

Scotland County

Monthly



APRIL 2006

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

Early voters try new equipment

With lever-style Automatic Voting Machines (AVM) a thing of the past, Scotland County residents will now vote by inserting hand-marked ballots through an electronic voting counter.

Those who voted early were the first to use the new State-approved equipment in an actual election.

Voters selected candidates by using a pencil to fill in an oval-shaped space next to the candidate's name.

Voters inserted the ballot into an electronic voting counter. Completed ballots are stored in a locked ballot box.

Accounting Technician Bill McMillan, who voted early, said the process was easy, and the directions were clear.

Poll worker Clarice Holmes said an over vote, where a person votes for more candidates than allowed, is returned by the electronic counter.

The voter can then choose to vote again or not to vote. Under-voted ballots are accepted.

Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, the first person to vote early, completed his ballot using the equipment for individuals with disabilities.

Patterson said the procedure was almost effortless as an electronic voice guided him step-by-step through the process.



Precinct worker Clarice Holmes watches Bill McMillan insert his ballot in the ballot counter.

Free Day takes in record tonnage

More than 420 tons of waste was collected at the County Landfill and recycle centers during the annual Free Day April 1.

More than 500 vehicles unloaded construction and demolition material, old furniture and some municipal solid waste during an eight-hour period at the landfill alone.

"We also took in 250 tires, old swing sets, bicycles, just about anything you can think of," said County Engineer Jim Blackwell. Waste collected was residential only.

"We want people to do some spring cleaning," Blackwell said, explaining why the County hosts a Free Day.

"This has got to be the biggest Free Day we ever had," Blackwell continued.

Blackwell said of the Public Works staff, "They did an outstanding job. Everybody got sunburnt. Everybody was staging traffic. We had people in every location."

He also commended the customers for being patient and understanding, especially when lines were long. Blackwell said at one point that morning there were 61 vehicles on site waiting to unload at the landfill. He said, "It was a real busy day and an enjoyable day."

Report to the People highlights beneficial results

The local Cooperative Extension served nearly 11,000 people in 2005. During the annual Report to the People staff provided insights on how that was accomplished.

For instance, peanut production, a crop that is well-adapted to Scotland County soils, provided growers with an alternative cash crop that will increase yields of cotton.

According to Agricultural Agent David Morrison, agri-tourism, which involves selling products on a farm with entertainment activities, is creating success stories. He cited Cypress Bend Vineyard in Wagram as an example of success in agri-tourism.

556 8th graders participated in Baby Think it Over, a teenage pregnancy prevention program. They cared for a computerized infant that simulates the needs of a newborn.

All teens who participated in the three-day project agreed they were not ready for the financial, social, physical and emotional consequences of pregnancy before marriage.

Nearly 500 people benefited from the Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), which provides lessons on meal planning, food safety practices, price comparison, making healthy food choices, reading nutrition labels and food preparation without reliance on salt.



Local officials and citizens attended the Report to the People. Photo by Dot Coble, Laurinburg Exchange.

EFNEP activities for 4-H youth, with a focus on nutrition education and healthy lifestyles, benefited more than 2,000 children ages 5 to 19 over the past two years.

4-H served more than 4,000 youth in community clubs, after school and special interest programs.

Those in attendance also heard reports on services in poultry and livestock, Extension and Community Association (ECA) and community and resource development.

Hardship withdrawals restriction changed on 401k

The mandatory suspension of contributions to the 401k has been reduced from 12 months to six months.

Employees who made hardship withdrawals from their 401k accounts had to wait 12 months before they could resume contributions to the 401k. Neither the employee nor the County could make contributions during that time.

"This is good news for employees who make hardship withdrawals from their 401k accounts," said Payroll Technician Nancy Bostick. "Now they can resume their contributions after six months and begin receiving the County portion again."

Bostick said that after the six-month period, an employee must remember to change the 401k contribution from zero to a stated amount.

Employees who have an immediate and heavy financial need may withdraw money while working.

The IRS-approved list of such needs are as follows:

Expense for certain unreimbursed medical care for you or your dependent. Proof must be dated within 45 days of the request.

Costs (excluding mortgage payments) directly related to the purchase of your principal residence.

Tuition, related educational fees, and room and board expenses for the next 12 months of post-secondary education for yourself, your spouse or dependent. This excludes books.

Amounts necessary to prevent your eviction from your principal residence or foreclosure on the mortgage of your principal residence.

The minimum hardship withdrawal you may request is \$500, or your account balance, if less.

At the time an employee applies for a hardship distribution, evidence of financial need also must be submitted.

The employee must certify and agree that all of the following conditions are satisfied:

The distribution is not in excess of your immediate and heavy need.

The employee has obtained all distributions, other than hardship distributions, and all nontaxable loans currently available.

If an employee's withdrawal comes from a pretax contribution, the employee's salary deferrals will be suspended for six months after receipt of the hardship distribution.

Hardship withdrawals are not available to be rolled over into another hardship plan.

A service representative is available to answer questions 8 a.m. to 9 p.m. at 1-866-624-0151. The participant website is www.nc401k.prudential.com.

Introductions & transitions

Welcome to those individuals who joined Scotland County departments since February 16, 2006: **Clarence McAllister**, Inspections; and **Karen Leviner**, DSS.

Voters consider continuing Nickels for Know-How Program

Polls will open Thursday, May 25, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., so users of feed and fertilizer in North Carolina can vote on continuing the Nickels for Know-How Program.

If approved, the Nickels program will be effective from January 1, 2006 for another six years.

Referendum Chair David Morrison said six polling places will be set up in Scotland County to make voting as easy as possible.

All users of feed and fertilizer are eligible to vote.

The statewide referendum is required every six years to determine if users wish to continue assessing themselves three nickels for each ton of feed and fertilizer that they purchase.

The funds from the Nickels program support agricultural extension, research and teaching programs in the College of Agriculture and Life Sciences at NC State University.

Since the inception of the Nickels program in 1951, it has been approved by an average 90 percent favorable vote in the past 12 referenda. A two-thirds majority is needed in the May 25 vote to continue the program.

Polling places in the county will be located at Farmland Ag-Services, Cape Fear Farm Credit, Southeastern Farm Equipment, North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, Scotland Feed and Garden Center and Helena Chemical Company.

If you have questions regarding the Nickels For Know-How Program, contact Scotland County Cooperative Extension, 277-2422.



Healthy snacks gain in popularity

The Healthy Snack Bar is gaining in popularity among Health Department employees, so much so that an inventory expansion is being considered.



Melinda Salley, Janet Lamourt and Linda Holland, left to right, purchase healthy snacks.

Health Educator Kathie Cox said there are plans to offer bottled water and yogurt along with the current selections of fresh fruit, dried fruit, cereal bars and 100-calorie snack packs.

"There are no trans fats and selections all are low in sugar," said Cox.

Melinda Salley said she buys something from the Healthy Snack Bar daily. "It's more convenient to buy one piece of fruit here than to buy it in larger quantities at the store." Salley especially enjoys snacking on the animal crackers.

Fruits, such as bananas, oranges, tangerines and red, yellow and gold apples, are 25 cents a piece while snacks are 50 cents each.

The snack bar is self-supporting since the monies raised are used to purchase more healthy snacks.

Cox said a brief message on nutrition relayed over the Health Department's intercom system first thing every morning serves as a reminder to employees that they do have a choice when they are hungry, and that choice is a healthy one.

Post Scripts

Congratulations to County Engineer **Jim Blackwell** on the April 3, 2006 birth of grandson Alexander Scott Hibbets and to **Belinda James**, DSS, on the April 4 birth of daughter Naomi James. ☼ Cooperative Extension staff held a party for Area Specialized Poultry Agent **Jody Smith** to celebrate his April 22 marriage to Ashley Tyner. ☼ Amber and Justin Baldwin, children of **Cory Baldwin**, EMS, will compete nationally in July in Daytona Beach, FL, after scoring Superior in Teen Talent while representing McColl Pentecostal Holiness Church and Laurinburg District 3. Amber and Justin scored Superior in their Pantomime skit. Justin also will play a trumpet solo in competition after winning his division and scoring Superior. ☼ Congratulations to March EMS Employee of the Month **Robert Sampson**, sponsored by Mac Tucker. EMS staff celebrating employment anniversaries this month are **Randy McArthur**, 12 years; **Keith Hatcher**, 3 years; and **Dontaè Roland**, 2 years. ☼ In Health Department news: **Tina Oxendine** RN was recognized as the March Employee of the Month. Best of luck to **Esther Taylor** RN in her future endeavors. Congratulations to **Vicki Thrower** who was promoted to the vacant Nutritionist II position. Staff was honored by the Senior Management Team with a Mardi Gras-themed **Employee Appreciation Luncheon** April 28. ☼ A question and answer session on hearing loss with the **North Carolina Services for the Deaf and Hard of Hearing** is 10 a.m. Thursday, May 18, at Scotland Place Senior Center. Applications also will be taken for assistance with the purchase of hearing aids. ☼ **Extension and Community Association** (ECA) will host a Barbecue Plate sale (\$6 eat in or take out) Thursday, May 11, from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the County Annex. Purchase tickets at the Cooperative Extension office.

Condolences to the family of **Dr. Harley Davidson**, who served as the County Medical Examiner. He will be missed by the staff of the Health Department and EMS.

the Birthday list for May

April 28 Sharon English (Cooperative Extension) | Arthur Bryant (Sheriff); **2** James McQueen (DSS); **3** Katherine Medlin (Jail); **4** Teresa Vick and Tosha McQueen (DSS); **5** Rhonda Saffel (Tax); **7** LaCarrol Rhone (DSS); **9** Jems McQueen (Transportation) and Belinda James (DSS); **10** Jammie Deese (DSS); **11** Nancy Bostick (Administration); **12** Crystal Norton (Register of Deeds); **13** Joyce Hamby (Elections Board); **14** Dontaè Roland (EMS); **15** Tracey Ansley (Sheriff) and Roxanne Douglas (DSS); **17** Melanie Clark (EMS) and Dewey Oxendine (Public Buildings); **18** Dalores Ingram (Elections Board) and Clarence McPhatter (Commissioner); **20** Billie Phillips (Tax) and Tony Smith (Sheriff); **21** Gregory Tuck (Jail) and Gwen McDuffie (DSS); **23** Lisa McPhatter (DSS); **24** Michelle Campbell (DSS) and Pearlene Leggett (Health); **25** Gail Jackson (Sheriff); **26** Jennifer Taylor (Health); **27** Tim Reynolds (Public Buildings); **29** Dennis Currie (EMS) and Myra Hill (DSS); **30** Terry Gainey (Soil and Water); **31** Wayne Mace (EMS).

Message from the Manager

Every County department has now submitted initial FY 2006-2007 budget proposals.

I was amazed at the restraint the departments showed in their budget proposals.

My only instruction to Department Heads was to ask for what they needed in order to operate their departments. Everyone followed this instruction, and the increases were minimal.

As we begin to evaluate the requests, some numbers come up that I would like to share with you. Expenditures for the two single largest items in the budget — the School current expense and Medicaid — account for 78 cents of the \$1.10 tax rate that we plan to set for next year.



John A. Crumpton

That leaves 32 cents of the rate for the County to operate.

Think about that.

I challenge anyone to go across this state and find 10 counties who operate with less.

Speaking of Medicaid, the debate on Medicaid relief for counties is heating up in Raleigh. Although the General Assembly will not convene until May 9, committees of each House are already discussing proposals.

After reviewing the budget and where the County's spends its money, I see Medicaid relief as the only possibility in the near future that would help the County reduce the tax rate.

If you see or talk with Senator Bill Purcell or Representatives Doug Yongue or Garland Pierce, I encourage you to tell them that we need help with the Medicaid bills they will be considering this session. Any Medicaid relief is good relief.

Finally, as the May 2 primary election approaches, I hope everyone gets out and exercises their right to vote.

May also is the time of year when the days begin to get hot. For those of you who work outside and in the heat, make sure to take proper precautions to stay hydrated. Drink lots of fluids and pay attention to heat stroke conditions.

Think "Safety First" in your jobs.

EMStatistics

EMS Report for March:
Responded to 401 Medical/Trauma calls
Treated 39 motor vehicle accident patients
Administered 90 wellness/blood pressure checks
Sold 45 blue address signs

911 Report Highlights:

384 EMS
267 Sheriff's Department
148 Laurinburg Police Department
95 Fire Department
516 hang-up calls
105 wrong numbers
61 open line calls
1,091 cellular calls
1,876 total calls to 911

Top five complaints for EMS Response

57 breathing problems
46 sick person (specific diagnosis)
44 transfer/interfacility/palliative care
39 traffic accidents
37 chest pain

Weather Observations (EMS Recordings)

Temp (high) 84 on 3/12
Temp (low) 28 on 3/4,5
Wind (mph) 22 on 3/2,10,13,14
Rainfall (inches) .22 on 3/23
Compiled by Tommy Hatcher

Simple tip protects data

by *Gaylord Hunt, Computer Tech II*

Save your work often.

Too simple a tip you say? Perhaps, but it is worth mentioning because most people STILL DO NOT save their files until they are done working with them.

Imagine a well-known author working on a manuscript for a sure-to-be best seller novel.

This author decides that the pressures of working within walls stifles his creativity, so the decision is made to work outside.

All of the work is done outside and written on sheets of paper. The author decides to make the writing process easier and scatters the papers around.

It rains. It thunderstorms. A dog comes running through the paper. Any way you look at it, the paper is ruined.

That's what you are doing when you don't save a file in progress but wait until you are finished to save your work.

You are trusting your file to the elements. A power surge could strike. A program error could crash the operating system. Someone could trip over the plug.

Universal Power Source systems can fail. I have seen each of these things happen personally so I can attest to the fact.

Heed this warning for your own data safety.

All American Trail grand opening held

Senator Tony Rand and U.S. Rep Robert McIntyre were among the dignitaries who celebrated the grand opening of the All American Trail at Fort Bragg.



Senator Tony Rand.

The trail is a 10 to 15-foot wide unpaved pathway that follows the perimeter boundary of Fort Bragg through the Sandhills Region.

The first seven miles of what will be a 70-mile trail that will circumnavigate the entire boundary of Fort Bragg and extend through Cumberland, Hoke, Moore and Harnett counties is now available for hiking, running, jogging and bicycling. Horses and motorized vehicles of any kind are not permitted.

The All American Trail, with 1,500 species of plants and trees and 400 species of wildlife, is expected to promote tourism in the region.

Scotland County Monthly is published by the County Manager's Office to provide news and information to employees. Comments, suggestions and story ideas welcome. Contact 277-3191 or akurtzman@scotlandcounty.org.

News of Note

4-H hosts teen retreat

More than 100 4-H youth stayed at the Clinton Inn March 25 and 26 while attending the annual South Central District 4-H Teen Retreat hosted by Scotland County's 4-H. Youth, agents and volunteers from 12 counties enjoyed workshops on leadership, health and fitness, preparing for college and the 4-H Livestock Program. Kenya McNeill, Scotland County 4-H member, was elected South Central District Secretary/Treasurer for 2006-2007. Scotland County 4-H also was the recipient of the South Central District Spirit Stick awarded for their enthusiasm and participation in the retreat.

Sunday in the Park draws crowd

Several hundred Sunday in the Park children and their families visited the 4-H booth to get their faces painted, play games, pick up stickers and register to win an Easter basket. 4-H Agent Sharon English and 4-H youth and community members volunteered to man the booth during the April 2 event. Pictured right, English presented 5-year-old winner Travon Campbell with the Easter basket.



First Quit participants needed

Employees who wish to participate in First Quit biweekly smoking cessation classes are asked to contact Personnel Administrator Susan Butler at 277-2403 or sbutler@scotlandcounty.org. There must be at least 10 participants before another First Quit session can be initiated. 12 EMS and Transportation employees participated in First Quit sessions earlier this year. Four quit smoking.

Relay For Life readies for 10th annual event

Enthusiasm and a little bit of time devoted to the 2006 Relay For Life will guarantee endless rewards because of the many who will benefit from your participation. All past, present and future supporters/team captains of this event, now in its 10th year, are encouraged to attend the kick-off meeting 6:30 p.m. Monday, May 1, at the Dulin Center. Anyone interested in forming a team through their church group, work group, family or just want to get involved in some way, please show your support by attending this very important meeting. The American Cancer Society Relay For Life represents the hope that those lost to cancer will never be forgotten, that those who face cancer will be supported and that one day cancer will be eliminated. Everyone, at some time or another, will be affected in some way, whether it is a family member, friend or themselves. If anyone has questions prior to the meeting, please contact Lynda McMillan (accounting and registration), 277-2440 ext. 445; Kaye McMillan (survivorship), 277-2500, ext. 305; or Carol Thomas or Stewart Thomas (Relay For Life® Co-Chairs) at 276-5247. The Relay For Life is scheduled for 6 p.m. Friday, September 8 and will continue to 6p.m. Saturday, September 9 at Pate Stadium.

March of Dimes fund-raiser successful

The Health Department raised more than \$2,300 for the March of Dimes this year, surpassing its goal of \$1,500. A Silent Auction, soup and sandwich meal, Friday dessert sales and private donations contributed to the success of the fund-raiser. Health Department employees are credited for their donations, support and hard work. Special thanks to Michealle Reece for assisting events coordinator Deborah Rogers. "I cannot name all those who contributed to this charity, but you know who you are, and I thank you from the bottom of my heart for the generosity you have given to March of Dimes," Rogers said. "We can make a difference in the lives of babies when we work together."