

JULY 2014



Scotland County, NC

A newsletter for the Scotland County community

Liaison Committee begins school funding process

A committee of Commissioners and School Board members will develop a school funding formula that will satisfy the needs of the schools while taking into account the needs of all Scotland County citizens.

Commissioners Carol McCall, Whit Gibson and Bob Davis and Board of Education members Jamie Sutherland, Pat Gates and B.J. Gibson are tasked with developing a mutually agreed upon funding formula for the schools. Deadline for a funding resolution is March 2015.

Known as the Liaison Committee, appointments were made after the schools took the County to mediation in order to resolve a conflict in funding of local current expense.

According to the FY 2015 funding formula, also known as the "school floor," the County was required to provide the schools with \$892,000 in local current expense.

The \$892,000 would have increased the tax rate six cents from \$1.03 to \$1.09. Additionally, the schools requested \$400,000 in capital funds exclusive of lottery funds, debt service and fines and forfeitures.

Chairman Guy McCook said the County continually funds the schools at an extraordinary level and the \$892,000, an 8.9 percent increase in funding over the previous year, was unreasonable and unsustainable, since that would become the funding base for future budgets.

McCook pointed out that most County departments received less than a two percent increase for FY 2015.

Currently the County ranks 28 out of 100 counties in local funding per pupil, 22 in total dollars expended per pupil and number one based on its ability to pay.

The Commissioners asked the School Board via letter and in informal meetings with School Board members and staff to consider a local current expense appropriation less than the State-mandated \$892,000 but the schools did not respond.

The Commissioners on June 23 approved a FY 2015 budget that provided a \$200,000 increase in local current expense to the schools and \$189,780 in capital, which maintained the tax rate at \$1.03.

As a result, the Schools initiated a mediation process. The nine-hour mediation concluded when both boards agreed to a \$475,000 increase in local current expense to

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Analysis calculates library's value

The more the library is used, the better the investment it is to the community. "We provide the community with a number of goods and services that are considerably cheaper than if you rented or bought them," said Library Director Leon Gyles. "For example, where could you get a program on snakes that wouldn't cost something. Here at the library it's free."

He added, "Where could you go to a play that's free and get a quality program like we had with Bright Star or pick up a movie for five days for free."

"There are a number of services that we provide that are in essence free," Gyles explained. "We know it costs tax money, but for every dollar of the tax money that I spend — and that includes the wages, upkeep of the building and cost of goods and services — the return in every one

dollar invested is \$4 worth of material."

"If you look at it from a business perspective, if I could invest my money in a company that for every dollar I invested I got \$4 plus back, you think I would do it? In a heartbeat I would."

Gyles calculated the value of the library as a community resource by estimating the cost of the services it provides against the actual costs.

For instance, there is a weekly usage of 560 hardback books. If the books were purchased at an average price of \$20 each, that's a weekly cost benefit of \$11,200.

Gyles used the same equation for all library services including those provided by library staff. The library's weekly benefit to the community is \$32,731. Its annual benefit is \$1.7 million. The total annual cost for the library is \$421,000, which includes \$323,000 in County costs, results in a little more than \$4 return to the community for every one dollar the library spent.

Bond for first courthouse framed

A \$100 bond, one of many sold as a way to raise money for the construction of the first Scotland County Courthouse, was discovered by Register of Deeds Deborah Holcomb.

The bond, issued in October 1901 and signed by A.F. Gibson, the first Chairman of the Board of Commissioners, is now framed, archivally protected and on display at the Register of Deeds office. The \$100 bond drew six percent interest in its day, and bond owners could collect the interest earned annually.

Clerk of Court Philip McRae said sale of the bonds — and there were many of them — helped raise \$30,000 for the construction of a "courthouse, jail and home for the aged and infirm."

"Any time you had a project, this was the way a county could raise money," said McRae. "Every county used to have what they called a

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Mad Science was one of a series of free summer events held at the library.

Historical documents preserved School funding process begins

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county home. The jail was attached to the back of the courthouse (located where the A.B. Gibson Center now stands). The county home was a separate building."

The document was deacidified to prevent it from degradation, copied and placed on cd. "Paper today doesn't have acid in it but paper back then did," explained Holcomb.

Additionally, documents from the Gill House regarding the formation of Scotland County were preserved through a donation from the Genealogical Society of which Holcomb is a member. The documents are duplicates of those sent to the State legislature.

McRae, who is a member of the Historic Properties Commission, said, "There were people who would sit hours at a time copying documents. The original is in Raleigh and the transcribed duplicate of the original is the County's copy."

The petition to form Scotland County, a description of the boundaries, a handout explaining the reasons why petitioners wanted to form Scotland County that includes statistical information to further the cause all have been encapsulated for archive purposes.

Holcomb believes there are documents in people's homes which may be historically significant. "We're looking for old documents that might be valuable to the County historically or if anybody knows of historical documents in their home that they would like us to look at, the Genealogical Society would be happy to do that."

the schools and \$300,000 for capital in FY 2015. Local current expense would increase by two percent and capital would remain at \$300,000 in FY 2016.

If an agreement is not reached by March 2015 either or both boards could proceed to the State legislature and attempt to get the basis of school funding changed.

At its first meeting July 23, the Liaison Committee discussed its goals and expectations. McCall suggested that whatever the funding agreement that it be local and not dictated by Raleigh. She also said that the agreement should be reviewed every so often to ensure it meets the needs of the schools and the County.

Gibson said he is confident the Liaison Committee will develop a funding solution that meets the middle ground where the County no longer struggles to fund the needs of all services and the schools no longer are put in a position to defend the funding formula.

The Liaison Committee will meet every third Tuesday at 5 p.m. alternating between the A.B. Gibson Center and 507 West Covington Street.



Philip McRae displays the \$100 bond.



The first courthouse in 1902.

Post Scripts

Welcome to those employees hired since May 16: **Lindsey Villela**, Elections; **Richard Brown**, Health;

Scott Parks, Inspections; **Andre McMillan**, Jail; **Nadine Quick**, DSS; **Kevin Mauldin**, Public Works; **Adam Long**, **Samantha Hetrick** and **Steven Wilburn**, part-time with EMS; and **Gabrielle Gulating** and **Tina Smith**, Splash Pad. ☘

The June 2014 Scotland County newsletter incorrectly stated the County was ranked 83 in **Health Outcomes** in 2013. It was ranked 93. ☘ There are two additional graduates to congratulate.

Avery L. McArthur, son of Evangela McArthur, Health, graduated with honors from Marlboro County High School. Avery will attend the University of South Carolina in the fall where he will major in mechanical engineering. **Mackenzie S. Roberts**, son of Maria Roberts, Health, and grandson of retired DSS Director Joe Knott, graduated with national honors and highest honors from Scotland High School. Mackenzie will attend Campbell University in the fall and plans to major in biology pre-med. He also plans to study military science and will graduate as a Second Lieutenant in the Army. Mackenzie plans are to attend medical school and practice in the Army as a physician. ☘ Signups for **football, cheerleading** and **soccer** at Parks and Recreation start July 28 and run through Saturday, August 2. Fee is \$15. Late signup fee is \$20. All football players must be present at sign up so they can be weighed. If this is a child's first time playing with Parks and Recreation, they must bring their birth certificate.

Our condolences to ...

The family of **Glenn Chatman**, Public Works retiree, who passed away July 3; the family of **J.C. Dunn**, Public Buildings retiree, who passed away July 9; **James McQueen**, DSS, on the July 14 passing of his grandmother, Arline Davis; **Carlotta Rivers**, Health, on the July 16 passing of her grandmother, Bessie Quick; **Shannon Newton**, Parks and Recreation, on the July 18 passing of her stepfather.

the Birthday list for August

1 Willie Hunt (Public Works), Kimberly Foy (Jail) and Jessica Duke and Chena Jackson (DSS); 3 Amanda Taylor (Cooperative Extension); 4 Hazel McPhatter (Cooperative Extension) and Daniel Dockery (Planning and Zoning Board); 5 Michael McQueen (EMS); 8 J.R. "Bobby" Horne (Public Works); 9 Jimmy Covington (Library); 11 James Kelley (Jail); 12 Janet Mudd (DSS); 13 Catherine Bailey (Health) and Shirley Fairley (Jail); 14 Kevin Strickland (EMS) and Joan Alford (DSS); 15 Dell Parker (Elections) and Samantha Ruiz (Administration); 17 Dee Hammond (Board of Equalization and Review); 18 Tina Phillips (DSS); 19 Lorianne Knight (EMS); 20 Stephanie Palmer (DSS) and James Pruitte (Parks and Recreation); 21 Charles Todd (Health Board); 24 Margaret McCaskill (EMS); 28 Tenita Bullard (IT); 29 Mitch Johnson and Marcus Brown (Sheriff) and Henry Leviner (Public Buildings); 30 Robert Wray (Sheriff) and Kimberly McRae (DSS); 31 Katherine Caulder and Carolyn Walls (DSS) and Mark Dembrosky (IT).