

RUTHERFORD COUNTY MANAGER

County Commissioners

Julius Owens, *Chairman*
William Eckler, *Vice Chairman*
Greg Lovelace
Eddie Holland
Roger Richard

Carl Classen, *County Manager*
Hazel S. Haynes, *Clerk to the Board*
Richard Williams, *County Attorney*

December 13, 2013

To: County Commissioners

From: Carl Classen, County Manager

Weekly Report Items **Weeks Ending December 13, 2013**

General:

This is a highlight of items from the previous week. It is not meant to be exhaustive but to inform the Commissioners and Department Heads.

Airport:

As recommended, fuel prices have been lowered for a 2 week period, effective Thursday, December 12, 2013. Jet A, after tax, has been lowered to \$4.70. 100LL, after tax, has been lowered to \$5.25. Prices are scheduled to return to regular rate on January 1, 2014 and/or adjusted accordingly. Prepaid customers purchased 833 gallons Jet A and 306 gallons of 100LL fuel.

Board of Elections:

This week the elections office has worked on bills for the towns for the municipal election and the Director spoke to the Leadership Rutherford Class. Staff, on Wednesday, enjoyed the annual lunch and shopping for a child that is served by DSS. We love being Santa and helping out a child instead of giving gifts to each other.

Building Inspections:

Building Inspections issued 31 permits including a permit for a new Subway restaurant in Sandy Mush and inspectors conducted 95 inspections. The Director has participated in several meetings including additional work at the airport for tree removal and several complaint investigations. Our new inspector, Aubrey Clay, received his Level II probationary certificates in all 5 trades this week.

Clerk to the Board:

The County Commissioners' Office is beginning preparation for the County Commissioners' meeting to be held on January 6. There is an early deadline for the agenda which is December 18 due to the Christmas holidays. Commissioners participated in the Tenure Awards on Thursday afternoon. Commissioner Owens attended the Advantage West meeting on Thursday. He was recently appointed to that board. Chairman Eckler attended the Fire Council Meeting on Tuesday. Commissioners attended Business After Hours at Carolina Chiropractic Plus sponsored by the Rutherford Chamber of Commerce.

Cooperative Extension:

County Extension Director- Conducted a 4th Grade Farm City Assembly to talk about the importance of agriculture to the students and to award the poster contest winners. The Director continues to assist clients with technical problems through office visits, phone calls, emails, and farm visits. ANY DAY NOW, JEFF WILL BE A DADDY AGAIN!

Family and Consumer Sciences-The agent attended a organizational training webinar, worked with Extension and Community Association Report and Planning Committee, and conducted an educational program for two county agencies.

4-H Youth Development-4-H member have submitted their end of the year 4-H project record books for judging. Fifty-six project records were submitted by 4-H members across the county. **Agricultural Agent** networked with producers regarding WNC Ag Options grants, met with Industrial Extension Energy, meeting on Agricultural Tourism linkages with Polk-Rutherford EDC, TDA, and Cooperative Extension, and completed Farmers Market relocation report preparation and presentation to Rutherford County Board of Commissioners. Contact: 63.

County Manager:

The County Manager attended numerous meetings this week after being stranded on Monday in a snow storm following a visit to his parents in Pennsylvania. Mr. Classen spoke to the Leadership Rutherford class, attended an IPDC Board meeting, attended a Land Classification meeting, met with a representative from Senator Hagan's office, attended the Wayfinders' meeting, and attended a RTR Board meeting. Continuing, Mr. Classen attended a meeting regarding Ruth School, attended a local manager's meeting, attended the tenure reception, and met with James Kilgo and Sherry Lavender on Solid Waste fees.

Economic Development:

This week the Executive Director reviewed public infrastructure needs with the Town of Forest City for industrial recruitment project; made preparation for upcoming Economic Development Commission Board meeting; met with the Town of Forest City and confidential prospect to review an existing facility as a potential location for relocation and expansion opportunities; continued development of information for industrial recruitment projects; obtain proposal for Phase II ESA at Daniel Road; completed performance evaluation for two staff members; attended a land classification study meeting at the Annex; completed and submitted a Building Reuse Grant application on behalf of Trelleborg Coated Systems US, Inc.; and met with Tom Johnson of AdvantageWest. This week the Project Administrator participated in an introductory conference call with a NC Department of Commerce Broadband partner, a fiber provider, and a last mile provider about fiber infrastructure for a business expansion; worked on additional requirements for an IDF Grant application for an existing business expansion; attended a Stakeholder Meeting for the Wayfinding Master Plan at the Foundation; scheduled and made business retention and expansion visits to existing industry and conducted numerous follow-up calls to existing industry to touch base and to offer assistance. This week the Economic Development Assistant participated in a planning session for the annual report to discuss possible articles and to determine who would write each article; attended the employee performance review; sent out public notice, minutes and the agenda for the upcoming Economic Development board meeting and collected and input data for the monthly building permits report.

Emergency Management/Fire Marshal:

The Fire Marshal responded to two searches for missing persons, met with fire chiefs concerning grants, reviewed a new web page on active calls, attended various meetings, and completed additional Emergency Management Performance Grant activities.

Finance:

The Finance Director met with Leadership Rutherford this week and reviewed the County's budget process and how everything is funded. At the Tenure Reception, Diane Hirt was honored with her 25 year award and Paula Roach was recognized for 10 years of service. The Finance Office continues to work with departments and vendors to update files with E-Verify information as required by new legislation.

Human Resources:

The HR Director held meetings to discuss personnel issues, exit interviews, and retirements. Welcome new employees Wesley Alexander (IT). Employees who have left the service of Rutherford County are Gary Mills (Solid Waste), Katie Segars (Detention), Andrienne Wallace (TDA), and Jackie Wallace (TDA). The Director conducted the monthly orientation of new hires and attended the tenure reception for County employees.

Information Technology:

The IT department is happy to announce we have a full staff now: Wesley Alexander came on board Monday and is learning the ropes this week. Trackit has been updated to handle your requests so keep sending your trackit requests and they will find their way to the IT person for you!! VoIP is still plugging along and on track for January 6th. A few training sessions are being planned at the training center for the 18th and the morning of the 19th. Peter Gaulin will be sending out an email soon so you can sign up for those classes (4 two hour classes on the 18th and 1 two hour class on the 19th). For this class we are asking you to send your IT contact from your department. If you do not have one, please assign that duty to someone in your office that your other employees can contact and ask questions about their IT equipment. We need a representative from each department. **Start thinking** about your IT needs for next year. The budget process will begin very soon and I need to hear from you as to what you may need. Our regular IT/Maintenance meeting will be held again next year (which is just a few weeks away), so have your questions together and let's start making a plan. 2014 is going to be another exciting IT year so let's make it happen in 14.

Library:

The Director held a staff meeting on Monday and has spent the week working on performance evaluations and planning for an upcoming Board of Trustees meeting in January.

Public Works/Planning:

The garage had 16 preventative maintenance service calls, 12 repairs, 7 tire service calls and 10 other repairs, with two accidents where EMS ambulances hit doors at Spindale and Cliffside. Maintenance completed 24 work orders and repairs and groundskeeping of all County facilities and grounds. During the commissioners meeting this week, budget amendments were approved for the water paving contracts for Greyrock projects 7 and parts 8 and 9 change order, and the 2nd project of Queens Gap grading award. The Director and Project Manager met on NCDOT improvement projects with TCC and TAC members along with other meetings for Rail Trail improvements, a potential fire access road to River Ridge, Frank West Park Dam research, and investigating a reported illegal mobile home park.

Greyrock Paving for Project 7, 3B, parts of 8 & 9 is now underway. We are executing a change order to add the remainder of Project 9. Project 8 has been graded to about 1000 feet from the end. That project should be completed shortly as the weather clears up. Project 10 and Project 11 bids will be opened prior to Christmas. Project 12 will be open in February and will be the final grading project.

Queens Gap Updates: 1. Project 1 contractor has mobilized and is beginning work. Project 2 bid has been awarded to Clary Hood. Project 3 is set to be opened in January.

Register of Deeds:

This week, the Register of Deeds office had an active week with 408 recordings and collected \$15,703.00.

The Revenue Department answered 461 phone calls, and assisted 234 citizens who came in to the office (7 being PUV). 48 deeds were recorded and 36 were transferred. 7 estates were transferred. Mapping completed 3 splits, 1 merge, 4 acreage adjustments and created 11 new maps. 4 new E911 addressees were assigned. Ownership of 131 addressees was updated. 5 new road signs were installed. The GIS website had 171,544 hits and 107,723 successful searches. Appraisers completed 530 field reviews. Electronic payments consisted of 36 by credit/debit, 150 by website, and 11 by phone. 704 citizens came in to pay at the counter. Enforced collection action consisted of 15 foreclosures. 28 Deeds were certified. Staff worked 154 bankruptcy payments/issues, 5 discoveries, 31 releases, and 2 refunds. 1251 pieces of mail were received and processed. March motor vehicles are currently being reviewed.

Senior Center:

The Senior Center enjoyed several special Christmas musical performances this week. We started the week with a performance by Mt. Vernon - Ruth 2nd graders. Then we were entertained by the Chase High Jazz Band on Tuesday and the Spindale Elementary 4th and 5th grade chorus on Wednesday. On Friday, the Center hosted a Christmas party for the Spindale Elementary Pen Pals. The seniors were able to meet their Pen Pal face-to-face. All of these programs serve as part of our intergenerational program goal. Also, the Senior Center will be closed Monday, December 16th to host training for the staff. John Carroll is providing an employee from DSS to train on services dealing with Seniors, Lori Simpson from IPDC will be doing Aging Related training, and Steve Leatherwood with the Employee Assistance Program is coming to speak about "Dealing with Difficult People".

Social Services: Last Monday, Director, John Carroll and Program Manager, Amanda McGee, attended the County Commissioner's Meeting where a congratulatory proclamation was presented for Mary Cole. Mary is retiring on December 31st after 29 years of service to Rutherford County DSS and 37 total years with local DSS'. Mary will be greatly missed by the agency, we wish her well as she begins this new chapter of her life. On Tuesday, the Director attended the Partnership for Children of the Foothills board meeting held at ICC; and on Wednesday, attended the Community Health Council Meeting held at the Carolina Event and Conference Center. On Thursday, several staff members attended the Western Regional Director's Meeting in Asheville. There were sessions held for Income Maintenance staff, Service staff, Directors and joint sessions. Moving on to this week, a meeting was held with representatives from Smokey Mountain Center, Family Preservation, and Parkway to discuss the transfer of QSAP substance abuse assessments from Parkway to Family Preservation, who will merge effective January. Work First staff attended a webinar about the availability of funds to support the Head Start – Work First Program Collaborations *Innovation & Sustainability* Grants Project. Teams consisting of the county DSS Work First program and the local Head Start program can partner to submit a joint application outlining plans to develop a coordinated system of seamless services for children and families. On Thursday, children services staff; IT Analyze, Ann Moore; and the Director attended a presentation by Northwoods Consulting Partners about software for Child Protective Services. Also on Thursday, the Director and those employees receiving tenure awards attended a reception at the Annex. On Friday, interviews were held for a vacant Processing Assistant position. Several NC FAST conference calls were held over the past two weeks attended by the IM Administrator and Supervisors.

Soil and Water:

The Admin/Education Specialist held a Farm City Assembly at Thomas Jefferson Classical Academy with Jeff Bradley to teach a lesson on the importance of agriculture in our everyday life and present the Farm City poster contest award, worked with schools on Poster Contest and a Computer Designed Slide Show Contest, prepared for a 6th grade Soils Lesson and submitted the No-Till Accomplishment Report. The Ag Cost Share Technician processed a landowner payment, worked with NRCS on CSP Payments, had phone meetings with advisers about out of compliance issues and participated in online training for upcoming nutrient management class. Technician went on landowner visits for possible stream bank stabilization project, access road project, and a stream exclusion project.

Solid Waste:

The Solid Waste Department served 226 customers, hauled 51 loads from convenience centers and shipped 32 loads to Lenoir. The Director met with Sherry Lavender on ordinances and completed all employee evaluations. Four new floaters have been hired.. The Director has met with Ann Moore and Wesley Alexander, our new IT person. The Director is also working on getting an extension for the recycling contract. The landfill has sent another truck load of electronics to ERI this week..

Tourism:

The TDA took difficult but proactive steps to ensure the continuation of our core duties to our stakeholders, despite a downturn in occupancy tax collections. We regret the situation required a reduction in force, as two full-time positions were placed on inactive status for an indefinite period. We want to thank these two employees for their service to the county and its tourism industry. Marketing, PR and visitor services continue.

Transportation Services:

EMS: This week EMS Personnel responded to 147 emergency calls and 50 convalescent calls. Staff members attended a quarterly medical quality review meeting at the hospital. Staff also held a conference call with the billing company to work through some issues. EMS issued an updated press release on the ability to accept monetary donations for “Stuff the Ambulance” toy drive through the United Way. Personnel participated in the Rutherfordton and Spindale parades to promote the toy drive. **Transit:** Transit drove 11,306 miles, completed 1,058 local trips and 81 out of county trips, transported 272 unduplicated passengers and collected \$17,387 in revenue. The Director attended a Board of Directors meeting for NC Public Transportation Association. A random drug and alcohol test was completed. A performance evaluations began.

Veterans Office:

This week staff made 199 contacts, received 92 telephone interviews, and had 52 mailouts for veterans to complete documents and requests for service. The Service Officer continues to help veterans with food from the food pantry. **The TOYS FOR TOTS BOX will be available at the Veterans office until Friday, December 13, 2014. The Veterans Office will be closed from December 22 thru December 27, 2013.**

SPECIAL HIGHLIGHTS



VETERANS—TOYS FOR TOTS

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

December 11, 2013

**MONETARY DONATIONS ACCEPTED FOR
STUFF THE AMBULANCE**

Rutherfordton, NC – The Stuff the Ambulance Toy Drive has started off to a great success. Toys have been collected at Walmart over the past few weeks. The last days to drop off a toy is this weekend.

Friday, December 13: 4-8 PM

Saturday, December 14: 9AM – 5 PM

Sunday, December 15: 12-5 PM

We also realize that it may be difficult for some to get out to Walmart to purchase a toy for a child in Rutherford County. Therefore, we are now accepting monetary donations and will make sure the money is spent on toys for kids in Rutherford County. Please make checks out to The United Way and mark it for “Stuff the Ambulance”. Citizens can drop off checks at the following locations:

- Rutherford County Finance Office – 289 North Main Street, Rutherfordton
- Register of Deeds – County Courthouse (upstairs) – 229 N. Main Street, Rutherfordton
- Economic Development Office – 142 E. Main Street, Forest City
- Hickory Nut Gorge EMS & Rescue / Mountain Branch Library – 150 Bills Creek Rd, Lake Lure
- EMS Station 1 – 339 Callahan Koon Road, Spindale
- United Way - 668 Withrow Road, Forest City

Monetary donations will be accepted at the above locations through December 18th. Toys will be distributed by December 20th through DSS and The Salvation Army’s Christmas Cheer.

"I think that as EMS providers, we often see people only at the worst times of their lives. With this project, it is a wonderful way for us to change that and bring happiness to the children of our county, who otherwise may not have toys this Christmas. Who doesn't like to see kids smile?" stated paramedic, Roc-Anthony Smith, NREMT-P.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

Kerry Giles, Transportation Services Director, 828.288.4505, kerry.giles@rutherfordcountync

