



SCOTLAND COUNTY MONTHLY

JUNE 2002

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

Commissioners approve two-cent cut in the FY 2002-2003 tax rate

Citizens will see a two-cent cut in the tax rate, from \$1.10 to \$1.08 per \$100 assessed property value for FY 2002-2003, now that the Board of Commissioners approved a County budget in excess of \$37 million.

The June 24 approval of the budget was made even though two issues, which could directly impact the budget, remain unanswered. A school floor funding modification is being considered by the Legislature.

The modification calls for the schools to receive \$8,700,000 in local funding this year, which is \$200,000 less than what the schools received in FY 2001-2002 and \$1 million less than what it would have received in FY 2002-2003 based on current school funding law.

A second bill being considered by State legislature would allow counties to impose a one-half percent sales tax sooner than the original target date of July 2003. Levying a one-half percent local sales tax would offset the \$1.5 million in revenue reimbursements to Scotland County that Gov. Mike Easley seized to help rectify the State's budget woes.

According to Sen. Bill Purcell and Rep. Doug Yongue, indications are both bills will have successful passage through the House and the Senate, although it may take several more weeks before that happens.

Chairman David L. Burns thanked County Manager Scott Sauer, his supervisors and staff for their efforts in reducing expenditures and continuing to streamline services.

New fire tankers displayed for public



Two new fire tankers for the Gibson and Wagram Volunteer Fire Departments were displayed for the public in June. The tankers, from Pierce Manufacturing, transport 1,500 gallons of water. The tankers, with a price tag of \$153,000 each, feature a diesel engine and Allison automatic transmission on a Kenworth chassis. A pumper for Spring Hill, which pumps and puts out 1,250 gallons of water per minute, will arrive this summer. A tanker for Spring Hill is scheduled for arrival in the next budget year to complete the fleet of 14 trucks for the seven area volunteer fire departments.

Registration/Change Forms prepare voters for elections

Dear Citizens:

Very soon a date for the Primary Election should be announced, you need to be ready. Do any of these situations apply to you?

- have moved from one residence in the County to another
- have not moved but my address changed due to County readdressing
- have changed my name and/or marital status
- would like to change my political party affiliation
- have never registered to vote
- have a student in my home who will be 18 on or before General Election Day
- have a college student who needs to register and will not be in the County on election day

Taking care of any of the above situations is easier than ever, and all are taken care of on the same Mail-In Registration/Change Form.

Registration/Change Forms are available in your election office. If you call and let us know of your need, we will send you the form. However, you also can get a form from your Social Services Office, Health Department, Register of Deeds, Tax Office and the County Manager's Office.

These changes can also be made when you go to the DMV to make the change on your drivers license. If you're not sure you are registered to vote, call your election office today, 277-2595, and let us check for you.

If you have a student who will be away on election day, you may request an Absentee Ballot to be mailed to that student. We will talk more about Absentee Voting in the next newsletter. Right now, let's get all the changes made and everybody Registered to Vote.

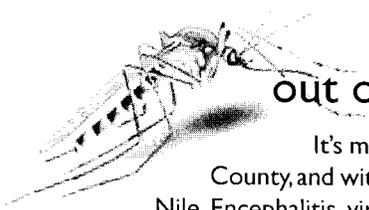
I hope to hear from you real soon!

Judy Riggins, Director

Scotland County Board of Elections 277-2595

THERE'S MORE INSIDE

Office cares for veterans ... page 2
Smart Growth possible page 3



Take the bite out of mosquitoes

It's mosquito time in Scotland County, and with it comes news of West Nile Encephalitis virus. Although it can be fatal, the human case fatality rate in the US is low at about 11 percent.

Infections may result in a non-specific flu-like syndrome, sometimes accompanied by a rash, fever, headache, general pain or malaise. Antibiotics are not effective.

Personal control measures include reducing time outdoors, particularly in early evening, wearing long pants and long sleeve shirts and applying mosquito repellent to exposed skin areas.

When using insect repellents **do** read the directions; **do** apply only to exposed skin/clothing; **don't** use on cuts, wounds, etc.; **don't** let children handle (apply to your own hands and then apply to the child); **do** avoid eyes and mouth.

Home control measures include reducing the amount of standing water; disposal of cans, pots and containers that have accumulated; discarding tires; drilling bottom drain holes in recycle containers; cleaning out roof gutters; turning over plastic pools or any receptacle that collects water; aerating ornamental pools of stock with fish; and using landscaping methods to eliminate standing water.

the Birthday list for July

1 Carissa Gemar (Health); **3** Shelia Jackson (Tax); **4** Tim Martin (DSS); **7** William Norton III (Sheriff); **10** Chris Coleman (Sheriff) and Denise Locklear (DSS); **11** Samara Pegues (DSS); **14** Linda Graham (DSS); **19** Marcus Norton (Planning) and Pat Lathrop (EMS); **21** Jenny Church (DSS) and Melanie Harding (Health); **23** Elaine Harrison (DSS) and Judith Riggins (Elections); **24** Scott Sauer (Administration); **25** Mildred Williams (Veterans Services); **26** Jeff Wood (DSS); **27** James Banks (Public Buildings) and Priscilla McInnis (DSS); **28** Delores Baxley (Parks and Recreation) and Kenny Smith (Jail); **29** Angela Rascoe (DSS); **30** Wanda Britt (Transportation); **31** Jan-Marie Fesmire (DSS) and Judith McMillan (Health).

Murray honored for service

Kudos to Jane Murray, Health Department Director, who was recognized by County Manager Scott Sauer as Department Head of the Year.



Notes from the County Manager

To my fellow employees:

Thank you for your stewardship of County resources, your commitment to high quality service and your professionalism that is evident throughout our organization.

July 1, we begin a new fiscal year with a lean, well-honed budget plan that includes a staffing component comparable to the FY 1992-1993 budget. Through your hard work, team efforts, cooperative agency relationships and commitment to fiscal responsibility, we are accomplishing more with less.

We have witnessed a downturn in our national, state and local economy that the experts claim will be second only to the Depression of the 1930s. Our County has lost nearly 3,000 manufacturing jobs since 1996. County staffing for the new budget is down 18.5 full-time positions, which was accomplished through attrition.

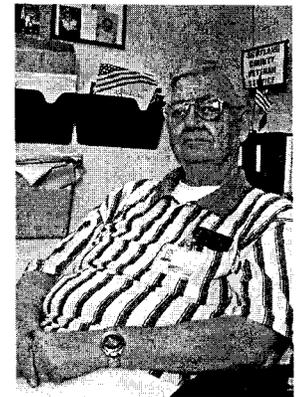
Your talents, skills and perseverance are needed now more than *see Notes, page 4*



Scott Sauer

Office serves veterans

Robert Sanford at the Veterans Service Office, right, and with the 24th Infantry Division in Korea, June 1951.



The one-story cinder block building in front of Legion Park isn't an imposing structure, but the services provided within are powerful ones.

The building, once the National Guard Armory, houses the Veterans Service Office staffed by two veterans service advocates, Robert Sanford and Mildred Williams. Although appointments are taken, much of the business conducted there comes from walk-ins and through telephone queries.

On this particular day, a Vietnam veteran was filing a compensation claim for his diabetes, the result of exposure to Agent Orange. "We don't turn anybody away, and we don't charge for our services," Sanford explained. "We're here for anybody who is or has been in the service, including widows and spouses of those in the service."

Since Scotland County is home to 3,440 veterans, the office is busy. Through the efforts of the Veterans Service staff, a total of \$3,954,186 in veterans benefits flowed into the County in 2001.

Along with filing compensation and pension claims, the Veterans Service Office also assists with hospital and pharmaceutical services, medical appointments and transportation, vocational rehabilitation, burial arrangements, home loan guarantys and entitlements, VA insurance and scholarships.

Sanford served in the Army with the 24th Infantry Division, the first outfit sent to Korea. And after 13 years in a different branch of service as an advocate for veterans, Sanford plans to retire July 31. "I've enjoyed my work, and I've enjoyed working with veterans."

The rural scenic beauty of Scotland County has been impacted by land development practices that encourage the platting of multiple manufactured home lots along highways and rural roads. Although very proud of its rich Scottish Heritage, lackwater streams and open farmland, a negative impact from development inconsistent with County standards became prevalent.

In large areas of the County, farmers, visitors, citizens and economic development prospects began commenting on the noticeable impact of the change from rural farmlands and woods to sprawling lines of driveways and manufactured homes without underpinning.

The Board of County Commissioners in April 2001 directed that no manufactured home should receive a Certificate of Occupancy unless it was in compliance with County underpinning requirements, particularly masonry underpinning for doublewide manufactured homes.

In July 2001, the Commissioners appointed an Ordinance Amendment Committee to review Countywide ordinances and land development practices. Several County Commissioners, Board of Zoning Adjustment members, Planning and Zoning Board members and individuals representing the development industry served on the Ordinance Amendment Committee.

Smart development preserves rural land and promotes healthy economy

by Marcus Norton, Planning Director

In December 2001, the Scotland County Planning and Zoning Board concurred with the Ordinance Amendment Committee's work and recommended approval of the proposed amendments. In January 2002, the Board of County Commissioners adopted the Planning and Zoning Board's and Ordinance Amendment Committee's recommendations amending the Scotland County Zoning and Subdivision ordinances. The Commissioners directed that all land development ordinances be enforced fairly, equitably and thoroughly.

Efforts to increase countywide awareness through public education are a major part of the process. As a result of the directives by the Commissioners, a wave of manufactured home underpinning has occurred across the County. The staff began enforcing street frontage requirement for lots and paving requirements for new streets.

Now, new developments on major streets must consider internal access for homes, and subdivisions using unimproved easements as development streets are no longer permitted. Additionally, through density incentives, development is encouraged to locate where water and sewer infrastructure are planned. The changes have been widely accepted as a result of the intensive effort to explain the reasons for the new land development standards.

An increased pride in neighborhoods has been an immediate impact of the Board of Commissioners work, resulting in feedback by citizens about the better appearance of subdivisions with underpinned manufactured homes. Some homeowners in those same neighborhoods have cleaned up piles of debris and trash and have become involved in encouraging others to meet the new County standards.

The public education component is especially beneficial because people better understand what is expected when developing land in Scotland County. There has been an increased awareness of the role of planning in local government. Positive long-term impacts will continue, as there is now greater thought required before converting rural Scotland County land into other uses. This contributes directly to the local business of farming and a fledgling tourist initiative.

Application of the smart growth principle — "better planned counties are more desirable locations to live and work" — is expected to have a positive impact to current job losses. As the benefits of good planning become more apparent, the momentum from the Board of County Commissioners work will carry over into an initial effort to update the comprehensive plan.

Smart Growth - Planning, design and development that improves quality of life through the fair distribution of the costs and benefits of development, the preservation of natural and cultural resources and promotion of a community's identity.

Easement – Property right allowing limited use of someone's property, such as a driveway across another person's property to yours.

Underpinning – Vinyl for singlewides and masonry for doublewides placed around the perimeter of a mobile home to cover the space underneath. Underpinning improves appearance, prevents access by animals and children and provides protection from weather.

Plat – Maps of property produced by surveyors to illustrate property area with accurate boundary distances and direction. Plats also illustrate locations of existing or future development.

Subdivision – The verb "subdivision" is the process of splitting or dividing one unit of property into two or more units called "lots" or "parcels." As a noun, it refers to a development usually made up of homes and neighborhoods. The process of subdivision must meet County requirements so that the noun subdivision will be a healthy and desirable place to live.

Post Scripts

Notes from the County Manager

continued from page 2

ever as we begin a new year. We are in the public service business, and your value to the organization has never been more important as our greatest resource. I am deeply concerned that salary increases were not available for next year, but I am grateful to maintain adequate staffing, strong benefits and no layoffs.

Our program of work for FY 2002-2003 is enormous in the lasting impact it will have for Scotland County:

1) Municipal and County elections managed by the Board of Elections. Maintaining a strong democracy by assuring credible ethical and fair elections is our highest priority.

2) Revaluation of all real property, with new assessments effective January 1, 2003, and the expectation of a lower tax rate will heavily influence the budget debate next year.

3) Water District II construction is a project goal established by the Board of Commissioners nearly a dozen years ago.

4) Health Department clinic co-location at 1405 West Boulevard with facility renovation/construction is part of the adopted budget plan.

5) Updating the County comprehensive land use plan is a top priority for the Planning and Zoning Board.

6) Implementation training for the integrated geographic information system (GIS) will provide a powerful management tool for all departments and eventually

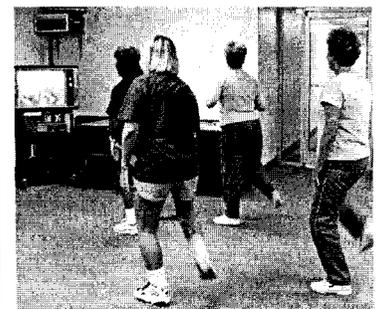
Internet accessibility for various County databases.

Scotland County government is a strong organization, and we will remain successful because of our dedicated staff and support from the Board of Commissioners. I continue to be indebted to your commitment and honored to serve this community.

Thank you for making Scotland County great!

Employees fit to be exercised

Stay fit and enjoy 30 minutes of fun with the Aerobotics, County staffers who exercise Monday through Friday at noon in the Annex conference room.



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



Retiring after 21 years of service is Dannie Hill, center, with, left to right, Vikki Sellgren, animal control officer; Cassandra Jordon, LPN, and Jennifer Taylor, Home Health clerk. Hill worked at Home Health until 1998 and then transferred to the Health Department.

We extend our sympathy to former commissioner **D.B. Quick** and family on the death of his daughter, Brenda Quick Dow and to **Shirley Grooms** of the Health Department on the death of her mother, Helen Lucille Sheppard Wallace ☼ The **Sheriff's Department** and the **Emergency Medical Services** staff were honored by the Laurinburg Post Office as local heroes for their services in the aftermath of September 11. Sheriff **Buddy Blalock** and EMS Director **Roylin Hammond** accepted "Heroes 2001" stamp plaques on behalf of their departments. The stamps, which feature New York firemen raising the flag amid the



Commissioner **Nancy Shelley**, right, presents **Betty Rising** with a Resolution in her honor. Rising retired from the **Lumber River Council of Governments** after 28 years of service as **Aging Program Administrator**.

wreckage of the World Trade Center, will be sold at a higher rate of 45 cents to help raise money for the Federal Emergency management Agency (FEMA) ☼ **Jane Callahan** attended a district Register of Deeds meeting May 30 in Southport ☼ In the Health Department, welcome to **Winnie Lail**, RNC, who will be an asset to its nursing services. We will miss

Melanie Harding, RN, and wish her much success in her new position at the high school. Many thanks to **Carol McCall** and **Andy Kurtzman** for their contributions to the Healthy Carolinians Program. We wish them success in their future endeavors. Welcome back, **Terena Taylor**. ☼ Veterans Service Officer **Robert Sanford** met with U.S. Rep. Robin Hayes May 28 to discuss upcoming veterans legislation regarding compensations, pensions and hospitalization. ☼



The 2002 Scotland High School Quiz Bowl Team, having won the State Championship, was recognized by the Board of Commissioners. Resolutions honoring each of the team members were distributed by Commissioner **Nancy Shelley**, far right, at the Board's June meeting.

Commissioner **Sam Snowdon** was named to the College of Fellows at the American Institute of Architects. Inclusion is reserved for members who have made "contributions of national significance to the profession."