

JUNE 2014



# Scotland County, NC

A newsletter for the Scotland County community

## Three-cent fire tax increase will benefit property owners

The fire tax increased from two cents to five cents for property owners in unincorporated areas of the County when the Commissioners approved the 2015 budget June 23.

Up until now, the fire tax remained at two cents for the past 16 years and is still among the lowest in the region even with the increase.

During budget negotiations, the Fire Commission requested the increase as part of a 20-year plan that would sustain the operational obligations of the fire departments, replace aging fire trucks and pumpers and reduce the fire insurance rating for property owners.

The increased tax would also be used to establish an unmanned, heated fire sub-station with a pumper and tanker in the southern part of the County and another sub-station with the same features and equipment in the western part of the County. Both facilities also would help reduce the ISO ratings which, in turn, would reduce the cost of fire insurance in those areas.

Previously the County's general fund was used to purchase the 14 fire trucks the fire departments currently operate, the oldest of which is 18-years-old.

County Manager Kevin Patterson said it would cost \$3.8 million if all the vehicles were purchased today. He added that if the fire tax remained at two cents, it would take 56 years to purchase the 14 vehicles rather than the intended 11 years.

## Community brainstorms on methods to improve health ranking

Health issues and risk factors the County faces were the focus of a health summit where specific information was provided on the County health rankings and the factors that rank it near the bottom at 98 out of 100 counties.

The event helped attendees organize and brainstorm on how various community agencies and individuals could work with one another to address the low rankings and reverse the trend.

While it was agreed that lack of physical activity and poor nutrition, which includes food insecurity, are the top behavioral risks in the County, diabetes, cardiovascular disease, mental health and teen pregnancy were identified as the top health risks.

When the health summit meets again, the four health risks will be whittled down to two and initiatives will be developed to address

## Budget restores longevity, provides 1.7% COLA increase

The Board of Commissioners, following a day-long mediation process with the Board of Education, approved an amended 2015 budget that maintains the tax rate at \$1.03 and provides a 1.7 percent cost of living for County employees, the first in six years.

The budget also restored longevity to 100 percent for qualifying employees.

The original \$38,581,088 budget was amended to \$38,966,318 and provides for \$10,614,325 in school current expense and \$300,000 in school capital.

Mediation resulted in an agreement between the Commis-

sioners and School Board where the schools would receive \$475,000 in local current expense rather than the \$892,000 mandated by the school funding formula, also known as the school floor. The \$892,000 would have meant a six-cent increase on the tax rate from \$1.03 to \$1.09.

More than 150 people attended a June 16 public hearing on the budget where six speakers supported funding the schools, even if it meant increasing the tax rate, while five opposed the funding increase because it would further burden taxpayers and hurt the economy.

The \$892,000 was equivalent to an 8.9 percent increase to the schools. Chairman Guy McCook said that increase would be unsustainable and unrealistic when County departments were expecting less than a two percent increase.



More than 150 people attended the June 16 public hearing on the 2015 budget.

the behavioral and health risk issues.

The state of health of the County was ranked near the bottom statewide, according to a Robert Wood Johnson Foundation study conducted annually. Last year, Scotland County was ranked 83.

Health Director Dave Jenkins said, "This is a great opportunity for community stakeholders to come together and share some ideas and receive input on what we think are the top health priorities and what we would like to try and address as a community."

He added, "Based on those discussions we will meet again in the near future, take the priorities we chose to see how they can be addressed and make improvements."

The June 25 summit was hosted by the Health Department and Scotland Healthcare System.

# Congratulations Class of 2014

## High School

**DSS: Taylor Mackenzie Cheek**, daughter of Kim Cheek, graduated from Marlboro County High School. Taylor will attend Queens University of Charlotte on an athletic scholarship. She will play softball for the Queens Royals and plans to major in nursing. **Teya S. Anderson**, daughter of Nicole Robinson, graduated from Scotland High School. Teya will attend Fayetteville State University. **Breanna Jade Gist**, daughter of Tanya Graves, graduated with honors from Scotland High School. Breanna will attend UNC-Greensboro in the fall. She will double major in speech pathology and Spanish. Breanna plans to become an audiologist and sign language interpreter/teacher.

**EMS: Katelyn Elizabeth Currie**, daughter of Dennis Currie and niece of Susan Butler, Administration, graduated with honors from Scotland High School. Katelyn, who received a scholarship from the North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS, will attend Appalachian State University.

**Health: Matthew McMillan**, grandson of Lynda McMillan and great nephew of Nancy Bostick, Administration, graduated from Scotland High School. **Mikala L. Lowry**, daughter of Brian Lowry, graduated from Purnell Swett High School where she was salutatorian. Mikala is the recipient of the Early Assurance Scholarship to UNC-Pembroke where she will study chemistry and biology. Afterwards she will attend Brody School of Medicine at East Carolina University with aspirations of becoming a medical examiner.

**Register of Deeds: Gregory Ethan "Cody" Conklin**, nephew of Crystal Norton, graduated from Scotland High School. Cody plans on earning Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) in hopes of becoming a detective.

## College/University

**DSS: Justin Michael Walters**, son of Joan Walters, graduated from Southeastern Baptist Theological Seminary in Wake Forest with a major in intercultural studies. Justin is applying with International Mission Board to be a missionary in a foreign country. **Bryan Andersen**, grandson of Katherine Caulder, graduated from Lee Early College in Sanford with an Associate Degree in mechanical engineering.

**Library: Kaci Lauren McIntyre**, niece of Ann Locklear, graduated from Scotland Early College High School/Richmond Community College with an Associate in Arts in ultrasound technology.

## Staff

**Heather Wyke**, Health, graduated from Miller-Motte Technical College with an Associate Degree in applied science for electronic medical records.



**Paramedic Wayne Mace provides an EMS safety presentation to kindergarten-age kids at Scotland County United Way's annual Safety Town camp held at Washington Park School each summer. Photo by Roylin Hammond, EMS.**

# School Jam winners named

The Chamber of Commerce GREENTeam promotes the Recycle, Reuse, Reduce mantra daily. It promotes appreciation for the environment, beautiful trees, grasses, streams and more, all precious commodities frequently taken for granted. When adults fail to show their appreciation for their surroundings, children miss out on Mother Nature's value as well.

One way the GREEN Team tries to educate the community on caring for the environment is through sponsorship of the GREEN School Jam Awards where schools design projects and programs that protect the environment. Three GREEN School Jam Awards schools were recognized and rewarded for their efforts.

Covington Street Elementary School won first place. It was treated to an ice cream party and presented a \$200 cash prize.

Second place Pate-Gardner Elementary School was presented a \$100 cash prize.

South Scotland Elementary School earned third place for a \$50 cash prize.

"Each of these schools and more did great projects and we are grateful to these principals, teachers, counselors and volunteers who try to instill in these young people

the importance of taking care of our community," said Chamber of Commerce President Tonia Stephenson.

According to the Green Guide for Kids website, below are a few ways that a community can help Recycle, Reuse, and Reduce.

**Buy only what you need and use all of what you buy. Avoid buying things that use excessive packaging and buy in bulk.**

**Buy durable things that will last a long time. When things break, see if they can be fixed before throwing them away.**

**Wash and reuse plastic cups, utensils and bags. Recycle by buying products whose packaging can be recycled.**

**Always bring your own bag! If you are just buying a few things just carry them in your hands.**

**Complete the cycle and buy products made from recycled materials. When you buy products made from post-consumer recycled materials you are helping to reduce carbon emissions and saving resources.**

These lessons are what our schools teach our children in a fun way, and it has made a difference in our community.

## Congratulations to our 2014 Green School Jam Winners



1st - Covington Street Elementary



2nd - Pate-Gardner Elementary



3rd - South Scotland Elementary

## Health Department remodels reception

Makeovers at registration and the waiting room at the Health Department made the spaces more customer friendly. The customer check-in, eligibility and registration transitioned from windows with small cut out holes to sliding windows. The area also received new counters and improved lighting.



**Processing Assistant Deborah Rogers stands where the waiting room wall was opened up.**

key as the Health Department moves forward with electronic medical records (EMR) in July."

"Our goal is to go as paperless as possible, and electronic medical records (after training) will help to streamline many of our processes, which will make us much more efficient and provide better customer service," Jenkins explained.



**Sliding windows replaced small holes at the reception area.**

For instance, exam tables were recovered. Holes in walls were patched and floors repaired in all patient exam rooms. Two examination rooms for children were painted.

Jenkins said stickers will be added before the Health Department opens its child health clinics. The wall in the general clinic was removed and painted to allow for more work space and to provide a more customer friendly exam area.

## Relay for Life fundraiser gets underway

The Health Department's Scotland County Relay for Life team is selling purple bows to brighten your office, mailbox, door, car or wherever you would like to place a splash of color. The purple-bow fund-raiser is in honor of victims and survivors of cancer.

If you would like to purchase a bow for a \$5 donation or more, please contact Lynda McMillan at extension 4445. McMillan also has forms for the purchase of luminaries at \$10 each and business sign-size luminaries at \$100 each. Payment may be made by check or money order made out to Relay for Life or to the American Cancer Society.

**It' HOT out there!** Drink plenty of water before starting an outdoor activity. Drink extra water all day. Heat-related illnesses are caused by high temperatures, a loss of fluids and a lack of salt in the body. Some sports drinks can help replenish the salt in your body lost through sweating

## Our condolences to ...

**Morgan Richardson**, Health, on the June 3 passing of her grandmother; **Scott Parks**, Inspections, on the June 2 passing of his father; **Felisa Lockey**, DSS, on the June 5 passing of her father, Willie Grooms; **Stephanie Berry**, DSS, on the recent passing of her grandfather, George McLaurin.

## Post Scripts

Welcome to those employees hired since March 16: **Ann Locklear**, Library; **Dwight Bryant**, Parks and Recreation; **Henry Leviner**, Public Buildings; **Chena Jackson**, DSS; **Matthew Jones**, part-time with EMS; and **Eddie McLaurin** and **Phillip Miles**, seasonal with Public Buildings; **Darrell Jones**, temporary with Transportation. ☘ The May 28 **Blood Drive** collected 14 units of blood, which fell short of the 20-unit goal. Thanks to those who donated. ☘ **Karen Goins**, Inspections, is proud of her son, Grier Goins, who made the Honor's List for spring semester at UNC-Pembroke. ☘ Veteran Services Officer **Mildred Williams** reported that two Scotland High School students, Amanda Kay Lee and Matthew Duan Warren were awarded North Carolina State Scholarships for Children of Veterans. ☘ Congratulations to **Jeannie M. Freeman**, DSS, on the May 24 marriage of her daughter Meagan D. Freeman to Marco Bryant. ☘ Congratulations to **Mike McGirt**, Public Buildings, on the June 24 birth of his granddaughter (and sixth grandchild) Maycee Ava McGirt.

## the Birthday list for July

**2** Karen Jacobs and Joy Hine (DSS); **3** Shelia Jackson (Tax); **4** Anita Jenkins (EMS), Tim Martin (Health) and Adam Holland (DSS); **7** Amy Locklear (Sheriff); **8** Eddie McLaurin (Public Buildings); **9** Amanda Martin (DSS); **10** Denise Locklear (DSS); **11** Heather Moody (DSS); **12** Preston Jackson (Sheriff); **14** Delana Vaughn (EMS) and Darrell Jones (Transportation); **15** Arline Swett (EMS); **19** Billy Bostick and Josephine Thompson (Public Buildings); **20** Jessica Watson (EMS); **21** Brandon Butler (EMS), Walter McLaurin (Transportation) and Jenny Valdaliso (DSS); **22** Shanice Vinson (Splash Pad); **24** Kimberly Spry (Tax) and Jackie Williams (Jail); **25** Mildred Williams (Veteran Services); **26** Tyquane White (Sheriff), Amy Miller (Soil and Water) and Jeffrey Wood (DSS); **28** Vincent Locklear (Public Works) and Atysha Locklear (DSS); **29** Kevin Patterson (Administration) and Miriam Bounds (Health); **31** Sharon Brandon (Register of Deeds) and Judy McMillan (Health).

## First-ever community event at the library attracts crowd



**There were lots of gears and pulleys for kids to experiment with.**

Hundreds of children and their families and dozens of exhibitors were on hand for the first-ever science and community event at Scotland County Memorial Library.

The day was sweltering and humid but few seemed to mind as they participated in science experiments, got their faces painted and created bead bracelets and learned a lot while all the while having fun.

The Humane Society was there with two dogs that literally lapped up all the attention they received from dog lovers and the those curious about dog behavior. It gave the Humane Society opportunity

to promote the spay/neuter program and talk about pet adoptions.

There was an ongoing search for the queen bee in her hive at the Beekeeper's Association table and plenty of watermelon to go around at J.P. Locklear's produce table.

There was no need for a playground when there were tractors, a firetruck and the Bookmobile to explore.



**Science experiments were a big hit.**

Bookmobile to explore.

Whirlwind planning for the event began just a few weeks earlier when Youth Services Director Denise Dunn was inspired to kick off the summer reading program Fizz Boom Read! in a big way.

"This got kids out of the house to explore, investigate and be curious. There were pulleys, gears and levers so kids could see how things work and think on how pieces come together."

The event was most definitely hands-on and interactive.

There were exhibits with electricity and light bulbs. The Sheriff's Department was there so kids could make their own ID cards, and Badcock Furniture made its parking lot available for the overflow of vehicles.



**The City of Laurinburg brought a firetruck.**



**There was a very large tractor.**



**A selection of free fruit, particularly watermelon, was most enjoyable.**

## Officials request full restoration of school capital lottery funds

Chairman Guy McCook, Vice Chair Carol McCall and Commissioner John Alford made the annual pilgrimage to Raleigh to meet personally with area legislators and advocate on issues of concern to the County.

The trip was part of County Assembly Day when county elected officials and staff are encouraged to travel to the State capital to speak as one voice with representatives.

Of particular concern is the reduction in lottery funds for school capital projects, and it remains the number one legislative priority for counties.

Counties have seen the distribution share drop from the original 40 percent to 22 percent over the past several years.

Representatives Ken Goodman and Garland Pierce commiserated with the Commissioners over lottery funding but conceded little could be done at this point.

"School systems have gone into debt based on the promise by the State they would get 40 percent of the lottery money for construction," Goodman said.



**Commissioners visited State elected officials in Raleigh during the May 28 County Assembly Day. Pictured, left to right, are Representative Garland Pierce, Chairman Guy McCook, Representative Ken Goodman, Commissioner John Alford and Vice Chair Carol McCall.**

Locally, Scotland County and the schools depended on the 40 percent distribution to pay a 10-year loan at \$300,000 annually for the Wagram Primary School expansion and other capital needs. Lottery funding locally was reduced from \$810,000 to \$424,000.