



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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Riverwalk Arts Fest a Success

Banner Elk – Vendors from throughout the region lined the path for the Riverwalk Arts and Crafts Festival last Saturday, August 15. The sun was shining and there was a nice cool breeze sweeping through the Riverwalk, Newland's town park along the Toe River. The exceptional weather provided a pleasant environment for both vendors and customers.

Fifty-five artisans displayed handmade wares that included flutes, lampshades, bowls and plates of copper, pottery, and wood, statuary in soapstone, cast iron, and concrete, jewelry crafted of pearls, crystals, semiprecious stones, and precious metals, handbags, paper goods, and much more. A happy crowd rambled along the Riverwalk path – Arts Council staff report that approximately 2,000 people took advantage of the once-a-year opportunity to purchase quality handcrafts while enjoying a pleasant summer day in the park. A generous sprinkling of dogs on leashes animated the scene, and there were all sorts of tasty snacks such as home made potato chips, fruit smoothies and hot dogs. Children had their own festival of creative experiences at hand. The Scrap Exchange team from Raleigh brought barrels of stuff to make works of art, which turned out to be a very popular pastime. Genesis Wildlife Sanctuary joined in the fun by bringing an assortment of critters for folks to enjoy and get to know. Face-painter Extraordinaire, Trish Daniels, was on hand to create fantasy faces. Throughout the morning folks were able to take pleasure in background music while they were perusing the booths. Music included the Gaelic sounds of the bagpipes by Rebecca Witt, and down home bluegrass tunes provided by Creekside Grass, with local favorite Alan Johnson joining in.

The Avery Arts Council Board of Directors gratefully acknowledges the town of Newland, Lowe's Foods and The Church of Jesus Christ and Pastor Dave Adkins for their support and kindness shown by allowing us to share parking lots and the Riverwalk Park. Sincere thanks also to Jerry Moore and Tres Magner of the Avery Extension Service, Frank Vance of the Highland Games, and Trish Daniels of WRAPS for their unstinting generosity on behalf of the Festival. Their efforts and those of our loyal volunteers, who gave up their time to work at the event, are most appreciated. The Scrap Exchange Arts Project was underwritten by Mountain Electric Cooperative's Operation Pocket Change. Music programming was underwritten by the Grassroots Grants Program of the NC Arts Council.

The Riverwalk Arts and Crafts Festival takes place each year in August. To be put on the mailing list for information about next year's event, contact the Avery Arts Council.

The Avery County Arts Council is a non-profit organization working to enrich the people of Avery County through meaningful arts and cultural experiences. For more than 30 years the council has helped to support school arts programs and served as a resource for artists and the community. Contact the Avery County Arts Council at 828-898-4292 or info@averycountyartscouncil.org