



YANCEY COUNTY/BURNSVILLE, NC

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Spring Tour Gives Glimpse Inside Toe River Artists' Studios

BURNSVILLE, N.C. – Long known for its concentration of artists, the Toe River Valley welcomes visitors to meet its talented residents, see their studios and purchase their work during the Toe River Arts Studio Tour, Friday, May 31, through Sunday, June 2.

The free, self-guided tour includes 106 participating artists, as well as seven area galleries, throughout Yancey and Mitchell counties. The event takes place twice a year, in June and December. Now in its 26th year, the tour sees repeat visitors who frequent the same studios each time and others who map a different route for each event. For newcomers, the tour is a good introduction to the vibrant arts community.

“The Toe River Arts Studio Tour is one of the largest and longest-running tours in the country,” says Nealy Andrews, executive director of Toe River Arts, which puts on the event. “Attendees feel like they’re being let in on a closely held secret when they arrive at these mountain sanctuaries that artists call studios.”

While many areas are known for one particular artistic medium, the Toe River Valley prides itself on artistic variety. The tour includes potters, glass blowers, textile artists, painters, sculptors, woodworkers, photographers, printmakers, jewelry designers and mixed-media artists. Eleven participants are new to the tour this year.

The concentration of artists is due in part to nearby Penland School of Craft, an internationally known educational institution that focuses on the handmade. Once artists come to the area and find inspiration in the surrounding Blue Ridge Mountains, many decide to stay.

“The tour allows visitors to not only meet the artists, but also listen to their stories, and to travel around one of the most beautiful places on earth,” Andrews says.

Hours are 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. each day. Guidebooks with a list of participating artists, photos of their work and maps to the studios are available at the Toe River Arts galleries in Burnsville and Spruce Pine, participating studios and area businesses. A digital listing of participants can be found at www.ToeRiverArts.org.

For more information about Burnsville, including lodging and dining options for the weekend, go to www.YanceyChamber.com or call (828) 682-7413.

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