

BLOWING ROCK, N.C. — The 19th edition of WinterFest in Blowing Rock, from Thursday, January 26 through Sunday, January 29, will include more events and activities than ever before, from daytime to dusk and beyond. And, as always, it's about contrast. On the warm side, chili cook-offs, carousing canines at the WinterPaws dog show, comfort food, and the inner warmth that comes from donating to a worthy cause through the WinterFashion Show. Then there's the cold: The Polar Plunge into Lake Chetola, ice carving demonstrations, lighted ice sculptures downtown and skiing at Appalachian Ski Mountain. All invigorated by the crisp days and cold nights of late January in the High Country.

There are two noteworthy events this year...one new and one moved to an evening start time. The Beer Garden and Chili Challenge at the Inn at Ragged Gardens on Saturday from noon to 4 makes its WinterFest debut, featuring beer and spirit tastings, along with chili from area restaurants under a heated tent with live music. Also, in its second year, the Appalachian State WinterFest Snowflake Parade will be an evening event, taking place downtown at 5:30 on Friday.

"We're really excited about the Appalachian State parade," said Billie Rogers, Events Director for the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce. "App State recently won its second consecutive Camellia Bowl, so it's a huge celebration for all the Mountaineers. And it's going to be exceptionally beautiful since it's an evening parade with winter lighting."

Additional WinterFest highlights include WinterFeast on Thursday; the Friday WinterFashion Show, benefitting the Women's Fund of the Blue Ridge; a Friday evening, after-dark Ice Stroll with lighted ice sculptures in front of downtown businesses; special comfort food menus at local restaurants; two participatory Cork and Canvas classes at BRAHM; the chills and thrills of the Saturday morning Polar Plunge at Chetola Lake, and much more.

For a full and expandable schedule of events, go to blowingrockwinterfest.com.

Blowing Rock is accessible from anywhere in the region, less than two hours from Charlotte and Greensboro, three hours from Knoxville and Raleigh and five hours from Atlanta and Charleston. A wide range of accommodations is available; visit blowingrock.com/accommodations for details.

WinterFest, which has been named a AAA "Top Pick" and a Top 20 Event by Southeastern Tourism Society, is organized by the Blowing Rock Chamber of Commerce and presented by Hendrick Northlake Luxury Auto Mall.

For more information or ticket purchases, visit blowingrockwinterfest.com or call 877.295.7801.

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CONTACT:

Billie Rogers
828.295.7851
billie@blowingrock.com

