

**Mercer County Convention and Visitors Bureau
Board Meeting
August 19, 2024**

Members Present: Henry Jones, Kim Jones, Jim Spencer, Phil Lane, Patrice Belcher, Todd Boguess, Ansel Ponder, Marty Gearhart, Jeff Disibbio, Greg Puckett, Candace Wilson, Sam Lusk, Kitt McCarthy-Zoom, Grant Bennet, Todd Boguess-Zoom

Members absent: John O'Neal, Carmen Hendricks

Guests: Pat Strader, Alexa Nagy, Lyndsay Fruchtl

Staff: Jamie Null, Karen Morris, Valerie Hendricks

Call to Order:

Jeff Disibbio, Vice President, called the meeting to order at 2:03 P.M. Guests were welcomed. June minutes and financials were passed.

Old Business

- A. **Pineapple PR:** Lindsay Fruchtl gave an update on the stories that have been written about Mercer County as well as the monthly story pitches that her and her team send out. She went over the numbers and stats as well as sharing the earned media numbers. She also went over some of the recent stories that have been in publications and what is coming up with articles and travel writers.
- B. **Uniquely Appalachian Trademark:** Jamie informed the board that the license agreement should be done soon and the CVB would be able to use "Uniquely Appalachian" freely. The Department of Tourism gave their ok for us to proceed and she is working on getting the agreement with State Parks to use their images as well.
- C. **Community Marketing Report:** Valerie said that she has had 5 partner meetings, and everything is going well. Everyone is very responsive and says they want to work with us. Guides have been delivered and sent out to over 30 places and requests are still coming in. 45 swag bags were also put together for visitors to the area.

New Business

- A. **DR Update:** Alexa gave an update on the current campaigns that are running. Alexa gave the social media numbers; visitors guide request numbers, goal conversions, co-op data and website numbers. She also talked about what marketing campaigns were coming up. Pat Strader presented the website proposal to the board. Jeff called for a vote on the website update and the update passed.
- B. **Director's Report:** Jamie told the board that June occupancy is down -1.0% from 2023 according to the Star Report and -9.5% from 2023 according to Airdna. The sign is up for White Oak Falls, the sunscreen dispenser is up at Camp Creek State Park and if it goes well, there will be others

put up around the county. There is a new AI chat bot on the website that gives instant information on what's on the website. Leave No Trace training will begin in the schools in the Fall. Concord University and Giles County are helping to work on Civil War Trails history. Upcoming events include the Governor's Conference on Tourism, Candy Cane Trail-Holiday Lights edition, YouTube series with 5 unique hosts traveling around the county, and Tourism Development history trails to make in the county. Jamie explained that Datafy can track visitors throughout the county such as where they go and what they do. The CVB staff worked a booth at the WV State Fair and Huey will be at Autumfest and Bridge Day.

- C. Committees:** Karen informed the board that it was time to fill the Nominating and Budget committees. She asked for volunteers for each one and any spot not filled would be assigned. Ansel Ponder, Sam Lusk and Kim Jones will be on the budget committee and Candace Wilson volunteered to be on the nominating committee.

Next meeting: TBD

Meeting adjourned at 3:13

Ansel Ponder, Secretary



Mercer County CVB Board