

## Depends on 'how the black and brown stripes run'

Written by

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By Monday, we'll know what the thirteen weeks of winter have in store.

At least, according to woolly worm officials like the Avery/Banner Elk Chamber of Commerce's Brian Powers.

Woolly worms have thirteen stripes to represent the thirteen weeks of winter- and the colors tell whether winter will be harsh or mild. It depends on "how the black and brown stripes run," he says.

The Woolly Worm Festival starts Saturday- and the first worms will take off at 10 a.m. Worm races will last as long as the nice weather- possibly until late in the afternoon, Powers says. The winning worm will determine the forecast.

The festival happens at Banner Elk Elementary School.

With the thousands of tourists expected at this year's festival, the Chamber isn't the only organization gearing up for a busy weekend. Banner Elk Police Sergeant Steve Gouge says other Avery police departments are providing back up on Saturday and Sunday.

They've developed a Woolly Worm routine over the years.

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In fact, they'll be out in droves.

If you're coming to Banner Elk this weekend- prepare for a crowd, he says- but, rest assured, BEPD is looking out for your safety.