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Plan your wine trips

Jeff Reid/
Smith
Mountain
Eagle

Visitors to Hickory Hill Vineyards & Winery enjoy wine and music at an event in 2021. See more photos on Page 16.



Five wineries to visit

C.E. ADAMS
Smith Mountain Eagle

Smith Mountain Lake is known for its wine. One of the biggest events in the area is the Wine Festival hosted by the Smith Mountain Lake Regional Chamber of Commerce. Although the three-decades-long annual event has been canceled for two years in a row due to COVID-19, it is expected to make a comeback this year.

The event usually sees dozens of wineries and more than 11,000 people in attendance tasting various wines, but you don't have to wait until the next Wine Festival to try out local wine. Start making your plans to visit some wineries this summer.

Here are five wineries at Smith Mountain Lake that will be open to visitors (in alphabetical order).

Brooks Mill Winery

Brooks Mill Winery is an award-winning winery owned by H.T. and Rhonda Page. For

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Jeff Reid/Smith Mountain Eagle

A glass of wine is poured at the last Smith Mountain Lake Wine Festival in 2019.

Updated pay grades OK'd

TAYLOR BERGER
Smith Mountain Eagle

At the April 19 Franklin County Board of Supervisors meeting, Stacey Whichel, a project manager of Evergreen Solutions LLC, presented recommendations based on research and findings from an employee compensation and classification study the company conducted.

At the Aug. 17, 2021, meeting, the board of supervisors had allowed an employee compensation and classification study by Evergreen Solutions to be conducted. Since that time, staff at Evergreen Solutions has worked to complete a market survey and align the results with the county's current pay classification

plan. The study addresses numerous items that can be viewed on the Franklin County website.

The preliminary results were presented to the board of supervisors at the Feb. 15 board meeting before the company's recommendation was made April 19.

Whichel recommended three pay plans: General, Public Safety and Sheriff/Sworn Employee. Thirty pay grades are recommended with a 60 percent spread and progression of five percent. Whichel broke down each plan in detail.

Implementation of these plans was discussed as well. Employees making at the base level or more than 90 percent of the new

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SML rezoning application to be fast tracked

TAYLOR BERGER
Smith Mountain Eagle

During the April 19 Franklin County Board of Supervisors meeting, Ron Willard II of Willard Investment Properties LLC requested rezoning to replace an existing plan with a previously approved "planned commercial development" to develop 30 single-family homes and commercial property.

The rezoning would affect five parcels of land located along Bridgewater Grande Drive off Booker T. Washington Highway in the Gills Creek District of Franklin County.

In conjunction with this rezoning request, Willard also is requesting three special use permits for an outdoor storage area, intended for boats, boat trailers and other types of watercrafts. Details on the 30 single-family

homes were given as well.

The applications by Willard were submitted April 4 and are scheduled to be discussed during the May 10 planning commission meeting. After this, it will be brought before the board of supervisors again at the June 21 meeting.

Additionally, Willard is requesting that the board approve a "fast-tracking" of aforementioned applications so the public hearings before both meetings occur. Willard has stated that the "new proposed community will create dozens of new job opportunities."

The board's policy on hearing applications for rezoning or a special-use permit allows for fast-tracking applications in cases necessary for economic development and/or emergency

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Small business spotlight

Black Water Resurfacing offers alternative coating for decks, docks

ADAM POWELL
Smith Mountain Eagle

The Smith Mountain Lake region offers many beautiful lakefront properties, but one of the unfortunate casualties of living on the water is the weathering of docks and decks.

For those seeking a proven alternative to improving the look and durability of their docks, decks, boat lifts, piers, boardwalks and walkways, there is Black Water Resurfacing, a local company that began in January 2021 and offers a product called Acryfin, an acrylic polymer coating that is used to restore, renew and revitalize deck paint, concrete stain, wood coating, exterior paint and other types of outdoor surfaces.

Black Water Resurfacing

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SMITH MOUNTAIN EAGLE

Wine

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more than 12 years, they made fruit wine as a hobby, and in December 2008, turned their passion into a business, growing blackberries, blueberries, pears, apples, peaches and cherries.

The wines vary from dry dinner wines to sweet dessert wines. It's most popular selection is Blackberry, but it also offers a variety of flavors such as Dry Pear, Black & Blue, Dry Blackberry, Blueberry, Sweet Blackberry, Sweet Blueberry, Cherry, Plum, Peach, Pear and Sangria. The location also hosts music events on occasion.

Brooks Mill Winery is located at 6221 Brooks Mill Road in Wirtz. Its summer hours are noon to 5 p.m. from Friday to Monday. Owners H.T. and Rhonda Page may be contacted by calling 540-721-5215 or emailing page3@embarqmail.com. More information may be found at brooksmillwine.com.

Fables and Feathers

Fables and Feathers is new to Smith Mountain Lake. It's a family operated winery with four owners: Tom, Pam, Adam and Genny Luedtke. They bought the winery formerly called White Rock and moved here from Illinois, north of Chicago. The location offers outdoor and indoor seating and provides small snacks. Guests are encouraged to bring picnic meals to accompany their wine outside.

New wines are Sweet Rose, Dry Rose, Rkatsiteli and Chambourcin. Co-owner Genny Luedtke's favorite is Rkatsiteli, which is sweet and tastes like peach and honey. White wines include American Riesling, Aesop's White, Chardonnay, Virginia Riesling and Sadie's White. The most popular of these is Sadie's White. Red wines available are Sadie's Red, Pinot Noir, Aesop's Red, Merlot and Cabernet Franc. Of those, Pinot Noir and Aesop's Red have been

popular.

In addition to wine, beers are offered, such as Tom's Cerveza, Pam's Raddler, Adam's Kolsch, Evan's Ale, Andy's Stout and Genny's Cider.

Fables and Feathers is located at 2117 Bruno Drive in Goodview. Summer hours are 11 a.m. to 6 p.m. Thursday to Monday. The business may be called at 540-420-0916 or emailed at fablesandfeatherswinery@outlook.com. More information may be found at fablesandfeatherswinery.com.

Hickory Hill Vineyards

Hickory Hill Vineyards & Winery has been growing wine grapes for nearly four decades, with two decades serving as a winery, making it the oldest winery at Smith Mountain Lake. It has been around for three generations of the Furrow family, with Roger Furrow as the owner and co-founder, and family members Wendy Furrow-Scott and Donald Furrow-Scott managing.

The winery has received more than 80 awards in state, national and international competitions. It has a 1923 farmhouse tasting room with gift shop and picnic area. Although the indoor tasting bar has been closed, the picnic area is open by reservation, and the indoor bar may reopen for reservations in fall 2021. Orders may be placed online, and curbside pickup, local delivery and shipping is available.

Traditional wines offered are Full Pond, Chardonnay, Cabernet Sauvignon and Cabernet Franc. The Smith Mountain Lake series of wines consists of Mist, Country Red, Redbud, Sunset and Sweet Red Sail.

The winery also offers a series of music events

called Sunset Saturday and had started a charitable event called Charity Cheers.

Hickory Hill Vineyards is located at 1722 Hickory Cove Lane in Moneta. Summer hours are noon to 5 p.m. Wednesday to Sunday. The company may be called at 540-296-1393 or emailed at thefurrows@smlwine.com. More information may be found at www.SMLwine.com.

Ramulose Ridge Vineyards

Ramulose Ridge Vineyards is an award winning winery that opened in 2013 with an updated facility after Jim and Sandi Ramaker started it in 2004. The indoor tasting room isn't open, but in the meantime, it has outdoor seating available on a 1,100 square-foot patio and pergola. Guests are welcome to bring chairs or blanket to sit on the lawn.

Due to COVID-19, masks are required when ordering, paying and using the restrooms. Parties of seven or more are asked to call 540-314-2696 in advance. They serve wine flights and wine by the glass and bottle. They also offer cigars and have snacks available, such as cookies, brownies, cheese, crackers and even pizzas.

White wines consist of Vidal Blanc, Traminette, Viognier and Chardonnay. Red wines offered are Malbec, Cab Franc, Chambourcin, Syrah and Robusto. Semisweet wines are Blackwater, Blush, Muscat and Tendril. Cigars offered include Flatbed Cigar Company Truck (Green PA Broadleaf, Azul Cameroon and White Corojo) and Panacea Cigars (Black Maduro and Red Habano).

The site has held Yoga events and has offered its 2,200 square-foot event space for various events,

including weddings (including 1,100 square-foot indoor space). There also is a 600 square-foot pavilion.

Ramulose Ridge Vineyards is located at 3061 Hendricks Store Road in Moneta. Summer hours are 1-6 p.m. Tuesday to Thursday and 1-8 p.m. Friday and Saturday. The company may be called at 630-485-8941 or emailed at ramuloseridge@msn.com. More information may be found at ramuloseridgevineyards.com.

Seven Doors Winery

Seven Doors Winery offers wines that are organic and biodynamic. It's unique by offering a spiritual experience with yoga classes, wine meditations and fire celebrations. It has a 2,000-square foot tasting room and an outdoor area with a covered porch, wooded walking trails, etc., that can be booked for events. The winery also serves as a wedding venue, offering a large cedar wedding arbor, organic wines,

florals, locally sourced foods and local musicians.

Seven Doors Winery is located 5800 Johnson Mountain Road in Huddleston. Its summer hours are noon to 5 p.m. on Saturday and Sunday. Dogs are welcomed, and outside food is encouraged. Owner Jen Feazelle may be contacted by calling 540-605-8745 or emailing sevendoorswinery@gmail.com. More information may be found at sevendoorswinery.com.

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Pay

Continued from Page 1

pay grade will not receive a pay upgrade. However, those below the baseline will receive the pay increase. Averages were given during the presentation by Whichel.

The board approved the findings and research presented in the final report and results from Evergreen Solutions. The board discussed the approval of the proposed pay grades and adopted the pay grades unanimously.

Going forward, the numbers will be accessed and will be discussed by the board of supervisors during the June meeting. Chairman Ronnie Thompson fears that they may fall behind in the implementation if something is not done.

Director

Continued from Page 3

commitment in assuring we continue to enhance and measure the quality of services that support the needs of our communities and citizens of Bedford County.”

“Janet never appears to have a bad day.” Robert Hiss stated. “She brings years of productive, positive, honest and collaborative leadership to this position. She continues to be a steady contributor to emergency services in Bedford County and has the right temperament to lead this department and work in partnership with the volunteer rescue squads and fire departments, sheriff's office, E911, and other public safety entities. I look forward to the positive changes she will implement in the years to come.”

PHOTOS OF SML WINERIES

Ramulose Ridge Vineyards

Brooks Mill Winery



Fables and Feathers

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All photos by Jeff Reid

Hickory Hill Vineyards



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