



# NEWSLETTER

Fall 2011  
Volume 8, Issue 3

## News from the Mayor

Roger Snyder

As we make the transition from one season to another, things around the community are still moving forward. We tend to start slowing down this time of year and getting ready for the winter season. Be careful with "gutter cleaning," gathering firewood and cleaning the chimney.

### Did You Know

In 2007, the Town voluntarily annexed (at the request of the owner) the Old Westfeldt Property. This area is between the Mountain Horticulture Research Station and the Asheville Airport on Fanning Bridge Road. Andrew Tate (Henderson County Partnership for Economic Development) has successfully gotten this property State certified. This designation opens the door to be recognized throughout the State and marketed as such. Right now, it is only one of three sites carrying this certification from the NC Department of Commerce.

### Town Property

Most of the items included in Phase 1 of the Town's park are almost complete. Also, you may have noticed that the finishing touches are being completed on a new entry drive for the Town Hall and the Library off of Highway 191. Look for it to be open at the end of October and for the Park to be opened in phases through the winter.

Many thanks to Nathan Conner for building the flower planters and installing plants around our flagpole. This project was done in conjunction with his Boy Scout Eagle Project.

Have you visited our Library lately? If you haven't, then you are not aware of the Mills River History Room. Old Mills River pictures and items will be displayed and will change quarterly.

### Safety Tip

This time of year I try to encourage our citizens to get their vehicles ready for winter. We also need to prepare ourselves. This includes spare blankets, flashlights, emergency provisions like canned food and a "manual" can opener. If you are like us, we try to stock up on can goods during the year and store them wherever we can find room. Keep flashlights located in certain areas of the house and in your vehicle and let everybody know where they are. Taking a few minutes now might save yourselves some grief later and, as always, check those batteries – smoke and carbon monoxide detectors, flashlights and vehicles.

*And as always, if the Council or Staff can be of any assistance, please feel to contact us*



### THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER

124 Town Center Drive  
Mills River, NC 28759

OFFICE: 828-890-2901 FAX: 828-890-2903

**Office Hours: 9:00 am—5:00 pm**

**Monday-Friday**

[info@millsriver.org](mailto:info@millsriver.org)

[www.millsriver.org](http://www.millsriver.org)

### Council Members:

Mayor: Roger Snyder

Mayor Pro Tem: Lois Pryor

Councilman: Wayne Carland

Councilman: Shanon Gonce

Councilman: Larry Freeman

### Staff:

Town Manager: Jaime Laughter

[jaime.laughter@millsriver.org](mailto:jaime.laughter@millsriver.org)

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Susan L. Powell

[susan.powell@millsriver.org](mailto:susan.powell@millsriver.org)

Administrative Assistant: Aurelie Taylor

[aurelie.taylor@millsriver.org](mailto:aurelie.taylor@millsriver.org)

Zoning Enforcement Officer: Pat Christie

[pat.christie@millsriver.org](mailto:pat.christie@millsriver.org)

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### Newsletter Editors

Articles: Aurelie Taylor

Layout: Kathie Doole



## HISTORY CORNER

by Jim Brittain

Dramatic changes in agriculture affecting Mills River farmers occurred during World War II. The changes were manifest in a rapid increase in the acreage devoted to so-called “truck crops” such as snap beans. There also was a shift from a primary reliance on family members for farm work to a growing use of seasonal migrant workers. In addition, there emerged a trend away from small subsistence farms relying on the use of draft horses to large commercial agricultural enterprises relying on rented fields and tractors.

The United States entered the War in December 1941, and the farm labor supply soon began to be affected by the military build-up and an increased demand for labor in war-related industries. These developments created an urgent need to increase production of food to supply those leaving to go to war or work in urban centers. A local impact was to stimulate the planting of an increased acreage of bean fields in Mills River and other agricultural areas of Henderson County. Bean picking was a very labor-intensive task, and it soon proved necessary to bring in migrant workers to help with the harvest. In the summer of 1942, a migrant labor camp was set up at the Western North Carolina Fair Grounds just east of Hendersonville. The camp had a capacity of 600 workers, and those who came helped harvest a bean crop with an estimated value of one-half million dollars that year.

The acreage devoted to truck crops in Henderson County increased from about 3,500 acres in 1942 to 10,000 acres in 1943. Planting of what was predicted to be the first million dollar bean crop in county history began in May 1943. The same month, it was reported that the capacity of migrant labor camps was being increased to 1,800, including 1,200 at the Fair Grounds and 600 at a camp in Mills River. In late June, the first beans were ready for picking and the Hendersonville *Times-News* stated that pickers would receive 30 cents per 30 pound hamper for the first picking and 35 cents for the second.

Unfortunately, the expected migrant laborers did not arrive soon enough. It was announced on 26 June that there was an acute shortage of bean pickers in the county with an estimated 10,000 bushels of beans which needed picking. Two days later, a “bean harvest emergency” was declared with an estimated 15,000 bushels said to be in danger of spoiling if not picked quickly. Subsequently, it was reported that local merchants had agreed to close at noon to enable their employees to work in the bean fields. The *Times-News* even suggested that “loafers” would be arrested and jailed if they were unwilling to pick beans. The newspaper edition of 29 June stated that about 500 city residents were at work in the county bean fields. Children from local summer camps also joined in the effort to save the bean crop. By then there were only about 75 people at the migrant labor camp. Some growers were reported to have begun picking beans on Sunday. The crisis was alleviated by mid July with the arrival of migrant laborers from the Bahamas and some others from Eastern North Carolina, where they

Continued on next page

had been harvesting potatoes. Reportedly, there were 725 workers staying at the Fair Grounds labor camp by 19 July.

A rather unusual addition to the county's farm labor force took place during the growing season in 1944. John Hollamon, the county Farm Agent, announced in mid June that 250 German war prisoners were to be sent to the county and would be confined in a prison camp on Haywood Road. They were to be guarded by a contingent of American military police and would be available to work for local farmers in groups of 10 or more. The prisoners had arrived by 13 July and the *Times-News* stated that they already were at work in the bean fields and were taking good care of the bean vines. A Mills River bean grower was reported to have used some of the prisoners and to have been pleased with their work. Another Mills River farmer later recalled that he had transported a group of prisoners along with 3 guards to bean fields in North Mills River in an open-bed Dodge truck. In addition to bean picking, some prisoners were used to perform other farm chores such as clearing land, digging ditches, and harvesting corn and potatoes. They were paid up to \$1.20 per day which they could use to purchase cigarettes, candy, and other items at the prison commissary.

In November 1944, after the prisoners had left the county, it was reported that they had picked 27,795 bushels of beans during 8,186 man-days of work. They also were credited with 411 man-days devoted to general farm labor. The report also disclosed that Bahamian migrant workers had been in the county from 25 June to 3 November and that they had picked about 300,000 hampers of beans in 34,000 man-days for a total of about one-half million dollars worth of beans. These pickers had earned an average of \$3.25 per day and had worked for about 250 growers in the county.

Bahamian migrant workers and German prisoners returned to the county in the summer of 1945. By then Henderson County reportedly had become the top producer of beans in the region. The County Agent's report on the county's production in 1945 stated that truck crops and fruit had a gross value of almost 2 million dollars. This included about 625,000 bushels of beans valued at about one million dollars. The labor force had included 635 from the Bahamas and 500 German prisoners. The prisoners had performed farm labor worth \$94,238 which included \$58,473 for bean picking and the remainder for other farm work. They had harvested about 250 acres of potatoes and picked 30,000 bushels of apples.

With the War ending in 1945, German prisoners no longer were available to harvest beans in 1946. Migrant workers from the Bahamas did return but fewer in number than in previous seasons. About 4,000 acres were planted in snap beans in the county, and the bean crop again reached a level of about a million dollars in value. In 1946, the county also produced about 600,000 bushels of apples worth about one million dollars while the county's production of dairy products was valued at about \$972,000. Other truck crops with a significant value that year included potatoes, pole beans, and strawberries.



## RECIPE CORNER

### Party Chicken

by Cleo Jones

- 8 Large skinned and boned chicken breasts
- 8 Slices of bacon
- 1 Package of dried beef (Hormel or equivalent)
- 1 Can of cream of mushroom soup
- ½ pint of sour cream

Preheat oven to 275 degrees  
 Cover baking dish with beef  
 Wrap chicken in bacon and place on beef  
 Mix soup and sour cream and pour over chicken  
 Bake at 275 degrees for 3 hours – uncovered

(I always want extra gravy, so I double the soup and sour cream.)

**ENJOY!**

## MEETING & OTHER DATES

Oct 20	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM
Oct 21	Agricultural Advisory	9:00 AM
Oct 27	Town Council	7:00 PM
Nov 1	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Nov 9	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
Nov 10	Town Council	7:00 PM
Nov 11	Veterans Day	Town Hall Closed
Nov 18	Agricultural Advisory	9:00 AM
Nov 22	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM
Nov 24	Town Council	7:00 PM
Nov 24-25	Thanksgiving	Town Hall Closed
Dec 6	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Dec 8	Council –Organizational	7:00 PM
Dec 13	Board of Adjustment	7:00 PM
Dec 14	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
Dec 16	Agricultural Advisory	9:00 AM
Dec 22	Town Council	7:00 PM
Dec 26-27	Christmas	Town Hall Closed
Dec 27	Parks and Recreational	7:00 PM
Jan 2	New Year's Day	Town Hall Closed
Jan 3	Planning Board	7:00 PM
Jan 11	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
Jan 12	Town Council	7:00 PM
Jan 16	Martin Luther King	Town Hall Closed
Jan 24	Parks and Recreation	7:00 PM
Jan 26	Town Council	7:00 PM
Jan 20	Agricultural Advisory	9:00 AM



## LOCAL SMALL BUSINESS ADS

The Mills River Town Newsletter is printed quarterly: at the end of March, June, September, and December. In order to defray the cost of publishing, the newsletter will be taking small business ads. These ads will be business card size and black and white. The business must be located within the town limits. There is a \$50 fee for each quarterly advertisement and since there is a limited amount of space, ads will be taken on a first come, first served basis. The ad must accompany payment and checks should be labeled for the newsletter. The fee collected goes directly for newsletter costs. Site selection within the newsletter is to be determined by the newsletter committee. The committee reserves the right to refuse an ad. Both ad and payment will be returned if this occurs.

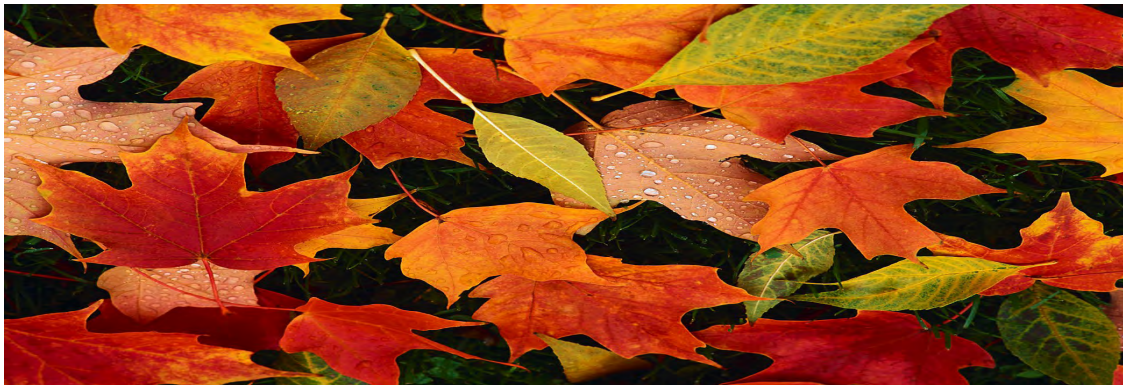
Thank you for your support.

## NEWSLETTER SUBMISSIONS

The Town of Mills River newsletter is published and distributed quarterly. Articles submitted may be edited for brevity. Deadline for submission of articles is the 25<sup>th</sup> of each of the following months: March, June, September and December. Submit articles in writing to:

Aurelie Taylor  
Town of Mills River  
124 Town Center Drive  
Mills River, NC 28759

or by email to [aurelie.taylor@millsriver.org](mailto:aurelie.taylor@millsriver.org). Articles can also be dropped off at the Mills River Town Hall. If you need assistance, have questions or need more information, feel free to call Aurelie at (828) 890-2901 or email.



## NOW AVAILABLE: Partial Payment Agreement for Property Taxes



Will paying property tax in one lump payment put a strain on your budget? Do you owe property tax from a prior year? **Here's help!**

The Town of Mills River announces an **OPPORTUNITY** for taxpayers to complete Partial Payment Agreements and pay their taxes over the course of six (6) months.

Contact Town Hall at 124 Town Center Drive, or call 828-890-2901 for more information.

**REMINDER:** Property tax becomes due and payable on September 1, and becomes past due on January 6. If not paid by January 5, interest begins accruing at the rate of 2.0% for January, and 0.75% for each month thereafter. Contact us today if you need assistance.

**SPOTLIGHT ON MILLS RIVER RESIDENT...**  
**Deputy Chief Robert Griffin, Firefighter, Mills River Fire Department**  
by Kathryn Finotti

How long have you been a Mills River firefighter?

*I was hired as a full time employee at Mills River Fire Department in November of 2009.*

Have you ever worked as a firefighter anywhere else?

*I started in the fire service in 1987 as a volunteer at Edneyville Fire Department. I worked full-time at Fletcher Fire Department from 1995 to 2006. In 2006 I worked as a contract firefighter in Iraq, returning home in late fall of 2007.*

What's the best part of your job?

*The best part of my job is helping people.*

Does the firehouse in Mills River have its own Dalmatian dog?

*No, the firehouse does not have a dog.*

Do you have pets of your own?

*Yes, I have 3 dogs and 2 cats.*

What is your hometown?

*Hendersonville is my hometown.*

Do you have a favorite book or movie?

*I do not have a favorite book per se, but do have a favorite author Michael Connelly.  
(Interviewer side note: Michael Connelly writes mystery/detective novels.)*

Where do you go to relax?

*I enjoy going to the beach, but also feel very relaxed camping in the mountains.*

Do you cook?

*Yes, I cook. I enjoy cooking.*

What would your dream car be?

*I actually owned my dream car once but didn't realize it at the time. It is a 1969 Camaro Z-28.*



## NEWS FROM YOUR MILLS RIVER BRANCH LIBRARY

by Roz Ledford

**Branch Hours: Monday thru Friday, 9:00 am. – 5:00 p.m.**

**October - December 2011**

**CANDY CORN CONTEST:** Open to children birth to age 11. The contest will run Monday, October 3 – Monday October 17, 2011. The child that guesses the correct number or number closest to the correct number wins. Each winner will receive a \$25 gift certificate to Barnes and Noble and, of course, the jar of candy!



**STORY TIME:** Every Monday, October 3 – December 5 (special holiday story time on 5<sup>th</sup>). Story Time will be suspended December 12, 19 and 26 and will resume on January 2, 2012.

**FORGIN' ON:** A "no cost" program of music and stories of Mills River, NC and County Donegal, Ireland await you at the Mills River Branch Library's Commons Room at 7:00 p.m., Friday evening, 21 October 2011. Jere Brittain, a native of Henderson County and Mills River along with his wife, Joanne, will present a program of stories, lyrics, tunes, and mountain dulcimer. His latest CD is titled "Forgin' On." Jere indicates his daily walks along the banks of South Mills River bring him close to the sites of the Sitton/Gillespie Iron Forge, rifle works, grist mill, sawmill, and post office operating there from the early nineteenth to early twentieth centuries. The song "Forgin' On" recalls the sights one might have seen and heard during those years. CD's of Jere's music will be available for purchase with proceeds going to the Friends of the Mills River Library for use within the Branch.

**HALLOWEEN PARTY:** A Halloween party will be held at the Mills River Branch Library on Saturday morning, October 29, 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Stories, games and fun activities are being planned. Wear your costume as a prize will be given for the best costume.



**BIRDS OF A FEATHER PROGRAM:** On Tuesday, November 1, at 4:00 p.m. the North Carolina Museum of Natural Sciences will present "BIRDS OF A FEATHER". This is a hands-on program so it will be limited to 30 children. Mills River Branch will have a sign-up sheet available in the Library.

### GREAT NEWS!!!!

Be on the lookout for our new paved entrance off NC 191. We've been told it is scheduled to be completed by the end of October. There have been some delay due to the week of rain in the area which slowed the grading aspect of the project. The required layer of gravel is down and hopefully the first layer of asphalt will be in place before long.

**SHERIFF**



**HENDERSON COUNTY  
NC**

**HENDERSON COUNTY SHERIFF'S DEPARTMENT  
MILLS RIVER DIVISION**

by Sergeant Ken C. McCraw—Have a Safe and Happy Fall!

Please check the Henderson County Sheriff's Office website at [www.henderson.lib.nc.us/county/sheriff](http://www.henderson.lib.nc.us/county/sheriff) for links and information regarding identity theft, Community Watch programs, and crime prevention.

I hope everyone has a safe and happy fall season. I want to remind everyone to drive safely. Below are a few driving reminders:

- Obey all posted speed limits
- Observe speed regulations in school zones
- Slow down and use caution during times of inclement weather
- Wear your seat belt
- Watch out for children around schools and near school buses
- Come to complete stops at all stop signs
- Turn your headlights on when operating your windshield wipers in the rain
- Please properly secure children in the correct child seats for their weight and age
- Increase your following distance in traffic
- Make sure your vehicle is in safe operating condition (tires, lights, signals, wiper blades, brakes, etc.)

For Emergencies—911 Non-Emergencies—697-4911 NC Highway Patrol—693-4141

**The Town of Mills River  
124 Town Center Drive  
Mills River NC 28759**