



SCOTLAND COUNTY MONTHLY

NOVEMBER 2003

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

Expansion within budget



The Health Department expansion remains within budget although expected completion has fallen slightly behind. Completion is now scheduled for sometime in January with a February 2004 move-in anticipated.

Direct Deposit test run planned

BB&T customers will have the opportunity December 2 to do what employees affiliated with the Credit Union have been doing for some time now — enroll in a Direct Deposit plan. That means paychecks would go directly to the employee's BB&T savings or checking account.

Personnel Administrator Susan Butler encouraged as many employees as possible to sign authorization agreements for Direct Deposit in order to become familiar with how it works.

December will be the first automated Direct Deposit for employees affiliated with the Credit Union. It was previously a manual Direct Deposit system. All other employees will be phase in no later than June 2004.

By summer 2004, Direct Deposit will be mandatory for all employees with few exceptions.

"It is important to get this established because anyone who receives Retirement or Social

Security is on mandatory Direct Deposit," Butler explained.

The authorization form will take just a few minutes to complete. Attaching a voided check to the authorization form is required in order to initiate the process.

Although County employees will be able to select any banking institution, a BB&T account provides the following package for County workers: free regular checking account; free basic checks (maximum three boxes per year); free ATM card; no fee for cashier's checks (up to two per month); no money order fee (up to two per month); no fee for traveler's checks and no annual fee for the first year on credit cards.

Hughes surprised... not once, but twice!

Becca Hughes was seated in the front of the room preparing to provide a Youth Recreation Complex update at the November Commissioners meeting. By now, she's used to it. As the Youth Center Task Force Chairman, she's been reporting almost monthly.

But it wasn't necessary.

Hughes instead was recognized for her work in helping the County raise more than \$1.6 million toward construction of the Youth Recreation Complex as well as for all her other successful fund-raising efforts Countywide.

Hughes was presented with an Order of the Long Leaf Pine certificate, signed by Governor Easley, at the request of dozens of area officials who wrote letters requesting she be recognized.

The second surprise — her family and friends quietly filled the back of the Commissioners Chamber as she accepted the certificate from Chairman David Burns. Pictured, Hughes reacts when Chairman Burns asks her to turn around and say hello to her family and friendly well-wishers.



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United Way
of Scotland County

United Way contributions up slightly from last year

The generosity of Scotland County employees was well documented this year as \$11,991 was raised for United Way. That's \$254 more than last year.

Overall, 41 percent of employees contributed to the 2003 campaign, which benefits Scotland County service agencies. The 41 percent remains unchanged from last year as does 13 percent of those employees who participated in the Fair Share program.

Individuals who participate in Fair Share, which is equivalent to pledging one hour of their paycheck each month to United Way, get to enjoy the day off on their birthday.



Counterclockwise, top right, examples of “Triple Play” materials from the State. First responders were told to expect numerous scenarios dealing with the public in a crisis situation. Law enforcement personnel were called in for traffic control. First responders help a citizen into a wheelchair. Citizen volunteers identified with an illness or plague-like symptoms are masked and wait to be dispensed medication as they are seen in the infirmary.

First responders react to plague outbreak in second part of a Bioterrorism “Triple Play”

In the second phase of a “Triple Play” the Health Department took the lead in a bioterrorism exercise as a means to gauge Scotland County’s response to a crisis event.

Phase one of the exercise occurred several weeks earlier when people and animals contracted an unknown “illness” later identified as Pneumonic plague.

Phase two kicked in just one day before the bioterrorism November 14 exercise at Scotland Place on Turnpike Road. The State retrieved doses of antibiotics from the national stockpile for transport within 12 hours to Scotland County.

The bioterrorism exercise involved activating the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) and calling on the support assistance of first responders including law enforcement, the hospital, Red Cross, EMS, DOT, highway patrol and volunteer fire departments.

Essential to conducting the exercise were the numerous volunteers ranging from high school students in a health occupations class to senior citizens.

All were assigned profiles at the point of registration, which identified them by gender, age, primary language, a brief medical history, special needs and current symptoms.

Volunteers registered repeatedly. An 18-year old high school student, for instance, could be assigned that of a 52-year-old diabetic man with a three-year-old grandson in tow. County Manager Scott Sauer’s first assignment was that of an 87-year-old woman who showed no symptoms of any illness. Next time around, he was a 55-year-old woman who recently emigrated to the area from Russia.

The variety of profiles provided was critical to the exercise. It gave first responders and the participating agencies the opportunity to work with a large number of people calmly despite the stressful circumstances, process the general population efficiently and dispense when necessary medication under strict control procedures.

Phase three deals with quarantine and isolation. Preparedness and Response Coordinator Dawn McDonald said phase three would be conducted as a tabletop exercise on how to go about implementing quarantine and isolation.

“It’s important from a State, regional and local perspective to understand what would be required by law if people are quarantined at home. You have to make sure they have adequate provisions.”

Afterward, the EOC had opportunity to review the events of the day. “It went well, and this exercise provided a good opportunity to build a foundation from which to start,” McDonald said. “It gave everyone a chance to work together as a team and to feel confident about the roles they would play if the County was to do this for 36,000 residents.”

McDonald said that the exercise allowed the Health Department and participating agencies to make changes in areas where things did not go as planned. “We’ve got to be efficient to make it happen for real if we had to.”

Public health officials at the State level also will evaluate the County’s performance. Scotland was one of only eight counties in the State invited to take part in the “Triple Play” exercise.

McDonald explained that Scotland County has had a strong relationship with the State public health agency over the past year. She pointed out the the County’s first response plans were written and submitted early and that the County has called upon the State for assistance with recent concerns surrounding outbreaks of West Nile Virus (WNV) and Eastern Equine Encephalitis (EEE).

She praised the volunteers from the responding agencies as well as the citizen volunteers for helping the County become better prepared in the event a real threat would ever occur.



Job Fair booths open for business. Photo by Tim Martin, DSS.

Hundreds attend Job Fair

More than 270 job seekers met with potential employers, schools and support agencies during a DSS-hosted Job Fair.

Half an hour before the doors opened a line formed around the outside of the National Guard Armory, site of the Job Fair.

Initially geared toward Work First clients, DSS opened the event to the entire community to assist individuals seeking employment after the closure of several area industries.

DSS also attracted 12 agencies, including trucking companies, the hospital, the new prison, RCC, UNCP and temporary employment agencies.

Phyllis Clark of Adult Services said turnout was excellent because DSS distributed posters and brochures throughout the community and received ample advance media coverage promoting the event.

Job Fair participants submitted applications, looked into education opportunities and discussed their futures with agencies specializing in career advancement and job search enhancement.

Plan Petty Leave accordingly

As the holidays near, employees who wish to use the balance of their Personal (Petty) Leave are encouraged to request and receive prior approval in advance of the end of the year.

This will help Supervisors schedule accordingly to minimize staffing shortfalls that might occur in departmental service areas.

Notes from the County Manager

Greetings. When it comes to crisis management or confronting an unknown threat, the Health Department, supporting agencies and first responders proved their mettle.

When the a bioterrorism exercise is methodically played out, not everything goes according to plan. That's why it's an exercise. It readies us for the 'what ifs,' builds confidence and better prepares everyone involved to work together if and when the worst happens. A lot goes right, too, and all participants are to be commended.

Our United Way Campaign ended on a successful note. Thank you! Many of those local agencies served by your gifts would join the Health Department in the front line in the event of an outside threat.



Scott Sauer

Time ideal for soil samples

by David Morrison, Agricultural Extension Agent

Now is an ideal time for homeowners and gardeners to take soil samples for grasses, such as centipede, bermuda grass and ryegrass, as well as other landscaping plants.

There are a number of good reasons to sample right now. First of all, it is important to know soon if your grasses need lime. If lime is needed, it should be applied right away. Lime needs some time to change the soil pH before grasses have their growth spurt in the spring.

Second, late summer to early fall is an excellent time for the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services soil testing lab to process soil samples quickly. Gardeners should plan ahead and take advantage of this fact.

During the fall and winter, the lab will be processing tens of thousands of samples for the State's farmers, making processing time noticeably longer.

Third, people love to plan garden projects in the spring, and it is always a good idea to take a soil sample a few months before beginning work on any new landscaping whether it's laying sod, starting a vegetable garden, putting in a flower bed or planting perennials.

Again, the major reason for planning ahead is to give yourself time to apply lime and let it do its work. It is not necessary to take soil samples every year. A good rule of thumb is to sample established areas — lawns, trees, shrubbery and other perennials — once every three or four years.

When you do sample, collect soil only from areas that have not been limed or fertilized for at least eight weeks. However, if an area of your lawn or garden is discolored or growing abnormally, take a soil sample right away. You may want to collect matching plant tissue samples or separate soil samples for nematode assay, a test that identifies microscopic plant parasites.

For help with lawn and garden problems, contact your area NCDA&CS regional agronomist, county Cooperative Extension agent or other agricultural advisor.

Soil sampling supplies, instructions and advice are available from the NCDA&CS Agronomic Division, 4300 Reedy Creek Road, Raleigh, NC 27607-6465; 919-733-2655.

Locally, contact the Cooperative Extension, Scotland County Center at 910-277-2422. Some garden centers and agribusinesses also are able to provide materials.

Soil sampling information is available on the division's website at www.ncagr.com/agronomi.



Boxes available at the local Cooperative Extension office are specifically used for the gathering of soil samples.

**Scotland County Board of Commissioners meet
7 p.m., December 1, Commissioner Chamber
1405 West Boulevard**

Count succumbs to munchie attack



Posing as County Dracula, the Health Department's Judy McMillan samples a sweet eyeball and scoops a chocolatey morsel from the litter pan. Unsavory submissions to the Health Department's Halloween bake off contest, like Kitty Litter Cake, Road Kill and Dirt Pizza with Chocolate Covered Eyeballs, really tasted disgustingly delicious. DSS, Health Department and Cooperative Extension staffers satisfied their alter egos by dressing up for Halloween.

the Birthday list for December

1 Lisa Faulkner (Tax); 2 Peggy Robinson (Health) and Kimberly Cheek (DSS); 4 Lloyd Goins (Jail); 5 David Newton (Sheriff), Prentis Henegan (Parks and Recreation) and Wendy Stanton (DSS); 6 Amy Ratley and Tracie Jacobs (EMS); 7 Steve Odom (Jail); 8 Heather Johnson (DSS); 10 Patrick Davis (EMS); 13 Joe Wampler (Health); 14 Patricia Wells (DSS); 15 Sue McRae (Board of Elections) and Morrison Lockey (EMS); 17 Sylvia Kolb (Jail); 18 Nicole Peek and Maggie Cribb (Health); 20 Dr. William Stroud (Health) and Gail Wright (Administration); 21 Teresa Gorden (DSS); 22 Alice Holden (DSS); 23 Barbara Britt (Jail), Barbara McLean (DSS) and Harold Smith (EMS); 24 Sandra Leonard (DSS), Charles "Scoofer" Jordan (Commissioner), Anne Tindall (Administration) and Esther Taylor (Health); 26 John Alford (Sheriff); 27 Martin Davis (Public Buildings) and Elfreda Locklear (DSS); 29 Cynthia Gibson (Health); 30 James Patterson (Transportation), Betty McMullen (Jail) and Bunny Anderson (Soil and Water Conservation); 31 Mary Ivey (Tax), Mary Armstrong (Health), Angie Lassiter and Marcia Coble (DSS) and Debbie McRae (Transportation).

Post Scripts

The **DSS Silent Auction** and **yard sale** raised more than \$1,600 to benefit the 40 children who will be in Foster Care during the holidays. The good news is gifts and donations continue to come in to DSS almost daily. Those visiting the **Daily Grind** will find the **Angel Tree**. Each angel represents a Foster Child, the child's age, size, gender and Christmas wish are provided. Select one and spread holiday cheer to a Foster Child. ☼ Remember those in need of donated leave. ☼ **Gene Jackson** in Public Buildings still needs 129 hours, the equivalent of 16-plus days, to carry him through to his expected return date. ☼ In Health Department news, condolences to **Deborah Rogers** on the death of her mother-in-law and to Melinda Salley on the death of her mother. Good luck to **Teresa Wilcox** on her new job. ☼ Payroll Technician **Nancy Bostick** and Accountant **Bill McMillan** attended a Budgeting and Finance course November 10 to 14 sponsored by the Institute of Government (IOG) in Chapel Hill. **Bostick** also attended Governmental Accounting and Financial Reporting October 20 to 24. ☼ The Register of Deeds is scheduled to receive a computer system upgrade the first part of December. A Samsung ER-4940 electronic cash register will be available for any department's use. Contact **Jane Callahan** for details. ☼ **Hazel McPhatter** attended a 4-H Youth EFNEP conference November 4 to 6 in Raleigh. McPhatter attended workshops on self defense for the holidays, healthy eating habits for youth and adult, youth obesity and fitness. ☼ Finance Officer **Charles Williams** attended a NC Association of County Commissioners Regional Advisory Committee meeting November 18 in Elizabethtown.

EMStatistics

EMS Report for October: Responded to 351 Medical/Trauma calls.

Treated 46 motor vehicle accident patients.

Provided 11 stand-by medical coverages.

Gave 2 departmental presentations.

911 Report Highlights:

Received 1,479 total calls
334 EMS

279 Sheriff's Department
94 Laurinburg Police Department

19 Fire Department

359 hang-up calls

107 wrong numbers

102 open line calls

617 cellular calls.

Report compiled by Tommy Hatcher.

Introductions & transitions

Welcome employees who joined County departments since September 16: **San Juana "Janie" Ruiz**, Health Department; **Penny Gibson**, Register of Deeds. **Ricky Locklear** transitions from Animal Control Officer to Public Buildings. Moving to Animal Control from the Jail is Officer **Larry Herring**. Congratulations to **Mary Armstrong**, who transitions from Nutritionist to WIC Director at the Health Department.

Mandatory meetings planned

Open enrollment meetings for the Flex Plan are scheduled for December 2 with a 9 to 10:30 morning session in the Annex Conference Room and an afternoon session, 1:30 to 3, in the Commissioner Chamber.

Any changes in the Dental Plan, 401(k) monthly deductions, tax withholding and alterations to optional Colonial Life and Accident Insurance should be made at this time.

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.