

# Scotland County

## Monthly



SEPTEMBER 2013

A newsletter for Scotland County employees

## Local officials take budget concerns to delegation in Washington, D.C.

The September 9 and 10 Chamber fly is just as much about putting a face to the name as it is advocating for the health and welfare of local communities.

According to County Manager Kevin Patterson, who was among the handful of local officials who made the two-day trip to the nation's capital, "The Washington, D.C., visit helps maintain relationships so when a bill or an issue comes out and we have particular concern there is someone we know to contact."

He added, "When we do that, we know who they are and they know who we are. When it comes to the concerns of someone you know, you tend to rank them higher than the concerns of a stranger."

Patterson, Chairman Guy McCook, Vice Chair Carol McCall and Economic Development Director Greg Icard met with staff for Senators Kay Hagan and Richard Burr and met with Representative Richard Hudson and his staff on two occasions.

Patterson said the County is concerned about changes in the tax code and changes in entitlements and other spending. "Both could have a negative impact on the County budget and County programs."

"The limitation or total elimination of the federal exclusion or exemption of local government debt is an issue of concern," Patterson said. "Currently if the County buys local government bonds, the interest off the bonds are tax exempt. That exemption allows local governments to issue debt at a lower interest rate. People are more inclined to buy them because they don't have to pay a higher income tax on it."

He added, "If you eliminate the federal tax exemption, local government would be on par with corporate debt because it would borrow at a higher rate, which could increase the cost of borrowing as much as 50 percent, which would impact schools, roads, municipalities, hospitals, law enforcement centers, jails. When you increase those borrowing costs, the most common avenue to repay those are property taxes."

"We also addressed entitlement reform — Medicaid and SNAP (Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program)," Patterson said. "One thing that appears to be the easy fix is reducing the reimbursement rates. The benefits are always there, but in an attempt to streamline entitlements, more regulations are added to the program while the federal reimbursement of County expenses dwindles and administrative services for the programs see reductions."

*see Fly in, page 4*

## EOC/911 Call Center site fenced in



Photo by Roylin Hammond, EMS

The EOC/911 Call Center site was secured with temporary fencing and a construction trailer placed on the property.

The grading contractor is erecting a silt fence around the site and will begin to remove stumps and level the site. Building construction will begin soon.

## Inmate work program is making the grade

On the one-year anniversary of the inmate work program, County officials praised its success.

Public Buildings and Grounds Supervisor Mike McGirt said the six to eight inmates who care for the grounds and cut grass helped reduce mowing time by an estimated 40 percent.

"We've been able to utilize inmates in projects we were not been able to do in the past, and it's been a real positive program for us," McGirt said.

He added there are now preliminary discussions with Scotland Correctional Institution to see if the County can get inmates for after-hours work assignments and janitorial duties inside the buildings, particularly stripping floors and shampooing carpets.

"These are duties that would be too disruptive to do during the normal business day," explained County Manager Kevin Patterson.

Patterson said inmates working after hours would present a logistical challenge at this time. "The County provides transportation, and unless we bring in another driver, we won't be able to expand. Also, a supervisor would be needed for after-hours work."

He added that despite some talks, the Department of Corrections only permits labor Monday to Thursday, 8 a.m. to 5 p.m., at this time.

Departments initially viewed the inmate work program with skepticism, but that view has changed

"Anytime you think inmates you only think the worst," said McGirt. "These guys coming out are positive inmates, and we've had some excellent workers. It's been a win-win situation for the County."

Patterson agreed with McGirt's assessment. "It's exceeded our expectations. Despite initial concerns, everybody's been pleasantly surprised by the outcome and the productivity."

Even Public Work Supervisor Bryant Higgins was skeptical at first. But he has since changed his mind.

Higgins said, "The inmates are actually trying to work their way up to another program, so they have reasons of their own to do good, to be successful."

*see Inmate, page 4*

## PostScripts

Welcome to those individuals who joined County departments as of July 2013: **Daniel McClellan** with the Jail; **Haley Powell** with Parks and Recreation; **Andrew Walker**, part-time with EMS and **Anwar Monroe** and **Walter McLaurin**, part-time with Transportation. ❁ **Commissioner Bob Davis** was elected as a District 5 Director for the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners NCACC). Davis will represent the interest of the counties in District 5 — Bladen, Hoke, Robeson and Scotland. In this capacity, Davis will help make policy decisions to guide the NCACC and its staff through the year. ❁ The August 21 visit to Scotland County by **State Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker** was featured in the August 27 edition of *Sync*, a Department of Commerce weekly publication. While here, Decker toured Scotland County, the Small Business Innovation Center, Richmond Community College Scotland campus, St. Andrews University and its Equestrian Center, Thomas Walton Manor, downtown Laurinburg and Laurinburg City Hall. ❁ Expansions at FCC and Meritor are highlighted in a September 7 **Fayetteville Observer** article about the economy and job availability in North Carolina. The article also features a photo of construction currently underway at FCC. ❁ Congratulations to **Susan Butler**, Administration, on the September 6 marriage of her daughter, Michelle Butler, to Christopher Currie.

### Our condolences to ...

**Teresa Gorden**, DSS, on the September 14 passing of her mother, Mary Frances Jacobs Grooms.

### the Birthday list for October

**2** Beth Hobbs (Administration); **3** Shannon Newton (Parks and Recreation); **4** Timothy Haggans (Public Works); **5** Priscilla Bryant (Health); **7** Michael Sanders (EMS); **8** Bobby Lowery (DSS), Robert Bowen (Administration), Andre Grant (Sheriff) and Anwar Monroe (Transportation); **11** Roy Chavis (EMS), Linda Gibson (Health) and Jerome Alford (Jail); **13** William Grant (EMS), Jamie Hunt (Parks and Recreation) and Kim Brayboy (Tax); **15** Leslie Hallman (EMS); **16** Darlene Baker (Jail); **18** Russell Lester (EMS); **19** Marion Locklear (Jail); **20** Michelle Locklear (DSS); **21** Cheryl Faile (EMS) and Frances McLean (DSS); **22** Rachel Beach (Tax); **23** Cory Baldwin (EMS); **25** Debra Maske (Health); **26** Danny Sprouse (Health); **28** Margaret Uncapher (Library) and Vicki Locklear (Tax); **29** Thomas Milligan (Inspections); **31** Antonia Rainer (DSS).

## County praised for quality offerings

While spending a day in Scotland County, Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker discussed the five tenants of focus for North Carolina as it positions itself as a leader in agribusiness and advanced manufacturing.

In listing the five tenants, Decker praised Scotland County for what it offers and how well it aligns itself with the comprehensive position of the State.

1. Health: Every North Carolinian deserves a chance to live a healthy life. It matters to employers to employ healthy people.

2. Education: All elements of a good education and support are here, particularly in Scotland County, where a partnership with the County public school system, Richmond Community College and St. Andrews University advance the early college initiative.

3. Economic Development: Infrastructure is key. In Scotland County there is the availability of water, sewer, natural gas, connectivity. All that matters when it comes to siting a new business or expanding an existing business.

4. Grow arts, tourism, culture: In North Carolina, arts, tourism and culture available throughout the State are as big as attracting 10 large industries to the State on an annual basis. All counties in the State have realized growth in this area. In Scotland County, in particular, attractions include the Storytelling Festival, Highland Games and equestrian events.

5. Quality of life and the environment: What Scotland County offers in hospitality and its personal touch speak to the quality of life. The County must be mindful of its beautiful landscape, recruit in a meaningful and targeted way.

“You have a lot to work with,” Decker assured. “I’ve seen it today.”

“I was very proud to be part of the delegation that met with Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker,” said Chairman Guy McCook. “All the entities involved helped us put our best foot forward. We began a vital dialogue with the Secretary of Commerce that will allow us to continue to promote our community not only with the Department of Commerce but with the economic developers in our region

## Health Fair grade improved from 2012

The overall 2013 Health Fair grade for participants improved slightly to a B grade and 3.08 GPA, from a B in 2012 with a 3.03 GPA.

Attendance, however, was down. 142 of 318 employees, retirees and spouses participated this year compared to 158 in 2012 and 183 in 2011.

Employees were graded on blood pressure, total cholesterol, body mass index, glucose and tobacco use. Improvement was noted in all categories compared to 2012.

49.66 percent of participants received an A in blood pressure-systolic and 63.64 percent received an A in blood-pressure-diastolic, compared to 47.59 and 51.50, respectively a year ago.

Cholesterol screening remained stable with 78.87 percent of participants graded as an A compared to 78.98 percent in 2012.

Glucose screening improved with 80.42 percent of the participants earning an A compared to 66.03 percent participants who earned an A in 2012.

The percentage of people not using tobacco also improved with 92.91 percent of participants no longer using tobacco compared to 87.97 percent in 2012.

Body Mass Index in participants improved with 21.57 percent receiving an A compared to 18 percent in 2012.

Scotland County hosted the Health Fair, which was sponsored by FirstCarolinaCare and the Jack Ficklin Company. County employees had four opportunities to attend a Health Fair. Three were held at the Health Department and one took place at 507 West Covington Street.



**Economic Development Director Greg Icard, left, takes Secretary of Commerce Sharon Decker, right, on a tour of CCL Label.**

## Less is good with Litter Sweep results

Eleven teams made up of 118 volunteers spent the week of September 9 to 14 picking up trash off County roadways during Fall Litter Sweep. The result — they picked up more than 3,100 pounds of litter. That's nearly an 8,000 pound drop from the amount of litter collected during Spring Litter Sweep. But that might well be good news.

"This past spring, our groups picked up more than 11,000 pounds of trash off streets," said GREEN Committee Chairman Leroy McIntyre. "This litter sweep more than 3,100 pounds was collected. We hope our message is getting out in the community to throw trash away and not leave it along the streets."

Cash awards were given to those who picked up the most trash. Girl Scout Troop 1723 led by Kathy McCallum won the first place \$200 award for picking up 1,603 pounds while second place winners, a two-person team calling themselves The Cousins, Sharon Nicholson and Hilary Kelly, were awarded \$100 for bringing in 548 pounds. The Murphy Brown team, although it did not place first or second, picked up 330 pounds of litter on Fieldcrest Road alone.



**The Murphy Brown team picked up 330 pounds of litter on Fieldcrest Road alone.**

The goal of the sponsor, the GREEN Committee of the Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce, is to clean up the streets of Scotland County and make the community cleaner and greener and more appealing to County visitors and residents.

"Volunteers picking up trash along the streets send a message to the community to take care of the area," said Solid Waste

Enforcement Officer J.R. Horne, who is a GREEN Committee member. "It would be great if we eliminated the need for picking up litter. The litter sweeps bring out a lot of people who care about our community and want to make a difference."

This is the second time the Litter Sweep ran for an entire week, which made it easier to accommodate the schedules of the volunteers. The Laurinburg/Scotland County Area Chamber of Commerce values the importance of a cleaner and greener community. "When visitors or potential investors enter Scotland County, it is imperative the community puts its best foot forward to encourage others to want to come to the County and potentially invest in our community through bringing in industry or retail," said Chamber of Commerce President Tonia Stephenson. "This could result in more jobs for County residents."

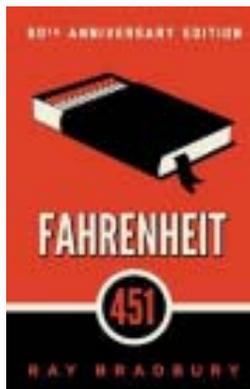
## Fahrenheit 451 focus of The Big Read

Ray Bradbury's *Fahrenheit 451* is the focus of this year's Big Read. The free books are available at Scotland County Memorial Library, and activities will begin in October.

The Big Read, an initiative of the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA), is designed to restore reading to the center of American culture. The library is partnered with the Storytelling and Arts Center and Parks and Recreation. The Big Read is managed by Arts Midwest.

Library Director Leon Gyles said, "The Big Read grant provided the resources to us in order to distribute books to the community, making it easy for community participation. We decided to distribute the books prior to the official start of the program so those who want to participate in the Big Read would be able to enjoy the book."

He added, "As we get closer to the beginning of October check the Storytelling and Arts Center and library webpages for more information."



## Lights installed at Moses Soccer Field

Field lighting will be installed on the Moses Family Soccer Field at the James L. Morgan Recreation Complex by October 31.



**Lights go up at the Moses Family Soccer Field**

Lights will be in and ready for Halloween in the Park Thursday, October 31.

The Parks and Recreation Foundation thanks the many donors who made this project possible.

The Foundation also thanks the County Commissioners and Laurinburg City Council for their leadership and foresight in a joint effort to ensure the project is completed and done in a professional manner.

The lights are expected to be shining during the October 31 Halloween in the Parks event. Gates open at 6 p.m. and the last car will be admitted at 8 p.m. There is a \$2 admission per vehicle.

Kids 12 and under will be entertained with carnival games, a haunted maze and storytelling. The event will permit friendly costumes only. There will be no drop offs, and adult supervision is required.

## Nominations open for volunteer service

Many of outstanding community volunteers work without recognition. Yet the work they do makes a great impact on a community.

If you know of a person or group of persons whose volunteer acts of generosity and kindness enhanced the quality of life of others in Scotland County, consider nominating that person, family, club or group for the 2014 North Carolina Award for Volunteer Service.

Nomination forms are available from [hwhitehurst@gmail.com](mailto:hwhitehurst@gmail.com) (Howard Whitehurst) or at the Chamber of Commerce.

Please return the completed forms by mail to Volunteer Service Committee, 702 West Church Street, Laurinburg, NC, or at the Chamber of Commerce. Deadline for form submission is November 1.

### Animal welfare gets its day in court

The last Wednesday of each month has been set aside in District Court for animal-related cases. Animal Control Officer Larry Herring said, "The biggest advantage will be that just one day of the month everybody charged with an animal violation will be in court on that particular day. It will be a big advantage to animal control officers and others charging because we will go to court that one time and we won't be mixing cases in court and people will know that the last Wednesday of every month is the day for animal cases to be in court." It will be helpful to the Humane Society because currently Humane Society staff would have to go to court three or four times a month for cases, and now it will be just one day instead of several days during the month. The new set up will help the Humane Society move dogs more quickly after they've been confiscated in raids such as the recent raid on a pit bull ring in which 10 dogs were kept for more than six months. The issue of a dedicated animal court was raised and resolved as the result of meetings now being conducted among City and County animal control officers, law enforcement, administration and representatives from Public Health and the Humane Society.

### Get moving to WOW! workouts

Join Workouts for Women (WOW!) at Scotland Place 5 p.m. to 6 p.m. Mondays, Tuesdays and Thursdays. Exercise begins at 5:15 p.m. County employees can take advantage of a reduced cost of \$10 for a six-week session. Regular cots is \$12. Volunteer facilitators lead the workouts. WOW! is sponsored by Healthy Carolinians, the Department of Public Health and Parks and Recreation.

### Tennis courts resurfacing continues

Plans continue to get the six hard courts and four soft courts resurfaced at the Tennis Center. The six hard courts should be resurfaced after the conclusion of the high school girls tennis season in October. The soft courts should be completed in early spring. The Scotland County Recreation Foundation will help raise funds, which would make all donations tax deductible. The Tennis Center and Tennis Association (SCTA) goal is to raise an additional \$12,000 to supplement funding already being contributed by Parks and Recreation and the SCTA. The \$12,000 in additional funding is for the resurfacing of the soft courts. To make a one-time tax deductible contribution/donation, please contact the Tennis Center. If you know of anyone else who would be willing to help with this project, please contact them. The resurfacing project will improve their appearance and playability. The Tennis Center and SCTA encourages community support for the project.

## Fly in allows concerns to be voiced

*continued from page 1*

Patterson explained that the County in recent years has had an increase in workload with no increase in revenues, which means the County might use tax revenues to support the programs or reduce staffing.

Reduction in Workforce Investment Act (WIA) funding was another topic

of concern up for discussion. "This is the primary funding for workforce training to help people develop their skills so they have the ability to go into the workforce. One of the most common issues in business today is the need for a better skilled workforce," Patterson explained.

Another concern is in the Transportation Housing and Urban Development bill

(THUD), which incorporates the Community Development Block Grant (CDBG). It is proposed that CDBG funds be reduced by 60 percent.

"CDBG funds infrastructure, which helps fund the extension of utilities for industrial development that would bring employment into an area that has a high percentage of low income workers," Patterson explained.

As an example, \$1 million in CDBG funds is being used for the extension of water lines for the FCC project for an expansion that will create jobs.

Patterson said, "The issues of concern were well received, and our elected representation expressed concern about the slow progress of Congress and the partisan nature of the gridlock."

Patterson added, "There were different levels of support from the elected officials, who also admitted there would be significant battles over SNAP. Overall, the trip was worthwhile."

## Inmate work program helps County

*continued from page 1*

Two inmates work at the landfill. One spots and greets customers at the transfer station while the other helps at the C&D landfill by monitoring the incoming waste. It enables Higgins to take staff with better skills, like equipment operators, and use them in other areas. It frees up that manpower to perform the skilled jobs.

Higgins said, "We try to teach inmates things while they're here. It's been a success. They're doing a good job. It's a positive program for us at the landfill."

All inmates who work for the County are in minimum security and are within two years of release. The County pays \$1 per inmate per day for the labor provided.

Patterson added, "Putting this labor on a resume when inmates in the work program get out will be helpful. They learned a positive skill while in prison."



**Those who participated in the Washington, D.C. Fly in were, left to right, Cory Hughes, Tourism Development Authority; Tonia Stephenson, Allen McLaurin and Dee Hammond, Chamber of Commerce; Greg Icard, Guy McCook, Kevin Patterson and Carol McCall, Scotland County; Kirtsen Dean, Scotland Memorial Hospital; and David McLamb, Chamber of Commerce.**

**The November Scotland County Board of Commissioners meeting has been rescheduled to 7 p.m. Tuesday, November 5.**