

Hop, Skip & a Jump



WAYNESVILLE ~ APPALACHIAN AMUSEMENT CENTER

Pictured at the top left, Lori shows off her 'flying' skills. Pictured at the top right, Jenny works on perfecting her form during 'flying' time. Pictured below, an instructor shows how high he can go.

There is a hidden jewel tucked away in the mountains of Western Carolina ... the tiny town of Waynesville, NC. With spectacular shopping, fine dining at its best and a bounty of beautiful B&Bs, this treasure awaits your discovery. However, one of our favorite attractions in Waynesville is truly a blast - Appalachian Amusement Center, home of the Vertical Wind Tunnel.

You may have heard of wind tunnels in Pigeon Forge and other places, but this wind tunnel is one-of-a-kind. Literally there is no other wind tunnel like it in the world. Never heard of a vertical wind tunnel? Neither had we until our visit. This machine produces a vertical column of wind fast enough and large

enough to make a person float in the air. People typically use these wind tunnels to practice skydiving sequences, but plenty of people experience the wind tunnel just for fun!!

So, we decided to give it a try. First-timers watch a video about form, as keeping the body in a controlled, yet relaxed position is important. Next, we suited up, which took a few minutes considering the uniform includes a jumpsuit, helmet and goggles. And, we're off!!

Both of us did a pretty good job the first-time around, but it does take a little practice. Usually beginners are kept at a comfortable height of about five feet with two instructors constantly at your side, keeping you within the column of air and reminding you about form.



This experience is truly intense as the wind blows at over 100 mph. 'Flying' feels a bit like swimming since your muscles can get tired, and any shift in body position will cause you to move about. Beginners are advised to 'fly' for just three minutes, and though the lesson sounds short, we can truly say that it felt more like 10!!

After our session, we had the pleasure of observing experts in flight. One of the instructors could soar up to 60 feet in the air. It honestly looked like a scene from Peter Pan, as he flipped and dipped and dove and rocketed back up into the air. Of course, the instructor admitted he had been "flying" for over 14 years in a number of wind tunnels across the U.S.

So, if you've ever wanted to fly or have children that would enjoy the flying experience, visit the Appalachian Amusement Center in Waynesville.

We've enjoyed our journey, you enjoy yours!!

Lori & Jenny

Appalachian Amusement Center is located at 49 Adventure Park, Waynesville, NC 28785. To check out their flight schedule, visit them on the web at www.verticalwind.com/aac, or give them a call at 828-926-WIND (9463).

Feel free to send us your questions or comments. We'd love to hear about your favorite near-by travel destination! Contact us at: hopskipjump@ellijay.com. ☘



264 BILL HASTY BOULEVARD C • JASPER, GA 30143
678.454.4050 / 678.454.4051 FAX
mountainsidemanor@lincolnapts.com
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