

Scotland County Monthly



FEBRUARY 2008

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

Commissioners help RCC reach campaign goal

It took a final donation of \$4,857 to get Richmond Community College to its \$3.5 million Capital Campaign goal. That donation came from the Board of Commissioners.

Now the community college can set the summer of 2009 as the target date for occupancy of its Scotland County campus facility on the site where the old hospital once stood.

The 18,000-square-foot Richmond Community College Scotland Center will house its nursing program and industrial training classes to support workforce development.

RCC in November received a \$900,000 grant from the State Community College System. Other donors to the RCC Foundation Capital Campaign included Golden Leaf, \$1.2 million; Federal EDA, \$1 million; and RCC capital campaign fund-raising efforts, \$395,143.

Design completion is expected this June with construction beginning in August 2008.

Library transitions to County department in July

Scotland Memorial Library will become a County department effective July 1.

That means Library employees will have access to the same health benefits and be subject to the same cost of living increases as those received by County employees.

Commissioner Joyce McDow, who is Chairman of the Library Board, said the transition by the Library to a County Department would save the County about \$12,000 a year.

The County provides about \$250,000 in supplemental funding to the Library each fiscal year, which includes health insurance and life and fringe benefits.

The savings to the County will come in future fiscal years when Library employees become eligible to receive the same benefits from a larger insurance pool.

When the Library employees become County employees, they will be subject to all County policies, including personnel.

All Library employees will be subject to the hiring authority of the County Manager.

All Library property and assets will become the property of the County, according to a Memorandum of Agreement.

The Library Board will be responsible for regular capital campaigns to fund major repairs, renovations, expansions, book mobile and other capital needs.

County selected to participate in 21st Century Communities

Scotland County was one of five counties selected as a 2008 participant in the 21st Century Communities Program.

Alexander, Clay, Camden and Nash counties also were selected to participate.

Sponsored by the NC Department of Commerce, the initial introduction to the 21st Century Communities process will begin with a program orientation.

The orientation, which will be scheduled at a later date, includes an overview of program expectations and provides an opportunity for dialogue with Commerce staff and existing 21st Century Communities.

Initiated in 2001 in response to business and industry closures and the loss of thousands of jobs in the manufacturing and textile industries, the 21st Century Communities program has positively impacted the State's most challenged communities and helped jump-start economic development.

Hayes meets with local officials for input on community priorities



Left to right, Laurinburg City Manager, Chairman J.D. Willis, County Manager Kevin Patterson, U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes and Commissioner Guy McCook discuss how to better promote Scotland County as a community of choice.

Capitalizing on Base Realignment and Closure (BRAC) and promoting the Laurinburg-Maxton Airport as a military-related business park were at the center of an informal discussion between community officials and U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes.

Hayes and his staff met with local officials to discuss appropriations that might benefit the region and to listen to what the officials considered priority needs for the County.

Officials also asked Hayes to provide them with a list of possible grant opportunities, which might generate an alternative revenue stream for the County.

Hayes was questioned about the County's ability to attract contractors to the area who would service the defense industry as a result of BRAC.

Commissioner Guy McCook said Scotland faces fierce competition

see priorities page 3

Medicaid relief expected to help decrease tax rate over time

The Commissioners indicated earlier this month a strong desire to decrease the tax rate by four cents from \$1.06 to \$1.02 in FY 2008-2009.

The intended decrease in the tax rate is the result of a three-year phaseout plan developed by the State Legislature to assume 100 percent of the cost of Medicaid.

Up until this fiscal year, counties were responsible for paying 15 percent of the cost of Medicaid.

The County financial participation in Medicaid will be eliminated by July 1, 2009 as part of a three-year phaseout.

The phaseout concludes a four-year debate between State legislators and county elected officials to develop a mutually equitable and beneficial plan to relieve counties of Medicaid expenses.

The State budget provides for a three-year phaseout of county Medicaid expenses in exchange for a gradual assumption by the State of a half-cent local sales tax.

In the first year the State will keep 60 percent of the ADM funding that is allocated to Scotland County to pay for the school bonds. The amount to be withheld is estimated at \$261,180, and the County will have to fund this same amount out of other unrestricted funds. Scotland County is expected to receive a hold harmless payment to guarantee a net benefit of \$500,000.

In the second year the State will take one-half of the Article 44 sales taxes. This will be a loss of approximately \$740,000 compared to an estimated savings of \$2 million.

By year three the State will take all Article 44 sales taxes and change the method of distribution for other sales taxes from per capita to point of delivery. This would represent a loss of revenues of approximately \$2.2 million compared to a savings on Medicaid expenses of \$4.4.

Chairman J.D. Willis said as the phaseout progresses he expects the tax rate to decrease incrementally. He estimated that by fiscal year 2009-2010, the tax rate will decrease by three additional cents to 99 cents.

The Commissioners agreed that with Medicaid relief the eventual goal would be to reduce the tax rate to under one dollar.

The phaseout also allows counties by local referendum to pursue additional optional revenues through the levy of a .25 percent sales tax or the levy of up to a 0.4 percent land transfer tax.

Revenues from either of those sources would help counties fund future infrastructure and capital needs.

the Birthday list for March

1 Bud McAllister (Inspections) and Juliet McMillan (DSS Board); 2 Marc Brown (Sheriff); 3 Uniqua Bostick (DSS); 4 Catherine Stubbs (Tax); 6 Gaylord Hunt (General Services), Nancy Pittman (DSS) and Latoya Williams (Sheriff); 7 Raymond Moody (Parks and Recreation), Felisa McKeithan (Transportation) and Jeffrey Cooke (Sheriff); 8 Leslie Scott (DSS); 9 Hattie McCallum (Health Board); 12 June Hunt (EMS); 13 Phyllis Clark (Health) and Alice Morgan (DSS); 14 Mary White (EMS) and Rachel Peguese (Health); 16 Annie Malloy (Health); 17 Dixie Whelpley (Revaluation); 20 Gracie Rettig (Transportation); 22 Kitty Johnson (Health); 24 Mary Helen Norton (Tax), Rhonda Cox and Elizabeth Shutt (DSS), Linda Jones (Transportation) and Kemp Roper (Public Buildings); 25 Ricky Locklear (Public Buildings); 28 Rodney Tucker (Sheriff).

Peanuts a topical issue



David Jordan, standing, Cooperative Extension Peanut Specialist with NC State University, discusses peanut production with growers interested in producing peanuts for the first time.

Firefighter honored for saving life of employee

Volunteer firefighter William Skipper said he did what anybody would have done in his place.

What Skipper did was nothing short of heroic. He didn't give up on the life of Raymond Moody, assistant athletic supervisor with Parks and Recreation.

This past summer, during an all-star baseball game in nearby Red Springs, Moody collapsed and had no heartbeat.

Skipper, who also serves as a coach, administered CPR on Moody for 45 minutes until a volunteer EMS unit arrived.

Skipper was recognized by the Board of Commissioners February 4 for his persistence, his determination and his tireless effort to save a life.

Chairman J.D. Willis presented Skipper with a framed proclamation and a windbreaker with the Scotland County logo.

"The Scotland County Board of Commissioners and the entire Parks and Recreation staff are indebted to William Skipper for his part in ensuring Raymond Moody is with us today," the Proclamation states.

Commissioner Leon Butler said of Skipper, who is a Laurel Hill resident, that as a firefighter Skipper is a model citizen and a role model for others he trains to become firefighters.

Take the fitness quiz

How many miles must you cover over the course of a day to earn an "active" fitness label?

a. 2 miles b. 5 miles c. 7 miles

See Health Tip, page 4, for the answer.



Chairman J.D. Willis, left, presents William Skipper with a framed Proclamation and a County logo jacket.

News of Note

Healthy Carolinians “Step into Spring”

"Step into Spring," a four-week walking program sponsored by Healthy Carolinians, begins April 1. **See Health Tip, page 4, for walking benefits.** Call Kathie Cox, 277-4478, to register. Additionally, the Healthy Carolinians Lunch & Learn Program is held the last Monday of each month at 12 p.m. in the Health Department education room. Bring your lunch and enjoy the company and the practical health information.

Newsletter is black and white — for now

The monthly newsletter will be distributed in black and white for the foreseeable future as Administration reviews proposals for a more cost-efficient color copier with local service and maintenance built into the contract. Meanwhile, if you miss the color version, the latest edition is available the end of each month on the Scotland County website at www.scotlandcounty.org/newsletter.

Blood drive falls one unit short of goal

The County employee Red Cross Blood Drive resulted in the donation of 24 units, one pint shy of the intended goal. Turnout was better than expected, though, with 29 employees coming in to donate. A special thanks to EMS Shift A, all of whom donated. Five of the 29 employees were deferred. Human Resources Manager Susan Butler said 33 employees made appointments but four reported sick the day of the drive. Butler thanked the employees for their patience since the wait to donate was longer than expected. Butler said she will work closely with the Red Cross to ensure employees will not be inconvenienced when they sign up to donate for the next Blood Drive.

Youth recreation registrations begin

Parks and Recreation will hold Tee Ball, Softball and Baseball registration March 3 to 8. The fee is \$12 per participant for boys ages 5-12 and girls ages 5-15 as of May 1. Registration locations are: Scotland Place, Monday-Friday, 8 a.m.-5:30 p.m. and Saturday 10 a.m.- 1 p.m.; Laurel Hill Community Center, Tuesday, March 4, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.; Gibson Gym, Wednesday, March 5, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m.; and Wagram Murray Park, Thursday, March 6, 4 p.m.-5:30 p.m. New participants must present birth certificates. Baseball Extravaganza and Picture Day will be April 19. All games for Extravaganza will be played at the New Recreation Complex.

Lincoln Park equipment placed



As part of the Parks and Recreation Master Plan, new playground equipment was installed at Lincoln Park on Corona Avenue in Laurinburg.

Public Buildings and grounds staff Ricky Locklear, Tim Matthews, James McQueen and Mike McGirt, pictured left to right, installed the equipment.

Additionally, a picnic shelter is being built at the Laurel Hill Community Center. The structure was requested by residents of the Laurel Hill area in the Master Plan.

Food and Nutrition Services receives excellence award



The DSS Food Nutrition Services (formally Food Stamps) unit were among the State recipients of the 2007 Director Cup Award for excellence in the areas of payment accuracy, claims management and program access, which includes participation and timeliness measurements.

DSS staff accepting the award are, left to right, Barbara Ledbetter, Karen Chavis, Tammy Cole, Taronda Douglas, Gwendolyn Terry, Vickie Barnes, Sarah McQueen, Roxanne Douglas, Sandra McNeil, Willette Jones and Jennie Lowe.

The award was given to the State of North Carolina as part of the Southeast Region, which also includes Kentucky, Alabama, Tennessee, Georgia, Mississippi and Florida.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services was recognized for maintaining payment accuracy and negative error rates that are consistently below the national average. The State also reports an application timeliness rate that exceeds the national average.

North Carolina was the first in the Region to collect claims from multiple debtors making the State a leader in reducing its overissuance debt.

Based on most recent data published on food stamp participation, North Carolina achieved an eight percentage point increase in its participation rate between 2003 and 2004, the largest in the Southeast region.

For the last two years, North Carolina has been engaged in a campaign to increase participation, which included county-specific assessments of underserved groups and informal outreach activities at the local level. As a result, an additional 55,000 participants received food stamp benefits between fiscal years 2005 and 2006.

Priorities identified

continued from page 1

from Cumberland County because it has more resources to mount that kind of charge to get the contractors to locate in and around Cumberland.

McCook added, "Laurinburg-Maxton Airbase should be on their radar now so the defense industry can invest in it and use it some time down the road."

Hayes agreed to help the County make direct contact with BRAC officials at the decision-making level and to look into what long-term planning might be developing for the region.

McCook said of the County's quality-of-life attributes, "We've got all the key pieces that would make us a good bedroom community for Fort Bragg."

John Blue House showcased on NC Now

The historic John Blue House and grounds got at least six minutes of fame January 11 when they were featured on the PBS program *NC NOW*.

A film crew from UNC-TV (Chapel Hill) visited the John Blue House and cabins, the Cotton Gin, the Cotton Blossom Train, the A.D. Gibson General Store and the Museum of Scotland County in early December.

The crew spent most of the day filming footage to prepare for the six-minute televised feature.

The crew filmed inside the John Blue House with and without Christmas decorations to provide extra footage in case the story was not used until after the holidays.

The extra footage also would leave an opportunity for the possible airing of future film clips.

The crew also received brochures about the house and grounds and the John Blue Cotton Festival and Storytelling Festival of Carolinas, since both festivals are held annually on the John Blue House grounds.



Post Scripts

We wish **Sandy Lockey**, EMS, a speedy recovery from recent surgery. ❀ Congratulations to professional grandmother **Lynda McMillan**, Health, who welcomed her 6th grandchild February 13, Domenick Anthony Ragone to parents Christy and Raymond Ragone. Although he was born five weeks premature Domenick is improving a little each day. And congratulations to Domenick's aunt, **Nancy Bostick**, Administration. ❀ Justin Baldwin, son of **Cory Baldwin**, EMS, received the National Marching Band Award and has been invited to try out for the National Honors Band in New Orleans.

Our condolences to **Pam Reed**, DSS, on the January 27 passing of her mother, Eunice J. Fetner.

Introductions & transitions

Welcome to those individuals who joined Scotland County departments since December 16, 2007: **Corrie Patterson**, EMS; **Cardra Burns**, **Elliott Brown** and **Martin Nielsen**, Health; **Jonathan Edwards** and **Latoya Williams**, Sheriff.

Health Tip

You'll need to cover at least five miles to meet government — and RealAge — fitness guidelines. That's equivalent to about 10,000 steps, so clip on your pedometer and get counting!

The Flip Side

Know what fitness label you'll earn if you cover roughly half that five-mile ground? Sedentary. People who walk little more than two miles (less than 5,000 steps) over the course of a day are not considered active at all.

Get It Where You Can

The good news is that you can tally up those miles not just during the course of a formal workout but through any kind of physical activity — from puttering around your house while you cook or dust to walking to and from your car. Give yourself a head start by taking a 30-minute walk each day.

Many walking enthusiasts who picked up the habit say that as a result they either reduced their risk of disease, lost weight, beat depression or enjoyed countless other major health rewards.

Some doctors and scientists even believe that walking regularly can reverse illness and aging, making the simple act of walking quite possibly the most underrated prescription for good health. **Source: RealAge.com**

New 4-H Agent welcomed

Corrie Haskins has joined the Scotland County Cooperative Extension staff as 4-H Agent.

Haskins will provide leadership to the County 4-H Program in the areas of community/project club organization, school enrichment projects and special interest programs.

Other responsibilities include recruiting, training and working with adult volunteers.

Haskins received a double major in general music and textile design/marketing from UNC-Greensboro. Haskins has more than nine years experience as a 4-H member and inductee into the 4-H Honor Club. She also served as State 4-H President.



Corrie Haskins

EMStatistics

EMS Report for January:

Responded to 449 Medical/Trauma calls

Treated 46 total traffic accident patients

Administered 71 wellness/blood pressure checks

Sold 8 blue address signs

911 Report Highlights:

434 EMS

263 Sheriff's Department

224 Laurinburg Police Department

54 Fire Department

643 hang-up calls

79 wrong numbers

59 open line calls

1,304 cellular calls

1,977 total calls to 911

Top five complaints for EMS Response

66 breathing problems

57 sick person (specific diagnosis)

49 falls/back injuries

(traumatic)

47 chest pain

34 traffic accidents

Weather Observations

(EMS Recordings)

Temp (high) 78 on 1/8

Temp (low) 18 on 1/4

Wind (mph) 21 on 1/2, 11, 29, 30

Rainfall (inches) .62 on 2/11

Compiled by Tommy Hatcher