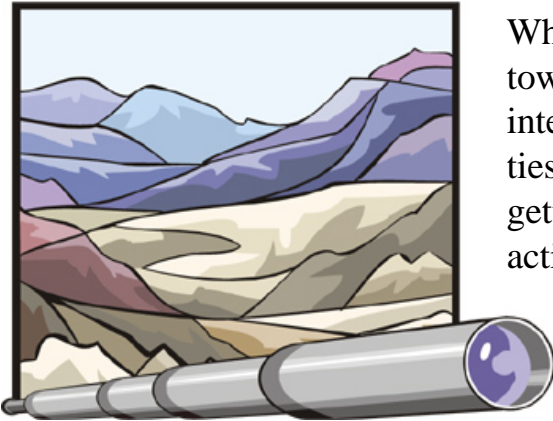


Vision Qualla

Planning Effort Identifies Promising Growth Options



What do the local tourism industry, Cherokee's downtown, trout fishing, Cherokee arts and crafts, broadband internet, small business development and career possibilities for local students all have in common? They are all getting a big lift because of Vision Qualla, a family of actions plans recently developed by a committee of people from the Qualla Boundary and surrounding region to speed desirable economic development and help create a better life for our community.

The committee, which was convened by Cherokee Preservation Foundation to help guide its grantmaking, included representatives from the EBCI Executive Branch and Tribal Council, Cherokee cultural organizations, hotels, retail establishments, tourism destinations, community groups, banks and regional organizations.

The group started with Cherokee values, believing that if the EBCI is to succeed in creating economic development that supports and nourishes traditional values, it must incorporate those values into the planning itself. Then they focused the Vision Qualla effort on identifying options that would bring both near-term results and long-term success.

The Vision Qualla committee determined that the growth possibilities that held the most promise are cultural tourism, downtown and retail revitalization, entrepreneurial and small business development, Cherokee arts promotion, trout fishing, a local knowledge-based industry, and student education development. Each of these areas has strong local assets in place, good growth potential, existing planning and development activities to build upon, a good fit with Cherokee culture and values, and potential funding sources.

An action plan has been developed for each of the seven areas, and now the hard work of implementing those plans is underway. Already, Cherokee Preservation Foundation has channelled \$5.8 million of funding

into initiatives that stem from the Vision Qualla planning effort, and many good things are happening as a result:

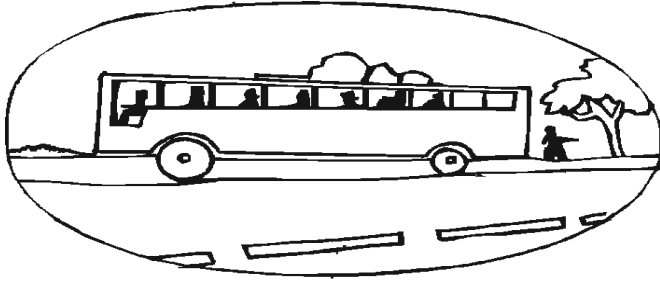
A \$2.3 million grant is helping fund revitalization of the downtown Cherokee, NC, business district, in part through placing funds in a low-interest, revolving Community Development Corporation loan fund available to business owners and operators so they can renovate the facades of their businesses in keeping with the EBCI's Downtown Business Master Plan. Grant funds are also being used to develop rock towers and green spaces that will enhance Cherokee's downtown.

A \$1.7 million grant is helping Cherokee Historical Association (CHA) increase attendance at the Oconaluftee Indian Village and *Unto these Hills* by marketing the attractions more aggressively, selling tickets online, and updating the attractions over the next two seasons.

A \$735,000 grant is supporting the second year of a major research, marketing and public relations campaign to increase attendance of family and heritage tourists at tourism venues and related businesses in Cherokee.



A nearly \$50,000 grant will enhance visitors' heritage tourism experience through the creation of pre-packaged and custom tour packages that combine cultural opportunities, guides and other resources. The idea is to give visitors such a great experience in Cherokee that they will come back again and again, and recommend Cherokee as a must-see destination to their friends.



A \$200,000 grant is enabling continuation of the Qualla Arts & Crafts Mutual's effort to enhance its capabilities through its new community outreach program and the development of craft demonstration sites outside Qualla A&C's building to educate visitors about the processes involved in producing Cherokee crafts.

A grant totaling nearly \$117,000 will fund the creation of murals and other artistic creations around downtown Cherokee. The work will be done by local artists and will showcase the EBCI's history during the period following the Trail of Tears up through the present day.

With the help of an \$80,000 grant from Cherokee Preservation Foundation, a new annual festival in Cherokee celebrates native North and South Americans. It is helping to draw more visitors to the region.

Vision Qualla Committee

The Vision Qualla committee created important, achievable action plans and made sure Vision Qualla incorporated community concerns, needs and interests. Members included Fred Alexander, Chrissy Arch, Davy Arch, Donna Ball, Jerry Boone, Brian Burgess, J.L. Burgess, Tommy Cabe, Mary Jane Ferguson, Trent Fouts, Bill Gibson, Leo James, Susan Jenkins, Marie Junaluska, Lumpy Lambert, Vicki Ledford, Betty Maney, Dave Matheson, Paxton Myers, Brenda Oocumma, Dorothy Posey, Dan Keith Ray, Ellison Rudd, Miranda Thompson and Merritt Youngdeer.

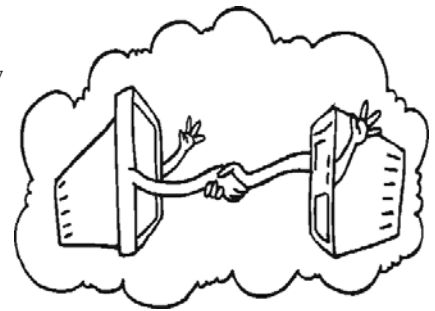


Efforts to support entrepreneurs and career-minded students are also in full gear:

Cherokee Preservation Foundation made a \$520,000 grant that will help enrolled members of the EBCI develop entrepreneurial skills and acquire financing to start a business or purchase one from an enrolled member, and then manage the business successfully over the long term. Most of this grant will be used to increase the Revolving Loan Fund administered by the Community Development Corporation in Cherokee.

A \$100,000 grant was made to establish a Tribal Internship Training Program that will enable Cherokee youth to see the expanding scope of professional services that are required by the Eastern Band, and then encourage students to become well educated and return to the Qualla Boundary to work after their college graduation.

A \$20,000 grant is helping existing knowledge industry businesses on the Qualla Boundary capitalize on the broadband internet access made possible by the new BalsamWest FiberNet system and encourage enrolled members to create knowledge businesses.



Thanks to Vision Qualla, a cohesive strategy and action plans that will have a long-term, positive impact on the culture and economy of the Qualla Boundary and the surrounding region are now in place. The good things that are beginning to happen will accelerate as a larger group of committed local and regional people convened by Cherokee Preservation Foundation embarks on the second phase of desirable economic development, one that focuses especially on creating a unique tourism position and unified marketing program that are based on—and then will further invigorate—the Eastern Band's strengths and assets. This newest phase is called Heart of Cherokee.

Cherokee Preservation Foundation was established in 2000 as part of the Second Amendment to the Tribal-State Compact between the EBCI and the State of North Carolina. It is an independent nonprofit foundation funded by the EBCI from the tribe's gaming revenues. Since the Foundation's inception, it has made 265 grants totaling more than \$17.8 million. It is a grantmaker, a convener, a partnership broker and a community builder.