

NEWS RELEASE



*Where the Sun Rises
on the Smokies*

HAYWOOD COUNTY TOURISM DEVELOPMENT AUTHORITY

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HOLIDAY SHOPPING IN HAYWOOD COUNTY MAKES FOR 'MAGICAL' EXPERIENCE

Avoid Stresses of the Season With Getaway to Unique Shopping Destination in Beautiful Setting

HAYWOOD COUNTY, N.C. (DECEMBER 1, 2008)—The holiday season has arrived—and with it, the busiest shopping season of the year: crowded malls, long lines, frustrated fellow shoppers, and testy store employees. Along with the typical headaches, the task of finding the perfect gifts for friends and family only adds to the stress. Enter Haywood County, North Carolina—the ideal antidote to the woes that often accompany the holiday shopping season.

Only a few-hours drive from many locales in the Southeast, Haywood County offers holiday shoppers throughout the region a destination with an enjoyable atmosphere, a variety of locally owned shops, and unique gifts for everyone.

“The area is known for its concentration of artists and craftsmen who are inspired by the beautiful surrounding mountains, creating incredible works of art that cannot be duplicated,” said Carrie Keith, owner of Twigs & Leaves Gallery (www.twigsandleaves.com), which features nature-related art and fine crafts from Southern Appalachia in a two-floor, 3,000-square-foot space within a renovated century-old downtown Waynesville building.

“By doing your holiday shopping here, not only do you avoid the big-city traffic hassles,” Keith said, “but you also get the one-of-a-kind, individually owned shops and galleries that provide personal attention to shoppers, making their experience so much more enjoyable.”

That spirit is definitely alive and well in downtown Waynesville, the county seat, where shoppers will find everything from art galleries to bookstores, home furnishings to clothing, and antiques to toys, as they stroll the brick sidewalks of the quaint Main Street, lined with trees festooned with lights and lamp posts decorated with garland, red ribbon and bows. Several cafés provide the perfect respite—a place to set down the bags and enjoy a cup of coffee.

“It is magical,” said Buffy Phillips Messer, executive director of the Downtown Waynesville Association (www.downtownwaynesville.com), of the holiday shopping experience here, “especially when we have

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snow flurries floating around us.” Instead of frustration and irritation, the relaxing atmosphere and friendly people offer shoppers—visitors and locals alike—to “make memories that last a lifetime.”

The same can certainly be said of the equally enticing Maggie Valley, only a few minutes away from downtown Waynesville. From locally thrown pottery to homemade jams and jellies, unique gifts abound in this picturesque setting far from the blandness of malls and chain stores.

“The small gift shops offer more personalized service and more unique items that can’t be found in the big box stores,” said Allison Carver of Jelly Bellies Mountain Gift Shop in Maggie Valley (www.jellybelliesmaggievalley.com), adding that there is not a more beautiful place to be shopping during the holidays than in the mountains of Western North Carolina.

Maggie Mountaineer Crafts, a must-stop shop for visitors for decades, is the epitome of the variety of local gifts available throughout Maggie Valley, featuring everything from homemade fudge to traditional Native American moccasins.

“Maggie Valley shops have handcrafted items that are unique to the area,” said Sue Pendley, owner of Maggie Mountaineer Crafts (maggiemountaineercrafts.com), adding that the “quaint village atmosphere” makes shopping so much more pleasant.

With more than 180 accommodations (from bed and breakfasts to motels, from cabins to hotels and inns), more than 100 restaurants (with varying cuisines to please any palate), and the Southeast’s top ski area (www.cataloochee.com), this is the perfect time and Haywood County is the perfect place for a winter weekend getaway.

“Think of how much fun it would be to come ski, shop, dine and relax around a crackling fire,” said Lynn Collins, executive director of the Maggie Valley Chamber & Area Visitors Bureau. “A great way to make memories and take the stress out of the holiday shopping experience.”

For more information, visit www.smokeymountains.net: Be sure to check out the “Events/Festivals” page for special events and local traditions taking place this holiday season; for money-saving packages, be on the lookout for “Hot Deals”; and for more about the adventures that await this season, read “Sunrise Stories: Winter Wonderland in the Smokies.”

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Haywood County, North Carolina, “Where the Sun Rises on the Smokies,” is 554 scenic square miles of spectacular country, with beautiful mountains and valleys dotting the landscape. More than a dozen of its mountain peaks soar to elevations of at least 6,000 feet (more than any east of the Mississippi River), and the county is one of the highest, with a mean elevation of 3,600 feet, east of the Rockies. One of its most notable mountain peaks is Cold Mountain—the basis for the award-winning, best-selling novel by Charles Frazier and the ensuing 2003 major motion picture—at 6,030 feet. The county sits at the western edge of the state, with the Blue Ridge Parkway running along its southwestern border. The Great Smoky Mountains National Park and Pisgah National Forest are located in the northern section of the county. Call 800.334.9036 to request a Media Guide.