Volume 21. Number 40

Real-Time News, Weather & WebCams: HighlandsInfo.com

Thurs., Oct. 3, 2024

MC sheriff officer dies during Helene onslaught

On Friday, Sept. 27 at 11:30 a.m., as Hurricane Helene was tracking through Macon County, a 911 call was made about a truck in the Cullasaja River at Fulton Road near the Macon Middle

School with witnesses saying they saw someone in the truck before it went underwater.

It was soon realized that one of the Macon County Sheriff Office's courthouse security officers.

Jim Lau, hadn't returned to work from lunch and his truck matched the description of the truck that was seen in the river.

A search effort was initiated

• See OFFICER page 16

•INSIDE THIS ISSUE•

Mayor on Duty	2	Events	10-11
Weather	2	Shopping Pullout	12-13
Letters	7	Police and Fire	19
Investing at 4,118 Ft	8	Service Directory	20-21
Ink Penn	9	Classifieds	21

County to begin search for County Manager

By Kristin Fox

After 15 years of service to Macon County, County Manager Derek Roland submitted his official notice of resignation at the September 10 meeting of the Macon County Board of Commissioners.

"After much reflection and with a heavy heart, I announce my intent to step down tonight as the County Manager of Macon County," said Roland. "This decision has not been easy. I have given the past 15 years of my life to this organization, 10 of which has been serving as the County Manager."

Roland first worked as the County Planner for Macon County, becoming County Manager in

• See MANAGER page 4



NC 106 (Dillard Road), Near Blue Valley Falls washed out 11 a.m., Thursday, Sept. 26 during the precursor front event before Hurricane Helene officially hit Highlands, early AM Friday, Sept. 27. According to NC DOT one lane near the washout is open with a temporary traffic light. Two lanes are open prior to and after the washout.

- Photo courtesy of NC DOT

Hurricane Helene strikes far and wide in WNC

Highlands fairs better than many communities with lack of power the main obstacle

By Kim Lewicki

We knew Hurricane Helene was coming but no one expected its impact to affect an area hundreds of miles away.

For Western North Carolina it started with a frontal event feeding tropical moisture to slow-moving storms that had formed along a stalled cold front days before Helene hit. Consequently, Western NC was already seeing a lot of rain that saturated the ground and filled waterways.

Helene was forecasted to descend on Highlands the early hours of Friday, Sept. 27 but by midnight Thursday, before Helene even made landfall, Asheville airport had already seen four inches of rain with other areas seeing more than nine inches as far away as Tennessee.

Climate officials say Helene amplified an already dire situation by pushing moisture up the mountains. Over the 3-day event, places across Western NC clocked 31 inches of rain.

With the heaviest rain from Helene just beginning to fall throughout Friday, in Highlands storm force winds began to bring trees and powerlines down.

Mayor Pat Taylor joined the county and the state and declared a state of emergency for Highlands urging everyone to shelter in place and be prepared for extensive damage and power outages.

Around 2 a.m., power in Highlands began to flicker off and on and finally went out for good around 5 a.m., Friday and soon the rumble of gas-powered generators could be heard throughout town and neighborhoods.

Though some residents in the Highlands Township re-

• See HELENE page 15

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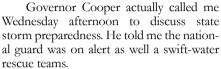
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THE PLATEAU'S POSITION

Countdown to Hurricane Helene

this is my immediate journal and recollections as mayor during a storm and state of emergency. It begins last week.

At the start of last week, I and our staff became aware and started tracking the disturbance in the Caribbean. By Wednesday the governor, county and town declared a state of emergency. We followed the projected track of Hurricane Helene. Our crews and staff began preparations for the storm.



Zeb Smathers, Mayor of Canton, sent me a forecast Wednesday night that Highlands would receive 20" of rain from Hurricane Helene. Zeb was right about the amount for Highlands but unfortunately his town also received heavy rain causing massive flooding.

Highlands Newspaper

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Letter Policy:

There is a 500-word limit. We reserve the right to reject or edit letters-to-the-editor. No anonymous letters will be accepted, Views expressed are not necessarily those of Highlands Newspaper.

Obituary Policy:

We do not charge for obituaries at this time, but we reserve the right to edit as needed for space.



Highlands Mayor Patrick Taylor

Wednesday and Thursday Lamar Nix was contacting private electric crews to be ready to come to Highlands to help repair the electrical grid after the storm. He could get no commitments since many companies had contracted with large electrical providers.

Wednesday and Thursday staff checked and prepared equipment for storm response. Crews were on notice and call.

Early Friday morning the storm hit Highlands and inflicted

major damage to roads and the utility grid. Access roads to Highlands were blocked and closed by fallen trees.

I arrived at Town Hall at 7:15 on Friday morning to take calls and assess the storm damage. Francis Beck of our administrative staff was already there taking calls. Internet and communications were for the most part totally down. I couldn't contact the Town Manager nor the Public Works Director.

Critical staff could not reach Highlands from their homes due to road closures. Some on-call road crews and electrical crews went through the town initially responding and assessing the damage. Police Chief Holland had positioned a double shift of officers who had spent the night at the department. They began managing traffic, checking on people and identifying hazards and damage.

Some restoration of services began after weather conditions improved Friday afternoon. Town Hall remained open late into the afternoon.

With continuing bad weather Friday night, more trees fell on power lines and blocked roads. Crews continued clearing roads Friday through Saturday.

After hours of travel, Francis Beck was again manning the front counter of Town Hall before 8am on Saturday. Lamar Nix, our Public Works Director and Josh Ward, the Town Manager, made it to Town Hall and implemented a utility restoration response.

Saturday and Sunday staff kept Town Hall open and answered citizen questions. Public WiFi was provided at Town Hall and the Civic Center. Lester Norris, Director of Rrecreation, kept the Civic Center open all Saturday night and all day Sunday.

> Lamar Nix began requesting out-• See MAYOR page 4

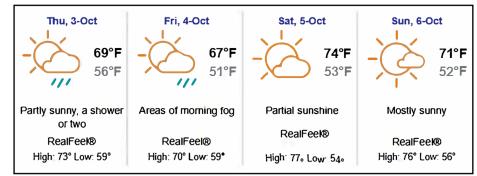


FALL through a window!

Photo by Kathy McIntyre Ross

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

FATHER •



For Real-time Weather and the Extended Forecast, go to www.highlandsinfo.com and click on Weather

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...MANAGER continued from page 1

December 2013. He replaced Jack Horton who retired as county manager after a 30-year career as a manager for several counties.

"It has been an honor and a privilege to work along some of the most talented, driven and compassionate individuals I have ever known in the Macon County employees," he added. "Together we faced challenges, celebrated victories, we've mourned losses. Through all that I feel like we've became more than colleagues, we became more than friends, we became family and that is what makes this decision so bittersweet.

"I've loved every second of this journey," added Roland. "I love this organization and still to this day I love my job. My decision to resign as county manager is my decision, and I am making it in order to pursue another career opportunity."

Roland assured the board that he will stay on and assist the board in the replacement process as he works through his notice period. Oct 8 will be Roland's last meeting as the County Manager.

At a special called meeting of the county commissioners last week, Horton spoke to the board about a service provided by the North Carolina North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC). The NCACC is a non-partisan organization that serves as the official voice of all 100 counties In North Carolina.

As a part of its strategic member services, the NCACC offers county outreach services to counties. Horton serves on the team of four former county managers who provide these outreach services. One of the services provided by the team is to help counties with recruitment of key county officials including county managers, finance directors and tax administrators.

"Derek has done a terrific job for this county over the past 11 years," said Horton "We appreciate all the good work that he's done. He will be greatly missed as he moves on to new adventures but he leaves the legacy of good management and dedication to his job."

The team can help a county find a permanent replacement or if a county needs more time, help them find an interim to keep the county running during the search for a new County Manager. These services are offered to the county at no charge. The team will give counties as much or as little help as they want locating a county manager. It will also be up to the commissioners if they want to use these services in their search for a new county manager.

According to Horton, some counties want the NCACC team to be more involved in the process, all the way from writing the job description through interviews and so forth. The team will not make a recommendation of who to hire for the position that will be entirely up to the local board.

"We won't recommend anybody for the job, but we may tell you somebody whom you shouldn't consider and that's as far as we'll go," said Horton. "The final decision is entirely up to the board of county commissioners.

'We've had some success stories throughout the state on working with counties recruiting and helping them in the process of finding a new management," he added. "We recently helped Stokes County find a new manager."

Horton also informed commissioners that in the western part of the state there are several vacancies for county managers. He said that it is hard to find somebody who has the ability, expertise and willingness to take on the responsibility of the county manager position.

Chairman Gary Shields encouraged the board to move forward with the process. However, Commissioner Josh Young felt like the board needed some time before deciding to use the NCACC team, especially as there were only three commissioners present at the meeting.

"I have a list of questions and would like to discuss this with the county attorney," said Young. "I just think there needs to be some internal discussion with the board as a body first. I just feel like there's just a lot of other questions that need to be answered."

...MAYOR continued from page 2

side electrical crew assistance all Saturday and Sunday. Representative Karl Gillespie helped secure crews from Connecticut. They arrived along with other crews on Tuesday. They will help town crews erect fallen lines and utility poles until full restoration.

Lamar Nix worked with Joey Wilson of Duke Energy in rebuilding the transmission lines feeding Highlands. Duke got power back to the Highlands substation Monday afternoon. The downtown and some neighborhoods were back online. Outlying areas will continue to be restored.

The water and sewer plant continued operations throughout the disaster. Water crews made repairs to numerous leaks in the system during this period.

The Highlands Cashiers Hospital and emergency department remained operative during the state of emergency. An emergen-

• See MAYOR page 19

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• I FTTFRS •

'Mr. Trump has proven he is not up to the job'

Dear Editor

On Sunday September 22, 2024 a bipartisan group of 741 national security leaders — some of the biggest names in the field — endorsed Harris. They had worked in the Republican administrations of Reagan, both Bushes and the Democratic administration of Obama. The letter read as follows:

"To the American People," they wrote. "We are former public servants who swore an oath to the Constitution. Many of us risked our lives for it. We are retired generals, admirals, senior noncommissioned officers, ambassadors, and senior civilian national security leaders. We are Republicans, Democrats, and Independents. We are loyal to the ideals of our nation — like freedom, democracy, and the rule of law — not to any one individual or party.

We do not agree on everything, but we all adhere to two fundamental principles. First, we believe America's national security requires a serious and capable Commander-in-Chief. Second, we believe American democracy is invaluable. Each generation has a responsibility to defend it. That is why we, the undersigned, proudly endorse Kamala Harris to be the next President of the United States.

This election is a choice between serious leadership and vengeful impulsiveness. It is a choice between democracy and authoritarianism. Vice President Harris defends America's democratic ideals, while former President Donald Trump endangers them.

We do not make such an assessment lightly. We are trained to make sober, rational decisions. That is how we know Vice President Harris would make an excellent Commander-in-Chief, while Mr. Trump has proven he is not up to the job."

We urge you to consider the seriousness of this letter when deciding for whom you will vote in this most consequential election.

The Board of the Highlands Democratic Precinct. Al Brady, Margaret Pickett, Karen Hawk, Robert E. Smith and Linda Arnold

Kudos to Lester Norris and all the staff at Highlands Recreation Center!

Dear Editor.

The Rec Center became a beacon of light in an otherwise gloomy situation. Town residents were able to get their phones, computers, tablets, etc., charged up and communicate with loved ones.

It was like old home week seeing people you hadn't seen in years. Everybody was congenial and many experiences regarding the storm were shared. Without the support and friendliness of all it would not have become the safe haven for all to communicate and vent, if need be.

So, thank you to all the staff for coming in at odd hours and helping when needed.

Maddy Wooldridge Highlands

Thanks to the mayor and town employees

Dear Editor,

We are writing to express our gratitude to and admiration for Mayor Pat Taylor's great leadership, and to the numerous staff of the Town of Highlands for their outstanding work before, during, and after Hurricane Helene. Mayor Taylor kept the lines of communication open wonderfully by radio and video messages. He worked tirelessly to lead many different Town workers to speed the Highlands recovery from the massive damages caused by the storm

We want to express our deep appreciation for the Recreation Center being open during the crisis. The fact that we were able to go there and have electricity, WiFi, hot showers, and to congregate with people at this facility was immeasurably valuable, not only physically but emotionally. The open gym was excellent for the children and teens.

We want to give a huge thank you to director Lester Norris and the rest of the dedicated staff at the Rec Center. Lester stayed long hours at the rec center for us. They provided many services with compassion and kindness. We especially want to recognize employee Sabrina Cashion whose sparkling personality was a bright light of optimism for all of us.

Margo and David Cooper Highlands Manor Ct.

There are lots of ways to help Helene victims

Community foundations and many other organizations across North Carolina are collaborating to support western North Carolina after the devastation brought by Hurricane Helene.

- To support ongoing recovery needs, give to The Community Foundation of Western North Carolina's Emergency and Disaster Response Fund.
- To support long-term recovery, donate to the North Carolina Community Foundation Disaster Relief Fund.

A wide range of groups are also providing support to

western North Carolina, including:

- American Red Cross
- Diaper Bank of NC
- Operation Airdrop
- Second Harvest Food Bank of Northwestern North Carolina
 - Wine to Water

You can find additional information about the NCCF Disaster Relief Fund and other efforts by visiting our website at nccommunityfoundation.org/helene.

Investing at 4.118 Ft

Highlands community - vacation renters, year-round and seasonal residents all went through Helene

There are things that our town doesn't do well, but when it comes to town emergencies, Highlands, NC understands the assignment. I applaud Mayor Taylor with the many updates he has given regarding the storm, Hurricane Helene. Someone else who gets a lot of credit is our radio station, WHLC. I remember when Chuck and Wanda Cooper first started WHLC just as they were being initiated with the blizzard of 1993. When a crisis occurs, it's imperative to not only get the information to everyone as quickly as possible, but to get the correct information to the ears of the public. Facebook is great for a lot of things, but well-intended hearsay isn't what is needed.

This storm, reminiscent of Hurricanes Opal and Ivan packed a punch right in the gut of Highlands. I don't know why but I expected to lose power for a while, maybe even a day or two, but for some reason, I was surprised to lose my cell phone. Usually, even when I don't have internet, I can use my cell phone's cellular data plan. We were completely cut off from the outside world. Even if we had an emergency, there'd be no way to call for help, and there

was no way anyone could reach us anyway because our driveway was blocked. Special shout out to Noah Chmar of Peak Land Services, LLC for coming to our rescue and cutting a path through the fallen trees Saturday afternoon.

We headed to our office in town to fill up our water containers, and then went to the Rec Park, because Mayor Taylor's radio address suggested that was where Wi-Fi was available, as well as a hot shower. What an invita-

tion! It was so good to see so many people. I saw bewilderment but I also saw smiles. I think we were all glad to be seen, too, even though we had to 'come as we were.'

If you get the chance, thank a town worker, the Highlands Fire and Rescue and the Highlands Police Department. I understand the HPD had access to a local home usually reserved for friends, guests and short-term rentals. I'm sure as time goes by, we will hear more nice things about the people of this community.

We've had a stressful few years with The



Jeannie Chambers Chambers Realty & Vacation Rentals

Highlands Neighborhood Coalition and the SaveHighlands.net fractions. Fractions is a good word because the STR issue has divided the town. Things have been said that should have never been said, feelings have been hurt, friendships estranged and for what? Did you know that extreme worry and stress can cause sickness? Who knows what will happen next, but the Town Board voted 4-1 in favor of amortization to end all short-term rentals effective September

2027 for homes located in R-1 and R-2. Now, if there's rowdy guest, they'll be required to stay rowdy for 30 nights or more.

When I was younger, I enjoyed watching a show called Bewitched. Samanta and Darrin had a nosy neighbor, Mrs. Kravitz, remember her? She just knew there was something going on across the street. Her husband always had his nose in his newspaper, but you could hear him agree with his wife out of necessity, to keep the peace. Mrs. Kravitz could be seen peeping through the venetian blinds on just about every epi-

sode. Poor thing.

When it was time for the public hearing on STRs, I made a comment, "Wonder which side we should sit on, the bride's or groom's side?" I meant it as a joke, but I got to thinking about it later. When you go to a wedding, there are two sides, two sets of friends and families who are there to see the group become one in supporting the bride and groom start a new life together. Think about it. What if the two opposing groups in Highlands were to join together and become one for the betterment of new life in Highlands?

There will always be the few who don't follow rules, but just because Uncle Billy got drunk at the wedding and started acting like a fool doesn't mean the wedding can't go on as planned. We can't go back to the '50s and '60s and this ain't Mayberry, but we can all act civilized and get along.

I personally don't care for third party rental sites, but maybe there needs to be a big fat, red-letter warning for a prospective tenant to initial that the home they're viewing is in a residential neighborhood, and they better be nice...or else.

• See INVESTING page 9

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• INK PENN •

The perks of being an avid reader

T've been an avid reader my whole life. In grammar school, I lived for the book fairs, and I was the girl in high school who always had a novel tucked inside her textbook. I learned all I needed to know about the Kings and Queens of England from historical novels by Phillipa Gregory, Anya Seton, Jean Plaidy, and goodness knows who else.

Of course, I majored in English in college. What else was a girl to do?

The number one perk is the pure joy I get from reading a good book, which is why I read every night, often two-three books a week. Next is what I learn. It was the Maisie Dobbs series that introduced me to the impact of the first World War on England — beyond the actual bombs and devastation to a generation of young men. A dry history book is not for me. It's novels I crave.

What I never imagined is that later in life, I would become a world-famous columnist writing about books. Do you see my tongue firmly planted in my cheek? I'm certainly not famous, but a bit of attention has come my way because of my book columns in the Dunwoody Crier.

I've had the pleasure of meeting with book clubs to discuss my books, my path to writing, and books I recommend. When a member of Sisters in Crime Atlanta read my columns, she invited me to attend a monthly Reader Rendezvous meeting. What fun to chat with a group of mystery readers about the latest books we've enjoyed.

That invitation led to my joining SINC Atlanta and participating in lots of book festivals. And yes, on occasion, someone reads the byline for my columns and picks up one of my books.

The latest perk came my way when the communications manager for a major publisher noticed my columns. She wrote to ask if I'd care to read any of the mysteries and thrillers the firm planned to release this year and sent me a list to consider. The



Kathy Manos Penn

first thing that caught my eye was an October release by Colleen Cambridge, so that went on the list. But I also found several new to me authors.

This week's review is about a debut novel described as "Maisie Dobbs meets James Bond." How could I resist?

A Jewel in the Crown by David Lewis

Set in England during WWII, it features Caitrin Colline, a strong, talented female protagonist. Charged by Winston Churchill with removing the Crown Jewels from the Tower of London and driving them north to Scotland, an unlikely pair of secret agents sets out under the cover of darkness. They are to safeguard the jewels at all costs so that they don't fall into the hands of the Nazis. It's not long, of course, before the plan goes awry.

Is there any doubt that Caitrin Colline, a Welsh coalminer's daughter, will save the day? Author David Lewis has given us a well-researched, action-packed caper filled with witty dialogue. I wasn't surprised to read that he was an award-winning screenwriter and filmmaker. That background shines through in this tale that kept me turning pages well past my bedtime several nights in a row.

Trust me when I tell you that there is not a boring moment in this novel. Lewis tells us he has more Caitrin Colline stories to share, so I'm eagerly awaiting Book II. The series may be dubbed "The Secret Churchill Files," but like the Maisie Dobbs series I so love, I'll read it to learn more about Caitrin Colline.

This book ticks all my boxes — set in England, strong female lead, well plotted mystery, and more. I highly recommend you grab it now. Happy reading!

Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Georgia resident. Find her cozy mysteries at Franklin Office Supply & Gifts, and on Amazon. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com, and follow her on Facebook, www.facebook.com/KathyManosPennAuthor/.

...INVESTING continued from page 8

Hurricane season isn't over until November. Let's remember what we wished we'd done differently this time so we can all be better prepared the next time. And let's remember the neighborhood feeling

we shared during this hurricane. There were vacation renters, year-round residents, and seasonal residents all in the same boat and it was a good thing.



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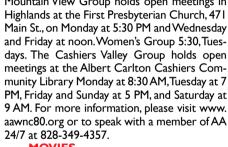
Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday I Iam-6pm and Sunday I-6pm ΔI I WFFK

• Alcoholics Anonymous: "Open Meetings" are for anyone who thinks they may have a drinking problem or for anyone interested in the A.A. program of recovery. Highlands

Mountain View Group holds open meetings in 24/7 at 828-349-4357.

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• Movies at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at PAC on Chestnut Street See adioining ad.







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PICKI F BALL

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Mon-Wed-Fri

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- · Balance, Stretch & Strengthen Class at the Rec Park 8:30-9:30am. The cost for the class is \$30 a month. The class is led by Cathy Hodgson, Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information.

Second 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. More meeting places call president Paula McDonald at 706-372-3004
- Indivisible Highlands from 5:15-6:15pm at the Hudson Library Meeting Room.

Ist Tuesdays through Dec.

· HUMC's Community Table Dinner at the Community Building at at 6 p.m. Sept. 3, Oct. I, Nov. 5 and Dec. 3.

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 information 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. Aim for strong, lean muscles using light weights, body weight, and high repetition to shape and tone. Learn proper form and range of motion to safely target all muscle groups for a metabolic boost and feel great.
- · At Wayfarers Chapel, Workshop for Writers - Tuesdays from 5-6:30 PM. Facilitated by Sam Renken, this group has a simple mission: to foster and provide consistent community for local writers thereby giving writers of all ages and genres the opportunity to write, read, revise, and present their work to the group.
- · ESL classes are held at the Presbyterian Church in Highlands from 6:30-7:30pm. No registration required - just show up and participate. Questions? call 828-526-0863 or email info@maconncliteracy.org

2nd Wednesdays

· Hudson Library, in partnership with VAYA Health, is hosting an educational series on adult mental health topics, held on the first Wednesday of each month at 11 AM. This series is aimed particularly at older adults and

• HIGHLANDS EVENTS •

will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend. The November I program is Dementia: A Deeper Understanding. Reservations are required for this free event. To register, stop by the library or call 828-526-3031.

2nd & 4th Wed.

- Digital Navigators will be at the Hudson Library the second and fourth Wednesdays IPM 3PM of each month to help patrons with their tech needs. Bring a smartphone, laptop, or other digital device to receive free assistance and support. No appointments are required all are welcome.
- Pickle Ball inside and outside at the Rec Park. 10am-1pm, everyone is welcome so come out and enjoy a game of Pickle Ball.

Mon., Tues., Thurs.

- The Food Pantry behind the Methodist Church on Spring Street is open from 10a-6p.
- Exercise Class with Michelle Lane at the Rec Park at 5:30.A combo class with different types of exercise. Call the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more information

Thursdays

- Kickboxing 8:15-9:15 am. at the Rec Park. An exhilarating and fun mix of martial arts for a calorie-burning workout. No martial arts background necessary Contact the Recreation Department at 828-526-3556 for more info.
- At Hudson Library, special children's events will be on tap on Thursday afternoons at 3:30 Kids Zone programs.

Fridays

 At Hudson Library, Friday afternoons at 2 PM, there's a variety of children's programs including board games, STEM programs, and crafternoons.

Saturdays

- Story Ballet a gentle ballet & creative movement class for Children 3-4. The flow of class follows a story or theme that changes each month, engaging imaginations! Saturday 5:30-6:30pm. 828-421-6720
- Adult Ballet crafted for beginners, but mindfully taught for all levels. Ballet is an excellent way to move, grow stronger, improve balance, flexibility and coordination while having fun. 6:30-7:30pm. 828-421-6720.

2nd Saturdays

• The Western North Carolina Woodturners Club meets in Highlands at The Bascom at 10 a.m. thru Nov.

3rd Saturdays

• The American Legion Post 370 meets at the First Methodist Church at 315 Main St. in their community room/909 chapel. We serve breakfast at 9 AM and hold our monthly meeting at 10 AM. We invite ALL veterans to attend - email ncpost370@gmail.com for more information or just join us at 9 AM.

Sundays

At Wayfarers Chapel, Sunday Service: 10
 AM Sunday Morning. Stick around for visita-

tion and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the lst Sunday of each month).

Thru Mid-October

• Visit the Cashiers Historical Society every Friday & Saturday for a guided tour of the 1850s Zachary-Tolbert House and other historic structures on their five-acre campus. Tours will be available from 11am - 3pm on the top of the hour. CHS is located at 1940 HY 107 S Cashiers. NC 28717.

Fri., Oct. 4

• Friday Night Live music on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. – Zorki

Sat., Oct. 5

• Pop-Up Bag Pipers at First Presbyterian Church 4:30 p.m. to 5 p.m.

Sun., Oct. 6

• The Highlands Biological Station presents Highlands on the Half-Shell Sunday at 4p.m. feature jambalaya, gumbo, and oysters at the Highlands Biological Station's Valentine Meadow Tickets are available for \$150 per person. Space is limited, so be sure to register soon at www.highlandsbiological.org.

Tues., Oct. 8

• HCHF 2024 Grant Awards Ceremoy 4p at The Village Green in Cashiers.

Thurs., Oct. 10

- Pisgah Legal Services' 14th Annual Justice Forum. Reception 5:30pm; Forum 7pm. Tickets to the reception are \$125/person and include food and drink. Advance registration is required at www.pisgahlegal.org/justiceforum. In Highlands, the free livestreaming of the event will be at PAC. Questions? Email Leslie@pisgahlegal.org
- OEls The Orchard Sessions with Erick Baker. Light bites, a cash bar 6-8 p.m. \$40. Book Online: https://www.simpletix.com/e/erick-baker-orchard-sessions-at-the-farm-tickets-149415.

Oct. 11-26

• At PAC, Mountain Theatre Company presents The Burnt Park Boys. For tickets go to boxoffice@mountaintheatre.com.

Fri. & Sat., Oct. 11-12

 \bullet At The Bascom, Fall Pottery Show 10a to 4p.

Fri., Oct. 11

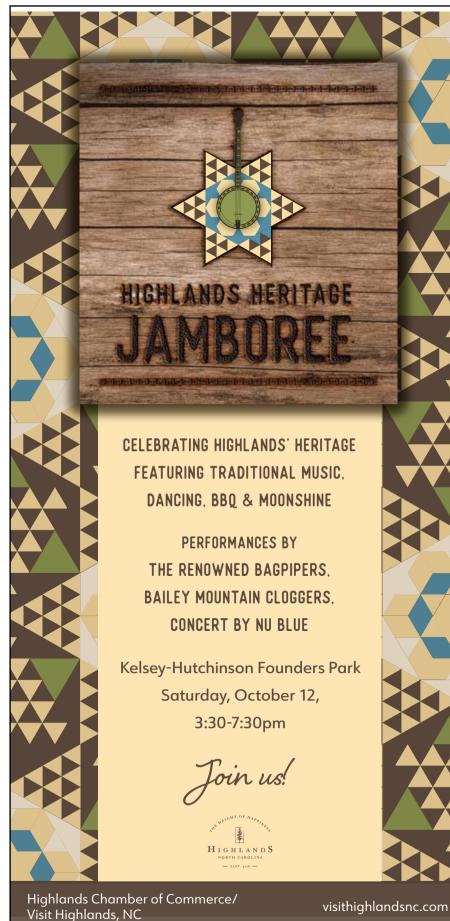
- Friday Night Live music on Main Street's Town Square 6-8:30 p.m. The Foxfire Boys
- OEI's Chef Dinners at The Farm. GREAT BRITAIN CELEBRITY CHEF PHIL VICKERY. Book Online at OldEdwardsHospitality.com/ ChefDinners

Sat., Oct. 12

• Highlands Heritage Jamboree with traditional music, dancing, BBQ & Moonshine at KH Founders Park 3:30-7:30p featuring Nu Blue.

Fri., Oct 18

 At Hudson Library in Highlands, Arts & Crafts of Bhutan with Dennis Desmond at 4 p.m. sponsored by the Arts Council of Macon County.



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Hurricane Helene aftermath Sat., Sept 28

















...HELENE continued from page 1

gained power – some late Friday and others throughout the weekend – most people were without power until the evening of Monday and some won't see it totally restored until Friday and possibility beyond.

Throughout the Highlands Township, power is provided by Duke, Haywood and the Town of Highlands each with its own distribution system and restoration timeline.

Once the storm passed, assessment began across Western NC and Highlands.

Photos by Kim and Rachel Lewicki

With the extensive loss of power, Mayor Taylor began broadcasting updates via UTUBE, and on Sunday

evening he said the town was struggling to get power restored.

• See HELENE page 16







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...OFFICER continued from page 1

that afternoon by multiple emergency service agencies – an onfoot search, a drone search and multiple swift-water rescue teams were called in.

Ultimately, the search was put on hold when the sun began to set. The search began early the morning of Saturday, Sept. 28. Lau's body was found and recovered from the river shortly after the search began.

NC State Highway Patrol is the investigating agency and its ongoing in-

"Jim Lau was very liked and respected



lim Lau

within the department," said Sheriff Brent Holbrooks, "He was known to be a hard worker, dependable and he jumped in whenever help was needed. His absence will truly be felt in our agency."

Sheriff Holbrooks asks that the community pray for his family and loved ones as well as prayers for the department.

"Also, continue to pray for Western North Carolina as a whole," he said. "The tragedy that

surrounds our mountain communities is unimaginable."

Submitted

...HELENE continued from page 15

"We experienced 21 inches of rain over the and super high winds that knocked out power lines and splintered and destroyed a number of our utility poles," he said.

The transmission system from Duke Power, that supplies Highlands power, was also literally destroyed, he said.

"Three major transmission poles and lines went down and Duke is working to install new poles and bringing the transmission lines back to the substation that feeds all of Highlands," he said, "but with so many outages and downed trees that knocked down lines, the process of restoring full power to the town of Highlands could take more than a week to complete."

A Duke contract worker explained the

number of steps that must be completed per spot – which exemplified why restoring power takes so long.

He said first crews have to identify where the problem lies – where a tree took out a pole or lines - and there are lots of them, and that and the lack of cell coverage has made the multi-step process physically

"So it's a multitask process - spotters find the problem, then linemen determine if the line is hot, then tree guys remove the tree, then poles have to be re-established, then the linemen run the new line and make sure it is functioning. It's a process, and there are a lot of steps at one spot," he said.

• See HELENE page 17





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...HELENE continued from page 16

He said to compound the problem. Duke has to allocate resources across a wide swath of Macon and Jackson counties -Cashiers, Franklin, Nantahala and Highlands. "It's a big job," he said.

Over the last several days, with no power, people congregated at the Civic Center for hot showers and wifi and also outside Town Hall to access wifi.

By early Monday evening the town's three-phase system, which powers the heavy load to electrify the downtown and business area as well as outlying neighborhoods, came online. But Mayor Taylor reiterated that power to the entire township could take as long as two weeks.

He said thanks to the help of state representative Karl Gillespie a private electric company from Connecticut is now on site rebuilding the electric grid but it won't be a fast process.

Services continue in town with garbage pickup continuing as long as homes are physically accessible; a fully operational water department is distributing safe, high-quality water; and the sewer department is fully operational.

The NC 106 (GA Road) washout that occurred about 11 a.m. Thursday, as part of the precursor frontal event, closed the road for several days, but one lane

was opened near the washout late Monday with traffic monitored with a temporary traffic light.

The First Baptist Church is operating an emergency aid station with essential supplies and support services and is open from 10a to 3p

It needs water, canned foods, toiletries, baby wipes, diapers, toothbrushes and toothpaste, hand lotion, cleaning supplies and gloves and trash bags

The Food Pantry needs diapers, baby formula and feminen products.

The International Friendship Center needs flashlights for the farm workers in Macon County.

Hotwire has some spot outages but most of its network is

operational. Other communication providers are working to restore their networks.

Highlands Police continue to do welfare and damage checks

throughout the town.

Macon County Schools closed in preparation of Helene through Wednesday, Oct. 2. Classes will resume Thurs.. Oct 3.



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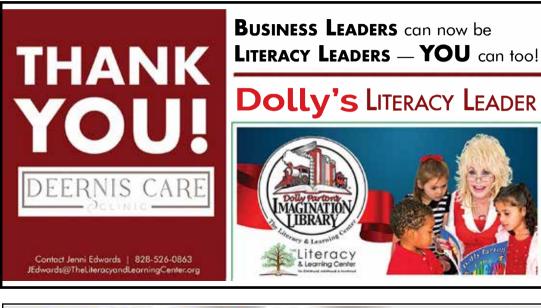


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ORG NEWS •



From left: Ed McCloskey, Marla Dalrymple, Maci Bears, Sarah Holbrooks, and Paul Schowalter

Students learn the history of the American Flag

The Highlands School 5th grade classes taught by Maci Bears and Marla Dalrymple joined with the Highlands American Legion Post 370 for an American Flag History, Etiquette and flag folding class.

The event was organized by Maci Bears 5th grade teacher at the school with Obie Oakley and Chip Snyder of Post 370 with the support of school principal Sarah Holbrooks.

The 34 5th grade students engaged first with Post Commander Paul Schowalter in the school gym to learn about the history of the flag from Betsy Ross days in 1777 evolving 43 times to the current American Flag of 50 stars and 13 stripes. Commander Schowalter outlined a brief history of the American Legion and the veteran service members that comprise the organization in Highlands.

The group then moved outside to the school flagpole where Post Chaplain and Ceremonies Officer Ed McCloskey guided the students through the correct way to unfold, attach and raise the flag as the post bugler played "To the Colors." A number of the students had an opportunity to raise and lower the flag as well as practice folding and unfolding for future daily flag raising services.

The American Legion has nearly 2 million members across the United States from all military services, making it the nation's largest veteran service organization. The Highlands American Legion Post has committed to donate new American and North Carolina flags to the Highlands School continuing the posts commitment to donating flags to local organizations as a show of patriotic and community spirit.

PLACES TO WORSHIP

BLUEVALLEY BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Oliver Rice. Pastor (828) 421-1315 Sundays: School: 10 a.m., Worship: 11

Sunday night services every 2nd & 4th Sunday at 7

Wednesdays: Mid-week prayer meeting: 7 p.m. BUCK CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

828-269-3546 • Rev. lamie Passmore, Pastor Sundays: School: 10 a.m.: Worship: 11

CASHIERS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

Rev. Aryn Williams-Reubel. Pastor 828-743-5298

Sundays: School at 9:30: Worship 10:30 CHAPEL OF THE SKY

Sky Valley, GA • 706-746-2999

Sundays: 10 a.m. Worship; Holy Communion 1st & 3rd Sundays

CHRIST ANGLICAN CHURCH

The Rev'd Dr. Michael Matlock, Rector. 464 U.S. Hwy. 64E, Cashiers, NC

CAC@christanglicancashiers.org • 828-743-1701 Sunday: 9:30a Adult Christian Ed: 10:30a Holy Eucharist Wed: 6p Potluck, Bible Study

CHRIST CHURCH OF THE VALLEY, CASHIERS

Pastor Brent Metcalf • 743-5470 www.cashiers.church Sun. S.S 9:30a, 10:45a; Tues. Guys study 8am. Gals 10am.; Wed. 6pm supper and teaching.

CHRISTIAN SCIENCE CHURCH

283 Spring Street - Sunday Service: 10:30 a.m. Testimony meeting: 3rd Wednesday at 5:30 p.m.

CLEAR CREEK BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Iim Kinard Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 1 la.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 Bistro

COMMUNITY BIBLE CHURCH OF SKY VALLEY

706. 746.3144 • 696 Sky Valley Way #447 Pastor Steve Kerhoulas

Worship: Sun. 10:30 a.m. Holy Communion 2nd Sunday

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 PRESBÝTERIAN CHURCH

Emily Wilmarth, pastor, Kelley Connelly Asso. Pastor 828-526-3175 • fpchighlands.org Sun.: Adult Ed.: 10 a.m.; Worship 11 a.m.

Tues: Men's Group 10 a.m. Wed: Bell Choir 4 p.m., Choir:6p

GOLDMINE BAPTIST CHURCH

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Sunday School: 10 am. Worship Service: 11 am

GRACE COMMUNITY CHURCH OF CASHIERS

Non-Denominational-Contemporary Worship 242 Hwy 107N. I/4 miles from Crossroads in Cashiers www.gracecashiers.com • Pastor Steve Doerter 743-9814 Services: Sundays 10am - Wed. - 7pm; Dinner - Wed. 6pm

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: I I

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. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHÓDIST CHURCH

Rev. Dr. Randy Lucas. Pastor 526-3376 In-Person and live-streamed Worship Services 909a Bluegrass and I Ia Traditional www.highlandsmethodist.org

HOLY FAMILY LÜTHERAN CHURCH: ELCA

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Visit our website: Holy Family Lutheran Highlands NC MACEDONIA BAPTIST CHURCH

8 miles south of Highlands on N.C. 28 S in Satolah Pastor Zane Talley Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.

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

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOĞUE

Franklin • 828-634-1312 • mountainsynagoguewnc.com. Services: 1st Fri. and 3rd Sat. and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church 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.;

OUR LADY OF THE MOUNTAINS CATHOLIC CHURCH

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SCALY MOUNTAIN BAPTIST CHURCH

Rev. Marty Kilby

Sundays: School -10 a.m.; Worship -11 a.m. & 7 Wednesdays: Prayer Mtg.:7 p.m.

SCALY MOUNTAIN CHURCH OF GOD

290 Buck Knob Road; Pastor Donald G. Bates • 526-3212 Sun.: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 10:45 a.m.; Worship: 6 p.m.

SHORTOFF BAPTIST CHURCH

Pastor Rev. Andy Cloer Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11 a.m. Wednesdays: Prayer & Bible Study:6 p.m. ST. IUDE'S CATHOLIC CHURCH

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1448 Highway 107 S.. Office: • 743-2359 • Rev. Rob Wood

Sunday Rites-Holy Eucharist: 8a. 9:30 & 11a Visit our website www.goodshepherdofcashiers.com for schedules of activities.

Our Bazaar Barn is open Thurs. - Sat. 10a -2p.

UNITARIAN UNIVERSALIST FELLOWSHIP

85 Sierra Drive. Franklin • uufranklin.org Sunday Worship - II a.m.

WHITESIDE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH

Rev. Sam Forrester/Cashiers •828-743-2122 Sunday School:10 am. Worship Service:11 am

• Business/Organization News •



From left: Randy Foster, Rotary president; Ava Ammons; administrator, Eckerd Living Center: Dennis Leftwich, rotary host.

On Sept. 17, Rotary was pleased to hear from Ava Ammons, Administrator of the Eckerd Living Center. It is a CMS rated 5-star, 80-bed skilled nursing facility with 61% of residents from the Highlands-Cashiers communities; 68% of residents use Medicaid, 22% use private pay, and 12% use Medicare. It is the only skilled nursing facility in the Mission/HCA network. It also provides on-site cohort classes to help stave the drop off rate in professional caregivers.



From left: Linda Tiffany, President Randy Foster..

On Sept 3 Rotarian Linda Tiffany, executive director/administrator for Chestnut Hill of Highlands delivered a wealth of information on Chestnut Hill. It is an assisted living facility whose goal is to improve each resident's quality of life. While there are private homes for sale, the focus of the assisted living facility is to provide varied activities to its residents along with a high level of senior care services.

Chamber recognizes outstanding community contributors

The Highlands Chamber of Commerce proudly celebrated exceptional individuals and organizations at its annual Autumn Ovation event, held on September 17 at The Vineyard at High Holly. This gathering of Chamber members honored outstanding contributions to the Highlands community, spotlighting leadership, service, and dedication.

The Volunteer of the Year, presented to Michael Lanzilotta. This award recognizes an individual who demonstrates exemplary leadership, commitment to volunteerism, and community service. Lanzilotta serves on six boards, including the Hudson Library, Community Care Clinic, Highlands Cashiers Players, Macon County Arts Council, Eckerd Living Center, and Bel Canto. Additionally, Michael serves as the DEI District Chair for Rotary International District 7670, which encompasses Highlands and Western North Carolina. He is also an active member of the Mountaintop Rotary Club. His philanthropic efforts extend to a wide range of causes, including Literacy and Learning Center, and the Highlands Bolivian Mission. Amidst all of this, Michael still finds time to tutor students and deliver Meals on Wheels.

The Robert B. Dupree Award for Outstanding Community Service, presented to Art and Angela Williams. This prestigious award is presented to individuals who have a longstanding and distinguished record of selfless community service. Over the past 20+ years, Art and Angela Williams have continuously supported and enriched the lives of countless individuals in Highlands. Their contributions include financial support for over 500 employees and their families, along with scholarships for local daycare facilities and graduating high school seniors. The Williams' generosity has been integral to many transformative projects in the community, such as covering the local swimming pool, installing an ice rink, funding The Bascom and Performing Arts Center (PAC), completing Founders Park, and installing the Christmas tree in the park. Their unmatched commitment to improving Highlands is a testament to their spirit of giving.

The Del Roberts Award for Outstanding Businessperson, presented to Jimmy Tate. Created in 2005, this award honors businesses or individuals who have made unselfish contributions to Highlands' business community. Jimmy Tate, a longtime business leader and owner of Tate Landscaping, has been a driving force behind Highlands' economic growth. His company provides employment for more than 50 individuals, and both he and his wife, Allison, have contributed selflessly to the community for many years. In addition to his business success, Jimmy has held various volunteer roles, serving as a county commissioner and chairman for over 11 years, ensuring Highlands always had a voice in county governance. His unwavering dedication to both the local economy and community makes him truly deserving of this recognition.



Jim and Allison Tate

...MAYOR continued from page 4

cy corridor from Highlands to the hospital was opened early Friday morning. The hospital and HCA brought in work crews to help keep roads open and the hospital accessible.

Fire fighters and EMTs remained on duty throughout the emergency. The fire department served as a hub for emergency workers.

With communications down, I began WHLC updates on Friday. On Sunday I began updates on AskMayorPat from my home after activating a small generator. My updates were linked to the town website on Monday afternoon. I and staff member spent time responding to claims and rumors on Facebook about roads closures and other events. We talked at Town Hall with many tourists about the best way for them to leave Highlands using open corridor roads.

Recovery will continue. After full restoration a performance review will be conducted focusing on improvements for future emergencies.

I want to thank our staff, commissioners and community organizations who have responded to the emergency.

I'm tired but like our town staff and volunteers, we will continue to remain on duty. So many people love our town and one another.



Michael Lanzilotta



Brian Crook of OEI accepting for the Williamses

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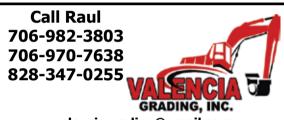
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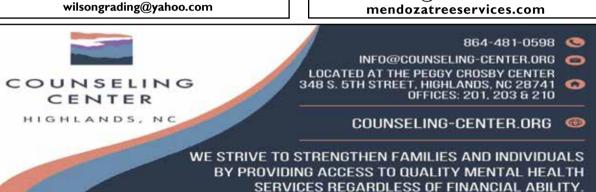
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HIGHLANDS/SCALMOWNTAIN/CASHIERS



2460 Cashiers Road • Highlands 828-526-2395 highlandslawnandgarden.com

• CLASSIFIEDS •

FOR SALE

LAND FOR SALE - 3 tracts, 7.5 miles south of Highlands, 8.64 acres with spring, by far the best view in the area at \$200,000; 6.12 acres with spring (already subdivided into 2, 3-acre lots) \$140,000; 3.99 acres with southern exposure, \$70,000. 828-974-1137. (11/28)

SEASONED FIREWOOD - Any size load. call 828-342-6806. (st. 1/25)

TINY HOME LOTS FOR SALE. \$55k-\$85k ea. Each lot comes with water, power, and sewer run to each lot. www.TinyMountainEstates.com for more info. (st. 11/22/24)

RV SITE - class A only - in Wildflower Creek RV Resort. Just minutes from Highlands and Sky Valley. Full hook-up, concrete pad, landscaped and storage shed. \$195,000. For more info call 828-421-1709 or email bobnnancync@gmail.com. (st. 1/25)

FOR RENT

SEASONAL NEW LOG CABIN ON SAGEE DRIVE. 2 bedroom & 2 bath suites on Creek. I 1/2 mile to downtown. Monthly or seasonally \$8,700 (1) month \$7,200 (3) Months. email: renee7726@gmail.com (st. 5/2)

WORKFORCE HOUSING - 2 bedroom/2 bath and 3 bedroom/2 bath with between Highlands & Cashiers. Includes hi-speed internet, water, & washer/dryer. No dogs. Inquires, Marcy_(706) 982-0444 or (828)-482-4239, (st. 5/2/24)

HELP WANTED

Align Therapeutic

Nicole Dilbeck, LCMHCA nicole@aligntherapywnc.com www.aligntherapywnc.com 828-526-6370



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LUPOLI CONSTRUCTION is hiring a Bookkeeper/Accounting Coordinator. Full-time, inperson, compensation based on experience. Must have experience in Construction Accounting. Contact regina@lupoliinc.com, 770.757.5004 (st. 9/19)

TRAINED SINGER NEEDED TO CANTOR Sunday morning Masses at Our Lady of the Mountains (Highlands) and St. Jude (Cashiers / Sapphire) Catholic churches. Qualifications: strong vocal and sightreading skills; technical ability to access music digitally; experience singing in liturgical settings; commitment to Sundays, Holy Week, Christmas services. Pay negotiable. Contact: 828-526-2418 or olmountainshighlands@rcdoc.org.

ORGANIST/PIANIST NEEDED to play for I I am Sunday worship services and Wednesday evening choir rehearsals (5:30-7pm) at First Presbyterian Church, Highlands, NC. \$24K annual salary. No administrative duties involved. Our organ is a circa 2004 16-rank 2 manual Wicks pipe organ. For more information, contact Angie Jenkins, Director of Music Ministry @ 828-200-0183. (st. 6/13)

ESTABLISHED CUSTOM HOMEBUILD-ER IN HIGHLANDS/CASHIERS area looking for project superintendent to manage multiple sites and subcontractors. Please send resume to: JW Underwood Construction LLC P.O. Box 147, Highlands NC 2974. Or email: john@jwunderwoodconstruction.com (st. 5/2)

SERVICES

CAREGIVER/SITTER with 40 years experience available for part-time personal care, errands, transportation, meals, etc. Highlands full-time resident. Robert Doe 828.399.0262. (st. 8/29)

<u>HIGHLANDS-CASHIERS HANDYMAN</u> – Chatlos Construction – Remodels, Additions, Framing, Siding, Roofing, Decks, Painting. References. Insured.

828-200-4071. (4/25)

MURPHY'S PAINT CO. - interior/exterior pointing/chapters/k repain/wallpaper removal/log

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NEED FURNITURE MOVED OR ANY-THING HAULED AWAY? Call or text James of Going Gone at 828-421-2655. (3/28)

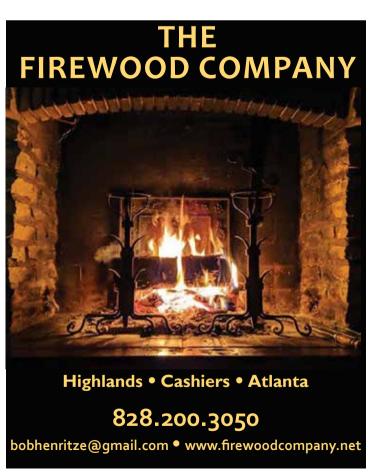
ANYTHING GOES CLEAN-UP SERVICE

Complete property cleanup - house, garage, property, etc. Call at 828-200-2855. (st. 9/28)

HIGH COUNTRY PHOTO/KEVIN VIN-

SON: 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.





• Biz/Org News •

Nonprofits get proceeds from Motoring Festival

On Wed., Sept. 5 proceeds from the 17th annual Highlands Motoring Festival were presented to three charity organizations in KH Founders Park: the Literacy and Learning Center of Highlands, REACH of Macon County, and the Community Care Clinic of Highlands and Cashiers Kelsey Hutchinson Park.

The festival's net proceeds of \$105,000 were distributed equally between the three charity organizations. Highlands Motoring Festival® is a 501(c)(3) non-profit and is an all-volunteer team of classic car enthusiasts.



Pictured left to right: Craig Nixon, Steve Ham, Lester Norris, Ricky Siegel, Faviola Olvera, Steve Mehder, David Moore, Cindy Trevathan, and Bonnie Potts. The vehicle is an original 1913 Buick owned by David and Amy Noznesky.

Photo By Becky Nixon



Head of School Jeff Miles enjoys welcoming a group of students at Rabun Gap-Nacoochee School's Niles Bolton Middle School on the first day of the 2024-2025 academic year.

Rabun Gap opens academic year with record enrollment

Rabun Gap-Nacoochee's 2024-2025 school year is off to a historic start with record enrollment numbers. On Wednesday, August 21, campus came alive as 685 students from Pre-K through 12th grade filled the classrooms, marking the highest enrollment in the School's storied history.

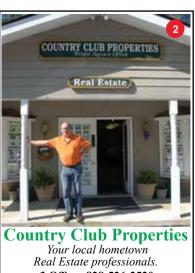
This exciting milestone reaffirms Rabun Gap's unwavering commitment to its founding mission — delivering exceptional educational opportunities to students from across the valley and around the world. This year, over 68% of students are local to Georgia, North Carolina, and South Carolina. The 110-member Class of 2025 is the largest graduating class in school history and was the first class to begin as fifth-graders at the Evelyne Sheats Lower School. This year's student body includes 48 countries and 16 states, truly representing Rabun Gap's global reach and local roots.

There's even more to cele-

brate this year! The Upper School officially moved into the newly renovated Hodgson Hall — the nearly 100-year-old main academic building that has been beautifully restored and modernized with new technology, additional classrooms, student workspaces, and a stunning terrace overlooking the mountains. These updates ensure Rabun Gap students have a state-of-the-art learning environment while preserving the campus' history.



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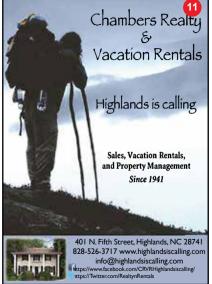
Veichert

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Highlands Newspaper - Thurs., Oct. 3, 2024 - 828-200-1371 - Page 23

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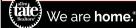


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