

BEECH MOUNTAIN EAR

A PUBLICATION OF THE TOWN OF BEECH MOUNTAIN, NORTH CAROLINA
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ELEVATE YOURSELF

Summer 2007

Town Adopts FY 2007-2008 Budget

At their meeting on June 12 the Town Council approved the budget for fiscal year 2007-2008 which runs from July 1 2007 through June 30 2008. The total budget for the new fiscal year is \$6,065,610 which represents an increase of \$677,580 or 11% over fiscal year 2006-2007. The new budget maintains the current tax rate of \$.55/\$100 of valuation, as well as a 5% increase in water and sewer rates and an 8% increase in sanitation fees. A copy of the new rate schedule is included in this edition of the MountainEar. The new budget includes funding for a cost of living increase for Town employees and makes money available for merit increases. It also funds the necessary repairs to Lake Coffey as required by the State and funding for Phase I of the water distribution system improvements. These improvements will see generators installed at the water plant as well as all tank sites, two new pressure reducing stations, and a new water line from the Emerald Mountain Tank. This project will take care of several safety concerns that the Town discovered during its study of the water system. In addition the new budget will fund the purchase of a new garbage truck and one new pickup truck. The Town does not plan to overlay any streets this year, but we do plan to do a lot of patching work on existing paved roads. The new budget includes money to have the roads stripped again next spring. There are no new positions included in the new budget. A copy of the budget is available at Town Hall for your review. If you have any questions, please contact the Town Manager at 828-387-4236.

NCDOT Replaces Culvert on Parkway

As many of you know, the culvert in front of Destiny Inn and Frazier's routinely overflows when there is a heavy rain. The DOT has planned for several years to replace these culverts with one 96 inch culvert. After much delay the project was started on September 10. It was necessary for DOT to close the Parkway in both directions during the construction. Traffic was detoured down Lake Road to Dogwood Lane and then to Charter Hills. We apologize for any inconvenience this may have caused. However this was a much needed repair that will hopefully fix the recurring flooding problems in the area.

Customer Satisfaction Surveys

The Town of Beech Mountain wants to provide a high level of service to our citizens and visitors. In order to do this, we have to determine what services our citizens want and then establish a baseline for how satisfied they are with those services. In order to gauge the current level of satisfaction with our services, the Town will be publishing a series of surveys to our website. Each one of these surveys will be about a different Town service. For example, in February there was a survey about Recreation. In March the survey was concerning police. "Each month's survey will focus on only one Town service. This way we can keep the survey's short and hopefully increase the response rate," said Town Manager Michael Boaz. Once this series of surveys is complete, the Town will use the data to set goals for each department. "We obviously want to maintain or improve our current level of customer satisfaction. The results of the survey will give us that level of satisfaction and will also tell department heads what areas they need to focus on improving. We hope that this will allow us to give our citizens a better value for their tax dollars," added Boaz. The Town hopes to have the surveys complete sometime in early fall. "The Council will be using this information to redirect attention to those areas that need improvement.," said Mayor Rick Owen. If you have any questions about his program, please contact the Town Hall.

New Mapping Service Online

The Town of Beech Mountain has recently contracted with Withers, Ravenel and Associates to provide a better online version of our GIS system. GIS stands for geographic information system and is a software program that draws electronic maps of the Town. Citizens can now go online to view property information, look at the location of water and sewer lines, see how their property is zoned, or find out where their lot is located. This new service replaces the old online mapping software. "This new data should be up to date and will hopefully provide a much higher level of service to our citizens," said Town Manager Michael Boaz. Citizens can go to the Town website and click on Town services and Maps to access the new software.

Town Hires Assistant Building Inspector/Planner

Robert (Bobby) Dziewulski is completing his first year of service to the Town as the Assistant Building Inspector/Planner. Bobby's primary responsibility is to help Keith Cook manage the every increasing number of inspections of new construction. "2006 was a record year of the number of new homes permitted on Beech Mountain and 2007 looks to be even bigger. The Council felt that the time had come to hire someone to help Keith keep up with this mounting number of inspections," said Town Manager Michael Boaz. Bobby had been serving the Town as an intern before being brought on full time. In addition to his inspection duties, Dziewulski is also responsible for enforcing Town ordinances such as regulating the placement of propane tanks. Also, Bobby has been working to update the Town's GIS system and to make better use of it for planning. Finally Bobby has taken on the responsibility of spearheading the Town's strategic planning efforts. (More about strategic planning can be found elsewhere in this issue of the MountainEar). "I am really happy to be here on Beech Mountain. I love living and working in the high country and I hope that I can serve the Town and its citizens well," said Bobby.



Connect CTY Reverse 911

When you returned to Beech Mountain for the summer, many of you may have had a message on your answering machine from the Town. This message was a test of the Town's new Connect CTY Reverse 911 Emergency Notification System. The Town will use this system in the event of an emergency to let everyone know about the situation, how the Town is responding, and what actions, if any, citizens should take. The system will also be used to let citizens know about important events in the community. The Town has already loaded the Beech Mountain phone number for all of our citizens into the system. If you would like an additional phone number added or an email address, please go to the Town's website at www.townofbeechmountain.com and click on the Connect CTY icon. If you have any questions about this system, please do not hesitate to call the Town Hall at 387-4236.

Compact Fluorescent Light bulbs

The new compact fluorescent light bulbs that people are buying now can't be put into the landfill. These bulbs contain mercury and must be disposed of in a special manner. The Town will be providing a blue bin at the recycling center that will be labeled fluorescent bulbs. Please bring your bulbs to the recycling center and put them in this bin. The Town will properly dispose of these bulbs.

Wild Animal Reminders

The Town of Beech Mountain would like to remind you that the animals that live on Beech Mountain are not domesticated and should be treated as wild animals. This includes bear, deer, coyotes, beaver, raccoons, skunk, and other types of animals. The NC Wildlife Commission would like to remind everyone that it is not a good idea to feed any wild animals, even those generally regarded as harmless, like deer. Once the animals become accustomed to people, they will lose their fear of people which is not good for the animal. They will not be afraid to approach humans and areas where humans live. Deer can cause damage to vehicles, plants, and other types of landscaping. There are several things that the wildlife commission recommends when dealing with wild animals. First and foremost is, don't feed them. Second, you should attempt to secure your garbage cans to prevent the animals from getting into them. In addition, the Wildlife Commission recommends motion sensor lights to temporarily scare off wild animals. If you follow the above instructions, you can live in harmony with the wild animals.

Recycling Drop-off Center

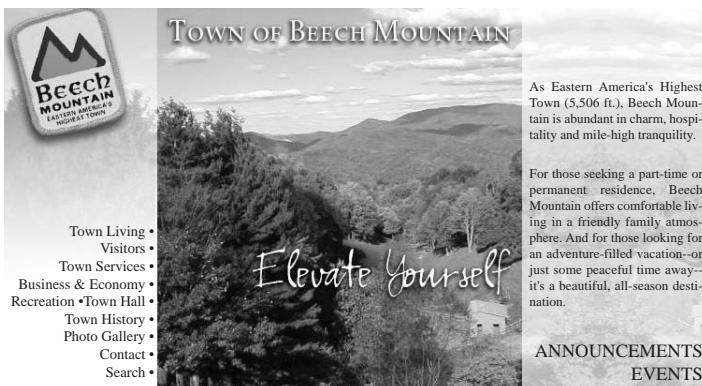
The Town of Beech Mountain operates a recycling drop-off center located on the Beech Mountain Parkway adjacent to the Public Works Building.

Please Recycle the following items:

- Glass bottles and jars. Separate bins are provided for green, brown and clear glass bottles and jars. Please rise all food materials from containers. Discard lids and caps from containers. Please don't include window glass or crystal.
- Aluminum and metal cans. Rinse all food materials from containers. Please, no aluminum foil or pie pans.
- Scrap paper, newspaper and magazines. All paper except foil or cellophane may be deposited in the newspaper/magazine bins. If you bring your papers in plastic or paper bags, please don't throw the bag into the newspaper bin.
- #1 and #2 plastic containers. A bin is provided for these two categories of plastic bottles and containers. Plastics other than #1 or #2 should be deposited with your regular trash.
- Cardboard boxes. Flatten boxes (corrugated cardboard only, please) before placing into proper bin.

Chamber Announcements

The Chamber of Commerce would like to encourage all property owners to become members of the Chamber. The fee is \$25. For more information contact the Chamber office at 828-387-9283. The Chamber is willing to take winter pictures of the homes of summer residents. The residents would then be mailed an 8x11 photo. For more information about this program, contact Peggy at the Chamber. The Chamber office is looking for volunteers to help out in the office and with events. Please contact the Chamber if your are interested. The Chamber has published its Calendar of Events to its website. The address is www.beechmtn.com. Go to the website and check out this Calendar.



The banner features the Town of Beech Mountain logo on the left, a scenic mountain landscape in the center, and text on the right. The text includes the tagline 'Elevate Yourself', a description of Beech Mountain as the highest town in Eastern America, and a list of services. At the bottom right, it says 'ANNOUNCEMENTS EVENTS'.

TOWN OF BEECH MOUNTAIN

As Eastern America's Highest Town (5,506 ft.), Beech Mountain is abundant in charm, hospitality and mile-high tranquility.

For those seeking a part-time or permanent residence, Beech Mountain offers comfortable living in a friendly family atmosphere. And for those looking for an adventure-filled vacation--or just some peaceful time away--it's a beautiful, all-season destination.

Elevate Yourself

ANNOUNCEMENTS
EVENTS

- Town Living •
- Visitors •
- Town Services •
- Business & Economy •
- Recreation • Town Hall •
- Town History •
- Photo Gallery •
- Contact •
- Search •

Coming Soon, the Towns website will be setup to allow for credit card payments.

We have a updated GIS link on our website. It is much better, faster, and offers an updated version of our GIS information.

Our website also has the Towns Code of Ordinances, minutes and agendas for Town meetings, applications for utility service, as well as other useful information.

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Quick Notes

The Beech Mountain Recycling Center hours of operation change seasonally.

Remember utility bills are now sent out on a quarterly basis. Bills should be received in October, January, April, and July.

If you rent your property out for less than 90 days, you owe 6% occupancy tax. Call 828-387-4236 for more information.

Pond Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Upgrade



Elevate your community.

Buckeye Recreation Center One Year Anniversary

On May 1st, the Buckeye Recreation Center celebrated the one year anniversary of providing new opportunities for health, leisure, and recreation to the residents of Beech Mountain. "The Recreation Center has been a great success. We have had more visitors and more people buying passes than we originally expected. Our classes are a big hit, especially spinning and we continue to grow the list of class offerings. We are extremely excited to be open and serving the people of Beech Mountain and the surrounding community," said Recreation Director Craig Colistra. The Center now has over 230 pass holders, each month an average of 600 people visit the Center, and these numbers are growing all the time. The Center is expected to reach the 250 pass holder mark sometime before the end of June. The first year's reports reveal that nearly 1,000 Pass-holders took full advantage of the quality amenities and activities that the facility has to offer since opening to the public.

The Fitness Room, accommodating a diverse line of Nautilus cardio and weight machines, clearly receives the most attention. The Fitness Class Schedule recently added Boot Camp to its wide assortment of classes, which have also received increasing attendance, and include: Pilates, Yoga, Aerobics, Spinning, and Spin & Sculpt. The center also offers complimentary wireless internet services in the Living Room, with library books available for check-out. The costs for an Annual Individual and Family Pass remain at a very low rate of \$75 and \$150, respectively. Being a public facility, anyone has the opportunity to participate by paying daily rates of \$2.00 for general building use which includes the full court Basketball Court and Kid's Playroom (for ages 7 & under); \$5.00 per person for a 1.5 hour reservation of the Indoor Tennis Court; \$5.00 for use of the Fitness Room; or \$8.00 for full access. Also available, for rental, is the Multi-Purpose Room with Catering Area, ideal for parties, receptions, reunions, or meetings.

To meet the recreation needs of the community, staff requests that users inform them of activities they would be interested in participating in at the recreation center if available. If anyone is interested in volunteering, or has a skill or hobby they would be willing to share with others, please call 387-3003 or send an email to buckeyerecreationcenter@townofbeechmountain.com. For the latest class calendar or facility schedule information, visit us at www.townof-beechmountain.com.

Hiking on Beech Offers Something for Everyone

Something for everyone is the best way to describe the twenty miles of designated hiking trails on Beech Mountain, North Carolina. Depending on your desire for an easy stroll through the woods with your family, or for those more adventurous, an eight mile trek through a thousand feet of elevation change, Beech's trails can fulfill your need for adventure. Whether it is for hiking, mountain biking, cross-country skiing or trail runs, we have the trails for you.

These wooded trails can take you through old growth forest, where waterfalls abound, over an old logging road, and beside a railroad grade that once carried the logs harvested on the ski slopes.

We even have a quarter mile paved handicap accessible trail around Lake Coffey for those wanting a little exercise.

As you hike the trails of Beech Mountain, you will follow pathways that wild animals often followed over and over, before the first human set foot on Beech, to find water, mineral licks or the easiest path from their wooded hide-a-ways into the open fields of balds where they grazed on lush vegetation.

All of the designated trails are marked. Maps displayed at each trailhead are easy to follow and include trail descriptions and helpful information.

Fire Department Updates

Numerous homeowners checked their insurance classification after our department's rating drop on March 1st of 2006. To their dismay, many found that their homes were rated at class 9 (which is commonplace in a rural setting). When their agents checked and confirmed the class 6 rating, many savings were in the \$500 to \$800 per year range instead of \$100 to \$200 that we predicted from our class 7 to class 6 drop.

Our only major fire this year was due to a buildup of soot in the flue. Please have your chimney inspected and swept as necessary.

National fire apparatus standards changed dramatically last year. Substantial changes were made in the areas of safety, functionality, and obsolescence. Based on these changes our 1977 reserve pumper should have been taken out of service two years ago and our 1st out 1987 pumper should be changed to reserve status. Our truck committee, headed by George Buesser, engaged a member of the National Fire Apparatus Standards Committee to draft bid specifications and solicit bids from all major manufacturers. Money for this new truck will come from reserves raised by our five year fund raising committee and a low interest loan from the USDA Rural Development Office. Bids should be received and finalized by early fall and our new pumper will be finished in the spring of 2008.

Fire department members are deeply indebted to the "Five Year Fund Raising Committee." Chaired by Ricky Holcombe, this committee was amazing and brought fundraising in our community to new heights by raising over \$500,000. Since 40% of our budget comes from donations, fundraising must go on. A special thank you to Brian Barnes, Tim Smith, and John Carrin for this year's golf and tennis tournaments and Ricky Holcombe for heading up the Saturday night cocktail party and dance. It was a great "Homecoming Weekend" and fundraising event. We hope everyone will join us again next year.

Zoning and Code Enforcement Issues

The Inspections Department wants to help property owners stay in compliance with some of Beech Mountain's unique zoning regulations. A quick check of several items could head off a notice from the Building Inspector. 1) Please make sure that your 911 street address is posted on your property. This is a cheap and easy task. In fact, it is a good idea to post it two or three places around your home. Near the front entrance, on the garbage bin, and on the mailbox are all easily seen locations. Try to think like an emergency service provider trying to locate a house that he or she has never been to before. 2) Make sure your garbage bin is up to code. Specs available at Town Hall and online @ www.townof-beech.com. 3) Garbage cans must have lids that are secured to the container. Wind and animals can remove the tops and garbage goes everywhere! 4) Above ground propane tanks must be screened with lattice fencing and evergreen bushes/trees. 5) Permits are required to cut any tree with a diameter greater than 6 inches, measured 4 ft. above ground level. Call Keith Cook with your questions @ (828) 387-4236. The time you spend could save you big bucks!

Special Pickups

The Town of Beech Mountain provides special pickups of yard waste, as well as other materials prohibited in the landfill, such as old carpet, white goods (old refrigerators, stoves, etc.), and furniture generated by the property owner. Used motor oil can be delivered to the Public Works Department by appointment.

This service is available to property owners only. If you have a contractor replace your roof, repair your deck or do other work which generates waste, part of your contract MUST be for the contractor to remove the old materials.

Special pickups are done on Thursdays. Call 828/387-9282 to arrange for a special pickup, or e-mail Riley Hatch.