



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### Haywood County Tourism Marketing Recognized by U.S. Travel Association

**Maggie Valley, N.C. – August 17, 2018** – The Haywood County Tourism Development Authority is excited to announce that it was recognized as a Finalist for a [Destiny Award](#) from the U.S. Travel Association Destinations Council. [Haywood County](#) received the recognition for their “Hay Now” campaign in the category of Branding and Integrated Marketing Campaign: Destination Marketing Budget \$1 million to \$2.5 million. The campaign was developed and launched in 2017 in partnership with Crawford Strategy, a full-service marketing and communications agency in Greenville, S.C.

“It is a true honor to be recognized among so many top-notch competitors by the U.S. Travel Association,” said Lynn Collins, President of Haywood County TDA. “We are proud of the work the team has done to position Haywood County as a unique, fun and quirky destination. This campaign has been incredibly successful in bringing more visitors to the area and helping to drive economic benefit for our entire community.”

The “Hay Now” campaign was designed to capture the spirit of the destination: a mountain community with unique experiences at every turn and friendly faces ready to welcome visitors in. More than just a tagline or a punchline, Hay Now is an invitation for visitors to experience what makes Haywood, Haywood. The campaign included website content, digital advertising, print advertising and promotional items, including creative t-shirts sold at the Haywood County Visitor’s Center. This integrated strategy has led to an increase in organic traffic to the website of 105 percent over the previous year and, more importantly, an 11 percent increase in accommodations tax collection compared to last year.

This was the first time Haywood County has entered the ESTO Awards. Campaigns from across the country were honored at the 2018 ESTO Conference held August 11-14, 2018 in Phoenix, Ariz. Haywood County was a finalist in the category along with Wichita, Kan. and Buffalo, N.Y., who received the top prize. The Destiny Awards recognize U.S. Travel destination members for excellence and creative accomplishment in destination marketing and promotion at the local and regional level; and foster the development of imaginative and innovative destination marketing promotion programs and activities.

The ESTO Awards judging panel explained that the “Hay Now” campaign was named a finalist because they “...loved the idea of “Hay Now!” as a rallying cry for locals. [Haywood County] used smart, simple and creative tactics to promote their objectives. ‘Hay Now!’ was unique and own able.” The judges also loved the custom t-shirts and found the method of digital outreach incredibly compelling. They said the campaign was scalable in its content and delivered extraordinary numbers for the website.

“Our team is thrilled to see Haywood County receive the recognition it deserves,” said Andy Windham, SVP Director of Client Strategy for Crawford Strategy. “We love this community and know how special this area is. We are proud to help inspire new people to visit every day.”

This recognition comes on the heels of several other awards for the TDA's marketing efforts, specifically for the redesigned website that launched in Fall 2017. To date, the VisitNCsmokies.com website has received the following awards:

- **Gold Marcom Award** – [Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals \(AMCP\)](#)
- **Platinum AVA Digital Award** - [Association of Marketing and Communication Professionals \(AMCP\)](#)
- **Gold SIAAward** - [Service Industry Advertising Awards](#)
- **Silver ADDY** – American Advertising Federation of Greenville

### **About Haywood County TDA**

*Welcome to Haywood County, North Carolina, boasting 46 of the most scenic miles of the Blue Ridge Parkway and authentic Appalachian history, culture, and natural experiences. Along with its picturesque beauty, Haywood County and its five towns of Maggie Valley, Waynesville, Lake Junaluska, Canton and Clyde offer year round activities and events centered around farm-fresh food, unique heritage, an eclectic music and art scene, and of course, the wildly natural great outdoors. No matter what experience you choose, we guarantee that your stay here will stay with you! For more information visit [www.visitncsmokies.com](http://www.visitncsmokies.com) or contact the Haywood County Tourism Development Authority at 800-334-9036.*

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