

Continuing Mount Airy Museum of Regional History's celebration of local music and culture, in conjunction with their luthier exhibit, the museum will host an evening of entertainment by Wayne Henderson and friends, paired with a dining experience catered by Old North State Winery.

The event will take place on the museum's third floor, which museum Director Matthew Edwards said would offer a "unique, small venue opportunity to see one of the living masters of the flat top guitar live and in person." Seating is "extremely limited" with only 70 seats available.

Edwards said dinner will feature a starter of a Caesar salad, followed by a choice of herb-crusted filet mignon or stuffed airline chicken breast. The chicken breast will be seasoned with garlic and herbs, and stuffed with caramelized onion, apple cider bacon, spinach, and goat cheese, with a mustard cream sauce. The choice of entree is paired with grilled asparagus, grilled summer vegetables, garlic and herb roasted new potatoes; followed by homemade pie for dessert. The meal includes a glass of wine with dinner and a cash bar.

Edwards said the music and dinner event is part of a series of programming inspired by the luthier exhibit, "Luthier's Craft: Instrument Making Traditions of the Blue Ridge." It is also a "perfect venue" for Wayne Henderson to make the formal presentation of the guitar he created for the luthier exhibit, which was created to be a traveling exhibit, one that will begin its journey after February, when it heads to the Earl Scruggs center in Shelby. The Wayne Henderson guitar featured in the museum's luthier exhibit right now is one on loan, Edwards said, to give time for Henderson to "work his magic."

"Getting a Henderson-built guitar is not a fast process, but that is the beauty of his craft," Edwards shared. "We were fortunate to have the guitar in the exhibit on loan, until Wayne finished construction on the guitar that will travel with this luthier exhibit as it moves forward."

"This is a great opportunity for supporters of the museum to hear the guitar in use by the man who created it, before it makes its transition into the museum's exhibit," Edwards said.

The event will also provide "much-needed funds" for the regional museum, Edwards said, during winter months when the museum may go for a few days at a time without many visitors. Edwards shared that museum visitation is typically down in the winter season, but they still have to maintain the building to "preserve archival standards and continue to pay year-round expenses," such as the power bill and staffing costs. "This is a great way to combine programming with the luthier exhibit, along with a way to produce a revenue stream to hopefully help us get through the winter doldrums."

In addition, the event allows the museum to partner with local wineries and restaurants, in order to promote local businesses.

"Music, wine, and culture — it's a great pairing."

Wayne Henderson is a musician and guitar maker, also known as a luthier, who is featured as part of the museum's exhibit of regional instrument makers. He specializes in creating custom-made acoustic guitars, and is based in Grayson County, Va. He also builds mandolins.

Henderson's guitars are made by hand and he creates around 20 per year. He was awarded a National Heritage Fellowship presented by the National Endowment for the Arts in 1995, and is known for building a guitar for Eric Clapton, a process that was outlined in a book entitled "Clapton's Guitar: Watching Wayne Henderson Build the Perfect Instrument" by Allen St. John. Henderson has built guitars for musicians such as Doc Watson, John Cephas, and Gillian Welch. The Wayne C. Henderson Music Festival and Guitar Competition was established in 1995 and a portion of the proceeds are placed into a scholarship for young musicians.

"Wayne is very personable, and full of great stories. He's an easygoing, really interesting guy and that's important when you have someone with the renown that he has. The music will be excellent and it will be performed alongside the stories he tells," Edwards shared.

An Evening with Wayne Henderson and Friends will be held on Feb. 8 at 7 p.m. Tickets for the event are \$100 each, which includes the meal, a glass of wine, and entertainment. Proceeds will be used to support the museum during the slower winter months. To purchase tickets or for more information, call 786-4478.