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WINTER 2025

LAUREL RIDGE COMMUNITY NEWS

ROAD FUND NEWS

Funded by annual contributions from Laurel Ridge property owners, the Road Fund is a volunteer organization that oversees maintenance of the private roads winding through our mountain community, and plays a pivotal role in maintaining access to our mountain for residents and visitors alike.



LAUREL RIDGE ROAD FUND

FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS

Beginning Balance 1/1/2025 **\$4,763.88**

Expenditures

Administrative Costs	\$35.00
Road Maintenance & Materials	\$1,950

Income

2025 Contributions (37% of cabins) **\$14,000**

Ending Balance 2/8/25 **\$16,778.88**

MAKE YOUR CONTRIBUTION TODAY!

Please help keep our mountain roads drivable! The suggested contribution amount for 2024 is \$500 per cabin. When making your contribution, please indicate your cabin address in the memo section. Thank you for your support!

Pay Electronically with Zelle

Payee: Laurel Ridge Community Road Fund, Inc.
Zelle ID: laurelridgeroads@gmail.com
(note our **NEW** Zelle address!)

Mail a Check



Make your check payable to Laurel Ridge Community Road Fund, Inc., and mail it to:
Laurel Ridge Community Road Fund
1472 Brianwood Road
Decatur, GA 30033

LAUREL RIDGE ROAD UPDATES

As many of you know, Laurel Ridge experienced not one, but two, historic record freezes last month, during which our roads took a beating. Fortunately, both times, Marek Bass came to the rescue and repaired the damage — restoring smooth access to our community for residents, guests and first responders.

The worst of the damage was to the hill above Walt Polk's house, which ended up a minefield of muddy ruts and potholes. Marek was able to make Laurel Ridge a priority and quickly came out to scrape/grade/gravel the hill. Other issues will be addressed in our next quarterly maintenance.

Gilmer County has promised to address the lingering mud at the entrance to our community ASAP.



Ice and snow made for slippery driving



Muddy ruts and potholes left behind



Marek Bass to the rescue!

ROAD FUND CONTRIBUTIONS – LET'S KEEP UP THE MOMENTUM!

First, a resounding thank-you to our [2025 Road Fund Heroes](#), who have already made their 2025 annual contribution! To those who haven't yet done so — the road work above, which restored access to and from the mountain, would not have been possible without the 2025 contributions already made by your Laurel Ridge neighbors. It is our obligation as Laurel Ridge homeowners — especially those of us engaged in short term rental businesses — to ensure that our mountain roads and rights-of-way are properly maintained to ensure safe, unhindered access for property owners, guests, and utility/first-responder vehicles. With the average quarterly road maintenance and spot repairs running around \$7,500, we are still far short of what we'll need to meet our goal of four quarterly maintenance runs for 2025.

How can you help? Consider making your \$500 annual Road Fund contribution now. Can't pay all at once? No problem. Quarterly and semi-annual split payment plans are available.

GREAT NEWS FROM SISSON WATER!

Sisson Utilities is beginning the install of backup generators on the pump houses that provide water to our cabins. This is something they have been working on for a while, and will be a welcome addition to our mountain during power outages. You may notice additional trucks at the stations as they complete the installation, but there shouldn't be any noticeable disruption in service while this upgrade happens.

[READ MORE](#) →

COMMUNITY WORKSHOP UPDATE

Get ready, Laurel Ridge residents! DJ Carder from Sisson, Dupont & Carder is set to host an exclusive informational meeting at Sisson's new community center, located behind their new building. This is your chance to delve into the history of our community and its iconic Sisson log cabins. DJ will share insights on cabin maintenance and overall property care, from ensuring your cabin is stained correctly by contractors, to understanding our water system and winterizing your cabin. Plus, there will be an opportunity to ask questions and mingle with your neighbors. Keep an eye out for more details and make sure to save the date! And don't forget, there will be refreshments. See you there!

Save the Date: Saturday, July 19th



MEET YOUR NEW NEIGHBORS!

Hello, we are the Kongs. Pon is a fitness trainer and I'm Lynda, a realtor. We have a daughter named Autumn who is 8 and a son name Dreyzen who is 10. We love to spend time together hiking outdoor and exploring nature and travel. Our family also includes my mom, Vasana, who is a second mom to my kids and our golden doodle, Zotic who likes to play hide and seek with his siblings. We are happy to be a part of the Laurel Ridge community!

Do you have a new neighbor? Please let them know about the Road Fund and website!

CHRONICLES OF THE PAST *with Janet*

In our upcoming newsletters, we're excited to introduce a new feature by our very own local historian, Janet McMillan. Janet will be re-telling captivating stories from her family's rich history, tracing back to the Civil War era. This edition will serve as an introduction to Janet, whose personal history is as fascinating as the vignettes she'll be sharing with us. Get ready to get acquainted with Janet and her intriguing past!

My background: I'm an Air Force brat born in Madrid, Spain. During my childhood my father's military career also took us to Florida, Arkansas, Japan, Alaska, California and Hawaii.

I've been married to my soulmate Vance since May, 2005. I have three great children - David, Ryan and Jordan and three wonderful bonus children who have given Vance and me 17 grandkids total.

My paternal grandfather was born in Oklahoma on Potawatomi Indian land - he and his four siblings were the children of a mother of Scandinavian descent and a Native American father. I am an enrolled member of that tribe as are my children and grandchildren. On my mother's side, the roots in southern Appalachia run deep. My great-great grandfather, who lived in Epworth, deserted from forced conscription in the Confederate Army and instead joined up with a US regiment in Tennessee. He was married to Susannah McCay, sister to the McCay from whom McCaysville got its name.

Our family did not write their history but instead have an oral tradition carried by a member of each generation. The oldest storyteller that I know was Dolly, and the torch was successively carried by her daughter Nellie and then by my mother Shelba and now by me. It's the women in our clan who have had the calling to keep the stories alive.

I feel that it's important that I set these family story vignettes to paper because I'm the eldest of my generation and the youngest person remaining who sat at the knee of Aunt Nellie as she faithfully recounted the old stories.

I am struck by the frequent notes of melancholy and hardship in most of the stories, especially when viewed in the light of modern life where we have access to everything we need - adequate food, modern medicine, machines that do our hard labor, and where blessedly maternal and infant mortality are rare. These are the same themes seen in a lot of traditional Appalachian music and old-timey gospel where we are but travelers in a strange land, with "heaven as our eternal home". The old stories illustrate how thin the veil between life and death could be in those days and where it was rare for a family not to have several tiny graves that they tended in the churchyard.

[READ MORE →](#)



REDTAIL MOUNTAIN VINEYARD

400 White Road
Blairsville Georgia 30512
706-745-7850

redtailmountainvineyard.com

LOCAL ACTIVITY SPOTLIGHT: REDTAIL MOUNTAIN VINEYARD

Each quarter, Anna Alfano will spotlight an outdoor activity, winery, brewery or other location that may be of interest to you and/or your guests.

In this issue, we're turning our attention to a newer winery just a short distance from Blairsville — **Redtail Mountain Vineyard**. Three decades ago, the Taylor Family was captivated by a stunning piece of land in the Coosa Valley. Through dedication and tireless effort, they have transformed it into a flourishing vineyard. This vineyard became a haven for numerous Red-Tailed Hawk families, inspiring its name, Redtail Mountain Vineyard. Their mission? To craft award-winning wines using fruits grown on their unique terroir in the Upper Hiawassee Highlands.



We visited this quaint winery twice during its initial weeks of operation. Unlike neighboring wineries like Living Waters, it hasn't yet drawn large crowds, allowing us to enjoy the serene setting and ambient piped in music. The view is quite picturesque, with extra seating by the creek under the trees. They offer a combination of red, white, and rosé wines, and we sampled a few from each category. In our opinion, they rank among the top local wine offerings.

While they discourage patrons from bringing their own food, they set themselves apart with their unique charcuterie baskets. These are filled with meats, cheeses, and jams sourced from local vendors. You can choose from several options as they prepare a basket for your table, complete with selected crackers, olives, and truffle chocolates. A small basket is \$29, and we had leftovers with 4 of us. We especially liked the Duck Prosciutto. They also offer kids snack bags that were a big hit.

They have future plans for expansion and adding live entertainment and events such as cooking classes and Murder Mystery nights. I predict this winery will quickly become a local favorite. The owners are starting small and doing it right!

Be sure to check their website, redtailmountainvineyard.com for more details and hours of operation.



be sure to check out the LRM community web site – laurelridgemountain.com

COMMENTS, SUGGESTIONS, OR REQUESTS FOR YOUR LAUREL RIDGE MOUNTAIN COMMUNICATION TEAM?
PLEASE LET US KNOW! VISIT LAURELRIDGEMOUNTAIN.COM OR EMAIL NEWSLETTER@LAURELRIDGEMOUNTAIN.COM