

Scotland County

Monthly



JANUARY 2013

A newsletter for the Scotland County community

U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson outlines priorities to constituents

Nowhere are jobs and the economy more important than they are in Scotland County.

So said U.S. Representative Richard Hudson who, six days into his tenure as a member of Congress, visited the area to meet with his constituents. Hudson, a Republican, in November defeated incumbent Larry Kissell, a Democrat.

"When it comes to recruiting industry in Scotland County, I'm a partner, and I'll do whatever it takes," Hudson assured the standing room only crowd at the Richmond Community College Diane Honeycutt Center.

Hudson said politics at the federal level are getting in the way of job growth. "I'm concerned about the tax rate and health care costs and business owners," he said. "The uncertainty out there is crushing job growth."

Hudson said he ran for office because he was frustrated with Democrats and Republicans who stalled when it came to tough decisions.

"I intend to reach out to the Democrats and be a person of my word," Hudson said. "If (former Senators) Jesse Helms and Ted Kennedy could work together, anybody can work together."

Hudson said he has already met with other freshmen House members of both parties. "We discovered there are issues we agree on and can work on. I'm going to look for the incremental things that can be done."

"We aren't going to do sweeping things but we can work



Chairman Guy McCook, right, asks U.S. Rep. Richard Hudson for assistance in securing an extension for a Homeland Security grant earmarked for the construction of the Emergency Operations Center.

together to make things better," Hudson explained. "My most sacred responsibility is to take care of my constituents no matter what the party. It's important to me that you're relevant."

Touching on national issues, Hudson said he would not vote [see Hudson, page 4](#)

AARP Foundation to provide free income tax service

AARP Foundation Tax-Aide will provide free income tax services February 7 to April 12 at Scotland County Memorial Library.

The AARP Foundation program 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 are trained and certified by the Internal Revenue Service to help with personal income tax returns. They maintain strict client confidentiality.

The free service is co-sponsored by Parks and Recreation and Scotland County Memorial Library. "Last year more than 280 State and federal returns were processed by Tax-Aide volunteers," said Library Director Leon Gyles.

He added, "Taxpayers should bring their Social Security cards, 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-2s, interest, dividends, retirement income and Social Security statements."

Anyone who would like more information about this service or who would like to schedule an appointment, contact Parks and Recreation at 277-2585.

Tax holiday expiration will impact employee paychecks

A two percent decrease in the net salary of County employees will be reflected in the January 31 direct deposit statements.

"All employees will see a two percent drop, which will probably be about \$40 to \$45 a month," said County Manager Kevin Patterson.

A family earning \$50,000, for example, will pay \$1,000 a year more from \$2,100 to \$3,100 in Social Security.

This is because the payroll tax holiday has expired. "For the last two years of the employees' portion, 4.2 percent of Social Security taxes were taken out instead of 6.2 percent," Patterson said. "As of January 1, that amount goes back up to 6.2 percent."

"That's effective for any payroll paid after January 1. Even though half of our pay period is December through January, half of it is in the prior year, the new rate impacts the entire payroll," Patterson added. "So the January check is going to be two percent less."

The payroll tax holiday was supposed to last for one year in an effort to stimulate the economy. It was extended for an additional year.

But the fiscal cliff deal reached by the White House and Congress did not extend the lower rate for a third year.

the Birthday list for February

3 Lisa Tew (Health); **5** Randy Dover (Sheriff); **6** Debra Holcomb (Register of Deeds); **8** Al Blades (Parks and Recreation); **9** John Cooley (Commissioner); **10** Carrie Edwards (EMS); **12** Matthew Locklear (EMS) and Lee Davis (Sheriff); **13** Donald Locklear (EMS); **14** Yvonne Deberry (DSS); **16** Pat Brown (Register of Deeds); **20** Teresa Jacobs (DSS), Glen Lockey (Public Works) and Mike Edge (EMS); **23** Kelly Carpenter (Parks and Recreation) and Donald Flowers (Sheriff); **24** Ann Kurtzman (Administration); **25** Frances Moody (Health) and Jim Blackwell (Public Works); **26** Tonya Gay (Sheriff); **27** Ellen Locklear (Health).

Extension events attract stakeholders

Agriculture Extension Agent David Morrison hosted a soybean update meeting with information shared by several guests.

Dr. Jack Bacheler, with the assistance of T.G. Gibson, discussed the latest information learned from the multiple planting date/variety test planted in 2012 in Gibson.

Dr. Steve Koenning discussed diseases, nematodes and fungicides available to produce profitable crops in 2013.

Dr. Jim Dunphy gave a presentation on varieties and the latest research conducted on soybeans in order to increase profitability.

Attendees were also brought up to date on the latest weed management information.

Morrison also hosted two pesticide certification meetings.

Two-page W-2 forms are on their way

Starting in tax year 2012 some employees will get a two-page W-2 depending on qualifying deductions.

"The more the deductions, the more the likelihood an employee will get a two-page W-2," said Deputy Finance Officer Nancy Bostick. "The continuation is for deductibles found in box 12."

Interpreting the W-2 Wage and Tax Statement can be a challenge.

Since the W-2 accompanies the January paycheck, listed below are some items to keep in mind.

Box #1 of the W-2 (*pictured at right*), "Wages, tips and other compensation" will not match the gross earnings figure found on your monthly paycheck. That's because the figure in box #1 of the W-2 includes only the amount earned that is subject to federal and State tax withholdings.

In other words, the federal taxable wages found in Box #1

Hammond showcased in magazine



EMS director Roylin Hammond is featured prominently in the Winter 2012/2013 edition of *FirstHealth*.

He is one of three individuals profiled for their exceptional patient experience at FirstHealth of the Carolinas.

In the case of Hammond, he recognizes the cardiology services of Reid Heart Center at FirstHealth Moore Regional for saving his life this time last year when he suffered a heart attack.

In less than 90 minutes the FirstHealth ambulance had transported him directly to Reid Heart Center where a group of heart care professionals, already familiar with his case, was waiting.

His experience is an example of the lifesaving agreement he endorsed and the County Commissioners adopted two years ago.

The agreement, RACE (Reperfusion of Acute Myocardial Infarction in Carolina Emergency Departments), is a protocol for heart attack treatment.

It allows a FirstHealth ambulance to be stationed at Scotland Memorial Hospital to transport people suffering a stroke or a cardiac situation to other facilities in the region.

"It transports people who need a higher level of care" explained Hammond. "In cases of stroke or cardiac situation, getting to definitive care in as rapid a time as possible is extremely important."

The FirstHealth emergency vehicle operates from 8 a.m. to 8 p.m. every day and responds to calls from Scotland Memorial Hospital.

It can transport patients to Moore Regional, Carolinas Medical Center, UNC Hospitals, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Womack Army Medical Center and Charlotte Medical Center Mercy.

Hammond said FirstHealth consistently transports about 45 patients monthly to other regional medical centers during its hours of operation in Scotland County.

The protocol probably saved his life. Hammond said in the article, "I'm here, living proof that the system really works."

2222	VOID	Employee's Social Security Number	For Official Use Only OMB No. 1545-0046
a Employer identification number (EIN)	b Wages, tips, other compensation		c Federal income tax withheld
c Employee's name, address, and ZIP code	d Social Security wages	e Social Security tax withheld	f Social Security tax
d Social number	g Medicare wages and tips	h Medicare tax withheld	i Allocated tax
e Employee's first name and initial	h Social Security tax	j State income tax	k State income tax
f Last name	i State income tax	l Dependent care benefits	m See instructions for box 12
g Last name	n Qualified plans	o See instructions for box 12	p See instructions for box 12
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News of Note

Input needed on tennis facility improvement

Parks and Recreation and the Tennis Association plan to work on a long-term tennis facility improvement plan. Input on the project is encouraged. A web-based survey about the tennis facilities is located at <http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/9FTN7CZ>. Input will help in the decisions that reflect the wishes of you, the tennis player. Adequate input will help gauge the level of interest in improving the facilities.

Workout for Women kicks off 2013

Another "WOW!" Program (Physical Activity and Nutrition) for women began Monday, January 28, 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. There is no registration deadline, and it's okay to join anytime. Exercise starts promptly at 5:15 p.m. at Scotland Place. If you are interested or know anyone who might be ready to lose weight, strengthen and tone muscle, become more flexible, increase energy levels and learn about healthy eating, then this program is for you. Beginners to intermediate exercisers are welcome. Challenge yourself, your friends, bring a buddy or neighbor. Cost is \$12 for the six-week session. Join us Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays January 28 through March 7. Participants must sign a liability waiver. Exercises are provided by non-certified volunteer facilitators. WOW! is sponsored by Scotland County Healthy Carolinians, Scotland County Department of Public Health and Parks and Recreation. For more information or to register, contact Health Educator Kathie Cox, 910-277-2470, extension 4478 or Parks and Recreation, 910-277-2585.

Meetings assist grandparents raising children

A support group for grandparents and kinship caregivers who are raising children meets monthly at Scotland Place. Participants learn about issues, resources and programs that help with parenting, strengthen family communication and dynamics, assist with behavior, educational, social, legal and health care concerns and allow discussion with other grandparents. Kimberly McRae of DSS facilitates the meetings held the third Monday of each month, 10:30 a.m. to 12 p.m., at Scotland Place. The meetings are sponsored by Parks and Recreation, Social Services and the Family Caregiver Support Program at the Lumber River Council of Governments. Contact Doris Ann Donovan, 910-277-2550, for more information.

December report in on discount prescription cards

The number of prescriptions purchased using the NACo-sponsored Prescription Drug Discount Card was 155 in December, down from 192 in November and down from 206 prescriptions purchased in December 2011. The NACo program in cooperation with Caremark offered the best prices on 52 prescriptions in December. Since Scotland County opted to participate in the program in September 2006, 20,481 prescriptions have been processed at participating pharmacies for a total price savings of \$164,523 for customers. Prescription cards are available at 507 West Covington Street or call 277-3191 or email akurtzman@scotlandcounty.org to pick up cards.

Our condolences to ...

Leon Gyles, Library, on the December 24 passing of his mother-in-law, Virginia Owen; **Shep Jones**, Sheriff, on the January 9 passing of his mother, Lessie Mae Jones; **Darryl Locklear**, DSS, on the January 8 passing of his father; and **Janet Mudd**, DSS, on the January 18 passing of her sister Teresa Saunders.

PostScripts Welcome to those who joined Scotland County since November 2012: **Karen Goins**, Health; **Christopher Strickland** and **Dorothy Malloy**, Jail; **Daniel McLellan**, temporary with the Jail; **Kendria Finkley**, Library; **Iris Hamilton**, Parks and Recreation; and **Brandon Cribb**, Sheriff. ❀ Congratulations to **Tina Clark**, Health, on the December 22 marriage of her son, Hal M. Hunt, Jr., to Quawanna Locklear. ❀ Congratulations to **Pat Brown**, Register of Deeds, on the December 22 birth of grandson Ja'Keem Fitzgerald Brown. ❀ Best wishes to **Pam Reed**, who retired from DSS November 2012 after 33 years of service, 4.5 years with Mecklenburg County and 28.5 years with Scotland County. ❀ The **Board of Health** will now meet 6:30 p.m. instead of 7 p.m. in the Health Education Room the third Tuesday of each month. ❀ The 4th annual Cape Fear Cattle Conference was held in Lumberton in January. This beef cattle educational conference and industry trade show is an annual event hosted by the Cooperative Extension offices from surrounding counties, including **Scotland County Cooperative Extension**. This year, 71 area beef cattle farmers participated in educational programs, which included the construction and troubleshooting electric fences and information on diseases of beef cattle. Industry updates on retail beef cuts and legislative reports from the N.C. Cattlemen's Association also were presented.

State Supreme Court ruling upholds sweepstakes ban

The County earlier this year asked the General Assembly to grant it authority through a local bill to collect privilege license fees from internet sweepstakes establishments.

The initiative ended in December, perhaps indefinitely, when the State Supreme Court denied sweepstakes businesses a stay of an order that upholds the Legislature's ban on video sweepstakes.

The businesses had asked for a delay in enforcement while they appeal the case to the U.S. Supreme Court.

"The State wanted to make sweepstakes and video gambling machines illegal," explained County Manager Kevin Patterson.

He explained, "The sweepstakes industry appealed the State effort saying the law was overreaching and impinging on its freedom of speech."

Patterson added that sweepstakes operations contended they are no different than the McDonalds Monopoly game, for example. "Sweepstakes operations just communicate sweepstakes winnings using a different method. The State Supreme Court disagreed."

Effective January 3 all sweepstakes operations were ordered closed. Although not yet clarified, a ruling is expected from the Office of the Attorney General as to what exactly is supposed to happen.

"A lot of municipalities including Laurinburg have privilege licenses on these establishments," Patterson said. "They will no longer be able to charge privilege license, so it will cut off a revenue stream for them."

Patterson added, "The ruling will halt significant action by the State where it and counties could see a new revenue stream."

Patterson predicted the industry will probably look to continue perhaps by appealing to the federal government. "This will be a wait and see situation."

Legislative goals beneficial to all counties

Every two years, in the months preceding a long session of the General Assembly, the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) engages in a process to determine the legislative goals it should seek in the best interest of the counties. All counties and all county officials are invited and encouraged to participate in the legislative goals process.

Of the hundreds of legislative goals submitted by counties, a screening committee reviews all proposals and submits the top five legislative goals. The NCACC along with county leadership will advocate for those goals.

County Manager Kevin Patterson discussed the goals selected this year and how successful advocacy with State Legislature would benefit Scotland County and all counties in general.

Oppose shift of State transportation responsibilities to counties

Patterson: The State is looking at changes to how it handles non-emergency medical transportation. If you qualify for Medicaid, if you have a doctor's visit, if you cannot otherwise get there, and you need help with paid transportation, SCATS (Scotland County Area Transit System) transports people to medical appointments, especially dialysis, which is a routine one. The State is looking at changing the rules where there would be a contract with the State Department of Medicaid Assistance to become a regular provider. The risk is the State might keep changing the program so counties would be responsible for providing transportation, but the reimbursement will not be there.

Reinstate ADM and lottery funds for school construction

Patterson: The ADM (average daily membership) is a part of the corporate income taxes paid in North Carolina that is distributed to counties for school construction and debt service. For Scotland County, the ADM was about \$400,000 a year. The State took that capital designated to schools for a two-year period. With that reduction, plus a reduction in sales tax for the last two years, the County has had less restricted revenues for the debt service payment. If this continues, the County would have to appropriate unrestricted general fund dollars to school debt. When school bonds were passed in the late 90s to fund construction of three new schools, at that time the promise was made that property tax would not go into this. Without ADM dollars, that promise will not be kept. The lottery continued to do reasonably well, but original school bonds do not qualify for lottery use. The County received about \$600,000 to \$800,000 a year in lottery funds for school capital and for new debt issue. The State changed the lottery distribution two years ago and significantly reduced distribution so the County is getting less than \$400,000 a year. The County is able to meet the debt service on the Wagram expansion, but use is limited after that.

Oppose unfunded mandates and shifts of State responsibilities to counties

Patterson: That's a standard battle cry for counties. It will remain in the top five in perpetuity. As the federal government looks at significant changes to its budget, it will shift responsibility to the State, which means it will pull back on what it gives the State as far as revenue. That means the State will shift other revenues it has away from counties. If the federal government allocates an additional Medicaid burden to the State, the counties might have to pick up a percentage of that additional burden. More of the administrative dollars might be reallocated to the State side so the County might have to continue providing services with less administrative dollars.

Preserve the existing local revenue base

Patterson: Every biennium, the Legislature looks at ways to protect citizens, for example, by increasing the Homestead exemption or adding disability and veteran exemptions. That erodes the property tax base. And then there are revenue sharing options where the State actually shares revenues that used to go only to the counties. The State withheld sales taxes in the past. The ADM funds from corporate sales taxes are still there, but the State kept them to fund public education on the State side. In the past there have been conversations about not making the refund of sales taxes to counties.

Ensure adequate mental health funding

Patterson: This has been a big issue with counties for a number of years. Counties have the responsibility to fund mental health but the needs far outstrip the County's capacity to fund any program. Over the years, State funding for mental health has been significantly reduced. Services for severe mental health issues are woefully lacking.

Hudson visits area

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to raise the debt ceiling without a dollar for dollar spending cut. "Bear with me, it will get pretty ugly in February and March."

Hudson said cutting the federal workforce through attrition, funding cuts to the United Nations and initiating efficiencies at the TSA are just several ways "pockets of money" could be saved.

Hudson added that in education, cutting the overhead at the federal and state level and sending dollars directly to communities to fund education also could result in savings.

The GOP House freshman said he would work to preserve Medicare and Social Security for people at or near retirement. "Knowing these programs are going to go broke, we have to make tough decisions. Changes could be made for people my age and younger."

He said, "The President, Senate and House have to come together to address these programs."

Hudson explained, "You might not always agree with how I vote, but you'll always know where I stand."

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Boxes #3 (Social Security wages) and #5 (Medicare wages and tips) show a figure that is different from the gross earnings and the federal taxable wages.

Social Security, FICA and Medicare are paid on that figure, which is the gross earnings minus travel, dental, Aflac accident, Assurity Cancer Plan, Superior Vision, daycare and medical reimbursements and Health Savings Account (HSA).

Box #10 shows daycare reimbursements.

Box #12 uses the following codes:

DD — Cost of Health Employer Sponsored Coverage and is the result of the Affordable Care Act. **This amount is not taxable.** It is for information only and includes what the employee pays and what the County pays.

AA — Roth 401k contributions.

D — 401k contributions.

C — Taxable Group Term Life Insurance (GTLI). This is for any amount of coverage paid for by you and/or the County that exceeds \$50,000. This includes the Retirement Death Benefit as well as employer paid coverage and employee paid coverage for supplemental and dependent coverage.

G — 457 B contributions.

W — Employee/employer contribution to the HSA.