

Scotland County, NC



A newsletter for the Scotland County community

Bryan Graham named Parks and Recreation Director

Bryan Graham will assume the responsibilities of Parks and Recreation Director effective July 6. Graham comes to Scotland County from the Town of Pembroke, where he served as Director of Parks and Recreation since October 2008.

During his tenure in Pembroke, Graham increased program participation by 409 percent. He oversaw a 32-acre outdoor recreational complex and managed two full-time employees, eight part-time employees and dozens of sport-specific volunteers. Graham also served as Chairman of the Pembroke Tourism Board from 2009 to 2013.

As Parks and Recreation Director for the Town of Pembroke he planned, directed, managed and oversaw activities and operations for the department including programming, park beautification and transportation activities with other town departments and outside agencies.

Graham established and owned the first indoor athletic facility in Robeson County from 2009 to 2013. The facility houses batting cages and is the site for various athletic events. While at the facility, Graham educated staff on philosophies of teaching baseball and softball and trained children on baseball and softball skill sets.

In 2006, Graham earned a Bachelor's of Science in Exercise and Sports Science from UNC-Pembroke. In 2017 he expects to earn his Masters in Public Administration from Capella University.

Graham replaces Shannon Newton who retired and now serves as Horticulture Agent for Cooperative Extension in Scotland and Hoke counties. Athletic Supervisor Al Blades has served as Interim Parks and Recreation Director since April.

Employees to receive one percent COLA

The FY 2017 budget approved June 27 by the Board of Commissioners provides a one percent COLA for all County employees effective with the pay period that begins July 16.

Additionally, about one-third of employees will receive step increases based on years of service as part of a 3/7 progression plan.

Employees in position three years or more will receive a 2.5 percent salary increase and one step while those in place seven years or more will receive a five percent increase and two steps not to exceed step nine.

The progression plan is geared toward employees on or below a step nine who have no disciplinary action or are not in a current disciplinary action state.

The budget totals \$40,373,012. The tax rate will be reduced from \$1.03 to \$1.02 per \$100 valuation.

As part of the joint agreement for funding the Scotland County schools, the schools will receive \$10,583,013, a 2.25 percent decrease from the previous year, and \$300,000 in capital.

The second phase of a planned water rates increase of 15 percent was approved. It will raise the average monthly water bill to \$33 instead of \$28. Water rates were increased 15 percent this past year.

The increase became necessary when the City of Laurinburg increased its water rates by 30 percent. The County purchases its water from the City.

The increase also will provide the revenue necessary to repaint the three County water towers and to establish a contract for the long-term water districts maintenance.

Five additional positions requested by the Sheriff (2), DSS (2), Administration (1) and Health (2) were approved in the FY 2017 budget.

The only significant capital projects included in the budget are for repair of the communications tower and replacement of communications equipment.

DSS will add a scanning project to start converting paper records to electronic records.

The Sheriff will purchase seven vehicles instead of five.

New courthouse signs point the way

Old, unreadable signs at the courthouse were replaced this month by Public Buildings and Grounds staff. Frequent visitors to the courthouse might have taken the signs for granted but it was confusing for newcomers.

Clerk of Court Philip McRae asked that the signs be replaced. Public Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Mike McGirt said there was enough money in his budget at the end of the fiscal year to honor the request. The new signs cost \$4,000.



Safety tips for swimmers

Whether it's an uneven lake bottom or drop-off, rip current or unexpected hazardous weather, swimmers in natural water settings need to be aware of the dangers and take special precautions to stay safe. Here are a few safety tips:

Learn to swim. Formal swimming lessons can protect young children from drowning. However, even when children have had formal swimming lessons, constant, careful supervision is necessary when children are in or around the water.

Watch swimmers in or around the water. Designate a responsible adult who can swim and knows CPR to watch swimmers in or around water. The supervisor should not be involved in any other distracting activity (such as reading or talking on the phone) while watching children.

Learn CPR. In the time it might take for lifeguards or paramedics to arrive, your CPR skills could make a difference in someone's life.

Use Buddy Systems and Lifeguards. Regardless of your age, always swim with a buddy and select swimming sites that have lifeguards whenever possible.

Know the terrain. Avoid drop-offs and hidden obstacles in natural water sites. Enter water feet first.

Avoid rip currents. Watch for dangerous waves and water that is discolored and choppy, foamy or filled with debris and moving in a channel away from shore. If you are caught in a rip current, swim parallel to shore; once free of the current, swim toward shore.

Use life jackets. Do not use air-filled or foam toys, such as water wings, noodles or innertubes in place of life jackets. These toys are not designed to keep swimmers safe.

Know the weather. Strong winds and thunderstorms with lightning strikes are dangerous. **Source:** [CDC.gov](http://www.cdc.gov).

Snake wrangling added to Mike McGirt's job duties

Excitement reigned during a recent meeting at 507 West Covington Street where a three-foot garden snake



lounge in the shade outside the conference room door.

Since it was determined rather quickly that snake wrangling falls under the purview of public buildings and grounds, Supervisor

Mike McGirt was called upon to "handle" the situation, which he did, using a wooden stake as a handy prod.

Following some adept moves and patient coaxing, McGirt was able to escort the snake across the street to the shade and comfort of bushes at the vacant Morgan Center.

Congratulations Class of 2016

Congratulations to the following 2016 graduates.

High School:

Administration: **Leia House**, niece of Samantha Ruiz, graduated from Scotland High School. Leia will attend Sandhills Community College and then East Carolina University to pursue a major in Marketing and a minor in Dance; **Jessalyn Butler**, granddaughter of Susan Butler, graduated from Scotland High School. Jessalynn will take the Certified Nursing Assistant class this summer and will begin Richmond Community College in the fall in the LPN program.

Cooperative Extension: **Taleya Laws**, daughter of Chassidy Laws, graduated from Scotland High School. Taleya will attend William Peace University in Raleigh in the fall.

DSS: **Chase Hine**, son of Joy Hine, graduated from Scotland High School. Chase will attend UNC-Chapel Hill. He plans to become a surgeon; **Travion R. Smith**, nephew of Latisha Manning, graduated *summa cum laude* from South Robeson High School. Travion plans to attend UNC-Pembroke in the fall to major in Biology.

Elections: **Melinda Sue Campbell-Tyler**, daughter of Melanie Campbell-Tyler, graduated from Scotland High School. Melinda will attend UNC-Pembroke.

Health: **Caeleb Smith**, grandson of Jennifer Taylor and Sheriff's retiree Ricky Taylor, graduated from Western Guilford High School, Greensboro. Caeleb will major in Business Marketing at Greensboro College where he signed on to play baseball.

Library: **Roger Joe McIntyre III (Trey)**, nephew of Ann Locklear, graduated from Scotland High School.

High School/Early College (SEARCH):

Tax: **Maggie Elizabeth Pate**, daughter of Marty Pate, graduated from Scotland High School/Richmond Community College with an Associate of Arts degree. Maggie plans to attend UNC-Pembroke to pursue a Bachelors in Sports Science.

College/University

DSS: **Clinton McRae**, son of Kimberly McRae, graduated from UNC-Charlotte with a B.S. in Business Economics and a minor in American Studies; **Kristen Elizabeth English**, daughter of Margaret "Monnie" English, graduated from Francis Marion University, Florence, SC, with a Bachelor of Business Administration in Human Resource Management. Kristen is currently working a paid internship at SoPak Co. Incorporated as a Human Resource Assistant. In the fall, she will begin Master's Program in Marketing; **Telisa Tamisha Taylor**, daughter of Donald Taylor, graduated from Robeson Community College with an Associate's Degree in Early Childhood Development. Telisa plans to attain a four-year degree in that field from UNC-Pembroke. Telisa is currently employed with Christina's Christian Day Care in Lumberton and hopes to gain employment with the Public School System in Robeson County; **Levern Hamer**, nephew of Willette Jones, graduated *magna cum laude* from Howard University in Washington, D.C., with a Bachelor's in Theatre Arts Administration; **Kellie Carthens**, niece of Willette Jones, graduated from Sandhills Community College in Southern Pines with an Associate's in Human Services. Kellie plans to attend UNC-Charlotte in the fall.

Health: **TJ Smith**, grandson of Jennifer Taylor and Sheriff's retiree Ricky Taylor, graduated with honors from Wake Forest University with a B.A. in Political Science with minors in Biology and Spanish. TJ will work at Wake Forest University as a Provost Fellow. He plans to attend law school or a graduate program in order to obtain a Ph.D. **Dr. Laquanda Leaven**, daughter of Frances Moody, earned a Master's in Christian Studies from Duke University. Dr. Leaven will continue teaching at North Carolina A & T State University and plans to enroll this fall in a Master's program at North Carolina State University.

News of Note

McAllister receives Governor's Volunteer Award



Bud McAllister

Congratulations to Bud McAllister in Inspections who received the Governor's Volunteer Award at the June 3 Laurinburg After 5 event. He is a "superhero" to the Scotland County Humane Society, where he serves as a board member. According to SCHS, "Bud is a great volunteer. He is always ready to help us and often anticipates our needs. He fosters our hard-to-place animals. Daily, while on his lunch from a full-time job, he walks a shelter dog. He helps at adoption events. He does maintenance and landscaping for the shelter. The list is endless. We are thrilled Bud's commitment to the homeless animals of Scotland County is recognized. He's the best."

LEPC tours Campbell's Soup

The Scotland County Local Emergency Planning Committee (LEPC) toured Campbell's Soup in Maxton. A group of 25 members toured the facility lead by Jamie Collins, Environmental and Safety Director at Campbell's Soup. Collins gave the group a brief history of Campbell's Soup operation before the tour of the plant.

Laurel Hill gets new fire truck

The Laurel Hill Fire Department took delivery of a 2016 model E-One Fire Engine. The truck, approved for purchase by the Board of Commissioners and funded through the Scotland County Fire Tax, cost just over \$300,000. The fire truck should be in service for the next 25 to 30 years. It is equipped with a 1,750 gallon per minute pump and carries 1,000 gallons of water.



Laurel Hill's new fire truck.

EMS staff take burn care class

EMS Staff received updated training last month on Pre-Hospital Burn Patient Care from Jim Gusler, a medic with the North Carolina Burn Center in Chapel Hill. The three-hour presentation was informative and provided techniques to enhance the care and recovery a patient would receive in the UNC Burn Center. The class was held in the large conference room of the Emergency Operations Center (EOC). EMS staff must have at least 24 hours of continuing education annually. To meet that requirement, Training Officer Robert Sampson schedules a training class monthly, usually the last working week day of each month.

Gryphon Group holds active shooter training

Paramedics and Sheriff's Department deputies participated in hands-on Response to Active Shooter training. The training was provided by the Gryphon Group located at the Laurinburg/Maxton Airport. The training consisted of classroom exposure to rapid response, treatment and evacuation of patients in a hostile environment while securing that same environment followed by real time exercise scenarios with simulated active shooters and multiple patient injuries.



Gryphon Group hosts active shooter training.

Entry teams were exposed to unexpected situations and had to respond with the training they received.

Our condolences to ...

Wanda Hassler, Health, on the May 30 passing of her sister, Carol Hart Jones; **Annie Blue**, DSS, on the June 27 passing of her father, George Ellerbee

Post Scripts

The following individuals joined Scotland County departments between April 16 and May 15: **Carlton Sallie**, **Jessica Friede** and **Lorelei Taylor**, Sheriff; **Calacia Douglas**, **Kelli Ashe**, **Richard Ramsey** and **Samira McLaurin**, DSS; **Walter Ikner**, part-time in Transportation and **Chassidy Laws**, temporary in Cooperative Extension. ⌘ Veteran Services reports that the NC Division of Veterans Affairs Scholarship was awarded to Timon Jacoby McMillan. The competitive four-year scholarship is awarded each year to 100 qualifying children of deceased, disabled, combat, or POW/MIA veterans and covers free tuition, room and board allowance and exemption from certain mandatory fees. Timon plans to attend UNC-Pembroke. ⌘ Amari

Malloy, granddaughter of **Annie Malloy**, Health, is on the A honor roll, and earned Highest Math Achievement of the class at Hickory Ridge Middle School, Charlotte.

the July birthday list

2 Joy Hine (DSS); **3** Shelia Jackson (Tax); **4** Anita Jenkins (EMS), Tim Martin (Health) and Adam Holland (DSS); **7** Amy Locklear (Sheriff) and Melanie Campbell-Tyler (Elections); **8** Margaret English (DSS); **10** Denise Locklear (DSS); **11** Heather Moody (DSS) and Malinda Hall (Transportation); **13** Bradley Hatcher (Public Buildings); **14** Delana Vaughn (EMS); **15** Arline Bostick (EMS) and Annie Blue (DSS); **19** Christopher Goodwin (EMS), Billy Bostick and Josephine Thompson (Public Buildings); **21** Jenny Valdaliso (DSS), Brandon Butler (EMS) and Walter McLaurin (Transportation); **22** Shanice Vinson (Splash Pad) and Samira McLaurin (DSS); **23** Darren Scott (DSS); **24** Jackie Williams (Jail) and Kimberly Spry (Tax); **25** Mildred Williams (Veteran Services) and John Storey (EMS); **26** Amy Miller (Soil and Water), Jeffrey Wood (DSS) and Tina Smith (Splash Pad); **27** Rudolph Baldwin (Transportation), and Richard Ramsey and Kelli Ashe (DSS); **28** Vincent Locklear (Public Works) and Atysa Locklear (DSS); **29** Kevin Patterson (Administration); **31** Sharon Brandon (Register of Deeds).

Revenue from third-party billing helps EMS purchase new equipment

When Scotland County EMS pulled up in front of EMS Management & Consultants (EMS|MC) in an ambulance, no one was alarmed. Sirens weren't sounding, lights weren't flashing and no one was injured.

EMS was in Winston-Salem to showcase the new vehicle it purchased in October 2015 as the result of a successful partnership with EMS|MC, the third-party billing company for Scotland County EMS.

Since 2013, EMS|MC has helped Scotland County EMS increase its revenue by reviewing all of its ambulance transports, coding them and billing the primary payer — usually Medicare, Medicaid or an insurance carrier. In the case where a patient does not have insurance, the patient receives the full bill.

Assistant EMS Director Robert Sampson recalled what it was like before the partnership with EMS|MC began. "We went from having limited access to guidance on billing to having our billing company help us understand more about what we needed to document to have a clear picture of what happened on a call."

Sampson explained, "They provide knowledge and expertise that truly helps us, including our medics who have greatly improved their documentation skills."

Administrative Assistant Debbie Sandlin said it was difficult to keep up with the industry changes. "Now, we feel comfortable that the EMS|MC billing team is going to be more aware of the frequent coding updates when processing claims. We put our trust in the billers."

That accuracy and knowledge of industry rules and regulations steadily led to an increase in revenue recovered for Scotland County EMS. With an improved cash flow, Sampson is able to update the life-saving equipment for his crews.

"With the support of the County, we've been able to improve our technology which has enhanced patient care," said Sampson. "Our Lifepack 15 defibrillators have Wi-Fi capabilities. We were able to purchase mobile hotspots for our ambulances that allow the defibrillators to transmit our 12 leads straight to a local hospital as well as to our PCI center. That's improved efficiency."

Scotland County EMS runs approximately 5,600 to 5,800 calls annually. Year after year of life-saving transports began to take a toll on the condition of the ambulances.

In October 2015, EMS purchased a new ambulance replacing one that had been on the road for nearly 20 years. But more important than requiring less maintenance or downtime, the new vehicle provides reliable service to citizens. "It has improved our ability to provide better and more efficient patient care," said Sampson.

Sampson hopes to continue improving the equipment that will give medics the best tools to effectively do their jobs. He added that new ambulances and equipment and EMS revenue are not possible without the support of the County Commissioners and the EMS crews. "EMS does a phenomenal job day in and day out. They put in a lot of time and hours. This truly starts with them."



Assistant EMS Director Robert Sampson shows off the new ambulance to EMS|MC staff in Winston-Salem.

Safety in the workplace requires a team effort

DSS is considering rolling out a crisis intervention class for its employees.

The agency's safety team, made up of a representative from each unit, received tips from Captain Mitch Johnson of the Sheriff's Department on being aware of your surroundings, looking for hints when a situation might escalate and working as a team.

Johnson put together a simple pilot training. "We need to be able to determine when threats actually can become high energy or instances where you need assistance."

"Crisis management is when things go wrong. Even if you are great at what you do, a problem happens when you have individuals who become disruptive or are not in a place where you can manage them. We've got to be in a mindset to see what's happening and not allow something to persist," he explained.

Johnson said it's important not to exacerbate a behavior that may already be present. "Play an active role to defuse it."

Johnson said be empathetic and put yourself in that person's shoes, especially when they are agitated.

"You just need to be supportive. When a person becomes aggressive or defensive, move to the stage where we give them a directive."

"Notice where the problem comes and know what to do in order to get assistance. It's important to gain control without escalating a situation," Johnson said.

"We realize that because of the number of individuals DSS serves, they also need our support. This is a supportive effort allowing Sheriff Ralph Kersey to come in and provide information and tactics on how to keep agency staff safe."

Even though most DSS personnel work behind locked doors they should be aware of what is going on in the building.

"Our potential for preventing danger comes from defusing situations from its earliest point. That's when you come in contact with the individual. You've got to be the eyes and ears. You've got to be aware of your surroundings at all times. You've got to think about not just yourself but the safety of the rest of the facility."

Johnson said if you don't think anything can happen to you, it can, even if it starts somewhere else. "Crisis situations can travel and move directly to where you are."

He said be mindful of the outside of the building and check vehicles and people in the parking lot.

"Your commitment is to operate as a team and to help those around you. Be accountable. Familiarize yourself with what your co-workers do and make sure they know what you do. Familiarize yourselves with the work habits of your co-workers," Johnson advised.