



# The Village Current

An e-Newsletter of the  
Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce



The mission of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce, through the efforts of our membership, shall be to contribute to the cultural, social and economic development, growth and sustainability of Blowing Rock while preserving the charm and character of the village.

## Make the Most of Visitors During the Blue Ridge Wine & Food Festival, April 16—19

The Blue Ridge Wine and Food Festival is coming up in a few short days. It's time to start planning how your business can benefit from the crowds that will be in Blowing Rock Thursday, April 16 thru Sunday April 19. In a change from years past, the Festival's main attraction, the Grand Tasting will now be in the heart of Blowing Rock on Maple Street. Festival patrons will be in Blowing Rock's Central Business District and ready to shop. We encourage all businesses to get in the spirit of the Festival by decorating windows in a Wine and Food theme. As part of the Festival, we have a couple of events going on designed to send customers into the Downtown Shops. All weekend, shoppers can look for clues as part of the Barrels of Fun Hunt. This contest has guests looking for



A shopper at Neaco, on Main Street in Blowing Rock.

hidden Festival Wine Glasses in participating stores. On Friday, April 16, there will be a Gallery Stroll from 5:30 to 8:00pm. This is a perfect time to capture customers in Downtown. Nearly all of our Downtown Galleries are participating: Main Street Gallery, Winterfire Gallery, Morning Star Gallery, IAGO, Bob Timberlake Gallery, Traditions Pottery, and Gaines Kiker Silversmith/Goldsmith. Shoppers will be on the streets, and your store should be open to welcome them! On Saturday night, the Festival will have two Fire on the Rock heats. Aside

from that event – which may not interest everyone – there is no other event competing for the customer's attention. Saturday night will be a good time for Festival goers to enjoy the great shops Blowing Rock has to offer — make sure you are open to welcome them. You can print out a [schedule of events here](#). Keep the schedule close to your register, and make sure employees know it's there and are familiar with the Festival. The more questions we can answer for the customer, and the more available we are to the customer, the more likely we will have a customer for life.



### The Open Store Gets the Sale

Want to know the best way to grab a customer: BE OPEN. Despite tough economic times, there are customers in Downtown Blowing Rock every day of the week — and even in the evenings. We have recently received e-mails and heard the voices of visitors who have come to town in the middle of the week

and find too many shops and restaurants closed. A local hotelier recently related the story of a couple who stayed at their Blowing Rock hotel, only to have to drive to Boone to eat and shop. This is not an isolated incident, we hear this too often to be ignored. As one shop owner who keeps her shop open seven

days a week told us, "I know I may not have a lot of customers on Wednesday, but it's a good time to catch up on other things. I work on my web page, clean the store, dress the windows. And any customer I have, it makes my day!"

Volume 5, Issue 7

Friday,  
April 10, 2009

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#### Calendar of Events.

- Thursday, April 16, thru Sunday, April 19, [The Blue Ridge Wine and Food Festival](#)
- Tuesday, April 21, 5:30—7:00pm, Hillwinds Inn, Business After Hours
- Thursday, April 23, Noon, Glidewell's, Business Support Committee Meeting
- Saturday, April 25, 9:00 am - Noon, Leadership Challenge Water Project
- Thursday, April 30, Morning, SOS Seminar, Hayes Center
- Thursday, April 30, 3:00pm Litter Sweep

## Meet Your Board of Directors

**Babette McAuliffe of *Carolina Mountain Life***

Babette McAuliffe, editor of *Carolina Mountain Life*, is a member of the Board of Directors.



Board Member Babette McAuliffe, editor of *Carolina Mountain Life* magazine, describes herself as, "One of Blowing Rock's biggest fans." Having served on the Chamber Board for several years, she has gotten to know the community through her many magazine stories about Blowing Rock and her work with many Chamber projects. She feels very much a part of the community, even though she doesn't live here. "Each place in the High Country is unique," she says. "Blowing Rock is a gateway to the High Country for many travelers." As a result, she is working with the Chamber to make

Blowing Rock the best it can be, for not just the town, but because good business in Blowing Rock benefits the High Country as a whole. Babette particularly enjoys participating in Chamber events, "The Chamber is an open door to many great people and businesses," she says. You can almost always find her at Business After Hours, volunteering at the Wine Festival, or taking tickets at the Symphony. "My Daughter Meghan (one of five kids) and I volunteer at the Symphony every year – she really enjoys it. Working with the public there has been valuable experience for her." Because she so much enjoys

working with and talking to other business owners, Babette currently serves on the Membership committee. She is also the Business At Large Member of the Executive Committee. "I think I bring the whole area to the Board," she says. Babette grew up in Wyoming, but has been in the High Country since she arrived at Appalachian State as a Freshman. *Carolina Mountain Life* has been her work for almost 13 years. "We saw a need for a magazine that covered the secret places of the area," she says. Blowing Rock has certainly shared a few of those places over the years.

### Board Meeting Review

The April 1, 2009 meeting of the Board of Directors included the discussion of several important issues which the committees of the Chamber are working on. These projects include the develop-

ment of the Wine & Culinary Institute, a Fresh Market, and a new Main Street Event for 2010. The Membership Committee also shared a new brochure for introducing new members to Chamber benefits.

Additionally, The Board passed a resolution to send a letter in opposition to the Employee Free Choice Act to North Carolina Senator Kay Hagan and Congresswoman Virginia Foxx.

### Shop Locally, Support Your Independently Owned Brick and Mortar Businesses

You're probably hearing more and more about the importance of shopping at your locally owned and operated businesses. Recently, the Business Support Committee has been developing strategies to remind people of the importance of buying from independently owned businesses — and we have lots

in Blowing Rock. Try out Village Hardware instead of Lowe's... or Tucker's on Main as opposed to ordering from Amazon.com. First, the Business Support Committee has developed a "Buy Local" information sheet you can hang up in your store, [you can download it here](#), or call the Chamber to request one. We

would also like to share with you the link to [The 3/50 Project](#). This is a national movement which encourages us to shop in 3 independently owned stores and spend \$50 per month with locally owned businesses. Local businesses pay local taxes, support local charities, and keep Blowing Rock's money in Blowing Rock.

#### Minding The Store



Hints & Tips from the

#### BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The Business Support Committee is committed to helping you with issues related to your business.

## Blowing Rock Businesses Using Social Network Site for Marketing

Do you know the difference between a Tweet and a post on FB? If you do, then you're probably already making the most of a new – completely free – marketing trend that many Blowing Rock businesses are using. Social networking sites, like [Twitter](#), [Facebook](#), and MySpace are changing the way that small businesses are marketing themselves. If you have a computer hooked up to the internet, you can market your Blowing Rock business to millions in just a few seconds. Think all this computer mumbo-jumbo is just for those young big city types: think again. "We started a Blowing Rock fan page on Facebook about ten months ago, and we currently have over 1300 "fans" of Blowing Rock," says Amanda Fife Lugenbell, Asst. Director of the Blowing Rock TDA. "It's a great place for people to share their memories of growing up here or visiting." The Blowing Rock page at Facebook is monitored by the TDA and the Chamber, and the experience has been over-

whelmingly positive. "We use it to let people know what's going on in town, and to stay connected with our customers." Most of the people that are Blowing Rock "fans" are mid-life professionals. In fact, the fastest growing demographic on Facebook's 175 million active users are those ages 35 plus, according to Facebook's own statistics (see them at: <http://www.facebook.com/press/info.php?statistics#>). Several Blowing Rock Businesses are already using Facebook to get the word out to their customers. Find Blowing Rock on Facebook or Twitter just by going to [Blowingrock.com](http://Blowingrock.com), and clicking on the links near the bottom of the page. The Gamekeeper, Neaco, BRAHM, Footsloggers, and others are all using Facebook's Groups or Fan Pages to promote their businesses. Grandfather Mountain is doing a great job updating the Facebook page it maintains with photos and information about what's going on at the Mountain. It can be very effective. Slightly newer to the scene, Twitter is another

free social networking site that can get information to your customers quickly. More like a miniblog than Facebook which uses photos, Twitter gives you 140 characters to get info to your customer. Recently Business Week quotes Biz Stone, Twitter's founder, "Businesses use this as a hybrid between marketing and customer service." Read the article here: [Twitter: Building Businesses Tweet by Tweet](#). Christopher's Wine and Cheese on Sunset Drive is using Twitter to get the word out about seminars and specials to their customers, or in Tweet Speak, Followers, who have signed up to get notifications. Christopher's has about 1200 Followers, and is hosting a Twitter Wine Tasting next Friday as part of the Wine Festival. Many people receive and send Tweets on their cell phones, which gives businesses the ability to stay in touch with customers 24/7. And in tough economic times, any marketing that gives you that kind of access to customers for free is something to tweet about.



*Social Networking Sites can help market your business.*

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## Business After Hours April 21

Business After Hours Returns for Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce members on Tuesday, April 21. This month's Business After Hours will be hosted by Hillwinds Inn, located at 315 Sunset

Drive. Business After Hours is a networking event for Chamber Members and potential new Chamber Members. If you would like to introduce a potential new member to the Chamber, please let us know,

and we will be happy to provide them with the appropriate information.



*Last month's Business After Hours at the Meadowbrook Inn.*



**The Blowing Rock  
Chamber of Commerce**

*The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce*  
**2009 Board of Directors**



Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce

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**Keep Up with Latest on Issues that  
Effect Your Business.**

**Links to help you Stay in The Know**

[US Chamber of Commerce](#)

[NC Chamber of Commerce](#)

[United States Senate](#)

[United States House of Representatives](#)

North Carolina General Assembly :

[Senate](#)

[House of Representatives](#)

**Officers**

**Rita Davis, President**

*Wachovia Bank*

**Nancy Santay, Vice President**

*Cabin Fever*

**Bill Hall, Past President**

*Blowing Rock Realty*

**Linda Gilleland, Secretary**

*Greystone Insurance*

**Margaret Holder, Treasurer**

*Chetola Resort*

**Members of the Board**

**Babette McAuliffe**

*Carolina Mountain Life Magazine*

**John Aldridge**

*Individual Representative*

**Greg Clark**

*Gregory Alan's*

**Dan Phillips**

*Individual Representative*

**Tim Miller**

*Blowing Rock Frameworks & Gallery*

**Betsy Collins**

*Individual Representative*

**Joellyn Gibbons**

*Individual Representative*

**J. B. Lawrence**

*United Community Bank*

**Heidi Ellis**

*Tanger Shoppes on the Parkway*

**Cathy Robbins**

*Tweetsie Railroad*

**Doug Pegram**

*Village Real Estate*

**Cindy Milner**

*Bistro Roca*

**Dick Goosman**

*Meadowbrook Inn*

**Deborah McDowell**

*Mountianaire Inn*

**Jim Steele**

*Individual Representative*

**This Week in Photos**



*Say Cheese. If you have photos  
you'd like to share, please send  
them to  
[Stephanie@blowingrock.com](mailto:Stephanie@blowingrock.com).  
We're especially looking for  
photos from our Business Mem-  
bers in their Businesses!*

Blowing Rock Leadership Challenge is  
underway and learning each week.

