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2025

MOUNTAINS and MORE



A SPECIAL PUBLICATION OF **THE Stokes News**



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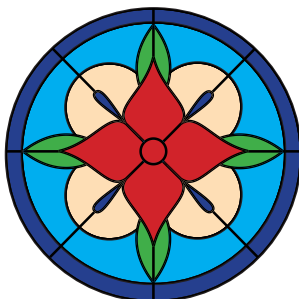
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**For advertising inquiries,
please call 336.591.2102**

Our goal is to highlight everything Stokes County has to offer, so please reach out with suggestions or if you see something missing or incorrect. We appreciate your input and support!

Cover photo courtesy of Stokes County Economic Development.
Inside photos by Terri Flagg | The Stokes News, except where noted.

Stokes Partnership for Children

151 Jefferson Church Rd King, NC 27021

BBQ for Books with a Side of Bluegrass

Date: Friday, October 3, 2025

Time: 6:00 to 9:00 PM • Doors open at 5:00 PM

Location: Nana-Mac Meadows, Pinnacle, NC

Dine in Only, Food served between 6:00 and 8:00 PM



**A Homecoming!
Mason Via
&
Friends**

Purpose: Raising funds for early childhood programs, including Dolly Parton's Imagination Library and much more!

Food: Barbecue and all the fixings, including non-alcoholic drinks and dessert

Alcohol: Wine and Beer

(not included in the cost of admission)

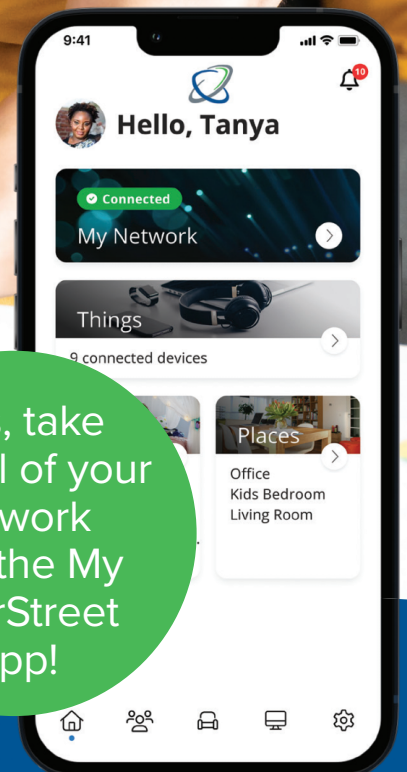
Activities: Live music, live and silent auctions and games.



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WELCOME TO STOKES COUNTY

One thing I've learned as editor of *The Stokes News* is that Stokes County's mountains always surprise and never disappoint.

When I'm able to get out from behind the computer, work often requires a drive across the county. There's basically no highways, there's a mountain in the middle, and I'm a slow driver -- especially in my clunky old van on winding roads that often still feel new to me. I love it. The mountain reveals itself in different profiles from different locations; different weather and times of day make it look new each time. It's awesome in every sense of the word.

In this edition of *See Stokes*, we invite you to explore all the beauty and charm this county has to offer from corner to corner. You'll find tips from Stokes News columnists who know the area inside and out.

My suggestion is turn your driving from a necessity into an experience. Follow the scenic byways that loop around Hanging Rock, or branch out into the hinterlands.

Whatever you get into while you're here, we hope you enjoy the sense of wonder a visit to Stokes County offers.

Terri Flagg

Terri Flagg | The Stokes News
Driving east across Stokes County from Francisco does
not disappoint in the views and vibes department.



PHOTO BY TERRI FLAGG | MAP COURTESY OF STOKES COUNTY

This map pinned to The Stokes News' newsroom wall shows all the communities in the county, scenic roads and river access.

LISTEN TO THE LOCALS

If you want to explore Stokes like a local, this is where to start. The regions each has its own vibe — different landscapes and rhythms that are all part of the same story. At *The Stokes News*, we honor that tapestry by keeping something

special alive: community columns written by people who actually live there. Our columnists know their corners of the county better than anyone, and they've each shared a tip just for visitors.

FRANCISCO NEWS

"I would recommend the hike up to the dam at Jessup Mill in Collinstown...It's absolutely beautiful during the spring and fall. It's not as crowded as Hanging Rock and the trail is simple. I also cannot leave out the Francisco Music Jam the first Tuesday of each month. The caliber of talent in one room is unmatched. I'm in awe every time I go. To think you can put these musicians together and have such a collaboration of pure talent just makes me smile...this is something to definitely check out."

— Sylvia Burton

NANCY REYNOLDS NEWS

"In Westfield, find the Sheep Rock near Nancy Reynolds Elementary School. The rock juts out for animals and people to shelter under next to the river. Class field trips used to go down there."

— Juanita Gordy's Children

CHAT WITH THE CHAPLAIN

"When in Stokes County, stop by and see our helicopter display at the American Legion Post 290 in King. It's a 1968 medevac helicopter flown in the Vietnam War and Desert Storm, one of only six in the United States. Also, Historical Danbury is a must."

— Post 290 Chaplain John Winfrey

THE OLD PATHS

"I love to take my children to Priddy's General Store in Danbury for those famous thick-slab bologna sandwiches with that specialty hoop cheese. We grab a bag of chips and a glass-bottled drink from Priddy's very unique selections and then drive the two miles to Moratock Park to enjoy our lunch outdoors by the delightful Dan River."

— Leslie Bray Brewer

LOAVES AND DISHES

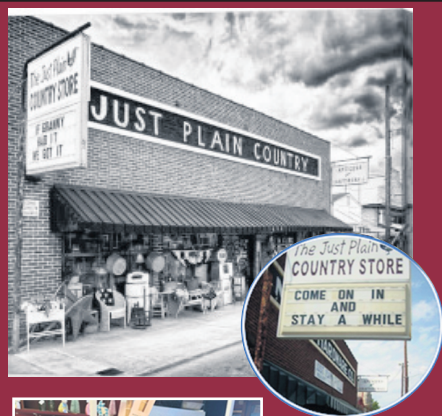
"Full disclosure, I might have a soft spot for a good brew! But honestly the local craft beer spots here are top-notch (1889, The Green Heron and the dearly missed Midsummer Brewing). The bartenders are wizards, the locals are like your new best friends and the beer is ice-cold and delicious. Plus, you'll often find a food truck or a local musician keeping the good vibes rolling. If you miss that part of Stokes County, you've really missed something special."

— Wendi Spraker

SANDY RIDGE NEWS

"Although Sandy Ridge is a small, unincorporated community, it has a lot to offer. Each month, the Sandy Ridge Music Association hosts a bluegrass music event on the second Saturday at the community center. These groups are Grand Ole Opry worthy! Another popular event is the Bingo Fundraiser, which supports the community center. Our Annual Ridgefest, sponsored by the Ruritans, is a time when we give back to the community with free Brunswick Stew, vendors, food trucks, and live music. The NE Stokes Volunteer Fire Department also organizes a Summer Bash, offering fun activities for all ages. We may be small, but we have a big heart."

— Carolyn Craig



"If Granny had it ★★★
We Got It!" ~Kathy



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New year, new you

Shane Sargent | Courtesy of Stokes County Arts Council
More than 150 individuals rush into the lake at Hanging Rock State Park as part of the Polar Plunge on Jan. 1, 2024.

START FRESH WITH THE HANGING ROCK POLAR PLUNGE ON NEW YEAR'S DAY

TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

Jumping into a lake in the cold of winter may be an unusual way to kick off the new year, but it's become a tradition for many.

The Stokes County Arts Council hosts a polar plunge at the Hanging Rock State Park lake annually on New Year's Day.

"The party of the year on the first day of the year," says Eddy McGee, Stokes County Arts Council director. "It's the best!"

The 10th Annual plunge was held on Jan. 1, 2025, drawing another great crowd of folks from all over.

The weather that day at Hanging Rock was sunny but chilly, with temperatures in mid-40s and the lake at 46 degrees.

"It's been colder," McGee said while standing on the beach after the plunge, still dripping and shivering, recalling a year when ice had to be broken up off the surface of the lake before the swimmers could jump in.

The annual off-season dip in the lake benefits the Arts Council, which uses the funds to support programming in schools and communities.

In addition to a good time, free chicken stew and a sense of personal accomplishment, each registrant receives some swag, which this year was a Hanging Rock Polar Plunge mug.

COOL COSTUMES

Participants don't just plunge — they plunge in style, parading down to the beach in a

wide variety of costumes. The best of the best win prizes such as gift certificates to The Arts Place or Rocky's.

Elementary school principal Eric Pritchett plunged for the first time this year. He was dressed in a full suit and tie.

"I figured if I died I'd already be prepared to be buried," a soaking wet Pritchett joked after he emerged from the lake.

Claire and John Wait, of Clemmons, tapped into a pop culture moment in "Wicked" cast costumes, Claire as Elphaba and John as Galinda.

"We play to win every year," Claire said as the couple marched down to the lake, and win they did — for the fourth consecutive year.

The Waits previously dressed as a Santa and elf they described as on the "naughty" side, the Adams Family, and Barbie and Ken, winning awards for each.

"We have a reputation to preserve — our legacy," Claire said.

Jax, of Winston-Salem, wore a Kitsune costume, which is a fox spirit in Japanese mythology. The plunger stayed in the lake after many had fled and said a shorty wetsuit helped.

"It still prickles," Jax said of the cold water.

"I love this park, I love this lake, and I like doing crazy, memorable things. And this is an interesting way to start off the year," Jax said. "I first came here several years ago, saw the people doing it and I was like I'm tempted but I'm afraid. Eventually I finally bit the bullet and did it one year, and then I've been doing every year since."

Liz Laprade's crew had participated last year but it was her first time.

"It was fun but it was scary — it was freezing," she said. "I was worth it."

Laprade's group from the Germanton area won a prize for their "Napolean Dynamite" movie themed costumes.



Courtesy of Stokes County Arts Council
A chilly 'Stokes County Baptism' in 2025

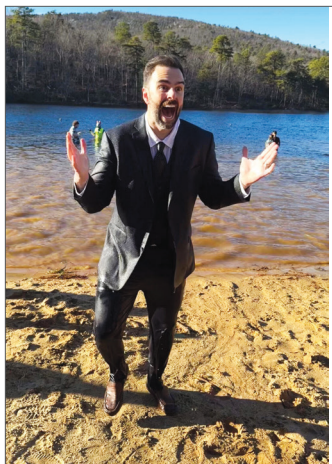
'STOKES COUNTY BAPTISM'

Travis Leonard, of King, has attended — and plunged — every year.

"Every year I see familiar faces, and I see a lot of new faces every year," he said. "It's really awesome to see this event from when it started the first year to where it is now."

This year, Leonard's youngest of three sons went in with him for the first time. Now all three sons have plunged.

"I look forward to this every year," Leonard said. "Everybody's all hyped up about Thanksgiving, Christmas — I



Eric Pritchett, London Elementary School principal, emerges from Hanging Rock lake after his first polar plunge.

count down the days to this.

"You can't ask for a better way to start off the beginning of the year."

Leonard noted that for a lot of people it's simply a fun, local thing to be a part of.

"For me, and I know for a few other people, it's more kind of like a spiritual thing," he said. "I've been quoted as saying this is a Stokes County baptism. But it's more of getting in tune with yourself, your inner self, and getting in tune with nature, and people that are coming together just not talk about anything other than we're all just a little bit nuts."

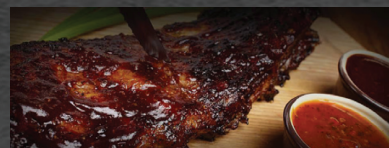


Shane Sargent | Courtesy of Stokes County Arts Council

Barbie and Ken (Claire and John Wait) head toward 40 degree water at Hanging Rock State Park's lake for the Jan. 1, 2024 Polar Plunge.



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SANDY RIDGE ANNUAL **Bluegrass Show**

TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

SANDY RIDGE — Premiere bluegrass musicians Flatt and Scruggs headlined the inaugural Sandy Ridge Bluegrass Show in 1948 and did so annually for 20 years — until the legendary duo broke up about two weeks before the 1969 event.

The show went on, as they say it must, and the event has continued for more than 75 years with no signs of slowing down.

“We researched to the best of our ability and we can’t find any other show of that type in the United States that’s been running continuous for that long,” other than The Grand Ole Opry itself, which is a weekly show, said Jay Adams, event organizer.

The Annual Sandy Ridge Bluegrass Show is scheduled for the third Saturday in March each year and is held at Sandy Ridge Elementary School. Concessions are available, and the doors typically open at 5 p.m. and the show starts at 6 p.m.

Proceeds from ticket sales benefit the school.

Junior Sisk Band, 2024 Society for the Preservation of Bluegrass Music of America (SPBGMA) Album of the Year winner, headlined in 2025 with The Churchmen gospel group will starting things off.

In 2026, Lonesome River Band will headline and The Churchmen will open.

Lonesome River Band is lead by Sammy Shelor, a five-time International Bluegrass Music Association (IBMA) Banjo Player of the Year and winner of the Steve Martin Prize for Excellence in Banjo and Bluegrass.

“It’s gonna be fun,” said Adams, of Pine Hall. “It’s always been a really good concert. We’ve got a really good audience.”

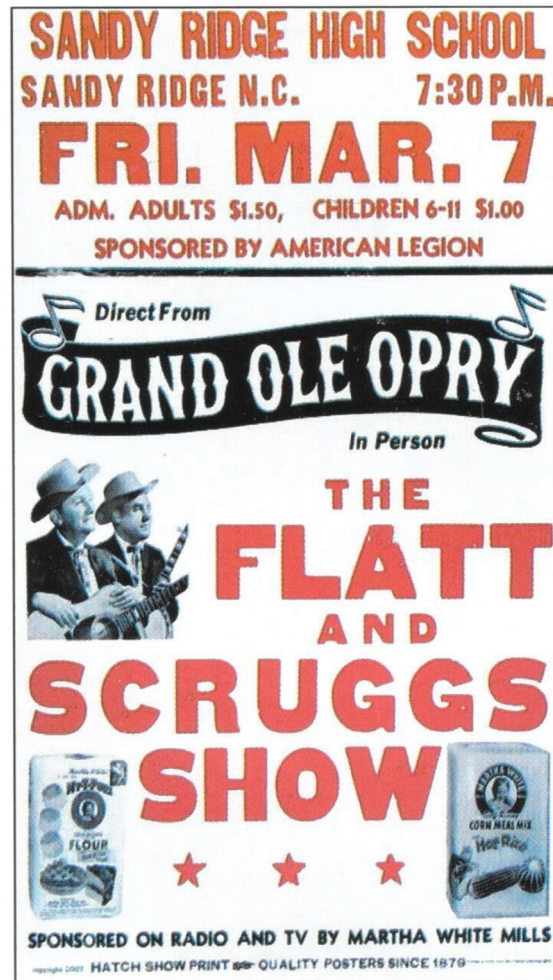
‘The Music Man’

Cleo Lemons, grandfather of Stokes County Sheriff Joey Lemons, started the Annual Bluegrass Show and kept it going for decades.

After Cleo passed away in 2016, “Bluegrass Today” magazine published an article by John Lawless that notes his contribution to the genre:

“Lemons was among the first promoters to book Lester Flatt & Earl Scruggs. He had contacted them as soon as he learned that the pair had formed their own group after leaving Bill Monroe, bringing them in to perform at the Sandy Ridge High School in Stokes County, NC in 1948.”

Adams recalled that The Osborne Brothers filled in for the 1969 show. Lester Flatt eventually came back with a different band, and



Hatch Show Print of Nashville created the show posters for Flatt and Scruggs performances in Sandy Ridge.

many Opry acts came to Sandy Ridge to do the show over the years.

Cleo Lemons, “The Music Man,” had started a tradition that with enduring significance.

“Cleo was really passionate about the concert,” Adams said. “He understood the history of it in association with Flatt and Scruggs and the other Grand Ole Opry people.”

Things almost stalled out when Lemons had to step back in 2011.

“They were not going to have a concert, and so I thought it’d be a good time to step in,” Adams said. “And Cleo had told me previously that he wished I would take it...so I did.”

Several loyal sponsors have supported the event over the years as well as new ones. Along with ticket sales, enough is brought in to pay the musicians and make a donation to Sandy Ridge Elementary School.

“I’ve had a lot of good help from different directions,” Adams said.

There’s also been interest from documentary television programs and films exploring traditional music.

“It’s a lot of stories that are associated with this little concert,”

said Adams.

The show posters are one of those stories. The iconic Nashville print shop Hatch Show Print used to print the promotional materials for the Sandy Ridge and send them to Stokes County on busses several weeks in advance.

So the posters from the 1969 Flatt and Scruggs show in Sandy Ridge — that they didn’t end up playing — had already been printed.

Lemons had one of those original posters for the ‘69 show, but he might have traded it with The Osbourne Brothers’ bus driver, Adams said.

Hatch Show Print music posters were collector’s items.

“It just made it really interesting, the more you dig into it,” Adams said.

“It’s just a lot of history there that a lot of entertainment fans don’t realize, and that’s been a big thing for me since I started organizing it,” he said. “I think it’s got a certain amount of value both in North Carolina history, Stokes County history and just bluegrass music and country music history in general.”

Visit StokesArts.org for tickets or for more information.

Live Music

PICKIN' AT PRIDDY'S

The first four Saturdays in October, 3 - 5:30 p.m. Bring a friend and a chair and enjoy bluegrass music the old-fashioned way in the back yard of Priddy's General Store, 2121 Sheppard Mill Road in Danbury. Don't forget your dancing shoes!

BLUEGRASS JAMS

The best traditional, bluegrass and old-time music. Come just to listen, or bring an instrument and play:

- **Francisco Music Jam** is 7 p.m. on the first Tuesday of each month at the Francisco Community Building, 7104 N.C. Highway 89 in Westfield.
- **The Lawsonville Ruritan Bluegrass Jam** is held the fourth Monday of every month from 6 to 9 p.m. at the Lawsonville Community Center at 4589 N.C. Highway 8 N.
- **1889 Taphouse**, Sundays 3 to 5 p.m., Main Street in Walnut Cove.
- **Foothills Grill and Tap**, Tuesdays 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. and Wednesdays 7 to 9 p.m., Main Street in King.

THE ARTS PLACE OF STOKES

A unique venue on Main Street in Danbury. The Stokes County Arts Council regularly brings acts that will blow your mind. A do-not-miss situation. StokesArts.org

HOTSPOTS

Local bands bring the energy and the vibe is all about good times and great music: StoCo Provision Co., 1889 Taproom, Foothills Grill and Tap, The Bearded Viking and Daily Basket. Details on page 13.



STOKES COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL EST. 1979

THE Arts PLACE

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KING MORAVIAN CHURCH

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 Check website or Facebook for dates
KingNCFarmersMarket.org

STOKES FUTURE FARMERS' MARKET AT HANGING ROCK

Saturdays
 11 a.m. to 2 p.m.
 Earth Day (April) to Veteran's Day (November)



TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS
 Robertson Family Farm's new location at 439 Hartgrove Road in King.



TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS
 The Mosers, of Moser Manor Farm, at the King Farmers' Market."

SET A DATE

Stokes County offers a stunning natural backdrop for weddings, parties and special events, making it easy to incorporate the region's scenic beauty into your celebration.

Whether you're dreaming of a stately manor with mountain views or a charming barn with rustic-chic flair, you'll find flexible venue options that suit a range of styles and budgets.

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COURTESY OF THE BARN AT SHELTON FARMS

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Sunday - 8:00am-8:00pm

HANGING ROCK STATE PARK

JEWEL OF STOKES COUNTY



PHOTOS COURTESY OF STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

ROBIN RIDDLEBARGER
PARK SUPERINTENDENT

Built in the 1930s, Hanging Rock State Park offers sheer cliffs and peaks of bare rock, quiet forests and cascading waterfalls, with views of the Piedmont and the Blue Ridge that stretch for miles.

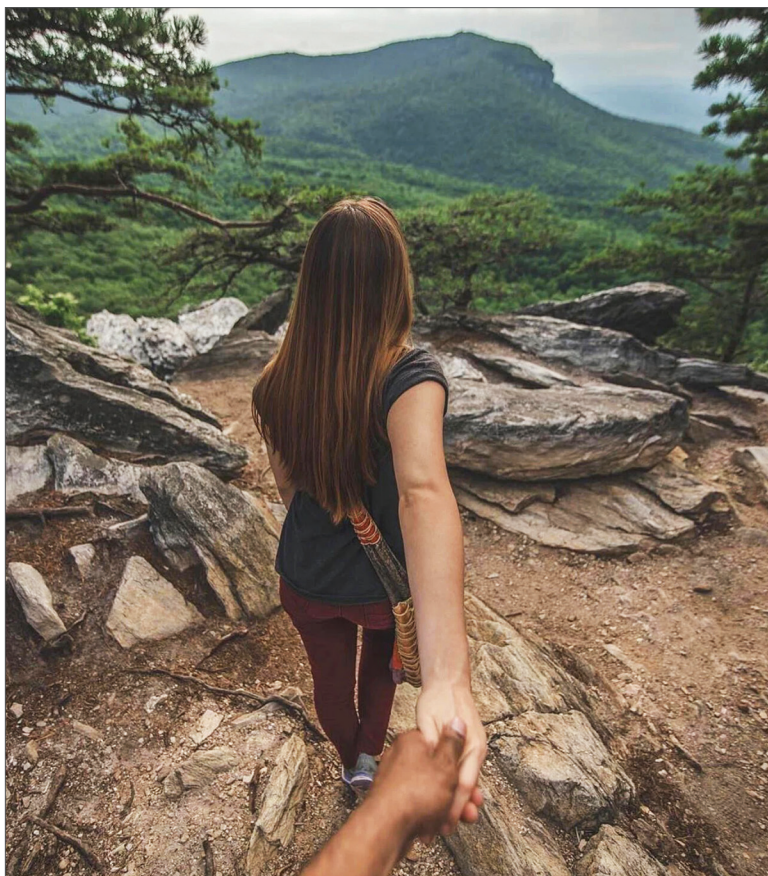
Hanging Rock's allure is strong. In 2024, visitors to the park numbered nearly 1 million, and it was the seventh most visited state park in North Carolina.

Visitors enjoy the park in many ways. There are 21 miles of hiking trails, 5 miles of bridle trails and 15 miles of mountain bike trails. The park hosts regular events and family programs that are free and open to the public, and topics range from adegids to zoology and everything in between. Last year, park staff provided 478 nature programs and guided hikes to 4660 people.

NEW TRAILS

A new section of the Hanging Rock Trail, which leads to the park's namesake rock formation, was opened for hikers in February. The old section of trail was severely eroded, followed a steep contour, and was becoming hazardous to users. The new section of trail is 6 feet wide and now has no steps. Hikers can walk a more gradual incline to the summit than before. The added distance made the trail 0.4 miles longer, but it's almost unnoticeable since the climb is gentler.

Several miles of Mountains-to-Sea-Trail are currently being built that will connect Hanging Rock to the middle of Danbury.





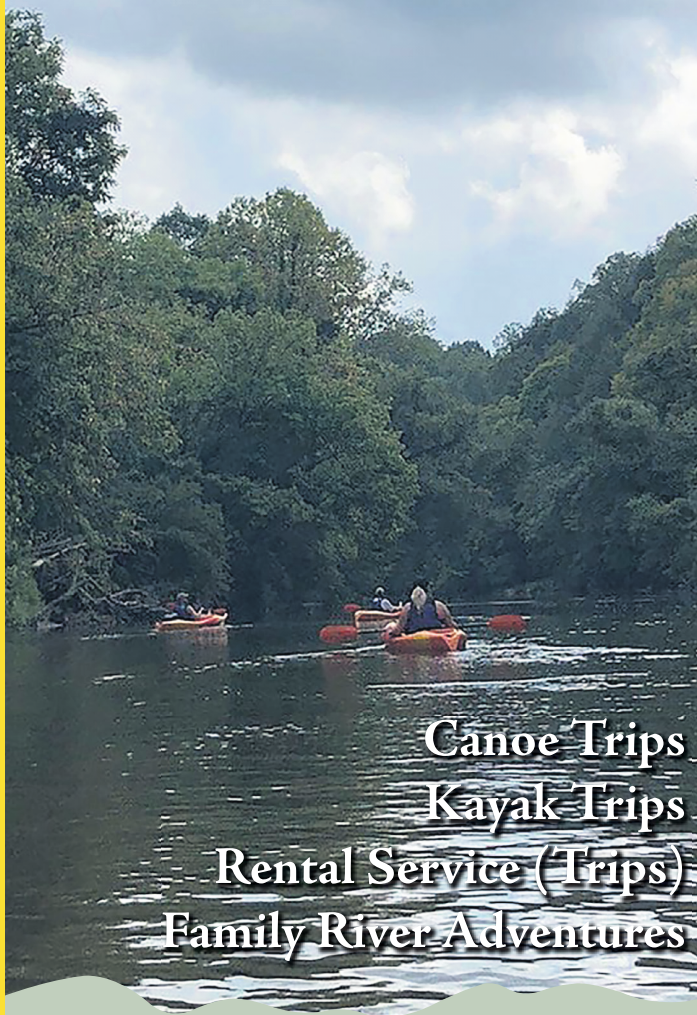
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GreenHeronAleHouse.com

336.593.4733



1110 Flinchum Rd.
Danbury, North Carolina 27016



COURTESY OF STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

VADE MECUM MEANS 'GO WITH ME'

The renovation of Vade Mecum is progressing well. In late 2025, the park will be re-opening the Vade Mecum area for visitors. The hotel will open with 14 individual guest rooms available to reserve for overnight visits. Twelve rooms will be queen beds, two will be king ADA suites. Each room will have its own private bathroom — a big change from the old hotel with 30 tiny rooms and only 4 shared bathrooms! Each room will have a TV and Wi-Fi.

An elevator will help guests navigate the three stories. The dining hall has been converted to a small restaurant for overnight guests. The park is exploring opening the restaurant to the public at some point. The Pretty Room, a former conference room, will be furnished as a library / lounge for hotel guests. Offices have been updated for staff and will include a gift shop off the lobby.

The beautiful double-decker porch will remain the same, with rocking chairs, ferns and a breeze. Park staff, with the help of local historian Steve Shelton, are working with exhibit experts to develop interpretive displays that will grace the hallway walls telling the eventful and storied history of the property.

The chapel now has a restroom addition with an adjoining bridal room and was given a full face lift inside and out with a new roof, heating and AC.

A modern restroom building is being built beside the gym for hikers and day visitors. A widened two lane road, parking lots, sidewalks, exterior lighting, landscaping with native plants and underground utilities will complete the facility upgrade. Look for more updates about a grand opening event in fall 2025!!!



Restoration of the historic hotel at Vade Mecum is underway



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The cabins are designed for up to six people comfortably, and they all have similar layouts. Each cabin has its own bathroom with showers. The living room has a pull-out sleeper sofa and cushioned chairs and adjoins the dining area with a table for six. The kitchen includes sink, oven, refrigerator, microwave, coffee

maker, dishes, silverware, pots and pans, and cooking utensils. There are two bedrooms, each with two twin beds. Sleeping capacity is extended by the pull-out sofas in each living room. Cabins 1-6 have queen sleepers, and Cabins 7-10 have full sleepers.

Guests must supply their own bed and bath linens, food and toiletries. The gift shop in the Visitor Center carries supplies for sale in case anything vital is forgotten. Sorry, pets are not allowed in the cabin area.

Prices are \$110 per night, with a two-night minimum stay. A seven-night Monday to Monday stay is required from mid-June through August for a reduced weekly rate of \$520. Reservations can be made online at www.ncparks.gov/make-reservation or by phone at 1-877-722-6762. Reservations are highly recommended as cabins can be reserved 6 months ahead of time.



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WHERE TO **STAY**

There's so many choices when looking for a place to rest your head while visiting Stokes County, and many of these rentals are steeped in history, providing guests with a unique and immersive experience.

The best way to find accommodations that best suit your needs is to search these Airbnb.com and VRBO.com using zip codes corresponding to your desired location within the county.

For those preferring traditional hotel accommodations, the Days Inn by Wyndham in King is a notable option. This motel has recently undergone renovations, enhancing both its rooms and facilities to offer guests a more comfortable stay.

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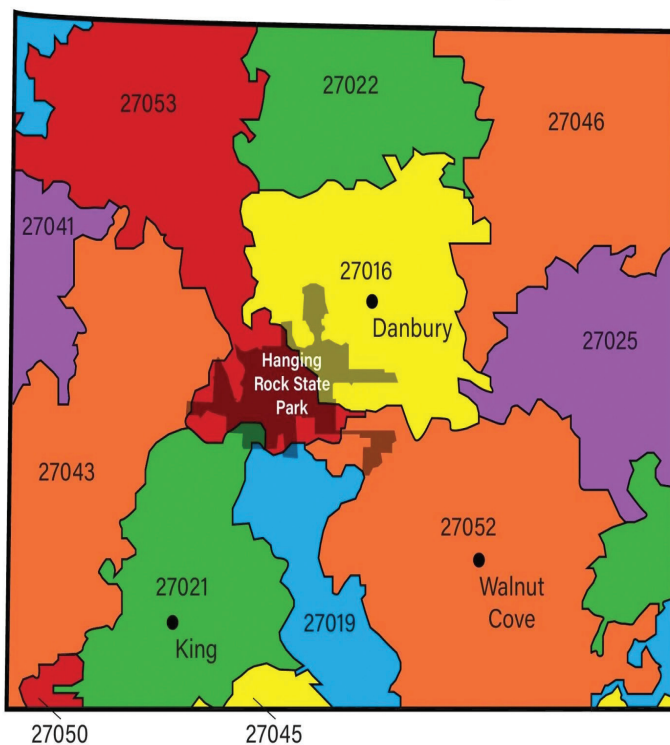
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TREAT YOUR SELF

A wave of new openings in King, where historic charm meets modern flair, is giving Stokes County visitors even more to explore.

Two new restaurants on the corners of Dalton Road and Main Street are redefining the local dining scene with carefully restored spaces and bold, inviting menus.

Chef- and locally-owned, The Dalton Bar and Grill serves up elevated American favorites alongside specials that change daily. Expect craft cocktails, a seasonal menu and a lively atmosphere. It's also open for lunch, and the bar stays open late on weekends.

The Mercantile Chophouse pays tribute to the Boyles and Shore Mercantile companies that were once housed in the iconic building. It boasts classic American steakhouse vibes with local ingredients, a killer wine list and a gorgeous bar. Reservations are recommended.

If you're starting the day early, head



COURTESY OF THE DALTON

The Dalton Bar and Grill

a little further down Dalton Road for a homemade cinnamon roll from Hailey Bakery. Don't be surprised if there's a line out the door.

Grilling out at the rental house or campsite? Grab some locally sourced meat at Mitchell's Chop Shop on Main Street next to The Mercantile. Well established and known for quality and ethics, Mitchell's recently opened new butchery locations in Walnut Cove and in King.

Upscale offerings continue in The Market at King's Crossing on Kingscote Way off Moore Road. Marcella's Sweetery is a custom bake shop where every treat looks



COURTESY OF THE MERCANTILE CHOPHOUSE

The Mercantile Chophouse

straight out of a magazine — artful, chic, and just as delicious as they are beautiful.

And for a different kind of luxury, Parry and Pearl Salon Suites offers a boutique setting with independent stylists providing a full range of beauty and wellness services.

With new places to eat, shop, and unwind, King is quickly becoming a must-stop for anyone visiting Stokes County.

Friends Helping Neighbors

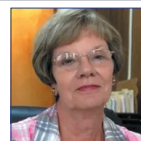
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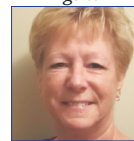
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foothillsgrillandt.wixsite.com/foothillsgrilltap

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amazing-thailand.restaurants-world.com

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TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

ON TAP

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ARTS BLOCK

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COURTESY OF STOKES COUNTY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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dailybasket.co

Most of the establishments without a listed website address have Facebook pages for more information.

FRANCISCO CRUISE-IN

A WHOOTY OF A TIME

TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

While most vintage automobiles stand out among their modern peers, Francisco farmer Joe Glen George's 1966 Ford Bronco Roadster was iconic even when it was new.

It has no doors, no roof, was one of only 5,000 produced with that body style (U13), and it sat in view on the Pilot Mountain Ford Motor Co. lot for two years before George bought it.

So plenty of locals were happy to see the familiar Bronco back in Francisco on June 15 for the inaugural Cruise-In and Art Extravaganza presented by Our Communities of NW Stokes.

"It's kind of neat because all these folks here remember it or remember the people that owned it," said new owner Cindy Wilson, of Mount Airy, who purchased the vehicle from George's son last year. "She's in the neighborhood where she grew up, her old stomping grounds."

Wilson said she picked up lots of the Bronco's history from the George family when she bought it and had been hearing lots of new stories throughout the day from cruise-in visitors.

As a kid, Roger Stevens, one of the event organizers, used to play ball with George's sons Don and Jimmy on the field where the cruise-in was held next to the Francisco Elementary School.

"Their dads would sit in the Bronco, under the big oak trees that were up there at one time and watch them play ball in this field," Wilson said. "Other people would walk

up and say, 'ohh this was Joe Glen's, I've been looking at this thing for 40 years!'"

Another Francisco resident told Wilson he would leave high school and go sit in the Bronco at the dealership.

"He loved it so much, and he just turned 16 and he really wanted one," Wilson said.

David Parker, of Francisco, recalled riding to school in Raleigh in the Bronco with Jimmy George.

Wilson named the vehicle "Pearl" (because she's rare and pearl colored), and made a few fixes to get her running and safe, but otherwise plans to leave the Bronco in original condition — including the Pilot Mountain Ford sticker on the back bumper.

"All these stories are so awesome," Wilson said. "I've really enjoyed it."

WHAT'S A WHOOTY?

The Bronco's return to Francisco helped make the community's inaugural cruise-in extra special.

"It's been amazing," said Texie Jessup, event coordinator.

About 100 cars participated and visitors — some from as far as Nevada — were plentiful.

The idea of a cruise-in in Francisco had been in the works for some time.



Cindy Wilson, of Mount Airy, is photographed with her 1966 Ford Bronco Roadster "Pearl" was originally owned by Francisco resident Joe Glen George.

Stevens, a Francisco resident and automotive painter who frequents car shows, had for several years been sitting on the idea of making an owl out of a Harley-Davidson gas tank and the "WHOOTY" acronym: WHO is number One This Year.

"I waited for the perfect opportunity," Stevens said. About five or six years ago, while Stevens battled cancer, the Francisco community held a benefit for him. It meant a lot. A community cruise-in with a WHOOTY prize was that perfect opportunity to use the idea and give back.

He built the owl-shaped WHOOTY as a best in show prize that would stay on display in the

Francisco Community Building throughout the year with a photograph of the winner.

"It just kind of snowballed from that," Stevens said. He and fellow artist Jamie Smith also

crafted smaller WHOOTY's for winners of different categories to keep.

ART EXTRAVAGANZA

Across the street from the cruise-in at the school, in the relatively cool shade of the Francisco Community Building, home cooked food was available for purchase and folks filled the tables surrounded by works by local artists.

Stevens, who uses old satellite dishes and automotive paint to create vintage style signs, displayed his art for the first time.

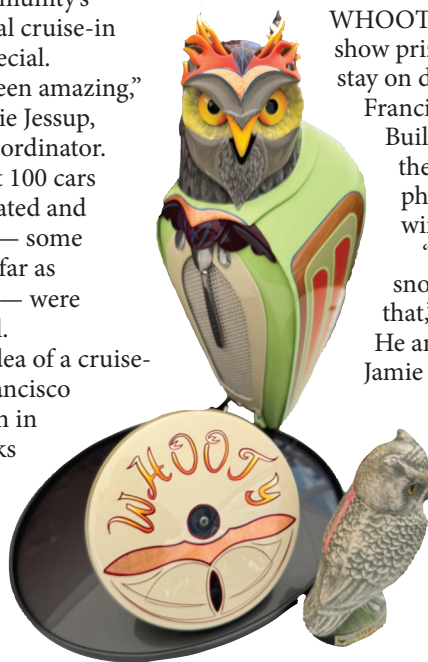
He paints what he likes, Smith helps out with the fine detail work and, much to the disappointment of many of those who viewed the exhibit, the pieces aren't really for sale.

"I like old antique stuff," he said, recalling that he saw an old 7 Up sign at an antique store one time that he liked but the price tag was too high. So he decided to make his own, and he kept at it.

"I'll look up stuff on the internet and if I see something with an oval shape that will compare with a satellite dish then I'll make me a sign for it," he said.

Though Stevens had been taking his 1969 Chevrolet Camaro (which he also painted) to car shows for years, the art extravaganza was the first time his sign art had been on exhibit to the public.

"It's pretty neat," he said of





A 1963 Volkswagen bus was an award-winning crowd favorite at the Francisco Cruise-In and Art Extravaganza on June 15.

the experience.

Those who went home with a “Whooty” by Stevens or Smith (who also doesn’t sell his art) truly won something priceless.

Tina Moore, of Danville, Virginia, also had never done an art exhibit before.

She creates vases using a pour paint technique makes jewelry and other trinkets using by-products of the process called “drippings.”

Stevens had run across Moore’s work and was excited about it, Moore said.

“I love to see people get as excited about my stuff as I get excited,” Moore said, so when Stevens asked her to be a part of the art exhibit, her response was: “Well, why the heck not.”

It worked out well for Moore.

“The last show, where I saw [Stevens] was a three day show, and I’ve almost sold more here than I did at a three-day event,” Moore said. “I’m definitely not complaining.”

The art exhibit also provided

an opportunity for 12-year-old Delana Kitzmiller to display her work for the first time.

“It feels nice,” said Delana, of Sandy Ridge.

Delana was not an official exhibitor but had asked her dad Ted Kitzmiller if she could set up her drawings to display, having driven by and seeing a sign advertising the event.

She was inspired, “just coming and knowing that I’m able to do this,” she said.

Delana set up her sketchbooks on a table for folks to view.

“So far, everybody who see’s it likes it,” Ted Kitzmiller said. “Just wanted to give her a chance to be up here and let people see her work.”

WHO GETS THE WHOOTY?

The event culminated with an award ceremony where silent auction and raffle winners were announced.

WHOOTY winners, who were chosen by ballot and staff picks, were also announced.

Rodney Burcham, of



PHOTOS BY TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

Rodney Burcham, of King, is photographed with his best in show WHOOTY and his winning custom motorcycle, a 2008 Softail Deluxe Vici.

King, won the best in show WHOOTY for his custom 2008 Softail Deluxe Vici.

Two special awards were tacked on to the list: Stevens presented one of his signs

emblazoned with “Ford” to Wilson as a “heritage” award, and Stevens was presented with his own WHOOTY, a zig-zag sewn bowl made by exhibitor Rita Pack.

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Steinholding contest at Oktoberfest 2024.

HANGING ROCK POLAR PLUNGE - JANUARY 1

Join in on the chill and thrill of plunging into the ice cold waters of the lake at Hanging Rock State Park. Costume parade and prizes, swag and unlimited free food/beverages for participants. Sponsored by the Stokes County Arts Council and benefits arts programming in schools. Register at StokesArts.org or at the event.

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. DAY

Third Monday in January in Walnut Cove. March down Main Street followed by service at Rising Mill Baptist Church on Windmill Street. Presented by CAP (Christian Awareness Program). Check Facebook or TheStokesNews.com for details.

BLACK HISTORY MONTH

Annual service in February sponsored by CAP (Christian Awareness Program) that brings together people from several local churches. The Stokes County Arts Council sponsors several performances in February highlighting Black history. Check Facebook, TheStokesNews.com and StokesArts.org for details.

FEED STOKES 5K - MARCH 14

The 5K through the City of King benefits the local food pantries throughout Stokes County. Start/finish at King Central Park, 302 Kirby Road (Veterans Memorial). Awards, competitions and swag for participants. Held on the second Saturday in March. Register at RunSignUp.com or at 7:15 a.m.

NATIONAL VIETNAM WAR VETERANS DAY - MARCH 29

King American Legion Post 290 hosts a celebration every year on March 29 by the helicopter monument at 436 South Main Street, King. Check TheStokesNews.com for details.

HIGH 5 AT HANGING ROCK- APRIL 12

Trek over 11 miles of park trails to reach five of the highest elevations within Hanging Rock State Park. It's a strenuous hike; a 5 mile option that summits only Moore's Knob is also available. Hosted by Friends of Sauratown Mountains as a park fundraiser. Starts/finishes at the upper parking lot, 1790 Hanging Rock Park Road, Danbury, NC. Registration

required, visit High5atHangingRock.com to sign up.

EASTER EGG HUNT & COOKOUT - APRIL 18

Easter Egg Hunt & Cookout 11 a.m. sharp, egg hunt and dove release. 12 p.m. food served. A free program sponsored by CAP (Christian Awareness Program) at East Walnut Cove Community Park, 1288 Burton Loop in Walnut Cove. Everyone is invited. Rain date April 26.

MEET ME ON MAIN - APRIL 26

Family fun with vendors, live music, food trucks, foam zone, cruise-in and more. Sponsored by the King Chamber of Commerce. Held on the last Saturday of April in historic downtown King at the intersection of Dalton Road and Main Street. Catch a shuttle from American Legion Post 290, parking also available at King Moravian Church and King Public Library.

DINNER ON DALTON - MAY 17

A night of open air dining on Dalton Road featuring local culinary delights, entertainment and dancing. Presented by Downtown King Partnership to support their revitalization projects. Dinner prepared by The Dalton restaurant's chef. Purchase tickets at DowntownKingPartnership.org.

KENT
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336-682-4075

TNNC169073-1

WALNUT COVE SPRINGFEST - MAY 17

Spring fun in downtown Walnut Cove with than 100 vendors, food, shopping and live music. Presented by The Cove Group annually on the third Saturday of May.

MEMORIAL DAY

Annual ceremony hosted by Stokes County Arts Council and King American Legion Post 290, held at the Veterans Memorial at King Central Park, 302 Kirby Road.

KING AMERICAN LEGION PRO RODEO - JUNE 6-7

Bull riding, bronc riding, barrel racing, steer wrestling, roping. Check out past, current and future champions at this Rafter K Rodeo Company event held annually the first weekend in June at the American Legion, 466 S. Main St. in King. Concessions, vendors and souvenirs. More info on Facebook or call 980-434-6155.

FRANCISCO CRUISE-IN AND ART EXTRAVAGANZA - JUNE 14

Old-time cars, trucks, tractors hot rods and muscle cars as well as art by local and regional artists. The WHOOTY for best in show is up for grabs. Live music, raffle tickets, home-cooked concessions. Held 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the former elementary school and Francisco Community Building, 7104 N.C. Highway 89 W. in Westfield.

FIRST TO CELEBRATE THE FOURTH - JULY 3

Sponsored by the Town of Walnut Cove, Lions Park, 1115 Lions Park Drive. Live music, food trucks, fireworks. Get there early and grab a good spot!

CITY OF KING FIREWORKS - JULY 4

Fireworks are set off from Recreation Acres, 107 White Road. Parking and great viewing at the King American Legion Post 290, 436 South Main Street, King.

SANDY RIDGE SUMMER BASH - JULY 5

Northeast Stokes Volunteer Fire & Rescue will host inaugural Summer Bash and Independence Day Celebration. Plans are still underway but the event will include lots of delicious food, the well-loved cake walk bounce houses, water slides, live music and fireworks.

STOKES COUNTY AGRICULTURAL FAIR - SEPT. 9-13

The rides, foods and and games don't even scratch the surface of what this fair has to offer. Expect a fantastic array of exhibits and livestock shows at one of the most historical county fairs in the state. The fairgrounds are located at American Legion Post 290, 436 South Main Street in King.

STOKES STOMP FESTIVAL ON THE DAN - SEPTEMBER 13*

Held on the banks of the beautiful Dan River, this festival showcases the best in traditional and Americana music groups, visual arts and craft demos, river activities, dance troupes, local food vendors and a children's area. Sponsored by the Stokes County Arts Council and held on the second Saturday of September in Moratock Park in Danbury.

*Check StokesArts.org for information on the 2025 Stokes Stomp, as construction on the Sheppard Mill Road Bridge near the park may impact the festival.

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FRANCISCO FARMFEST - SEPTEMBER 20

With the motto "Homegrown & Homemade," this festival is a day filled with tractor parades, tobacco tying, local crafters, good food, live music, raffle prizes, games and more. Hosted by Our Communities of Northwest Stokes the third Saturday in September, 7165 N.C. Highway 89, Westfield.

WALNUT COVE FALLFEST - SEPTEMBER 20

Music, food trucks, shopping and free fun for kids on Main Street in downtown Walnut Cove. Held rain or shine 2-7 p.m. on the third Saturday in September. Presented by The Cove Group.

FIRE IN THE FOOTHILLS BBQ COMPETITION & FEST - SEPTEMBER 27

Premiere Kansas City Barbeque Society (KCBS) sanctioned cookoff with Pro and Backyard competitions. Taste the greats and vote on your favorite in the People's Choice award. Festival environment with vendors and entertainment. Visit www.FireInTheFoothills.com for more information.

BBQ FOR BOOKS WITH A SIDE OF BLUEGRASS - OCTOBER 3

Celebrate the flavors of the south, the twang of bluegrass and the joy of supporting early literacy. Held on the first Saturday of October, the 2025 event will be held at Nana-Mac Meadows, 965 Stony Ridge Road in Pinnacle and will feature Mason Via & Friends. Hosted by and benefits Stokes Partnership For Children. Tickets and information available at StokesPFC.com.

KING FEST - OCTOBER 4

Community spirit abounds in this event that highlights local businesses, organizations, churches and the arts. Lots of kids activities, live music, contests and games, food trucks and vendors. Hosted by the King Chamber of Commerce the first Saturday in October.

FOOTHILLS FARM FEST - OCTOBER 4

Annual festival on a multi-generation family farm in Lawsonville with old fashion farming and folk life demonstrations: corn picker, husker, saw milling, chainsaw carving, blacksmithing, tobacco harvesting and more. Molasses, apple butter and biscuit making demonstrations. Antique tractors and tractor parade, live music, food by local groups and churches, homemade ice cream. Country meal served. Held on the first Saturday of October with a rain date set for the second Saturday of October. 1463 Snow Hill Church Road, Danbury, NC. Visit Facebook for more information.

CAROLINA HARVEST FESTIVAL - OCTOBER 4

A day full of harvest demonstrations, antique displays, horse drawn equipment set ups and more. Live music, corn maze, hayrides and other farm activities. Potted mums, pumpkins and cut flowers available. Armstrong Artisan Farm, 1499 Brook Cove Road, Walnut Cove.

RIDGEFEST - OCTOBER 11

The Sandy Ridge Ruritans give back with free Brunswick Stew and live music, vendors and food trucks. Held annually on the second Saturday in October at the Northeast Stokes Volunteer Fire & Rescue Station, 5086 N.C. Highway 704 in Sandy Ridge.

OKTOBERFEST - OCTOBER 18

Enjoy crisp autumn air while supporting local businesses and vendors in historic downtown King. Full day of fun, food and festivities. A variety of food trucks, free kids area, unique handmade goods and creations. Presented by Downtown King Partnership.

REACH THE PEAKS - OCTOBER 18

The ultimate North Carolina recreational challenge. A single-day hike that offers a strenuous 10 mile trail route testing participants to summit the major peaks of Hanging Rock State Park. Call or email 336-593-8159 or email stokesarts@gmail.com with questions.

JUST PLAIN COUNTRY STORE FESTIVAL - NOVEMBER 8

Antiques and collectibles, local art and crafts, great food and music at Just Plain Country Store, 405 N. Main St. in Walnut Cove. A fall tradition on the second Saturday in November.

SOUP IN A BOWL - NOVEMBER 22

Attendees receive the soup of their choice in a hand crafted pottery bowl to take home. Hosted by the Stokes County Arts Council on the fourth Saturday in November, proceeds and donations benefit the three Stokes County food banks. Held in the back parking lot of The Arts Place of Stokes, 502 Main St. in Danbury, NC.

CHRISTMAS LIGHT SPECTACULAR - NOVEMBER 22 - JANUARY 1

Miller Farm and Armstrong Artisan Farm, 1499 Brook Cove Road, Walnut Cove. Take a 30 minute hayride through a beautiful light and music show. Hot cocoa, pictures with Santa, carriage rides and more. Hayride availability only guaranteed with advance tickets, purchase at ArmstrongArtisanFarm.com.

PRIDDY'S OLD-FASHIONED CHRISTMAS - DECEMBER 13

Priddy's General Store's annual party with Santa Clause is held on the second Saturday in December, 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Enjoy tasty treats and find unique treasures. Bring your wish list and camera and capture the sweet Christmas memories made at Priddy's. 2121 Sheppard Mill Road, Danbury.

CHRISTMAS PARTIES & PARADES

City of King Christmas Tree Lighting, first Friday of December, 6:30 p.m., Central Park, 302 Kirby Road, King.

King Christmas Parade, first Saturday, 1 p.m., Main Street, King.

Christmas in the Cove / Tree Lighting, first Saturday of December, 4 - 8 p.m., 521 N. Main St., Walnut Cove.

Christmas in Historic Danbury, first Sunday of December, Courthouse Square / The Arts Place of Stokes, 502 Main Street, Danbury, NC.

Walnut Cove Christmas Parade, second Saturday of December, 2 p.m., Main Street, Walnut Cove.

ONGOING EVENTS

Walnut Cove Cruise-In, the last Friday of the month, April through August. Old-time cars, trucks, hot rods and muscle cars line up along Main Street and downtown Walnut Cove.

Concert in The Cove Series, Thursday nights, May to October, Cove Square, downtown Walnut Cove.

Bull Riding, Saturday nights, Jan. through March. Winter series presented by Rafter K Rodeo Co. at the American Legion Post 290, 446 S. Main St. in King.

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RESOURCES

GROCERY, CONVENIENCE & GENERAL STORES

Cornerstone Market

2996 N.C. Highway 268
Pinnacle, NC 27043
336-351-8212

Hanging Rock General Store, Inc.

3500 Moores Spring Road
Westfield, NC 27053
336-593-8480

Berry Patch Market & Grill

4863 N.C. Highway 8
Lawsonville, NC 27022
336-593-9005

Briggs Grocery

4444 N.C. Highway 8
Danbury, NC 27016

Wood & Sons Farm Center

4694 N.C. Highway 704 E.
Sandy Ridge, NC 27046
336-871-2875

Foothills Market & Grill

10788 N.C. Highway 704
Madison, NC 27025
336-949-4712

Hillside Market

1199 N.C. Highway 89
Walnut Cove, NC 27052
336-593-1032

Priddy's General Store

2121 Sheppard Mill Road
Danbury, NC 27016
336-593-8786

Mitchell's Butchery

2678 N.C. Highway 89
Walnut Cove, NC 27052
336-591-1052
www.MitchellsButcheryNC.com

Whicker's Grocery

4216 N.C. Highway 89 E.
Walnut Cove, NC 27052
336-591-5000

Daily Basket

3561 N.C. Highway 8 & 65
Germanton, NC 27019

The Market by Dragonfly

117 Meadowbrook Drive
King, NC 27021
336-985-8620

Ingles Market

802 S. Main St.
Walnut Cove, NC 27052
336-591-5818

Food Lion - Walnut Cove

1072 N. Main St.
Walnut Cove, NC 27052
336-591-3375

Food Lion - Northern King

6370 N.C. Highway 66
King, NC 27021
336-983-0481

Food Lion - Main Street King

705 S. Main St.
King, NC 27021

Lowes Foods of King

614-G S. Main St.
King, NC 27021
336-983-0125

LIBRARIES

Books, movies, music, free Wi-Fi, computers, history, Hanging Rock State Park annual passes and more. You don't have to be a resident to get a library card, and all libraries are part of the NC Cardinal system.

King Public Library

101 Pilot View Drive
336-983-3868
www.nwrl.org/king

Walnut Cove

Public Library
106 West Fifth Street
336-591-7496
www.nwrl.org/walnut-cove

Danbury Public Library

1007 Main Street
336-593-2419

PHARMACIES

Hicks Pharmacy

Walnut Cove
1072 N. Main St.

Family Pharmacy

Walnut Cove
317 N. Main St.
336-591-7171

Stokes Pharmacy

King
533 S. Main St.
336-983-3118
Danbury
111 Crawford St.
336-593-8070
www.StokesPharmacyNC.com

King Drug Co.

142 S. Main St.
336-983-3147
www.KingDrugCo.com

A CVS on Main Street in Walnut Cove and Walgreens and CVS on Main Street in King are open on Sundays.

MEDICAL

LifeBrite

Community Hospital
1570 N.C. Highway 8 & 89
Danbury, NC
(3.5 miles from Hanging Rock State Park)
Emergency Department, Acute Care

LifeBrite Family Medical of Pine Hall

3853 U.S. Highway 311
Pine Hall, NC
Family Medicine, Urgent Care
336-427-3076

Cardinal Urgent Care

607 S. Main St.
King, NC
336-983-9111
Walk-in or Appointment

STOKES ABC

Walnut Cove

521 N. Main St.
336-591-7447

King*

501 S. Main St.
*Opening July 2025

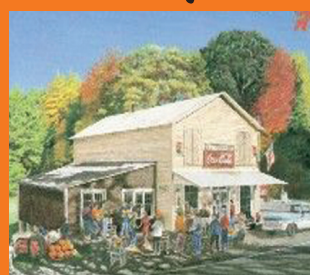


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336-972-7656

carolina ziplines.com

2. TUBING ON THE DAN RIVER.

Or kayaking on the Dan River. Or fishing. Or canoeing. Or wading. Stick a toe in, at the very least. Find access points on the Dan River Basin Association website.



Couple riding canoe in river

3. MOSER FARM MARKET AND MOUNTAINVIEW CENTRAL RAILROAD

6320 NC-66, King
336-985-6041

Take the kids on a miniature train ride and see the big red antique caboose. There's also a playground, bounce house and locally grown produce.

4. COLONEL JACK MARTIN ROCK HOUSE

Flat Rock Road, Pinnacle

The ruins of a home built more than two and a half centuries ago by a Revolutionary War Patriot.

5. THE MORATOCK FURNACE

Located in Moratock Park in Danbury, the iron furnace was built in 1843 and used through the 1890s. It's one of the few remaining of the once plentiful furnaces from that era.

6. THE PALMETTO THEATRE

Movies and live music in beautifully restored theater.
329 N. Main St., Walnut Cove
palmettotheatrewalnutcove.com

7. THE MOVING WALL

A half-sized replica of the Vietnam Veterans Memorial will be at the King American Legion Post 290 in . 436 Main Street in King.

8. ARTS BLOCK RENOVATION AND TRAILHEAD

Keep your eye on the buildings connected to The Arts Place of Stokes. Renovation of this historical site will lead to a new taproom or brewery and a farm-to-table restaurant. Out back, a trail from the parking lot to Hanging Rock State Park will connect along the Mountains-To-Sea Trail.

502 N. Main St., Danbury




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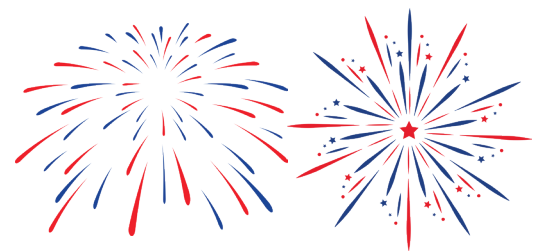


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Fireworks light the Walnut Cove sky over Lions Park on July 3, 2024, at the culmination of the town's annual "First to Celebrate the Fourth" event.

BE THE 'FIRST TO CELEBRATE THE FOURTH' IN THE COVE



TERRI FLAGG | THE STOKES NEWS

Fourth of July celebrations commemorate the July 4, 1776 signing of the Declaration of Independence, but for Stokes County business owner Aaron Shaver, the holiday represents an additional anniversary.

"My first event was the Lawsonville fireworks," said Shaver, owner of Town Fork Mobile Kitchen, thinking back on things just a few minutes before the fireworks started at this year's "First to Celebrate

the Fourth" in Walnut Cove on July 3.

Town Fork has been a vendor at the annual Independence Day event since the Lawsonville fireworks were discontinued.

Shaver, of Germantown, noted how that first event helped shape his business.

"I didn't intend on being a hibachi food truck; I was going to be a smash burger, roving little gourmet truck," he said, but the Lawsonville event already had a taco truck

and a burger truck.

So Shaver changed gears.

"I was like, what can I do to not be in anybody else's lane, to be different and what could I do fast," he said. "I ended up doing this, and it went over really well, so then I did it again...and now that's what I do."

Shaver described Walnut Cove's 2024 event as fantastic.

"Definitely a good crowd," he said. "It's always a good crowd, but I think it's a little bigger crowd this year

actually."

The food truck operator said his history with "First to Celebrate the Fourth" goes way back, well before he started Town Fork.

"We've lived in this county for 25 years, and my kids have grown up coming here every Fourth of July," he said. "It's a nice, small-town, hometown event, and it's grown over the years."

Shaver's more recent visits to the annual event have been work related, but it's still a

family affair. His 20-year-old daughter, Addy, spent the evening working too.

"I love it," said Addy. "When I was little, I used to be one of the kids standing up at the front dancing the whole time, that was the best"

Addy Shaver said that while it was a bit strange to work at the event it was still a great experience.

"I love that we still get to see the fireworks every time and see everybody," she said.

The popular event was held at Lions Park in Walnut Cove, which was soon filled to capacity. By 8 p.m. nearby business lots were filled with overflow traffic eager for a good view of the fireworks.

Other vendors included Kona Ice, Rub & Grub and Boy Scout Troop #444.

The Phase Band provided musical entertainment.

"It's going great," said Earnest Johnson, band manager and performer.

"The crowd is very motivated...very responsive," he said. "We just love coming to Walnut Cove. They always welcome us with open arms."

While on a break from dancing, Patrina Adams, of Walnut Cove, sat with Frances Martin and Phyllis Hairston. Adams said she was having a good time.

"Truly, yeah," she said.

"The band's awesome.... They always do a great job," said Martin, adding that the trio had seen the band perform at one of The Cove Group's downtown concerts the previous Thursday.

The annual event is a tradition for lots of folks.

"Every year," said Sam McBride, of Walnut Cove, there with his wife, Jennifer, and son Codey. The McBrides like to tailgate in a pickup and showed up last year at 3:30 p.m. to grab a spot in the front parking row at the top of the hill. This year, the couple had to work, and their 5:30 arrival got them through the gate, but a row or two back.

"The event is going



Geraldine Mitchell, left, Walnut Cove Mayor Nellie Brown, Aubre Chamberlain and Sherlene Beatty take in the entertainment at the town's "First to Celebrate the Fourth" event held July 3, 2024 in Lions Park.

absolutely great," said Mayor Nellie Brown. "The crowd is large this year, we've got people from surrounding areas...family, friends, everybody is bringing the kids out, which is nice to see all the young children running around having a good time."

Brown thanked a long list of those who helped make the day special: the citizens of Walnut Cove, the Phase Band, the Walnut Cove Lions Club, Wetzel Pyrotechnics for the fireworks, Cook Rental for the bandstand, Royal Luxury Rentals for the restrooms, the vendors: Walnut Cove Boy Scouts Troop 444, the town staff, the Stokes County Sheriff's Office, Chief Brian Booe and the Walnut Cove Fire Department, Walnut Cove Fire Marshal Jason Farris.

Brown also thanked the veterans for their service, and noted that all the town commissioners attended the event.

Andrew Smith, retiring building inspector, delivered the invocation at the event and was honored for his retirement. Smith started working for the town in 1985.



Victoria Blankenship, of Danbury, and Josh Lawson, of Pine Hall, burn sparklers at the "First to Celebrate the Fourth" event held July 3, 2024, at Walnut Cove Lions Park.



Frances Martin, left, Phyllis Hairston and Patrina Adams are photographed in between dances at Walnut Cove's "First to Celebrate the Fourth" event on July 3, 2024, at Lions Park.



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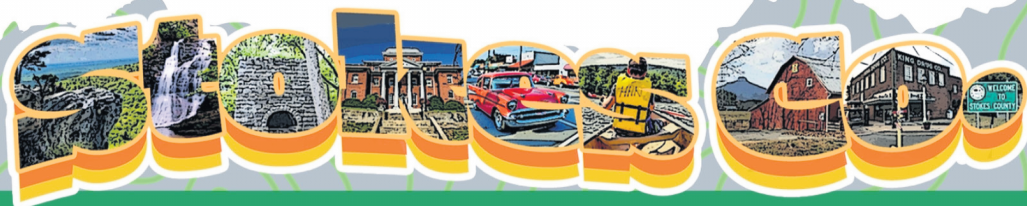
Hillview Cabin - Danbury, NC

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