

**HARRIS BLUE DEVILS BASEBALL**



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The 2018 Harris Middle School Blue Devils baseball team is, front row, from left, Adrian McFalls, Gabe Honeycutt, Luke Barnes and Dalton McMahan. Second row, from left, is Isaac Biddix, Ben Hollifield, Joey Rogers, Carson Phillips and Clay Pate. Third row, from left, is coach Andrew Thomas, Damion Riddle, Jake Holden and Carter Hoyle.

**HARRIS BLUE DEVILS SOFTBALL**



PHOTO SUBMITTED

The 2018 Harris Middle School Blue Devils softball team is, front row, from left, Abigail Ledford, Allison Payne, Alondra Ramirez and Maria Velazquez. Second row, from left, is Allie Johnson, Rylee Carver, Emma Wiseman, Zayda Carver and Alyssa Barnett. Third row, from left, is coach Dustin Hughes, Finley Revels, Reagan Buchanan and Brianna Burleson.

**ADULT LEAGUE BASKETBALL CHAMPS**



NEWS-JOURNAL PHOTO/BRANDON ROBERTS

The Mitchell County Parks and Recreation Adult League Basketball champions were crowned this past Sunday in a 77-68 overtime thriller at Harris Middle School. Pictured, front row, from left, is Ryan Cook, Dustin Burleson, Jason Hall and Kasey Cook. Back row, from left, is Zack Snyder, Patrick Gore, O.C. Ameh, John Wilson, Jeremy Carver and Joe Hobson.

**TRACK**

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"I don't really change anything," Smith said about training for track. "I try to stay hydrated and I do a lot of speed work."

Smith, who has a scholarship offer from Lees-McRae for track and field, said playing receiver isn't very different from running track.

"Being able to get up to your top speed quickly comes into play in both sports," he said. "If you can beat the other guy off the line, you'll do good things in both."

Smith said he's undecided on his college choice and is keeping his options open. For now, he's focused on defending his individual title and helping the track and field team perform well in relays.

Despite his success on the football field and on the track, it hasn't been all smooth sailing for him through high school – he

didn't run track his sophomore because of a back injury.

"It was very difficult," Smith said about the injury. "A couple different doctors told me it wasn't safe for me to play any sports."

Instead of feeling defeated, Smith trained hard, was back on the football field as a junior and set a career-high for single-season receiving yards with 1,171.

Later in his junior year, he was back on the track and his preparation paved the way for a state title.

"I did a lot of core training," Smith said about his rehabilitation. "It was hard getting back but it made me work a lot harder."

Beyond a state title to put an exclamation mark on his high school career, Smith said he has one other goal – leave a legacy of hard work.

"You're never entitled to anything," he said. "If you want to be successful, you have to put in the effort. It's all about giving a little extra when you feel like you don't have anything left to give."

**Blue Ridge Weddings Pop Up Show brings in hundreds of people**

BY BRANDON ROBERTS  
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SPRUCE PINE – Hundreds of people meandered through the Cross Street Commerce Center this past Saturday during the first Blue Ridge Weddings Pop Up Show.

Soon-to-be brides spoke with 23 vendors, including caterers, hair and makeup artists, wedding planners, wedding venue representatives, custom invitation and sign designers, florists, photographers and more at the event.

"This event was created to help brides getting married in our area connect with amazing wedding vendors who can help take some of the stress out of their planning," said Patti Jensen, executive director of the Mitchell County Chamber of Commerce. "We have so many wonderful businesses in our area who offer amazing products, venues and services at affordable prices and our goal is to connect them with the brides who are planning their upcoming weddings. Supporting these small businesses and showcasing our beautiful area is a win-win."

Stephanie Medford from Spruce Pine Florist said she was "very pleased" with the turnout.

"For it being the first one and in our little town, I am amazed at the people and vendors who are here today," she said. "I don't know if it could've gone any better."

Laura Watrous, owner of Sunset Gatherings in Burnsville, said she was impressed by the show.

"This is a beautiful show and beautiful place to have it," she said. "I have talked with a lot of people and I am really surprised at how many older couples have come through today."

Blue Ridge Weddings co-owner and event organizer Kelly Jones said each soon-to-be bride was given a card vendors were asked to sign and that card was then used an entry for free giveaways.

"It's a way to encourage brides to visit all the vendors," she said. "The vendors seem happy and so do the brides so that's really all we can ask for."



NEWS-JOURNAL PHOTO/BRANDON ROBERTS

Leah Spitz, left, of Bridal Photography, and Debby Hipps, owner of Visions Weddings and Events, of Asheville, talk during the Blue Ridge Weddings Pop Up Show this past Saturday at the Cross Street Commerce Center in Spruce Pine.

**Lots on tap for March SEARCH meeting**

Sustaining Essential and Rural Community Healthcare, or SEARCH, will convene at 7 p.m. Tuesday, March 20, at Trinity Episcopal Church in Spruce Pine.

During the meeting, citizens of Mitchell and Yancey counties will be asked to give feedback on an organizational plan being developed for the next 12 months.

In addition, SEARCH has formulated a proposed list of the essential healthcare services that should be available locally. They will be laid out along with the possibility for a scorecard to rate if and how well these services are in being provided in the community.

Also on the agenda will be a discussion of the Community Listening Conversations on healthcare being developed by the Outreach Task Force. The overarching purpose of these conversations will be to expand and deepen community connections and understanding around issues related to community health.

A focused roundtable on healthcare is being planned for Burnsville in early May. The details of that event will be shared at the meeting.

Call Mitchell County facilitators Risa Larsen at 828-765-1318 or Susan Larson at 828-765-2652; or Karin Rolett at 828-675-9671 in Yancey County. Light refreshments will be served.



PHOTO SUBMITTED

SEARCHers show support for federal funding for FQHCs such as the health clinics in Bakersville, Spruce Pine and Celso.