



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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**HAYWOOD COUNTY TDA REINVESTS TOURISM DOLLARS INTO
EVENT PROMOTION AND CAPITAL IMPROVEMENTS**

The HCTDA commits to funding \$693,481.17 to 21 projects and annual events following a comprehensive review process, supporting initiatives that benefit both residents and visitors.

HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C. (May 28, 2026) – The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA) has completed its FY26–27 tourism grant cycle, committing to award funding to projects and events that strengthen Haywood County’s visitor economy and enhance quality of life for residents.

The multi-month grant review process included updated application guidelines, new one-on-one coaching sessions, detailed staff review and technical assistance, and independent evaluation by the HCTDA Product Development Committee. Applications were assessed based on tourism impact, overnight visitation potential, alignment with the Destination Master Plan, and broader economic and community benefits. Final funding recommendations were presented to the Executive Committee and approved by the HCTDA Board of Directors during its May 27 meeting.

A total of five capital improvement projects are slated to receive funding totaling \$532,028.17 to support recreation access, tourism infrastructure, historic preservation, and community enhancements across Haywood County. Projects include:

- The Clyde Riverfront Park pavilion and Hellbender Trail connection
- Modernization upgrades to the historic Stuart Auditorium at Lake Junaluska
- The Boyd Avenue Greenway Connector, linking key recreation areas in Waynesville
- Kiwanis Playground 2.0 Enhancement, featuring upgraded accessible play equipment at Waynesville Recreation Park
- The Upper Falls Connector Trail project at Graveyard Fields, expanding trail access and recreation opportunities while supporting broader restoration efforts

In addition, the HCTDA awarded funding totaling \$161,453 to support 16 promotional and legacy event-related projects. These investments help market long-standing events as well as new and innovative experiences that position Haywood County as a premiere visitor destination and contribute to a vibrant community for residents.



A full list of awarded grants is available at haywoodtda.com/awarded-grants.

“These investments reflect the HCTDA’s continued commitment to reinvesting tourism dollars into projects and experiences that strengthen our communities, support local businesses, and enhance the visitor experience across all of Haywood County,” said Corrina Ruffieux, HCTDA Executive Director.

To learn more about the HCTDA grants program, visit haywoodtda.com/grants.

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A photo gallery can be found [here](#). Please credit all images to Visit Haywood.

About Haywood County TDA

The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority (HCTDA), operating as Visit Haywood, is a public authority established by enabling legislation at the state level and created to manage the proceeds of a 4% occupancy tax paid by visitors spending the night in paid accommodations throughout the county. The HCTDA drives county-wide economic development and supports hundreds of local small businesses by promoting travel, tourism and visitor services, sponsoring tourism-related events, and financing tourism-related capital projects that both make the destination more appealing to visitors and enhance our community for locals.