



Tourism Tidbits **December 2015** A bi-weekly newsletter from HCTDA

2016 Henderson County Tourism Conference

The Henderson County Tourism Conference will be held on Jan. 21 from 8:30 am—3:15 pm at Blue Ridge Community College in the Conference Center. In case of snow, the date will be Jan. 28. This is the only county-wide tourism conference of its kind in North Carolina, and attendance is FREE for all tourism-related businesses in Henderson County.

This year's line up features exciting panels from experts in tourism and economic development. The Key Note Speaker will be Dr. Steve Morse, Associate Professor & Program Director of Hospitality and Tourism at Western Carolina University. Breakout sessions will cover cutting-edge information on business analytics from Dr. Morse, social media strategy from JB Media Institute, and partnership information with key tourism players in our region including the WNC Ag Center, Blue Ridge Parkway, Asheville Airport, and DuPont State Recreational Forest. This expert information and unique networking opportunity is available at no cost to our tourism industry partners, but space is limited and has filled up quickly in the past.

Registration will open next week through the Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center. More information and a registration link will be sent out on Monday, so be sure to check your email. Interested tourism partners may also contact Michael Arrowood with questions at 693-9708 or events@visithendersonvillenc.org.

Who has the most Holiday Spirit?

The holiday decorations in Downtown Hendersonville are spectacular this year! Thank you to all the merchants that stepped up their holiday spirit to entice locals and visitors to spend time and money downtown. Volunteer judges visited each window display in Downtown, and have chosen the jolliest decor. The winners will be announced tomorrow, and will receive special recognition from HCTDA. Stay tuned, and be sure to congratulate them!

HCTDA will observe holiday hours throughout the Christmas and New Year's holidays. Check the Calendar on Page 3 for the latest updates!

Did you know?

64% of leisure travelers and 52% of business travelers are not loyal to a particular brand—meaning hotels need to focus on creating personalized experiences based on customer data to get traveler loyalty. How do you structure more personalized experience around your guests?

(Data from a 2015 Sabre Hospitality study.)

2016 Events

HCTDA is developing our event calendars for 2016. Eligible tourism-related events are promoted on our website, through “Weekly Happenings” print outs in the office, on the VisitNC website, and through a wide range of outside media. We can only promote your event if we know about it! Send your event information to Michelle at info@visithendersonvillenc.org. Michelle can also answer any questions about what events are eligible for HCTDA publicity materials.

Even if you do not have all your event details set, send us as much information as you have available for maximum publicity opportunities.

Boost your Business with Coupons

As we wind down the year, remember to take a look at the coupon program with HCTDA. Only a small handful of our tourism partners take advantage of this program, but many of our travelers ask about discounts. See current offerings at

<http://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/coupon-categories.htm>.

For details, contact Karen at 693-9708 or email kbaker@visithendersonvillenc.org.

Coca-Cola Murals Featured

Coca-Cola Bottling Company Consolidated, out of Charlotte, NC, has released a wonderful video of the restoration of the Coke murals in Downtown, a unique Hendersonville asset. The video is a great promotional tool for the entire Hendersonville region. See the video at <https://youtu.be/YUOuXR63VAM> and don't forget to share! Congratulations to Dad's Collectibles and Mark Ray for the success of this venture.

Hendersonville Makes Top 10 List

Hendersonville was named one of the “Top 10 Christmas Towns Near Asheville” on the popular blog RomanticAsheville.com. This independently run blog features high-quality images and garners heavy traffic. Hendersonville is prominently featured at

www.romanticasheville.com/christmas-towns

HCTDA hosts Holiday Party

HCTDA held the annual volunteer appreciate dinner and Christmas party earlier this month. Over 50 volunteers and guests attended, and were treated to a delicious dinner and a wonderful evening of entertainment at Etowah Valley Golf & Resort. Thank you, Etowah Valley, for your hospitality. The volunteer dinner is HCTDA's chance to thank our dedicated volunteers, who are essential to the Visitor Center's operations. If any volunteer or board member did not attend, please contact Dara at 693-9708 to pick up your Christmas gift. Thank you for all you do, and Merry Christmas!



Above: HCTDA Board Chair David Nicholson and HCTDA Executive Director Beth Carden welcome guests to the Christmas Party, held at Etowah Valley.

Happy Holidays from HCTDA to all of our tourism industry partners! Here's to a great 2016!

Final Week to Share your Feedback

As we develop the networking opportunities for 2016, HCTDA wants to hear your opinion on Tourism After 5, Lunch & Learn, and how we can better work with you. Please take a few moments to fill out an anonymous 10-question survey that will help us going forward. The survey is available at <https://www.surveymonkey.com/r/PW7YYSV>.

Each person may only take the survey once, but multiple people from your business or organization may complete the survey. The survey will be live for one more week, so please share your thoughts.

Garden Jubilee named “STS Top 20 Event”

The Southeast Tourism Society (STS) has named Garden Jubilee one of the STS Top 20 Events in the Southeast for May 2016. Travel industry experts select 20 events per month, and STS publicizes them throughout the US. The complete list is published on two websites:

<http://www.escapetotheseast.com> and <http://www.travelmediapressroom.com/sts/>. Events considered for the STS Top 20 recognition must be at least three years old and have attendance of at least 1,000. This year’s Garden Jubilee is May 28 & 29, 2016. The STS Top 20 Festival and Event Awards have highlighted programs around the Southeast since 1985.



This is a major boon for Henderson County tourism. For more information on the Garden Jubilee Festival, go to http://www.visithendersonvillenc.org/garden_jubilee.htm.

Upcoming Events & HCTDA Holiday Hours

Dec. 23rd 10am-5pm

Visitor Center Holiday Hours
201 S. Main St., Hendersonville

Dec. 24th 10am-3pm

Visitor Center Holiday Hours
201 S. Main St., Hendersonville

Dec. 25th All Day

Visitor Center Closed
201 S. Main St., Hendersonville

Dec. 31st 10am-3pm

Visitor Center Holiday Hours
201 S. Main St. Hendersonville

Jan. 1st All Day

Visitor Center Closed
201 S. Main St., Hendersonville

Jan. 21st 8:30am-3:15pm

Henderson County Tourism Conference
Blue Ridge Conference Center,
180 W. Campus Dr., Flat Rock

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