Tourism is driving county’s and town’s economy

Like elsewhere in Macon County, the Highlands economy is built on tourism and the attraction outsiders have to its “nature scape,” its restaurants and shops.

According to Western Carolina University’s Hospitality and Tourism department, tourism is not only big business in Macon County, but a growing business at that.

In 2015, tourist activities generated $154.23 million in direct tourist spending in Macon County. The industry produced $27.28 million in worker income and paychecks and created $12.22 million in local county tax revenues. The industry is responsible for 1,260 jobs in Macon County and compared to 2014, tourist spending in the county increased by 3.7 percent in 2015.

“The 2015 tourism impact figures for Macon County continue to demonstrate the increasing importance of tourism as a local economic driver,” said Commissioner Jim Tate, along with Commissioner Ronnie Beale and Macon County Manager Jon Wiseman.

Meadows’ Freedom Caucus aims to make big changes to ACA

Not long after President Donald Trump took office, Republican leaders in Congress started talking about repealing the Affordable Care Act.

Though the details of the new ACA plan have now surfaced and were set to be voted on Wednesday, Congressman Mark Meadows has been vocal in his stance on the repeal and replacement process and what he wants to see implemented.

“I applaud my colleagues Senator Paul and Representative Sanford for their efforts in crafting this healthcare reform bill,” Rep. Meadows said concerning their replacement plan. “The need for fundamentally sound healthcare alternatives right now is ab-

Macon County leaders spent last week representing residents of the county in Washington D.C. during the 2017 Legislative Conference for the National Association of Counties.

This year, the annual days-long event brought more than 2,000 elected and appointed county leaders together with federal legislators in Washington to discuss federal policy issues that impact counties and residents.

County members from across the country attended the conference and for North Carolina, all 100 counties were represented and in attendance at the NACO conference.

Macon County Commissioner Jim Tate, along with Commissioner Ronnie Beale and Macon County Manager Jon Wiseman.

Macon C. leaders talk ACA, PILT and more with Feds

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Macon County Commissioner Jim Tate, along with Commissioner Ronnie Beale and Macon County Manager Jon Wiseman.

The undefeated Eagles – Macon County Junior League Season and Tournament Champions – part of the county’s 10-team junior league. Front row from left: Nolan Billingsley, Peyton Naron, Nathan Keener, Owen Munoz, JD Head, and Jacob Holt. Back row from left: Assistant Coach Lamar Billingsley, Aiden McMullen, John Hayes Shaheen, Harrison Gates, James Earp, J Postell, and Coach David Billingsley. Their record was 15-0 (2-0 pre-season, 10-0 regular season, 3-0 tournament) with an average margin of victory of 17 points. The team averaged 31.9 points per game during regular season but were only allowed 13.6 points per game.

“They are an incredible group of kids with a lot of heart and unmatched determination to win. I’ve never seen anything quite like it out of a group of basketball players at any level. It doesn’t matter what sport or at what level, it is truly amazing to go undefeated for the whole season. They made the season fun,” said Coach David. “They came ready to play every minute of every practice and every game. This is a very competitive group that played extremely well together.” The team’s sponsor was Allen Dearth and Sons Generators.
H \nhere I go again, talking trash. No, not trash talking. I want to talk about trash and garbage issues that impact our beautiful community.

A couple of weeks ago I wrote an article about it being time to “spruce up” Highlands for the impending tourist season. I asked people to let me know if they saw areas where we could improve and clean things up. People contacted me about problems, especially where they saw sidewalk issues.

Thanks to the folks that contacted me, especially to the person that called about a major trash problem that had not been addressed at Hickory and 5th Street. I got in my old Toyota pickup truck to go assess the problem firsthand. What I discovered was that some “Bozo Head” had dumped an old futon mattress on 5th Street, right where the road ends and the historic Kelsey and Greenway Trail begins.

Yes, I called the offender of  this sacrilege against nature and our community a derogatory name. He or she deserves the label. I will try to talk trash.

With the help of  a good friend who happened to see what I was doing, we both were able to load the wet, heavy mattress onto my truck. I was able to haul it away and properly dispose it.

If anyone sees a “Bozo Head” dumping trash on a Highlands street, park or beautiful space, please get a description of the person, vehicle, tag number, etc., and call 911 without delay. A Highlands police officer will be dispatched to immediately investigate and possibly apprehend the criminal offender.

A while back a concrete truck operator dumped a load of cement down the side of the right-of-way on Oak Street. The concrete flowed and set up on our greenway trail that ran just below the roadside. Several days later when the crime was discovered some folks reported they had noticed the person dumping the concrete a while back, but didn’t call 911 to report it. By that time the ability of the police to make a case was basically lost. If a call had been made to 911, an officer may have been able to catch the offender in the act, or at least there would have been a hot trail for officers to investigate.

When we have our Highlands Cleanup on April 22, Earth Day, volunteers will pick up an incredible amount of trash and garbage left by “Bozo Heads.” I will be writing more about the trash problem in the coming weeks. If anyone has a better name than “Bozo Heads” for people who trash our community, please let me know. The only condition is that I have to be able to repeat the name in public. I can always be reached at (828) 506-3138, or at mayor@highlandsnc.org.

Statistic 14-399(a) makes it a crime to illegally dump trash, garbage and debris on public and private property.

The summary below was written by the Congressional Research Service, which is a nonpartisan division of the Library of Congress, and was published on Feb 2, 2017.

H.J.Res. 38: Disapproving the rule submitted by the Department of the Interior known as the Stream Protection Rule. (This measure has not been amended since it was introduced. The summary of that version is repeated here.)

This joint resolution nullifies the Stream Protection Rule finalized by the Department of the Interior’s Office of Surface Mining Reclamation and Enforcement on December 20, 2016. The rule addresses the impacts of surface coal mining operations on surface water, groundwater, and the productivity of mining operation sites.

Vote:
Congressman Mark Meadows
Office 202-225-6401
Email/Website: meadows.house.gov

Senior Senator Richard Burr
Office: 202-224-3154
Email/Website: burr.senate.gov

Junior Senator Thom Tillis
Office: 202-224-6342
Email/Website: tillis.senate.gov

...TOURISM continued from page 1

economic driver and are key to the continued growth and sustainability of Highlands’ and the county’s overall economic future,” said President of Highlands Chamber of Commerce Bob Kielyka. “Highlands growing reputation as a year-round resort community, where hospitality is king, contributes significantly to the impressive results compiled by Western Carolina University’s College of Business.”

Dr. Steve Morse, Director of Hospitality and Tourism at WCU released the 2015 Tourism Economic Fact sheets during WCU’s third annual regional outdoor tourism and recreation conference. It was held on February 28 at Harrah’s Cherokee Casino and drew a record 177 attendees from across North Carolina, as well as eastern Tennessee and northeast Georgia.

The mix of participants included outdoor recreation and travel industry representatives, chamber of commerce officials, economic development leaders, private sector outdoor tourism business owners and operators, tourism development authority officials and regional tourism marketing representatives. Topics included outdoor tourism trends for the coming decade, generational marketing, regional partnerships and the role of tourism in local economic development.

“This is a tool you can use to show folks who need to know the impact of...
**Obituaries**

**LaNita Kae Clark**

LaNita Kae Clark, née Hawkins, died in the early morning of February 23, 2017 when she let go of her loving husband’s hand and grasped the hand of her Maker and Friend.

Before she found herself in bed, wrestling with cancer, LaNita and her husband Larry had, for several years been doing what they could to help and teach and love in the small village of Londiani, Kenya, Africa. Kenya is now dotted with young girls named LaNita who will be told, when they ask where their name came from, about a kindly lady from America who spread love, compassion and a penchant for tea parties.

Prior to becoming a Kenya expat, she and her family lived in Highlands, NC, where she focused her time and energy on making her home beautiful and cozy for her husband, and entertaining a small circle of church friends between the family gatherings.

She spent most of her life in Malone, New York on a farm tucked in a river valley a little south of Montreal that is saturated with memories of LaNita.

Larry and LaNita made their home in Malone but met in LaNita’s hometown of Bethany, OK.

She is survived by many people who dearly loved her: Larry, whose life-long love for LaNita and his vigilant, selfless care for his wife over the last several years have become legendary in the family; her favorite son, David; her other “favorite” son, Gary; her “other favorite” son, Jed; and her only, and therefore favorite daughter, Sarah and her “favorite Kenyan” daughter; also assorted siblings, nieces, nephews and numerous friends.

LaNita’s husband, Larry, and her children will be celebrating her life at a Memorial Service on Sunday, March 12, 2017 at 2 p.m. at the Highlands United Methodist Church in Highlands, NC. We would love to have her friends and those touched by her life on earth join in the celebration.

Please RSVP if you are planning to attend so we can finalize our preparations. For more information on this service, please go to: www.facebook.com/events/383576838682008/

**Leona Joan Schloesser**


Born in Chicago, IL she was the daughter of the late David Leo Trahey and Pearl Alice Cary Trahey. In addition to her parents, she was preceded in death by her husband, John Robert Schloesser; daughter, Lynne Ellen Smith and two sisters, Ruthie McNichols and Loraine Tatum. Leona loved spending time with her grandchildren. She was of the Catholic faith.

She is survived by two daughters, Coradee Ferree of New Port Beach, CA and Maribeth Moss of Cashiers, NC; one brother, Daniel Trahey of Chicago, IL; 10 grandchildren; seven great grandchildren and three great-great grandchildren.

A Memorial Service will be held at 1 p.m., Monday, March 13 at Our Lady of the Mountain Catholic Church. Macon Funeral Home is in charge of the arrangements. Online condolences can be made at maconfuneralhome.com

**Tom Edward James**

Tom Edward James, 83, of Highlands, went to heaven on Thursday, March 2, 2017.

Born in Clayton, GA, he was the son of the late Lawton Pinkney James and Irene Picklesimer James. In addition to his parents, he was preceded in death by one sister, Barbara James Taylor. Tom was a US Army veteran and served during the Korean conflict. He owned and operated Tom James Wrecker Service. He was a member of the Lion’s Club of Highlands and member of Community Bible Church.

He is survived by his wife of 44 years, Hilda Sanders James; four children, Elizabeth James Cunningham and husband Keith of Easley, SC, Tom Edward James Jr. and wife Brenda of Dillard, GA, Terri James Potts and husband Tony of Highlands and Sue James Houston of Stone Mtn., GA; two sisters, Wilma James Gordon and Geraldine James Crowe both of Highlands; one brother, Herbert James of Highlands; seven grandchildren, eight great grandchildren and numerous nieces and nephews.

Funeral Service were held at 3 p.m. Sunday, March 5 at Community Bible Church. Pastor Gary Hewins, Rev. Woody Johnson and Rev. Eddie Stillwell officiated. Burial was in the Scaly Mtn. Methodist Cemetery with military rites conducted by VFW Post 7339 and American Legion Post 108.

Pallbearers were Jimmy Almond, Steve Derry, Robbie Potts, James Manley, Ricky James, Morris Reed, Ruben Contieras and Salvador Ocalde. Scaly Mtn. Volunteer Fire Dept. and Highlands Volunteer Fire Department served as Honorary Pallbearers.
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www.wolfgangsnets
...MEADOWS continued from page 1

solutely critical – Obamacare has been a disaster from the beginning, and Americans can no longer sustain the crushing weight of its failures.”

The plan released by Rep. Paul and Rep. Sanford was endorsed by the House Freedom Caucus, on which Rep. Meadows serves as the chair.

“Furthermore, the speculation on what a replacement will look like has created an unnecessary climate of  anxiety in this discussion. As members of Congress, we have a responsibility to reassure Americans – particularly those with preexisting conditions – that they will be protected under a new system,” said Rep. Meadows.

“I commend Senator Paul and Representative Sanford for releasing a plan so that we can move toward debating the issues at hand and ultimately keep our promises to the people.”

Not only has Rep. Meadows supported the plan introduced by Rep. Paul, he has also spoken out against an alternative plan introduced by Rep. Paul Ryan. Speaking to CNN last week, Rep. Meadows said that he wouldn't support Ryan's draft of the GOP Obamacare repeal bill unless substantial changes are made. (The outcome of Wednesday's vote was not available by press time.)

According to Meadows, Ryan's plan creates an “entitlement program” because of the tax credits and incentives listed in the draft bill – credits and incentives many now covered by ACA depend upon.

“Our original concern with Rep. Ryan's plan is that the tax credits were something that were not just available to those who need it, but would be available to millionaires as well,” said Rep. Meadows. Anytime you are going to write a check on behalf of taxpayers, it should be done as a safety net and not to increase someone's bottom line. We wanted to make sure that there were tests in place to make sure that those tax breaks for people who truly needed it and not people who can already afford insurance.”

Ryan's bill to repeal Obamacare replaces the law's subsidies with less generous tax credits, increases the amount insurers could charge older Americans and more or less eliminate Medicaid for low-income adults.

The refundable tax credit would be given out based on age and range from $2,000 for those under 30 to $4,000 for those between ages 60 and 64.

Not knowing what will happen has municipalities like Highlands – now in the 2017-18 budget process – that offers its employees and their families a generous health insurance package, in limbo.

...TOURISM continued from page 2

tourism on economic development, job creation and payrolls,” Morse said. “Tourists are, as I often refer to them, ‘temporary taxpayers’ whose local spending means that local folks will pay less in local — and state — taxes,” Morse said. “Tourism jobs in your town can never be outsourced. Plus, tourism creates jobs for more than just that single destination or attraction. Travel and tourism jobs and dollars extend well into the whole community.”

The students’ analysis showed that in 2015 tourism spending in the 26 counties of Western North Carolina was $3.34 billion, a 3.5 percent increase over the previous year, and generated 31,540 jobs that netted $672 million in income and worker paychecks.

Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor agrees. “While I know some residents become frustrated about the recent increase in the number of cars and visitors in town during summer and fall, Dr. Morse’s data underscores the financial impact of tourism on our community. All of our residents benefit directly or indirectly when we have a robust tourist season. Jobs and tax burdens are key elements,” he said.

As one of the largest tourism related businesses in Macon County, with tourist related spending growing, so has Old Edwards Hospitality Group in Highlands.

“The resort has grown to meet the demands of the industry. In 2008, OEI employed 170 people; last year that number reached an all time high of 415,” said president and managing director Richard Delany. “In 2008 OEI had 57 rooms available for guests and in 2017 that number will reach 207 between three different locations. With more rooms available, OEI has been able to accommodate more tourists each year. In 2008, OEI saw 14,838 guests and last year the resort was able to serve 76,060 people. The 237% increase in revenue also produced $267,000 in occupancy tax generated for the town and county in 2016 alone.”

The Highlands Chamber of Commerce welcomes the news.

“The outlook for tourism’s continued growth in Highlands and all of Macon County remains bright based on data from recent years. For example, the average daily combined state and local tax revenues generated by tourism spending in Macon County in 2015 increased $5,150 or 11%...”

* See TOURISM page 11
Proverbs 3:5 • Places to Worship • John 3:16

BLUE VALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Oliver Rice, Pastor (706) 782-3965
Sundays: School:10 a.m., Worship:11
Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7
Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting:7 p.m.

BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
828-269-3546 • Rev. Jamie Passmore, Pastor
Sundays: School:10 a.m., Worship:11

CHAPEL OF SKY VALLEY
Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999
Sundays: 10 a.m.: Worship
Holy Communion 1st Sunday of the month
Wednesdays: 9 a.m. Healing and Prayer w/Communion

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH
Rector: Jim Murphy, 252-671-4011
464 US Hwy 64 east, Cashiers
Sun.: 9:30a Sunday School; 10:30a Worship w/ Music
Mon.: Bible Study & Supper at homes - 6 p.m.

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS
Pastor Steve Kerhoulas • 743-5470
Sun.10:45am, SS 9:30am. Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.
Tues. Guys study 8am, Gals 10am.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Jim Kinard
Sundays: School:10 a.m., Worship:11 a.m.
1st & 3rd Sunday night Service: 7 p.m.
Wednesdays –Supper at 6 p.m.

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH
www.cbchighlands.com • 526-4685
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC
Senior Pastor Gary Hewins
Sun.: 9:30am: Sunday School
10:30am: Middle & High School; 10:45am: Child. Program,
10:45am:Worship Service
Wed.: 5pm Dinner ($7 adult, $2 child), 6pm CBC U.

COMMUNITY CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS
Pastor Steve Doerter: 743-9814
www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter: 743-9814
3645 Cashiers Rd, Highlands, NC
Sundays: School:10 a.m., Worship:10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.
Wed.: 5pm Dinner, 6pm CBC U.

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION
The Rev. Dr. Maurice L. Goldsmith, Interim Rector
526-2968
Sundays: Education and choir rehearsal, 9 am,
Holy Eucharist Rite II, (sanctuary),10:30, nursery available
Thursdays: Holy Eucharist Rite II.

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS
828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org
Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor
220 Main Street, Highlands NC 28741
Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am
Wed.: Men’s Bible Study 8:30 am; Prayer Mtg 6:15 pm;
Choir 5 pm.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH
Curtis Fussell & Emily Wilmarth, pastors
526-3175 • fpchighlands.org
Sun.: Worship: 11 a.m.; School: 9:30
Mondays: 8 a.m. Men’s Prayer Group & Breakfast
Wednesdays: Choir:5:30p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH
(Off Franklin/Highlands Rd)
Sunday School;10 am, Worship Service:11 am

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Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH
Hwy 107N. • Glenville, Nc • 743-2729
Pastor: Nathan Johnson
Sunday: School: 9:45a., Worship 11a & 7p, Bible Study 6p

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD
Randy Reed, Pastor828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship:11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Dan Robinson
670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)
Sun.: Morning Worship 10:45 a., Evening Worship, 6:30 p.
Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
Pastor Randy Lucas 526-3376
Sun: School 9:45a.; Worship 9:09, 10:50; Youth 5:30 p.
Wed: Supper: 5:15; youth, & adults activities: 6; Handbell rehearsal, 6:15; Choir Rehearsal 7. (nursery provided ); 7pm
Intercessory Prayer Ministry

HOLY FAMILY LUTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA
Chaplain Margaret Howell • 2152 Dillard Road • 526-9741
Sun: School and Adult discussion group 9:30 a.m.;
Worship/Communion:10:30

HEALING SERVICE on the 5th Sunday of the month.

MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH
8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah
Pastor-Troy Nicholson, (828) 526-8425
Sundays: School:10 a.m.; Worship:11. Choir:6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.:7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE
at St. Cyprian’s Episcopal Church, Franklin
828-524-9463

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH
743-2583 • Independent Bible Church
Sun:10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church,
4224 Big Ridge Road (4.5 miles from NC 107)
Weds: Bible Study 6:30 p.m.; Youth Group 6 p.m.

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH
Parish office (Father Francis): 526-2418
Mass: Sun: 11 a.m.; Sat. at 4p

SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH
Rev. Marty Kilby
Sundays: School: – 10 a.m.; Worship: –11 a.m. & 7
Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.:7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD
290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Jerry David Hall • 526-3212
Sun.: School:10 a.m.; Worship:10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH
Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer
Sundays: School:10 a.m.; Worship:11 a.m.
Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study:6 p.m.

THE CHURCH OF THE GOOD SHEPHERD
1448 Highway 107 South, Office: 743-2359
Rev. Rob Wood
Oct-May: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a Rite II, 10:30
June-Sept: Sunday Services: Rite I, 8a, Rite II, 9:15 & 11a
Nursery available for Rite II services
Sept 6-Oct 25-Informal Evening Eucharist-5:30 p.m.
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At PAC Live from the MET
LaTraviata, March 11

The Highlands PAC will live stream via satellite from the MET Opera La Traviata (Verdi) on Saturday, March 11 at 12:55pm. There will be a pre-opera discussion led by Beverly Wichman beginning at 12:30pm.

The courtesan, Violetta’s relationship with men and with a male-dominated society is clearly defined. Just as the opera examines death and the dynamic circular motion of life and death, it also deals with the relationship of men and women, and the boundaries between them, in a representative way that reaches far beyond the individual fate of one courtesan.

Sonya Yoncheva brings her acclaimed interpretation of the doomed courtesan Violetta Valéry to Live in HD audiences for the first time, opposite rising American tenor Michael Fabiano as her lover, Alfredo.

Thomas Hampson sings one of his most acclaimed Met roles as Giorgio Germont, Alfredo’s disapproving father. Tickets are available online: highlandspac.org, at the door or by calling 828.526.9047. Highlands Performing Arts Center 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands
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Full breakfast made to order every morning until 11:00 am.
Cage-free eggs, waffles, french toast, sausage, ham, homemade biscuits, muffins, croissants. Espresso bar and coffee roasted in-house.

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$11.99 (dine in) or $9.99 a pound (to go)

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DINNER TO GO
A different full dinner every night.
Serves four serving Monday through Saturday from 4:30 until we sell out – Call ahead to reserve.

Monday: choose either:
Four chicken and four cheese enchiladas, refried beans, monterey rice, homemade tortilla chips, salsa, shredded lettuce, tomatoes, sour cream.
Or...
24 buffalo wings or 2 lbs chicken tenders and hand cut fries.
$21.95 serves four.

Tuesday: Made in-house Italian sausage lasagna and a large house salad.
$21.95 serves four

Wednesday: Chicken or steak pot pie and a large salad.
$21.95 serves four

Thursday: Roasted meatloaf with mashed potatoes, gravy and a large salad.
$21.95 serves four

Friday: Wild caught fried shrimp, baked potatoes, hush puppies & coleslaw. $24.95 serves four

Saturday: In-house smoked bbq, coleslaw, apple and bacon-baked beans, and yeast rolls. $21.95 serves 4

Weeknight Pizza Special:
Available Monday -Thursday 4:30 to close
16" NY style pizza with up to 5 toppings. Comes with garlic bread & salad $21.95
or
Baked Linguini: Meatballs, tomato sauce & cheese. Comes with garlic bread and salad $21.95
or
Baked Penne Pasta: Italian sausage, onion, bacon and mushrooms in white sauce. Comes with garlic bread & salad $21.95

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Dozens of cheeses, tapenades, olives and specialty items to choose from including our made-in-house crackers.

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  - Rising Energy Costs

The earth in your dirt crawl space is the major source of moisture in your home! This moisture is carried up into your house from the natural upward air flow created from rising heat.

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...LEADERS continued from page 1

Macon County Manager Derek Roland, attended the event. Commissioner Beale serves as the North Carolina representative on the National Association of Counties board.

Congressman Mark Meadows was among the DC leaders to meet with commissioners from his district; and said that having members of the local government in Washington is invaluable.

“Having the opportunity to meet with county leaders in D.C. is always something that I look forward to and provides an excellent opportunity to talk face-to-face about issues that impact my constituents,” said Rep. Meadows. “Macon County Commissioner Ronnie Beale is a tremendous asset and a great advocate for Macon County. While we may represent different political parties, Ronnie Beale is someone I trust and respect and isn’t shy of telling me exactly what he thinks is important to the county, and I appreciate that.”

Rep. Meadows said that he spoke with Macon commissioners about everything from the Affordable Healthcare Act repeal to securing PILT (Payment in Lieu of Taxes) funding.

Payment in lieu of taxes is payments the federal government makes to compensate a local government for some or all of the tax revenue lost due to tax exempt ownership or use of a particular piece of real property.

In Macon County there are 239.31 square miles of USFS land -- 153,159 acres -- which constitutes much of Macon County’s PILT issue.

“Commissioner Beale made it clear that whatever repeal and replacement plan we end up approving, he wanted to make sure that we don’t make the federal government’s decision a problem on the state and county level,” said Rep. Meadows. “And I understand that. We don’t need to balance the federal government’s problems on the backs of our states and counties.”

In addition to the ACA, county commissioners spoke to Rep. Meadows about PILT funding, which is something Rep. Meadows is hopeful about.

“We are pushing for a long-term fix for PILT funding and making sure that those funds are reauthorized for longer than just on a year-to-year basis,” said Rep. Meadows. “I am more hopeful than ever that we will be able to do that this year and grateful to have the support of the county commissioners in doing that.”

...TOURISM continued from page 5

per day during the most recent two-year period,” said Kieltyka.

For Macon County, the eight-year trend for tourist spending is on the incline. Tourist spending topped $152 million in 2015 up from $120.6 million in 2008.

On an average day, tourist spending generated $52,520 in combined state and local tax revenues for Macon County and created $33,479 in local county tax revenues. Tourist spending also generated $74,739 in daily worker paychecks.

Because of the tourism industry and the tax revenue it produces, WCU reports that each of the 25,379 Macon County households pay $755 less in local and state taxes each year. If tourism did not exist, each household would have to pay $755 more in state and local taxes to replace the taxes generated by tourist spending.

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A very special play, Middletown USA, the Highlands Cashiers Players’ dinner theater production, has three more days to run, Thursday through Saturday, March 9-11. There is no Sunday matinee. Middletown was obtained by special permission of the playwright, Dan Clancy, and will not be available to community theaters for some time to come, as it has been optioned for professional production only. This is the only chance to see it in our area.

Written to be presented as a dramatic reading and directed by Ellen Greenwald of Cashiers, Middletown concerns the life stories of two couples, who have been friends for 33 years, performed by four of HCP’s most talented and experienced actors: Michael Lanzilotta, Adair Simon, Ralph Stevens and Lauretta Payne, who movingly relate the joys and sorrows of the characters’ lives.

Several members of last week’s audience and also the actors have commented that they saw something of themselves in the lives of the characters and found themselves laughing at the funny incidents but also on the verge of tears when the couples face some of life’s sorrows.

Proceeds of Rotary Taco Dinner for polio and Alzheimers

The Highlands Rotary Mountaintop is having a Taco Dinner fundraiser at the recreation park on Friday, March 10 from 5-8pm. The cost of admission for the dinner is $10 and includes all the tacos you can eat. No family will pay more than $50, but it is for immediate family only. The proceeds of the evening will go to Rotary’s program to end polio and to fund Alzheimer’s research.

Rotary has been instrumental in nearly eradicating polio from the face of the earth. Polio exists now in only three countries, Nigeria, Pakistan, and Afghanistan and even in those countries, there are only a few reported cases.

Rotary also funds Alzheimer’s research and there is a terrible disease that robs a person of their memory, their dignity and ultimately, their life. There are two Rotary Clubs in Highlands. The Mountaintop Club meets at the Episcopal Church on Monday at 5:30pm and the other club meets at noon at the community building near the ballpark. There are 1,200,000 Rotarians in 35,000 clubs worldwide and they all belong to the largest service organization in the world. In addition to polio and Alzheimer’s research, the club funds projects all over the world to end hunger and disease, advance education, and promote peace. Anyone wanting to join such an organization should contact a Rotarian and ask about membership.
Police & Fire Reports

The Highlands Police log entries from Feb. 22. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Feb. 22
- At 9:22 p.m., officers were called about a simple assault at the Ugly Dog Pub where a woman's glasses were taken and thrown and she was slapped in the face.

Feb. 26
- At 2:30 a.m., Pierson Alexander Benton, 23, of Arden, NC, was arrested for DWI and driving with an expired registration when he was pulled over on Main Street.
- At 6:16 p.m., officers responded to a motor vehicle accident on Carolina Way involving two vehicles.
- At 5:30 p.m., officers received a report of fraud when someone posed as an employee of a phone card machine company to scam money from Farmers Market. $200 in electronic transfer via a phone card was done.

March 3
- At 1:30 p.m., officers responded to a two-vehicle accident on Wyanoak Road.
- At 3:50 p.m., officers responded to a call of shoplifting at Highlands Pharmacy.

Help Wanted

NOW HIRING FOR SECURITY GUARD SHIFTS in Highlands. Two part-time shifts available – 16 hours per weekend. Please call 828-526-4161 (3/16)

HAVE OPENING FOR WAITSTAFF AND DRIVER for transportation. Please apply at Chestnut Hill in Highlands, NC, 24 Clubhouse Trail, (828) 526-5251. (st. 3/9)

DO YOU WANT TO EARN EXTRA MONEY? Retail store in Highlands is looking for someone to work Saturdays. Contact Colleen at 828-482-0286 (st. 3/9)

FURNITURE MAKERS/TRIM CARPENTERS/CABINET INSTALLERS for full-time work in Highlands cabinet shop in Highlands, NC. Please send resume to: info@warthconstruction.com. (st. 3/2)

WOLFGANGS RESTAURANT looking for experienced waitstaff, bartender and bus person. Call Jacque at 828-526-3807 (st. 3/2)

PART TIME ADMIN. ASSISTANT SKY VALLEY COUNTRY CLUB seeks professional, energetic, reliable admin assistant. Up to 32 hours per week, flexible schedule. Duties include assisting with new membership prospects, organizing advertising plan, general office work. Basic computer skills required. Send inquiries to zanepurcell@skyvalleycountryclub.com or call 706 746 5304 (3/2-3/16)

HIGHLANDS INN & HIGHLANDS INN LODGE now accepting applications and interviewing for all positions. Front Desk, Housekeeping, Maintenance, Night Audit, Breakfast Host & cook. Full time and part time available. Call 526-5899 for appointment or stop by 96 log cabin lane for application. Resumes or questions may be emailed to sales@hightownsinnlodge.com. (st. 2/16)

PART TIME CLEANERS needed after hours cleaning banks. Please call Cathy at 828-772-9831 (st. 12/22).

MOUNTAIN FRESH GROCERY is hiring a full-time, experienced line cook. Also hiring a breakfast cook and Deli positions. Please come in person to 521 east Main Street in Highlands to apply or call 828-526-2400.

EXPERIENCED ELECTRICIANS NEEDED. Call 828-526-5147. (st. 11/22)

WANTED

HOUSEKEEPER NEEDED – 5 bedroom house, call Larry – 773-220-8622 (st. 3/9)

ITEMS FOR SALE

2010 UTILITY, LAWN, STOCK TRAILER – 4’x8’ open floor w/4’ fold down ramp, 2‘x2’ expanded metal rails, 4.5’ feedlot panel sides, new tires and trailer jack. Asking $800. Call 526-4959 for more info. (st. 2/2)

WANTED TO BUY

U.S. AND FOREIGN COINS. Call Dan at 828-421-1616. (4/20)

RENTAL/COMMERCIAL FOR RENT

2 BEDROOM, 2 BATH HOUSE, vaulted ceilings, washer/dryer. Potter studio and gas kiln. 6 miles south of Highlands. $900/mth plus utilities. Call 706-490-7036. (st. 3/9)

WAREHOUSE FOR RENT: Christ Church of the Valley, 3,400 sq. ft. heated or unheated. 118 Hwy. 64 East, Cashiers, 743-5400 (st. 3/9)

CASHIERS/SAPPHIRE – Furnished Split Level 3 Bed/3 bath home. Year round Mountain Views. Yearly lease 1,850. per month. Will consider renting 2 Bed/2 Bath level for $1,250. 1,346-6400 (3/23)

2 BEDROOM CONDO FOR RENT IN TOWN – Split living, furnished, mountain view, brand new central heat and air. $1,300/mth plus utilities. Contact Carol Criminger at 828-421-5172 or email carolcriminger@aol.com References required. (st. 2/9)

ONE BED/ONE BATH, furnished. All utilities paid. Call 828-371-0829. (st. 1/12)

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CUSTOM FASHIONS FOR YOUR HOME OR BUSINESS with The Slipcover Chic and The Designing Diva at Kay’s Place in Whistle Stop Mall on River Road off the Highlands Road. Call Kay at 828-421-3879 or Holly at 828-342-1987. (st. 2/9)

ALL AROUND OFFICE SOLUTIONS – Bookkeeping Services, Payroll Prep, Payroll Tax Prep, Billing Services, Virtual Assistant, Data Base Management, Administrative Services, Research Assistance, Quickbooks Set-up and Training. Call Mary James at 828-421-0002 or email mjamess@allaroundofficesolutions.com (st. 1/15)

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MOLD AND MUSTY SMELL IN YOUR HOME? Call for free inspection. 828-743-0900.