

**North Carolina Association of County Commissioners
2004-05 Ralph W. Ketner Employee Productivity Awards Application**

County:	Brunswick	Employee:	Tom Bagby	Email:	tbagby@brunscoco.net
County Department:	Revenue	Employee Title:	Collector of Revenue		
County Phone:	910-253-2712	County Mailing Address:	PO Box 29, Bolivia, NC 28422		
Is this project being submitted on behalf of two or more employees?				No	Yes X

If yes, please provide below a listing of all project employees in Number 6. Employee & title as listed above should be for lead team member.

Fair Labors Standards Act Designation: In order for your project to be eligible, you MUST indicate one of the following. If you do not know, please contact your personnel director

EXEMPT: NON-EXEMPT: BOTH (if applicable to team):

1.	Productivity Improvement Title:	Tax Office "MakeOver"
2.	Implementation Date (must be between January 1, 2004 and December 31, 2004)	December 31st 2004
3.	Please describe the productivity improvement. (Please limit response to these 2 pages.)	
A multi-faceted program to "makeover" the Brunswick tax collection office was implemented in 2004. The broad goals were to reverse the declining collection rates, improve customer service, and to do it without adding employees. The elements below do not include the entirety of the makeover, but are inclusive of those that impacted specifically on productivity.		
Initiated a unique delinquent bill for motor vehicles that list all outstanding bills (property and motor vehicle) under the matching name of the taxpayer. This collects more bills with less postage expense. Significant amounts of tax information and ads promoting tax payment were published throughout the required advertisement of property tax liens. This aids collection and actually is free advertising as the lien publication cost is added to delinquent tax bills and recovered upon collection. Bill inserts, newspaper advertising, and speaking engagements were utilized to improve public understanding of tax laws and due dates, and to encourage use of the County Website to obtain tax information and tax receipts. This results in fewer telephone calls and higher collections. The telephone system was rearranged to reduce holding time, and a light signaling system was added so the tellers could answer the calls without the noise of "ringing" negatively impacting conversations with the walk-in customers. Procedures were updated so that every correspondence to a customer, including payment receipts, reminded them of any outstanding balances. Employees were trained to "ask" for and expect tax payments when talking to taxpayers with delinquent taxes. Various manual reports within the tax office were mechanized to reduce labor time. Collector field visits were instituted and all job contents were reviewed, redistributed and focused on both customer service and tax collection.		

4.	Please describe why this project was initiated or what problem it addressed:		
	Brunswick County has been experiencing unprecedented growth. Over 10% (14,000) of land parcels were changing ownership each year creating enormous workloads for the tax office. Additional County revenues were needed and the collection rate had been declining for the past six years. Customer service was below expectations due in part to the workload and the stress that it created. A new Tax Collector had been appointed in December 2003 and was charged with turning the collection rate and the service around. Telephone calls were not promptly returned and walk-in taxpayers waited too long in line. Only one tax collection employee had been added since 1995 and numerical evidence supported two additions. The tax office "makeover" was initiated to both accomplish the results desired and to avoid the two additional employees. This multi-faceted program was presented to County leadership and implemented throughout 2004 with the very gratifying results listed below.		
5.	Please quantify the improvement's results in terms of cost savings, cost avoidance and/or a higher level of services provided.		
	<i>(Please indicate what resources were used to achieve your results, and what was done with the time savings, if any accrued).</i>		
	The County collection rate had been declining for six years. The downward trend was not only halted, but also the highest collection rate in County history was achieved. This added over \$600,000 to the current fiscal year, and \$1.5 million per year by the end of the second fiscal year. For both motor vehicle and property taxes, more than 100% of the levy was collected when adding delinquent year collections with base year collections. The timing of collections was accelerated, producing an extra \$ 8 million in cash flow for four months – September through December. Overtime was reduced during the peak period by 65%. The average time to return telephone calls to the public was reduced from six hours to one hour. The customer waiting time at the Tax Office was reduced from about ten minutes to less than five minutes. The addition of two Tax Specialists, which had been supported by numerical data during the budget process, was avoided, at a savings of over \$75,000 per year. The number of delinquent tax liens requiring advertising was reduced by 10%.		
6.	Please provide any other descriptive information you would like to be considered by the review committee.		
	Employees involved with and contributing to the project implementation:		
	Tom Bagby, Mary Franks, Diane Baxter, Wanda Blackard, Vickie Grissett, Renee Phillips, Yolanda Potter, Teresa Price, Valarie Price Shelia Swanson, and Gina Todd.		
County Manager's Name:	Marty Lawing	Supervisor's Name:	Boyd Williamson

Return by **JUNE 1, 2005** via email Rebecca.Troutman@ncacc.org or fax to (919) 733-1065