

# Tourism is up in family-friendly Maggie

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FRONT PAGE

While Maggie Valley has always been a hot spot for tourists, there seems to be something different about this season's flock — many of them are smaller.

That's because they're kids.

With the re-opening of Ghost Town in the Sky, Maggie Valley's mountain top theme park and a more aggressive approach toward marketing local events, business owners say Maggie Valley is making a come back

as a family-friendly vacation destination.

Most business owners along Soco Road said business is up substantially compared to seasons past, and most attribute that in part to Ghost Town's return.

Smackers Grill Owner Becky Ramey said her business is up on average about 25 percent from last year.

The increase, she said, is a direct reflection of Ghost Town being back in business.

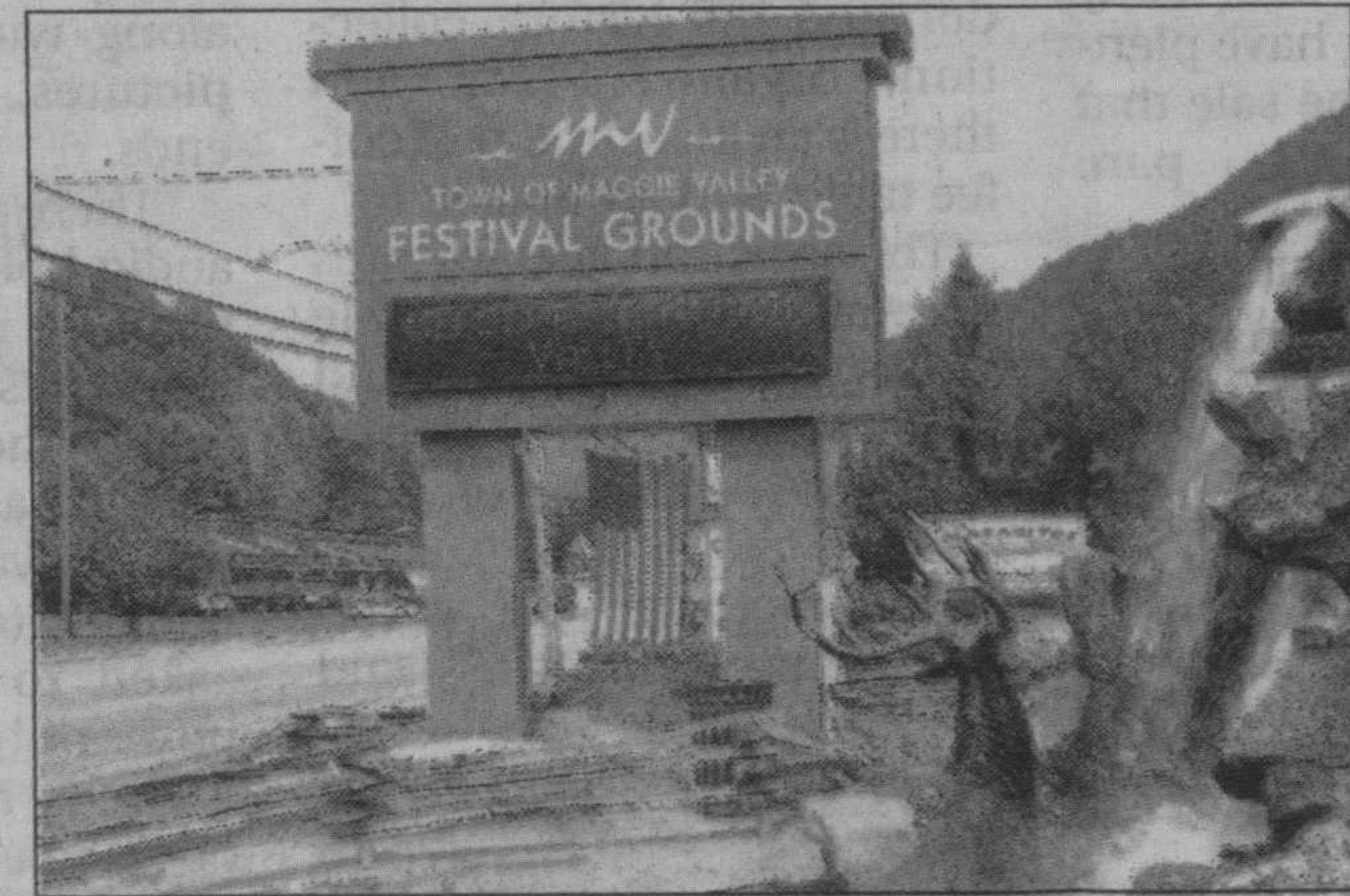
"I can tell from all the little cow-

boys and Indians coming in the door," she said. "Nearly every other kid that comes in has their face painted with Indian war paint, or has on a cowboy hat."

Brad Pendley of Maggie Mountaineer Crafts has noticed the same trend.

"So far, June numbers are up about 12 percent, July (business) is up about 14 percent," he said. "I think it's definitely because of the kids ... we get a lot more kids and a lot more

Tourism continues on 12A ►



POURING IN

— Businesses in Maggie Valley say tourists are coming in droves this summer, and they're bringing their kids.

MICHAEL RICH /  
Staff photographer

