



NEWS RELEASE: FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Jackson County Tourism Development Authority's Nick Breedlove Wins Young Professionals Rising Star Award

Whitehall, MI – The Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) is excited to reveal the winner of this year's Young Professionals Rising Star Award, Nick Breedlove. The award seeks to recognize a young professional (age 35 or under) in the travel and tourism sector for the individual's commitment to increasing his or her expertise in the industry, demonstration of leadership abilities, and outstanding accomplishments that have added value to travel and tourism. Eligible recipients for the award must be nominated by a current TTRA member or member organization and have worked in the travel and tourism industry for at least one year.



The award was presented to Nick at the Marketing Outlook Forum (MOF) on October 24 by the MOF Awards Committee Chair Dee Ann McKinney and MOF Chair Sheila Flanagan. In addition to complimentary registration to attend MOF and a one-year Premier TTRA membership, Nick received a plaque for the honor.

Nick previously served as Mayor of Webster, North Carolina, while also working as a reporter for the local newspaper. In 2015, following his diverse, non-tourism professional history, Nick stepped into his current role as the Executive Director of the Jackson County Tourism Development Authority (JCTDA), a role which he is the first to fulfill. It didn't take long for Nick's hard work, leadership, and influence to be felt. Jackson County is relatively small, with only 41,000 full-time residents. Despite its small size and his relative lack of prior category experience, Nick has exhibited a dedication to industry metrics. He instituted the use of Smith Travel Research data to measure lodging impact and utilized website metrics to initiate a complete overhaul of the DMO website, which resulted in substantially higher visitation to the site. During 2016, Jackson County had the third-highest increase in visitor spending in the state.

In March of this year, Nick was selected to make two presentations at the state's annual tourism meeting, the Visit 365 conference held by VisitNC. Both presentations focused on using available or readily-accessible data to establish strategy and support for tourism marketing in the destination and were particularly important coming from the leader of a smaller DMO to an audience of similarly-sized DMOs and other travel entities. Nick displayed exceptional leadership in leveraging the opportunity provided by the Great American Eclipse of 2017. Jackson County was in the path of totality, and Nick recognized the tremendous opportunity of the eclipse beyond just filling hotel rooms during it. Nick provided leadership in working with other stakeholders to not only plan for the arrival of thousands of visitors to view the eclipse in the county (including emergency management officials), but also to create a memorable experience for many first-time guests. He initiated a significant public relations effort that brought substantial new awareness of Jackson County and which will generate a return on investment beyond 2017.

Founded in 1970, the Travel and Tourism Research Association (TTRA) is a non-profit association whose purpose is to enhance the quality, value, effectiveness, and use of research in travel marketing, planning, and development. TTRA strives to be a leader for the global community of practitioners and educators engaged in research, information management, and marketing in the travel, tourism, and hospitality industries. The Marketing Outlook Forum (MOF) is the industry's leading strategic travel forecast conference, running annually for over 30 years and combining industry networking and quality educational programs that can't be found anywhere else.

Travel and Tourism Research Association

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