



CountyLines

www.ncacc.org

APRIL 2010 | VOLUME 36, NO. 4

Tall order for a short session

Basnight, Hackney to speak at County Assembly Day; budget deficit concerns county officials

By **Kevin Leonard**

Director of Government Relations

Two of the most influential legislators in the state will address attendees at the NCACC's annual County Assembly Day, which will be held May 19 in Raleigh.



Marc Basnight

County officials will hear from Speaker of the House Joe Hackney (Orange County) and Senate President Pro Tem Marc Basnight (Dare). Both legislators were ranked No. 1 in their respective chambers in the biannual effectiveness rankings of all state legislators



Joe Hackney

Please see Legislature on page 13



DuPont Davis

1946 – 2010

By **Jason King**

Assistant Communications Director

Few county commissioners are referred to as walking encyclopedias of county government. DuPont L. Davis was one of those rare people. He seemed to know what was going on in every county and could engage in a deep conversation whether you were from urban Mecklenburg County or rural Gates County.

For veteran commissioners, he became a trusted friend. For those trying to spread their wings, he was a man of influence willing to share experiences and help make introductions. It was Davis' ability to connect with people that helped him become the Association's 86th president in 2002.

Davis, who served as a Hertford County commissioner for more

than 21 years until his death on March 25, left behind a legacy that will be remembered in his home county and across the state.

"When I first became a commissioner, DuPont Davis was probably one of the first people who introduced themselves to me," said NCACC President Mary Accor, who was appointed to the Cleveland County Board of Commissioners in 1995. "He was quick to give you compliments and give you good wisdom, and he was very slow to criticize. I really respected that from him. He became a mentor to me as a commissioner.

"There wasn't anything you couldn't ask him that he didn't know. It didn't matter if it was about another county."

Please see Davis on page 15

Courthouse fire brings heartache in Chatham

Commissioners vote to rebuild historic and beloved landmark

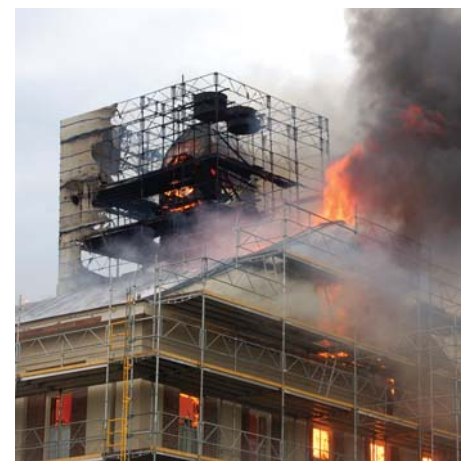
A fire sparked by a construction worker who was using a soldering iron for repair work ravaged the Historic Chatham County Courthouse just before 5 p.m. on March 25. By the time the fire was finally extinguished the next day, little was left standing but the four exterior walls and scaffolding that had been erected for the refurbishing project.

The blaze was so intense, and the damage so abundant, that county workers initially feared the worst in the days immediately after the blaze. But when architects and engineers were finally able to examine the charred remains just over a week later, they found the walls were structurally sound enough to sustain a rebuilding project. It didn't take Chatham County commissioners long to decide to rebuild the courthouse.

"The exact nature of the restoration will be determined later," Vice Chairman George Lucier said March 31 after the Board voted to rebuild. "We will form a task force and involve the community, Pittsboro, and court personnel to help us make the best decisions. Our goal is that the fire of 2010 will be part of the history of the courthouse, not the end of it."

The original two-story courthouse was built in 1881 by J. Bynum and William Lord London of Pittsboro for

Please see Chatham on page 6



A fire rages at the Historic Chatham County Courthouse on March 25. The building was undergoing a renovation and was surrounded by scaffolding.

Photo courtesy Chatham County

A-B-see: We need to be seen in our schools

Changing perceptions about local governance begins at home, and there's no better place to start than in-school meetings with students

April is National County Government Month, a time to celebrate all the great things county governments do and to educate our citizens about county government. There are many ways that we as elected officials can participate in this annual celebration.

I would like to encourage all commissioners to think about what they can do to spread the word about county government, particularly amongst our younger – and more impressionable – citizens. There is a lot of negative attention paid to government throughout the year, but National County Government Month gives us an opportunity to shine some light on the good things that are going on in our counties.

I challenge each and every one of you to visit a school in your county

before the end of the school year. Speak to a classroom, educate the children about what it is that we do, and find out from them how we can better meet their needs. You might

learn just as much from their questions as the students do from your presentation.

A lot of counties invite youths to visit a county commission meeting during the month and allow the students to hold a mock commissioners meeting or



President's Perspective
by Mary Accor

Mary S. Accor

shadow a county employee for a day. These are wonderful learning opportunities for the students.

I think our friends in Cherokee County had an even better idea. Instead of inviting the kids to a meeting, the commissioners took the meeting to the kids. The Board of Commissioners held its regularly scheduled March 1 meeting in the media center at Murphy High School.

Before conducting county business, each commissioner spoke to the students about the importance of understanding county government and of participating in the democratic process by voting. The commissioners also fielded questions from the students. The commissioners enjoyed the opportunity to meet and hear from the students and already announced plans to hold another regularly sched-

uled meeting at the county's other high school.

There are many other ways you can spread the word about county government. The Association has created a booklet, *Welcome to Your County*, and a companion Web site (www.welcometoyourcounty.org) that includes a brief overview of North Carolina county government and activities and games for students. You can view the Association's award-winning video on county government on the Web site and download a PowerPoint presentation to use as a teaching aide in your classroom visit.

National County Government Month lasts just 30 days, but there is no limit on our opportunities to interact with students and to educate them about what counties do.

If you would like to receive the NCACC's e-mail version of *CountyLines*, contact Jason King at communications@ncacc.org or (919) 715-0045.

2009-10 NCACC OFFICERS/BOARD OF DIRECTORS

EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

Mary Accor, President, Cleveland County Commissioner

Joe Bryan, President Elect, Wake County Commissioner

Brian McMahan, First Vice President, Jackson County Chairman

Kenneth Edge, Second Vice President, Cumberland County Commissioner

Terry Garrison, Past President, Vance County Commissioner

David F. Thompson, NCACC Executive Director

DISTRICT DIRECTORS

- | | |
|--|--|
| 1: Phil Faison , Camden County | 10: Jimmy Maske , Richmond County |
| 2: Jerry Langley , Beaufort County | 11: Darrell Frye , Randolph County |
| 3: Christine Mele , Pamlico County | 12: James Klein , Lincoln County |
| 4: F.D. Rivenbark , Pender County | 13: Barbara Beatty , Catawba County |
| 5: Robert Wright , Hoke County | 14: Ken Richardson , Alleghany County |
| 6: Dan Andrews , Harnett County | 15: Renée McDermott , Polk County |
| 7: Robert Carter , Northampton County | 16: Charlie Messer , Henderson County |
| 8: Barry Richardson , Warren County | 17: Dana Jones , Cherokee County |
| 9: Amy Dalrymple , Lee County | 18: Leon Inman , Stokes County |

NACo DIRECTORS

Lee Kyle Allen, Craven County
Kay Cashion, Guilford County
Billy King, Cumberland County
Betty Lou Ward, Wake County
Danny Wright, Vance County

AT-LARGE DIRECTORS

Kitty Barnes, Catawba County
Jo Boggs, Cleveland County
Tony Cozart, Granville County
Owen Etheridge, Currituck County
Virginia Tillett, Dare County

COMMITTEE LEADERSHIP AND REPRESENTATIVES

Mike Cross, Legislative Goals Committee Co-Chair, Chatham County
Bobby Greer, Legislative Goals Committee Co-Chair, New Hanover County
Ray Jeffers, Agriculture Steering Committee Chair, Person County
Chuck McGrady, Environment Steering Committee Chair, Henderson County
Viola Harris, Human Services Steering Committee Chair, Edgecombe County
Hubert Sealey, Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee Chair, Robeson County
Ann Holton, RMP Board of Trustees Representative, Pamlico County
Harry Jones, County Managers' Representative, Mecklenburg County

Executive Editor: David F. Thompson

Editor: Todd McGee

Assistant Editor: Jason King

CountyLines is provided to county officials as a benefit of NCACC membership. Subscriptions are available to non-members at \$20 per year, plus applicable sales tax. To request subscription information, make changes in an existing subscription, or request display or career opportunities advertising information, or offer an idea for a story, e-mail communications@ncacc.org.

NCACC STAFF NOTES

Stephanie Woods joined the NCACC's staff April 5 as paralegal/executive assistant. She will provide a wide range of support duties to Executive Director **David F. Thompson** and Deputy Director **Patrice Roesler**, serve as a paralegal to Executive Counsel Sharon Scudder, and eventually supplant Kathy DeMay as clerk to the NCACC Board of Directors. ... A host of MPA candidates from N.C. Central University have begun internships at the Association. On March 15, **Randy Williams** started his internship researching broadband issues and connectivity. On March 25, **Kenneth Baker** kicked off an internship during which he will research flexibility of e-911 funds. Finally on April 5, **Wendy Cotten** and **Kevin Holman** began three-week internships to collect information for the N.C. General Assembly's Select Committee on Global Engagement about businesses and industries in our counties that have a global presence. This information will be used by the committee to improve legislators' understanding of the magnitude of global economic interests in our state. ... **Thompson** joined legislators and other leaders from state agencies for a "rolling workshop" sponsored by the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center on March 22-23. The workshop included stops in Richmond, Anson, Stanly and Montgomery counties. ... Several members of the Government Relations Team (**Kevin Leonard**, **Jim Blackburn**, **Rebecca Troutman**, **Anthony Allen** and **Alisa Cobb**) traveled to Ashe County on March 29-30. The group toured the county's new justice center and met with department heads to hear

about the county's perspective on major legislative issues facing counties, such as animal control, e-911 fee flexibility and broadband. ... **Blackburn** spoke March 8 on the NCACC legislative goals process and the involvement of affiliates at the N.C. Association of Registers of Deeds' (NCARD) annual legislative conference. ... **Allen** traveled to Vance County on March 9 to participate in a Strategic Planning Council grassroots conference for Cooperative Extension. The group is working on developing several county-related initiatives. ... **Scudder** represented the Association at the County Reinsurance Limited conference in Austin, Texas, on March 10. The Association is one of the founding members of CRL. ... **Allen** visited Cherokee County on March 12 to learn more about county 911 centers and how they operate. ... Information Systems Director **Judy Rhyne** met with members of the Sandhills GIS User Group on March 18 in Pinehurst. The group includes GIS representatives from Cumberland, Harnett, Hoke, Moore, Richmond and Robeson counties. ... **Blackburn**, **Scudder** and Property and Casualty Program Specialist **Michael Kelly** attended the annual AGRiP (Association of Governmental Risk Pools) conference March 22. Scudder was appointed co-chair of the General Counsel Track for next year. ... **Blackburn** traveled to Watauga County on April 7 to speak to a group of visiting government officials from South Africa, who were being hosted by Appalachian State University's International Education and Development Program. He addressed advocacy between various levels of government and the importance of developing relationships with the professional staff who service the various governing bodies. The South Africans are learning about all levels of government, and several delegates were imbedded within local governments across North Carolina to get a closer look at operations.



Stephanie Woods



CountyLines

is published monthly by the NCACC
215 N. Dawson St., Raleigh, NC 27603
Phone: (919) 715-2893
Fax: (919) 733-1065
e-mail: ncacc@ncacc.org
www.ncacc.org

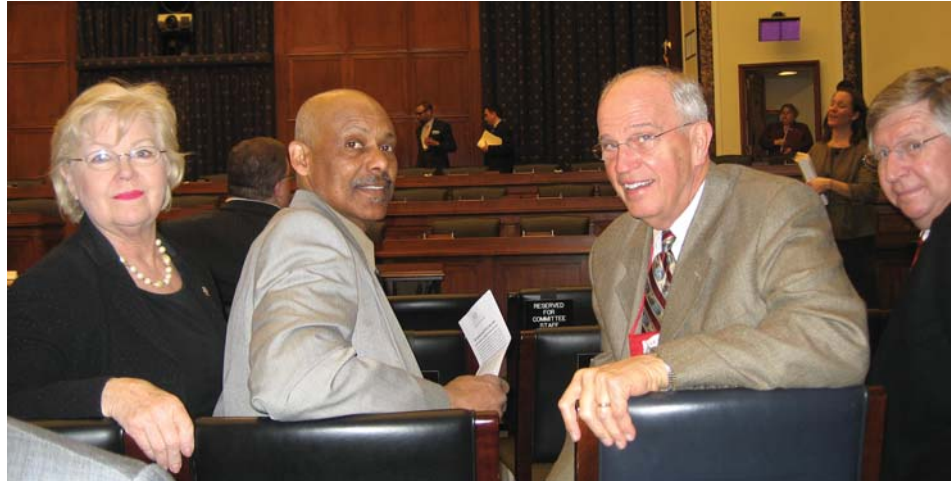
Federal issues leap to forefront at NACo conference

By **Todd McGee**
Communications Director

Considering that Washington, D.C., had just experienced a record snowfall of about 36 inches, the weather outside was delightful for the thousands of county officials who attended the National Association of Counties' annual Legislative Conference from March 6-10. Inside the Marriott Wardman Park, however, there was a definite chill in the air, as county officials regaled each other with tales of budget woes and other local problems.

During the North Carolina Caucus held March 8, Tar Heel officials were updated on several pieces of federal legislation that could impact counties – either directly or indirectly – and also received a preview of the upcoming 2010 short session from NCACC Executive Director David F. Thompson.

Jim McCleskey, director of the Washington Office for the State of North Carolina, said that state officials are warily eyeing the expiration of the expanded Medicaid FMAP included in the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act. Currently, the expanded FMAP is scheduled to expire Dec. 31, 2010. If it lapses, it will cost North Carolina an additional \$250 million per quarter in Medicaid expenses. McCleskey said a continuation of the FMAP is included in President Obama's budget, and he asked county officials to lobby their Congressional delegation on behalf of the state to approve the extension.



Commissioners Kay Cashion (Guilford County), Luther Parks (Wilkes) and Harold Holmes (Randolph), and Randolph County Manager Richard Wells attend a subcommittee meeting March 10 to monitor progress of H.R. 413, which would preempt North Carolina's ban on collective bargaining for public employees by providing such rights to public safety employees, including sheriff's deputies, EMS workers and firefighters.

Photo by Rebecca Troutman

"We need your help," he said. "I don't need to tell you what could happen to your budgets" if the state has \$500 million of additional Medicaid expenses for 2010-11.

McCleskey said that Congress is also keeping an eye on online travel companies, which are arguing that they do not have to collect occupancy taxes on hotel rooms booked through their services because they do not own the hotel rooms they are booking. If the companies are successful, counties and cities in North Carolina could lose millions of dollars per year in revenues that are primarily used to bolster travel and tourism

efforts in North Carolina, said NCACC Intergovernmental Relations Director Rebecca Troutman.

"A lot of money is on the table," said McCleskey. "The good news is it hasn't happened yet. The members of our delegation have been sympathetic, but ... keep talking to them about this issue."

After the federal update, Thompson provided a brief preview of what will likely truly be a short session for the North Carolina General Assembly in 2010. The state of the economy and the upcoming election season will conspire to keep the session short, Thompson said.

"We think it's going to be a tough and very quick session," he said. "The General Assembly will have to focus on the economy, job losses and the state budget. Sales tax collections remain well below expectations and income tax withholding is also continuing to weaken."

Not all was doom and gloom during the conference. Michael Blake,

deputy associate director of the Office of Intergovernmental Affairs for the White House, told county officials that President Obama's administration is committed to restoring the partnership with counties.

"Please don't underestimate your importance to us," Blake said. "We have the opportunity to ensure the partnership between America's counties and the federal government is strong and productive. We are not just restoring a partnership, but sustaining a long-term partnership. We want to institutionalize these relationships, so that when we leave, these relationships will keep going."

"We know that our job is far from complete. The challenges that we face – healthcare, educating our children, the safety of our neighborhoods – all point to you. We need to focus on the next generation, not the next election."

The conference concluded with the annual North Carolina Congressional Breakfast, where 12 members of the state's 15-member delegation, including Sens. Richard Burr and Kay Hagan, took time out of their busy schedules to stop by and welcome their county officials to Washington, D.C. After the breakfast, Troutman led a delegation of county officials to attend a meeting of the Health, Employment, Labor, and Pensions Subcommittee of the Committee on Education and Labor.

The subcommittee was conducting a hearing for H.R. 413, the Public Safety Employer-Employee Cooperation Act of 2009. The bill would extend the right to bargain collectively for better working conditions, wages or benefits to public safety officers in all 50 states.

The NCACC Board of Directors voted at its Feb. 3 meeting to oppose any federal preemption of state laws regulating collective bargaining of public employees.



Alexander County officials placed a wreath on the Tomb of the Unknown Soldier at Arlington National Cemetery in honor of Alexander County veterans on March 8. From left to right are County Manager Rick French, Chairman Larry Yoder, Vice Chairman Ryan Mayberry and Commissioner Wes Bolick. Bolick served in the United States Navy from 1955-59.

Photo courtesy Alexander County



Howard Hunter III



Viola Harris



Noah Woods

Hertford's Hunter announces candidacy for NCACC Second VP; Edgecombe's Harris, Robeson's Woods to seek NACo seat

During the NACo Legislative Conference, three North Carolina county commissioners announced their plans to pursue a leadership seat with the Association. Hertford County Commissioner Howard Hunter III announced that he is running for NCACC Second Vice President, a seat that will be decided during the NCACC Annual Conference in Pitt County in August.

Edgecombe County Commissioner Viola Harris, who currently serves on the NCACC Board of Directors as the Human Services Steering Committee chair, and Robeson County Commissioner Noah Woods, an NCACC past president, are seeking North Carolina's soon-to-be-open seat on the NACo Board of Directors. Vance County's Danny Wright will be retiring as a NACo Board member this summer after serving the maximum of three two-year terms on the NACo Board of Directors.

Rivers & Associates, Inc.
Since 1918

Engineers
Planners
Surveyors
Landscape Architects

GREENVILLE, NC: (252) 752-4135 www.riversandassociates.com RALEIGH, NC: (919) 848-3347

H1779 implementation to be pushed back to July 2013

Champion in Legislature says failure 'not an option' on system allowing for combined collection of motor vehicle registration, property taxes

By **Todd McGee**

Communications Director

Combining the collection of property taxes due on a motor vehicle with the registration renewal doesn't sound all that complicated. But the technology specialists charged with creating the new system have run into more problems than they knew existed when the idea was approved by legislators nearly five years ago.

At a recent meeting between representatives of the NCACC, N.C. League of Municipalities, the departments of Revenue and Transportation, the Division of Motor Vehicles and Rep. Dale Folwell, it was decided that the implementation of H1779 needs to be delayed until July 2013.

The bill, sponsored by Rep. Folwell, passed both the House and Senate unanimously in 2005. It calls for the combined collection of property taxes on a motor vehicle and fees for license plate renewal.

Last year, the DOT hired consultants to begin building the database needed to implement the new law. These consultants worked closely with local tax officials across the state, including Pete Rodda of Forsyth County and Stan Duncan of Henderson County, to make sure the new

system addressed all county concerns.

What the consultants found was that counties employ a variety of methods to determine addresses for taxpayers. The ability to link these addresses with those contained in the DMV database proved problematic. If the new computer system cannot accurately determine in which jurisdiction(s) an automobile resided, it will not be able to generate the tax bill needed for the combined system.

In addition, there are ongoing technical issues with the DMV's current computer system, which includes problems arising with the new program that links the inspection with the renewal. Add in the likelihood that DMV is going to need an entirely new computer system in a few years, and officials in the state agencies decided it is prudent and reasonable to reconsider the design of the new system to ensure compatibility and the integrity of the system.

"We are disappointed in the delay, but we recognize how important it is for this system to fully function when it is implemented," said NCACC Executive Director David F. Thompson. "It doesn't make sense to spend a lot of money to design a system that will have to be replaced in a few years when the DMV

gets a new computer system.

"The delay does not in any way negate the tremendous effort put forth by county, Property Tax Division, DOT and DMV staff over the past two years in designing the new system. We will continue to work with all parties to ensure that this system is a resounding success."

Transportation Secretary Gene Conti and Revenue Secretary Kenneth Lay met in early March and decided it was prudent to halt the ongoing work and seek a two-year extension – to July 1, 2013 – of the implementation deadline. Rep. Folwell, who doggedly pursued passage of the bill and has been a driving force behind implementation of the plan, agreed with the decision to seek a delay. The system was originally scheduled for a July 1, 2009, implementation, and had already been delayed to July 1, 2011.

"This additional time will allow for a comprehensive solution to be developed that will address all concerns and will fully integrate with the new DMV computer system," said Rep. Folwell. "This system is designed to keep up with all the other states that have gone to this type of program and, more importantly, rewards the citizens of North Carolina who are trying to do the right thing as

well as saving counties and cities money and time. This new system will be better, faster and cheaper.

"Failure is not an option. If the new system failed, it would jeopardize the registration and property tax collection of 30,000 vehicles per day."

All parties involved are in agreement in seeking the delay, and all remain committed to this concept.

North Carolina is the only state that collects motor vehicle property taxes in arrears, which results in a very low collection rate for many counties. In 2007-08, the statewide property tax collection rate for motor vehicles was 87.2 percent.

When implemented, this combined system should help counties, cities and fire districts improve their motor vehicle property tax collections and could result in as much as \$80 million in additional property tax collections per year.

"With the difficult budget times that counties are now facing, this program is even more important," said Thompson. "This new program will not only improve counties' tax collections on motor vehicles, but it will also speed up the collection, resulting in more resources for counties to meet the challenges of our growing state."



LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS

Academy

Strategic Leadership Education for County and Municipal Elected Officials

Essentials of Economic Development

MAY 12, 2010 CULLOWHEE

This course provides an opportunity to learn about promising strategies for promoting economic development, even in the face of tight budgets. Scholarships are available for local elected officials.

Visit www.sog.unc.edu/courses/0772/, or contact Carla Stowe at cstowe@sog.unc.edu or 919.843.8176.

Delivering Bad News: How to Help Citizens Understand the Realities of Tough Economic Times

MAY 20, 2010 12-1:30 PM

This 90-minute webinar, led by communications advisor Mark Weaver, will help elected officials and public administrators learn to communicate about economic challenges facing local governments.

Visit www.sog.unc.edu/courses/1204/, or contact Susan Jensen at sjensen@sog.unc.edu or 919.962.0940.

Collective Bargaining: A Beginner's Guide

MAY 21, 2010 WILMINGTON

A bill to require cities and counties to engage in collective bargaining with law enforcement, fire, and EMS unions is pending right now in Congress. This would be a major change for North Carolina.

If you are interested in learning more about this proposed legislation and its possible impact on local governments, please join us at an upcoming half-day program to discuss 10 basic questions related to collective bargaining.

To register, visit www.sog.unc.edu/courses/0391/, or contact Lisa Sheffield at sheffield@sog.unc.edu or 919.962.3464.

Visit www.lela.unc.edu for an up-to-date calendar of educational programs offered through the Local Elected Leaders Academy. To learn more, contact Donna Warner at 919.962.1575 or warner@sog.unc.edu.

Medicaid waiver program wields big impact for LMEs

The North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services is cautiously moving forward with a plan to expand a waiver program that has demonstrated significant success for one Local Management Entity (LME).

The 1915 waiver program, which references a section of the federal Medicaid law, changes how most LMEs are configured and the types of services that they provide. The program is one of two changes being implemented by DHHS to the community mental health system to improve accountability, ensure medical necessity, and increase service use and cost oversight. Although to a lesser extent than the waiver program, the CABHA (Critical Access Behavioral Health Agency) model also has widespread financial and governance implications for counties.

The Association hosted a conference call March 18 for county managers, assistant managers and finance officers with DHHS Assistant Secretary Michael Watson and MH/DD/SAS Division Director Leza Wainwright to enable county officials to learn more about the initiatives.

Piedmont Behavioral Health LME, which is now known as PBH and is made up of Cabarrus, Davidson, Rowan, Stanly and Union counties, has been operating under a 1915 waiver since 2005. Based on its success with service performance and costs, the General Assembly and its Joint Legislative Oversight Commission on Mental Health/Developmental Disabilities/Substance Abuse Services have

been pushing expansion of the waiver program.

DHHS sent out a Request for Applications in seeking one or two areas to be included in the waiver model, and four LMEs responded: East Carolina Behavioral Health, Mecklenburg County MH/DD/SAS, Sandhills Center for MH/DD/SAS, and Western Highlands Network. DHHS officials sought LMEs with a minimum of 70,000 Medicaid eligible citizens in their service area – a requirement that six LMEs currently meet. DHHS intends to award one or two 1915 waivers in July, with start-up dates planned for next January.

Plans call for the waiver model to be expanded throughout the entire state over the next several years. This process will reduce the number of LMEs through consolidation to meet the minimum population threshold.

The 1915 waiver allows the LME to waive some of the requirements for Medicaid. It establishes a managed care system for community mental health by combining services for all Medicaid eligibles into a single capitated funding model. Under this model, a qualifying LME would receive a fixed payment rate per Medicaid eligible member per month (pmpm) to pay for oversight, coordination and payment of all Medicaid mental health services in its counties.

New LME responsibilities include authorizing the payment for services, processing and paying claims, conducting care utilization and quality management

functions, and developing and overseeing a closed network of service providers.

The capitated rate is based on historically driven service costs, and any increases in Medicaid eligible caseloads would be covered by the “pmpm” rate. Should actual service use and costs fall below this rate, the LME can retain the excess funds for investment in non-Medicaid services. If actual costs exceed the funds generated by the capitated rate, the LME is financially liable for assuring that Medicaid consumers continue to receive Medicaid-eligible services.

One concern that county officials expressed during the conference call is that if an LME is dissolved and its fund balances do not satisfy its total indebtedness, remaining debts are apportioned to its member counties. This transfers financial risk to LMEs and, indirectly, to member counties.

DHHS requires each participating LME to create a risk reserve and to build reserve assets to at least 16 percent of the capitation budget. The department will provide an incentive of 2 percent of capitation each year to the qualifying LMEs to help build their risk reserve, and officials recommend that these LMEs purchase stop loss insurance as well.

LMEs must be fully divested of services, must have been fully accredited for three years, must meet single-stream funding requirements, and must have a letter of support from the full LME board that is assuming the financial responsibility.

The new CABHA provider model is

being implemented for frequently used services and for new services that will replace community support services in 2010-11. CABHA requires providers to offer services such as case management and day treatment as core services, plus at least two enhanced services such as intensive in-home and community support teams. A qualifying agency must have a medical director, a clinical director and a quality management/staff training director. CABHA providers must also be nationally accredited for at least three years.

The purpose of the CABHA model is to establish a strong clinical foundation for community mental health services, requiring medical necessity for service utilization. Currently, more than 600 separate providers offer the range of CABHA services, although many offer only one of the enhanced services needed to qualify for CABHA status.

DHHS officials anticipate fewer numbers of qualified providers upon full CABHA implementation next fiscal year but expect service quality to markedly increase. Counties – particularly those at the far ends of the state – have expressed concerns that there may not be a CABHA provider located in every county. DHHS officials concede that this will likely be the case, although they point out that a CABHA can be located in any county and serve every county in its geographical region.

The department is conducting a certification process to identify providers that will qualify for the CABHA status.

School of Government makes available ‘Model Code of Ethics’

“A Model Code of Ethics for North Carolina Local Elected Officials” is now available for purchase through the School of Government’s Web site. The publication, developed by the SOG, NCACC and N.C. League of Municipalities, is intended to help local elected boards and their staffs develop codes of ethics that meet the requirements of state law.

In 2009, the North Carolina General Assembly passed a law requiring all North Carolina counties, cities, unified governments, local boards of education, sanitary districts and consolidated city-counties to adopt by Jan. 1, 2011, a resolution or policy containing a code of ethics to guide actions by the governing board members in the performance of their official duties as members of that governing board.

The publication includes a model code with optional provisions, as well as commentary and discussion questions that boards are encouraged to use in developing and interpreting their own codes. The book is designed to be clear and unambiguous, simple, and easy to read and use.

As of early April, the 69-page publication was available for purchase (\$30) and download as a PDF. The SOG is also accepting advance orders for the hard copy publication, which is scheduled to

become available by the end of April.

For details and/or to purchase a copy, visit www.sog.unc.edu, click on the “Publications” link at the top of the page and enter the publication title in the search

field.

There are several opportunities for county commissioners to earn Local Elected Leaders Academy (LELA) credits in May.

School of Government faculty member A. Fleming Bell II will present two regional “Rules of Procedure” workshops aimed at small- to mid-sized boards.

Topics of discussion will include types of meetings, agendas, motions, actions by the board, voting, debate, ratification of actions, quorums and closed sessions. Participants will also discuss common practices and legal standards for comment at public meetings.

The sessions will be held Tuesday, May 4, at the Land-of-Sky Regional Council in Asheville, and Wednesday, May 5, at Foothills Higher Education Center in Morganton. Registration begins at 9 a.m., and the seminar runs from 9:30 a.m. to 12:30 p.m. Contact Vickey Wade at (828) 227-3442 or vwade@wcu.edu for more information. A registration fee

of \$25 covers the cost of the break and materials, including Bell’s Suggested Rules of Procedure for Small Local Government Boards.

The School of Government will offer its Manager Evaluation and Board Assessment program May 6 at the North Carolina Arboretum in Asheville. Participants who complete this program will learn how to develop a successful evaluation process and how to avoid the pitfalls common with board self-assessments and manager evaluations. The registration fee is \$175. For more information, contact Catherine Cunningham at (919) 843-6518 or cunningham@sog.unc.edu.

North Carolina Sea Grant will be offering another course in its Leadership Training series May 6. Growth and Sustainability Strategies will be held at the Currituck County Cooperative Extension Facility in Barco. The course is designed to help local governing boards effectively engage in processes that integrate community water quality protection goals with growth and redevelopment.

To register, e-mail your name, local government affiliation, address and telephone number to laurenk@nccoast.org or call (252) 393-8185 by April 28. There is a \$20 registration fee that covers breaks, lunch and the meeting notebook. For questions about

the conference, contact Gloria Putnam at (919) 513-0117 or Gloria_Putnam@ncsu.edu.

The School of Government will offer its Essentials of Economic Development program May 12 at the Ramsey Regional Activity Center at Western Carolina University. The one-day course is designed to help local, regional and state officials understand the fundamentals of economic development in the current regional, national and global economic climate. The workshop will help participants understand what is required to make their communities attractive for investment in the new economy. Participants will examine various economic development strategies and consider how governments, along with the nonprofit and private sectors, can help facilitate the process of creating jobs and wealth.

For more information visit www.sog.unc.edu/courses/0772/ or contact Carla Stowe, program manager, at (919) 843-8176 or cstowe@sog.unc.edu.

Elected officials can earn six credits toward their commitment to continuing education through the Local Elected Leaders Academy (LELA) recognition program by attending any of these workshops. For more information, visit www.ncacc.org/lela.html.

LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS
Academy

Chatham

Continued from page 1

\$10,666. A major renovation during the 1930s resulted in a one-story addition to the ground floor, and the interior was extensively remodeled in 1959. A clock tower was added in the early 1990s. The tower collapsed the night the fire started.

The courthouse is situated prominently inside a traffic circle in the heart of downtown Pittsboro. Residents throughout the county routinely pass by the courthouse, making it the most visible landmark in the county and causing many residents to feel the loss personally. This emotional reaction convinced commissioners that the courthouse needed to be saved if at all possible.

"The courthouse is an icon of our community," Board Chair Sally Kost told *The News & Observer* of Raleigh. "Fifty years from now, we want people to come through and see our building."

State investigators determined the blaze was started by a construction worker who was using a soldering iron to repair gutters on the roof, Chatham County Fire Marshall Thomas Bender said in a statement released March 30. The repair was being done as part of a \$410,000 restoration of the building's exterior, the first such work in nearly two decades, Chatham officials said.

"A thorough investigation of the evidence led us to a conclusion fairly quickly," said Bender. "It is common for rumors about the cause to circulate throughout the community when you have a disaster of this magnitude."

The courthouse had recently been the scene of several hearings related to a DVD involving former Sen. John Edwards and a former member of his 2008 Presidential campaign staff. Court officials were quick to point out that the DVD was not in the courthouse when it caught fire, but there had been some speculation that the fire was related to the presence of the video.

While there were no county admin-



The courthouse in October 2009, prior to the beginning of renovations.

Photo by Jason King



The courthouse on April 5.

Photo by Todd McGee

Clerk's e-mail revealing of feelings toward courthouse

A few days after the fire, Chatham County Clerk to the Board Sandra B. Sublett penned an e-mail to county clerks that conveys the heartache that many in the county felt while watching the courthouse burn.

"Many of us watched with tears streaming down our faces. The hurt is still raw," she wrote.

"Many people may think this is just a building, but it was so much more than that to our county. The phrase, 'if these walls could talk' is never more appropriate than in this case. I feel as if we have lost a member of our family. Many of my commissioners have been sworn in there over the years. Local democracy was alive in this building during many, many public hearings, and it served as a centerpiece as Chatham County honored those fallen after 9/11.

"I sit about one hundred feet from our beloved old courthouse. I look out my window now at a shell of a building and realize that the memories and history are now our responsibility to carry forward as we decide how and when to rebuild."

istrative offices in the courthouse, the building did house the District Attorney's Office and offices for judges and other court personnel. Many court records were destroyed or damaged.

Within two weeks of the fire, Chatham County had secured alternate office space for court personnel and a place to host court sessions. Assistant County Manager Renee Paschal said court will be held in the agricultural building auditorium for the next several months or until a more permanent space can be found, and that the Chatham County District Attorney's Office will move into a vacant law office on West Street, while the probation office will move next to the General Store Café on West Street.

"Both of these facilities are located within walking distance of courtrooms and other court staff, which is an important factor for effective court operations," Paschal said.

The courthouse also contained the Chatham Historical Museum, which occupied a small room in the southwest corner of the first floor. The museum's collection includes a colonial warrant signed by William Hooper, who is a signer of the Declaration of Independence and served as the first Chatham County Clerk of Court.

Many of the artifacts and historical documents contained in the museum were spared significant damage when the upper floors collapsed during the night as the fire continued to burn. The debris protected many of the items from water and/or smoke damage.

No injuries were reported, even though the blaze spread quickly and numerous firefighters were involved in the battle.



McDowell County Commissioners (from left to right) Dean Buff, David Walker, Andrew Webb and Michael Lavendar met with State Treasurer Janet Cowell (center) following the meeting.

Photo by Jason King

Cowell visits three counties to promote financial literacy

Shortly after Janet Cowell took office as State Treasurer in January 2009, she realized that the state is not a best practice workplace on financial literacy. Her Financial Literacy Tour, which made stops in Gaston, Dare and McDowell counties in late March, is one of Treasurer Cowell's first steps toward promoting financial literacy among local government employees.

"I want us to be better partners to you as employers in this system," Cowell told attendees in McDowell County.

Representatives of N.C. Retirement Systems, N.C. Supplemental Retirement Plans and the Local Government Federal Credit Union joined Cowell at each stop to talk about the need for financial literacy in the workplace and discuss the resources available to both employers and employees.

Diane Whaley, Member Services Section chief with the Department of State Treasurer, touted the benefits of ORBIT, the Retirement Systems' online presence that provides secure, 24/7 access to accounts for the more than 800,000 individual members of the state and local government systems. Whaley said that some of those services include the ability to make beneficiary changes and check retirement account balances. She said employers should educate themselves about ORBIT so they can help

employees access their accounts.

Whaley encouraged employers to tell employees who leave local government that they are better served leaving their money in the system or rolling it into a supplemental retirement plan than taking it out and invoking fees for early withdrawal, in addition to having to pay taxes on their savings refunded in cash.

Derwin Dubose, director of financial literacy for the State Treasurer, cautioned people who think their pension is all they need for retirement. Dubose said the pension is only built to cover half of the needed income during retirement. In addition to Social Security, employees need to be making regular contributions to other retirement savings accounts – and that's where Prudential, North Carolina's partner in providing 401(k) and 457 deferred compensation supplemental retirement plans, comes in.

Prudential's Tim Bryan said that at www.NCPlans.prudential.com, participants can answer two basic questions and receive asset allocation advice to make sure they are making proper allocation decisions based on their preferences.

The LGFCU's Chris Brown said the credit union is committed to financial literacy, and has a goal to educate any local government employee that applies for a loan on how that loan fits into their full financial picture.

Does Your County Need Raleigh Representation?

- Appellate • Property Tax Commission • Legislative
- State Regulatory Agencies

IRW

ROSE | RAND | WALLACE

ATTORNEYS, P. A.

Raleigh Contact: Jeff Gray
(919) 832-4040

Wilson Contact: Jim Cauley
(252) 291-3848

www.rrwattorneys.com

"Our clients are institutions, and so are we ..."

GOOD IDEAS GO REWARDED

12 programs that address county problems through innovative processes and solutions earn NCACC Outstanding County Program Awards

This year's class of winning programs in the NCACC's annual Outstanding County Program Awards competition present innovative solutions to problems dealing with youth development, unemployment, educating the public about county government, recycling and

community garden projects, among others. Throughout April – National County Government Month – NCACC staff presented awards during winning counties' Board of Commissioners meetings.

Established in 1991, the NCACC's Outstanding County Program Awards

recognize innovative county programs that other counties might want to emulate. Programs involve a uniquely innovative process, solution or idea to address a county or multi-jurisdictional issue and/or to prevent a future problem from developing. Four winners were

picked in each of three categories: General Government, Human Services and Public Information/Participation.

Find recaps of winning programs for 2009 on pages 7-11. Descriptions of previous years' winners are online at www.ncacc.org/awards/ocpa/about.html.

CUMBERLAND MATTERS

Cumberland County

In July 2009, Cumberland County launched its communications initiative "Cumberland Matters." The brand is designed to tell the county's story through various outlets. The goal is to inform citizens about county services and happenings. The title is used on three products – a weekly column in *The Fayetteville Observer*; a 30-minute television show (broken down into five 5-6 minute segments with segues hosted by the county's communications manager); and a three-quarter-page section appearing twice each month in a local weekly newspaper.

The Fayetteville Observer column is written by staff from the county's various departments. The focus is on health, the consumer and the environment. So far, employees from the departments of Mental Health, Extension Services, Soil and Water Conservation, Public Health, Social Services, Emergency Services, and Veteran's Services have submitted columns. The newspaper publishes the columns – which have included information about H1N1 flu vaccination, the importance of a healthy diet, the statewide smoking ban, and winter storm preparedness – for free. The newspaper has a daily circulation of more than 100,000, and the columns are also posted online.

The video program is produced by a local company. The video segments are shot on-site at various county venues. The 30-minute monthly show airs on cable twice weekly and also airs during the broadcast of the Board of Commissioners' meetings when the board enters closed session. It is posted on the county's Web site and YouTube, and is also shown in waiting areas of several county facilities.

Up & Coming Weekly is a free weekly newspaper with a circulation of 15,000 that reaches Fort Bragg and other areas of the community. For no charge, the county is given three quarters of a page for editorial content. The communications manager submits a camera-ready design.

By utilizing different media and outlets, the county can also cross-promote its communications efforts. A staff person who writes the column for *The Fayetteville Observer* will also appear on the weekly television show to discuss the same topic, enabling the county to reinforce its message and reach additional people who may not have access to either the newspaper or cable television.

For more information, contact Sally Shutt at (910) 437-1921.



MOBILE RECYCLING SERVICE

Polk County

In 2007, the Polk County Recycling Advisory Board began researching cost-effective and convenient ways to increase recycling participation. The county operated one recycling center, but it was not convenient to many areas of the county, and the costs to establish additional convenience centers to increase accessibility to more citizens were prohibitive.

Since the county could not make citizens travel to the one central location and could not afford to build additional permanent locations, the board developed a plan for a mobile recycling center. The goal was to take the recycling centers to the citizens. The plan had three goals: to avoid additional costs; to avert the public debate of "not in my backyard"; and to increase public convenience countywide.

Board members believed that increased convenience would result in increased participation from citizens. This, in turn, would avert reusable waste, thus reducing tipping fee charges for citizens and private haulers, and creating feedstock and jobs for the marketing and manufacturing sector. It would also help the county comply with new landfill regulations that ban aluminum cans and plastic bottles from landfills.

The county was awarded two grants that partially covered the costs of the truck, trailer, recycling containers, associated equipment and promotional materials. The county received \$15,000 from the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, Division of Pollution Prevention and Environmental Assistance. From local funding, the county received \$11,000 from the Polk County Community Foundation. Polk County Government allocated funds for maintenance, operation and part-time

wages for a recycling driver/attendant. The total budget commitment for 2009 was \$43,905, which includes the grants.

The resulting program, the Mobile Recycling Service (MRS), is designed to reach citizens via mobile recycling stations strategically located near their communities. To further boost participation and to address public need, Polk County collaborated with its school system in order to include elementary, middle and high schools in the mobile service schedule and athletic event schedules.

Prior to launching MRS, the county completed a three-week collection experiment at Polk County Middle School using boxes placed there for the collection of paper, cardboard and drink containers. From this trial, the county estimated that at least 18,000 additional pounds of paper and 7,200 pounds of co-mingled containers would be diverted from the landfill with the placement of the trailers through MRS, saving the school system a portion of the solid waste and recycling fees that it paid prior to MRS.

The first MRS pickups began in December 2009 with staffed mobile units stationed in three locations from 7 a.m. until noon.

The first three weeks of collection yielded 8,540 pounds of material. In the following weeks the numbers grew as the public became aware of the drop-off locations and the school collection process began. Based on preliminary numbers, it is projected that the collection rate of the community sites, schools, senior centers and government offices will exceed 300,000 pounds of diverted material.

For more information, contact Polk County Manager Ryan Whitson at (828) 894-3301, ext. 7, or rwhitson@polknc.org.

DEPENDENT ELIGIBILITY AUDIT

Durham County

Durham County Government has more than 2,000 employees and eligible retirees, as well as several hundred dependents of these employees, who participate in the county-funded comprehensive benefits package, which includes employee health and dental insurance, family vision coverage, and life and accidental death and dismemberment insurance. Providing these benefits requires millions of dollars in county funds each year.

Durham County wanted to make sure that only eligible dependents are being covered through their program, and so implemented its first Dependent Eligibility Audit in October 2009. Each employee who covered a spouse and/or dependent(s) on one or more of the county's health, dental or vision insurance plans was mailed a letter in early October describing the audit process.

Employees were given an amnesty period from Oct. 12-23 during which they could voluntarily remove an ineligible spouse or dependent from coverage without consequence. After Oct. 23, the county began a verification phase. During this time period, employees were to provide documentation to Human Resources that verified their spouse and dependents' eligibility for coverage under the plans. Copies of a marriage license, birth certificates or court orders mandating coverage comprised the required documentation. In addition, employees wishing to cover dependents ages 18-25 had to sign and notarize a declaration stating they had claimed those dependents on their most recent tax filing.

E-mails, Intranet postings and letters were used to help remind employees of the Dec. 18 deadline.

If the appropriate documentation was not provided by Dec. 18, the employees' spouse or dependent coverage was terminated effective Dec. 31, 2009. Employees found claiming someone ineligible for coverage as a spouse or dependent would be subject to discipline, up to and including termination of employment.

The end result included the removal of more than 100 spouses and more than 100 dependents from the medical, dental or vision plans, resulting in a monthly savings to the county from claims and administrative services fees of nearly \$50,000.

For more information, contact Benefits Manager Diane Pearson at (919) 560-7930 or dpearson@co.durham.nc.us.

2009 OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM AWARDS

CAPE FEAR YOUTH AMBASSADORS

Cape Fear Regional Council of Governments (includes Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover and Pender counties)

Recognizing that there is a lack of services aimed at helping youths make positive decisions about their future, the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board Youth Council and the New Hanover County Blue Ribbon Commission on the Prevention of Youth Violence started a collaborative effort for young adults between the ages of 16-24.

The Cape Fear Youth Ambassadors Program began in November 2009. It provides an opportunity for young men and women to contribute to youth initiatives in Brunswick, Columbus, New Hanover and Pender counties.

While peer pressure can often lead to bad decisions – particularly among youths – these groups realized that peer pressure in the form of positive role models can also lead to positive outcomes. Youths ages 16-24 are recruited, selected and appointed to serve as “ambassadors” by the Cape Fear Workforce Develop-

ment Board and Youth Council.

Some of the challenges affecting young adults in the Cape Fear region include: socioeconomic status, graduation/dropout rate and delinquent/violent behaviors. There are opportunities in education and workforce development for young adults through the Cape Fear Workforce Development Board Youth Council, local JobLink Career Centers and community colleges, but there are very few programs that empower and encourage young adults and offer leadership and community service opportunities.

The Ambassadors Program will sponsor career/youth summits to provide workforce training and preparation opportunities, host community engagement events to educate youths on the prevention of youth violence, engage youths in positive youth activities to alter risky behaviors, and host community and after-school sessions to educate and

expose youths to the “green” concept of recycling.

The Cape Fear Youth Ambassadors Program is set apart from other programs in that it is the only program in the four-county area that addresses education, life skills, workforce development, youth development, community service, issue awareness and civic duty. Ambassadors will have the opportunity to impact change in their communities by making recommendations to their local politicians and public officials.

The Cape Fear COG partnered with many local organizations to provide opportunities for their ambassadors, and the COG also solicited grant funds to help underwrite the costs of the program.

For more information, contact Lashauna Parker, Workforce Development Youth Program manager for the Cape Fear COG, at (910) 395-4553, ext. 218, or lparker@capefearcog.org.

RECYCLING CENTER

Person County

Person County has taken the concept of “going green” even further. The result is a collaborative effort that works to improve the environment and provides meaningful employment opportunities for individuals with disabilities.

Person Industries (PI) is a county department, a Community Rehabilitation Program (CRP), a small business, and a liaison between the local business community and people with disabilities.

In 2008, PI leaders realized that many of the department’s existing contracts were beginning to move overseas. At the same time the contracts were dwindling, a recycling advocacy group, PC Pride, was bringing attention to improving the county’s existing recycling program, which consisted of one single stream drop-off station. The county did not own or sell the materials collected.

PI brought forward a proposal to combine the two programs. The plan was approved and fully supported by the county commissioners in October 2008. The Person County Recycling Center (PCRC) opened June 29, 2009.

The projected 2009-10 fiscal year budget for PCRC is approximately \$212,385. As of March 31, PCRC had earned \$75,000 with estimated inventory of baled materials bumping the total to close to \$100,000. During this same period PCRC sold 633 tons of recyclables – compared to 529 tons collected at the former convenience site for the 2008-09 fiscal year. Considering growth and the pay-off of equipment within five years, the project is expected to pay for itself.

The majority of the workforce is made up of people with mild to profound disabilities. These employees receive and sort all materials. Special care is taken to match an employee’s strengths and interests with a specific job.

The program offers drive-up service. Citizens drive their vehicles to the 50,000-square-foot facility and are met by employees, who unload the recyclables from their cars.

PCRC staff also provides community outreach and in-house education to teach the public the value of recycling.

After PCRC opened, staff collaborated with Person County Schools and two private garbage collection companies in the county. The school system instituted its first ever recycling program, and the private garbage collection companies started offering curbside recycling. All materials collected from both of these programs go to the PCRC.

For more information, contact PI Director Wanda Rogers at (336) 599-7571, ext. 15, or wrogers@personcounty.net.

THE COMMUNITY-BASED CIP PROGRAM

Catawba County

Like many counties, Catawba County relies on community-based, nonprofit organizations to help provide critical services to struggling families who find themselves in a crisis situation. In 2009, the county realized that three local nonprofits – the Salvation Army of Hickory, the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry and the Eastern Catawba Cooperative Christian Ministry – had programs for citizens who find themselves in need of temporary assistance to help with heating/cooling bills.

The county Department of Social Services (DSS) received federal funds for this purpose and operated a similar program, but had no county staff dedicated to processing the intake needed for the program. The nonprofit agencies had the staff to handle the administrative part of the program but often found themselves short of funds because of their small operating budgets.

County officials thought it might be best to explore ways the organizations could work together, thereby streamlining the process and, ultimately, utilizing existing administrative staff already conducting similar functions. As a result, the Community-Based Crisis Intervention Program (CIP) was born.

DSS brings the money and technical expertise to the table, and the helping agencies provide manpower at multiple sites throughout the county.

The three agencies first met in April 2009 and reached an agreement in May 2009. As a result, all CIP monies appropriated to Catawba County Social Services by the state are made available to the three helping agencies.

The agencies have access to a state-operated, Web-based eligibility system that tracks the benefits given to individual clients who live in North Carolina.



Mary Hefner (left) of the Greater Hickory Cooperative Christian Ministry trains with Susan Parrish of Catawba County Social Services on processing disbursement vouchers.

Photo courtesy Jo Sloan/Catawba County DSS

Because the system is real-time, it can prevent a family from getting CIP assistance at one agency and then attempting to get help across town at another, and it also assures that no family exceeds the annual maximum benefit of \$600.

DSS employees train staff from the helping agencies about CIP policy and how to use the automated system.

The program provides numerous benefits to citizens and the county. It has reduced waiting lines at DSS since clients are now seen at the nonprofit locations throughout the county, meaning that citizens who are waiting for other services do not have to spend as much time in line. With access to these federal funds, nonprofits are able to utilize limited funding from donations with greater flexibility. Customers who would have been seen at multiple sites in the

past are now able to be served in the one location for heating/cooling crises. This greatly reduces the duplication of service administration hours. The use of the state database means that more citizens are being served because the three nonprofits can now see which clients have already received assistance.

For more information, contact Program Administrator Jo Sloan at (828) 695-5667 or jo@catawbacountync.gov.

greenengineering

emerging technologies . . . timeless principles

WATER ■ WASTEWATER ■ SURVEYING ■ PLANNING ■ PROJECT MANAGEMENT
 WILSON, NC 252.287.5365 | RALEIGH, NC 919.277.0784 | www.greenengineering.com

2009 OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM AWARDS

CRISIS INTERVENTION TEAM

Cumberland County

The Cumberland County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an innovative jail diversion program involving community partnerships and collaborations that has improved services, enhanced access to care and resulted in financial savings. It is a specialized law enforcement response to an individual experiencing a crisis related to a mental illness, addiction disease or developmental disability. Designed as a pre-booking jail diversion program, it seeks to prevent arrest and incarceration for misdemeanor crimes and to connect consumers to treatment resources instead.

CIT began at a grassroots level in Cumberland County when citizens united to address an alarming community need, as more and more individuals with mental illnesses were being arrested and thrown into a criminal justice system not equipped to deal with their special needs.

It was a problem for law enforcement as it drained valuable resources. It was a problem for the community as the inappropriate use of jails and emergency rooms created growing expenses and liability risks. It was a problem for individuals and families as incarceration caused conditions and consequences of their mental illnesses to escalate.



Recognizing that action needed to be taken, the Cumberland Chapter of the National Alliance on Mental Illness (NAMI) began to advocate for CIT in the community. In early 2007, the local Mental Health Consumer Family Advisory Council (CFAC) hosted a public forum to form a partnership to bring CIT to Cumberland County. In the months following the forum, representatives from more than 15 organizations worked together to

make CIT a reality.

The Fayetteville-Cumberland CIT/Jail Diversion Committee was convened in March 2008. It continues to meet monthly to provide oversight of the program, review and refine the 40-hour CIT curriculum, and promote ongoing communication among community partners.

The first local CIT training was held in June 2009 and was followed by sessions in October 2009 and March 2010.

Continuing education credits are awarded by Fayetteville Technical Community College.

Law enforcement officers who complete the comprehensive 40-hour crisis de-escalation training and pass the end-of-course evaluation are certified as CIT officers. There are 73 certified CIT officers in Cumberland County, representing the Sheriff's Office, the Fayetteville Police Department, and the VA Medical Center Police Service. The program provides highly specialized mental health training to law enforcement officers, helping them better understand and more effectively intervene with individuals with mental illness.

For more information on the CIT, contact Sharon Yates at (910) 222-6108.



We can assist you with:

- Site and building selection
- Online property listings at ncelectriccooperatives.com/development
- Energy audit services
- Market research & demographic analysis
- Flexibility in rate design
- Loan and grant assistance
- Help bringing the right experts to each unique situation including the NC Department of Commerce, Regional Partnerships, USDA Rural Development, NC Rural Economic Development Center and NC Economic Developers Association

SHEDDING LIGHT ON BUSINESS OPPORTUNITIES IN NORTH CAROLINA.

North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives are pleased to offer businesses a wide range of services designed to help them grow, expand and find ideal new locations. From helping with site selection and energy efficiency, to assistance with paperwork to qualify for loans and grants, we're here to empower business growth in North Carolina.

North Carolina's
Electric Cooperatives

Your Touchstone Energy® Cooperatives 

ncelectriccooperatives.com/development

2009 OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM AWARDS

EMPLOYMENT ASSISTANCE PROGRAM

Wake County

In response to the economic downturn that is causing financial hardships on many Wake County citizens, the public library started an Employment Assistance Program to provide training, information and support for unemployed, underemployed and financially stressed citizens.

Beginning in January 2009, libraries began offering programs in four areas: career retooling, building technology skills, life management and small business assistance. Programs included "Landing the Right Job," "Interview Skills" and "Dress for Success." Citizens were taught a variety of job-related skills, including how to use software programs such as Microsoft PowerPoint and Excel, and how to write résumés.

Sessions were also offered on managing stress and goal setting. The program involved the support of many partners, including JobLink, UNC-Chapel Hill and the State Library of North Carolina. The State Library created a Job Seekers Toolkit for all libraries throughout the state, and Wake County libraries in turn trained staff to use these tools.

Library staff used different technologies to market the programs – Twitter, Facebook, blogs, and Web sites for *The News & Observer* and the library. More than 1,050 people participated in the programs, more than 800 attended one of the technology classes, and more than 200 received direct job and career assistance.

The library made the program available countywide instead of locating it in one branch, allowing for more widespread responsiveness. In addition, citizens needed access to computers to update their résumés or apply for jobs. For instance, grocery clerk and stocking jobs at many grocery store chains require their applications to be submitted via the Internet, thus citizens need some basic technology skills to complete the applications.

While other county agencies helped individuals with issues such as housing, shelter, employment and food, the libraries became a center for social services support and – unlike many county agencies – were open nights and weekends.

County libraries made use of their internal resources such as meeting rooms, computer labs, computer equipment and staff. For example, the computer lab at the Cameron Village Library was idle 50 percent of the time. With this program, more technology classes were scheduled, and the Job and Career Assistance Lab in that room filled many hours. Several librarians were trained on résumé writing and career resources and contributed to training efforts.

Perhaps the most important strategy was to utilize the community. Library staff found many people who were willing to help and volunteer their time to teach résumé writing, career coaching, interviewing and other skills needed.

For more information, contact Public Libraries Reference and Information Services Supervisor Susan Wolf Neilson at (919) 856-6718.

COMMUNITY GARDEN OUTREACH PROGRAM

Guilford County



In December 2008, the Guilford County Office of the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Service, working through the Extension Master Gardener Volunteers, established a Community Garden Outreach Program. This ongoing program is designed to mentor and assist community groups in establishing and maintaining community gardens.

Community gardens have gained national attention recently because they help citizens improve their health and save money, and help make Earth a greener place to live. Community gardens improve health through more exercise and better nutrition by increasing access to local, fresh and low-cost produce. As an added benefit, community gardens build bridges between neighbors and communities.

The Mixed Greens Community Garden, operated by Cooperative Extension through the Master Gardener Volunteers, has been in existence for eight years and has continued to grow each year. The garden now has 90 plot holder families of diverse backgrounds and cultures.

The Community Garden Outreach Program enables volunteers to help others who are beginning their own community garden efforts. In 2009, the program helped more than 25 groups establish a community garden. These groups included neighborhoods, churches, retirement centers and special populations such as LifeSpan. A Master Gardener Volunteer assists each of these gardens by serving as a mentor and educator.

Last year, Cooperative Extension also sponsored the first public "Community Gardens Tour," which showcased a variety of gardens. The Master Gardener

Volunteers gave this project such high priority that they funded the direct costs connected with outreach efforts, such as printing and marketing expenses. Each of the gardens was individually funded through grants and local contributions.

The various community gardens are also a benefit to the community. Approximately 8,600 pounds of food from these gardens was donated to food pantries and soup kitchens in 2009. Food produced by community gardeners was estimated at roughly 31,750 pounds.

The program benefited greatly from wide community support. City of Greensboro Parks and Recreation provided land for several gardens, and the city's Waste Management division provided municipal compost to sustain the gardens. The Health Department provided "Eat Smart, Move More" grants, and the Greensboro Neighborhood Congress provided grants to several gardens through its "Building Stronger Neighborhoods" program.

For more information, contact Cooperative Extension Urban Horticulture Agent Karen Neill at (336) 375-5876.

CLIENT MANAGEMENT

Randolph County

A new software program developed by the Randolph County Information Technology (IT) Department and the Department of Social Services (DSS) has resulted in greater customer satisfaction, reduced stress on workers, and the creation of meaningful statistics for supervisors to evaluate their employees.

As Randolph County began to automate forms creation and storage at its DSS, it became painfully obvious that DSS receptionists needed help dealing with their paperwork as well. When clients checked in, they were signed in on paper logs by the receptionists, who also had to gather demographic information. Using a daily roster of available workers, the receptionists telephoned workers to inform them a client was waiting, keeping track of who and how many times they called.

The receptionist then had to track the status of the client's visit and, if the client was present for more than one program, had to start the process all over again after the first visit ended. This cumbersome process often resulted in long wait times for some clients.

Client Management has transformed how clients are managed. When a client checks in, all they have to do is give their name and date of birth to the receptionist. The rest of their demographic information is stored by the software. They are checked in to see a specific worker and/or a group of workers for one or more program areas, all through an easy-to-use graphical interface on the receptionist's computer.

Caseworkers in their own offices log into the program if they are "on intake" that day and see a list of clients waiting to



From left to right, IT Systems Analyst Jeff Mullins, DSS Administrative Support Supervisor Tamara Stout and DSS Computer Systems Administrator Patrick Skelly worked on the Client Management system.

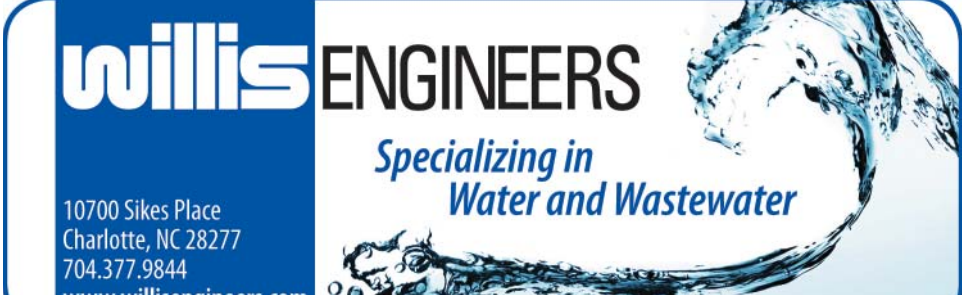
Photo courtesy Michael Rowland/Randolph County IT

be seen. They click on a client's name to "take" the client, and enter the disposition of the visit when they "release" the client.

With an ever-increasing number of citizens coming to the office for services, the two receptionists are able to manage

an increasing number of clients, saving the county the cost of hiring another receptionist.

For more information, contact Programmer Analyst Jeff Mullins at (336) 318-6321.



willis ENGINEERS

Specializing in Water and Wastewater

10700 Sikes Place
Charlotte, NC 28277
704.377.9844
www.willisengineers.com

2009 OUTSTANDING COUNTY PROGRAM AWARDS

WORK FIRST COMMUNITY GARDEN PROJECT

McDowell County

The McDowell County Department of Social Services (DSS) began its community garden project over concern for county residents trying to make ends meet during the economic recession. The county was experiencing increased numbers of Food and Nutrition Assistance applications with high unemployment.

Given the county's agricultural history, as well as a spirit of helping others in need, the idea evolved into plans for the Work First Community Garden, where anyone could help plant crops and share in the harvest. Besides growing healthy food, the project also aimed to revitalize gardening and promote healthier lifestyles through improved nutrition and physical activity. Additionally, project leaders hoped it would create opportunities for Work First Family Assistance participants – the primary labor provider – to learn marketable skills.

Community response was positive. Three grants and two private donations totaling \$6,500 were given to the project. Representatives from the Health Department and Cooperative Extension helped with client and staff education regarding the health aspects of gardening and food preservation. A food preservation class was conducted at the Senior Center for project participants, staff and volunteers.

Through the growth of the project, DSS remained the organizer, coordinating community partners and the 17 local businesses that helped to sponsor the project. With the full support of DSS Director Phillip Hardin and County Manager Chuck Abernathy, DSS allowed

staff members to "volunteer" in the garden. Other costs were absorbed within the community as area businesses donated tools and equipment for the project. Grant funds were used to purchase necessary equipment, such as a seed spreader, gloves, plants, mulch and a tiller.

The project reaped numerous benefits. Work First Family Assistance participation increased. Participants were hired by area employers, due in part to the mentoring and one-on-one time with the garden coordinator/job coach. Disabled clients worked on garden projects such as row markers, signs and scarecrows.

The garden yielded an impressive harvest of corn, squash, cucumbers, tomatoes, green peppers, red cabbage, pumpkins, watermelon, potatoes and carrots. Portions of the garden harvest were distributed to the Senior Center, which realized savings in food purchases and gained the ability to offer increased nutritional value to seniors. Some of the produce was distributed to the three community homeless shelters and two churches, one of which operates the only soup kitchen in the community.

With the distressed economy, the project offered hope by emphasizing the benefits of self-sufficiency and the nutritional benefits of fresh foods. Master Gardener Volunteers had the opportunity to educate staff members. Explaining the Work First Family Assistance Program allowed agency staff to educate the community about governmental programs.

For more information, contact Hardin at (828) 652-3355, ext. 117.

EDUCATIONAL ADVOCATE INITIATIVE

Catawba County

Transitioning into foster care is not easy for a child. Children need stability, especially in their education, but children entering the foster care system often find themselves uprooted completely from their familiar surroundings, going to new schools, learning new routines and developing new relationships.

To try to make this transition as easy as possible and to minimize the school moves, Catawba County started an Educational Advocate Initiative aimed to improve educational continuity and stability for children in foster care. The educational advocate works with each of the 44 schools in the county for all of the children in foster care. Each school assigns a staff person to work as the point of contact with the educational advocate.

The educational advocate focuses on establishing communication channels and standardizing communication protocols between social services and the school systems; minimizing school moves for children in foster care; developing timely enrollment procedures; and tracking school placements and educational progress of children in foster care.

One of the primary goals for the educational advocate is to assure co-

ordination of transportation in order to minimize school moves or to facilitate school record transfers for children entering foster care.

In addition to coordinating transportation, the educational advocate tracks school placements, and gathers report cards and information from school designees to track educational progress. The advocate is also responsible for assuring that free and reduced school lunch forms and enrollment packets are available to foster care workers and completed as needed.

The advocate spearheaded a "Back to School Backpack" drive to ensure that each child in foster care had a backpack and necessary school supplies to start the school year and as they entered care. Finally, the advocate made contact with school systems in neighboring counties to initiate discussions about developing similar protocols or processes to track placements and progress, since a significant number of children in Catawba County's custody live in neighboring counties.

For more information, contact Special Projects Coordinator Dawn Wilson at (828) 695-5702 or dawnwilson@catawbacountync.gov.

MEET OUR JUDGES

Almost 50 county officials traveled to Raleigh on March 25 to review entries for the 2009 Outstanding County Program Awards. Participants were divided into three teams – General Government, Human Services and Public Information/Participation. The NCACC would like to thank those who volunteered their time and expertise to help make the program a success! Judges in each group are pictured below, from left to right.



GENERAL GOVERNMENT: Sampson County Commissioner John Blanton, Nash County Commissioner Fred Belfield, Orange County Assistant Manager Gwen Harvey, Martin County Commissioner Derek Price, Alamance County Manager Craig Honeycutt, Ashe County Commissioner Richard Blackburn, Mitchell County Manager Chuck Vines, Wake County Commissioner Lindy Brown, Randolph County Tax Administrator Debra Hill, NCACC Chief Financial Officer Elizabeth Floyd, Dare County Tax Assessor Greta Skeen, Wilson County Tax Administrator Randy Faircloth, Pitt County Tax Administrator Cathy Booker, and Franklin County Tax Administrator Jimmy Tanner. Not pictured: Buncombe County Manager Wanda Greene.



HUMAN SERVICES: Bladen County Manager Greg Martin, Wayne County Manager Lee Smith, Pitt County Commissioner Jimmy Garris, Davidson County Chairman Max Walser, Rutherford County Tax Administrator Kep Kepley, Burke County Deputy Manager/Finance Director Paul Ijames, Orange County Chairman Valerie Foushee, Wilkes County Manager John Yates, Edgecombe County Tax Collector Gloria Lyndaker, Robeson County Assistant Manager Ricky Harris, Halifax County Tax Coordinator/Collector Pamela Harris, Scotland County Commissioner Joyce McDow, Alleghany County Chairman Ken Richardson, Nash County Organizational Development Director Patsy King, Onslow County Chief Operations Officer Angela Cole, and Chatham County Tax Collector Frances Wilson.



PUBLIC EDUCATION: Durham County Assistant Manager Drew Cummings, Nash County Commissioner Lou Richardson, Ashe County Manager Dan McMillan, Burke County Vice Chair Ruth Ann Suttle, NCACC Wellness Program Coordinator Alissa Willett, Onslow County Tax Administrator Harry Smith, Granville County Commissioner Hubert Gooch, Scotland County Tax Administrator Mary Helen Norton, Pasquotank County Commissioner Cecil Perry, Durham County Assistant Manager Deborah Craig-Ray, Pitt County Commissioner Melvin McLawhorn, Wilson County Assistant Manager and Clerk Denise Stinagle, Alexander County Commissioner Wes Bolick, Craven County Tax Administrator Ronald Antry, and Rowan County Commissioner Tina Hall. Not pictured: Person County Vice Chair Jimmy Clayton.

NCACC President Elect addresses ABC study committee

NCACC President Elect Joe Bryan, a Wake County commissioner, brought the county perspective March 24 to a new General Assembly study committee that is examining the state's alcoholic beverage control system and discussing ways to reform it.

Bryan addressed the Joint Study Committee on Alcoholic Beverage Control, comprised of legislators and a cross-section of public members representing various perspectives. Hertford County Commissioner Howard Hunter III is a member of the committee.

The NCACC opposes changes to the system proposed in 2009 legislation due to the usurpation of local control. Governor Beverly Perdue in January said she is considering privatizing the ABC system, something the NCACC also opposes due to the potential loss of local revenues.

"The system we have now is not broken," Bryan told the committee. "This state has one of the highest ABC revenue streams in the nation and at the same time one of the lowest consumption rates – a position many states envy.

"Our goal is not about power, but is about accountability and flow of information. We also support granting more tools for accountability and direction to the state's ABC Commission to provide salary schedule data to all appointing authorities and local ABC boards."



Wake County Commissioner and NCACC President Elect Joe Bryan offered support for a handful of recommendations to the Joint Study Committee on Alcoholic Beverage Control.

Photo by Jason King

Bryan told committee members that the Association is prepared to support legislative recommendations related to:

- increasing reporting requirements to appointing authorities. Reports would include all information related to finances, personnel, sales and salaries. Some ABC boards are already doing this.
- mandating that all local ABC boards submit annual salary data to the state ABC Commission and that the state ABC Commission be required to annually distribute that data (including benefits and bonus information) to all local ABC boards and local appointing authorities. This would in effect create a statewide salary schedule, and would allow local ABC boards to compare

themselves to like-sized ABC systems by providing comparative data for systems of all sizes.

- requiring that local ABC boards adopt an ethics policy consistent with their appointing authority. The General Assembly in 2009 adopted a local government ethics act, recognizing that local governments have unique situations and needs that are not consistent with those of state government. Requiring local ABC boards to adopt ethics policies consistent with the local appointing authority would better reflect the makeup of that particular community.

"The Association believes that action on these three items would enhance the accountability of our local appointing

authorities and would make strides to address the isolated incidents that exist in our state's ABC system," Bryan said.

Committee members also heard from Jon Williams, chairman of the state's ABC Commission. Williams presented several recommended options for reform, including consolidation of boards on a county-wide or regional basis.

Among comments made during the meeting:

- Sen. Dan Clodfelter (Mecklenburg County) insinuated that the ABC Commission could be extended the same financial power over local ABC boards that the Local Government Commission has over county and municipal governments. "If it's good enough for cities and counties, why isn't it good enough for ABC boards?" he asked.

- Andy Ellen, who lobbies for the Retail Merchants Association, spoke in favor of privatization and offered to hold local governments harmless from any potential loss of revenues.

For background on the ABC system, visit www.ncacc.org/documents/2010issues_abc.pdf. For information on the legislative committee, visit www.ncleg.net, click on the "Committees" link at the top of the page, and select "Joint Study Committee on Alcoholic Beverage Control" from the dropdown menu.

– Jason King and Kevin Leonard



RISK MANAGEMENT POOLS

While insurance companies have customers, the NCACC Risk Management Pools have members who are involved in developing risk management products and the provision of those products.

Rather than being driven by profits, the Pools are driven by service to members.

Ask about becoming part of our MEMBER-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION.

Contact us at (919) 719-1100, or visit www.ncacc.org/rmp.htm.

A MEMBER-DRIVEN ORGANIZATION

The price is right: Vision plan comes at no cost to counties

County officials familiar with the Community Eye Care (CEC) vision plan have always touted its simplicity and extensive provider network. But in the midst of agonizing budget shortfalls and unprecedented fiscal challenges, the features of the plan that are generating the most buzz among commissioners and managers alike are the economic advantages.

Four advantages in particular are: there is no cost to counties to participate; employees can realize substantial savings; participating counties support the North Carolina economy; and that support in turn increases tax revenues.

No cost: Because the CEC vision plan is a voluntary benefit handled through payroll deduction, there's no cost to the county. That means that the benefit doesn't have to be included in the budget process, and it can be easily implemented

at any time of the year. It also enables counties to enhance their benefits packages at a time when virtually all other employers are cutting benefits, thus giving a boost to employee morale.

Savings for employees: Equally important, the CEC plan makes it possible for county employees to substantially reduce their current expenditures for routine eye care: exams, glasses and contact lenses.

"Savings generally range between 50 percent and 70 percent," said Dr. Marvin Schrum, chief operating officer for CEC. "During an economic downturn, those savings can be used to cover the cost of other essential items, such as food, utilities, car payments or mortgages."

Support the economy: Community Eye Care indirectly helps county governments through its positive impact on the North Carolina economy. Because the company is based in North Carolina, CEC's business keeps revenues in-state, creates jobs locally, and helps with the state's economic recovery.

Increased tax revenues: As a North Carolina company, CEC contributes to the

local tax base. This is absolutely critical at a time when virtually all counties are facing drastic shortages of revenue.

Dr. Stephen Pollock, CEO of Community Eye Care, acknowledged the economic rationale for using in-state benefits carriers.

"We're proud to be North Carolina's Vision Plan, and we're truly pleased to be able to improve the financial well-being of our county governments and their employees," he said.

Pollock noted that some North Carolina counties haven't yet converted to an in-state vision plan.

"It's possible that not all benefits managers are aware that whenever a county opts to use an out-of-state carrier, funds are siphoned out of North Carolina, tax revenues shrink, more county employees are furloughed or laid off, and essential county services are placed in greater jeopardy," he said.

Community Eye Care is an endorsed benefits provider of the Association. For more information, contact NCACC Outreach Coordinator Lisa Nolen at (919) 715-4362 or lisa.nolen@ncacc.org.



Legislature

Continued from page 1

compiled by the N.C. Center of Public Policy Research.

In addition to the remarks from Rep. Hackney and Sen. Basnight, Association staff will provide perspectives on the upcoming short session, highlighting several issues – including e-911 funds, secondary road funding and ABC (Alcoholic Beverage Control) system changes – that could be in play for counties this session.

In addition, all members of the General Assembly have been invited to the annual reception, which will be held following County Assembly Day activities at the N.C. Museum of History.

For registration information, visit www.ncacc.org/countyassemblyday.html.

Issues impacting counties could include ABC reform, e-911 funding

The General Assembly will convene for its 2010 short session at noon on May 12. The feeling in the halls of the Legislative Building is that the session will be short, but perhaps not very sweet. State lawmakers will convene with the main objective of making adjustments to the second year of the biennial budget, which means they will be looking for ways to plug a significant revenue gap.

Legislators will also address other policy issues, but there is a limited scope of eligible legislation. At the end of the long session, the House and Senate adopted rules that govern which legislation can be introduced or considered during the short session. As a general rule, all appropriations, finance, pension and retirement, local legislation, and bills that passed at least one chamber the previous year are eligible for consideration. Issues that are considered controversial are traditionally not addressed by the General Assembly during the short session, although the definition of "controversial" sometimes varies depending on the leadership of each chamber.

A significant backdrop to the upcoming session is the number of resignations

Earn LELA credits by coming to County Assembly Day

By attending County Assembly Day, elected officials earn three credits toward recognition for their commitment to lifelong learning through the LELA (Local Elected Leaders Academy) Recognition Program. Through LELA, the NCACC and School of Government have established for individual county commissioners a three-level recognition program, which will help the Association achieve one of its strategic goals, "strengthen county leadership and board development." Learn more at www.ncacc.org/lela.html.

and announced retirements of current legislators. A notable change this session will be the absence of Sen. Tony Rand (Cumberland), the former Senate Majority Leader and Rules Chairman. For more than a decade, Sen. Rand helped guide legislation and the development of the state budget in the Senate.

In addition to these changes, Election Day looms on the horizon. Speculation abounds in the halls of the General Assembly that many members prefer to have a true "short session" so that they can return to their districts and constituents prior to the fall election. Almost every incumbent who is running for re-election this fall faces competition – a drastic change from previous years in which as many as half of the seats in the General Assembly featured only one candidate.

A main focus will be the budget and the fiscal environment facing the state. While it appears that the revenue shortfall for the 2009-10 fiscal year will fall in the \$500 million to \$700 million range, the required spending reversions set in place early this fiscal year should address a revenue gap of that size. However, revenue declines this year will require a lowering of the revenue base for next year, and it is likely that the revenue growth rate undergirding the 2010-11 budget will also be reduced. Fiscal ana-

lysts are predicting at least a \$500 million shortfall, with some speculating that it may reach the \$1 billion mark given the lackluster revenue collections.

It is generally accepted that there will not be an appetite for increasing or creating new taxes to raise revenues during the session, especially after the state increased the sales tax by 1 percent last summer and put a surcharge on personal and corporate income taxes. Discussion is likely to be centered on budget cuts, and legislative leaders are expected to deal with any shortfalls by making reductions.

While budget negotiations will take center stage during the short session, the Legislature will take up a limited amount of other important public policy matters. Some of these issues will directly impact our legislative goals. Specific issues counties are watching include:

ABC system reform: The Joint Study Committee on Alcoholic Beverage Control is currently hearing testimony regarding ABC ethics reform as well as privatization of the ABC system. The committee is expected to make recommendations to the House and Senate for changes to the system, and there is a high expectation that the General Assembly will take action.

E-911 funding: The House Select Committee on 911 Funding is expected to make recommendations to the House regarding 911 funding flexibility and the makeup of the 911 Board. The Association has been working with a group of stakeholders – including the 911 Board, the N.C. League of Municipalities, and representatives of the telecommunications industry – to work toward a position that will accomplish our legislative goals to increase flexibility and increase local representation on the 911 Board.

Annexation: At this time the status of annexation legislation is unclear. During the 2009 long session, H524 (Annexation – Omnibus Changes) passed the House and was delivered to the Senate, but technically was never received by the Senate and was not assigned to a Senate committee. The Association supports the current version of H524 because it

includes many provisions that support our legislative goal. Those items include increasing the density standards for urbanizing areas, requiring the provision of water and sewer services in the annexed area within three years, establishing June 30 following the adoption of an annexation ordinance as the effective date, requiring the development of joint utility services plans, and establishing a procedure for a referendum if at least 15 percent of the total of the registered voters of the municipality and proposed annexation area sign a petition.

Water and wastewater infrastructure: The Water and Wastewater Infrastructure Study Committee has been meeting consistently since the General Assembly adjourned in August 2009. It seems that the group is currently focusing on possible funding models that would create a dedicated revenue stream for water and wastewater infrastructure projects. We anticipate a recommendation to be forwarded by this committee to the House and Senate.

State budget: As always when there is a revenue shortfall at the state level, the state budget is a concern to county officials. History indicates that the Legislature has often viewed local government funds as a reserve bank account for the state. The adopted state budget has already taken the county share of the corporate income tax – known as the ADM Fund – for 2010-11. The Association will work closely with state budget officials and legislators to make sure that no further damage is done to county budgets as the state works to revise its 2010-11 budget.

As always, there will be issues that arise during the session that are unanticipated. The Association's Government Relations Team will monitor these issues and report any concerns to the membership through our Legislative Bulletin, e-mail legislative alerts and our Web site, www.ncacc.org. Also look to the NCACC's Twitter site, twitter.com/ncacc, for notifications about issues of importance to counties when those issues are scheduled for legislative meetings.

Cleveland County student nets prize for essay on county government

A 10th grade student at Cleveland Early College High School in Shelby has won the NCACC's statewide essay contest on county government. Brandon Ruppe and his former 10th grade civics teacher, Joe Rountree, each won \$500 for Brandon's winning essay.

The contest was open to 10th grade classes in North Carolina public and charter schools. Students were asked to write a 500-word essay on the topic, "How does my county government improve the lives of its citizens?"

In 2004, the Association Board of Directors adopted five strategic goals. One of these goals is to inform the public and the media about the role of county government. In 2008 as part of the Association's centennial celebration, the Board of Directors approved the annual essay contest to encourage students and teachers to focus on county government in the classroom. Previous winners have hailed from Onslow and Duplin counties.

"As a former teacher and principal in the Cleveland County School System,

I am very excited and honored that one of our own is the winner of this year's essay contest," said NCACC President Mary Accor, a Cleveland County commissioner. "We want to thank Joe for encouraging his students to learn more about county government by participating in this contest, and we congratulate Brandon for winning the essay contest."

Brandon's winning essay focused on the role that counties play in public education, public safety and public health. The essay is available online on the NCACC's county government education Web site, www.welcometoyourcounty.org. The site is designed for civics teachers and students who would like to learn more about county government, and contains information on why counties and county governments exist, where counties receive their funding, what services they provide, who runs county governments, and more.

The essay contest will be held again for 10th grade students in the spring of 2011.

How does my county government enhance the lives of its citizens?

By Brandon Ruppe

Student, Cleveland Early College High School

Cleveland County provides an excellent example of how a county enhances the lives of its citizens. Although bipartisan, Cleveland County's board of commissioners is exemplary, due to their willingness to work together. The commissioners see to Cleveland County's needs and make the important decisions that benefit its citizens. Cleveland County provides an array of services. The most important of these services are public education, the local Sheriff's Department, and the health care system.

Education is one of the primary focuses in Cleveland County. According to the County Manager's Budget Message, education comes second only to public safety in Cleveland County. Cleveland County is home to 29 public K-12 schools and three colleges. These include Cleveland Early College High School (CECHS). CECHS is a recent addition to the Cleveland County school system. It offers students the chance to graduate with a High School Diploma and an Associate's Degree within five years. This will improve the lives of citizens in Cleveland County.

Cleveland County's Sheriff's Department employs many programs that maintain public safety. One such program is Neighborhood Watch, which provides peace of mind for communities. The Sheriff's Department uses the Neighborhood Watch program to create a partnership between communities and law enforcement. This prevents crimes in neighborhoods. The Drug Abuse Resistance Education program, or D.A.R.E., is another program that the Sheriff's Department offers for crime prevention. D.A.R.E. is currently taught at seven of the 16 elementary schools in Cleveland County. This program teaches children about drug abuse and presents alternatives to crime and violence.

"To assure, enhance, and protect the health of all citizens through education and prevention," is the mission statement of the Cleveland County Health Department. The Cleveland County Health Department provides numerous services through different professionals including physicians, dentists and social workers. The health department also extends prevention programs and job opportunities to teenagers and young adults in Cleveland County. One such prevention program is the Community Organization for Drug Abuse Prevention, also known as CODAP. CODAP is designed to prevent drug abuse in the Cleveland County area. A survey states that drug abuse in the county has decreased from 2006 to 2009 with due credit to CODAP. The health department also extends the chance to job shadow health professionals through the Code Teen program. Code Teen is intended to educate students, who apply, about different healthcare careers. This allows them to follow a professional in a career of their interest.

Cleveland County's education system, the Sheriff's Department, and the Health Department all provide services that assist the citizens of Cleveland County. The school system provides a future for the young people in the county. The Sheriff's Department provides protection to all those who reside in Cleveland County. The Health Department supports the well being of the county's citizens. Despite the economic downfall, Cleveland County will continue to be an exceptional place to live as long as these services are provided.



NCACC District 15 Director Renée McDermott of Polk County (left), and President Mary Accor (second from right) and At-Large Director Jo Boggs (right) of Cleveland County were on-hand for the NCACC's April 14 district meeting in Shelby to present Brandon Ruppe with a \$500 prize for his winning essay on county government. Numerous family members, as well as his former 10th grade civics teacher, Joe Rountree, attended the presentation.

Photo by Donald P. Cyszcz

4-Hers provide basics of a successful youth-adult partnership

Working with youths requires sincerity, an open mind and a sense of fairness, attendees at the NCACC's April 8 district meeting in Halifax County heard during a presentation from a local high school student and representatives of two area county Cooperative Extension agencies. The Halifax district meeting was the first of six to be held in April.

Developing leadership among youths is Cleveland County Commissioner Mary Accor's presidential initiative for 2010, and the presentations from area youths and Cooperative Extension agents at each district meeting served to further communication between county leaders and youths.

Jasmine Harris, who attends high

school in Northampton County, said that in a working partnership, both youths and adults need to realize what the other brings to the table, as well as the expected roles for each group.

Pasquotank County Extension Agent Mason Lawrence, who leads the county's 4-H Youth Development efforts, said that for adults, those roles include experience, leadership and guidance. More importantly, Lawrence said that adults need to see youths as part of the solution, rather than part of the problem. If the adult gives nothing more than lip service to an endeavor with youths, the partnership is doomed to failure.

"Youths are very good at seeing through people," he said. "Youths won't

put forth the effort if they see you aren't sincere."

While there is an assumption that youths have a fear of working with adult leaders in the county, the opposite is more often true. Vanessa Spiron, who works with 4-H Youth Development in Pitt County, said that in overcoming that fear, adults must dismiss stereotypes they may associate with today's youths and get to know them on an individual basis. Adults must also display a sense of fairness and "don't expect more of them than you would of an adult."

Vance Holloman, director of the Local Government Commission, also addressed attendees at the Halifax meeting and provided an overview of a financial

condition analysis project jointly developed by the UNC School of Government and the State Treasurer's Office.

The Web-based tool, which will reside online at www.nctreasurer.com, will allow a local government to select up to five other similar local governments (i.e., counties can compare themselves to other counties) against which to benchmark its financial condition. The Web site will include populations and pertinent information, such as whether that local government operates a water and/or sewer system, in order to allow that local government to make meaningful peer selections. Trend and benchmark data will be provided in order to provide for a more robust interpretation.

Davis

Continued from page 1

Cumberland County Chairman Billy King, who preceded Davis as NCACC president by six years, said Davis thrived in the role of mentor.

“He kind of took young commissioners under his wing and gave them advice,” he said.

Person County Commissioner Ray Jeffers, the youngest commissioner in the state, said Davis impressed upon him the importance of knowing what’s going on in other counties so that he could add to the conversation when talking with commissioners from across the state. At the recent NACo Legislative Conference in Washington, D.C., Jeffers and others spent time with Davis in his hotel room.

“He was very influential,” Jeffers said of Davis. “I learned more in D.C. sitting there talking with him for two hours in his room, just talking about different current events and things that were going on, past things in counties, and what we needed to know and what we didn’t. I learned more there than some of the session blocks I went to.”

A lifelong Hertford County resident, Davis earned his nickname, “Pine” (short for pine box), from the business he established in 1972, the Davis Burial Vault Company. Long before he built his reputation on a statewide level, he earned respect locally in part for his willingness to help his fellow citizens. He won a seat on the Board of Commissioners in November 1988.

In addition to “Pine,” his fellow commissioners came up with a number of nicknames for him through the years.

“We called him ‘the King,’” said longtime friend and Hertford County Commissioner Howard Hunter III. “At his last meeting, he got labeled ‘the God-father.’ I think he liked that.”

Hunter and Bertie County Commissioner Lewis Hoggard are two of the many who counted Davis as a mentor. They also called him “Pops” because “he was like a father to us,” Hoggard said.

Hoggard said that Davis, whom he called almost every Saturday morning, was the perfect type of positive influence a new commissioner needed.

“There might be something going on in Bertie County, and I would want to know how he would you answer that certain question,” he said.

When Hunter decided to run for a seat on the Hertford Board of Commis-



Davis receives counsel from former NCACC Executive Director Ron Aycock during the late Hertford County commissioner’s term as president in 2002-03. “He had the ability to cut across party, regional and socioeconomic lines,” Aycock said. “He created coalitions ... across the state.”

NCACC file photo

sioners, he let Davis know before telling his own father, the late State Rep. Howard Hunter II.

“After I won, he took me under his wing and he mentored me,” Hunter said. “He taught me to listen first and to learn. I listened the first two years. He told me to be honest and do what’s right for the people in the county; don’t have a hidden agenda.”

Davis’ commitment to the citizens he represented made an impression on Ron Aycock, who was NCACC executive director when Davis was an Association officer.

“I visited Hertford County to meet with him shortly after he became president to help plan out the year,” he said. “Everywhere we went, people were coming up to us. ... It was obvious that the man was committed to his public service and the people appreciated what he did.”

Claude Odom, who completed a two-term stay on the Hertford County board in 1986, remembered Davis as a dynamic individual and as a person who held to his beliefs, something that often carried over into Board of Commissioners meetings.

“He would not back off an issue,” said Odom, who now serves as an area administrator for the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention. “He was as tenacious as a pit bull, and he would hang in there until he got the job done.”

That tenacity reared its head a

number of times on issues he worked on as an Association officer. He was serving as the NCACC’s second vice president in 2001 when Governor Mike Easley seized millions in business inventory tax reimbursements due to counties to help with a state budget crisis.

“He was fairly dogmatic particularly during that time,” said longtime former NCACC field representative Robert Hester. “He didn’t hold his feelings back at all. He thought it was wrong and let it be known.”

“Coming from a rural, poor county, he was I think a spokesman for not just Hertford County but a lot of rural counties.”

“He wouldn’t hold his tongue for anybody,” Hunter said. “He would tell you the truth. But he would tell you to help you.”

In addition to holding a position on the NCACC’s Executive Commit-

tee for five years beginning in 1999, he was three times appointed as an at-large member to the NCACC Board of Directors. He was also a sitting member of the NCACC Risk Management Pools Board of Trustees. Last October, Governor Beverly Perdue presented him with the Order of the Long Leaf Pine.

“The Association and county government has lost a giant in my opinion,” King said. “He knew the ins and outs of government, no doubt about it. He was real sensitive to that. He came from a small county that was trying to have a progressive agenda.”

Former Hertford County Manager David F. Thompson also worked with Davis in his current position as NCACC executive director.

“He has been an outstanding mentor to many of us in county government through his constant work in serving the citizens of not only Hertford County but the entire State of North Carolina,” Thompson said.

Hunter said that Davis was not only a walking encyclopedia on county government, but also a walking Bible. He used a different parable from the Bible at almost every meeting of the Board of Commissioners, he said.

“There’s nobody else that can fill those shoes,” he said. “He left a legacy that cannot be touched.”

As much as Davis enjoyed county government, King said nothing meant more to him than his wife, children and grandchildren. He made lasting friendships with many commissioners, and maintained a sense of humor that often helped diffuse the seriousness surrounding the tough issues that elected officials must deal with, according to Accor.

“The times he made us laugh. ... The laughter is one of those things I’ll always remember,” Accor said. “Even now when I think about him I can’t help but smile.”



Davis shares a crowded seat with Bertie County’s Norman Cherry and Cumberland County’s Breeden Blackwell and Billy King during County Assembly Day in 2004.

Photo by Jason King

MARTIN ♦ STARNES
& ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.
A Professional Association of Certified Public Accountants & Management

- ♦ Providing audit services to Counties & Municipalities since 1992
- ♦ Serving all areas of North Carolina
- ♦ Ranked 8th Best Accounting Firm to Work for in 2009 by *Accounting Today* magazine
- ♦ Management Advisory Services

730 13th Avenue Drive, SE
 Hickory, NC 28602
 Tel: 828.327.2727
 Fax: 828.328.2324

www.martinstarnes.com

13 South Center Street
 Taylorsville, NC 28681
 Tel: 828.632.9025
 Fax: 828.632.9085

McGill
 ASSOCIATES
 ENGINEERING • PLANNING • FINANCE

ASHEVILLE, NC (828) 252-0575
 HICKORY, NC (828) 328-2024
 PINEHURST, NC (910) 295-3159

www.mcgillengineers.com

Union, five others from North Carolina crack list of nation's 100 fastest growing counties

Six North Carolina counties are among the nation's 100 fastest growing since April 2000, according to U.S. Census Bureau estimates released in March.

According to the Bureau's new population estimates as of July 2009, Union County has realized a 60.5 percent growth in population over the past nine years – good for 14th among all counties. Other Tar Heel counties ranking in the top 100 are Brunswick (No. 38), Wake (45), Johnston (66), Hoke (95) and Currituck (98). The Bureau did not include counties with less than 10,000 citizens,

meaning Camden County, which grew by 41.3 percent, was not ranked.

Wake County continued to close the gap on Mecklenburg County in the rankings of most populous counties. They are the state's only two counties to break the nation's top 100: Mecklenburg is 49th and Wake is 54th.

At the opposite end of the spectrum, 25 North Carolina counties either grew by less than 1 percent or decreased in population since April 2000 – furthering the perceived divide between the “two North Carolinas.”

North Carolina's fastest growing counties, 2000-09

County	July 1, 2009	April 1, 2000	Increase	Percent
1. Union County	198,645	123,777	74,868	60.5
2. Brunswick County	107,062	73,107	33,955	46.4
3. Wake County	897,214	627,879	269,335	42.9
4. Camden County	9,730	6,885	2,845	41.3
5. Johnston County	168,525	121,966	46,559	38.2
6. Hoke County	45,148	33,652	11,496	34.2
7. Currituck County	24,216	18,182	6,034	33.2
8. Cabarrus County	172,223	131,063	41,160	31.4
9. Mecklenburg County	913,639	695,378	218,261	31.4
10. Chatham County	64,772	49,326	15,446	31.3
11. Iredell County	158,153	122,660	35,493	28.9
12. Pender County	52,378	41,056	11,322	27.6

For the full list, visit www.ncacc.org/countyline/2010/04/populations.html

Career Opportunities

CLERK TO THE BOARD – Caswell County is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Clerk to the Board of County Commissioners. The Clerk to the Board serves at the pleasure of a seven-member Board of Commissioners and is responsible for creating, coordinating, and maintaining a permanent record of Board actions including historical and current official records; researching, interpreting and analyzing various reports and activities; and assuring that legally required Board operational processes and procedures are followed. The position requires the use of considerable judgment and independent action, must possess excellent skills in written and oral communication, and interpersonal skills. Work requires a high level of discretion and often requires the use and handling of confidential information. The Clerk to the Board is responsible for responding to requests from the general public, the news media, and County employees for information and/or services. Applicant should have a four-year degree or an associate degree in public administration, finance, business or related field with at least two years of experience in administrative work; or an equivalent combination of training and experience that provides the required knowledge, skills, and abilities. Salary Grade: 22, Salary Range: \$28,502 – \$46,977. Starting salary will be based on qualifications and experience. Position will remain open until filled. Application review will begin April 20, 2010. Contact Wanda Smith, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners at (336) 694-4193, Ext. 106 or wsmith@caswellcountync.gov to receive an application. Applications are also available on the County's website at www.caswellcountync.gov. Send completed applications to Ms. Wanda P. Smith, Clerk to the Board, PO Box 98, Yanceyville, NC 27379. Caswell County is an Equal Opportunity Employer.

PUBLIC HEALTH DIRECTOR – Toe River Health District (Avery, Mitchell, and Yancey Counties). Location: Mitchell County, North Carolina. Type: Full Time – Experienced. Salary: \$48,609 – \$85,305. The Health Director is responsible for implementing plans, activities, policies and utilizing organizational and managerial skills to provide effective public health services in a three county health district. The Health Director will manage a staff of over 170 employees (Home Health, Community Alternatives Program (CAP) for Disabled Adults, Health Department and Administrative Office) with an annual budget of over eight million dollars. Requirements: Master's degree in public health and at least one year of employment experience in health programs or health services; or a master's degree in public health discipline other than public health administration and at least three years of employment experience in health programs or health services; or a master's degree in a related field to public health and at least three years experience in health programs or health services; or a medical doctorate. Minimum training and experience requirements are pursuant to North Carolina G.S. 130A-40 and G.S. 130A-45.5. Local Government with excellent benefit package. Candidates must complete and submit a North Carolina State application, a certified copy of college transcripts, a current résumé and three professional references. Submit NC state application to: Toe River Health District, 861 Greenwood Road, Spruce Pine, NC 28777, Attn: B.J. Rock – Human Resource.

COUNTY SOCIAL SERVICES PROGRAM ADMINISTRATOR – Haywood County Department of Social Services. This position serves as a Program Administrator in the department and at times has acted as the Program Administrator for the Family Financial Support Division. Under the general supervision of the Director, this position has delegated responsibility for planning, organizing, directing and controlling all operations of the units under their supervision. This position serves as a member of the Agency Senior Leadership Team and is responsible for professional development of supervisory staff. Currently this position supervises the Food and Nutrition Services Program, Child Support Enforcement and Information Technology/Imaging. Minimum Training and Experience: Graduation from a four-year college or university and five years of administrative experience in government or business; or nine months of graduate training in an accredited school of social work and four years of supervisor or administrative experience in social work; or an equivalent combination of education and experience provided. Applicants may apply to: Kathi McClure, PHR, c/o Haywood County Department of Social Services, 486 E. Marshall St., Waynesville, NC 28786.

ASSISTANT TO TAX DIRECTOR – Guilford County is seeking a professional to assist the Tax Administrator in the administration, supervision, and management of Real property appraisal and assessment, individual personal property listing and assessment, listing and assessment of business property, transfers of property ownership, tax mapping, and property tax collections. The employee will work primarily in the Greensboro office but may be assigned responsibilities relating to the County's tax office in High Point. Specific duties will be determined by the Tax Administrator based upon the evolving needs of the organization. A four year degree in business administration, accounting or related field, and several years of experience in a tax office involving the collection of taxes, including some supervisory/administrative experience; or an equivalent combination of experience and training. Preferred candidates will have effective supervisory skills, an ability to communicate well verbally and in writing, familiarity with Microsoft Word and Excel, and impressive customer service skills. Salary range \$60,992 – \$82,339. Apply online at www.co.guilford.nc.us. 201 S. Greene St., Greensboro NC 27401 (EOE).

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT DIRECTOR – Hertford County is seeking applications for one full-time Emergency Management Director to perform administrative work in planning, directing and coordinating activities in emergency management and animal control. Position also serves as the County Fire Marshall and Safety Director. Education and experience equivalent to graduation from an accredited college with 3 years experience in public administration, fire rescue and emergency procedures. Must possess a valid NC Drivers license and a State Fire Inspection Certification. Salary Range: \$40,046 – \$62,072. Open until filled. Apply online at www.ncesc.com, report to any ESC office or call to request applications: Job Application, Employment Security Commission, 109 Community College Road, Ahoskie, NC 27910. Phone #252-332-2431. Fax #252-332-2813. An Equal Opportunity Employer/AA.

PUBLIC UTILITIES DIRECTOR – Robeson County. Public Utilities Director of 23 years is retiring. Annual Salary: \$64,390. Closing Date: Open Until Filled. Qualifications: Graduation from a four-year college or university with major course work in Public Administration, Civil Engineering, Urban and Regional Planning, or a related field and five to six years of progressively responsible experience in water and wastewater treatment operations, including one to two years of responsible supervisory experience; or any equivalent combination of training and experience which provides the required skill, knowledge and abilities. Possession of a valid NC driver's license. Application Process has changed. Applicants must apply online at robesoncountycareers.com or www.co.robeson.nc.us. For questions about the new web site please e-mail jobs@co.robeson.nc.us. Robeson County Human Resources, 701 N. Elm St., Lumberton, NC 28358. Jobsline: 910-671-6289. An Equal Opportunity Employer.

DENTIST III – Cumberland County Department of Public Health seeks highly motivated Dentist to work in new modern facility. Must be able to work with pediatric and adult populations with special emphasis on preventative care for youth. Requires graduation from an approved school of dentistry and four years of experience in the general practice of dentistry, one of which must have been related to teaching dentistry professionals. Salary negotiable and commensurate with experience. For job description and to download application, visit www.co.cumberland.nc.us. Please submit application to: S. Barrett at CC Dept of Public Health, 3rd Floor, Administration – Human Resources, 1235 Ramsey St., Fayetteville, NC 28301. NC State Government application acceptable in place of a CC Government application. Résumé must have an attached and fully completed application. For more information, call Mr. Buck Wilson, Health Director at 910-433-3707. EOE.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The NCACC publishes career opportunities in CountyLines and on its Web site at www.ncacc.org/classifieds.htm.

CountyLines rates (monthly)

\$1.50 per printed line (minimum of \$25 per monthly ad) for North Carolina member counties and county entities; \$3.50 per printed line (minimum \$75) for all others.

Web site rates (one-time charge)

\$20 per ad (up to 400 words) for N.C. counties and county entities; \$50 per ad for all others. After 400 words, all ads will cost an additional \$5 per every 50 words.

General information and instructions

Ads published in CountyLines run in one issue only unless otherwise requested by the advertiser. Ads published in CountyLines are posted online at no additional charge and will remain posted on the Web site until the position's closing date or the position is filled, for up to six months. Advertisers are asked to notify the NCACC when their position has been filled. Ads may be submitted, along with billing information, to Jason King via e-mail (communications@ncacc.org), or faxed to (919) 733-1065. Non-N.C. member counties must provide a credit card number before ads will be posted. **The deadline for advertising in the next issue of CountyLines is Thursday, May 6.** For more information, please call Jason King at (919) 715-0045.

Calendar of Events

For a complete listing of events, visit www.ncacc.org/meetings.htm.

▼ MAY

- 5 NCACC Environment Steering Committee meeting, Albert Coates Local Government Center (ACLGC), Raleigh
- 5-6 NACo County Jail Diversion Forum, Pittsburgh, Pa.
- 11 NCACC Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 12 NCACC Public Education Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 13 NCACC Human Services Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 18 NCACC Intergovernmental Relations Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 19 County Assembly Day/Legislative Reception, Quorum Center, N.C. Museum of History, Raleigh (Wake County)
- 20 NCACC Agriculture Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 20 NCACC Taxation and Finance Steering Committee meeting, ACLGC, Raleigh
- 26-28 NACo Western Interstate Region (WIR) meeting, Billings, Mont.



Health and safety program success is in the details

By **Bob Carruth**
Risk Control Manager

Editor's note: This article is the fourth in a series that provides a primer for ANSI Z10, the voluntary consensus standard for health and safety management systems approved in 2005. The first three articles are available online at www.ncacc.org/rmp.htm.

In previous articles laying out the details of ANSI Z10, I discussed the importance of management support, employee participation, and risk assessment goal determination for the organization's Occupational Health and Safety Management System (or OHSMS). In the next two articles, I will outline the "meat and potatoes" of management. This month, we will focus on the operational elements of the OHSMS; next month, we will discuss training, communications and documentation.

As I discuss the operational elements of this management system, it is important to note the gaps that may be in your own system so that you can make sure these areas are addressed adequately.

Hierarchy of controls: Once a hazard or risk has been identified, what do you do about it? If left uncontrolled, you are banking on pure chance for prevention. This can be catastrophic for the organization, both from a financial as well as an emotional and psychological perspective. Uncontrolled hazards will, over time, also have a profound

effect on employee morale and relations. Simply put, any hazard or exposure that is identified should be addressed in the following priority order, until the highest feasible control can be identified: elimination, substitution, engineering controls, warnings, administrative controls, and personal protective equipment.

Notice the order of these move from less dependence of human behavior to more; this can also lead to a less-than-effective solution to the problem and increase the chances of an incident occurring. Implementation of the control should also be done in light of overall cost investment, as well as feasibility of the proposed solution.

Design review and management of change: This is usually the most overlooked – and most important – aspect of an organization's OHSMS. This is particularly true of operations where a lot of change may take place over time. Often, a new process or technology is introduced into the workplace, or a program or process is restarted. In both of these situations, it is much easier to identify throughout the planning process those areas that may increase risk for the organization, and design the process to include safety and risk considerations.

Procurement: The first line of defense in any organization is with the person (or persons) responsible for purchasing the materials, tools and/or items used by the organization. The purchasing staff should be fully aware and trained

on recognizing hazardous materials and know how to advise employees on less hazardous substitutions. In addition, the purchasing agent is also the critical link in getting the required documentation, whether it be MSDSs for chemicals used, warranty and operations information on equipment purchased, and other documents as needed. The procurement process should also include a method by which this information is shared with the rest of the organization.

Contractors: This is another commonly overlooked component of an organization's health and safety program. Each year hundreds of incidents occur in workplaces that can be directly attributed to actions performed by direct or third-party contractors working temporarily at a worksite. It is important that you consider how the relationship with your contractors is defined. This includes how your safety requirements are communicated, what hazards the contractor may introduce into the workplace, and how liabilities will be shared or transferred as appropriate.

Emergency preparedness: In spite of our best efforts, sometimes "it" happens – a bomb scare in the courthouse, a wreck involving a transit van, an employee collapsing in the tax office. All of these are real events, and the organization must be prepared ahead of time to deal with them. For a county, this emergency planning goes beyond emergency operations for community incidents, but includes what will be done internally

to react to situations that may occur in county facilities involving employees and members of the public. Procedures, drills and plans should be well thought out, then practiced and rehearsed extensively so that they become second nature.

Coupled together, all of these elements have a common thread – they all involve situations when operations are not at a normal state, be it when a hazard is discovered, a new process is introduced, a new product is purchased, contractors begin working, or when something out of the ordinary happens in the workplace. The vast majority of incidents that occur in the workplace can be traced back to one of these components not being thought through or complied with.

The next installment will continue our discussion by dealing with three other critical pieces of the OHSMS system – training, communications and documentation.

As Risk Control Manager for the NCACC, Bob Carruth manages the operation of the Risk Control Team for the Risk Management Pools. The team assists members with development of safety policies and programs and identification of liability exposures and controls. Carruth is a Certified Safety Professional and is certified as Associate – Risk Management. A current Cabarrus County commissioner, he serves on the Board of Directors for Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare and the Water & Sewer Authority of Cabarrus County.

Pay special attention to specifics of builder's risk policies

Builder's risk insurance is a special type of policy that provides coverage for buildings during the course of their construction and is normally provided to the county by the general contractor. Reviewing the builder's risk coverage specifics can be extremely important.

Most standard property insurance policies are not designed for many of the exposures normally associated with the process of construction, which is why the builder's risk policy form was originally developed.

Typical construction projects are going to have all kinds of exposures to loss that are often temporary in nature. Examples are building materials on the job site pending actual use, forms, scaffolding, falsework, cribbing and materials stored at other locations until they are actually needed at the site.

In addition, there are often "soft

costs" – additional expenses required to complete a construction project that has been delayed due to unexpected physical damage. Examples are loss of favorable financing for the project, extra expenses, advertising, design fees, loan interest payments, general administration, loss of use, permit fees and even insurance premiums previously paid.

These soft costs are contrasted to "hard costs," which include the typical cost for labor and materials that are directly affiliated with the project's physical construction.

Because builder's risk policy forms are often an unfiled class of inland

marine insurance, the coverage providers are free to design their policy forms without the influence and regulation of the state Department of Insurance. This leads to potential wide variances in the scope of coverage. No two insurance company's builder's risk policies will read exactly the same.

Some supplemental coverage can be included – often with a smaller sublimit – that can be easily overlooked but become quite valuable after a major event, such as a flood, earthquake, coverage for personal property, ordinance of law (for both damaged and undamaged parts of a building), and even pollutant cleanup and removal. Some will include perils such as the collapse of a building or structure, contract penalty coverage, expediting expense coverage and fire department service charges.

Areas of major coverage variance that bear special attention can include:

- What are the actual perils insured against? Are they named or specifically listed, or is it written as "all risk" except as excluded?
- How will a given loss be valued – replacement cost, stated value or actual cash value basis – and at what exact time will the policy cease providing its coverage? Some will terminate without notice if the property owner moves any

contents into the structure in anticipation of occupancy in a short time but prior to taking legal possession.

• Who is responsible for the deductible should a loss occur, and who is responsible for the selection of the size of the per occurrence deductible? Some larger general contractors will have an annual builder's risk policy form that covers multiple construction projects. This allows for monthly reporting and automatic coverage for new projects as they are started. These policy forms can carry per occurrence deductibles occasionally as high as \$100,000.

When working through the bidding process on a sizeable construction project – aside from receiving the usual bid and performance bonds and certificates of insurance – it would be a good practice to request an actual certified copy of your general contractor's builder's risk policy for your specific project. That puts you in the best position to better understand the conditions, provisions, limitations, deductibles and coverage specifics before a loss occurs.

NCACC Property and Casualty Program Specialist Michael Kelly writes a regular column on risk management for CountyLines. Archived versions of the column can be found online at www.ncacc.org/managingyourrisk.html.

Managing Your Risk

by **Michael Kelly**
NCACC Risk Management

www.wkdickson.com

WK DICKSON
community infrastructure consultants

Transportation Planning & Design
Environmental & Water Resources Engineering
Community Planning & Development
Geospatial Technology

Raleigh • Charlotte • Wilmington • Hickory

Iredell County Chairman succumbs to cancer

Iredell County Chairman Godfrey Williams, 66, died March 6 following a year-long battle with pancreatic cancer. He had served on the Board of Commissioners since 2000 and in 2008 was elected to a four-year term. Williams previously served six years on the Iredell-Statesville Board of Education.

As press time of this issue of *CountyLines*, the county had not named an individual to serve in Williams' seat through November. A new representative will be elected in November to fill the remaining two years on Williams' term. Out of respect to Williams, commissioners declined during their March 16 meeting to name a new chairman, instead allowing Vice Chairman Marvin Norman to run the meeting from his usual seat to the right of the chairman's seat.

Williams was a member of the NCACC Agriculture Steering Committee and served as an NCACC Legislative Liaison.

Causey makes jump from USDA to Sampson County

Ed Causey, who as area director of the U.S. Department of Agriculture/Rural Development's Kinston Office has been a familiar face in Eastern North Carolina, will begin serving May 1 as Sampson County manager. The Sampson County Board of Commissioners announced the appointment March 31.

Causey has served with the USDA for the past 39 years, including 30 years as Kinston area director. Under his direction, the Kinston Office managed the largest portfolio of projects in North Carolina and possibly the largest loan and grant portfolio in the nation.

Causey succeeds Rick Moorefield, who resigned as county manager/county attorney in December 2009 to become Cumberland County attorney. Assistant County Manager Susan Holder has since served as interim county manager.

"He certainly is no stranger to Sampson County, having developed public financing packages for our water districts, schools and county office facilities," said Board of Commissioners Chairman Jefferson Strickland. "In addition to his financial expertise, Ed brings to us what our citizens most frequently requested – knowledge of and appreciation for our agricultural heritage and our agriculture-based economy."

Langdon to step down as Carteret County manager

Carteret County Manager John Langdon announced March 15 that he planned to retire by mid-April. Langdon, who has held the position since 2004, cited personal reasons for his retirement.

Langdon served as the county's Legislative Liaison to the NCACC and was active in a number of statewide legislative issues of importance to counties. He is a retired Marine Corps colonel with 30 years of service.



Durham County Vice Chair Ellen Reckhow, Chairman Michael Page and Commissioners Brenda Howerton and Joe Bowser take part in the groundbreaking ceremony for the new county courthouse.

Photo courtesy Dawn Dudley/Durham County Public Information

Durham County digs for gold

Durham County will have a new LEED Gold-certified courthouse by the end of 2012. Durham County officials – including commissioners – broke ground on a \$75 million, state-of-the-art facility on March 31. Keeping with the Durham County High Performance Building Policy, the courthouse will be built to pursue Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design (LEED) Gold certification standards.

The building will feature 11 stories with 318,533 square feet, offering 20 courtrooms for users – and potential to expand to 27. It will replace the county's current 16-room courthouse, which



An artist's rendering of the new courthouse.

Courtesy O'Brien/Atkins Associates and Heery-HLM Design

opened in 1978. A five-level, 897-space parking deck, scheduled to be completed during the summer of 2011, will be located adjacent to the new courthouse.

Chatham joins counties with Farmland Protection Plans

The Chatham County Board of Commissioners on March 1 adopted a new voluntary Farmland Protection Plan that includes several components to help retain farmland and boost the county's agricultural economy.

The county's Agriculture Advisory Board worked with the Chatham County Center of Cooperative Extension Service, the Soil and Water Conservation District and the Triangle Land Conservancy in developing the plan with grant funding from the state's Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation (ADFP) Trust Fund. To learn more about the county's Farmland Protection Plan, visit www.chathamnc.org, click on the "More News" link, and view the release dated March 1.

According to ADFP staff, 11 counties have approved Farmland Protection Plans. For more on Farmland Protection Plans and other preservation tools for counties, visit www.ncadfp.org.

Catawba's Barnes appointed to NACo 'Green Government' board

Catawba County Board of Commissioners Chair Kitty Barnes was appointed March 15 to serve on the advisory board of NACo's Green Government Initiative, a national effort launched in 2007 to help counties develop and implement environmentally sound programs and practices.

The Green Government Initiative serves as a comprehensive resource for county governments on all things "green," including energy, green construction, climate protection, air quality, transportation, land use, water quality, purchasing and recycling. Through the initiative, NACo provides education and outreach to counties on sustainability strategies and directs them to corporate and organizational partners that can offer green services and products.

In August 2009, Catawba County hosted the NCACC's 102nd Annual Conference, which featured a sustainability theme and highlighted several county sustainability programs.

Bladen County Board names Lewis-Moore's replacement

Bladen County commissioners on March 15 appointed Albert Beatty to fill the seat vacated when Margaret Lewis-Moore died Feb. 6. Beatty will serve through November and possibly longer – he will appear on the November ballot as a candidate to complete the final two years of Lewis-Moore's original term.

The lifelong Bladen County resident was chosen for the seat after the original appointee, Stanley Richardson, was killed in an automobile accident before he could be sworn into office.

Meanwhile, commissioners paid tribute to Lewis-Moore at their March 15 meeting by recognizing family members and hanging a plaque in her honor in the commissioners meeting room.

Hyde County honors Swindell, seats new member

Hyde County commissioners honored a former Board member and welcomed his successor March 15. Chairman Tom Davis presented a plaque of appreciation to former Commissioner Barry Swindell, who resigned Feb. 26. The Board appointed Ken Collier to serve the remaining nine months of Swindell's term.

Commissioner Sharon P. Spencer was appointed Board vice chair, a seat held by Swindell prior to his resignation.

Guilford Commissioner Davis could appear twice on ballots

Guilford County Commissioner Bruce Davis has announced he is planning to run for the N.C. Senate as an unaffiliated candidate in District 28. Sen. Katie Dorsett, a Democrat, originally filed for re-election but pulled her name out of the race on the final day of filing. Davis, who is running unopposed for re-election to the Board of Commissioners, has stated he would have filed for the Senate seat had he known Dorsett was going to withdraw as a candidate.

In order to have his name appear on the ballot as a candidate for the Senate, Davis needs to submit a petition to the county Board of Elections director by June 25 that includes signatures from a minimum of 4 percent of the total number of voters in the district as of Jan. 1, 2010.

Latest 'Precinct Manual' available from School of Government

The School of Government has announced the availability of "The Precinct Manual 2010," which is published every two years and includes a basic introduction to the law governing the administration of elections. Intended to give practical guidance to precinct officials, it explains North Carolina law on registering voters, conducting elections, counting ballots and more.

To purchase the publication, visit www.sog.unc.edu, click on the "Publications" link at the top of the page and enter the publication title in the search field.

Struggling economy, sagging revenue projections bring more pain for counties

Revenue shortfalls continue to hit counties hard, and several counties announced in March actions that included employee layoffs and furloughs.

Citing a decrease in anticipated revenue from sales tax and fees for county services, Mecklenburg County Manager Harry Jones on March 16 implemented a hiring freeze and directed county department heads to cut \$13.2 million from the current budget. The reductions include the elimination of 45 filled positions in code enforcement. The county will use \$14.6 million from its fund balance to help offset the overall reduction of budgeted revenue.

Looking ahead to the 2010-11 fiscal year, Jones said he is preparing for an

\$85 million budget shortfall, and cuts include potential layoffs of more than 500 employees and possible elimination of more than 100 vacant positions.

Orange County Manager Frank Clifton in March discussed with commissioners the potential savings from eliminating 75 permanent positions that are now vacant, and providing retirement incentives for employees who are eligible to retire.

Rockingham County officials announced March 8 that the county will close its doors and furlough employees on April 5 and May 28, saving an estimated \$245,000. The Sheriff's Office, emergency services, the Board of Elections and the county landfill will remain

open.

Guilford County will furlough its Register of Deeds Office employees for two days this fiscal year, but will stagger the furloughs so that the office can remain open.

In Rowan County, commissioners gave their OK to a freeze on unspent appropriations for capital projects among other budget adjustments for the current fiscal year to cover a portion of a \$1.5 million revenue shortfall.

Wilkes County leaders announced furloughs for county employees – one day per month for each of the final three months in the fiscal year – and shelved plans for a new jail in light of a \$1 million budget shortfall.

SHORTS

Columbus: Commissioners discussed the possibility of merging the Whiteville City and Columbus County school systems during a March board retreat. ... Gerald Fogle was appointed social services director March 15. He previously served as a regional supervisor for the South Carolina Department of Social Services. ... NCACC Associate Member Ware Bonsall Architects presented to the County Courthouse Committee in March on a courthouse needs assessment. ... **Catawba:** Bryan Blanton was promoted to emergency services director in March. Blanton, who has served with the county's emergency services in various roles since 1993, succeeds David Weldon, who resigned in January to join the state Division of Emergency Management. ... **Graham:** Assistant County Manager Kim Crisp is serving as interim county manager following the resignation of Lynn Cody on March 22. ... **Nash:** The county sold bonds March 17 to finance a new high school, a new county emergency services facility and two other projects. The interest rate on the 20-year bonds is 4.36 percent. ... **New Hanover:** Payroll Administration Analyst Debbie Grymes has been appointed to the LGFCU's Southern Coast Advisory Council. Council members serve as liaisons between credit union members and non-members and LGFCU management. ... **Pender:** Security renovations to the courthouse are among several ongoing facility improvements. In addition to renovation work at the animal control building, the health department's dental facility and probation and parole offices, child protective services were relocated to new modular buildings. ... **Robeson:** The Board of Commissioners during its March 15 meeting continued to show its appreciation to legislators for relieving counties of Medicaid costs in 2007. Reps. Doug Yongue, Garland Pierce and Ronnie Sutton, and former Sen. David Weinstein were honored during the meeting. ... **Surry:** Commissioner Jim Harrell Jr. and his father, brothers, sons and nephews were honored during a 100-year celebration of Scouting at the Old Hickory Council Boy Scouts' March 26 recognition banquet. The Harrell family has earned eight Eagle Scout awards since 1938. Commissioner Harrell earned his Eagle Scout award in 1962. ... **Wake:** Standard and Poor's, Moody's and Fitch have each assigned triple-A ratings to the county's 2010 \$125.8 million general obligation bond issue that will be used to finance \$100 million of Wake County Public School System capital projects and \$25.8 million of Wake Technical Community College projects. The bond issue was sold March 16. ... Mike Wasilick, a 23-year veteran of the county's library system, took over as director of libraries on March 29.



Chinese visitors talk county government with Currituck officials

Currituck County welcomed a delegation of municipal-level government executives from China on March 16. A group of 23 officials from China's Hunan Province met with county commissioners and staff at the Moyock Welcome Center, the historic courthouse and the water plant in Maple. The Chinese delegation was in the United States to attend a public administration training seminar at Old Dominion University in Norfolk, Va. Areas of specific interest for the group included tourism, land use planning, conservation, economic development and education.

Photo courtesy Randall Edwards/Currituck County Public Information Office

Commissioners in Cumberland, Alamance discuss sales tax

Cumberland County commissioners are considering asking the Legislature for permission to hold a referendum on a one-cent sales tax to fund ambulance and fire service improvements. Commissioners discussed the proposal March 4 as a way to incent county fire departments to respond to medical emergencies – something fire chiefs told commissioners at a February meeting they could no longer do without additional funding.

Alamance County commissioners heard a proposal from Farm Bureau officials March 23 to hold a referendum on the quarter-cent sales tax option granted to counties by the Legislature in 2007.

The sales tax rate is 7.75 percent in 91 counties. Cumberland and seven other counties – Alexander, Catawba, Haywood, Martin, Pitt, Sampson, and Surry – have implemented the quarter-cent sales tax. Voters in Hertford, Lee, Randolph and Rowan counties have also authorized their county boards of commissioners to levy an additional quarter-cent sales tax. Mecklenburg, which has a half-cent local sales tax for public transportation, has the highest rate at 8.25 percent.

Ballots in Duplin, New Hanover and Onslow counties will include quarter-cent sales tax referendums on May 4.

Henderson County invites citizens to design new logo

Henderson County on March 31 announced a contest to create a new county logo. The county invited graphic designers of all ages and skill levels to enter the contest to create "a modern, eye-catching logo that reflects what makes Henderson County such a unique place to live and work."



A committee of county employees will choose the top three design entries. In early August, the county will post the top three designs on its Web site and allow citizens to vote on their favorite design. The county's current logo is pictured above.

LGFCU reaches asset milestone

After nearly 27 years exclusively serving North Carolina's local government employees, elected/appointed officials, volunteers and their families, Local Government Federal Credit Union has reached a major business milestone – surpassing \$1 billion in assets.

The NCACC was one of the partners that worked with State Employees' Credit Union officials to launch LGFCU.

NACo accepting entries for County Courthouse Awards

The National Association of Counties is accepting applications for the 2010 NACo County Courthouse Awards program through May 7.

The awards program recognizes innovative governance by county elected officials from NACo member counties. From large metropolitan counties to suburban and rural counties, county executives, board members and commissioners are continually working to address issues such as homeland security, air and water quality, information technology, health and human services, and public safety. Managing and prioritizing a county's needs may be a commissioner's most challenging task. These stories are the foundation upon which other successes can be built.

Award winners will receive an engraved plaque that they can display in their county, recognition at the 2010 NACo Annual Conference and a \$5,000 college scholarship to present to a graduating high school senior. Awards will be given out in three categories: rural, suburban and urban.

For more information, visit the "Awards" page at www.naco.org, or contact Dalen Harris or Erik Johnston at (202) 393-6226, or dharris@naco.org or ejohnston@naco.org.

JCPCs earning their keep, juvenile justice officials say

Youths who run afoul of the law are better off receiving treatment within their community rather than in a state facility, representatives of the N.C. Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention (DJJDP) told members of the NCACC Board of Directors during their April 7 meeting in Raleigh.

DJJDP Deputy Secretary Michael Rieder and Eastern Area Administrator Claude Odom lauded the work of county Juvenile Crime Prevention Councils (JCPCs) in helping youths who get into trouble from becoming repeat offenders.

Rieder said that JCPC programs, which provide various mentoring, education and therapeutic treatment in the community through locally developed programs, have helped to significantly reduce the number of youths being treated in one of the state's nine Youth Development Centers (YDCs). In 1998, he said, roughly 1,300 youths were treated in YDCs. Today, that number is 365.

"That's a real testimony to our programs ... and keeping our children home instead of sending them to a YDC," Odom said. "The better investment is in community programs. We're truly convinced that's the way to go."

According to Rieder, 57 percent of the youths who enter the juvenile justice system are there because of problems that occurred at school. He said simply



NCACC President Mary Accor talks with DJJDP Deputy Secretary Michael Rieder (left) and Eastern Area Administrator Claude Odom, a former Hertford County commissioner, following a presentation during the NCACC Board of Directors meeting April 7.

Photo by Jason King

removing the youth from school isn't the answer, however.

"When we suspend a child from school, we get temporary relief," he said. "We haven't solved anything."

By suspending a student, teachers and school administrators will lose their chance at Rieder's No. 1 key to being successful with youths – engagement.

JCPCs provide that engagement in a home or community setting. Odom said the local programs also can provide badly needed structure in a youth's life.

Both Rieder and Odom expressed concern over the loss of programs due to budget cuts. One such program, Support Our Students (SOS), provides supervision and structure for youths in the

afternoon hours – when the majority of juvenile crimes occur.

Rieder said that JCPC appropriations are well spent and provide quantifiable value. DJJDP can spend \$98,000 annually on a youth enrolled at a state facility.

"If the JCPC programs keep 1 percent of the children that they serve out of a YDC, we save the State of North Carolina an amount of money greater than the entire JCPC budget."

In other news, the Board adopted the membership service fee structure for the 2010-11 fiscal year. For the second consecutive year, every county will see a decrease in membership fees. The Board authorized a reduction in rates of 5 percent in fees in light of the financial difficulties that counties are facing. This comes on the heels of a 10 percent reduction for 2009-10.

Board members also heard a report from NCACC Outreach Coordinator Lisa Nolen, leader for the staff team charged with implementing strategies to achieve the strategic goal of "facilitating regional and intergovernmental collaboration," about the team's "County Government in a Box" project.

The team developed the box to assist K-12 public school teachers in their lessons on county government. It is being made available to social studies coordinators in each of the 115 school districts.

HELLOC
HOME EQUITY
LINE OF CREDIT

Secured, pre-approved line of credit

Borrow up to 90 percent of your home's appraised value

No origination fee

888.732.8562
www.lgfcu.org

LGFCU
LOCAL GOVERNMENT
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION