

OCTOBER 2014



# Scotland County, NC

A newsletter for the Scotland County community

## Parks and Recreation Master Plan awaits input from Commissioners

The 10-year Master Plan was approved by the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board during a public input session in which one person made comment.

Scotland Community Health Clinic Director Andy Kurtzman supported the greenway concept in the plan. "A greenway would get more people to exercise and encourage physical activity. People won't be encouraged to exercise or get healthy if it's not fun or not convenient."

Kurtzman suggested a possible greenway route that would connect parks or connect to the Morgan Recreation Complex and the downtown area.

Parks and Recreation Advisory Board member Jan Schmidt said the plan should be presented widely through the community for comment from as many residents as possible before adoption.

Guy McCook, Board of Commissioners Chairman and Advisory Board member said that even with approval by the Commissioners, the plan would only move forward as funding is available. "Funding is a long-term process and a multi-year process."

McCook said, "It's really to get this before the Commissioners, talk about what the goals are and how it will improve the life of citizens in the community and ask the Commissioners to support it."

The Master Plan will be introduced to the Commissioners at the November 3 regular meeting with follow-up and request for approval at a future meeting.

"It's a lot of information to digest and I don't expect any action on it the first time it is received," said County Manager Kevin Patterson.

The 88-page Master Plan is a guide to future investment and allocation of resources for parks and recreation facilities. The plan includes an emphasis on public health as one of the most effective ways to improve health outcomes through increased physical activity.

It outlines four main goals.

Goal 1: Reduce the number and acreage of parks maintained by the Scotland County Parks and Recreation System. This may be accomplished through a reduction in maintained acreage or by repurposing specific parks.

Goal 2: Provide a connected network of multi-use paths (greenways) for bicyclists and pedestrians. Such a network should traverse much of the county, connect parks, and provide an alternative (active) transportation option for residents.

[see Master Plan page 3](#)

## Obesity health initiative takes center stage

A core group of volunteers from the Health Summit will study ways to promote community wide physical activity in order to reduce obesity and cardiovascular disease.

The larger Health Summit group a few months earlier identified obesity and cardiovascular disease as priority health concerns for County residents.

During the brainstorming session with the smaller core group, facilitated by Center for Health North Carolina Director Joanne Rinker and hosted by the Health Department, County assets, programs, interventions and resources already being employed by various agencies were listed.

Scotland Health Care System, for instance, conducts screenings for cholesterol, glucose, height, weight and body fat throughout the year. Scotland Community Health Clinic hosts chronic disease self-management classes. All Parks and Recreation programs promote a healthy lifestyle. Growing Change works with adjudicated youth to address hunger and hope. Numerous other services that focus on nutrition and health also were listed.

Despite availability of these services, the group agreed that funding and follow-up are challenges.

[see Initiatives page 2](#)

## School funding discussed

Commissioners and Board of Education members received information on State and local funding of schools from UNC School of Government Professor Kara Millonzi.

A trend where states are decreasing funding of schools continues, Millonzi said, and that means counties are in a position to make up the difference. Millonzi said the trend is not expected to reverse.

She also said Scotland County is not unique in its attempt to find a solution to fairly fund the schools even though a State mandated funding formula is in place.

Although the law determines how much money the County funds the schools each year, based on the funding formula, Commissioners have some say in where that money is spent.

Millonzi said counties need fund balance for operational and payroll purposes until the end of the year, when property tax collections kick in. She said schools

[see Funding, page 3](#)



*The Parks and Recreation Advisory Board developed a list of community assets during a brainstorming session in the process to develop a master plan.*

## Initiatives address obesity, cardiovascular disease

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Rinker advised the group to figure out how to support an increased participation in these existing community events.

She suggested the group might want to focus on a new initiative. "Success will be to start small," she said. Rinker suggested other organizations not yet included in the meeting, specifically those who focus on health and wellness, should be invited to participate.

Health Director David Jenkins said, "Our core meeting went really well. I was glad to see so many community members come together to share what we offer relating to improving health in Scotland County."

He added, "I was impressed by the many initiatives already taking place, and if we can find a way to better support each other in our efforts, that will enhance our overall impact to the community."

"I was also glad to see that the group is closing in on a specific area to focus on relating to obesity and cardiovascular disease," he said.

"Without a specific focus, this task would be daunting," Jenkins explained. "Obesity and cardiovascular disease are related to so many health problems such as diabetes, high blood pressure, heart disease and stroke. Educating people on making good personal choices relating to diet and exercise will be key."

He added, "As a group we hope to achieve improved health outcomes relating to obesity and cardiovascular disease and improving the overall health of our community."

Health Educator Kathie Cox added, "The meeting provided an opportunity for those at the table to feel a part of this new and ongoing process and to learn what local agencies are doing now with respect to the health issues determined at the initial Health Summit."

## 155 kids have a field day



**George Norfleet discussed the importance of bats and bat activity in the environment.**

Spring Hill Middle School sixth grade students attended the 27th Annual Environmental Field Day at Lumber River State Park October 16.

The event, sponsored by Scotland Soil and Water Conservation District, entertained and educated 155 kids, who enjoyed a day outdoors gathering information on natural resources and how to protect them for future generations.

Environmental stations presented instruction on air quality, water quality, forestry, wildlife animals, bats, woodpeckers and recycling.



**U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson, center, meets with Interim DSS Director James Clark and Foster Care Supervisor April Snead at Cynthia's Place.**

## Rep. Hudson visits foster care unit

U.S. Representative Richard Hudson visited with the County foster care unit in order to learn more about foster care and how federal resources might be utilized to support and enhance program activities.

"There are so many issues that I wasn't aware of that you deal with taking care of this population," Hudson said. "I'm here to learn from you and learn what the federal government is doing that is positive and what can it do better," he explained.

Hudson's visit to foster care units in Scotland, Robeson and Richmond counties was prompted by Kashawn Little, a former foster child who spent time job shadowing Hudson in Washington, D.C.

"Kashawn really raised my awareness about foster care and challenged me to do more," Hudson said.

Chairman Guy McCook, who also is a member of the DSS Board, praised the efforts of the staff on its ability to reduce the number of children in foster care from 80 to 30. "I

compliment staff when it comes to reducing the number of kids from 80 to the low 30s. It wasn't a result of a change in the need. It came about as a result of staff realizing that kids get better care, the care that they deserve, if they are in a long-term environment somewhere. They've done an outstanding job."

During the hour-long visit, Foster Care Supervisor April Snead and Interim DSS Director James Clark asked Hudson to do what he could to restore SSBG funding, which is directed toward foster care as well as adult protective services.

They also discussed the need for specialized mental health services, challenges presented by Medicaid restrictions, making do with limited resources and the need for more investigators.

Little said, "On a federal level most people don't know what's going on. In order to do that, they've got to learn about the issues."

Little shared hope for the youth who are in foster care. "Each person should own their story. Don't let their story own them. They should go on, go to school, get an education, start their career and make a good living."

Hudson thanked the foster care unit for all it does. He pledged help and support. "Let's make this the opening of a dialogue to keep me informed of the issues and things I can do to help make your lives easier so we can better serve the kids and take care of these families."

## Health Department provides wellness outreach at festivals



**Felicia Faison, left, and Ellen Locklear man the Health Department outreach table.**

The Health Department provided free blood pressure checks and distributed wellness-related materials at Kuumba and John Blue Cotton festivals. 124 blood pressure checks were done and approximately 165 people visited the booths during the course of both festivals.

They received information on diabetes, heart disease and vitamins. 15 women of child bearing age received vitamins through the March of Dimes Folic Acid Program.

## Legislative goals submitted

The Commissioners intend to pursue two legislative goals with the State that will generate revenue locally.

"The first one is payment in lieu of taxes for game land, property the State purchases for their use or for preservation purposes," said County Manager Kevin Patterson.

Currently 20 percent of the County is owned by the State primarily in game lands.

"We are asking for any new lands that are purchased and taken off the tax books that the State would actually pay an amount comparable to the property taxes for a period of years to offset the revenue that is lost," Patterson explained.

"The other legislative goal is expanding options for sales taxes," said Patterson.

The legislature while in short session looked at the possibility of giving all counties the ability to go from a two-cent local sales tax up to a 2.5 cent local sales tax.

Although the bill stalled in Senate, the additional sales tax would have been permitted for education, transportation as well as general operations pending a successful local referendum.

Patterson said most other legislative goals are continuations from previous years. "The big one is of course lottery where counties are supposed to get 40 percent of the net of lottery with proceeds to go back to capital and debt service for public school systems."

Now counties receive 22 percent of net lottery, which was a \$400,000 reduction in funds to Scotland County.

Patterson said, "The State will tell you those funds are going back into education but they are offsetting the cuts to the general fund dollars for education."

Bottom line, Patterson said, "We're going to be looking for revenue preservation and avoiding mandated shifts from the State or federal governments down to the counties."

## Trust, building relationships a helpful school funding tool

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do not have to meet a minimum threshold with fund balance and do not have the same dire need for fund balance compared to counties. Schools generally use fund balance when unexpected events occur that would need immediate remedy.

Chairman Guy McCook said, "This helped clarify what the County role is and what the School Board role is. Commissioners take the responsibility very seriously of adequately funding the school system."

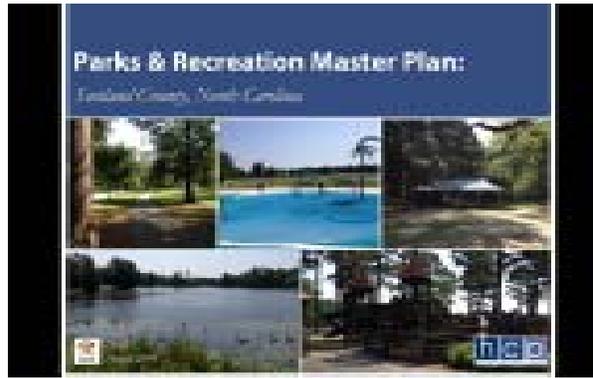
Millonzi said some counties and schools have developed memorandums of agreement on school funding.

Millonzi said if the schools, however, feel the funding is not adequate they still can initiate a dispute resolution process.

She said memorandum of agreement discussions are positive. "A theme we come back to is you've got to work together. Memorandums of agreement, although not legally enforceable, are a way to smooth relations and build trust. We've seen success in some counties. If you don't have that foundation, the most intricate formula won't solve the problem. They (memorandums) are a reflection of two boards functioning well together."

## Master Plan scheduled for review by Commissioners

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**The Parks and Recreation Master Plan identifies four long-term goals.**

Goal 3: Increase recreation opportunities for Scotland County residents. While many high intensity sports activities currently exist, more passive opportunities are desired. This may be accomplished through the construction of new facilities, shared use of school property, repurposing of facilities as outlined in Goal 1, or by developing or

strengthening partnerships.

Goal 4: Conduct a Program Life Cycle Analysis for county recreation programs. Just as trends change, so should programming over time. To identify those programs reaching the end of their life, an assessment of program condition should take place.

## Local grant opportunities available through Golden Leaf

Several area agencies will apply for \$1.5 million in Golden Leaf Foundation grants provided the proposals create jobs and enhance services in education and health care.

Richmond Community College (RCC), the City of Laurinburg, Scotland Health Care System (SHCS) and St. Andrews University officials met with County Manager Kevin Patterson October 15 to discuss proposals that might fit the bill.

SCHS proposed access to care through a third phase expansion of its emergency center. The expansion would increase treatment space, staffing and physical space for surgical services.

For RCC, the soon-to-be-vacated Morgan Center could be retooled as a simulated hospital hub for clinical instruction. The project would give RCC opportunity to educate and graduate practical nurses, a profession that has become more in demand.

The City of Laurinburg proposed to attract more businesses to downtown by establishing a revolving loan fund that would work as an incentive for them to occupy Main Street storefronts.

Golden Leaf funds are available through its community-based grants initiative for projects in certain communities.

Patterson said, "Golden Leaf has \$12 million for a 10-county area that we're in. Each county can submit up to three grants totaling no more than \$1.5 million."

He added, "Golden Leaf would require a 20 percent cash match to make sure there's a community buy-in or collective agreement that the grants are going to have the greatest community impact."

Golden Leaf has standard priorities when awarding its grants — workforce development, infrastructure, health care infrastructure and agriculture.

"The grant opportunity here would be for projects that have already been designed and are expected to be completed within two years," Patterson explained. "It's going to be very competitive."

## Our condolences to ...

**Al Blades**, Parks and Recreation, on the October 1 passing of his father-in-law Jimmy King, a former Parks and Recreation employee; **Maria Roberts**, Health, on the September 30 passing of her grandmother, Ella Mae Jones. Ms. Jones is also the mother-in-law of retired DSS Director, **Joe Knott**; **Tina Clark**, Health, on the October 27 passing of her father.

## the November Birthday list

**1** Charles Blue (Transportation); **2** Roylin Hammond (EMS), Nicole Robinson (DSS) and Carol McCall (Commissioner); **3** Chassidy Laws (Cooperative Extension); **4** Angelica Smiling (EMS); **6** Richard Best (Sheriff); **8** Joshua Medlin (EMS), Brian Lowry (Health), Elizabeth Velez (Jail) and Jerry Glover (Sheriff); **9** Lendo Mason (Transportation); **10** Nikki Sewell (Parks and Recreation); **12** Wayne Gay (Sheriff) and Judy DuBois (DSS); **13** Brandon Cribb (Sheriff); **14** Kelvin Howell (Sheriff); **17** Shane Baldwin (Jail); **18** Robert Sampson (EMS), Jonathan Smith (Sheriff) and Joy Nolan (Public Works); **19** Angela Townsend (DSS); **20** Deborah Starr (DSS); **22** Johnny Brown (DSS); **23** Shep Jones (Sheriff) and Lori Habisch (DSS); **24** Adam Liles (Health); **25** Martha Norfleet (Tax) and Kathy Duke (Public Works); **28** Janna Williams and Carolyn Lewellen (DSS), Betsey Ellerbe (Health) and Haley Powell (Parks and Recreation); **30** Corrie Patterson (EMS), Jennifer Byrd (DSS), Michealle Haynes (Health) and James McPhatter (Sheriff).

## Post Scripts

Welcome to those employees hired since July 16: **Brenda Tyson** and **Benita Mullis**, Health; **Anthony George**, **Christina Dowd**, **David Blalock**, **Tina Strickland** and **Justin Hill**, Sheriff; **Sandy Connor**, **Darren Scott**, **Marisol Morales** and **Vanessa Clark**, DSS; **Dana Bethea**, Jail; **James Hunt** and **John Storey**, part-time with EMS; **Jerry Glover**, temporary with Sheriff. ☘ **James Clark** is serving as interim DSS Director. ☘ Congratulations to **Phyllis Clark**, Health, on the September 24 birth of her first grandchild, Madelyn Rose Clark. ☘ Congratulations to Lumber River Council of Governments award recipients **Kevin Patterson**, Region N Manager of the Year and **Ann Kurtzman**, Annie Kohnen Regional Clerk of the Year. ☘ **Kathie Cox**, Health, successfully passed the national exam to receive recertification for Child Passenger Safety Technician. ☘ Between now and the end of the year **Health Department staff** will provide outreach at the KORDSA Health Fair, Scotland High School Career Fair Day, Wagram Elementary Health Fair, the Community Diabetes Health Fair and at a variety of church health fairs.

## News of Note

### Fall Litter Sweep bests itself

Fall Litter Sweep surpassed last year's collection. Girl Scout Troop 703 picked up the most trash and earned the King of the Mountain top spot and a \$200 prize. Maureen Windmeyer from Scotch Meadow won second place and \$100. It was the first time an individual won a cash prize. Windmeyer picked up trash throughout Scotch Meadows and in the south side of town. Litter Sweep ran from September 14 to September 20, and 11 teams turned in 3,776 pounds of trash, which is 300 pounds more than last fall and with fewer teams participating.

### Removal of blighted building a team effort

The abandoned gas station at Main and Church Streets might be transformed into open space in the near future. The City, County and Schools each pledged \$7,500 toward an estimated \$25,000 project where its underground tanks would be removed and the building demolished. The Laurinburg Downtown Revitalization Corporation plans to purchase the property, when the bankruptcy case is settled, for approximately \$4,000. The City will demolish the building, and the County will waive the tipping fee for the structure only. This is the first time the Board of Commissioners ever waived the tipping fee for a commercial building. In approving the County's share of the \$7,500 and waiving the tipping fee, the Commissioners agreed that the joint effort to resolve the issue of a blighted building is a positive step toward enhancing the appearance of the downtown business district.

### County bond rating downgraded

Moody's on September 30 downgraded the County's bond rating from A1 Negative Outlook to A2. County Manager Kevin Patterson said, "The primary reasons for the downgrade were the financial weakness in the enterprise funds and the local economy." Patterson said during much of the conference call he had with Moody's, the focus of the discussion was on the unemployment and poverty rates in the County compared to State and national averages. Patterson said unemployment and poverty are two issues in which the County has no control. "Bond ratings are not a credit score," he explained. "They do directly impact the secondary bond market, buying and selling bonds." He added, "The County's bond ratings will impact the underwriting costs of future bond issuances. Since we have no plans to issue new bonds, we will have new bond ratings before we issue new bonds."

### December 31 is wellness exam deadline

County employees still have time between now and December 31 to have their wellness exam completed. Please make an appointment with your primary care physician and bring the physician's form with you so your provider can complete it. Fax the form along with the Health Risk Assessment to FirstCarolinaCare Insurance Company at 910-715-8102. Both forms are available by contacting Human Resources Manager Susan Butler at 910-277-2403. A few envelopes are available if you wish to mail the forms. If your wellness exam is completed and the forms submitted to FCC by December 31, you will be eligible for the premium waiver beginning January 2015. If you do not have your wellness exam and submit both forms to FCC by December 31, you will be charged \$20 per month for Employee Only health coverage. New employees hired from October 1 and forward have six months from their health insurance effective date to have their wellness exam completed to be eligible for the premium waiver for the next year.

### Transfer Station closes for repairs

The Scotland County Transfer Station will be closed for repairs November 4 to 7. No MSW/Household garbage will be accepted during this time. The landfill will be open during this time for other materials, just no MSW. MSW will be accepted again November 10.

**Vote Tuesday, November 4**