

JANUARY 2015



Scotland County, NC

A newsletter for the Scotland County community

Register of Deeds to retire



Register of Deeds Debra Holcomb will retire March 1.

Debra Holcomb will retire as Register of Deeds, effective March 1. "It has been an honor and a privilege to have served these past three terms as Register of Deeds," Holcomb said in making the announcement.

Holcomb's service to Scotland County spans more than 21 years. She served 10 years as a Deputy Clerk in the Scotland County Clerk of Superior Court. In 2004 she was elected to the Office of Register of Deeds. She was reelected in 2008 and again in 2012.

During her tenure as Register of Deeds, Holcomb said, "I am most proud of the ongoing back scanning project of older records."

She explained, "Along with the support of the County Manager and the Board of Commissioners we are now in the process of securing and making older Real Property Indexes and records available on the internet."

"I am very proud of the experienced and well-trained staff in the Register of Deeds Office," Holcomb said. "I leave knowing that the staff will continue the excellent service they have always provided for this County."

"Throughout my years of service, I have had the opportunity to meet and serve people from all walks of life," Holcomb said. "I am

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Priority list gleaned from Parks and Rec Master Plan

The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board identified five priorities that align themselves with the recently approved Master Plan and will be presented to the Board of Commissioners in March.

The priorities also satisfy some of the four goals outlined in the Master Plan.

The Advisory Board will recommend funding an updated Master Plan for the Morgan Recreation Complex at an estimated cost of \$18,000, which would address various improvements to Scotland Yard, Bridge Creek Trail, the athletic fields and overall complex.

Another priority called for investigating the possibility of developing a joint use agreement with the school system for use of its open spaces, ballfields and playgrounds.

Parks and Recreation staff is already polling other school districts on their methods to open ballfields and permit open space and playgrounds for community use.

The Advisory Board also recommended construction of a new playground in a yet-to-be-determined location following an evaluation process.

It was suggested that 'low cost' items such as removal of fences with the exception of backstops be conducted in all areas feasible.

The fifth priority calls for contacting the City of Laurinburg to discuss whether the City would take back ownership of By-Pass Park with the County removing fences. By-Pass Park would still be left open for sports practices.

Unrelated to the priorities but recommended by the Advisory Board was to place signage at Lincoln Park noting that it is free and open for use. It was brought to the board's attention that some in the community think there is a charge to use Lincoln Park.

The Parks and Recreation Adviosry Board will recruit residents from the Laurel Hill area for a subcommittee that will seek input into the future of Laurel Hill Community Center.

Repainting water towers identified as a crucial project

The water towers at Deercroft, Gum Swamp and McEachin Road might soon get repainted.

County Manager Kevin Patterson said the three towers have not been repainted since they were installed, and they should be repainted every 10 to 15 years, although they have had some minor repairs.

"They're in different conditions right now," Patterson said. "The water tower on McEachin Road is the worst case scenario. It needs to be cleaned back down to the bare metal and completely repainted."

According to Patterson, putting the three water towers back into good condition is estimated at more than \$500,000.

Patterson also discussed the possibility of entering into a standard 12-year cycle, which would include repairs, a wash out, which is done every four years, painting the outside in the 10th year and the inside in the 12th year. The 12-year cycle plan would cost more than \$900,000.

Patterson said the topic of water towers would be one of the budgetary items discussed when the Commissioners meet for the upcoming budget process.

Patterson said there are options, which might include individual water tower repair or entering into a 12-year maintenance program where a company is paid an annualized amount to manage the water towers for the County.

County, community help United Way surpass goal

The County's contribution to the United Way Campaign was up this year by nearly \$300. In 2015, County employees pledged \$6,542.92 compared to \$6,265.08 in 2014.

Percentage of total County employee contributors increased from 13 percent in 2014 to 14 percent in 2015. Fair Share contributors also took a slight uptick from 50 percent in 2014 to 51 percent in 2015.

Contribution from County employees helped United Way conclude a successful campaign to raise \$244,000, which will provide funding to 19 nonprofits, including Habitat for Humanity, the Domestic Violence and Rape Crisis Center, the Scotland Community Health Clinic and Scotland Family Counseling Center.

United Way increased its goal by \$35,000 in order to accommodate the needs of two additional agencies — Teen Court and the local Autism Society of North Carolina chapter.

United Way addresses the needs of people who live and work in Scotland County so donations stay local.

Medical records make electronic transition

There's a new electronic records system at the Health Department. Staff trained to use the Cure MD hardware and software.

"Our goal is to improve quality, safety and efficiency, reduce health disparities, engage patients and families, improve care coordination and maintain privacy and security of patient public health information," said Health Director Dave Jenkins.

Jenkins said he expects better clinical outcomes and more efficient outcomes with the system in place as well as increased transparency and efficiency.

The computerized health records networking program purchased by the Health Department for \$103,000 keeps the agency in compliance with the Affordable Care Act, which calls for a transition away from paper medical records to an electronic database.

Wagram fitness center free to employees

County employees can use the Wagram Recreation Center fitness room for free. Normally it is \$4 per day or \$20 per month.

The fitness room features treadmills, elliptical machines, stationary bikes, rowing machine and a variety of weight machines.

This is a benefit to County employees who wish to take advantage of the fitness room. Just bring your County ID to gain access to the equipment.

The Wagram Recreation Center is open Tuesday through Friday from 9 a.m. to 7 p.m. and Saturday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. Contact the Wagram Recreation Center 369-0686 for more information.

Henry McLeod recognized for 50 years of volunteer service

The Board of Commissioners recognized and thanked Henry McLeod for more than 50 years of service to the community.

Chairman Guy McCook presented McLeod with a proclamation thanking him for his five decades of volunteerism and service.

Unbeknownst to McLeod, his four children were in the audience when the proclamation was presented January 5.

The document outlines the work McLeod did to enrich the lives of Scotland County citizens, a part of which reads:

"Henry McLeod engaged in purpose driven pursuits that positively impacted the community: guided the County on appropriate land use as a member and Chairman of the Planning and Zoning Board, helped develop the Scotland County Joint Land Use Plan and the Scotland County Zoning Ordinance, assisted with the building of Scotland Place Senior Center, served for many years as an impartial moderator of the



Chairman Guy McCook, left, presents a proclamation to Henry McLeod.

annual candidate forum, was instrumental through the Parks and Recreation Commission in transitioning the City of Laurinburg department into a comprehensive countywide Parks and Recreation system, helped develop the Lumber River Canoe Trail, was a member of the Scotland County Board of Education in a time when the schools were consolidating, served on the Scotland Memorial Hospital Board of Trustees and was a member of the Richmond Community College Board of Trustees, representing Scotland County, when that entity was first known as Richmond Technical College."

McLeod's son, Mack, said after the presentation, "On behalf of my sisters, brother and our mom, we want to thank you and the Board of Commissioners for recognizing and honoring our dad."

He added, "Dad never wanted the spotlight to be on him; it has always been about the big picture and what was ultimately accomplished.

"We sincerely thank you for allowing the "spotlight" to shine on him. I can assure you he was definitely surprised.

"Please know that Scotland County's act of kindness shown last night will not be forgotten by our family," he said.

McCook said, "Henry served this community for over 50 years and he's been in public service while he's been a private citizen.

"He's constantly been volunteering in positions that have been a service to our community and help improve the lives of the citizens here, and we really appreciate that effort."

Post Scripts

Welcome to the following Scotland County employees who were hired since November 16: **Lori Parks**, Administration; **Robert Sampson**, EMS; **Tina Ellis**, Health; and **Gwendolyn Clark, Kristie Johnson** and **Nicole Grant**, DSS. ✂ Congratulations to **Phyllis Clark**, Health, on the January 6 birth of grandson Tyler Adam Dixon.

Poorest county ranking a matter of statistics

Scotland County was identified as the poorest county in North Carolina, according to 24/7 Wall St., a report that analyzed the poorest counties in each state in the U.S. 24/7 Wall St. derived its data from the Census Bureau's American Community Survey.

The median household income from 2009 to 2013 in Scotland County was \$29,592, while the state median household income was \$46,334. The poverty rate was 32.3 percent and unemployment was at 14.6 percent.

The website had this to say about Scotland County: "A typical household in Scotland County earned an annual income of less than \$30,000 over the five years through 2013, substantially lower than the state and national median household incomes. The county's job market was particularly weak, with an unemployment rate of 14.6 percent, nearly double the national rate in 2013. Additionally, as in most of the poorest counties in each state, Scotland residents had low college attainment rates. While nearly 29 percent of Americans had at least a bachelor's degree during the five years through 2013, just over 14 percent of Scotland residents had such a degree."

"There's not a significant change in the economy even though we are now listed as the poorest County in the State," said County Manager Kevin Patterson. "This is a change in statistics."

At least one county in each state had a median annual household income more than \$7,000 lower than the median income of its state. Virginia and Maryland had counties, for instance, with median incomes more than \$35,000 lower than that of the state. The population of 24 of the poorest counties was predominantly rural. Eight counties had rural populations of 100 percent.

Patterson suggested lifestyles of people who live in the County have not dramatically changed from five years ago. "People in the middle and upper-class have greater movement capacity and move into more urban areas."

Residents in the poorest counties struggled with low educational attainment and limited job opportunities. The unemployment rate of 36 of the poorest counties was above the national rate of 7.4 percent in 2013.

"This reinforces that we have to continue to work on economic development," Patterson said. "There are positive choices individuals have to make to improve their lives, the lives of their family and even the community."

He added, "With education and moving up the economic ladder, it doesn't matter how good your school system is if someone chooses not to take advantage of it."

24/7 Wall St. reviewed five-year estimated median annual household incomes and educational attainment rates from 2009 through 2013 from the American Community Survey in order to identify the poorest counties and educational attainment percentages in each state. Annual unemployment rates are for 2013 and came from the Bureau of Labor Statistics.

Library program promotes reading and a Ringling Bros. circus visit

by Leon Gyles, Library

Kids, are you interested in reading some cool library books? Are you interested in earning a circus ticket at the same time?

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey and Scotland County Memorial Library are hosting some serious fun with Reading with Ringling Bros.!

Want to learn what it takes to soar on the flying trapeze or just what goes into those cream pies that clowns throw? Or maybe learn some fun facts about one of the more than 100 cities the mile-long circus train visits or how to teach your old dog a new trick?

It's easy! Just visit Scotland County Memorial Library at 312 West Church Street and enjoy the magic of reading.

The reading program is easy and fun for kids to participate. The best part is that kids can earn a Ringling Bros. circus ticket by simply doing their library reading!

Children from ages two to 12 simply need to enroll with the library staff who will provide everything to start your library reading.

The library reading program will encourage children not only to read, but also to discover, dream and learn! For more information, visit www.ReadingWithRingling.com.

Ringling Bros. and Barnum & Bailey will be playing February 4 to 8 at PNC Arena in Raleigh and February 26 to March 1 at Cumberland County Crown Coliseum.

For Scotland County Memorial Library patrons, there is a requirement of a parent/guardian ticket purchase upon redemption of the child's card. There must be one paid adult ticket with every three free kids' tickets.

Circus voucher redemption is valid at any performance. See the front and back of your child's redemption card for more information.

Anyone needing further information concerning this library program please contact the library staff at 276-0563 or check us out on the web at www.scotlandcolibrary.com.

As always, the library is committed to serving the community with excellence. Come visit the library soon!



Holcomb announces retirement

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grateful for the good leaders we have in this County that support and recognize the importance of this Office."

Holcomb added, "I would like to thank the citizens of this County from the bottom of my heart for the opportunity that I was given to serve as Scotland County Register of Deeds."

The Register of Deeds is custodian of all real property and vital records in Scotland County.

Although the Register of Deeds is elected, the County Commissioners and Democratic party leaders, in accordance with State law, will conduct an interview process and appoint Holcomb's successor for the remainder of her term ending December 1, 2016.

A job description is posted on the Human Resources page on the Scotland County website at www.scotlandcounty.org.

Those interested in the position must complete a PD-107, which can be downloaded from the Human Resources page.

All applicants must be a resident of Scotland County and submit to a national criminal background check, credit check and drug screening.

the February birthday list

1 Betty Blue Gholston (Commissioner); **2** Carrie Rorie (DSS); **6** Debra Holcomb (Register of Deeds) and Jerome Bostick (Transportation); **8** Al Blades (Parks and Recreation) and Sherika Elliott (DSS); **9** Richard Goforth (Cooperative Extension); **12** Matthew Locklear (EMS); **13** Donald Locklear (EMS) and April Martin (DSS); **16** Patricia Brown (Register of Deeds) and Marisol Locklear (DSS); **18** Michael Webb (EMS); **20** Teresa Jacobs (DSS) and Mike Edge (E911 Center); **23** Donald Flowers (Sheriff); **24** Ann Kurtzman (Administration); **25** Frances Moody (Health); **27** Ellen Locklear (Health).

Our condolences to ...

the family of **Milton Ware**, a retiree of the County Detention Center, who passed away December 29.

“WOW!” physical activity program gets started

by **Kathie Cox, Health**

The "WOW!" (Physical Activity and Nutrition) six-week program began Thursday, January 22, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. at Scotland Place. Registration is \$12.

"WOW!" classes are held Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. They do occasionally go until 6:15 p.m. Exercise starts promptly at 5:15 p.m.

New participants receive a packet of educational materials and information, physical activity and nutrition logs, along with a resistance band to use during classes.

Regular participants will continue receiving the educational handouts for their packets along with a log and a new resistance band as needed.

A variety of exercise videos are utilized from beginner to intermediate. Should you have health issues, you are encouraged to confer with your health care provider first.

All participants who register for the class fill out a registration form along with a liability form if they have not already done so.

New participants will fill out a registration form and sign a liability waiver for the session.

The "WOW!" program (for women only) provides physical activity opportunities in a comfortable setting and motivates participants to become more physically active outside the classes and to practice choosing healthier food options for better health outcomes.

"WOW!" boasts numerous successes — weight loss, muscle strengthening and toning, stress relief, being able to get off certain medications, increased energy, stamina and flexibility and increased water intake to name a few. Physical activity is a positive step toward those successes and fun too. Contact Health Educator Kathie Cox at kcox@scotlandcounty.org with questions.

It's all gone!



It's a clean slate now that the vacant service station at the corner of Church and Main streets was demolished.

The County, City of Laurinburg and the School System each chipped in \$7,500 to have the building demolished. The actual cost when the project was completed was a little over \$30,000 with the City footing the difference. The County waived the landfill tipping fee. Cost of tonnage accepted at the landfill was an estimated \$11,800. All contaminated materials were sent to a site that accepted industrial waste.

The City cleared the site and transported the uncontaminated materials to the County landfill, where tipping fees were waived. The property, which had been in foreclosure, is now owned by the LDRC (Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation). Future plans for the site are unknown.

Baby Boomer population growth will impact County by 2033

By 2033, the Scotland County population of those 60 and older will have increased by 71.5 percent while the number of residents 17 and younger will have decreased by 18 percent.

Total population of the County will have decreased 7.8 percent in 2033 from 36,223 in 2013 to 33,390 in 2033, according to a study by the NC Division of Aging.

According to the NC Data Center, "Of the population 65+, the age group 75 to 84 will grow more rapidly in the next two decades. Beyond 2030, the growth will shift into the ages 85+ as the baby boomers move into the age group."

The number of individuals 60+ in Scotland County in 2013 was 7,973, and it's projected to increase to 9,185. Population of the 65+ age group will increase from 5,476 in 2013 to 7,167 in 2033, while the number of those 85+ will

rise from 671 in 2013 to 838 in 2033.

Meanwhile, the number of youth 0 to 17 will drop from 8,785 in 2013 to 7,206 in 2033. Total Scotland County population will drop from 36,223 in 2013 to 33,390 in 2033.

Meet Social Services Director April M. Snead
5 p.m. to 7 p.m. February 3, at the Emergency Operations Center,
1403 West Boulevard. Refreshments will be served.