



February 23, 2015

Weekly Report

## A Highlight of Departmental Activities

*The Weekly Report showcases the activities and accomplishments of the many Departments within Rutherford County Government. Click on the directory lists, headings and text in blue to be linked to more information.*

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### Agriculture/Cooperative Ext.

#### Family and Consumer Sciences:

- Submitted monthly news column to Daily Courier.
- Rescheduled school programs due to weather.
- Prepared next week's classes.

#### Agriculture:

- Master Gardener Volunteer Training - Rutherford EMGV's
- Spring Garden School Committee
- Rutherford County Bee School - African Honeybee Program
- Private Pesticide Applicator Trainings - "V" & "X" Categories
- Rutherford County Farmers Market Committee
- Radio Programming - WCAB & WGTM

### Board of Elections

This week the director, Debbie Bedford, has been out of the office due to surgery. She is back home and doing great. She is continually checking her email and keeping in contact with the staff. The elections staff has been busy this week processing voter changes and new registrations. Staff continues to work on reorganizing the storage area.

### Clerk to the Board

This week has been busy as the weather required that meetings be canceled and re-scheduled. The Airport Authority on which the Board of Commissioners serves canceled their regular 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday meeting. The meeting has been re-scheduled to February 19 at 4:30 PM.

Conference calls regarding the inclement weather were held twice daily to determine plans of action.

Staff is working to re-schedule three Granicus webinars that were canceled during the early part of the week.

## County Manager

The County Manager's week began with a "flurry" of activity due to inclement weather and schedule changes. Performance evaluations with Department Heads, numerous meetings, discussions with Planning and Projects, and conference calls were just a start to the busy week. The week continued with additional duties, including several luncheons, interoffice meetings, public relations, advising, preparation for various responsibilities and meeting with citizens. Midweek, the county offices were closed for a day due to inclement weather, but many continued to work, and a special thanks to all who closely monitored the weather conditions and contributed to making public safety first priority. The manager traveled to Lake Lure for meetings the latter part of the week. The Airport Authority Board meeting was held on Thursday evening after being rescheduled due to inclement weather.



## Economic Development

This week, the Economic Development Department reviewed the second draft of the 2014 Annual Report, researched information for an industrial prospect proposal, gathered documentation for a public information request, and met with allies to discuss county wide fiber infrastructure. The department continues to be busy following up on multiple industrial recruitment activities, reaching out to industry representatives to meet grant reporting deadlines, and preparing for an industrial prospect site visit. This week's EDC Board meeting was cancelled due to inclement weather.

## Fire Marshal/Emergency Management

Fire Marshal and staff:

- Monitored weather conditions and made preparations for upcoming extreme cold weather.
- Worked on information for upcoming public hearing.
- Met with County Attorney regarding service district changes.
- Received an emergency portable shelter and HVAC unit for use in emergency situations. This was paid for by a homeland security grant.
- Conducted one origin and cause investigation.

## Human Resources

**Human Resource Director:**

- Held meetings to discuss personnel issues, exit interviews, and retirements.
- Conducted interviews, along with James Kilgo, for the Utility Worker position.
- Due to inclement weather, County offices had to close or delay opening. Attended several conference calls regarding this matter.
- Orientation was cancelled and will be rescheduled.

HR staff wants to extend a big "Thank You" to all those that worked during the icy cold conditions. Maintenance, Sheriff, EMS, and 911 go the extra mile. Thank you to Jeanette Bosgra and Paula Roach as well for ensuring payroll was processed for County staff and to Kim Aldridge for keeping us all informed during this time.

**Job postings:**

- Economic Development Specialist
- County Manager
- Billing Specialist
- Airport Technician

Apply at [Rutherfordcountync.gov](http://Rutherfordcountync.gov) or 289 North Main Street.



Please be watching for email blasts for Relay for Life. The team is geared up and doing a great job.

## Finance

The Director and Assistant Director attended several interdepartmental meetings. Budget packages have been distributed to the departments. Budget Requests are due back to the Finance Office by March 9<sup>th</sup>. The Finance Office processed accounts payable and payroll. Special thanks for all the ladies in the Finance Office for working so diligently to ensure payroll was processed in a timely manner.

## Information Technology

TrackIt tickets closed 59

IT was involved in the meeting on the Capital Facilities project . We held a meeting with various department heads (who's budgets did not go thru the fund 10 accounts and/or had large impacts on the use) about the direction the county should go to upgrade our MS Office 2007. Also, attended a meeting with an ISP company wanting to bring internet to the county.

Staff is working on budget requests. If you have any other needs that you have thought of this week, please send to me by Friday at 5:00 p.m. Something may come to you as you are finishing up your departmental request.

Always remember to use Trackit for your IT, Maintenance, and Voip needs.

The director attended a public records meeting a couple of weeks ago and was reminded that anything paper, emailed, faxed, etc are public record documents and you are the custodian of those records. IT can help you get those records in most cases but you are responsible for maintaining.

## Library

### **Library Director:**

Even though the weather has been extremely cold, the library kept a full house during operating hours. In addition, staff worked on finishing up grant applications to send into the State Library

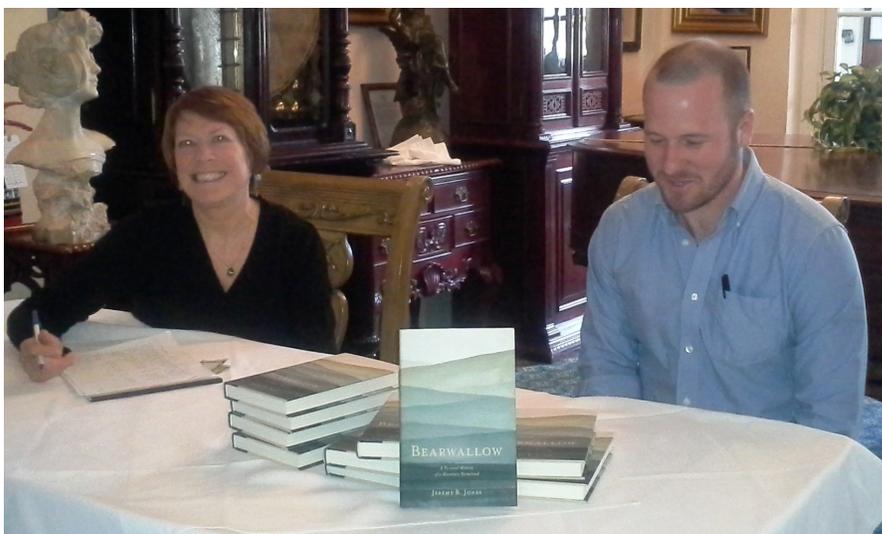
### **Youth Services Librarian:**

There was no Story Time on Tuesday or Wednesday because of the inclement weather, but Story Time was held at Mountains on Thursday with the topic of Zoos and Wild Animals. If schools are back in session, Outreach will be at Pinnacle Elementary. Next week's theme is Penguins. In addition, a new "Wicked Writers and Epic Authors" poster has been produced for the teen "Hub."

### **Mountains Branch:**

Joy Sharp attended the Friends of the Library Books & Bites event for February at the Lake Lure Inn. February's speaker was Henderson County writer, Jeremy Jones, author of the novel, *Bearwallow: a Personal History of a Mountain Homeland*. Joy also sat in on the library's Genealogy Club meeting and discussed a new North Carolina State Library program, RootsMOOC - a free, open, online course and an introduction to family history research in the U.S.

The librarian also worked with local Lake Lure Classical Academy students on reference work for their junior year research projects. In addition, Joy attended a Webinar introducing new Juvenile titles for spring.



## Revenue Department

**The Revenue Department** handled 32 VTS assists. The office answered 514 phone calls and assisted 286 customers. We completed 2 plat reviews, 2 projects, 4 pre-permit and answered 3 Data Requests. Appraisers completed 280 field reviews. A total of 58 new documents were recorded and 24 transfers were completed. GIS created 6 new maps and the GIS website had 187,125 hits and 134,360 successful searches. E911 addressing assigned 8 new addresses and updated 33 addresses with new owner information. Part time maintenance workers installed 9 new roads signs. 9 appeals and 9 listing forms were received and 3 letters were mailed back out. The PUV program mailed 6 letters, and assisted 5 program members. Staff processed 13 exclusions/deferments, 5 refunds and 8 discoveries. Electronic payments consisted of 94 by website and 6 over the phone. Collection action consisted of 137 bank drafts, 75 prepays, and 15 overpayments. Staff completed 12 gross receipts, 15 payment plans, and processed 100 items mailed in. 15 new deeds were certified for recording purposes.

## Senior Center

The Senior Center and the satellite sites were closed this week on Tuesday and Wednesday due to inclement weather. There were also no meal deliveries to homes on Tuesday or Wednesday. We delivered a pre-packaged meal on Monday in addition to the regular meal to be used during inclement weather. Michelle Smith, Nutrition/Home Delivered Meals Coordinator, called each Meals on Wheels participant on Wednesday to verify that they were okay and assess the need for a pre-packaged meal. The satellite sites will remain closed on Thursday and Friday and these participants are encouraged to come to the main Senior Center for activities and lunch. Lastly, tax preparation continues to be provided at the Center by the AARP Foundation Tax Aide Program. This is a free tax preparation service for low to moderate income individuals, with special attention to those 60 and over. The trained volunteers will be available, by appointment only, on Thursdays and Fridays, through April 10<sup>th</sup>.

### **Upcoming:**

Registration for the 2015 Senior Games will be held from February 23-March 6. The Rutherford County Senior Games promote health and wellness activities through athletic and artistic endeavors for Rutherford County citizens age **50** and better. Seniors compete for awards in their own gender/age category. Cost is \$12 and \$10 for a 1<sup>st</sup> time participant. Registration cost includes a t-shirt and covers all the events in all categories of Senior Games. The dates of the events are as follows:

SilverArts	March 16-20
Performing Arts	March 27
Sporting Events	April 2-17

2<sup>nd</sup> Annual Parade of Tables Fundraiser rescheduled from February 20<sup>th</sup> to February 27<sup>th</sup> at 6:00 p.m. due to weather conditions.



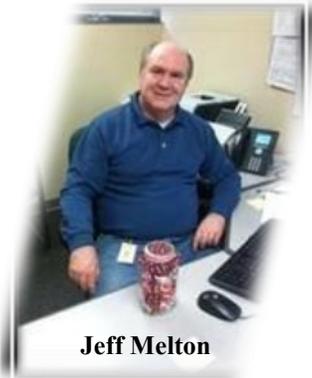
## Social Services

Work continues toward the implementation of the Northwood Case Management System for social work services. The first phase of training was completed last week and Northwoods staff are in the office providing technical assistance. Two social workers from Alamance County DSS are working with the Northwoods Team, which has been beneficial as they do the same work as our staff, and their agency implemented this program in October. The next phase of implementation will be training and deployment of iPads that workers will

Social Services continued from page 4

use in the field to complete paperwork that will be entered directly into the document management system. All major training will conclude on March 11, and Northwoods' staff will be in the office until March 27th to offer support. Income Maintenance management continues to be proactive during the implementation

of Medicaid into the NC FAST System. There have been some delays in benefits due to various glitches in the system, but we have staff dedicated to troubleshooting problems and trying to resolve them as soon as possible. The state has set a goal that all Medicaid reviews be completed timely by March 31. This will prove to be a daunting task that will require much hard work, including overtime for staff. Staff and Management attended an NC FAST Conference Call on Tuesday. Last week, Income Maintenance staff celebrated Valentine's Day with a "Guess the Number of Hershey Kisses". **Brenda Crawford and Jeff Melton were the winners (pictured).**



Jeff Melton



Brenda Crawford

**A door-decorating contest was displayed with Bobbi Walker, Emily Williams, and Susan Epley being the winners (see pictures below).** The Director attended meetings in Raleigh last week, including the statewide Director's meeting on Thursday. The Adult Services Unit is in the training and implementation stages of Healthy IDEAS (Identifying Depression, Empowering Activities for Seniors) North Carolina. This is a national evidence-based depression model designed to detect and reduce the severity of depressive symptoms, and prepares social worker to identify depression in at-risk older adults. This program is being funded through a Kate B. Reynolds Grant and implemented in North Carolina by the UNC-CH School of Nursing. Rutherford County is one of nine counties, and one of two DSS agencies, to have this model in our state so far.



Emily Williams



Bobbi Walker



Susan Epley

## Soil & Water

The Admin/Education Specialist:

- worked on Watershed maintenance information and letter
- worked on meeting registrations and rescheduling school visits

The Ag Cost Share technician:

- worked on Ag. Wrap planning this week

## Solid Waste

**The solid waste department stats for this week:**

- Served 226 customers
- Hauled 47 loads from convenience centers
- Shipped 21 loads to Lenoir
- Shipped 2 recycling trailers
- 16 tire customers

The director conducted interviews with human resources, attended the weekly meeting with Carl, attended conference calls dealing with weather delays, dealt with MSW contract with Republic Services and attended the airport authority meeting. Staff has been busy working on the Edwards house, delivering containers to Shiloh for the old gym cleanup, dealing with the removal of ice and performing everyday job duties despite the cold weather. Due to the bad weather, the gas well monitoring was canceled and rescheduled for Wednesday February 25<sup>th</sup>. **Attached are pictures of the Edwards house work.**

**Solid Waste Code Enforcement Officer report is as follows:**

- Active cases: 7
- Closed cases: 1
- Convenience Center cases: 3
- Community service workers: 5
- Community service reports: 1



## Transportation Services

### Emergency Medical Services:

EMS is experiencing a delay in revenues due to switching billing companies on January 1<sup>st</sup>. EMS has implemented multiple expenditure reductions in order to compensate for the reduction in cash flow. This should only be required for 60 days while the new billing company ramps up collections. EMS will also transfer dispatching of non-emergency transports to Transit's dispatcher starting on Monday. This will allow EMS to utilize software already implemented at Transit. Transit will provide this service during business hours and the Communications Center will continue dispatching these calls during nights and weekends.

TYPE	CURRENT WEEK	WEEKLY AVG
Emergency Calls	179	168
Convalescent Calls	80	47

### Transit Department:

Transit's numbers below are from Wednesday-Tuesday each week. Transit was closed on Tuesday and Wednesday during this week for snow. Even though revenue is down due to the closures, expenditures will also be down by not running operations. The first Steering Committee meeting for the NCDOT 5 year plan will be held on Friday, February 20<sup>th</sup>. Transit also requested \$78,110 in grant reimbursements from NCDOT for capital and administrative expenses.

TYPE	CURRENT WEEK	WEEKLY AVG
Total Miles	7,909	9,566
# of Local Trips	907	881
# of Out of County Trips	63	66
# Unduplicated Passengers	214	238
<b>Total Revenue</b>	<b>\$12,172</b>	<b>\$14,549</b>

## Veterans Services

<b>Mail In</b>	26
<b>Fax</b>	55
<b>Mail Out</b>	16
<b>Phone Calls In/Out</b>	60
<b>Veteran Contacts</b>	118

# *Special Highlights*

## **Rutherford County Transit Recognized as 2015 Harvard Ash Center Bright Idea in Government**

**Spindale, NC – February 18, 2015** – The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation at the John F. Kennedy School of Government, Harvard University, recognized today Rutherford County Transit as part of the 2015 Bright Ideas program. This year's cohort includes 124 programs from all levels of government—school districts; county, city, state, and federal agencies; as well as public-private partnerships—that are at the forefront in innovative government action.

Rutherford County Transit has been recognized by the Harvard Ash Center for the initiation of a grocery shuttle service. They were also recognized in 2014 by NaCO (National Associations of Counties) award for the same service project.

In 2013, Rutherford County Transit initiated free transportation shuttles to a local food pantry by recognizing that even when resources are available transportation is often a barrier. By listening to their passengers, they went outside the scope of traditional public transportation and created a service that meets their passengers' basic needs. Drivers recognized that there was a tremendous issue of hunger among passengers. For years, employees stocked a small pantry to help passengers. They knew the Transit was not equipped to directly hand out large quantities of food, but perhaps they could transport citizens to available resources. Churches and organizations have provided food to citizens for many years, but had not considered that those with the greatest need may not have transportation to get to those resources.

In January 2013, the Transit staff developed a schedule that worked efficiently for Transit, the passengers and the Storehouse Pantry. They created a rack card and flyers to promote the new service and placed them on all Transit vehicles. Staff identified five vehicles and drivers for the shuttle and purchased large tubs to place in the vans to hold the food. Vans could accommodate four passengers and four tubs, thus allowing Transit to provide service to twenty families per week. On January 24, 2013, the free Food Pantry Shuttle Service was launched.

The Food Pantry Shuttle Service introduced a substantially new service concept and fundamental change for public transportation. Transit now looks at services that are needed, and not just new route locations. For example, on February 9, 2015, Transit launched a new Laundromat service available to anyone in the county. Transit will provide free transportation to citizens to one of four Laundromats in order to help people who normally would not have a way to get there.

Transit continues to go outside the scope of traditional public transportation services to provide relief and better the lives of their passengers. They are putting the pieces together to bring the resources to those in need. Citizens have commented that these services have provided a tangible and visible way to use tax dollars to provide additional benefits to county residents.

“The Bright Ideas program demonstrates that often seemingly intractable problems can be creatively and capably tackled by small groups of dedicated, civic-minded individuals,” said Stephen Goldsmith, director of the Innovations in Government Program at the Ash Center. “As exemplified by this year's Bright Ideas, making government work better doesn't always require massive reforms and huge budgets. Indeed, we are seeing that, in many ways, an emphasis on efficiency and adaptability can have further-reaching effects than large-scale reforms.”

***Special Highlights continued from page 8***

This is the fourth cohort recognized through the Bright Ideas program, an initiative of the broader Innovations in American Government Awards program. For consideration as a Bright Idea, programs must currently be in operation or in the process of launching and have sufficient operational resources and must be administered by one or more governmental entities; nonprofit, private sector, and union initiatives are eligible if operating in partnership with a governmental organization. Bright Ideas are showcased on the Ash Center's Government Innovators Network, an online platform for practitioners and policymakers to share innovative public policy solutions.

**For more information, contact:**

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**About the Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation**

The Ash Center for Democratic Governance and Innovation advances excellence in governance and strengthens democratic institutions worldwide. Through its research, education, international programs, and government innovations awards, the Center fosters creative and effective government problem solving and serves as a catalyst for addressing many of the most pressing needs of the world's citizens. For more information, visit [www.ash.harvard.edu](http://www.ash.harvard.edu).

**About Rutherford County Transit**

Rutherford County Transit was established in 1990 and is a self-funded department within Rutherford County Government. The purpose of Rutherford County Transit is to provide efficient and effective utilization of all available resources in the provision of safe, convenient and reliable transportation services, and to facility mobility choices for all individuals including the elderly, disabled, and clients of human service agencies.

*To the Transit Department:*

*Your hard work and effort have paid off!  
A success well deserved, an occasion worth celebrating!  
Congratulations!*

*County Commissioners*

**Bryan King, Chairman**      **Michael Benfield**  
**Alan Toney, Vice Chairman**      **Eddie Holland**  
**Greg Lovelace**

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



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