GO Tri

Living in the Tri-Cities
The Tri-Cities housing market saw another record growth year for existing home sales in 2016 while new home construction continued its slow-growth pattern, according to the Northeast Tennessee Association of Realtors (NETAR).

Across the region, existing homes sales saw a 15.3 percent increase from 2015, which was also a record-setting year.

Sales of previously owned single-family homes and condominiums moved past the $1 billion mark for the first time.

NETAR said existing home sales in Kingsport were up 12.5 percent last year, but the average sales price of $162,085 was down 3.1 percent. The average price in Bristol, Tenn., was $150,304, up 6.8 percent. Johnson City had the highest average price of $208,371, down 3.2 percent.

A tighter inventory of homes for sale was a recurring topic in housing market reports during 2016. By the end of the year, 76 percent of all the homes sold in the Tri-Cities region were in the $200,000 and below price range. New home construction, as measured by new residential permits, saw seven percent growth in the region during 2016.

“By the end of the year, 76 percent of all the homes sold in the Tri-Cities region were in the $200,000 and below price range. New home construction, as measured by new residential permits, saw seven percent growth in the region during 2016.”

“The new apartments will be a game changing option for new residents. Each of the new complexes are strategically located around the city to afford easy access to most employers so that residents can choose to live nearer to their careers,” said Lynn Tully, development services director for the city of Kingsport. “The new apartment developments are located in areas that will and have spurred additional retail and other commercial interests. We expect that they will be a catalyst for new development in those areas.”

According to www.apartments.com, rents in the Tri-Cities are varying from around $500 to $1,300 per month depending on the number of bedrooms and amenities, like an onsite gym or pool.

“They fill up immediately. All you have to do is put a banner up,” Hill said of apartment demand. “Millennials like something updated.”

The rest of 2017 looks busy for Realtors and renters.

“We have been very busy,” Hills noted. “It appears people are more confident in all price ranges … our industry is always a changing industry. You change with it and watch things. I think it’s really encouraging.”
Something special is happening in Johnson City.

By Mayor David Tomita

Just ask one of us. Ask a first-timer. Ask a native who just came back after being away for a while. Anyone who has been to Johnson City in the past year or so has seen it and tasted it and even more so … felt it.

What is “it” exactly? It’s hard to describe, I think it’s the spirit of our community. I think it’s the energy our city has taken on … it’s a life all its own.

And I’m not the only one.

“We can’t necessarily put our fingers on it, but Johnson City has something that draws us in. It wasn’t necessarily the local beer or food, but just a vibe we got from it. The fact that these entrepreneurs are keeping what we consider the character of the town alive through its original architecture is a wonderful thing to us and we can’t get enough of it.” That’s what the authors of the online blog “Jets Like Taxis” had to say about us.

“Johnson City is a town rediscovering itself. A reawakening downtown, a brand new microbrewery invigorating a long-simmering beer culture, and new parks and trails on the rise give Johnson City a future that is sure to be as storied as its past.” That’s from Blue Ridge Outdoors, which was spot on about our invigorated craft beer scene. It’s unique to have three craft breweries in a 1-mile radius, and by the end of this year, there will be five local breweries in a mile stretch.

The creation of the five-acre Founders Park, which alleviated many flooding issues in downtown, has provided an amazing hub of activity to the central part of our city. The Pavilion, which opened in April 2016, provided 3,750 square feet of covered space adjacent to the park. From festivals to the Founders After 5 concert series to Farmers Market to Barefoot in the Park yoga, Founders Park quickly became downtown’s gathering anchor.
The King Creek basin park — where our re-modeled Johnson City sign will stand — will be another popular spot when it’s complete this year.

All this activity helped drive the creation of 12 new downtown businesses last year. A grass-roots Downtown Strong movement is building a sense of community among the merchants that is supportive and familial. Recently, Johnson City Brewing Company was vandalized when a man threw a rock through its window. When the temporary plywood went up, so did a sign: Johnson City Brewing Company loves downtown! Tell us why you love downtown. #DowntownStrong. Hundreds of passers-by have written positive messages of hope, appreciation and pride on that sign. It’s a perfect representation of the “it” that you feel in Johnson City these days.

An important part of our downtown enhancements has been sidewalks, trails and beautification of streetscapes. The 10-mile rails-to-trails project Tweetsie Trail is the premier place in the region to bike and hike. Spurs to the Tweetsie Trail run through downtown, providing a great link for bicycle enthusiasts like those who participate in the popular Taco Trek and Bikin’ and Eggs organized rides. As evidenced by the addition of the Trek Store downtown, biking has become a major component of Johnson City’s recreation offerings.

The recent focus on downtown should not take away from the other components of our community that make it great. Our top employers — Mountain States Health Alliance and East Tennessee State University — are crucial to our City’s success. MSHA’s economic impact exceeds $1.3 billion while ETSU’s is greater than $683 million. Aside from that, they bring people here. For school, for doctor visits … for a chance to see the Southern Conference Champion Buccaneer basketball team play in the beautifully renovated Freedom Hall Civic Center. All those people get to see first-hand all that we have to offer. We have a first-class school system. We have an extremely low crime rate. We have incredible access to health care. We have an array of higher education. We have a remarkable public transportation system. We have lakes and rivers and parks and golf courses and shops and restaurants and just about anything anyone could want to do. And the citizens who live here are happy about it. Our most recent citizen survey shows that 84 percent of respondents think Johnson City provides an excellent or good quality of life. Ninety percent of them would recommend Johnson City as a place to live. That’s significant.

With everything Johnson City has to offer, it’s no surprise that visitors are flocking to our area. In 2014, the economic impact of tourism in Washington County was $235.5 million resulting in $5.4 million in local tax receipts. In 2015, those numbers grew to $236.9 million and $5.6 million in local tax receipts. Writers from across the country have come here to experience live music at the Down Home, where the likes of Kenny Chesney and Allison Krauss have played for intimate audiences on the stage that’s still used today. They see how our historic railroad depots have been converted into fine dining at Tupelo Honey Café and a craft brewery at Yee-Haw. They watch our Appy League champ Cardinals from The Perch at the newly renovated TVA Credit Union Ballpark. Minor League Baseball writer Benjamin Hill featured Johnson City in his “On the Road” column last year, saying he visited many locations throughout his day here “yet barely scratched the surface on what the town has to offer. … Johnson City is a forward-thinking community with an interesting past and a bright future.”

As mayor of our great city, that is my hope. We work hard daily to be forward with our thinking and to make decisions that ensure a bright future. We are in the position we are now be-
HIGHER EDUCATION

Compiled by David Floyd and Rick Wagner

EAST TENNESSEE STATE UNIVERSITY

Originally founded in 1911 as the East Tennessee State Normal School — a teacher’s college — East Tennessee State University has since become a regional touchstone for people seeking a degree in a number of professions. ETSU has about 120 baccalaureate, graduate and doctoral programs, including programs in Bluegrass, Old-Time and Country Music Studies, Storytelling and Sports Physiology.

The university had a total enrollment of 14,285 students in fall 2016, including undergraduates, graduates, medical students and pharmacy students. The university is in the process of moving away from the Tennessee Board of Regents, a state governing board, to its own regional governing institution, the board of trustees. The university is now in the process of building a new football stadium for the recently reinstated football team and is in the planning stages for a fine arts center that will appear adjacent to the Millennium Centre.

In addition to the numerous colleges on its main campus, the university also includes the ETSU James H. Quillen College of Medicine, a medical school that was founded in 1974 and has an enrollment of about 290 students. The university also features 18 NCAA Division I sports teams and is the home for a U.S. Olympic Training Site for weightlifting, canoe and kayak, and bobsled and skeleton.

MILLIGAN COLLEGE

A Christian college nestled in the Tri-Cities region, Milligan College has about 1,200 students hailing from 35 states and 15 countries. The college has been in existence for about 150 years and has more than 100 majors, minors, pre-professional degrees and concentrations. About 80 percent of the faculty have doctorate degrees. Milligan also has more than 40 clubs and organizations as well as 24 intercollegiate sports, including basketball, cross country, baseball, cycling, soccer, softball and tennis. According to the college’s website, Milligan consistently ranks as one of the best regional colleges in the South in “America’s Best Colleges” by U.S. News & World Report. A member of the Council for Christian Colleges and Universities, Milligan College traces its roots to the Buffalo Male and Female Institute, a private religious secondary school founded in 1866. The arrival of Josephus Hopwood brought the elevation of the school to a liberal arts college in 1881. The name “Milligan” came from a former professor of Hopwood’s.
WE BELIEVE THAT

HOME

IS MORE THAN WALLS

WE BELIEVE IT IS

where

and

Love

family & friends

provide the

FOUNDATION

to build your future

and dreams

Evans & Evans

Real Estate

Experience makes the difference

2685 Boones Creek Road
Johnson City

www.evansnadevanstn.com
Phone: 423.282.1817 • Fax 423.282.3439
NORTHEAST STATE COMMUNITY COLLEGE

Northeast State Community College is a comprehensive two-year community college under the governance of the Tennessee Board of Regents of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee. Founded in 1966, the college recently celebrated its 50th anniversary.

Janice Gilliam is the current and fifth president.

The college provides university parallel programs designed for students desiring to transfer to another college or university, career programs for students planning to enter the workforce immediately upon graduation and continuing education and community service programs for professional growth and personal enrichment.

The college is designated to serve the citizens of Carter, Johnson, Sullivan, Unicoi and Washington counties but also has students from Hawkins County and other Northeast Tennessee localities. Northeast plans to build Emerging Technologies Complex and it recently added an aviation program to include a drone degree.

Aside from the main campus, Northeast has campuses in Bristol, Johnson City, Kingsport, Elizabethton and Gray.

In 1966, the college began adjoining Tri-Cities Regional Airport as Tri-Cities State Area Vocational-Technical School under the governance of the State Board for Vocational Education, but in 1970 the mission was expanded and the school became a regional center for vocational and technical training.

In 1978, the scope was again expanded to include the awarding of both one-year certificates and associate degrees in technology, and the name was changed to Tri-Cities State Technical Institute. Five years later Tri-Cities State Tech was placed under the governance of the Tennessee State Board of Regents and became part of the State University and Community College System of Tennessee.

In 1990, a university parallel component was added, and the institution’s name was changed to Northeast State Technical Community College, and in 2009 the name was again changed, this time to Northeast State Community College to reflect the diverse range of programs offered by the institution.

KING UNIVERSITY

King University is a doctoral-level comprehensive private university based in Bristol, Tenn., with satellite campuses in East and Middle Tennessee and Southwest Virginia. It serves nearly 3,000 students.

Founded in 1867 as King College, the university remains in the 21st Century a Presbyterian-affiliated school offering more than 90 majors, minors, pre-professional degrees and concentrations in fields such as business, nursing, law, medical and health sciences, pharmacy, education and humanities.

Graduate programs are offered in business administration, education and nursing. A number of research, off-campus learning opportunities and travel destinations are also available.

The university boasts a student faculty ratio of 11:1 and an enrollment of 2,897, with students hailing from 32 states, 29 countries and six continents. The enrollment numbers are representative of all three educational platforms taught at King University including traditional, graduate and professional studies, as well as online degree programs.

Throughout the years, King has events for prospective students, including “King for a Day” events for high school students pondering college. Though a private school, the university offers grant and financial aid opportunities with the average student receiving just more than $15,000 a year in financial aid, according to the school’s website.

As for sports, King is a member of NCAA Division II and a Conference Carolinas member with 25 varsity sports.

The King University main campus sits on 135 acres and includes residence halls, food services, classroom and education buildings and sports facilities. It has satellite operations at the Kingsport Center for High Education and the King Downtown Campus, also in Kingsport.

King has satellite operations in Abingdon, Va., at the Southwest Virginia Higher Education Center, Mountain Empire Community College in Big Stone Gap, Pellissippi State Community College in the Knoxville area, at Northeast State Community College in Blountville, Roane State Community College in Harriman, Tenn., the Hardin Valley campus in Knoxville, Walters State Community College in Morristown and Sevierville, the Franklin, Tenn., campus near Nashville and at the Southwest Virginia Community College in Richlands, Va.
Thank you for making our family part of yours!

Dental Crowns & Bridgework
Inlays & Onlays • Porcelain Veneers
Teeth Whitening • Tooth-Colored Fillings
Invisalign Clear Aligners
Cosmetic Bonding • Dental Implants
Teeth Cleaning & Exams

Contact our office to schedule a personal cosmetic consultation
2975 Fort Henry Drive  Kingsport, Tennessee 423-247-2151   www.guestdds.com

Dr. Charles E. Guest
Dr. Cheston B. Guest
Dr. Meaghan E. Guest

DeAnna Jilton
Associate Broker
REALTOR®

Greg Cox Real Estate
3121 Bristol Highway
Johnson City, TN 37601
Cell 423-773-1080
Office 423-282-2411
deaanna.jilton@gmail.com
www.BHHSgregcox.com

e-Certified Relocation Broker
Multi-Million Dollar Club
A member of the franchise system of BHH Affiliates, LLC

Trusted, personal service through a local lender.
Purchase, Refinance, VA, FHA, Home Equity Line-of-Credit, and more.

Heather Ball
Real Estate Loan Officer
hball@tvacreditunion.com
NMLS #1132142
phone: (865) 201-9833

tvacreditunion.com

NMLS 16711. Tennessee properties. Restrictions Apply. Not a government affiliated agency. Federally insured by NCUA.
SULLIVAN COUNTY
23 schools
4 high schools
6 middle
Innovation Academy of Northeast Tennessee (6-8)
10 elementary
2 K-8
723 teachers
10,220 students
32.4 percent economically disadvantaged
17.6 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,572

WASHINGTON COUNTY
17 schools
2 high schools
1 adult high school
2 middle
1 K-12 (University School)
10 elementary
1 virtual
564 teachers
8,765 students
27.3 percent economically disadvantaged
14.9 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $8,549

JOHNSON COUNTY
7 schools
1 high school
1 middle
5 elementary
2,149 students
43.4 economically disadvantaged
18.9 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditures of $10,381

UNICOI COUNTY
7 schools
1 high school
1 middle
4 elementary
2,402 students
40.3 percent disadvantaged
18.8 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,623

ROGERSVILLE CITY
1 school, K-8
46 teachers
663 students
28 percent economically disadvantaged
11.2 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,462

HAWKINS COUNTY
18 schools
2 high schools
3 middle
9 elementary
1 alternative
1 intermediate
1 K-2
1 K-12
460 teachers
7,109 students
39 percent economically disadvantaged
16 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,262

KINGSPORT CITY
12 schools
1 high school (Dobyns-Bennett and D-B EXCEL count as one)
1 alternative school (6-12)
2 middle
8 elementary
481 teachers
7,403 students
39.8 percent economically disadvantaged students
18.6 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $10,726

ELIZABETHTON CITY
5 schools
1 high school
1 middle
3 elementary
185 teachers
2,555 students
33.6 percent economically disadvantaged
16.4 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,721

CARLTON COUNTY
15 schools
4 high schools
1 middle
9 elementary
1 alternative school
5,491 students
46.1 percent economically disadvantaged
17.1 percent disabled
Per pupil expenditure of $9,478

Fairway Volkswagen Kingsport
THE 2017 VW “Golf Alltrack S” 4x4
#92-17 - All wheel drive, all power, AM/FM & CD, satellite radio, Apple Play, ESP, power windows, air conditioning, power steering, power remote locks with security system, 4 wheel, disc, anti-lock brakes, front and side airbag protections, side curtain & much more.

* $1,999 cash or trade due at signing. Excludes fees, tax, tag & license.
12,000 miles per year with approved credit through VCI. Subject to prior sale. Offer ends 4/30/17.

Fairway Volkswagen
2301 EAST STONE DRIVE • KINGSPORT
423-378-1800 • www.fairwayvw.com
NEW BOONES CREEK LOCATION COMING SOON!

SOUTHERN DWELLINGS

Real Estate

SERVICE YOU DESERVE - PEOPLE YOU TRUST

www.SouthernDwellings.com
When I was two, my parents and I fled from Havana, Cuba to the United States. After arriving in Miami, my father landed a job at DuPont in Philadelphia, where I was raised.

I grew up in a great family. I got my community spirit from my parents, along with their sense of hard work and dedication.

That’s why it was so easy to fall in love with Kingsport.

I am inspired by this town and by its people. I am a better person because of living in Kingsport. My roots are here and I enjoy telling our story about why Kingsport is so special.

Kingsport is a special place with special people. Over the last 100 years, citizens of every walk of life have worked to build this city. It is the strong foundation they have built that propels us towards the next one hundred years.

We embrace progress, and we embrace our neighbors. We continue to maintain our small town feel with big city opportunities for all our citizens.

I believe there are two reasons why Kingsport is so special and unique. One, we have the undeniable “Kingsport Spirit.” It is not something describable, just felt. If you have not lived or visited here, then it’s hard to understand, but it is definitely alive and well in Kingsport today, especially during our centennial year.

The second attribute is our citizens’ “aim-high” mindset. Margaret Meade is widely quoted, “Never doubt that a small group of thoughtful, committed citizens can change the world; indeed, it’s the only thing that ever has.” This is Kingsport.

Together, we started Educate & Grow, and now it’s Tennessee Promise. Together, we started Healthy Kingsport, and now there is a state initiative recognizing Kingsport as the model. Together, we sought safety, and now we are one of 19 National Safe Communities in the United States. It is amazing what Kingsport citizens can accomplish when they put their mind to it.

Many of you have been following the OneKingsport movement. It is one of the most exciting things going on at the city right now. I encourage you to get involved and help make a difference in the quality of lives for our residents, businesses, developers and visitors, and undeniably you.

Believe it or not, the term OneKingsport has been around a really long time. The earliest recorded memory of OneKingsport was back in 1949 as it was the cover of a Kingsport Chamber Annual Report. The title across the cover of the book said “There’s only One Kingsport”. This is true...there’s literally only ONE Kingsport in the entire United States. Several Bristol’s, Johnson City’s, Knoxville’s and Nashville’s exist, but there’s only OneKingsport.

The most recent association with OneKingsport is the OneKingsport Summit, OneKingsport Post-Summit Workgroups and now the OneKingsport Advisory Commission.

The last visioning process occurred under Mayor Jeanette Blazier in 1999 where excellent projects like the Kingsport Academic Village and MeadowView transpired to further the city’s vision.

A couple of years ago, I campaigned on the fact it was time for another visioning effort within our community. In October 2015, hundreds of citizens gathered, in person and via livestreaming, for a two-day summit to discuss a population growth issue in Kingsport. The purpose of the OneKingsport Summit was to create a five-year road map of unique investments and initiatives that differentiate our city in the region and make Kingsport a more vibrant 24/7 city.

As Mayor, I have the best job because on any given day, I have the opportunity to recognize citizens and organizations for their achievements and community spirit to improve the quality of life for all residents. The Kingsport spirit of teamwork combined with an aim high and can-do mindset has driven us for decades, resulting in a very high quality of life for all Kingsport citizens to enjoy and for businesses to grow and prosper.

For all these reasons, I am confident Kingsport will enjoy another great 100 years.

By Mayor John Clark
At Coldwell Banker Security Real Estate, we pride ourselves on being experts in bringing home buyers and home sellers together throughout the Tri-Cities area. We use innovative advertising and marketing techniques to attract potential buyers to the properties we list.

And, with a seasoned staff of brokers and agents, no one knows our area better! We are the “ONLY” Coldwell Banker Franchise serving the Tri-Cities since 1983. Experience is our edge!

Security Real Estate
200 Princeton Road • Johnson City, TN 37601

423-282-2595
Toll Free: 866-998-8196

*Each Office is Independently Owned & Operated

www.coldwellbankersecurity.com
Bays Mountain Park — one of Tennessee’s top attractions — offers a diverse array of programs, activities and exhibits to the residents of Kingsport and greater Tri-Cities region, hosting more than 150,000 visitors each year.

The park opened in 1972 and over the years has grown to 3,600 acres in size, making it one of the largest city-owned parks in the country. On any given day the park will serve a visiting school’s educational needs, provide the perfect backdrop and challenge for a quick hike, run or mountain bike adventure, take visitors on a virtual and realistic journey through space, and also allow families to enjoy an outing in the great outdoors.

Bays Mountain Park’s 36 miles of trails surround a man-made 44-acre lake, which serves as the scenic centerpiece for the park. The trails offer enthusiasts of all ages breathtaking scenery and natural mountain terrain; 20 miles of trails are also approved for mountain biking offering a challenge for all levels of expertise and experience.

The park includes a Nature Interpretive Center with exhibits on rocks and minerals, pond life, insects and mammals, space exploration as well as a cave for youngsters to play in and explore. Housed within the center is the planetarium, which in recent years received a major overhaul and a new, state-of-the-art digital star projector, allowing patrons to watch professional made programs on space, the constellations, the night sky and the solar system.

Other outdoor features of Bays Mountain Park include the observatory, where folks can participate in the StarWatch program or enjoy a filtered view of the sun for the SunWatch programs. The Adventure Education and Team Building ropes course has been one of the more popular additions to the park in recent years, where groups can maneuver through a ropes course, three wooden towers and finish up with a ride down the zip line.

Featured in Bays Mountain Park’s habitats are white-tailed deer, several species of snakes including copperheads and rattlesnakes, a bobcat, river otters, raccoons, birds of prey such as a great-horned owl and red-tailed hawk, and of course, the gray wolves.

Bays Mountain Park is also host to many events, such as the annual Bays Mountain Trail Race (a 15-mile test of endurance), Art on the Mountain (a monthlong art show) and the Earth Day Celebration. Other events such as musical performances and plays have been held at the park’s 400-seat amphitheater.

For more information go to www.baysmountain.com.
WARRIORS’ PATH STATE PARK

Warriors’ Path State Park is home to premier boating and fishing activities, 12 miles of hiking trails, an internationally-renowned mountain bike trail system (a designated National Recreational Trail), an award-winning nature education program and a nationally recognized golf course.

Named for the Great Cherokee War and Trading Path, the 950-acre park is located on the shores of the Patrick Henry Reservoir on the Holston River and brings in thousands of visitors each year looking for outdoor recreation activities, a picnic with the family, a game of golf with friends or a weekend of camping.

Warriors’ Path is the only Tennessee State Park with a Boundless Playground - where children of all physical and mental abilities can play together. Features of park include the Lions Narnia Braille Trail with eight sensory stations along a quarter-mile that tell visitors the story of Aslan of the Chronicles of Narnia, the Anderson Treehouse (a fully-accessible tree house) and the Palmer Center Foundation Amphitheater which can host audiences of up to 1,000 people.

In addition to the 12 miles of hiking trails, Warriors’ Path offers 8.5 miles of scenic and challenging mountain bike trails, as well as the lap around Duck Island. If you’re not interested in walking or biking, the park does offer two miles of horseback riding for adult and pony rides for children during the summer.

The park is a popular fishing hole for many with catches including bass, crappie, Hybrid Striped Bass, catfish and trout. And staying with the water theme, patrons fill up the lake during the warmer months in canoes, kayaks, fishing boats and two-person paddle boats.

The Olympic-sized pool is available from Memorial Day through mid-August while the park's 18-hole golf course is always a popular spot for golfers of all skills. The par 72 course was designed by George Cobb and opened for play in 1972. The course includes a large practice facility complete with teeing ground, practice green and practice bunker.

SYCAMORE SHOALS

When American colonists first began settling beyond King George’s Proclamation Line of 1763, one of the major settlements was on the banks of the Watauga River and the Sycamore Shoals of the Watauga became a focal point for the settlers of the region.

Many of the events in the first chapters of history books about Tennessee took place at Sycamore Shoals. These included the Transylvania Purchase in 1775, the Cherokee attacks and siege of Fort Caswell, and the gathering of the Overmountain Men to march to Kings Mountain, S.C. to meet the threat of British Major Patrick Ferguson.

These events are depicted in the state’s official outdoor drama, Liberty! Which is presented at Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area on the last three weekends of July each year.

Sycamore Shoals State Historic Area was created to honor and preserve these historic moments of Tennessee history. In addition to protecting the historic grounds around the shoals, the park also preserves the Carter Mansion, which is located a few miles upstream. It was the first frame house built in Tennessee and was the home of John Carter and his son, Landon Carter. The park’s latest acquisition is Sabine Hill, the house built for Brig. Gen. Nathaniel Taylor after his return from the War of 1812.

While the park was created to commemorate and preserve some significant events in the history of Tennessee, the park’s grounds have also become a popular location for other annual events, including a Native American Festival in June and a Celtic Festival in October. The park is located at 1651 W. Elk Ave.
BUFFALO MOUNTAIN PARK

Johnson Citians don’t even have to leave their hometown to enjoy some of the best hiking around. Buffalo Mountain Park has been providing hikers memorable experiences since 1986, even before it was owned by Johnson City.

The 725-acre park has been managed by the Johnson City Parks & Recreation Department since 1994 after the city obtained the land from the U.S. Forest Service. It has steep and forested trails. Hiking and picnicking are the two main activities.

The park’s trails include White Rock Trail (1.9 miles), Lone Oak Trail (1.81), Tip Top Trail (1.5), Cascades Trail (1.0), Fork Knob Trail (.91), Tower Ridge Trail (.8), Fork Ridge Trail (.63), Hartsell Hollow Trail (.37) and High Ridge Trail (.35). Loops can be made by combining the trails into longer hikes.

Tip Top is the highest point of the park, although most hikers enjoy the views from White Rock Overlook. The famous views include downtown Johnson City, nearby East Tennessee State University and the surrounding mountains.

Autumn hikes are very popular as the leaves begin their annual colorful transformation.

The park serves as a nature preserve, and many species of wildflowers can be found along the trails, as can all kinds of wildlife.

Dogs are allowed as long as they are on leashes, and there is a parking area near the trail head.

The park’s hours are 7 a.m. to sunset in the summer and 9 a.m. to sunset in the winter.

Buffalo Mountain Park’s address is 570 Highridge Road, Johnson City, TN 37604.

FOUNDERS PARK

Four years ago, the Johnson City Commission approved the first of eight planned phases of downtown flood mitigation when the $3 million, 5-acre Founders Park stormwater/park project won approval.

Today the eye-pleasing green space, complete with revamped and visitor-friendly Brush Creek, greets visitors and residents as they enter downtown Johnson City from the west.

The watery greenway is a popular place to take a casual stroll, admire sculptures placed by the Public Arts Committee, enjoy musicians at the park’s open-air pavilion or children flying a kite on what now is known as “The Great Lawn.”

Residents and visitors can reserve the greenery, amphitheater or the entire park for a fee.

Founders After Five was launched in 2015, which takes place at the amphitheater. The program utilizes a pool of local acting, production and marketing talent, as well as providing something not often seen in downtown Johnson City’s outdoor public space.

The Pavilion at Founders Park moved the Johnson City Farmers Market closer to the park, and opened up a mounting number of downtown event possibilities near downtown.

The city is also planning to build a 10-foot-wide, roughly 200-foot-long walkway that leads from the park’s plaza and stretch between Brush Creek and State of Franklin toward Church Brothers Family Fun Store.

For information about event rentals, go to www.jcdevelopment.org or call (423) 928-2988.
On many summer nights, there is a bevy of activity emanating from Winged Deer Park. Sometimes it’s the glow of the lights humming over the heated competition of a softball tournament – sometimes fast-pitch and other times the less-stringent slow-pitch variety. Action is overseen from the scorer’s tower which has a bird’s-eye view of four of the park’s five full-sized softball fields.

There’s plenty more to offer the residents of Johnson City, including batting cages that can be used for different levels of speed for honing the skills of baseball players – or slow-pitch offerings for softball.

Also, people can take a walk through the forest for an 18-hole battle with the disc golf course. Other offerings include three lighted softball fields, concession buildings, a half-mile walking track, and paved fitness trails that wind through the forested section of the park.

Down at the lake, enthusiasts can take advantage of two sand volleyball courts, a picnic shelter, public boating access, green space, a lighted handicap-accessible boardwalk, amphitheater, and a festival plaza multi-use area.

And there’s more with the park’s historical features: Robert Young Cabin (one of Johnson City’s oldest dwellings), Massengil Monument, and the James H. Quillen Historical Tree Arboretum.

Johnson City’s Winged Deer Park was established in 1991, and is a 200-acre facility.

The area was previously owned as a farm by the J. Norton Arney family. Arney was a car dealer in the area, and he also trained show horses in the area. The farm was used primarily to grow hay, and there were several large stables on the lakefront portion of the property.

In 1985, the city of Johnson City purchased the property, converting the original Arney family farmhouse for the offices of the Parks and Recreation department.

Park hours are 7 a.m. to 10 p.m. in the summer, and 7 a.m. to sunset in the winter. The administrative office at the park is open Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Sustainable recreation opportunities and infrastructure for Rocky Fork are still in the planning stages. Future amenities will include a visitor center and gift shop, picnic pavilions, a ranger station, campgrounds, and a hiking, mountain biking and horseback riding trail system with access to the Appalachian Trail.

The state Department of Transportation hopes to complete a one-mile paved access road into the park by early next year.

The state Department of Transportation hopes to complete a one-mile paved access road into the park by early next year.

The park is bordered on three sides by the Cherokee National Forest and laced by many miles of abandoned and unmarked logging roads. The Appalachian Trail and the Sampson Mountain Wilderness Area are also located nearby.

Located in the pristine Rocky Fork watershed, the park’s, rugged terrain features numerous cool mountain streams including the park’s namesake, Rocky Fork Creek. With its large moss covered boulders, deep pools and eddies, the cold, swift flowing creek is known for its miles of excellent trout fishing.

The park is bordered on three sides by the Cherokee National Forest and laced by many miles of abandoned and unmarked logging roads. The Appalachian Trail and the Sampson Mountain Wilderness Area are also located nearby.
Dining in the Tri-Cities

By Tony Casey

Restaurants come and go, but staple eateries established in Bristol, Kingsport and Johnson City develop their own cult-like followings, and deservedly so. Here’s a narrowed-down list of just a few of those area favorites.

**AUTHENTIC VIETNAMESE CUISINE**

What: Pho and Johnson City are not two phrases that you’ll usually find in the same sentence, unless that sentence is, “I wish I could get pho in Johnson City.” Now you can, as V’s Authentic Vietnamese restaurant recently opened in Northwest Johnson City. Authentic, fresh and healthy dishes are the name of the game for V’s.

Where: 920 N. State of Franklin Road, No. 530, Johnson City, Tennessee 37604

**OLE’S QUACAMOLES**

What: Ole’s position in the Tree Streets makes it that “neighborhood” Cal-Tex Mex joint that constantly stays busy. With a great salsa bar, deep menu and beer offerings, Ole’s Guacamole’s is a must-eat in Johnson City. Located just a few blocks from downtown Johnson City proper, it’s well worth the walk.

Where: 1000 S. Roan St., Johnson City, Tennessee 37604

**Two Dads**

What: Your place or theirs? The two dads who run Two Dads Cafe and Catering invite you to either join them at their location in Kingsport or they can make sure you and your hungry guests eat well at your next event or function. They specialize in home-cooked meals like pot roast and soup beans, prime rib or grilled salmon.

Where: 301 E. Sullivan St., Kingsport, Tennessee 37660

**J Frank**

What: Very few regional restaurants have a venue like the J Frank Restaurant, which is located in a restored Victorian home from the mid-19th century. Focusing on steak, seafood and their cocktail creations, this is a home away from home for many local foodies. This restaurant is also known as the Troutdale Dining Room.

Where: 412 6th St., Bristol, Tennessee 37620

**Wild Wing Cafe**

What: As one of downtown Johnson City’s newest restaurants, this has been a hot spot for people who like hot wings, a great place to watch sports games and a fine beer list. Directly next to Founders Park and the Pavilion at Founders Park, this is a prime location for people looking to fill their bellies after exploring downtown Johnson City’s offerings.

Where: 71 Wilson Ave., Johnson City, Tennessee 37604
International Cuisine is not in short supply in the Tri-Cities, with many countries and cultural styles of food represented in restaurants across the region.

A few of the best options may also be, at this time, among the least well known to the general public, although they each have their own loyal returning fan base.

Some choices for a culinary tour of the world without leaving the Tri-Cities include:

* In 2007, Choon Fah Yong and his wife Adeleine opened Yong Asian House in Gray to offer a sampling of dishes from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, China and other Asian countries.

It’s not a typical “Chinese restaurant.”

Their goal is to bring the best of their heritage and cuisine to the public. Yong Asian House, located 405 Roy Martin Road, is a family owned and operated restaurant that offers up traditional clay-pot dishes to curries, noodles and seafood, and a sushi bar.

What to try first? It’s hard to say because it’s all good. But, if you attend the Sunday brunch buffet you can try a little bit of everything. That’s the only time Yong offers a buffet.

* Most Mexican restaurants have similar menus, and similar cuisine, but California Mexican Grill & Bar in Kingsport has a style all its own.

Located at 1001 East Stone Dr., California Mexican Grill & Bar offers a different flavor of Mexican food. You receive table-side service for guacamole and salads, ensuring the best and freshest taste.

Along with a California-style Mexican menu, unusual dishes are also available, such as Spinach Enchiladas, Avocado Burrito, Potato and Bean Burrito, and a variety of shrimp and fish combinations to go along with other traditional Latin fare.

What should you try first? Definitely the homemade tamales.

* Cafe Alona, 1154 Highway 126, Bristol, is open all week, but on Thursday through Saturday it offers a completely different menu each week offering food and culture of other countries under one roof.

They invite their guests to “travel the world by taste” while enjoying countries’ cultures of food and presentation.

Chef Alona Kennedy comes to us from the Philippines where she started cooking at a very young age with her father. Alona gives all the credit to God as she says, “I am just a vessel. It is He who does the cooking.”

What to try first: It’s hard to say because the international cuisine menu changes every week. Customers say, “It’s all good.”

* In 2007, Choon Fah Yong and his wife Adeleine opened Yong Asian House in Gray to offer a sampling of dishes from Japan, Thailand, Malaysia, China and other Asian countries.

It’s not a typical “Chinese restaurant.”

Their goal is to bring the best of their heritage and cuisine to the public. Yong Asian House, located 405 Roy Martin Road, is a family owned and operated restaurant that offers up traditional clay-pot dishes to curries, noodles and seafood, and a sushi bar.

What to try first? It’s hard to say because it’s all good. But, if you attend the Sunday brunch buffet you can try a little bit of everything. That’s the only time Yong offers a buffet.

* Most Mexican restaurants have similar menus, and similar cuisine, but California Mexican Grill & Bar in Kingsport has a style all its own.

Located at 1001 East Stone Dr., California Mexican Grill & Bar offers a different flavor of Mexican food. You receive table-side service for guacamole and salads, ensuring the best and freshest taste.

Along with a California-style Mexican menu, unusual dishes are also available, such as Spinach Enchiladas, Avocado Burrito, Potato and Bean Burrito, and a variety of shrimp and fish combinations to go along with other traditional Latin fare.

What should you try first? Definitely the homemade tamales.

* Cafe Alona, 1154 Highway 126, Bristol, is open all week, but on Thursday through Saturday it offers a completely different menu each week offering food and culture of other countries under one roof.

They invite their guests to “travel the world by taste” while enjoying countries’ cultures of food and presentation.

Chef Alona Kennedy comes to us from the Philippines where she started cooking at a very young age with her father. Alona gives all the credit to God as she says, “I am just a vessel. It is He who does the cooking.”

What to try first: It’s hard to say because the international cuisine menu changes every week. Customers say, “It’s all good.”

* The Main Street Pizza Company offers Italian American cuisine specializing in handmade pizzas, subs, salads, pasta dishes, desserts, and more.

Create your own pizza or choose one of the gourmet pies, with more than 50 toppings to choose from.

There are two locations including 242 E Main Street in Kingsport; and 300 East Main Street in Johnson City.

If you’re looking for something better than the traditional fast food pizza, try the Main Street Pizza Company. There’s nothing on their menu that isn’t amazing.

What to try first? That’s a no-brainer. Loaded Chicken Alfredo Pasta.
There’s not a slow season when it comes to the performing arts.

Whether it’s music or theater, performance groups in the area are rolling out their spring and summer schedules for the year. Between all the theater and music groups in the Tri-Cities, audiences are covered from classic Shakespeare to music from J.R.R. Tolkien’s Middle-Earth.

Barter Theatre is offering a full season of productions. Twelve different plays and musicals will occupy the theater’s two stages from April through July, with a few big names on the agenda for the year.

Shakespeare’s A Midsummer Night’s Dream will run for one month from April 13 to May 13, and Footloose will begin shortly after from May 19 to August 12. Director Adie Lee said that cast, crews and directors are excited to bring a variety of shows to audiences this year, and said that Footloose is expected to bring a fun atmosphere to audiences.

“It’s going to be a good time,” Lee said. “It’s one of those feel-good musicals for the whole family.”
Kids Love Barter Too!

– A Duck Called Ugly will run from April 4 through 22 and Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day goes from April 25 through June 3. A full production list of Barter Theatre’s schedule through July is:

April 1 - April 30 Uncanny Valley
April 4 - April 22 A Duck Called Ugly
April 13 - May 13 A Midsummer Night’s Dream
April 25 - June 3 Alexander and the Terrible, Horrible, No Good, Very Bad Day
May 12 - August 12 The Savannah Sipping Society
May 19 - August 12 Footloose
June 1 - August 12 The Cottage
June 6 - June 24 Mike Mulligan
June 10 - August 13 Leaving Iowa
June 27 - July 15 Cinderella
July 18 - August 5 The Neverending Story

Contact Barter Theatre’s box office by calling 276-628-3991 or visit www.bartertheatre.com for more information on productions, tickets and show times.

Johnson City Community Theatre
May 11 - May 20 See How They Run
Contact: 926-2542 or www.jct.info for tickets.

Kingsport Theatre Guild
April 13 - April 15 Importance of Being Earnest
May 5 - May 14 Little Women
Contact: 392-8427 or kingsporttheatre.org for tickets.

Jonesborough Repertory Theatre
March 31 - April 21 Sister Act
May 12 - May 28 The Little Princess
June 23 - July 9 South Pacific
Contact: 791-4440 or www.jonesboroughtheatre.com for tickets.

Theatre Bristol
June 16 - June 25 Disney’s Beauty and the Beast
Contact: 212-3625 or www.theatrebristol.org/ for tickets

Coming events at the Johnson City Symphony:

The symphony will benefit from an Encore event at The Ridges Country Club (1501 Ridges Club Drive), in Jonesborough for a night of live music, food and a cash bar. Proceeds will benefit the JCSO. The event is on April 21 and begins at 5:30 p.m.

On May 6, several Appalachian bands will host the Banding Together half-day concert. A jam session will be held from 5:30 to 6 that day for interested participants. Tickets for the event are $15 and the venue has yet to be announced.

The JCSO will collaborate with the celtic band Mithril at Milligan’s Seeger Chapel for Through Middle Earth-The Magic of Mithril on May 20 at 7:30 p.m. The program will feature songs from ‘The Lord of the Rings’ along with Irish jigs to complete a Celtic celebration.

All tickets can be secured by either calling 926-8742 or by visiting www.jcsymphony.com.
Local Music
By Nick Shepherd

No matter what type of music you are into, chances are you will be able to find a live performance of it in the Tri-Cities area. It’s one of the many great things about living in a region so diverse and musically inclined.

Whether you are looking for old time country music, a bevy of bluegrass, open mic nights, karaoke, classic rock or heavy metal, the Tri-Cities offers it all. Below, we take a look at some live music venues from around the region.

One of the most iconic music venues in Johnson City is The Down Home Eclectic Music Room. The small music venue is one of the region’s longest running venues. It was founded in 1976 and, according to their website, become a mecca for music lovers from Upper East Tennessee and Southwest Virginia.

Down Home works to place the emphasis on the quality of music and actively promotes a listening atmosphere rather than a typical bar scene, where socializing takes priority.

While the schedule is not set in stone, some upcoming acts in April include Chuck Brodsky, an Asheville singer-songwriter, and bands from East Tennessee State University. Visit their website, www.downhome.com, for more.

A pub in Kingsport that regularly offers live music, this spot has what you need for a fun night out on the town. This microbrewery opened in downtown Kingsport in 2014, concentrating on batches of beers that use quality ingredients and is family and dog friendly.

Upcoming musical acts for Sleepy Owl include JP Parsons, an Americana singer, Grandpa’s Cough Medicine, an Outlaw Bluegrass band, and If Birds Could Fly, an Americana band. Find out more on their website www.sleepyowlbrewery.com

This bar in Johnson City named after the famous mobster Al Capone has quickly become a venue for some of the biggest bands in hard rock music. Nationally known bands frequent the bar and the venue often sells out.

However, the bar not only hosts national bands, it also hosts plenty of home grown music and music from all across the spectrum. Some upcoming shows include Hold Gallows Band, The Breakfast Club, Diamond Dogs David Bowie Tribute and local favorites Demon Waffle. For more information, please visit www.caponesjohnsoncity.com.

This quaint coffee house and music room is located in the heart of downtown Johnson City. The Facebook page for Willow Tree describes it as a magical place where musicians, artists of all kinds and lovers of both can come together, feel appreciated, eat, drink and be merry.

Upcoming acts include Driftwood, a band playing a variety of music, Cory Branan, a singer-songwriter, and Violet Bell, a country music band. For more information, please visit thewillowtreejc.com.

NETRE is a full-service agency able to meet all of your Tri-Cities real estate needs. Whether you are buying, selling, renting, or need property management services, we are here to help. Call (423) 282-1050 or visit www.netretn.com today!

2726 E. Oakland Avenue, Johnson City, TN 37601
CUSTOM ASPHALT SERVICES

Bob Gilham, owner of Custom Asphalt Services has been a contractor in the pavement maintenance industry since 1973. He located his business in Johnson City, TN in 1981. That’s 44 years of valuable experience, and 36 years of serving our area.

His company provides “HEAVY - DUTY” protective sealcoating, striping, patching, crackfilling, concrete services, snow removal, parking area design, layout, and associated services.

Some of their many completed projects include Oakland Avenue Baptist Church, Central Church of Christ, Gunning’s Baptist Church, Storage Max, Morris Baker, Stowaway Bristol, Sulphur Springs United Methodist Church, Highland Baptist Church, Friendship Baptist Church, First Baptist Church-Blountville, Fox Glen Townhouses, Faith Tabernacle Church, King Springs Baptist Church, Quillen Rehab Hospital, Jubilee World Outreach Church, Piney Flats Presbyterian Church, 1497 Med.

Having served the Johnson City and surrounding area of Northeast Tennessee for 36 years, our efforts have always been to provide the most effective, longest lasting “HEAVY - DUTY” protective sealcoating available! We look forward to a prosperous year and wish the same for all of our friends and associates.

Bob Gilham – Owner
2215 Ridgefield Drive
Johnson City, TN 37601
Phone: 423-926-2742   Cell: 423-791-0270
www.customasphaltservices.com
A MIDSUMMER NIGHT’S DREAM
BY WILLIAM SHAKEPEARE
APRIL 13 - MAY 13

UNCANNY VALLEY
APRIL 1-30
THOMAS GIBBON

TICKETS START AT JUST $20!
GET THE BEST SEATS AT THE BEST PRICE!
bartertheatre.com • 276.628.3991