

Highlands Newspaper

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Thurs., Jan. 23, 2025

Despite setbacks Highlands School Project is on track for completion the Fall 2025

By Kristin Karcher

Last week, at their first meeting of the new year, the Macon County Board of Commissioners

were given an update on the Highlands School renovation project.

Representing Vannoy Construction, Project Manager Caitlin

Jones reported on the progress of the 8.4-million-dollar school project.

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15-hour power outage exemplified the need for better communication

Town implementing new Website/App to keep citizens informed of various issues

By Kim Lewicki

The 15-hour power outage last week caused citizens to question the town's ability to keep them up to date concerning outages and other issues.

Several months ago, prior to the weather event, the town realized that it was time to upgrade its website for that purpose, said Town Manager Josh Ward.

Mayor Pat Taylor, who was the recipient of numerous complaints during the power outage, said he understood the need to get timely information out to citizens, though it's not always available even to the town.

"To that end, the town is in the process of upgrading our website and creating an app so that updates can be quickly provided to residents by real-time input from the town staff, the fire chief, and

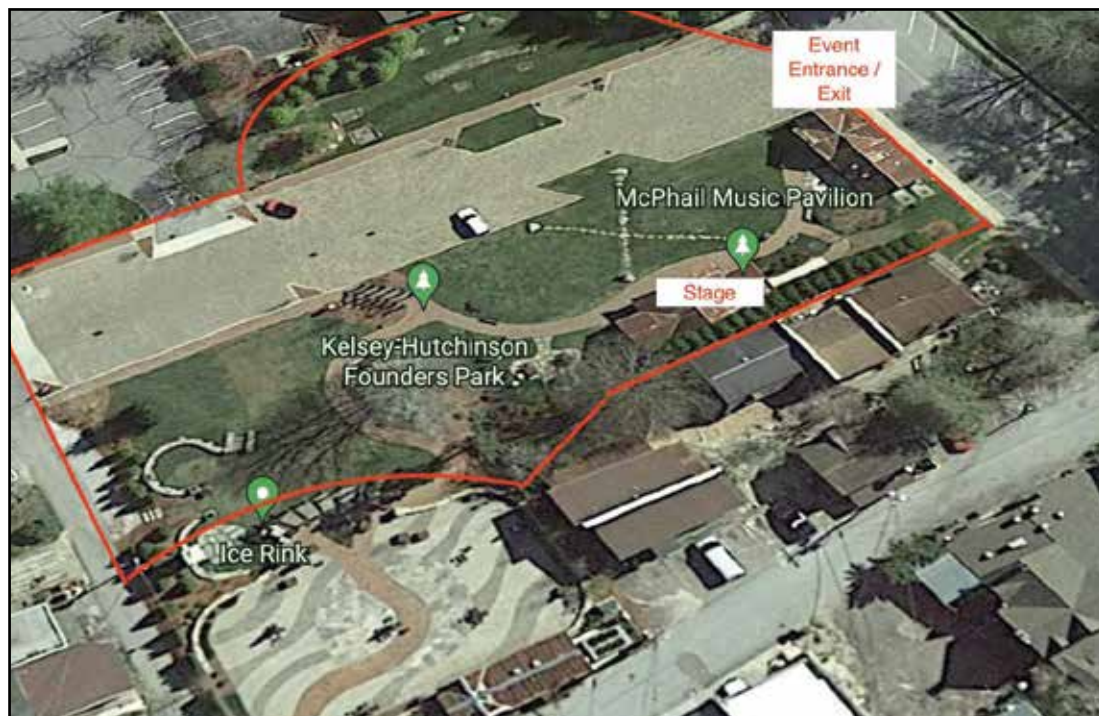
the chief of police," he said.

During November's Work-session, representatives from CivicPlus provided a presentation showing the sites it had created for hundreds of municipalities across the country. Their websites are intuitive, easy to navigate and easy to keep up to date.

"CivicPlus, one of the largest governmental website design companies shared with the Board what they could offer. The key benefits they offer, include the ease of use for the user as they navigate their sites and the ability for the client to have control over adding and amending specific content on pages within the site, such as special announcements and events," said Ward.

As it turns out, CivicPlus owns MuniCode which currently

• See COMMUNICATION page 11



The red line denotes the area of the park to be set aside for the festival but the patio and bathrooms will be open.

HF&W gets OK for park use in Nov.

By Kim Lewicki

The possibility of Highlands Festival's Bear Shadow event being in KH-Founders Park in May initiated discussion concerning exactly

what is allowed in the park at the December Town Board meeting.

Due to public outcry, Bear Shadow was deleted from December's agenda at the request of

Highlands Festivals so it was technically not discussed by the board, but several people spoke against it during the public comment period,

• See PARK page 7



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• THE PLATEAU'S POSITION •

• MAYOR ON DUTY •

The road to handling Highlands' power needs

Who knew, but here we are in the old-fashioned days of traditional Highlands. We thought they had gone away since the town had not had any measurable snow in the past three years.

For some of our newly arrived residents, I am sure it is a surprise; for a few, it may even be a shock. Our long-time local residents are thinking, what is all the fuss? The snow and cold have always been a part of life in Highlands. The pattern goes like this: cool, rainy summers and brutally cold winters. The entire seasonal residents' phenomenon developed around these extreme weather cycles.

The Highlands I remember when I first became mayor in 2013 is gone. Post-Covid has ushered in a number of changes. We have many new residents who live here year-round. Great broadband access has contributed to this trend or at least enhanced year-round commuting to second homes in Highlands. Back in the good old



Highlands Mayor
Patrick Taylor

winter days, there would be almost no one in some neighborhoods, so the demand for snow plowing was not as intense as it is now. The demand for power was also not all that great.

Also, since COVID-19 and just before, we have seen a boom in building large homes in Highlands. A few years ago, the almost electrical shutdown during "The Big Freeze" triggered the town to engage an electric consulting company. As a part of that engagement, an electric consultant toured the neighborhoods to assess and upgrade our electric grid. After completing his analysis, the consultant said he knew what was pressuring the electrical system. He pointed out that these newer homes were the equivalent of mini-hotels when it came to electric consumption. These homes constantly consume power regardless of the power setting on specific appliances.

I have a confession: Sallie and I are part of this trend, albeit over a 25-year period. When we first moved here in 1999, our home was a summer cottage with a 60-amp electrical service. One of the first things we did in our upgrading and house expansion was to install a 200-amp service. At the time, I declared we would never use all the 200-amp breaker slots. Twenty-five years later, we now have a sub-panel that serves an addition built about a decade ago. My point is that we consume copious amounts of power despite using more efficient appliances. We depend on this power in this highly distressed terrain with many forest areas that experience extreme temperatures and routinely high winds. Some outages are inevitable.

So here is the dilemma facing the town. More and more power will be needed to serve the community, especially if electric car charging continues to grow. Consequently, 2.8 million dollars was allocated this year to upgrade the electrical grid. More dollars may be needed. Eventually, we will have multiple power feeds to the town and four distribution circuits to manage the ever-increasing power load.

Back in the old days, the power would routinely go out almost weekly, and Highlanders would say; "So what's new? It will

• See MAYOR page 7

• SNAPSHOT •







Stopping by woods on a snowy evening ...

Do you have a heartfelt, funny, interesting, or beautiful photo you would like to share in our new "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.

By Russell Brock

• WEATHER •

Thu, 23-Jan	Fri, 24-Jan	Sat, 25-Jan	Sun, 26-Jan
 35°F 15°F	 30°F 14°F	 44°F 21°F	 44°F 27°F
Chilly with high clouds	Mostly sunny and cold	Sun, some clouds; not as cold	Rain and ice in the morning
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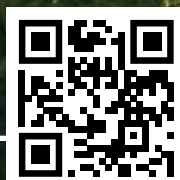
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• INVESTING AT 4,118 Ft •

What can we expect in 2025?

I recently read a couple of articles on Realtor.com that gave me cause to feel better about the projected 2025 housing market. The article of January 6th was written by Snezana Farberov. These are my takeaways, quotes and reasons why I think

there's hope. The title of the article, "Will Homeowners Finally Sell in 2025? Here's What the Experts Say, Amid a Glimmer of Hope"

See? Even the title gave me hope.

The article starts off stating that De-

cember 2024 was the slowest festive season for home sales in five years. What will happen in 2025? Remember that the following quotes and statistics are for nationwide home sales.

Home prices are set to rise. The average home's asking price increased about 1.3% per square foot compared to just one year prior. Economists at Realtor.com project that the 2025 prices can go up 3.7% citing a marginally lower interest rate and a jump in inventory. (More on that jump later.)

The next takeaway is when Farberov said, and I quote, "The National Association of Realtors® 2024 Homebuyers and Sellers Report revealed that buyers over the past year tended to be older and wealthier than in the past. The median age of homebuyers was 56, up 7 years compared with 2023. The median age of first-time, repeat, and all buyers each reached record highs."

Well, I don't know about you, but that sort of burst my bubble a little. What? When I read the title, I was thinking people in their 80s would be buying more properties, after all, it's not that unusual here, but 56? Farberov says, "Older buyers are still in charge." When I first started selling real estate, all the potential buyers were older than me, but that's certainly not the case anymore, but fast forward 30 something years and the age difference is because I've aged, not the buyers.

Another prediction was what a Realtor.com economist called a 'Trump Bump.' We can anticipate major shifts to the housing market due to things like easing regulations of tax policies. This term will make him jump through a few hurdles, too, things out of any president's control, such as inflation, interest rates and changes of the demographics of Americans. Remember the inventory jump earlier? In this article? Even though Trump wants to increase homebuilding in order to have more housing inventory, which could also lead to lower interest rates there's a glitch. The tariffs he wants to implement are bound to have a big impact on building supplies, as if the prices weren't high enough already. Ahhh, another reason for the prices of homes to be on the



Jeannie Chambers
Chambers Realty
& Vacation Rentals

rise.

Other good news for sellers and buyers is that the top ten markets for 2025 are all in the South and the West. The top three are in the states of Texas, Florida and Virginia, and you better believe each of those areas will have an impact on our regional marketplace.

Here are the top ten that are expected to have higher home sales in 2025:

- #1 Colorado Springs, CO;
- #2 Miami, FL; #3 Virginia

- Beach, VA; #4 Richmond, VA; #5 McAllen, TX; #6 El Paso, TX; #7 Little Rock, AK; #8 Greensboro, NC; #9 Washington, DC; #10- Harrisburg, VA

These didn't make the top ten, but each of these will impact the real estate markets of the triangle area of Northeast Georgia, Western North Carolina and the upstate of South Carolina.

- #12 Charlotte, NC; #13 Orlando, FL; #14 Atlanta, GA; #16 Austin, TX; #17 Augusta, GA; #18 Durham, NC; #20 Jacksonville, FL

Higher prices, low inventory and the slightest decrease in interest rates have kept buyers wary of diving into the deep end of real estate pool in the last couple of years but that may be about to change. Lower interest rates, even though they're expected to stay in the sixish range, may give more sellers the motivation to go ahead and list their homes because they'll be able to use more of their sales proceeds to buy another home. Having more existing homes inventory added with more new home builds may allow buyers to have a little more leverage in some markets.

2025 may be the housing boost that will be good for buyers and sellers.

Nap time is over. It's time to get out of my rocker so I can help some of those 'elderly buyers' who are their mid-50s find their dream home.

• Jeannie Chambers is the broker/owner of The Chambers Agency, Inc., and is proud to be a part of one of the oldest real estate firms in Highlands. Highlands is Calling! (828) 526-3717 or jeannie@highlandscalling.com

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• BIZ/ORG NEWS •

Outpost Inn opens wine bar Friday, Jan. 24

The Outpost Inn, a new boutique inn nestled in the scenic mountains of Highlands, NC, at 790 North 4th Street, is excited to announce the launch of its wine bar, offering a curated selection of wines, beers, and light snacks in a cozy, inviting atmosphere.

The brand-new wine bar at Outpost Inn serves as the nighttime equivalent to their popular coffee bar located in the hotel's lobby, which will be transformed at 5 p.m. to all candlelight.

Guests are invited to settle into the low slung, comfy seating areas around a wood burning fireplace over a great soundtrack of mellow jazz, folk, blues and Americana. In the warmer months, seating will spill out onto the outdoor

courtyards and terraces around the various firepits.

The drink menu, curated by Beverage Consultant Jeremy Carter, features natural wines available by the glass or bottle, craft beers, and non-alcoholic options.

Chef Adam Bresnahan, who oversees the culinary program at Outpost Inn's sister property, Highlander Mountain House, prepares a rotating selection of snacks – Smoked Trout Dip, Housemade Za'atar Potato Chips, and an Appalachian Charcuterie Board, with dishes changing seasonally.

The wine bar every Thursday, Friday, and Saturday evenings from 5-10 p.m.

For more information, visit outpostinnhighlands.com and follow @outpostinnhighlands.

...HIGHLANDS continued from page 1

Vannoy Construction began mobilizing the project in the fall of 2024 and has continued to make progress despite a few setbacks and most recently winter weather.

The project saw a slight delay while dealing with an underground fuel storage tank that was located under the new meant for the new addition.

The school board and county commissioners decided to leave a 10,000-gallon underground storage tank in place with the necessary remediation requirements for soil, groundwater and decommissioning of the tank.

Re-design of the structural foundations was necessary because the existing underground fuel storage tank will remain under the footprint of the new middle school classroom addition.

In the fall, commissioners approved a \$75,000 change to LS3P's contract to revise the design of the structural foundation of the two-story middle school classroom addition relating to the underground storage tank.

According to the Planning, Permitting and Development for Macon County, the work to remediate the existing fuel tank under the new addition has been completed. It has been cleaned and filled with concrete. Vannoy has filed the necessary documentation with the North Carolina

...PARK continued from page 1

anyway.

When KH-Founders Park opened more than a decade ago, the general consensus from Town Board members at the time was that the park was a public space so private or ticketed events wouldn't be allowed.

That policy quickly got murky, however, when the fledgling, tented, ticketed Highlands Food & Wine event – at that time sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce – was allowed in the park from the get go.

Over time, the event has evolved, expanded and for a few years now, has been sponsored by the nonprofit Highlands Festivals, Inc. – not the Chamber, though the Chamber has given Highlands Festivals money toward the event.

Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) which is now filing it with the state office.

The next step will be to install a vapor intrusion mitigation system under the slab in relation to the remediated tank. The system will be installed the last week of January. After the installation of the system, the construction company will begin to pour the slab for the new addition followed by the installation of vertical steel in February.

In addition, Vannoy has installed 78 helical piers for foundation support for the middle school addition. The piers have been inspected by WSP USA Environment & Infrastructure Inc., the third-party inspection company hired for the project. The footings have also been excavated and poured. WSP has inspected all the work which meets the design intent and torque.

Heat for the school has been a hot topic. Vannoy was able to make headway over the holidays on the solution to this problem. New pads were poured for new fuel tanks which will be installed this week. Vannoy is expecting to make the swap over next weekend. Once this is completed the temporary heat in the middle school will be removed from the building, and the school will be back to using the boilers.

In February, the company is scheduled to begin work on the

second-floor renovations of the middle school.

The Highlands School expansion project will expand the middle school to accommodate much needed classroom space and additional space for career and technical education courses, and an updated media center.

In addition, the project also includes renovation to the second floor of the middle school and to the elementary wing to repurpose two classroom spaces for Pre-K classes.

The total price includes additional funding the board ap-

...MAYOR continued from page 2

proved last November for soft costs not included in the guaranteed maximum price (GMP). Additional items were approved at the November meeting adding \$560,845 to the total cost of the project. The additional items include furniture, technology and Pre-K playground equipment; special inspections and testing fees, and an owner contingency fund.

“We are tracking on schedule despite fighting the weather,” said Jones. “In terms of budget, we are tracking on budget and our allowances are coming in under or

meeting allowances.”

Interim County Manager Warren Cabe told commissioners he meets twice a month and conducts site walks with Jones. In addition, Vannoy will give a project update to the commissioners every quarter.

“I am very pleased from my perspective with what we have seen in the last two weeks in spite of the weather,” said Cabe. “We are on a very tight deadline to get the project completed.”

The Highlands School project is projected to be done when the school opens in the fall for the 2025-2026 school year.

event from reoccurring, Duke Energy needs to remove about 28 trees in the transmission right-of-way that feed power to the town. OSHA and Duke's concern for the safety of their workers necessitates cutting off the power while the trees are being removed. Duke has been planning this work for many months, and the recent outage underscored the critical need to clear the right-of-way.



We anticipate this one-day outage to happen sometime in March. Duke will coordinate its schedule with critical stakeholders like the school to minimize disruptions. We all want this work to be done before the tourist and activity season gets underway. Duke and the town will strive to get the word out as soon as possible concerning the outage date.

Understanding the difficulties and the need to get timely information to our residents, the town is in the process of upgrading our website and creating an app so that updates can be quickly provided to residents by real-time input from the town staff, the fire chief, and the chief of police.

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• INK PENN •

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Kathy Manos Penn

column. The news reported that one Malibu trailer park was devastated, so I thought of Renée, who is an avid surfer and lives in a trailer park in Malibu.

So much of what I know of the LA area comes from Connelly's series and visits with two friends who live there. One lives far from the devastation, but my Altadena friend was in the thick of it. He evacuated before his neighborhood was engulfed in flames, and miraculously, his house was still standing when he last heard.

The images on the news are horrific, and reading Michael Connelly's vivid descriptions of the areas I see in flames make them all the more real to me. Gut wrenching, poignant—words fail me. My heart goes out to those who are living this horror.

• *Award-winning author Kathy Manos Penn is a Sandy Springs resident. Find her Dickens & Christie cozy mysteries on Amazon or locally at The Enchanted Forest and Bookmiser. Contact her at inkpenn119@gmail.com and visit her website www.facebook.com/KathyManosPenn.Author/.*

investigating the never solved Black Dahlia case from the '40s. The twists and turns in trying to solve the case while also dealing with department politics combine with investigating another cold case that hinges on DNA analysis.

This one is a suspenseful roller coaster ride, and, of course, I stayed up way too late several nights to get to the end. I had barely finished the book when the wildfires erupted in California.

Now, as I watch the coverage of the LA fires, I'm flipping back through the book and wondering how the areas in this series have fared.

Harry's neighborhood of Laurel Canyon had escaped unscathed as I began writing this

Can you recall getting hooked on a series and having to wait a year for the next installment to appear? Or perhaps stumbling across book five or six in a series and enjoying it so much that you went in search of the earlier books?

Michael Connelly's Bosch series is one I started from the very beginning with "The Black Echo." At the time, there were several books out. Only after that did I have to wait patiently for the next installment to appear. If you haven't read the books, you may know his name from the show on Prime Video. This review is of book 25.

The Waiting by Michael Connelly

Renée Ballard, who appears in the last five Bosch books, heads LAPD's Open-Unsolved Unit, investigating cold cases — some decades old, others more recent. As happens in the previous books with Ballard as the main character, Harry Bosch contributes to solving the case.

This time, Bosch's daughter Maddie, who is now a patrol officer, joins the unit as a volunteer. Before you know it, the unit is in-

...PARK continued from page 7

non-profit organization approved by the Town of Highlands," reads the policy.

Furthermore, "No commercial (for profit) or private uses are permitted in the park."

And, "No admission to the town's outdoor recreation areas can be charged for any event unless approved by the Town Board."

Highlands Festivals' request to use KH-Founders Park again this year for two of Highlands Food & Wine events was in the Consent Agenda last week which was approved in total by the board.

Sometimes, items are pulled from the Consent Agenda for discussion, but that wasn't the case last week.

Since the Consent Agenda was approved by the Town Board, Highlands Food & Wine got the go ahead to hold two of its four, ticketed events in KH-Founders Park in November.

Due to an issue last year when someone seeking to use the public bathrooms at the park was turned away, Highlands Festivals has made it clear that the bathrooms and the

patio area in the park will be open to the public while setting up and throughout the festival.

The 4-day festival begins Thurs., Nov. 13 with the Grand Tasting 7-10pm at The Bascom.

On Fri., Nov 14, 'Truckin' will be in KH-Founders Park from 1-4:30pm and on Sun., Nov. 16, Shot at Redemption will also be in the park from noon to 3pm.

The Main Event will be Sat., Nov. 15 from noon-3:30pm on Main Street between 4th and 5th streets.

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• HOSPITAL NEWS •

HC Hospital and Eckerd Living Center start 2025 from a place of strength

Looking forward to steady growth

I hope readers enjoyed their holidays and are ready to usher in 2025 with hope, confidence, and excitement. As we begin each year, I think it's important to talk to our community about the overall "state of the hospital." I am pleased to share that again this year Highlands-Cashiers Hospital (HCH) and Eckerd Living Center (ELC) are in excellent shape, and I am very excited about things coming in 2025.

To start, I want to address the state of our hospitals after Hurricane Helene. Thankfully, HCH and ELC remained fully operational during the storm and have fully recovered from the storm's effects. More importantly, I believe our hospital is stronger as a result. I also closely observed the morale, and I feel better than ever about our team. I watched how we extended the same care to each other that we deliver to our patients. It is also important to recognize the extraordinary support we received from HCA Healthcare. I have commented frequently upon the strength of HCA Healthcare and the importance for rural hospitals to have a strong partner. If there was ever a time we appreciated this value, Hurricane Helene was it.

I am also happy to report that we have held onto our status as the top ER for patient satisfaction in HCA Healthcare. We are proud as well to be recognized for the third time by Press Ganey with the Guardian of Excellence Award, which is awarded to healthcare facilities that earn a place in the top 5% of all hospitals across our country. In actuality, we rank in the top 1% of all ERs and I could not be prouder of our doctors, nurses, and support staff who are responsible. Press Ganey is a national organization recognized by CMS (Centers for Medicaid and Medicare Services) to survey patient experience in hospitals.

Last year, I shared that HCH had been recognized as an Acute Stroke Ready Hospital per the Joint Commission. This means that our community can feel certain they're receiving the highest level of stroke care if they come to our ED for treatment, and as we all know, every second counts when it comes to providing critical care for a patient experiencing a stroke. I have to remind our community to call 911 and seek care immediately if they are having stroke symptoms. I encourage you to remember BEFAST.

B: Balance (sudden difficulty with balance)

E: Eyes (sudden difficulty with vision in one or both eyes)

F: Face (note if one's smile starts to droop on one side)

A: Arm (arm weakness)

S: Speech (speech difficulties)

T: Time is critical; call 911.

One of the things I've been most energized about at HCH is our growing surgical services. We can now provide a wide range of procedures for patients with plans to add more in 2025. Patients can also come to HCH for colonoscopies, orthopedic surgery, hand surgery, and minor general surgery procedures. When possible, our surgeons perform minimally invasive surgery, including laparoscopic and robotic procedures. These surgeries require only a few small incisions, so patients recover more quickly and with reduced pain, bleeding, and scarring.

We just recently added facial plastic surgery with Dr. Chris Wenzel, who offers face lifts, brow lifts, and chin lifts among other cosmetic procedures. Dr. Wenzel has performed more than 10,000 cosmetic and reconstructive procedures during his career. He has the experience and technical acumen to achieve natural-looking, beautiful results for his patients and takes pride in his work, combining artistry, technical skill, and surgical precision while devoting his attention to every detail of patient care.

HCH is also proud to offer specialized pain management, dedicated to management of chronic pain that can be debilitating. Dr. Eric Roslonski, board-certified in Physical Medicine and Rehabilitation, Pain Medicine, and Neuromuscular Medicine, will be joining the HCH family. He is especially interested in diagnosing and treating patients with painful neuromuscular and spinal conditions and is dedicated to individualized whole-patient care.

Finally, I am pleased to share that Dr. David Jarrett will be joining us to support our orthopedic surgery program. He is a native of Asheville and the son of a well-known and respected orthopedic surgeon by the same name who practiced in Asheville from 1973 to 1998. Dr. Jarrett is a general orthopaedist, concentrating in the area of joint replacement and arthroscopic surgery. He has served as Chief of Staff and as the



**Tom Neal CEO, CNO
Highlands-Cashiers
Hospital**

Orthopedic Medical Director for Mission Hospital. Dr. Jarrett is in the process of relocating his practice to Franklin and will hold a clinic in Highlands. He will be operating at HCH.

Another important service I want to call out is our swing bed program. We saw significant growth in 2024 and look to expand this service even more in 2025. This represents a level of skilled care for patients who need rehabilitation services in a hospital setting. Our program has brought many from our community close to home

where they can continue their recovery and regain their health.

Patients who receive rehab services in our swing bed program are cared for by a team of healthcare professionals that includes our exceptional nurses, as well as a cadre of physical and occupational therapists, speech pathologists, dietitians, and pharmacists. All of these services are under the watchful eyes of our medical staff.

At HCA Healthcare's Mission Health,

• See HOSPITAL page 11

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The Light of the World



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The Episcopal Church of the Incarnation

The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overcome it.

-John 1.5

Darkness cannot drive out darkness; only light can do that. Hate cannot drive out hate; only love can do that.

-The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

January 6 is the Epiphany. It comes at the end of the Christmas season -- a time when we think about the wise men and their journey to come see Jesus, the new king.

We associate the word epiphany with new discovery and knowledge — coming to see and understand things in a new way. Sometimes we call these “aha!” moments. “I’ve had an epiphany! Now I get it. Now I see.”

The Sundays after the Epiphany are filled with readings of Jesus’ miracles, healings, and teachings and these create a time when we discover, each liturgical year, who and what Jesus is and what he has come to do. We are constantly being shown the light of Christ that has come into the world, and it illuminates everything. Everything. We can’t choose to see some things and ignore others. When the light shines in the darkness, we see it all — the good and the bad, the justice and the injustice of the world in which he lived.

Each year during these same weeks we celebrate the life and legacy of The Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. who also, in his own way and in his own context, shone a light on things that many had either not seen, or had chosen not to see. He brought to our attention the good and the bad, the justice and the injustice of the world in which he lived.

Dr. King is not Jesus — let’s be clear — but like the time after Epiphany in the church, he serves to remind us that God calls us to the light. So often we feel that the world is full of darkness, and we feel pulled into that darkness, but this is the time of year when we are reminded that light and love are the only means to find our way forward in this world. More darkness and more hate will not do it. In dark times we must look for, and hold onto light and love.

They both lived in dark times, and each was a light — and not always in a warm and fuzzy way. There was that sense of love and compassion that was a part of all that these men did, but there was a greater purpose for both.

Dr. King reminded us of what God brought into the world through our Incarnate Lord Jesus Christ — he reminded us that the light of Christ shines in the darkness and the darkness did not and will not overcome it — not then, not now, not ever.

• 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. Jamie 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: 9a Fellowship; 9:30a Adult Christian Ed; 10:30a Holy Eucharist Tues., 9a; Thurs., 12p Prayer & Book 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 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 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 PRESBYTERIAN 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

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HAMBURG BAPTIST CHURCH

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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. Wednesday Worship is 6:30p

HIGHLANDS UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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Pastor Zane Talley

Sundays: School: 10 a.m.; Worship: 11. Choir: 6 p.m.
Wed: Bible Study and Youth Mtg.: 7 p.m.

MOUNTAIN SYNAGOGUE

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Services: 1st Fri. and 3rd Sat. and Rosh Hashanah & Yom Kippur.

MOUNTAIN BIBLE CHURCH

743-2583 • Independent Bible Church
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(4.5 miles from NC 107)

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

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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.

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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 Jan. 2. Only the names of persons arrested, issued a summons/citation, issued a Class-3 misdemeanor or those of public officials have been used.

Jan. 2

• At 5:57 p.m., officers were called about a larceny at OEL lodging on Church Street where air pods valued at \$175 were taken from the room.

Jan. 6

• At 9:42 a.m., officers responded to a call of damage to personal property at Estate Jewelers on Main Street where a door knob and locking mechanism valued at \$25 was

damaged.

The Highlands Fire & Rescue log from Jan. 14.

Jan. 14

• At 3:27 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on N. 6th Street.

Jan. 15

• At 12:26 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on N. 6th Street.

• At 3:41 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

Jan. 16

• At 11:19 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Main Street.

throughout our community. On behalf of everyone at HCH and ELC, many thanks to everyone in our community for continuing to provide us with the honor of caring for you. There is nothing we value more. I am excited about this year and look forward to this year with anticipation.

...HOSPITAL continued from page 9

we show up for our patients, our communities and each other. "We Show Up" means caring for our patients like family, listening to their concerns and working together to find the right solution. It is doing everything in our power to heal and improve lives, within our walls and

...COMMUNICATION continued from page 1

manages the town's ordinances online through the town's current website.

"This ensures efficiency when searching each document on the website, as well as updating the documents when changes are made," said Ward. "Plus, as a current MuniCode client, we would get a 10% discount."

Ward recommended the "premium design" and said the implementation of the new site will take 12-16 weeks – and should be ready for the upcoming season.

There is a \$850 one-time fee and an annual fee of \$3,795. Several staff members as well as the Fire Chief, Police Chief and the Recreation Director will be trained to use the site so they can update as needed for their departments.

In addition, an App of the website will be created which can be accessed on cell phones like the Macon County Sheriff's Office App now available through the PlayStore.

The town's App will be the entire website so users can navigate to the Police Department website or the Fire Department website and any part of the website itself.

Circling back to the 15-hour power outage, the mayor said upgrades to the transmission corridor on Hicks Road are set to be made by Duke.

"To prevent this same type of power-outage event from reoccurring, Duke Energy needs to remove about 28 trees in the transmission right-of-way that feeds power to the town," he said.

OSHA and Duke's concern for the safety of their workers necessitates cutting off the power while the trees are being removed.

"Duke has been planning this work for many months, and the recent outage underscored the critical need to clear the right-of-way so downed trees don't jeopardize the transmission of power," he said.

This one-day outage will happen sometime in March.

"Duke will coordinate its schedule with critical stakeholders like the school to minimize disruptions," said the mayor. "We all want this work to be done before the tourist and activity season gets underway. Duke and the town will strive to get the word out as soon as possible concerning the outage date."

Jan. 17

• At 8:50 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a location on Skyline Lodge Road.

Jan. 18

• At 10:17 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm set off by a water sprinkler flow at a location on Country Club Drive.

Jan. 19

• At 5:49 p.m., the dept. responded to a motor vehicle accident on Horse Cove Road.

Jan. 20

• At 10:23 p.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on VZ Top.

• At 10:50 p.m., the dept. was first-responders to a residence on Ridge-wood Road.

Jan. 21

• At 5:08 a.m., the dept. responded to a fire alarm at a residence on US 64 west (Franklin Road).



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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 bobnancync@gmail.com. (st. 1/25)

FOR RENT

MIRROR LAKE 2/2 COTTAGE. Newly Renovated. six months to one year lease. Available starting February 2025. For more information email Scott@CottageConcierge.biz (st. 12/12)

2/2 FURNISHED RENTAL only minutes from Cashiers crossroads. King beds, fast internet, paved access in a quiet safe neighborhood. 8-12 month lease. \$2,600 month plus electric. No pets. 828-577-0748. (st. 12/5)

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)

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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 VINSON: scanning photos, slides & negatives to CD or DVD for easier viewing. Video transfer to DVD. Everything done in house. Leave message at 828-526-5208.



HIGHLANDS
CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

LEADERSHIP HIGHLANDS

Join Our Team as the

Digital Marketing Coordinator!

The Highlands Chamber of Commerce/Visit Highlands, NC is looking for a part-time Digital Marketing Coordinator to collaborate with our Marketing & Communications Director to create engaging content, track key metrics, and maintain our digital presence. Your contributions will play a pivotal role in showcasing the beauty and rich culture that Highlands, NC has to offer.

Key Responsibilities

- Social Media & Web Content: Develop and implement compelling content and monitor performance metrics.
- Email Marketing: Create and distribute regular newsletters for the community, members, and visitors.
- Data & Reporting: Gather and manage data to generate insightful reports and maintain accurate distribution lists.

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- Marketing Knowledge: Experience with social media, public relations, and digital marketing strategies.
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• HIGHLANDS AREA EVENTS •

WINTER 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+ Mon.-Thurs. 11am-3:30pm, Friday 11am-1:30pm
Public Swim: Mon. thru Thurs. 3:30-7pm, Saturday 11am-6pm and Sunday 1-6pm

ALL WEEK

• 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 Highlands at the First Presbyterian Church, 471 Main St., on Monday at 5:30 PM and Wednesday and Friday at noon. Women's Group 5:30, Tuesdays. The Cashiers Valley Group holds open meetings at the Albert Carlton Cashiers Community Library Monday at 8:30 AM, Tuesday at 7 PM, Friday and Sunday at 5 PM, and Saturday at 9 AM. For more info, please visit www.aawnc80.org or to speak with a member of AA 24/7 at 828-349-

4357.

PICKLE BALL

• At the Recreation Dept. every Monday - Friday 10am-1pm indoors for the winter (notice the days and time has changed),

MOVIES

• Movies at the Martin Lipscomb Performing Arts Center at PAC on Chestnut Street. See ad on page 9.

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. 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.

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@maconnc literacy.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 will focus on mental health topics of particular interest to them, but all ages are welcome to attend. The November 1 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 1PM - 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.

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

Thurs.-Sat.

• Mountain Findings Hours: 10a to 1p.

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 crafters.

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.

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 visitation and coffee hour immediately after service. (Coffee hour is replaced by potluck dinner the 1st Sunday of each month).

Beginning in Feb.

• At the Mountain Learning Center Youth Programs – Spring Elementary CON (3rd-5th Grade): Feb 14 - 16; Spring Intermediate CON (6th-8th Grade): Feb 28 - March 2; Spring Senior High CON (9th-12th Grade): March 14 - 16 <https://www.themountainrlc.org/event/homecoming-2/>

Through-March

• Ice Skating in the Park The hours are Thursdays, 3:30-8pm,

Fridays, 3:30-10pm, Saturdays, 1-10pm, Sundays, 1-5pm. The price is only \$8, with or without skates. Coffee and hot chocolate are available for purchase.

Ongoing on Thursdays

• Christ Anglican Church on 64 East in Cashiers will host "lunch and learn" brown bag sessions beginning Thursday, at noon led by Michael and Robin Matlock. For eight weeks, the book, Emotionally Healthy Spirituality by Peter Scanzero, will be the focal point. Come learn how healthy spirituality and healthy emotions are inseparable! Purchase your book copy at Amazon or your favorite bookstore. Call 828-743-1701 or email cac@christanglicancashiers.org with questions. All are welcome.

Thurs., Jan. 23

• Upcoming Workshop with Hagan Binder Landscape Architects, The Art of Bulb Forcing at 4 p.m. Register online at haganbinder.com

Thurs., Feb. 13

• Highlands Chamber of Commerce members are invited to a presentation "Setting up simple IRAs for employees" with Todd Holder with Edward Jones at the Community Building. Light breakfast from 9-10:30a. R.S.V.P. Jane Ford Clark at businessservices@highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-5841.

April 13-18

• At the Mountain Learning Center, Music Week – Experience our engaging Music Week through classes, workshops, and one-on-one sessions with nationally touring musicians you will discover your magic in music. Early-Bird Discount - \$50 off if registered before Valentine's Day! <https://www.themountainrlc.org/event/homecoming-2/>

Sat., April 26

• Plateau Pickup. Keep Highlands beautiful. Participate in Plateau Pickup, a community-wide cleanup day dedicated to preserving our town's natural beauty. For more info, go to highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

1st Sat., May-Oct.

• Pop-Up Pipers Discover the magic of live music as the Pop-Up Pipers perform throughout town, adding a charming, musical twist to a Main Street stroll. For more info, go to highlandschamber.org or call 828-526-2112.

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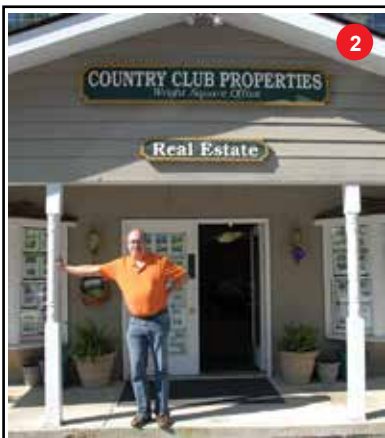
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