



# The Pinnacle

## Letter from Mayor Lynch

"We recently hosted the 14th annual Wayne Scott Strawberry Festival with over 3500 participants. With the help of about 35 volunteers, Town staff, Vice Mayor Doug Hopson, Alderman Jeff Linville, Alderman Kathy Bullen, and myself the festival turned out to be one of the best in event history. Programs like this prove the importance of volunteer support; without the help of volunteers we would not be able to accomplish all of the great things we offer within the Town.

If you are interested in volunteering for the Town, we have several different avenues to fit your expertise: Unicoi Business Alliance, History Group, Park & Recreation Board, Tanasi Gallery, Mountain Harvest Kitchen and Town Administration. We really depend on these volunteers' hard work and appreciate all they have done and continue to do to make the Town successful.

Also, I am pleased to welcome our new Assistant City Recorder, Mike Housewright, and new Director of Parks and Recreation and Public Relations, Sarah Jennings, to the Town. We have a very qualified and professional group of employees and expect great things in the future."

-Mayor Johnny Lynch

## Volunteer Fire Department

Did you know that there are 25 active members of the Town of Unicoi volunteer Fire Department? This includes 3 junior members, which are under the age of 18. The volunteers are working diligently to install new smoke alarms in households within the Town. To request an installation, call the Town of Unicoi at 743-7162 and provide your name, address and phone number. A fire department representative will then contact you to schedule a time for the installation.

*Thank a local volunteer firefighter for their service when you see them out in the community!*

*In The Beautiful Buffalo Valley*



### Town of Unicoi —Upcoming Events— Jane-July

Mondays—Pickin' on the Porch, 6 to 8 p.m., Bogart-Bowman Cabin

Fridays beginning June 17—  
Farmers Market, 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. & 3 to 6 p.m., Tourist Information Center

July 1 & 2—Community Yard Sale, 8 a.m. to 2 p.m., Tourist Information Center

July 4—Freedom Fest, 5 p.m. to dark, Unicoi Elementary School

July 9—Ice-cream Social, 1 to 3 p.m., Bogart-Bowman Cabin

July 29—Movies in the Park, 9 p.m., Buffalo Creek Park

### We want to hear from you

As a Town, it is our responsibility to make sure we are providing citizens with exceptional services and experiences. In every newsletter you will find two questions and we would appreciate your feedback. Please e-mail or call Director of Parks and Recreation & Public Relations, Sarah Jennings (sjennings@unicoitn.net or 735.0317), with your responses.

1. How do you find out about programs that the Town offers?
2. What event/program would you like to see the Town offer in the future?

## What's New?

### *New Employees*

Welcome to our new employees Mike Housewright and Sarah Jennings.

Housewright is currently serving as the Assistant City Recorder and will take over the City Recorder position following the retirement of Larry Rea on July 1.

Jennings serves as the Director of Parks and Recreation and Public Relations. The positions were combined to offer a higher incentive and eliminate the overlap in the two job descriptions.



Sarah Jennings



Mike Housewright

### *New Kiosk Installed*

A new informational kiosk can now be seen at the Tourist Information Center. The kiosk serves as a informative booth for visitors after normal business hours, providing resources such as brochures and vending. Mayor Johnny Lynch stated, "This kiosk will be a huge help to visitors, and we hope they will also see what we have to offer as a Town and decide to stay for the day and shop in our businesses." The Town originally intended to purchase a kiosk with grant funds, but staff learned that Town Maintenance could design and construct a larger and better-built kiosk for less money than would be required to pay for grant match funding. Great job and thanks to our Town Maintenance staff Danny Coffie and Tony Street!



## Town of Unicoi Updates

### *Marbleton Road, closed until further notice*

Due to deteriorating conditions on the bridge at Marbleton Road and Anderson Chapel Road, the bridge will close on Saturday, June 4 and remain closed until repairs are completed.

### *Mountain Harvest Kitchen, "grow local businesses"*

The Mountain Harvest Kitchen will be a 4,000 square foot, certified commercial kitchen created to support development and growth of local and regional food businesses. This facility will be available for rent 24/7 to individuals and businesses for food processing. One of the primary benefits of the Kitchen is the food business incubator. The Kitchen, with the support of ETSU Innovation Laboratory, will assist clients to create and grow their own food businesses. This incubator concept will help food business entrepreneurs to start a new business with very low overhead cost and will create 100+ new jobs in the region. The Kitchen is currently in Phase II of development and located at Exit 32 off Interstate 26 in Unicoi. Thank you to all of the volunteers that have assisted in making this vision become a reality for the Town. If you are interested in volunteering, serving on the Mountain Harvest Kitchen board, or simply want more information please contact Town Hall.

Visit the website to learn more: [www.unicoitn.net/mountain-harvest-kitchen](http://www.unicoitn.net/mountain-harvest-kitchen)

### *Wayne Scott Strawberry Festival draws thousands*

As the rain poured the parade rolled down Unicoi Drive, kicking off the much anticipated Wayne Scott Strawberry Festival on Saturday, May 21. The rain, on and off throughout the day did not stop festivalgoers from enjoying the event happenings; in fact, it is estimated that this was the biggest crowd in festival history. Live music, food, craft vendors and of course Scott's Strawberries entertained a crowd of around 3500. With 850+ buckets sold and a never ending line, the strawberries were selling faster than they could be picked. It is safe to say that this event was a huge success.

The Town would like to thank all of the volunteers, staff and community leaders that took the time to make the event possible. Along with some great volunteers we had an outpouring of sponsors which exceeded \$11,000 from in-kind and cash donations to support the event. Thank you to all of our sponsors!

### *Pinnacle Trail offers picturesque views*

If you have not hiked the Pinnacle Tower Trail, make sure to add it to your to-do list this summer. Conveniently located off exit 32 on interstate 26, the 4.8 mile trail up Buffalo Mountain leads to the Pinnacle Fire Tower. The trail averages about a 7% grade and is mostly forest covered. The Pinnacle Tower offers visitors a 360 degree view of the surrounding areas, Unaka Mountain and the towns of Erwin and Unicoi. On a clear day, you can see both North Carolina and Virginia. Visitors have left comments like "love it!," "will be back," "well maintained" and "great views."

Trail maps can be found at the Tourist Information Center or on the Town of Unicoi Website.

**Ask us about the Students of Code and Technology Day  
Camp, held at the Tourist Information Center on July 28th!**

# Spotlight on Local Businesses-

## AgriBusiness in Unicoi

*Business continues to grow for two locally owned farms in Unicoi, Scott's Strawberry and Tomato Farms and Jones and Church Farms. Both globally certified businesses might have farms in other counties but the base of their business resides in Unicoi. Renea Rogers, office manager at Jones and Church stated, "For both us and Scott's, everything is centered here and a lot of times Unicoi doesn't get credit for the size of operations we both house here. I think it is important for people to know." Take time to learn about these two local business and make sure to stop by and get some farm fresh produce.*

### Jones & Church Farms

Jones and Church Farms is one of the Towns largest employers. They house a prominent packing facility of internationally shipped tomatoes. Over the past 45 years, the tomato business at the farm has continued to grow thanks to four partners: Carl Jones, Sue Jones, Esther Church and the late Buckley Church. The farm is also successfully managed by: Renea Rogers, Gregg Church and Mike Church.

Rounds and Romas are among the tomatoes that are produced at Jones and Church Farms. They are shipped across the United States and into Puerto Rico. If you are on a cruise this summer and eat something with tomatoes in it, it is likely that the tomato came from Jones and Church because their suppliers sell the tomatoes to cruise lines. Jones and Church also grows a farm fresh, vine ripe tomato for local sales. The vine ripe tomatoes can be purchased directly from Jones and Church Farms (310 Marbleton Road).

The tomato seeds start out in the greenhouse and are then harvested, graded, and packed all by Jones and Church. With over 600 acres of tomato production, the business operates with 20 year-round employees and 230 seasonal employees. Carl Jones mentioned, "The majority of our packing house employees are local."

When asked what was going on right now at Jones and Church, Carl said "We are busy getting ready for season." Stop by and grab a box of locally grown vine ripe tomatoes, you won't be sorry.

### Scott's Strawberry and Tomato Farms

Scott's Strawberry and Tomato Farm is among the region's largest agricultural operations, employing 8-10 people year round and up to 150 seasonally. In 1978, Steve Scott, co-owner of the farm, graduated from Virginia Tech and returned home to join the family business. A few years later, his brother, David Scott, co-owner of the farm, returned home after graduating from the University of Tennessee to do the same. David and Steve continue to work hard to maintain the level of standards and work ethic that their parents Wayne and Mary Lou Scott had for the business. Over the past 57 years, Scott's Farm has grown and flourished. Steve's sons, Cody and Ryan, are currently working for the farm with plans to one day take over the family business as the third generation.

Scott's strawberries are grown and sold locally while the tomato sales are 95% wholesale, selling to brokers and re-packers. Steve Scott said, "The tomatoes are grown specifically for packing and mostly re-sold in the fast food industry."

In 2015, Scott's Farm Market (600 Tennessee 107, Unicoi, TN) opened and was well received by many. Steve said, "We don't sell a tremendous amount of stuff but we know that it's good stuff. I only buy from people I know." At the Market you can find corn, different kinds of peppers, squash, strawberries and tomatoes, all sold within season and grown locally at the farm.

The Farm Market will begin a new adventure in the next few weeks selling handmade, hand dipped ice cream in pints and cones. Chocolate, vanilla and strawberry (when in season) will be among some of the flavors that will be available for purchase. Other flavors are currently being tested. Be sure to stop by and grab a bucket of strawberries, some preserves or even an ice cream cone to cool you off this summer!

## Happy Retirement

Larry Rea has been with the Town of Unicoi serving as your Town Recorder since January, 17,



2008. During this time Larry has truly been dedicated to the Town. The numerous projects and grants, trailhead at the Pinnacle Tower, Tourist Information Center, and Mountain Harvest Kitchen would not be possible without his leadership and loyalty to the Town. Larry will leave the Town Administration on June 29th for retirement with plans on spending time traveling with his wife. You will be missed Larry! Please join us as we offer Larry best wishes in his retirement on June 22. Drop in at the Tourist Information Center any time between 9 a.m. and 4 p.m.

### Gaye Norman Volunteer of the Quarter



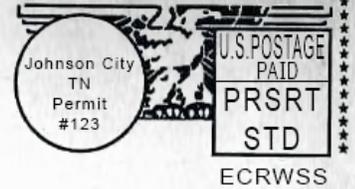
As Mayor Johnny Lynch stated, "We really depend on volunteers, hard work and appreciate all they have done and continue to do to make the Town successful." This month we would like to recognize Gaye Norman as our Volunteer of the Quarter. Gaye works hard at organizing the Pickin' on the Porch held on Monday nights at the Bogart-Bowman Cabin, and is an active member of the History Group. In addition to her role with the History Group she also serves as the Secretary for the Unicoi Planning Commission. Thank you for everything that you do to support the Town, Gaye!

# Town of Unicoi - The Pinnacle



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## POSTAL CUSTOMER

*In The Beautiful Buffalo Valley*



ELECTED OFFICIALS OF THE TOWN OF UNICOI encourage citizen participation in governing the Town and welcome citizens to attend all Town meetings.

BOARD OF MAYOR AND ALDERMAN MEETINGS are held on the third Monday of each month at 5:30pm.

PLANNING COMMISSION AND BOARD OF ZONING APPEALS meetings are currently held on the second Monday of each month at 5:30pm.

All meetings are held at Town Hall. Citizens can find notices of meetings and agendas several days prior to each meeting at the following locations: Unicoi Post Office, Unicoi Town Hall, Tourist Information Center.

*We welcome your attendance and participation in all town meetings. Please come, volunteer and give suggestions.*

Town of Unicoi Facilities		
Bogart-Bowman Cabin	5012 Unicoi Drive	423-735-0317
Buffalo Creek Park	5012 Unicoi Drive	423-735-0317
Mountain Harvest Kitchen	105 Unicoi Village Place	423-743-7162
Pinnacle Tower Trail	101 Powder Hollow Rd	423-735-0317
Tanasi Gallery	106 Unicoi Village Place	423-735-0217
Tourist Information Center	106 Unicoi Village Place	423-735-0317
Town Hall	3600 Unicoi Drive	423-743-7162
Town of Unicoi Staff Directory		
Johnny Lynch	Mayor	423-743-5963
Doug Hopson	Vice Mayor	423-747-2219
Kathy Bullen	Alderman	423-220-6862
Jeff Linville	Alderman	423-220-9821
Larry Rea	City Recorder	423-743-7162
Mike Housewright	Assistant City Recorder	423-743-7162
Sarah Jennings	Director of Parks and Recreation, Public Relations	423-735-0317
Tina Wilcox	Administrative Assistant	423-743-7162
Tony Street	City Maintenance	423-743-7162
Danny Coffie	City Maintenance	423-743-7162
Dwight Harrell	Building Inspector/Code Enforcement	423-743-7162
Trish Bennett	Appalachia CARES/AmeriCorps Member Volunteer Coordinator	423-735-0517
Suzan Harkins	Housekeeping	423-735-0426