



WELCOME

November 21, 2024

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting

EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY

Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

CALL TO ORDER

Chair Brenda Durden

- Call to order the Joint Meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA Nonprofit Corporation



POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

Board Meeting

Thursday, November 21, 2024 | 9:00 a.m.

Explore Asheville | 27 College Place | Board Room (1st Floor)

Members of the public may attend in person or [register here](#) to view a livestream of the meeting.

AGENDA

9:00 a.m.	Call to Order the Joint Meeting of the BCTDA, Public Authority and BCTDA, Nonprofit Corporation	Brenda Durden
9:05 a.m.	Approval of October 30, 2024, Meeting Minutes	Brenda Durden
9:10 a.m.	Financial Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. October 2024 Financial Reportsb. Helene-Related Penalty Waivers Updatec. FY24 Audit Status	Melissa Moore, Buncombe County Finance Director / BCTDA Fiscal Agent
9:20 a.m.	BCTDA FY25 Budget Update <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Finance Committee Report	HP Patel
9:30 a.m.	President & CEO Report <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Industry Metrics & Market Performanceb. Other Updates	Vic Isley
9:40 a.m.	Grant Program Updates <ul style="list-style-type: none">a. Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF)b. Legacy Investment from Tourism (LIFT) Fundc. Festivals & Cultural Events Support Grant Fundd. Always Asheville Fund	Tiffany Thacker
9:55 a.m.	Marketing Updates	Dodie Stephens Scott Peacock, Visit NC
10:25 a.m.	Asheville City Council Update	Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore
10:30 a.m.	Thanks to outgoing board member, Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore	Brenda Durden
10:35 a.m.	Buncombe County Commission Update	Brenda Durden on behalf of Terri Wells
10:40 a.m.	Miscellaneous Business	Brenda Durden
10:45 a.m.	Comments from the General Public	Brenda Durden
10:50 a.m.	Adjournment	Brenda Durden

The next joint BCTDA monthly meeting is **Wednesday, January 29, 2024**, at 9:00 a.m., in the Board Room of Explore Asheville, located at 27 College Place. Please visit [AshevilleCVB.com](#) for more information or call 828.333.5831 with questions.

BCTDA Mission Statement

To be a leader in the economic development of Buncombe County by attracting and servicing visitors, generating income, jobs and tax revenues which make the community a better place to live and visit.





GIVING THANKS & GRACE

EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE

POWERED BY

Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

FOR OUR REMOTE VIEWERS

Chair Brenda Durden

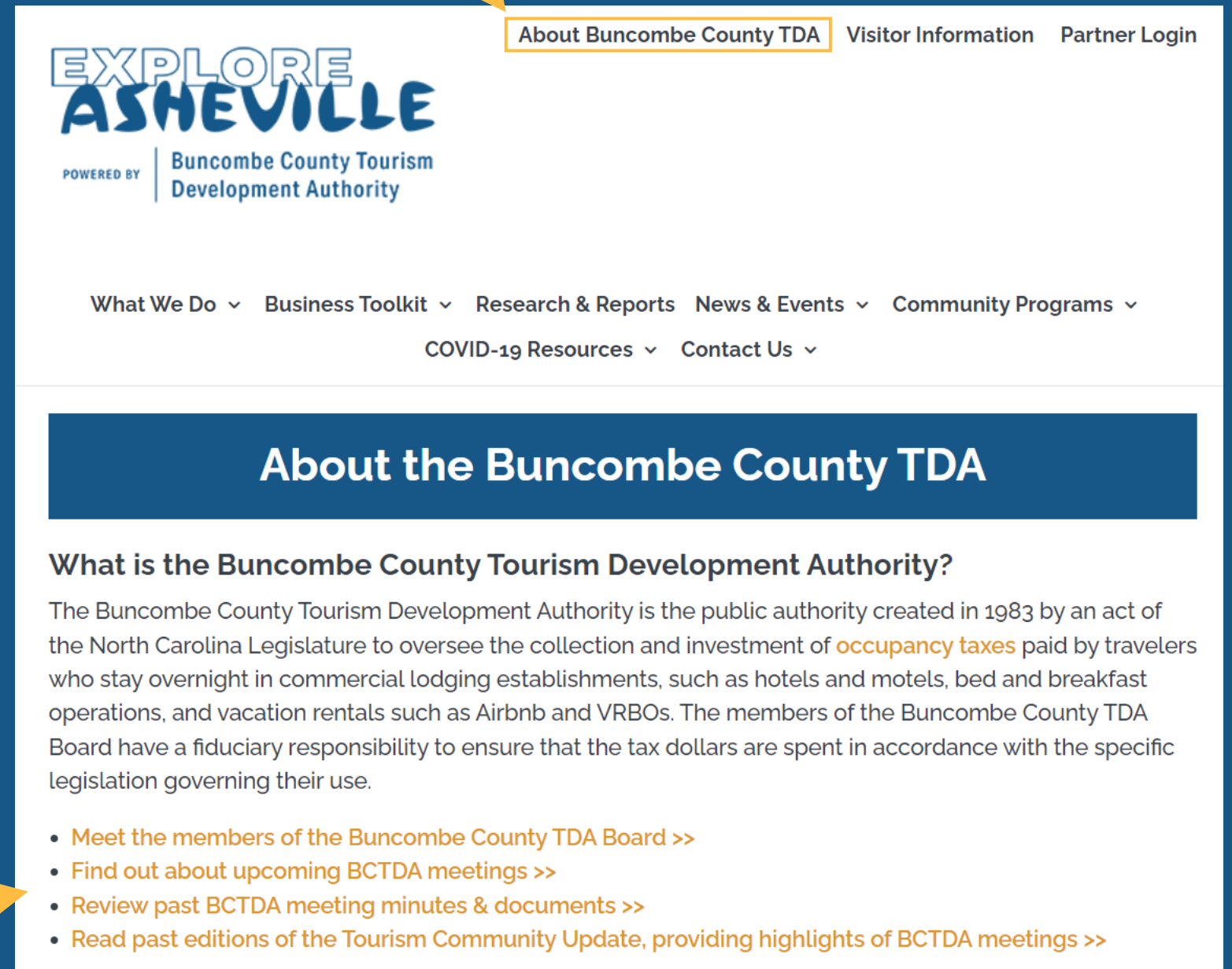
For our viewers watching remotely, documents were emailed to everyone who registered on Zoom by 8:00 this morning.

The agenda and meeting documents are also available online.

Additional materials, including the PowerPoint presentation, will be posted later today.

Go to:

- [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com)
- About the Buncombe County TDA
- Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings



EXPLORE ASHEVILLE
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority

[About Buncombe County TDA](#) [Visitor Information](#) [Partner Login](#)

[What We Do](#) ▾ [Business Toolkit](#) ▾ [Research & Reports](#) [News & Events](#) ▾ [Community Programs](#) ▾
[COVID-19 Resources](#) ▾ [Contact Us](#) ▾

About the Buncombe County TDA

What is the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority?

The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority is the public authority created in 1983 by an act of the North Carolina Legislature to oversee the collection and investment of **occupancy taxes** paid by travelers who stay overnight in commercial lodging establishments, such as hotels and motels, bed and breakfast operations, and vacation rentals such as Airbnb and VRBOs. The members of the Buncombe County TDA Board have a fiduciary responsibility to ensure that the tax dollars are spent in accordance with the specific legislation governing their use.

- [Meet the members of the Buncombe County TDA Board >>](#)
- [Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings >>](#)
- [Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents >>](#)
- [Read past editions of the Tourism Community Update, providing highlights of BCTDA meetings >>](#)



WELCOME BOARD & GUESTS

Chair Brenda Durden

- Welcome board members and guests who are in attendance
- Introductions around the room



OCTOBER 30 MINUTES

Chair Brenda Durden

Questions/ Comments

Suggested Motion:

Motion to approve the October 30, 2024, meeting minutes.

Motion Second

Additional Discussion

Vote



POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority
A Joint Meeting of the Public Authority and Nonprofit Corporation

Explore Asheville – 27 College Place, Asheville

Board Meeting Minutes
Wednesday, October 30, 2024

Present (Voting): Brenda Durden, Chair; HP Patel, Michael Lusick, Lucious Wilson, Elizabeth Putnam, Himanshu Karvir, Larry Crosby, Tim Rosebrock

Absent (Voting): Matthew Lehman, Vice Chair

Present (Ex-Officio): Asheville Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore, Buncombe County Commissioner Terri Wells

Absent (Ex-Officio): None

Staff: Vic Isley, Jennifer Kass-Green, Dodie Stephens, Tiffany Thacker, Julia Simpson, Ashley Greenstein, Josh Jones, Holly Watts, Kimberly Puryear, Sarajane Case, Mike Kryzaneck, Luisa Yen, Shawn Boone, Cristina Fernandez, Cass Herrington

BC Finance: Melissa Moore

Legal Counsel: Sabrina Rockoff, McGuire, Wood & Bisette

In-Person Attendees: Rick Bell, Asheville Buncombe Hotel Association
Randy Claybrook, Asheville Bed & Breakfast Association
Roy Harris, Community Member
Dave Nutter, Connect Buncombe
Pat Moran, Mountain Xpress
Lindsay Drillings, Miranda Escalante; Asheville Food & Beverage United
Meghan Rogers, Asheville Independent Restaurant Association
Peter Pollay, Posana
Chris Corl, City of Asheville
John Ellis, Prior BCTDA Board Member

Online Attendees: Sha'Linda Pruitt, Nick Kepley, Kathryn Dewey, Emily Crosby, McKenzie Provost, Shelby Pearsall, Khal Khoury, Emilie Soffe; Explore Asheville
Chip Craig, Caleb Hofheins; Greybeard Realty and Rentals
Martha Goss, RiverLink
Kit Cramer, Asheville Area Chamber of Commerce
Madison Davis, Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission
Jim Muth, TPDF Committee
Will Hofmann, Asheville Citizen Times
Daniel Walton, The Assembly





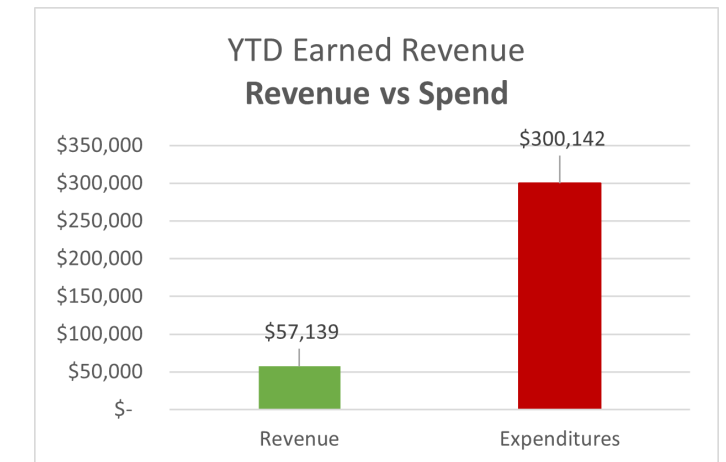
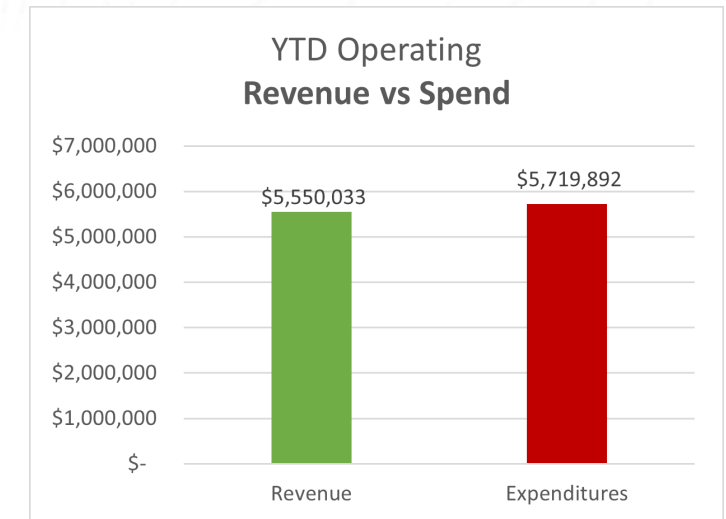
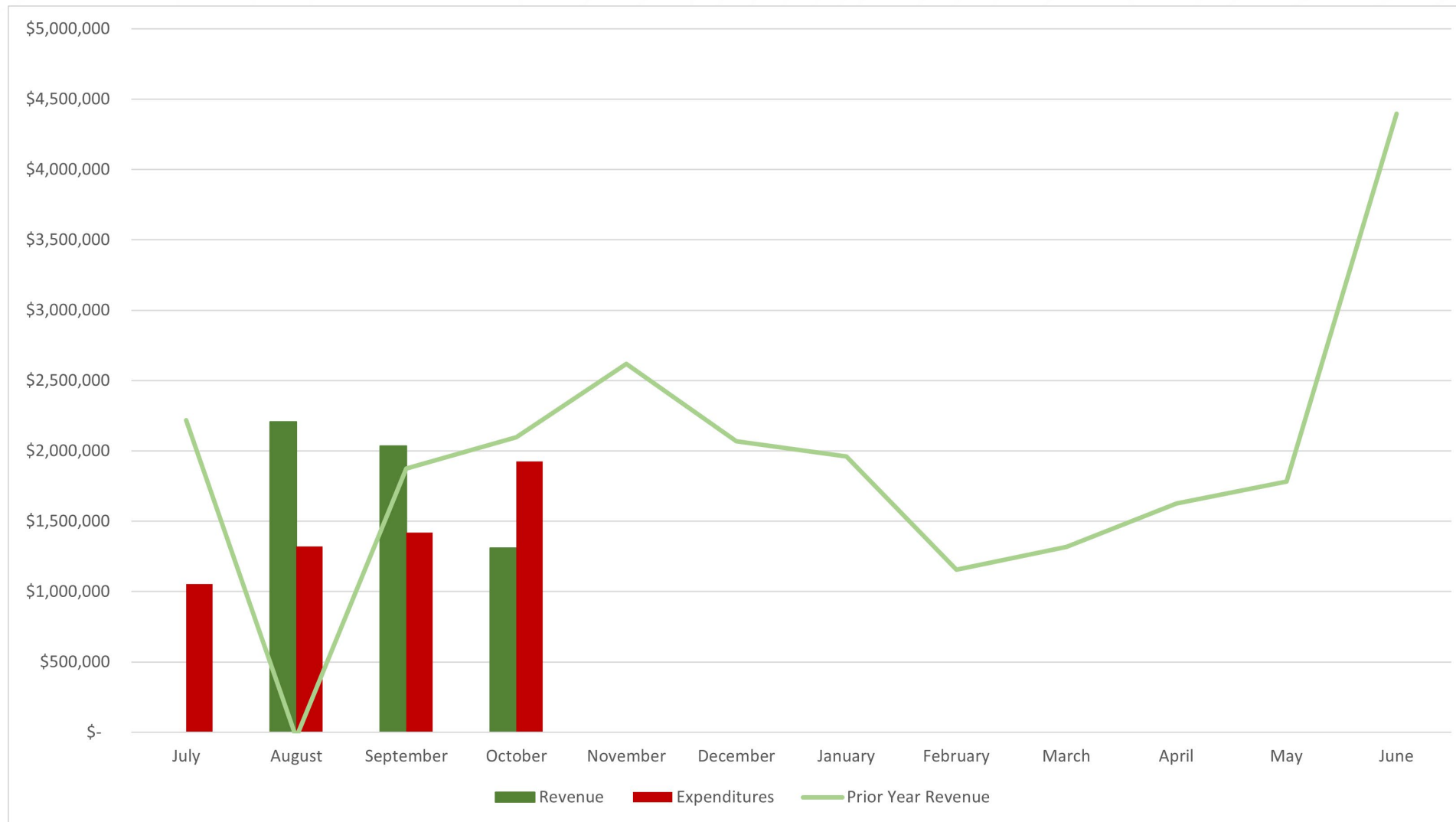
FINANCIAL UPDATES

Buncombe County Finance Staff

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POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

OPERATING AND EARNED REVENUE FUNDS

Revenues (Current and Prior-year) vs Expenditures (current year), October 2024



For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 1-3, and 7



OPERATING AND EARNED REVENUE FUNDS

Monthly Summary of Activities, October 2024

Operating Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$27,347,000	\$1,309,988	\$5,550,033	24.2%
Total expenditures		\$1,924,049	\$5,719,892	20.9%

Earned Revenue Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Year to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$350,000	\$ 19,379	\$57,139	27.5%
Total expenditures		\$ 300,142	\$ 300,142	85.8%

For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 1-2



PROJECT FUNDS: TPDF AND LIFT FUNDS

Monthly Summary of Activities, October 2024

Tourism Product Development Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Life to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$32,554,985	\$476,917	\$43,800,540	>100%
Total expenditures		\$30,781	\$5,999,776	18%
Active projects		19		
Funding available for future grants		\$11,245,554		

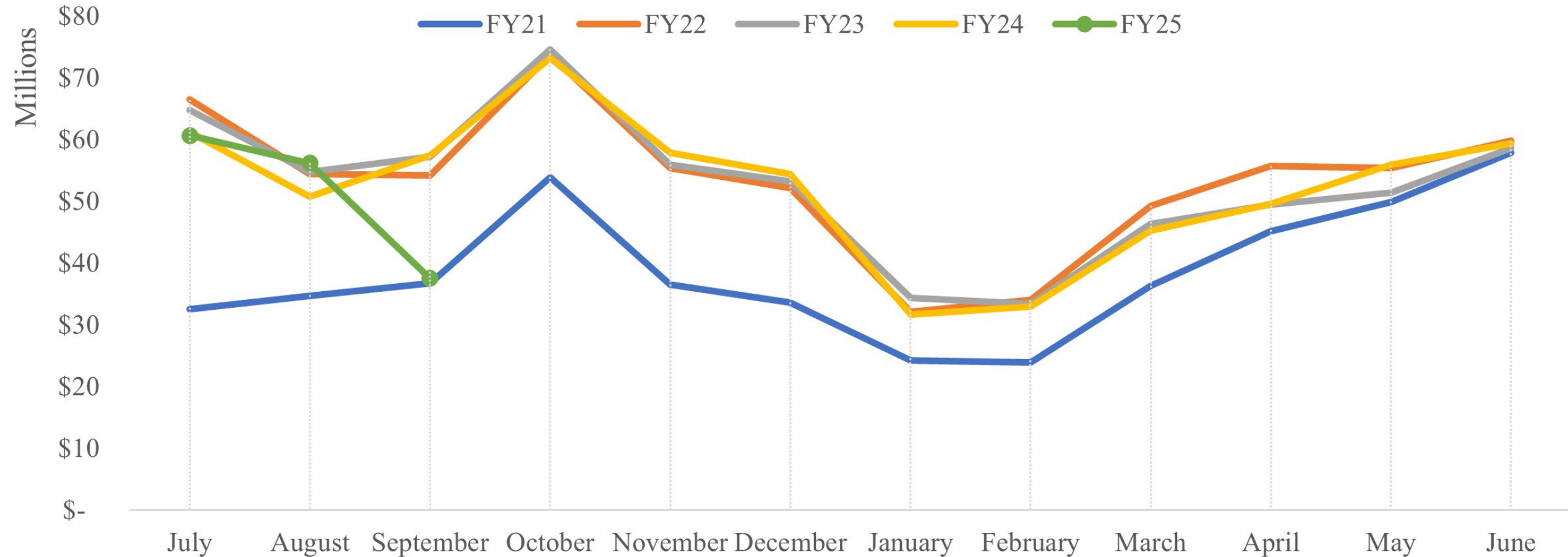
Legacy Investment From Tourism Fund	Budget	Current Month Actual	Life to Date Actual	(%) Budget Collected/Used
Total revenues	\$10,390,903	\$381,012	\$13,815,096	>100%
Total expenditures		\$72,981	\$94,941	1%
Active projects		12		
Funding available for future grants		\$3,424,193		

For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 3, 5, & 6



LODGING SALES

Shown by Month of Sales, Year-to-Date (5 years), October 2024

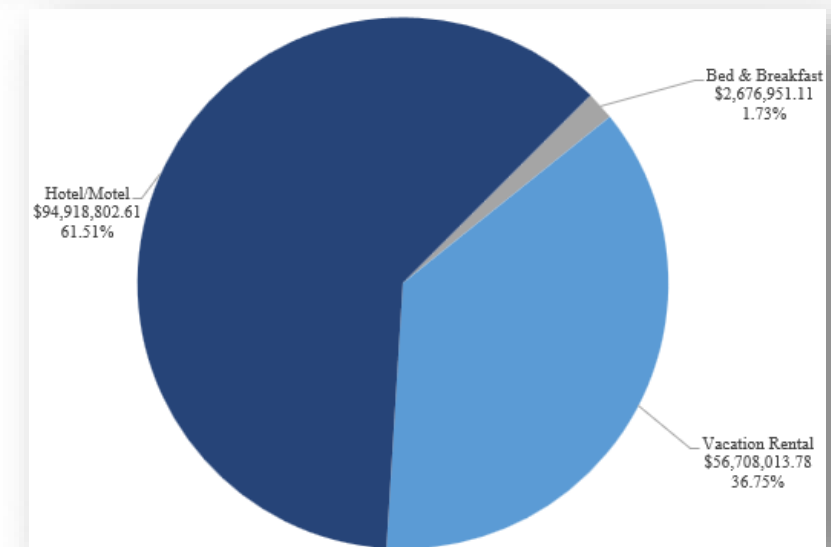
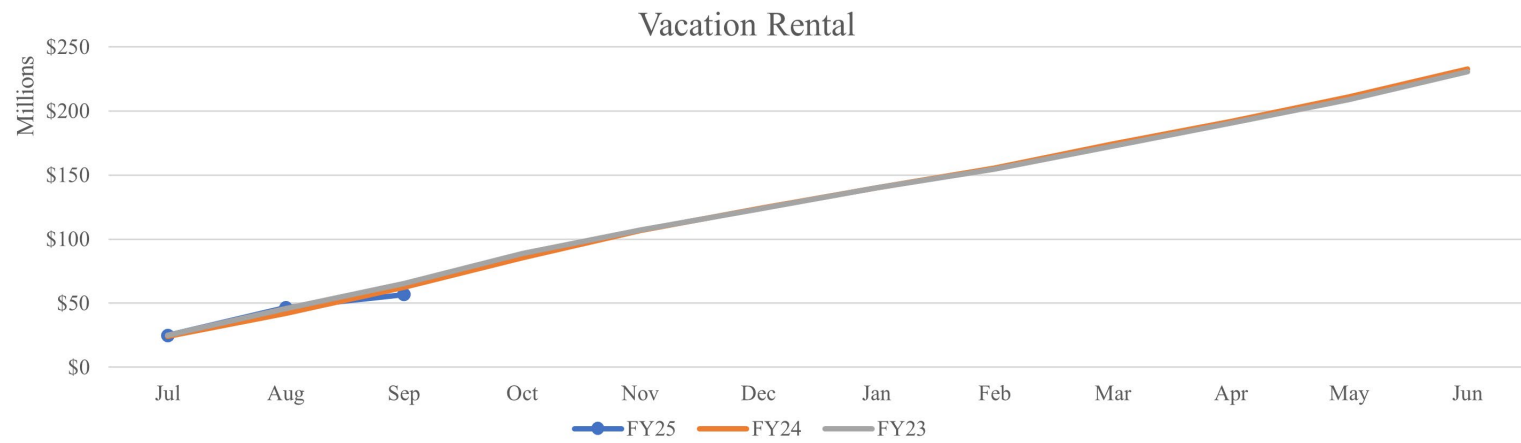
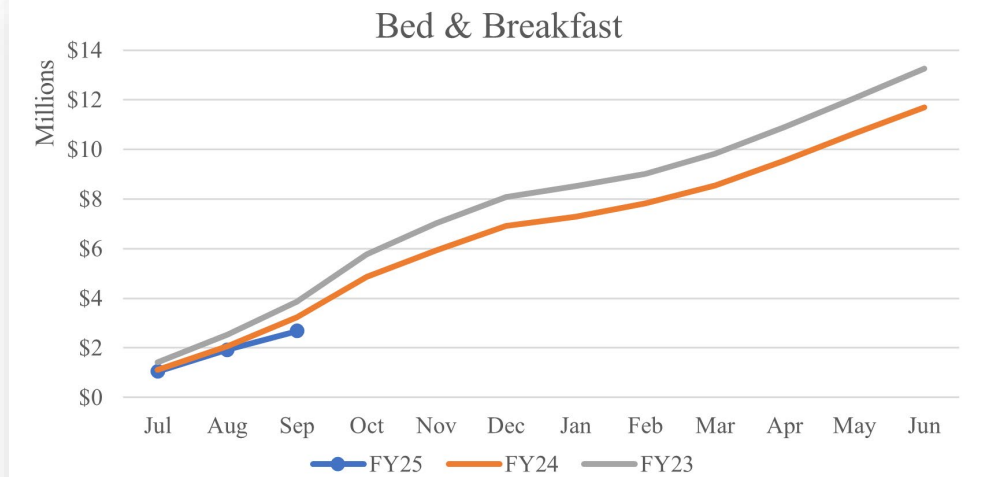
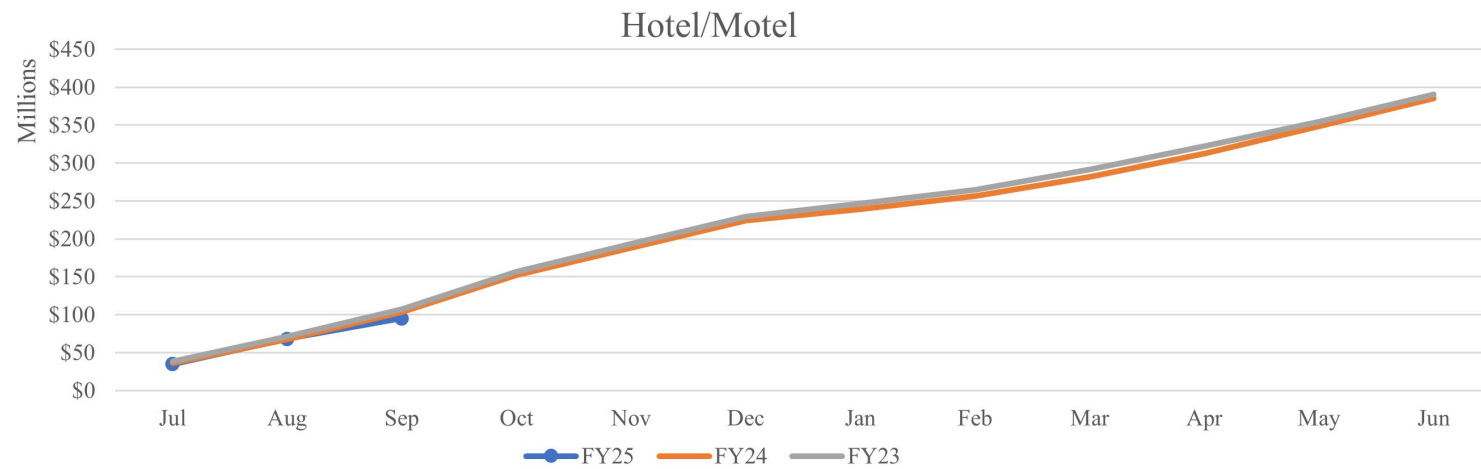


For more information, see financial and sales statements page 9



LODGING SALES

Activity by type and month, shown for 3 years, October 2024



For more information, see financial and sales statements pages 9 - 10



OCTOBER 2024 FINANCIAL REPORTS

Chair Brenda Durden

Questions/Comments

Suggested Motion:

Motion to approve the October 2024 financial reports as presented.

Motion Second

Additional Discussion

Vote





OTHER UPDATES

Melissa Moore

**Buncombe County | Director of Finance
BCTDA | Fiscal Agent**

PENALTY WAIVER UPDATE

Helene-related occupancy tax penalties waived for September – December 2024

Buncombe County Commissioners approved recommendation of the BCTDA; Helene-related occupancy tax penalties for September, October, November and December 2024 lodging are waived until June 2025.



FY24 AUDIT UPDATE

Revised timeline as a result of Hurricane Helene

Status report:

- BCTDA audit was nearly complete prior to hurricane – field work completed and financial statements drafted
- Hurricane redirected attention of County staff and auditors
- No anticipated findings from BCTDA's audit

Next steps:

- Mid November – early December: BCTDA, County staff, and Mauldin & Jenkins (M&J) review financial statements
- Late December/early January: County staff finalize financial statements, M&J issues audit report
- January 29: County staff and M&J present audit to BCTDA Board





FY25 BUDGET UPDATE

HP Patel

**BCTDA | Finance Committee Chair,
Treasurer of the Nonprofit**

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Development Authority

FINANCE COMMITTEE REPORT

Finance Committee Chair HP Patel

As directed in last month's board meeting, staff convened the Finance Committee in November to review information about the FY25 budget.

Finance Committee members include:

- HP Patel, BCTDA Treasurer of the Nonprofit (Committee Chair)
- Brenda Durden, BCTDA Chair
- Matthew Lehman, BCTDA Vice Chair
- Chip Craig, GreyBeard Realty
- Chris Cavanaugh, Magellan Strategy

BCTDA legal counsel and County fiscal agent participated in the meeting.

Following discussion and review of a number of factors, including reports of lagging payments from FEMA and delayed tax collections, the Committee's recommendation is to maintain the current FY25 budget, and revisit budget amendment discussions in the January meeting, when there are additional financial reports available.

QUESTIONS
INPUT
COMMENTS



PRESIDENT & CEO REPORT

Vic Isley
Explore Asheville | President & CEO

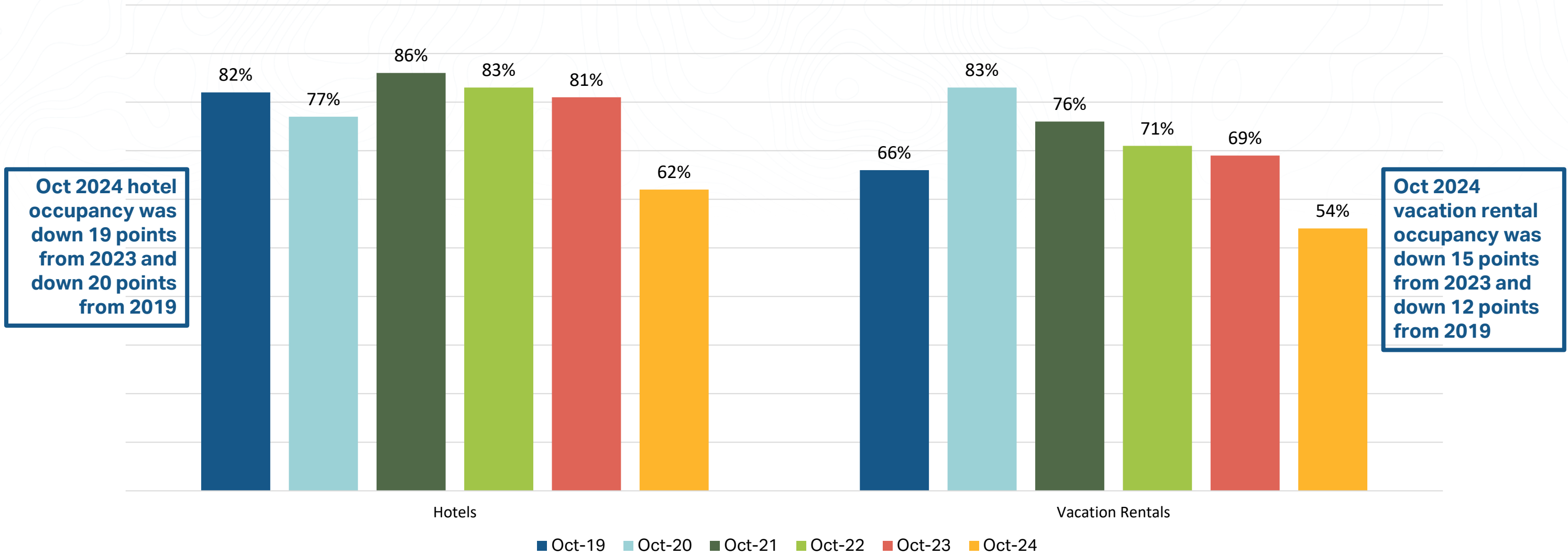
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INDUSTRY METRICS & MARKET PERFORMANCE

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Development Authority

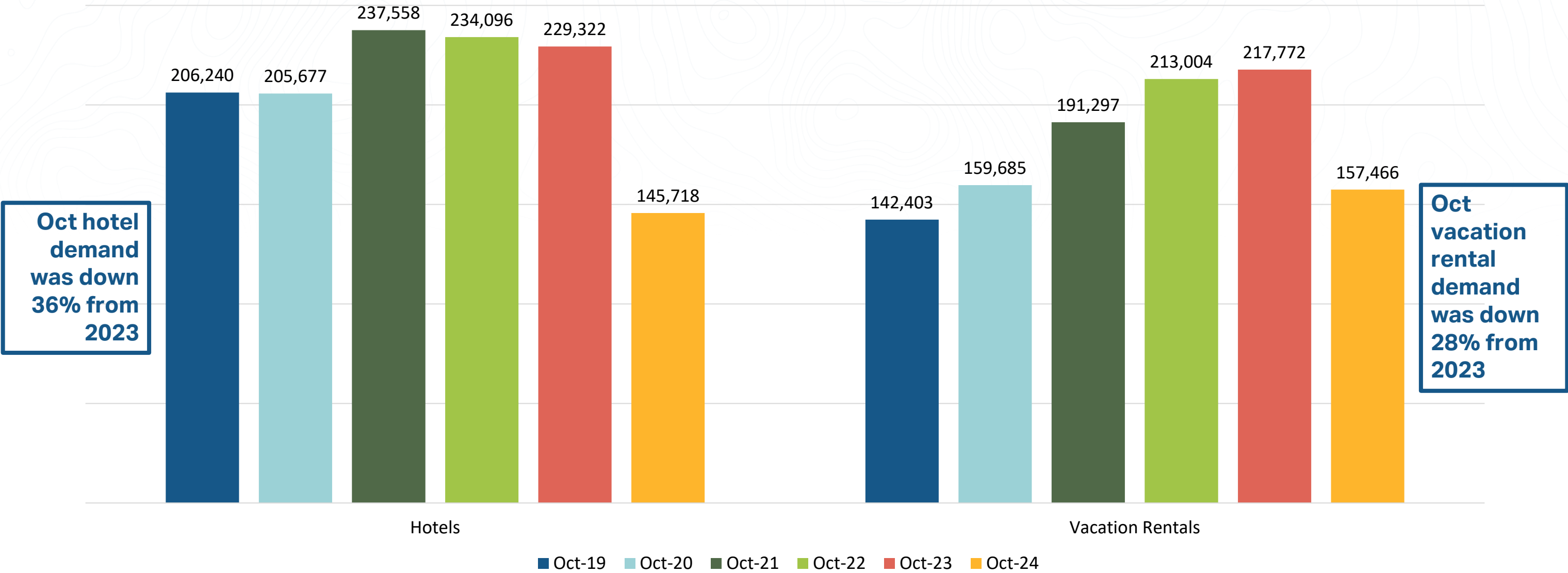
OCTOBER LODGING OCCUPANCY



Sources: Smith Travel Research (STR) & AirDNA



OCTOBER DEMAND

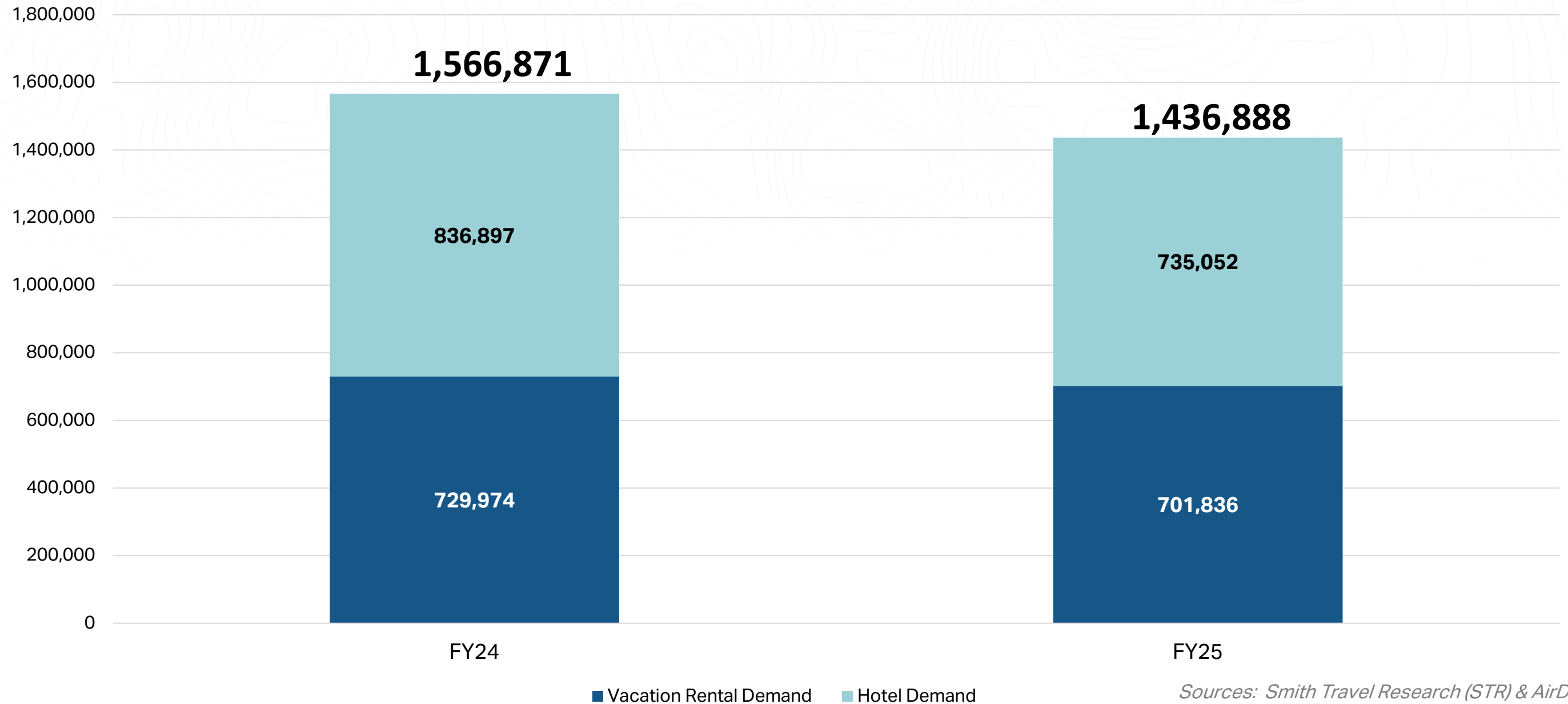


Sources: Smith Travel Research (STR) & AirDNA



TOTAL ROOMNIGHT DEMAND

-8% change FYTD (July – October 2024)

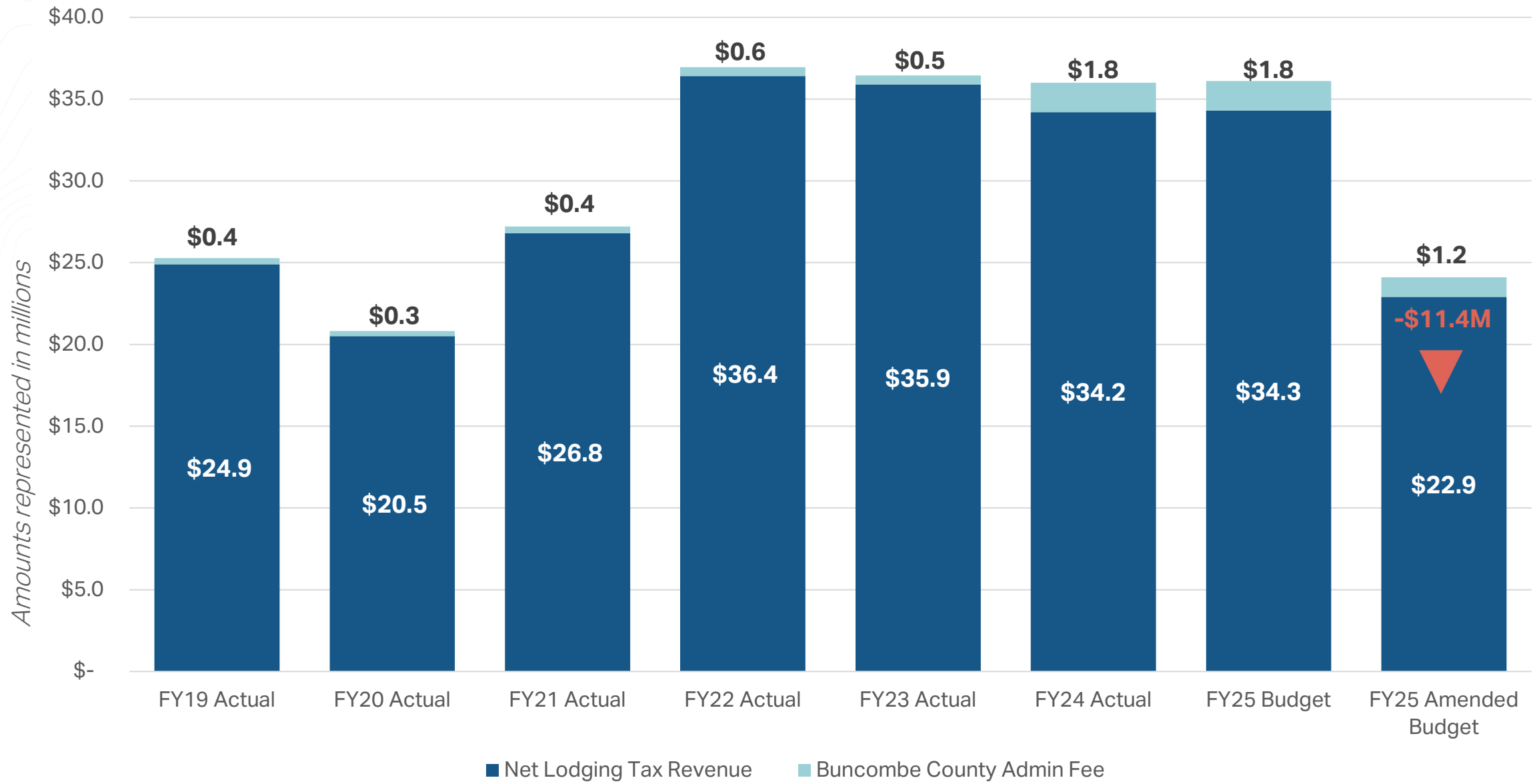


Sources: Smith Travel Research (STR) & AirDNA



BUNCOMBE COUNTY LODGING TAX HISTORY

Based on lodging tax revenue in Buncombe County, FY19-FY25

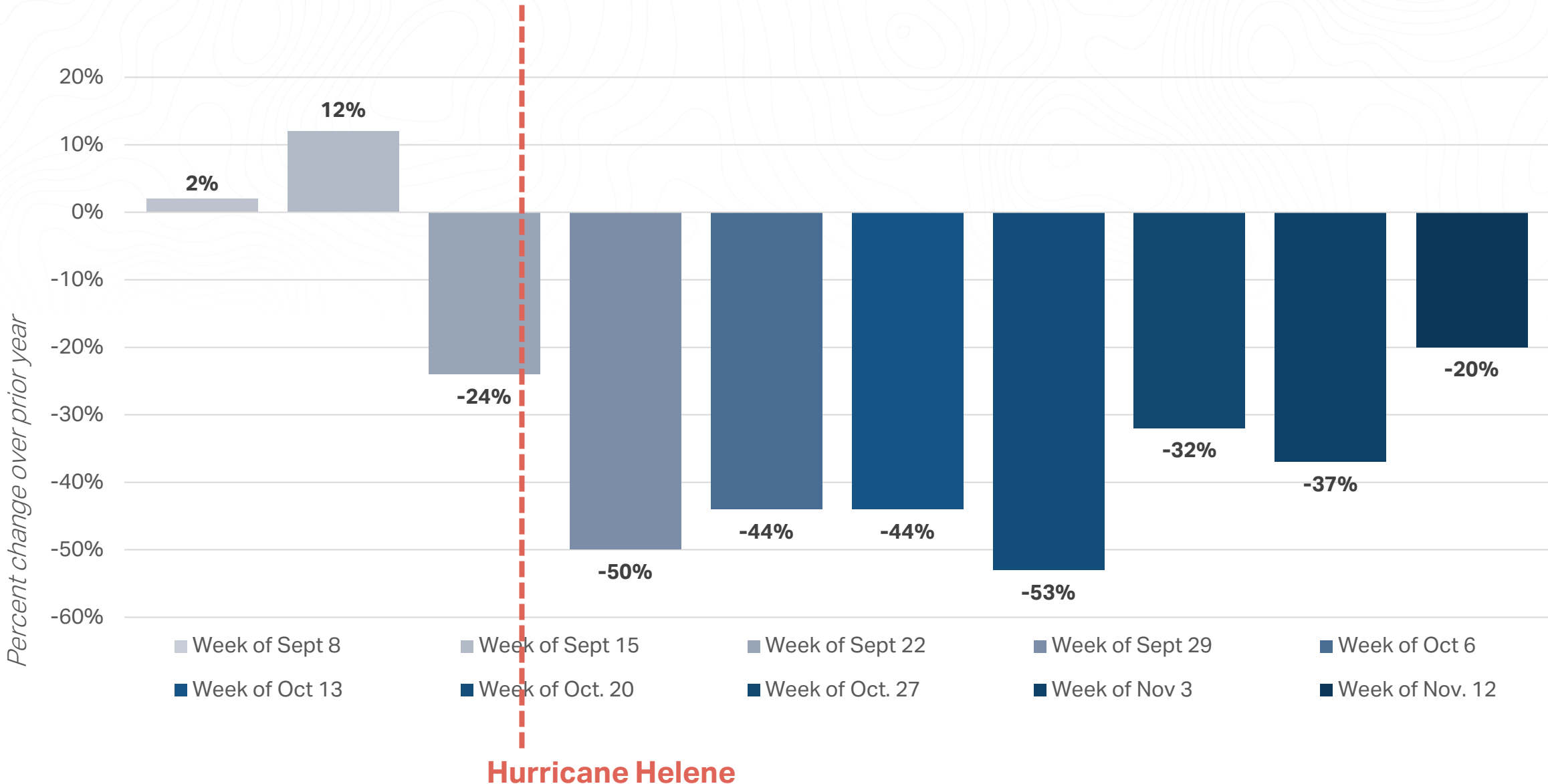


- Revised forecast is now \$11.4M less than original FY25 net revenue budget. Last month's estimate was \$10.1M.
- Lodging tax collections are forecast to decline 33% for FY25, to the lowest level since the pandemic in FY20.
- Year-over-year monthly declines of 40%-45% in the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Helene are expected to gradually lessen over the course of the fiscal year.

Source: BCTDA; Tourism Economics

BUNCOMBE COUNTY WEEKLY HOTEL REVENUE PERCENT CHANGE

Severe impact of Hurricane Helene immediately evident

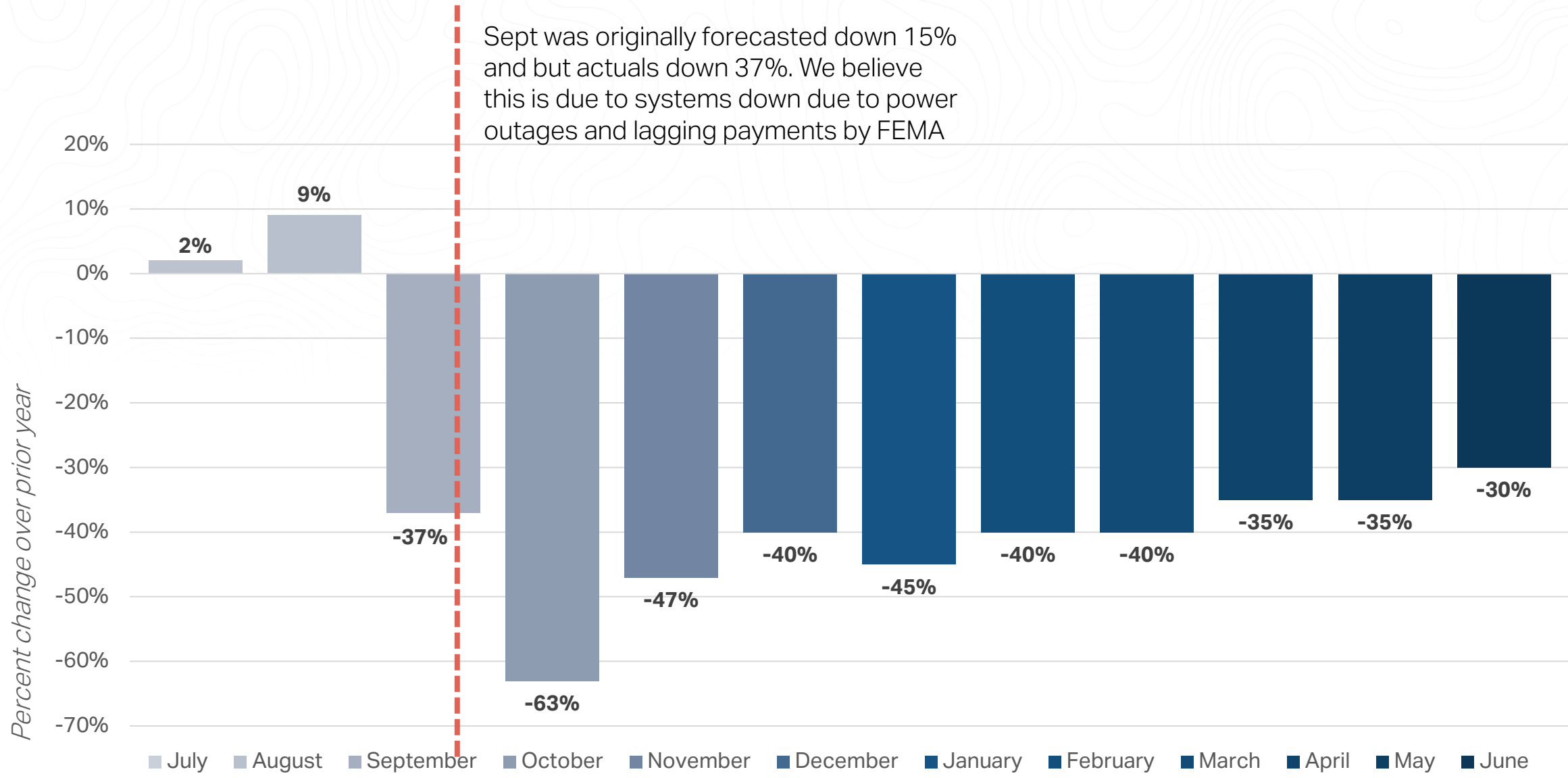


- Lodging and sales tax collections were already experiencing periods of weakness in 2024, following the 5% decline in 2023. Merchants and business owners were reporting weaker performance and were counting on a robust fall season.
- Helene hit western North Carolina on September 27 and 28.
- The impact of the storm appears the week of September 22, with the full impact evident in the weeks following.

Source: STR, BCTDA; Tourism Economics

BUNCOMBE COUNTY LODGING TAX

Forecasts for FY25



- The pace of recovery will depend on the timing of repairs to infrastructure including power and water systems, highways, and natural assets including the Blue Ridge Parkway.
- Additionally, there is a marketing and communication need to convey to potential guests that Asheville is open, accessible, and still an appealing place to visit.
- Quick action on these factors could accelerate economic recovery, including lodging tax revenue.

Hurricane Helene

Source: BCTDA; Tourism Economics



OTHER (MORE UPLIFTING) UPDATES

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Development Authority

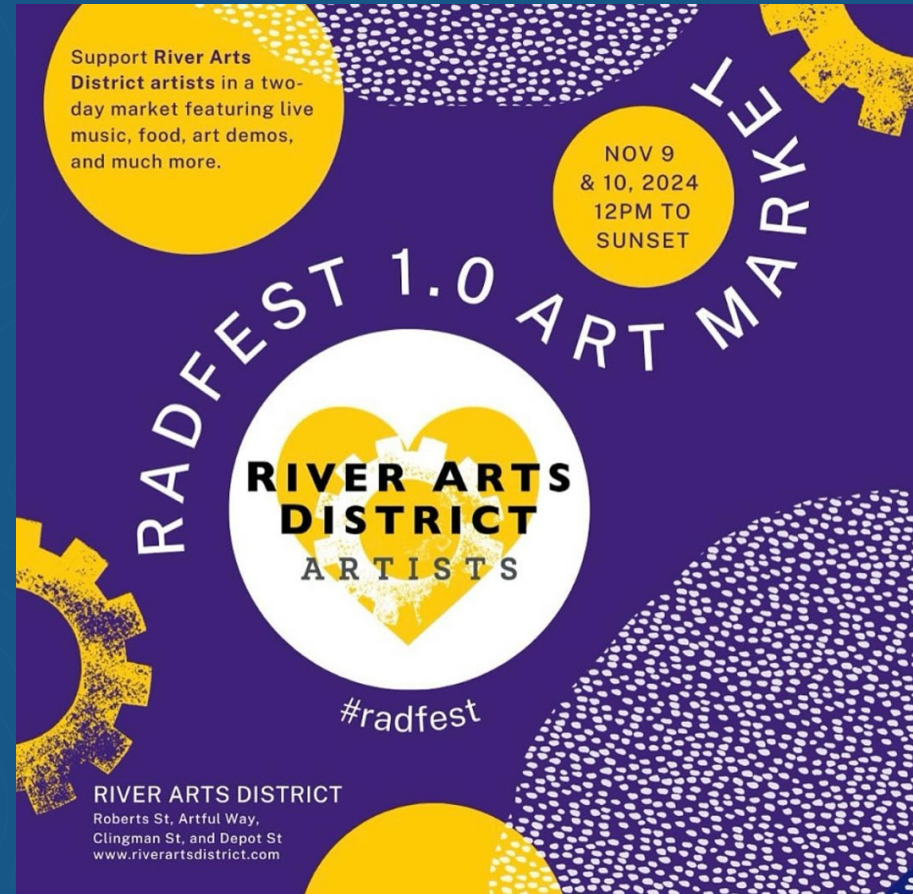
REOPENING AND RESILIENCE

Supporting and amplifying our community's resolve



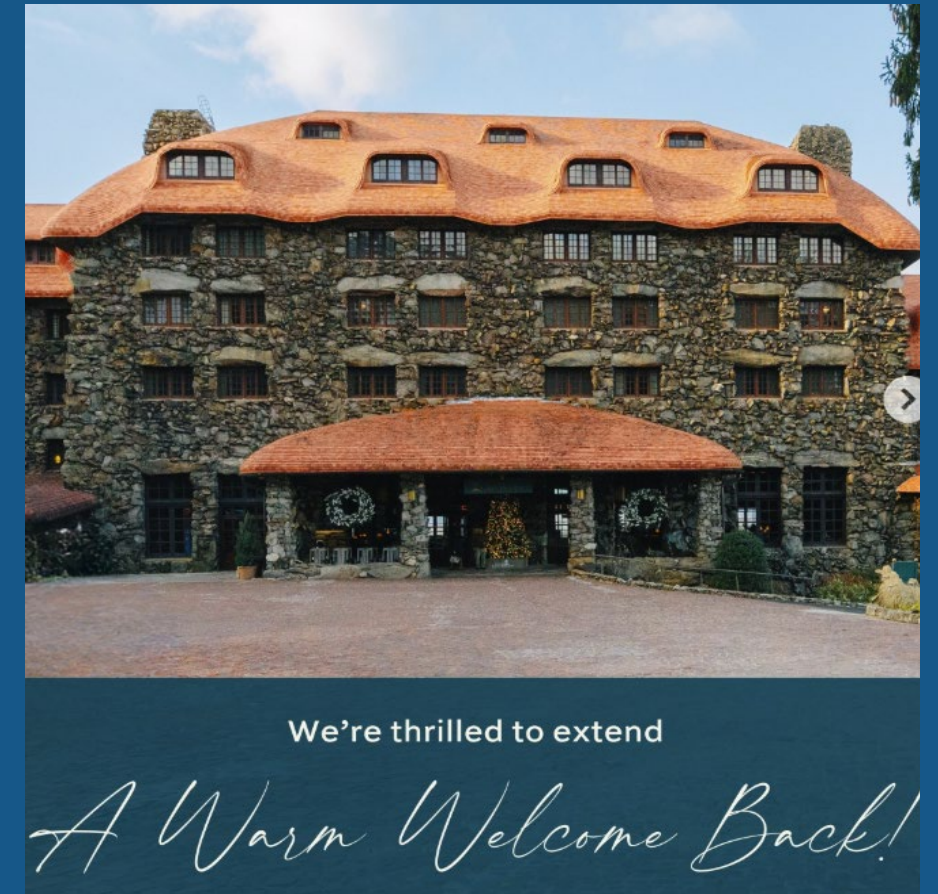
Biltmore Estate

November 2



RADFest 1.0

November 9-10



We're thrilled to extend

A Warm Welcome Back!

Omni Grove Park Inn

November 15



SHINING A LIGHT ON HOLIDAY MAGIC IN THE COUNTY

Explore Asheville and the BCTDA sponsored seasonal events



Asheville Holiday Jamboree
November 23
at Pack Square Park



Winter Lights
November 15 –
December 31
at The NC Arboretum



Festival of Lights
December 4 –
December 23
at Lake Julian Park



Holly Jolly Event
December 6
in Black Mountain

LOOKING AHEAD TO Q1 2025

Opportunities to invite visitors back to HCCA and our community with heart



Women's Gymnastics Competition
January 10-12, 2025



Billy Strings Concerts
February 6-8, 2025
February 14-16, 2025



SoCon Basketball
March 7-10, 2025



SoCon Wrestling
March 7-8, 2025

QUESTIONS
INPUT
COMMENTS



GRANT UPDATES

Tiffany Thacker

Explore Asheville | VP of Partnership & Destination Management



POST-HELENE TPDF & LIFT FUND PROJECT ASSESSMENT

- Majority of TPDF & LIFT Fund projects sustained minimal or no physical damage to the properties from Hurricane Helene.
- Several projects have yet to be fully assessed due to not being accessible or requiring a more specialized evaluation.
- The most severely damaged projects were (1) Riverfront Destination Development (RADTIP), (2) John B. Lewis Soccer Complex, and (3) Asheville Municipal Golf Course.
- Many municipal projects such as parks and ballfields may be eligible for FEMA funding for repair and replacement costs.

FEMA CATEGORIES OF PUBLIC ASSISTANCE

Emergency Work

President Biden approved 100% of categories A&B to be covered by Federal Government

- Category A: Debris removal
- Category B: Emergency protective measures

Permanent Work

FEMA covers no less than 75 percent of the eligible cost for emergency measures and permanent restoration; increases to up to 90% with emergency disaster supplemental bill

- Category C: Roads and bridges
- Category D: Water control facilities
- Category E: Public buildings and contents
- Category F: Public utilities
- **Category G: Parks, recreation, and other facilities**

Administrative Cost

- Category Z: Administrative cost

TPDF & LIFT FUND TIMELINE

11 months

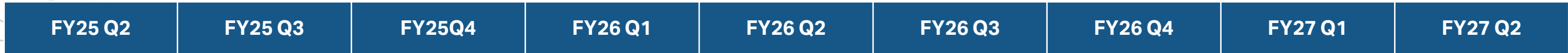
5 months

November 2024
TPDF
Committee
voted to
terminate 2024
grant cycle

April 2025
TPDF Phase I
Application
Opens

October 2025
TPDF Funding
Recommendations
Presented to
BCTDA Board

**\$14.3M
Projected
Available**



November 2024
LIFT Fund
Committee voted
to postpone
2024-25 grant
cycle

April 2026
LIFT Fund Phase I
Application
Opens

October 2026
LIFT Fund Funding
Recommendations
Presented to
BCTDA Board

**\$10.8M
Projected
Available**



TPDF & LIFT FUND TIMELINE

11 months

5 months

November 2024
TPDF Committee voted to terminate 2024 grant cycle

April 2025
TPDF Phase I Application Opens

October 2025
TPDF Funding Recommendations Presented to BCTDA Board

\$14.3M
Projected Available



November 2024
LIFT Fund Committee voted to postpone 2024-25 grant cycle

April 2026
LIFT Fund Phase I Application Opens

October 2026
LIFT Fund Funding Recommendations Presented to BCTDA Board

\$10.8M
Projected Available



FESTIVAL & CULTURAL EVENT SUPPORT FUND

FY25 Grant Cycle Updates

- Next F&CE grant application will open in January 2025, for events occurring between March 1, 2025 and December 31, 2025.
- Any organizers planning events before March 1, 2025 are able to access event support through Explore Asheville's Sponsorship Program.



ALWAYS ASHEVILLE FUND

Grant Cycle Update

- 620 applications received
- 392 eligible with requests totaling \$3.7 million
- Raised ~\$1,030,000 to date
- Review Committee is meeting later today to make award determinations
- Award Notifications planned to be sent to applicants tomorrow, Friday, November 22.

ALWAYS
ASHEVILLE
FUND





MARKETING UPDATES

Dodie Stephens
Explore Asheville | VP of Marketing

Scott Peacock
Visit NC | Director, Tourism Marketing &
Communications

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Development Authority



EXPLORE ASHEVILLE MARKETING UPDATES

Dodie Stephens
Explore Asheville | VP of Marketing



BILTMORE & EXPLORE ASHEVILLE LINEAR TV & STREAMING TV

- **Intentional Market Amplification:** Charlotte, Raleigh-Durham, Greensboro, Atlanta, Greenville/Spartanburg, Knoxville, Nashville, Washington DC, Jacksonville (CTV), Orlando (CTV)
- **Timing:** Week of November 11th through December 22nd
- **Programming Alignment:** NBC's 2024 Christmas in Rockefeller Center Holiday Special, NBC's Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade, CMAs on ABC, NFL Sunday Night Football and Monday Night Football, etc.
- **CTV Strategy:** United message encouraging visitation to the Asheville area via Hulu and Amazon Prime buys; Implement ACR/Automatic Content Recognition technology to retarget Linear, Hulu and Amazon Prime efforts with CTV
- **Estimated Impressions:**
 - Over 3.9M Linear Impressions
 - Over 4.4M CTV Impressions

BILTMORE®



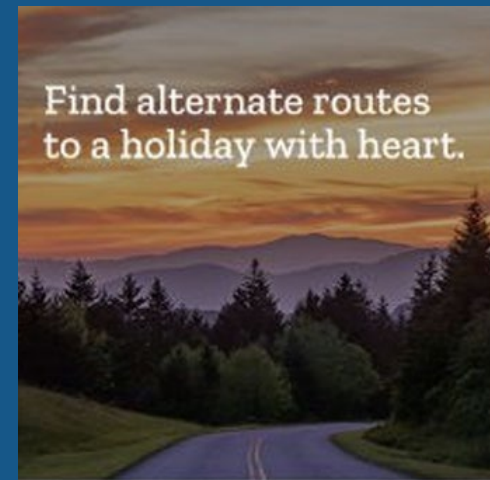


FOCUS ON CONVERSION: REGIONAL & BEYOND

- IMMEDIATE PRESENCE: Regional Drive Markets & Beyond
- CORE & DIRECT FLY: Core intent markets and direct flight routes remain in the mix including Ft. Myers, Miami/Ft. Lauderdale, Orlando, Tampa, West Palm and Tri-Cities.
- FOR MARKETS WEST OF ASHEVILLE: Dedicated messaging supportive of alternative routes keeps Asheville area top of mind and builds awareness of accessibility.
- Media Mix Highlights: Paid Search, Meta, Pinterest, TikTok, Linear TV (Nexxen), CTV (Travel Desk, Sabio), Programmatic audio (Spotify), Display/Native/Video (Sojern), Branded Content (Trip Advisor); Email Marketing (eTarget), Rich Media (Undertone, Sabio) and Custom content (Equal Pride).
- Educating visitors on alternate routes and Asheville's reopening status. "Be Part of the Comeback" creative messaging.

West of Asheville Drive Markets

Cincinnati
Lexington
Louisville
Nashville
Knoxville



Find alternate routes
to a holiday with heart.

Always.
ASHEVILLE
BE PART OF THE COMEBACK

SEE CURRENT ROUTES

Drive Markets (not impacted by I-40)

Columbus, OH
Charleston, WV
Washington, D.C.
Richmond, VA
Roanoke, VA
Norfolk, VA
Baltimore, MD
Birmingham, AL
Montgomery, AL
Atlanta, GA
Augusta, GA
Savannah, GA
Pittsburgh, PA
Jacksonville, FL
Columbia, SC
Charleston, SC
Raleigh/Durham, NC
Charlotte, NC
Greensboro/Highpoint, NC
Wilmington, NC



PLAN YOUR RETURN WITH HEART: DIGITAL CREATIVE

- Build upon the recovery message under our Always, Asheville storytelling foundation, that speaks to the resiliency, ingenuity, culture of creativity, deep roots and independent spirit.
- Leverage the desire to participate in seasonal traditions, as well as the appetite to support Asheville, by highlighting open businesses and activities to drive and non-stop flight markets.
- CONTINUED IN-KIND: Above and beyond the plan, activating in-kind ad opportunities to drive travel back in key drive markets and national outlets, including digital via Clicktripz and print features in *Origin, Global Traveler and Saga City publications*.

Always,
ASHEVILLE
BE PART OF THE COMEBACK

The collage features several digital creative assets for Visit Asheville:

- Top Left:** A vertical banner with a pink-to-blue gradient background. Text: "Plan your return trip with heart." Below is a photo of a mountain road.
- Top Center:** A large banner for "visit asheville SPONSORED" with the headline "YOUR ASHEVILLE HOLIDAY IS A SHORT DRIVE AWAY." Below is a night view of Asheville with mountains in the background.
- Top Right:** A social-style post with the headline "Visit Asheville Your holiday visit takes on a deeper meaning this year." Below is a photo of two women posing on a balcony.
- Middle Left:** A vertical banner with a photo of a mountain town. Text: "Return to the small mountain town that's big on charm." Below is a photo of people sitting on a porch.
- Middle Center:** A banner with the "Always, ASHEVILLE BE PART OF THE COMEBACK" logo and a "SEE BLACK MOUNTAIN" button.
- Bottom Left:** A banner with a sunset over mountains. Text: "Fly Nonstop to Asheville" and a "Book Now" button.
- Bottom Center:** A banner with a large building and trees. Text: "Have a Magical Winter" and a "Book Now" button.
- Bottom Right:** A banner with a building. Text: "Book Your Flight Today" and a "Book Now" button.
- Bottom Far Right:** A banner with the website "EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM", the "Always, Asheville" logo, and the text "Be part of the comeback." Below is a "Book Now" button circled in red.



EXPLOREASHEVILLE.COM LANDING PAGE + NEW MAP

For Residents Weddings Meetings Travel Pros Sports Media Partners

ASHEVILLE

Things to Do

Events

Eat & Drink

Places to Go

Places to Stay

Plan Your Trip



**ASHEVILLE IS CALLING
YOU BACK AGAIN**



"BE PART OF THE COMEBACK" INVITATION

Efforts include targeted email messaging designed to inspire regional visitation and social posts amplifying reopening messages.

- Launched a weekly email series highlighting curated downtown itineraries to inspire regional visitation.
 - Regional markets of focus: Greenville, Raleigh/Durham, Charlotte, Tri-Cities, Greensboro/High Point, Atlanta
 - First email performance:
 - 51,553 emails sent
 - 15,762 emails opened (31% open rate)
 - 1,252 clicks (1.35% click rate)
- Created social posts amplifying reopening messages across different areas and categories.
 - Highlights:
 - [Water Return Post](#) – 107,532 likes, comments and shares on Facebook
 - [Biltmore Tree Raising](#) – 40,359 likes, comments and shares on Instagram
 - [RAD Reopening Post](#) – 23,894 likes, comments and shares on Instagram



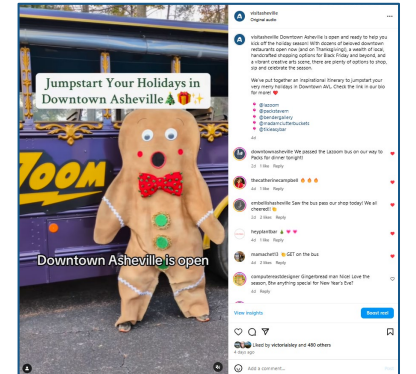
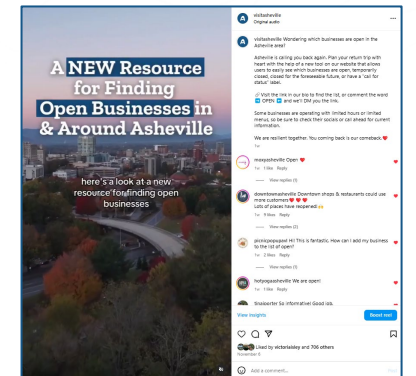
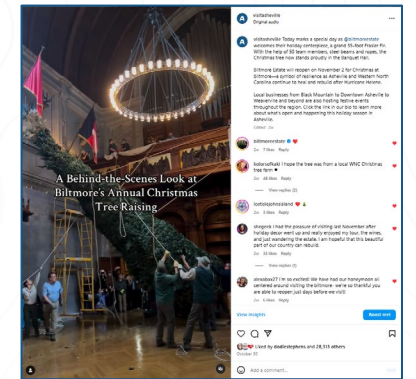
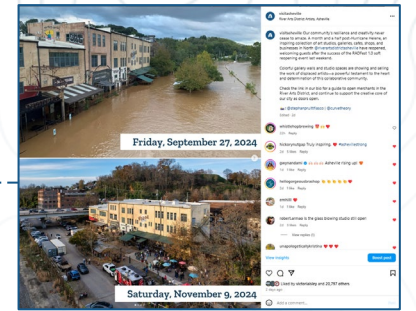
Asheville Is Open: Be Part of the Comeback

The spirit of holiday travel takes on a deeper meaning this year. In the wake of Hurricane Helene, Asheville area artists, makers, chefs, performers and shop owners are welcoming you to be part of the comeback.

What better time to return than to kick off your holiday season? An [open and festive downtown](#), [holiday markets and events](#), and new traditions of giving feature the resilient artists, makers and innovators of Appalachia.

With dozens of beloved [downtown restaurants](#) open now and on Thanksgiving Day (Nov. 28), a wealth of local, handcrafted shopping options for Black Friday and beyond, and a vibrant creative arts scene, there are plenty of options to shop, sip and celebrate the season.

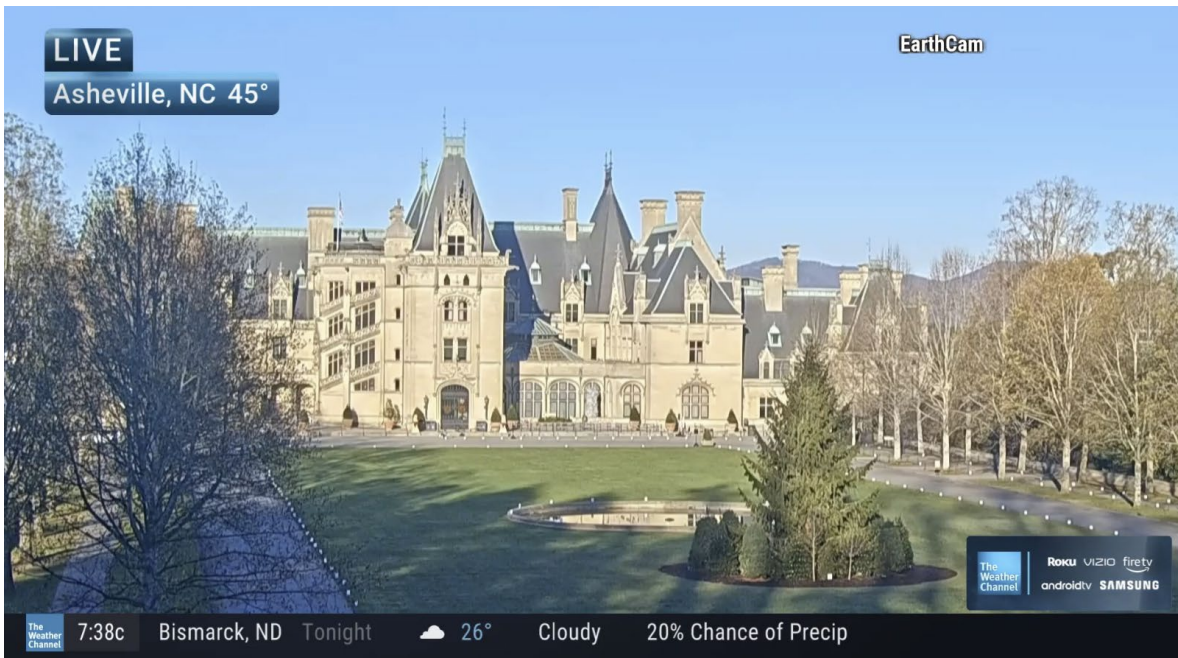
**Holiday Itinerary Inspiration:
Warm Your Heart in Downtown Asheville**



MEDIA OUTREACH & EARNED COVERAGE

- Latest press comms to 1,200 media contacts.
- Targeted media included those who covered impacts to urge coverage of call to return.
- Fielding/pitching TV news coverage in drive markets and inviting media to reschedule, come visit and join us here in the Asheville area.

Clips & Ongoing PR Support Highlights: The Weather Channel, WRAL/Raleigh, WSOC/Charlotte, CBS Sunday Morning, WBIR/Knoxville, Passport, Samantha Brown's Places to Love, Chattanooga Times Free Press, WBT/Charlotte



Appalachian Resilience Shines: Asheville is Open and Calling Visitors Back Now and for the Holidays

From Christmas at Biltmore to heartfelt displays of community spirit in downtown Asheville, Blue Ridge Mountain holiday traditions welcome customers back with heart

Asheville, NC (Nov. 13, 2024) — The spirit of holiday travel takes on a deeper meaning this year across the Blue Ridge Mountains of North Carolina. In the wake of Hurricane Helene, Asheville area artists, makers, chefs, performers and shop owners are calling visitors back as major attractions reopen and seasonal festivities are announced—including [Christmas at Biltmore](#), The Omni Grove Park Inn's new "[Gingerbread Trail of Giving](#)" and [holiday markets and events](#) featuring the resilient artists, makers and innovators of Appalachia.

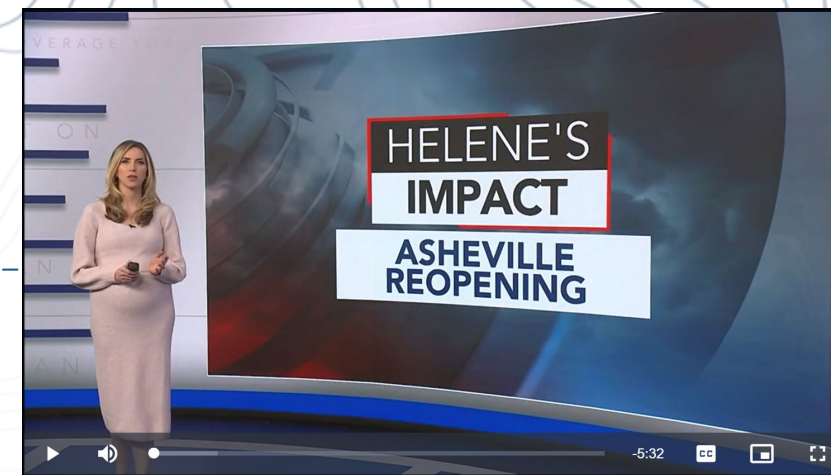
Resilient Together: "Be part of the comeback" is the rallying call of local businesses and creatives who are not only opening doors to customers, but making space on gallery walls, in shops and in kitchens for displaced artists and makers.

Season of Hope: With a full schedule of holiday happenings including beloved traditions and reimagined favorites — visitors take comfort that every ticket, reservation or locally purchased holiday gift offers hope and help for this beloved Blue Ridge Mountain community.

Plan with Heart: [ExploreAsheville.com](#) has launched new travel planning features to support confidence as visitors plan their return. Read below for the latest holiday happenings and community updates.

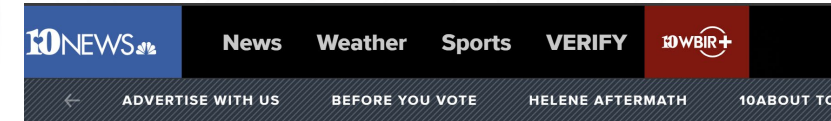
Heart-Warming Happenings in Downtown Asheville

Downtown Asheville, which remained largely untouched by the storm, is open with a calendar of festive events and a full slate of world-class dining options. Downtown also exemplifies Asheville's unique brand of hand-crafted holiday shopping, including opportunities to purchase



Asheville welcoming visitors after Hurricane Helene

Nearly two months after Hurricane Helene devastated parts of Western North Carolina, Asheville is welcoming visitors, and some of its biggest boosters are saying come stay a while.



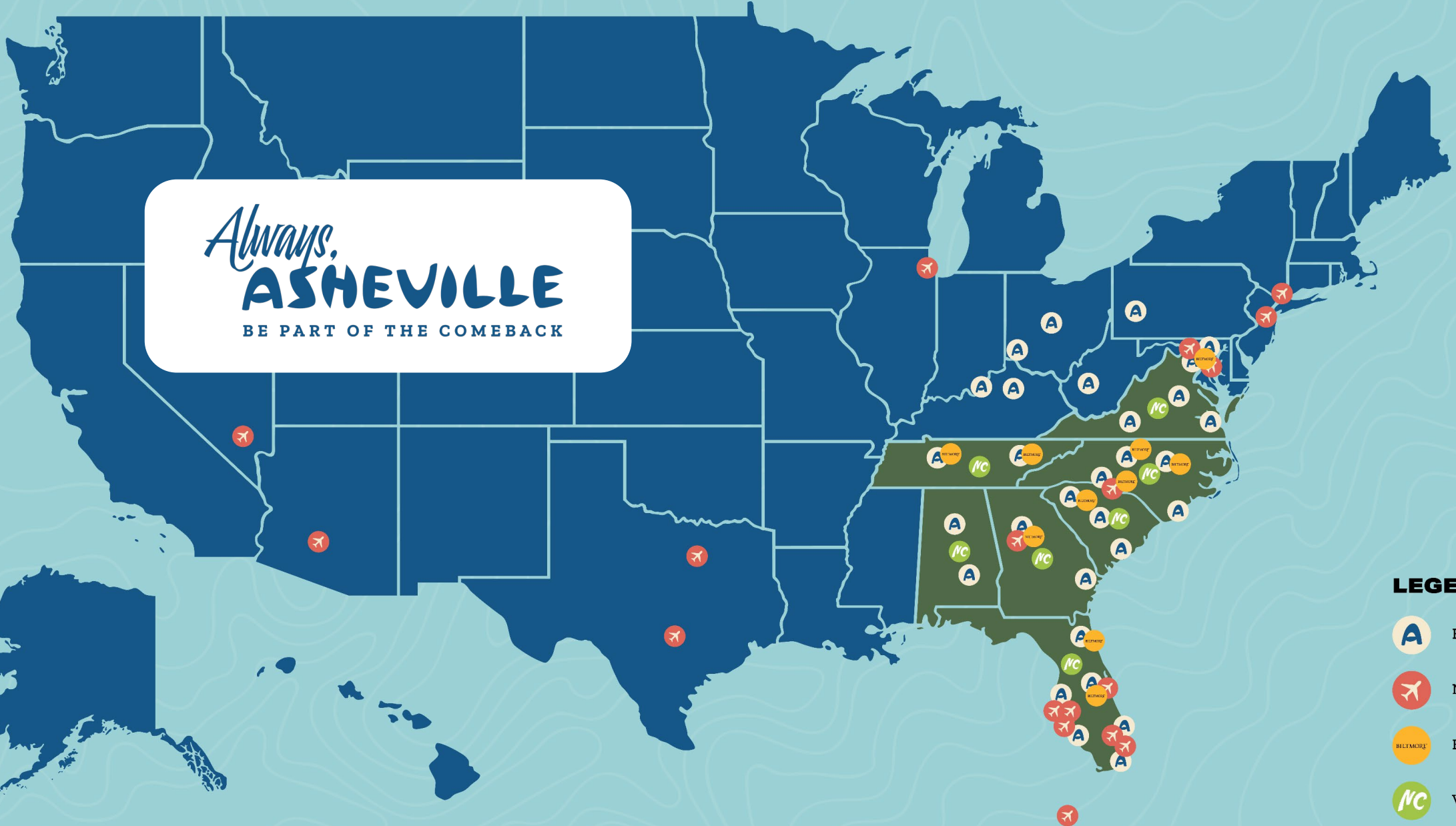
Asheville community to welcome visitors for the holidays, during Hurricane Helene recovery

Explore Asheville, a tourism development organization, said several businesses and restaurants are hoping to welcome visitors during the holiday season.



GOING IN TOGETHER: MARKET STRATEGY NOW

Always,
ASHEVILLE
BE PART OF THE COMEBACK



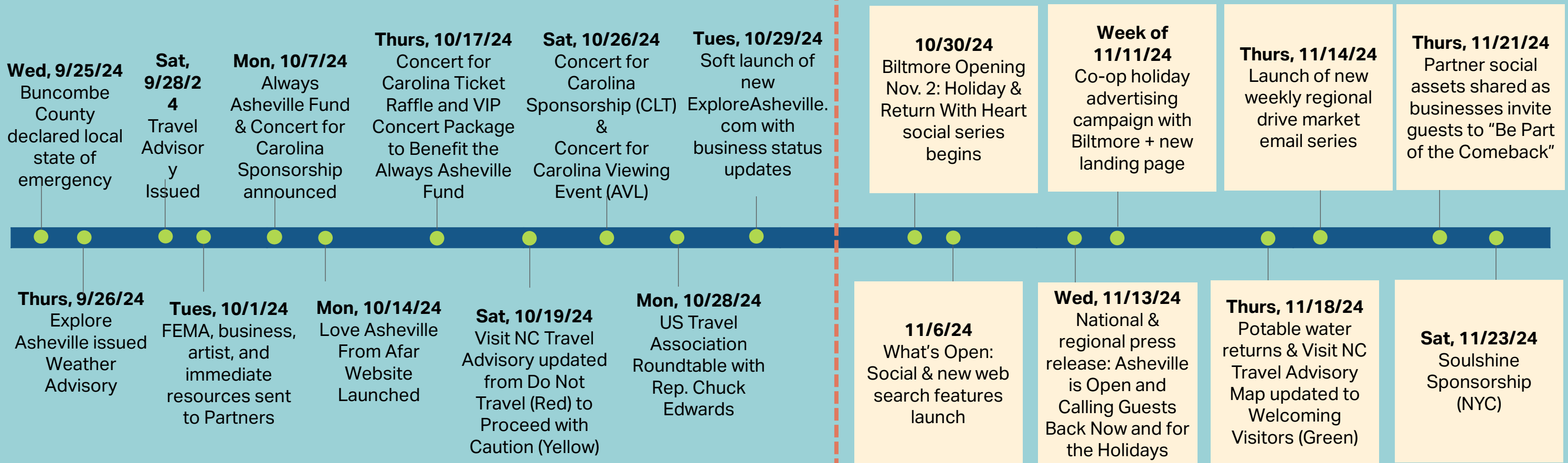
LEGEND

- Explore Asheville
- Non-stop Flight
- Biltmore
- Visit NC

**Dark green states indicate Visit NC targeting at the state level.*



HURRICANE HELENE RESPONSE TIMELINE



LOVE ASHEVILLE FROM AFAR GOES ON THE ROAD

Supporting creators and makers in feeder markets



Bank of America Tree Lighting

November 26 in Charlotte

Following successful sales of Asheville made goods at the Concert for Carolina, several Asheville merchants will be selling Asheville made goods at the Panther's tree lighting event.



Pop Up Art Gallery

December 6-29 in Atlanta

Details to be announced very soon



VISIT NC UPDATE

Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority Board Meeting
November 21, 2024

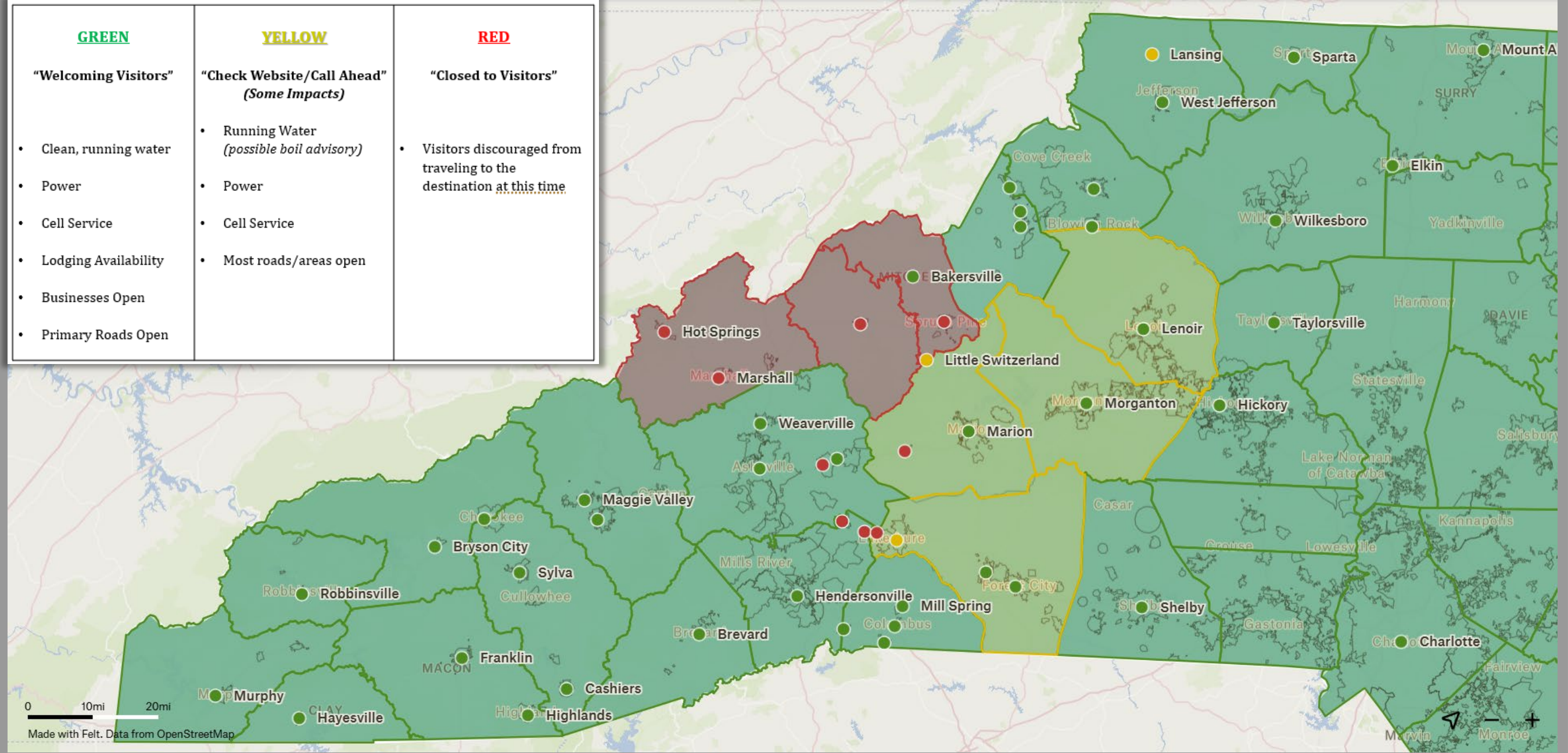
Presented by Scott Peacock, Director, Tourism Marketing & Communications



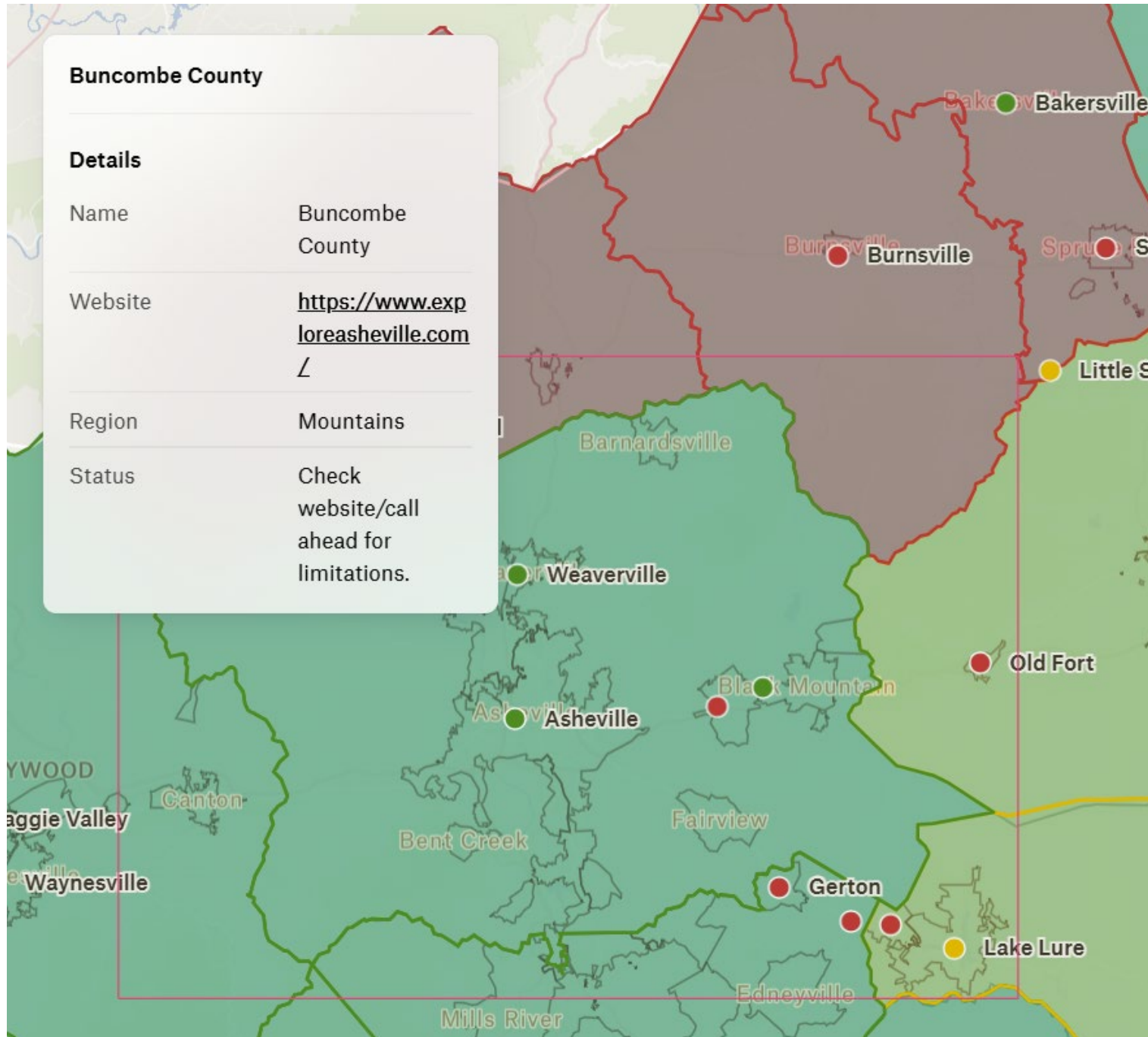
LAY OF THE LAND

CURRENT STATE OF TRAVEL

GREEN	YELLOW	RED
<p>“Welcoming Visitors”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, running water • Power • Cell Service • Lodging Availability • Businesses Open • Primary Roads Open 	<p>“Check Website/Call Ahead” (Some Impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running Water <i>(possible boil advisory)</i> • Power • Cell Service • Most roads/areas open 	<p>“Closed to Visitors”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors discouraged from traveling to the destination <u>at this time</u>



BUNCOMBE COUNTY VIEW

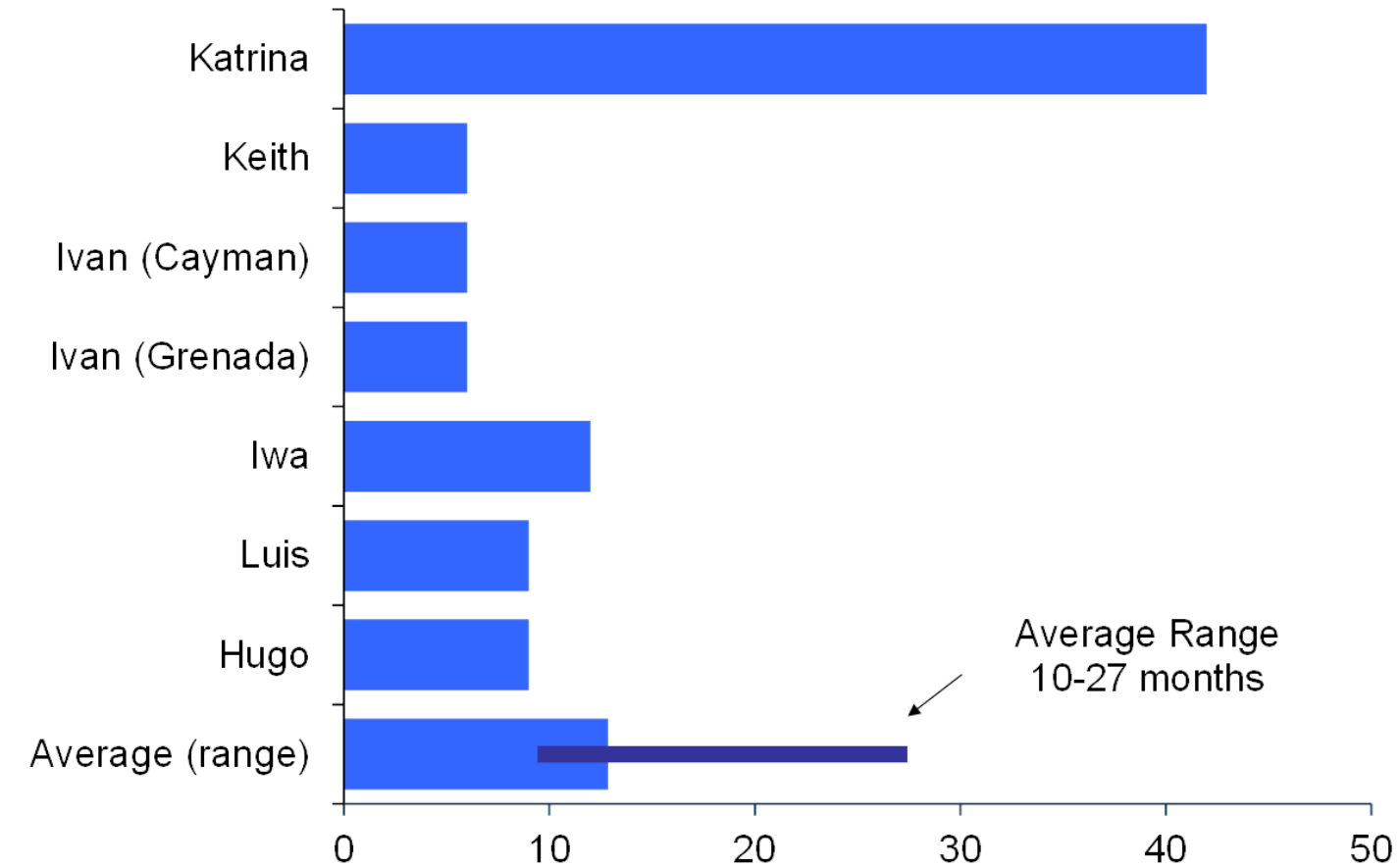


GREEN	YELLOW	RED
<p>“Welcoming Visitors”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Clean, running water • Power • Cell Service • Lodging Availability • Businesses Open • Primary Roads Open 	<p>“Check Website/Call Ahead” (Some Impacts)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Running Water <i>(possible boil advisory)</i> • Power • Cell Service • Most roads/areas open 	<p>“Closed to Visitors”</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visitors discouraged from traveling to the destination <u>at this time</u>

HURRICANE RECOVERY TIMELINES

Duration of Hurricanes Tourism Impacts

Months after initial disruption for visitor spending to return to baseline

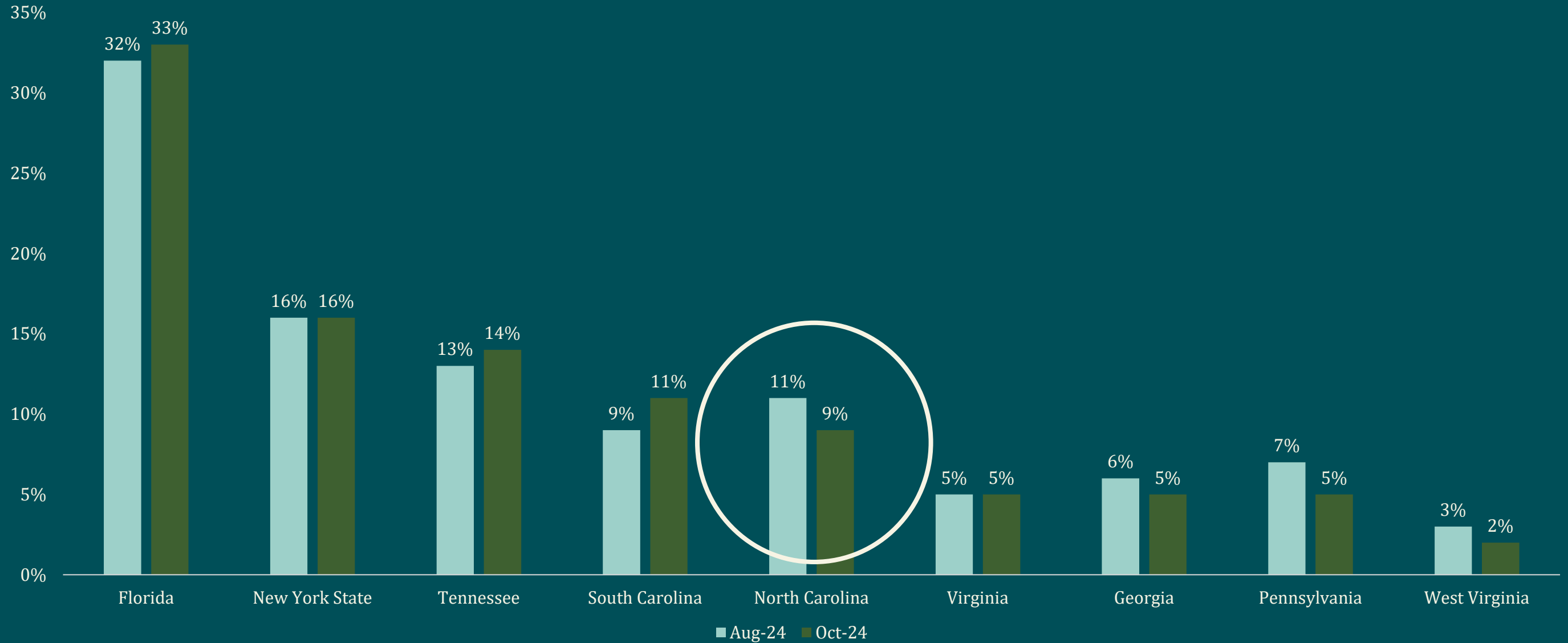


Source: Tourism Economics

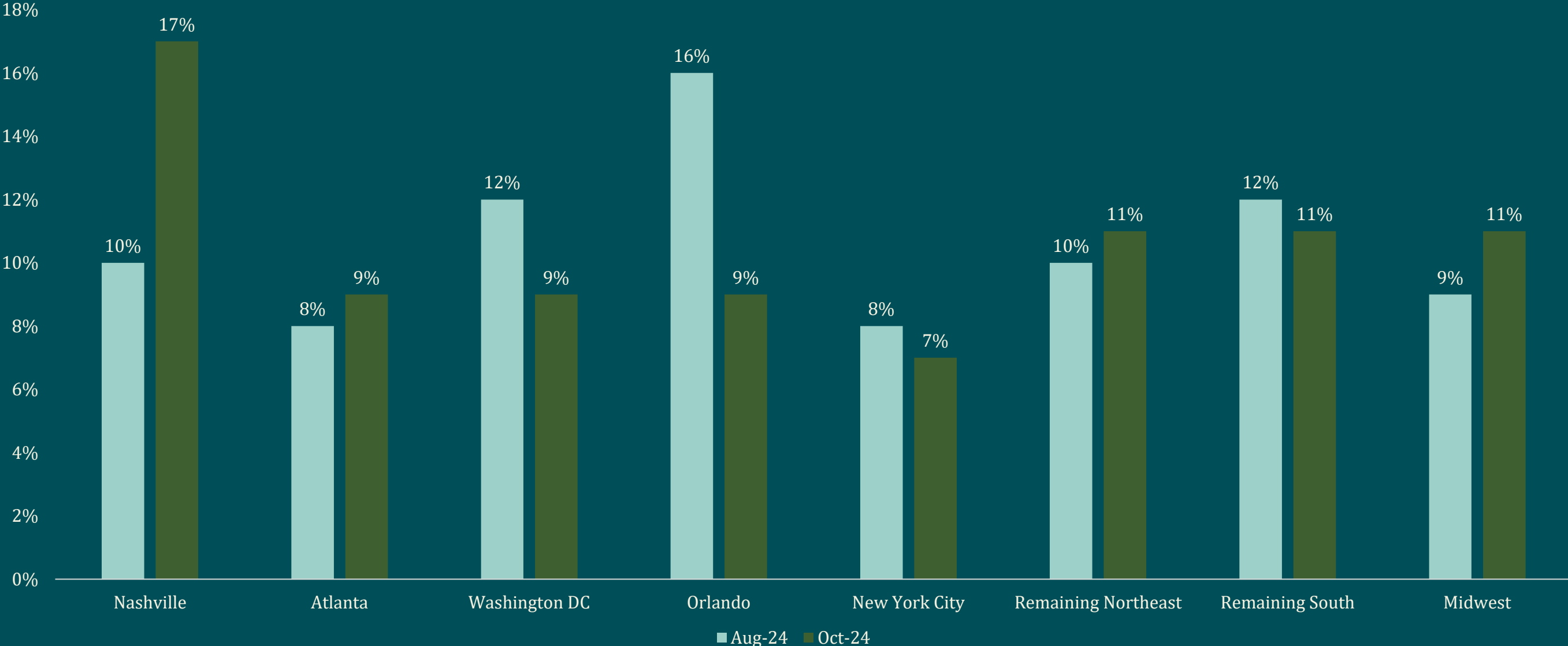
PRELIMINARY PERCEPTION RESEARCH

Conducted Oct. 14-31, 2024

CHANGE IN PREFERRED DESTINATION

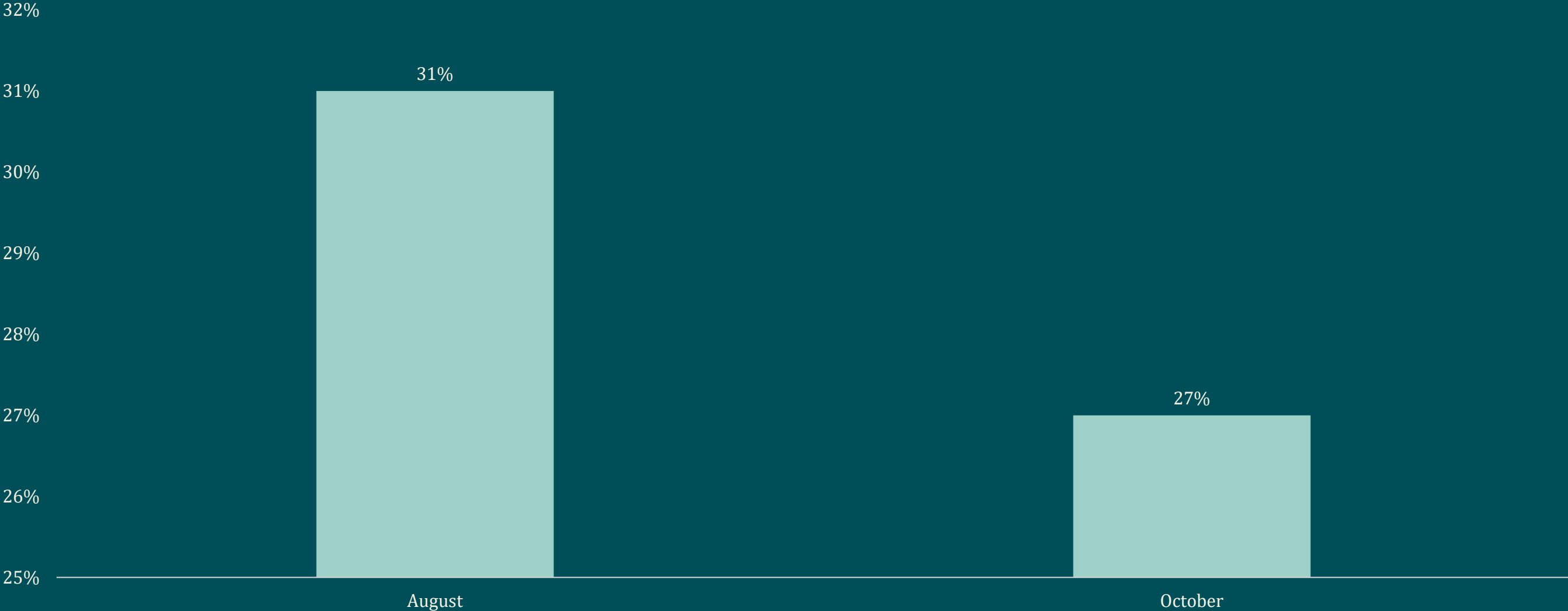


CHANGE IN PREFERRED DESTINATION BY MARKET

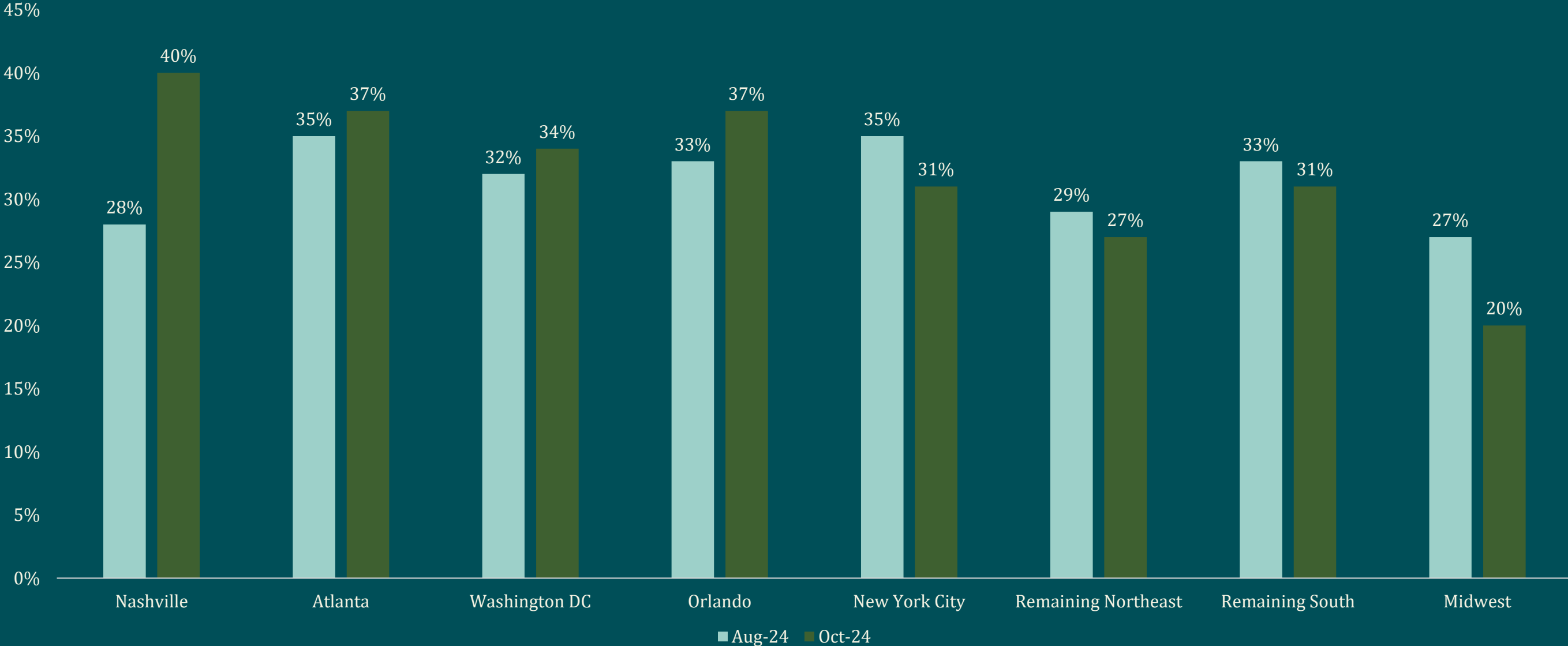


CHANGE IN LIKELIHOOD TO VISIT

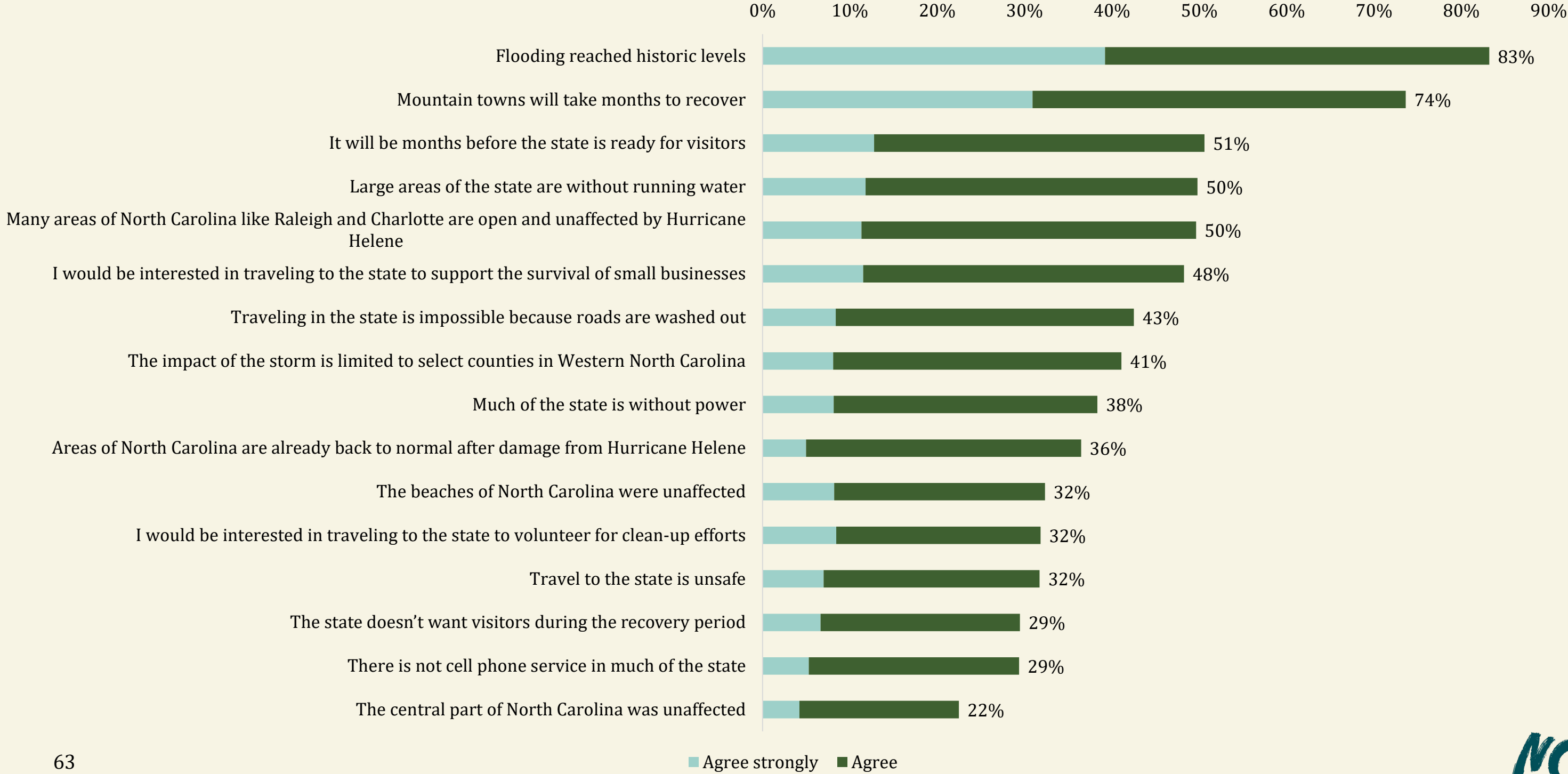
Likelihood to Visit North Carolina (Extremely Likely & Somewhat Likely)



CHANGE IN LIKELIHOOD TO VISIT DESTINATION BY MARKET



KNOWLEDGE OF HURRICANE IMPACTS



KNOWLEDGE OF HURRICANE IMPACTS BY MARKET

Sentiment	Attribute	New York														
		Nashville	Atlanta	Washington DC	Orlando	City	Remaining NE	Remaining South	Midwest	Boston	Chicago	Dallas	Denver	Houston	Minneapolis	St. Louis
Neg	Travel to the state is unsafe	104	113	80	93	106	108	107	97	93	83	101	83	92	101	64
Neg	Mountain towns will take months to recover	119	110	99	110	98	95	108	93	97	91	95	103	98	99	103
Neg	The state doesn't want visitors during the recovery period	112	120	84	119	97	91	115	92	107	95	85	85	99	102	91
Neg	Much of the state is without power	87	107	72	99	115	106	102	106	85	75	105	76	108	102	79
Neg	There is not cell phone service in much of the state	94	122	87	107	92	99	115	97	101	82	99	61	107	105	70
Neg	Traveling in the state is impossible because roads are washed out	123	125	79	115	102	94	104	98	93	99	110	76	103	89	92
Neg	It will be months before the state is ready for visitors	95	112	94	95	90	94	107	100	96	99	105	99	107	109	105
Neg	Large areas of the state are without running water	98	108	78	110	100	91	110	106	96	82	101	78	111	110	104
Neutral	Flooding reached historic levels	110	105	98	104	103	96	103	94	95	103	96	104	103	97	106
Positive	The impact of the storm is limited to select counties in Western North Carolina	132	111	116	114	114	95	101	90	99	93	76	98	99	94	93
Positive	The beaches of North Carolina were unaffected	120	116	137	111	116	88	108	83	103	96	84	105	83	86	80
Positive	The central part of North Carolina was unaffected	133	138	125	143	119	83	96	75	96	103	111	93	101	108	77
Positive	I would be interested in traveling to the state to volunteer for clean-up efforts	117	132	88	115	103	82	125	98	76	73	114	62	96	96	73
Positive	I would be interested in traveling to the state to support the survival of small businesses	120	121	83	106	90	93	119	93	87	96	97	74	105	106	81
Positive	Many areas of North Carolina like Raleigh and Charlotte are open and unaffected by Hurricane Helene	118	111	118	98	104	90	108	79	106	116	93	98	96	100	107
Positive	Areas of North Carolina are already back to normal after damage from Hurricane Helene	109	116	104	136	117	76	104	98	94	101	88	103	106	107	99

RECOVERY RESEARCH

- Research to understand the messaging needs for encouraging visitation to Piedmont and Coast
- Testing produce spots to use in the near term as well as to determine when to move back to regular campaign messaging
- Visitor sentiment among top markets, including travel intentions, information awareness on recovery efforts and to establish a baseline to monitor shifts in sentiment
- Research will include a quarterly full survey and monthly performance trackers for 6 months

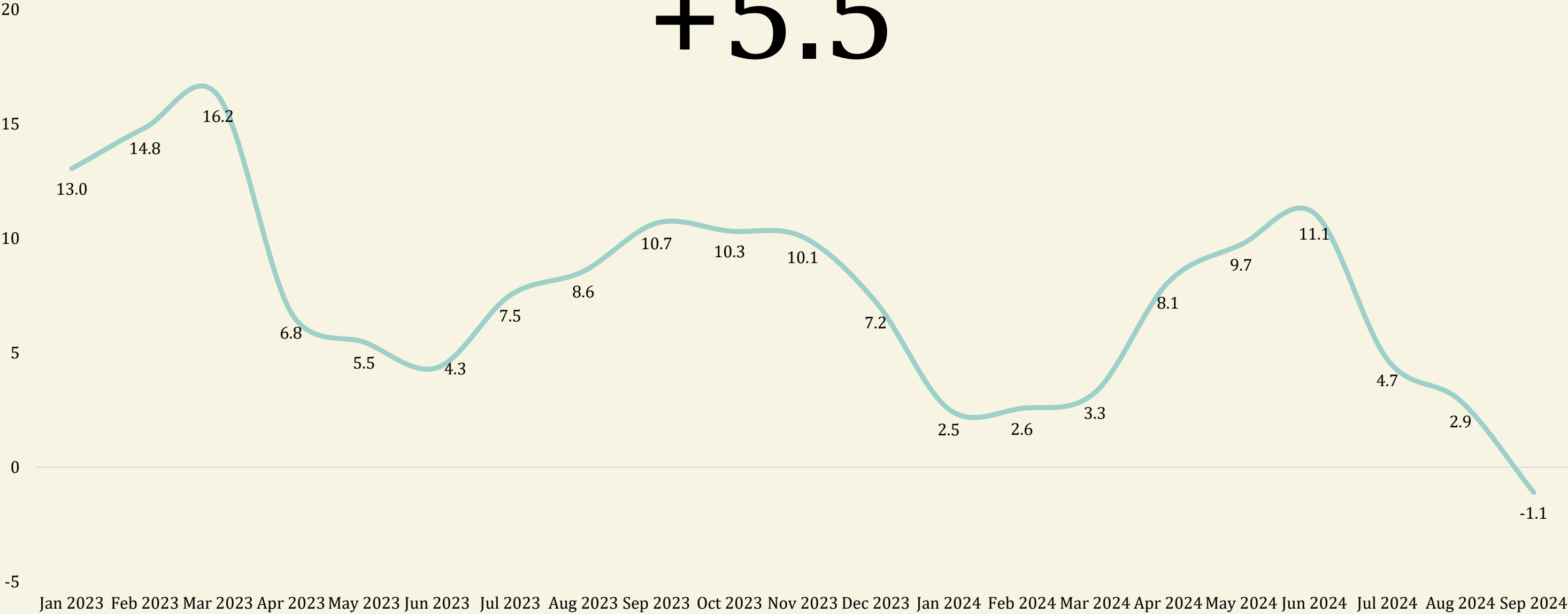


An aerial photograph of a lush green marshy area with a winding river. A small red boat is visible in the water. The text is overlaid on the left side of the image.

2024 STATEWIDE LODGING DATA YEAR-TO-DATE THROUGH SEPTEMBER 2024

STATEWIDE VISITOR ECONOMY INDEX

+5.5



Visitor Economy Index is comprised of commercial lodging demand, vacation rental demand, credit card spending data and visitor location data

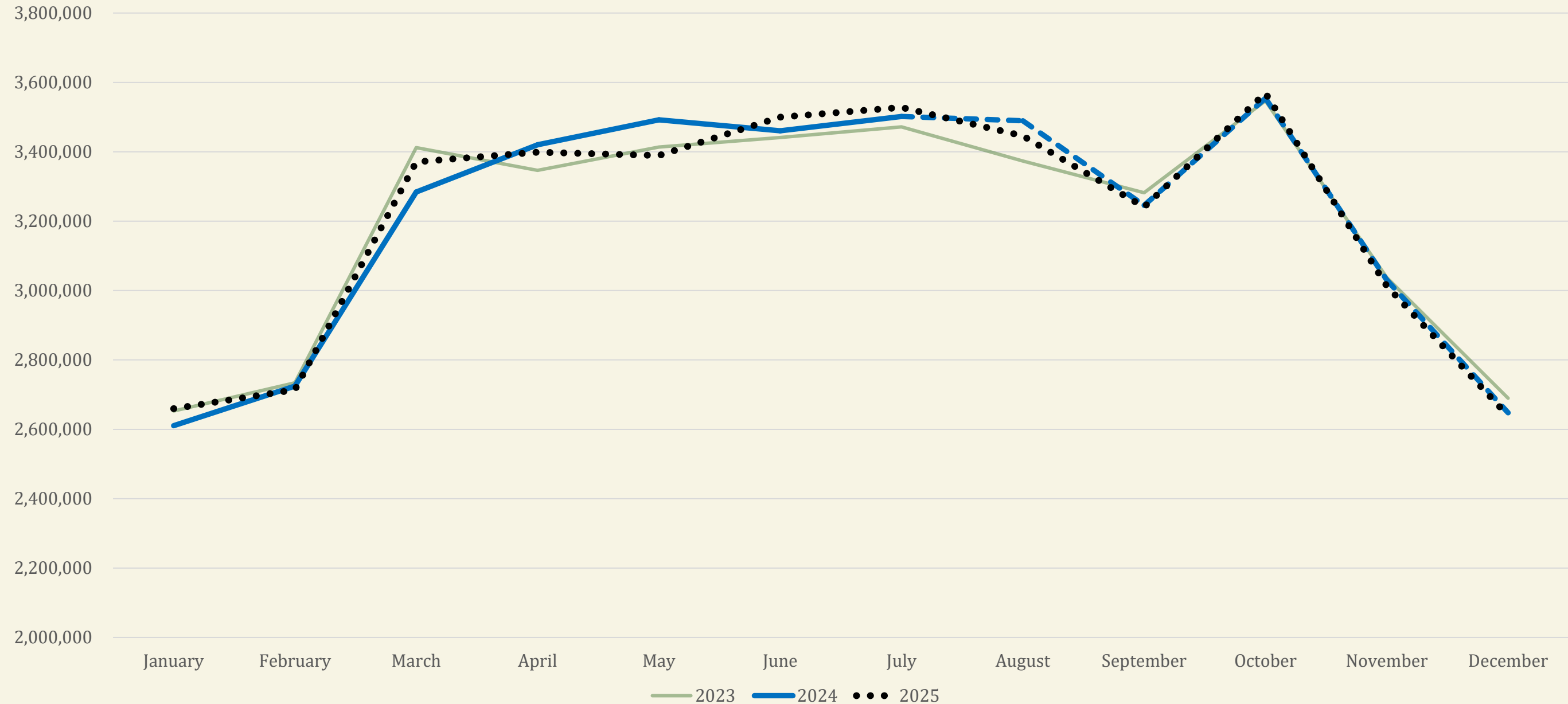


SEPT. 2024 YTD STATEWIDE LODGING DATA

Measurement	Commercial Lodging (STR)	Airbnb/HomeAway entire home rentals (AirDNA)	Vacation Rentals (KeyData)
Occupancy	Down 0.7%	Up 1.7%	Down 4.9%
Room Rates	Up 1.9%	Up 4.8%	Up 0.4%
RevPAR	Up 1.2%	Up 6.9%	Down 1.6%
Revenues	Up 1.5%	Up 18.3%	Down 4.3%
Demand	Down 0.3%	Up 12.3%	Down 5.6%
Supply	Up 0.3%	Up 10.2%	Down 0.1%

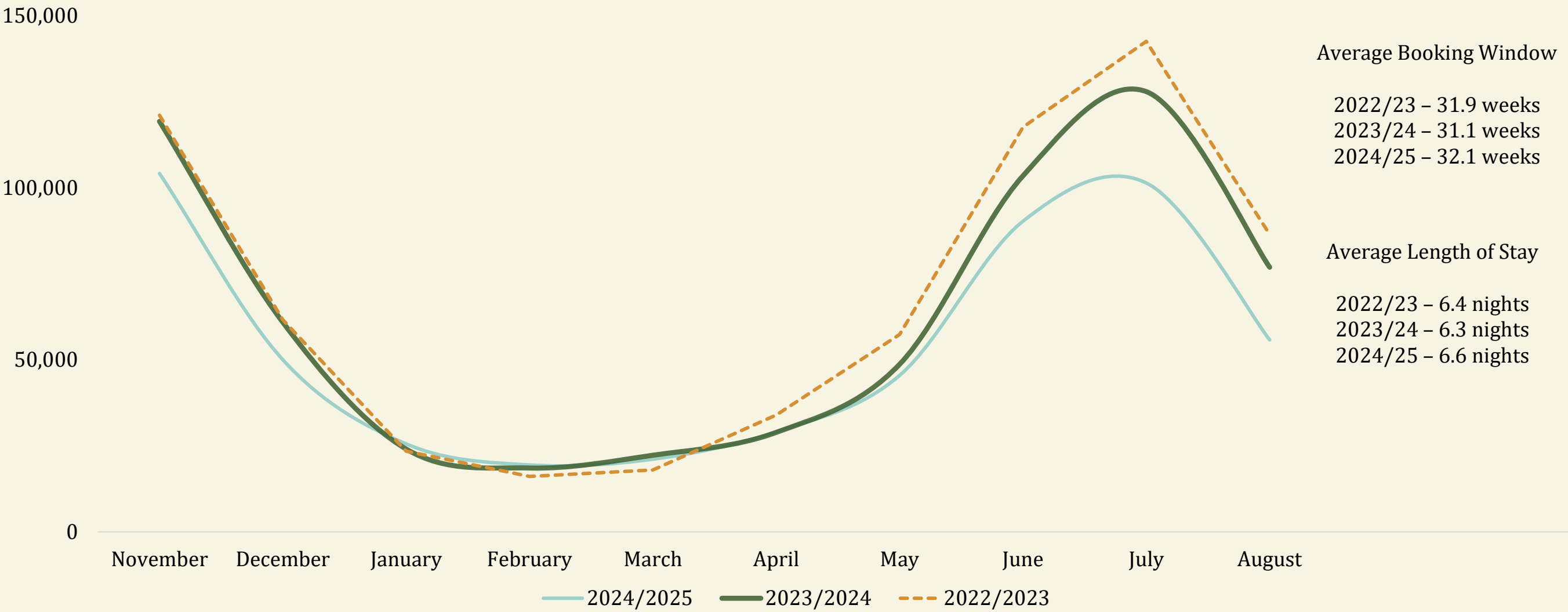


STATEWIDE COMMERCIAL LODGING FORECAST - DEMAND



STATEWIDE MANAGED VACATION RENTAL OUTLOOK

Guest Nights Booked as of November 12 of 2022, 2023 & 2024



Average Booking Window

2022/23 – 31.9 weeks
 2023/24 – 31.1 weeks
 2024/25 – 32.1 weeks

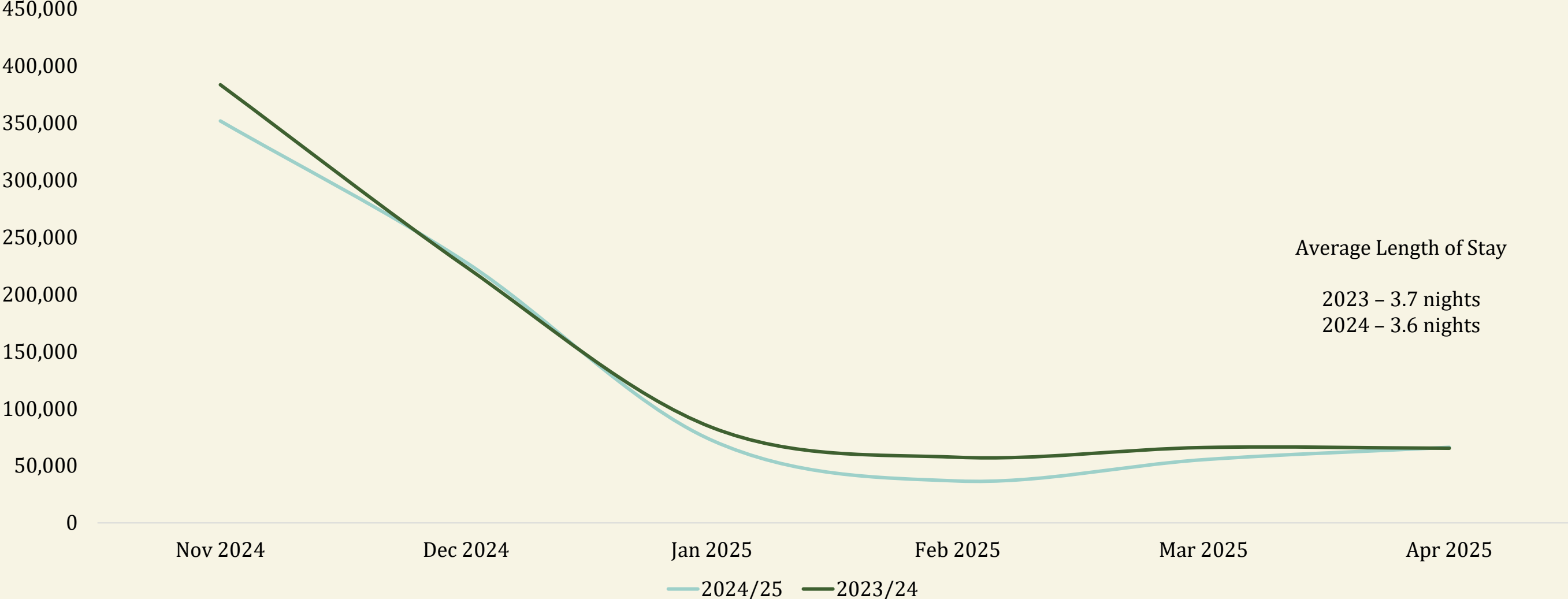
Average Length of Stay

2022/23 – 6.4 nights
 2023/24 – 6.3 nights
 2024/25 – 6.6 nights



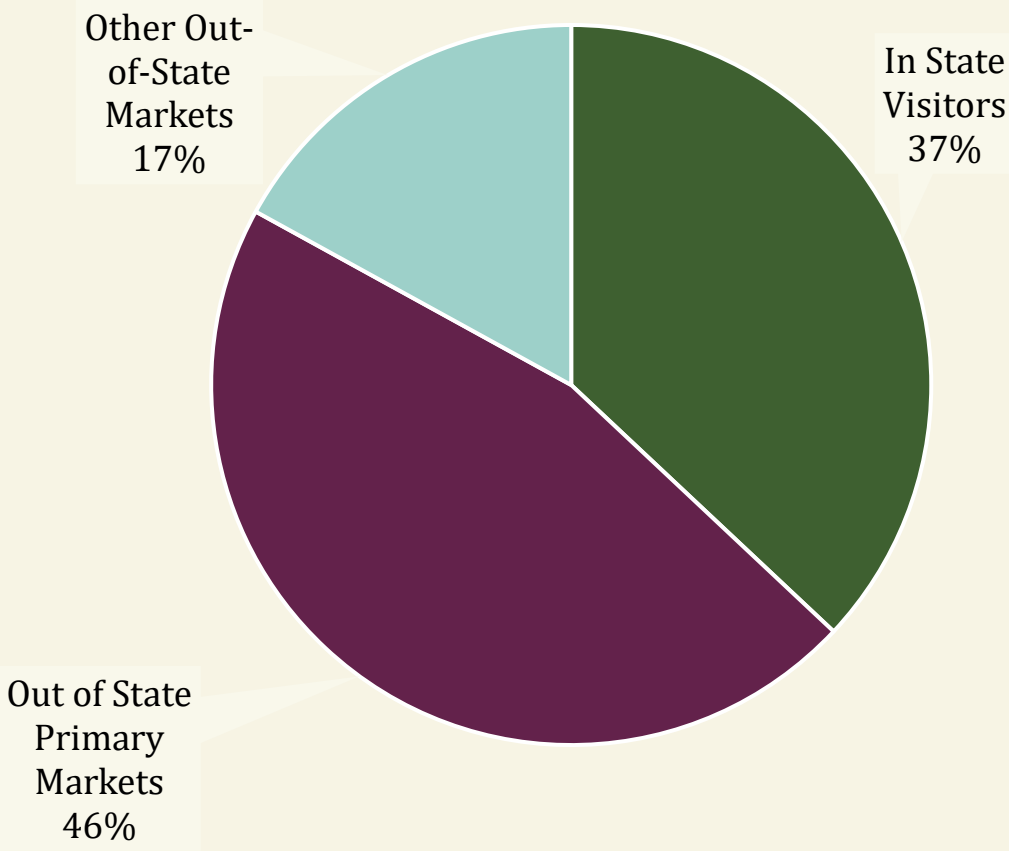
STATEWIDE SHARED ECONOMY RENTAL OUTLOOK

Guest Nights Booked as of November 1 of 2023 & 2024

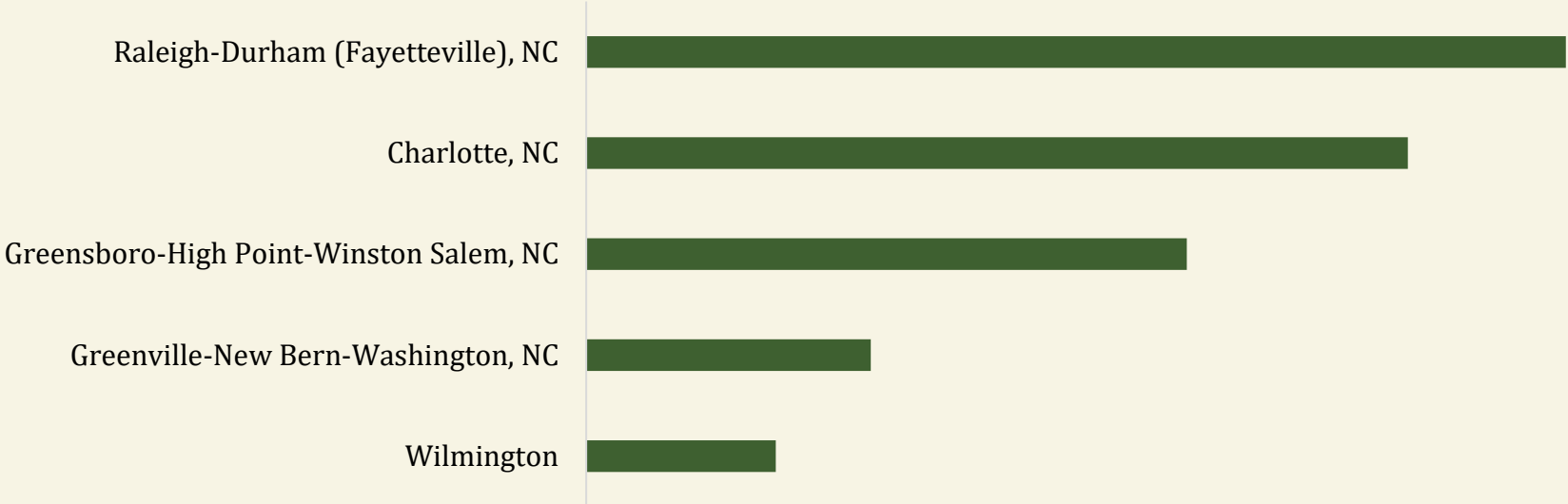


2024 YTD VISITATION TRENDS

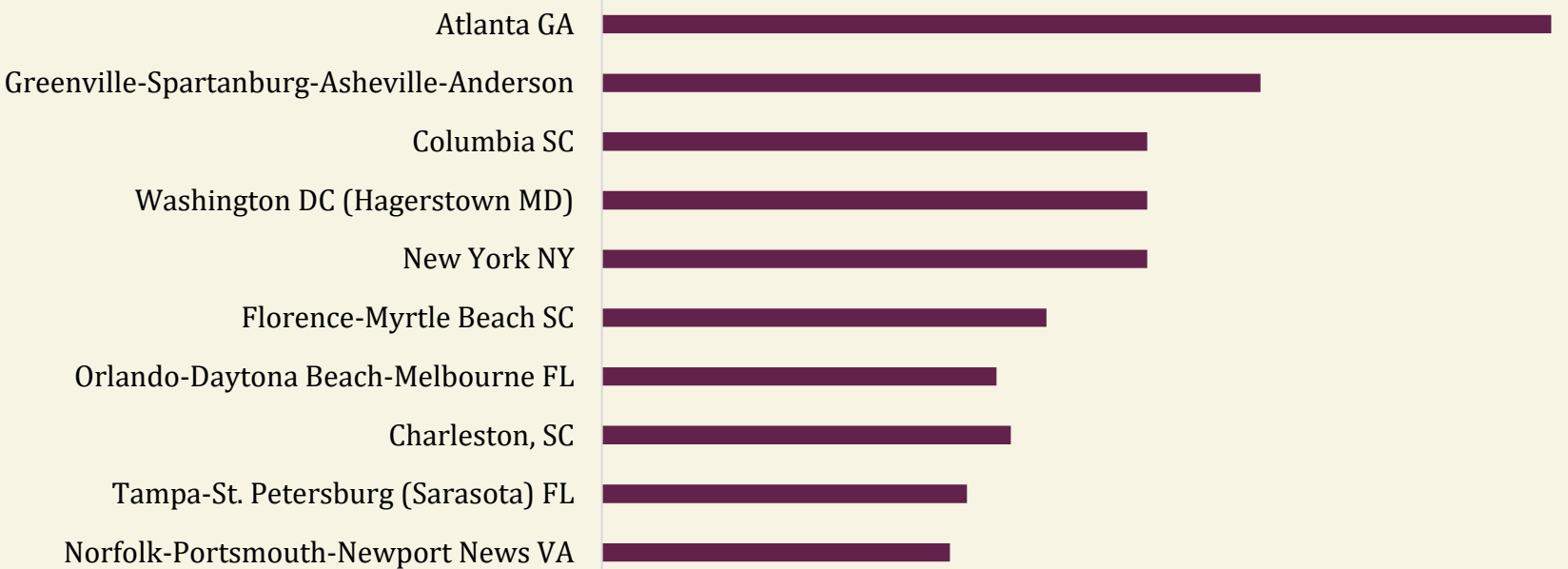
In-State vs. Out-of-State Visitors



Top 5 In-State Origin Markets



Top 10 Out-of-State Origin Markets



RECOVERY MARKETING UPDATE

PARTNER COMMUNICATION

- Travel Advisory/Map Updates
- State Agency Updates such as NC DNCR/NC State Parks
- Travel Industry Supplier Updates such as Expedia
- EDPNC Small Business Relief Updates
- Visit NC and Outdoor NC Marketing Updates
- Partner Updates and Input



RECOVERY MARKETING UPDATE

- Legislature appropriated \$5 million for Western NC tourism promotion/recovery campaign.
- While leveraging the \$5 million as quickly and effectively as possible, Visit NC has submitted a request for \$10 million in additional funds to expand the effort to revitalize the mountain region's tourism economy and address misperceptions among travelers about the Piedmont and Coast regions being impacted.
- Net effect is all three regions will see increased efforts from us to aid in tourism promotion.
- Current phase in recovery messaging is an emphasis on promoting Holiday and Winter seasonal travel to the mountain region beginning in advance of Thanksgiving travel.
- Working on tweaks to the 'For Real' campaign for use in promoting the Piedmont and Coast.
- Recovery campaign is already up and running to capture Winter travel season.

RECOVERY MARKETING UPDATE | PAID MEDIA

Mountain-focused recovery paid media

- Four seasons Nov '24 – Oct '25
- Top markets of origin for region
 - Proximity to state
 - NC, SC, GA, FL, TN and AL
- Plus International

Piedmont and Coast messaging benefiting from modest Core budget increase



RECOVERY MARKETING UPDATE | PAID MEDIA

Mountain-focused incremental support

- Holidays (now through Dec.)
- Winter follows (through Feb.)
- Spring, Summer, Fall '25
 - Use sentiment tracking insights to evolve messaging
- More to come



WESTERN NC RECOVERY CAMPAIGN | WINTER CREATIVE

- Paid Search and Paid Social are up and running
 - Asset types: Meta static, Pinterest static, Google, Bing
 - Messaging: supporting Holiday/Winter travel
 - Top markets of origin for region and targeting:
 - NC, SC, GA, FL, TN and AL
- Streaming video/TV and audio going live next week.

**“Our best way to get back
is for you to come back.”**

WESTERN NC RECOVERY CAMPAIGN | PAID SOCIAL + PAID SEARCH



**INSTEAD OF WATCHING
A HOLIDAY MOVIE, FEEL
LIKE YOU'RE IN ONE.**

Our best way to get back
is for you to come back.

NC
Visit North Carolina



**NEVER MIND SANTA,
WHEN ARE YOU
COMING TO TOWN?**

Our best way to get back
is for you to come back.

NC
Visit North Carolina



**YOU'RE
ON OUR
WISH LIST**

Our best way to get back
is for you to come back.

NC
Visit North Carolina



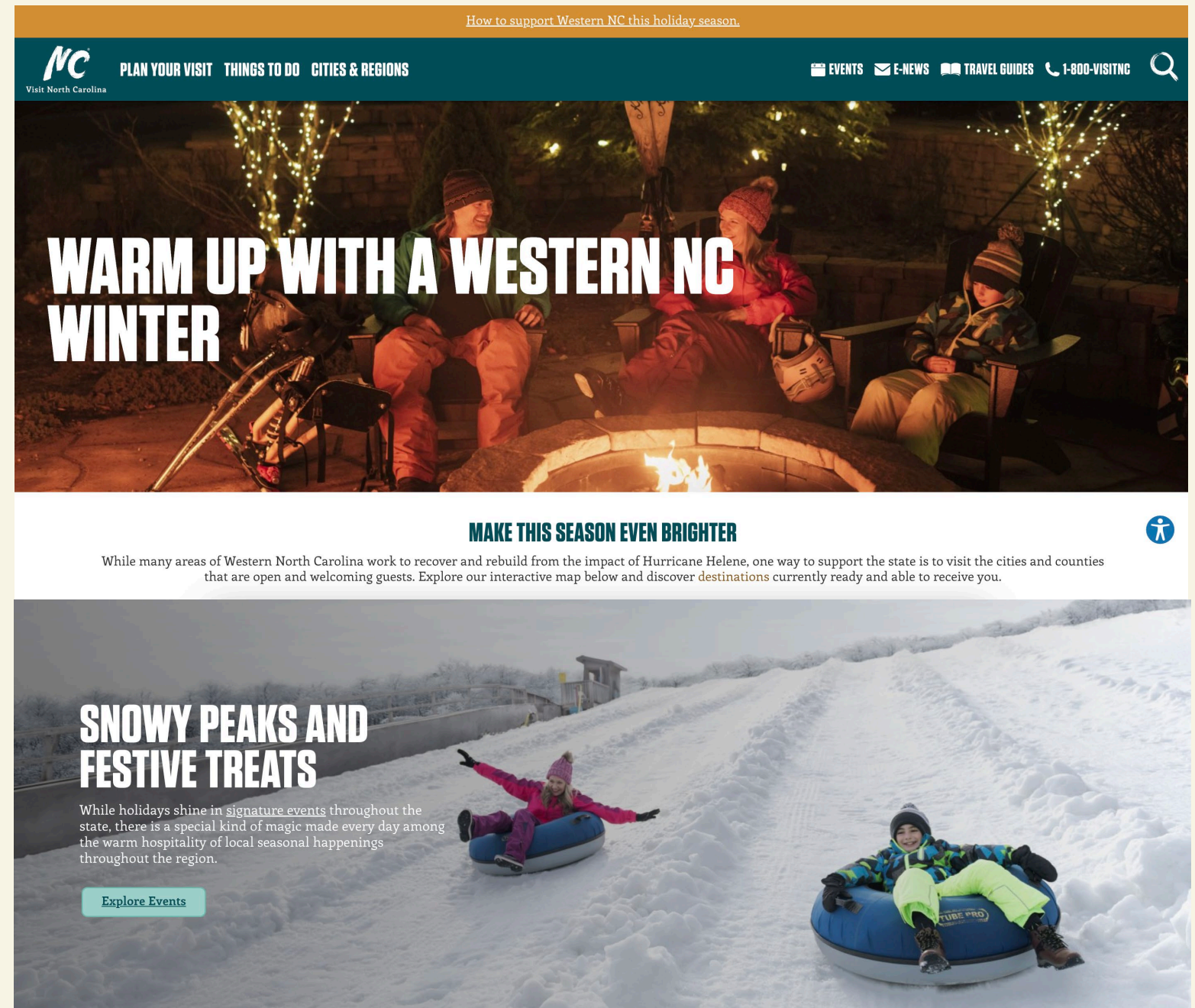
**WHY WALK WHEN YOU
CAN RIDE IN A WINTER
WONDERLAND?**

Our best way to get back
is for you to come back.

NC
Visit North Carolina

WESTERN NC RECOVERY CAMPAIGN | LANDING PAGE

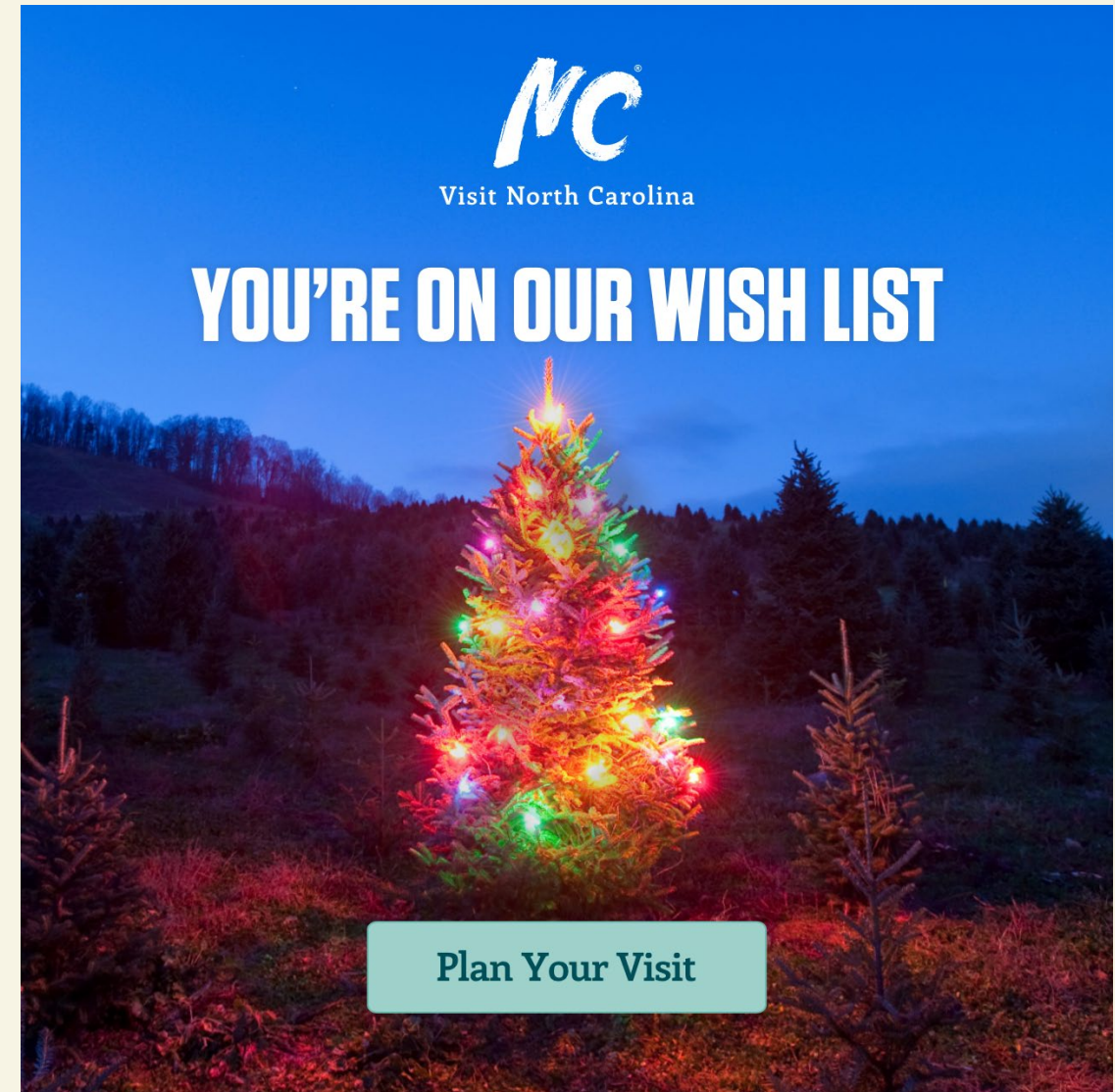
- Paid Social and Search will be driving to the newly launched WNC Recovery landing page, visitnc.com/western-nc-recovery
- The page encourages responsible travel to the mountain region, informing visitors what's open, providing a view of holiday and winter events, a link to the shopwnc.com site, Choose and cut tree farms, and more.



WESTERN NC RECOVERY CAMPAIGN | STREAMING AUDIO

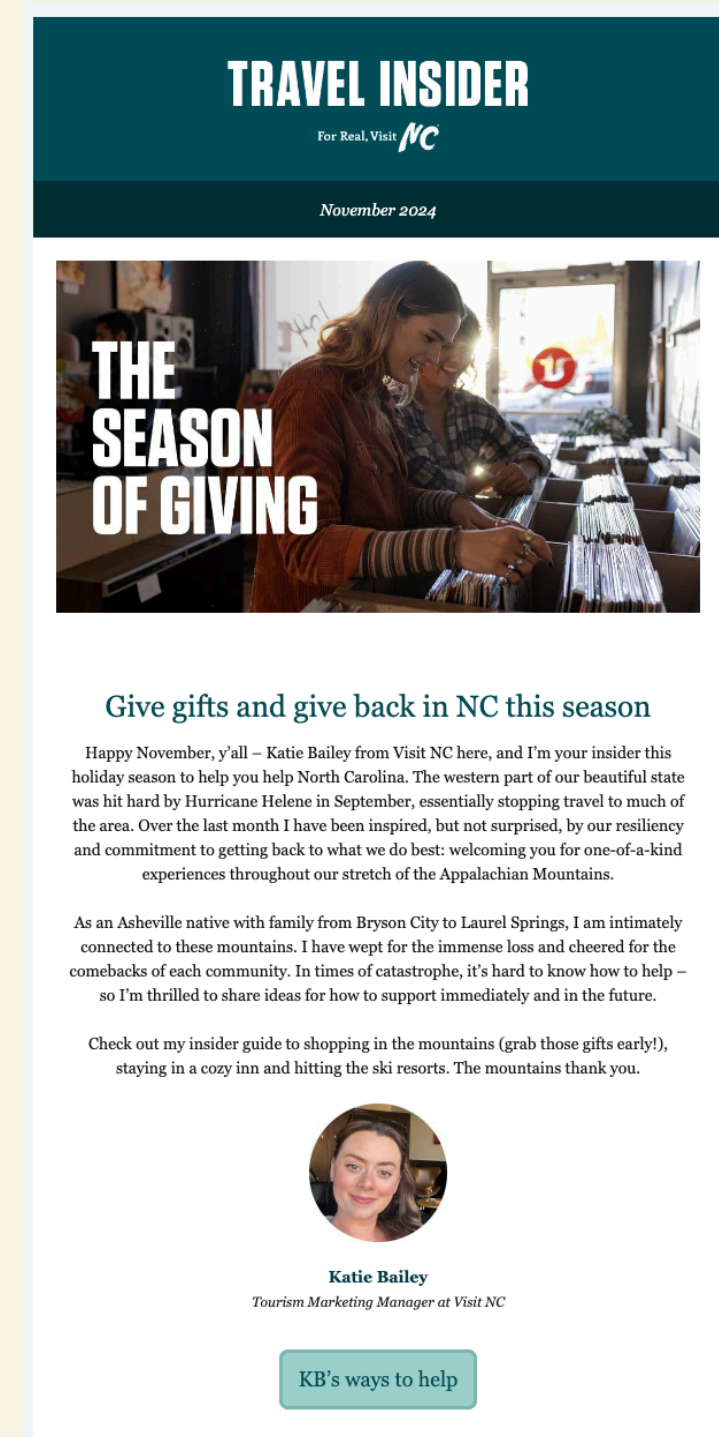
:30

They say “tis the season for giving.” So how about you give you and yours a new tradition, like a trip to the mountains of North Carolina? We’re open and have all the holiday trimmings. Fresh cut trees. Check. Twinkling Lights. Check. You? Well, you’re on our wish list, because the best way for us to get back is for you to come back. Sounds like a great gift for us all and a chance to say, “Bless our hearts, everyone.”



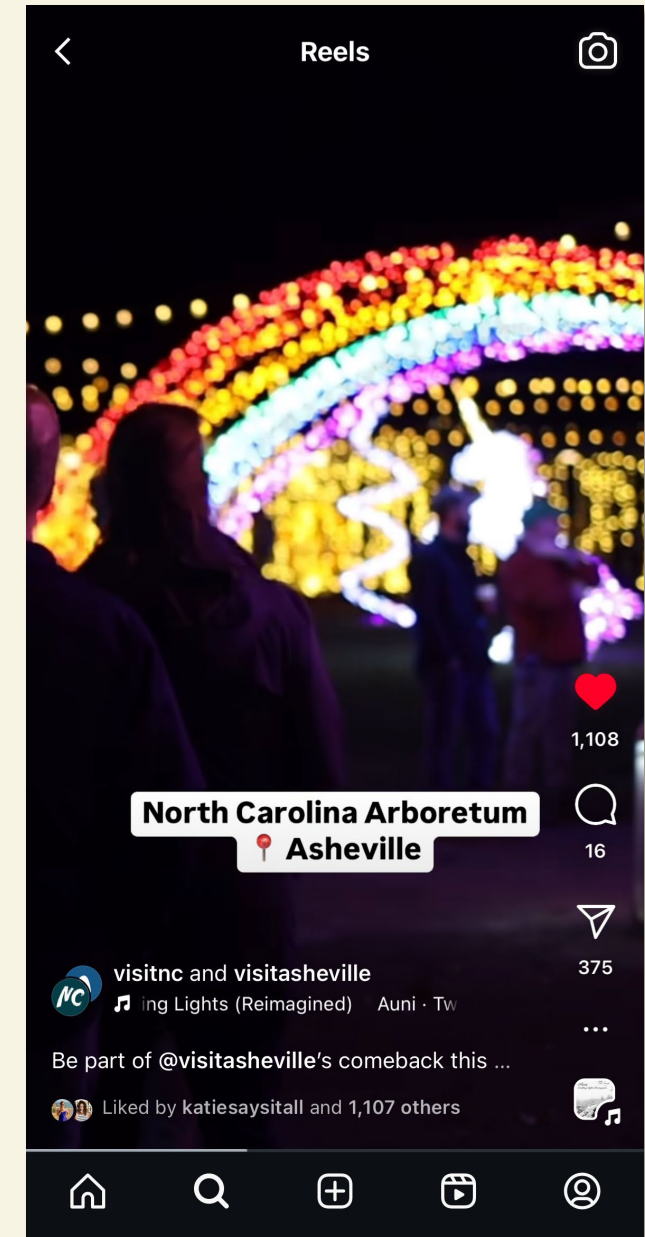
WESTERN NC RECOVERY CAMPAIGN | EMAIL

- Asheville prominently featured in Visit NC's December and January Travel Insider editions, linking directly to Asheville's website and deployed to 170,000+ subscribers
- December:
 - Biltmore Christmas, holiday shopping, seasonal brews, cabins, hotels and hideaways, Appalachian food scene
- January:
 - James Beard piece on VisitNC.com AND doing a specialty Eat & Drink email segment send which features this content in January Travel Insider send. We're sure to promote all this on organic social, too. This content will mention many Asheville spots:
 - Good Hot Fish, The Market Place, Plant, Cúrate, Chai Pani



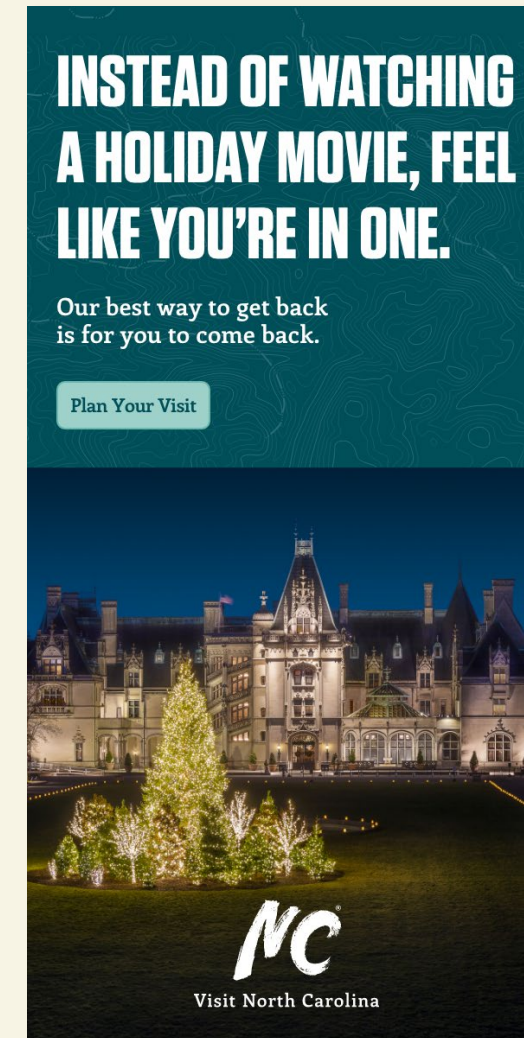
RECOVERY MARKETING UPDATE | ORGANIC SOCIAL

- **November content inclusions:**
 - Winter Lights Instagram reel posted 11/15
 - Visit NC's Gift Guide content:
 - This is an integrated push on Visit NC's organic channels to feature NC businesses and inspire holiday shopping. Asheville will be featured in the following organic social content:
 - Pinterest will launch the week prior to Small Biz Saturday
 - Instagram Stories will feature Gift Guides on Small Biz Saturday
 - Also starting on Small Biz Saturday there will be a FB post every week for 4 weeks with the gift guide articles
- **December content inclusions:**
 - Winter Lights
 - Biltmore
 - Tiktok stitch for Dobra Tea House



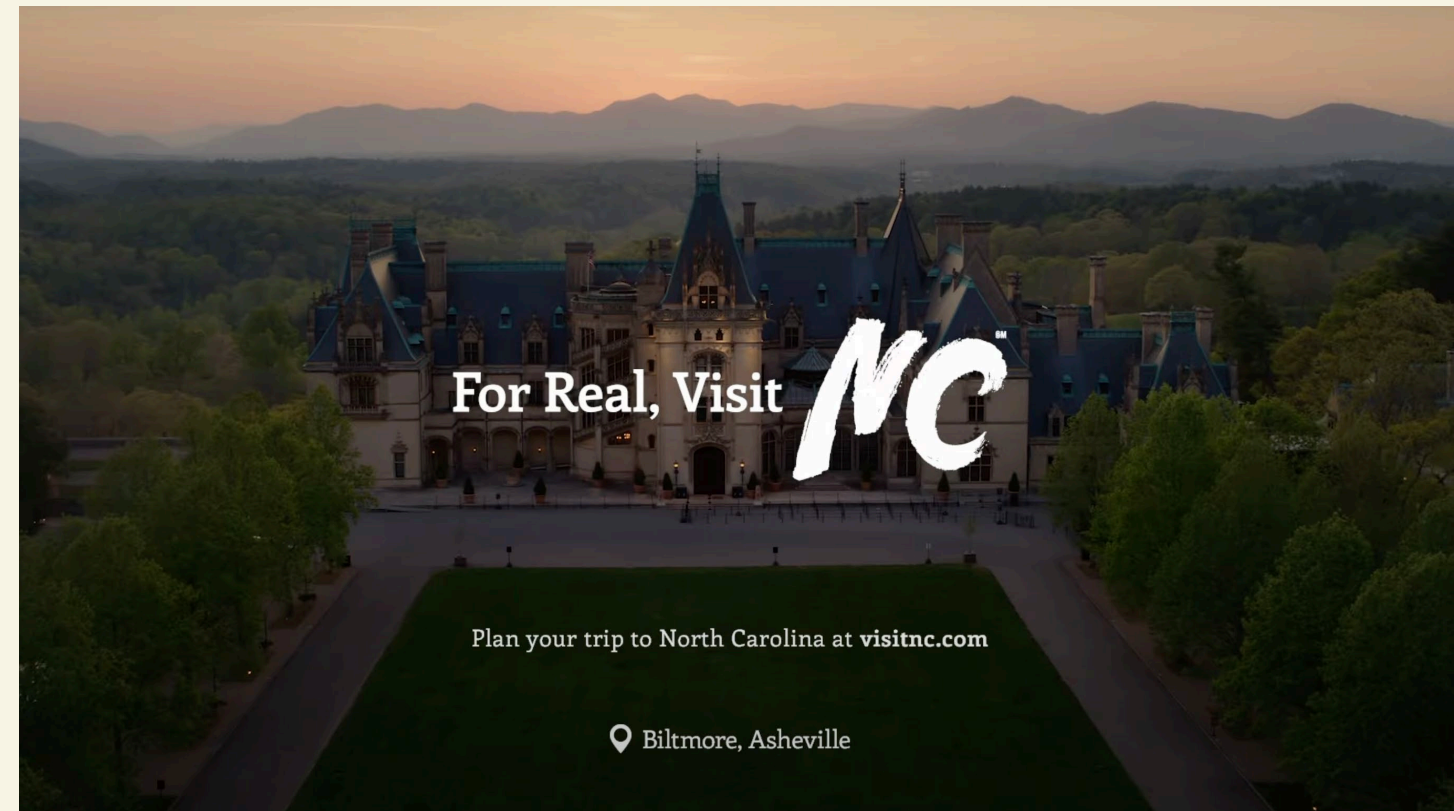
VISIT NC + EXPLORE AVL | COMPLEMENTARY EFFORTS FOR HOLIDAYS

- **Paid Social retargeting**
 - Visit NC to send pixels so that Visit NC can retarget Asheville audiences with paid social ads across meta
 - Asheville to also send pixels so that Asheville can retarget Visit NC audiences
- **Display retargeting**
 - Visit NC to send pixels so that Visit NC can retarget Asheville audiences with display messages
 - Asheville to also send pixels so that Asheville can retarget Visit NC audiences with display messages



VISIT NC + EXPLORE AVL | COLLABORATIVE EFFORTS FOR WINTER & BEYOND

- **Paid Social retargeting** (*continued from Holiday flight*)
- **Display retargeting** (*continued from Holiday flight*)
- **Linear and CTV alignment:**
 - Visit NC and Asheville to seek media efficiency in reach and frequency by aligning linear and CTV buy flighting and addressable audiences for key target markets



PUBLIC RELATIONS

PUBLIC RELATIONS

GARDEN & GUN


TRAVEL

These Western North Carolina Communities Are Open and Need Your Patronage This Fall

“Above all, your presence shows that the outside world cares”

By **ELIZABETH HUTCHISON HICKLIN**
October 23, 2024

[f](#) [x](#) [p](#) [e](#) [p](#)



Downtown Waynesville, North Carolina.

THE POINTS GUY [NEWS](#) [CREDIT CARDS](#) [POINTS + MILES](#) [TRAVEL](#) [TOOLS](#) [SUBSCRIBE](#) [Advertiser disclosure](#)


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NEWS

Following Hurricane Helene, these western North Carolina towns are open and eager for tourists


Jason Erye
Oct. 24, 2024 • 8 min read



[JUMP TO SECTION](#)

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 **NATIONAL GEOGRAPHIC**

TRAVEL

In the aftermath of Helene, Asheville tells tourists: 'We're open for business'

Hurricane Helene ravaged parts of the popular tourist destination during its peak season. But hospitality businesses are steadily opening again with a focus on the Christmas season.

By Sara Murphy
October 25, 2024

[f](#) [x](#) [e](#) [p](#)

PUBLIC RELATIONS

These North Carolina Towns Are Open And Need Your Business

"We appreciate your support to our local economy this fall, as we rely on this season heavily."

By [Lisa Cericola](#) Updated on October 18, 2024



In This Article

- Highlands
- Franklin
- Cashiers
- Bryson City
- Robbinsville
- Brevard
- Shelby
- Murphy
- Hayesville
- Hendersonville



PHOTO: VISIT SMOKIES

North Carolina is a beloved travel destination all year round, especially in the fall and early summer, when its natural beauty really shines. While much of the western part of the state is still recovering from widespread devastation caused by [Hurricane Helene](#), some areas are open for business and in need of visitors.

Visit North Carolina has released a [helpful interactive map](#) that shows the most up-to-date [road closures](#), areas that you should avoid, and where it is safe to travel. (Check out [DriveNC.com](#) for more detailed information on road closures.) Based on that information, we've rounded up our recommendations on where to go, what to do, and where to stay.

If you do decide to travel, be sure to double check any reservations or plans before leaving, as this information is changing frequently.

RELATED: [The 15 Most Beautiful Places In North Carolina, According To Locals](#)

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ARTS & CULTURE

Get a Jump on Holiday Shopping and Bolster North Carolina Artists Who Need Help

From Black Mountain to Asheville to Boone to Chimney Rock, creatives in Western North Carolina need support during what would have been their busiest season

By **AMY BRECOUNT WHITE**

October 16, 2024



PHOTO: MELINA FERRIS COOGAN

Previously, visitors gathered at Marshall High Studios for the annual holiday market. Due to flood damage from Helene, the studio is in the process of restoration, but the Marshall Handmade Market will continue this year at Odonata Farm in Mars Hill, North Carolina.

QUESTIONS
INPUT
COMMENTS



CITY UPDATES

Vice Mayor Sandra Kilgore



THANK YOU, SANDRA!

**VICE MAYOR
SANDRA KILGORE**

We appreciate your dedicated service as a
BCTDA ex-officio member

December 2020 – November 2024

*Thank you for serving the City of Asheville,
as well as the BCTDA!*





COUNTY UPDATES

Brenda Durden

(on behalf of Commissioner Terri Wells)

EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority



MISCELLANEOUS BUSINESS

Brenda Durden
BCTDA | Chair

EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE
POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority



PUBLIC COMMENTS

Brenda Durden
BCTDA | Chair

**EXPLORE
ASHEVILLE**

POWERED BY | Buncombe County Tourism
Development Authority

LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Brenda Durden

Members of the Public were invited to sign-up to virtually share live comments during today's in-person BCTDA meeting.

As of the 12:00 p.m. registration deadline on Wednesday, November 20, no requests to speak had been received.



LIVE VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENTS

Chair Brenda Durden

Upon arrival to this morning's BCTDA meeting, anyone who indicated a desire to make public comments completed the Public Comment Sign-In Sheet, affirming they agree to abide by the Rules of Decorum.



A FEW REMINDERS

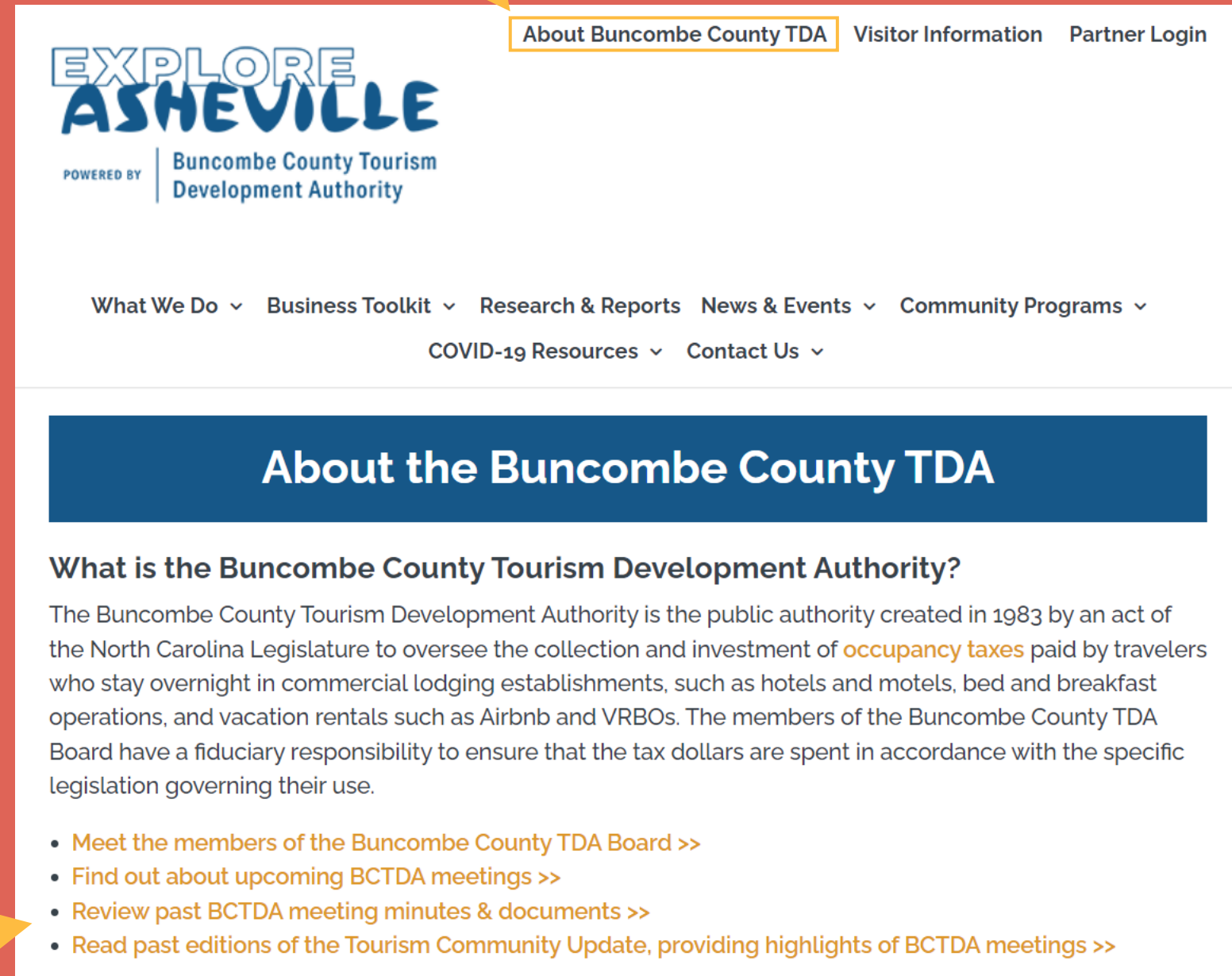
Chair Brenda Durden

Additional materials, including the PowerPoint presentation, will be posted online later today.

The next BCTDA meeting will be held on Wednesday, January 29, 2025, at 9:00 a.m. in the Explore Asheville Board Room

For more information go to:

- [AshevilleCVB.com](https://www.ashevillecvb.com)
- [About the Buncombe County TDA section](#)
- [Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings or Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents](#)



The screenshot shows the Explore Asheville website. At the top left is the logo "EXPLORE ASHEVILLE" with "POWERED BY Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority" below it. To the right of the logo is a navigation menu with "About Buncombe County TDA" highlighted in a yellow box, and "Visitor Information" and "Partner Login" to its right. Below the navigation menu are several dropdown menus: "What We Do", "Business Toolkit", "Research & Reports", "News & Events", "Community Programs", "COVID-19 Resources", and "Contact Us". Below the navigation menu is a dark blue banner with the text "About the Buncombe County TDA". Below the banner is the section "What is the Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority?". The text in this section describes the authority's role in collecting and investing occupancy taxes. Below the text is a list of links: "Meet the members of the Buncombe County TDA Board >>", "Find out about upcoming BCTDA meetings >>", "Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents >>", and "Read past editions of the Tourism Community Update, providing highlights of BCTDA meetings >>". A yellow arrow points from the top of the slide to the "About Buncombe County TDA" link in the navigation menu. Another yellow arrow points from the bottom of the slide to the "Review past BCTDA meeting minutes & documents >>" link in the list.



ADJOURNMENT

Chair Brenda Durden

Questions/Comments

Suggested Motion:

Motion to adjourn the BCTDA Meeting.

Motion Second

Discussion

Vote





THANK YOU

See you at the next BCTDA meeting!

Wednesday, January 29, 2025 | 9:00 a.m.

Explore Asheville Board Room | 27 College Place