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2026

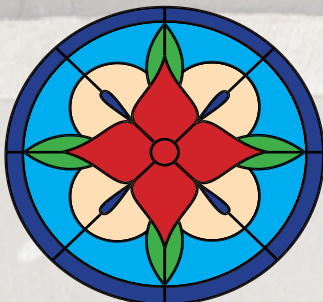
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# What's INSIDE

Welcome to Stokes County... **6**

The Ambrosia of Agritourism  
Armstrong Artisan Farm..... **7**

Snorkel Trail..... **10**

Plan Your Trip..... **16**

Stokes County In Photos .... **18**

What's Happening in  
Stokes County?..... **23**

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*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!*

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# WELCOME TO Stokes County

EMILY M. WILLIAMS | [emily.williams@thestokesnews.com](mailto:emily.williams@thestokesnews.com)

Welcome to Stokes County, a Piedmont paradise of outdoor recreation, vibrant communities with activities no matter the season, a place with a little bit of something for everyone.

Each community in Stokes County has little different flavor, with fan favorite venues, parties in the parks, new events being planned and the continued expansion of the areas around the highway corridors.

Music lovers should check out a performance in Danbury at The Arts Place or the Palmetto in Walnut Cove, or one of the many festivals or fundraisers throughout the year. Special events like BBQ for Books offer up music and a great meal for a worthy cause.

The chance to hike to the top of Hanging Rock or any of the numerous trails throughout the park is one of those opportunities not to be missed by the outdoor enthusiast.

Other trails from the state park grounds are not as strenuous, and a short three tenths of a mile hike on the Upper Cascades Trail leads to a waterfall, a spectacular sight for a first trip to Stokes County. The trail begins at the west end of the visitor center parking lot, located at Hanging Rock State Park, 1005 Visitor Center Drive, Westfield.

Want to have an adventure and relax on the water? Take a lazy tubing trip down the Dan River and relax, as water and nature surround you. Or if you want a swim pop in at Hanging Rock Lake and enjoy the beach and the serenity of the mountain. Did the weather turn on you? You can still get your recreation in, so don't give up hope and pop over to King and go to the Stokes YMCA. They have plenty of room for activities and the chance to stretch your legs.

With branches in Danbury, King and Walnut Cove, the Stokes County libraries would welcome a visit from you

to check your email or read this week's print edition of The Stokes News.

Fall foliage in Stokes County is something majestic to see, as the changes in the leaves rival the splendor of colors of the sunset on the beach. There's lots to do in the fall, with all the farms bringing out harvests for folks to take home and even join in the picking.

Have you ever tried chicken stew or Brunswick stew? I never really had until I moved to Stokes County, and it has been great trying it at all the different places across the county.

The fall fundraiser of choice for churches, fire departments, non-profits, there's someone selling stew about every weekend, benefitting one organization or another. Each place makes theirs a little differently, has their favorite cooks, a bit of friendly community competition of sorts, and they will even sell it by the quart for you to take home and freeze.

If you're lucky or unlucky, depending on your perspective on snow, you never know if you'll get a bit come wintertime. But rest assured there's crisp, clear days that are still pleasant despite the cold with plenty going on.

Activities for families, churches, community organizations and civic groups unite to celebrate the season. Each community has a variety of holiday fun planned, from craft activities to tree lightings, to history tours.

Love a great holiday parade? King and Walnut Cove host Christmas parades that are everything a parade enthusiast would want.

One of my favorite things about Stokes County is the variety of places to eat. Tucked away in all the corners of the county are different diners, restaurants, cafes and coffee shops, all serving eats and treats that are sure to please just about anyone.



The ambrosia of agritourism

# Armstrong

ARTISAN FARM

EMILY M. WILLIAMS | [emily.williams@thestokesnews.com](mailto:emily.williams@thestokesnews.com)

WALNUT COVE — Armstrong Artisan Farm has become an agritourism destination with activities for all ages throughout the year.

Spring heralds in festive activities with the excitement of an Easter egg hunt and the Easter bunny dropping eggs out of a helicopter so children can come and search for treats. Helicopter rides are also available for purchase.

When you first arrive, majestic splendor of a vibrant array of colorful tulips are on display, a testament to the ambrosia of beauty. Walk out and pick your own, and take home a bouquet of blooms to enjoy at the Carolina Tulip Festival. Tulips are available by the stem, by the vase or the stem plus bulb.

Families have lots of opportunities throughout the expanse of the grounds for photo opportunities, with Easter and spring displays ready for eye catching photos that you can enjoy for years to come.

Around the time the tulips come through there is another treat, the Carolina Strawberry Festival. Visitors



can come in late April and May and pick their own or even get pre-picked strawberries to take home.

Mother's Day, Military Day, and Homeschool Day are other special events that they host at Armstrong, with different activities planned to suit the theme.

On Farm Fun Day visitors can pet a baby goat, meet the chicks, or even see a sheep being shorn.

Kids can play throughout the day as there are other

activities open, such as a jumping pillow, corn pit, petting zoo and a bounce house. With a concession stand open, picnic tables and fire pit, respite is right at hand when you need a break. There's lots of games all over the farm that are fun for adults and kids alike, like the apple cannon out back.

Come fall, as the weather cools, it's pumpkin time. The corn maze and fall activities are held on select Fridays and Saturdays September through November from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.. Entry covers everything on the farm but pumpkins are sold separately.

The farm boasts over eight acres of u-pick pumpkin fields and sunflowers, and are purchased by what you pick. Be on the lookout for the special night corn mazes and spooky corn mazes. Explore on tractor driven hayrides and horse drawn wagon rides around the farm



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as they are included with a combo ticket.

October brings the Carolina Harvest Festival and Draft Horse Pull which includes harvest and plowing demonstrations, horse drawn wagon rides, antique tractors and equipment, plus sorghum cutting and cooking.

The Christmas Light Spectacular is open during select dates and offers a 30 minute hayride through the light and music show. Christmas trees will be available for purchase as well. Carriage rides, playground, hot cocoa, pictures with Santa are part of the fun.

*For more information or to pre-purchase tickets visit [armstrongartisanfarm.com](http://armstrongartisanfarm.com) and see their current schedule of upcoming events.*



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# Snorkel TRAIL

a new way to explore

EMILY M. WILLIAMS | [emily.williams@thestokesnews.com](mailto:emily.williams@thestokesnews.com)

Every so often something magical and fresh comes along. For Stokes County, that's happening with the Foothills Snorkel Trail.

The trail, beginning with a few marked locations, will include select sites spread around the county. Visitors of all ages can see and experience nature in new ways. Some sites also have interesting tie-ins with Stokes County history.



## What exactly is the Foothills Snorkel Trail?

The snorkel trail is a set of locations that provide easy and free access to creeks, rivers, and lakes where you can enjoy the best stream walking and snorkeling anywhere in the NC foothills. Take your camera to capture fascinating images!

When snorkeling, your mask provides a window into the underwater world. Whether floating in thigh-deep water or laying belly-down on a shallow rock, you will enjoy unique views. Stream walking in or along the water surrounds you with nature. In both cases, you will see more if you move slowly and stop often.

While snorkeling is a warm-weather sport, people stream walk year 'round.



**What kind of critters might I see?**

Visitors to Foothills Snorkel Trail spot almost every type of freshwater critter. Crayfish, salamanders, fish, water insects, mussels, snails, freshwater jellyfish, toads, and turtles coexist with beavers and otters. Plants and algae complete the picture.

Topside, visitors encounter deer, birds, squirrels, raccoons, insects, flowers, and plants native to North Carolina, along with beautiful scenery.

Each location has its own unique habitat and its own mix of nature. You will want to visit them all.

**What equipment do I need?**

Stream walking and snorkeling are affordable activities. No complicated gear is required

You will want protective footwear. Water shoes, wetsuit booties, or even old tennis shoes work. In cold months, some stream walkers wear waterproof muck boots to keep feet dry. Consider using hiking poles to steady yourself on slippery or unsteady rocks.

Snorkelers need a well-fitting mask and snorkel.



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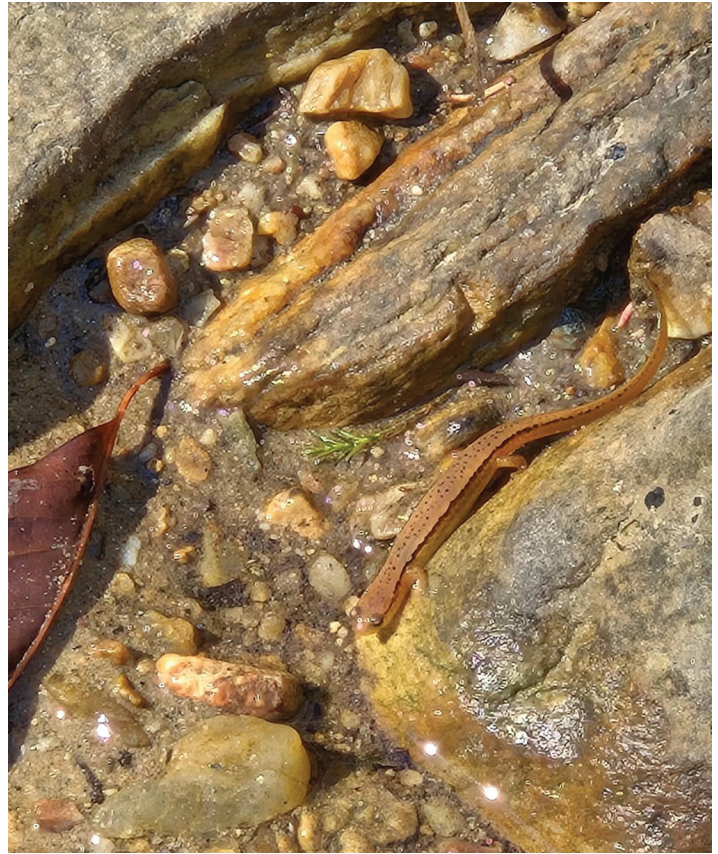
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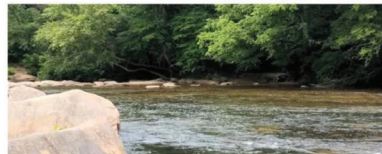
### SNORKEL TRAIL

... STOKES COUNTY, NC. ...



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#### STREAM WALKING

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That's it!

**What safety precautions do I need to take?**

Stream walking and snorkeling are safe activities. Follow these tips for a good experience.

Never stream walk or snorkel alone. It's safer and more enjoyable to have a buddy.

Use protective gear. Footwear is essential. Snorkelers may choose to wear a wetsuit to protect from abrasions on rocks, as well as for thermal protection.

Be aware of water conditions. Avoid fast moving water, especially during or after heavy rains. Avoid water with debris.

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EMILY M. WILLIAMS | THE STOKES NEWS

Social media influencers “Park Wanderers” had a long weekend of exploration and entertainment in Stokes County thanks to the hard work of the Tourism Development Authority. Pictured are, from left, TDA Secretary David Willard; TDA Chairman Beth O’Neal (back); TDA Vice Chair Katie Tedder; Park Wanderers Emily and Zack Lantz and Tory Mabe, Stokes County tourism and marketing coordinator.

# Plan Your Trip

EMILY M. WILLIAMS | [emily.williams@thestokesnews.com](mailto:emily.williams@thestokesnews.com)

A newly redesigned visitors website demonstrates the pulse of Stokes County, highlighting upcoming events, where you can find the best eats, places to stay and even can help you plan your trip, whether it’s a day trip or a whole week.

The Stokes County Tourism Development Authority started working on this project in 2025 with the community and social media influencers to build content

and enhance experiences.

One night they were at the 1889 Taphouse in downtown Walnut Cove and sampling food from a food truck that was there for everyone’s enjoyment.

Emily and Zack Lantz are the Park Wanderers, social media influencers on a variety of platforms from Instagram to YouTube. They even were married in a state park. Hanging Rock was one of the reasons they were so excited come to Stokes County to explore as part of the TDA project.

“So fun,” said Emily, of her experience throughout the long weekend when she and her husband visited in the latter part of 2025.

“Today’s been jam-packed with so much stuff. I think the biggest thing is everyone is so nice here. Every single spot we’ve gone into people have just been so willing to tell us their story, and like what’s going on.”

“I think the biggest thing that stands out is we’ve met a lot of younger people,” she said.

Over the weekend they traversed throughout the county

popping into places, eating all over, even enjoyed a hike at Hanging Rock.

The ambiance of King Drug, she said, felt like a step back in time. Customers have been coming into the drug store for over 40 years.

“It was just like walking back in time, you know, and I really enjoyed that,” Emily said, remarking that the orangeade was fantastic. Walk right up to the beautiful marble countertop and have a seat.

Not to mention going to the Fire in the Foothills and sampling the barbeque.

“We love it here,” she said, talking about Stokes County. “It’s so nice.”

One place they stopped to eat was a chop shop, and they don’t have those back at home in Virginia where they live.

Her husband, Zach said that coming out of the barbecue someone already knew that they were there.

“I would say, one of the most shocking things for me was we were walking out of the BBQ, and somebody just comes up to us. And she says, are you guys the influencers?”

That’s one thing anyone visiting Stokes County will notice pretty quickly, there’s a hometown feel, no matter where you go. If it’s down to take photos by one of the waterfalls or one of the scenic vistas, a stop in any of the shops along the way are sure to have something to entice you.

“It’s really cool just to have a new perspective from some outside folks,” said Tory Mabe, Stokes County Tourism and Marketing Coordinator. “It’s a couple’s vacation to Stokes County as the focus.”

Mabe shared that the new website will have a place where visitors can now upload their own videos and pictures and share their experiences as well.

The new website which is still going to be hosted at hangingrock.com will have lots of new features that will enable travelers to fine tune their trip, plan on the fly,




search by location, date range and more.

Additional new pages on the website will showcase other families, their itineraries and experiences, as well as check out where to stay.

“You would think you were already Stokes County residents just hanging out with us,” Mabe said of Zach and Emily. “We’re glad that they’ve been able to come and highlight the area, and provide content and photos and stories.”

And after their night on the town? They were promised a chance to pet donkeys before they left out of their AirBnB in the morning.

Follow them on Instagram: @ParkWanderers.



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4730 NC HWY 89 • WALNUT COVE, NC 27052

**(336)591-8008**

**KINGSDOWN**

Vaughan-Bassett  
LABOY



**Stokes Partnership for Children**  
151 Jefferson Church Rd King, NC 27021

**BBQ for Books with a Side of Bluegrass**

**Date:** Friday, October 9, 2026

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

**Location:** Nana-Mac Meadows, Pinnacle, NC

**Red Camel Collective**



*In 2024, lead singer Heather Berry Mabe won IBMA Momentum Vocalist of the Year. In 2025, the band received the prestigious IBMA New Artist of the Year Award. If you like pure, heartfelt, beautiful singing and smooth, rhythmic, top-notch picking, then you are sure to love Red Camel Collective!*

A fundraiser to benefit early education programs in Stokes County, hosted by Stokes Partnership for Children, a local non-profit Smart Start Agency.

**There will be delicious barbecue and all the fixings... our live and silent auctions, games, and the tremendous fun that has put this event on the map. All proceeds from BBQ for Books with a Side of Bluegrass are used to purchase new books and to fund early childhood programs for over 2,500 young children in Stokes County.**



**Info. - Go to [www.stokespfc.com](http://www.stokespfc.com)**





# WHAT'S *Happening* in Stokes County?

Look for more events on the new website [hangingrock.com](http://hangingrock.com)

## JANUARY

- **Polar Plunge** - Jan. 1 - Hanging Rock State Park
- **Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites
- **Martin Luther King Day Walk** - Walnut Cove

## FEBRUARY

- **Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

## MARCH

- **Carolina Tulip Festival** at Armstrong Artisan Farm, ongoing
- **Horne Creek Farm Annual Spring Heirloom Fruit Tree Sale**, ongoing

- **Feed Stokes 5K** - Second Saturday - Sponsored by King Rotary. Benefits food banks in Stokes County.

- **Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

## APRIL

- **Meet Me on Main/5k Fun Run** - Last Saturday - King - Sponsored by the King Chamber of Commerce.

- **High 5 at Hanging Rock** - Second Saturday - Hanging Rock Park

- **Hanging Man Triathlon** - Third Sunday - Hanging Rock Park

- **Carolina Tulip Festival** at Armstrong Artisan Farm, ongoing

- **Horne Creek Farm Annual Spring Heirloom Fruit Tree Sale**, ongoing

- **Springtime Farm Fun Day**, Armstrong Artisan Farm, varies

- **Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

- **Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites



## JULY

**Sandy Ridge Fireworks and July 4th Celebration**  
in Sandy Ridge

**King American Legion 209 Veterans Walk** - July 4

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Live Music on the Lawn** - The Daily Basket - Germanton

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

## AUGUST

**King Pow Wow** - Second Weekend, Saturday and Sunday - American Legion, 436 S Main St., King.

**Concert in the Cove Series** - throughout the month - downtown Walnut Cove

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

## SEPTEMBER

**Stokes Stomp** - Second weekend - Danbury

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Walnut Cove Fall fest** - Third Saturday - 2 to 7 p.m. - downtown

**Concert in the Cove Series** - throughout the month - downtown Walnut Cove

## MAY

• **Walnut Cove SpringFest** - 10 a.m. to 2 p.m., Third Saturday - Sponsored by The Cove Group

• **Live Music on the Lawn** - The Daily Basket - Germanton

• **Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

## JUNE

**Juneteenth** - Saturday close, Walnut Cove hosts

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Live Music on the Lawn** - The Daily Basket - Germanton

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

# HILLBILLY HIDE-A-WAY RESTAURANT

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Available  
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Rosanna Bray Jarvis  
Daughter And Current Owner

*Wedding Venue and Hideaway Cottage*

Friday- 4:00-9:00pm  
Saturday - 3:00-9:00pm  
Sunday - 8:00am-8:00pm

**Pilot Mountain to Hanging Rock Ultra** - Third Saturday

**Francisco FarmFest** - 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. - Third Saturday  
- Francisco Park - 7165 NC 89 Hwy W., Westfield.

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

**Fire in the Foothills Annual BBQ and Competition and Festival** - Last Saturday - King

## OCTOBER

**BBQ for Books with a Side of Bluegrass** - 6 p.m.,  
First Friday - Nana-Mac Meadows, Pinnacle. Benefits Stokes  
Partnership for Children

**KingFest** - 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. - First Saturday - King  
Central Park

**Foothills Farm Festival** - 8 a.m. to 7 p.m. - First  
Saturday - 1463 Snow Hill Church Road, Danbury.

**Carolina Harvest Festival and Draft Horse Pull** -  
10 a.m. to 6 p.m. - First Saturday - Armstrong Artisan Farm.



**Concert in the Cove Series** - throughout the month -  
downtown Walnut Cove

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second  
Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

**Reach the Peaks** - Third Saturday in October - Hanging  
Rock Park - Benefits the Stokes County Arts Council

**Walnut Cove Cruise In** - 5 p.m., Last Friday

**STOKES COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL** EST. 1975

**THE Arts PLACE**

**STOKES COUNTY ARTS COUNCIL**  
APPLE GALLERY

**THE Arts PLACE**

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336.593.8159 | [www.StokesArts.org](http://www.StokesArts.org)

SEE Stokes 2026 | 25

## NOVEMBER

**Nov. 11 - Veterans Day Ceremony** - 11 a.m., King Veterans Memorial Park

**Soup in a Bowl** - noon, Saturday before Thanksgiving, The Arts Place, Danbury. Benefits the Stokes County Arts Council

**Sandy Ridge Music Association** - 6 p.m. - Second Saturday - Bluegrass and Christian favorites

## DECEMBER

**Lights on Beasley** - Throughout December

**King Christmas Tree Lighting** - First Friday, evening, King Central Park

**Christmas in the Cove** - 4 p.m., First Saturday, Walnut Cove, music and tree lighting

**King Christmas Parade** - 1 p.m., First Saturday, downtown



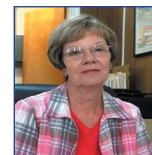
**Christmas in Danbury** - 1 to 5 p.m., First Sunday, 502 Main St.

**Walnut Cove Christmas Parade** - 2 p.m., Second Saturday, downtown

# Friends Helping Neighbors



*Thank you for Voting us as the Best Insurance Agency and Agents and the Best Boss in the Stokes County Readers Choice Awards and The Mount Airy News Readers Choice Awards!*



**Melinda Dodson**  
Agent



**Sandra Matthews**  
Agent

# West Ridge Insurance Agency



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and Substance Abuse Services

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For more information contact  
**Terri Fowler 336-413-4237 [tfowler@insightnc.org](mailto:tfowler@insightnc.org)**  
**Derrick Vickers 336-287-2411 [dvickers@insightnc.org](mailto:dvickers@insightnc.org)**



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North Carolina

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# SHARE YOUR MOMENTS

Show Us your experiences around Stokes County, Hanging Rock, The Dan River & Local Charm. Upload photos or videos that capture the spirit, people, & places that make our area unique.



@StokesCounty  
#StokesCo



SCAN TO UPLOAD

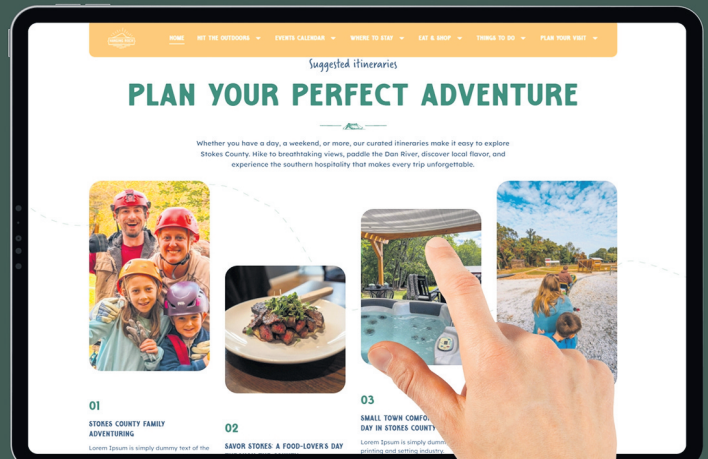


Our Visitors Guide at your fingertips, helping find: Itinerary Ideas, Local Shopping, Historic Sites, Attractions, Farm Tours, Dining, Events & More!

FEATURING  
Event Calendar  
Annual Festivals  
Things To Do  
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