



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.

Blowing Rock Fresh Market Arrives in Downtown



Customers at Graham Girl Gardens stand buy food grown right here in town!

Shoppers at Blowing Rock's very first Fresh Market were out of luck if they got there late on Thursday — the Market was so popular nearly everything sold out! "I was surprised," said Andrea Morrell, better known as The Pasta Wench. "I'll certainly bring more next week." Andrea was one of twenty vendors at the inaugural Fresh Market, July 16. All of the vendors sold whole foods, vegetables, fruits or plants. Farmer's and whole foods producers are required to be from Watauga, Caldwell,

Avery or Ashe Counties. "This is an effort to connect local foods to local people," said Dan Phillips, a member of the Chamber's Economic Development Committee which helped to develop the event. In one case, the produce was grown right here in Blowing Rock! Susan and Kent Graham, along with their daughters, are growing a garden right on Wallingford Street. When the Graham Girl Gardens ran out of potatoes, Kent had to run across the street and dig up some more spuds! Talk about Fresh Local Food! For a while, it seemed like everyone in town had dropped by the Fresh Market, locals and visitors alike. We even spotted a few restaurant owners, who can buy and serve the produce they purchased at the Fresh Market. "That's just good for everyone," said Chamber Executive Director Charles Hardin. "That supports

local farms, local restaurants and keeps transportation of food at a minimum, and THAT is good for the environment." Many of our downtown chamber members also participated in a coupon program that Fresh Market vendors gave out with each purchase for 10% at our participating stores. Customers had to use the coupon within 24 hours of the Fresh Market in order to get the savings — driving business into our local shops. "This is a big thumbs up," said resident Jim Steele. Other residents echoed Jim's words. Resident Karen Barker was thrilled, "This is wonderful," she said. "This was a long time coming!" Credit for the wild success of the Fresh Market should go to one committee member in particular, Dell Slack of Blowing Rock Realty. Dell worked hard to recruit and place vendors. We would also like to thank Wachovia Bank for the use of the space.

Banners Are Allowed!

Blowing Rock businesses need to know that at the July 7 Town Council meeting, a change to the Grand Opening/Anniversary Banners ordinance was passed. According to the Town Council's agenda, this was, "an amendment to the sign ordinance, which would allow grand opening banners, grand re-opening banners (upon relocation or \$50,000 in renovations) and anniversary banners upon 5 years increments of opera-

tion to be displayed on the outside of businesses. As drafted, banners would be restricted to no more than 16 square feet in size and for a maximum of 14 consecutive days. Also, business-after-hours event signs would be allowed." The amendment to the ordinance passed by a vote of 5—0. [You can read the full ordinance here.](#)



A Grand Opening and Ribbon Cutting for Art and Artifacts

TONIGHT, Friday, July 17. 5:30pm—8:00pm, 159 Sunset Drive. Come and enjoy refreshments, meet many of the artists featured in the gallery and join the Sunset Stroll afterward!

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Friday,
July 17, 2009

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Calendar of Events.

- Friday, July 17, 5:30pm, Grand Opening, Art & Artifacts, 159 Sunset Drive
- Saturday, July 18, 10 am—5pm, Art in the Park
- Sunday, July 19, 4pm Concert in the Park, The Minute Men of the 440th Army National Guard Band
- Thursday, July 23, 4—7pm, Fresh Market at Blowing Rock, Main Street,
- Friday, July 24, Symphony by the Lake at Chetola
- Thursday, July 30, Fresh Market at Blowing Rock, Main Street
- Thursday, August 6, Fresh Market at Blowing Rock, at Main Street

Meet Your Board of Directors

Heidi Ellis of Tanger Shoppes on the Parkway

Heidi Ellis of Tanger Shoppes on the Parkway is a member of the Board of Directors.

Manager of Tanger Shoppes on the Parkway, Heidi Ellis has been a member of the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors for nearly two years. Heidi came to work at Tanger in March of 2007, after having managed the Boone Mall for seven years. Heidi didn't set out to be a property manager; she has a Master's degree in Special Education! "I just really enjoy what I do," she says. "I started working at a part time job in the Boone Mall Management Office while I was in graduate

school, and that led to the manager's position." She really enjoys working at Tanger and is particularly proud of the community service that is so strong at Shoppes on the Parkway. Tanger is a major sponsor of all the big events in Blowing Rock, including Winterfest, the Blue Ridge Wine and Food Festival and Symphony by the Lake at Chetola. Mr. Stanley K. Tanger has provided the fireworks following the Symphony performance for the past several years. Heidi participated in the 2008 Blowing Rock Leadership

Challenge. A native of Watauga County, she now lives in Fleetwood with her husband Jeff and daughter Bailey. However, her roots run deep in Blowing Rock. Her great grandfather, John Ford, once owned the famous Rock itself. Heidi is the co-Chair of the Business Support Committee. One of her goals for the Board of Directors is to improve relations among the merchants in Blowing Rock. "We all need to be on the same page," she said. "More cooperation with downtown merchants and Tanger will maximize business for everyone."

Mid Season Economic Update

In Blowing Rock, July normally holds two of our season's biggest events; Symphony by the Lake and the St. Mary's Tour of Homes. That day is seen as the unofficial halfway mark of "The Season." Much like a football team would examine its plays at halftime; this is a good time to examine how this season's game is stacking up in comparison with the rest of the state and the nation. Reports for June 2009 by the business tracking company [Business Wire](#) indicate that retail sales are down nationally over the same month in 2008. For example, national clothing chain The Gap is reporting a 10% drop in sales. In fact, in Business Wire's most recent report, only three of the eight businesses featured had posted (very modest) gains. Statewide, North Carolina's

unemployment rate hit 11.1% in June, and is predicted to hit about 13% before a national economic recovery begins in late 2009, according to North Carolina State University Economist Michael Walden. In his [North Carolina Economic Outlook for Summer 2009](#), Walden *did* report that the leisure/hospitality sector is one of the few areas which has reported a slight gain, good news for Blowing Rock. However, the largest job losses are being posted in the construction sector, another sector which employs many in our area. In other parts of North Carolina, the retail sector is reporting losses, for April 2009 Watauga County posted taxable sales of \$39.8 million, down from \$55 million in April of 2008. *Business North Carolina's* July 2009 issue reported

that in January 2009, Asheville's taxable retail sales were down 25.3% over January 2008. Comparably, in Hickory, sales were down 25.9% and in Charlotte, sales were down 22.4%. While we do not have specific retail sales data for Blowing Rock, many of our businesses are anecdotally reporting that sales are down, but steady, with peaks around major events in town. The Tourism Development Authority *can* report hotel occupancy rates for Blowing Rock. TDA Director Tracy Brown states that so far, FY 08-09 is down 14% compared to FY 08-07 (The TDA's FY just ended on June 30.) This is on par with statewide trends. The [Smith Travel Research for North Carolina Report](#), reports that occupancy is down by 12.8% statewide.



Blowing Rock is a part of a broader national and global economy.



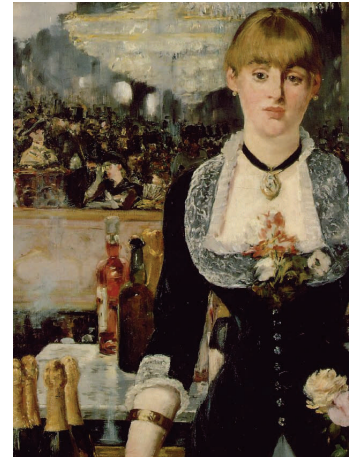
Perspiration Conservation Inspiration Or, How to Stay Cool in the Summer

Guest Column from BREMCO's Brian Crutchfield, Director of Sustainable Development

Operate your air conditioner efficiently. Consider a service call if it does not seem to be doing its job right. Clean off the condenser and coils that are outside and consider a shading device for it. Replace the filter more often than normal; it is probably operating 24/7 in the hotter summer months. Turn the thermostat up as far above 78 degrees that you can stand. Just two degrees more will save you ten percent. Two degrees down to 74 will cost you ten percent more. Keep doors and windows closed when operating the AC. Consider a programmable thermostat to do the work for you more efficiently. Fans can be used to

supplement the AC. The effect of a fan blowing directly on a person has a big cooling effect but it has to be felt to be effective. Small personal fans for employees that stay in the same location are a lot more effective than turning down the AC for the entire space. Folks in kitchens and restaurants need all the breeze they can get but don't freeze your customers while trying to cool the space down. Try using fans more where they are needed. You might consider inexpensive hand fans for customers while they are waiting for a table. Some fans can be personalized with your company name to advertise your business or a summer promotion. There are also

some neat misting devices that can be used with fans to cool an outside area down. Caps and wet neck wraps can be used by employees that are really in the heat or build up a sweat moving around serving customers. Most of our old fashion incandescent lights put out more heat than light. Change out those incandescent bulbs to cooler CFLs (Compact Fluorescent Lamps). They use 75% less electricity and generally last ten times longer. They may be little more expensive than the old types but they will pay for themselves in savings in less than two years. Lighting is an easy measure to address and a great investment if you select the right replacement lamp.



Manet's barmaid kept her cool without the benefit of air conditioning... your employees can too!

A detail from

*A Bar at Foiles-Bergeres, 1882,
Edouard Manet.*

News Release from the Small Business Administration:

SBA Launches New 100-Percent Guarantee ARC Loan Program to Help Struggling Businesses

WASHINGTON – Small businesses suffering financial hardship as a result of the slow economy may be eligible to receive temporary relief to keep their doors open and get their cash flow back on track through to a new loan program announced today by SBA Administrator Karen G. Mills.

Beginning on June 15, SBA will start guaranteeing America's Recovery Capital (ARC) loans. ARC loans are deferred-payment loans of up to \$35,000 available to established, viable, for-profit small businesses that need short-term help to make their principal and interest payments on existing qualifying debt. ARC loans are interest-free to the borrower, 100 percent guaranteed by the SBA, and have no SBA fees associ-

ated with them. "These ARC loans can provide the critical capital and support many small businesses need to make it through these tough economic times," said Administrator Mills. "Together with other provisions of the Recovery Act, ARC loans will free up capital and put more money in the hands of small business owners when they need it the most. This will help viable small businesses continue to grow and thrive and create new jobs in communities across the country." As part of the Recovery Act, the ARC program was created as a no-interest, deferred payment loan to help small businesses that have a history of good performance, but as a result of the tough economy, are struggling to make debt payments.

ARC loans will be disbursed within a period of up to six months and will provide funds to be used for payments of principal and interest for existing, qualifying small business debt including mortgages, term and revolving lines of credit, capital leases, credit card obligations and notes payable to vendors, suppliers and utilities. Repayment will not begin until 12 months after the final disbursement. Borrowers don't have to pay interest on ARC loans. After the 12-month deferral period, borrowers will pay back the loan principal over a period of five years. ARC loans will be made by commercial lenders, not SBA directly. For more information on ARC loans, visit www.sba.gov

**Minding
The
Store**



*Hints & Tips
from the*

BUSINESS SUPPORT COMMITTEE

The Business Support Committee is here to make sure you can get the resources you need.



**The Blowing Rock
Chamber of Commerce**

The Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce
2009 Board of Directors

Contact the Chamber:

7738 Valley Blvd Phone: 828-295-7851
PO Box 406 Fax: 828-295-4643
Blowing Rock, NC 28605 E-mail: info@blowingrock.com

**Keep Up with the 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](#)

E-Mail Your Elected Officials:

U.S. Rep. Virginia Foxx – 202-225-2071 - Web Email

State Sen. Steve Goss – 919-733-5742 – steveg@ncleg.net

State Rep. Cullie Tarleton – 919-733-7727 –
culliet@ncleg.net

Officers

Rita Davis, President
Wachovia Bank

Nancy Santay, Vice President
Cabin Fever

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Linda Gilleland, Secretary
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Margaret Holder, Treasurer
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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

John Albright

Individual Representative

Members of the Board

Babette McAuliffe
Carolina Mountain Life Magazine

John Aldridge
Individual Representative

Greg Clark
Gregory Alan's

Dan Phillips
Individual Representative

This Week in Photos



Say Cheese. If you have photos you'd like to share, please send them to Stephanie@blowingrock.com. We're especially looking for photos from our Business Members in their Businesses!

Mayor JB Lawrence and First Lady Lynn enjoyed the Fresh Market.



Chamber Board of Directors member Betsy Collins waves at the crowd during the Fourth of July Parade. Photo by Lonnie Webster

Matt Cooper of Up Lively Farm helps a customer while daughter Cita snoozed in his arms.

