

NEWS RELEASE

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Additional photos available upon request

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Haywood County Quilt Squares Attract Tourists to Western North Carolina

Waynesville, NC - Schools, churches, banks and a variety of other establishments are “stitching” a trail throughout Haywood County that is giving tourists the opportunity to see rural areas that they would not have had before. Vacationers are traveling to Clyde, Canton, Waynesville and Maggie Valley to see the brightly painted quilt squares while getting a taste of its heritage as they explore this Western North Carolina County that is immersed in American history. Vibrant quilt patterns are painted on pre-built wooden squares ranging from two feet to eight feet in size, creating a vibrant trail throughout the area.

In November of 2010, The Haywood County Arts Council has joined other existing quilt trails in Ashe, Avery, Macon, Madison, Mitchell, Watauga, and Yancey counties in North Carolina, making Western North Carolina the geographic area with the highest concentration of quilt trails in the United States.

Now, Haywood County has fourteen squares, with approximately 9 more going up in the coming weeks, many of which are in Downtown Waynesville. A “walking” quilt trail planned for Downtown Waynesville. The walking trail is part of the overall Haywood County Arts Council’s Quilt trail project, which will include many trails within the overall trail.

Symbols of Heritage and History Transformed

Quilting as a sewing method has been an American tradition for centuries, with fabrics and patterns representing a family or story pertaining to that particular timeframe. Now, through the organization of the Quilt Trails project, the much-loved symbol of comfort, family, heritage, and community that quilting symbolizes is represented by large wooden quilt squares that have taken on the same meaning, with its patterns representing the history of the land, the building or the family.

The Quilt Trails project got its start in 2001 when Donna Sue Groves, a representative of the Ohio Arts Council, put an 8’x 8’ block on her barn in Adams County, Ohio to honor her mother, a lifetime quilter. The Adams County Arts Council picked up on the idea and painted 20 squares

in their county and developed a driving tour. Now, the project has spread to 30 states and Canada.

Quilt Trails Bring more Culture, Color and Economic Impact

The Haywood County Quilt Trails (HCQT) project provides another reason to explore Haywood County and enjoy the surrounding beauty. They add vibrant colors around the county as well as promote the culture. In addition, it has also provided an added economic impact in two ways: Tourists are attracted to the quilt squares, and many local artisans have developed quilt-related products to sell. Self-guided trails maps are being developed to direct sightseers along the highways and byways to view these icons of tradition.

“The Haywood County Quilt Trail helps our community find and tell its stories one quilt block at a time,” explains Kay S. Miller, Executive Director of the Haywood County Arts Council. “The stories represent agriculture, history, charity, honor, family traditions, and so much more. The colorful patterns are instantly recognizable as being associated with quilts—those ‘icons of tradition’ that are connected to comfort, warmth, security and home. The Haywood County Quilt Trail beckons us to take to the road. You’ll experience life through the stories and traditions of our beautiful county; you might even come away with a unique life story of your own!”

Up-to-date information about blocks, including site locations is available at www.haywoodquilttrails.org.

Along with its picturesque beauty, rich history and newly developed quilt trails, Haywood County offers year-round cultural, music, family-fun activities and special events throughout the year. With 554 scenic square miles of spectacular country, and beautiful mountains and valleys dotting the landscape, more than a dozen of Haywood County’s 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. 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. For more information, Call 800.334.9036 or <http://www.visitncsmokies.com/>.

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