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Yancey Emergency Management introduces Hyper-Reach emergency telephone notification system

Yancey County has a new emergency notification service available for local citizens. Known as Hyper-Reach, the service provides warnings and notifications about local emergencies, hazards, and threats to county residents. Hyper-Reach uses telephone calls, text messages, and email, to send these alerts. In order to receive the messages, residents have to sign up for the service, which is free to anyone who enrolls.

Call Jeff Howell at 828-678-9266 to enroll. It only takes a few minutes. You do not have to own a computer or smartphone to receive the alerts. The service can contact land line telephones with these announcements. If you need assistance with signing up for this service please call.

Hyper-Reach Anywhere is a smartphone app available for free through the Apple App Store and the Google Play Store that allows phones to receive emergency alerts directly when they are posted.

Yancey County plans to use Hyper-Reach primarily for announcements about weather and environmental hazards, criminal activity, and missing persons. The Hyper-Reach system is fully operational and county

residents are encouraged to enroll as soon as possible.

Yancey Emergency Management Director Jeff Howell said that his department has already put the Hyper-Reach system to good use, most recently using the network to alert residents about a possible missing kayaker during heavy rains that the area experienced on October 23. After several inches of rain, a flood warning for Yancey County was issued by the National Weather Service at 2:26 p.m. A flash flood warning for Avery and Mitchell Counties was added at 3:32 p.m. In addition, a Tornado watch was issued for Avery County at 2 p.m. A flood warning was also issued at 7:52 p.m. for Avery, Mitchell and McDowell Counties. Students at schools in the Eastern part of the county were held until the water had receded. Rain gauges in the area showed up to six inches of rain had fallen on that Monday afternoon.

A motorist traveling on Blue Rock Road near the South Toe River called emergency management and reported that they had seen a kayaker going down the river paddling feverishly, triggering the use of the Hyper-Alert System.

Following the emergency calls, Howell said his office was inundated with calls from residents to be taken off the alert calling list.

Those people who don't want to be on the list can be taken off the list. Howell said. "It is critical that folks put it in writing that they wish to be removed from Hyper-Reach, if for no other reason than to protect the County from liability when someone's house burns to the ground after they said they didn't want to be called."

Howell said that not signing up for the service can be a mistake because those households will not be notified when an emergency situation arises. "Say a wildfire was racing up the side of Madison Mountain and we wanted to alert homeowners in that area that they need to take action to avoid the fire, we would not be able to do so," Howell said. He advised Yancey County residents to think twice about not signing for or discontinuing the important service.

To express your wishes to be taken off the list that now exists please do so by writing Yancey County Emergency Management at 110 Town Square, Burnsville NC 28714.

Coletta, Fox and McIntosh are winners

Burnsville Mayor Theresa Coletta pulled out a victory Tuesday November 7, beating back a late write-in challenge from Councilman Ron Powell.

Coletta defeated Powell by a count of 235 to 189, according to unofficial final election results.

Russell Fox and Bunnie McIntosh will become the newest members of the Burnsville Town Council, according to unofficial results.

They will replace Powell and Ruth Banks on the Board.

In the results for the Town Council election, Fox came out on top with 264 votes, McIntosh came in second with 229 votes. Lucy Doll was third with 135 votes, Gordon Higgins was fourth with 125 votes followed by Kayti Ledford with 75.

The two highest vote-getters were elected to the Town Council.

Coletta was first elected in

2013. With another term, Coletta said she would like to help finish the progress the Town has made with her at the helm, mentioning the continuation of locating funds for the aging water and sewer lines of the town.

Mayor Coletta also said she wants to continue expanding the Farmer's Market in the Town, hoping to find a permanent year round home for the organization to sell their produce and other goods.



Theresa Coletta



Russell Fox



Bunnie McIntosh

Burnsville Mayor looks at challenges for Town

Following her re-election last Tuesday, Burnsville Mayor Theresa answered a few questions from Times Journal Editor David Grindstaff and gave the following statements:

What is the number one item on your agenda in your second term as Mayor?

"By far the most important challenge facing our town is the continuation of locating funds for the aging water and sewer lines of our town. We are sitting on a time bomb which will affect our quality of life, and which will not sustain new industry for our town and county. Also, the building of the new fire department for the town is a top priority and must be completed.

To ignore this critical need is an insult to the brave firemen who put their lives on the line every time the fire engine leaves the fire station. Burnsville is very fortunate to have Fire Chief Niles Howell, who is diligent in his pursuit of funds for this life-saving service for our citizens."

What are some new challenges that you and the Town Council will be facing over the next four years in Burnsville?

"Our town has to become involved in the hospital issues now facing our citizens. We are an aging community and cannot leave this health service to chance. Not having representation at the monthly hospital discussion meetings is not an

option. Our town will be a voice at the table!

Another project is the town's sidewalks. They are crumbling which makes walking a dangerous healthy activity. Unfortunately, re-pouring sidewalks are horribly expensive. Very limited sidewalk funds are available, but the town must pursue grants if our sidewalks are to be rebuilt to be safer for all of our citizens, especially the disabled."

How important is the Farmers Market to Burnsville?

"As Yancey County moves forward in revitalizing agriculture as a means of making a living, they have overlooked the important role of a Farmers Market in offering healthy eating choices for our citizens. Our town needs to engage with Sharon Hughes, Farmers Market Manager, to find a permanent, year-round market place which affords many food opportunities, especially food demonstrations using monthly produce."

What part does Public Art play in the Town of Burnsville?

"Public art is a voice speaking to what is beautiful as embraced by a town. The gateway entrances must be completed in a timely fashion in order to be enjoyed today, and to inspire future generations to continue creating and appreciating the arts in our community"

Coletta also voiced her

strong support for the Town Planning Board. "As mayor, I have continued to be a strong supporter of our Planning Board, and I have stood with the recommendations delivered by the Planning Board to the town council."

"Town Board meeting minutes confirm my support. Harrison Tyner is a strong and capable chairman in guiding his board to sort through relevant issues facing our town. A Planning Board is the critical tool in making sure a town grows in a vibrant, disciplined capacity. For the many volunteer hours, these past and present board members have given, our town remains forever indebted to each of them for their public service."

How do you feel about your new Town Board?

"I am very excited about the newly elected town board members. Bunnie McIntosh and Russell Fox will bring a breath of fresh air to the council and to our town board meetings. Burnsville's best days are ours for the taking, and with the membership of Judy Buchanan, Shannon Peterson, Russell Fox, and Bunnie McIntosh, our best days are still to come, and we will accomplish great things for this place we love and call home.

As mayor, I am excited and grateful for the opportunity to serve in these exciting days ahead."



This year's holiday tour, now in its 24th year, will be one of the largest with 104 artists participating at 58 studio sites. Some studios host one or two visiting artists, which allows customers to see multiple artists in one stop.

Toe River Studio Tour December 1-3

The Toe River Studio Tour creates an enjoyable holiday shopping experience as visitors wander along mountain back roads throughout Yancey and Mitchell counties, meet the artists and purchase handmade gifts. The tour runs Friday, Dec. 1, through Sunday, Dec. 3.

This year's holiday tour, now in its 24th year, will be one of the largest with 104 artists participating at 58 studio sites. Some studios host one or two visiting artists, which allows customers to see multiple artists in one stop.

Seventeen participants are new to the tour, including a jewelry maker, a guitar builder, potters, painters, sculptors and more.

The Toe River Valley is known for its concentration of glass artists, as well as the diversity of work found here.

"The quality, breadth, and type of art make it an interesting adventure for anyone to come," says Denise Cook, executive director of the Toe River Arts Council. "People love it because they get to design their own adventure."

The Toe River Arts Coun-

cil, which sponsors the free, self-guided tour, produces a guidebook with a map that gives each artist's name, medium, website, studio location and picture of his or her work. Guidebooks are available at the Toe River Arts Council galleries, located in Burnsville and

Spruce Pine, participating studios and at www.ToeRiverArts.org/About-the-Tour.

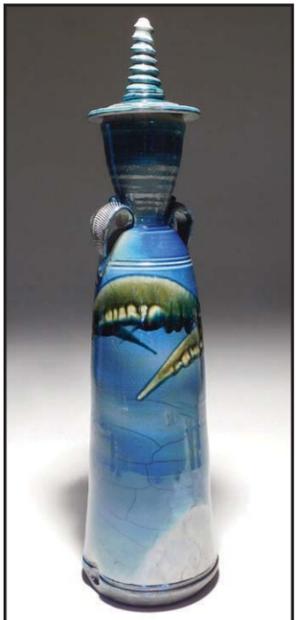
For many working artists, the tour is the only time they open their studios to the public. The event allows customers to see where they work, ask questions and connect with the person behind the art.

"Handmade gifts may cost a little more, but you're receiving an item that was carefully crafted," Cook says. "And when you buy it from the maker, it's a meaningful experience."

The tour coincides with downtown Burnsville's Christmas parade, which takes place Saturday, Dec. 2, at 3 p.m. The traditional, small-town parade includes floats, bands, and Santa.

Studio Tour hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. A meet-and-greet reception takes place Friday, Dec. 1, from 5:30 p.m. to 7:30 p.m. at the Toe River Arts gallery in Spruce Pine. For additional tour details, visit the Toe River Arts website.

For more information about Burnsville, including lodging and dining options, visit www.ExploreBurnsville.com.



Ruth Banks honored for service to Town

The Burnsville Town Board will honor Town Board member Ruth Banks on Tuesday November 28 at 7 p.m. at her last board meeting at Burnsville Town Center. Banks is retiring after 16 years on the Council. She served as Town Clerk in Burnsville for 28 years before being elected to the Town Board in 2001.

Refreshments will be served at the celebration that will take place following the November Town Board meeting.

For those unable to attend the celebration but are wishing to share their memories with Ruth, a basket will be placed in the Burnsville Town Hall during regular business hours, from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. on Nov. 27-28 so that you can express your appreciation for all of her service to the Town over the years.



Ruth Banks, who is retiring from the Burnsville Town Council will be honored Nov. 28 at the Town Center.