



Tourism Council of Carbondale (TCC) Meeting
Thursday, January 22, 2026, 8am, Third Street Center

TCC Mission:

The Tourism Council of Carbondale's mission is to create a strong tourism economy by promoting the Town.

TCC Vision:

Carbondale Tourism will focus on the core values of sustainable tourism: promote smart growth and support local businesses; take pride in the unparalleled outdoor recreation and natural assets; celebrate and preserve our small-town character and culture. The organization will continue to uphold this Spirit of Sopris to residents and visitors in our community.

In Attendance/Not In Attendance

- **Co-Chair Erkko Alm**, Alpine Bank
- **Co-Chair Michael Stout**, Carbondale Arts & Carbondale Creative District
- **Kelsey Brasseur**, Roaring Fork Outdoor Volunteers
- **Dave Eisenson and Simone Franklin**, Plosky's Deli
- **Kat Hardy**, Current Ritual
- **Brittany Hailey**, Aspen Leisure Co.
- **Matt Hoogenboom**, Revel Bikes
- **Lani Kitching**, Proudline Guided Fly Fishing
- **John Miernicki**, Days Inn Carbondale
- **Greg Morrison**, Mountain Tide Provision Co.
- **Marlene Neidert**, OMfluence
- **Kaitlin Piosa**, Aspen Skiing Company
- **Erica Savard**, Town of Carbondale Parks & Recreation
- **Stefani Soyachak**, True Nature Healing Arts
- **Chester White**, Main Line Social and Sprazzo
- **Mike Imes/Tim LeRoy**, BluBird Communications
- **Jess Robison**, Town of Carbondale Trustee Liaison
- **Christina Montemayor**, Town of Carbondale Trustee Liaison
- **Andrea Stewart**, Carbondale Chamber & Tourism President and CEO
- **Ola Verploegh**, Town of Carbondale Finance Director, Town Liaison

Agenda:

1. Call meeting to order, Erkko at 8:06am
2. Welcome 2026 Board Members & Introductions
Erkko welcomed new and returning board members to the TCC. Introductions included clarification of roles and representation, including:
 - Confirmation of the shared Plosky's Deli seat between Dave Eisenson and Simone Franklin (one vote)
 - BluBird Communications present as a non-voting contractor
 - Andrea Stewart shared office structure at the Third Street Center (she is $\frac{3}{4}$ Chamber, $\frac{1}{4}$ Tourism) and introduced that Sarah, new Office Coordinator, in office who joined one month ago
 - Board members and liaisons briefly introduced their affiliations
3. Approve Co-Chair Role

Erkko and Micheal presented the co-chair role to the TCC for approval, Kat Hardy moved to approve, and John Miernicki seconded the motion, all in favor the motion was approved. Erkko and Michael will share the TCC Chair responsibilities for 2026.

4. Approve December 18 meeting minutes

The December 18 meeting minutes were presented for approval, Erkko moved to approve, and Marlene seconded the motion, the motion was approved.

5. December Financial Review

Tourism Council of Carbondale

Bookkeeper's Report – Executive Summary, Period Ending December 31, 2025, Cash Basis

Lodging Tax Report – Town of Carbondale

- Lodging Tax for October 2025 (received in Dec 2025) is \$16,280.57, a 7% decrease compared to October 2024
- Lodging Tax for November 2025 (received in January 2026) is \$11,230.63, an 18.8% increase compared to November 2024 (woo hoo!)

YTD P&L Actuals December 31, 2025 (Blue Column)

- Lodging Tax Income on P&L: \$198,799 Actual vs Budget of \$193,600
- September & October 2025 actual Lodging Tax Income combined (\$32,432) were received in December 2025
- Total Income: \$204,851 Actual vs Budget of \$197,770
- Net Ordinary Income: \$18,967 Actual vs Budget of (\$65,246)
- Net Income including Other Income: \$30,192 Actual vs Budget of (\$1,812).

Balance Sheet as of December 31, 2025 (Blue Column)

- The Operating Checking Account balance is \$61,931 compared to \$38,749 at 12/31/24; \$30,000 has been transferred from the money market account to the checking account as of Dec 31, 2025, and the MM account was budgeted to replenish the checking account up to \$85,000 in 2025
- Money Market & FirstBank CD cash accounts total is \$215,588 compared to \$220,176 at 12/31/2024
- Reserve Fund Equity account is \$153,711 (after \$1,906 in 2025 Money Market interest earnings allocated to Reserve Fund Equity); Opportunity Fund Equity account is \$20,174
- The CDs at FirstBank contain funds of \$111,702; \$85,000 of Savings was budgeted to be spent in 2025, but only \$30,000 of that \$85,000 has been used as of 12/31/2025, and no additional Savings are expected to be used in 2025.

Respectfully submitted, Heather Beach, Bookkeeper January 20,
2026

- Additional Discussion
 - Lodging tax collected and distributed by the Town since 2004
 - Two-month reporting lag on Lodging Tax

- 2025 books to close at end of February 2026. Page 6 of report shows trends back to 2015; COVID impacts noted by Erko
- Current reserves equal approximately eight months (national nonprofit recommendation: 6–9 months)
- Reserve funds held at FirstBank
- Finance Director Ola Verploegh may join future meetings
- Andrea shared that bylaws were emailed to all new members and printed copies distributed. She clarified the relationship between the Chamber and TCC as connected but separate entities and reiterated board attendance expectations (minimum 8 of 12 meetings annually).

6. TCC Past, Present & Future 2025 Year in Review / Strategic Planning

Andrea presented results of the 2025 strategic planning process. Copies were distributed, emailed and are posted on the website.

Key themes included:

- Shift since 2020 from marketing to tourism management
- Emphasis on sustainable tourism and responsible travel
- Origins of the Take It Easy Carbondale campaign
- Focus on managing tourism impacts while supporting local businesses

Clarifications:

- TCC stands for Tourism Council of Carbondale (congruently known as Lodging Tax Committee)
- Works in partnership with the Colorado Tourism Office
- KPIs include website traffic and tools such as Placer.ai
- TCC promotes a place, not a product

2026 Board Goals, Responsibilities & Subcommittees

- TCC is not an event-staffing organization; supports events through marketing and funding
- Roaring Fork Destination Alliance created with Aspen, Snowmass, Basalt, Carbondale, and Glenwood Springs
- Connection to Colorado Creative District with potential expansion
- Subcommittees introduced:
 - Budgeting & Ordinance (to activate during 2027 budget planning in August)
 - Grant Program Development (primary 2026 goal)
- Grant Program discussion:
 - Proposed ~\$20,000 grant pool (~10% of lodging tax budget)
 - Focus on events and sustainability initiatives (e.g., Red Hill, Nordic Council)
 - TCC and Town involvement anticipated
 - Michael emphasized grounding future grant decisions in existing values and guiding principles and asked members to review last year's work.

7. Contractor Updates: – **BluBird Communications**

Mike Imes provided a high-level update on marketing efforts. He shared that BluBird is onboarding, reviewing existing materials, and aligning marketing activities with the five-year strategic plan. Mike emphasized storytelling, local presence, and collaboration with businesses and community partners.

Key points:

- BluBird is handling strategy and oversight; Blizzard continues managing website backend operations.
- Mike invited feedback from board members and community partners and welcomed story ideas.
- Media hosting and journalist outreach were discussed.
- Kat Hardy suggested leveraging local historical society resources.

- Questions were raised regarding how much content creation is done internally versus outsourced; Mike noted this varies by project.

8. Trustee Updates- Christina not present.

9. Additional Discussion

- Clarification that Lodging Tax applies to hotels/lodging, not short-term rental taxes; 2 of the 6% of STR tax go directly to the tourism council, the other goes to the Town for affordable housing initiatives.
- Kat Hardy shared enthusiasm for sustainability-focused grant work and highlighted Dandelion Days' involvement and side project of creation of a health insurance fund for farmers.
- Stefani Soychak suggested creating an easy system for businesses to share existing content with TCC to reduce duplication of effort.
- Chester White asked about the future of the Take It Easy Carbondale campaign. Mike noted it emerged during the COVID era and agreed it may be revisited to better reflect the current tone and direction of the community. Any rebranding or slogan changes would be directed by the Tourism Council.

10. Adjourn, Erko/Michael

The meeting was adjourned at 9:40am by Michael. No motion needed.

Upcoming TCC Meeting: Thursday, February 26 8am-9:30am, Third Street Center

Respectfully Submitted,

Stefani Soychak, True Nature Healing Arts, TCC Board member