



Leading Notes

Is It Spring Yet?

I trust all Chamber Members are enjoying the wonderful mountain weather we tell everyone about. The coming year holds great promise for the Chamber and the county with new business and development in the towns of Marshall and Hot Springs. The remodeling of some of our well known landmarks in both towns will bring new life to the area. A new business center near the entrance to Wolf Laurel will be open soon. The new lodge at the Wolf Laurel Ski Slope is open and with the current weather should be busy.

New real estate developments, both large and small in scale will also be a boost to the Madison County economy. The hard work of the Economic Development Committee is starting to pay off. The new plan just unveiled for a multi-purpose center near Madison High is a very positive step.

Ricky McDevitt is off and running as our new county manager. Let's give him both the support and input of the chamber and the community to insure the continued growth, progress and development in Madison County.

*O'Neal Shelton, President
Madison County Chamber of Commerce*

Volunteers Needed

You can help make important contributions to the vitality of Madison County. Help distribute business directories, or meet and greet folks while you promote local businesses as a volunteer at the local farmers market and other area events. Contact us today! We have everything you need! 689-9351

Contact the Chamber

PHONE: 828 689-9351
PO Box 1085, Mars Hill, NC 28754
chamber@madison.main.nc.us

Chamber Board Meeting Highlights

- Special Thanks -

• The Chamber would like to thank **Steve Duncan** and **Cygnus Publishing**, for including this, the Chamber's quarterly newsletter, in the **Madison Monthly News**. With this bold move, Steve has increased our circulation 100%. Thank you Steve for working to promote our county and community!

• **Frank Fisher Ford** has provided the Chamber with classy, clean vehicles for each of our town's holiday parades. Thank you Frank, your support is greatly appreciated!

- September 2004 -

• \$500 has been contributed towards the printing of the **"In Our Own Way"** booklet, a Madison county resource.

• On September 25 the Farmer's Market participated in the **"Madison Celebrates Art"** festival in downtown Marshall. The festival had about 61 booths this year, up from 30 booths last year.

• Jerry Plemmons will be working with **French Broad** to identify new residents to the county in order to officially welcome them. After Jerry retired from FBEMC last summer, he accepted the Madison County Partnership's request that he develop and staff an ongoing program in the spirit of the "Welcome Wagon" concept. All agreed that it would be great if Madison had some sort of welcome packet which could contain coupons, gift certificates and information about local businesses and services. Jerry is willing to be the contact for anyone who has materials they would like to distribute.

- October 2004 -

• The Chamber will be collecting articles and news clippings about Madison county. These articles could be used in the county's relocation packet, reprinted in our local papers and posted on the website. Please send any articles or clippings to Claudia Reavis, or to Simone Bouyer. The current events page on the Chamber's website, www.madisoncounty-nc.com needs your event listings! Please e-mail Simone with any Madison county events you would like to advertise, info@quickbrightsharp.com.

• Maps are still available to chamber members for \$2.00 each for orders of 51 or more. See Claudia at the Visitor's Center.

- November 2004 -

• **BUSINESS AFTER HOURS** held on Thursday, October 21, at the **Stagecoach Inn at Spring Creek**, and hosted by **Cindie & Ryan Harmon** was a fantastic time. It was a lovely setting with great food and fellowship. About 25 people came to the event. Future locations are needed for 2005.

• It has been a successful year for the Farmer's Market thanks to the festival atmosphere and the table placed at the I-26 Welcome Center on Saturday mornings promoting the event. People are staying for 1 to 1 1/2 hours.

- December 2004 -

• Projected income for 2004 from membership support was \$15,000. Actual amount generated was \$13,183; amount under budget \$1,817.

• The board of the Visitor's Center voted to move to the blue Hoffman House on Anderson Street in Mars Hill. Larry Burda has informed us that both the Chamber and United Way will be welcome at the new location.

• Almost 1,000 business directories remain from 2004. 5,000 directories were printed. Directories are needed in the libraries, banks, and convenience stores. Any members wishing to distribute directories should pick up a case or two from the Visitor's Center, or at A-B Tech in Marshall.

• The Chamber will be offering a scholarship in 2005, and an award banquet will be planned. All chamber members are encouraged to donate to the scholarship fund.

• About 41,000 people stopped at the Welcome Center in October, with 20,000 in November. Numbers are up from past years.

- January 2005 -

• Proposed agenda for the February meeting to include discussion on recruiting new members, and distributing business directories. Claudia can send introductory letters to any prospective members. The Chamber had a 3% return from a list of local businesses compiled by Claudia in July!

• A showcase home in the new development in Little Pine Preserve will be featured in Southern Accents Magazine. Other new developments in the area include the Mountainside Townhomes in Wolf Laurel, and Bear River Lodge.

"Seeds of Deception" New Book by Jeffrey M. Smith

Reviewed by Robert Eidus © 2004

Your health is currently at risk from Genetically Modified Organisms, also called GMOs. All of our food supplies are being threatened and this book can help educate you. Jeffrey M. Smith presents a detailed argument explaining how major corporations, such as Monsanto, are infiltrating the Food and Drug Administration to establish favorable policies toward genetically engineered foods. (See November 1996 editorial, *New England Journal of Medicine*.)

The book goes on to recount how animals consistently avoided foods with GMOs and how negative effects resulted in animals that were forced to consume genetically engineered foods. Monsanto and other biotech corporations have suppressed free speech on this topic to protect their products. Monsanto's power in this industry is highlighted by a case where they sued an organic farmer for using their product when the organic farmer's crop was actually contaminated against his will from a neighboring field... and they won!

While reading this book, I was amazed to learn that the biotech industry spent \$143M between 1998 and 2002 to lobby in favor of GMO. Smith discloses that FDA over-site Congressional committee members accepted hundreds of thousands of dollars in PAC money from the biotech corporations and previous leaders from Monsanto were setting FDA policies. How can we trust this establishment to protect our needs when they are so closely connected to the needs of these major corporations?

The catastrophic effect of immune deficient diseases, such as AIDS, has received a tremendous amount of press. However, the detrimental effect that GMO are causing to immune systems is being held back from the American people. European research shows that GMO traces may never leave the human body and may alter the chemistry of your stomach, (See Marc Kaufman, article in the Washington Post, March 19, 2001)

This is not a Republican versus Democrat issue. Both sides of the aisle are responsible for the lack of oversight. (See Gwynne Dyer, "Frankenstein Foods", *Globe and Mail*, February 20, 1999.)

Novartis (now Syngenta), Dupont, Dow, GD Searle (now part of Monsanto), & Rowett Research Services are polluting our food supply in the name of greed and corporate arrogance. After reading Smith's book, I feel that these companies should be taken to court or at least boycotted. They have introduced GMOs into our basic food sources, such as corn, milk, soy, and canola which are used throughout food preparation. It is mind boggling how wide spread the effects of this technology could be. This book touches on the environmental impact of GMOs. Once a genetically modified organism is released in the environment, Smith says "it can never be recalled". Smith's next book is planning to discuss this topic in more detail.

By now, you should feel angry, violated, and ready to take action. What can you do to learn more and protect your health? Start by reading Smith's book. I got my copy from the public library.

You can buy a copy from Yes! Books, P.O. Box 469, Fairfield Iowa, 52556 or call (888) 717-7000.

Go to www.seedsofdeception.com to learn more about GMOs and the foods they are contaminating. On the web site you can find more information to influence our political leaders. The biotech companies are influencing them... so we all need to work together if we want our side to be heard.

Article submitted by **Robert Eidus**
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Reasons to Join the Madison County Chamber of Commerce:

- ✓ Your business listed in the Madison County Business Directory
- ✓ Affordable web links and listings on www.madisoncounty-nc.com

Your Name: (Mr. Ms. etc.) _____

Company Name or Organization: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone: _____ Fax: _____

E-Mail: _____ Web Address: _____

Business Category: (Health Care, Real Estate, Crafts, etc.) You can select up to 3 categories free.

Description of Business Activity: Please limit to 20 words, .50 cents for additional words.

Business Entities (Corporation, LLC, Partnerships, etc.) should pay dues based on number of employees.

Number of Employees: (Full Time/Part Time/Seasonal): _____

I would like to join the Chamber as a:

Business/Industry

- 1-4 Employees \$40.00
- 5-8 Employees \$75.00
- 9-14 Employees \$90.00
- 15-25 Employees \$120.00
- 26 + Employees \$270.00

Professional

- (Lawyer, Doctor, Dentist, Vet, etc.) \$85.00
- Real Estate \$100.00
- Financial (Bank/Utility) \$220.00
- Educational \$120.00
- Non-Profit Organization/Club/Church \$35.00
- Individual (Non-Business Listing) \$25.00

Please mail your check along with this application to:

Madison County Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 1085, Mars Hill, NC 28754

Dues are not refundable! Memberships run from January through December, after July 1 dues are 1/2 off for first time members only. Inquiries may be made by calling 689-9351 and/or 680-9546. Or, e-mail the chamber at: madisonchamber@main.nc.us

Chamber Board Meetings

Madison County Chamber of Commerce Board Meetings are held the first Tuesday of each month. All interested parties are encouraged to attend. Meetings begin at 8am at the Mashburn Medical Center in Marshall.

Upcoming Meetings:

- Tuesday, February 1, 2005
- Tuesday, March 1, 2005
- Tuesday, April 4, 2005
- Tuesday, May 3, 2005
- Tuesday, June 7, 2005

Chamber Officers 2004-2005

- O'Neal Shelton** - President
- Tammy Williams** - Vice President
- Jennifer Hott** - Treasurer
- Simone Bouyer** - Secretary

Madison County Farm Tour - Part II

The Madison County Partnership, an umbrella organization which includes the Madison County Arts Council, Handmade in America, the Madison County Extension Service, Mars Hill College, and the Hot Springs Health Program among others, organized two farm tours in July as part of their vision to create new and expanded sources of income for local farmers and craftspeople. This article covers the farms visited on July 20, 2004.

Madison County is host to thousands of tourists who visit our area each year. These farm tours were a great way for local farmers, craftspeople and businesses to understand how we can creatively build a sustainable economy around our rural heritage.



Fresh from Sunset Valley Farm's gardens

The day began with a visit to Sandy & Jackie Melton's **Nowhere Branch Angora Goats**. This working goat farm, located on Will Green Rd. in Marshall, opened in 1992 with 2 does, and now is home to anywhere from 50 to 70 mild mannered Angora goats. Sandy shears the goats in April and again in September, then washes and dyes the wool. Spinning demonstrations and tours can be arranged for about \$10 per person. Mohair products are also available for sale. Contact the farm by calling 828 689-9622.

Madison County has the largest percentage of alternative crops in the state, thanks in part to the **Palmer Ford Organic Farm**. Will Osborne spends most of his time maintaining this 16 acre organic farm which is irrigated by the river along Gabriel Creek Road. For the past 6 years Will has raised yellow squash, zucchini, melons, eggplant, beets and more. Careful rotation of the crops combined with detailed records insure that his heirloom tomatoes, broccoli, cabbage, bell peppers, beans, leeks and cucumbers are healthy and blight free. Will's plans for the farm include a U-Pick strawberry operation and private cabins for rent. Contact the farm by calling 828 689-8596.

On the way to Jack Jarvis' legendary **Japanese Lotus Gardens**, you'll walk right by Sue & Dave's produce stand. They carry seasonal produce from surrounding farms and participate in local farmers markets. Jack's 10 acres began as a tobacco farm in 1975, with drought forcing him to take up landscape design in the 1980s. About 7 years ago he started a bonsai garden, which led him to learn as much as he could about Japanese gardening. We were amazed when he told us that the lotus leaf can be used to treat allergies and the roots and seeds are edible. This self taught, organic and chem-free gardener has created beautiful spring fed ponds, complete with man made rock formations which are home to coy, frogs, numerous birds, and even a couple of cranes have spent time there. Saturdays are the best days to visit. Contact Jack by calling 828 689-3859.

Located in Mars Hill, just down the road from the Jarvis Gardens is Martha & Gary's **Bed & Breakfast at Ponder Cove**. This dog friendly B&B will be celebrating it's 2 year anniversary in February. All dogs, big and small are welcome at this upscale arts & crafts furnished home. Each of the 3 rooms has its own private bath, and you'll fall in love with Gary's finely crafted, natural wood furniture. You can contact Martha by calling 828 689-7304, or visit their website at www.pondercove.com.

Dewain Mackey started breeding Gelbvieh cattle on **Mackey Farm** in 1986. Today the farm utilizes computers to monitor the herd, and Mackey, along with his son Christopher, are growing hydroponic lettuce and spinach. A spring furnishes the water, and a computer system monitors the nutrients. Mackey is supplying some of our local schools and other businesses with several varieties of fresh lettuce. The farm also produces molasses and honey, and is well known for the community effort that helped him raise a new barn in 1 day after a fire destroyed their old barn on December 2. Mackey Farm, located on Fred Holcombe Rd., can be reached by calling 828 689-5977.

You have to taste **Sunset Valley Farm's** organic jams, pickles, salad dressings, dipping oils, herb vinegars, hot sauces and salsas. This 4 year old business, begun by Sandy Smith when she returned to the 13 acre family farm, uses fresh herbs and vegetables grown on the land, or on nearby farms. Sandy's NCDA inspected kitchen produces goods that often sell out at the weekly Farmer's Market that she manages in Mars Hill. You can share the joy Sandy gets working for herself by calling 828 680-9890.



Feeding baby goats at Spinning Spider Creamery

Another Market favorite, the **Spinning Spider Creamery**, located on Bone Camp Rd., is owned and operated by Jeff and Chris Owen, and was licensed in 2003. The couple have crafted the art of making delicious varieties of goat cheese, and with the help of their home schooled children, are working to create a sustainable family farm. Begun in 1999, the dairy cares for a small herd of about 16 goats which provide the creamery with 8 to 10 lbs. of milk per goat each day. Tours and classes are available by calling 828 689-5508.



Lotus at Jarvis Japanese Gardens

These businesses are proof that Madison county can build a creative economy based on its rural heritage. Small farms are adding to the economic health of our community and are also providing us with fresh produce, handmade goods, new ideas and a wealth of opportunities.



Mars Hill College Lyceum Series

March 23 - Peking Acrobats

Pushing the envelope of human possibility.

April 13 - Cotton Patch Gospel

The Greatest Story Ever Retold.

.....
All events held in Moore Auditorium with 7:30 curtain. MHC Students admitted free to all events with valid ID. Tickets available at Mars Hill College Bookstore, or phone 689-1209.

Check www.mhc.edu/lyceum for more information!

Hot Springs Trail Fest

April 22 - 24, 2005

Trailfest begins with an All You Can Eat Spaghetti Supper on Friday evening, April 22. On Saturday, April 23, live music begins at 11:00 am. Trailfest T-Shirts will be sold along with ducks for The World Famous Duck Race. Free camping at the Silvermine campground provided by our National Forest Service. Contact Jack Dalton, jdalton@madison.main.nc.us for more info.

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Come join us for Sunday School at 10 am and Morning Worship at 11 am!

Madison County
Chamber of Commerce

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Promote your business in our quarterly newsletter.

EVENTS NEEDED: Submit your public events for FREE inclusion on our web site.

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(828) 689-9351

Welcome NEW Chamber Members 2004-2005

Adapt to Change

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Areopagus Bistro

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Cherokee Trader Work & Western Wear

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Cody House

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www.hot Springsnc.org/codyhouse

Cody Insurance & Tanning

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Fowler Farms Sporting Clubs

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email: jnjarrett@charter.net
www.greenridgegetaway.com

Hayes Run Wood Arts

Frank W. Heatherington
66 S. Ammons Branch Rd.
Phone: 828 649-3922
e-mail: ab7cd@main.nc.us

Jarvis Landscape & Design

Jack Jarvis
202 Old Mill Rd.
Mars Hill NC 28754
Phone: 828 689-3859
e-mail: jackj53@aol.com

Jenkins Nursery

Yuvonda and Howard Jenkins
14310 Hwy. 23
Mars Hill, NC 28754
Phone: 828 689-2860
e-mail: yuvondaj@madison.main.nc.us

Judy Futch Consulting, Inc

Judy Futch
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Kiggins Insurance

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email: rjkiggins@yahoo.com

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Mars Hill College Bookstore

Darryl Norton
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Phone: 828 689-1248
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e-mail: Bookstore@mhc.edu
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