

JANUARY 2016

# Scotland County, NC



A newsletter for the Scotland County community

## Line dancing catches on, attracts a crowd of all ages

A health and fitness initiative that began in a small way has seen exponential gains in participation.

Tuesday evening line dancing was spearheaded by the Extension & Community Association (ECA) and Family & Consumer Sciences Agent Sharon English in August 2015.

Word of mouth has since resulted in robust attendance among men and women of all ages.

Here's what English had to say about the growing popularity of Tuesday evening line dancing.

### **Q. When did line dancing begin and why?**

Cooperative Extension is fortunate to have a wonderful group of ECA members who volunteer their time and talents to enhance their club and community. Their focus is on strengthening individuals and families and they support programming efforts with me.

ECA members wanted to address the importance of health and fitness and began to brainstorm program ideas that would interest both male and female adults.

It was during a monthly club meeting that one of the ECA members suggested developing an exercise program utilizing line dancing.

On August 6, 2015 the ECA members, who serve as instructors, piloted the weekly, no-cost exercise program targeting both adult men and women of all ages.

### **Q. Did you have a small group when you started?**

Initially attendance was very small, averaging five per class in August. By October numbers increased to an average of 25 per class.

December attendance recorded an average of 35 and January has seen an increase to 45 participants and counting.

### **Q. How is the growth in attendance being handled?**

Due to the large number of new people attending each week, a 45-minute beginner's group session was added prior to the regular dance class program.

The session allows beginners and those needing a refresher on the dance steps the opportunity to become familiar with a couple of the dances prior to dancing with the larger group.

### **Q. Why are so many people attending?**

In talking with our participants, especially those attending *see line dancing, page 4*



*Line-dancers on a typical Tuesday evening at Scotland Place with lead instructor Sandra Alford, front row, center, in white shirt.*

## 911 Call Center fully staffed during January 22 ice storm

The January 22 ice storm brought some things to light about when to call 911 and when not to call 911. It is an issue that EMS Director Roylin Hammiond said should be addressed.

Before the County consolidated the 911 center, administrative and 911 calls were taken at four different locations for the Sheriff, Laurinburg City Police, EMS and Fire Department. 911 calls are typically considered to be for a life threatening situation, whether it involved medical, fire or law enforcement.

"Those same people who answered 911 calls and dispatched emergency responders to those situations also took non-emergency calls on the administrative lines," Hammond explained.

Hammond said, for example, if someone called to report a stolen tractor, it might take a little longer for law enforcement to respond because of the non-life threatening nature of the call.

"But if a caller reported that someone was holding a gun to their neighbor and getting ready to shoot, that's a whole other situation and it is a life-threatening situation," Hammond said.

"The same person was receiving both those calls and the same person was dispatching those resources."

Since 911 consolidated last year, the administrative lines from the four agencies are rerouted to the 911 Center after 5 p.m. and on weekends and holidays.

A 911 telecommunicator would pick up the line, which would *see telecommunicators, page 4*

## Bring voter ID to the polls

When you go to the polls in 2016, be sure to bring your photo ID. This election you'll be asked to show an acceptable photo ID at the polls.

When you go to the polls, bring your North Carolina driver's license or identification card, passport, military ID, Veterans Affairs card or certain tribal IDs.

If you don't have an ID or you are unable to obtain one, there are still options for voting. For information on exceptions or for help getting a free ID go to [VoterID@nc.gov](mailto:VoterID@nc.gov) or call 866-522-4723.

## The February birthday list

1 Betty Blue Gholston (Commissioner); 4 Melody Jones (E911 Center); 8 Al Blades (Parks and Recreation) and Sherika Elliott (DSS); 12 Matthew Locklear (EMS); 13 Donald Locklear (EMS) and April Martin (DSS); 16 Pat Brown (Register of Deeds); 18 Clyde Smith (Sheriff), Michael Webb (EMS) and Dana Maring (E911 Center); 19 Megan Bristow (E911 Center) and Angela Galloway (Cooperative Extension); 20 Teresa Jacobs (DSS) and Mike Edge (E911 Center); 23 Donald Flowers (Sheriff); 24 Ann Kurtzman (Administration); 25 Frances Moody (Health); 26 Tonya Gay (Sheriff).

## Post Scripts

The following individuals joined Scotland County departments between November 16 and December 15: **Chad Haywood** and **Jason Butler**, Sheriff; **Lanetta Campbell**, DSS; and **Marion Hollingsworth**, part-time with Transportation.

## Our condolences to ...

**James Nichols**, Jail, on the January 2 passing of his wife, Betty Nichols; **Susan Butler**, Administration, on the January 1 passing of her sister-in-law, Wanda Roller; and **Barbie Britt**, Jail, on the January 9 passing of her mother, Mary Britt.

Of the 12,111 workers in Scotland County, 39 percent of them commute from outside the county. Of the 10,212 workers in Hoke County, 39 percent commute from outside the county. Of the 42,734 workers in Robeson County, 20 percent of them commute from outside the county. The U.S. average is 27 percent. **Source: The Washington Post**

## Library sponsors free tax service

Scotland County Memorial Library will sponsor free income tax preparation services through AARP Foundation Tax-Aide, a program that helps low- to moderate-income taxpayers have more discretionary income for everyday essentials, such as food and housing, by assisting with tax services and ensuring they receive applicable tax credits and deductions.

Tax-Aide volunteers, trained and certified by the Internal Revenue Service, will offer help with personal income tax returns from January 28 through April 15 at the library. Strict client confidentiality is maintained.

"Last year more than 390 state and federal returns were processed by Tax-Aide volunteers," said Library Director Leon Gyles.

"When utilizing this service the taxpayer should bring a photo ID, health insurance cards, their and their dependent's Social Security Cards, their checkbook or a copy of a canceled check (not a deposit ticket) if they want direct deposit, a copy of last year's return, and all important tax information they received, such as W-2's, interest, dividends, retirement income and social security statements," Gyles said.

Anyone who would like further information about the free Tax-Aide program or would like to schedule an appointment, please contact the library staff at 910-276-0563 extension 2.



The communications tower and building, pictured below. Photos by Roylin Hammond, EMS.

## Visual inspection of tower requested

A visual inspection of the aging communications tower on West Boulevard is a recommendation made by E911 Center Director Mike Edge.

Built in 1984, the tower was repainted about 15 years ago. "We've not had a visual inspection of the tower to look for any repairs, missing bolts or brackets, or any rust, things like that," Edge explained.

An engineering firm would be able to conduct a visual of the tower and report back on the overall standard of the tower to keep it maintained.

"One thing you don't want to do is just let the tower sit there until it's time to repair it," Edge said. "You want to keep a handle on this because a new tower would cost somewhere around \$300,000."

The tower is of critical importance to the community since it has all the communications for public safety, including Sheriff, Laurinburg Police Department, EMS, fire and rescue, DSS, Health Department, Highway Patrol and local government radios.

Additionally, Edge recommended that the metal building beside the tower that houses all the communications equipment be replaced with a concrete building.

"We're vulnerable because all those agencies have radios out there," Edge said, explaining that an ice event where ice falling from the 350 foot tower could actually penetrate the building and damage the equipment.

Edge said the ideal replacement would be a precast concrete hardened building that is monitored, has ports for cables and a heating and cooling system that keeps it climate-controlled.

"It makes your radio equipment last a lot longer because they are especially built for these kinds of systems."

"It does a lot better job of protecting the equipment that you have," Edge explained.

If something were to happen to the current metal structure, Edge estimated it would cost thousands of dollars to replace the radio equipment, and communications would be out for an unknown period of time before it gets back on line.

"You would not want to be out of communications for say, one week. It's something we want to think about in the forefront before we get caught up in a situation. The building that is there now served its purpose, but it really wasn't built for what we have it used for this time."



## Duke Life Flight, EMS host training to dispatch helicopters



First responders participated in a Landing Zone (LZ) to better prepare them to dispatch helicopters to the scene.

Hosted by EMS and Duke Life Flight, telecommunicators, the fire departments and EMS personnel participated in the training.

“We’re better prepared to safely be able to land the helicopter because there is a process to be able to land one safely,” explained EMS Assistant Director Robert Sampson.

He added, “We are moving toward dispatching helicopters more frequently than ever before based on criteria of patient conditions.”

Sampson explained, “We will start landing helicopters more on the scenes or at designated LZ sites. That was the focal point for having this training.”

## Medicare 101 offered

Seniors 65 and older are invited to attend Medicare 101 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Wednesday, February 10, at Scotland Place.

Guest speaker Gary Knutson of the N.C. Department of Insurance will answer questions and concerns about Medicare as well as provide participants with a basic understanding about Medicare and how it works.

If you would like to attend or would like more information, call Scotland Place at 277-2550.

## Volunteers pick up trash



Partners in Ministry volunteers, pictured above, picked up trash along East Laurinburg streets as part of a special project on Martin Luther King Day.

Meanwhile, St. Andrews University equestrian team members gather litter along Hasty Road. The students adopted Hasty Road near where the university Equestrian Center is located.

Anyone who would like to pick up litter can contact Solid Waste Enforcement Officer J.R. Horne at 610-5262.



## Ice storm paralyzes much of County



Power outages across the County were widespread January 22 when an ice storm accompanied by high winds passed through the area. Tree limbs weighted by ice fell on power lines and across roadways.

While some were without power for a few hours, others did not see power restored for nearly two days. No major injuries were reported. **Photos by Roylin Hammond, EMS**



## Don't let scammers threaten you

Scammers will sometimes try to frighten you by pretending to be a law enforcement officer or a government employee.

In a recent incident, a man claimed to be an inspector with the State Treasurer's Office, likely to try to trick someone into giving up their money or personal information.

The scammer was able to manipulate Caller ID to make it look like he was calling from the Treasurer's Office. He claimed to be inspector “Henry Jordan” and threatened the consumer who answered the call that a warrant would be issued for his wife's arrest if she didn't take the call. Fortunately, the man who answered the phone recognized this as a scam and reported it.

Remember: You can't rely on Caller ID to determine whether or not a call is official. Legitimate law officers and government officials will not call you and threaten to arrest you. If someone calls you and demands money or personal information, hang up and contact the real agency or business at a number you know to be valid.

If you spot a scam, report it to the Attorney General's Consumer Protection Division by calling 1-877-5-NO-SCAM or by filing a complaint online at [ncdoj.gov](http://ncdoj.gov).

## Fit Respond class aims to reduce injuries in the workplace

EMS staff from Scotland and Bladen counties participated in a Fit Respond class paid for and hosted by the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC).



**MacTucker (B-Shift Supervisor) and Nikki Phy, EMT-I, participate in the Fit Respond class.**

ambulance and how to properly transfer patients over from beds to stretchers, all in an effort to help reduce work-related injuries," Sampson added.

"We are busy and trying to do a lot of things within the department so when emergencies do happen we're better prepared and better fit."

## Crowd gets fit with line dancing

*continued from page 1*

class on a regular basis, many say it's just plain fun. Others say they attend for weight loss, improved balance, social interaction, fun exercise option, memory benefits (learning and recalling the dance steps are challenging), stress relief, opportunities to share a fun activity with a spouse and/or other family member or friend, improvement for chronic health issues, improved sleep, increased energy and increase in self-confidence.

Increase in class size has been through word-of-mouth, with members who attend recruiting more people.

The group is diverse. They enjoy interacting with each other, and dance is a universal language.

### **Q. What feedback are you receiving from participants?**

Newcomers say everyone is nice. They feel comfortable joining the group. Seasoned members 'adopt' the newcomers, encourage them and help them learn the steps.

Most members ask if we can offer line dancing more than once a week. The biggest issue we face is limited location options. Currently, line dancing is at Scotland Place.

### **Q. If someone wants to attend, what should they know and what should they wear?**

Anyone interested in attending is asked to register by calling English at 277-2422.

Participants should wear comfortable shoes (non-skid) and layered clothing. The best part, the classes are free.

## Telecommunicators handle ice storm calls and more

*continued from page 1*

be identified as an administrative line. "If the 911 line is ringing, the administrative call will continue to ring until they get through with the 911 call. Telecommunicators can tell the difference between the seven 911 lines and the eight non-emergency administrative lines."

Hammond said, "With the power outage, when people are told to call the 911 Center, they call 911, not the administrative lines. We need to go through an educational and a voicemail process to make sure that the voicemail messages that exist in the four agencies properly direct the caller to do the right thing and not overburden the 911 system."

Hammond said of the more than 1,450 calls that 911 received the day of the ice storm — if they normally have a little over 100 911 calls on a normal day — than most of those calls were because the power was out.

"That's not an emergency. The majority of the calls were for power outages, limbs in the road, or a downed power line, which might be considered an emergency, but not a life-threatening situation." Hammond said 911 should be used for life-threatening medical emergencies and law enforcement issues where somebody could get hurt, somebody breaking the law, an assault, bank robbery, a fire.

Make non-emergency calls to 276-1313 for EMS, 276-3385 for the Sheriff, 276-1811 for the Fire Department and 276-3211 for Laurinburg Police. "Those are the administrative lines for the day-to-day business that occurs which are typically non-life threatening situations."

Hammond conceded that differentiating between life threatening and non-life-threatening is not black and white. "There's a lot of gray area here. But some of the messages left on administrative telephones need to be looked at and thought about to make sure they direct people to the right place."

Hammond said, "On a normal day, we don't get seven 911 calls at the same time. Something very unusual has to happen for us to get seven all in a short period of time. When we have inclement weather like we had Friday, it overwhelms us."

There were seven people in the E911 Call Center answering the seven 911 trunk lines and two lines from each of the four agencies that roll over into the 911 Center. That's 15 different telephone lines coming in that those seven people were able to answer on that day."

Hammond added, "On a normal day the 15 lines are answered by four telecommunicators. But on Friday we made sure we had enough telecommunicators on hand."

Hammond said people perceive emergencies in different ways. "What's an emergency to the general public might not be an emergency to emergency services if someone's life is not in danger."

"Those dispatching did an excellent job on Friday," Hammond said. "They handled that event superbly. They handled a tremendous amount of calls because all people knew to do was call 911. Because we were having that kind of weather everybody just automatically called 911 instead of their local power company."