

Highlands Newspaper

FREE Every Thursday

Volume 17, Number 47 Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com Thursday, Nov. 19, 2020

COVID-19 county alert system in effect

On Tuesday Gov. Roy Cooper warned North Carolinians that the unfettered spread of COVID-19 could result in snapping back statewide

restrictions on businesses, but now endorsed the idea of a more regional approach.

By using a color-coded map all 100 counties in the state

will be alerted of their current COVID-19 predicament:

- Yellow: Significant Community Spread;

• See COVID page 17

Board of Ed member Goldsmith resigns

New member to be appointed Nov. 30

By Brittney Lofthouse

Macon County Board of Education member Fred Goldsmith announced his resignation from the board during Monday night's board meeting.

Following the superintendent information section of the agenda, Goldsmith announced his resignation, effective immediately due to personal reasons.

Goldsmith was elected to the Board of Education in 2014 when he ran for the seat left vacant by Gary Shields when Shields ran for commissioner. Goldsmith was then re-elected to a second four-year term in 2018. With two years left on his term, a replacement will need to be appointed.

• See BOARD OF ED page 6



Since last week, town bucket trucks have been seen over town hoisting town workers to the highest heights to string lights to be ready for the town's annual "Lighting of the Town" the Saturday after Thanksgiving.

– Photo by Kim Lewicki

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Highlands hybrid holiday lineup

The town's ice-skating rink at K-H Park on Pine Street opens today, Nov. 19 from 1-8 p.m.

It's typically open Thursdays-Sundays but will be open the Wednesday of Thanksgiving week, too.

Reservations for 1 1/2 hour slots are required at icerink.reccdesk.com. Only 30 people are allowed on the ice at one time.

The folks at the Chamber of Commerce have been working with town staff to come up with a way to orchestrate holiday festivities during the COVID pandemic.

Though events planned for the Saturday after Thanksgiving and the first Saturday in December

will not be like events of the recent past, they will be memorable just the same.

Dubbed "Light up the Park," the lights and wreaths being strung up hung up all over town, will turn on at 6 p.m. Before six,

• See HOLIDAY page 17

Proposed 'Cashiers Hillside' community is unveiled

Cashiers Planning Council wants more info prior to approval

On Monday, November 16, plans for a new sustainable community, Cashiers Hillside, were presented to the Cashiers Community Planning Council. The Cashiers Hillside project, led by Macauley Investments, will be located on the southeast

corner of the US 64/NC 107 intersection at Cashiers Crossroads near the Village Green. Cashiers Hillside will be a 57-acre, mixed-use destination, offering year-round residential, hospitality, retail, entertainment

• See CASHIERS page 15

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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

Decision on broadband partner is near



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

Tonight is the November meeting of the Highlands Town Board of Commissioners. It begins at 7 pm by way of Zoom. The Zoom information is on the town website for those who would like to join. I had hoped that the town would be back to in-person meetings by now, but with the impending surge in COVID, we have opted for caution.

I was downtown this past weekend and was very pleased to see how many folks were wearing masks. At this point, the best we all can do is to wear masks in public, socially distance and wash our hands frequently. I am very optimistic that a vaccine will be available before the next Highlands' season. I will take the vaccine when it is appropriate for me to do so.

Tonight's meeting has a full agenda. First up will be the presentation of the 2019-2020 town audit by Martin, Starnes and Associates. The audit has also been sent to the North Carolina Local Government Commission for a standard review.

Also on the agenda, is a proposed ordinance amendment that I touched on in this column last week. I wrote about a bear-resistant toter that had been overfilled to where the lid could not be closed, therefore rendering the container nonfunctional. The amendment to the ordinance will require toters to be completely closed and latched.

The board will also get an update from Kay McHan, the director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce, concerning plans for a modified Christmas Parade. It will not be the same as in the past, just as the Highlands Town Lighting on the weekend after Thanksgiving will be modified.

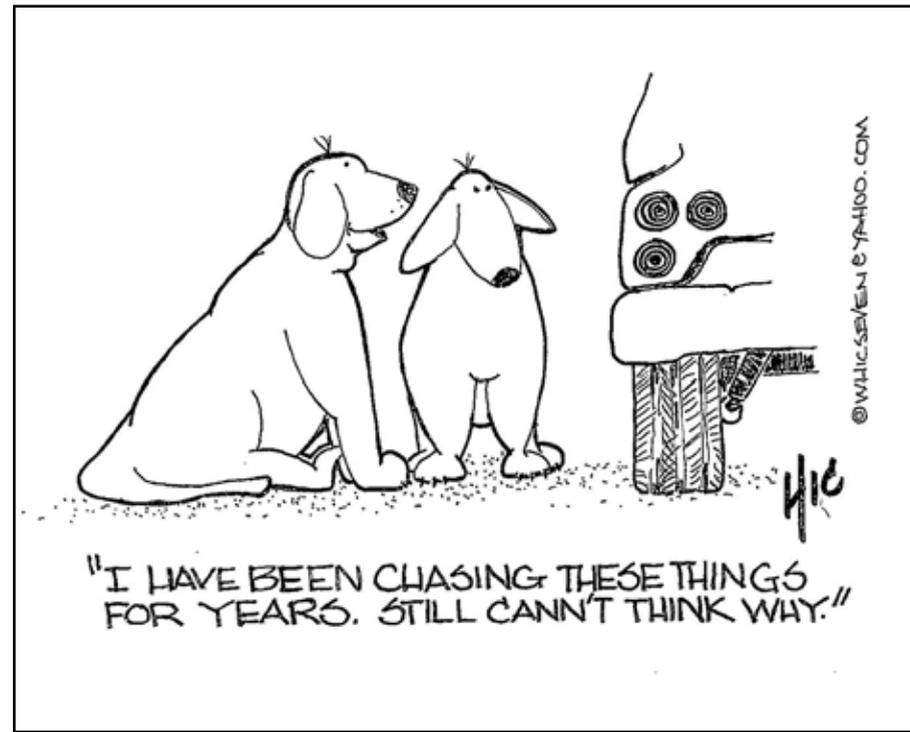
There are two closed session items on the agenda. First, Kevin O'Donnell our electric utility consultant will brief the board on a proposed Duke Energy settlement that involves a number of small municipal electric utilities who purchase electricity wholesale from Duke.

The board will also go into closed session to discuss the selection of a company that will lease the dark fiber on the Highlands Smart Cities Fiber Network. Two companies are under consideration, BalsamWest and Hotwire. Representatives of these companies were interviewed by the board two weeks ago. Since then we have been in a due diligence phase to review both company's financial status and to check references. Under nondisclosure agreements, our town attorney and designated staff have examined each company's financials. They will report to the board. Our town manager has contacted references and other communities that have used these companies' services. He, too, will make a report.

I anticipate the board selecting a company on Thursday night, or very shortly thereafter. The next step would be for the town to enter a phase of developing a formal contact with that company to operate the network which would also involve them building the underground section of the network as soon as possible.

It is time for the town to move forward with the Smart Cities Fiber Network Project without undue delay.

• HIC'S VIEW •



"I HAVE BEEN CHASING THESE THINGS FOR YEARS. STILL CAN'T THINK WAY."

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• WEATHER •

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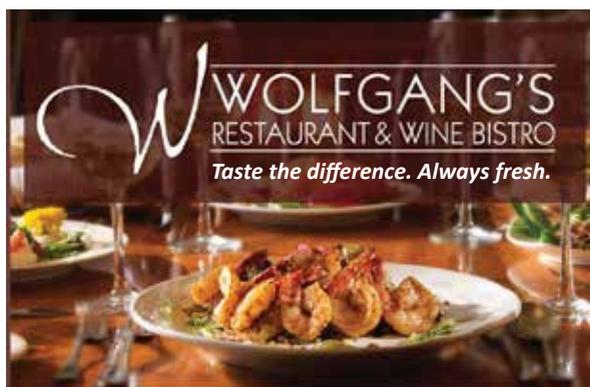
by Old Edwards

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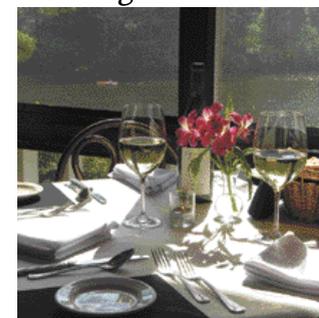
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• THANKS •

Many thanks for the many kind gestures, condolences, cards, food, etc. in the passing of our Mom (Pearle Rogers Lambert P). We are grateful for everything. She touched many in her 100+ years of life.

Sincere thanks,
The Rogers Family

• LETTER •

Town's broadband initiative can't come soon enough!

Dear Editor,

After reading the recent articles and letters pertaining to the town's efforts to build a state-of-the-art broadband service for Highlands, I want to express my gratitude and excitement to connect in the near future. I am a longtime suffering user of the local broadband system and cannot wait for the town's system to be at my house and business.

Right now, the available internet-cable provider on my end of town has limited programming, speed and sometimes unreliable performance. Upgrades to their system have only been promised recently and are because of potential competition from the town's proposed cutting edge system.

In my view, broadband service to rural areas and small communities need government help to make it happen, much like TVA and the Rural Electrification Administration did for electricity 100 years ago. The private business model cannot justify long distances and sparse population. Also, the Covid-19 era has increased the need as many students must go to public buildings to find hot spots for their on-line learning.

Lastly, thank you to Mayor Taylor, Town Manager Josh Ward, and the four Town Board members who support this difficult effort - Commissioners Donnie Calloway, John Dotson, Amy Patterson, and Brian Stiehler.

The complex regulations and changing political hurdles are evidently enormous. Nothing else can benefit our local economy and our quality of life as much as high-tech internet. Hurry and go Highlands.

Hank Ross
Highlands

County approves Hazard Pay for all county employees

By Brittney Lofthouse

With funding from the federal government and higher than expected sales tax revenue collections, Macon County Manager Derek Roland asked the Board of Commissioners last week to approve Hazard Pay Bonuses to all county employees who have worked through the COVID19 Pandemic.

"We always talk about the employees in this organization and how they are great at providing essential services to the folks of Macon County," said Roland. "During all this time, it has never been more truthful and has never become more evident to me personally than it has during the past eight months as Macon County, our State, and Nation have continued to deal with the COVID19 Pandemic. As Macon County Manager, I can assure you that there is no department in this organization that has been spared from the challenges and the challenging times that have been brought about by Covid-19."

Roland asked Commissioners to consider providing all full-time employees with Macon County with a \$750 bonus and part-time employees with \$150 bonus, to show their appreciation for working during the pandemic. The criteria to determine the Holiday bonuses provided by the county is the same criteria used to determine eligibility for the hazard pay bonus.

Roland said it would cost less than \$400,000 to provide all eligible employees with the bonus, but the funds to do it would come at no added expenses to county taxpayers. Macon County received federal funds for COVID19 related expenditures which was used to cover payroll expenses at the Macon County Health Department. That allowed general operating expenses to be spent elsewhere, which Roland proposed to be allocated to county employees.

"We would be able to provide the bonuses to employees with a net-zero impact on the county's budget," said Roland.

Roland explained to commissioners that not only have county employees remained working during the

pandemic, they have seen a significant increase in services. Commissioner Ronnie Beale, who made the motion to grant employees the bonus without hesitation, noted that Macon County is one of the few governments in the state that did not close down and halt operations during the pandemic. Roland agreed and said that some county governments across the state have yet to continue essential services that Macon County never stopped offering.

"I've never been more proud to be a part of this organization and I've never been more proud of the employees in this organization who is chosen to stand in as leaders during the most challenging time that this county, state, or nation has ever faced," said Roland.

Commission Chairman Jim Tate to show their appreciation the Town of Highlands recently increased Christmas bonuses for town employees and reinstated COLA in the budget.

At the end of June, at the height of the pandemic, the board wanted to wait to see how finances played out before agreeing to the COLA expense in the FY '20-'21 budget.

Once it was clear that sales tax and real estate were up, the board said it could afford to reinstate COLA in the budget.

Employees with the town of Franklin did not receive a Cost of Living Adjustment this year, however this year will be the first year that employees will receive a merit-based holiday bonus. The bonus is based on the evaluation policy approved by the council last year and will establish individual bonus values to all employees based on performance.

Commissioner Paul Higdon cast the sole opposing vote to the hazard pay, stating that when county employees are hired, they are hired to work in good times and in bad and they shouldn't get a bonus for simply doing the jobs they were hired to do.

"We hire you to perform in good times and bad

• See HAZARD page 8

Mailbox for Santa letters now in lobby of MC Detention Center

Pictured are members of the Macon County Sheriff's Office with Sheriff Robert Holland



Safe Kids Macon County and the Macon County Sheriff's Office have been specially requested by Santa himself to help out this Christmas. Santa delivered a big red mailbox to the Macon County Sheriff's Office that will allow kids to write a letter directly to Santa.

"We know that this year has been really hard on everyone and that things are going to be different this holiday season, so we wanted to do a little something to help spread some holiday magic to families in our community," said Sheriff Robert Holland. "Make sure that you include a return address, so Santa can send a personalized letter back to your child."

With Safe Kids Macon County and the Macon County Sheriff's Office acting as Santa's elves, every boy and girl who writes a letter to Santa and drops it in Santa's mailbox located inside the lobby of the Macon County Detention Center, will get a special personalized letter back from Santa himself!

"Safe Kids Macon County usually spends the year making sure children in our community are safe through things like car seat checking stations and fire prevention," said Safe Kids Macon County Coordinator Nick Lofthouse. "We were not able to do those things this year due

to COVID19, so we wanted to do something to make sure we stay involved and active in our community."

Sheriff Robert Holland is encouraging teachers to have their classes submit letters as a group and then the class will receive individual replies sent to their classroom teacher to have a fun activity to do together.

The mailbox will be located inside the Macon County Detention Center lobby until December 11. For those unable to drop off a letter in person, letter' can be addressed to Santa and sent to 1820 Lakeside Drive, Franklin NC 28734.

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...BOARD of ED continued from page 1

Board of Education Chairman Jim Breedlove, who just won re-election to the board earlier this month, discussed the timeline and the process for replacing Coach Goldsmith on Monday night. Because the Board of Education is a non-partisan board, it will be the responsibility of the board of education to appoint a replacement. The last time a member resigned and a replacement was appointed was when Stephanie McCall was appointed in 2009.

On a motion made by Stephanie McCall and seconded by Melissa Evans, the Board announced that a Special Called Meeting will take place on Monday, November 30th at 9 am to appoint a replacement for Fred Goldsmith.

Superintendent Dr. Chris

Baldwin and the Macon County Board of Education expressed sincere appreciation to Coach Goldsmith for his passion for education as well as the devotion of time and support given to the Macon County School System.

Monday night also served as the last meeting for McCall, who decided not to seek re-election this year. McCall was appointed to represent the Highlands District on the board in 2009, filling the seat vacated by Frieda Bennet. McCall was selected out of a pool of seven candidates submitted for consideration.

McCall was honored for her time spent on the Macon County Board of Education on Monday night with Superintendent Dr. Chris Baldwin expressing sincere

appreciation to McCall for her passion for education as well as her devotion of time and support given to the Macon County School System.

Because McCall did not file for re-election, Highlander Hilary Wilkes ran unopposed for the vacant seat and will join the Macon County Board of Education on Monday, December 7, 2020.

Other BOE news

Highlands School English teacher Ms. Kelly Pia is transferring to Macon Middle School to be the interim Science teacher once her replacement is hired at Highlands.

Principal Brian Jetter said it will likely happen during the second semester.

• LIFE ON THE SUNNY SIDE •

Phyllis Diller

Phyllis Driver, better known to us as Phyllis Diller, passed away a few years ago at age 95.

She was a very gifted comedian and a gifted entertainer. She was also a wonderful mother. She had five children and they all loved her dearly.

She got her start as a guest on the Groucho Marx TV show. That show launched her career. She was in 42 movies, entertained on Broadway (leading lady on Hello Dolly), had two different TV programs, was a guest over 100 times on different TV shows. She was one of Johnny Carson's favorites as well as Bob Hope and Ed Sullivan. At one time she had her own radio program. She was a concert pianist. She appeared as a piano soloist with symphony orchestras across the country between 1972-1981. The San Francisco Examiner called her

a fine concert pianist with a firm touch. She wrote five best-selling books as well as writing stories for Ellery Queens Mystery Magazine (I remember reading all of Ellery



Kenny Youmans



Queens's mysteries). She was a gifted artist. She toured with Bob Hope entertaining the U.S. troops overseas. Phyllis Diller was a true, loyal American and role model.

She credits the book "The Magic of Thinking Big" by Claude M. Bristol for giving her the confidence she needed to move forward as a stand-up comedian (I know "The Magic of Thinking Big" made a positive difference in my life). She was the first female stand-up comedian. Joan Rivers and Lily Tomlin give her much credit for their success. They both say she was their role model.

Three of her many famous one-liners

"House work won't kill you, but why take a chance?"

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ALL ABOUT BOOKS

• INK PENN •

Another British mystery series

Have you read the Cormoran Strike series by Robert Galbraith aka JK Rowling? I've been hooked since book one and just finished book five—"Troubled Blood." It's a whopper of a book, size-wise, at over 900 pages. When I opened my library copy, I wondered whether I'd mistakenly ordered the large print version, but no, it was the regular book.

It's also a whopper of a book in the story it delivers. It's not often a mystery stays with me, and in this case, it wasn't so much

the mystery at the heart of the book as it was the relationships and family dynamics among the main characters. One reviewer captured my feelings when she wrote, "Galbraith has created a pair of characters who live on in your head after the book is closed."

The first line of the Amazon description reads, "A breathtaking, labyrinthine epic, "Troubled Blood" is the fifth Strike and Robin novel and the most gripping and satisfying yet." I agree wholeheartedly.

In case you've never picked up one of these novels, here's a bit of background—all taken from Amazon, so no spoilers.

The description for book one, "The Cuckoo's Calling," introduces the main character. "After losing his leg to a land mine in Afghanistan, Cormoran Strike is barely scraping by as a private investigator. Strike is down to one client, creditors are calling, and after a breakup with his longtime girlfriend, he's living in his office."

By book two, "The Silkworm," Strike's assistant Robin Ellacott begins to take on a more prominent role, and by the time fans get to "Troubled Blood," they'll be as involved with Robin as they are with Cormoran Strike.

When I glanced at the Amazon reviews



Kathy Manos Penn

to see how other readers felt about the book, I was surprised to learn that some had shunned the book because it was mistakenly described in some media reports as some sort of diatribe against transgenders. I certainly didn't get that sense from the book.

I must admit I skimmed portions of the book that went overboard, in my opinion, on astrology. Perhaps it would

have run only to 700 pages without some of that detail. Still, there are likely plenty of readers who will enjoy reading about astrological signs and tarot cards and how they play into the investigation.



Oddly enough, after finishing this book in which Rowling mentions Aleister Crowley, a British occultist, I heard him referenced in a BBC murder mystery. I wouldn't have taken note of his name if I hadn't read "Troubled Blood." What a strange coincidence.

I've heard book six is in the works and can't wait. If it's only half as good as this one, it will be a winner.

• Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries locally at Books Unlimited in Franklin and on Amazon. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

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...HAZARD continued from page 5

times," said Commissioner Higdon. "I work with people in the private sector and I'm not here to represent the Board of Elections, or the Sheriff's Office, or the Board of Health. I appreciate those boards and those committees and respect them fighting to get more money, but the private sector

employees don't have the same hazard pay and benefit so county employees shouldn't."

Despite saying he appreciated the work county employees perform, he voted against providing them with hazard pay. The Board of Commissioners voted 4-1 to award all eligible county employees with the bonus.

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By Jack Igelman
Carolina Public Press

If the entire Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest road system in Western North Carolina were uncoiled and arranged in a single continuous route, it would stretch from Mount Pisgah to Mount Shasta in California.

While Forest Service roads are not a sexy issue, the topic may be the most meaningful during the ongoing revision of the Pisgah and Nantahala national forests' land management plan, Jill Gottesman of The Wilderness Society said.

"It's one issue that seems to cross every other issue in the forest," she said, whether the topic is access to recreation and

iconic sites within the forest, conservation priorities, timber production or water quality.

"It all comes down to having a sustainable road system in the right places," she said. "Roads should be front and center in the planning process."

Yet maintaining the 2,320-mile road system is among the agency's most formidable challenges, and according to some, the Forest Service must do more to reduce its maintenance backlog before adding more roads to the system for timber and restoration projects.

Damage to streams

"Roads are essential, but they are the greatest contributor to erosion and sedimentation in the forest," said Hugh Irwin, also of The Wilderness Society, adding that conservation values should be a priority in managing the forests' road network.

"The large, unmaintainable road system that we have highlights the need to look objectively at slope, stream crossings, road grade and determine what risk a road would have under increased rainfall due to climate change," he said.

"The system needs to be right-sized for what we know is coming in the future."

In fact, more rainfall over the last decade and heavy use in one of the nation's most popular national forests has contributed to sediment runoff, water quality issues, access problems and barriers to aquatic species, such as native brook trout and salamanders.

Essential for access

Staff officer Barry Jones of the National Forests of North Carolina, who oversees the transportation network in each of the four national forests in North Carolina, said the road system is the "backbone of mobility and access" in the forests for millions

of users.

Jones said 868 miles of the road system is open to the public during some portion of the year. The remaining roadways are decommissioned or used to manage resources, such as timber projects or fire control. "Most (of the public roads) are in really good shape," he said. "The structural integrity of the roads is good."

The Forest Service classifies road miles on a scale of 1 to 5.

Level 1 roads are typically put in storage, while level 5 roads are open and provide a high degree of comfort.

Jones acknowledged that roads must be resilient and there is funding to adapt them to greater rainfall due to climate change.

According to Jones, in the Pisgah Ranger District, 2013 was the wettest year on record. The second-wettest was 2018. In fact, five of the 10 wettest years have been reported within the last decade.

While the impact of a changing climate may have an impact on road quality, the legacy of the road system on public lands in Western North Carolina is also accountable.

An inherited problem

The 18th-century explorer and botanist William Bartram famously described the Western North Carolina landscape as a "world of mountains piled upon mountains."

"The rugged landscape of the region has always been a challenge to build and maintain roads," Irwin said.

"When industrial logging came to the region in the late 1800s, their primary concern was access. They didn't care about the damage," he said, referring to century-old roads and rail beds that were carved into steep terrain and along streams to transport timber.

"Many of those roads became the legacy of our road system. It's a problem we inherited."

Road miles were also carved by the Civilian Conservation Corps during the Great Depression and in the postwar era, when the agency focused on timber production, which required an expansion of the road system, Irwin said.

Though some roads are in good shape, others have been decommissioned and slipped into disrepair.

Can't afford to fix roads

Indeed, like many other public land units, the four national forests in North Carolina have a colossal backlog of repair projects. For the 2019 fiscal year, deferred maintenance surpassed \$45 million.

Jones said the Great American Outdoors Act, which Congress passed over the summer, will "make a huge difference" in the backlog of road projects.

The legislation was signed by President Donald Trump in August and created the National Parks and Public Land Legacy Restoration Fund, which will provide \$9.5 billion over five years to undertake the massive pile of deferred maintenance on public land units in the U.S.

However, according to attorney Sam Evans of the Southern Environmental Law Center, the problem is simple: The Forest Service has more roads than it can maintain.

His worry is that the draft forest plan released earlier this year doesn't do enough to address the backlog of maintenance.

According to figures from the Forest Service provided in a draft transportation analysis in 2015, the agency had enough funding to maintain 12.5% of the

• See USFS page 12

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• BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •

Highlands Rotary clubs collaborate to keep families warm this

The Rotary Club of Highlands and Highlands Mountaintop Rotary have joined forces to bring the community the Winter Warm Wear project that provides anyone in need with coats, socks, and blankets.

Donations are still being accepted, but Former Rotary Club of Highlands President and Chair of the WWW project, Sherry Holt, asks people donating used items to please wash them first to comply COVID guidelines.

Donations can be dropped off at the Highlands Rec Park or to Holt at 16 Holly Tree Lane.

"We know that it has been a hard year for everyone, and we just want to help when we can," said Holt. "It's amazing how this town comes together for something like this. We have received a lot of new coats for children."

This is not the first time the Rotary clubs in Highlands have collaborated, as they often work together on projects such as giving out hot dogs on Halloween. Holt said both Clubs have similar goals, so it's natural they work together.



Pictured are Rotary members accepting donated coats for our upcoming service project Winter Warm Wear. Photo courtesy of Rotary Club of Highlands.

"We are a club of service, so anytime we can help each other out we do," said Holt. "In the end we are all working for the same thing, to make a difference in our community."

Highlands Nature Center Pop Up Shop

Saturday, November 28th | 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In front of Highlands Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd

Earlier this year, the Highlands Nature Center completely revamped the gift shop and added all new merchandise! Unfortunately, COVID-19 hampered plans to share this enlivened addition with the Highlands community and visitors. In the spirit of "Small Business Saturday,"™ the Nature Center will be hosting a pop up shop for all to come check out the new merchandise on Saturday, November 28th from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Stop by, help support the Nature Center, and make a dent in your Christmas shopping list. The new gift shop merchandise will be set up outdoors in front of the Nature Center, 930 Horse Cove Rd.

Available products include a wonderful collection of books, board games, puzzles, and finger puppets for kids as well as coffee mugs, kitchen towels, canvas totes, books, and hats for adults.

Quantities are limited so come early! Please wear a mask and maintain social distancing while you browse. For more info, please call (828) 526-2623.

The Highlands Nature Center is part of the Highlands Biological Station, a multi-campus center of WCU.

The Highlands Emergency Council's (H.E.C.) raffle drawing will be held on Nov. 27 at 2:30 pm.

It's not too late to get tickets!

Stop by the Highlands Emergency Council from 10 am to 2 pm ... on Poplar Street (next to Wilson Gas), before it is too late.



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Natural Products Store



...USFS continued from page 10

road system in Pisgah National Forest and 14% in Nantahala.

In 2015, the SELC commissioned a survey of closed roads to determine if they were adequately maintained to protect aquatic ecosystem integrity. The survey studied roads in tracts of land in portions of the forest that are relatively undeveloped with gated, dead-end roads due to low use.

The results, said Evans, were sobering.

In all, the group surveyed 322 stream and road intersections. Among them, 40% were in violation of “forest practice guidelines” because of erosion at the crossing or sediment delivered into the stream. The inspectors also determined that aquatic organism passage was poor and crossings of smaller streams with pipe culverts were not adequate for small fish and salamanders.

Despite their conclusions, Evans said, the information in the survey did not inform the draft plan.

“We sent the report to the Forest Service, mentioned it in public comments and had meetings to explain it, but the (plan) spends only seven pages discussing the road system,” said Evans, adding that there are no plan components that would reduce road mileage or increase maintenance levels to ensure the system can be adequately maintained.

He said the proposed forest plan fails to “right-size” the road system to match funding expectations. In fact, he anticipates that the road system will expand to meet the proposed forest plan’s timber harvest and timber restoration objectives.

In the proposed forest plan, which was presented to the public in February, the agency developed a tiered approach to land stewardship. Tier 1 goals identify activities and objectives that are within the agency’s budget and capacity. Tier 2

goals outline what the agency can accomplish with the help of partners.

For example, a tier 1 goal aims to maintain 280 miles of roads annually. The tier 2 goal would reduce the road maintenance backlog by 10% annually.

Although the tier 2 goal reduces the backlog, Evans said the tier 1 benchmark should be more ambitious in addressing the backlog and represents the status quo.

The Nantahala-Pisgah Forest Partnership is a collaborative group that provided comprehensive feedback to the Forest Service on the proposed plan, suggested that the tier 1 objective should reduce the road maintenance backlog by 25% and increase the tier 2 objective to reduce the backlog by 50%.

Currently, the agency uses a management process to set priorities, plan, budget, monitor and evaluate the condition of roads.

Jones of the USFS said contractors are employed on a rotating cycle to repair and maintain roads, and the Forest Service uses a database to track conditions. Each road, he said, is on a regular inspection cycle.

The Forest Service, Jones told Carolina Public Press, will complete a “travel analysis report”

within three years of approval of the forest’s land management plan. The management plan is expected to be finalized in late 2021.

The travel analysis is intended to identify a “æminimum road system” that can be maintained within the agency’s anticipated budget and resource objectives. The process is intended to inform the Forest Service on altering road management objectives, which roads to add or decommission and future maintenance responsibilities.

Evans said Pisgah and Nantahala are the only national forests in the U.S. yet to complete a travel analysis report. In 2015, the agency tabled the analysis to focus resources on the forest plan revision that began in 2012.

“The Forest Service dove headfirst into planning and based its management objectives on the road system we currently have rather than the road system we should have,” Evans said. “This effectively locks in a future road system that will not be financially sustainable to maintain.”

Promising partnerships

In the future, however, the Forest Service will rely on other sources of funds and expertise to address road maintenance. One promising partnership is with Trout Unlimited.

TU cold water conserva-

tioned several dozen volunteers to survey streams and road intersections in the national forests to identify places where roads are eroding, where there is significant sedimentation or where culverts to allow streams to flow underneath roads have failed.

Obstructed culverts can create a substantial barrier to species that migrate to breeding grounds or to higher-elevation streams seeking a cooler climate, for example.

TU has focused efforts on two large landscapes, Sky Island in Pisgah National Forest, which includes watersheds southwest of Asheville, and the Wilson Creek Wild and Scenic River watershed near Morganton.

Brown said heavy rains can burden metal or concrete culverts with fallen tree limbs, gravel, sand and other debris.

“Trout and salamanders need to move through the stream system to access higher-elevation headwater streams to spawn, to escape hot summers and to hide from predators,” he said. “The more places you can get to hide, the better off you’ll be. The more habitat you have, the greater your ability for native and wild trout to thrive and grow to a healthy size and population.”

TU, with other partners, has funded the design and replacement of culverts with a bottomless arch structure that allows streams to flow through and provide a wider path for organisms and debris, such as branches from dead hemlocks, to pass during heavy rains. The bottomless structures are designed to last 50-75 years and are more durable than traditional culvert structures.

“For native brook trout this is critical and urgent,” he said.

Since the project began in 2014, the partnership has completed 13 culvert replacement projects. In all, the Forest Service has contributed \$1.25 million, and TU has raised \$1.2 million.

Closed roads limit access

Of course, a well-maintained road system is also vital for human transportation.

Graham County economic development director Sophia Paulos said access to places within Nantahala National Forest is a significant concern among residents in the rural southwestern county.

“When roads are closed because of lack of funding or maintenance, it denies people access to places they remember going to as kids – bear-hunting spots, fishing streams deep in the woods and old homesites,” she said.

“When they are denied access because a road isn’t maintained, it’s disheartening and is the ultimate example of people’s frustration with the agency.”

She also said the local search-and-rescue departments are responsible for evacuating injured users or to find lost hikers.

“When roads are closed, we can’t get to them,” she said. “What’s more frustrating than that?”

Roads also provide access to timber harvesting for economic extraction or for ecological restoration. Though the timber industry is diminished in scale, it’s still a meaningful part of the rural Western North Carolina economy.

The forest products industry in the North Carolina mountains contributed over \$3.4 billion to the state economy in 2018, according to N.C. State University’s extension service.

For timber companies, restoring or building new roads adds significantly to the cost of cutting lumber.

“In places where there is a poor network of roads, the delivered price of timber isn’t enough to justify bidding on a project,” said Rob Elliot, the western vice president of the N.C. Forestry Association, a nonprofit organization.

“We acknowledge that the USFS is underfunded, and the current budget is not enough to support maintenance.”

While conservation groups,

• See USFS page 13



Heavy equipment performs work on bridge in the national forests. Photo courtesy of Trout Unlimited

Highlands hosts Summit for preseason cross country scrimmage

By Brian O'Shea
Plateau Daily News

Long-distance runners from Highlands and Summit Charter schools laced up their sneakers for a preseason cross country scrimmage on Saturday in Highlands.

Highlands boys and girls teams ended up taking first place running the approx. two-mile course with the fastest race times.

Highlands Coach Derek Taylor said a scrimmage is not an official meet, but a warmup for the conference opener that took place yesterday at Swain.

Summit Coach Gretchen Kapity said they were missing a chunk of their team on Saturday with three boys and one girl who could not attend. For the Summit girls who did attend, it was their first time competing in a cross country race and Kapity said they did a great job.

"We have a great, young team this year," said Kapity. "I am excited that we get to run at all and am already looking forward to track in the spring!"

This year's cross country season began about three months later than usual because of COVID-19 restrictions.

Teams could not officially begin practicing until Nov. 4; and coaches, athletes, support staff, and media all must adhere to clearly defined guidelines from

...USFS continued from page 12

such as Trout Unlimited, play a critical role in the stewardship of roads and their environmental impact, so too does the lumber industry.

"In general, the industry wants the same thing as other national forest stakeholders: an efficient and well-maintained road network that allows for (cost-effective) timber harvests and forest restoration projects

• HIGHLANDS SCHOOL VOLLEYBALL TEAMS 2020 •



Highlands Junior Varsity Volleyball Team. Front row from left are Ezra Branham, MacKenzie Woods, Karmen Jenkins, Ashlynn Wilson, and Abigail Nichols. Back row from left are Allie Buck, Olivia Cole, Abbie Doerter, Caroline Woods, Caitlin Tingen, and Anne-Marie Moore.



Highlands Varsity Volleyball Team. Front row from left are Taylor Robinson, Brandy Zagal, Reese Schmitt, Alyson Dayton, and Tessa Wisniewski. Back row from left are Ella Crook, Bailey Schmitt, Anne-Marie Moore, Emma Minton, Julia May Schmitt, and Haley Small.



Jim de la Cruz de Dios takes the lead.

the North Carolina High School Athletic Association in order to participate.

Kapity said the 2020 season

will not include as many meets as a regular season, but runners are looking on the bright side and enjoying the cooler weather.



Claire Worley and Cayden Pierson make their way to the finish line at the school's track at Saturday's pre-season scrimmage.

without negative impacts to water quality and the soil," he said.

"We want good, sustainable forest management to occur, whether that involves reopening closed roads or creating new ones."

Yet, industries in Western North Carolina that rely on timber as a primary input, such as paper, wood processing and furniture, typically rely on timber

from sources other than the national forest. Elliot said that over the last several decades, annual timber harvests in Nantahala and Pisgah declined significantly.

"We've figured out how to survive, but it's to the detriment of the forest itself. The forest's health has declined as management has declined," he added.

"The lack of economically

and environmentally sustainable timber projects makes accomplishing broadly supported forest management objectives to manage wildfire, improve wildlife habitat or to achieve other ecological goals more difficult to implement."

Designing timber projects that all forest stakeholders can agree on is challenging, but Elliot

said that a well-maintained road system is a critical factor.

"There is a global demand for sustainably harvested southern Appalachian hardwoods, and if we're smart stakeholders, we can work together with the Forest Service to design functional projects that support the local economy and the health of the forest," Elliot said.



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• INVESTING AT 4,118 FT. •

How to Make an Offer in a Seller's Market

In this current seller's market we are seeing properties that go under contract within days, or sometimes hours, of coming on the market. Last week I presented an offer on a house for a client, later to find out that there were seven offers within the first 24 hours. This is very different and frustrating for many buyers, and can also be challenging for sellers as well. How do you determine the terms of the offer that work for you as a buyer, but that are also appealing to a seller. Serious buyers must be prepared to make an offer and there are several things that they can do to be prepared.

First, make sure that you are certain in your decision to buy a property. Whether it is going to be a primary residence, second or third home, or investment property, think through the pros and cons and be certain you are ready to make a purchase. This is not the time to make a hasty decision that you will regret in six months or a year.

Second, have an established relationship with a licensed Realtor. Utilize their knowledge, and spend sufficient time learning the market, the neighborhoods, and conveying what you are looking for and what you do not want. Once you have a relationship, it is important to listen and trust their knowledge, especially when quick decisions are necessary.

Another important preparation in this market is for a buyer to be ready to come immediately to view a new listing. A seller is less likely to accept a sight unseen offer in this market, especially when multiple offers are in play. There are exceptions and ways to compensate for this, which I will touch on later.

When writing an offer, these are the terms of the Offer to Purchase and Contract that are the most important:

- **Price** – ultimately, this is what the seller looks for first, but a slight difference in price can be offset by some other terms. This isn't a market where offers below asking price or market value are getting attention. Your agent should be able to provide comparable sales to support your offer. When competing



Carl Romberg, BIC
Landmark Realty
Highlands Office
678-936-9309
carl@landmarkrg.com

offers are going in, a buyer should be prepared to offer above the asking price.

- **Due Diligence Fee** – this is an amount paid to the seller that will apply to the purchase price. If the contract is terminated, the seller retains the due diligence fee. This can be used to make an offer more appealing than a competing offer, as the buyer has money on the line and it indicates they are serious. In some cases, if it isn't included in the first offer, the seller will respond with a request for a due diligence fee and it becomes part of

the negotiation.

- **Earnest Money** – this is refundable during the due diligence period, but a higher amount may get more attention. Once due diligence ends, the earnest money is non refundable, unless the seller cannot complete the transaction. Many times additional earnest money is offered at the end of due diligence, which does get the attention of the seller.

- **Due Diligence Period** – the shorter the due diligence period, the more attractive the offer is to the seller. I have seen some contracts where the due diligence period is only a few days, or waived entirely.

- **Settlement Date** – this can be several days to several weeks or longer after the due diligence period ends. Usually a quicker closing is advantageous unless the seller needs to postpone for some reason.

- **Sale of Another Property** – the buyer must disclose if they need to sell another property in order to close the transaction. With competing offers, if a property must be sold, the property should already be under contract or out of due diligence to gain favor with a seller.

- **Mortgage** – the buyer must also disclose if they need to obtain a mortgage. A cash deal is always preferable to a seller, but with rates as low as they are, many buyers are getting mortgages. This may delay the due diligence period or closing date. If a buyer needs a mortgage, they should have a pre-qualification letter to present with the offer. When able, purchasing with cash and

• See **INVESTING** page 19

...CASHIERS continued from page 1

and amenities that authentically reflect the local mountain village character, its heritage and surrounding natural environment.

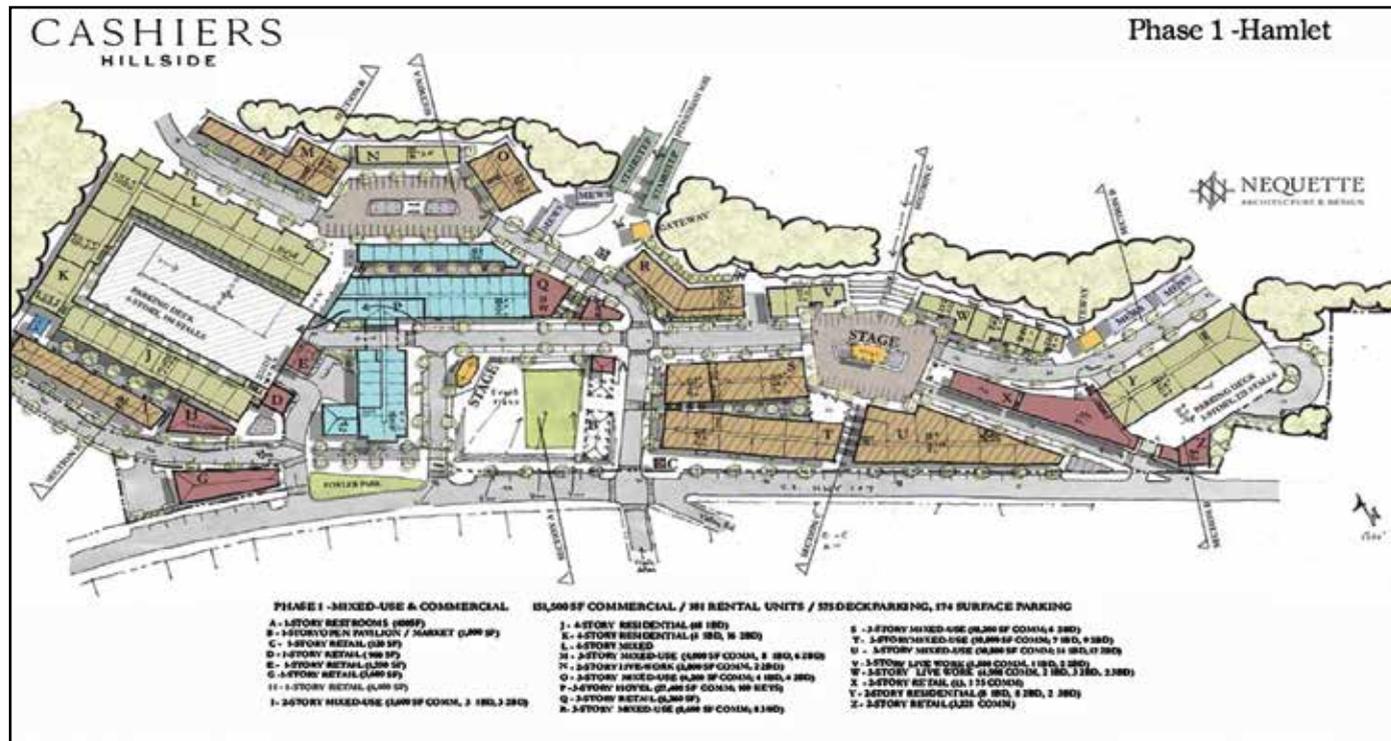
Vehicular and pedestrian efficiency and connectivity are fully incorporated into the plan. The project will include a Frank Allen Road extension to provide convenient access and reduce Crossroads traffic impact and includes thoughtfully designed public parking and pedestrian pathways.

“Throughout our extended planning process, our professional team of town planners, transportation and geotechnical engineers, homebuilders, contractors, economists and other experts have used the Cashiers Small Area Planning document as our comprehensive guide,” explained Stephen Macauley, principal of Macauley Investments. “We want to ensure that our efforts align with the community and government’s priorities as it pertains to commercial, residential, infrastructure, aesthetic, programming and beyond. Infrastructure improvements and expansion will benefit not only our development but also the surrounding community.”

Nature, preservation, and sustainability are a major part of the planning, with emphasis on topography and landscaping. Commercial spaces and homes will feature advanced, efficient building methods and technologies. Environmental goals include net zero carbon emissions, environmentally sensitive enhancements, solar energy, and geothermal. Other approaches include the latest fiber-optic technology and a commitment to dark sky initiatives, reducing light pollution.

Cashiers Hillside will be designed to be a year-round “experiential destination” to complement existing businesses in the village core as well as in the Cashiers Area at large with its tenants intended to enhance the local economy. Independent retailers and artisans will offer shopping, supplemented by unique leisure opportunities, such as an outdoor performance venue, grotto-style spa facilities, community fireplaces, art demonstrations, exhibits and musical performances. Dining options will include farm-to-table restaurants, handcrafted regional specialties, rooftop socializing, healthy carry out and more.

Accommodations will include both “boutique-style” and mid-tier hotels capable of hosting weddings and mid-size corporate events. A culinary kitchen and school will promote workforce expansion through public-private partnerships with universities and colleges. A co-working space and event facility will serve residents



and visitors alike.

Multi-generational residents and guests will experience a hometown atmosphere and enjoy sunset views overlooking Jackson County’s iconic Whiteside Mountain. Housing diversity will support a “live/work/play” lifestyle with proximity to recreation and schools.

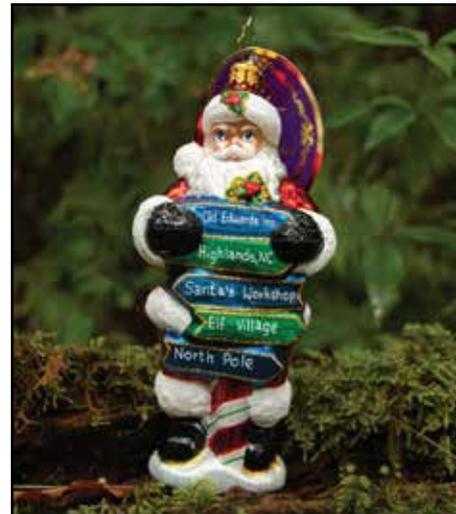
A charitable foundation funded by a percentage of homeowner dues and real estate transaction fees will provide subsidies for affordable rental housing for teachers, first responders and health care workers and underwrite community arts.

With approval, groundbreaking of Cashiers Hillside will begin Q2 2021, with delivery of the first phase expected in 2022. It’s expected to take 7-10 years to build out the entire 57-acre development. For more information, visit www.cashiershillside.com.

About Macauley Investments

For more than three decades, Macauley Investments, LLC, led by Stephen Macauley, has redefined mixed-use development through its pillars, an approach that intertwines the liveability of yesteryear with modern design sensibilities. These pillars provide the foundation for developments that are resilient and capable of withstanding the test of time. Experience has proven that this approach is most successful when balanced with a combination of marketplace dynamics and public-private partnerships. Macauley has a track record of being one of the most successful developers in Atlanta for more than 30 years, receiving countless local, regional and national awards and recognition for his work.

— Submitted



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• BUSINESS / ORGANIZATION NEWS •

ABC Store distributes annual profits



On Monday November 16th, the Town of Highlands ABC Board made their yearly distributions to the The Town of Highlands. Pictured are from right is General Manager Kevin Vinson, Board member Rick Trevathan, Mayor Patrick Taylor, Board Chairman Leslie Cook, Board member Andy Chmar. Not pictured were board members Ryan Bears, David O'Harra and other store employees, Skip Keener, Lisa Talley, Cali Smolarsky, and Milt Stork. Mayor Pat Taylor accepted the distributions on behalf of the different Town Departments. Distributions were as follows: Recreation Dept. \$20,576.36; Highlands School Scholarship Fund \$18,787.11; Town of Highlands General Fund \$21,398.55; Highlands Police Dept. \$6,182.49; and Counseling & Psychotherapy of Highlands (for mandatory alcohol education and rehab distribution) \$8,305.49

Curbside Drop-off at Highlands First Baptist Church for Operation Christmas Child continues

Operation Christmas Child has been collecting and delivering shoebox gifts – filled with school supplies, hygiene items and fun toys – to children worldwide for more than two decades. This is a project that everyone can still be a part of, even with COVID-19 restrictions NOV. 16-23.

There's still time for individuals, families, and groups to transform empty shoeboxes into fun gifts. The project partners with local churches across the globe to deliver these tangible expressions of God's love to children in need. Find a step-by-step guide on the How to Pack a Shoebox webpage.

Highland's location and their scheduled hours are listed below:

First Baptist Church
 Coordinators: Sergio Barranco, Angelica Garcia
 220 Main Street, Highlands
 828-508-7466 or (828) 508-2695

- Thu, Nov. 19: 1-5pm
- Fri, Nov. 20: 1-5pm
- Sat, Nov. 21: noon-5pm
- Sun, Nov. 22: 1-5pm
- Mon, Nov. 23: 10am - noon

Those interested in more information on how Operation Christmas Child is making adjustments during its National Collection Week can visit the

organization's Important COVID-19 Updates webpage for the latest information and answers to Frequently Asked Questions.

Operation Christmas Child, a project of Samaritan's Purse, seeks to demonstrate God's love in a tangible way to children in need around the world and, together with the local church worldwide, to share the Good News of Jesus Christ. Since 1993, Operation Christmas Child has collected and delivered more than 178 million gift-filled shoeboxes to children in more than 160 countries and territories.



let's leave the
AGING
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...COVID continued from page 1

- Orange: Substantial Community Spread;

- Red: Critical Community Spread.

Macon County is currently yellow with 866 case as of press time; 59 positive cases and 129 tests pending.

The COVID-19 County Alert System uses a combination of three metrics: case rate, the percent of tests that are positive, and hospital impact within the county.

To be assigned to the red or orange tier, a county must meet the threshold for case rate for that tier AND the threshold for either percent positive OR hospital impact.

Case Rate: The number of new cases in 14 days per 100,000 people

Percent Positive: The percent of tests that are positive over 14 days

Hospital Impact: A composite score based on the impact that COVID-19 has had on hospitals including percent of COVID-19 hospitalizations, COVID-19 related visits to the Emergency Department, staffed open hospital beds, and critical staffing shortages over 14 days

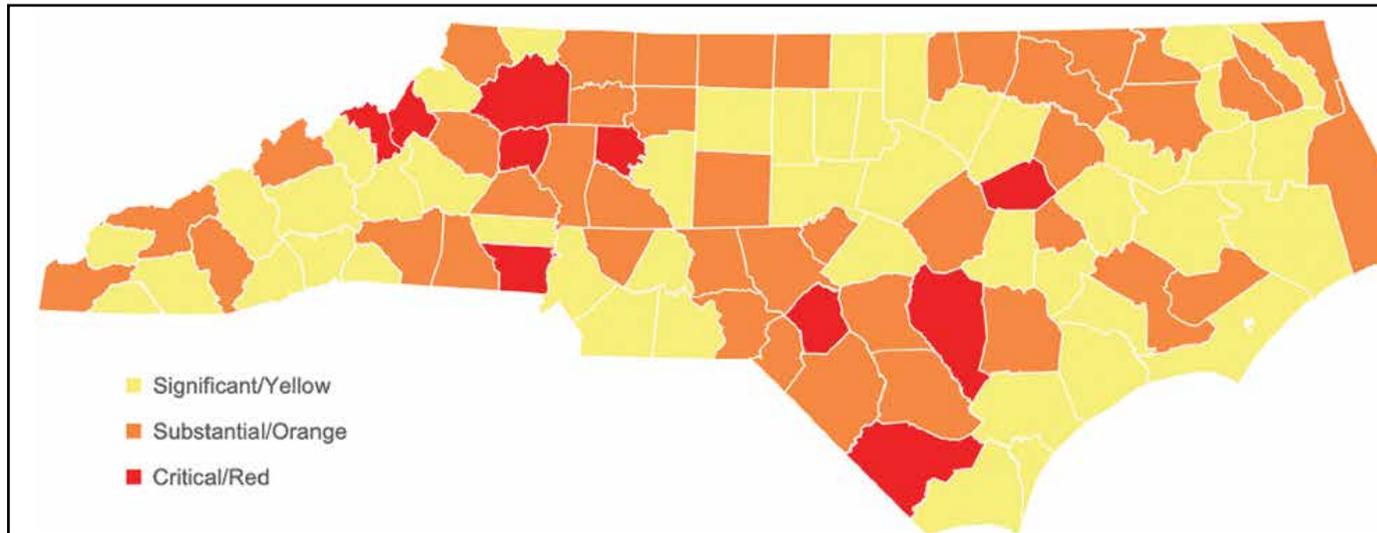
Counties that do not meet criteria for red or orange are categorized as being in the yellow tier

“North Carolina’s COVID-19 numbers remain too high,” Cooper said on another day of more than 3,000 confirmed cases.

The color-coded designations also come with a series of actionable recommendations for county governments, including ending alcohol sales after a certain hour or limiting indoor dining.

“By pinpointing counties with high

Color Coded County Alert System



virus transmission and asking people in those counties to work with us and do more right now to slow viral spread, we can succeed,” Cooper said. “It can help bring down case rates, keep their communities safer, save lives and keep their hospital systems working.”

According to a report on COVID-19 clusters in North Carolina updated Monday afternoon, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services has learned of at least 31 COVID-19 clusters stemming from social gatherings, resulting in 316 cases and four deaths. Health officials have repeatedly said the current spike in COVID-19 cases is being driven by gatherings among people who do not live in the same household.

Cooper’s announcement does not

affect the current Executive Order for Phase 3, which currently runs until December 4. No other aspects of the current phase will change -- outdoor gathering limits will remain at 50 people, bars and movie theaters will be allowed to remain open, and all businesses will be subject to capacity limits.

With many North Carolinians planning gatherings with family and friends for Thanksgiving, health officials again urged compliance with the 3 W’s to prevent an even greater spike in COVID-19 following the holiday season.

...HOLIDAY continued from page 1

however, Santa and Mrs. Claus who will be riding a firetruck through town to end up at the Kelsey-Hutchinson Park where elves will toss candy canes to folks driving through.

Since Governor Roy Cooper has extended Phase 3 and mass gatherings of only 50 people are allowed through Dec. 4, the chamber thought it was best to err on the side of caution and encourage people to drive through the park – pausing of course for candy canes and pictures – rather than gathering in-person this year. There is no program.

To be COVID safe, Santa and Mrs. Claus will not be in Santa’s Hut this year, but families can still use the hut and sleigh

for photos Nov. 28-Jan. 1 and letters to Santa can be deposited in the mailbox on site.

The town’s ice-skating rink will be open Saturday, Nov. 28 from 1-8 p.m. but reservations are required. Register online at icerink.recdesk.com.

The movie “Elf” will be playing the evening of Saturday, Nov. 28, too, at Ray’s Drive-in at the Performing Arts Center drive-up theatre on Laurel Street. The movie is free and starts at 7pm, after the town lighting. Reservations are required because there are only 32 unobstructed view parking spaces. Call 828.526.9047 or register online at www.highlandspac.org or www.HighlandsPAC.org.

• See HOLIDAY page 21

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Facing Today's World

Rev. Sam Forrester
Whiteside Presbyterian Church

What I want to do is an article concerning the election and the confusion it has brought into many of our lives. As believers we should be able to take such things and deal with them in a way that will bring glory to our Lord. We will start with a look at I John 5:1-5 which should be a background for our thoughts. Whoever believes that Jesus is the Christ is born of God, and everyone who loves Him who begot also loves him who is begotten of Him.

By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep His commandments. For this is the love of God, that we keep His commandments. And His commandments are not burdensome. For whoever is born of God overcomes the world. And this is the victory that has overcome the world – our faith. Who is he who overcomes the world, but he who believes that Jesus is the Son of God.

In this passage we are told how to overcome the world. In turn this also teaches us how to face these election results. I have talked with a number of people about the election we are going through. I have heard them express anger, frustration, anxiety, confusion and sorrow over its results. None of these things is good for you over something that is beyond your ability to change. How are we supposed to handle such events in our lives?

First, you cannot allow your anger to cause you to sin. Some of you have said you won't participate again because you don't trust those running things. That is your anger trying to divert you from what your Lord has called you to do and that is to be salt and light in this imperfect world and to live by faith. God gave us this nation and we must do what we are called to do and that is to participate in her elections. Our voices must be heard. Others are overwhelmed with anxiety and depressed because it didn't go their way. Some are filled with anger because they believe the government or maybe even God let them down.

What I want you to know is that anxiety and anger are real enemies to God's children. This election has caused many to have to deal with this in their lives. That also includes me. I know how hard it is. Paul in II Timothy 1:7 says "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind."

The question is how to activate these gifts? The first thing we need to ever keep before us is that our God is sovereign. That means He is in control of everything and

•See SPIRITUALLY page 19

Proverbs 3:5

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Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

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Randy Reed, Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street
Sundays: Worship: 11

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670 N. 4th Street (next to the Highlands Civic Center)
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Wednesday: Prayer Service, 6:30 p.

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• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Nov. 9. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or public officials have been used.

Nov. 9

• At 8:59 a.m., officers were called about a larceny at Mountain Findings where donated phones and a calculator were taken.

• At 3:59 p.m., officers were called about someone trying to obtain property by false pretenses at Bryson's Food Store.

Nov. 12

• At 6 p.m., officers were called about a missing 88-year-old woman She

was located.

Nov. 14

• At 4:38 p.m., officers were called about a shoplifting incident at Wit's End where a Joules Merrium vest valued at \$155 was taken.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Nov. 10

Nov. 10

• At 10:18 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Half Mile Dr.

• At 10:40 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Tudor Hall Lane.

• At 1:51 p.m., the dept. was first-

responders to a location on the Cashiers Road.

• At 10:11 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Stoney Creek.

Nov. 11

• At 7:19 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at the hospital.

• At 8:40 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on N. 4th Street.

Nov. 12

• At 7:50 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Big View Dr.

• At 3:21 p.m., the dept. responded to a call of a gas leak at a location on Foreman Road.

• At 6:26 p.m., the dept. was called

about a search on Main Street but it was cancelled.

Nov. 14

• At 2:54 a.m., the dept. was called for mutual aid in Cashiers but it was cancelled.

• At 5:20 p.m., the dept. was called about a search on Whiteside Mountain Road but it was cancelled.

Nov. 16

• At 5:31 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Lyman Zachary Road.

• At 10:51 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a location on Main Street.

...SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING continued from page 19

He has a plan for each nation and every individual in this world. Daniel 2:21 "And He changes the times and the seasons; He removes kings and raises up kings; He gives wisdom to the wise and knowledge to those who have understanding."

This tells us God's plan is the one being worked out, even in this election. I Peter 2:13-14 "Therefore submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake, whether to the king as supreme or to governors, as those sent by him for the punishment of evildoers and for the praise of those who do good."

If this election result holds up, Joe Biden will have been placed in office by the sovereign will of God. As a believer the only reason I can see for this, would be to punish this nation and those responsible for the sins that have drawn us away from our love of God and what he has done for us in Jesus Christ. How many children, the most helpless among us, have been slaughtered through abortion?

...INVESTING continued from page 14

refinancing later may be favorable to the seller.

• Onsite Preview Addendum – this can be used when a buyer has not seen the property. Like the due diligence fee, it is paid directly to the seller and will state how long the buyer has to view the property. If the buyer decides not to proceed with the purchase, the seller retains the fee; if the buyer closes, it is applied to the purchase price.

• Personal Property – the MLS will

We have recognized the sin of homosexuality and declared God was wrong in condemning it. We have allowed men to outwardly change their sex and declare God made a mistake in making them what they were. Many of our churches have abandoned the preaching of the word for the entertaining of the people. All of these things deserve the wrath of God. This could be the beginning of the time of judgment or just another warning that it is coming. Paul says in Roman 13:1 "Let every soul be subject to the governing authorities. For there is no authority except from God, and the authorities that exist are appointed by God." He shows those who do good will be rewarded and those who do evil will be punished.

Should we, as believers, be overcome with anxiety or anger because this election has not gone as we had hoped? No! We must not give in to such hopeless behavior. Psalm 22:28 says "For the kingdom is the

state which appliances are included and if the home is being sold furnished or not; or with exclusions. A seller's market is not the time to insult the seller by asking for all furnishings when the property is being sold without furnishings. The best advice is to negotiate the purchase of the property and then negotiate furnishings.

• Seller Possession After Closing Addendum – this document has more impact on an offer than many buyers or sellers realize. At this time of year, the seller

Lord's, and He rules over the nations." This nation of America is in the hands of the sovereign Lord regardless of who is president. He tells us in Proverbs 21:1 "The king's heart is in the hand of the Lord, like the rivers of water; He turns it wherever He wishes."

How do we fight this anxiety or anger we are facing? With the knowledge of who our God is and what he can do. No man, no president or tyrant can thwart the will of God. Asaph in Psalm 75:7-10 tells us "But God is the Judge: He puts down one and exalts another. For in the hand of the Lord there is a cup, and the wine is red; It is fully mixed, and He pours it out; Surely its dregs shall all the wicked of the earth drain and drink down. But I will declare forever, I will sing praises to the God of Jacob. All the horns of the wicked will be cut off, but the horns of the righteous shall be exalted."

I know we all have our preference as to who our president should be but don't

may appreciate having possession until after the holidays. Many times the seller isn't comfortable moving out until the deal is closed. Or perhaps, the seller needs time to do work on a property they are moving to. A buyer that can be flexible may gain the upper hand of offers presented.

A buyer and their Realtor should be able to talk through these terms and be able to put together an offer that is attractive to a seller, but that the buyer is comfortable with. When multiple offers are involved, there are going to be offers that are not accepted.

be guilty of ignoring God's plan. If you believe He is sovereign, the Creator of man and nations and the One who sent His Son to save your soul. Then, lift your voice and rejoice that His plan in being fulfilled because it is a plan that exalts those who believe and trust in Jesus Christ.

So, how do you activate these gifts II Timothy 1:7 says God has given you? What did he tell you? He said, "For God has not given us a spirit of fear, but of power and of love and of a sound mind." These gifts of power, love and a sound mind come from only one place, your absolute commitment to Jesus Christ, which is faith generated.

Please, keep your attention on Jesus and what he did for you and let God direct the affairs of this nation as only He can do. You live and approach your duty by faith and through that faith you will overcome this world and the affairs of nations will not turn your heart from the truth.

Buyers that are not successful should continue to work towards improving their offer for the next time. In this market, the ability to react is important, but so is patience for the right property purchase under terms that are acceptable to both parties.

• *Carl Romberg is the Broker-in-Charge of Landmark Realty Group's Highlands Office. Landmark has been the firm with the largest volume of sales on the plateau each of the past 7 years. Carl can be reached at 678-936-9309 or carl@landmarkerg.com.*



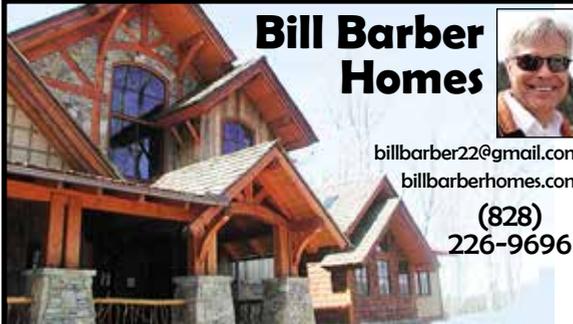
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...HOLIDAY continued from page 17

The following Saturday, Dec. 5 a hybrid Olde Mountain Christmas parade will take place from 6-8:30pm.

Instead of folks lining Main Street watching the parade go by, folks in their vehicles will drive by floats set up in the center of Main Street from 3rd to 5th streets in a pre-determined traffic loop. Traffic will continue through K-H Park on Pine Street where Santa and his elves will again be on a firetruck giving out candy canes and the Pinnacle Brass Ensemble will be performing on stage.

Shop owners will be encouraged to keep the lights on in their stores to help light up the Main Street and those with floats are being encouraged to use decorative lights.

In addition to floats, there will be antique cars, the homecoming court and music courtesy of bands set up along the way – the Curtis Blackwell Band, the Dean English Band and bagpipers, too.

– Kim Lewicki

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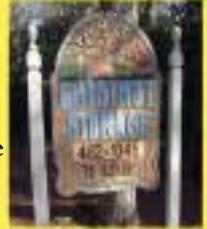
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WOLFGANGS is looking for hostess, waitstaff, and backer. Best award of Wine Spectator. Please call Jacque at 828-526-3807 for either positions. (st. 5/28)

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HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VINSON; scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to

DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208. (st. 6/4)

BUSINESS FOR SALE

CASHIERS RESTAURANT. Owner is retiring from Randevu Restaurant. Turn Key Operation in the center of town. Contact Michael Moore for details. Call 603-520-0523. Randevucashiers@gmail.com (st. 11/19)

REAL ESTATE/BIZ FOR SALE

HIGHLANDS CONDO - 1 bed plus bonus room with 2 bathrooms, activity room, one-car garage. 239-597-2959. (st. 7/16)

LOTS. 3.22 ACRES. Borders NSFS. VIEWS. Well, septic, utilities, roads installed. PRIVATE. Multiple exit/entry. 2/2 residence. asking \$186,000 Call 828.482.2050.

SIX ACRES ON BUCK CREEK ROAD behind Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. Sign on property. 843-460-8015. (st. 5/30)

2/2 CLAYTON HOME IN LOWER CLEAR CREEK. 1+acre, Private. View. \$118,000. Call 706.782.9728 (st. 9/5)

REAL ESTATE FOR RENT

3B/2.5B HOUSE IN THE HALF MILE FARM NEIGHBORHOOD. Large ranch style. Hardwood floors. Fence in backyard. Small deck. Six month lease available. Pets ok. Please call or text 904-403-8090. \$1200/month. (st. 11/19)

LONGTERM/SHORTTERM RENTAL IN SCALY MOUNTAIN, NC. \$1,100 Per Month. 1BR/1BA Apartment available Jan 2021. All Utilities Included. Fully furnished. Living/Dining Area with Full Kitchen. References Required. Security Deposit Required. Pet Friendly. Limited to (1) One Pet Only. Pet Deposit Required. Interested email or call me @ bobhenritze@gmail.com or 828-482-2554. (st. 11/5)

EXECUTIVE RENTAL - Very high-end home close to downtown Highlands in superb neighborhood and furnished. Available for long-term rental. Call Jody or Wood Lovell. Highlands Sotheby's International Realty. 828.526.4104. (st. 10/29)

CUTE 2 BEDROOM, 2 BATH COTTAGE and bonus room. Terrific large porch and wood burning fireplace 8 mins from town. \$1500/month. Furnished or unfurnished. Minimum one year rental. Available later this fall. Mrpaulkrk@yahoo.com (st. 9/3)

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