



NEWSLETTER

Spring 2006
Volume 3, Issue 1

News from the Mayor

Roger Snyder

One of the biggest issues to hit the Town will be decided in the month of April. That issue is the County's method of distribution of sales tax monies. Every year, each County across the State, according to State Statutes, has to decide which method they will choose in the upcoming fiscal year. The County chooses between Per Capita or Ad Valorem methods, and notifies the Department of Revenue of their choice. Across the State, it is about a 50 / 50 split. The effect to Mills River (estimates) is below:

Ad Valorem \$350,000 vs. Per Capita \$1,250,000

As you can see, there is a big difference between the two figures. For the past two years, Henderson County has been on the Per Capita Method of distribution, with some payback from Mills River and Flat Rock. Those are the only two municipalities that have elected to have an agreement with Henderson County.

Ad Valorem monies are based on the tax rate that the municipalities set, so if a Town keeps its tax rate low (Mills River's is 1 cent per \$100 valuation), it is penalized. Town Council supports staying with the current method. Council thinks it knows what Mills River residents want. For example, the Council opened up and continues to support its branch library with these monies. By statute, the Library is solely a County function, but the Town "stepped up to the plate" and supports this.

In other news, the Library continues to grow its circulation and expands its hours. It is staffed entirely by volunteers. They do an excellent job.

The location of a Post Office in Mills River is slowly moving forward. A report is due to the Town from postal officials in the next 30-60 days. We hope that we will be able to make an announcement later.

As always, if the Council or the Staff can assist you in any way, please feel free to let us know.



THE TOWN OF MILLS RIVER

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info@millsriver.org

Council Members:

Mayor: Roger Snyder
Mayor Pro Tem: Lois Pryor
Councilman: Wayne Carland
Councilman: Ed Glenn
Councilman: Shanon Gonce

Staff:

Town Clerk/Tax Collector: Susan L. Powell
Susan.powell@millsriver.org

Town Manager: Dean McGinnis
Dean.mcginis@millsriver.org

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Martha.orr@millsriver.org

Email Free Newsletter Subscription:
newsletter@millsriver.org





**Mills River Volunteer
Fire & Rescue**
by Rick Livingston, Fire Chief

School House Road, Horse Shoe, NC 28742
Phone emergencies for either
FIRE or MEDICAL: Call 911

Our community has been very fortunate during the recent dry and windy period as we have responded to several small brush fires which have been contained and extinguished quickly with no structures lost and minimal acreage scorched. Other nearby communities haven't been as lucky, with major acreage burned and several structures threatened. Mills River Fire and Rescue has provided mutual aid responses to some of these wildfires with firefighters and apparatus.

Several laws and regulations concerning outdoor burning have changed in recent years which some of you may not be aware of. I would like to briefly mention some of these changes and suggest that you contact the agencies listed at the end of this article if you have questions or need further explanation. As always, a burning permit is required from the N.C. Division of Forest Resources if you are conducting open burning that is more than 100 feet from your home and within 500 feet of woodland. These permits are now available on-line at www.dfr.state.nc.us and I strongly suggest you take advantage of this opportunity as this information is immediately available to the N.C. Forest Service and the fire department rather than creating a "paper trail". Read your permit thoroughly and abide by these regulations. Permits may also still be obtained at the usual outlet locations including N.C. Forest Service Headquarters, Valley Ag, Hyder's Kountry Kubbard, or Mills River Fire and Rescue's Main Station.

Other open burning rules are enforced by the N.C. Division of Air Quality and are summarized as follows. The basic message is simple: Only leaves, branches and other plant growth can be burned - NOTHING ELSE. This means no trash, lumber, tires, old newspapers, building materials, plastics and synthetic materials, shingles, paints and chemicals, buildings, mobile homes and other structures. During the ozone season (May through September) no open burning by homeowners may be done on "Air Quality Action Days", when forecasts are Code Orange, Red or Purple. For air quality forecasts, go to www.NCAir.org or call 1-888-784-6224.

Homeowners can burn yard trimmings - excluding logs more than 6 inches in diameter and stumps, if it doesn't cause a public nuisance. Other allowable burning includes campfires, outdoor barbecues and bonfires for festive occasions. Landowners or contractors also can open burn vegetation to clear land or rights-of-way, provided that burning is done on the site of origin, prevailing winds are away from built-up areas and roads, fires are at least 1000 feet away from occupied buildings, and that burning is done between 8 a.m. and 6 p.m. You don't need a special permit from the Division of Air Quality for allowable fires. As you can see the DAQ deals with air pollution while the N.C. Division of Forest Resources is primarily concerned with fire danger.

Brochures are available at Mills River Fire and Rescue's main station explaining these rules in greater detail. You may also call The Western N.C. Regional Air Quality Agency at 828-255-5655 or the Henderson County Office of The N.C. Forest Resources at 828-891-3957. As always, you may also call Mills River Fire and Rescue at 828-891-7959.

Wishing you a safe and enjoyable spring season.



MEETING DATES

Apr	4	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	11	Board of Adjustments	7:00 PM
	12	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
	13	Town Council	7:00 PM
	14	Good Friday	Town Hall Closed
	17	Town Council	9:00 AM
		Budget Workshop	
	17	Agricultural Advisory Committee	7:30 PM
May	18	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	27	Town Council	7:00 PM
	2	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	3	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
	12	Town Council	7:00 PM
Jun	15	Agricultural Advisory Committee	7:30 PM
	16	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	25	Town Council	7:00 PM
	29	Memorial Day	Town Hall Closed
	6	Planning Board	7:30 PM
Jun	8	Town Council	7:00 PM
	13	Board of Adjustments	7:00 PM
	14	Finance Committee	7:00 PM
	20	Planning Board	7:30 PM
	22	Town Council	7:00 PM



History Corner

by Jim Brittain

Philip Sitton (1770-1843), a pioneer ironmaster and the patriarch of the Mills River Sittons, his wife, Winifred Bradley Sitton (1766-1841), and several children moved to South Mills River from Georges Creek, SC, in the late 1790s. The state of North Carolina gave him a land grant of 3000 acres as an incentive to construct and operate an iron forge. He selected a site for his first forge near the confluence of Bradley Creek and South Mills River. Although no contemporary description or drawing of his forge has been found, it is likely that it was an open-hearth type known as a "bloomery" or Catalan forge. Surviving physical evidence in the form of large pieces of iron-rich black slag has been found near the mouth of Bradley Creek.

Iron ore mined on the South face of Forge Mountain (known as "Iron Works Mountain" in the early 19th century) was transported by ox cart or wagon through Vineyard Gap to the forge. Limestone was mixed with the ore to act as "flux" to remove impurities, and charcoal produced locally from hardwood timber, served as fuel. A water-powered leather bellows forced air into the burning charcoal. The temperatures achieved in a bloomery forge ordinarily were not high enough to produce molten pig iron. Instead, a large mass of heated iron known as a "bloom" resulted which could be converted to malleable wrought-iron bars by repeated hammering and reheating. A heavy water-powered trip hammer was employed to shape the forged iron into the desired bar stock which, subsequently, would serve the needs of gun makers and blacksmiths. When in operation, the forge was a very hot and noisy work place with sustained ringing of the reciprocating hammer against the anvil and the heat from the furnace and hot iron.

After a few years, Philip and his family decided to abandon the Bradley Creek forge and install a new forge a few miles further down South Mills River. The new site offered a number of advantages including a new source of ore not far from the forge, a better site to develop water power, and better farm land for growing grain and better farm land for growing grain and raising livestock. Also, the new forge offered better access to a labor force and good home sites for the extended family. The new forge and "other improvements" are mentioned in an 1819 land deed. A water-powered grist mill was installed near the forge and provided stone ground meal for the forge workers and other residents of the community. A sizeable work force was needed to mine and transport ore, produce the charcoal fuel, and other activities at the rural industrial complex. It was common practice for workers to be paid, at least in part, by meat, grain, and vegetables to feed themselves and their often large families.

The wrought-iron bars produced at the Sitton forge could be made into a remarkable variety of useful products by local craftsmen. Examples include door hinges, pot hooks, carpentry tools, horse shoes, plows, fittings for ox yokes, traps, and hunting rifles. In the early 19th century, Mathew Gillespie (1788-1871), an experienced gunmaker, moved from the east fork of the French Broad River to South Mills River where he married Elizabeth Sitton (1788-1858), a daughter of Philip and Winifred. Gillespie established a gun

shop near the iron forge and used wrought iron to fabricate his rifle barrels and gun locks. He and his five sons continued to produce the highly-prized weapons for several decades.

Three generations of the Sitton family worked at the Mills River forge. Philip's son, Lawrence Sitton (1794-1873), worked at the forge until it ceased operation during the Civil War. In 1812, he married Isabel Gillespie (1796-1880), a sister of Mathew Gillespie. A son of Lawrence and Isabel, Philip Lawrence Sitton (1814-1857), also worked at the forge until his death shortly before the War. In 1842, he married Nancy Allen (1825-1909) and they became the parents of several children including Silas C. Sitton (1848-1912). Although the forge did not resume operation after the War, Silas C. Sitton established a water-powered sawmill near the site of the forge and operated it until he was killed in an accident at the mill in December 1912. I have an old photograph identified as the "old S.C. Sitton mill dam." The dam appears to be about 8 to 10 feet high and was a composite dam of wood and stone.

Bert J. Sitton, a grandson of Silas C. Sitton, recently has installed new grave stones marking the burial sites of Philip and Lawrence Sitton and their wives in the Sitton-Gillespie Cemetery. This family cemetery offers a commanding view of Forge Mountain and overlooks the site of the Sitton forge, sawmill, and grist mill. Forge Mountain remains as a highly visible physical reminder of a vital 19th century industrial center in the heart of the Mills River community.

LIBRARY HOURS



Mon. Wed. Fri.:
1:30-5:30 PM

Tues., Thurs.:
9:30 AM—5:30 PM

**Children's Hour: Tues. &
Thurs.**
11:00 AM

AGES 3-6

Old Fashion Touches

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"If we don't have it-You don't need it"

Hwy. 191/280-Goode Plaza-Mills River

Glenn C. Marlow Elementary School

Absolutely Incredible Kids Day

WOW!! What an amazing turnout. We want to thank everyone who came to celebrate your children. You helped to make your child feel special.

The students enjoyed their "I am an absolutely incredible kid" pins provided by our PTO, as well as, the many activities that teachers had planned with their classes. The children also enjoyed the assembly and prizes we had at the end of the day. But their biggest thrill was receiving the letters you wrote to them and being with you for our cookout.

We had almost 1,000 people for the cookout. Our hats are off to the ladies in the cafeteria feeding such large numbers with such calm and poise. We also want to thank our volunteer parents and staff for all of their support.

Again, thanks for being great and supportive parents.

Kindergarten Registration

It is that time of year again. Yes, we want and need all the 5 year old children in the Marlow community to register for Kindergarten. It is important to get children registered early. This helps Marlow see how many classes are needed, what supplies we need for the new year, and to give the children a little test to see what their needs are.

Early registration also allows the school to see how many teachers and classrooms we need. So, please if you have kindergarten age children or know friends, neighbors, etc. with youngsters please have them register NOW.

Children may register who are 5 years old on or before October 16, 2006.

Kindergarten Registration begins Monday, April 10, 2006 from 8:00 a.m. - 6:00 p.m. in the theatre and will continue on Tuesday and Wednesday, April 12th from 8:00-4:00. We need the following items:

Be sure to bring the following to registration:

1. Official Birth Certificate
- Proof of Residence (utility bill with physical address)

The documents below are desired at registration but required before the child can begin classes.

1. Immunization Record
2. Physical Examination (within 12 months prior to the beginning of school)

NOTE: Social Security Numbers are not required but are desired.

Kindergarten Readiness Rally
Thursday, April 6, 2006
Blue Ridge Mall
4:00-7:00 p.m.

?? Questions: Call Lou Ann Heninger,
698-0674 ??

Transylvania County Heritage Day

Saturday, May 20, 2006
American Legion, 55 E. Jordan Street, Brevard

Hundreds of family history exhibits presented by the 550 members of the Transylvania Genealogy Group

Expanded line-up of great mountain heritage entertainment

Mountain crafters both demonstrating and selling their work

Gillespie rifle exhibit

Delicious barbeque served from 11:00 am—2:00 pm.



NEWS FROM MILLS RIVER LIBRARY ...

* Our circulation improves steadily, and we see first-time patrons every week. We will celebrate our **ONE-YEAR ANNIVERSARY** in May.

* Jere Brittain is donating to the Friends of Mills River Library a portion of the sales of his new CD, "Chestnut Log -- More Songs and Stories of Mills River, North Carolina." The **CD IS NOW AVAILABLE** at Mills River Town Hall.

* On April 4, Mike and Linda Kirchen will present a special **MUSICAL STORYTIME** for pre-schoolers at the library from 11-11:30 AM.

* The Mills River Library continues to need **MORE VOLUNTEERS**. Come by the Library or by Town Hall to fill out a Volunteer Application.

Local Small Business Ads

The Mills River Town Newsletter is printed quarterly: 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 serve 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 and the committee reserves the right to refuse an ad. Both ad and payment will be returned if this occurs.

Committee Spotlight

The **Board of Adjustments** consists of 5 voting members and 2 alternates. The Board is a state-regulated board that meets in quasi-judicial hearings and applies the Town Zoning Ordinance in appeals from decisions of the Zoning Administrator when a property owner requests a variance or conditional use permit. The Board meets the second Tuesday of every second month at 7:00 PM, or more often when caseload deems it necessary. Gary Livingston serves as Chairperson.

If you are interested in serving, please come by Town Hall and fill out an application, or download the form on-line.

As of publication date, there is one vacancy for an alternate on the Board of Adjustments.



Community Support

2006 "Historic Mills River" Calendars are still for sale. The cover features the old Mills River Academy. Proceeds benefit the North and South Mills River Community Club. **\$10.00**

Chestnut Log: MORE SONGS AND STORIES OF MILLS RIVER, NORTH CAROLINA A second collection of original songs, poems and ballads by Jere Brittain with Andrea Brittain and Joanne Brittain continues to celebrate the heritage of Mills River. Proceeds benefit Mills River Friends of the Library. **\$10.00**

Mills River License Tags Show your pride in your community and your support for the library. Proceeds benefit Mills River Friends of the Library. **\$5.00**

ALL ITEMS are AVAILABLE at

**Mills River Town Hall
5046 Boylston Highway
Mills River, NC 28742**

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 10th of each month in the last month of each quarter (March 10, June 10, Sept. 10, Dec. 10). Submit articles in writing to:

Martha M. Orr
Town of Mills River
PO Box 189
Horse Shoe, N.C. 28742

or by email to martha.orr@millsriver.org.

If you need assistance, have questions or need more information, feel free to call Martha Orr at (828) 890-2221.

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**Henderson County
Sheriffs Department
Mills River Division**

by Corporal Ken McCraw

Spring has sprung! With the warmer weather, Mills River will begin to see an increase in our traffic on the highways. As we all know, our roads in Mills River are pipelines to many of our favorite tourist areas. As the volume of traffic increases, please remember to:

PRACTICE SAFE DRIVING

Obey all posted speed limits and obey traffic control devices (red lights and stop signs).

2. Remember to utilize safe driving. Many of our wrecks are caused by speed and *inattentive* drivers; and,

Last, but not least, **BUCKLE UP!!**

**Enjoy the weather and
enjoy Mills River!**

**Henderson County Sheriffs
Department Contacts**



**For Emergencies: 911
Non-Emergencies: 697-4911
NC Highway Patrol: 693-4141
NC Wildlife Resources Commission 662-7137
(to report wildlife violations)**

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