

BURNSVILLE, N.C. — A beloved Burnsville tradition returns Aug. 2-3 when more than 200 vendors convene on Town Square for the annual Mt. Mitchell Crafts Fair.

Born out of the rich arts-and-crafts tradition found throughout the Toe River Valley region of the Blue Ridge Mountains, the crafts fair started decades ago when local artists came to town to sell their wares before the end of the summer season. Now in its 63rd year, the event draws artists from throughout the Southeast. The fair is a juried show, so all of the work is handmade — from ceramics and wood carvings to jewelry, blown glass, metalwork, textiles and woven baskets.

“We always have a good variety of tried-and-true favorites and some newcomers,” says Ginger Johnson, executive director of the Yancey County Chamber of Commerce, which sponsors the event. “We don’t specialize in any one type of art; we have anything you can imagine, but it is all handmade, consistently good art.”

In addition to crafts, the fair includes live entertainment. Friday brings performances from Roberta Whiteside, Kirby Troutman, Rob Levin, Bruce Greene, Steve Millard, Broke Holler, Hot Duck Soup, Appalachian Performing Arts, Carolina Express and Cowboy Baby. Taking the stage on Saturday are Kirk Banner, actors from Parkway Playhouse, Thistle Dew, Dance & Karate Express, Line Drive, Nick Gonnering, Typical Mountain Boys and David Wiseman.

Like any Southern fair, tasty treats are plentiful. Favorites include burgers, hot dogs, barbecue, lemonade, sweet tea, kettle corn, funnel cakes and homemade ice cream.

“After you shop, you can set up a lawn chair under the shade trees on Town Square, listen to music and people watch,” Johnson says. “The setting is perfect.”

Hours for the Mt. Mitchell Crafts Fair are 9 a.m.-5 p.m., Friday and Saturday. Admission to the fair is free. To learn more about the crafts fair and explore lodging options for the weekend, visit www.YanceyChamber.com or call (828) 682-7413.

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