon, seconded by Callie Moore, and unanimously adopted to add an item under the Overall/General section to provide support for one or more Visitors Centers. Additional editing was made in the titles of categories and in the Mountain Culture section, and motion was made by Callie Moore, seconded by Danny Slucher, and unanimously adopted to approve the amended version attached hereto.

Motion was made by David Wood, seconded by Callie Moore, and unanimously adopted for Lillian Threlkeld to take the minutes at future meetings.

Eric Carlson discussed branding the county with Welcome to Cherokee County signs at the entrances to the county.

During the public forum portion of the meeting, Lillian Threlkeld and Bob Ferreira discussed a hot air balloon event to be held in Andrews in June.

There being no further business to transact, the meeting was adjourned.

  
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Phylis J. Blackmon, Secretary

APPROVED:

  
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**COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY**  
**STRATEGIC PLAN**

and travel in order to develop and enhance the quality of life for citizens of Cherokee County.

located, overnight destination where multi-generational visitors will experience great outdoor adventures centered on life, Appalachian and Native American culture, and Cherokee County heritage with a great desire to return. protect our tourism assets; promote all tourism; help visitors understand risks associated with tourism-related grows; insure that everything we do supports our mission statement; consider positive and negative impacts on e to practice mutual respect; and strive to insure that our work is honest, transparent, and responsible.

<p><b>ADVENTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Realize on the upcoming ICF e Freestyle World Championships qualifying and action being held on the Ahala River in 2012-13</li> <li>• Create action adventure videos that can be used to promote assets</li> <li>• Work with agencies to develop one or more public swimming areas on Hiwassee Lake</li> </ul>	<p><b>THE GREAT OUTDOORS</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a regional outdoor activities map and guide</li> <li>• Create lists and descriptions of hiking and horse trails; good roads for bicycling and motorcycles; and waterfalls.</li> <li>• Assist agencies and organizations working to develop a network of official public float access points</li> <li>• Work with agencies to develop one or more public swimming areas on Hiwassee Lake</li> </ul>	<p><b>MOUNTAIN CULTURE</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Create a self-guided tour of historical buildings and other points of interest</li> <li>• Develop a sampling of pre-planned itineraries for varying lengths of visit</li> <li>• Promote wineries and support the proposed "Hiwassee Highlands" AVA designation</li> <li>• Create a list and description of various scenic drives</li> </ul>	<p><b>EVENTS &amp; ENTERTAINMENT</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop a small grants program to help support events and entertainment that meet the goals and objectives of the strategic plan</li> <li>• Look to expand the county's capacity for events</li> <li>• Provide more comprehensive promotion of existing annual events</li> </ul>
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### **Indicators of Success:**

- Increase in occupancy tax revenue.
- Increase in sales tax revenue.
- Decrease in non-compliant accommodations.
- Increase in number of visitors to welcome centers.
- Increase in number of return visitors.
- Increase in number of hunting, fishing, and camping permits.
- Increase in number of designated public access points to water and public lands.
- Increase in number of professional guide licenses issued.
- Web site visitation metrics