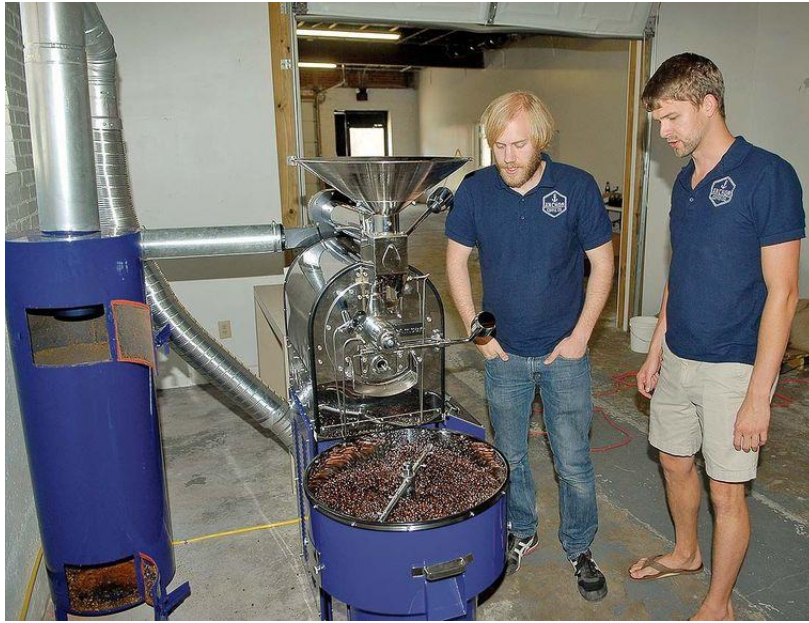


## Anchor offers specialty coffee



Jule Hubbard

### Anchor coffee

Anchor Coffee Co. co-owners Gregory Brady, left, and Nate Griffin look over their coffee roaster in the space they lease in downtown North Wilkesboro. It was purchased with a Wilkes EDC loan.

Originally posted Wilkes Journal-Patriot

Posted: Friday, June 12, 2015 2:21 pm

**Jule Hubbard**

Two 26-year-olds have done their homework and appear to be on their way to putting North Wilkesboro on the map among a growing number of craft coffee roasters nationwide.

Gregory Brady and Nate Griffin, co-owners of Anchor Coffee Co., spent much of the last year learning about the qualities of coffee beans from various countries and experimenting with different blends and lengths of time roasting beans to settle on four single origin coffees and two coffee blends.

Each single origin coffee is made from beans from Guatemala, Sumatra, Ethiopia or Brazil. Admiral, one of the coffee blends, is made from coffee beans produced in Guatemala and Sumatra. Seafarer, the other blend, is a darker Brazilian based blend that lends itself well to espresso.

Brady said the soil, temperature and other aspects of the places where coffee plants are grown greatly influences the flavors of coffee.

For example, he said, coffee made from beans from Central America tends to have a lighter, more berry-like flavor. Coffee from Brazilian beans has more of a smoky or chocolate flavor.

“The longer you roast coffee, the darker and bolder its flavor gets,” he added.

Anchor Coffee Co. is also producing and selling ready-to-drink coffee called "Iceberg Cold Brew." It is designed to be sold cold on a retail basis. It's made by soaking coffee grounds in cold water for about 24 hours.

Griffin said the 16-ounce plastic bottles of Iceberg Cold Brew have a shelf life of six months if not opened.

Brady said they're now buying coffee from Royal Coffee Co., but he and Griffin are interested in buying it directly from farmers to have more control on what they use.

Using a roaster purchased with a low interest loan from the Wilkes Economic Development Corp.'s revolving loan fund, they started roasting green coffee beans and distributing samples to coffee shops, restaurants and other potential customers this spring. The roaster can produce 4,200 pounds of roasted coffee beans per month.

Less than a month after Anchor Coffee Co. opened in leased space in the bottom floor of a building at the corner of D and Ninth streets in North Wilkesboro, its coffee is being sold at seven coffee shops or restaurants in North Carolina and by two subscription services that provide customers with coffee from different craft roasters each month.

Branciforte's Brick Oven restaurant in downtown North Wilkesboro is among the establishments selling coffee from Anchor Coffee Co.

Brady and Griffin graduated from high school in Wilkes and both are members of the worship band at Unified City Church on Cherry Street, North Wilkesboro.

Brady, who has an associate degree from Wilkes Community College, was working for a sign company when he started experimenting with different coffee blends.

"I want to create something... and I feel called to be here in Wilkes," he said.

Griffin said he was immediately interested when Brady mentioned the possibility of them working together to produce and sell craft coffee.

"I read a lot and I already have tons of ideas" of possible business endeavors, said Griffin, explaining that from his reading he already was aware of the rapidly growing popularity of craft coffee among people in their 20s and 30s. "There is huge market potential."

Coffee already is the second most heavily traded commodity behind crude oil. The U.S. consumes the most coffee in the world in terms of number of pounds annually.

Griffin has a master's degree in chemistry and has had a variety of work experiences. He said he is particularly interested in the process of starting a new business.

He said getting the word out on social media is important for craft coffee. Griffin and Brady have found Instagram to be particularly effective.

"You need social proof," said Griffin, which he said also includes unpaid publicity in the form of magazine and newspaper articles.

Brady and Griffin agreed that Jeff Foster of the Small Business Center at Wilkes Community College has been a tremendous help in multiple ways. They said financial assistance from the EDC also has been important.