

Madison County News Bulletin

Chamber of Commerce

(828) 689-9351

www.madisoncounty-nc.com

Spring 2004



Leading Notes

With warmer weather, gardens are being planted, trees are blooming and it's time for spring cleaning! The Chamber

is doing some spring cleaning as well. Since Claudia Reavis has taken on most of the secretarial duties we have decided to reorganize the membership files. Soon you will be receiving a blank membership application. Please fill it out with the information you want on the website and in the next Business Directory. For example, if your corporation name is different from your business name enter the one you want people to see. These applications will be put into your file along with any other correspondence.

On another note, our NC Scholars Banquet is coming up in May and this year we will be awarding our own \$500 scholarship at the ceremony. Our annual meeting is being scheduled for summer and we hope everyone will attend. Invitations with details will be sent out as soon as we finalize the plans. If anyone has an event coming up, please e-mail the information to Simone at chamber@quickbrightsharp.com and we will put it on the web!

*Jennifer Hott, President
Madison County Chamber of Commerce*

Madison County Web Site Hits

Nov.	Dec.	Jan.	Feb.
19,558	16,989	24,157	23,080

I-26 Welcome Center Stats

Month	Visitors	Travel Guides	Maps
Nov.	28,172		
Dec.	14,531	740	1,700
Jan.	16,854	1,200	900
Feb.	17,294	400	800
Mar.		1,000	2,800

2004 BUSINESS DIRECTORY CORRECTIONS



Many of you have received your 2004 Chamber Business Directory. The directory was compiled by Simone Bouyer and in case you haven't checked your listing, it just might be wrong. Simone would like to apologize for the number of errors and omissions in this year's directory. Corrections can be submitted to her at sbouyer@quickbrightsharp.com, or send your corrected listing to the Madison County Chamber PO Box.

Most of the listings were pulled from the chamber's web site earlier last year. Additional information came from disks used to compile the 2001 directory, which is one reason that many of the listings were outdated. Additional help and suggestions are needed in order to publish a better 2005 directory.

The Chamber would like to assure you that the 2005 directory will be as up to date and as current as we can possibly make it. Your support and continued membership are very important to us. We value your business! Please contact us with any ideas and suggestions — we want to know how we can better serve your needs.

A list of corrections to the directory is provided. Thanks go out to Claudia Reavis who has been diligently working to maintain and update our database.

First Baptist Church of Marshall, Inc.

53 South Main Street
PO Box 484, Marshall, NC 28753
Office: **828 649-3151**
Fax: 828 649-1110
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e-mail: firstbaptistmarshall@main.nc.us
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Fax: 828 689-9954
Charles & Shannon Fogle
e-mail: foglebuilder@aol.com
www.foglebuilders.com
Commercial and residential construction.

Mountain Area Information Network (MAIN)

Wally Bowen
34 Wall Street, Suite 407
Asheville, NC 28801
255-0182
Fax: 254-2286
e-mail: info@main.nc.us
www.main.nc.us
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Kevin Meyerhoff

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www.urgentcares.org
Sisters of Mercy Urgent Care Centers are convenient neighborhood medical centers designed for people who need immediate medical care.

Chamber Board Meeting Highlights

March 2004 - Jerry Plemmons reported that Avondale Mills in Burnsville announced their intent to close. Alcan, a Canadian company, has purchased Pechiney Plastics in Marshall.

February 2004 - Alfred White, president of the Asheville Altitude, and one of the Chamber's newest members, spoke briefly. The Altitude is a community based team that supports local organizations. They have offered to work with the Chamber to build the scholarship fund.

January 2004 - A new budget was presented by Jennifer Hott. Changes have been made in the amount projected from membership support due to cuts in funding. The budget for travel and tourism brochures was increased to cover costs of producing new brochures for 2004.

December 2003 - Land outside of Burnsville just off I-26 could be made available for a permanent location for the farmers market and agri-business center.



Jennifer Hott waves from Frank Fisher's Ford during the Mars Hill Christmas parade

2003 Holiday Parade

The Chamber would like to thank Tammie Chandler for pulling together a float for the Madison County Christmas parades. Thanks also to Frank Fisher for the use of one of their new trucks!

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, April 6, 2004

Tuesday, May 4, 2004

Tuesday, June 8, 2004

Tuesday, July 6, 2004

Chamber Officers 2003-2004

Jennifer Hott - President
O'Neal Shelton - Vice President
Larry Peek - Treasurer
Simone Bouyer - Secretary

You Can Teach Old Dogs New Tricks

After 32 years in the corporate world I luckily moved to Madison County February 2003 to open a B & B. I know you think I must like washing dishes and making beds. No, what drew me to the idea was my passion for engaging interesting people in interesting conversation, loving to entertain, cooking breakfast (my favorite meal) and spending time in a beautiful part of the country with my husband and my dogs.

Yes, it was a far cry from life between a boardroom and a 747 but I trusted there would be no heart palpitations when I cleaned rooms compared to cleaning up a corporate mess with millions of dollars on the line. So, the move to Madison County was my freedom move. No more stress OR SO I THOUGHT!

We moved and I started on my quest to create a little business for myself.

Step One. I read every "How to start a B & B" book I could find. They all spouted similar information concerning everything from the need to like people to the reality that you'll never make any money.

I like a good challenge. So, I pushed forward. Needing to do something creative I jumped in and decided my second step was to get my website designed. By this time I had a name, a location and a concept. Sounded like a fun project over the winter. I thought you designed a web site. I did not know you hosted it, submitted it, marketed it, spidered it, linked it, indexed it, and updated it.

DANG! Was I feeling familiar stress in my shoulders? So, at the advice of someone I went to a company with a big reputation in Buncombe county (the last time I crossed the county line) that would do all this for me. (I was at least smart enough to have a Madison County gal design it.)

This company guaranteed that within 90 days I would be recognized and my phone would be ringing. WOW! By that time my beds would be made, the leaves all changed and my menus designed. NOT! Ninety days passed, no Ponder Cove on the web. 120 days, no Ponder Cove. Now I am getting nervous. I start calling "reputed company in other county" on a regular basis in panic mode.

Since I hadn't received a single phone call I began asking questions from every Tom, Dick and Harry I could find that would talk to me about the WEB. So, every time I called that company my questions were more educated. It didn't take long for them to stop taking my calls.

I took the loss and moved on BUT TO WHOM????? The more questions I asked the more I realized NO ONE HAS ALL THE ANSWERS. But what I learned in my quest for answers (and business) is that the internet is a very new and powerful marketing tool. So powerful that if I didn't learn all I could I wouldn't have a business. But then the more I learned the more I found there was to learn.

Yes, I panicked but this forced me to get involved far beyond what I ever thought I needed. I picked up information every place I could go and acted on it. I heard the more hits you get the more the search engines like you. Thus, they would bump me up in the standings. So, I sent out an e-mail to everyone I knew and asked them to visit my site often. (Found out this doesn't work. So, don't waste your time.)

Then I heard you had to join indexes. I went into "Bed and Breakfast Asheville area" and signed up with everyone on that first page. (Why sign up with someone on page 322 out of 135,000 listings). Then I found out there are free listings. Well, I certainly like the word free.

Then I was told to go into the B & B's that ranked higher than me and see who they are linked to and link to all of their links. (There is a site that will tell you this.) So, I spent hours and I am talking 8-10 hours a day for 3 weeks doing this. Then I heard that the \$299 I was told not to spend on Yahoo is worth it. So, purchasing that listing along with an assortment of others put me way over \$3000, a far cry from the original quote from the first designer that said "I can "do" your site for about \$600".

Realize I keep saying somebody told me to do this and somebody told me to do that. Well, I didn't know anything when I started. Now I look back and don't think I spent a single unnecessary penny. Even the money I spent on "that company across the line" put me in gear with the realization NO ONE ELSE IS GOING TO TAKE CARE OF MY BUSINESS BUT ME!

The good news is my phone now rings, I do have reservations, I am meeting the most wonderful people and yes I am making beds BUT I am living in Madison County. It has been a lot of hard work but I am proud of my accomplishments in a year's time.

For three of my favorite on-line references try the following:

- For general information go to www.self-promotion.com
- To help choose targeted key words go to www.overture.com
- Check out why your competition might be ranked higher by seeing who they are linked to. Enter the names of your competitors in any search engine such as Google.

Good Luck!

submitted by
Martha Abraham, Innkeeper
Bed and Breakfast at Ponder Cove
www.pondercove.com
1-866-689-7304
1067 Ponder Creek Rd.
Mars Hill, NC 28754

Visitor's Center to Relocate



The Jarvis House in Mars Hill

The Visitor's Center, currently located in the Jarvis House in Mars Hill, is funded by the Tourism Development Association (TDA) with additional support from private sources, including the Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Mars Hill College (MHC) has generously housed the Visitor's Center rent free for 6 years, and now needs the space for other activities and organizations. The Center has to move by May of this year.

Ideally the Center would like to continue to use the Jarvis house. This is just not possible. The Visitor's Center offered to lease or purchase the Jarvis house, this offer was not accepted as the college needs the space.

The proposal by MHC to move the Visitor's Center to the Rural Life Museum has met with some resistance: no parking plan; the building needs extensive repairs. The County declined a nearly \$59,000 NCDOT grant for renovations to the Museum to house the Visitor's Center due to concerns that federal grant requirements would dramatically increase project costs in excess of grant funding. The MHC board is willing to provide workers for labor, but the work needed has to be done by skilled professionals (new windows, repairs to the balcony, asbestos concerns in regards to installing a new boiler, etc.).

Other ideas were suggested including constructing a new log building near the existing site, but there is no property available.

Most Visitor's Centers are supported by and share space with the local chamber of commerce. Our Visitor's Center not only distributes literature about Chamber businesses, it also answers the Chamber's phone calls and e-mail.

The gas station next to the Jarvis House, John L. Chandler's property on the corner of Main Street and Hwy. 213, is one location the Visitor's Center Board is looking at, although extensive renovations to that property would need to be made.

In 1996 Wayne Roberts proposed that the gas station be converted into a visitors information center. At this time the restrooms are not handicapped accessible, and other renovations would need to be made to the property. Roberts estimates that retrofitting the building would cost \$108,000.

In March the Visitor's Center Board voted almost unanimously not to move to the Rural Life Museum. They are currently talking to the Blankenship's, who own Appalachian Homes next to the Exxon station in Mars Hill. Appalachian Homes is considering building a two-story log home that could house the Visitor's Center.

The Chamber agreed that the partnership between the Chamber, the Center and TDA is crucial to business in Madison County. Traffic at the Visitor's Center has increased due to increased traffic from Asheville and the new Welcome Center.

Based on information given by Larry Burda to the Madison County Chamber of Commerce.

Madison County Farmer's Market

The Madison County Farmer's and Artisans Market opened on Saturday, April 3. This year the market will feature live music and special events! Located in the parking lot across from the Mars Hill College tennis courts on NC 213, the market is open every Saturday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. Stop by for produce, free-range eggs, goat cheese, mountain honey and molasses, canned goods, home-baked goods, bread, and crafts of many kinds -- brooms, flowers, furniture, soaps and medicinal herbs.

ROBERT HENSLEY, Saturday, May 1
Local musician and gospel singer.

OLD FARM PLOW DAY! Saturday, May 8
Rain date is May 15. The market will be held along with the Plow Competition about a mile down Walnut Creek Road in Marshall. For more information please go to www.madisonfarms.org.

4H AWARENESS DAY, Saturday, May 15
The market teams up with the local 4H program.

WATERBOUND, Saturday, May 29
Local musicians will perform.

Festivals & Events

Mars Hill College Cultural Events

Apr. 23-25 Bailey Mountain Cloggers

Jun. 6-12 Blue Ridge Old Time Music Week

Call 689-1307 or check www.mhc.edu/calendar for more information!

6th Annual French Broad River Festival, May 7-8

at the Hot Springs Campground. The event includes a whitewater raft race, canoe/kayak poker run, great food, prizes, and live music including Sons of Ralph, Strut, Fuzz, High Windy, Sawbilly Rooster and more. www.frenchbroad-riverfestival.com

Old Farm Plow Day, Saturday, May 8, from 9:30am until.

(Raindate is May 15) Held on Walnut Creek Road in Marshall. Singles, Teams, Horses, Mules, all welcome. Bring your spreads. Big Pine Volunteer Fire Department will sell sausage & ham biscuits & coffee in the a.m. Lunch at noon, \$6/plate. Clean family fun. No Alcohol. Sunday wagon train at 9:30 am. Contact Jerry Dale Hunter 649-2170.



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SART 30th Anniversary Season Gala Saturday, May 22.

A pre-season salute to SART's remarkable history. Visit with founders C. Robert Jones and Jim "T" Thomas and socialize with many of your favorite performers. Enjoy fine dining while you learn more about SART's remarkable history. Your favorite stars will entrance you with songs from our most popular shows. Join us for an enchanting evening. Gala tickets are a separate purchase; reservations are required, phone 689-1239.

June 2-13, *Accomplice*, by Rupert Holmes. Who wants to murder whom?

June 16-27, *All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*. Adapted by Ernest Zulia, music & lyrics by David Caldwell. A musical evening of theatrical storytelling.

For ticket and seating information phone (828) 689-1239 or e-mail sart@mhc.edu. www.sartheatre.com.

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Dr. Stephen E. Loftis, Pastor
e-mail: firstbaptistmarshall@main.nc.us

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