

Madison County News Bulletin

Chamber of Commerce

(828) 689-9351

www.madisoncounty-nc.com

Summer 2003



Message from the Chamber President

Hello Madison County Chamber members and welcome to a new year. I am excited to be your president this year! Many changes are taking place all over our county and I am proud to be a part of it both personally and professionally.

I have accepted a position at the new I-26 Welcome Center as one of three travel counselors. In this position I will be able to speak with over 1 million visitors per year, letting them know about our beautiful county.

As your new Chamber president I hope to unite this new gateway into our county with the businesses we offer. The new phone number at the Welcome Center is 689-4257 if you should need to talk to me. Hope you have a great year!

Jennifer Hott, Chamber President

SEND US YOUR ADS For the 2003-2004 Business Directory

Production has begun on the 2003-2004 Madison County Chamber of Commerce Business Directory. We are currently compiling listings and advertisements. If you would like to have an ad in the directory, please submit it to us before September 20, 2003.

Chamber Board Meeting Highlights

June 2003 – Rick Morgan, Dan Gallagher and O'Neal Shelton were nominated for positions on the Tourism Development Association board.

Madison Chamber scholarship deadline extended to July 18. County maps are being sold at the Farmer's Market. Dedication of I-26 planned for August 5, 2003. New Chamber Board Nominations made and accepted for: Jennifer Hott, President; O'Neal Shelton, Vice President; Larry Peek, Treasurer with Sue Buyers as Accountant; Simone Bouyer, Secretary.

Three year nominations made for Heath White, Doug Mackenzie, and Simone Bouyer. Plans made for the annual meeting program to include a talk on the history and future of Blannahassett island. Chamber PO Box changes from Marshall to Mars Hill.

May 2003 – Farmer's Market opening is great success -- merchants report they made twice as much as they did at last year's opening day. Nominating committee finalizes list of nominees for new Chamber board. Annual meeting date set for June 26, 2003 to take place on Blannahassett Island in Marshall.

April 2003 – Chamber scholarship deadline set for June 15, 2003. Plow Day cancelled for spring, planning for fall date. Farmer's market seeks permanent

home. Nominating committee created for new board elections. Simone Bouyer nominated to handle production of Chamber newsletter.



Jennifer Hott, newly elected Chamber President presents former Chamber President, Bob Jackson with a plaque.

Chamber's New Officers, Directors

The Madison County Chamber of Commerce held its annual meeting on the island in Marshall Thursday afternoon, June 26, a stones throw from the French Broad River.

The islands walking trail, which passes between the picnic tables and the river, was in full use during the meeting as folks took their afternoon walk, some pushing baby strollers.

Officially the informal outdoor gathering, catered by Zuma Coffee of Marshall, marked the exchange of the gavel as Bob Jackson completed his year as president and handed that position over to Jennifer Hott. *(Continued Inside)*

Enhancing the Economic Vitality of Hot Springs, Mars Hill & Marshall, NC



Jerry Plemmons

By Damien Jackson

Jerry Plemmons has done much for the mountain-wedged communities of Madison County in western North Carolina. But don't expect to hear it from him. "There's one thing you need to understand about us mountain-folk," says Plemmons, who grew up on a farm just outside of Marshall. "We don't care too much for talking about ourselves."

But few mountain-folk would question how much Plemmons cares for the area's children and families. In fact, his commitment is reflected in both his daily work life and his many volunteer activities.

As the long-time Economic Development Director of the French Broad Electric Membership Cooperative (French Broad EMC) in Marshall, the modest 65-year-old has devoted himself to meeting the affordable energy, employment and community development needs of area residents. As a co-founder and 23-year board chair of the Hot Springs Health Program -- one of the many institutions with which French Broad EMC has partnered -- Plemmons helped create this innovative health-care delivery system that now boasts a ten million-dollar budget and 125 employees. He is also a former chair and current board member of the Madison County Smart Start program, another French Broad EMC partner.

Plemmons holistic approach toward his economic development position at the French Broad EMC has been operat-

Jerry Plemmons, Champion for Children

ing quietly but effectively long before a broad, people-oriented approach became trendy across America. He is a visionary in terms of his understanding of the connections among economic, physical, educational and community well-being. Plemmons takes to heart the "member-owned" foundation of this rural co-op.

"The co-op feels very strongly that for it to do well, the community has to do well," he says, noting that his interests lie with the community first. "I believe that if you build a strong community, your economy will develop along with it. If it's a place where people are healthy, want to live and raise their kids", continues Plemmons, then "it becomes much easier to bring about job creation."

"Jerry has always managed to bridge deep-seated traditions in Madison County with more progressive ideals and programs," says Nancy Alenier, executive

him a sense of pulling together for a common goal. "My father worked at a hardware store five-and-a-half days a week, 10 to 11 hours most days," he recalls, noting his parents' additional responsibility of running a farm. "We were a typical mountain farm family in that we raised chickens and hogs for meat, and my mother did a lot of canning." Growing up in such an environment, says Plemmons, "gave me a real appreciation for the value of an intact family." His childhood was not easy by today's standards, but it was a good one.

Accordingly, the pleasant-mannered Plemmons admits he sometimes gets frustrated when influential people or policy-makers don't recognize the importance of "giving young children a good start" by ensuring them and their families timely and affordable services. Doing so, insists Plemmons, will "return dividends

for them and their communities throughout their lives. If they are given a good start, they'll likely become productive, contributing citizens and much less apt to be a burden on

society as they get older."

Such returns on his own investments in Madison County's children and families are what Plemmons banks on. "The satisfaction of just seeing children from one of the programs I was involved with grow into outstanding and involved contributors to our community is enough for me," says the humble mountain-man with an eye-twinkling smile. "It makes me think that maybe some of those meetings I went to actually made a difference."

For the full story, please go to www.ncchild.org and click on the "Others Making a Difference" button at the top of the page.

**Success is getting what you want.
Happiness is wanting what you get.**

- Hayden

director of the county's Smart Start program. While trumpeting Plemmons' role in bringing quality child care and child development services to the area, Alenier elaborates on the far-from-easy task of "selling" such government-run services to the region's staunchly-traditional communities.

"Early on, Smart Start was commonly thought to have the potential to usurp the family's role in raising children and to destroy the family structure," acknowledges Alenier. "But Jerry was able to interpret the program's mission as an opportunity to support both families and traditional values by insisting that the best thing for young children was to strengthen their families and the communities in which they lived." Plemmons' promoted this belief in crafting the county Smart Start's mission statement, which states that the program "enhances family and community resources to nurture the development of every child." Without Plemmons direct, steady, reassuring leadership, Smart Start might well have crashed or stalled across this county.

A product of the Madison County public school system, Plemmons own childhood development was enhanced by hard-working parents who instilled in

Madison County Hits & Stats

Month	Web Hits	Walk Ins	Mailings
April	27,943	279	34
May	28,010	472	41
June	28,102	372	30

Call 689-9351 or e-mail Jennifer at madisonchamber@main.nc.us for more information. All Chamber businesses are listed online! Join today!

www.madisoncounty-nc.com

Chamber Officers 2003-2004

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



The new Chamber board includes (left to right) Simone Bouyer, Secretary; O'Neal Shelton, Vice President; Jennifer Hott, President; and Larry Peek, Treasurer

Continued from Cover

Hott used the occasion to thank Ruth Boylan, owner of the Marshall House, for her 10 years of service to the chamber. Boylan has officially retired as executive secretary. She's succeeded by Claudia Reavis, who works with United Way of Madison County.

Mackenzie mentioned that the island property is about half-owned by the county, and the remainder by the town of Marshall. He has spent numerous hours helping to develop the walking trail.

His home, which faces Main Street in Marshall, looks out from the rear on the river and the island. "I'm amazed at how many people are out here early, early in the morning," he commented.

Mackenzie's current volunteer project is a portage feasibility study about establishing a way to get rafts and canoes around the Redmond Dam so that folks could put in the river near the downtown area, thereby increasing the opportunities for local business people.

Mackenzie said the town "declined to comment" on the project, but it has the support and blessings of virtually everyone else.

Mackenzie mentioned that each rafting company in the county puts about \$95,000 back into the local economy.

It was noted that Penland's in downtown Marshall is selling the Chamber's maps and vehicle tags, along with numerous books that promote Madison County or describe its history.

Reprinted courtesy of the News-Record and Sentinel, July 2, 2003, by Fred Hughes



New Chamber board members Doug Mackenzie and Heath White

In addition to Hott, the new executive board includes: O'Neal Shelton, Vice President; Simone Bouyer, Secretary; and Larry Peek, Treasurer.

Three new board members were elected. They are: Simone Bouyer, representing Mars Hill; Doug Mackenzie, representing Marshall; and Heath White, representing Hot Springs. Bouyer is a graphic arts designer. Mackenzie works in the television commercial and movie industry. White operates Huck Finn Adventures rafting company.

Festivals & Events

**Madison County Heritage Festival
October 4, 9:30am-4pm**

Traditional mountain music, authentic craft demonstrations, hand hooked rugs, animal petting area on the Mars Hill College Campus and downtown Main Street, Mars Hill. Contact the Madison County Visitor's Center at (828) 680-9031 for more information. Contact Jane Threat at (828) 689-5974 for booth information.

**Bascum Lamar Lunsford Festival
October 4, 7pm-until**

Annual festival of music, heritage and storytelling honoring Bascum Lamar Lunsford, "The minstrel of the Appalachians", born in Mars Hill, North Carolina. Founder of the first folk festival. Small admission fee. Contact Richard Dillingham at (828) 689-1424 for more information.

**Southern Appalachian Repertory
Theatre (SART) 2003 Season**

Kiss Me Kate - July 16-20, July 24-27, and July 31 through August 3. An all time favorite musical comedy.

Steel Magnolias - August 6-10 and August 14-17. A contemporary comedy with Southern themes.

The Lion, The Witch and the Wardrobe - Special children's play July 18 - August 9 at special matinee times.

Contact SART for ticket and seating information at 828-689-1239 or e-mail sart@mhc.edu.

Volunteers Needed

You can help make important contributions to the vitality of Madison County. 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

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.

Please Note: The August meeting will be held on July 29 due to the grand opening of I-26 on August 5, 2003.

- Tuesday, September 2, 2003
- Tuesday, October 7, 2003
- Tuesday, November 4, 2003
- Tuesday, December 2, 2003

PO Box 1085, Mars Hill, NC 28754

Chamber of Commerce

Madison County

BULK RATE
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Mars Hill NC 28754
Permit #48

Businesses that Joined the Chamber in 2003

Tree Spirit Inn

Suzie Engel
Bed & Breakfast
Hot Springs, (828) 622-9631

Ponder Cover Bed & Breakfast

Martha Abraham
Accommodations
Mars Hill, (828) 689-7304

Kokopelli's Daughters

Dr. Deborah Louis
Public Interest, Advocacy & Consulting
Marshall, (828) 649-2399

Briar Rose Farm

Tom Hare & Judie Hansen
Accommodations/Animal Farm
Hot Springs, (828) 622-7329

BUY
MADISON
Support
Our County
Businesses

Wired Up Systems

Samuel A. Lloyd
Automation/Electrical
Mars Hill, (828) 689-9473

The Secret Garden Bed & Breakfast

Cassandra Clark
Hospitality/Accommodations
Weaverville, (828) 658-9317

Asheville Oaks Inn

Sherrye L. Perry
Accommodations/Tourism
Marshall, (828) 649-0606

Country Boy Trail Rides

Rebecca Ogle-Cole
Guided Horseback Tours
Marshall, (828) 649-9428

Madison's Mystery Shopper

Ever been shopping at a store in Asheville and wondered, "Does the Madison County Chamber of Commerce have members stores that sell this exact same item for less?" In one recent case, I found out just how much money I could save shopping with Madison Chamber members.

I needed to go to a copy and printing store, then ship my package overnight to a client in Florida. Without planning ahead, I packed up my materials and drove 20 miles into Asheville from my office in Marshall. With my reproduced

reports in hand, I drove a few more miles to drop off the package, then returned to the office. For my one-hour round-trip, my out-of-pocket expenses for going to Asheville for two errands totaled \$64.60.

Did you know that the Madison County Chamber of Commerce has two members that offer professional quality copy services? On pages 62 and 63 in your Chamber of Commerce directory you will see advertisements for Northside Graphics & Printing in Weaverville and ValuePrint in Mars Hill and Spruce Pine.

For location preference, I have chosen to place my corporate account with ValuePrint. Had I 'shopped' at

ValuePrint my total costs would have been \$40.23.

There you have it. Not only did I save \$24.37, almost 38%, but I was also able to put my package into a drop box in Mars Hill and return to the office at least 30 minutes earlier than I would have while traveling all the way to Asheville. Taking my copies to a Madison County Chamber of Commerce member could save me nearly \$1,000 per year and a whole week's worth of time.

Our "Buy Madison" slogan is not only designed to support our own local economy, it can also save you money and time, AND LOTS OF IT!!!