

Employees Bond Over Burgers, Bikes at Summer Party

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Boom!

It was a familiar sound – thunderstorms had rolled through the Charlotte area nearly every day for three weeks, and this muggy July evening at the U.S. National Whitewater Center (USNWC) was no exception. Gusty storms, however, failed to deter 150 hardy Charlotte XPO employees and their guests as they biked, jumped, zipped, and rafted USNWC’s rolling hills and rivers at the office’s summer party.

It was an event months in the making. “We had an outstanding response to the idea of doing an off-site company party,” said office manager Alison Nixon, who began planning the event in April. USNWC, home to the world’s largest manmade whitewater river, offers close to 25 activities, including mountain biking, zip lining, whitewater rafting, and an obstacle course.

“The great thing about having the company party at the Whitewater Center is that people could either hang out and talk amongst themselves in our reserved tented area, participate in activities, or walk around the facility and watch others engaging in the land and water activities,” said Nixon. Each employee was also permitted to bring a guest.

Musicians took the stage near the zip line, regular fixtures of the park’s weekly River Fest concert series. They broke out fiddles and guitars, flatpicking their way through a rousing catalog of bluegrass music and delighting the soggy crowd.

Some employees enjoyed the event with their feet firmly planted on the ground, listening to music and indulging in the burger buffet, topping off their overloaded plates with handfuls of chips and homemade cookies. Those with a bold streak took advantage of the complimentary QuickPass provided by XPO and spent the evening engaging in adventurous activities. The storm did steal an hour of activity time, but there is a bright spot: unused passes will be honored on a future date.

Despite the less than agreeable weather, the turnout was impressive and the crowd cheerfully socialized, whether they were grasping burger-laden plates or the ropes above their zip line harnesses. “XPO planned a great social event for its staff!” said receptionist Jessie Fife.