



# THE DAILY COURIER

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SUNDAY, AUGUST 12, 2012 • ONLINE: WWW.THEDIGITALCOURIER.COM • LOCAL MATTERS

## WEATHER



High 85 Low 64

Today, Sunny. Tonight, Mostly clear.

Details, Page A5

## County ties for fifth in tourism growth

BY ERIN KIDD EKIDD@THEDIGITALCOURIER.COM

RUTHERFORDTON — Out of the 100 counties in North Carolina, Rutherford County has tied for fifth as the fastest growing tourism economy, according to the North Carolina Department of Commerce's latest annual county-by-county report of the economic impact of travel.

"Everyone in N.C.'s tourism industry should be pleased," said Michelle Whitaker, Rutherford County Tourism Development Authority (TDA) executive director. "I believe that those of us in Rutherford County, particularly, have a lot to cheer about."

Rutherford County was also ranked the fastest growing tourism economy in Western North Carolina.

SEE TOURISM/ PAGE A6



The walking trails in Chimney Rock State Park are a popular attraction for visitors of all ages.

Contributed Photo



Mitt Romney just announced that his running mate will be U.S. Representative Paul Ryan. Why do you feel this was a smart decision for the presidential hopeful? Why do you feel it wasn't? Visit The Daily Courier's Facebook page to comment.

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## INSIDE

### A dismal report

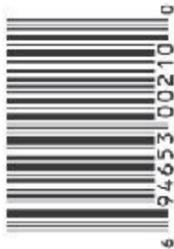
The recently released ABC's of Public Education annual report for North Carolina schools was dismal at best.

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## OBITUARIES

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Bobby Couch  
Thomas J. Gaizick  
William Howard Harton

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Jaymie Baxley/The Daily Courier

A banjo playing Storm Trooper patrols the entrance of B-Sharp Music during the store's grand reopening event.

## A Subtle Renaissance

BY JAYMIE BAXLEY JBAXLEY@THEDIGITALCOURIER.COM

SPINDALE — Tim Smith won't hesitate to tell you that downtown Spindale is the underdog of the tri-city.

"It always has been. Forest City's downtown is more white-collar. Rutherfordton has the court house and the hospital, and they're also a white-collar downtown. But Spindale has always been a working class, blue collar, cotton mill town," the 56-year-old explained.

Downtown Spindale boasts fewer businesses and, subsequently, garners less traffic than the two cities it sits between. Furthermore, with the exception of the annual Dairy Goat Festival, major events and holiday celebrations are mostly regulated to the downtowns in Rutherfordton and Forest City.

Within the past two weeks, however, a handful of businesses along Main Street have made a number of deceptively small

changes that may have an accumulatively big impact on the area.

At the center of these changes is Smith, who has been a driving force in the development of downtown Spindale since he opened Smith's Pawn in 1988.

Counting Smith's Pawn, he owns six buildings downtown or, by his estimate, half of the property along Main Street.

Currently, there's a business in every building: Barley's Taproom and Pizzeria, Foothills Connect, Changing Lives Fitness, Fat Tracy's and B-Sharp Music.

A few weeks ago, Smith owned more than B-Sharp's building. He founded the instrument retailer and repair center in 1996 and, a year later, he hired former manager Stan Thomas.

SEE SUBTLE/ PAGE A8

## County schools perform well in accountability report

BY ERIN KIDD EKIDD@THEDIGITALCOURIER.COM

FOREST CITY — The North Carolina Department of Public Instruction has released the 2011-12 ABCs of Public Education accountability report.

The report is based on several measures of performance including proficiency on End-of-Grade and End-of-Course tests, writing for grade 10, graduation rate, and student growth.

Results indicate that Rutherford County Schools had a Performance

**Rutherford County Schools had a Performance Composite of 76.9 percent, an increase from 74.9 percent for the 2010-2011 school year.**

Composite of 76.9 percent, an increase from 74.9 percent for the 2010-2011 school year. The most significant increase was shown in high school End-of-Course proficiency which increased from 72.9 percent in

2010-11 to 84 percent in 2011-12. Schools receive designations from the NCDPI based on their overall proficiency and growth for the year.

According to the reports, Rutherford Early College High School (REaCH) has been awarded the highest designation, Honor School of Excellence. This is awarded to schools that meet all Annual Measurable Objectives targets, make expected or high growth, and have over 90 percent proficiency.

SEE REPORT/ PAGE A8

## Not your basic basil: Unique uses for a classic herb

BY STEPHANIE JANARD SPECIAL TO THE DAILY COURIER

FOREST CITY — Among the most savory of herbs, basil is also one of the easiest to grow. And grow. And grow. What to do with this herb that's towering over everything else in your kitchen garden?

According to Rutherford County herbalist and holistic chef Michele Tanner, "It's a superfood! Use it, eat it, put it

on everything!"

But isn't basil primarily a complement to tomato-based dishes? What else can be done with it? Apparently, quite a lot. In Tanner's upcoming "Fresh Basil Workshop and Lunch," students will learn a number of recipes that incorporate basil, plus how to preserve, dry and store it. The class ends with a three-course meal.

Tanner has an intentional

purpose for holding her classes in the intimacy of her own home and garden.

"I want to show people how much they can do with herbs in a home setting. That's what permaculture is all about, where in a very small space, you can grow herbs and plants not just for eating, but also for your medicinal use," she said.

SEE BASIL/ PAGE A7



Michele Tanner's backyard garden contains an assortment of many savory herbs. Here she collects basil, which is also one of the easiest to grow, for an afternoon dish.

Garrett Byers/Daily Courier



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