

# **Jackson County** **Office of Economic Development**

401 Grindstaff Cove Rd.- Suite A231 Sylva, NC 28779



*Rich Price - Director of Economic Development 828-631-2240 richprice@jacksonnc.org*

## **For Immediate Release: February 20, 2017**

(Sylva, NC) Jackson County officials today have announced preliminary approval for a proposed outdoor adventure park development, to be located on property that the County currently owns along the Tuckasegee River near Dillsboro. The Jackson County Board of Commissioners has scheduled a public hearing to receive comment on the proposed project. That hearing is slated for Monday, March 20<sup>th</sup>, 2017 at 5:30 pm just prior to the Board's regular meeting, and will be held in the Commissioners Board Room of the Jackson County Justice and Administration Building.

The company, WNC Outdoor Development, LLC, proposes the construction of a family-oriented, multi-purpose adventure center that will include rafting and retail operations, primitive cabins and campsites that will accommodate both paddling enthusiasts and fishermen, and additional activities that may include zip lines, ropes courses, or climbing walls. WNC Outdoor Development will partner with several management companies to operate and market the various components of the project. Those partnerships will be determined and announced at a later date.

The project proposal will include an agreement between Jackson County and the Development Company that provides for the sale of approximately 7.0 acres of property from the original 17.5 acre site owned by the County. The County will also commit to some preliminary site prep work, and the installation of a water and sewer extension project that will serve not only the primary development site, but also additional commercial and residential properties in the immediate vicinity. In return for the County's assistance, WNC Outdoor Development will be required to complete their proposed construction plans within 5 years of the project's commencement, and to create an established number of full, part-time, and seasonal jobs over the 10 year agreement period. Projected increases in sales, occupancy, and property taxes will also be measured as consideration for the assistance provided by Jackson County.

"This project is the culmination of many months of negotiation, planning, and due diligence by all parties involved," said Rich Price, Director of Economic Development for the County. "The investments made by Jackson County and WNC Outdoor Development will have an immediate and long-term positive financial impact on the area, with expected increases in visitation, overnight stays, and multiplied consumer spending. Conservative preliminary estimates suggest that \$60 Million dollars or greater will be injected into the local economy over the duration of the ten year period covered by the Economic Development Agreement, once the project is completed."

Kelly Custer, President of WNC Outdoor Development, offered his thoughts on the proposed development. "We are excited to be working with Jackson County to develop this premier outdoor recreation center. As a local resident, I am committed to creating a project that we can all be proud of and that will benefit Dillsboro, Jackson County and the entire region. We believe that tourism is a key aspect of local growth and are committed to partnering with Jackson County, local businesses and fellow residents to responsibly promote visitation to our area."

Jackson County Board Chairman Brian McMahan expressed his enthusiasm for the project on behalf of the Governing Body. "The Jackson County Board of Commissioners is excited to partner with WNC Outdoor Development, LLC, a local company, to help make possible the development of a river front park in the Dillsboro community. This development will allow for greater access to the river, enhanced recreational opportunities, increased tourism, a growth in our tax base, and the creation of new jobs for our local workforce. This is truly a win-win for the residents of our County."

If given final approval by the Jackson County Board of Commissioners after the scheduled public hearing, construction on the project could begin as soon as April of this year.

*Please direct all questions/inquiries in writing to the following email address:*

[richprice@jacksonnc.org](mailto:richprice@jacksonnc.org)

*Copies of the proposed Economic Development Agreement and Project Overview may be viewed on-line at:*

[www.jacksonnc.org](http://www.jacksonnc.org)

[www.jacksonthrive.jacksonnc.org](http://www.jacksonthrive.jacksonnc.org)