

Last Tax Free Weekend; Time for School Stuff

Written by Steve Frank

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Time to make your list—your back-to-school list—as Friday begins what could be the last annual North Carolina sales tax holiday. The state legislature voted in the new budget to end the holiday, which cost the state's coffers \$13.6 million in revenue last year. There are certain wide categories of items that can be purchased without sales tax beginning at 12:01 a.m. Friday and lasts until 11:59 p.m. Sunday, items such as clothing, school supplies and computers—but there are limits. Clothing, shoes and school supplies of \$100 or less per item; school instructional materials of \$300 or less per item; sports and recreational equipment of \$50 or less per item; computers of \$3,500 or less per item; and computer supplies of \$250 or less per item. Tablet computers and netbooks costing \$3,500 or less qualify, and eReaders also count as computers if they have enhanced computing functions such as Internet access, email and the ability to download and run applications—so that leaves out basic eReaders, which are subject to taxes during the holiday. The first sales tax holiday was held in August 2002, but Gov. Pat McCrory has signed tax reform legislation that eliminates the tax-free holiday beginning in 2014.

And you might want to buy just a little more this weekend, and help out those who can't buy what they need for their children for the start of school. The 'Back to School Festival' seeks to supply the basic school needs of some of the 26% of the Watauga County population who live below the poverty level. Sponsors for the event, Quiet Givers, The Children's Council, Appalachian Women's Fund, Western Youth Network, Hospitality House, Kiwanis, Goodwill Yadkin Bank, CVS Pharmacy and more point out that 40% of Watauga County kids are enrolled in free or reduced lunch, and they're working to help send every student back to school feeling prepared and confident. To do our part, High Country Radio is supporting the upcoming Back to School Festival, which will provide much-needed supplies, clothing, and services to low-income children in Watauga County, and in support of the ongoing Pack the Bus fundraiser happening at Yadkin Valley Bank on Blowing Rock Road next to CVS Pharmacy, we'll do a live broadcast on location at the bank on Friday, August 2 from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. to encourage on-site donations and to bring awareness to the

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