

HEART OF

# BREVARD

BREVDNC.ORG



Loretta  
Mary  
Hiken

# 2024

## ANNUAL REPORT

CELEBRATING PROGRESS AND PARTNERSHIP

# FROM THE HEART

**EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR**  
Nicole Bentley

**EVENTS & VOLUNTEER MANAGER**  
Michele Izzarone

**EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE**  
Billy Parrish, President  
*Resident*

Adam Perkins, Vice President  
*DD Bullwinkel's Outdoors*

Shelia Carland, Vice President  
*Comporium*

Taylor Singer, Secretary  
*Heart of Brevard Resident*

Anna Davis, Treasurer  
*PLATT*

**OTHER ELECTED MEMBERS**

Victor Gomez-Flores, *Quixote Fine Cuisine*

Emrie Carlton Jackson, *Territory Brevard*

Doug Miller, *Newfound Artisan*

Paul Wilander, *Looking Glass Realty*

**APPOINTED DIRECTORS**

Maureen Copelof, Mayor  
*City of Brevard*

Nory LeBrun,  
*Transylvania County Representative, TwoBlueRhino*

Tamika Hunter,  
*Transylvania Chamber of Commerce Representative*



## WELCOME TO DOWNTOWN

This year, Heart of Brevard has been all about progress, growth, and the power of partnership. Our 2024 Annual Report is a celebration of the strides we've made together—a testament to what's possible when a community comes together with shared purpose and determination.

Downtown Brevard is so much more than a collection of buildings or a destination on a map—it's the heart of our community. It's where stories are told, dreams are realized, and neighbors gather. It's where history and innovation intertwine, creating a place that's as unique as it is welcoming. We believe that a thriving downtown is essential to the well-being of our entire community, and every step we take is in service of that belief. This spirit of inclusion and connection makes downtown Brevard not just a place to visit, but a place to belong.

We moved into a new office suited to our expanding work and deepened partnerships with the City of Brevard, officials, and downtown stakeholders to enhance public spaces, support local businesses, and keep downtown thriving. This year, we've grown stronger and more connected as an organization.

We made meaningful progress on several long-term projects, including the Loretta Mary Aiken Mural, a part of the NC Music Mural Project, which beautifully blends history and art. The Public Art Process is setting the stage for future creative projects. During the Times Arcade Alley Stormwater Project, we worked closely with businesses and city planners, ensuring these crucial infrastructure improvements kept downtown accessible and welcoming.

In 2024, our community demonstrated incredible resilience. After Hurricane Helene, we served on the Transylvania Tomorrow Task Force, raising over \$420,000 to support small businesses. Halloweenfest took on a new dimension with a community concert, which raised critical funds and reinforced the connections that drive us forward.


Our efforts to support businesses have never been stronger. We updated our Shopping and Dining Guide, improved signage, and developed vendor maps for events. The launch of the Social District in February added vibrancy to downtown, creating more opportunities for connection.

Our events, including the 20th Anniversary White Squirrel Weekend and Halloweenfest, drew record crowds, energized the local economy, and brought joy to thousands. These events define our downtown and strengthen community bonds.

We are grateful for the partnerships that made 2024 possible. Sponsors, volunteers, local leaders, and supporters helped us achieve so much. Together, we've shown that downtown Brevard isn't just the heart of our community—it's the soul of what makes Brevard extraordinary.

Here's to more growth, more connection, and more reasons to celebrate in the year ahead.

Sincerely,

  
J. NICOLE BENTLEY, Executive Director

## OUR MISSION + VISION

Heart of Brevard is creating a gathering space for the community, strengthening the economic vitality of the downtown Brevard district and preserving and sustaining our rich heritage.

Historic Downtown Brevard, cradled by the Pisgah National Forest, is the safe, walkable center of our community. Lined with diverse independent businesses, downtown serves as the cross-roads to exceptional outdoor recreation and is a thriving hub for the arts.

# PILLARS OF EXCELLENCE

Brevard's downtown is our community's main economic, cultural, political, and social center. Sustaining a safe and attractive downtown allows hundreds of small, independent businesses to flourish, important government transactions to take place, art and music events to thrive, and a healthy lifestyle to be encouraged. At Heart of Brevard, we center our work around 4 core pillars:

- 1** DOWNTOWN IS A PLACE FOR COMMUNITY
- 2** DOWNTOWN IS AN OUTDOOR HUB
- 3** DOWNTOWN IS A HUB FOR THE ARTS
- 4** DOWNTOWN IS ANCHORED BY INDEPENDENT BUSINESSES



1



2



3



4



2024

# ECONOMIC IMPACT

# \$6,047,190

TOTAL PUBLIC & PRIVATE INVESTMENT



NOTABLE

# PROJECTS

## OPERATIONAL IMPROVEMENTS

- ♥ Celebrated our **30th Anniversary Year** as a Designated North Carolina Main Street Organization.
- ♥ Secured a **New Office Space** to support the organization's growth and operational needs.
- ♥ Strengthened **collaboration with City of Brevard staff, elected officials, utility partners, and downtown stakeholders** to advance our shared mission and support downtown.



## DESIGN + INFRASTRUCTURE

- ♥ Facilitated the completion of the **Loretta Mary Aiken Mural**, highlighting local history as part of the NC Music Mural Project.
- ♥ Completed our **3rd Annual Walkable Center Assessment** and presented to council resulting in \$30,000 in funds for addressing the safety and infrastructure improvements in the HOB district.
- ♥ Collaborated with the City of Brevard and other stakeholders to establish a **Public Art Process** to guide future projects on public property.
- ♥ Served as liaison to downtown business owners during the **Times Arcade Alley Stormwater Project** enhancing downtown accessibility and aesthetics.



## BUSINESS SUPPORT + VISITOR ENGAGEMENT

- ♥ Since its launch in April 2024, the **Social District**, with 27 participating businesses, has generated an estimated economic impact of \$127,500 from approximately 19,500 stickered beverages sold (\$97,500) and 6,000 beverages sold during White Squirrel Weekend (\$30,000).
- ♥ Published an updated **Shopping and Dining Guide** to showcase downtown businesses and improve the visitor experience.
- ♥ Created **downtown signage** to aid navigation and promote key destinations.



## HURRICANE HELENE RESPONSE + RECOVERY

- ♥ In response to the catastrophic impacts of Hurricane Helene, Transylvania Business Support Task Force has relaunched the **Transylvania Tomorrow Small Business Emergency Relief Fund** (Transylvania Tomorrow) to support the small business community in Transylvania County, NC.
- ♥ Partnered with the Transylvania Tomorrow Task Force to **raise over \$400k, supporting 58 businesses** through grants in Transylvania County.
- ♥ Organized a **Community Benefit Concert** in conjunction with Halloweenfest to raise funds and unite the community.



# MAIN STREET IMPACT

NC Main Street is part of the Main Street America™ network, which helps communities strengthen their downtowns. It works with over 40 Coordinating Programs and 1,200 communities across the country to boost local economies and preserve historic areas through preservation-based economic development.

## THE RESULTS ARE IN...

Each year in July, North Carolina Main Street communities report the impact of their work to the North Carolina Department of Commerce. Main Street is the most impactful downtown economic development program in the state of North Carolina.



THE IMPACT OF

## MAIN ST. 2024



# EVENTS

Heart of Brevard drives the vitality of our downtown community through innovative marketing and dynamic events. By celebrating the unique character of the district, we create opportunities that engage residents, visitors, and local businesses. Our signature events attract thousands each year, boosting foot traffic and revenue for downtown merchants, restaurants, and service providers. These gatherings foster connections and position downtown Brevard as a vibrant destination for shopping, dining, and cultural experiences.

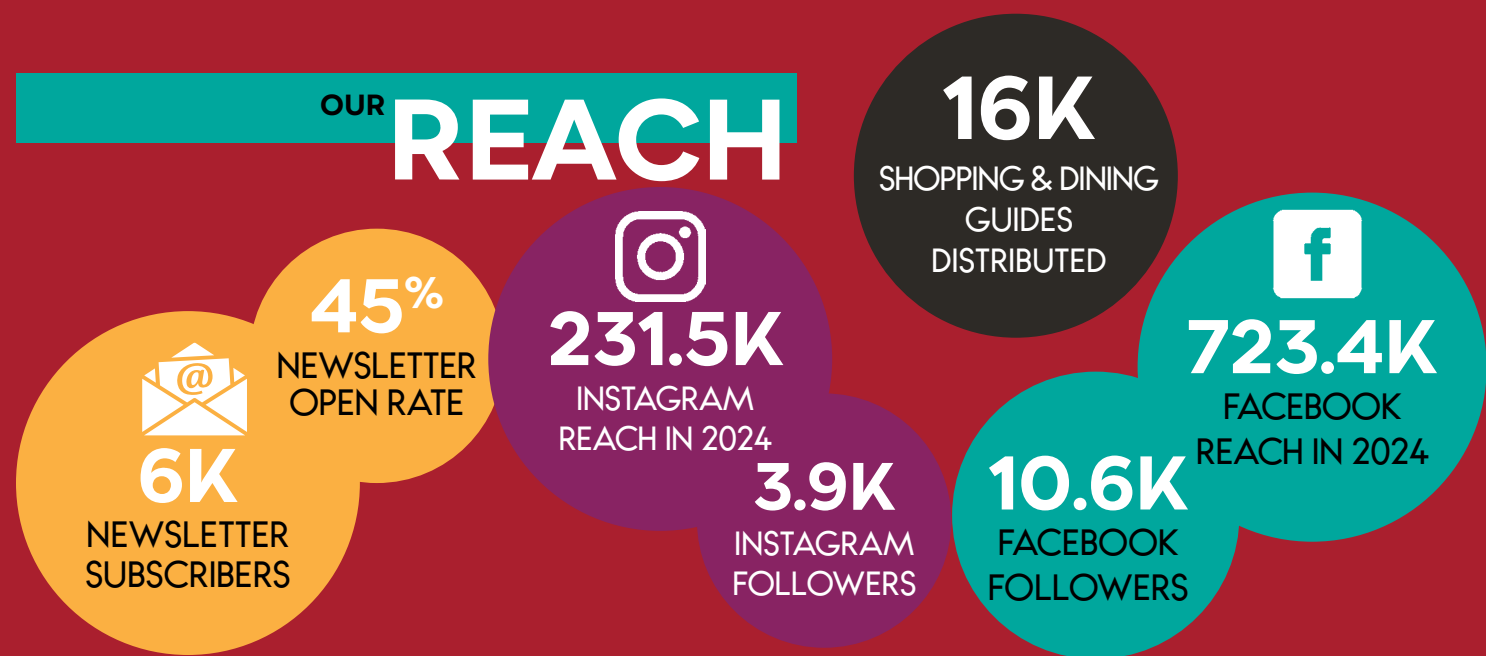


DOWNTOWN

# MARKETING

Heart of Brevard helps make downtown Brevard a vibrant and welcoming place. We support local businesses through marketing and promotions, host events that bring people together, and showcase what makes our community special. Our goal is to create a downtown where everyone—residents, visitors, and business owners—feel connected and inspired.

## OUR REACH



WHITE SQUIRREL WEEKEND  
**20<sup>TH</sup>**  
ANNIVERSARY



**75K**  
EVENT ATTENDEES

OPEN

**25**  
PLEIN AIR ARTISTS

**2024**  
FEATURED ARTIST:  
KYLE BUCKLAND



**6K**  
HOLIDAY WINDOWS VISITORS

**410**  
PEOPLE'S CHOICE HOLIDAY WINDOW AWARD VOTERS

# VOLUNTEERS AT WORK

Our volunteers are at the HEART of our organization! We rely on them to help us produce fun and meaningful events for our community. It provides a great way for our supporters to get involved. They help us make friends and meet new people and it helps us accomplish the myriad of tasks needed to create and execute community events and various other initiatives by Heart of Brevard.

**18**

VOLUNTEER EVENTS

**306**

TOTAL VOLUNTEERS

**2,269**

TOTAL NUMBER  
OF VOLUNTEER HOURS

INTERESTED IN  
VOLUNTEERING?



SCAN ME



**\$71,791.16**

TOTAL FINANCIAL  
VOLUNTEER VALUE



# COMMUNITY SUPPORT

Transylvania Tomorrow was founded in response to the COVID-19 pandemic as a disaster relief initiative aimed at supporting small businesses in Transylvania County during times of crisis. Led by the Transylvania Business Support Task Force, which includes the Brevard/Transylvania Chamber of Commerce, Heart of Brevard, Transylvania Economic Alliance, Transylvania County Tourism Development Authority, and Blue Ridge Community College Small Business Center, this fund focuses on collaborating to aid local businesses. Coordinated through the Community Focus Foundation, a 501(c)(3) nonprofit, this collective partnership amplifies our collective impact, combining resources and expertise to address challenges more effectively. By working together, we create stronger, more resilient communities where shared goals drive meaningful change.

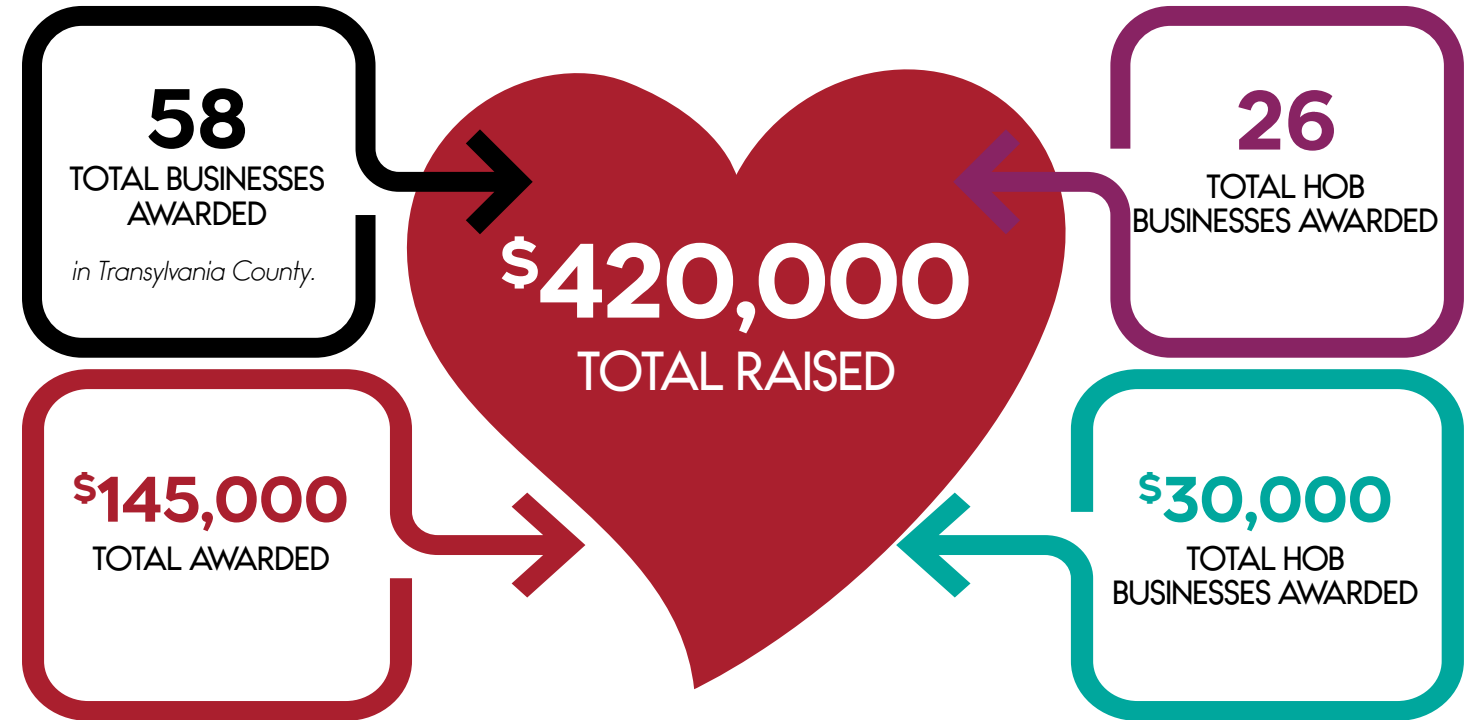
*"We, at Pitch Pine Farm are honored and thrilled to be selected for the grant. This funding brings us relief knowing that we can purchase supplies needed to get back to what we love doing – growing food for our community."*

PAIGE WITHERINGTON &  
JUSTIN DANSBY  
Owners of Pitch Pine Farm



TRANSYLVANIA TOMORROW

# IMPACT



BENEFIT

# CONCERT

To support this effort, Heart of Brevard produced a free Community Benefit Concert featuring The Steep Canyon Rangers and The Travis Book Band, with the goal of raising \$500K for the Transylvania Tomorrow Hurricane Relief Fund. The concert united our community and provided crucial support to those affected by the crisis.





# PARTNERS & SPONSORS

Our sponsors and community partners are crucial to the future of a vibrant and thriving downtown Brevard. Financial support from our sponsors helps fund our signature events and annual initiatives to engage the community and support local businesses. Being a downtown sponsor is a great way to promote your business at fun, family-friendly community events while helping draw attention to our downtown revitalization efforts.



## THANK YOU

TO ALL OUR SPONSORS & PARTNERS

- |                                |                                      |                               |  |
|--------------------------------|--------------------------------------|-------------------------------|--|
| 185 KING STREET/<br>NOBLEBRAU  | COMPORIUM                            | MAY<br>COLLABORATIVE          | SOUTHERN QUALITY<br>COMPANY                                |
| ADVANCED BUSINESS<br>EQUIPMENT | CONNESTTEE FALLS<br>REALTY           | MERCY URGENT<br>CARE          | TERRITORY  |
| BATH FITTER                    | DD BULLWINKEL'S                      | NATIVE SPIRITS                | THEOPHILUS   |
| BILTMORE CHURCH                | FIRST CITIZENS BANK                  | NEWFOUND<br>ARTISAN           | THE UPS STORE  |
| BLUE RIDGE<br>ORTHODONTIC      | FISHER REALTY                        | OSKAR BLUES<br>BREWING        | TRANSYLVANIA<br>COMMUNITY ARTS<br>COUNCIL                  |
| BREVARD BREWING<br>COMPANY     | GAIA HERBS                           | PLATT                         | TRANSYLVANIA<br>COUNTY                                     |
| BREVARD CLAY                   | HARPER<br>CONSTRUCTION               | PLATT HOME                    | TRANSYLVANIA<br>COUNTY TOURISM<br>DEVELOPMENT<br>AUTHORITY |
| BREVARD<br>INSURANCE           | JOE CHAPMAN<br>ROOFING               | RAE + IVY                     | TY HENDRIX<br>FINANCIAL<br>INVESTMENTS                     |
| BREVARD PIZZA<br>WORKS         | KUDZU BRANDS                         | RENEWAL<br>BY ANDERSON        | UNITED<br>COMMUNITY BANK                                   |
| BROAD STREET WINES             | LAND OF<br>WATERFALLS<br>CAMERA CLUB | ROCKY'S CORNER<br>MARKET      | WSQL   |
| CITY OF BREVARD                | LEAF GUARD                           | SHUTTERBUNNY<br>ART           |  |
| CANTEY<br>FOUNDATION           | LOCAL COLOR                          | SMALL AXE<br>CANNABIS COMPANY |  |
|                                | LOOKING GLASS<br>REALTY              |                               |  |

# OUR 2025 CALENDAR

Heart of Brevard sponsors special events, street festivals and promotional programs to encourage locals and visitors to the district and create a strong, positive image with the public. Our programs may range from large scale events, to self guided tours, to modest shop local promotional events and public relations efforts. We welcome you to head to the heart!



## MAY 23-25

**WHITE SQUIRREL WEEKEND**, Brevard's multi-day signature downtown event combines a stellar live music line-up with a wide variety of craft vendors and fun activities for the whole family.



## JULY 4

Celebrate Independence Day downtown at **SHINDIG ON MAIN!** Enjoy patriotic ceremonies, live music, and food. After sunset, watch Brevard's spectacular fireworks display right from Main Street.



## SEPT 8-13

Join dozens of artists at **BREVARD PLEIN AIR FESTIVAL**, a 5-day celebration of outdoor painting. Watch artists at work at this street festival and take home a painting that evokes the beauty of Brevard.



## OCT 25

There's no better place to enjoy Halloween than Transylvania County. Our **HALLOWEENFEST** features a Spooky Stroll, costume competition, parade, and downtown trick-or-treating.



## NOV 28 - DEC 31

As the holidays approach, downtown businesses in the Heart of Brevard decorate their windows with spectacular, eye-popping, and festive displays for all to enjoy in the **HOLIDAY WINDOWS COMPETITION**.



## DEC 6

**LIGHT UP THE NIGHT** is an event that immerses guests in an evening of wonder. The night is filled with live music, hayrides, food trucks, holiday downtown shopping, and the lighting of Brevard's Christmas Tree.

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## GET INVOLVED!



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