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ABYSA Receives \$1.1 Million TDA Grant for Turf Replacement Project

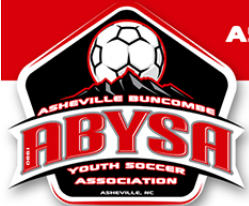
Asheville, North Carolina- The Buncombe County Tourism Development Authority (BCTDA) announced on Thursday that the Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association have been awarded a 1.1 million dollar Tourism Product Development Fund (TPDF) grant to assist with replacement of artificial turf at the John B. Lewis Soccer Complex. The TPDF awarded a total of \$3.9 to six projects that will generate overnight stays at hotel properties in Buncombe County.

The John B Lewis Soccer Complex opened in 2005, and at the time, was the largest artificial turf facility in the Southeastern United States. Owned and operated by the City of Asheville, the park serves over 500,000 park visits and over 7,000 youth and adult soccer players annually. With an expected lifespan of ten years, the artificial turf is worn and in need of replacement this summer in order continues to serve Buncombe County's vibrant soccer community and to remain a preferred sports tourism destination.

In addition to serving as an important quality of life asset to local residents, the soccer complex is also a proven economic asset. The Asheville Buncombe Youth Soccer Association and the Asheville Buncombe Regional Sports Commission will host events at the complex that will utilize over 11,000 room nights this year, a number that has grown every year for seven consecutive years.

“The John B. Lewis Soccer Complex is a great example of a successful public-private partnership generating both outstanding return on investment for the BCTDA and results for the local community” said Michael Rottjakob, Executive Director of ABYSA. “Of course, we are extremely pleased to have put forward a project that provides such a big benefit to the local lodging industry, and the lodging industry, in turn, is providing such meaningful support to our soccer family. It is a win-win-win in our mind. Its a win for hotel properties and all of the businesses that benefit from sports tourism, a win for the City of Asheville, and a big win for over 7,000 soccer players.”

We empower children, strengthen families and enrich our community through soccer, the world's game.



The turf replacement project, set to begin in May 2016, will cost an estimated \$2.1 million. In addition to the TPDF grant award, support from ABYSA's major corporate partners, and the City of Asheville, has been critical in bringing together the funding needed for such a large project. "We also want to thank Biltmore, Ingles Markets, and Mission Health for their sponsorship support and recognition of how important this facility is to the health and happiness of so many youth and adult athletes and their families" added Rottjakob.