WESTERN CAROLINA UNIVERSITY

Trends and Tourism in the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

GATHER 'ROUND THE BLUE RIDGE

10TH ANNIVERSARY

BLUERIDGE

NATIONAL HERITAGE AREA

MAKING A DIFFERENCE TOGETHER

Thank You for Inviting Me!

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Presentation Agenda – 3 Topics

1. Flashback 10 Years Ago to 2003

2. Regional Western NC tourism economic impacts & new partnerships and initiatives

3. Tourism creates a higher quality of life & attracts businesses for more Econ Development

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1. Flashback 10 Years Ago to 2003

2.

3.

Happy 10 Year Anniversary of the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area

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Remember 2003?

Flashback

10 Years ago

Do you remember 2003?

Prices in 2003

- 37¢ Postage Stamp
- $1.75 gallon of gas
- $2.75 gallon of milk
- 99¢ loaf of bread
- $2.75 1 lb. of coffee
- $3.97 per lb. Rib-eye steak

Other Events in 2003

- Saddam Hussein captured
- Martha Stewart indicted
- Bob Hope died
- California Gov. Gray Davis recalled, Arnold Swarzeneggar becomes Gov.

2003 – SARS swept across the Globe

Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome

Space Shuttle Columbia disintegrated on re-entry killing 7 U.S. Astronauts

Clay Aiken places second behind Ruben Studdard in American Idol Year 2 in 2003

Top 3 Country/Western Hits 2003

1) 19 Somethin' - Mark Wills

2) Beer For My Horses - Toby Keith/Willie Nelson

3) It's 5 O'Clock Somewhere - Alan Jackson & Jimmy Buffett

And in November 2003, the Blue Ridge National Heritage Area was formed

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Great Regional Partners

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Advantage West 23 County Economic Development Region

Tourism's Economic Significance in the 23 County Advantage West Economic Development Region, 2012

Tourist Spending	$2.71 Billion
Jobs Created	27,110 jobs
Worker Paychecks	$523.62 million
State Taxes	$134.66 million
Local County Taxes	$106.08 million

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties, 2012"

About 1 out of every 4 jobs (or about 27%) in Jackson Co. are in the hospitality and tourism industry

Source: U.S. Dept. of Labor, Bureau of Labor Statistics

Tourism jobs will
<u>NEVER</u>
be exported to another country

Fastest Growing Tourism Regions by Spending in NC, 2012 over 2011

Carolinas (Charlotte area)	**+ 6.5%**
Southeast (Brunswick Co. & Wilmington)	**+ 5.5%**
Western (Murphy to Asheville to Boone)	**+ 5.3%**
Research Triangle (Raleigh – Durham)	**+ 5.0%**
Northeast (Elizabeth City to Outer Banks)	**+ 5.0%**
Piedmont Triad (Greensboro area)	**+ 4.8%**
Eastern (Greenville & Rocky Mount)	**+ 3.2%**

Source: NC Division of Tourism & U.S. Travel Association's Report "The Economic Impact of Travel on NC Counties, 2012"

New & Emerging Heritage Tourism Initiatives by the Blue Ridge NHA

- Blue Ridge Music Trails
  - Partner with Blue Ridge NHA & NC Arts Council
- Yadkin Valley Heritage Corridor
- Catawba Meadows Archaeological Interpretive Center (Burke Co.)
  - with Explore Joara Foundation

New & Emerging Heritage Tourism Initiatives by the Blue Ridge NHA

- **Tuckaseegee River Corridor Initative (Jackson Co.)**
  - Cullowhee Revitalization Group
- **Earl Scruggs Center (Cleveland Co.)**
  - Destination Cleveland Co.
- **Bechtler House & Mint Site / NC Gold Trail**
  - Rutherford Co. tourism groups

New & Emerging Heritage Tourism Initiatives by the Blue Ridge NHA

- Macon Co. Heritage Center
  - Macon Co. & Cowee Community dev.
- Appalachian Women's Museum
  - Jackson Co. & Town of Dillsboro
- Rural Life Museum (reopened in 2013)
  - Madison Co. & Mars Hill University
- NC Smokies Blueway Trail
  - Smoky Mountain Host

New & Emerging Heritage Tourism Initiatives by the Blue Ridge NHA

- **Western North Carolina Cheese Trail**
  - **with WNC Cheese Trail non-profit group**
- **Farm-to-Table experiences & eateries**
- **Increasing number of Craft breweries & brew pubs**

Presentation Agenda – 3 Topics

1.

2.

3. Tourism creates a higher quality of life & attracts businesses for more Econ Development

Does tourism have a role helping create quality jobs in Western North Carolina?

Tomorrow's High Quality Workforce:

North Carolina's "Creative Class" of workers

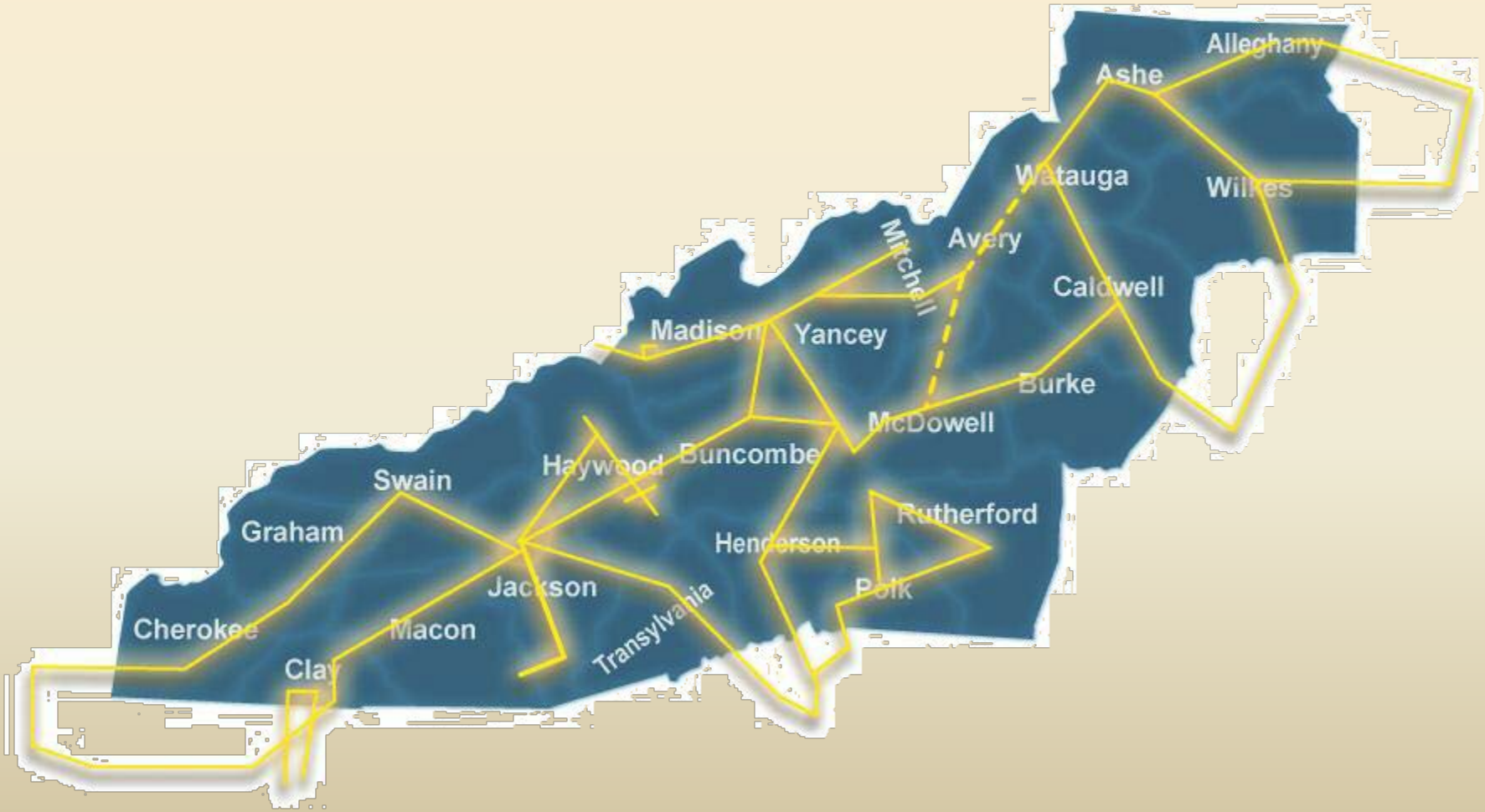
North Carolina's next
creative class of innovators
& entrepreneurs

Who are the new creative class of workers?

- ✓Technology Professionals
- ✓Arts & Culture Experts
- ✓Managerial & Analytical
- ✓Education & Training Professionals

Some future workers will be able to work from nearly ….. Anywhere

Broad Band internet access readily available across Western North Carolina



Future workers will have a choice of locations to work from

Towns and communities like Sylva, or Boone and others in western NC

Measures of "Quality of Life" attracting next generation of innovators & entrepreneurs

Last 30 years Quality of Life

- Low Home Prices
- Good Schools
- Low Tax Rates
- Low Crime Rate
- Available Transp

+ Plus

+ Plus

+ Plus

Next 30 years Quality of Life

- Diverse Cultures
- Natural Resources
- Sense of Community
- Open Space & Greenways
- Local Unique Flavor

The next generation of creative class workers and entrepreneurs are attracted to locations that offer:

(the same characteristics that make a great tourism destination)

- Music
- Arts
- History & Heritage
- Nature & Outdoors
- Shopping
- Agri-tourism
- Food
- Attractions
- Sports & Recreation

In closing - Main Message is a Perfect Fit Tourism Dev. & Blue Ridge NHA For North Carolina & VA

In summary – 3 Topics Takeaways

1. Flashback 10 Years Ago to 2003

2. Regional Western NC tourism economic impacts & new partnerships and initiatives

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