



Prepared for New Hampshire  
Division of Travel of Tourism  
Development

## ***Irish health official boosts 'selfie seats'***

The “selfie” has become a staple in popular culture in recent years, and many travelers take advantage of it as a way to capture their journeys. There can be consequences though— dangerous consequences—to getting the perfect selfie.

Just last month, a college student lost his footing and fell to his death at the Cliffs of Moher while reportedly taking a selfie. Now, Ireland’s Department of Health is requesting the addition of “selfie seats” to tourist hotspots. Jim Daly, the Department’s Minister of State for Mental Health and Older People, pitched the idea to the National Tourism Development of Authority to Ireland. The seats would serve as a sturdy place for photographers to sit and safely capture a desirable selfie.

Daly said that the seats could be installed at all appropriate lookout points. In addition to preventing accidents, Daly said the selfie seat would be an “innovative marketing tool,” that would boost tourism.

**Source: fodors.com**



Explore Asheville

**Downtown Asheville, NC, could see further development via the new initiative.**

## **Tourism marketing organizations expand into economic development**

Tourism marketers are sometimes faced with tough questions from area governments and residents:

- Are the impacts of tourism on local infrastructure and quality of life worth it?
- Who decides how to spend the money raised by hotel/bed taxes?

DMOs and CVBs have found varying ways to respond to those questions.

In Asheville, NC, tourism officials are engaging the community to better manage tourism and plan investments for the next decade.

The **Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority** approved funding for a \$440,000 community engagement process.

It will be led by a committee composed of local residents and will feature a survey asking locals about

various tourism-related subjects. The project will be paid for with occupancy tax revenue.

The convention and visitor’s bureau has hired a St. Louis-based consulting firm to research and develop a list of priorities. Part of that will be a survey given to residents across the county, asking people their opinions on things like downtown sidewalks and tourist attractions.

“We’re cognizant of what’s been discussed in recent years about those issues, and, obviously, that will become part of what shapes this plan,” tourism consultant Mike Konzen said. “And when we think about infrastructure and involvement of the city of Asheville and other communities in Buncombe County and

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## Product development based on research and local needs

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the county itself and other entities, all of them can be participating in this in a way.”

“We want to build on BCTDA’s successful track record of developing community improvement projects that are enjoyed by our residents as well as visitors,” **Explore Asheville** President and CEO Stephanie Brown said in a news release. “This process is aimed at understanding the community’s capital needs, the impacts of tourism and local government project timelines to determine a set of strategic priorities and a plan for occupancy tax dedicated to capital projects.”

The destination management organization in Hamilton County, Ind., has a long track record investing in the community.

Since 2006, **Hamilton County Tourism** has redistributed almost \$10 million in community investments ranging from downtown amphitheaters to performing arts venues, attractions start-ups and research for feasibility and product development.

More recently, they have moved

toward a business intelligence pipeline model where they use research and technical assistance to support development opportunities that move through a pipeline from idea development to implementation. All products must meet the goals outlined in the HCT Vision 2025 plan.

Examples of programs in the pipeline now include a rebranding program for the facilities at the Hamilton County 4-H Fairgrounds, working with Visit Indy and the city of Indianapolis on a 58-mile White River Vision Plan, and a new Creative Economies initiative to support the three designated cultural arts districts in the county.

“We’ve long been believers in product development investments based on research, and we have research to prove that return on investment exists, even if it’s slow,” said HCT President and CEO Brenda Myers. “But never at the expense of marketing. To us, they are complementary strategies.”

In Arkansas, the first Ark Tank, a startup pitch competition developed by **Arkansas Tourism** in partnership with Innovate Arkansas at Winrock

International, was held recently during the 2019 Arkansas Governor’s Conference on Tourism.

The competition criteria required that the presenting companies be a tourism-related business, defined as one that directly interacts with tourists, deals with businesses that cater to tourists, encourages tourism in and travel to Arkansas, and/or supports tourism-related activities in Arkansas.

The winner was RaftUp, a destination management software for outdoor recreation businesses, and received a cash prize of \$5,000, a guarantee for mentorship, and ongoing advisement with Innovate Arkansas and the Arkansas Tourism research and development section.

“Ark Tank was a great addition to our conference this year. The buzz that has been created among our attendees proves that the entrepreneurial energy from the competitors encouraged new ideas and new ways of thinking about business,” Arkansas Tourism Director Jim Dailey said in a news release.

**Sources: Travel News Daily, WLOS.com, www.hotsr.com**

Wonka Walk volunteer Wendy Bayes (right) greets some Oompa Loompas in Fayetteville, W.Va.



Brad Davis/The Register-Herald

### CVB cooks up sweet promotion idea

Tourism and city officials in Fayetteville, W.Va., channeled their inner Oompa Loompa with their first Wonka Walk in February.

Mary Ann Roberts, a board member for the Fayetteville Convention & Visitors Bureau, said the idea was mostly based on the fact people just

love a good, sweet treat.

“We get a lot of people from out of town to come to visit Fayetteville, so they’re always coming up with fun stuff for those who are visiting, and of course for those who live here too,” said participating business owner Kim Donch.

**Source: The Register-Herald**