

Chamber Chronicles

The official source of Towns County Chamber News

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Mountain Parties moves to a new location in Blairsville

By Charles Duncan
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Dianne Pike is excited to be a part of Mountain Parties.

She's also excited to be a part of David and Lisa Champlain's inner circle.

"I feel like part of their family," Pike said.

David and Lisa opened the party store in Victoria Center in Blairsville. From the start, Dianne Pike has played a pivotal role in the family business.

"From going over just to help out, I told myself, 'it would be great to work here.' I've always wanted to work

in a party store. I do gift baskets and all crafty things. It was a natural fit," she said.

"David said 'how about coming to work here?' and I said 'well, at 61, I guess can do this instead of waiting on tables,'" Pike said with a laugh. "I'm excited to be here, I'm excited to be back and I think our store is going to do awesome."

David and Lisa Champlain's entrepreneur enterprise will celebrate a grand opening at a new 3,000 square-foot location today in Blairsville at 10:30 a.m. in the shopping center behind KFC.

Mountain Parties evolved after David retired and found himself at home

with nothing to do. At his wife's suggestion, David opened a party store.

"I knew absolutely nothing about a party store," David said. "Lisa told me 'you can learn.' So I gave it a shot and we're still growing



David Champlain

today.

"Due to the economy, business is up and down, just like everybody else, but we're building a niche business right here in town," he said. "We do a little bit of everything."

David and Lisa ask that Mountain Parties become your first stop for all your party needs. They offer custom invitations, thank you and announcements up to 20 percent off retail. They also can put your custom logo on candies, balloons, napkins, specialty items. Mountain Parties also has Mylar and musical balloons, and they do custom balloon arrangements,



Dianne Pike
columns and archways.

They also handle bridal and baby shower needs, champagne/punch fountain rentals, wedding accessories, anniversary, graduation, sports, and religious events.

If you need birthday party supplies, cups, plates,

napkins, plastic tableware, theme displays, streamers, confetti, pinatas, cello, wraps and more, Mountain Parties has you covered.

"We do it all, from selling the gift baskets like Dianne mentioned to balloon arrangements," he said.

"We do the setup and table arrangements for weddings."

David said the venture has been exciting for the entire family.

"It's been a lot of fun," he said. "I've learned a lot of things about this business that I never thought I'd ever learn. I'm learning how the women think, almost, but not quite. But, best of all, I'm having a great time."

Welcome to Chamber Chronicles



Towns County Chamber President Angel Long is excited about the expanding benefits of Chamber membership. She's also excited about the new partnership with the Towns County Herald

Dear Members

I wanted to take a minute to thank you for your support this past year and to also discuss some of our goals for 2010. We have many, but our main goal here at the Chamber is to provide the best possible service and value for your investment. Below, I've outlined the benefits of membership with the Towns County Chamber of Commerce.

Listing on our Website – Our Website receives an average of 80,000 visits with over 290,000 page views per year.

Listing in our 2010 Membership Directory – We distribute over 2000 Membership Directories each year.

Weekly Newspaper Insert in the Towns County

Herald – Partnering with the Towns County Herald our weekly newspaper, the "Chamber Chronicle" is a weekly insert highlighting our members and their events. Additionally, The Herald will mail the newspaper to all Chamber members free once a month.

Monthly Newsletter – In addition to the weekly newspaper, a monthly newsletter is emailed with events and information to give our readers an "at a glance" view of the month's activities.

E-Mail Blast – We send out weekly email blasts to the membership as well as others who request to receive our information.

Weekly Radio Spot on WNGM AM Radio – We

have a weekly spot on WNGM AM Radio where we feature your special events to our members and the community at large.

Business Referrals – Many requests for referrals are received every week for just about every kind of service. We only refer businesses that are chamber members. You have our representation while non-members do not.

Ribbon Cuttings – We offer Ribbon Cuttings to new businesses or existing business that have a location change or expansion. This is a great way to get your business featured in the newspaper, our newsletter and on the radio at no cost to you.

Business After

Hours & More – We periodically host Business After Hours, Breakfasts and Lunch & Learn events at various locations and times throughout the year.

Brochure Distribution – We attend local and statewide festivals, fairs and trade shows throughout the year to promote Towns County.

Member to Member Discount Program – This program gives members the opportunity to offer discounts exclusively to other members.

Our goal for the coming year is to partner with you as you work to grow your business. If you have any suggestions on how we can better serve you, please let us know.

Welcome new members

Tim Talbert and Jack Dorman, of Appalachian Jeep Adventures were welcomed to the Chamber by Angel Long, President.

Appalachian Jeep Adventures will take you to the less traveled back roads to experience the sights and sounds of the Appalachian Mountains. They can customize any trip to fit your time and maximize your adventure. Call (828) 389-3555 to book your trip or go on line to jeepadventures.com.

Mountain Taxi Cab's staff, Pete Myers, Ron and Carla Connor, Brenda and Dave McEwen were welcomed to the Chamber by President Angel Long. Mountain Taxi Cab will provide local transportation & airport service, deliver takeout, and prescriptions, or whatever you need. Call them at (706) 372-7016.

Tina Russo, Carol Pude and Ron Pude of Border Hop

Package Goods Store were welcomed to the Chamber by Jane Holland.

Border Hop is only 4.5 miles north from the light in Young Harris. Stop by and check out their large selection of

domestic & imported beer and wine, kegs in stock, boiled peanuts & pickled eggs, along with lottery tickets and an ATM machine. Hours are Monday through Thursday, 8 a.m. until 8 p.m. and Friday and Saturday from 8 a.m. until 9 p.m. The Chamber is pleased to have The Border Hop as new members.

Chamber President Angel Long welcomed Kenneth and Liz West of West Printing Company into the Chamber. Kenneth and Liz are the owners of the Towns County Herald, official Legal Organ of Towns County. Sheriff Chris Clinton, Clerk of Court Cecil Dye and Probate Judge David Rogers recently reaffirmed the Towns County Herald as the Legal Organ for Towns County in 2010.

Big Sky Apartments hosted an Open House and Ribbon Cutting at 11 a.m. on Tuesday. They welcomed Chamber members with refreshments, tours of the facility and a ribbon cutting. The entire community was invited to attend. The facility is beautiful and new with spacious one and two bedroom apartments and tons of amenities.

Moonshine Cruise-In to return in 2010

By Charles Duncan
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Robert "Rakes" Parrish was right, there is a market for moonshine in North Georgia – a "Georgia Mountain Moonshine Cruise In."

Parrish has agreed to return in 2010 and hone the event to add a bit more luster next year.

"We need to go home and put some things together," Parrish said recently during a Tourism Association meeting.

"I think we all want to do this again," he said.

Parrish met with Tourism Association members at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds.

He told the group that everyone had learned from the inaugural event.

"There will be some minor changes, some fine tuning so to speak, but the Moonshine Cruise-In will return," Parrish said.

Vendors and local businesses couldn't have been happier during the summer months as the three-day event in August sparked an economic rally in Towns County.

The Cruise-In, sponsored by the Towns County Tourism Association, was by all accounts a huge success," Towns County Chamber

President Angel Long said. The event had classic cars for the show, it also brought in hundreds of spectators to the area as well.

"The hotels and restaurants were packed the entire weekend and traffic through town was bustling," said Katie Polstra, vice chair of the Towns County Tourism Association.

The financial numbers for sales and bed tax revenues were strong enough to prompt local business groups and civic organizations to get more involved.

The Towns County Tourism Association and the Bank of Hiwassee also sponsored the First Annual Cruise-In Softball Tournament.

They raised more than \$600 for the Towns County Food Pantry. The softball tournament likely will be scheduled in the days prior to the next Cruise-In.

"We all are grateful to all those who worked so hard to make the entire weekend such a wonderful experience for all of our guests," Long said.

The event offered a slice of the pie to businesses throughout the county.

The Ridges Resort at Fieldstone helped make the event a huge success.

"We really look forward to next year," said Chad Hooper, general manager of Ridges Resort at

Fieldstone. "We're just tickled to death the way things turned out.

"This event was a tremendous boost to the local economy," he said. "We were proud to have been a part of it and we look forward to seeing these folks back next year."

The event drew a crowd as more than 1,700 hot rods and antique show cars graced the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds from for three days.

Parrish, who pulled off the event, said he's hoping to build something that will be a financial staple for the Towns County community.

"We're trying to do something special," Parrish said. "This is as good clean fun as it gets."

From the car shows to the stroll through Pioneer Village, vendors and visitors alike had a blast. Visitors stood 10-15 deep in line waiting to get kettle corn with demand almost outweighing supply.

Traffic went smoothly but patrons sometimes found parking outside the Fairgrounds and walked inside to save time.

Parrish's dream of live Mountain Music shows, a swap meet, a Mountain Moonshine Run for cold, hard cash, a folk arts show and exhibit and mountain crafts in the Pioneer Village more than came to fruition.

Patrons enjoyed the pioneer setting, with live mountain music, folk exhibits, local crafts, and of course hundreds of hot classic cars, Parrish said.

"There were plenty of automotive vendors on display to help folks with a hard to find part for their classic car or street rod.

Parrish said the event was an opportunity to sit back and enjoy the shade trees, lakeside views, and relax the easy chair beside your hotrod with a cold glass of lemonade."

It also was a chance to bring in some much needed cash as restaurants and local businesses bustled with trade activity. The overall economic impact of the Moonshine Cruise In is likely to exceed \$1 million to local businesses and hotels.

"I know one thing is certain, it was a big time event," Hooper said.

In January, the group will host another meeting, actually two. The first will be at the Georgia Mountain Fairgrounds board room. The second will be in Anderson Music Hall and business owners and potential volunteers are invited to attend the continued discussion about the 2010 event.

"We didn't know what we were in for the first go round," Parrish said. "We've got a handle on it now."