

MOUNTAIN VISTA

A VIEW FROM BEHIND GLASS

STORY BY SARAH MATHIS

Across bustling shopping centers and secluded mountain-side mansions, one fact remains constant: Every room in the High Country has a window with a view. Waking up every day to scenic mountain vistas is what inspires many families to settle down along the Appalachian mountains, and no one understands this community's appreciation for breathtaking views like 20-year-old Boone resident Rowen Todd.

Todd has been growing his property management business, Mountain Vista Window Washing, since he was 14 years old. He was determined to raise money in pursuit of a higher education, but felt that starting his own business would be more efficient than finding employment with someone else, as many hiring managers had already turned him down, citing his youth and inexperience. So, Todd took to the streets with a small collection of professional grade cleaning implements and began spreading the word about his new business venture.

"I started out mainly doing commercial window cleaning," Todd said. "The first shop we were cleaning was Due South Outfitters."

Being too young to drive at the time, Todd's family was instrumental in getting Mountain Vista Window Washing off the ground. His father drove him to job sites and helped clean windows with him until Todd received his license in 2016. Afterwards, Todd got a work vehicle and took on a more independent managerial role at Mountain Vista Window Washing.

"I started driving around in a Subaru Forester, strapping ladders to the top of that and working with my dad," Todd described. "We ended up slowly hiring over the years, and



Rowen Todd. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.



"Rowen's persistence and attention to detail have helped him create a solid foundation for his professional career. As a high school student, he took to networking like no one [we've] ever seen. He followed up connections with outperforming the expectations of his customers. His work ethic serves him better than any business card or flier on a porch ever could."

- BOONE CHAMBER OF COMMERCE

now we're up to running three vans with a team of six to eight, so it's really gotten a lot larger in the last few years."

Todd was able to balance school and work by utilizing Watauga High School's Dual-Enrollment Program, which allowed him to take college level courses on Tuesdays and Thursdays and work during the remaining five days. He finished high school with an associate degree from Caldwell Community College and went on to attend Appalachian State University for a couple semesters before withdrawing to focus all his energy on his growing property management business. In retrospect, Todd found that his experiences at Caldwell Community College and Watauga High School, in addition to the skills he acquired on the job, were everything he needed to begin a successful and fulfilling career.

"Overall, I'm really grateful for my schooling, both at the community college taking lots of business management classes and at Watauga High School having the mentorship of Stephanie Ogle, my entrepreneurship teacher," Todd shared.

Todd went on to mention other organizations that have helped Mountain Vista Window Washing grow over the years.

"The Boone Chamber of Commerce has also been a huge part of supporting me, along with SCORE," Todd explained. "It's really been a community project, helping me do what I'm doing."

SCORE, a mentoring service that connects new business-owners to people with more experience in the field, awarded Todd with the Young Entrepreneur of the Year Award in 2021. In addition, the Boone Chamber of Commerce honored Rowen Todd with the 2020 Start Up of the Year Award. This award recognizes up and coming companies in the Boone area based on their staying power, growth in sales and/or workforce, innovative products and services, strong response to adversity, contributions to community-oriented projects, and use of local resources in business operations.

"Rowen's persistence and attention to detail have helped him create a solid foundation for his professional career," the Boone Chamber of Commerce wrote. "As a high school student, he took to networking like



Mountain Vista employee silhouetted against a curtain while squeegeeing a window. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.



Rowen Todd and friends squeegeeing a window. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.

no one [we've] ever seen. He followed up connections with outperforming the expectations of his customers. His work ethic serves him better than any business card or flier on a porch ever could. Once he gained a few customers, word of mouth traveled quickly. He's always thought a step ahead and has been ready to meet the challenges of a growing client base. His local relationships serve him well, and he has returned the favor to the business community in a genuine way."

Todd was also recognized as a Boone Chamber of Commerce 4 Under 40 Rising Star Finalist in 2020. This award sheds light on impressive Boone area businesses run by young professionals in four distinct categories — Business Owner, Rising Star, Non-Profit, and Education.

Mountain Vista Window Washing's first clients were all commercial venues, and that was the trend for many years. However, as was the case with many businesses in 2020, the COVID-19 pandemic turned everything on its head.

"During Covid, we were primarily still doing storefront windows, and then all the storefronts shut down, so they didn't need their windows cleaned anymore," Todd shared, laughing. "The shutdown lost us more than 80% of our revenue."

Since then, Mountain Vista Window Washing has shifted focus from local businesses to private residences, which now make up the majority of their client base.

The company has also begun offering screen cleaning, track cleaning, gutter cleaning, gutter guard installation, pressure washing, soft washing,

and dryer vent cleaning. Todd was inspired to implement all of these new services to adapt to a new era of his small business and better meet the needs of High Country homeowners.

Todd confided that, in the early days, he could be a little too stubborn for his own good with regards to getting a job done. He went on to share a rather uncomfortable experience that taught him about timing and patience.

"One time, I was pressure-washing a deck — this was when I was first starting out — and it was the middle of an ice storm when I was trying to do it," Todd described. "So, I would pressure wash the snow and ice off of the deck, and by the time I would get



A utility pocket containing a squeegee and replacement squeegee heads. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.



Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.

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The Mountain Vista Team: Adrian, Casey, Izzy, Rowen, Eric, Jason, and Cole from left to right. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.



Mountain Vista employee hand-cleaning a gutter. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.

it off, it was frozen again. It was a miserable time, and I was soaking wet, and the heat in the van didn't work, so I'd spend 20 minutes pressure washing, and then I'd be curled up in the van for a few minutes wondering why I was doing this. I came back the next day when the storm was over, and it all looked terrible, so I did it again, and it looked really nice."

Although Mountain Vista Window Washing has met many challenges and seen many changes over the years, the business has remained a father-son endeavor.

"[My dad has] taken on more of a maintenance and fill-in role, so he helps maintain all of the vehicles and equipment we use and does a lot of the commercial window cleaning with us during the summer when we're so busy doing residential," Todd stated.

In fact, Todd's parents were one of the major inspirations behind Mountain Vista Window Washing.

"I consider Mountain Vista to be an employee-centric business," Todd shared. "We take care of our clients; we care a lot about them, but also the reason we're working is to provide a quality work environment. I started it because I saw my parents working terrible jobs that didn't care for them and had bad pay and bad hours, so I wanted to provide a job for myself, and a job for my friends, that could treat everybody a little better."

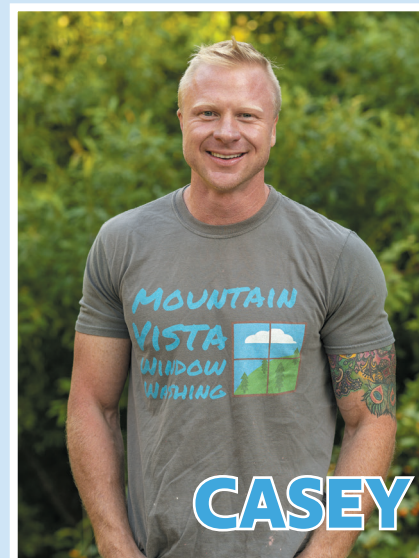
Employees are treated to flexible scheduling, competitive living wages, and

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- ROWEN TODD

Meet the MOUNTAIN VISTA WINDOW WASHING team!

Photos by Izzy Smeltzer





Eric cleaning a gutter. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.



Rowen Todd posing jauntily on a ladder. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.

a free healthy lunch every day courtesy of Wildwood Community Market.

And despite, or perhaps because of Todd's employee-centric business model, the Mountain Vista Window Washing team has earned a perfect 5-star Google rating with a total of 73 glowing reviews.

Many reviews cite the impressive technical skill of the Mountain Vista team.

"Rowen and his crew did an excellent job of cleaning our very dirty and very difficult to clean windows (hard to reach and lots of small window panes). They spent much time successfully removing silicone overspray from several windows, a task others had tried and failed to accomplish," Cheryl Stanley wrote.

"Rowen and the Mountain Vista team can't be beat. My windows were practically fuzzy; they were so dirty. Now they are positively gleaming. They hand washed all the windows inside and out, even the highest ones. I couldn't be more pleased. This was my first experience with Mountain Vista, but it will not be my last!" Jeanie Derr wrote.

While others find themselves pleased with Mountain Vista's unbeatable customer service.

"The two young men who came to my home to wash the windows did a wonderful job. The windows are now crystal clear, revealing the gorgeous mountain views. I had a problem after they left with one window and the owner, Rowen, came over and fixed it ON A SUNDAY! You very rarely see customer service like this anymore," Margaret Dula wrote.

"Rowen and his team were extremely professional, responsive to my calls, showed up on time, and did an amazing job cleaning my windows. I will be calling them again for sure, and so should anyone who wants the job done properly. Thank you Mountain Vista!" Marlene Bluestein wrote.

Regardless of the exact content of each review, it's safe to say that everyone who works with Mountain Vista Window Washing walks away satisfied. When asked about his 5-star rating, Todd had this to say:

"Every Google review is extremely rewarding and always fills me with joy to know we are making our clients happy. I think it's

"We show up on time, we do what we say we're going to do, and we almost never change the price on stuff. All the time I get people telling me, 'Oh, I called five people, and you're the only one who got back to me,' and 'We had someone last year who did the work and charged us double what they quoted.' Every person's important, and we try to do a really good job for everybody, and I think that goes back to the idea that taking care of your team helps them take care of your clients."

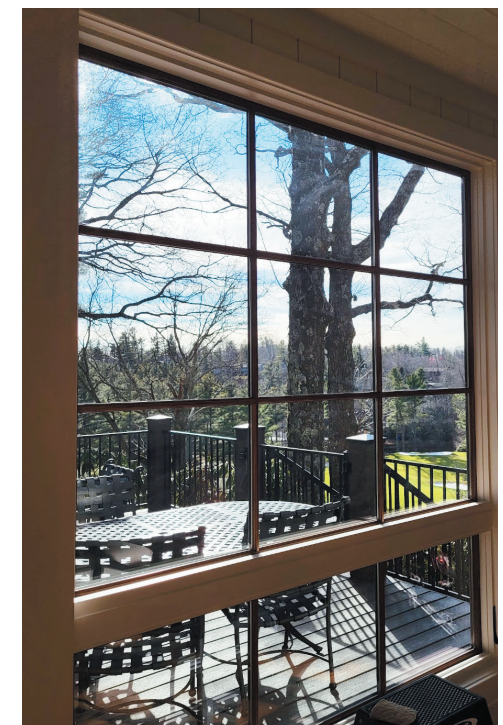
- ROWEN TODD

a testament to our high quality service. We show up on time, we do what we say we're going to do, and we almost never change the price on stuff. All the time I get people telling me, 'Oh, I called five people, and you're the only one who got back to me,' and 'We had someone last year who did the work and charged us double what they quoted.' Every person's important, and we try to do a really good job for everybody, and I think that goes back to the idea that taking care of your team helps them take care of your clients."

However, Mountain Vista Window Washing doesn't just take care of their clients and employees; they take care of their community by donating supplies and services to those in need.

"We've donated over \$5,000 worth of services to nonprofits and schools. We did about a week of pressure-washing and window cleaning for Two Rivers Community School this spring, and we also did some free window cleaning for addiction recovery centers around Boone. We try to be a team player," Todd said.

Rowen Todd is committed to creating high quality jobs in the High Country and providing clients with positive experiences and exemplary work. To inquire about employment or get a quote from Todd and his team, call (828)-434-5299 or visit their website at <https://mountainvistawinwash.com/>. ♦



A clean window with a beautiful view. Photo courtesy of Mountain Vista Window Washing.

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