



Fannin County Chamber of Commerce

2026 Operating Plan

Vision

The vision of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Office is to be the most effective Chamber in North Georgia, providing an environment conducive to developing a diversified and stable economy.

Mission

The mission of the Fannin County Chamber of Commerce and Tourism Office is to strengthen Fannin County's economy and quality of life by supporting local businesses, championing tourism, and preserving and enhancing the natural and cultural character that makes the community unique.

Organizational Effectiveness

Goal: Manage the operations of the Chamber, including finance, human resources, administrative functions, communications, facility management, policy decisions, bylaws changes, and long-range planning. Manage the relationship with the Board of Directors and professional relationships with community organizations and leadership.

- Conduct annual board orientation and at least nine board meetings.
- Prepare an annual budget by October (for vote in Nov or Dec) and quarterly financial reports for stakeholders.
- Conduct an annual audit with an outside professional firm.
- Maintain GACCE Chamber Accreditation (renewed in 2024 for another five years).
- Continue contractual relationship(s) with Fannin County and the City of Blue Ridge to promote tourism in the county, including managing the Tourism Product Development fund for Fannin County.
- Hire, train, and retain staff with comprehensive onboarding and continuing education programs.

- Ongoing promotion of the Chamber's role in the community, including providing space and resources for members, visitors, and the community.
- Implement refreshed branding that includes cohesive colors and fonts for both Chamber and Tourism.

Membership Recruitment, Retention and Services

Goal: Determine and implement services to be offered to members, contact non-renewing members, recruit new members, support member events and communicate with members.

- Maintain membership and dues revenue.
- Continuously compare dues structure with other Chambers in the area.
- Implement retention and win back programs.
- Conduct a staff and ambassador membership drive during the first quarter of 2026.
- Offer and manage ribbon cuttings and ground breakings for members.
- Host eight to ten Business After Hours and/or Breakfast Before Business networking events annually.
- Produce an annual membership directory, Information Please.
- Communicate with members with weekly e-mail newsletter and social media.
- Support membership events, including an annual meeting/banquet, Clay Shoot, Golf Tournament, and Young Professionals (as needed). Events are meant for public relations, networking, and/or fundraising, depending on the event.
- Present programs and workshops for members up to quarterly and as needed.
- Coordinate and enhance Chamber Ambassador Program.
- Coordinate Chamber Leads Group.
- Enhance Junior Chamber Membership.
- Young Professionals group to meet up to six times a year.

Loving Local

Goal: Strengthen ties with the local community and promote sustainable practices.

- Manage #LovingLocal campaign, including continued integration and support of the Chamber into local community events and organizations and a partnership with the Welcome magazines tailored to both locals and visitors.
- Enhance heritage tourism information.
- Conduct a Buy Local campaign.
- Support Fannin County School System and school groups, as appropriate.

- Work with local government and emergency services to develop strategies to sustain quality of life, encouraging sustainability (recreate responsibly) to visitors and locals.
- Continue all conservation efforts, including the Commitment to Conservation (C2C) program. Work with the community and organizations on beautification and recreation projects in alignment with conservation efforts, including TVA, USFS, the Fannin County School System, etc.

Tourism Marketing & Visitor Services

Goal: Implement a sustainable tourism marketing and visitor services program for Blue Ridge, McCaysville and the Copper Basin, and all of Fannin County, with strategies to improve the quality of the local economy, quality of the visitor experience, stewardship of the natural environment and quality of life of the community.

- Develop and execute an annual tourism marketing plan and budget.
- Coordinate a Tourism Committee made up of representatives from tourism-related businesses and organizations in the community.
- Create a unified image of Fannin County by jointly promoting the projects and events of other local organizations.
- Manage a cooperative marketing grant program for the purpose of supporting tourism marketing projects that provide economic benefits to Fannin County and attract out-of-area visitors.
- Work with Fannin County Government and appropriate partner entities to identify and implement Tourism Product Development projects.
- Identify tourism gaps and seek new campaigns/promotions and ways to increase tourism in slow months.
- Host workshops and/or provide information for tourism businesses, including customer service, marketing and lodging related issues, as appropriate and necessary.
- Operate the Main Visitor Center, Downtown Blue Ridge Visitor Center, and McCaysville Visitor Center. Continue to promote McCaysville and the Copper Basin to encourage quality development and tourism.
- Enhance accessibility initiatives, bringing sensory sensitive blocks to more parades, supporting both locals and visitors.
- Attend local, state, and national conferences to promote Fannin County/Blue Ridge tourism offerings, strengthen industry relationships, and identify emerging trends and best practices.

- Serve in a continuity role for Fannin County in the event of an emergency, supporting communication, coordination, and information dissemination efforts in partnership with county leadership and emergency management.
- Distribute tourism information and literature by mail and electronic delivery to prospective visitors, travel trade partners, and consumer leads.

Economic Development

- Maintain a close working relationship with the Fannin County Development Authority to encourage diversification of the economy in Fannin County. Partner on projects when appropriate.
- Integrate economic development, entrepreneurship, and livability into tourism marketing media to support future development and current business growth.

Leadership Fannin

- Conduct annual leadership development programs for adults with a series of educational programs, including Orientation, Leadership, Social Services, Local and State Government, Education, Economic Development, Arts & Parks, and Tourism. The program educates participants about the community, encourages leadership in the community, and other volunteer opportunities, fostering idea generation and potential implementation of community improvement.
- Plan and implement special events and networking opportunities for the Leadership Fannin Alumni group.

Advocacy & Governmental Relations

Goal: Provide opportunities for information exchange between Chamber members and governmental officials on a regular basis. Encourage cooperation and communication between government entities and the Chamber.

- Advocate for new and existing businesses and members on issues of common concern as appropriate. Provide informational forums and training opportunities for existing businesses on timely issues and opportunities for business growth.
- Hold Candidate Forums.
- Represent the Chamber in local and state government related matters.
- Host Eggs and Issues breakfast.
- Communicate regularly with USFS, TVA, DNR and other outdoor agencies and groups.
- Strengthen relationships with local, state, regional and U.S. officials and agencies.