



ASHE COUNTY

ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

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Newsletter



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The New Ashe County Economic Development Website By the #'s

750 ➔ The # of visits to the new website since its launch on May 21st

3,081 ➔ The # of pageviews on the website

4.5 ➔ The average # of minutes each visitor spends on the website

13 ➔ The # of countries around the world visitors have accessed the website from

160 ➔ The # of U.S. Cities visitors have accessed the website from



Ashe County Commercial Kitchen Making a Local Difference

6/21/13

From the [Jefferson Post](#):

Just a few months ago, there was talk of shutting down Ashe County's commercial kitchen at Family Central because the facility wasn't being used by the community it was meant to serve. Today, with a handful of culinary entrepreneurs and new manager, the former Ashe County High School kitchen is home to a bustling micro-economy of local small businesses. "I see this kitchen as a way for somebody to make their dreams come true," said Kitchen Manager Lisa Testerman, who took over the facility in February. Liz Riddick of Alive and Kicking Foods in Boone has been doing just that for a little over a year now with her [Kale Yeah dried kale snacks](#). It all started when Riddick went on a raw foods diet, she said. "I wanted



Liz Riddick and company producing Kale Yeah! at the Ashe Commercial Kitchen

"I wanted something crunchy and savory, and found this recipe for dried kale." She made a few batches and began sharing it with friends, who soon were asking for more. Then she discovered Ashe's commercial kitchen, where she is able to process 250 pounds of organic kale per week. The kale from individual growers in Ashe and Watauga counties in the warmer months, and from the N.C. east coast in winter. "It's a great facility," she said. "It's a good platform for figuring out if you have a viable business idea." Riddick's idea seems viable. Kale Yeah is moving 300 units a week in Boone alone, she said. "I'm selling all I can make," she said. "Stores are asking for it all the time. If we had two more food dehydrators, we could do 750 pounds a week," she

said. Dried kale may not sound appetizing. But it is, indeed, crunchy and savory — and oddly addictive. Riddick also makes a pesto-like Kale Yeah seasoning called "Shake," which is good on everything from popcorn to scrambled eggs, she said. "This kitchen is a huge asset to the community," Riddick said. "Since we got Lisa, it's been a complete turnaround."

Sarah Proctor, also of Boone, has been baking cookies, scones and breakfast breads at the kitchen under her [Mrs. Prock's Bake Shop brand](#) for three months. Proctor's start-up concern is already a full-time job, she said. Like Riddick, she is currently selling all she makes through 10 stores in Boone and Blowing Rock. ...[continued on pg. 3](#)



Ashe County Commercial Kitchen Making a Local Difference *(continued from pg. 2)*

"My kids love it," Proctor said. Tina Reid of [Reid's Catering Co.](#) in Valle Crucis also does a brisk business out of the kitchen. "We go all over, but we do all of our prep here," she said. Reid also had high praise for the facility. "We get so much more work done out here than at a restaurant kitchen," she said. Not all the kitchen's clients are from outside the county, however. Dave and Joy Brockheart of Subs-to-Go on Old N.C. 16 make their sandwiches there, Testerman said. Other clients who don't use the kitchen itself rent shelf space in the walk in cooler and freezer, she said. Dry storage space is also available.

Established by grants from the N.C. Rural Center, Appalachian Regional Commission and Golden LEAF, and operated by the Ashe County Partnership for Children, the kitchen is open 24 hours, with most evening and night hours currently available, Testerman said. Kitchen time is a reasonable \$15 per hour.

Testerman said the kitchen owes its success to invaluable contributions from [Blue Ridge Seeds of Change](#) and [Heifer International](#).

For more information or to schedule time in the Ashe County commercial kitchen, call (336)620-2484.

The original article from the Jefferson Post can be viewed [here](#).





Ashe Park to Offer Free Public Wi-Fi Beginning with the 4th of July Celebration 6/27/13

Ashe County Park, a recreational mainstay for residents, will begin providing an additional service to its visitors beginning with the annual Fourth of July celebration. Thanks to several high capacity outdoor radios installed in each of the shelters and at other areas, visitors to Ashe Park will be able to access high-speed internet free of charge on their laptops, tablets, phones, and other devices that are Wi-Fi capable. According to County IT Director Cyrus Hurley, not only will the free internet service be fast –with speeds up to 10 Mbps, but also secure. “It’s secure with the client isolation feature, which separates each client on the network with every other client/user,” also, “the County will be able to block access to sites



that are not appropriate for public Wi-Fi.” The network was designed by the Ashe County IT Department, which consists of Cyrus Hurley, Todd Chapman, and Toby Bennett, and will be implemented jointly by members of Ashe County Parks and Recreation, County IT, and the County Maintenance Department.

Visitors to Ashe Park, pictured above, will be able to access high-speed internet free of charge on their laptops, tablets, phones, and other devices

The new Wi-Fi system will be available for public use just in time for the perennially popular Fourth of July celebration at Ashe Park. The Parks and Recreation Department has a full day of activities planned that are open to the public. A motorcycle show will be held in the middle parking lot of the Park, with registration from 9:00am-12:00pm, judging at 1:00pm, and awarding of trophies at 2:00pm. Mountain Advantage will have inflatables for kids in the Russ Blevins Shelter. Music will also be filling the Park, with a full line-up of performers featuring The Appalachian Mountain Girls at 4:00pm, The Grayson Highlands Band at 5:15pm, The Toneblazers at 6:30pm, and True Heart at 7:45pm. All musical performances will take place on the Russ Blevins Shelter stage. Sweeties will be providing food and drink options for the day, which will include BBQ sandwiches, hot dogs, fresh cut French Fries, funnel cakes, deep fried pickles, deep fried Oreos, hamburgers, bloomin' onions, lemonade, tea and more. The fireworks show will begin shortly after dark. Be sure to come out and take part in what promises to be an event-filled day with fun for the whole family!

If you would like to learn more about Ashe County recreational opportunities please click [here](#).