

Home Show...from Page 1A



Jim Parks of HGTV's "New Spaces" fame. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

on curb appeal to a seminar on optimizing space within the home, and everything in between.

"Jim Parks lives in Chicago and is with HGTV, and we use him for a lot of our shows," said Anderson. "He flies down and spends the weekend giving seminars, such as 'Update My Kitchen, Bathroom and Closet,' which is the most popular one."

According to Anderson, the majority of the vendors at the show are from the Western North Carolina market of Murphy, Hayesville and Andrews, then Blue Ridge, Blairsville and Hiawassee in Georgia.

"We have 82 vendors this year, which is bigger than before, and most of them are local," said Anderson. "That's part of the beauty of it. These are local people who have products for the houses. And people who see something they like, they won't have to travel far to find these businesses."

"If people want to make their house better, more livable, more comfortable, then they should definitely make it out to the home and garden show."

"Also, most of the vendors and businesses that are here also have show specials, so there are discounts that people can get here that they might not get just by going to

the store."

One of the booths, Cindy Cohen and Donald Caraway with Complete Home Services in Blairsville, had multiple displays around the venue, showcasing the various services they offer, such as residential lawn design.

"We're Complete Home Services, which has a division of VistaScapes Landscaping," said Cohen. "We're one of those companies that does housekeeping, gutter cleaning, summer home cleaning. Then we have our VistaScapes Landscaping division where we do anything from designing of residential lawns to just basic lawn care."

The two have been coming to the Home and Garden Show for as long as it has been running as a way to attract more customers and let people in the area know where they are and what they do. So far, both Cohen and Caraway said that it has definitely proven to be a good decision each year.

"This is our third year here," said Caraway "We've been coming to the Home and Garden Show ever since it started. We always are trying to get our name and face out there and that's basically why we come to this show, to try and do that."

"It has generated some business so far this year and definitely brought in some business in previous years. And we love the new venue this year. The recreation center is bigger and nicer and we have a lot of space to set up and people seem to like it."

Countless other vendors



It was looking outdoors indoors during the show at the Towns County Recreation and Conference Center. Photo/Lowell Nicholson

lined the recreation center, from cookware to house insurance to home furniture, offering deals and tips on how to make the home a more cozy, comfortable environment.

Overall, this year's

home and garden show was one for the books, with more vendors, more attendees and more opportunities for home improvement.

"The house is the greatest asset that most of us have and

we spend more money and more time on making our house nice and livable than anything else we have," said Anderson. "This is why home and garden shows are so popular and so important."

Akins...from Page 1A



Bud and Mary Carol Akins in Sicily's Restaurant of Blairsville. Photo/Shawn Jarrard

back to the society to which he has dedicated so much.

The Historical Society has been busy of late with Memorial Day activities and its commemoration of the 100th anniversary of the United States entering World War I.

"Our next event will be the Heritage Festival coming up Labor Day Weekend, and it's always big," said Akins. "We're excited about our new building going up next to the Butt Mock House, and we're supposed to have it completed by the Labor Day Weekend."

Construction of the new building should begin in the next week or so, and Akins, who has spearheaded the project, is excited to share with the community what will be a big boon to the Historical Society and, by extension, the community.

The 40-by-40 structure will feature much-needed storage and display areas, and appropriate materials will be used for the exterior of the building to mirror the look and feel of the historic Mock House.

A generous donation has

made the building possible, and with two climate-controlled stories planned – a first floor and a basement – the society will be able to host a variety of rotating historical displays.

And so, as recognition for his exemplary community leadership and civic involvement, the local Modern Woodmen members decided to select Bud Akins as their 2017 Hometown Hero.

"Modern Woodmen is a not-for-profit insurance organization, therefore we don't pay taxes to the government," said Lisa Lewis, a financial representative. "Instead, we take the monies we would pay in taxes and we give it back through our local communities and our membership of those who are members of Modern Woodmen."

"This is one of the many ways we do that. It's called our Hometown Hero project. Our group, I came to them and said, all right, these are the different projects we have during the year, and we need to honor someone in the community that we feel like has just gone above and beyond giving back."

Lewis is from Ringgold, though she's been traveling to Union County to meet with her Blairsville members for years, which has meant years of giving back through Modern Woodmen.

"Every month, we get together, most times at local restaurants, and Modern Woodmen pays a portion of their meal," said Lewis. "It's just considered a community giveback, to give them a chance to get together and fellowship every month with other members."

After the luncheon, the group traveled to Union County Fire Station No. 1 with baked goods, simply to show appreciation for the local firemen, and later spent time gathering items to donate to the Hope House of Union County.