

# Scotland County

## Monthly



FEBRUARY 2006

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

## Landfill negotiations end Capital projects get prioritized

After months of research and information gathering, the Board of Commissioners discontinued all negotiations with private companies to develop a regional landfill in the County.

In addition, the Commissioners rescinded the franchise/host agreement with Waste Management previously approved on first reading.

The Commissioners expressed concern that the proposal to develop a regional landfill had become a divisive issue for County residents.

Several Commissioners said they had already made up their minds months ago regarding the issue.

Commissioner Clarence McPhatter had stated publicly that he would not support a landfill.

The Commissioners still must review options for a longterm solid waste plan for the County.

The County contracts with Republic Services to handle its solid waste at Uwharrie Landfill in Montgomery County.

Scotland County must renegotiate its contract with Republic when it expires December 31, 2007, the result of which might be at a higher price.

Republic is now going through the repermitting process at Uwharrie, which would increase the landfill capacity from seven years to 12 years.

The Commissioners also authorized County Manager John Crumpton, Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, County Engineer Jim Blackwell and Solid Waste Consultant Dr. Greg Richardson to study the feasibility of the County developing and operating its own landfill with longterm interlocal agreements from surrounding counties.

Accommodating space needs at DSS and the Courthouse topped the priority list developed by the Board of Commissioners at a Planning Retreat earlier this month.

Although the Courthouse and DSS space issues are not new, the Commissioners now are in a position to take the corrective action because of an additional \$1.2 million in unappropriated fund balance realized from increased revenue from sales tax, aggressive tax collections and a savings from lapsed salaries.

The Commissioners discussed moving Adult Probation to West Covington Street, which served as the local mental health facility until it closed December 2005, to free space for other personnel in the Courthouse.

The construction of a 3,000-square-foot, ADA-compliant modular facility is being investigated for DSS use.

Other capital needs on the priority list include installing a new roof and heating/air system in the courthouse, purchasing a 2006 ambulance and purchasing a time management system.

According to Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson, a time management system would free up personnel from keying in timesheets so they could be retasked to other duties.

The Commissioners also authorized Patterson and County Manager John Crumpton to report on the affect a cost of living raise at two percent and at three percent would have on the budget for the next fiscal year.



**Chairman J.D. Willis speaks to landfill opponents at a recent community meeting.**

## Smokers try quitting



**Facilitated by Cindy Laton with First Quit, staff at EMS are participating in biweekly smoking cessation classes. "Most of our smokers have joined and are doing well," reported EMS Training/Operations Coordinator Dennis Currie. Above, Mac Tucker displays a few of the quit smoking aids.**

## Budget manual promotes uniformity

A new budget manual for the 2006-2007 fiscal year will ensure a base level of financial information received from all departments regardless of size.

It also will be the standard with which future budgets will be prepared.

"Departments in the past each had their own design and template," explained Finance Officer/Assistant County Manager Kevin Patterson.

He added, "The manual will simplify the process, especially in review of the budgets and understanding the total costs of operating Departments rather than individual costs within each one."

Commissioner **Betty Blue Gholston** was the guest speaker February 3 at Scotland High School where she shared her knowledge of Ancient Egypt with two history classes. Commissioner Gholston talked about her recent two-week visit to Egypt in October. While there, she toured antiquities and burial grounds, cruised the Nile and studied the customs and lifestyles of ancient and modern Egyptians. ❁ Welcome back **Judy Riggins**, Board of Elections. ❁ Congratulations to **Debra Holcomb**, Register of Deeds, on the February 11 birth of grandson John Hunter Holcomb. ❁ Congratulations to the Health Department's laboratory staff members **Judy McMillan** MLT-Supervisor, **Erica Hall** MLT and **Van McArthur** MLT for the outstanding federal audit they received February 17 for the agency's laboratory. The CLIA (Clinical Laboratory Improvement Act) audit ensures the quality and accuracy of the Health Department's laboratory testing. The laboratory was found to be in full compliance with all standards and received no deficiencies. ❁ Congratulations to **Teresa Gorden**, DSS, on the February 17 birth of granddaughter Emily Brooke Gorden.

Our condolences to County Attorney **Ed Johnston** on the death of his mother.

### the Birthday list for March

**1** Juliet McMillan (Social Services Board); **2** Marc Brown (Sheriff); **4** Catherine Stubbs (Tax); **6** Gaylord Hunt (General Services); **7** Raymond Moody (Parks and Recreation); **9** Hattie McCallum (Health Board); **12** June Hunt (EMS); **13** Phyllis Clark and Alice Morgan (DSS); **14** Rachel Peguese (Health); **15** Anthony Livingston (Transportation); **16** Annie Malloy (Health); **19** Carolyn Chavis (Public Works); **20** Gracie Rettig (Transportation); **22** Kitty Johnson (Health); **24** Linda Jones (Transportation), Augusta Roper (Public Buildings), Elizabeth Shutt and Rhonda Cox (DSS) and Mary Helen Norton (Tax); **25** Ricky Locklear (Public Buildings); **27** Marcus Hunt (EMS); **28** Rodney Tucker (Sheriff); **31** Donna McQueen (Health).

Normally it isn't good to get involved in a difficult political issue, but one continues to brew in the General Assembly, which I feel you all should know about.

The issue is **MEDICAID RELIEF** for counties, which has been discussed a great deal over the last couple of years.

Currently there is a proposal, which Senator Tony Rand (Cumberland, Bladen), is trying to promote to the counties and the Legislature.

The proposal calls for the State to take over all County Medicaid

expenses in exchange for the County giving the State the Article 39 (one-cent) sales tax. If approved, the General Assembly also would give counties the option to enact an additional one-cent sales tax that would replace the Article 39 tax. This would allow the County to stay revenue neutral.

One County Manager told me he felt the State was forcing the counties to do its dirty work by raising the sales tax to cover expenses the State should be paying already.

This may be true, but we all have to remember that the General Assembly controls every function of the County. In addition, the General Assembly would not assume the expense for Medicaid unless it was assured a revenue stream to cover the total amount.

If the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) and member counties choose not to support this latest proposal, the blame for the Medicaid burden would shift from the State to the counties because they did not accept the proposal.

This proposal is more than likely the best opportunity Scotland County has for relieving itself of the continuing increases of Medicaid.

Scotland County's current Medicaid budget is \$3.7 million. If the Board of Commissioners enacted an additional one-cent sales tax, it could lower the property tax by an estimated 20 cents.

Arguments in favor of the proposal mainly come from the small and medium-sized counties because they carry a large Medicaid burden. Arguments against

the proposal come from high-growth and large counties whose sales tax increases and total sales tax revenues exceed their Medicaid burden.

The proposal has split the NCACC because of how the proposal affects each county. If you are interested in learning more about the proposal go to the Association's website at [www.NCACC.org](http://www.NCACC.org). The Scotland County Board of Commissioners endorsed the proposal. The need of the County to relieve itself of the Medicaid funding burden and future increases it would bring far outweighs any negatives from the current proposal.

Sometimes in politics, the good of the whole must outweigh the individual political desires of each county. For the counties whose Medicaid burden is crippling their ability to balance a budget and/or attract industry due to their high tax rate, this proposal must be supported by the larger counties.

If the larger counties don't support the proposal, they will be forced to address the financial impacts in the future when the small counties will no longer have the ability to support their budgets any further.



**John A. Crumpton**

### Scotland Leadership orientation held



**Cooperative Extension Director Cathy Graham, back row center, facilitated the Leadership Scotland Orientation weekend at Carolina Beach for the third consecutive year. Personnel Administrator Susan Butler, seated second from left on the second row, represents the County this year in the Leadership Scotland class. The County's 2005 graduate was Payroll Technician/Deputy Finance Officer Nancy Bostick.**

## Farmers Market opening set

A source of locally grown, fresh produce sold at a Farmers Market in downtown Laurinburg could happen as early as May 2006.

The Laurinburg Farmers Market Coalition, a group of individuals from various county agencies such as Cooperative Extension, Health Department, Scotland Memorial Hospital and Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization, hopes the venture will encourage more farmers to grow produce, which would provide another source of income for them.

A recent traffic survey revealed the highest traffic count occurred at the City-owned parking lot at the corner of Main and Church Streets with 343 vehicles per 30 minutes. But it is relatively small to allow many individuals to sell produce, and it could present a traffic hazard to cars coming in and out of the lot.

The second highest traffic count at 321 vehicles per 30 minutes occurred at the A.B. Gibson Education Center parking lot, also owned by the City, was determined to be the best location for the new Laurinburg Farmers Market.

The market would be governed by volunteers who would ensure that safe and quality products would be provided.

Products sold must be grown or produced within Scotland or adjacent counties to Scotland. Sellers must pay a daily selling fee of \$5 for one space or a \$60 annual selling fee.

The market will operate from 7 a.m. until 12 p.m. the first Saturday in May through until the first Saturday in November or until growers decide to close. New dates will be set annually.

Homemade/handmade crafts may be sold with other food items by the same vendor.



**The parking lot at the A.B. Gibson Center is an ideal location for a downtown Farmers Market.**

## EMStatistics

**EMS Report for January:**  
Responded to 389 Medical/Trauma calls

**Treated 37** motor vehicle accident patients  
**Administered 88** wellness/blood pressure checks  
**Sold 37** blue address signs

### 911 Report Highlights:

**337** EMS  
**244** Sheriff's Department

**114** Laurinburg Police Department  
**36** Fire Department  
**524** hang-up calls  
**97** wrong numbers  
**91** open line calls  
**892** cellular calls

### Weather Observations (EMS Recordings)

**Temp (high) 73** on 1/11, 12  
**Temp (low) 27** on 1/6, 27, 28  
**Wind (mph) 33** on 1/18  
**Rainfall (inches) .61** on 1/23

**Compiled by Tommy Hatcher**

## Elections dates announced

Although the candidate filing period concluded February 28, activity in the Board of Elections Office will gain momentum through July.

The following dates should be of interest to Scotland County voters.

**Monday, March 13:** First day to request an absentee ballot by mail.

**Friday, April 7:** Voter registration deadline for May 2 Primary Elections. Forms must be postmarked or delivered in person by today.

**Thursday, April 13:** One-Stop Absentee Voting begins for Primary.

**Tuesday, April 25:** Last day to request absentee ballots in writing (exception due to sickness or disability).

**Saturday, April 29:** One-Stop Absentee Voting ends.

**Monday, May 1:** Mailed absentee ballots must be received to Board of Elections office by 5 p.m. Deadline to request absentee ballots for sickness/disability is 5 p.m.

**Tuesday, May 2:** Primary Day.

**Tuesday, May 9:** Canvass Day for County Board of Elections.

**Monday, June 12:** Soil and Water Conservation District filing period opens at noon.

**Friday, July 7:** Soil and Water Conservation District filing period closes at noon.

Below is a list of local partisan offices available.

**25th Senate:** one seat available.

**NC House of Representatives District 46:** one seat available.

**NC House of Representatives District 48:** one seat available.

**Clerk of Court:** one seat available.

**Scotland County Sheriff:** one seat available.

**Scotland County Commissioners:** three seats available, which include two Stewartsville seats and one Spring Hill seat.

Below are the nonpartisan offices available.

**Soil and Water District Supervisor:** two seats available.

**Scotland County Board of Education:** four seats available, which include two Stewartsville seats and two Townships At Large.

## SCOTLAND COUNTY PARKS & RECREATION

### Tee Ball, Softball, Baseball Registrations

Registrations are March 13 to 18 for boys 5 to 12 and girls 5 to 15 at the following locations: **Scotland Place, Turnpike Road, Laurinburg**, Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. and Saturday, 9 a.m. to 1 p.m.; **Laurel Hill Community Center**, Tuesday, March 14, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; **Gibson Gym**, Wednesday, March 15, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m.; **Wagram Murray Park**, Thursday, March 16, 4 p.m. to 5:30 p.m. There is a \$10 fee per participant. New participants must bring birth certificates.

### Community Workshop for Caregivers

The free workshop, designed to assist caregivers to people with memory problems, is scheduled for Friday, March 24, at St. Luke's United Methodist Church, 1501 Turnpike Road, Laurinburg.

There are two sessions: **How to Communicate When Someone Has Dementia**, 9 a.m. to 12 p.m., and **How to Fill the Day When Someone Has Dementia**, 1 p.m. to 4 p.m. Preregistration for the workshop, sponsored by the Lumber River Area Agency on Aging and Alzheimer's Association East North Carolina Chapter, may be made by March 17 by calling Family Caregiver Specialist Anne Oglesby at 910-618-5533. Registration begins one-half hour before the program begins March 24.

Snacks will be served. Lunch is on your own.

## Prison update presented

155 of the 389 people who work at Scotland Correctional Institution are County residents, according to a recent report provided to the Board of Commissioners by Administrator Don Wood.

Wood said with an average annual salary of \$27,500, the payroll for the 155 County residents brings \$4,262,500 into the community.

The 1,000-bed close custody facility currently houses 975 inmates.

Now in its third year of operation, Wood said the Institution started out with "a lot of inexperienced staff that had to come in and deal with experienced inmates."

He explained the operation of the facility "has smoothed out a lot as the staff matured."

Wood said 25 positions at the prison remain vacant. "We have problems recruiting and retaining new people, which mostly has to do with dollars." He said the federal prison in Bennettsville, SC, is a big competitor, and the Correctional Institution has lost employees to that facility. "The State simply cannot compete with the federal people, and that has hurt us."

Wood added that filling nursing positions also presents challenges because the facility is competing with the private sector.

He said future projects include the creation of an enterprise sewing plant expected to be completed in March. Approximately 120 inmates will be making inmate and employee clothing.

Six vocational classrooms, with instruction provided by Richmond Community College, would be completed by the end of March. There would be a barber school and classes on sewing, carpentry, HVAC and electrical wiring.

Wood said the Central Engineering Staff in Raleigh is designing a 544-bed medium custody dormitory as an addition to Scotland Correctional Institution.

He estimated the new addition would employ 40 to 50 people. There is no start date and no State-approved funding yet, said Wood.

## Voting equipment delivered



Board of Elections Director Judy Riggins accepted delivery of 12 M100 electronic voting counters and ballot boxes, 10 of which will be placed in the precincts in time for the May 2 Primary.

All counties were required to contract with a State-approved voting equipment vendor before January 1, 2006. Most of the cost of the equipment and software was covered by the Help America Vote Act and additional State funding.

The Commissioners approved the surplus of the lever-style voting machines at their February monthly meeting.

## Continuing education classes a must for EMS employees

EMS employees attended a continuing education session covering fire extinguisher training, HIPPA, blood borne pathogens and driver safety.

John Johnson of the Laurinburg Fire Department gave a brief classroom presentation on fire extinguisher use, and a practical exercise was conducted outdoors.

All employees had a chance to actually extinguish a fire as shown in the picture where Robert Sampson, EMT-P/Shift Supervisor, extinguishes a fire. John Johnson, right, and Chad Donaldson are the Fire Department instructors.



## News of Note

### Reminder to Colonial products users

The County will no longer deduct premiums for Colonial Supplemental Insurance products from employees' paychecks. According to Colonial, each employee listed on the County's last billing will receive a conversion letter explaining the options for continuing this coverage. Colonial is available at 800-325-4368 to assist in explaining available options to continue coverage.

### Important mental health numbers provided

Although Scotland Center, the local office of the Southeastern Regional Mental Health agency closed December 30, two Scotland Center programs — Shining Star Clubhouse and Scotland Enterprises — will continue local service. Contact number for Shining Star, the psychosocial rehabilitation program at 224 King Street is 276-7360. The number for Scotland Enterprises, an adult vocational skills program at 1224 Biggs Street, is 276-9664. Other important numbers are 800-670-6871 for screening/triage/referral and 800-670-1238 for customer service.

### New fire district maps approved

New six-mile fire district maps approved by the Board of Commissioners would reduce fire insurance rates by 10 percent to homeowners who live between the five and six miles. EMS Director Roylin Hammond said homeowners who live between the five and six miles and reside within 1,000 feet of a water source might see a further reduction in their insurance rate.

### 4-H'ers study fitness and nutrition

Scotland County 4-H youth attended nutrition and fitness workshops while during the annual South Central District 4-H Winter Enrichment at Sandhills Community College. Scotland County 4-H was among a 120-member delegation that attended the event with the State theme, "Get Fit with 4-H, Make it a Clover Combo." Attending from Scotland County were Cherrell Brown, Traci Johnson, Ashley Bethea, Shanice Daniels, Mary Tardif, Irene Davidson, 4-H Agent Sharon English and 4-H Volunteer Debbie Tardif.