

A scenic mountain landscape at sunset. The sky is filled with soft, colorful clouds in shades of orange, pink, and blue. In the foreground, a large, dark evergreen tree stands on the left. In the middle ground, two people are sitting on a large rock, looking out over the mountains. One person is pointing towards the horizon. In the background, a woman is standing on the right, taking a photo with her phone. The overall atmosphere is peaceful and scenic.

— VISIT —  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

HAYWOOD COUNTY  
TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

March 25, 2026 | Board of Directors Meeting



# — VISIT — HAYWOOD

WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

Occupancy Tax & Lodging Data

### Fiscal Year Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison (Gross)

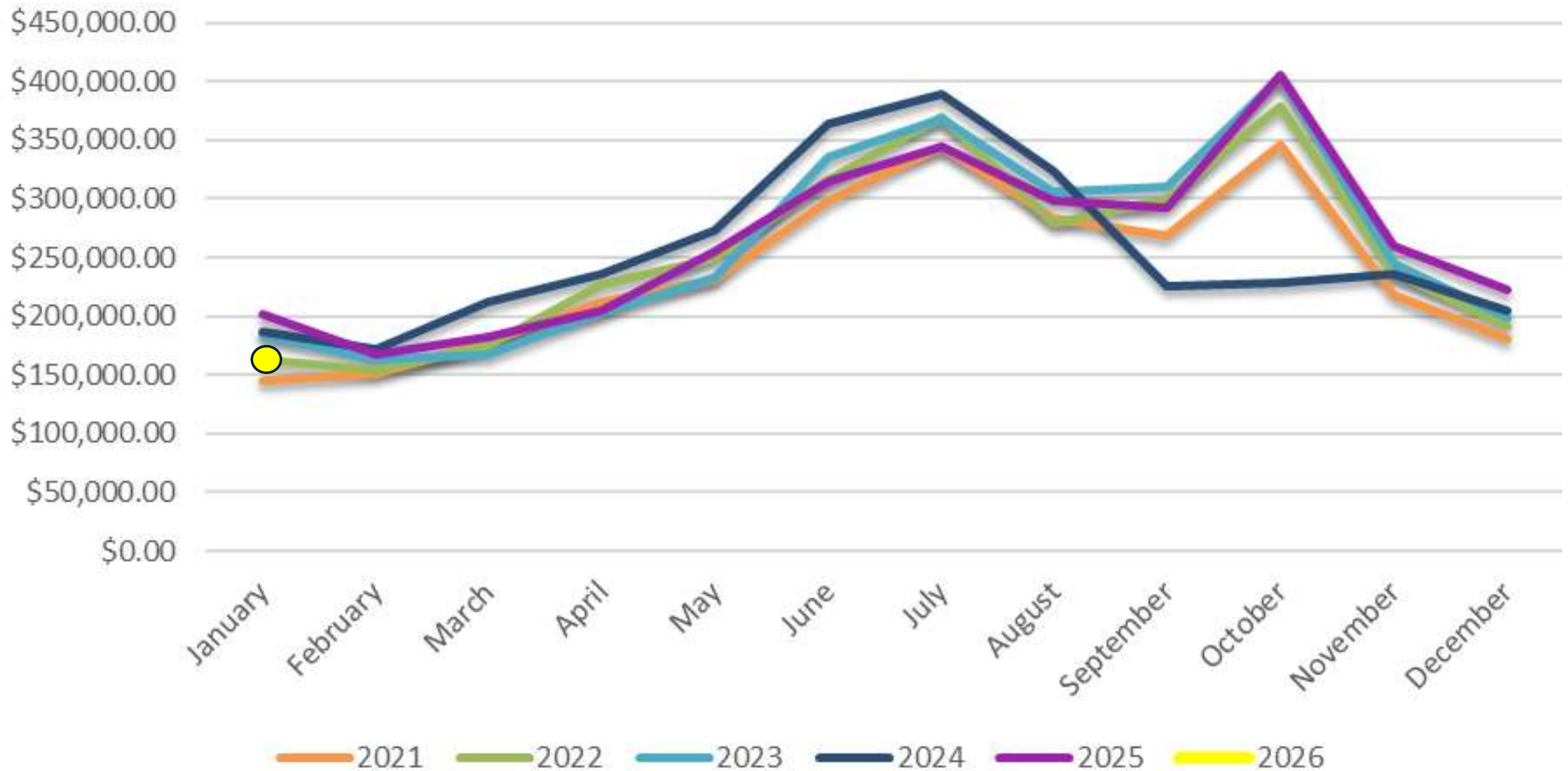
	<b>2022-2023</b>	<b>2023-2024</b>	<b>2024-2025</b>	<b>2025-2026</b>	\$ Change from Previous Year	% Change from Previous Year
January	\$184,467.69	\$186,374.80	\$201,802.09	\$162,893.11	(\$38,908.98)	-19.28%
Canton	\$15,055.47	\$20,320.83	\$15,212.14	\$13,623.75	(\$1,588.39)	-10.44%
Clyde	\$17,470.28	\$16,150.10	\$11,492.80	\$14,514.62	\$3,021.82	26.29%
Lake Junaluska	\$13,371.82	\$8,856.70	\$15,684.34	\$5,952.10	(\$9,732.24)	-62.05%
Maggie Valley	\$84,230.59	\$86,145.46	\$98,739.45	\$73,493.67	(\$25,245.78)	-25.57%
Waynesville	\$54,339.53	\$54,901.71	\$60,673.36	\$55,308.97	(\$5,364.39)	-8.84%
	<b>\$3,043,483.81</b>	<b>\$3,270,866.51</b>	<b>\$2,932,906.56</b>	<b>\$1,985,551.09</b>	<b>\$176,859.53</b>	<b>9.78%</b>

**\*\* Two back-to-back winter weekend storms:**

- Jan. 23-26: Winter Storm *Fern*, local State of Emergency
- Jan 30-Feb 2: Winter Storm Warning, Extreme Cold Warning, State of Emergency, widespread facilities closures

[Link to Online Version](#)

# YOY Monthly Occupancy Tax Comparison



— VISIT —  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS



Old Business

## RESOLUTION DECLARING CAPITAL PROPERTY SURPLUS AND DISPOSITION OF PROPERTY

**WHEREAS**, N.C.G.S. 160A-265 authorizes the local government unit to sell or dispose of real and personal property, without regard to the method or purpose of its acquisition or to its intended or actual governmental or other prior use.

**WHEREAS**, due to no longer participating in Mountain Heritage Trout Waters Tackle Loaner Program, Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) wishes to convey the following surplus fishing items to Trout Unlimited, Haywood Waterways, or another local non-profit organization, and/or the Haywood Recreation and Parks, Waynesville Parks and Recreation, or any other unit of local government.

**WHEREAS**, The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors is authorized to declare surplus and adopt a resolution for this conveyance of surplus personal property;

**NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED** that the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority Board of Directors, meeting in general session on Wednesday, March 25, 2026, does the following:

Hereby authorizes the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority Executive Director to declare surplus:

1. Fishing Poles (42)
2. Fishing Pole holders (2)
3. Tackle Boxes (51 medium, 86 small)
4. Fishing Supplies (13 rolls string, repair tackle box, misc. accessories)

# Resolution to Declare Surplus Items

# Lease Extension

- ✓ Per the approved lease, we can renew for up to four, one-year terms. This extension is 3 of 4.
- ✓ We were informed that Lake Junaluska is waiving the 5% rent increase for July 1, 2026- June 30, 2027, holding the rent at \$4,140 monthly.
- ✓ With the Board's consensus, we plan to confirm in writing our intent to renew for an additional one-year term.





— VISIT —  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

New Business

# Marketing Committee Opening Recommendation

## Marketing Committee Vacancy Update

- Received 4 strong applications for the open Canton-community seat, exceeding expectations
- Due to no March Marketing Committee meeting, the Executive Committee reviewed all applications
- All candidates were well-qualified; however, only one seat is available

## Recommendation:

- Hannah Burnisky is recommended for appointment due to:
- Strong engagement with the Canton Merchant Partnership
- Active collaboration with the Town of Canton on development-related initiatives



# 2026 Ice Fest Recap



Jan.29

Feb.01



2026

# Event Recap

- ❄️ 4 days of events planned across all 5 towns.
- ❄️ 66 Participating Partners in 2026 vs. 55 Partners in 2025
- ❄️ Several events sold out in advance.
- ❄️ Advance ticket sales for Ice Extravaganza pacing 30% ahead of 2025, sold across broader geographic reach from Ohio to Florida.
- ❄️ Lodging Packages – 6x more lodging pre-bookings over 2025
- ❄️ Collaboration with partners to provide last minute, additional support to mitigate cold weather concerns.





# Weather Impact

- 19 Vendors pre-cancelled and/or concerned about travel & extreme conditions
- Extreme cold will damage warming tent & bounce house
- Ice Extravaganza refund requests
- Lodging cancellations
- Extreme Cold Warning
- Winter Storm Warning
- State of Emergency
- Travel warning - NCDOT

# Making it Work

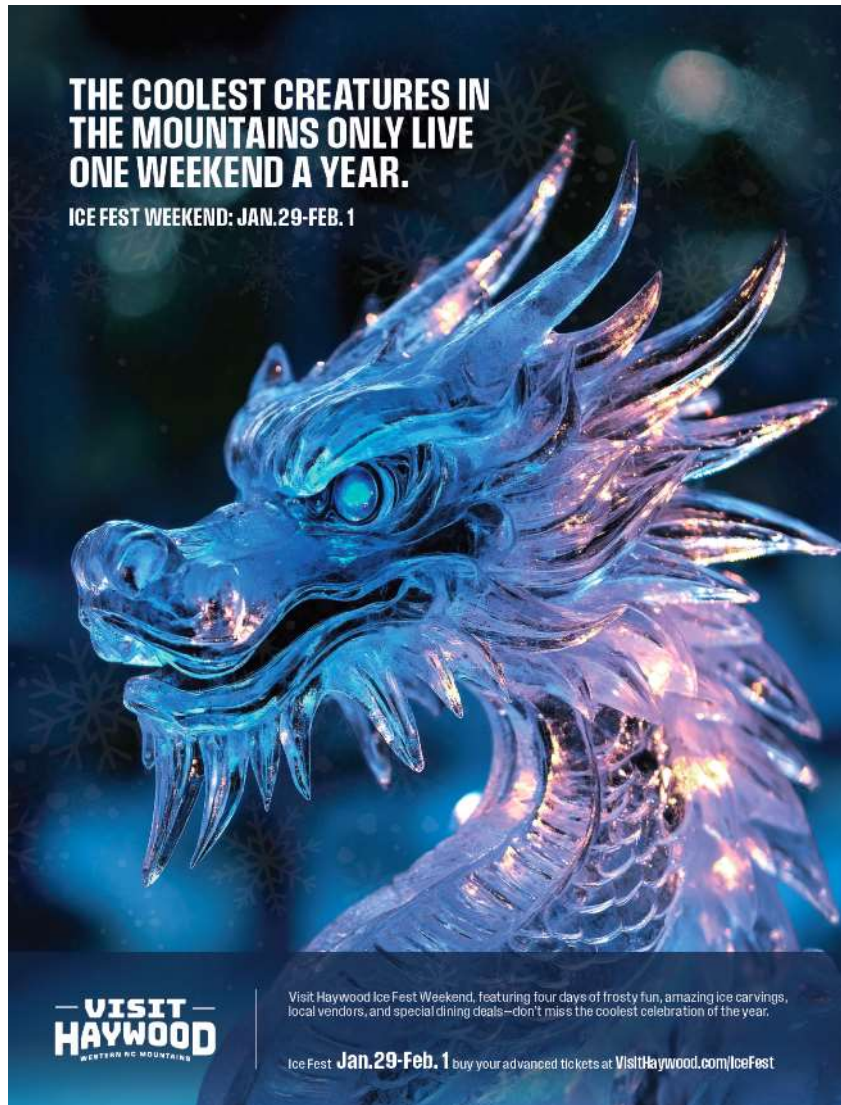




## User Generated Photos



# Advertising Recap



- 2nd most visited page on website behind home page.
- 1st most visited in Unique views

- 140,402 Page views
  - 134% increase from 2025
- 90,311 Unique views
  - 111% increase from 2025



# Advertising

- Meta Ads (Facebook, Instagram)
- Our State
- GVL Today
- Datafy
- Visit NC (Featured Event & Social Promotion)
- Newsletters
- The Mountaineer
- The Biltmore Beacon
- Smoky Mountain News



# 2026 Press Coverage

## CARDINAL & PINE

### Haywood County's 2026 Ice Fest Weekend celebrates community & recovery



Make family memories at the Ice Extravaganza in Maggie Valley. (Visit Haywood)

By Vanessa Infanzon  
December 11, 2025

Discover what's in store for the 2026 Visit Haywood Ice Fest Weekend, from local gems to a full schedule of events.

Visit Haywood



### THINGS TO DO

## ICE FEST WEEKEND: JAN. 29 - FEB. 1

HAYWOOD COUNTY

4:52 FOX CAROLINA 41\*



### 20+ Great Things to Do in No Carolina in January (Updated)

As we've done with previous monthly guides, we're kicking off these January events by starting date.

Ice Fest Weekend in Haywood County

2025 Event Dates: January 29 - February 1

Haywood County in Western NC! Weekend for four days, stretching February! There are also some fun events including a Cool Jazz concert and a Visit Haywood Ice Stroll!

Returning festivities include ice games, and a host of vendors.



### 2025 North Carolina Festivals guide: State Fair

January festivals in NC

Annual processions of all things a festival, featuring live music, art, and more. Attendees can look forward to a variety of activities, including live music, art, and more.

Check out the 2025 North Carolina Festivals guide: State Fair.




Haywood.com Ice Fest

Y.C. VISIT HAYWOOD COUNTY



### Your guide to things to do in Asheville and WNC this week

Chris Worley  
WNCN Travel  
November 18, 2025



Plan ahead: The Haywood Ice Fest is Jan. 30 - Feb. 2. For details, visit [visithaywood.com/visiting-to-do/visit-haywood-ice-fest-weekend](http://visithaywood.com/visiting-to-do/visit-haywood-ice-fest-weekend)

## Embrace the Cold

### at the 2026 Visit Haywood Ice Fest Weekend



Discover what's in store for the 2026 Visit Haywood Ice Fest Weekend. From local gems to a full schedule of events, this weekend is a celebration of community and recovery.

Local Gems: While visiting through Haywood County, look for Blue Moon Brewing in Canton for craft beer and enjoy scenic views perfect for coffee with your favorite author. Popcorn Cakes, also in Canton, offers coffee, hot cocoa, sandwiches, and pastries from Four Seasons in Black Mountain.

### Haywood Ice Fest Schedule

THURSDAY JAN 29

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm: Local Art & Craft Show
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm: Ice Sculpture Contest
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Ice Stroll
- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Live Music
- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Ice Games
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm: Fire Pit

FRIDAY JAN 30

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm: Local Art & Craft Show
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm: Ice Sculpture Contest
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Ice Stroll
- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Live Music
- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Ice Games
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm: Fire Pit

SATURDAY JAN 31

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm: Local Art & Craft Show
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm: Ice Sculpture Contest
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Ice Stroll
- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Live Music
- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Ice Games
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm: Fire Pit

SUNDAY FEB 1

- 10:00 am - 12:00 pm: Local Art & Craft Show
- 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm: Lunch
- 1:00 pm - 2:00 pm: Ice Sculpture Contest
- 2:00 pm - 3:00 pm: Ice Stroll
- 3:00 pm - 4:00 pm: Live Music
- 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm: Ice Games
- 5:00 pm - 6:00 pm: Fire Pit

The Tassel Head in Lake Junaluska provides affordable rooms with a hot tub in a serene, scenic lake setting. During Visit Haywood Ice Fest, guests may take the shuttle to the festival's signature events and enjoy an ice-themed brunch on Sunday. Lake Junaluska's walking paths pass by a lakeside, scenic, and serene.

Add a 45-minute tour of Wolfbane Creek Farm, a 20-acre farm in Waynesville, to your weekend. Meet Chad and Susan, piggy bank guests. They and Luke, dog who pranks the sheep and sheep to the pasture, and Sam, the Golden retriever, who greets guests. The farm features a scenic mountain overlook (Highway 108) and a scenic mountain overlook (Highway 108).

second location in Asheville, now behind mountainside Golfway area, and mountain backdrop. Most of the animals come from rescue organizations.

Stop by the Ice Extravaganza in Maggie Valley. It's a fun-filled day with an eclectic collection of gifts, Christmas decorations, festive arrangements, games, and local art. Meet the authors, Tracy Carter and Susan Walker, who have inspired the state for more than 20 years.

Throughout the weekend, local businesses offer drink specials and food discounts to guests attending the Fest.

# 2025 Total Visitor Impact

**138**

Jobs Supported

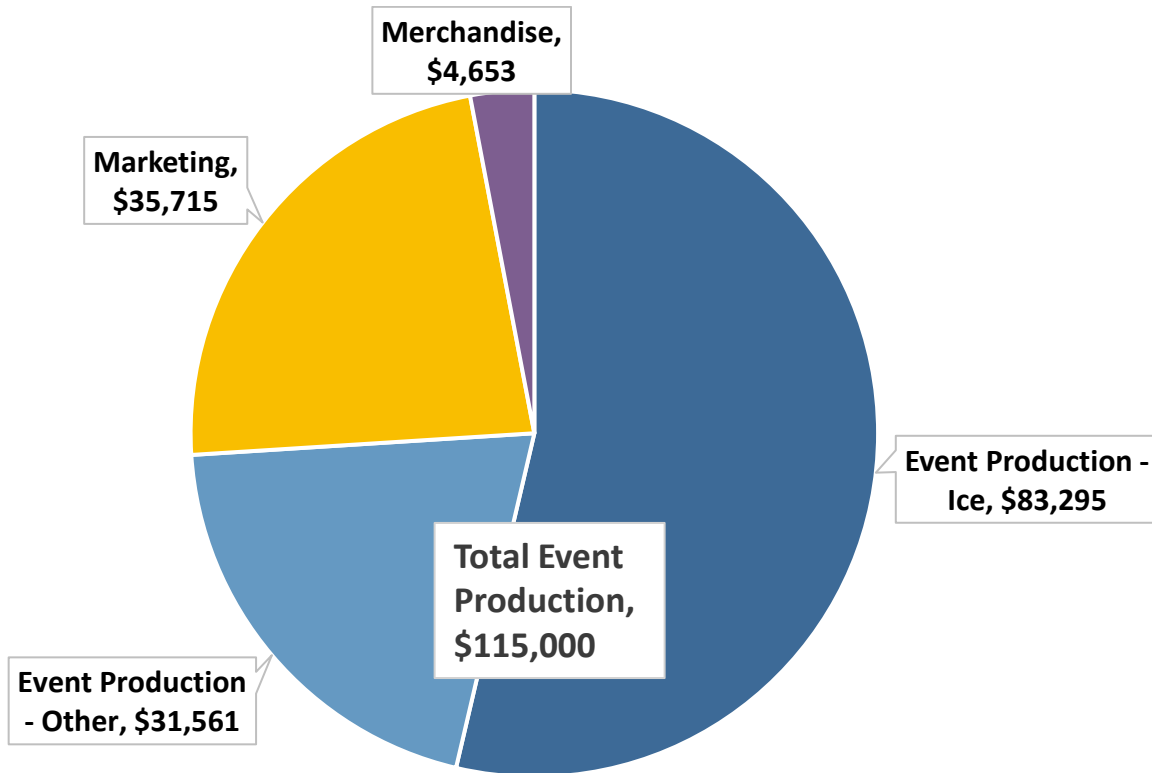
Local Taxes

**\$18,286**

Business Sales  
**\$566,086**

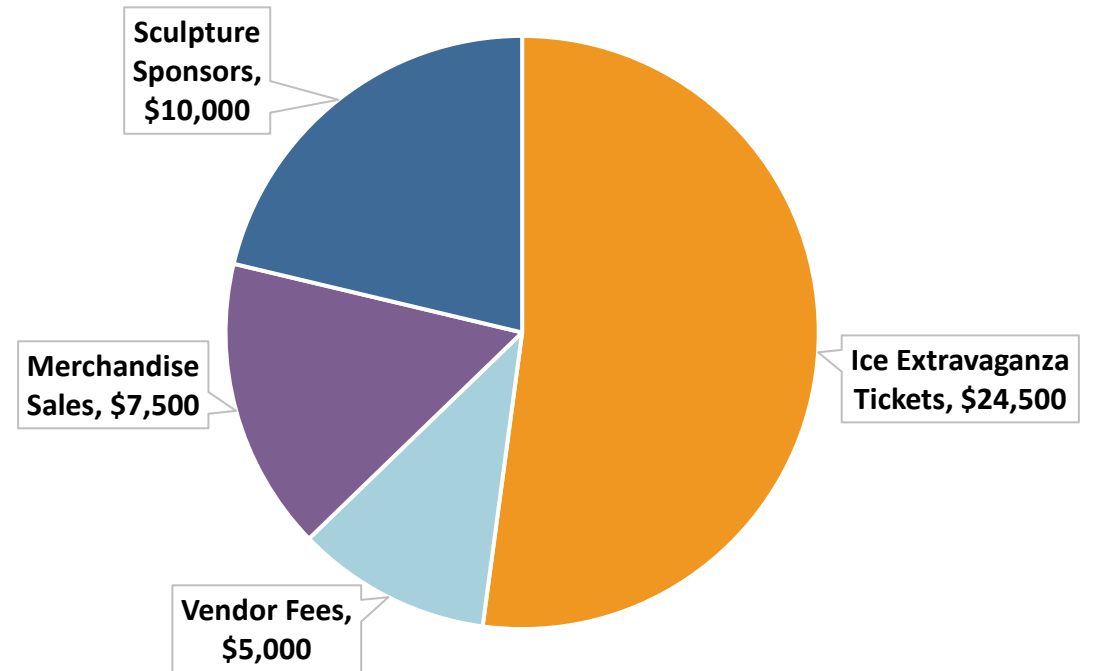
# Estimated Expenses: \$155,000\*

*\*Minor refunds/expenses in March*



# Projected Revenues: \$47,000\*

*Assumes a 20% increase in ticket sales YOY*

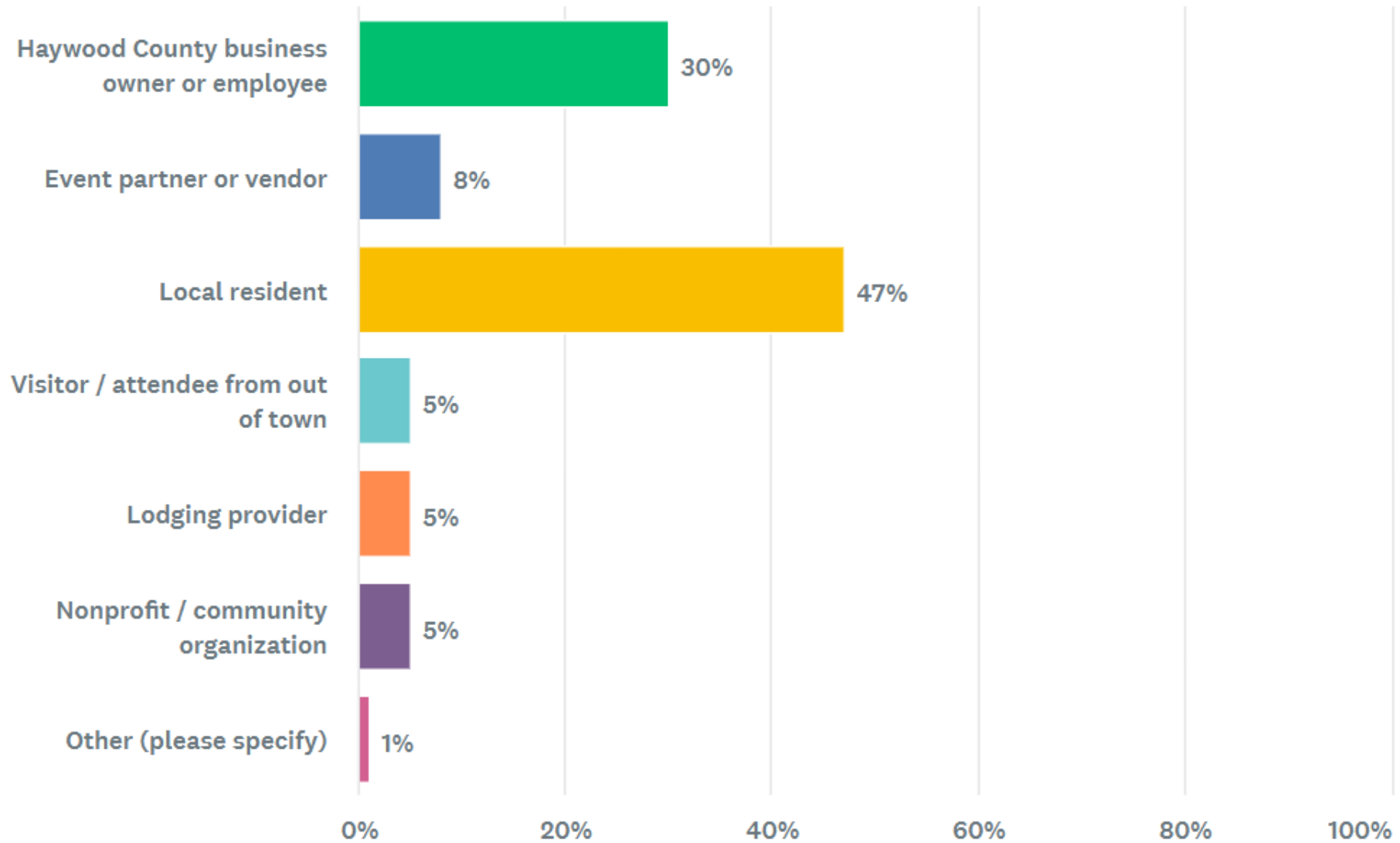


### Actual Revenues

Ice Extravaganza Tickets	\$0
Vendor Fees	\$100
Merchandise Sales	\$500
Sculpture Sponsors	\$10,000
<b>Total</b>	<b>\$10,600</b>



# 2026 Expenses & Revenues



*How were you involved in Ice Fest Weekend 2026? Select the most relevant answer.*

# Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses

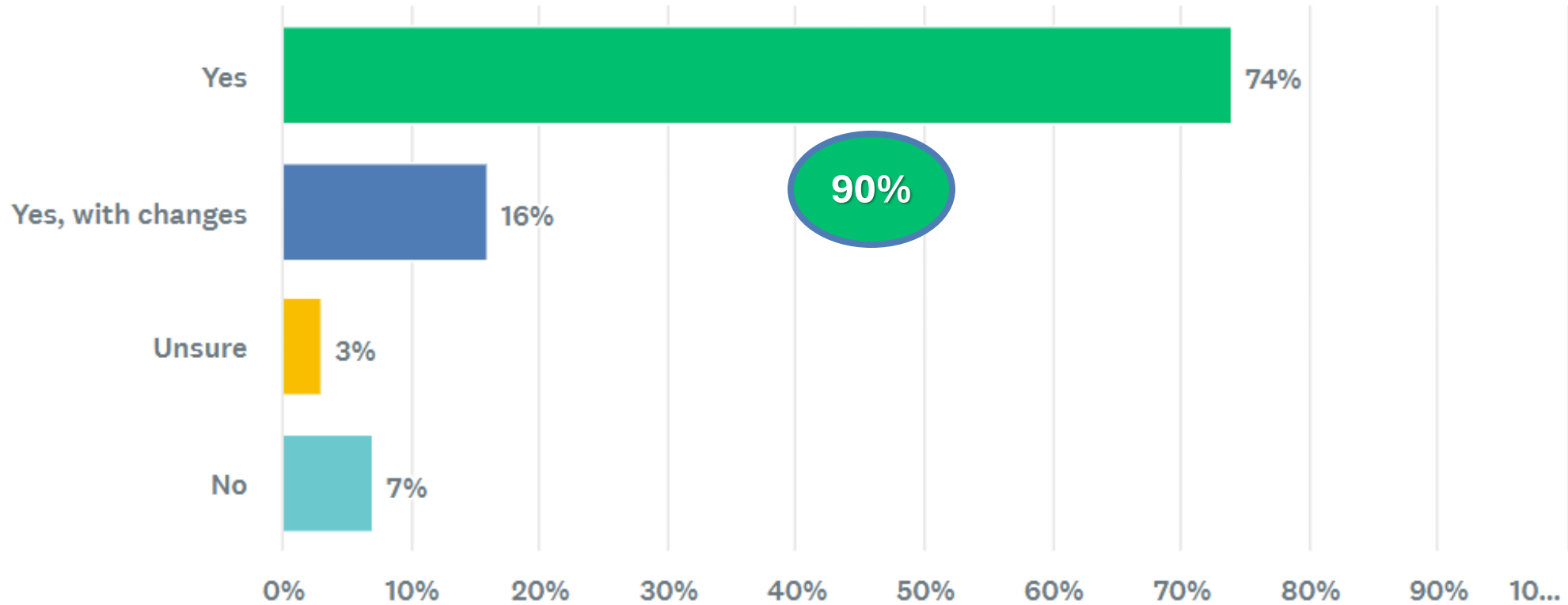




*With 1 being not important at all and 5 being extremely important, how important do you feel Ice Fest Weekend is to supporting Haywood County during the winter season?*

**Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses**

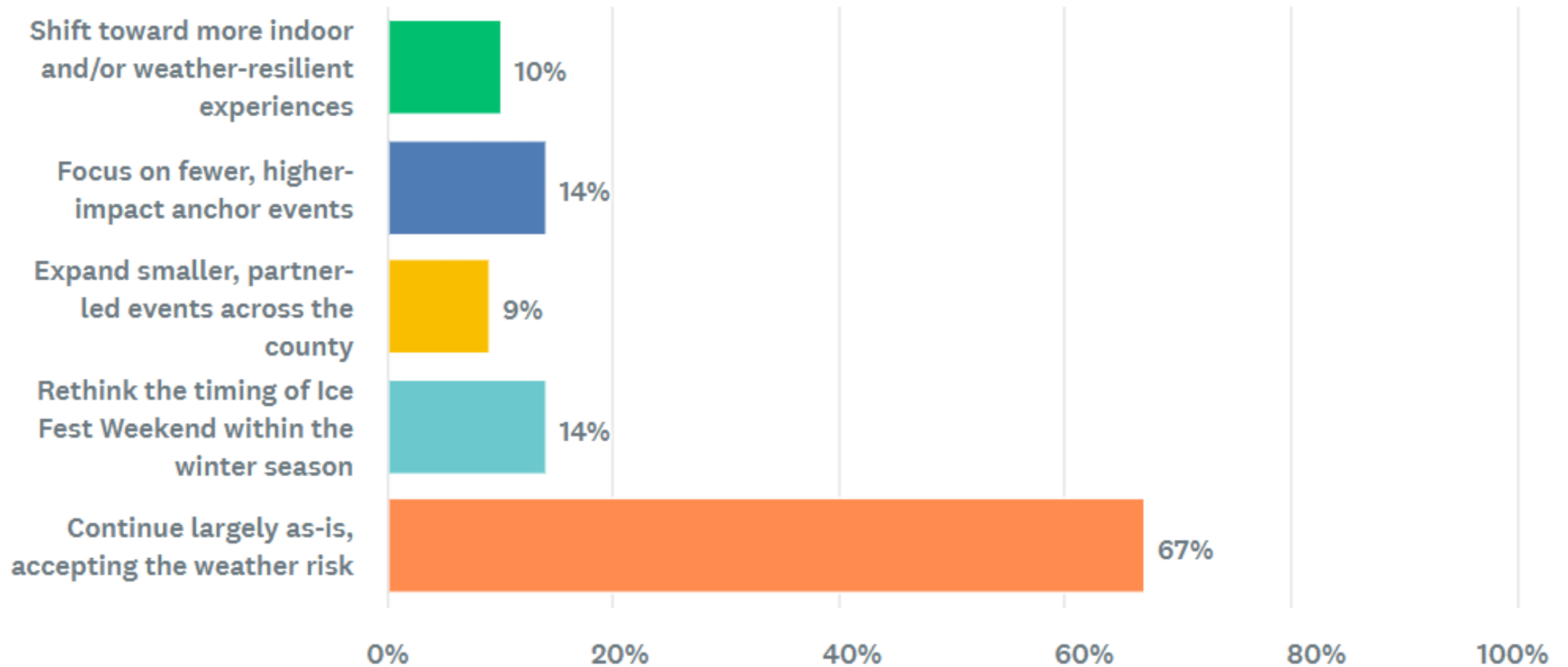




*Would you support Ice Fest continuing even if weather disruptions remain a possibility?*

# Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses





*Looking ahead, which overall direction do you think Ice Fest Weekend should move in?  
Select all that apply.*

# Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses



## **DATES/TIMING**

Adjust timing of the event within winter (earlier, later, modify specific start times).

Consider expanding beyond a single weekend format.

## **FINANCIAL**

Increase ROI by investing in longer-lasting, weatherproof event features.

Maintain affordability and a family-friendly focus.

## **GENERAL/OVERALL COMMENTS**

Overall feedback was very positive, with many respondents describing Ice Fest as well planned, well executed, and the best version yet, encouraging organizers to continue the event while building on its unique ice-focused elements.

## **EVENT ELEMENTS**

### **Keep activities concentrated in a walkable downtown setting:**

Many respondents preferred centralized downtown events (especially Waynesville) over dispersed locations or the festival grounds.

### **Expand interactive elements and entertainment:**

Requests included more vendors, performers, musicians, and activities for families.

### **Retain and expand popular features:**

Warming stations, fire pits, and courthouse ice sculptures were frequently praised and recommended to continue.

*OPEN-ENDED SUMMARY: What is the single most important improvement or change you would recommend as we plan for 2027?*

# Post-Event Survey: 87 Responses



# Planning for 2027



# Innovative Ideas for 2027



Canton: "Anything But Snow"  
Snowman Contest



Maggie Valley: Life-Sized  
Snow Globe Trail



Clyde: Ice Lantern Trail



# Innovative Ideas for 2027



Lake Junaluska: Ice  
Light Garden



Waynesville: Ice Block Party on  
Saturday with slightly extended hours



# 2027 Ice Fest Weekend: January 28-31, 2027

Requesting approval to spend up to \$155,000 on event production, advertising, and other expenses for FY 26/27



2027 Ice Festival Preliminary Budget





— VISIT —  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

Staff Reports

# Visit NC Conference

Ashley, Alycin, & Amie attended the Visit NC Tourism Conference last week in Asheville.

## Highlights:

- Amie connected with 4 journalists during the Media Marketplace.
- The team gained insight into emerging content trends like the return of longer form content, how to future-proof content for the age of AI, and Taming the Octopus.
- Heard from the Governor about recovery efforts in WNC.



# 2026 T-Shirt Contest

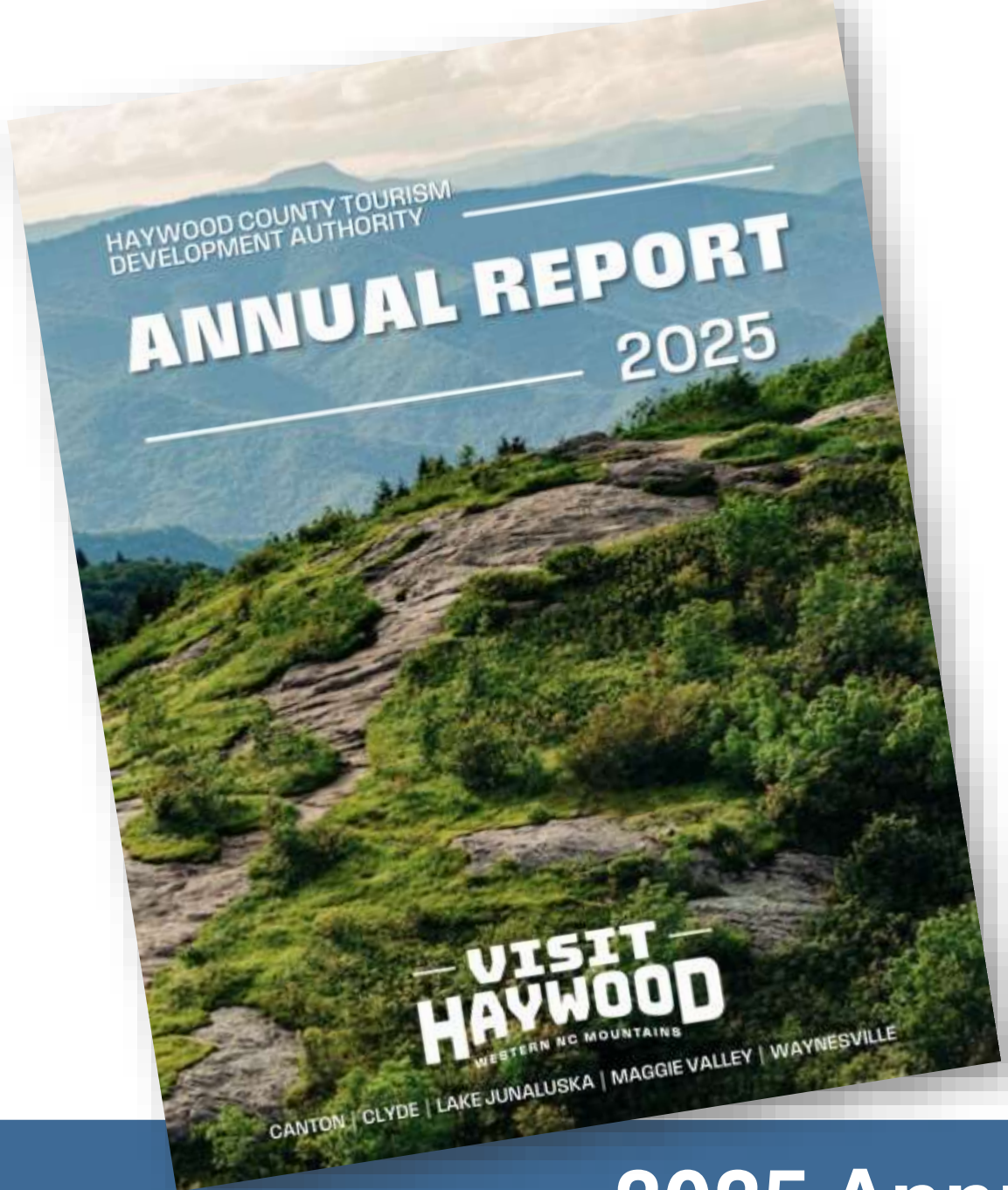
- 12 eligible submissions from 8 local artists
- 1<sup>st</sup> round of voting open March 27-April 22! Cast your vote at:  
[VisitHaywood.com/TShirt-Contest](http://VisitHaywood.com/TShirt-Contest)



HAYWOOD  
North Carolina



HAYWOOD COUNTY NC  
2026



The 2025 Annual Report showcases the measurable impact of HCTDA’s work—from increased visitation and economic growth to strategic initiatives that support Haywood County’s long-term tourism success.

# 2025 Annual Report



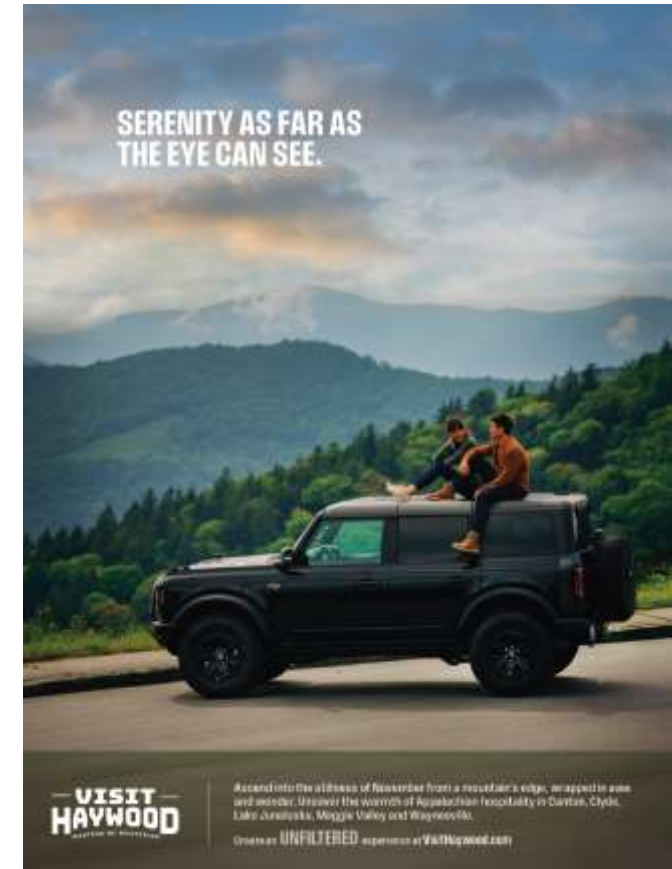
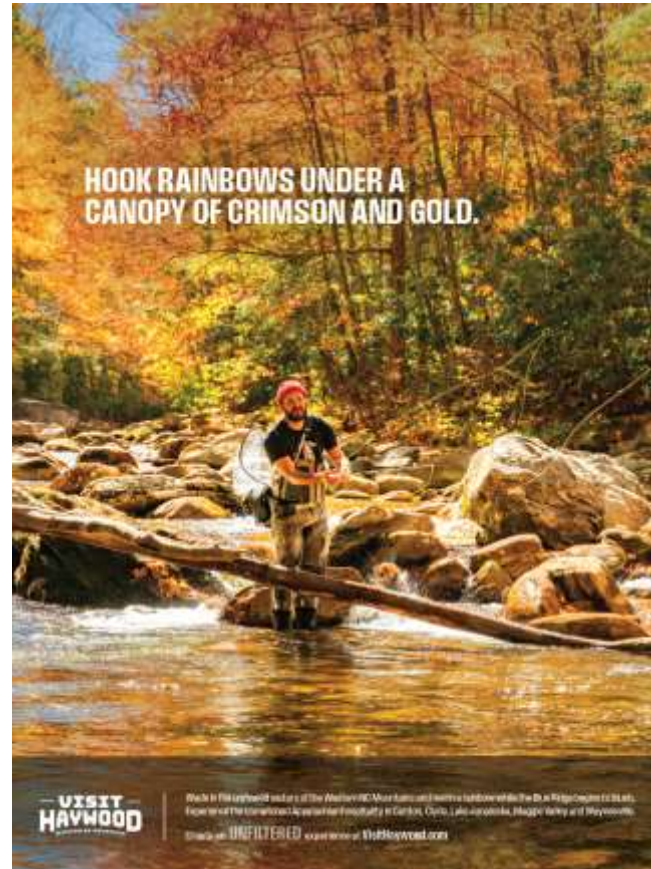


Capital Region Advertising Federation

# American Advertising Awards

## Gold Award

- Cross-platform Integrated Campaign: Regional/National TV/Print/Digital Display/Internet



# American Advertising Awards

## Gold Award AND Best of Show

- Film/Video/TV Regional/National 2:00 Commercial



# American Advertising Awards

## Judges Comments





**MOUNTAIN  
MORNINGS**

**NEXT MOUNTAIN MORNINGS:  
May 7 | The Warren Center, Lake Junaluska | 8:30AM**



**— VISIT —**  
**HAYWOOD**  
WESTERN NC MOUNTAINS

**Next TDA Board Meeting:  
Wednesday April 22, 2026**