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Kayakers below the bridge at Buchanan
Photo: Twin River Outfitters



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On the cover: composite photo of Altec Industries and Dan Jones photo of swimming hole on Jennings Creeek.

Botetourt Living 2015

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County's Doors

Wide Open

for Business

Botetourt County's advantages for business are as rich as its outdoors.

In fact, the County's Botetourt Center at Greenfield combines it all in a park-like setting that can provide on-site training for workers at the Greenfield Education and Training Center while your business facility is being constructed. Moody's estimates the cost of doing business in the county at 15 percent less than the national average. Add to that a labor market of 350,000 workers, noted on the County's extensive online site.

The County's three other business parks are EastPark, Vista Corporate Park and Jack C. Smith Industrial Park, all with strong residents.

Parts manufacturer investment pays off.

Dynax America anchors EastPark and is in the process of a \$32.6 million expansion expected to create 75 new jobs. The company, headquartered in Japan, employs more than 600 people at the plant. The new equipment investment alone is expected to exceed \$23 million.

The project demonstrates the County's and Commonwealth's commitment to business growth. A Governor's Opportunity Fund grant of \$225,000 was matched with cash and incentives from the County, County Administrator Kathleen Guzi said. An additional \$250,000 performance grant came from the Virginia Investment Partnership Program, along with other state and local incentives.

Associate Adam Wallace has high view from crane at Altec Roanoke plant in Greenfield

Dynax serves firms such as Ford, GM Powertrain, Chrysler, Daimler, Allison Transmission and AW North Carolina.



Groundbreaking for Dynax expansion

of job opportunities in sales, engineering, information technology and human resources as well as production positions for welders, machine operators, electricians and painters.

The company has been an especially good match for welding students from Botetourt County Technical Education Center (BTEC). It also has been a major supporter of the local United Way, raising more than \$100,000 for that organization in 2014.

On a growth track.

Altec Industries Roanoke, the County's second largest employer, offers a wide range

The company's factory-direct crane manufacturing and assembly plant in Botetourt

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Center at Greenfield in Daleville was built in 2001 to engineer, manufacture and assemble aerial devices and later added telescopic boom truck cranes and has recently expanded to include large transmission derricks.



Gala Industries display at trade show

Mining legacy includes brick.

The county has a long mining history and remains home to Virginia's only active cement plant, Roanoke Cement at Troutville. Brick maker General Shale and Boxley Materials in Blue Ridge and Carmeuse Lime & Stone in Buchanan are also long-time contributors to the industry and the tax base.

General Shale has been part of the Blue Ridge community since 1988. The facility manufactures 38 brick colors in six sizes for markets in seven states and Washington, D.C.

It is the exclusive production site for manufacturing Endurance RS4™ Structural Brick, which eliminate the need for load-bearing wood or steel framing and are engineered to meet requirements in areas prone to high winds, tornadoes and earthquakes.



Don Ballard, district sales manager, Virginia Division, General Shale



The Blue Ridge facility operates a specialized sawing operation used to create the thin brick products commonly used in remodeling and interior renovation projects.

"We are currently working on some new products to add to our production line," says Don Ballard, district sales manager, Virginia Division. "These products are being developed to meet demand for new brick colors in our Richmond and Tidewater markets."

When John Alderson started his independent insurance business, he had a plan: Put people first, and keep it simple. It didn't hurt that the roots of his family in Botetourt County are about as deep as they can go.

After working a couple of years for another company, he opened Alderson Insurance in 1967 in a one-room office with no bathroom in Fincastle. By that time, he had been married to Doris, "a Roanoke City girl," since 1956.

"We have always been very conservative as a business, and we spent years coming to represent more and more companies in the 18 states where we are now licensed agents. As we added each new company, we grew in volume, which is what we wanted. The new company received a profit each year, which is what they wanted."

Alderson's ancestors first came to Botetourt in 1772, living on part of the 165 acres the family occupies. The original John Alderson came from Rockingham County; one of his sons was Curtis Alderson, a member of the clergy for whom Alderson, W. Va. was named. Now three generations live on the farm on Shavers Farm Road, and two of them are in the insurance business.

Alderson's business can insure anything from a \$20-million industrial building to a homeowner's residence, but, at heart, he is a Botetourt farmer.

"I'm a farmer with a wife, Doris, and kids, John Mark, my eldest and Curtis, and two grandsons; that's who I am," the 81-year old Alderson says.

"In the county we have it all—the mountains on both sides and the James River running down the middle, many resources for industry. But it is the people here that I find are different from other places; I find that they are the core of business."

Some things have changed dramatically in Botetourt County, Alderson says.

"When I was a child, there were 50 or 60 dairies in the county; now there are six or seven. There was a chicken hatchery and a processing plant. Now the county officials are wisely trying to find ways to put to work more of the excellent agricultural resources Botetourt County shares and to increase agricultural production. Most of the county is blessed with a very fertile limestone soil with 38 inches of rain a year in a gentle climate. Could you wish for more than that?"



*John and
Doris Alderson*

The Alderson family farm includes 80 Angus cattle and will continue to be a working farm even when he converts the property to a permanent conservation area this summer.

"That will protect the land in perpetuity, but it doesn't mean that there can be no development at all. We, for instance, have added recently a new 100-foot machine shed to the property."

Alderson goes in to work each day, but leaves most of the heavy lifting to "the very talented and hardworking people here" while tending to his other interests. He is a deacon and teacher at Mill Creek Baptist Church, serves as a member of the Botetourt County School Board and is co-chairman of a \$10 million campaign to build a new YMCA in the county. The campaign had \$6.2 million in donations and pledges in March.

"It is important to recognize where we are," Alderson says, noting that Botetourt County has abundant water, large Appalachian Power growth in Cloverdale, plenty of natural gas access, two railroads, a low tax rate of 72 cents, a burgeoning health center and plenty of open land.

"Here in the southern Shenandoah Valley, we are on the threshold of a great burst of growth; we are nearly set to take off," Alderson says.

50 years

of growth
and counting

General Shale's Blue Ridge plant has provided support to Habitat for Humanity, the Boy Scouts of America, the Botetourt High School golf team and Botetourt County recreational youth sports programs.



Robot "hands" prepare to lift finished brick at General Shale

Some of the product goes to companies for use in animal food, says Clay Coleman, manager.

Carmeuse is a major donor of land and funds for the construction of the county's seventh access ramp to the James River and to a parking area for vehicles and trailers.

Highway company to redo I-81 exit.

Branch Highways of Roanoke won a \$17.9-million contract to turn the intersection of four highways in Botetourt County into what County officials

plan as a gateway to the area that removes a host of traffic problems. The area around Exit 150 was a magnet for traffic, especially large trucks using a truck stop there. Architectural renderings of the new area show essentially a green gateway into the county at Cloverdale Road, U.S. Route 11 and 220 North. County planners hope the new look and ease of access will increase the demand for nearby business spaces.

Virginia Department of Transportation engineers expect to complete the major part of the project by fall of 2017.

Limestone company aids river access.

Carmeuse Lime & Stone has 34 employees who mine stone for chemicals. The plant dates to 1868, but boasts the latest technology. The current operation uses X-ray technology to determine the chemical makeup of mined material to identify its elements so the final product can be directed to the company needing it. For example, the high-calcium stone is sold for use in power plants where it is used to clean the flue stacks.



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Hauler thriving, hiring.

Lawrence Companies boasts new logo

Lawrence Companies, which dates to 1932, has a new logo designed to show off its moving-ahead attitude. The company employs 300 and works with 200 contractors. It expanded into new quarters recently and advertised for a Driver

Recruiter to help meet its increased need for drivers.

"We haul things most companies shy away from, from cement to grandfather clocks," says Barry Barnes, vice president of sales and marketing.

Lawrence's largest client is Yokohama Tire in nearby Salem, but also hauls for the county's largest employer, Dynax America, and its reach spans the country. The company also bought another Case construction dealer, this one in Suffolk.

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New alliance increases market.

Virginia Transformer Corp., which has 84 employees at a manufacturing facility in Troutville, has become the nation's second-largest provider of custom engineered power transformers through an alliance with Caravels LLC. Caravels, owned by Neerja Gursahaney, daughter of Virginia Transformer President Prab Jain, has purchased a large transformer manufacturer in Rincon, Ga. VT also has offices in Idaho, Mexico and

The traditional story of 'local boys make good' met reality in Protos Security, housed at Daleville Town Center. Founders Chris Copenhaver and Patrick Henderson were raised in the area and both graduated in 1999 from Virginia Military Institute in nearby Lexington. The two got to know each other well at VMI, meeting in the gym for workouts and often talked about what kind of work they would do. They were firm that just punching a clock without exercising their creativity would be the worst possible route in life.

"We've got to start a business, our own company," Copenhaver recalls saying. He majored in business and economics. Henderson, an engineering major, agreed, and soon it became an assumption that there would be a company in their future. That company is Protos Security, which offers electronic surveillance of security guard operations for corporate clients.

Protos can track tardiness, keep a record of property checks and log incidents that occurred during a shift, day or month, information previously lost by traditionally small loss prevention staff. In addition, the men built relationships with 2,000 security service vendors in the U.S., Canada and Puerto Rico and matched them to corporate clients. Now, 20 employees work around the clock from Daleville Town Center to keep corporations informed about events on their properties.

"These services are for the corporation with a national footprint," Henderson says. "Our passion is hearing someone's problems because in those problems we see an opportunity to serve in an industry that has been broken for too long. Large retailers often compliment how well our products fit their needs."

Protos now lists many well-known corporations as clients. Among them are Advance Auto, Walgreens, Sears, HH Gregg and Gander Mountain. Some, such as Walgreens, use Protos' services at locations outside the United States.

In the event of an unexpected or dangerous event at a corporate location, Henderson says the use of the 911 call is primary for the company. But Protos serves well as a supplementary resource, continuing to collect and store data that at a future date might be useful for the defense of legal matters.

"We have moved to the point where we can provide new services like letting guards check in via smartphone, record mileage covered during a shift and deliver reports by mobile device," Henderson says. "We can provide supplementary support during unexpected events, and, if desired, share some data anonymously with other clients or non-clients in the area if it might help prevent further problems."



Keeping tabs

on corporate property

Robot used for virtual meetings

"We believe we are a unique business in Botetourt County, for the simple reason that we create revenues and bring them into the County's economy, but we don't send money out anywhere we go," Chris says. "We collect data and manage it for our clients in real time. There is a big demand in business for this kind of service and we are helping meet it."

Henderson, a member of the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce board, lives with his family in the county. Copenhaver, who lives in Charleston, S.C., travels often to Daleville Town Center office, but when he cannot be there he maintains the connection with a virtual presence device manufactured by Double Robotics of California. The battery-powered, gyro-controlled robot carries a tablet screen projecting a live feed of Copenhaver and allows him to roll through the office to carry on conversations with employees as though he were there. Between the two, they spend about 25 percent of their year on the road, often attending trade shows to encourage sales of their security products.

What's next for this talented team of application designers?

"Mediocrity is one of our greatest fears, so we operate as if we haven't arrived yet. That means we are never complacent with our feet up on the desk. We hire good people and let them lead in such a way that we can bring added value to our clients," Copenhaver says.

Patrick Henderson and Chris Copenhaver



When Susanna Thornton came back to Botetourt County, she was a little uncertain what her future would be here, but she was certain it was where she wanted to be. After 10 years traveling and studying sustainable agriculture, she had decided it was time to begin her own business.

"What I wanted for my life was to be closer to my family, and the decision was made when I came back for Thanksgiving in 2014," she said. "My family had long farmed our 300 acres under what would be called organic farming now — essentially my parents used sustainable practices all those years and protected the land."

Thornfield Farm is at Fincastle on the Blue Ridge Turnpike.

To get started, Thornton installed a 30-by-90 foot "hoop house" to give early plantings a degree of protection from the winds of February. A heated 20-by-32 propagation greenhouse was already on the property.

"Farming was in my blood from a very young age, and I liked outside work with my hands," Thornton says. "I had worked in several industries, but it was a chance meeting with friends who are organic farmers in Maine that taught me what I needed to create my own future."

"To be a farmer, you have to really like to work hard, and there are a lot of seven-day weeks. But it's part of the life integrated with family and work. Maybe I'm a little crazy, but I love it. A friend said to me once, 'Farming isn't a job; it's an aggressive hobby.'"

Those earlier years of experience made it clear that it was one thing to farm for your own consumption and sharing with others, yet quite another to farm for profit. Thornton will hire a helper for the busiest parts of the summer and assistance with major building and field projects is always available from her parents, John and Linda.

This year, she is working to get part of the farm certified as organic and planting more than 40 crops and varieties, including specialties like purple and yellow carrots and cheddar cauliflower.

Thornton has 1.5 acres of vegetable production, as well as 20 varieties of cut flowers to sell to local florists. "This is part of my commitment to growing locally, selling locally and keeping the money local." Her Farm Share program had 35 customers by March and could accommodate about five more.

"Our products are harvested within 24 hours of pickup by the client wherever we host a Farm Stand on Tuesdays, Thursdays or Saturdays;



Susanna Thornton

it doesn't get much fresher than that," she says. She takes products to Community School and Sweet Donkey Coffee Shop in nearby Roanoke, to Hollins University during the week, and to the Grandin Community Market in Roanoke on Saturdays. Customers can sign up on her website to get text notifications about which products she will bring to the markets.

Thornton says the business will grow cautiously as its customer base grows. At some future point, she might add a few sheep, as her parents did "but I want to get the other things in place here first. Thornfield Farm is already a success: I'm here and I'm happy, so that's step one."



*Childhood tractor
still a favorite*

She Brought
**Farming
Skills**
Back Home

India and has built transformers for the Tower of Terror at Disney World, Orlando, and for the Washington Metropolitan Transit System. In 2013, Virginia Transformer invested \$4.5 million to complete its Troutville facility.

Botetourt County 'well-banked'

The Bank of Botetourt expects to open an office at Daleville Town Center in the fall of 2015. It is the first financial institution at the Center, and the Bank of Fincastle and Freedom First Credit Union are nearby. Altogether, eight banks and two credit unions serve the area. These include BB&T, Valley Bank, Farm Credit of the Virginias, HomeTrust Bank, First Citizens, SunTrust and Member One Federal Credit Union.

Two of the banks, Bank of Botetourt and Bank of Fincastle, have a history in the county dating to the 1800s. The Bank of Botetourt's main, and largest, office remains in Buchanan where it was founded 116 years ago. That office has just been remodeled, says Lyn Hayth, president and CEO of the bank, which with \$315 million in assets ranks as a mid-size community bank. It employs about 100 people and has offices in Rockbridge County, Roanoke and at Smith



Bank of Fincastle's annual race

Mountain Lake. Electronic banking makes up three-fourths of its branch business. Hayth even tweets, but he says: "I don't have a lot of followers."

The Bank of Fincastle dates to 1875 and counts among its seven locations in the county a branch at The Glebe retirement

community in Daleville. Its assets are listed at \$219 million. This bank employs close to 70 people and has a reputation for distributing tempting treats along with banking services. As a sponsor of activities at Daleville Town Center, bank volunteers hand out free ice cream. Each branch has an oven for preparing the fresh baked cookies given to customers on Fridays, and the hot dogs served at the 2014 Customer Appreciation Day total 2,900, according to Mary Ann Layman Miller, vice president for marketing. The bank's largest community effort, however, remains its annual fall 5K and 10K run, now in its 29th year.

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Chartered in 1875, The Bank of Fincastle was a reincarnation of the Farmer's Bank of Fincastle, which collapsed in the 1860s along with the Confederate States of America. One of only 52 banks operating statewide in 1885, The Bank of Fincastle likely began in a one-story brick building on Main Street in Fincastle between the old post office and where "Stoner's Store" stood. The present Fincastle headquarters was constructed in 1908 at a cost of \$4,373. In 1969, the bank opened its first branch in Daleville, followed by branches in Blue Ridge, Troutville, and Cloverdale. The Bedford branch opened in 2005.

The true history of The Bank of Fincastle is a history of people. A strong local identity and continuity of leadership have made the bank an integral part of family and business life in our community. There have been only eight presidents in the history of the bank. It is said the bank's first vice-president, Mr. S. B. Smith, kept a diary so detailed and accurate, including births and deaths, that it served as proof of events not otherwise publicly recorded. We still maintain a continued interest in our customers today.

In our efforts to support the community, we host an annual 5K and 10K run. Beginning in 1987, the first run had just over 150 runners. Today, we have over 1,000 registered participants. This event supports our local schools with team building, health awareness as well as providing scholarship opportunities.



By implementing the StudentSave Program, The Bank of Fincastle has given students the opportunity to experience first hand how a bank operates. Students learn how to open savings accounts, deposit money and calculate the interest earned.

By pairing up with a local non-profit, EventZone, we have helped to establish a summer concert series that is held on Thursdays May-September. These events allow local vendors to participate and promote their products while bringing the community together as a whole. The Bank of Fincastle provides free ice cream to those in attendance. The "Ice Cream Socials" are staffed by bank employees along with Colonial Mortgage and Colonial Title employees. Although the free ice cream is limited to the summer concert series, we also give out "FREE DOUGH" on Fridays. We began serving cookies at all of our full service branches back in 2009.

Today, The Bank of Fincastle offers all the benefits of a full service bank, yet it is the special relationship between bank employees and customers that continues to set it apart. Our heritage is personal commitment. That's a value that never goes out of style.

INSIDE LOOK at The Bank of Fincastle Subsidiaries

The Bank of Fincastle has two major subsidiaries in Botetourt County. Opening their doors in 1997, the first being, Colonial Mortgage Company, Nikki Griffin is the Vice President and Manager. Specializing exclusively in residential mortgages and having a full complement of loan options to suit everyone's needs. Competitive interest rates, competent, friendly service with many loan options. Including: conventional Fixed Rate Mortgages with as little as 5% down payment, FHA, VA, and USDA Loans, Adjustable Rate Mortgages, Construction to Permanent Financing, Jumbo Loans, Interest Only Loans, and many others.

The second, Colonial Title and Settlement began in 2005, Loretta Bourne is the General Manager and Underwriter. The main goal of a title and settlement company is to try to make the settlement process go as smoothly as possible. Handling purchases and refinances of residential, commercial and investment properties. Services also include title searches, title insurance, ensuring the deed of trust is accurate, coordinating property inspections, homeowner's insurance and payoffs. Focusing and taking the time to sit down with customers to explain all documents they are signing is extremely important. Next, recording the documents in the jurisdiction the property is located. Lastly, the proceeds are distributed.

Pictured: (left to right) Mary Ann Layman Miller, Nikki Griffin, Loretta Bourne

County studies ways to grow agronomics.

Recognizing the enormous contribution to the county's financial strength and stability made by agriculture and related business in the past, County officials have undertaken a study to help it plot a course for the increased growth in all things agricultural in Botetourt.

The \$20,000 study, half-funded by the County, is being conducted by The Weldon Cooper Center for Public Service at the University of Virginia. It will answer what technology and research and which crops and farming methods will enhance conventional farming.

The study will create a database of farms in the county and how future policy changes could help them. "I want to focus on new directions, including what we are not doing now that we could do," says Supervisor John Williamson.

Some farms have taken early steps on their own, including joining the Fields of Gold AgriTourism Program that encourages farmers to develop new lines of business. By including such things as agricultural tourism, farms can strengthen and stabilize their financial position.



One of many scenic hayfields in Botetourt County

Farmers Market is growing popularity.

The county has a long history of agricultural commerce. Now, agriculture is the developing force for more recent events. Not long ago, several farmer's markets in the county consolidated on a generous space at Daleville Town Center, where they have continued to flourish and expand as Botetourt Farmers Market Inc., according to Dayna Patrick, president.

The Farmers Market is a community-based non-profit

venture, made up mainly of local farmers and artisans who provide meats, eggs, dairy products, breads, pastries, cakes, cookies and a host of wines, jams, flowers, textiles, woodcrafts, repurposed items and scores of other artisan crafts and foods. Special events are held throughout the May through October season. The market is usually open from 8 a.m. to noon and often includes activities such as live music, pony rides and antique car and firetruck displays.

The Botetourt Farmers Market is located just off Route 220, two miles north of Interstate 81/Exit 150. For information, visit www.facebook.com/BotetourtFarmersMarket, or email Manager@botetourt-farmersmarket.org to learn about vendor opportunities.

A Buchanan Farmers Market is open from 8 a.m. – 1 p.m. on Saturdays at the Buchanan Common grounds.

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Daleville more vibrant than ever.

Daleville isn't incorporated as a town, but this section of the county is one of its more vibrant areas, mainly because it is where so much recent growth has taken place. Botetourt Commons shopping center, very close to a major Interstate 81 exit, has a full contingent of restaurants and retail along with a grocery store anchor. Its shops include Penelope, which brought upscale women's clothing and jewelry to the area, and Outdoor Trails, which carries everything important for the Appalachian Trail nearby and even provides a shuttle for hikers who want to come in for supplies and entertainment.

A short distance down Route 220 (Roanoke Road), the Daleville Town Center collection of apartments, homes and commercial space complex also includes restaurants and retail and is home to regular music events and a seasonal Farmers Market.

Flying Mouse Brewery hosts Saturday events and a family-friendly environment.



Stephanie Rogol, owner of Town Center Tap House at Daleville Town Center, recently opened Tizzzone Wood Fired Kitchen and Wine Bar. "I'd like to think I added another reason to live in Daleville," she says.

Nikki Westerlund, bartender at Tizzzone



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The new location shares a kitchen with the Tap House next door but has a different personality. It has been designed as a quiet hangout, no sporting events on TV screens, but instead book club gatherings and Saturday morning story times. Seating has been designed for both communal and private groups. Tizzzone serves wines from the three area vineyards -- Virginia Mountain, Blue Ridge and Fincastle -- and has a long list of beers and ciders from Virginia brewers. The menu offers pizza and salads and a small list of after-5 dinner specials, announced daily on the chalk board.



*Three Li'l Pigs sampler
in Botetourt Commons*



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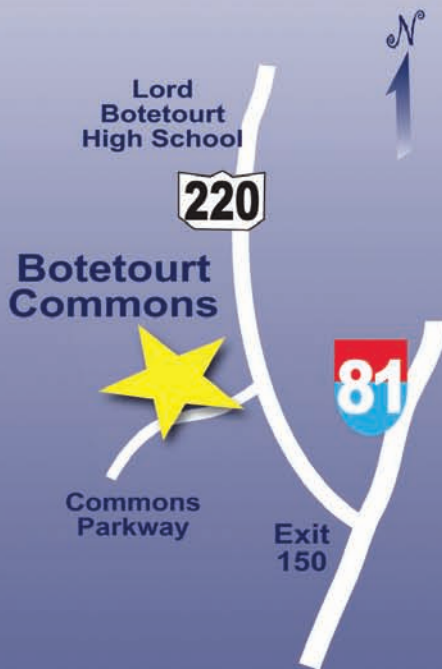


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Judy Carter, Assistant Manager at Penelope

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Fincastle's where history was made.

Across the road from Daleville Town Center, a Food Lion grocery anchors Orchard Market Place Shopping Center that includes a CVS Pharmacy and a Carilion pediatric clinic.

Along an approximately 3.5 mile stretch of Route 220, Bellacino's Pizza & Grinders serves up a variety of foods, Cupcake Cottage sells gifts along with sweets, Ikenberry Orchards has an array of locally supplied foods along with gift items and plants.



Just off U.S. Route 220 in this stretch are The Glebe retirement community with its 200-plus residents, and Ashley Plantation Golf Club, the only 27-hole public access course in the Roanoke Valley.

The Town of Fincastle is filled with history. Courthouse Square, where the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce is housed in the historic jail building, includes the Botetourt County Courthouse and the Botetourt County Historical Society Museum. Documents in the courthouse date to 1770 and include many signed by Thomas Jefferson. Items in the museum go back to the 1740's.

For a brief time, Fincastle was the seat of government for a territory including what is now Kentucky and a good portion of West Virginia, Ohio, Indiana, Illinois and some of Wisconsin. Volunteers provide genealogy services at the Courthouse and expert assistance is

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available at the nearby Fincastle Library branch, which has a room devoted to genealogy. The library has a new large-format scanner and a new digital collection of African American research.

The community keeps up a more-than-century-old tradition of midnight bell ringing from Courthouse Square, and many residents, and lawyers, occupy properties listed on an historic register. Not so old, but certainly different, is the miniature Sunshine House, which can be rented for tea parties and other intimate events.



*Botetourt County Historical Society Museum
Photo: Dan Jones*

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The town also is the new home to Heritage Family Market, an Amish-operated store drawing customers from all over. Nearby Attic Productions stages a regular stream of plays in its stand-alone theater on Route 220 and several retail stores are clustered near the entrance to downtown. Santillane event and wedding venue, housed in a home that is on the National Register of Historic places, is nearby as is the Botetourt Golf & Swim Club.

*Lawyers' row
in Fincastle*

Two of Botetourt County's three vineyards – Fincastle Vineyard & Winery and Virginia Mountain Vineyards – have Fincastle addresses. (Blue Ridge Vineyard is in Eagle Rock.)



Buchanan nourished by the James.

Buchanan, a major access spot for the James River's numerous water activities, has its first town manager. Mary Zirkle has been spending time polling area businesses to learn what the town can do for them and also doing some face lifting throughout the community. Buchanan, with cherry blossoms rivaling those in the nation's capital and a broad variety of events, has become a weekend destination.

Events range from Second Friday's cruise-ins to a day honoring the birth of author Mary Johnston (145th this year) and a holiday tree lighting ceremony.

"We want to grow the river aspect, and we continue to build out at the park, adding a pavilion," she said. The town park hosts annual Civil War reenactments, which have grown each year. One of Buchanan's more popular events, Mountain Magic, will also move from Main Street to the park this year.

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10 West Main Street, Fincastle (across from the Courthouse)

Fincastle is renowned for its history, and some of that history flows through the family of Willie Simmons. Each New Year's Eve, Simmons continues the generations-long tradition when a male member of his family ascends the bell tower of the Fincastle Courthouse, shotgun in hand, to fire a round at midnight, officially bringing in the town's New Year.

Simmons also has continued another family interest, woodworking. His father for many years repaired, refinished and built furniture, and Simmons worked alongside him.

"Those are some of my earliest memories, helping my dad in that kind of work," Simmons says. In 1974, his father bought a building on U.S. 220 and moved the furniture and woodworking operation to it. The building now houses several tenants in addition to the woodworking shop.

Simmons produces both architectural and functional pieces intended "to be practical and useful to someone, as well as being attractive to view." Simmons considers his woodworking "a profitable hobby; I am a craftsman, rather than an artist. For me, woodturning is a form of stress relief." Still, he has earned a spot on the regular Open Studios artists' tours held in Botetourt County.

Two years ago he launched a website that sells some of the hundreds of objects he has made. Among them are several forms and sizes of wooden salt-and-pepper shakers and pepper mills and seam rippers sporting wood grain handles. The seam rippers were featured in *Threads* magazine, resulting in a stream of orders.

Throughout the year, he attends five or six arts and crafts events to market his woodwork. Much of his business is in the architectural "turnings" commissioned by area lumber suppliers for their customers. He has done pieces for Hotel Roanoke and, more recently, for the remodeling of Natural Bridge Hotel. "Creating objects like finials to match old, damaged originals is reproducing history," Simmons says. He confesses he gets pleasure out of seeing his work in a public place.

Simmons has learned his work has found its way as gifts to England, Ireland, China, New Zealand and other countries. "I am proud of that," he says.



Handmade shakers

Woodworker Follows

Family Traditions

The bulk of Simmons's work time is spent at the lathe, surrounded by antique and current woodworking tools and pieces of wood ready for his touch. Among the woods in waiting are several burls, the large fungi found on the trunks and limbs of trees. One large piece of manzanilla root burl has been sitting in his shop for six years.

"Burls are very difficult to work with, as the grain goes in many directions within a single piece," he says. "Getting started is the hardest part. I spend a lot of time procrastinating as I think about how to go about using a piece like that."



Willie Simmons



Buchanan, readily accessible from Interstate 81 and the Blue Ridge Parkway, has some 1,200 residents and one of the largest collections of historic stores and houses in the region. Main Street is home to several antique shops; the town was recognized for its wealth of antiques shopping destinations by Fodor's Travel.

*Buchanan Carnival fireworks
Photo: Ed McCoy*



*4th of July Parade
in Buchanan*





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The restored Buchanan Theater offers first-run movies along with specialty productions and concerts, and fans say the freshly popped corn from the antique popper is the best.

Twin River Outfitters, which provides river outings and equipment of all types, is headquartered near Buchanan.

Troutville welcomes 'thru-hikers'

Troutville has one of the most active parks anywhere. The park's numerous play stations, covered pavilions and real caboose draw crowds year round whenever weather permits. Thru-hikers coming off the nearby Appalachian Trail pick up packages at the post office, camp in the park and shower and do laundry at the Troutville Fire Department across the street. Troutville became an official Appalachian Trail Community in 2011.

The town's Thriftway Store with its 1950's décor attracts locals and travelers alike as does Pomegranate Restaurant, which offers fine dining. A year ago, Flying Mouse Brewery opened just off Route 11 on Virginia 76, which is part of the Trans-America bike route. The brewery offers a variety of events including live music and food tastings and has canned two brands of beer for sale at local stores.




Antique cars reign on Second Friday's in Buchanan



*Civil War weekend
Photo: Robert London*

The Swinging Bridge remains the town's centerpiece. Its large stone footers were constructed in 1851 as part of a five-cent toll bridge by the Buchanan Turnpike Company. Zirkle hopes to expand parking in this area of town as well as the river access areas.



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Prominent in town are two furniture and gift shops, Apple Barn II Gifts & Collectibles and Cackleberry Ridge. Cat's Meow items and art work from P. Buckley Moss can be found at Apple Barn II.

A short distance off the town's main drag, Woodpecker Ridge Nature Center offers a self-guided look at plants and lots of spots to relax with binoculars to bird watch. Coming into town means

passing by Cracker Barrel Old Country Store and Restaurant with its always good food, and at this location, superb views of the mountains from the porch rockers.



New villas climb hillside in downtown



Troutville Town Park popular with its picnic, play facilities



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Chamber Notes

Welcome to the new Botetourt Living magazine.

We've put a new spin on a traditional idea and hope you enjoy it. In the 2015 edition of Botetourt Living, you'll find a mere sampling of all the county has to offer to everyone who lives, works, visits or does business in the county. I encourage you to look not only at the magazine, the gorgeous pictures and enticing stories: Look around you every day and everywhere. Our county is full of the best of "living" you will find anywhere.

We brag about a retail community that offers antiques to cutting-edge art and fashion; a business community thriving in a positive environment. Botetourt's quality of life lures and retains talented workers for today; education prepares a strong workforce for tomorrow. We're a vibrant community with outdoor recreation and indoor wellness options. We savor home-cooking, traditional family food and the newest in dining concepts.

For long-time residents of Botetourt County say "There's no place like home." Newcomers breathe a sigh of relief at the comfort of their new home. Those passing through often leave with a desire to return, if not for good, then at least for a while.

For me, living in Botetourt County has been a coming home.

One of the first artifacts I discovered in the Chamber of Commerce office when I arrived in May 2014, is the 1945 Chamber Directory. Artifacts are common in a structure — the Old Jail for those familiar with Courthouse Square in Fincastle — nearly 120 years old and considered a new building.

The 70-year old directory describes Botetourt County on the cover leaf as:

Beautiful – Bounteous – Historic
Diversified Agriculture, Industrial Sites
Abundant Water Power Good Rail and Highway Transportation
Mild Climate, Low Taxes, Native Labor

Today "Native Labor" would read "strong workforce," but the rest could easily appear in a Chamber brochure or the County's economic development literature. True then, true now.

The "Purposes and Organization" of the chamber has changed little:

"Advancing agricultural . . . commercial, industrial . . . and social interests in Botetourt County." Membership was — and still is — open to "any person, association, corporation, institution or

partnership" paying dues. (The five-dollar dues have risen a bit in 70 years, however.)

Out of the list of the board of directors, the executive committee, committee chairmen (chairpersons now) and members jump familiar family names: Layman, Brugh, Camper, Carpenter, Dodd, Lawrence, Ikenberry and Burhman — names prevalent in today's chamber directory.

Paging through the nine pages of tiny type at the nearly 300 names — generally individuals were listed rather than organizations — another name jumped out at me: J.B. Myers of Fincastle. Throughout my childhood, I heard stories of my great-grandfather Jesse and his wife Bessie running a store at the corner of Catawba and Blacksburg roads. For a time my grandparents Vester and Lena Stanley also ran the store.

Though the building is long gone, I felt a curtain of time part. Jesse died long before I was born. I know him only from photographs where he is the so-called "carbon copy" of my uncle Sylvester. I vaguely remember Bessie as an elderly woman who dipped snuff, (which her great-great-grandsons think is pretty cool.)

Reading the directory listing for J.B. Myers I felt the tug of family roots. Though my mother Lydia Louise Stanley (later Vest) graduated from Troutville High School and left for nursing school in 1951, my grandparents stayed in the area until the 1960s. Plenty of cousins still reside here.

The 1945 directory, not unlike the one you will find in this issue of Botetourt Living, clarified that what felt like a career opportunity a year ago is now a more of personal mission to make Botetourt County my county: this beautiful, bounteous, historic county you will read of in this magazine.

And I am especially proud that I am "advancing agricultural . . . commercial, industrial . . . and social interests in Botetourt County" through the "purposes and organization" of the Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce.

Doloris E. Vest
Executive Director
Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce



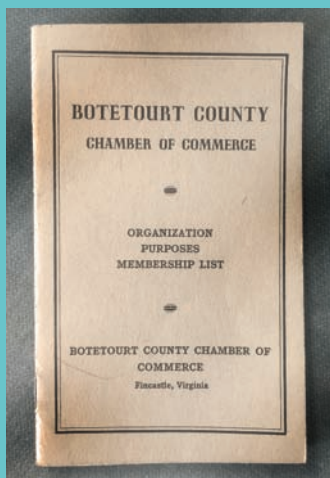
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Groundbreakings and ribbon-cuttings are some of our favorite activities at the Chamber

At right, a copy of a 1945 Botetourt County Chamber of Commerce Directory



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Kirby-Vass Insulation, Inc.	540-992-3960	www.kirby-vassinsulation.com	
Lanford Brothers Company, Inc.	540-992-2140	www.lanfordbros.com	
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Structures Design/Build	540-774-4800	www.structuresdb.com	
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Blue Stone Block Supermarket	540-982-3588	www.bluestoneblock.com	
Coker Composting & Consulting	540-890-1086	www.cokercompost.com	
Moyer Consulting Services	540-354-8531	www.moyer-consulting.com	DENTISTS / ORTHODONTISTS
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Botetourt Technical Education Center	540-473-8216	www.bcps.k12.va.us	
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Buchanan Elementary	540-254-2084		
Buchanan Library	540-254-2538	www.rvl.info	
Central Academy Middle School	540-473-8333		
Cloverdale Elementary	540-992-1086		
Colonial Elementary	540-977-6773		
Dabney S. Lancaster Community College	540-863-2819	www.dsicc.edu	
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About this Directory

This list is presented as a courtesy and resource guide. It is not inclusive of all chamber members. For example, individual members and members without verified or provided contact information are not included. Also, members who were not active or current within the term and effective at time of publication are not included. Data was obtained from the chamber roster; we regret any errors or omissions and cannot guarantee complete accuracy or latest iterations. Botetourt Chamber of Commerce does not endorse companies and organizations, but recognizes the value of membership and provides the directory as a service. The Chamber also recognizes the many other businesses, organizations, product and service providers that contribute to our County and region, and encourages readers to always consider our local business community whenever possible.



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County students **Spot On**

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quality education

When Calab Peery gets out of classes at James River High School shortly after noon each day, he heads to work at Altec Industries in Daleville, the county's second largest industrial employer. Peery, 18, who graduates this year, has attended regular classes at James River High in Buchanan, taken welding classes at the Botetourt Technical Education Center (BTEC) near Fincastle and was in dual enrollment programs at Dabney Lancaster Community College in Clifton Forge to complete his welder's certifications.

**From student to
welder same day.**

*Adam Wrenn fabricates
a miniature logging truck for
statewide welding competition*







Officials and staff from the Bank of Botetourt joined visiting students on Bank Day 2015

Peery said his welding instructor “got me in the door, and then I did several interviews and had to do a presentation.”

Peery had known for some time that he wanted to be a welder, and at Altec. “My uncle has been at Altec 10 years, and I saw the money he was making.” A brother also works at the company, which supplies the cranes used in public utility work. In the spring, Caleb was still in a temporary position, but anticipated being hired full-time. “I love my job,” he says. “I always wanted to go into that business, and the money is great.”

As welding has become a more sophisticated field, and one in heavy demand, BTEC added a virtual reality welding machine to give students practice in three welding processes: Stick, MIG and FCAW. This fall, the school will open a \$500,000-plus welding facility that includes robots so students can work on larger-wire projects, says Troy Linkenhoker, welding instructor. “We want to prepare students for what they will need in the next 10 years,” says BTEC principal Jim Bradshaw. Money for the welding project came from the Botetourt Education Foundation and area businesses, he said.

STEM-H point of pride.

The county has seven elementary, two middle and three secondary schools, in addition to a STEM-H Academy (science, technology, engineering, math and health).

The quality of the County’s schools is central to the marketing of the County, says Jay Branchick, economic development manager for the County. “In fact, the schools’ STEM-H program, housed in the Greenfield Education and Training Center, is preparing the county’s next generation for the high-tech, high-demand jobs we are working to attract to the area,” he says.

At **Dabney S. Lancaster Community College**, quality programs of study prepare you for employment, transfer to a four-year college or university, or pursuing any other pathway you have planned. Enrolling in college soon? DSLCC’s **Rockbridge Regional Center** is not that far away! General education classes, occupational technical courses, and the College’s culinary arts, practical nursing and massage therapy programs are offered at that location. Call **(540) 261-1211** to schedule an appointment with an academic advisor to develop class schedules for fall, spring and summer sessions. Placement testing is free and financial aid programs may assist with the cost of tuition.

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The STEM-H program allows students to graduate high school and receive an associate's degree from the college at the same time.



Students are already working as welders because of classes at Botetourt Technical Education Center (BTEC)



*Calab Peery, BTEC welding student working at Altec
Photo: Troy Linkenhoker*

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In addition, up to 25 current graduates of the County's schools with at least a 2.5 grade point average can attend Virginia Western Community College tuition-free through the Community College Access Program (CCAP). The program is supported by monies from the Botetourt Education Foundation, the public schools and the college. The community colleges also offer dual enrollment classes to high school students.

Troutville Elementary students celebrate "Cat in the Hat"

*"Speak Up, Speak Out"
Day Camp, sponsored by 4-H*



New community college program.

The Greenfield Education and Training Center will expand offerings to the community this fall with its Workforce Enterprise Systems (WES), which provides noncredit classes online.

"Our focus is workforce," says Cassandra Dove, Virginia Western's manager of WES and Workforce Operations. The Center partners with the Botetourt Chamber of Commerce and the Small Business Development Center to offer regular workshops.



Work from public school art show

Dove anticipates even more classes at the center, everything from certification classes for tradespeople to fundamentals of beekeeping, a field with growing interest.



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*Countryside ideal for paragliders
Photo: Dan Jones*

Lifestyle
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than in Botetourt



Botetourt County offers a smorgasbord of health and lifestyle opportunities whether your desire be post-surgical rehab, a leisurely tube ride down the James River, disc golf, biking or fishing or horseback riding. Botetourt County also

has a strong equestrian presence, driven by the Botetourt County Horseman's Association, the 4-H Botetourt County Horse & Pony Club and the presence of an equestrian center and Amethyst Acres breeding facility for Egyptian Arabians.

The county also is home to the scenic bike road, Route 76.

Imaging center grows.

LewisGale Imaging Center in Daleville Town Center brought digital mammography to the county and since has added ultra sound and bone density tests to its services, says Michael Stoots, director of imaging for LewisGale Regional Health System based in nearby Salem. "Our volume continues to grow," he says.

Clinic reaches wide.

Carilion Clinic, headquartered in Roanoke, has nine locations in Botetourt County, including its Carilion Wellness center, former the Botetourt Athletic Club. Family medicine clinics are in Blue Ridge, Buchanan and Daleville. Other services in the County include allergy and immunology, imaging,

pediatric medicine, Velocity Care and obstetrics and gynecology, all in separate facilities in the Daleville area.



New signage for fitness center

New signage was installed in the spring at Carilion Wellness as part of a rebranding of the fitness and training amenities offered by Carilion Clinic. Maygon Sowder, manager, says the facility will eventually add more transitional services as an adjunct to Carilion's pre- and post-surgery therapy program available to members and non-members. Located in Summerfield Village on U.S. 220 Alternate, the club has more than 125 group classes a week, a Cardio Theater and indoor/outdoor heated pools with a 23-foot super slide.



*Game at Sports Complex
Photo: Sam Dean*

Sports complex a gem.

The 2015 event season began in March at the Botetourt Sports Complex. By October, the center will have hosted 24 sporting events, including youth recreational teams, high school teams and regional and national events for baseball and softball.

Since it opened in 2007, the facility has been home to more than 190 tournaments and some 150,000 visitors. Teams representing 30 states have played there. More than 24,000 people attended events there in 2014, and it is projected that the events generated 15,075 room nights in the Roanoke Valley hotels and motels.

The 2015 schedule includes the NCAA's Women's Fast Pitch World Series and the annual Military Appreciation Tournament, which this year also will feature the Wounded Warrior Amputee Softball Team (WWAST) made up of veterans and active-duty servicemen who have each lost some part of his arm or leg while serving in the military. Also returning this year is the Botetourt Bash Invitational Softball Tournament hosted by Lord Botetourt and James River high schools.

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"Sports-related tourism continues to be big business nationwide, and we are humbled to attract such a quality schedule to Botetourt County," says Jim Farmer, Sports Complex manager.

Marking the James River.

Possibilities for recreation in Botetourt County are nearly unmatched, even in Virginia, which is a national destination for all forms of recreation. The county's western half includes 120 square miles of the George Washington and Jefferson National Forests. The Cowpasture River and the Jackson River, a nationally-ranked trout fishery, converge in the northern county to form the headwaters of the mighty James River where it begins its 348-mile journey to the Chesapeake Bay.

Access to water from anywhere in the county is immediate. Botetourt County has the equivalent of three square miles of water, including 45 miles of the James River and part of Carvins Cove Natural Reserve.

As the James River becomes a more popular destination for sports lovers, Botetourt County officials are working with the James River Association

to establish mile markers that could help river users find the way to launch points, trails and picnic and fishing areas. Past practice has been to spray-paint a large dot on a tree or rock to make navigation easier, but officials like Pete Peters of the County's Parks, Recreation & Tourism Department believe a formal marker each mile in a simple but visible format would be of great assistance to users of the river.

Application has been made to the Alleghany Foundation for a \$53,000 construction and installation grant for a three-county effort to mark the river, with an additional \$15,000

in county matching funds. Virginia Commonwealth University students completed the marker design, which is going through the state approval process.

Also under consideration is an addition to the eight Botetourt County launch points on the river. Other locations not formally designated are being used and adding them, along with any necessary improvements, would add to the versatility of river use. Two that are being evaluated for public improvement are Last Lock near Eagle Rock and Roaring Run. The Glen Wilton launch area between Iron Gate and Gala has been approved.



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Recreational incentive grants.

The Botetourt County Recreation Incentive Program is seeking grants for a community pavilion in Buchanan Town Park, baseball press box improvements in Blue Ridge Park; bee habitat improvements in Greenfield Business Park Preservation Area, fencing at Breckenridge Elementary School, a new public address system at James River High School football stadium and concrete tee pads at Greenfield Disc Golf.

The Recreational Advisory Commission has endorsed all the applications. Grants are paid on a reimbursement system with total payout expected to be about \$20,000, according to the Parks, Recreation & Tourism office. Previous grants for recreational projects have resulted in more than \$1.5 million in recreational improvements.

Disc golf field rated internationally.

The Greenfield Disc Golf Course now enjoys ranking as 20th in the world out of more than 5,000 courses, according to DG Course Review online community of enthusiasts. The course was built in spring 2014, largely through the

Twin River Outfitters of Buchanan preparing canoers to launch on James River





Disc Golf calls for strong throws
Photo: Matt Rose Photography

efforts of the Roanoke Disc Golf Club, says Matt Rose, president of the group. The club issues a membership packet containing a disc to newcomers, and Rose, a professional photographer, is in the process of building member profiles for the club website.

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Dan Jones always has a cord hanging around his neck. Either he's wearing a stethoscope as Dr. Dan Jones as a member of the Daleville Carilion Clinic or a camera strap as one of the area's most prolific photographers.

Jones's photos, which have won awards from the National Park Service, chronicle the County he grew up in, and they regularly pop up on the County's tourism website because he readily shares them. The offices of Carilion Clinic in Daleville, where he works, have become an art gallery with regularly changing exhibits from Jones's cameras.

He has combined his vocation and avocation since he was in medical school in the 1970s and has eagerly embraced the changes in both. As a family doctor he used to see patients at the office and also in the hospital. Now, Jones works with a pod of specialists at Carilion Clinic in Daleville that include nurse practitioners and physician assistants. When patients are hospitalized, Carilion "hospitalists" take over their care, but Jones can monitor his patient through EPIC, an electronic records system. Patients use their My Chart email through EPIC to contact Jones for health questions, prescription refills or appointments, and sometimes just to discuss Virginia Tech football. Jones is a devoted Tech fan.

His photography skills have changed with technology, too, through the use of such software as Adobe Lightroom that allows him to create books of major annual vacations he and Charlotte take. He's also had to add additional storage drives to his equipment and recently moved to a new one after storing more than 60,000 photos on the first drive.

"I started photography when I was in med school as a release," Jones recalls. He supported his school costs doing computer programming he learned in high school. Those technology skills have come in handy, too, for his photography. He has large format cameras, but increasingly uses his cellphone to capture special scenes like the rainbow that appeared outside his medical office one morning.

"Botetourt County is one of the neatest places to live," says Jones who has trimmed his practice to a three and a half days a week with the hope that he has one day a week "out photographing." He doesn't have to venture far to capture the area's beauty; the farm he shares with wife Charlotte — also a Botetourt County native — is on Catawba Creek with a view toward Caldwell Mountain.

Thrives on **Tech- nology** for work, fun

Dr. Dan Jones








Student rider at Harmony Equestrian



*Stacey Collins, owner
of Harmony Equestrian*




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Equestrian center galloping along.

Stacey Collins opened Harmony Equestrian Center in June 2010 after relocating from Rochester, N.Y., to Botetourt County when her husband Steve Baka Jr. took an engineering job with MacAulay Brown. She has a degree in pre-veterinary – animal science with a concentration in equine studies from the University of Massachusetts Amherst and worked as a head riding instructor for a large center in Massachusetts for more than eight years.



Harmony Equestrian entrance

She started with six students and two horses. Now, she offers 70 lessons a week, owns five horses and leases

three and has a dozen equine boarders. Lessons range from those for first-time riders to persons returning to riding. The dressage and eventing center occupies 115 acres near Fincastle. She has hired staff and has students who help with care of the horses and center as part of their lesson agreement.

"It has grown faster than I thought it would," says the mother of boys, ages 2 and 8. In addition to offering training, Stacey provides the summer horseback riding program for nearby Camp Bethel.



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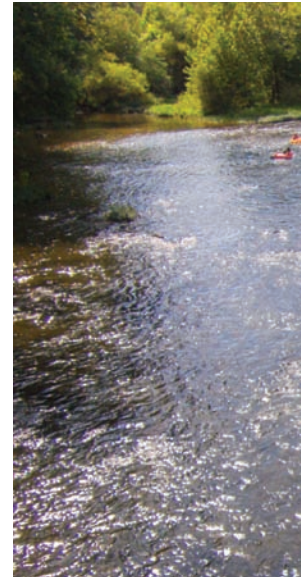
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YMCA project continues progress.

A fundraising effort to establish a YMCA in Botetourt County is underway, helped greatly by a \$2.5 million challenge grant from the Waldron Charitable Foundation. Throughout 2015 and maybe a little later, the project will employ the services of a local fundraising consultant to help hit the \$10 million goal. Already \$6.2 million is pledged.



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Photo: Twin River Outfitters*



Children play in Blue Ridge Park



*Concert at Daleville Town Center
brings out the crowds
Photo: Bank of Fincastle*



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