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## Press Kit

### Accolades & Nicknames

**Certified North Carolina Retirement Community**  
NC Department of Commerce, 2013

**Friendliest City Runner-Up**  
Best of the Road Contest, USA Today and Rand McNally, 2011

**The Granite City**  
Home to the largest open-face granite quarry in the world operated by the North Carolina Granite Corporation

**Mayberry**  
It is believed that Andy Griffith used elements from Mount Airy to form the basis for the town of Mayberry on The Andy Griffith Show

**Hallows**  
The Hollows comes from the fact that the region is encircled by several mountain ranges

**Small-Town USA**  
Mount Airy is often referred to as “Small-town USA”

**Old-Time Music Capital**  
Surry County is home to a distinct style of old-time music known as “Round Peak Style” that came from the rural community of Round Peak.

**All-America City**  
National Civic League, 1994

retire 



## Facts & Stats

## Legends & Landmarks

### Tommy Jarrell

The fiddle belonging to old-time legend Tommy Jarrell is on display in the Smithsonian Institution, Washington D.C. Jarrell attracted the attention of the National Endowment for the Arts in 1982 when he was awarded the National Heritage Fellowship.

### Donna Fargo

Native daughter Donna Fargo (born Yvonne Vaughn) is best-known for her series of top 10 country hits of the 1970s, such as “The Happiest Girl in the Whole USA” and “Funny Face.” Fargo won Best Female Country Vocal Performer in 1973 by the Grammy Awards and was also named “Top Female Vocalist” by the Academy of Country Music Awards.

### Siamese Twins

The original Siamese Twins, Eng and Chang Bunker, who married sisters and made their homes in Mount Airy, are buried in the cemetery of White Plains Baptist Church, in a community adjacent to Mount Airy. Both twins were born in Siam, now Thailand, and were joined by a band of cartilage at the chest. Together, they fathered between 20 and 23 children (accounts vary). Each year, there is a reunion of the Siamese Twins decedents. The Surry Arts Council houses a collection of artifacts for public display and perform “The Wedding of the Siamese Twins,” a play on the amusing lives of Chang and Eng Bunker.

### General J.E.B. Stuart

Confederate General J.E.B. Stuart was born at Laurel Hill in Ararat, Va., six miles north of Mount Airy, which is now the site of the annual Civil War Encampment and Reenactment held each October.

### Andy Griffith

Actor Andy Samuel Griffith was born in a house on South Street in Mount Airy on June 1, 1926, the only child of Carl and Geneva Nunn Griffith.

### NC Granite Corporation

Mount Airy is also home to the world’s largest open-face granite quarry.

### Merry-Go-Round

WPAQ’s weekly live bluegrass show the Merry-Go-Round is the second-longest live radio broadcast in the nation, behind The Grand Ole Opry.

## History

Mount Airy was incorporated in 1885. It is the largest of the four municipalities that make up Surry County.

The town’s name is believed to have come from the Mount Airy plantation which was established along a stage road in the early 1800s.

During the 1800s, the town was a former stagecoach stop along the Ararat River and served as a frontier commercial and trading center for the surrounding rural areas.

## Climate

Mount Airy residents enjoy four distinct seasons, marked by warm summers and mild winters. The average annual temperature is 61 degrees F. The annual winter temperature is 46 degrees F, while the average summer temperature is 76 degrees F. The average annual rainfall is 45.5 inches, and the average annual snowfall is 10.5 inches.

## Demographics

Visit <http://www.surryedp.com/data.htm> for demographic data.

## Geography

Mount Airy has an average elevation of 1,100 feet. It covers 6.81 square miles. Surry County has 539 square miles.

Bordering the Virginia state line, Mount Airy is nestled in the foothills of the Blue Ridge Mountains.

Mount Airy is 35 miles northwest of Winston-Salem and 100 miles north of Charlotte.

## Interstates

Interstates 77 and 74 dissect Surry County providing quick passage to Charlotte and Columbia to the south, or north into Virginia and on to Ohio.

Businesses can also quickly access Interstate 40, a major east to west route extending from Wilmington, NC to Bakersfield, CA.

Interstate 85 and 81 are within 30 miles of Surry County, which allows quick access to Greenville, South Carolina and Southern Virginia.

The Blue Ridge Parkway is 21 miles north of Mount Airy with a main entrance at Fancy Gap at mile-post 199.5. Mabry Mill and the Blue Ridge Music Center are nearby attractions along the Blue Ridge Parkway.