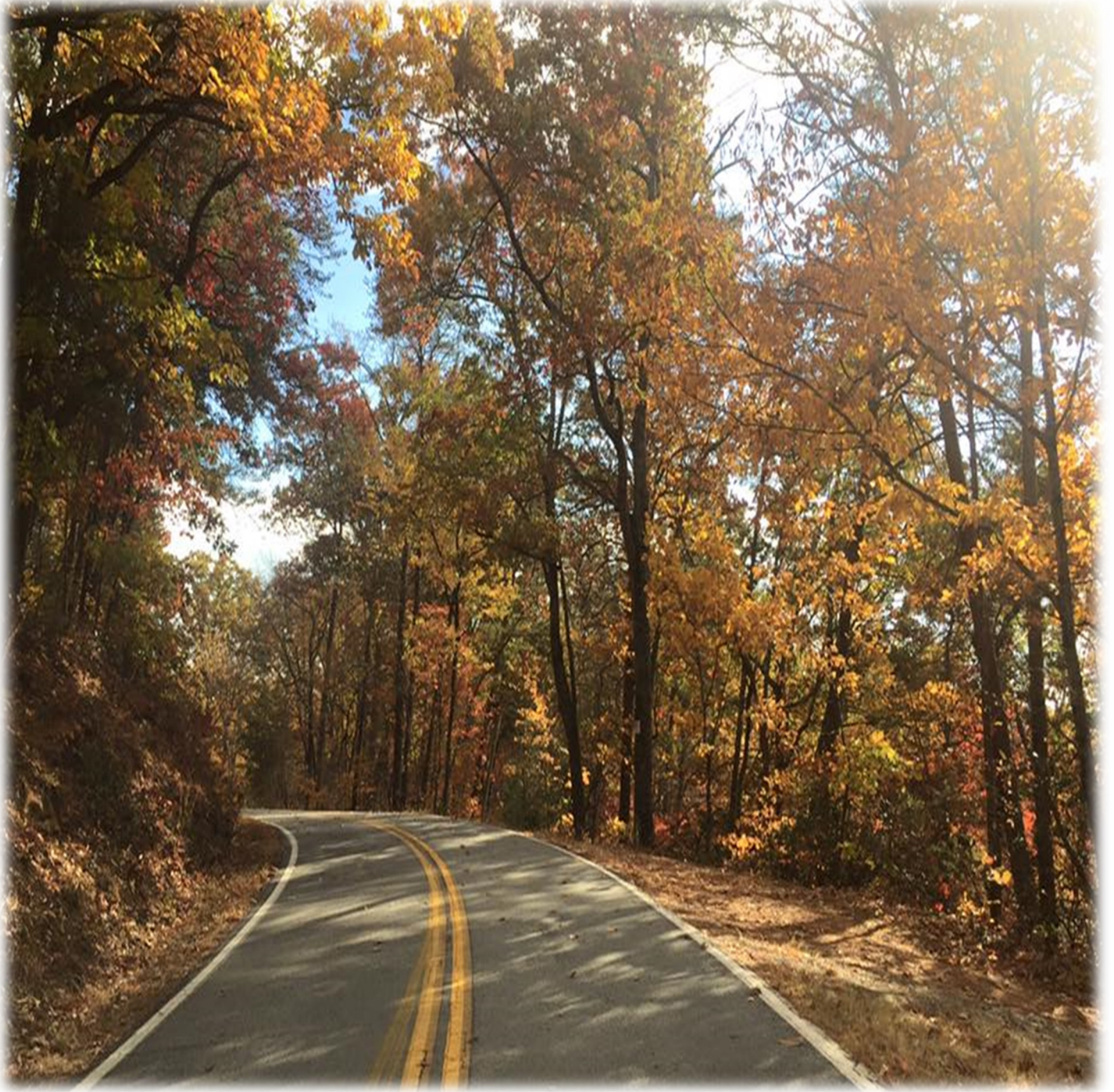


# 2022 Year End Report

*...showcasing activities and accomplishments of departments and offices within Rutherford County Government.*



RUTHERFORD  
EST. COUNTY, NC 1779

828.287.6060 | [www.RutherfordCountyNC.gov](http://www.RutherfordCountyNC.gov)

289 N. Main Street | Rutherfordton, NC 28139

Another year has come and gone, and we would like to share highlights of events, activities, and programming showcasing accomplishments of all County departments and offices.

The service from every County employee and the impact on Rutherford County during 2022 has been outstanding. Each department has shown their dedication and commitment to serving and improving the quality of life in our County. Please enjoy each featured County department.

# Airport



We find ourselves counting so many blessings from this past year in review at the airport. We have enjoyed seeing the new hangar area starting to be developed with continued interest in building several more hangars, hopefully coming soon in 2023 (pictured below). We are looking forward to several development opportunities through grant funding with the NCDOA and the BIL grant program. Currently, the Lighting Rehab Project is moving forward, and Eastside Development Project and a Terminal Conceptual Design Project are in the works.

We are truly grateful to all departments that have helped keep the airport functioning and looking great. The Solid Waste Department hired Stephen Cooper to maintain the airport grounds, as well as their caps (covered landfills) across the county. Stephen Cooper and his two-man inmate team have done a great job adapting to the challenges, fixing up the maintenance area, and working hard to keep the grounds looking great.

We have had the pleasure of hosting several groups taking tours at the airport. Also, we have enjoyed the opportunity to share what is happening at the airport offsite at a small Kiwanis Club event. We've enjoyed hosting several other meetings in our conference room and serving all the guests who have passed through our doors.

We have been blessed with safety over the past year and grateful for all the local and transient air traffic who have played a huge part in making our airport a vibrant place in the community. So often it is easy to take for granted the joy of this season when working to get through the day; however, I hope each of us can pause from the busyness of life and look back long enough to find a grateful heart and excitement moving forward into 2023.

Thank you once more to everyone who has helped directly and indirectly to make the airport a beautiful part of our community and remain a good tool for future growth. Finally, we truly hope you have a Happy New Year!





Heli Service's newly renovated hangar

**Additional 2022 Airport Highlights**

- NCAA Conference in Winston-Salem
- NC AirTap Class at Nc State University, Raleigh, NC
- Rutherford County Maintenance working to help find septic tank and blocked line (pictured right)
- Solid Waste employee, Stephen Cooper, covering equipment maintenance (pictured below right)
- Mickey Cochran fueling an Army Blackhawk (pictured below left)



- Local group stopped in for a visit/tour of airport (pictured below left)
- Eric LaRock refilling the Jet A truck (pictured right)



Various transient aircraft passing through Rutherford County Airport during 2022



# Animal Control

Each year Animal Control is faced with finding homes for unwanted pets, housing the needy and lost pets, enforcing laws and regulations, adoption of pets, and educating the citizens of the County.

Staff does not get the luxury of planning out our days. If we think it is going to be an easygoing day, we end up working into the night to save numerous dogs or cats and to provide a safe place for them. We are one of the few departments that has to be manned 365 days out of the year. That means we are caring for the shelter pets when most people settle down for holiday dinner.

However our staff is one of a kind. They multitask, work on calls, witness the horrors to which pets are sometimes subjected, and yet they do it with ease. The pets in our care know they are safe and loved. This staff is a family, and when we need help while out on the road or handling pets in our care, we know without a doubt that Animal Control staff will always show up to help. We are a necessity for the County, but more than that, we are the safe haven for animals within our County.

Rescue shelters, both near and far, have really embraced our partnerships and grown in trust. We were able to call for help with a few major cases this year and everyone stepped up to the plate to help.

We have been blessed this year by gifts from the community. Sometimes these gifts come in the form of financial support, blankets, towels, toys, but also, lunch or treats for staff letting us know we too are appreciated.

Organizations such as Best Friends and Lil Thrifts have helped with grants to provide for the Trap-Neuter-Return program. Without grants and donations, this program cannot exist.

We have a few anonymous donors who provide help with costly medical procedures for pets that otherwise we would not be able to provide.

The Senate Program started just two years ago, and as of 12/13/2022, we have helped with low cost spay/neuter of 228 pets! This is a huge step in the direction of lowering the numbers of unwanted litters in our County.

Through our monthly Rabies Clinics (first Tuesday of each month, 9 to 11 am), we have serviced normal vaccination of shelter pets, spay/neuter senate pets, normal vaccination of owned pets, and rabies vaccinated 1400 dogs and cats in our County!

Our goal for next year is to continue to get pets spayed/neutered, and also encourage microchipping. We do that at Animal Control for \$20 for anyone in the public and all of our adopted pets come with a microchip.

## Animal Control Stats for 2022

- 1,934 taken in by Animal Control
- 163 dogs adopted by the public
- 195 cats adopted by the public
- 3 other pets adopted by the public
- 218 dogs returned to owner
- 291 cats returned to owner (this number includes our Trap-Neuter-Return cats)
- 3 other pets returned to owner
- 463 dogs taken in by approved rescue groups
- 289 cats taken in by approved rescue groups
- 45 other pets taken in by approved rescue groups
- 196 pets were humanely euthanized at the shelter

It is important to understand as a County shelter, we provide a service to tax payers. One of these services is humane euthanasia for owned-pets. Many times people cannot afford the local vet fees and come to us for help. It is an honor to provide this service to them. These pets are loved but old, suffering, cancer-ridden and needing humane care. If we believe the pet can receive vet care and have a good quality of life, then we refer them to people who can help. This number also includes stray pets who were hit by cars, dog fights, bad wounds, cancer, other severe illness or injuries and the vet cannot reasonably help them. This number also includes dogs or cats with severe behavior problems when we have exhausted all other options. This is not an easy service but one that is needed.

A very sincere thank you to all who support us in our mission! We hope to continue to make Rutherford County a great place and continue to provide services for years to come. It is the support of citizens and rescue groups that help us with our journey, so keep up the great work!



## Board of Elections

- BOE secured a new One-stop site at Isothermal Community College. We were able to work with ICC to provide a safer location for One-stop by moving the site from our office on Fair-ground Road to the Business Science Building at ICC. Voters and workers alike were very pleased with the new location. A special thanks to ICC and their staff for making the transition an easy one for us.

- Election Worker Training (**pictured right**)



- Director, Board, and staff attended a state conference online in March to prepare for the upcoming Primary.



- Planning Session with Chief Judges (**pictured left**)
- Performed Primary Election in May with a 21.7 % turnout with 9,908 ballots cast.
- Sample audit of Primary Election results was conducted on May 23, 2022 with 100% accuracy.
- In July, Director Dawn Lovelace successfully completed Certified Elections Director exam. This exam is required by NC State Board to be completed within three years of appointment as director.

- In August Director, Board and staff attended a State Conference online due to COVID to prepare for the General Election.

- Voter Outreach with Reaching ROCO at ICC (**pictured right**)



- Performed General Election in November with 50.61% county turnout with 23,591 ballots cast.
- Sample audit of General Election was conducted on November 14, 2022 with 100% accuracy (**pictured below left**)
- On Dec. 13, 2022, Rutherford County participated in a pilot program to conduct a Risk Limiting Audit of the General Election. Rutherford County and eight other counties were selected to perform the pilot program. The pilot program will help determine if NC will add this type of audit for all of NC in the future.

- Board Members certified election results at Canvass (**pictured below right**)



## Building Inspections



Total permits issued were 2,700, totaling \$123.2 mil of work being done in Rutherford County (excluding the Town of Forest City), and \$551,000 in permit fees. We had 220 new house starts with \$204,000 in permit fees, which is 37% of our total revenue.

Some of our larger commercial projects include:

- LL Assisted Living-32,000 sf, 45 unit
- Hobby Lobby at the former Transit Damaged Freight location
- Two new Dollar Generals built and opened
- Yogi Bear Campground officially finished the build-out of their RV park/campground except for the alpine railway coaster. Two of our inspectors went to their end-of-project celebration.
- Approximately 13,000 total inspections, including Lake Lure/Chimney Rock area at 29 percent, almost always our busiest section of the County.

Two of our inspectors continue in school. They are required to take a series of 13 state tests to prove competence in each of four fields. Jeremy Hill passed his Mechanical Level 1 (making him Level 1 across the board) and Plumbing Level 2 this year; Lee Pace passed his Electrical Level 2 this year.

Two of our inspectors received tenure awards: Jeremy Hill (25 years) and Lee Pace (5 years)

RS Middle School was completed in August (photos below).



## Communications Center (911)



Congratulations to our staff who achieved tenure awards for their years of service to Rutherford County 911 Communications. **Below left to right:** Tina Smith, Amanda Holland, Laurel Messer, Director Scott Schiefelbein



Emergencies don't stop because of the holidays! The 911 Communications Center staff give up their holiday traditions. They give up time with their family and friends. Many of them missed Thanksgiving and Christmas festivities. They don't stop working. They can't, because they are the voices of 9-1-1. Our staff is dedicated to helping the people who live and visit Rutherford County.

(Pictured: 'A Crew' worked Christmas night)



# Cooperative Extension

## 2022 Horticulture Program

The Horticulture Extension Agent position is currently vacant and our office is going through the application and interview process. Listed below are some highlights of the horticulture program before Hannah departed for greener gardens:

- The Rutherford County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer program trained and graduated six new student interns in the Spring of 2022. These volunteers will be an asset to future horticulture programming efforts and community outreach.
- New gardeners were assisted with planning gardens and managing garden challenges throughout the year through phone, email and site visit consultations.
- Shared gardening education through Facebook posts, classes, newspaper and web articles, and individual consultations, reaching over 3,000 people.
- Planned the NC Foothills Farm Tour in conjunction with Polk County. This took place in October and was a tremendous success.
- Conducted pesticide recertification classes for private applicators
- Launched the Small Farms Bootcamp state-wide curriculum developed by Hannah and other Extension agents across the state. This program is designed for new and beginning market gardeners, homesteaders, and small-scale farmers.
- Developed the Community Garden Leadership Academy to give gardeners the skills to develop and sustain community gardens.

### Master Gardener Volunteer Graduates



## 2022 Family & Consumer Sciences (FCS) Program 2

The FCS program reached 113,308 people in 2022 through the following:

- Color Me Healthy Preschool Nutrition Series
- Adult Cooking Classes
- Youth Gardening & Cooking Camps

## Family & Consumer Sciences Program continued

- Food Preservation Workshops & Camp; Pressure Canner Testing
- Local Food System Presentations
- Food Safety for Community Gardens
- Kitchen Kits for families in transition
- Donation Station
- Farm-to-Pantry
- Food Council
- Caregiver Education
- Health Fairs
- Educational Articles
- Volunteer Training

## Kids and Chefs



## 2022 Expanded Food/Nutrition Education Program

This year, we welcomed a brand new position to Rutherford Cooperative Extension. EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program) offers free nutrition classes to help families and youth cook healthy meals at home, be more active, save money on food costs, and handle food safely. EFNEP works with adults with limited resources in our county and aims to provide hands-on instruction to both youth and adult participants.

### EFNEP Program:

- Reached 3 RC Schools and two after-school programs
- 200 RC students participated
- Volunteers donated 52 hours to this program, valued at approximately \$1,500 dollars.
- Hosted food demonstrations at our local libraries
- Partnered with local programs to advance equity in RC
- Participated in Trauma Informed Care Training
- Established partnerships with outreach programs to better assist our community

We are looking forward to a new year working with Rutherford County!

## 2022 Livestock Educational Programming

Educational efforts in value-added marketing were continued through networking with the Mountain Cattle Alliance, East Tennessee Cattle Alliance, Shelby Cattle Alliance and Virginia Quality Assurance. These producers received on-farm visits from Cooperative Extension and educational materials/advice in the areas of animal health, nutrition, animal handling, genetics and value-added marketing.

Numerous phone consultations and site visits were completed with new and beginning landowners who are planning to raise livestock in order to feed their families and/or become involved in production agriculture. While these producers are in the "development" stage, Cooperative Extension will continue to work with them to help make them successful.



Worked with livestock agents across the west district to coordinate the WNC Regional Beef Conference held at the WNC Regional Livestock Center in Canton. This was held in conjunction with the WNC Performance Tested Bull Sale and participants gained knowledge in various aspects of bull management for breeding success.

Hosted a bull breeding soundness exam day for Rutherford County cattle producers at the Rutherford County Livestock Educational Facility. This has a tremendous economic impact on cattle operations due to the potential for loss of calf crop. A total of 14 bulls were tested for breeding soundness with a potential economic impact of \$260,000 in calf crop sales.

Conducted a Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) workshop for producers in order to discuss the importance of responsible cattle management. The mission of BQA is to maximize consumer confidence in, and acceptance of, beef by focusing the producer's attention to daily production practices that influence the safety, wholesomeness and quality of beef and beef products.

As the state BQA coordinator for NC, we hosted the summer meeting for BQA coordinators from across the country. With around 55 in attendance, all of the country's major agricultural regions were represented.

## 2022 4-H Youth Development

We were able to resume normal 4-H Summer Fun enrichment workshops during the summer of 2022.

We taught a total of 12 classes, serving over 54 different youth in Rutherford County and surrounding counties, with most of them enrolling in multiple activities. Summer Fun topics included: Kids and Chefs Cooking, Arts and Crafts, Agriculture, Gardening, Archery, and more. Youth also attended overnight residential camp at Millstone 4-H Camp.



Our Spring 2022 4-H School Enrichment was interrupted by the outbreak of Avian Influenza, which prohibited us from hatching chicks in classrooms.

We transitioned to "Winged Wonders" and provided butterfly larvae to the classrooms. We were able to serve all 10 Rutherford County Schools second grade classrooms, some Kindergarten and special education classrooms and some homeschool groups. This project served 587 youth.

Our Fall Embryology course included 72 second grade students in 4 classrooms at Spindale Elementary School.

Students learned about life cycles and hatched chicks in their classrooms, using incubators and eggs provided by 4-H.

An 8-week Life Science series was taught to the HARC homeschool group from Rutherford and Polk counties, with two separate classes being taught each week,

The students learned about plant science, soil science, forestry, dairy science, poultry science and entomology.

*Cooperative Extension continued*

Poultry contests were back in person for 2022.

Our Poultry teams (Avian Bowl and Poultry Judging) met weekly from April through July and August to November to practice their poultry knowledge. They competed in the state 4-H Avian Bowl and Poultry Judging contests in July,

The Senior team was selected to represent North Carolina at the National 4-H Poultry and Egg Conference in Louisville, Kentucky.

This activity takes a lot of time and commitment to learn all the material, which includes the following:

- Raising Your Home Chicken Flock
- Raising Game Birds
- Egg Nutrition
- Reproduction
- Diseases, Food Poisoners and more.



Youth participated in the NC State Fair Broiler Show, Poultry Showmanship, and general exhibition, bringing many first place ribbons home, as well as fair premiums (pictured top right).

In early 2022, 4-H youth enrolled in horse projects working on their horse knowledge. Fifteen youth decided to compete in the Horse Bowl competition.

We hosted the District competition at TIEC. A total of 22 youth participated in one or both events (Horses Bowl and Hippology) at the State level

The Junior teams came in first and sixth place out of 12 teams that qualified to attend.

The Junior Hippology team also won first place.



Sixteen Rutherford County 4-H youth participated in the West District 4-H Horse Clinic at the WNC Ag Center in June. They took their horses and cared for them while improving their horsemanship and riding skills.

Ten 4-H youth participated in 4-H Presentations at the county and district levels and six of those advanced on to the state level. Topics included poultry science, cooking with eggs, grilling, safety, and horses.



## County Manager and Commissioners



The County Manager and Commissioners wish each of you a happy and healthy New Year and sincerely hope that 2023 will bring a blessed and prosperous year!



- An Opioid Settlement Funds Public Forum was held at ICC in November. County Manager Steve Garrison extends additional gratitude to Jill Miracle for her willingness to facilitate and coordinate the forum, and to Dr. Annunziata and her team for all their hard work to help set up the tables, chairs, and A/V equipment. The level of engagement from all of participants was impressive and beneficial. A resource document is being compiled with questions and responses that were posed during the meeting.



- Rutherford County purchased the vacant BiLo Building located in Rutherfordton to relocate several County departments (**pictured below**). In the coming year, Rutherford County Planning Department will be working with an architectural engineering firm to perform space-needs analysis, conceptual designs, cost analysis, and more.



- County Manager and County Attorney negotiated an agreement with the North Carolina Wildlife Resource Commission allowing the NCWRC to post signage and maintain and enforce/police the sites.

County Manager and Commissioners continued

- County Manager Steve Garrison said County Administrative staff met with the County Commissioners during two work sessions on May 23rd and 24th to review proposed projects for American Rescue Plan Act funding from the County's appropriation of \$13,019,597. After meeting with the Commissioners and evaluating each proposal, staff are presenting an ARPA Project Funding Plan that includes the following:

Concord Water System - \$426,900 for a water infrastructure improvement project.

PANGAEA Internet - \$1,500,000 as matching funds for PANGAEA's NCDIT GREAT grant application, which will help to expand high-speed internet service to many of the County's unserved and underserved communities.

Charter Spectrum Southeast - \$1,000,000 as matching funds for Charter's NCDIT GREAT grant application, which will help to expand high-speed internet service to many of the County's unserved and underserved communities.

County EMS - \$92,697 towards the purchase of a new ambulance.

County Capital Facility Plan-Critical Priority Projects - \$7,906,658 under the Standard Allowance Revenue Replacement General Government Services category for critical capital facility and property improvement projects.

County Capital Equipment Plan-Critical Priority Projects - \$401,049 under the Standard Allowance Revenue Replacement General Government Services category for the critical capital equipment plan.

County Vehicle Replacement Plan - Critical Vehicle Replacement Projects - \$1,692,293 under the Standard Allowance Revenue Replacement General Government Services Category for the critical vehicle replacement plan.



- Rutherford County staff worked with Artfacturing for several months to produce the new branded logo which includes several variations of the rebranding. (One variation pictured left.)

- 911 Operations transferred management and supervision from the Office of the Sheriff to the County Manager's Office effective July 1, 2022.

- The Commissioners approved a resolution supporting Operation Green Light for Veterans. On Veterans Day, county buildings were illuminated green as part of **Operation Green Light**. OGL's mission is to show support for all veterans who have served honorably and to raise awareness regarding challenges many veterans and their families face. *"By shining the green light, we are expressing our profound gratitude for the sacrifices and contributions our veterans and their families made on the battlefield, and at home,"* expressed County Commissioner Chairman Bryan King.





- The Honorable Judge Robert Martelle conducted the swearing-in ceremony for newly-elected officials in Rutherford County.

**Pictured left to right:** Chairman Bryan King (wife Kristi); Vice-Chairman Alan Toney; Commissioner Mike Benfield (wife Lori), and Judge Martelle

## Economic Development



# 20 YEAR 22 IN REVIEW



**SITE/BUILDING  
INFO REQUESTS**

**71**



**EXISTING INDUSTRY  
EXPANSIONS**

**3**



**BUSINESS BOOST  
CONSULTATIONS**

**20+**



**GRANTS  
ADMINISTERED**

**17**



**MULTIPLE COMMUNITY  
OUTREACH EVENTS**

(Including Job Fairs, Lunch and Learn Seminars, Groundbreaking and Ribbon Cuttings)

**Rutherford County Economic Development**

## Finance

The Finance Office had a busy 2022 year supporting the County Departments and Management. The Office received the Certificate of Achievement for Financial Excellence in Financial Reporting this November for the 2021 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). This was the thirty-third consecutive year the office has received this prestigious award and has submitted this year's CAFR for consideration. **Pictured left to right back row:** David Hunt, Greg Lovelace, Michael Benfield, Alan Toney; **middle row:** Wendy Hardin, Frank Shaffer, Holly Kever, Angela Ezell; **front row:** Bryan King and Paula Roach.



The 2022 annual audit has been completed for the County and the Tourism Development Authority. In 2022, the office also processed almost 18,000 invoices for departments and payroll for over 650 employees during the year. The Office continues to work closely with Public Works/Planning to update Vehicle Replacement and Capital Facility Plans.

Our team has also had additional responsibilities as a result of COVID-19: FEMA reimbursements, Coronavirus Relief Fund reporting, and other programs as a result of the CARES Act and funds related to the American Rescue Plan.

With a small team of only five employees, the director is quite proud of her team's professionalism, hard work and dedication they contribute to the office each day.

### Our Mission

Organizes the collection, disbursement, and accounting of county funds, purchasing procedures, payroll debt management and risk management systems. Manages the preparation of monthly, quarterly, and annual reports. Coordinates with the county manager the development of the annual general operating and capital improvements budgets; works with each department head to project revenues and expenditures; reviews departmental budget requests for accuracy and justification of resource allocation and expenditures; works with the manager in directing the formation of county financial policies and in the final preparation of the budget.

# Fire Marshal/Emergency Management

- Total Responses - 450
- Fire Investigations - 104
- Fatal Fires - 3
- Emergency Operation Center Activations - 3
- Countywide State of Emergency Proclamations - 2
- Special events (town festivals/events, statewide drills, local drills, and special funerals) - 12
- Missing persons - 7
- Resource Requests - 70
- Conferences/Forums - 8





# Human Resources

## From the pen of Director Debra Conner:

2022 was a busy and productive year for Human Resources. Many hours were spent on the continual monitoring of Covid 19 protocols and procedures. HR staff continues to work hand in hand with the Foothills Health District to ensure we stay on top of Covid protocols and continues to monitor OSHA regulations regarding ETS plans.

Workforce availability has seemed to increase and the County has been able to fill many open positions. EMS moved to 12-hour shifts, which meant many new hires and payroll changes.

### HR staff:

- Worked with Finance and County Manager to implement FY2022-2023 budget.
- Navigated and worked through a new and very busy Employment Security Commission web portal. This seemed to change constantly throughout the year.
- JCPC began meeting in person and have had successful meetings.
- Entered payroll information for over 650 employees each month.
- Completed 4% Cola increase that was implemented December 2021, 4 % Cola July 2022, and 10% for public safety staff.
- 401k platform changed from Prudential to Empower and we completed training on the new website.
- Implemented longevity pay November 2022.
- Performance reviews for all departments were completed.
- Conducted 2023 United Way Campaign.
- HR staff have worked hard to scan old files and new ones as they are created.
- Completed 1095 information for all employees
- Continue to attend yearly training for Personnel Law, FMLA, FLSA, and other functions that impact the services provided by the department.

### In 2022, HR hosted:

- Flu Vaccine Clinic
- Mammogram Day
- American Red Cross blood drive (pictured in right column)
- 401k seminars online
- Tenure Award Reception
- Colonial open enrollment
- State Health Plan enrollment
- Delta Dental open enrollment
- CEC open enrollment
- United Way Campaign

Rutherford County is extremely blessed to have great department heads. We are thankful for your hard work and dedication to the County. Welcome aboard, Sheriff James Aaron Ellenburg.

## Congratulations to our 2022 Retirees

- Chris Francis (Sheriff)
- Warren Sprouse (Sheriff)
- Shelley Owens (Sheriff),
- Bruce Greene (Sheriff)
- Leon Godlock (Sheriff)
- Anita McCracken (Transit)
- Shannon Patrick (Transit)
- Linda Greene (Revenue)
- Carol Sullivan (DSS)
- Gail Logan (DSS)
- Deborah Toney (DSS)
- Luann Butler (DSS)
- Sharon Messer (DSS)
- Mary Street (Senior Center)
- Robbie Holtsclaw (Solid Waste)

The Human Resource Department was recognized by Josh Dobson, NCDOL, for 18 years of Safety.



CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU TO OUR 2022 TENURE RECIPEINTS

(Photos on following page)

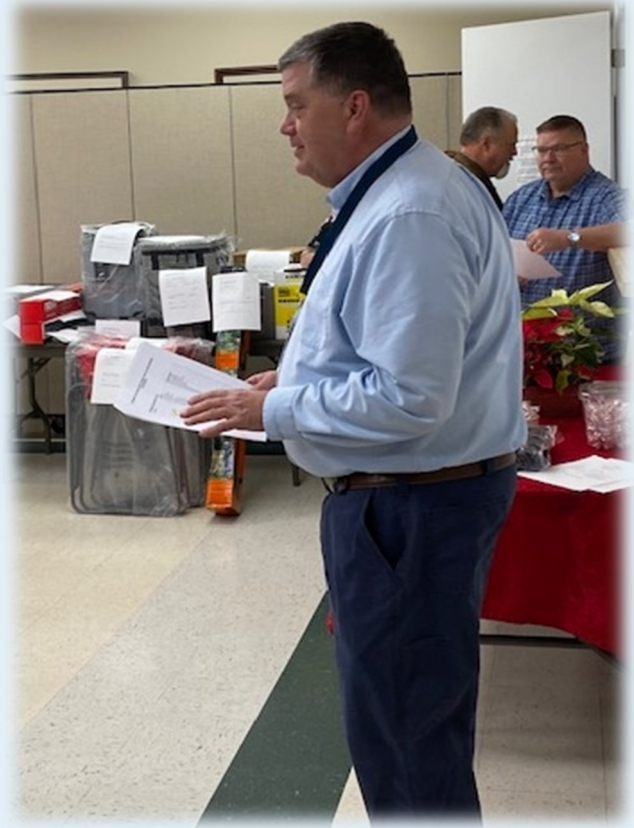
5 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Tina Smith	Communications
	Amanda Stevens	Communications
	Joshua Epley	Animal Control
	Kathy Hamilton	Animal Control
	Lee Pace	Building Inspections
	Jeune Coffey	Detention
	Teresa Snyder	Detention
	Carl McKnight	EMS
	Chris Pietrowski	EMS
	Michelle Elmore	EMS
	Jason Jenkins	EMS
	Chris Way	EMS
	Jordan Sane	EMS
	Lucas Sane	EMS
	Kelsie Hendrix	EMS
	Erika Crawford	Library
	Tamara Price	Library
	Joey Bumgarner	Maintenance
	Chris Holland	Maintenance
	Kevin Hodge	Maintenance/Garage
	Christina Martin	Register of Deeds
	Phyllis Matheny	Revenue
	Kali Holtsclaw	Revenue
	Crystal Blanton	Revenue
	Nathan Ensley	Sheriff
	Dylan Henderson	Sheriff
	John Greenway	Sheriff
	Toni Merck	Social Services
	Summer Searcy	Social Services
	Michelle Jones	Social Services
	Gena Duncan	Social Services
	Candy Owens	Social Services
	Sherry Jimerson	Solid Waste
	Kayley Smith	Tourism
	Rhonda Williams	Transit
10 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Scott Schiefelbein	Communications
	Greg Lovelace	Commissioners
	Elizabeth Sprouse	Detention
	Birgit Dilgert	EDC
	Bryan Homesley	EMS
	Janice Lovelace	Maintenance
	Deborah Conard	Senior Center
	Adrienne Wallace	Sheriff
	Ben King	Sheriff
	Christopher Lee	Sheriff
	Robert Holtzclaw	Sheriff
	Robert Holtsclaw	Solid Waste

*Human Resources continued*

15 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Laurel Messer	Communications
	Justin Splawn	Detention
	Kaleb Johnson	EMS
	Marc Horne	EMS
	Jennifer Wilson	Information Technology
	Brooke Watson	Human Resources
	Stacey Kempster	Revenue
	Cheryl Heatherly	Social Services
	Michelle Padgett	Social Services
	Sherri Gambill	Social Services
	James Kilgo	Solid Waste
20 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Lloyd Hardin	Sheriff
	William Toney	Sheriff
	Felicia Hodges	Social Services
	Kim Murray	Social Services
	Kerry Giles	Transit
25 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Jeremy Hill	Building Inspections
	Terry Byers	Maintenance
	Thomas Kever	Sheriff
35 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Roxie Toms	Social Services
40 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Hazel Haynes	Commissioners
45 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT
	Christine Williams	Social Services



# 2022 Tenure Reception



# Information Technology

Information Technology worked on a variety of projects this year. We completed software, hardware and infrastructure upgrades, as well as installing new equipment in our server rooms and many departments while providing support for all County employees.

Below are a few of the highlights from 2022:

- Hired two new Desktop Support technicians, William (Tripp) Richardson and Ethan Harris.
- Promoted Jim Yorke to Network Administrator.
- Attended demos and meetings for new software/hardware solutions.
- Successfully transitioned Building Inspections software to new cloud hosted solution.
- Deployed KnowBe4, a security training platform.
- Deployed a new Helpdesk ticketing system called BossDesk, and Cisco DUO Security.
- Performed upgrades to the operating systems of our existing server infrastructure and upgraded the hardware components.
- Upgraded and converted our Avaya phone system servers to virtual servers.
- Upgraded software applications for departments.
- Upgraded our desktop virtual environments to provide more resources for the user's virtual desktop experience.
- Transitioned all end users email to cloud hosted Exchange for email.
- Deployed Office 365 to all County end users.
- Redesigned the County website with the new colors and logos.
- Completed migration of all county end-user desktops to VDI (virtual machines).
- Deployed monitoring software for our virtual environments that will provide a more in-depth view to the virtual infrastructure.
- Performed software patches and updates as needed on all computers and laptops.
- Prepared and auctioned several lots of decommissioned equipment on GovDeals.
- Added additional cameras in several locations.
- Completed check scanning implementation at Tax Office.
- Updated all the mobile computer equipment in First Responder vehicles.

**We hope you all have a very Happy New Year!**



# Library

## RCLS 2022 Summary:

- 56,138 items circulated
- 42,248 visits to County, Haynes Branch & Mountains Branch Libraries
- 12,509 reference questions
- 6,124 phone calls
- 127 preschool story time programs with 1,015 story time attendees
- 343 in-house programs with 2,819 attendees
- 28 outreach programs with 1,486 attendees
- 20,028 items weighing 17,750 pounds shipped via 1,819 boxes using resource sharing
- 683 public volunteer hours
- 118 staff continuing education hours
- 539 United States passport applications accepted
- \$30,916 raised via Mountains Library Friends and Library Society
- 9 full-time staff
- 5 part-time staff
- 3 locations
- 1 Rutherford County Library System

Ceramic Dragonfly Vase Painters at Mountain Branch Library



Stuffed Animal Sleepover Mountains Branch Library



Engle hosting Tuesday Tap Trivia at Barley's Spindale



Library Director April Young accepting donation from Duke Energy Foundation, Representative Craig DeBrew. Donation is being used to purchase STEM materials for the new, custom-built bookmobile.



# Public Works and Planning

I can honestly say that for me personally, 2022 has been one of the most tumultuous years I've experienced. I am extremely humbled and grateful for the miracles of a great and mighty God that clearly still does miracles. After experiencing the debilitating effects of a stroke. I am thrilled to report that I am experiencing a full recovery and have a much greater appreciation for many of the wonderful people, freedoms and blessings that surround me every day. In fact, recovery has required working through therapy and personal goals of improvements with deliberate and focused intent which has been difficult, at best, many days.

Comparatively, the challenges of the job have not been without their own set of debilitations as well. Purchasing and contracting in this market while experiencing severe labor and material shortages along with spiking prices, for those commodities that are available, have been difficult to work through. However, with deliberate focused attention, we have worked through the complications on the job, and despite it all, County services continued full steam ahead while only gaining momentum as our department continues to meet the needs in serving others.

In the face of it all, the following list highlight some of our significant accomplishments this year in addition to the daily routine of Planning, GIS, Maintenance, Garage, E911 Addressing, Groundskeeping and more. It is our privilege to serve Rutherford County and pray that each of our elected leaders, colleagues, families and citizens are blessed with a joyful new year!

## 2022 Significant Accomplishments

- GIS completed updates for State inspections of five Fire Departments: Sandy Mush, Bostic, Chimney Rock, Lake Lure and Ellenboro.
- Finalized work required for NextGeneration911 go live scheduled for early next year.
- Continue working on updating the 1991 Addressing and Road Sign Ordinance.
- Katie Doherty finished her year serving as the North Carolina Property Mappers President Elect and will begin serving her 2023 year as President on December 1<sup>st</sup>. She was also nominated and approved by NCDIT/SMAC to serve as Co-Chairman of the NC Seamless Parcels Working Group under the Geographic Information Coordinating Council (GICC).
- E911 Addressing started offering a way to apply for new addresses online via the County's Website and it has already served 174 requests in 2022.
- GIS is finalizing last minute issues for a new GIS website scheduled to go live late December. The old site will no longer be available after December 31<sup>st</sup>.
- New HVAC Controls for two County facilities
- Courthouse
- Health Department
- Property Acquisitions to support upcoming capital projects:
  - 5 acres off Laurel Hill Rd. this parcel will house the future Animal Control Facility
  - 145 College Avenue (former Bi-Lo)
- Renovation Projects:
  - Transit
  - EMS #2
  - EMS #1 (Underway)
- Planning Upcoming Capital Projects:
  - Animal Control facility, staff is currently working with an Architect on the design of a new facility. The new facility will increase capacity and improve functionality for daily operations.
  - BiLo Renovation Project: The County acquired this parcel in November of 2022. The proposed plan for this facility it to remodel and relocate many County services to include: County Library, Revenue Department, Board of Elections and Veteran Services.
  - Courtroom #4: A new courtroom and District Attorney suite will be constructed in the current Register of Deeds space. Register of Deeds will be relocated into the future vacated Revenue space. (Design and progress on 4<sup>th</sup> court this upcoming year.)

## Other Projects:

- Gateway West infrastructure completed.
- Broad River Paddle trail Access re-design, bid/build underway.
- Soccer Complex
- RS Middle historical building teacher housing conceptual planning project.
- Facilitated NCARTS Grassroots Grant Program for Rutherford County.

## Register of Deeds

- Started electronic plat recording
- Started using electronic death registration system implemented by Vital Records (NCOVR)
- Started recording military discharges (DD214) through our software system
- Received reclassification for deputy position
- Received grant funds from the State for preservation of historical records
- Virtual workstations installed

The ROD office maintains all vital records for the County. The records processed and filed this year are as follows:

- Birth Certificates –156
- Death Certificates - 907
- Marriage Licenses Issued- 496

## Revenue Office

Congratulations to Assessor Richard Lawson for successfully completing the requirements for certification as a County Assessor in NC this year (pictured right).



### REVENUE OFFICE 2022 YEAR END

- Assisted 16,727 taxpayers in the office and 19,606 on phone
- Certified 3,139 deeds and transferred 125 properties by estate
- 153 Plats reviewed
- Appraisal Reviewed 3,870 building permits and 7,140 parcels without permits that needed to be rechecked or was at taxpayer request
- 1,794 deeds certified
- Listing is currently preparing the mailing of Listing Forms for Personal Property and Business Personal Property
- Appraisal is preparing to head up the 2023 Reappraisal and send out Value Notices
- Collections took 782 legal actions to collect back-due taxes
- Collections took in \$71,289,021.13
- This year, since partnering with Kania, Collections has collected \$105,472.70 in taxes on properties in foreclosure, which is a decrease from last year but with less properties in foreclosure.
- There was a decrease of .75% in Tax Collection rate for all districts 2021 to 2022-calendar year
- There was a 1.93% decrease for County Collection rate from 2021 to 2022 calendar year
- The current collection rate stands at 67.87% for the calendar year.
- We welcomed to our team:
  - Rebecca Johnson – Collection Supervisor
  - Danielle Tribou – Paralegal
  - Jeanette Devore – Listing Customer Service Tech
  - Jill Sims – Listing Customer Service Tech
  - Morgan Henson – Deed Certification Specialist
  - Megan Beck Seals – Customer Service Collections
- Steve Webb was promoted to Tax Collection Specialist and was deputized on March 26, 2022.
- Crystal Blanton in Collections was deputized on March 26, 2022.



## Senior Center

The Senior Center received numerous grants and funding sources this year:

- \$333,555 Block Grant to assist with Home-Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Transportation, and Senior Center Operations
- \$160,937 ARPA Funding which will be divided between congregate, home-delivered meals and Senior Center operations. This funding can be used through September 30, 2024.
- \$14,535 General Purpose Funds for Senior Center improvements and enhancements
- \$110,000 from NC DOT allowing Senior Center to contract with Rutherford County Transit to continue providing transportation for seniors in Rutherford County to the Senior Center.
- \$50,000 from RHI Legacy Foundation to supplement home-delivered meals
- \$27,396 from United Way of Rutherford County to help supplement home-delivered meals
- 8,707 from NC (DOI) Department of Insurance for (SHIIP) Senior Health Insurance Information Program
- \$5,039 from NC DOI for (MIPPA) Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act

We were pleased to remain open for one year without any closures due to COVID-19; however, we had a substantial increase in positive cases, so we were forced to close again for two weeks. The Senior Center closed to participants December 12<sup>th</sup> through December 22<sup>nd</sup>. We offered pick-up meals for congregate lunch participants the week of December 19, 2022.

September 27, 2022, Dena King, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina came to the Center with her team to talk about preventing scams that target senior citizens. Dena played "Fraud Bingo" with participants to help them retain some of the warning signs. We were thrilled to develop this partnership and plan to have them back in 2023 (pictured right).

Shawna Hensley joined our team as an aerobics and gym equipment instructor March 2022. Her class is popular with our participants. Our membership is at an all time high. We've had 292 join the Center this year. (See poster on following page.)



Received and dispersed 90 sets of vouchers from the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to eligible participants. These sets vouchers were valued at \$42 a set (total value \$3,780) to be used at the Farmer's Market. We held several Pop-Up Markets at the Center to allow participants the convenience of purchasing fresh vegetables and fruit while here at the Center.

### Senior Games

- 57 participants
- \$3, 882 raised through sponsorships and Torch Club
- Purchased new pool cues for the billiard room and new projector, camera and 75" monitors for the dining room.



Senior Center continued

A poster for an aerobics class. At the top left is the logo for 'SENIOR CENTER RUTHERFORD COUNTY NC' featuring a tree icon. The background shows a woman in a white tank top and patterned leggings performing a fitness move in a room with large windows. A large red arrow graphic points from the top right towards the bottom left. In the center, a white circle contains the text '9:30 AM Monday Wednesday Friday'. Below this, the title 'Aerobics with Shawna' is written in a bold, black, sans-serif font. To the right of the title, the text 'Achieving your fitness goals just became fun!' is displayed. Below the title, the phrase 'Get the most out of your workouts' is written in red. At the bottom, a red banner contains the address '193 Callahan Koon Road, Spindale', the phone number '828-287-6409', a Facebook icon, and the hours 'Open Monday-Friday 7:30 AM - 4:00 PM'. A small watermark 'Made with PosterMyWall.com' is visible in the bottom left corner of the poster.

The Senior Center received \$598 to purchase fans from the Duke Energy Grant. We purchased a total of 30 fans in the summer, which were distributed to seniors 60 years of age and older who had a home situation where a threat to health and well-being existed.

SHIIP- Senior Health Insurance Information Program: We have two amazing SHIIP volunteers who spend countless hours helping Medicare Beneficiaries and a third who enters stats. There were 417 contacts made during the Medicare Part D open enrollment, (10/15/22 to 12/7/22), and they saved a total of \$551,448. For 2022, to date our counselors had 663 appointments, saving Medicare Beneficiaries a grand total of \$814,658. A huge shout out to Amideus & Monica Athougies and Lynn Reinhardt for all they do all year help Medicare Beneficiaries!

Our partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP) is still going strong. CSFP is a federal program administered by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food Distribution Division for NC residents age 60 and older. The food items are provided by USDA. The program provides a monthly box of food designed to supplement the nutritional needs of low-income senior citizens. We are distributing 125 boxes per month and 1,590 food boxes this year. A total of 8,720 food boxes have been distributed to low-income seniors that live in Rutherford County since July of 2018.

### Meal Totals for Fiscal Year 2021-2022

#### Home-Delivered:

- 46,639 meals served
- 188 daily average meals served
- 282 different participants were served throughout the year

#### Congregate Meals:

31,447 meals served (see breakdown below)

- 14,925 lunches served in dining room
- 11,738 lunches served through the drive thru line
- 3,918 lunches served at Ellenboro Meal Site
- 866 lunches delivered by Transit
- 254 daily average meals served
- 561 different participants were served throughout the year

## Sheriff's Office



Congratulations to Sheriff Chris Francis on his years of service and retirement. The world needs more law enforcement officers like you, Sheriff Francis. Thank you for all you have done and the legacy you leave for the next generation. You deserve a wonderful retirement and Rutherford County wishes you the best! (Pictured left to right: former Forest City Town Manager John Condrey, Sheriff Chris Francis, and County Manager Steve Garrison)

Rutherford County's newly elected sheriff, Aaron Ellenburg, took the oath of office on December 5, 2022. This will be Sheriff Ellenburg's first term as Rutherford County Sheriff. Rutherford County wishes Sheriff Ellenburg much success as he leads Rutherford County law enforcement (pictured right with wife, Nikki).



Rutherford County Law Enforcement Christmas Party 2022 (pictured left to right: Chief Randy Greenway, Santa, Sheriff Ellenburg)



# Detention Center

## Detention Officers Recognized For Life Saving Actions

Rutherford County Sheriff's Office Detention Officers Sgt. Jimmy Brown, Sgt. Karen Lovelace, Sgt. Brandie Cole, and Ofc. Theresa Snyder were presented with the "Life Saving Award" in recognition of their outstanding and heroic lifesaving actions in the Rutherford County Detention Center on August 22, 2022.

On August 22, 2022, Sgt. Brown, Sgt. Lovelace, Sgt. Cole and Ofc. Snyder discovered an emergency situation involving the overdose of several inmates. They immediately responded to the situation by administering Narcan and activating the Emergency Response System. Due to their actions, several lives were saved.

Their actions reflect the highest standard of conduct for the Law Enforcement Profession and bring great credit to the Rutherford County Detention Center. Thank you for your service!



## Tek84 Intercept Body Scanner

The Tek84 Intercept Body Scanner was installed at the Detention Center on August 31, 2022. Jail staff was trained and certified on how to use the body scanner. The body scanner can detect both metallic and nonmetallic threats, including weapons, drugs, cell phones and other contraband. The screen takes only 3.8 seconds to show a full body image from below the feet to above the head, revealing items under the clothing and within the body. The body scanner is an effective addition to the Detention Center in that illegal substances and contraband have already been found from scans preventing these things from entering the jail.



## Stab Vests

Point Blank Standard stab vests were purchased and issued to Detention Officers in the jail in January. Stab vests are designed to protect detention officers against knives, shanks and other potentially lethal hand made weapons.

Sheriff's Office/Detention Center continued

**DOCC Graduates**

James Cox, Davia Jones, and Fred Holland graduated the Detention Officer Certification Course this year. DOCC is a Commission mandated 174-hour course that takes approximately five weeks to complete.



**Furthering Education in the Jail**

Two officers volunteered and took classes through the North Carolina Justice Academy:

- Cpl. Linda Morrison took the First Line Supervision course for Detention Supervisors (pictured below left).
- Cpl. Amanda Sprouse took the Detention Field Training Officer course (pictured below right).



**Recruiting**

Capt. Todd McDaniel and F/Sgt. Beth Sprouse attended several Job Fairs (NC Works) and hosted a recruiting booth at the Hilltop Festival. The Detention Center is looking to hire full-time and part-time employees for the Detention Officer position.



## Social Services

### 2022 Highlights:

- Foster Home Recruitment and Licensing Specialists, Angela Black and Jovan Baccus (**pictured right**) promoted the ongoing need for foster and adoptive families in Rutherford County. They gained the support of many Rutherford County small business owners to advertise this need.
- LIHWAP (Low-Income Household Water Assistance Program), a temporary emergency program that is available through September 2023 or until funds are exhausted. Call 828.287.1248 for more information.
- LIEAP (energy assistance) funds were made available through April to Rutherford County citizens in the amount of \$603,325.15.
- Building C staff enjoyed Easter fun, starting with contests, egg hunt, and finished with a potluck lunch (**pictured below**).



- Pinwheel Planting Ceremony was held in May 2022 at the Rutherford County Courthouse (**Interim Director Kevin Marino and staff pictured below**).



*Social Services continued*

- Income Maintenance Appreciation Week May 2-6, 2022 (pictured right)
- Several employees represented DSS at the Community Career Fair and Hiring Event at RS Central in June (pictured below Kandi Bridges, Amber Cox, Kayla Fox and Courtney Pickett)



- The World Elder Abuse Incentive Event was held in June with several presenters, including the new DSS Director, Dee Hunt (pictured below).



- Economic Services attended the Social Services Institute in September (pictured below).



- Income Maintenance Supervisor Sharon Messer retired with 18 years of service. We wish Sharon the best as she begins the next season of life (pictured below left).



- Rutherford County DSS welcomed new director, Dee Hunt, this year (pictured right).

*We wish all a very happy holiday season and best wishes for a Happy New Year!*



## Soil and Water

- Received \$500,000 grant for Watershed Project within the County.



- Hosted 500 County fifth graders for Conservation Education Field Day.



- New employee, Kayla Upton, is running our education program (pictured right).



# Solid Waste

## Rutherford County Convenience Centers

- Purchased new roll-off truck



- Replaced power unit at Avondale
- Rebuilt front porch at Green Hill
- Removed ten trees at Danielstown that were a safety hazard.



- Implementing new hours for Convenience Centers in January 2023.



Solid Waste continued

- Drain water diverted in back lot at Danielstown
- Replaced AC/Heating unit at Green Hill and Bills Creak
- Put new floors in compactor and repaired the rams at Green Hill and Danielstown
- Put new or rebuilt cylinders in at Avondale, Gilkey, and Colfax.
- Repaired and maintained trucks

Truck driver, Robbie Holtsclaw, retired on December 9, 2022 after ten years of service. Happy Retirement, Robbie!

**Rutherford County Landfill**

Material	Weight
MSW/Household Garbage	44,135.64 tons
Construction/Demo Debris	10,918.70 tons
Metal	1,063.23 tons
Recycle	2,763.34 tons
Electronics/TV	39.82 tons
Tires	1,254.22 tons

- Closed Old Construction and Demolition Site (pictured below)



*Solid Waste continued*

- Finished new C & D



- Purchased new dozer



- Approximately 1,500 tons of brush ground
- Sold 1,067.70 tons of metal
- Spring and Fall well water testing completed
- Quarterly gas well monitoring completed
- Replaced trash compactor's legs at Transfer Station
- Sent out 16.06 tons of electronics



# Tourism

2022 has been a very busy and successful year for the TDA. Occupancy tax receipts continue to grow year over year in excess of nine percent. The future for Rutherford County is optimistic.

## Promote Tourism Master Plan Success and Collaborations



The TDA has facilitated the Morse Park Overlook, Buffalo Creek Parking Lot, and the Lake Lure Town Center Walkway Ribbon Cuttings. We continue to work closely with our marketing group based in Charlotte, The Agency. The Agency's focus is to promote Rutherford Bound and its cause to the citizens of Rutherford County and surrounding areas. The Agency manages the campaign's social media and facilitates our current television broadcast contract with VYVE and our billboard advertisement with Headrick Outdoor Media. Destination

by Design continues to be the TDA's greatest asset in moving Rutherford Bound and its many capital projects forward. Their team works closely with each town, and project lead, to create site plans, grant opportunities, etc. Destination by Design also runs the main Rutherford Bound webpage where detailed descriptions of each project are continuously updated. The TDA, its Strategic Plan Committee, Board, Tourism Advisory Committee, and Rutherford Bound Partners are continuously working to make Rutherford County a better place to live, work and play, with many great things planned for 2023 and beyond. To follow updates for Rutherford Bound, and to view a complete list of projects, you can follow us at [Rutherford-Bound.com](https://RutherfordBound.com)

## Tourism Plan Implementation and Funding



The Community Foundation of Henderson County continues to serve as Rutherford Bound's 501c3. The Community Foundation focuses on community-oriented organizations and their causes to promote the successful fund management of campaigns such as ours. There is a public donation portal at [RutherfordBound.com](https://RutherfordBound.com) where donors can make a tax-deductible donation in any dollar amount they choose, as well as choose which specific project they would like their donation to be applied to. The TDA is beginning to install donation kiosks at all Rutherford Bound project sites that will provide individuals with a QR code that takes them straight to the website to help facilitate the donation process. The TDA is also working on finalizing artwork for donation boxes as well as informational brochures that talks about individual projects as well as providing a place to donate. These donation boxes and brochures will operate on a rotational basis throughout various businesses in the county. In addition to the informational brochures and donation boxes. TDA staff attends various events throughout the county to help inform locals about all the projects going on in the various communities.

## Maximize Tourism Occupancy Tax Receipts

The tourism occupancy tax receipts continue to exceed prior year. In 2022, the TDA continued its work with Granicus, the short-term rental monitoring program. This program works to identify all properties that are promoting themselves for overnight lodging. The data provided by this program is used to help individuals and companies become compliant with their occupancy tax. The TDA continues to implement and monitor the STR program to keep compliance at a high level and is doing further research on how to potentially monitor individual STR tax revenue. As we go into 2023, the TDA will continue to work closely with the Rutherford County Finance and Revenue Departments to ensure we are monitoring STR compliance to the best of our ability.

## Tourism continued

### Continue to Grow and Develop Relationships with County, Town, State Representative, and Stakeholders

The TDA values the time and relationships it has with the County Commissioners, municipalities, Visit NC, State Legislation, and stakeholders. The TDA attended meetings and conferences in person and continued to present a quarterly update to the County Commissioners. The TDA held two coffee talks in person. One in the spring and one in early December. We look forward to 2023 and the opportunity to attend potential conferences and meetings in hopes to bring more value to the TDA operations.

### Implement TDA Marketing Plan

In 2022, the TDA continued their contract with The Agency Marketing Group. In early 2022, the TDA board approved the 2022 marketing plan to begin in the Spring. The marketing plan included continued use of commercials, new social media content and the use of influencer marketing. In conjunction with the 2022 marketing plan, the annual Rutherford County travel guide was produced and released in early Spring. This travel guide was honored with a top award from the North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA). The award won was the Gold Marketing Achievement Award in the Leisure Marketing category.

### Implement Trails and Itinerary Program



In 2022, the Rutherford Trails Collaborative, (formally known as the Rutherford Trail Committee), put together a priority list for the funding granted by the TDA to implement new trails and begin the planning process for potential/future trails. Several applications were also completed, by different organizations within the collaborative, with the state for state designated trails. As 2022 closes out, additional funding has been granted for the two additional paddle trail access areas – on 221 and 221A, with plans to begin construction in

2023. In addition, 2023 has been designated as the “Year of the Trail” by VisitNC. The TDA will work closely with their marketing team in partnering with the state on marketing and promotion of Rutherford County for this designated year.

### Grow Community Programs/Events

The TDA continues to support festivals and events through a grant application which is approved and voted on by the TDA’s marketing committee. Throughout 2022, sponsored events included: Earl Scruggs Music Festival, Forest City Fireworks, Hot Nights Cool Rides, Dirty Dancing Festival, Lake Lure Music Festival, Olympiad, Hilltop Festival, Great Gatsby Gala, and Hometown Holidays. The TDA accepts applications for events that market to visitors over 50 miles away and draw in overnight visitors to the county.

### Relocate to Rutherford County

The Relocate to Rutherford program continues to be a program that needs attention for Rutherford County. The committee has been put on hold this year. In 2023, decisions will be made to restart or discontinue. A more detailed review to partner with VisitNC to promote RetireNC at a minimum will be considered.

### County-Wide Wayfinding Monitoring Program/Kiosks

Installation of all Wayfinding signs has been completed. The program now only consists of a once-a-year check on the county signs that the TDA will be responsible for maintaining and replacing if needed in the small municipalities while the larger municipalities are responsible for their own maintenance. As 2022 comes to an end, the TDA is in the process of planning artwork and finalizing locations of kiosks directing locals and visitors to [RutherfordBound.com](https://www.rutherfordbound.com) to learn about all the improvements that they are seeing before them. One kiosk currently exists in Chimney Rock Village. There are plans for 14 additional kiosks to be installed across the county. The installation of all kiosks are expected to be completed by the end of 2023.

Tourism continued

**Research and Develop Rutherford County Agri-Tourism Program**

In 2022, the TDA continued to fund Rutherford County’s placement in the farm app. This app allows visitors to get to farms and artisans when they are visiting the county. The TDA also funded the launch of the Lake Lure Farmer’s market. The TDA continues to market and promote the Lake Lure Farmer’s Market, The Rutherfordton Winter Market, as well as Rutherford County Farmer’s Market in Forest City. In 2022, The TDA partnered with ICC to host the Friends of Agritourism Breakfast on August 24<sup>th</sup> and sponsored the “Ins and Outs of Agritourism”, a class taught by ICC. Six individuals signed up at \$70 each and at the completion of the class received \$50 back.

**Enhance and Develop Welcome Center Presence in Lake Lure and Rutherfordton**



In 2022, staff at the Welcome Center greeted thousands of guests to our county. Rutherford County has an abundance of activities to offer, which continues to bring guests from both near and far. With more to offer guests with each coming year, the amount of people visiting our county continues to grow. This year we welcomed Savannah Wheat, as Information Specialist to our team and promoted Sarah Searcy from part time Information Specialist to full time. Each are doing wonderful in their positions and are excited to see the growth of tourism in our county. We’ve had several on-going projects at the Welcome Center this year. Earlier

in the year, a section was dedicated to Rutherford Bound. We hope that by providing information about the campaign to guests, we’ll not only help promote our continued efforts but also bring awareness and excitement to what transformations our county has planned. The patio also got “freshened up” this year with some much-needed pressure washing, landscaping, new paint, and pergola staining. At the TDA we strive to retain a positive and active presence in our county. By staying up to date on tourism related information and maintaining strong community relations, we are able to provide guests with accurate and relevant information when they are visiting.

**Rutherford County – Keep Rutherford County Beautiful**

In 2022, Keep Rutherford County Beautiful was very busy. Earth month was celebrated by completing trash birds and recycle bots, attending the ICC Science Expo, and attending homeschool day at Chimney Rock State Park. Two litter sweeps were held. One in the spring and the second one in the fall. The Trash Bowl took place September 16<sup>th</sup> through October 2<sup>nd</sup>. 18,370lbs of litter was collected, which was three times as much as the 2021 trash bowl. The winner of the 2022 trash bowl was Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy with 6,090lbs collected. Also in 2022, Green Scholarships were provided to 5 students. Finally, throughout the year of 2022, Keep Rutherford County Beautiful worked towards becoming an affiliate of Keep America Beautiful with the Induction Ceremony planned for January 17<sup>th</sup>, 2023.

**Provide TDA Staff with Education Opportunities**



The TDA staff has the ability to further their education opportunities through the attendance of conferences and classes that are held throughout the region. Some events attended by TDA staff included DIY Tourism Marketing, VisitNC 365 Conference. The annual NCTTC Conference, and the annual NCTIA conference. Also, the Marketing/Administrative/Project Coordinator,

Taylor Hardin, was accepted in the Leadership Rutherford class of 2022-2023.

**Strive to Develop RCTDA to Be One of the Leading Rural Tourism Development Organizations in the State of North Carolina**

The TDA Board and staff are proud of their accomplishments in 2022. We will continue to strive and grow our programs and strive to be economically feasible in all that we do. We want to be one of the leading rural tourism development organizations in the state of North Carolina, with our focus on making Rutherford County Tourism the best that it can be.

## Transportation Services



- On May 29, 2022, EMS went to 12-hour shifts thanks to a huge support by the County Commissioners, County Manager, Finance Director and HR Director. We also increased our fleet from five to seven ambulances, and moved to a staggered schedule that allowed us to increase ambulances during peak times. This new rotation has been very successful with employees and with response times on emergency calls. Employees can be much more rested than when we worked a 24-hour shift.
- Changing to 12-hour shifts kept EMS busy with hiring 28 new full-time employees and 7 part time employees in 2022. A special thank you to our Training Department for all the onboarding of these employees and for recertifying 6 paramedics and 1 EMT within our agency. WE were also able to promote/hire Luke Jenkins and Jeff Swink to Shift Supervisor positions and Kelsea Hendrix and Cody Brackett to FTO (Field Training Officer) positions.
- Created a Special Events Team and worked with our local motocross organizations, along with all middle schools and high schools to develop a strong standby event program. A special thank you to RHI Legacy Foundation for a \$20,000 grant which allowed EMS to purchase medical tents and equipment for these events.
- Marketing efforts this year included a new recruitment video (<https://youtu.be/IR2YpLNacak>), a new EMS logo and EMS sign at Station 1. We were also able to participate in several community events including: a public safety Job Fair at ICC in August, HOSA class at East Rutherford High School to run through EMT skills, Senior Center Health Fair, the Rutherfordton Fire Academy, a Skilled Nursing Facilities group meeting, and the Forest City Christmas Parade. EMS is also glad to be a part of the new Opioid Stakeholders Committee as the County works towards solutions for substance abuse in our community.
- EMS thoroughly enjoyed EMS Appreciation Week in May. Congratulations to Christian Mooney for being named Paramedic of the Year and to Paramedic Terri Carswell, Paramedic Jordan Sane, and Paramedic Bradley Lowe for being selected for the Supervisors Awards.
- Capital projects included a full renovation at Station 2 in Lake Lure, have begun a major renovation at Station 1 in Spindale to be completed in June 2023, received a \$252,877 AFG grant to put nine power load stretcher systems on our ambulances, installed cameras and access control on all doors at all bases, and purchased seven ventilators and one cardiac monitor with CARES funding.
- EMS has seen tremendous revenue growth and call volume increases. Monthly call volume has increased from an average of 600/month to 860/month. EMS has also generated \$1,000,000 more revenue in 2022 than in 2021.
- EMS was appreciative of FEMA for sending additional ambulances and crews to assist EMS in February while there was a staffing shortage due to the closing of the rescue squads.
- Department-Wide Training: Airway and Rapid Sequence Intubation for Supervisors and FTO's; Airway and Ventilator training; Culture of Safety and Ambulance Operations; Critical Skills Review; HIPAA privacy training and annual blood born pathogen training; OB and Pediatrics; Death and Dying; and American Heart Association related classes. Basic Life Support / Advanced Cardiac Life Support / Pediatric Advanced Life Support were offered on two different occasions during the year, and online training topics in a special partnership with UNC Chapel Hill and the NC Pediatric Emergency Care Program (PECC).
- Prepared for and delivered four Peer Review sessions that are presented quarterly to many of our community stakeholders to share information and relate trends or identify successes or opportunities. OEMS protocol update approved.
- Staff were able to attend several key conferences and training this year including EMS Today, PWW Revenue Conference, NCAEMSA Conference, and ICC's Leadership training course.

**Year End Statistics**

**2022 = 14,292 calls vs 2021 = 11,450**

Increase in calls is due to both Rescue Squads shutting down the end of 2021.

<b>EMD Complaint Report</b>	<b># of Calls</b>
Sick Person	2305
Transfer/Interfacility/Palliative Care	1859
Falls	1737
Breathing Problem	1104
Traffic Accident	1073
Chest Pain (Non-Traumatic)	762
Unconscious/Fainting	661
Psychiatric Problem/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide Attempt	373
Overdose/Poisoning/Ingestion	371
Hemorrhage/Laceration	358
Unknown Problem/Person Down	334
Cardiac Arrest/Death	329
Diabetic Problem	321
No Other Appropriate Choice	315
Convulsions/Seizure	302
Stroke/CVA	294
Abdominal Pain/Problems	289
Heart Problems/AICD	280
Traumatic Injury	198
Medical Alarm	150
Allergic Reaction/Stings	138
Assist Invalid	118
Assault	116
Back Pain (Non-Traumatic)	108
Headache	70
Standby	60
Pregnancy/Childbirth	53
Choking	45
Animal Bite	33
Stab/Gunshot Wound/Penetrating Trauma	28
Burns/Explosion	21
Heat/Cold Exposure	15
Altered Mental Status	12
Fire	12
Eye Problem/Injury	11
Pandemic/Epidemic/Outbreak	11
EMS Special Service	8
Well Person Check	7
Carbon Monoxide/Hazmat/Inhalation/CBRN	4
Drowning/Diving/SCUBA Accident	4
Airmedical Transport	1
Electrocution/Lightning	1
<b>Total Calls for 2022</b>	<b>14,292</b>

**Forest City Christmas Parade**





Transportation Services continued



- Operations Manager Kaleb Johnson, former Medical Director Dr. Bobby England, and Director Kerry Giles working at the East Rutherford football game (pictured left)
- FTO Cody Brackett working a football game at Chase High School (pictured right)



- Received the AFG grant from Congressman Patrick McHenry (pictured left)
- Paramedic Evie Bates, AEMT Hannah Barnwell, Paramedic Lucas Sane, EMT Darius Marcengill, and Paramedic Greg Walker (pictured right)



- Paramedic of the Year Christian Mooney with Operations Manager Kaleb Johnson (pictured left)
- ICC Public Safety Job Fair with AEMT Hannah Barnwell and EMT Chase Watson (pictured right)



- Rutherfordton Fire Academy with Paramedic Ashley Hudson and Paramedic Jessica Hoyle (pictured above)
- Paramedic Terri Carswell responding to a call on Thermal Belt Rail Trail (pictured right)





- **Retirements and New Hires:** In 2022, we wished both Anita Campbell and Shannon Patrick happy retirements. Both had committed well over 20 years each to Rutherford County Transit. We are happy to welcome Kyle Conner, who took over Anita’s responsibilities, and Candace McDonald, who started December 12<sup>th</sup> in Shannon’s position. Transit was also able to hire nine part-time drivers in 2022.

- Transit recognized 13 drivers that went the entire year 2021 without any at-fault incidents or accidents. These 13 drivers represent 66 years of cumulative safe driving. They are Pat Allen, Pete Bridges, Sandy Bumgarner, John Carver, Scott Davis, Christy Dysart, Joe Freeman, Danny McFarland, Mary Mock-Higgins, Bill Morris, Bob Nelson, Michael Shipp, and Rhonda Williams. Our drivers drive over 200,000 miles each year with most of these miles local.
- **RAISE Grant:** The County and the towns of Rutherfordton and Spindale have been awarded a multi-million dollar Raise Grant. This is a Federal Grant given to towns and communities for the improvement and betterment of streets to help improve access for motorists and pedestrians and to spur economic development along those streets. The plan is a major road improvement from Maple St. in Rutherfordton along Charlotte Rd and through Spindale to Oakland Rd. Transit will move four (4) of our Tri-City Xpress bus shelters to be located along this improved roadway with actual pull offs from the roadway to a bus stop with a bus shelter. This will provide a much safer boarding point and improve our visibility as these four stops would be on a busy corridor between the towns.
- Capital investments included Transit purchasing new Bluetooth headsets for all Transit drivers. A new repeater for our vehicle radios was purchased. Transit was also able to move back into their offices after an extensive renovation which included increasing the size of kitchen/meeting room, new cabinets and countertops, new appliances, replacing of all flooring, ceiling tiles, new overhead insulation, and fresh paint.
- Training opportunities included: UNC-School of Government class on Unemployment Law, NCPTA annual conference, 4-hour online training on ADA in Transportation provided by NCSU-ITRE, and a 2-day Transit Visioning Workshop with NCDOT-IMD. Monthly Safety Training for drivers this year included: Inclement Weather and Radio Procedures, Illegal Drug Use, General Security Awareness, Human Trafficking, Active Shooter Awareness training provided by Department Homeland Security, First Aid & CPR certification, Blood Borne Pathogens, RR Crossing, Sudden Brake Failure, Sudden Tire Blowout, Breakdown Procedures, ADA Sensitivity, Customer Service, Title VI, HIPAA Training, and Defensive Driving.
- **Special Events:** Transit provided two vehicles to ICC BLET for their training. They were demonstrating new techniques for entering larger passenger vehicles in emergency situations. Transit also provided shuttle service to EDC for the groundbreaking of the Love’s Truck-Stop and for Trooper Horton’s funeral service.
- Transit provided free employment transportation to county residents going to work inside the county.
- Transit provided free transportation to anyone going for cancer treatments or needed a ride to the grocery store or food pantry. This included free transportation to citizens to Chase Corner Ministries for free food on every Wednesday. This service was made possible through a grant from the RHI Legacy Foundation.

Year End Statistics	2021	2022
Total Miles	355,199	392,863
Total Trips	37,533	49,257
Total Unduplicated Passengers	660	692

Transportation Services continued

- Transit providing event shuttle service
- Retirees Shannon Patrick and Anita Campbell with Director Kerry Giles



- Safe Drivers: Pat Allen, Pete Bridges, Sandy Bumgarner, John Carver, Scott Davis, Christy Dysart, Joe Freeman, Danny McFarland, Mary Mock-Higgins, Bill Morris, Bob Nelson, Michael Shipp, and Rhonda Williams



- Annual Thanksgiving Luncheon



- Transit facility renovations



- March 18, 2022 proclaimed Public Transit Operations Appreciation Day by Governor Cooper



## Veteran Services

- Veteran Services' partnership program completed its fifth year and continues to grow and aid the veterans of our county.
- Monthly socials on the third Thursday of every month
- Provide food on a regular basis and as needs arise
- In March, Jennifer Fowler joined our staff as Veteran Service Officer. She completed VSO training through the North Carolina Department of Military and Veteran Affairs. She is now accredited and in the process of getting her credentials through the VA (pictured right).
- Recent Federal legislation has made more veterans eligible for benefits. This has caused an increase in cliental. Veterans are encouraged to reach out to our office and find out if they are eligible for benefits.
- In September, we held our 6<sup>th</sup> Annual End of Summer Bash. Approximately 70 veterans were in attendance Every veteran received a T-shirt and drawings were held for prizes donated by community businesses.



- Director Susan Hall attended the State in-person conference in October in Concord, NC (pictured left).
- American Legion 74, Marine Corp League. and DAV provided turkeys and hams for our Thanksgiving and Christmas meal boxes. They American Legion donates food each week to the food pantry. Food donations were also made from the DAR, Facebook, DAC, the American First Action Committee, and Realtors of Rutherford County. Thanks to all of our partners for all that you do to help us help veterans.

• We had a wonderful Christmas party for the Veterans on December 14th. Approximately 100 attended and each veteran received a gift bag.

- Director Hall participated in the annual event "Wreaths Across America" sponsored locally by the DAR.
- We continue to help veterans find and apply for benefits. So far in 2022, new claims won to include monthly pay and back pay are at 2.9 million dollars.





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**County Manager**  
*Steve Garrison*

**County Commissioners**  
*Bryan A. King, Chairman*  
*Alan Toney, Vice Chairman*  
*Michael Benfield, Commissioner*  
*David Hunt, Commissioner*  
*Greg Lovelace, Commissioner*

**County Office**  
*Hazel Haynes, Clerk to Board*  
*Kim Aldridge, Deputy Clerk*  
*Richard Williams, County Attorney*

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