

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Aug. 27, 2026

Town Board adopts data center moratorium

Starts work on ordinance and discusses Planning Board task

By Kim Lewicki

Last month, Highlands Town Attorney Nick Tosco was charged with outlining a

moratorium to deter data center proliferation in Highlands. The moratorium will be followed by an ordinance that commission-

ers said needs to be defensible against legal claims.

Commissioner Amy Patter-

• See TOWN BOARD page 5

Welcome back! From the Highlands School family!



Tues., Aug. 18, the The Boys and Girls Club of the Plateau treated the most of the 65-member Highlands School family to breakfast at the Highlands Falls Country Club.

So far, there are 85 elementary students, 85 middle school students, and 160 high school students – about 330 students this 2026-27 school year in Highlands School. The final count isn't taken until two weeks in.

There are several new staff members this year – Merissa DeHart is the new Kindergarten teacher; Jennifer Shackley is the new 6th-grade ELA/SS teacher; Brooke Waldroop as the new EC teacher assistant; and Cheryl Durden is a new custodian

2025 visitor impact for Macon Co. is tallied

Visitor spending in the county increases by 11.1% to \$386 million

According to Visit North Carolina, domestic and international visitors to and within Macon County spent \$386 in 2025, an increase of 11.1% from 2024. The data comes from an annual study commissioned by Visit

North Carolina, which is part of the Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina.

"Tourism is an essential part of the economic well-being of Highlands and Macon County, and these numbers demonstrate

just how far its impact reaches," said Johanna Fein, Executive Director of the Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC. "An 11.1% increase in visitor spending means more

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Escape for 90 minutes with SHOWSTOPPERS!

By Kim Lewicki

There are only 4 performances of SHOWSTOPPERS! left at the PAC on Chestnut Street in Highlands – Thurs., Aug. 27 at 7p; Sat., Aug. 29 at 2p and 7p, and Sun., Aug. 30 at 2p.

Residents of Macon, Jackson, and Rabun counties can see SHOWSTOPPERS! for only \$30 and students under 18 are FREE thanks to the Cullasaja Women's Outreach.

Bring your ID one hour prior to the show and get your \$30 ticket.

SHOWSTOPPERS! is a family-friendly, energetic celebration of the music and moments made famous on Broadway and Hollywood packed into 90 minutes of pure joy.

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The show is at PAC through August 30th. For more information call 828-526-2695.



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

• SNAPSHOT •

Lessons from Maine

Sallie and I have spent the past week in Maine at a cottage that overlooks a beautiful bay. The early 1900s cottage sits on a small island cove lined with natural boulder walls. We can see lobster trap buoys bobbing in the water right in front of the house. I have spent a lot of time watching the strong tides come and go.

At high tide, the cove shore is covered with floating layers of yellowish mats of seaweed. Further inspection of the seaweed reveals vibrant plants that I am sure sustain all sorts of animal life.

At low tide, that seaweed and most of the seaweed mats fall on the sandy and rock-laden floor while some continue to float and bob in the water. At this low tide point, the seaweed looks very different, as if it is dead and rotting. Some may contend it is a distracting cover hiding the beauty of those fantastic boulders adorning the



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

shore.

While homeowners around this unique shoreline have chairs and tables next to the boulders and shore, they have no docks, boats, or other human devices on the shore. Boats, for instance, are moored at a small island marina at the neighborhood entrance.

I suspect, for a compelling cause, the State of Maine has robust regulations about what can and cannot be done to the shoreline. Maine is a tourist destination

where people like me flock to devour lobster, clams, oysters, and all kinds of fish. The last thing the people of Maine want to see is this linchpin of their economy compromised by bad environmental and conservation policies.

I suspect a few residents might want to clear their property of those mats of seaweed with herbicides and algicides, but strict state regulations prohibit their use except in rare circumstances and under the control of a licensed professional. Certainly, routine spraying of these chemicals by residents would not be allowed, especially since there are lobster traps and oyster beds nearby. Those independent Mainers want to promote and market their seafood as the best and cleanest in the world.

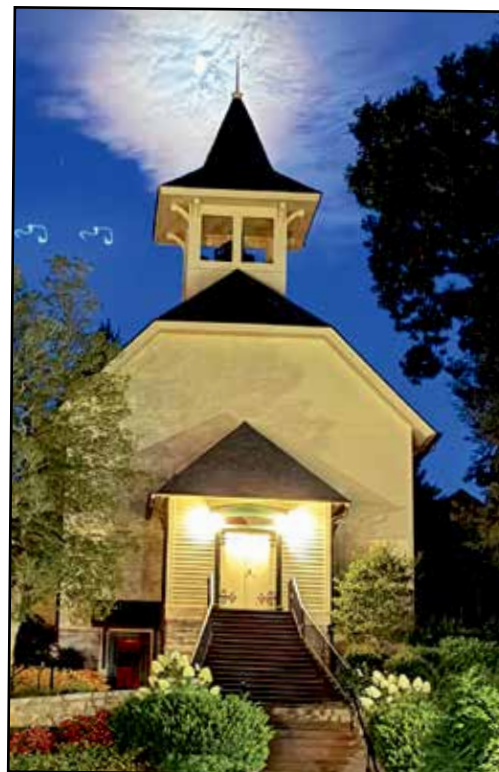
I am always the Mayor on Duty, so when I got a call from an 828 number late Friday afternoon, I, of course, answered it. On the line was a young man from a company that uses chemicals to remove weeds and plants from lakes and ponds. He let me know that he had talked with some residents on either Mirror Lake or maybe Lake Sequoyah about his company removing areas weeds from the lakes. He asked whether the town had ordinances about such activities.

My response was that, since these two lakes are critical to our watershed and drinking water, I certainly had concerns. The state may even view some of these weed areas as wetlands. I referred him to our Town Manager for more definite information. I also gave Josh Ward a heads up that he should expect a call about this proposed activity. Josh informed me that we would expect such operations having to go through a review and approval process from the North Carolina

• See MAYOR page 25

Just another mystical, magical night in Highlands!

Photo by Ron Johnson



Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our "SnapShot" section? Email it to highlandseditor@aol.com or text it to 828-200-1371, with a brief description and a name. No anonymous photos will be accepted.

• WEATHER •

Thu, 27-Aug	Fri, 28-Aug	Sat, 29-Aug	Sun, 30-Aug
			
75°F 59°F	73°F 59°F	75°F 60°F	75°F 58°F
An afternoon t-storm or two	Periods of sun with a t-storm	A p.m. t-storm in spots	Humid; a stray p.m. t-storm
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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •



HHS Gala was a 'roaring' success

The Highlands Historical Society held its annual fundraiser at the 1880 Highlands Inn, Sunday, Aug. 16. The theme was 1920s Gatsby era. The guests turned out in their finest sequence and. There was a silent auction with raffle tickets, a professional photo booth, a ragtime piano player and a wonderful four-piece band. The food was catered by The Kitchen and drinks were flowing as the 150 guests mingled in their fun party attire. According to president Price Kloess the "lion's share of the \$15,000 raised will go to support scholarships for local high school students.



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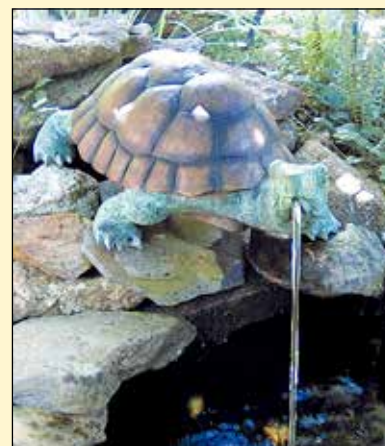


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...TOWN BOARD continued from page 1

son, who is one of the two non-voting members of the Macon County Planning Board (the Town of Franklin's representative is the other) has been vocal about the need for the county – whose land is outside Highlands corporate boundaries – to not just adopt amendments to its high-impact ordinance but to issue a moratorium. So far, the county hasn't expressed an interest.

Due to the lack of flat land as well as the price of land within the corporate limits of Highlands, commissioners agree that the chance of a data center setting up shop in Highlands is slim, but they decided to err on the side of caution.

"It's better to be safe than sorry," said Mayor pro temp Jim Tate at the August Town Board meeting.

Highlands Town Attorney Tosco, who has formulated numerous moratoriums and subsequent ordinances about data centers in NC, presented an "Overview of Data Center Moratoriums and Ordinances in North Carolina" last Thursday.

He said data centers represent one of the fastest-growing land uses in North

Carolina, driven by available power capacity, industrially zoned land, and proximity to fiber corridors.

"Consequently, communities across the state are adapting their land use frameworks in real time to keep pace with this demand," said Tosco.

As of Aug. 20, 21 data center projects have been announced, 38 jurisdictions have adopted a moratorium, and 13 jurisdictions have adopted zoning regulations.

"Thirty-eight jurisdictions in NC have adopted a moratorium on data center approvals and among the 38 jurisdictions, 68.4% have adopted a year-long moratorium," he said.

The shortest moratorium in effect is for two months by the towns of Mayodan (adopted in June) and Mount Airy (adopted in July).

The longest moratorium was adopted by the county of Northampton for two years and eight months in effect since May. The Town of Franklin adopted a year-long moratorium effective June 2026.

Tosco said 13 jurisdictions have only

• See **TOWN BOARD** page 13

2026 Town of Highlands Scholarship Golf Tournament

The 2026 Town of Highlands Scholarship Golf Tournament at the Cullasaja Club is Monday, Sept. 21

The day will begin with a light breakfast, followed by at 10:30a shotgun start. Following golf, there is a full buffet dinner in the Cullasaja Club clubhouse. The event will be capped off at 28 teams.

The cost is \$800 per team (\$200/player). Hole sponsorships are available, as well as a variety of sponsorship levels. Mike and Jim Bryson are sponsors of the event. For more information call Brian Stiehler (787-2778) or to register, contact Gibby Shaheen at Town Hall by calling 526-2118.

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Inventory and a stable market makes 'Highlands' a long-term investment

Highlands, North Carolina, enters the second quarter of 2026 with remarkable energy, reaffirming its place as a cornerstone of high-end Southern real estate. Characterized by accelerating transaction speeds and rising property values, the local market is moving through a dynamic period defined by both active buyer competition and expanding choices.

The most striking highlight of the Q2 market is the robust surge in property values. The median sale price reached \$1,118,466, a 16.1% climb compared to Q2 2025, while the average sale price jumped 13.7% to \$1,642,310. This impressive double-digit appreciation reflects sustained, high-intent demand from luxury buyers seeking premium primary and second-home mountain retreats. Closed sales volume also grew by 6.8% year-over-year, demonstrating that buyers remain highly motivated to transact.

Unlike previous periods defined by constrained choices, the market is benefitting from a healthy infusion of fresh opportunities. New listings rose 5.3%



Gary Scott
Howard Hanna Allen
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year-over-year, contributing to an overall inventory growth of 11.1% compared to Q2 2025. Despite this influx of inventory, the months' supply of inventory (MSI) held perfectly steady at 13.6 months. In a high-end secondary market, this balanced supply level allows buyers broader options without diluting seller value.

Market velocity has accelerated noticeably. Homes are moving off the market significantly faster, with average days on market (DOM) dropping 23.8% to just 93 days. This shift underscores a sense of urgency among buyers when well-priced, high-quality properties hit the market. Furthermore, sellers continue to command solid negotiating leverage, with the list-to-close price ratio holding strong at 95.1%, virtually unchanged from this same time last year.

For property owners considering a sale, expanding buyer demand coupled with rising median prices creates an optimal environment to leverage your built-in equity. With homes selling in under three months on average, strategically priced properties are capturing quick attention. For buyers, the expanded listing inventory provides a broader selection of premier mountain estates, while stable market conditions offer a clear, reliable landscape for long-term investments.

Whether you are looking to invest in Highlands' luxury real estate or establish your permanent mountain sanctuary, Highlands real estate agents are dedicated to guiding you through every step.

• Gary Scott is president of Howard Hanna Allen Tate|Howard Hanna Virginia. The firm has experienced local advisors who bring deep market knowledge and end-to-end client support across mortgage, title, insurance, and relocation. Contact Howard Hanna Allen Tate today to explore your Highlands opportunity.

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...VISITOR continued page from 1

than dollars coming into our community. It means jobs for our neighbors, support for local businesses, meaningful tax revenue and greater opportunities to invest in the quality of life we all value. Tourism helps sustain the vibrant shops, restaurants, cultural experiences and outdoor assets that make Highlands such a special place to visit and, more importantly, such an extraordinary place to call home.”

Tourism impact highlights for 2025:

- The travel and tourism industry directly employs more than 1,810 in Macon County.
- Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Macon County was \$96.16 million.
- State tax revenue generated in Macon County totaled \$12.83 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. About \$20.67 million in local taxes were generated from occupancy, sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel supported businesses.
- Each Macon County resident

saved \$1,520.51 on average in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the county. Savings per capita statewide averaged \$244.

These statistics come from “The Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties 2025,” which can be accessed at VisitNC.com/economic-impact. The study was prepared for Visit North Carolina by Tourism Economics.

Statewide, visitor spending in 2025 rose 1.3 percent to reach a record \$37.2 billion. Direct tourism employment increased 0.3% to 230,997. Fifty-nine percent of counties experienced increases in visitor spending from 2024 to 2025 with 14 percent recording flat performance.

“As much as we’d love to see growth in each of our 100 counties, the study confirms the vitality of North Carolina’s tourism economy,” said Wit Tuttell, executive director of Visit NC. “With the approach the two-year milestone of Hurricane Helene, we can draw inspiration from mountain counties that have experienced a turnaround as we continue the effort to see

every destination reach higher ground.” Noting the economic uncertainties that have been present since the pandemic, Tuttell encouraged state residents and tourism leaders alike to spread the message about the rewards of North Carolina travel.

“Those who take trips to and within North Carolina are elevated by the authenticity of what they experience,” he said. “Our culture, our cuisine and our vast outdoor wonders not only bring pleasure. They also serve as an economic engine that makes our lives better.”

North Carolina tourism facts:

- Total spending by domestic and international visitors in North Carolina reached \$37.2 billion in 2025. That sum represents a 1.3 increase over 2024 expenditures.
- Domestic travelers spent a record \$36.1 billion in 2025. Spending was up 1.5% from \$35.6 billion in 2024.
- International travelers spent \$1.1 billion in 2025, down 2.8% from the previous year.

• Visitors to North Carolina generated more than \$4.7 billion in federal, state and local taxes in 2025. The total represents a 2.5% increase from 2024.

• State tax receipts from visitor spending rose 2.0% to nearly \$1.4 billion in 2025.

• Local tax receipts grew 2.6% to more than \$1.3 billion.

• Direct tourism employment in North Carolina increased 0.3% to 230,997.

• Direct tourism payroll increased 3.5% to \$9.8 billion.

• Visitors spend more than \$101 million per day in North Carolina. That spending adds \$7.5 million per day to state and local tax revenues (about \$3.8 million in state taxes and \$3.7 million in local taxes).

• Each North Carolina household saved \$605 on average in state and local taxes as a direct result of visitor spending in the state. Savings per capita averaged \$244.

– Submitted

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• OBITUARY •

EllaMae Joyce Daubenspeck Hogan

EllaMae Joyce Daubenspeck Hogan passed to the next realm on Saturday, August 22, 2026, at her home in Highlands, following an extended illness. She was 72.

A native of Vineland, New Jersey, Ellie discovered Highlands in 1975 and adopted it as her forever home. During her time here she worked at several different vocations. Many people remember her long tenure as a dental assistant in Dr. Rodenbeck's office, where she lovingly worked with practically every child



in Highlands, calming their fears about coming to the dentist. She also worked as a server, dental office manager, spec home builder, and in food service and catering. In her 50s she reinvented herself as a Realtor and had a successful career as one of the town's leading agents with Country Club Properties. Though small in stature, she lived large energetically with a great deal of determination and spunk.

Ellie is survived by her son, Jesse Hogan, his partner Carrie Enloe, her granddaughter, Lyra Hogan, her

sister, Brenda Daubenspeck Platania-Whitacre, niece Sherry Lynn Dauenspeck, nephews Jamie and Kerry Daubenspeck, Jim and Damian Daubenspeck, 10 great nieces and nephews and two great-great nephews, along with a host of loving friends. She was preceded into death by her parents, Clarence Daubenspeck and Virginia Daubenspeck Vassell, and brothers Mark and Edward Daubenspeck.

The brightest lights of Ellie's life were her son, Jesse, his partner, Carrie, her granddaughter, Lyra, her Pug dog,

Lefty, and cat, Stryker. She loved practicing yoga, walking anywhere, hiking in the area's beautiful forests, swimming in the river, growing vegetables, gathering dandelion greens, foraging mushrooms, and finding rocks, arrowheads and gemstones. She adored nature in all its facets and things made from natural materials. She also enjoyed buck dancing, camping with family and friends, and laughter and singing around the campfire. She was fond of musical festivals, traveling to distant destinations, and exploring places with her many friends. Her heart always lived in Horse Cove.

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 Militaria
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 Modern Weapons



• UPCOMING EVENTS •

The Bascom's 16th Annual Dazzling Dahlia Festival

September 10-12, 2026

The Bascom: A Center for the Visual Arts will host the 16th Annual Dazzling Dahlia Festival from Sept. 10-12. This community-centered program brings horticulture into dialogue with the visual arts through a weekend of public events, including a fall reception, floral installations, juried single bloom and photography competitions, studio pottery offerings, hands-on workshops, and educational presentations.

In advance of the festival, The Bascom will present a free educational talk on The Terrace on Sat., Aug. 29, at 11 a.m., led by Festival Directors Peggy Boruchow Arnette, Libby Eustis, and Kim Daugherty. Designed for both new and experienced enthusiasts, the session will clarify what makes a bloom competition-ready and prepare participants to present their dahlias for judging in the Single Bloom Competition.

The festival opens with The Bascom's complimentary Fall Reception on Thurs., Sept. 10, at 5 p.m. The evening gathers the community around the fall season's exhibitions, which will be on view across The Bascom's galleries, and Michelle Radford as the winner of the 2026 Dahlia Poster Contest. Guests are invited to view the exhibitions, enjoy light refreshments, and preview the weekend's floral-themed programs.

Petals and Perspectives

Throughout the weekend, visitors can experience Petals and Perspectives, a special floral design showcase on view Sept. 10-12. Participating floral designers will create arrangements in direct response to works of art on view in The Bascom's galleries, fostering a thoughtful exchange between botanical design and visual art.

Fall Exhibitions

Three exhibitions will be on view across The Bascom's galleries during the festival weekend. Voices of Influence: Celebrating the Impact of Women in Art, a Community Call Exhibition, will be on view in Thompson Gallery through Nov. 28. Jo Sandman/TRACES with Black Mountain

College will be on view in Bunzl Gallery through Jan. 9. Ceramic Artists of the Bascom Clay Symposium: Andrew Godfrey Shaw, Alexander Thierry, and Tiffany Thomas will be on view in Joel Gallery through Nov. 16. Admission to all exhibitions is free.

Single Bloom Competition

The festival's signature event invites dahlia growers and floral designers of all ages and experience levels to enter. Competition categories include an open single bloom division, a novice division, a youth division, and an arranged division for those who wish to submit a floral arrangement rather than a single stem. The novice division is new this year, open to anyone who has never exhibited in the Dazzling Dahlia Festival's floral competition, as well as those who have exhibited in two or fewer previous years. Participants who have exhibited for three years or more compete in the open division. There is no entry fee this year. The juried show will be on view Fri., Sept. 11, from 3:30 to 5 p.m., and Sat., Sept. 12, from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m.

Juried Dahlia Photography Exhibition

New this year, the festival introduces a juried photography exhibition open to photographers of all ages and experience levels. The photographs will be on view in the Eckerd Children's Gallery from Sept. 10 through Oct. 3. Admission is free.

Studio Member Pottery Show

Running concurrently on Sept. 11 and 12 in The Bascom's Studio Barn, this sale features handcrafted wall pockets and vases created by Studio Members. Each work will be adorned with fresh dahlias and available for purchase.

Workshops

Workshop programming begins ahead of the festival and continues through the weeks that follow, offering hands-on options for adults of all skill levels across ceramics, floral design, mixed media, and painting. Advanced registra-

tion is required for all workshops and is available at thebascom.org.

Beginning Tues. Sept. 1, Colette Clark leads Floral Application, a multi-session ceramics workshop running through Tues. Sept. 9, in the Dave Drake Studio. No experience necessary. \$200.

On Sat., Sept. 5, Cath Connolly leads Saturday Sojourn with Paint: Big Bloom Energy, a full-day beginner painting workshop from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. No experience required. All materials included. \$150.

On Thurs., Sept. 10, floral stylist and artist Christy Curcuro leads Arranging with Showpiece Flowers: Locally Grown Mountain Dahlias, a morning workshop from 10 a.m. to 1 p.m. Hands-on guidance throughout. All materials included. \$200.

On Sat., Sept. 12, Caryn Raming teaches Beginner Collage: Everything's Dahlias! from 2-4 p.m. No experience required. All materials included. \$75.

The Dahlia Dialogue with Sonya Carpenter

On Sat., Sept. 12, Highlands ecologist and garden designer Sonya Carpenter will present "Floral Fidelity and the Art of Attraction," a talk on how dahlias are perceived by the other species we share our gardens with. The talk is free and open to all. 11 a.m.

Emerging Designer Collaboration

This year's festival collateral was developed in collaboration with Elena Rizek, a graphic design student at Western Carolina University and a participant in The Bascom's Emerging Designer Program. Rizek created the visual identity for the 2026 Dahlia Festival, including posters, educational signage, and promotional materials distributed across print and digital channels.

The Dazzling Dahlia Festival is made possible by generous support from Bryson Grading & Paving, Visit Highlands, and the North Carolina Arts Council.

...TOWN BOARD continued from page 5

adopted regulations regarding data centers by designating specific zoning districts where they would be allowed specifying the type of permitting required.

Such zones in the jurisdictions are varied: heavy industrial, heavy manufacturing, general industrial, general manufacturing, light industrial, heavy industrial innovation, and high impact.

The permit pathways are as varied: Special Use Permit, Conditional Zoning, and By Right w/Special Criteria.

Macon County amended its ordinance to address data centers by allowing them only in high impact zones with the "By Right w/Special Criteria."

Those jurisdictions interested in only amending their existing ordinances have stipulations regarding buffering/screening, noise, water use and discharge, electrical, lighting, limitations to signage and delineating between crypto-mining and data centers and finally decommissioning (what happens to the structure if the center ceases).

Tosco said Highlands has three options. Do Nothing, Adopt Regulations without a Moratorium, or Adopt a Moratorium

Doing nothing would allow data centers to be sited under existing zoning/land use regulations. "This may leave the Town without adequate protections," he said.

Adopting regulations without a moratorium would require moving directly to adopt new regulations tailored to data centers without pausing development. "This approach risks data centers being constructed without proper regulations," he said.

He said adopting a temporary moratorium on data center applications while the town studies the issue further and potentially adopts new regulations, is the safest way to go.

At the required public hearing on moratoriums at Thursday night's meeting, no one spoke so commissioners voted unanimously to adopt it.

With the one year moratorium adopted, the work begins.

Tosco said during the moratorium period, the Town needs to undertake a study of data center development, including consideration of adequate setback requirements, water usage and infrastructure capacity, electrical grid de-

mands, noise and environmental impacts, and other land use compatibility factors, zones and more.

"The moratorium is a first step – there is still a lot more to do due to the vested right problem, but this is the first step," said Commissioner Patterson at Thursday's meeting.

Though so far, no one has come forward, the "vested rights problem" refers to whether a developer has acquired permanent, legal protection to build or operate a facility before local or state governments change zoning laws, deny permits, or enact development moratoria.

Formulating a land use ordinance will be a group effort including the Town Attorney, Town Manager Josh Ward, and Planning Director Michael Mathis.

Planning Board

At this juncture, the Planning Board won't be involved with formulating the data center ordinance. Currently, it has been charged with reviewing the Community Plan which will likely take months.

The Town Board discussed where the Planning Board is at this point.

Mayor Pro Temp Tate said it appeared the Planning Board "got into the weeds" when attempting to outline a plan at its July meeting and had requested a Town Board liaison be part of the process.

"We don't need to reinvent the entire plan," said Commissioner Tate. "Perhaps they should review it section by section, see what we have done well, what we haven't done, and what we need to add or delete."

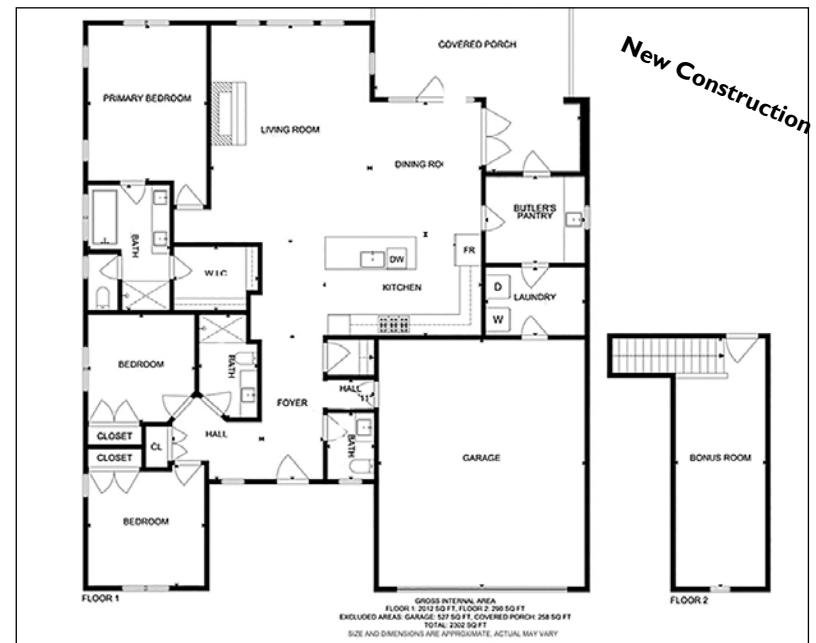
Commissioner Jeff Weller agreed saying the town isn't interested in redoing the Community Plan right now and suggested a priority list be formulated to guide the Planning Board.

"Let's ID items that weren't considered in the plan and look at items that need to be considered as the Town moves forward – use the plan as a guide," he said.

Commissioner Patterson agreed also saying to seek public input at a later date on specific items at specific times.

Instead of appointing a liaison, the board decided to have a joint meeting with the Planning Board at the Sept. 17 Town Board worksession at 6 p.m. in the Community Building – an hour before the regular Town Board meeting – to outline what is expected of the board.

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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

Blue Ridge Health-Highlands Cashiers has new provider, Sherry Burkett, DNP

Blue Ridge Health is proud to announce the addition of Sherry Burkett, who has a Doctorate in Nursing (DNP), as the new provider at the Blue Ridge Health-Highlands Cashiers clinic. Sherry Burkett is an Adult-Gerontology Primary Care Nurse Practitioner, bringing more than 10 years of experience and expertise in chronic disease management, preventive care, and the care of older adults. Burkett is accept new patients.



Sherry Burkett, DNP

evidence-based care while treating every patient with dignity, respect, and empathy.

After years of visiting the area, Burkett recently relocated to Western North Carolina from Florida with her husband, to be closer to their children and grandchildren. Burkett has fallen in love with the natural beauty, slower pace of life, and the strong sense of community in the Highlands.

Burkett received her Masters and Doctorate in Nursing from the University of South Florida. Specializing in Geriatrics, she chose this specialty to help older adults preserve their independence, quality of life, and the ability to age with dignity. Her philosophy is centered on providing compassionate, individualized, and

• To introduce Sherry Burkett to the community she now serves, Blue Ridge Health-Highlands Cashiers will be holding an open house on September 11th, 2026. The open house is from 1pm to 4pm at 209 Hospital Drive #301 Highlands. Please stop by to meet Dr. Burkett and welcome her to the WNC community!

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10 AM ARTIST AWARDS
11 AM PAC EDUCATIONAL THEATER -
SELECTIONS FROM THE HIT *SHREK: THE MUSICAL*
3 PM RANKIN - SINGS ALL-TIME FAVORITES
1 PM MICK MAYER - ACOUSTIC FAVORITES FROM THE MAIN STAGE LISA
FROM THE MAIN STAGE

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SMOOTH SUNDAY JAZZ
1 - 3 PM STANDARD ELEVATION TRIO -

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- Art projects
- Lego and bead creations
- Face painting (Sat. only)
- Teddy Bear Hospital from Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (Sat. only)



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• UPCOMING EVENTS •

Highlands Cashiers Players present **Grace and Glorie**

August 27 through September 6 at the Martin Lipscomb Theater at PAC

Highlands Cashiers Players will present *Grace and Glorie*, an Appalachian play by Tom Ziegler, Aug. 27 through Sept. 6 at the Martin Lipscomb Theater at Highlands Performing Arts Center. Jayne Pleasants is directing the HCP production and Cathy Myers is the assistant director, stage manager and set designer.

The play centers around Grace Stiles, a strong mountain woman with end stage cancer who wants to die at home among her apple trees instead of in a hospital. Her hospice worker is Gloria Hughes (called Glorie by Grace), a recent transplant from the city. The two women clash at first, but as they begin to explore their differences they also find many similarities.

"Since the play only has two characters, you feel like you really get to know each of them in a short amount of time," said HCP board chair April Getz. "As I was



Lee Lyons and Carol Attridge rehearse a scene from *Grace and Glorie* at Highlands United Methodist Church.

reading the play and watching rehearsals, I would alternate between tears and laughter."

The cast features Lee Lyons as Grace and Carol Attridge as Glorie. Lyons is returning to HCP for this very special role, and Attridge is making her HCP debut, but both women are very experienced on the stage.

Thursday and Friday performances are at 7 pm, Saturday shows begin at 5 pm and Sunday matinees are at 2 pm. Tickets are available at HighlandsCashiersPlayers.com, or by calling the PAC Box Office at 828-526-9047. The Highlands Performing Arts Center is located at 507 Chestnut Street, Highlands, NC.

Grace & Glorie

A play by Tom Ziegler

Directed by Jayne Pleasants

Cathy Myers - Assistant Director

**Highlands Cashiers
PLAYERS**

**August 27 -30 and
September 3 - 6,
2026**

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1st. Day at Highlands School '26-'27

Photos by Kim Lewicki



• HS SPORTS RECAP •

Highlander teams kick off season with grit and determination

Highlander Athletics is officially back in full swing. Student-athletes took to the fields and courts even before the school bell rang for the first day of classes on August 24, delivering two action-packed weeks of early-season competition.

Varsity Soccer Weathered in Opener

The high school varsity boys soccer team opened its season on August 17 at Franklin. The match was cut short when severe storms rolled in, forcing a suspension with 19:38 remaining in the first half. A date to conclude the game has not yet been set. The boys will look for clearer skies and a full 80 minutes when they travel to Madison High School this Friday, August 27.

High School Volleyball Battles Non-Conference Slate

High school volleyball has faced a



Brett Lamb
Athletic Director

grueling start, racking up five non-conference matches against Big Smoky Conference rivals Swain, Hayesville, Cherokee, Murphy, and Andrews.

- Junior Varsity: The JV squad holds a 1-2 record, picking up a strong victory over Swain alongside two tough, hard-fought losses to Hayesville and Cherokee.

- Varsity: The varsity team has shown immense resilience

while navigating roster shortages, including a heartbreaking, season-ending injury to senior Charlotte Westendorf.

A busy week lies ahead for varsity volleyball as they return to the court for three consecutive match days: today, August 25 vs. Robbinsville; Wednesday, August 26 vs. Rosman; and Thursday, August 27 on the road at Rosman.

Middle School Volleyball Gaining Momentum

• See HS SPORTS page 25



From left: Jennifer Shackley 6th grade ELA and SS, Brooke Waldrup EC TA, and Merissa DeHart Kindergarten teacher. (Not pictured is Cheryl Durden.)

New faces at Highlands School

By Kristin Fox

Like the other 11 schools in the Macon County Schools system Highlands School welcomed new teachers and staff.

Highlands School is pleased to welcome several new staff members this year. Merissa DeHart joins us as our new Kindergarten teacher, bringing a passion for early childhood education. Jennifer Shackley will serve as our new 6th-grade English

language arts/social studies teacher, inspiring our students with her dedication. We also welcome Brooke Waldrup as our new EC teacher assistant, Cheryl Durden as our new custodian, and express our gratitude for their commitment to our school community.

Highlands very youngest students will be taught by Western Carolina University graduate Merissa DeHart. DeHart holds a

• See NEW page 25



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UPCOMING PROGRAMS



Uncle Charlie: The Tampa Bay Rays Technological Edge

Thursday, August 27, 2-4 PM, Cost: \$35
Members/\$50 Nonmembers



Accessibility Features on iPhone/iPad

Friday, August 28, 1-2 PM, Cost: \$45 Members/\$60 Nonmembers



The End of Antibiotics

Thursday, September 3, 2-4 PM, Cost: \$35
Members/\$50 Nonmembers, Sponsored by the Highlands-Cashiers Health Foundation



CLE's Sixth Annual Highlands Porchfest Music Festival!

Sunday, September 20, 1-6 PM, FREE TO ATTEND!
Headliner Sponsor: Visit Highlands, NC



CLE September Book Club: "Meet the Newmans" by Jennifer Niven

Wednesday, September 30, 1-3 PM, \$20

For more information or to register, please visit www.clehighlands.com or call (828) 526-8811. Thank you for another fantastic season!



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Visit Highlands, NC hosts live music downtown.

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All shows take place from 6 – 8:30 p.m.

Friday Night Live

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Showcasing traditional
mountain music and local talent

AUGUST 7
Johnny Webb

AUGUST 14
McClain Family Band

AUGUST 21
Shawn Lane Trio

AUGUST 28
Spare Parts Bluegrass Band

Saturdays on Pine

Kelsey-Hutchinson Founders Park
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Featuring a variety of popular,
regional bands and musicians

AUGUST 1
Yacht Rando

AUGUST 8
Blake Ellege + The Resonators

AUGUST 22
Will Thompson Band

AUGUST 15 & 29 - NO CONCERT



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• HC HOSPITAL NEWS •

Fast stroke care helps Highlands woman make remarkable recovery

When Ann Cox Strub stood up from the couch at her Highlands-area home around midnight on June 9, something was wrong.

Ann and her husband, Richard “Dick” Strub, MD, a retired neurologist, had been watching the Knicks and Spurs game when her speech suddenly became slurred and one of her arms began making unusual, involuntary movements — a neurological symptom sometimes called “alien arm.”

Dr. Strub initially watched closely to determine whether his wife might be experiencing a transient ischemic attack, or TIA, whose symptoms can resolve. Within minutes, however, it became clear they needed help. He called 911.

That decision — and the rapid care Ann received at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital — would prove critical.

Glenville-Cashiers EMS arrived quickly despite the rainy night and transported Ann to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital in about 10 minutes. Once she arrived, the hospital’s stroke protocols moved rapidly into action.

Within 2-3 minutes, a Mission Hospital physician was evaluating Ann remotely through telehealth. The HC Hospital team performed a CT scan and determined she was a candidate for tenecteplase, or TNK, a medication used to dissolve blood clots causing certain ischemic strokes.

Ann received TNK just 23 minutes after arriving at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital, well ahead of the national 45-minute door-to-needle goal.

For stroke patients, those minutes matter. The phrase “time is brain” reflects the urgency: when a clot interrupts blood flow to part of the brain, brain cells can quickly become damaged. Recognizing stroke symptoms, calling 911 and beginning appropriate treatment as soon as possible can significantly affect a patient’s outcome.

For the Strubs, having that care available minutes from their Highlands home made all the difference.

“If they hadn’t had the clot-busting drug at Highlands and given it to me so quickly, I might have been paralyzed and Dick would have had to take care of me for the rest of my life,” Ann said. “I have never been so grateful in all of my life for Highlands-Cashiers Hospital and Glenville-Cashiers EMS — they saved my life.”

After receiving TNK, Ann was transferred to Mission Hospital in Asheville for the higher level of neurological care and monitoring that can be needed following a stroke. The transfer did not delay the

most time-sensitive part of her treatment: Highlands-Cashiers Hospital had already evaluated her, completed her imaging and administered the clot-busting medication.

About 25 minutes into the trip to Asheville, something remarkable happened: Ann, who had been unable to speak, began talking again.

Receiving TNK at Highlands-Cashiers Hospital rather than delaying treatment until Ann could reach a larger hospital gave the medication the opportunity to begin working as quickly as possible.

“Ann’s experience is an important reminder that our community can turn to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital when minutes matter,” said Tom Neal, CEO of Highlands-Cashiers Hospital. “It is a privilege to care for our neighbors, and we are incredibly grateful to see Ann doing so well.”

HCHospital is accredited for stroke care by The Joint Commission. Its Emergency Department was also recently named a 2025 Press Ganey Human Experience Guardian of Excellence Award® winner, recognizing performance in the top 1 percent of Press Ganey clients for patient experience. It marked the fourth time the hospital has received the honor.

Neal said the coordination among EMS, the Highlands-Cashiers Hospital team and specialists at Mission demonstrates the importance of having emergency stroke care available locally.

“People in our community should know that if they are experiencing signs of a stroke, they should call 911 immediately,” Neal said. “Our team has the training, technology and resources to quickly evaluate stroke patients and begin lifesaving treatment right here in Highlands.”

Two months later, Ann occasionally has difficulty finding a word, but otherwise reports no lasting deficits from her stroke. She was so grateful for the care she received that she returned to Highlands-Cashiers Hospital with food and flowers for the team.

“They had everything I needed right here, and they saved my life,” she said.

Ann’s experience also carries a message for others: BE FAST when stroke symptoms appear. Watch for Balance problems, Eye or vision changes, Facial drooping, Arm weakness and Speech difficulty — and remember that Time means call 911 immediately.

For Ann, acting quickly meant receiving the right care in the right place at exactly the time she needed it. — submitted

HCFF schedule and tickets

Contact Charlotte for more information at cmuir@highlandsp PerformingArts.com.

Film Festival Pass – \$75 plus fees

Access to film screenings only throughout the festival.

Film Festival VIP Pass – \$150 plus fees

Access to all films and seminars throughout the festival.

Film Festival Society – \$750 per person/\$1,500 per couple

Exclusive access to the Black and White Masquerade (for Society members and sponsors only), Access to the Horror Deconstructed seminar (for Society members, sponsors only, and VIP pass only), VIP Festival Pass (includes all films + events), Reserved seating at all films + events, Special lanyard and festival badge, Free popcorn throughout the Festival in limited edition popcorn tub

Wed., Sept. 16

(PAC Main Stage)

FREE: Rise, Ruin, and Restoration: A History of Lake Toxaway + Q&A with the Director
1 – 3p (Registration Required)

FREE: Festival Kick-Off Party at the PAC: 6 – 8p

Open to the public, with live bluegrass music under the stars from local band, Silly Ridge. Enjoy a special meet and greet with our Artistic Director, Joy Jorgensen! Bring your own picnic and chair.

Pick up your festival passes or purchase passes if still available.

Thurs., Sept. 17

(MLT Theatre at PAC)

SHORTS Block 1

10-11:30a

Mallory's Ghost

1:30-3p

The Oldest Person in the World

6-7:30 p

(PAC Main Stage)

Honeyjoon

11a-12:30p

The Last Class and conversation w/the filmmakers

3:15-5:15p

If These Walls Could Rock

8-9:30p

Fri., Sept. 18

(MLT Stage at PAC)

SHORTS Block 2

11a-12:30p

Susan

2:45-4:15p

(PAC Main Stage)

Horror Deconstructed Workshop

10-11:15a

Path of the Panther and Wildlife Corridor Panel with the filmmakers

12:15-2:30p

Papertown

4:30-6p

Patriots Day and conversation with the screenwriter

6:45-9p

Sat., Sept. 19

(MLT at PAC)

Hold On To Me

2:30-4:15p

(PAC Main Stage)

Inside the Grid: The design of TRON: Ares Presented by Darby Fuccinto w/ Christian Haberkern

10:30a-noon

Natchez

12:45-2:15p

Black & White Masquerade (Exclusive for Sponsors and Film Society Members only) – 6-9:30p

The Black & White Masquerade transforms the PAC for an unforgettable Festival celebration. Dress in black and white, don your favorite mask, and join us for an evening centered around the 1926 silent-film classic The Phantom of the Opera, on the big screen with a live orchestral performance by musicians from WCU. Following the performance, the Awards Ceremony for competition films will be presented on stage while sweets and champagne are served.

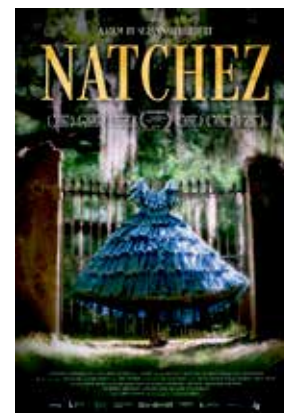


A Tribeca Winner Comes to the Mountains: HCFF Lands "NATCHEZ"

Sept 16-19, 2026

Fresh off winning Best Documentary Feature at the 2025 Tribeca Festival, the film NATCHEZ is headed to Highlands this September as part of the Highlands-Cashiers Film Festival (HCFF) competition films. It screens September 19th at 12:45pm at the Highlands Performing Arts Center.

NATCHEZ captures an unsettling clash between history and memory in a small Mississippi town: a layered mosaic of plantation owners, tour guides, activists, and politicians contending with the weight of the past in a place where it is always present. Equal parts amusing and disturbing, the film journeys through an antebellum tourist destination at a crossroads, grappling with a deeply troubled history so thoroughly ingrained in its present that viewers are left to wonder if it's actually past at all.



Among its most compelling voices is a local tour operator who challenges visitors to reckon with the site of the town's former slave market — one of the few figures in the film willing to confront that history head-on, in contrast to homeowners who've long sanitized their own family narratives for paying tourists. The result is less a single story than a town arguing with itself on camera.

Herbert is no newcomer to acclaim. Her first feature, *Wrestle*, picked up two News & Documentary Emmy nominations and landed on the National Board of Review's list of the top five documentaries of 2019. She's also built a parallel career as an editor, working on Bob Dylan film projects, including the permanent experiential film at Tulsa's Bob Dylan Center, and cutting Tony Bennett and Lady Gaga's Grammy-nominated video for "I Get a Kick Out of You."

Since premiering at Tribeca, NATCHEZ has kept racking up honors - close to 19 festival awards and counting.



NATCHEZ is one of eight competition films at this year's HCFF, a four-day festival bringing world-class documentaries and narratives to downtown Highlands. Weekend passes are now available at:
www.highlandscashiersfilmfestival.com/passes

SPIRITUALLY SPEAKING



Is Labor Day a religious holiday? Maybe ...

Rev. Dr. Marcus B. Robertson is
Interim Priest in Charge
Christ Anglican Church, Cashiers.

Labor Day is one of those holidays that is often appreciated (as a day off from work) but not fully understood in its origins and history. But even beyond its history (dating back to the late 1800s) Labor Day can become a time to reflect on the nature of work and its role in our human experience.

Genesis 1:28 is the first command given by God to humanity. God created man and woman and immediately gave them this charge: "Be fruitful and multiply and fill the earth and subdue it and have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over every living thing that moves on the earth." This text is often called "The Cultural Mandate" and describes humanity as stewards of the created order. Jesus refers to this notion of stewardship in several of His parables, where the story describes the master going away on a trip, turning over the management of his goods and property to others to "manage" or "steward" his wealth. Stewardship is an important element of biblical ethics as well as an important aspect of our human identity.

Labor is the essence of stewardship. To work is to enter a significant part of our created identity that God uses to bring us to personal fulfillment, self-worth and dignity. In today's world, work is sometimes used as a political foil to criticize a person's position on a certain law or proposed legislation. Socially, different kinds of work are sometimes used to demean the character of another and affirm one person over another. According to Holy Scripture, all work done faithfully and with good intent is to be honored, regardless of its social status. The steward who produced a twentyfold return was commended just as much as the stewards who produced a fifty- or hundredfold return. The steward who was criticized was the one seized with fear and who hid his master's wealth in the ground. Work reflects who we are as creatures in relationship to our Creator, regardless of the status of the work or its ability to produce a certain level of income.

I am semi-retired. I have a fair bit of time on my hands and my prayer has been, "Lord teach me the value of work – its joy, its reward and its discipline." Owning 65 acres which needs management and maintenance, I find myself no longer sitting at a desk preparing sermons, counseling parishioners or writing newspaper articles (!), but hauling stones, working on a tractor, wielding a chain saw or clearing brush. I don't receive a paycheck for that activity, but it produces within me a sense of accomplishment, an education in aspects of land management I never knew, and a deep satisfaction of being a steward in a completely dif-

• See SPIRITUALLY page 23

• PLACES TO WORSHIP •

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 7p

5th Sunday Singing featuring Georgia Mountain Trio;

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

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Senior Pastor: Rev. Amy Spivey

Assoc. Pastor: Rev. Wonyeong Lee 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30; Worship & Kids Worship 10:30

GRACE CHAPEL ON HIGH HOLLY

9615 Dillard Rd Scaly Mountain, N.C.

Pastor Steve Kerhoulas. <http://www.Graceonhighholly.com>

Sunday School 9:45; Worship 11; Prayer Service Wed 5:30p

Men's and Women's Bible Study throughout the week

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Marc Robertson & Rev. Nick McGee

464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701

Sunday: Adult Christian Ed, 9:15a; Holy Eucharist, 10:30a;

Fellowship 11:45a; Wed: Bible Study/Contemplative Prayer, 5p

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY. CASHIERS

743-5470 • www.cashiers.church

Sun. 10:45a; Wed Study 5:15p supper and childcare.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m.

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 • Sr. Pastor Gary Hewins

Sun: Service 10:45am, Children's 10:30am

Wed.: Youth 5:30-7pm; Women's Bible Study: Mon. 4:30pm, Tues.

10am; Men's Bible Study: Wed. & Thurs. 7am @ Zookeeper

EPISCOPAL CHURCH OF THE INCARNATION

Rev. W. Bentley Manning, Rector • 526-2968

5th and Main streets • www.incarnationwnc.org

Sunday: Rite I, spoken, 8 am in Chapel, Rite II with Choir 10:30

am in Sanctuary, Wed: Healing Eucharist 12 pm in Chapel,

Morning Prayer: Mon-Thurs 8:30 am in Chapel

FIRST BAPTIST CHURCH HIGHLANDS

828-526-4153 • www.fbchighlands.org

Dr. Mark Ford, Pastor • 220 Main Street, Highlands

Sun.: Worship 10:45 am; Sun.: Bible Study 9:30 am

Wed.: Men's Bible Study 8:30 am; Women's 10:30 am

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Emily Wilmarth, pastor; Rev. Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor

828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org

Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10a; Worship 11a.; Tues: Men's Group 10a;

Wed: Bell Choir 4p. Chancel Choir: 5:30p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

Hwy 107N. • Glenville. NC • 743-2729 • Nathan Johnson

Sunday: School 9:45a. Worship 11a & 7p. Bible Study 6p

Wed. Kidsquest 6p.; Worship 7p.

HIGHLANDS ASSEMBLY OF GOD

Randy Reed. Pastor 828-421-9172 • 165 S. Sixth Street

Wed. Bible Study: 6 p.m.; Sundays: Worship: 11

HIGHLANDS CENTRAL BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Dan Robinson • 11339 Buck Creek Road

The Highlands Central Baptist Church is temporarily sharing the facilities of the Shortoff Baptist Church.

Sunday Worship is at 9a. & 6p. Wednesday Worship is 6p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376

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Pastor Zane Talley

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Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

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Rabbi led service 3rd Saturday AM, Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

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Sun: 10:30 a.m. at Big Ridge Baptist Church. 4224 Big Ridge (4.5 miles from NC 107)

Weds: Youth Group 6 p.m.; Bible Study 6:30 p.m.;

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Rev. Marty Kilby

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Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.: 7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212

Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Richard Salmonson

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m.

ST. JUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

Mass: Sun. 9a (English); Mon. 9:30a (Vatican II in Latin); Tues. 7p (Spanish); Wed., 9:30a (English)

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Sunday Worship - 11 a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers • 828-743-2122

Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

• POLICE & FIRE REPORTS •

Highlands Police entries from Aug. 18. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Accidents responded to:

Aug. 18

• Vehicle 1 and Vehicle 2 were traveling north on NC 106 (Dillard Road). Vehicle 2 was stopped on NC 106 to turn left into Rhodes Auto parking lot. Vehicle 1 failed to see that Vehicle 2 had stopped, veered to the right and crashed into the right rear of Vehicle 2

Aug. 20

• Vehicle 1 was traveling north on NC 106 (Dillard Road). An unknown vehicle was stopped in the roadway making a left turn. Vehicle-1 was unable to stop, ran off road to right and struck a tree and came to rest on shoulder of roadway.

Aug. 21

• Vehicles 1 and 2 were parked facing west on US 64 (4th Street) in front of Town Hall. Vehicle 1 was not parked in a parking spot. Vehicle 2 backed into Vehicle 1.

• **During the week, officers issued 5 citations, 39 warning tickets**

Aug. 18

• At 9:08 a.m., officers responded to a call of an unattended death of a 74-year-old man at a residence on Naiad Terrace.

• At 12:19 p.m., officers responded to a call of someone trespassing on OEI's prop-

erty on Arnold Road.

Aug. 20

• At 11:05 a.m., officers responded to a call of someone stalking/harassing, a simple assault and latency at Spinx Gas Station on N. 4th Street.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Aug. 18.

Aug. 18

• At 9:02 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Naiad Terrace.

• At 4:35 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Ridge Lake Circle.

Aug. 19

• At 3:43 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Country Club Drive.

• At 7:02 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US. 64 east (Cashiers Road).

• At 6:22 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Kelsey Court.

Aug. 20

• At 3:31 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Morewood Circle.

• At 9:57 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on Happoldt Drive.

• At 4:16 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on NC 106 (Dillard Road).

• At 7:35 p.m., the dept. investigated the cause of smoke at a residence on Holt Road.

• At 9:03 p.m., the dept. responded to a medical alarm at a residence on Dog Moun-

tain Road.

• At 9:47 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Summit Trail.

Aug. 21

• At 3:09 a.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Split Rail Row.

• At 11:29 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on US 64 east (Highlands Road).

Aug. 22

• At 2:49 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Broadview Circle.

• At 5:54 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Charlie Johnson Lane.

...SPIRITUALLY

continued from page 22

ferent way than I have been for most of my life. My hands are dirtier, my back is sorer and my clothes are coarser and more functional (less fashionable), but that's OK. I'm learning the value of labor.

And I know many people who are less fortunate than I. They have physical limitations that keep them from enjoying the labor I now pursue. Yet, they have found their niche in life when it comes to labor. They call and encourage friends and neighbors. They pray for the sick, the lonely and the infirm. They welcome visitors with a smile and a genuine spirit of hospitality. Their labor is different, but it produces the same kind of satisfaction in the human heart.

By the time you read this, Labor Day may have come and gone, but it stands as a reminder of what it means to be human. We are created for a purpose and that purpose involves labor of some kind. Such labor grants us an identity beyond ourselves, for it reminds us that we are creatures who are called to relate to our Creator through the work He has given us to do.



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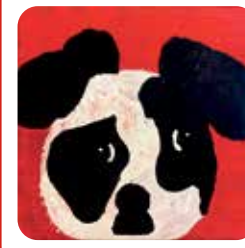
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IN SEARCH OF PART-TIME CHOIR DIRECTOR Highlands United Methodist Church is seeking a

chancel choir director for their weekly Sunday traditional worship services at 11am. Choir rehearsals are Wednesdays at 4pm. Inquiries may be addressed to Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas, HUMC Senior Pastor, at randyhumc@icloud.com. (8/13)

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...MAYOR continued from page 2

Department of Environmental Quality. That information gave me some relief from my concerns. But since those bodies of water are part of our drinking water network, any chemicals applied around or in those waters must be done with extreme care. Our water department constantly provides water samples from these bodies for state testing. The last thing we want to see is any significant trace of herbicides or toxic chemicals in the water supply. I am sure folks in Maine share similar views.

Our code enforcement officer monitors and will make sure any such activities are licensed and under the purview of state authorities.

I bring this up because I have an ongoing concern that we all must protect the watershed on the Highlands Plateau, just as I have witnessed in Maine this past week. If a home-

owner has a stream, pond, or any kind of impoundment on their property, state regulations apply to any chemical application, alteration or modification to that waterway.

Now I know some of my libertarian friends may retort, here goes that mayor again trying to tell us what we can do with our property. But on the other hand, property owners should not be allowed to do things on their property that affect or jeopardize other people's property rights or compromise public health and safety.

I hope, as a community, we can all agree that we must be good stewards of this unique land and environment. As for the removal of the aquatic growth in our lakes, town staff will carefully watch the situation. As we dredge Mirror Lake the issue of algae and weeds will also be a concern.

...NEW continued from page 19

Bachelor's in Birth to Kindergarten and has worked with young children for over eight years. Her passion is to help children reach their potential in learning, growing and building confidence in their abilities.

Macon County native Brooke Walroop is a graduate of Western Carolina University with degrees in both Elementary Education and Psychology. She has taught Kindergarten as well as 5th and 6th grade math and science in the Macon County School System. Most recently, she was a social worker and center director at the Rabun Head Start in Clayton, GA. Her goal for this year is to help the children she has the honor of teaching meet their educational goals.

...HS SPORTS continued from page 19

The middle school volleyball team has completed four matches in its early campaign. After enduring two challenging road tests at Andrews and Murphy, the team bounced back during a two-game homestand against Hayesville and Andrews. The team will enjoy a brief break before hosting

Murphy on September 1.

The Highlanders are making impressive strides across every program to start the year. Be sure to head out to the next home game and bring the noise for our student-athletes!



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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

POOL SCHEDULE

• Lap Swim: Mon.-Fri. 6am-9:45am, and Saturday 10am-11pm - 6 lanes. Water Aerobics: 18 y+ Mon.-Fri. 10-11am with Karen Chambers. Adult Swim: 18y+ only.

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. there are three indoor Pickle Ball courts and six outdoor courts. Pickle Ball can be played every Mon, Tues, Wed, Thurs. and Friday 10am-pm outdoors for the summer

MTN FINDINGS

• Open: 10 am - 1 pm. Thurs-Sat.. Spruce Street. www.mountainfindings.org

FIBBER MAGEES

• Fibber Magee's Thrift Store on Laurel Street Hours. Wed. & Fri. - 10a too 4p. Sat. - 10a to 2p.

FARMERS MARKET

• The "market" is open every Saturday 8a to 12:30p in KH Founders Park on Pine Street.

ALL WEEK

• Scaly Mountain/ Highlands/ Cashiers Alcoholics Anonymous "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. recovery program. Open meetings are held at Scaly Mountain @ Grace Chapel, 9915 Dillard Rd., Scaly Mountain each Tues & Sat at 5:30 pm and at Highlands @ the 1st Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 p.m. and on Wednesday & Fridays @ 12:00 noon. Open in person meetings are also held in Cashiers @ the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library, 249 Frank Allen Rd. on Sunday at 5:00 pm, on Tuesday @ 7:00 pm, on Friday at 5:30 pm and on Saturday at 9:00 am. For more information please visit our website www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of A.A. 24/7 call our HELP Line 828 349-4357

Mon. & Thurs.

• At First Presbyterian Church, ArtSpace is open from 9 a.m. to 4:30 p.m. The next exhibit will start in mid-August. For information contact fpchkelley@gmail.com

Mon-Wed-Fri

• Aerobics with Tina Rogers 8-9am at the Rec Park.
• Balance, Stretch & Strengthen Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month and is led by Vivian Brewer. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

• The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a-6p.

2nd Mondays

• The local chapter of PEO, an off-campus sorority founded in the 1800s that provides grants and loans to women with financial need who want to return to school or further their education meets at 10 a.m. For more info call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004

4th Mondays

• Highlands Planning Board meeting 5:30 p.m., in the Community Building.

2nd Tuesdays

• Highlands Writers Group meets on alternate Tuesday afternoons at 3pm. Writers still uncomfortable with in-person gatherings may participate via Zoom meetings For more info contact Bud Katz at either 828-526-3190 or at budandlynn@me.com

Tuesdays

• Strength Training at the Rec Park 8:15-9:15 am.
• At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers - from 5-6:30 PM
• ESL classes at The Literacy & Learning Center, 6-7 p.m. 675 S 4th St.

Tuesdays & Thurs.

• Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at the Rec Park at 5:30. A combo class with different types of exercise. 828-526-3556

Wednesdays

• The Literacy & Learning Center offers a FREE weekly Citizenship Class led by Faviola Olvera from 5:30 to 7 pm at 675 S 4th St in Highlands, this program is designed to help students navigate the complexities of the U.S. naturalization exam.

• Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library from 10a-noon PM, digital navigators will host a Tech Time drop-in time at Hudson Library with the goal to assist attendees with basic smartphone, laptop, iPad and tablet skills. For more information, call the Library at 828-526-3031. Free and open to the public.

2nd Wednesdays

• Highlands Zoning Board of Adjustment meeting at 5:30 in the Community Building

Thursdays

• Kickboxing 8:15-9:15a. at the Rec Park. No martial arts background necessary Contact the Rec Dept. at 828-526-3556 for more info.

3rd Thursdays

• Highlands Town Board meeting 7 p.m., in the Community Building.

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. Breakfast ia at 9a; meeting is at 10a. Email ncpost370@gmail.com or just join us at 9am.



Through Aug. 30

• Mountain Theatre Company presents "Showstoppers" a high-energy, 90-minute multimedia spectacular that races through Broadway and Hollywood's most unforgettable musicals, from West Side Story and Dreamgirls to Singin' in the Rain, Chicago, Mamma Mia!, and more. Featuring dazzling costumes, cinematic visuals, and a world-class professional cast, this fast-paced celebration brings iconic movie-musical moments to life with thrilling vocals, dynamic choreography, and nonstop excitement. The ultimate musical celebration. For tickets call 828.526.2695 or go to boxoffice@mountaintheatre.com

Aug. 27-Sept. 6

• HCP presents 'Grace and Glorie' at MLT at PAC. Thurs. and Fri. performances are at 7 pm, Sat. shows begin at 5 pm and Sunday matinees are at 2 pm. Tickets are available at HighlandsCashiers-Players.com, or by calling the PAC Box Office at 828-526-9047.

Sat., Aug. 28

• At The Bascom, What makes a blue ribbon bloom? A dahlia judging talk. 11a-noon. Free and open to the public. No registration required. For more info, go to The Bascom.org.

• 3 OPEN HOUSES at VZ TOP with Berkshire Hathaway Home Services, Howard Hanna and Country Club Properties from 3-5 p.m. Directions: From downtown Highlands, Turn Left on Hwy 106, then Left on Hudson Road, Follow

to VZTOP Entrance. Gate will be OPEN.

Sun. Aug. 29

• Open House at 177 Forest Trail in Highlands from 10a to noon. Hosted by Pat Gleeson with Christies International RE. Free cinnamon rolls offered for breakfast.

Sat. & Sun., Aug. 29-30

• Highlands Arts & Craft Show in KH-Founders Park on Pine Street 10a to 5p Sat. and 10a to 4p on Sunday. 120 vendors. Food available for purchase from Highlands Smokehouse, 11a-2:30p both days. Sip & Stroll Saturday. Tickets available at Sip & Stroll tent in front of the stage. Kid Zone, too.

Sept. 1

• Pop Up Pipers

Sat. -Sun, Sept. 5-6

• Public Open House at 1875, Highlands' newest exclusive gated community. 11a to 4p each day. Charcuterie, and registration for exciting gift card. High Gate Drive off Dillard Road.

Thurs., Sept. 10

• Mirror Lake Improvement Association annual meeting at the Mirror Lake Bridge at 6p. Michael Hanson (McGill & Associates), the Engineering Firm retained by Town of Highlands, will address, explain, discuss, and take questions regarding the continuing Mirror Lake Dredging Phases 2 & 3.

Tues., Sept. 11

• An Open House at Blue Ridge Health on the HC Hospital campus to introduce Sherry Burkett, DNP, to the community she now serves from 1-4pm at 209 Hospital Drive #301.

Mon., Sept. 14

• Cashiers Cares 5th annual golf tournament will be held at Trillium Golf Club Play is limited to first 96 players to sign up and Cost is \$300/player. The format is a scramble start at 10:30 AM. Lunch is provided and also awards party at the golf course. Raffles and Silent Auction featuring local merchants will be part of the activities, including golf foursomes at private clubs here on the plateau. There will be a Long Drive event with a Golf Pro and the chance to win a trip to Pebble Beach to play golf. To sign up to play in the tournament go to <https://cashierscares.org> the details.

Wed, Sept 16

• A FREE 2nd showing of Rise, Ruin, and Restoration: A History of Lake Toxaway, The Return of Lake

Toxaway is at 1p at the PAC. Documentary chronicles the creation of the resort on Lake Toxaway, the dramatic collapse of the dam in 1916, and the effort to resurrect the mountain lake some 40 years later. Director Dan Johnson will be available for comments following the film. Registration is required. Seating is limited. Arrive early. Register at www.eventbrite.com/e/1996882373935?aff=oddttdtcreator

• 2nd Annual Highlands Cashiers Film Festival Kick-Off Party - Free and open to the public at 6p at PAC. Bring the family, a picnic and lawn chairs and gather round a bonfire (weather permitting) with live music from Silly Ridge, Highlands-based acoustic bluegrass band, and enjoy a first meet-and-greet with Artistic Director Joy Jorgensen.

Wed.-Sat Sept. 16-19

• 2nd Annual Highlands Cashiers Film Festival held at the Highlands Performing Arts Center on Chestnut Street. For lineup and tickets go to www.highlandscashiers-filmfestival.com

Thurs., Sept. 17

• Library Party at the Hudson Library from 5-7 p.m. Unveiling the capital campaigns and newly completed outdoor spaces 5-7 p.m. Live music, food and drinks and tours.

Sat.-Sun., Sept. 19-20

• The Power of a Beautiful State: a 2-Day inner journey to calm, creativity and connection. The Mountain Retreat Ctr., \$150 to \$275. Info: LindaChmar@gmail.com or 404-909-9904

Sun., Sept. 20

• CLE's free annual Porchfest from 1-6 PM. Over 40 musicians will perform across 16 venues in Downtown Highlands.

Mon., Sept. 21

• The 2026 Town of Highlands Scholarship Golf Tournament at the Cullasaja Club. The day will begin with a light breakfast, followed by at 10:30AM shotgun start. Following golf, there is a full buffet dinner in the Cullasaja Club clubhouse. The event will be capped off at 28 teams. The cost is \$800 per team (\$200/ player). Hole sponsorships are available, as well as a variety of sponsorship levels. Mike and Jim Bryson are sponsors of the event. For more information call Brian Stiehler (787-2778) or to register, contact Gibby Shaheen at Town Hall by calling 526-2118.

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