



6 THINGS TO KNOW THIS WEEK



VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL

VIRGINIA HIGHLANDS FESTIVAL BEGINS THIS FRIDAY IN ABINGDON

It's time for the popular Virginia Highlands Festival in Abingdon, which runs Friday, July 22, through Sunday, July 31. This year's festival will feature 200 individual events, including the antiques market, arts and crafts show and weekend concerts. Check out the preview story on the region page inside.

'FARM AND FUN TIME' CELEBRATES ANNIVERSARY OF BRISTOL SESSIONS

To celebrate the 95th anniversary of the Bristol Sessions, the Birthplace of Country Music and Paramount Bristol are joining forces for a special edition of "Farm and Fun Time," live from the theater on Thursday, July 21. The 7 p.m. show will feature musical guests Rhonda Vincent and the Rage and Lauren Morrow plus Roni Stoneman with host band Bill and the Belles.



BILLIE WHEELER

HANNAH DASHER PERFORMS AT 1927 SOCIETY CONCERT SERIES

Another event being held to commemorate the Bristol Sessions is the 1927 Society Concert Series, which will feature country music artist Hannah Dasher at 7 p.m. on Saturday, July 23, at the Birthplace of Country Music Museum. See more of Dasher on the music page.



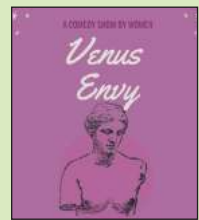
BCM MUSEUM

CITY OF BRISTOL, TENNESSEE, HOSTS HIRING EVENT AT LIBRARY

Looking for a job? The city of Bristol, Tennessee, will host a hiring event at the Bristol Public Library today, Wednesday, July 20, from 3:30-6:30 p.m. Representatives from all city departments will be there, with opportunities to interview on-site.

'VENUS ENVY' SHOW HIGHLIGHTS FEMALE COMEDIANS AT BLUE RIDGE

If you appreciate funny women, you may want to check out "Venus Envy," a comedy show featuring only female comedians. It will be held from 8-9:30 p.m. Saturday, July 23, at Blue Ridge Comedy at 620 State St. in downtown Bristol.



BLUE RIDGE COMEDY

COMMUNITY BOOK CLUB MEETS TO DISCUSS 'A WIZARD OF EARTHSEA'

Monday, July 25, will be the first of two book discussions as part of the Community Reads program by the Bristol Public Library. The project will bring the community together to read and discuss the same book, "A Wizard of Earthsea." On Monday and Aug. 15, from 6-8 p.m., discussions will be held in the J. Henry Kegley Meeting Room.

COMING IN 2023

FedEx Ground opening huge distribution center

Facility to be 3.5 times larger than nearby Amazon center

By SUSAN CAMERON
BRISTOL NOW EDITOR

BRISTOL, Va. — FedEx Ground is planning to open a 251,000-square-foot distribution center on Bonham Road in the Exit 7 area, just outside the Bristol city limits in Washington County.

The company is entering into a lease agreement for a new distribution station, said Dave Hill, media relations for FedEx Ground, in response to an inquiry from Bristol Now.

The facility is expected to be "operational" in 2023, he said. A time frame for the start and completion of construction was not released.

Hill would not say how many workers are

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SUSAN CAMERON/BRISTOL NOW

The is the back of a construction site being worked on Friday. This portion of land is next to the Amazon Distribution Center on Thomas Road.

Holiday Inn

Dueling lawsuits filed over Tenna hotel collapse

Delays, damages and defects cause legal uncertainty on how hotel was insured

By ROBERT SORRELL
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Dueling lawsuits filed in connection with the 2020 collapse of the Tenna Holiday Inn in downtown Bristol will likely be heard by a jury in late 2023, federal court records show.

On Feb. 25, 2022, Cincinnati Insurance Co. filed a complaint in U.S. District Court in Greeneville for a declaratory judgment against Tenna LLC, the company developing the hotel. The suit is about the insurance company's coverages of the property and what it believes it is required to pay.

A portion of the hotel, which had been under construction since 2019, collapsed on Sept. 25, 2020. The collapse left a mangled mess of steel and other materials on the property. No one was injured.

Tenna claims its losses have exceeded more than \$11 million.

Investigators for the two parties believe failing bearing walls on the second floor caused the damage, according to the

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Mae Malee's spring rolls



Bristol man honors mother's recipes with Thai-based food truck



TOM NETHERLAND/FOR BRISTOL NOW

Michael Daugherty established Mae Malee's Spring Rolls four years ago and learned to cook Thai-based food from his Thai mother.



Editor's Note: This is the first in a series spotlighting the region's unique food trucks.



TOM NETHERLAND/FOR BRISTOL NOW

Stir fry noodles with a spring roll, which includes chicken and sweet ginger soy sauce, sell well at \$10.

By TOM NETHERLAND
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Tenn. — Theatre Bristol's Ann Vance waited outside the Mae Malee's Spring Rolls food truck at lunchtime last Tuesday.

Her sights set on an order of chicken tacos and stir fry noodles, Vance said her eagerness for the Thai-based food extends back several years.

"Oh my gosh, it's so good," said Vance. "I've been buying their food since they started. They're different."

Michael Daugherty

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WEATHER

High Low
91 71
Partly cloudy



Sports

Bristol's Gavin Cross drafted by Kansas City Royals — as ninth pick overall in MLB draft. **B1**



Outdoors

Wild ponies are unique highlight at Grayson Highlands State Park in Virginia. **A5**



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TASTES



Editor's Note:
This is the second in a series spotlighting the region's unique food trucks.

By land, by sea

Lobster Dogs Food Truck brings a taste of Maine to Tennessee

By J.H. OSBORNE
josborne@bristolnow.news

Maybe you haven't heard of it. Maybe you're a devotee. It is by its very nature something you more than likely can't have every day. It's been popping up around Northeast Tennessee for about three years, offering a taste of New England, day by day, at local venues ranging from bank parking lots to breweries.

It's the Lobster Dogs Food Truck, and recent stops have included a rental store in New Tazewell, Walgreens in Jonesborough, the historic Sullivan County Courthouse in Blountville, the Bank of Tennessee in Jonesborough, Tennessee Hills Brewstillery in Johnson City and the Gate City Jeep Jamboree.

On a recent stop in Blountville, even a rainy day couldn't keep a steady stream of customers from stopping by for some Maine lobster, crab or shrimp — served up primarily on toasted, buttered, split buns or atop stuffed avocados.

There were first-timers and regulars, county employees who just stepped outside to grab lunch and folks who drove to Blountville just to catch the Lobster Dogs Food Truck. The newcomers might not have realized how good they fared, with the line rarely more than five to six deep and wait times in the single-digit minutes.

It's not unheard of for the Lobster Dogs Food Truck to have a line twisting halfway around a city block.

The most popular menu item is the lobster roll (\$19.50), with fresh, chilled lobster in a toasted, split-top bun and a "swipe" of mayo, dusted with special seasonings and served with melted butter. The crab roll (\$16) and shrimp roll (\$13) round out the "rolls" section of the menu.

Second place in crowd favorites goes to the Plan B, a whole avocado stuffed with black bean and corn salsa and pico de gallo and drizzled with chimichurri and chipotle ranch. The basic Plan B (\$11) can be upscaled by adding crab (+\$5), shrimp (+\$4) or lobster (+\$6).

Not in the mood for shellfish? Try the seared tuna (\$14), a whole avocado stuffed with seared ahi tuna, pico de gallo and queso fresco and drizzled with sesame ginger sauce.

Not in the mood for seafood, or a plain Plan B? Try the Free Bird (\$13), a whole avocado with



The lobster roll from Lobster Dogs Food Truck of Tennessee, the restaurant's most popular item among customers, includes fresh, chilled lobster in a toasted bun with seasonings, mayonnaise and butter.



'Have you seen our logo? It's intriguing in itself,' said Stephanie Gross, manager of Lobster Dogs.



Customers can choose lobster, crab or shrimp rolls at the Lobster Dogs Food Truck.



A customer waits in the rain with an umbrella to stay dry while waiting on the Maine-style seafood of the Lobster Dogs Food Truck.



A glimpse inside the food truck shows some of the ingredients.

grilled buffalo chicken, mixed cheese, pico de gallo and bacon bits all drizzled with ranch.

There are also "dogs," rather than full-on rolls, including the new Cali Dog (chilled lobster, topped with lemon butter, sliced

avocado and bacon bits, drizzled with chipotle aioli, \$17) and the Ultimate Dog (lobster, crab and shrimp on a toasted, split-top bun with a "swipe" of mayo and topped with melted butter and seasonings, \$17.50).

Stephanie Gross, a manager at Lobster Dogs, answered the following questions:

How long has your restaurant been in operation?

The franchise started in 2016. This particular truck has been in

If You Go

Location: Varies daily across Northeast Tennessee. Check Lobster Dogs Food Truck Tennessee's website and social media for weekly schedules.
Website: <http://www.lobster-dogstn.com/>
Phone: (704) 301-1573
Hours: Varies by event and location

operation since March of 2019.
What do you consider the specialties at your restaurant and why?
High-quality ingredients, simple and delicious.
What is your culinary education and how did you learn to do what you do in the kitchen?

The individual who started this franchise owned a restaurant in Mooresville, North Carolina, 10 years. All of the products sold in-house were always fresh and of high quality. He rolled the same concept into the food truck model. I myself have worked in restaurants, in every position, most of my adult life.

Explain in as much detail as possible why your restaurant is appealing to customers and how you maintain that ambience.

Being mobile is appealing in itself. Traveling to different locations daily brings a sense of excitement for guests. You never know where we will pop up next! The simplicity of our menu, unique menu items, quick and friendly service and the ability to have Maine lobster in Northeast Tennessee. Have you seen our logo? It's intriguing in itself.

Do you share recipes with your diners? If so, please share your favorite recipe.

Our recipes are simple, but we don't share secrets.

How do you think your restaurant differs from other restaurants in the Tri-Cities region?

Our brand is different simply by bringing a taste of Maine to Tennessee.

What are the advantages and disadvantages of your location?

None except gas prices! Lol.
How often do you change the menu and why?

We don't change our menu often. We do add a few items from time to time.

What's your favorite cookbook?

I'm always on the go, so my favorite cookbook is someone else's favorite. I truly enjoy when someone else does the cooking.



Stuffed avocado with Maine lobster is one of the specialties at Lobster Dogs.



To find the food truck's location and hours for the day, check their social media for schedules.



Rolls and dogs come with dippable garlic butter and other seasonings.

Stone fruits can be healthy and delicious part of summer

By KIRBY MOIR, RDN, LDN
Food City Registered Dietitian



Summer season means a plethora of in-season produce. If you're looking for a sweet treat to beat the summer heat, try a stone fruit. Stone fruits include peaches, nectarines, plums, cherries and apricots. They are referred to as stone fruits for the large "stonelike" seed surrounded by soft and sweet edible fruit. Stone fruits, also known as drupes, are in season from late May through early October.

Like other fruits, stone fruits are high in antioxidants, vitamins and minerals and low in fat, cholesterol and sodium. Most stone fruits are a good source of vitamin C and fiber. Vitamin C is linked to immune health, is important for wound healing and collagen production and assists with the absorption of iron. Fiber is beneficial for bowel regularity and has

been linked to improvement with cholesterol and blood sugar regulation.

Stone fruits offer a variety of polyphenols. These natural phytochemicals have been linked to numerous health benefits and are thought to lower risk of many chronic diseases.

Cherries contain carotenoids and polyphenols, which are believed to have an anti-inflammatory effect. Specifically linked with muscle recovery, cherries and cherry juice are a great option for recovery following intense

physical activity.

Apricots are commonly referred to as the "golden fruit" due to their rich nutritional value. They offer a high concentration of flavonoids and antioxidants and are a good source of vitamin A, potassium and iron. Apricots are associated with reducing free radicals, which can assist with reducing oxidative damage to cells.

Peaches are rich in vitamin A and contain health-promoting antioxidants such as lutein and zeaxanthin. These com-

pounds act as protective scavengers of free radicals and are linked to preserving and improving eye health.

Try stone fruits for a quick nutritious snack on the go or add to a favorite recipe. Try stone fruits in a cool summertime smoothie.

PEACHY CHERRY SMOOTHIE

1 cup milk of your choice
1/2 cup non-fat Greek yogurt
1 cup cherries, pitted
1 medium peach, sliced
1/2 teaspoon vanilla extract
1/2 cup ice
Add all ingredients to a

high-powered blender and blend until smooth and creamy. Visit www.food-city.com for more recipe ideas.

Note to readers

Do you have a favorite recipe you like to share with friends and family? We'd love to hear from you. Please send recipes to: scameron@bristolnow.news or bristolnow.news.

Luke Patterson fills his Abingdon eatery, Luke's Café, with eclectic art, music and gourmet recipes

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CONTRIBUTED

THE CADILLAC THREE SET TO BRING 'COUNTRY FUZZ' TO SIDETRACKS OCT. 7

Mix Tabasco with sweet tea, and you get The Cadillac Three — according to the country trio's latest album, "Tabasco & Sweet Tea," that is. The band, made up of true Nashville natives will perform at SideTracks, 3080 W. State St., in Bristol, Tennessee, on Friday, Oct. 7, at 9 p.m. Tickets are \$20. For more information, go to <https://sidetracksbristol.com/event/the-cadillac-three/>.

ANNUAL WILDLIFE WEEKEND SET FOR OCT. 7-8

Bristol, Tennessee's 25th annual Wildlife Weekend on Oct. 7-8 will offer educational events within Steele Creek Park. The weekend will begin at 6 p.m. on Friday, Oct. 7. Wildlife Weekend activities will continue on Saturday, Oct. 8. All Wildlife Weekend activities are free with park admission of \$2 per vehicle. For more information, contact Nature Center Director Jeremy Stout at jstout@bristoltn.org or (423) 989-5616.

CROOKED ROAD SONGWRITING CONTEST INVITES LISTENERS

On Oct. 6, music lovers are invited to listen to musicians and songwriters in The Crooked Road's Songwriting Workshop and Showcase at Mountain Empire Community College. Tickets are \$50 for the workshop (10 a.m. to 2 p.m.) and showcase (3 to 5 p.m.). Tickets are \$5 for general admission to the showcase only. For more information, go to www.thecrookedroadva.com.

SECOND ANNUAL BRISTOL IN BLOOM ART FESTIVAL SET FOR SATURDAY

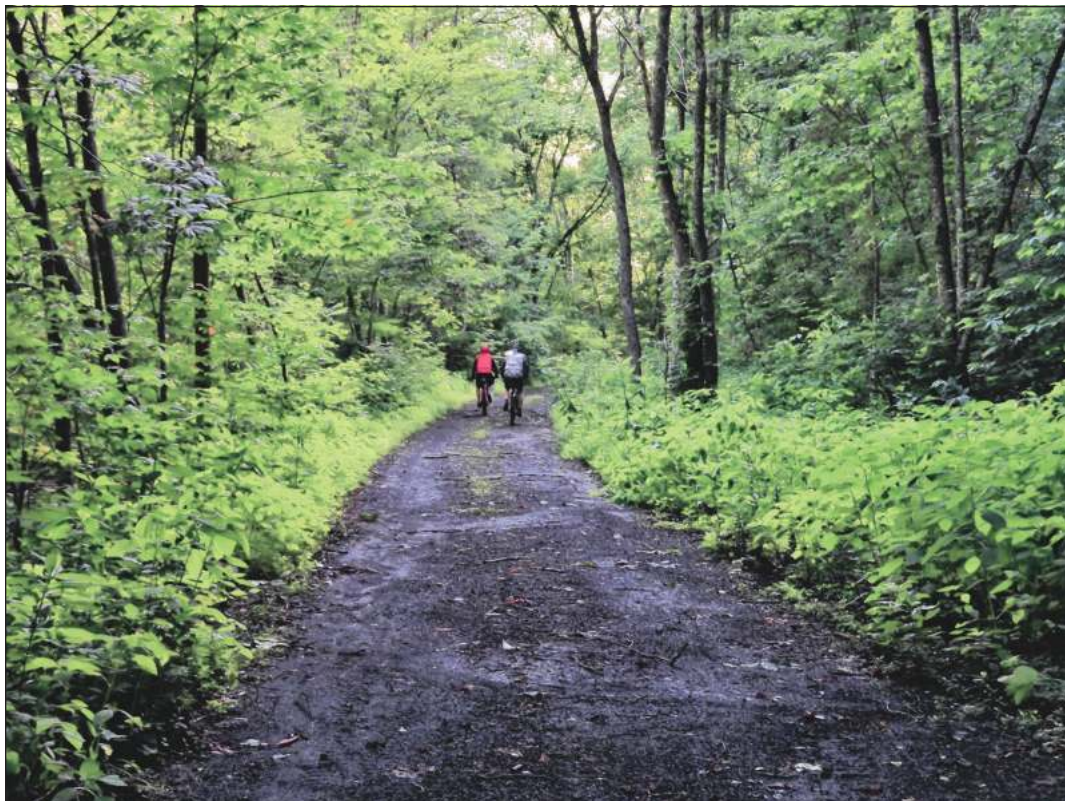
Bristol, Virginia, will come alive with art on Saturday, Oct. 8, from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. with the second-ever Bristol in Bloom Art Festival in Cumberland Square Park. The event is free and celebrates Appalachian artists and will include art vendors, food trucks, live music, demos and more.

BARTER THEATRE PRESENTS 'TUCK EVERLASTING' AT SMITH THEATRE

The Barter Theatre's Barter Players present "Tuck Everlasting," based on the novel by Natalie Babbitt. In the play, Winnie Foster becomes entwined with the never-aging Tuck family. The shows run from Oct. 4 through Nov. 4. Tickets are \$16. For more information, go to www.bartertheatre.com.

ROCKY MOUNT TO HOST HARVEST FESTIVAL OCT. 8-9

Join the Cobb family and friends as they celebrate the harvest on Oct. 8-9. Living history tours of the Cobb farm will take place all day. Demonstrations will include blacksmithing, fireplace cooking, apple butter making, apple cider pressing and more. Local craft artisans and food trucks will also be on-site. For more information, go to www.rockymountmuseum.com.



CONTRIBUTED/MENDOTA TRAIL CONSERVANCY INC.

The restoration of five trestles added 2.5 miles to the Mendota Trail.

Five restored trestles add 2.5 miles to Mendota Trail

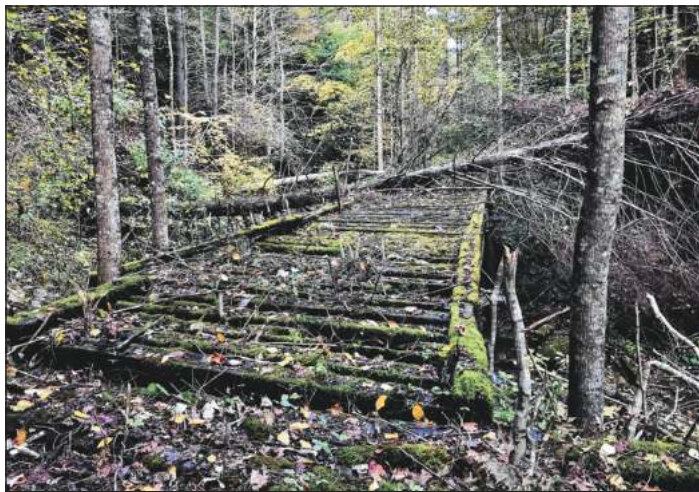
By ROBERT SORRELL
FOR BRISTOL NOW

BRISTOL, Va. — Work is complete on the restoration of five trestles on the Mendota Trail, which will add 2.5 miles to the foot and bicycle path.

The public is invited to attend a grand opening and ribbon cutting on Oct. 14 at the Mendota trailhead in Mendota, Virginia. The event is related to the completed restoration of five trestles on the Mendota Trail, according to a news release.

This portion of the 12.5-mile trail, which stretches between Bristol and Mendota, will showcase lush woodlands and multiple crossings.

Engineering firm Tysinger, Hampton &



CONTRIBUTED/MENDOTA TRAIL CONSERVANCY INC.

An overgrown bridge is pictured before the trail restorations were complete.

Partners Inc. out of Johnson City, Tennessee, designed the project. The Mendota Trail Conservancy Inc., which owns the trail, contracted

with Inland Construction out of Abingdon for construction services. This remote section of

See **TRAIL**, Page A3



Bristol Now launches first Readers' Choice Awards

By MARINA WATERS
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If you've ever wanted to share your favorite restaurant, jewelry store, veterinary clinic or other local business in either of the two Bristols, now is your chance to make your voice heard.

Bristol Now will launch its first Readers' Choice Awards starting Oct. 10. The first-ever competition will feature the top establishments within Bristol, Tennessee, and Bristol, Virginia, in over 150 categories — from roofers and auto dealers to churches and boutiques.

"There are a lot of great businesses in Bristol that our readers need to know about," Six Rivers Media Vice President Billy Kirk said, "and who is the best in the area."

Readers' Choice is new to Bristol Now. However, the competition appears in Six

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Bristol in Bloom celebrates Appalachian artists

By EMILY STEWART
estewart@bristolnow.news

On Saturday, Bristol's Cumberland Square Park will blossom with art and color for this year's annual Bristol in Bloom Art Festival.

Founded by artist Marcy Parks, Bristol in Bloom is an Appalachian regional art event featuring all local artists, craftsmen and small business owners. More than 60 artists will be in attendance, each with unique pieces, stories and passions for art. The original Bristol in Bloom Art Festival was set to take place in 2020 but endured COVID-related delays until 2021.

"Growing up as an artist here, I watched so many of my peers move away because there just wasn't a strong arts

community at the time," Parks said. "I created Bristol in Bloom to not only create opportunities for Appalachian artists to share their work and tell their stories but also to strengthen the community and connections within the arts community and encourage artists to dig their roots deeper into Appalachia."

The event will include kids and community art activities, interactive installations, including an all-new, mystery-themed project, live demonstrations and more. There will also be a Beer and Wine Garden and two locally loved food trucks, the Pakalachian Food Truck and Bristol Berry Bowls.

Bristol in Bloom is a free admission event and will be held in



CONTRIBUTED/MARCY PARKS

Dozens of local artists gather at Cumberland Park to share their creations and their stories at the first Bristol in Bloom Art Festival in 2021.

Cumberland Square Park from 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.

"Several artists participating in last year's event set new single-day

sales records at Bristol in Bloom," Parks said.

"This event, and others like it, only serve to strengthen the bonds in our community, helping

it to grow and flourish."

For more information, visit the Bristol in Bloom Art Festival Facebook page or bristolinbloom.com.

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High Low
74 44
Sunny all day



Sports

Former John Battle cross-country coach Randy Smith honored at 50th Sugar Hollow meet **B1**



Music

Jack Greene dominated the first ever Country Music Association Awards **A5**



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