



Pearisburg is making a small town comeback!

It's nice to see a community be recognized for the effort it is expending to be among the small town comeback happening throughout America.

Agencies and businesses such as Giles Arts Council, ReNew the New, The Bank Food and Drink Restaurant, Pearis Mercantile, Zeppa Studios, Virginia Cooperative Extension, The Green Market, The Appalachian Trail Holiday Motor Lodge and others have started to meet to discuss, plan and implement new projects that focused on increasing traffic in downtown Pearisburg.

"Not all these projects will happen overnight, some may take years, but when you look at where we were you look at what is being planned today, you can't help but be impressed," states Town Manager Ken Vittum.

The projects Vittum is referring to include the Farm to Fork Program, River Sculpture Exhibits, the Visitor Center at the new Giles County Chamber of Commerce office in Pearisburg, the development of a Community Partnership Program for Appalachian Trail Hikers and more.

The goal is for Pearisburg to be looked upon as a great comeback story. Through the development of destination attractions, businesses and programs, it is believed that more people will decide to turn their visit of visiting the community into an action. If visitor attendance and downtown traffic increase, this will translate into a more vibrant and robust downtown community.

For more information on the different projects and how you can help, contact 540-921-0340.

New Mercantile Store Opens

If you're looking for unique gifts, the Pearis Mercantile is a must visit. The shop is filled with unique and eclectic gifts, which include jewelry, stained glass, birdhouses, small furniture and gifts for all occasions. According to owner Ann Wheeler, "About 25% of our inventory is here on consignment. We try to focus on artists who are featured in other shops in our county so we can help spread the support to all of our artists."

Located at 200 North Main Street, the Mercantile is in an inviting historic stone building next to the Pearisburg Post Office. Built around 1930, it is best known to local long-timers as the former City ESSO Station, which was owned and run by Ann's father. At one time, the building also hosted a tanning salon. When asked about the building's recent transformation, Ann stated, "The former gas station was refurbished by residents of Giles County or people with ties to the county, including former students."

According to Wheeler, "My family and my husband's family have always served the community as merchants (Ann's husband) grandfather was a traveling salesman and sold merchandise to my family, so we have continued to serve our county from both sides of our family for generations."

In addition to gifts, the Mercantile offers items needed by A.T. hikers, which according to Ann, is a service they have received many compliments for. Next year, the Mercantile plans to offer hikers the ability to contact them online and place an order prior to their arrival. This way, their merchandise will be ready for pick-up when they arrive in Pearisburg.

For more information, call 540-921-2260.



New A.T. Hikers Services in Pearisburg

The Town of Pearisburg has been an active and proud Appalachian Trail Community for many years. However, this year the Town and its members have launched a number of new initiatives to become even better friends and neighbors to the hikers.

The Holiday Motor Lodge located on Main Street, has been a partner in this effort.

Some of their A.T. initiatives include:

- The conversion of the game room into a hiker dormitory. Completed in March of 2014, the dorm provides 17 beds complete with private bathrooms and showers. It has Wi-Fi and Internet access, free HBO and coffee.
- In addition, the Lodge provides a free water filling station for all thru-hikers, and a discounted fee for use of the pool, grilling area and access to showers.
- If staff is available, the Lodge will provide shuttle service for hikers.

According to Lodge Manager Mary Niece, they are very excited about the changes that have been made to better serve the A.T. community. The dormitory has already served 250 hikers since it opened. Note: rooms are also available in the main motor lodge facility as well.

New businesses are joining the Pearisburg A.T. Community Supporter Program on a regular basis and have the services listed below to hikers.

- Bank Food and Drink: free dessert with purchase of an entrée to any hiker who mentions this offer
- Pearisburg Eye Associates: discount on sunglasses and glasses. Same day replacement prescription glasses filled for lost or new glasses.
- Pembroke Stop and Save: Special discounts on certain merchandise
- Pearis Mercantile: Hiker box, message board, occasional shuttles, Info about local area, supply store.

Businesses do not have to be located in Pearisburg to join the program. If you would like to learn more about serving Pearisburg's A.T. Hiker Community, please call (540) 921-0340 or email the Pearisburg town office at info@pearisburg.org.

You can also fill out the form below and email it to info@pearisburg.org.

[AT Form](#)

Giles County Chamber of Commerce Relocates

After twenty years located at the corner of Main Street and Wenonah Avenue in Pearisburg, the Giles County Chamber of Commerce relocated to 201 North Main Street. The decision to move was based on the following improved parking, better visibility and the ability to realize the goal of opening a Visitor's Center in Downtown Pearisburg.

The Chamber will utilize the new space as an office, exhibit area for local art from the Giles Arts Council, and tourist information center. Chamber Director Cathy Clark is decorating the space with photos of the County integrated with tourism props.

There will also be exhibit space dedicated to "Giles County in Film." This area will be used to showcase the movie commercials, advertisements, independent films and television episodes filmed in Giles County over the years.

A retail area with Giles County merchandise will be added in the near future as well as display areas for Chamber members to showcase their businesses.

According to Clark, "Although the office relocated during the July 4th weekend, the setting up of the office will be work in progress." She continued, "We will be planning a grand opening in early fall once all the exhibits and visitor center information area is complete."

For further information, contact the Chamber at 540-921-5000.



Zeppa Studios Moves to Downtown

Since 1989, M. K. Zeppa has been designing and producing unique and whimsical animal themed giftware and accessories. M. K., (short for Melissa Kaye) has been a dog and horse fancier since birth. Inspiration for many K.'s designs comes from her beloved Lab (retriever) Assistants. Gator was the first, and then his son Snake. N Gator's Grandson, Hawk, and Tater Water answer your emails, inspect deliveries...or at least the delivery truck. They also support animal rescue groups across the country with "Project Rescue" and donations of Zeppa products. These organizations use the donated items for auctions, raffles or resale to raise badly needed money for food, visits, blankets, etc. for abandoned, abused or otherwise unfortunate animals. The Labs at Zeppa Studios say "Homeless is a four letter word!" Spelling never was their strong suit, but, then again, maybe they are right.

Zeppa Studios makes and ships unique animal themed gift items. All of their products are made to order in their 2,500 square foot facility located off the Giles County Court House parking lot behind Wenonah Avenue. The not warehouse finished products, only blank canvases, thus enabling them to create custom, and therefore, uniquely special gift items. The Fur Children Collection includes an eclectic mix of note cards, coasters, hand painted ceramics, and other gift items printed from their artwork or from personal photos provided by the buyer. Zeppa offers artwork representing over 200 breeds of dogs, cats and horses for buyers to choose from.

If you'd like to make a purchase, they have a safe and secure on-line order form. You can also place your order by phone at 540/921-1835 (local) or 800/347-3045. The studio is only open by appointment. Please feel free to contact them with any comments, questions or orders.

Recently, M.K. entered their Waterdog Glassware under the Home category in the Garden and Gun's 5th Annual Made in the South awards contest (madeinthesouthawards.com). If you check out Zeppa's website, the Lab Assistants, Tater and Hawk, will keep you apprised of their progress! (<http://zeppastudios.com>)



First Community Garden in Pearisburg

Brainchild of President Charlie Herbert, the Giles Breakfast Lions Club has partnered with the Pearisburg Presbyterian Church to start a community garden. Located behind the church on Tazewell Avenue, the garden contains potatoes, tomatoes, green beans and a variety of peppers. The produce grown in the garden is to be away to those individuals in Giles County who are in need of fresh produce. This initiative came about through recognition that there is a need to provide fresh vegetables and promote healthy eating habits in our region.

According to Lion Charlie, the garden is pesticide free and all organic. The beans and peppers will be ready to harvest within the month, the tomatoes are expected to be harvestable in August, and the potatoes will need harvested before the first frost.

Local residents are invited to participate in the growing and upkeep of the garden. Anyone interested in providing a helpful hand or receiving produce, please contact Lion Charlie at 540-505-7444.

Note: The concept for the community garden was brought to the club by Lions Nick and Jackie Clark. The community garden project is a joint effort between the Giles Breakfast Lions Club and Christ Episcopal Church (corner of Wenonah Ave and Tazewell Street). A special thank you to the Giles Farm Bureau who provided the plants and straw for the garden.



Speaking of Local Food

The town of Pearisburg, in partnership with Virginia Cooperative Extension, restaurants, producers and other stakeholders has been helping to educate the community about local and regional food systems as a part of the program, "Farm to Fork." Components of the program include cooking classes, the establishment of an electronic newsletter, co-sponsorship of a workshop on Farmers' Markets: The Basics, and the ongoing organization of community collaborations. Through these collaborations, program activities were identified that the town will pursue to meet the need for: a) Increased access to and utilization of locally and regionally grown food products and, b) Downtown Revitalization.

If you would like to assist in this effort, contact 540-921-0340



Open For Enrollment

Virginia beers are starting to gain attention nationwide. One brewer, Devil's Backbone, won six medals at the Great American Beer festival and was named the "Best Small Brewing Company in America." The Pearisburg Farm to Fork Program is pleased to announce that The Bank Food and Drink Restaurant and Devils Backbone Brewing Company have joined together to offer a class on how to match beer with all parts of the meal. Beer and Bite two hour session, from 6-8pm on July 17 at The Bank Food and Drink - 101 North Main Street, Pearisburg. Participants will be provided the opportunity to sample a variety of Devils Backbone beers paired with bite appetizer, salad, entree and dessert.

What better way to spend a hot summer night?

Baking pretzel bread is not quite as simple as flat bread or dinner rolls. Instructor Chris Sutherland, First Cool Turner Place, will teach you the secret for cooking this bread so that the loaves come out of the oven with a brown pretzel crust and a slightly sweet, tender center. Perfect for sandwiches or just cut into chunks and served as a snack! A tasting will be offered at the end of the class. Join Chris on Sunday, August 10 from 2:00-4:00p at the Pearisburg Community Center.

Wild game is nothing like the meat you find in grocery store. Instructor Jeff Dinger takes the mystery out of cooking wild game as he shares three wild game recipes and some wild-game cooking mistakes you can avoid. Join Jeff on Friday, August 15 from 6:00-8:30pm at the Pearisburg Community Center. A tasting will be offered at the end of the class.

To enroll in these classes, simply

1. Register online at www.pearisburg.org. Click on the Farm to Fork link to locate the registration form.
2. Pick up a registration form at one of these locations and return it to the Pearisburg Town Office: Giles County Chamber of Commerce, Pearisburg Library, Narrows Town Office and Pearisburg Town Office.



Pearisburg Farm to Fork

~ COOKING FRESH,
GOING LOCAL ~

River Sculpture Exhibits

In February 2014, the first meeting to discuss the concept of developing a river sculpture exhibit in Pearisburg was held. Members of Renew the New, Giles Arts Council, the town, and interested community members reviewed the idea of developing a river sculpture park or multiple exhibits throughout Pearisburg. Every component of the sculptures designed will come from New River cleanup activities, the boat ramps and roadways in Giles County.

The park or the exhibits would:

- Stimulate conversation about trash, recycling and conservation
- Provide an opportunity for environmental education
- Attract media attention
- Inspire artists and students to use recycled materials in art work

- Attract visitors to Pearisburg

Recycled River Sculpture Exhibits would be permanently installed in locations around Pearisburg. Sites disc include Whitt-Riverbend Park, throughout downtown, and other areas around Pearisburg (if feasible).

Each permanent exhibit would convey the message of promoting sustainability and recycling.

Recently, the town learned that a small grant has been approved to move this project forward. These monies be used to assist artists with the development and installation of the first four exhibits. More information on effort will be reported in future newsletters.

Pearisburg - A Destination Again

Pearisburg has developed an electronic small tourism guidebook of history and heritage attractions, outdoor attract and activities, art/agriculture cultural activities, restaurants/food and beverage, unique shopping, camping and accommodations, itineraries, and annual events and festivals around town and in surrounding areas for visitors to community. Coming soon you can view this guidebook on the Pearisburg website at pearisburg.org. In addition, k businesses and tourism groups can link to the guide and support Pearisburg's effort to cross promote the as that will bring people to our town and county. Please contact 540-921-0340 for more information.

Join us for Cocktails and Conversation in Pearisburg

Cocktails and Conversation is a monthly event offered at The Bank Food and Drink to promote direct conversation between musicians, artists, specialty food purveyors and the public. The event occurs on the first Thursday of each month at 6pm, except when there are conflicts conflicts with holidays. For more information please visit the event page for The Bank Food and Drink at www.thebankfoodanddrink.com/events or call 540-921-2981.



Coming soon!

- The Jolly Rovers will host The "Advanced Stonework for Trails" workshop, July 11-13th in Pearisburg. Jolly Rovers is a unique community of volunteers trained in the craft of stonework and dedicated to use those skills to improve public parklands. As a social-profit organization, they are trail builders, creating improving trails that receive heavy use from a diverse group; from the experienced hiker or trail runner to the novice individual, family or school group interested in a casual stroll. To make parkland more accessible to this wide range of people, they specialize in the creation of stone works such as staircases, retaining walls, and other structures using the old world techniques of dry stone construction. Like similar structures from the ancient world that survive to this day, their work aims to continue the legacy of aesthetic and

sustainable principles achieved by these early builders. Stone survives the test of time, and when constructed properly, structures built with it can be inviting and inspiring, welcoming people that might otherwise venture into the woods.

- Loco Arts in partnership with the town will be offering an after-school art program for Giles and Narro youth between the ages of 13-18 at the Pearisburg Community Center. Participants will learn about folk art, public mural arts and video documentaries. This program will operate for eight-weeks. More information will be available in future newsletters.
- Art on the Lawn of the Giles County Courthouse has been scheduled for Saturday, October 4 from 10 a.m. to 4 p.m. A great day to visit Pearisburg!

PASS IT ON!

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