

Madison County News Bulletin

Chamber of Commerce

(828) 689-9351

www.madisoncounty-nc.com

Fall 2007



Leading Notes

It has been a very active and productive first half of 2007 for the Madison Chamber. Membership has experienced record growth with new members from many different types of businesses located in all parts of Madison County.

Even with the dry weather, reports from our rafting, lodging, spa and other seasonal businesses reflect a positive growth for the year. The opening of many new businesses also reflects confidence in the business climate that exists in Madison County. Web site hits, walk-in visits and phone calls to the Visitors Center indicate a continued interest in our area.

The Chamber annual meeting held at the new lodge at French Broad Crossing was a great event. The location with fantastic views of the river and river valley made for a picture perfect Madison County evening. Thanks to all who attended and made the event very special with few speeches and a lot of visiting. Dewain Mackey and his Madison Farms food products catered a meal to match Madison County's reputation for great country cooking and farm products. Thanks also go to the staff and property owners of French Broad Crossing for hosting our annual meeting and going above and beyond the norm to make our chamber members and guests welcome.

It does not seem possible that we are now gearing up for our fall events. The summer goes quickly and the fall festivals make for a special time in our county. Let's all get out and support the numerous great sports and cultural activities available to us in Madison County and the business owners and volunteers that make these events possible.

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

Business After Hours in Madison

We have had a great response to our Business After Hours events. Attendance at the Zuma event (shown here) was wonderful, and more folks are expected at future gatherings. Interested in hosting a Chamber event? Please contact Claudia Reavis at 689-9351.



(1) Jerry Plemmons speaks with Jeanette Kendall; (2) Kathy Hendricks and Paul Tierney; (3) Lesley King; (4) David Kendall; (5) Claudia Reavis; (6) Dr. Joe Morgan and O'Neal Shelton.

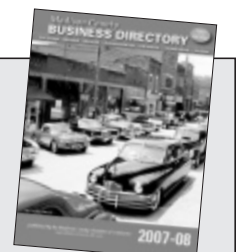
Upcoming Business After Hours Events:

Tuesday, October 23rd
Mountainside Cabins
Scott Burden - Hot Springs

Tuesday, December 4th
105 Main Street Bed & Breakfast
Robert Pierce and Steven Subera
Mars Hill

Thursday, March 6, 2008
News-Record & Sentinel
Jonathan Austin and Mickey Huot
Marshall

Madison County Business Directories and Visitors Guides are being distributed throughout the county. This year there is a display stand for the directories which has increased the pick-up rate. Directories are especially needed in Hot Springs. If you are interested in helping distribute directories you may pick up a case of the directories from Claudia at the Visitors Center.



We Want Your Brochures!

All Madison County Chamber of Commerce members are encouraged to bring brochures, postcards, photos albums and other promotional items to the Madison County Visitor's Center on Anderson Street in Mars Hill.

We want to help you promote and build your business. Make sure that the many visitors who stop in every week know all about the services you provide!

Submit Ads and Corrections for the 2008 Business Directory

We will begin compiling listings and advertisements for the 2008 Madison County Business Directory at the end of November 2007. If you would like to have an ad or listing in the directory, please call Claudia at (828) 689-9351.

Welcome New Board Members

The Madison County Chamber of Commerce would like to welcome several new board members to our team. Martha Abraham, (Bed & Breakfast at Ponder Cove), Marian G. Smartt (Angel Ridge Homecare), and Robert Ford (Hot Springs Health Program). We are looking forward to growing businesses, building friendships, and supporting tourism in Madison County.

Monthly board meetings are open to all Chamber members. Contact us with your ideas — help is always needed!

Chamber Board Meetings

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

Upcoming Meetings:

Tuesday, October 2, 2007
Tuesday, November 6, 2007
Tuesday, December 4, 2007

Chamber Officers 2007-2008

O'Neal Shelton - President
Larry Peek - Vice President
Maxine Brown - Treasurer
Simone Bouyer - Secretary

Visitor Impact for North Carolina

Gov. Mike Easley announced at the Annual Governor's Conference on tourism that visitors to North Carolina spent a record \$15.4 billion in 2006, an increase of 8.3 percent from 2005 and the largest single-year increase since tracking began in 1990. The number was also higher than the nation average which was 7.7 percent.

"The tourism industry is a key to our state's economic well being and I am committed to maintaining our position as one of the top travel destinations in the country," Easley said.

Statewide highlights include:

- 2006 total domestic visitor spending saw an increase of 8.3 percent to \$15.4 billion, up from \$14.2 billion in 2005.

- The travel and tourism industry directly employees more than 187,000 North Carolinians.
- The tourism industry generated a total of more than \$1.3 billion in tax revenues. State tax revenue totaled \$797 million through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income.
- Some \$496 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

The statistics shown below are from the 2006 Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties.

2006 Economic Impact of Travel on North Carolina Counties

Prepared for the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development by the Travel Industry Association of America

County	Expenditures (\$ Millions)	Percent Change 2005/06	Payroll (\$ Millions)	Employment (Thousands)	State Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)	Local Tax Receipts (\$ Millions)
BUNCOMBE	645.71	10.4%	154.85	8.97	33.63	20.74
HAYWOOD	111.06	7.3%	23.48	1.40	5.82	4.78
HENDERSON	189.23	4.1%	36.83	2.07	8.73	8.86
MADISON	27.30	10.4%	5.76	0.32	1.43	1.32
MITCHELL	18.62	5.8%	3.08	0.17	0.83	0.84
YANCEY	26.51	12.5%	4.83	0.25	1.22	1.99

Tourism Resources Available

Each year, over 60 million visitors flock to North Carolina and contribute more than \$14 billion annually to the state's economy. These numbers continue to rise as North Carolina moves up the list of Top 10 most visited U.S. states.

Tourism is also a vital industry for North Carolina in many other ways: it generates close to \$748 million in state tax dollars a year, and over \$450 million in local tax revenues; directly supports nearly 200,000 jobs and close to \$4 billion in wages; and has brought new life to areas left without a livelihood by the demise of other industries.

In short, tourism means jobs for North Carolinians and economic prosperity for communities across the state. Parks, Recreation and Tourism Management's (PRTM) tourism extension, engagement and economic development programs recognize the importance of tourism and allow PRTM to be a partner in planning,

developing, and growing sustainable tourism and recreation resources across North Carolina. These programs also reflect the growing diversity of the tourism industry as well as NC State's national stature within many of its most important sectors.

Resources for Practitioners

If you are an extension agent, business owner, community leader or simply a citizen seeking help with a tourism project, PRTM offers a number of resources that can help you with such steps as starting up an enterprise, managing risk and liability, marketing, obtaining insurance and funding plus many other areas. Please visit us for more information on the resources available to you. We will be updating and compiling a revised list of publications, useful links and other resources over the summer. www.cnr.ncsu.edu/prtm/extension/tourism.html

Welcome New 2007 Chamber Members

Green Mountain Developers

www.sunriseatroaringfork.com

A green community in harmony with nature

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www.sunriseatroaringfork.com

Green Mountain Developer's mission is

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Other Phone: 828 264-3040

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Chamber of Commerce**

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The Prama Institute offers facilities for both groups and individuals in a peaceful environment that is ideal for recharging body, mind and spirit. Vegetarian meals are provided by our highly skilled vegetarian caterers. We are located on 150 acres of rolling hills and forest lands with hiking trails and panoramic views of the Blue Ridge Mountains. The French Broad River, located just five minutes away, is ideal for canoeing and rafting.

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PO Box 729, Marshall, NC 28753
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828 649-1531
Cell: 864-918-5610
E-Mail: terryhenson@renvent.com
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Tom Turner Porcelain

www.tomturnerporcelain.com

In August of 2005 Tom Turner bought land near Mars Hill, NC, and established his fifth pottery studio to make porcelain and also to teach his knowledge and philosophy to younger pottery enthusiasts. He has been here a little over a year and it all shows great promise.



Tom moved to North Carolina because it is without doubt, "The Potter's State". His studio is located about 30 minutes from Asheville and only 40 minutes from the world famous Penland School of Crafts. His work has appeared in *Craft Horizons*, *American Craft*, *Ceramics Monthly*, *Studio Potter*, *The Washingtonian*, *House Beautiful*, and *Southern Living*.

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Carol Martin, President
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E-Mail: Carol06200@aol.com
The SART Guild is a non-profit membership organization, comprised of a host of energetic and talented individuals from the region, whose mission is to support the Southern Appalachian Repertory Theatre located in Mars Hill, North Carolina.

Swallowtail Garden Designs

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Inspector Don Miller received his first of three engineering degrees in 1971 and has been working in the field since 1975.

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Photo by John Coulakis.

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don@wncinspections.com

Minimum Wage Increase

from Cherie Berry,
Commissioner of Labor

The U.S. Congress recently passed legislation that will increase the federal minimum wage to \$7.25 over the next two years. This legislation will affect the labor law posters that North Carolina businesses are required to post. All posters printed before December 2006 are out of date and you should order a new one.

Effective July 24, 2007, the federal minimum wage will increase from \$5.15 per hour in three steps: to \$5.85 per hour effective July 24, 2007; to \$6.55 per hour effective July 24, 2008; and to \$7.25 per hour effective July 24, 2009.

In North Carolina, employers are required to pay the higher of the state or federal minimum wages. So, the minimum wage employers are required to pay their employees in North Carolina will remain at \$6.15 per hour until July 24, 2008, when it will increase to \$6.55 per hour.

However, while the increase in the federal minimum wage to \$5.85 per hour on July 24, 2007, will not affect the minimum wage in North Carolina, it will have an impact on businesses where employees receive tips. This is because the increase in the federal minimum wage by seventy cents creates a corresponding increase in the amount of the tip credit that employers are allowed to count toward the payment of wages for their tipped employees.

The following chart shows how the changes to the federal minimum wage will affect the tip credit allowed for tipped employees in North Carolina.

Effective Date	Minimum Wage	Tip Credit Allowed	Cash Wage
07/24/07	\$6.15	\$3.72	\$2.43
07/24/08	\$6.55	\$4.42	\$2.13
07/24/09	\$7.25	\$5.12	\$2.13

If you have any questions about the new posters or the poster law, or you would like to order new posters, visit www.nclabor.com/posters/posters.htm or call us at 1-800-625-2267.

Every Friday, 7pm

Traditional Music at the Depot
Main Street in Marshall.
Free, donations accepted.

French Broad Rafting Expeditions is "Going Green"

French Broad Rafting Expeditions (FBRE) owners' Michael and Mitch Hampton are in the process of restructuring their whitewater rafting business to be environmentally friendly by "Going Green." "As we were growing up we were taught of the importance of our surroundings and to respect the outdoors. Our love for the rivers, mountains, and nature inspires us to protect the environment in which we live... Going Green just makes sense," said Michael Hampton.

The first step in "Going Green" for FBRE is to use biodiesel for fuel for the diesel engine rafting buses. FBRE contacted Blue Ridge Biodiesel for their assistance in the transformation. Biodiesel is a nontoxic and biodegradable type of fuel made from vegetable oils (such as soy bean oil, canola oil, hemp oil) that are converted into a biodiesel fuel that is mixed with conventional diesel fuel. Biodiesel is a friendly fuel for the environment because it burns cleaner and does not pollute the atmosphere, which means it reduces the emission of harmful pollutants in the air. Biodiesel can also extend the life of diesel engines.

FBRE continues to recycle cardboard, plastic bottles, aluminum cans, and additional supplies used at the outpost. FBRE will also begin to educate their customers on being environmentally friendly by posting flyers and brochures with information on how they can "Go Green" at home.

"The practice of recycling, using biodegradable products, and converting to better burning fuels is a sound option to protect the environment. We are happy the opportunity is available for us to go forward with this process. I know we are the first rafting company in North Carolina to use biodiesel and I believe we are the first in the southeast," said Mitch Hampton.

On November 29, 2006, French Broad Rafting Expeditions outpost caught fire and everything was lost. The negative has turned into a positive for the Hampton's. They purchased new rafts, paddles, and life jackets and acquired three acres of land to be open for their 2007 rafting season. While FBRE is running out of temporary buildings you can hear the hammer and nails of their new outpost being built. "It's a



Mitch Hampton, co-owner of French Broad Rafting Expeditions, fills up his rafting bus with biodiesel.

great feeling to see our new building go up, but it's even more exciting to be able to restructure the outpost as an environmentally sound facility. We are aiming to be off the grid by using solar energy within the next 6 years," said the Hampton Brothers.

French Broad Rafting Expeditions is the closest whitewater rafting outfitter to Asheville, North Carolina. French Broad Rafting Expeditions provides an experienced CPR and first-aid certified guide in every raft. French Broad Rafting Expeditions is the only outfitter on the French Broad River with a covered pavilion for lunch or snack.

Trips offered are a five mile and nine mile whitewater rafting trip, a high adventure whitewater trip, and a calm water trip. For more information about French Broad Rafting Expeditions call 800-570-RAFT or visit us at www.french-broadrafting.com.

Volunteers Needed

If you would like to learn more about Madison County, or if you'd enjoy greeting Madison's many visitors, please contact the Madison County Visitors Center by calling 680-9031.

Volunteers are needed to cover three hour shifts at the Visitor's Center on Anderson Street, Monday through Saturday mornings, 10 am to 1 pm, or afternoons, 1 to 4 pm.

PO Box 1085, Mars Hill, NC 28754

Madison County
Chamber of Commerce

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French Broad Cabin

www.frenchbroadcabin.com



The French Broad Cabin is a rustic getaway conveniently located in Marshall, NC, within an easy drive to all the attractions of Western North Carolina. *The French Broad Cabin* is located on a gentle hill with a stunning view of the French Broad River below and the Blue Ridge Mountains in the distance. The cabin is fully furnished; including linens, all appliances, kitchenware, and basic supplies (paper products, salt, pepper, sugar, etc.).

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