

Highland Brewing leaders get direct phone call, invite to White House from President Biden

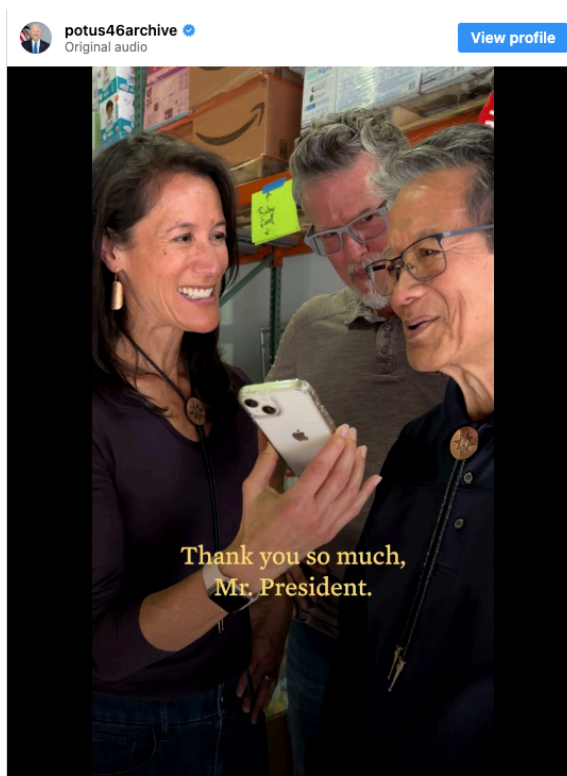
by Madison Smith Mon, December 9, 2024 at 1:53 PM

ASHEVILLE, N.C. (WLOS) — Not many people can say they have been personally called by the President of the United States, but Highland Brewing President Leah Ashburn and her husband Brock surely can. Just a few weeks ago after the Thanksgiving holiday, they received the call of a lifetime from President Joe Biden. In a video of the call, Biden is heard saying: "You didn't know when you opened that brewery that it was going to be a place where you save people's lives, did you?"

Leah and her husband have been involved with the community for years. They are a part of the workforce development board with Gov. Roy Cooper called NC Works.

After making a comment to a board member about the work they were doing during Helene recovery, that information made its way through Gov. Cooper and on to the White House, when they were told that the president would like to speak to them.

During the call, he thanked them for their community contributions to Western North Carolina, such as sharing the assets with struggling businesses and organizations. Some of those include supplies for the Highway Patrol, a place for operations for Wine to Water and a house for food for the Humane Society.



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All of this took place while they were still dealing with their own operation issues.

"We spent so much money trying to get back into operations as quickly as possible and still lost all the money from the taproom being closed, not being able to sell beer offsite or onsite, and losing all of our events in October, just like everybody else did," said Leah Ashburn. But the call from Biden is not the end of their presidential journey.

This Thursday, Dec. 12, Leah and Brock will be accepting an invitation to the White House.

Leah's father and Highland Brewing founder Oscar Wong was also invited but will not be attending because he is being honored at UNC Asheville early that Friday, Dec. 13.