

the day.

## WCU business college gains reaccreditation

**CULLOWHEE** — The College of Business at Western Carolina University received notice of full reaccreditation from AACSB International — The Association to Advance Collegiate Schools of Business.

Official announcement of reaccreditation came this month after approval by the AACSB International's board of directors. It concludes a period of extensive examination by faculty members in the WCU College of Business, followed by a visit from a peer review team and the recommendation of the organization's accreditation maintenance committee.

## Water department gets continued certification

**ASHEVILLE** — The city Water Resources Department received continued certification, meeting requirements and conditions of the International Organization for Standardization.

This means the department achieves and demonstrates sound environmental performance by controlling impacts of activities, product (water) and services on the environment.

Recertification has been consistent since the Water Resources Department became the first water utility in North Carolina to receive ISO 14001 Certification in 2004.

## GROW is next phase for MMS Direct

**ASHEVILLE** — MMS Direct, formerly Mail Management Services, launched GROW with an open house and launch party celebrating both the new company and the start of Asheville Greenworks 2011 Great American Cleanup campaign.

The new branding signifies a new direction for the River

# Summer camps mean big bucks

## Study puts impact to WNC economy at \$365M yearly

By James Shea  
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**B**REVARD — There's more to summer camp than s'mores and silly skits. The summer tradition generates some \$365 million in Western North Carolina economic activity, according to an industry group.

The N.C. Youth Camp Association funded a recent economic study that outlined the financial impact of 50 summer camps in Buncombe, Transylvania, Jackson and Henderson counties.

"Camping in Western North Carolina has a long tradition, but this quantifies (the economic impact)," said Jane Murray, N.C. Youth Camp Association executive director.

The study showed camps generated a \$103 million annual impact in Buncombe County; \$120 million in Henderson County; \$11.5 million in Jackson County; and \$126 million in Transylvania County. A 1999 study showed camps in Western North Carolina generated \$96.2 in economic activity.

Summer camps created the equivalent of 10,335 full jobs — excluding staff — in the four-county region, according to the study, and paid \$33 million in taxes. Out-of-state families spent \$2,096 per camper and camp staff members spent an average of \$2,402 during the camping season.

Robert Danos, director of Camp Mondamin in Henderson County, said a lot of people do not grasp the financial impacts that camps have in WNC. This is partially because the camps are in remote areas and local residents do not see them.

"Camps in Western North Carolina are a hidden business," he said. "We are a green business, but out of sight."

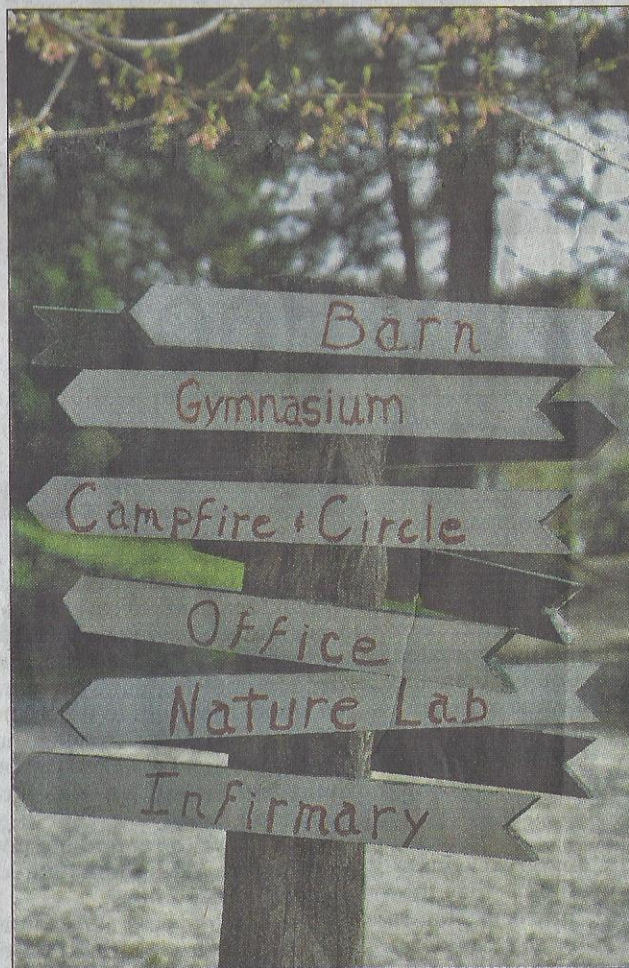
## A long history

For a long time, people have come to WNC for summer camp. At one point, North Carolina had the "Camp State" on its license plates because of the large number of summer camps in the state, most in WNC.

"The tradition in the South of going to camp in this part of North Carolina has been going on for generations," said Page Ives Lemel, Keystone Camp executive director.

She should know. Keystone Camp in Transylvania County was

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An old-fashioned directional sign is seen at Camp Mondamin.

## Now arriving in Alabama:

## Airlines sell lost

# BUSINESS

Mutuals	E2
Motley Fool	E2
Computer America	E3
Business people	E3

# E

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## BRIEFCASE

### Meeting brings German CEOs to Asheville

ASHEVILLE — The German American Chamber of Commerce of the Southern U.S. will hold its annual general meeting April 30 at the Grove Park Inn.

The meeting will be a summit of key leaders in the German-American business community, and attendees will include the largest concentration of German CEOs and executives in the region. The business program portion of the event is open to both members and nonmembers.

First up is a breakfast meeting with John E. Silvia, chief economist of Wells Fargo Securities. It will also include a keynote presentation during the business luncheon from state Commerce Secretary J. Keith Crisco. His presentation is titled "Cooking with Crisco: Spicing up Economic Development in North Carolina and the American South."

In the afternoon, representatives from German companies in the South will discuss challenges and tips for doing business in the region. Participants include Markus Schäfer, president and CEO of Mercedes-Benz U.S. International Inc., and Martin Richenhagen, chairman, president and CEO of the AGCO Corp.

Networking opportunities will also take place throughout



PHOTOS BY ERIN BRETHAUER/EBRETHAU@CITIZEN-TIMES.COM  
Mike Thiessen, a carpenter at Camp Mondamin in Zirconia, replaces old wood on a walkway Thursday morning. "There's always something to fix that's for sure," Thiessen said. Summer camps in Western North Carolina have a huge impact on the local economy.

## IMPACT: Camp owners meet with NC lawmakers about concerns

Continued from E1

founded in 1916 by two Florida women. Lemel is the great-great-niece of the founder, and her family has directly owned and run the camp since 1942. She was raised around the camp and has been the director since 1984.

Lemel has seen young children come to camp and years later return with their own children.

According to the study, 42 percent of the children who attend camp in the four counties are the children of former campers.

Lemel said two of her current staff have been coming to the camp for 15 years. They started as campers and are now staff members. The camp is a huge part of their lives.

Besides working and attending, many former campers settle in the area after growing up. Some have started businesses. The French Broad River Academy in Asheville and the Cypress Cellar restaurant in Hendersonville were both started by former campers who grew up outside the area.

"It's basically a delayed return on investment," Danos said.

### Staying in the area

The parents of campers are a main reason camps generate so much economic activity. They

often rent a hotel or cabin for a few weeks or a couple of days after campers are dropped off and before they are picked up.

"Let's face it: This is a beautiful area," Lemel said. "It's not surprising that parents would stay several days on both ends of a session."

The majority drive, but some fly to WNC. A few even take the train or bus. They travel an average of 500 miles to camp, according to the study. The families spend an average of four days away from home transporting a child to and from camp.

These are people whose only reason to be in WNC is summer camp.

More than three-quarters of the study respondents said they would not have visited North Carolina if their child did not attend camp.

"The study shows what a dramatic impact camps not only have on children but also the impact those families have on Western North Carolina," Danos said. "We bring numerous families to Western North Carolina."

Shopping was the top activity of camp families during visits to the region, but hiking, sightseeing and fishing were also listed as activities.

"We are the steady rock that keeps tourism going," Danos said.

### Preserving land

Besides the economic impact, there is also a positive environmental impact. The camps in the survey encompass nearly 50,000 acres, which have been largely preserved in a rural or natural state.

Adam Boyd, director of Camp Merri-Mac in Buncombe County, said developers still inquire about buying the camp — even after the real estate crash. He has no intention of selling and wants to keep the land preserved.

"The property for 65 years has not been developed," Boyd said.

Many of the camps have conservation easements placed on the property and cannot be developed. The streams and woodlands are good habitat for wildlife and plants. Many of the camps in the study reported that they conduct conservation activities to preserve or enhance the land.

"We are a green industry," Boyd said.

Camps also help preserve other land with the purchase of food from local farmers. The study found that 74 percent of the camps purchase food from local farms.

### Making presence known

Murray recently went to Raleigh and spoke with legislators about the camping industry. She said the industry is not

looking for a state subsidy or any special treatment, but she wants General Assembly members to be aware of the industry's impact.

She said the school calendar and state building codes are two major concerns for the camping industry.

The school calendar has been a major issue within the General Assembly recently. Schools generally want to lengthen the time when schools can be in session and the camps want a shorter calendar.

Murray said staff people who work at the camps and attend high school must start working early in the summer. If the students start later, it can be difficult for the camps to have enough staff people. A longer school calendar also limits the number of weeks that camps can hold sessions in the summer.

State building codes can also be a problem for camps, Murray said. Many of the cabins are rustic and built years ago. If similar ones were constructed, they would not meet current code.

"If you followed the rules to a 'T,' you would almost be building a hotel room," Murray said.

She would like to see camps receive an exemption for many building codes, partially to preserve the unique environment at the camps.

## HEALTH KUDOS

### Pardee recognized for blood drive sponsorship

**HENDERSONVILLE** — Pardee was recognized for its premier blood drive sponsorship by The Carolinas Blood Services Region of the American Red Cross.

Pardee had 12 blood drives at the main hospital, Pardee Health Education Center and Pardee Rehab and Wellness center for employees and the public in 2010.

For more information about the Red Cross or blood donation, visit [www.redcrossblood.org](http://www.redcrossblood.org) or call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

### MedWest honors nurses with DAISY Award

**CLYDE** — Nurses at MedWest Health System will be honored with the DAISY (Diseases Attacking the Immune System) Foundation Award for Extraordinary Nurses. The award, presented in collaboration with The American Organization of Nurse Executives, is part of the DAISY Foundation's program to recognize the every day extraordinary efforts nurses put forth in caring for their patients.

Twelve awards will be presented to nurses at MedWest hospitals — Harris, Haywood and Swain — and outpatient facilities. The first three awards will be presented during National Nurses Week on May 6.

Visit [www.daisyfoundation.org](http://www.daisyfoundation.org) for more on the foundation or visit [www.haymed.org](http://www.haymed.org) and [www.westcare.org](http://www.westcare.org) for nomination forms

### Urology practice joins MedWest Physician Network

**CLYDE** — Blue Mountain Urology joined the MedWest Physician

## LUGGAGE: Travelers' misfortune feeds bargain hunters' paradise

Continued from E1

salesman in Scottsboro who had a friend working at a bus

make money off," says Bill Race, who oversees luggage for Jet-

Airlines vary in their records for losing bags. Southwest says