



CountyLines

www.ncacc.org

AUGUST 2011 | VOLUME 37, NO. 8

Remembering a year of overcoming challenges

The past 12 months has been like a roller coaster, filled with ups and downs and terrifying twists and turns that left me breathless with my heart pounding – and wanting another exhilarating ride. So many memories have been created during my year as president, and yet it feels almost as if it were yesterday when I was being sworn in at the 103rd Annual Conference in Pitt County!

While there have been many memories, a few stand out. I was very appreciative when the Board of Directors unanimously agreed to support the task forces on human services, veterans and youth. These task forces have met throughout the year and will each sponsor a workshop at our 104th Annual Conference to discuss some of their findings. There is no better way for our counties to learn than to come together and discuss ideas and programs that are already being

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President's Perspective
by Joe Bryan



Cabarrus County has transformed a 30-acre tract of farmland donated by a citizen into an incubator farm that is a centerpiece of county efforts to build a sustainable local food economy.

104th Conference has local flavor

By Alissa Willett
Legislative Grassroots Coordinator

If you are a “locavore” – a term invented by San Francisco Bay area food writer Jessica Prentice to describe people who are interested in eating food that is locally produced – the NCACC’s 104th Annual Conference in Cabarrus County will offer a menu made just for you.

In step with the county’s drive to build a strong local food economy, more than 75 percent of the food that will be served at the conference has roots in Cabarrus County or the surrounding region, and all food will come from within North Carolina, according to Aaron Newton, Cabarrus County’s local food system project coordinator.

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Handful of legislative issues to be continued

Human services flexibility among bills of interest eligible for consideration in 2012

Despite a condensed but busy 2011 legislative long session, a number of hot issues for counties were left in the lurch when the House and Senate adjourned on June 18. The bills listed here met the General Assembly’s crossover deadline by being approved by one chamber and are eligible for consideration during the 2012 short session.

For a review of the long session, see the July issue of *CountyLines* or visit www.ncacc.org/countylines/2011/07/legislature.html.

Goals on deck

One of counties’ primary policy goals – an effort to allow county flexibility to reorganize local human services – unexpectedly stalled on the House floor in the final week of the session despite receiving a favorable report in the House’s Health and Human Services Committee

Please see Legislature on page 9

North Carolina ‘fares’ well in Portland

North Carolina was very well represented in Portland during the 2011 National Association of Counties’ Annual Conference. Nearly 100 county officials from the Tar Heel state made the cross-country trip, giving North Carolina the most counties represented (31) of any state. And once in Portland, many of the North Carolina visitors discovered the Pine State Biscuits restaurant – founded by two Raleigh natives – that featured Southern-style biscuits and chopped barbecue.

Besides the authentic North Carolina fare, North Carolina also fared well at the conference, as two members of the NCACC Board of Directors earned seats on the NACo Board of Directors.

NCACC President Joe Bryan emerged from a contested race to win a two-year term as the South Region

representative to the NACo Executive Committee. The four regional representatives are responsible for providing input to the NACo president and other officers with respect to policy and business of their regions, maintaining close contact with counties in their regions, keeping member counties informed of association activities and assisting membership recruitment and retention in their regions.

Following his successful campaign, Bryan credited the strong grassroots effort of North Carolina county commissioners, many of whom campaigned actively for Bryan throughout the Annual Conference. NCACC First Vice President Howard Hunter of Hertford County worked particularly hard for Bryan’s election and helped garner support from

Please see NACo on page 12



Wake County’s Joe Bryan is congratulated by Joyce McDow (Scotland), Noah Woods (Robeson) and Vilma Leake (Mecklenburg) following Bryan’s election as NACo South Region representative on July 19.

Photo by Kevin Leonard

Cabarrus

Continued from page 1

Locally grown products that will go from farm to fork include 200 chickens that were purchased earlier this year specifically for the conference and were growing on a pasture in the county at the time this story was written in late July. A farm in neighboring Rowan County was harvesting 40 pounds of mushrooms for dishes to be served at the conference. Attendees can expect a healthy dose of fruits and vegetables that are prevalent at this time of year. Locally grown wheat flour will be used to make bread; ingredients in many dishes will include locally produced eggs and cheeses.

“My hope is that county commissioners from across our state come away from this year’s conference with the realization that local communities can produce more of their own food, and that rebuilding local food systems is the first step towards rebuilding local economies,” Newton said. “It tastes great, too.”



Cabarrus County has stepped up its commitment to the local food economy over the past two and half years. The Board of Commissioners approved the Cabarrus County Food Policy Council (FPC), which performs research, educates the community, develops strategies and makes policy recommendations to promote the expansion of a sustainable local food economy. The goal is to create a healthier, more thriving population. The FPC is comprised of a diverse group of county residents with expertise in areas such as farming, nutrition, education, emergency food systems, health

care, food services, waste management, research, land-use planning and human services.

The county also has a food policy that commits participation in North Carolina’s 10% Campaign (www.nc10percent.com). The local food campaign was launched by the Cooperative Extension Service at N.C. State University and N.C. A&T to challenge local organizations and individuals to spend at least 10 percent of their existing food dollars locally to support North Carolina food producers, businesses and communities. All departments participate in the effort.

A rolling workshop tour offered on Thursday, Aug. 18, during the Annual Conference will highlight the centerpiece of the county’s local food efforts – the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm. The 30-acre incubator farm is in its third year of operation and is currently training 18 participants on the business of farming. See page 3 for a description of the rolling workshop.

“To ensure that we continue to grow good, quality local foods, we need to grow local farmers too,” Newton said.

To dig deeper into the local food economy, a food assessment conducted by the Center for Environmental Farming Systems (CEFS) – a collaborative partnership between the N.C. Department of Agriculture, N.C. State University and N.C. A&T – began work in June 2010 on a baseline assessment of the Cabarrus County food system.

The assessment was conducted in two phases. The first includes quantita-

tive information and gives a vast summary of information such as the number of farms in Cabarrus County, the kinds of foods and beverages county citizens consume, and how much of these foods are consumed. The second phase answers the what, when, why and where questions from the first phase, enabling county officials to evaluate desirable change.

Newton said, for example, that the assessment phase revealed a lack of fruit and vegetable production in the county.

“Now it’s time to come up with a long-term plan on how to solve that problem,” he said. Over the next eight months, the FPC will coordinate public forums to discuss a local foods plan for the next 20 years. During these forums FPC members hope to set goals, create strategies to meet those goals and create a timeline to connect it all.

The Board of Commissioners stands in full support of the local foods initiatives. Chairman Jay White said he looks forward to showcasing the county’s efforts for Annual Conference guests.

“I think it’s going to be an eye-opening experience and an opportunity for people to see what Cabarrus County and other North Carolina counties can provide,” he said. “The local quality is tremendous. It’s going to be a great experience for my fellow commissioners and all commissioners visiting from their respective counties.”

To learn more about the local food efforts in Cabarrus County, visit www.cabarruscounty.us and search under Business/Sustainability.

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CountyLines

is published monthly by the NCACC
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JACKSONVILLE ONSLOW
 ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

Future farmers spread their wings at Cabarrus Lomax Incubator Farm

Cabarrus County will host a rolling workshop to the Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm on Thursday, Aug. 18, from 2 – 4 p.m.

The Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm supports local farming while encouraging a new generation of farmers to ensure quality local food sources flourish in Cabarrus County. The Incubator Farm Park is the result of a successful partnership program between Cabarrus County, which owns the land, and North Carolina Cooperative Extension, which manages operations. The farm consists of 30.6 acres donated by Elma C. Lomax for use as a public park. It is a Certified Organic Operation.

This incubator farm works much like a business incubator. Individuals interested in starting a business as a farmer can enroll in the program, which provides classroom instruction on the business of farming in Cabarrus County, as well as hands-on experience on the farm. Participants in the program develop and manage their own agriculture business while receiving guidance from seasoned farmers.

The program helps individuals make the leap to market farming by offering affordable access to land, shared equipment and resources including help with



Check in at the registration table for seating on the Aug. 18 rolling workshop to the Cabarrus County Lomax Incubator Farm.

production, distribution, marketing, business strategies and more. Transition strategies follow a three- to five-year participation period at the farm and aim to help new farmers find land of their own.

Infrastructure and operational costs are funded by grants from the N.C. Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund (ADFPTF), the Cannon Foundation and Cabarrus County – including a fund established by the Board of Commissioners for the exclusive use of farmland preservation and agricultural development from deferred taxes paid on farmland coming out of present use tax valuation.

104th Annual Conference agenda

Thursday, Aug. 18

8:30 a.m. – 3 p.m. County Invitational Golf Tournament
 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Pre-Conference Seminar: "Bottom Line!"
 2 – 5:30 p.m. Exhibit Show open
 2 – 4 p.m. Rolling workshop: Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm
 2:30 – 4:30 p.m. Ethics training seminar
 6 – 7:30 p.m. Opening Reception in Exhibit Hall

Friday, Aug. 19

8 – 10 a.m. Opening General Session: Address by Dr. James H. Johnson
 10 a.m. – 2 p.m. Exhibit Show open
 10:30 a.m. – noon N.C. Association of County Clerks business meeting
 10:45 a.m. – noon Workshop Block I
 Noon – 1 p.m. Lunch in Exhibit Hall
 Noon – 1 p.m. County Managers' luncheon
 Noon – 1 p.m. N.C. Association of Black County Officials business meeting
 1:15 – 2:30 p.m. Workshop Block II
 2:45 – 4 p.m. Workshop Block III
 5:30 – 9:30 p.m. Horn O' Plenty: A Locally Sourced Food Exposition at the Cabarrus Arena and Event Center

Saturday, Aug. 20

7:15 – 8:30 a.m. Risk Management breakfast
 8:30 – 9 a.m. District caucuses
 9 – 10:15 a.m. Workshop Block IV
 10:30 – 11:30 a.m. Second General Session: Address by Neil Howe
 Noon – 1:45 p.m. N.C. Association of Black County Officials Awards Luncheon
 2 – 4:30 p.m. Business Session
 5:30 – 9 p.m. President's Reception and Banquet, and entertainment

Sunday, Aug. 21

9:15 – 10:15 a.m. Closing Service, featuring storyteller Tim Lowry (see page 5)



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Deductibles serve both insurer and insured

There's good sense behind the insurance policy deductible; local government risk management policies can include various types and sizes

The application and utilization of "deductibles" are common in many different types of insurance policy forms – property/casualty and health. Stated simply, a deductible is a portion of a loss that is covered in the policy but must be paid or handled by the insured, not the insurance carrier.

The first question someone might ask is why an insurance company and their insured would want to use a deductible in the first place. The reasons are that deductibles serve as a risk financing technique that help contain cost by eliminating the necessity of the insurance company to process small losses, which drive up operational costs and, by extension, increase insurance premiums.

Secondly, by essentially guaranteeing that the insured will participate in each loss, it reduces morale and moral hazard issues as well, while simultaneously encouraging loss control efforts from the insured. As a review, a morale hazard is where an insured takes an "I don't care" attitude in loss prevention because he or she is simply expecting their insurance to take care of the loss. A moral hazard is due to an insured's poor ethics, such as turning in a false or inflated claim just to get the insurance claim money.

With the use of a deductible, smaller losses are handled by the insured, and their claims experience will be reflected in their premiums. Most insureds will not turn in a first-party claim (for damage to property that they own) that is going to definitely fall below their deductible amount. This reduces both the frequency and severity totals in your experience. (As a side note, it is never a good idea to refrain from turning in a third-party claim even if it appears to be insignificant – as it is much more difficult to predict the total loss – or if it will ultimately be litigated.)

Let's look at the principal types of deductible clauses that are utilized today. The most prevalent is a straight deductible, which is typically found in property line insurance policies, i.e. buildings, con-

tents and related mobile or inland marine equipment policy forms. The deductible is expressed as a specific amount and applies for each loss regardless of the number or amount of losses. An example would be a \$1,000 per occurrence automobile collision deductible. For each collision, you as the insured would be responsible for the first \$1,000 of loss for damage to the vehicle. Any amount of damage above this \$1,000 would be paid and borne entirely by the insurance company.

A per event deductible is often utilized to address damage claims arising out of a single event, such as a named storm or hurricane. These types of deductibles typically apply to each event, or even each item, such as a building or each location. As such, there is a cumulative effect with the possibility that a large number of items damaged may ultimately result in a substantial amount of retained loss for you as the insured.

As referenced in the per event deductible detail, not all insurance policy forms utilize deductibles as dollar amounts. Some may employ a percentage deductible, which is based on some other amount, such as the total amount of insurance, the total amount of the item insured (building, contents, etc.) or the total amount of the loss. As a result, just as these insurance values increase in size, so will the total dollar amount of percentage deductible increase proportionally.

Typically, "for profit" insurance carriers will mandate a minimum "named storm" per event deductible expressed as a percentage (minimum of 2 percent up to 5 percent) of each building's replacement cost value total for counties that are located on or near North Carolina's coastline.

Managing Your Risk

by Michael Kelly
NCACC Risk Management

Aggregate deductibles are an amount to be paid by the insured for all losses sustained during a specific period of time – typically one year – and are sold in dollar increments. They are designed to establish a maximum total that an insured is responsible for regardless of the frequency or severity of losses. They minimize the effect of sustaining a large number of smaller losses because their total accumulates. Through accumulation of all losses, after the aggregate amount is reached during a single policy year, the insured no longer participates in future losses – even if they are smaller than the per occurrence straight deductible.

For business interruption type losses (loss of income arising separately from a covered loss), a time deductible is often used. This is not expressed as an amount of money or percentage but instead as a specific length of time that must pass before coverage actually begins. Another example might be that 48 hours must pass before a personal automobile policy will allow reimbursement for the leasing of a substitute car.

One of the less common deductible types used is the franchise deductible. This differs from the straight deductible in that should a loss exceed the franchise (typically an amount 2 percent or 3 percent of the total insured value), the insurance carrier pays the entire amount of the loss. As an example, a shipment with a total value of \$100,000 with a 2 percent franchise deductible sustains a loss of \$1,500. The insurance carrier pays nothing, but if the amount of loss were \$3,000, the full \$3,000 is paid to the insured. In this example, as

long as the franchise amount of \$2,000 is reached, the entire loss is paid by the insurance carrier.

There are still more rare deductible types available, such as convertible, cumulative and progressively diminishing deductible forms, but these are not typically utilized in insuring local government exposures and are omitted for clarity and column space. Using deductibles of any type help prevent what is essentially known as dollar trading, in that the insured pays the insurance company premiums that cover small losses and the insurance company then basically pays these same dollars back to the insured.

Deductibles are not a panacea to lower insurance costs. Weighing the credits generated against the total premium is important. Always remember one of the most basic risk management tenets discussed earlier: never risk a lot for a little. In other words, use deductibles where it makes good sense and is cost effective. The return needs to reflect the additional responsibility you are assuming by the selection of deductible type and size.

NCACC Risk Management Director Michael Kelly writes a regular column on risk management for CountyLines. With more than 32 years of risk management/insurance experience, he holds the Associate in Risk Management for Public Entities, Certified Risk Manager and Certified Insurance Counselor professional designations. He can be reached at michael.kelly@ncacc.org or (919) 719-1124. Archived versions of the column can be found online at www.ncacc.org/managingyourrisk.html.

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NACo initiative places priority on county health

With healthcare costs on the rise and preventable disease at an all-time high, county governments across the nation are increasing efforts to improve community and employee health and save county dollars. This year, the National Association of Counties is taking these efforts to a new level in hopes of encouraging more counties to follow suit.

NACo recently launched the Healthy Counties Initiative 2011 to enhance public and private partnerships in local health delivery. NACo officials say they hope to help counties improve their individual and community health, and aim to assist counties to effectively implement federal health reform.

Program Director Maeghan Gilmore

said NACo isn't trying to be prescriptive in nature, but "it's more about how current counties are already indentifying these issues. [Healthy Counties] gives them a platform to stand on to share ideas and understand how they can get started."

NACo hosted an introductory webinar on the initiative on June 30. The webinar, which is archived online at www2.gotomeeting.com/register/660229658, provides testimony from various leaders of counties and cities that are actively participating in healthy initiatives in their communities.

New NACo President Lenny Eliason of Athens County, Ohio, is demonstrating his support of Healthy Counties by

dedicating his presidential initiative to a similar cause. Eliason has promised to help counties create and maintain healthy communities by making tools available to promote health policies, create programs to support community health, and encourage health promotion at the local level.

NACo's Healthy Counties Initiative website (www.naco.org/programs/csd/Pages/HealthyCountiesInitiative.aspx) already has links to two webinars (and PowerPoint slides) that provide tips on how to save county dollars. The online resources provide ideas on how to implement community programs and where to find health-related grant and recognition opportunities. Online resources include a

healthy county database that can be used to search for county programs specific to states and issue areas. The database is helpful to counties looking to learn about and share creative ideas.

"The website was created a few years ago, and with the guidance of President Eliason, we hope to update the current database soon," Gilmore said.

The initiative is steered by a Healthy Counties Advisory Board that is comprised of county officials, staff and representatives of corporate sponsors.

"This model really works because it's member-driven, and with the help of corporate sponsors they [the advisory board] learn about the current trends that work right now," Gilmore said.

Storyteller Tim Lowry offers the Story of Esther during Annual Conference Closing Service

Stories can bring us closer to the truth about ourselves, about life and about living, as well as help us define our purpose here on Earth. Stories connect us to others, and allow us to experience and share joys, sorrows and new horizons.

Tim Lowry is a member of the North Carolina Storytelling Guild. The son of a Baptist minister, he grew up in South Carolina with the stories that are so much a part of the American cultural experience. Audiences of all ages enjoy Lowry's whimsical character voices and animated style. He mixes stories of the American Revolution, the Civil War, and the Western Frontier with tales of growing up Baptist, teaching English

to Russian immigrants, exciting road trips to Disney World, baseball, hotdogs, apple pie, and Chevrolet.

Lowry will use the art of oral storytelling during the Association's Closing Service to present the Story of Esther, a famous policy-changer in the Ancient Persian Empire. Esther's delivery of her people from annihilation is recorded in the Biblical Book of Esther and is commemorated by the Jewish Holiday Purim. Using a combination of humor, masks, colorful costumes, comic voices, noisemakers, klezmer music and plenty of audience participation, Lowry preserves the ancient tradition of passing down and sharing our stories with others.



Tim Lowry



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Mapping regional demand for recycling

By Will Sagar

Policy Directory, SERDC

The recycling song of the new millennium is one of finding supply to meet strong demand, especially in the Southeast United States. As the region rebounds from the exodus of textiles, furniture, cotton and tobacco, increased emphasis is being placed on green jobs and local manufacturing. There has been an increase in manufacturing investment in the production of consumer goods created from recovered materials, resulting in a strong recycling infrastructure and creating the many support jobs required to move material through its intended manufacturing lifecycle.

Mapping the network that supports local jobs and manufacturing

Recycling reprocessing infrastructure hinges on a critical point: community investment in the collection of recyclables. During tight budget times those investments can come under critical review. It is for that reason that the Southeast Recycling Development Council (SERDC) recently unveiled the conclusion of a two-year study documenting the heavy regional presence of manufacturers that depend upon post-consumer recycled materials.

The finding that 206 companies in the region look to recycled feedstock to fuel their operations is catching the attention of regional decision-makers – both elected and appointed. With those companies comes some 47,525 employees and \$29.4 billion in sales volumes. Such attention-getting numbers are just the ticket to help move recycling from the “feel good” to the “do good” category.

Putting numbers to current need for materials

When communities invest in local recycling collection programs, they are supporting regional manufacturers that depend on recycled plastic, glass, metal and paper to make new consumer goods. Today's plastic bottles can turn into tomorrow's carpet or new bottles, soda cans into more aluminum sheet, newspaper back into newsprint – all without leaving the Southeast. The job creation



Counties have taken steps in the past several years to increase collections. Polk County began a mobile recycling service in 2009 to increase convenience for citizens.

potential and growth in tax base is enough to convince many local officials to step up material collection efforts.

“With more than 15,000 people employed statewide and an annual payroll of at least \$395 million, the recycling industry in North Carolina is a steady contributor to our state's overall economic strength and competitiveness,” said Scott Mouw, North Carolina's State Recycling Program director. “That figure represents a 4.8 percent growth in the industry since 2008 during a time when North Carolina's overall unemployment rate soared close to 10 percent.”

Why recycling needs new numbers

The motivation behind this project lies in connecting recycling's impact to the Southeast's strong manufacturing base.

“Some of the nation's and world's largest recycling end users call our region home,” said SERDC Chairman Steve Carreras. “Unfortunately, many have to look beyond the Southeast to find materials while these same commodities are disposed in landfills across the Southeast. By collaborating across state lines, we can build effective recycling collection systems that provide essential feedstock to manufacturers who employ tens of thousands of people in the Southeast.”

Increased recycling rates have helped the 26 Alabama manufacturers that rely on recycled content feedstock. These companies generate more than \$6.6 billion in yearly sales and employ more than 10,700 Alabama citizens directly working in the manufacture of recycled content product.

Beyond manufacturing demand, there are direct impacts on the reprocessing side as well. With more than 300 employees, KW Plastics in Troy, Ala., is among the largest high-density polyethylene and polypropylene plastics recyclers in the country.

“Currently, KW receives enough plastic from Alabama to run the plant for only two days out of every year,” said KW Director of Market Development Stephanie Baker.

Into the bin and back again: Material flows support industries

As home to 11 pulp and paper mills paying an annual payroll of \$1.4 billion to 16,868 employees, Tennessee realizes annual recycling-related sales revenue in excess of \$5 billion. Larry Christley, environmental assistance program manager at the Tennessee Department of Environment and Conservation, said that these figures have allowed him to better connect with state and local elected officials.

“Paper mills alone generate \$123 million in tax revenue for the state and local governments,” he said. “Twelve additional plants such as Alcoa and Gerdau AmeriSteel use aluminum and steel feedstock, respectively, employing an additional 3,100 ‘Volunteer State’ residents. These metal plants bring over \$3.1 billion in annual sales to Tennessee. Figures like these help our decision makers give recycling the economic credibility it deserves.”

Using the power of the cloud to speak to the crowd

SERDC is dedicated to keeping active tabs on the demand for recycled feedstock and thus has adopted the find-

ings into an online tool (www.serdc.org/regionalresources) highlighting a visual demonstration of recycling's economic presence. Each of the pins on the map represents a manufacturing facility that relies upon feedstock collected in recycling programs. For each facility the mapping tool indicates recycled feedstock used, the product created, the direct dollar impact of the site, and the number of manufacturing jobs created. The map can be sorted by material type, zoomed to specific areas or regions, and focused upon selected companies.



This tool provides unique insight to the reliance upon recycling that has developed over the years in the Southeast. With the capability to drill in on any given location while selecting the material types in question, planners and decision-makers can now see the true effect of recycling on their local economy. Zooming in on specific areas, it becomes evident that there are clusters or centers of activity. This facilitates the development of hub and spoke collection and process infrastructure.

Projecting financial returns through increases in collections

In 2006, Drs. Frank Hefner and Calvin Blackwell of the Department of Economics and Finance at the College of Charleston published a study on the economic impact of the recycling industry in South Carolina. By measuring the material recycled in the state and the jobs, wages paid and taxes collected from the businesses processing the material, they concluded that, on average, every 1,000 tons recycled from landfills represents a total economic impact of \$236,000, including 1.68 additional jobs, \$79,800 in personal income and \$3,687 in additional tax revenues to the state.

But what happens when recycling rates increase? Tools such as the SERDC mapping project allow for the projection of expansion in hopes of continued commitment from community collection programs. One-thousand additional tons of material recycled in North Carolina would result in more than 1.5 new jobs and a \$3,600 increase in annual state tax base. This is proof to the statement that local investments in recycling collection result in regional return.

Will Sagar can be reached at (828) 507-0123 or will.sagar@serdc.org.

Snapshot by state of manufacturers that use recycled feedstock

State	Manufacturers	Jobs	Annual sales
Alabama	26	10,700+	\$6.6 billion
Arkansas	5	1,200+	\$0.4 billion
Florida	15	2,600+	\$1.5 billion
Georgia	31	7,000+	\$4.5 billion
Kentucky	17	4,300+	\$3.8 billion
Louisiana	10	2,900+	\$1.1 billion
Mississippi	3	525+	\$1.3 billion
North Carolina	30	2,800+	\$1.1 billion
South Carolina	24	5,300+	\$5.3 billion
Tennessee	30	6,500+	\$4.3 billion
Virginia	15	3,700+	\$3.6 billion
Region totals	206+	47,525+	More than \$29.4 billion

LELA workshop puts financing tools at your fingertips

A chamber of commerce urges its local council to offer incentives to small business owners who agree to make additional investments in their businesses.

A downtown development director seeks city and county assistance in revitalizing a downtown that has been struggling in this economy.

A vacant commercial facility sits near a downtown area and local leaders want to know their options for rehabilitating the property and putting it back to use.

What options are available to counties to help stimulate private investment and assist Main Street businesses? North Carolina communities can select from a wide array of financing tools in their efforts to attract and grow businesses, improve real estate and build community assets. In order to select the right approach, it helps to understand the options.

The School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill will host "Development Finance Toolbox: A Survey of Financing Tools for Community and Economic Development" on Sept. 20-21 at the Knapp-Sanders Building.

"There are multiple overlapping authorities for revitalizing a community,"

LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS
Academy

Nine to receive LELA recognition at Annual Conference

The Association and School of Government will honor the first set of commissioners to achieve "Mentor" and "Master" level status and the second set of commissioners to achieve "Practitioner" level status in the Local Elected Leaders Academy (LELA) Recognition Program during the Aug. 20 business session at the NCACC's Annual Conference.

Jonathan Barfield, Jr. of New Hanover County has achieved Mentor level status. Kevin Austin of Yadkin County, Gary D. Blevins of Wilkes County, Brenda Howerton of Durham County and Judy Porter Poe of Ashe County have reached the Master tier.

Those achieving Practitioner status are Ronnie Beale of Macon County, J. Owen Etheridge of Currituck County, Tracey A. Johnson of Washington County and Brian McClellan of Macon County.

In 2010, four commissioners formed the first class of LELA Practitioners: Blevins, Howerton, Richard Hayes of Lee County and Leon Inman of Stokes County.

LELA is a partnership program of advanced learning for county and municipal elected officials housed at the School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill. LELA was developed as a response to the Association's Strategic Goal No. 2, which emphasizes a need for leadership training and board development beyond the basic Essentials of County Government classes offered every two years. Commissioners began earning recognition credits in 2009. Practitioners are those who have earned 48 credits in specific categories of workshops, seminars and conferences.

according to School of Government faculty member Tyler Mulligan, "and there are constraints around the various options. This course will help participants learn to work through the complex systems and tease out the best choices for

their community."

Participants in the Development Finance Toolbox course will learn the basics of economic development mechanisms and how they have been implemented in North Carolina communities.

Program topics include:

- an overview of pro forma financial analysis;
- local government capital financing;
- tax increment financing (also known as TIF or project development financing);
- business improvement districts;
- incentive programs for Main Street businesses; and
- federal financing programs and tax credit financing.

Development Finance Toolbox will benefit elected officials; city and county managers, assistant managers and clerks; and community and economic development professionals seeking a greater understanding of the development finance options available to North Carolina local governments. Elected officials are encouraged to attend this course with their manager or economic development staff members.

County commissioners who attend will receive workshop credits toward their commitment to lifelong learning through the LELA Recognition Program.

Online registration as well as information about scholarships are available at www.sog.unc.edu/node/1184. The course fee is \$280 per person. For more information, contact Carla Stowe, program manager, at cstowe@sog.unc.edu or (919) 843-8176.

LOCAL ELECTED LEADERS

Academy

Strategic Leadership Education for Municipal and County Elected Officials

Development Finance Toolbox

A Survey of Financing Tools for Community and Economic Development

SEPTEMBER 20-21, 2011

SCHOOL OF GOVERNMENT, CHAPEL HILL

North Carolina communities can select from a wide array of financing tools in their efforts to attract and grow businesses, improve real estate, and build community assets. Participants in this two-day workshop will learn the basics of economic development finance tools and how they have been implemented in communities across the state.

Local elected officials are encouraged to attend this workshop with their city manager or economic development staff members. Scholarships are available to elected officials through the Local Elected Leaders Academy.

For course registration and scholarship information, visit www.sog.unc.edu/node/1184, or contact Carla Stowe at cstowe@sog.unc.edu or 919.843.8176.

Can We Talk? Tips for Effective Communication with Your Board Members

OCTOBER 22, 2011 1:00-5:00 PM

RALEIGH CONVENTION CENTER

Do you feel like you frequently have the same conversation over and over, but get nowhere? Do you struggle to have others understand your point of view?

In this workshop, local government managers and board members will be introduced to three key elements of skillful communication and will practice techniques to improve their communication with colleagues and others. This session will help participants learn to differentiate between positions and interests, understand the thought process people use to arrive at their conclusions, and identify the underlying emotional needs that motivate people's actions.

To register for this workshop, which will be held in conjunction with the NC League of Municipalities annual conference but is open to county officials, visit www.nclm.org, or contact Melissa Smith at 919.715.3927.

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.



Career Opportunities

COUNTY MANAGER – Rutherford County (population 67,810) located in the foothills of N.C. is seeking applications for the position of County Manager. The Manager is the chief executive officer for the county and reports to a five member Board of Commissioners. The manager supervises the administration of all county offices, departments, boards, commissions and agencies. The Manager is also responsible for managing a \$50 million plus budget and supervising approximately 406 full time employees. Applicants must have an understanding of the operations and organization of county government, including budget preparation, finance, employee management and knowledge of public administration principles and best practices. Effective oral and verbal communication skills are essential to establish and build relationships with citizens, community leaders and organizations, businesses, government officials, media representatives, commissioners, department heads and employees. Minimum requirements: Baccalaureate degree in public administration, business administration or a comparable field with a minimum of five years experience in county or city management or an equivalent combination of education and experience, ICMA certification preferred. Salary commensurate with education and experience, supplemented by an excellent benefit package. Submit cover letter, résumé and application (available at www.rutherfordcountync.gov) with salary history and work references to: Judith H. Toney, Human Resources Director, Rutherford County 289 N. Main Street, Rutherfordton, NC 28139. Position is open until filled. Drug testing required. EOE.

FINANCE DIRECTOR – Macon County is seeking a Finance Director to perform professional and responsible managerial and administrative work in planning, organizing and executing the financial activities of the county. Work involves coordination of the annual operating budget, and supervision of purchasing, accounting, collections, billing and cash investments. Must exercise considerable independent judgment and initiative in planning and directing the fiscal control system. Work is performed under the supervision of the County Manager. Graduation from a four-year college or university with a degree in business, public administration or accounting required. Considerable management experience in public finance administration preferable, as well as North Carolina Finance Officers' Certification. FLSA exempt position. Salary range \$82,656 – \$123,984. Applications accepted through the North Carolina Employment Security Commission at 427 Harrison Avenue, Franklin, NC 28734. Position open until filled. Macon County is an EOE/ADA Employer.

ADVERTISING POLICY

The NCACC publishes career opportunities in CountyLines and on its website at www.ncacc.org/classifieds.htm and promotes ads published there on its Twitter account, @NCCCountyCareers.

CountyLines rates (monthly)

\$2 per printed line (minimum of \$25 per monthly ad) for North Carolina member counties and county entities; \$4 per printed line (minimum \$75) for all others.

Website rates (one-time charge)

\$25 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 website 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 email (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, Sept. 1.** For more information, please call Jason King at (919) 715-0045.

DIRECTOR OF SOCIAL SERVICES

– Burke County Board of Social Services is seeking qualified applicants for the position of Social Services Director. The director serves as the executive officer of the county board of social services, executing the authority of the board as defined in G.S.108A-14. The director will appoint and supervise a staff of 136 employees in the delivery of agency services to the county's community and will provide leadership and direction for program development, establishing program standards, and monitoring and evaluating quality of service delivery. This officer will supervise budget activities and will act as spokesperson for the agency relative to program issues. The director will represent the agency with government officials, other human services providers and with community planning efforts. Qualified candidates must possess a thorough knowledge of the legal and philosophical bases for public welfare programs; knowledge of the principles and practices of social work; knowledge of management principles and practices; knowledge of the agency's objectives, organization and operation; knowledge of applicable federal and state laws, rules and regulations; a demonstrated ability to exercise sound judgment and to make effective decisions regarding employees and programs; and the ability to develop and maintain effective working relationships with the board, general public, and federal, state and local officials. Minimum Training and Experience Requirements: A master's degree in social work and two years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services; or a bachelor's degree in social work and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, one of which must have been in Social Services; or graduation from a four year college or university and three years of supervisory experience in the delivery of client services, two of which must have been in Social Services; or an equivalent combination of training and experience. Position is open until filled. Applications can be found online at www.co.burke.nc.us. Please mail completed applications to Ms. Nancy Taylor, DSS Board Director, PO Box 688, Morganton, NC 28680-0688. EEO/ADA.

INFORMATION TECHNOLOGY DIRECTOR – County of Montgomery, Virginia. Position to oversee the operation of the County's information systems. Requires a Bachelor's Degree in Information Systems, Computer Science or related discipline and 8 years experience in IT Management, of which at least 5 years should be in local and/or state government. Salary range \$79,810 – \$95,772, DOQ with excellent benefits (paid health, dental and vision, flex spending, life, disability, retirement, wellness program). For more information about this position or to apply for accommodation for disabilities, contact Human Resources at (540) 394-2007; TTY/Voice (1-800-828-1120 or 1-800-828-1140); County Job Line: (540) 394-2010. For a full description and/or to apply, visit our website at www.montgomerycountyva.gov/e-services. Open until filled. AA/ADA/EEO Employer.

New on Twitter: @NCCCountyCareers

When you advertise a career opportunity with the Association, you now receive additional exposure for your listing through twitter.com/NCCCountyCareers. By using hashtags such as #ncjobs and #hiring, we can promote your opening to an even larger audience.

All ads posted in CountyLines or on our webpage will be promoted via @NCCCountyCareers.



countymatch.ncacc.org



Former NCACC intern Brent Troxell met Governor Beverly Perdue following a June 23 bill signing ceremony.

Photo courtesy Office of Governor Bev Perdue

Troxell completes internship

Brent Troxell completed a 10-week internship with the Association on July 29. Troxell is entering his second year in the Master of Public Administration program at the School of Government at UNC-Chapel Hill. He performed research and support for the Government Relations Team. One of his research subjects was the impact of annexation on the county share of local sales taxes.

More staff notes: **Alissa Willett** officially joined the Association's Government Relations Team on Aug. 1 as legislative grassroots coordinator. She previously served as wellness program coordinator for the Risk Management Pools. In her new role, she will develop, manage and implement grassroots programs, assist with developing program content and marketing for educational events and conferences, and serve as the assistant liaison (assisting Rebecca Troutman) to NACo, among other duties. She will also continue to assist the Communications team and write articles for *CountyLines*.

New publication offers help for communicators

The N.C. City & County Communicators (NC3C) has developed a new quarterly publication aimed at local government communicators and public information officers in the state. The inaugural issue of NC|COM includes tips for photographers, an article about Chapel Hill, a look at All-America Cities in the Tar Heel State and much more. It is online at www.nc3c.com/uncategorized/nccom/.

The magazine is not only for NC3C members, but for anyone in the public sector who performs communications functions. Kiara Jones, director of public information and media relations for Pitt County, is editor of NC|Com.

NC3C is dedicated to the professional development and networking of local government communications professionals. The organization was founded in 2007 and has more than 60 members, including the NCACC.

Calendar of Events

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

▼ AUGUST

- 17 NCACC Board of Directors meeting, Embassy Suites Resort Hotel and Concord Convention Center (Cabarrus County)
- 18-21 NCACC Annual Conference, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Health and Human Services Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Justice and Public Safety Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Public Education Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Agriculture Steering Committee meeting (as part of Elma C. Lomax Incubator Farm Rolling Workshop), Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Taxation and Finance Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Intergovernmental Relations Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County
- 18 NCACC Environment Steering Committee meeting, Cabarrus County

▼ SEPTEMBER

- 15 NCACC Risk Management Pools Board of Trustees meeting, Quorum Center, Raleigh
- 18-21 ICMA Annual Conference, Milwaukee
- 20-21 Development Finance Toolbox: A Survey of Financing Tools for Community and Economic Development, School of Government, UNC-Chapel Hill

▼ OCTOBER

- 14-15 NCACC Board of Directors meeting, Hilton Garden Inn Outer Banks/Kitty Hawk (Dare County)

▼ DECEMBER

- 15 NCACC Risk Management Pools Board of Trustees meeting, Quorum Center, Raleigh



Legislature

Continued from page 1

and having already passed the Senate by a significant majority. S433 (Local Human Services Administration) was scheduled and listed on the House Calendar during the final week but was pulled by the bill sponsor at the last minute.

Rep. Jeff Barnhart, citing opposition by county social services and health directors as well as perceived conflicts with implementation of the statewide capitated model of mental health services, said he believed the bill was too controversial to proceed.

Having passed the Senate before the crossover deadline, S433 remains eligible for the short session. Rep. Barnhart and Sen. Fletcher Hartsell (the Senate bill sponsor) have pledged to work with counties to resolve this issue in advance of bringing it forward again next year.

H605 (Expand Setoff Debt Collection Act) allows a "regional solid waste management authority created under Article 22 of Chapter 153A of the General Statutes" to participate in the Debt Setoff Program. This would accomplish an Association legislative goal. It passed the House and will be eligible for the 2012 short session.

S572 (Omnibus County Bill), which passed the Senate, would accomplish two Association legislative goals. First, it would establish a Records Preservation Modernization Commission that would consist of 13 members – four appointed at the recommendation of the NCACC. The commission would study "issues relating to records preservation standards, procedures, and techniques." The bill would also establish June 1 as the deadline to apply for a property tax exemption or exclusion. It is eligible for House consideration in 2012.

Looking ahead

S756 passed the Senate on June 8 with a vote of 33-16. The bill, sponsored by Sen. Debbie Clary (Cleveland), amends current pretrial release procedures in several ways. First, S756 eliminates unsecured appearance bonds. It also expands how electronic monitoring may be used and requires the execution of at least a \$1,000 secured appearance bond if electronic monitoring is imposed as a condition of pretrial release. Current law only allows electronic monitoring to be used with house arrest.



Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger (left, Rockingham County) talks with NCACC President Elect Kenneth Edge (Cumberland) and President Joe Bryan (Wake) outside of Berger's office at the Legislative Building on July 28. Bryan, Edge and NCACC staff also spoke with Sens. Pete Brunstetter (Forsyth) and Wesley Meredith (Cumberland), and Rep. Efton Sager (Wayne) during their visit.

Photo by Todd McGee

S756 further provides that a person may be placed in a pretrial program only if the execution of a secured bond is a condition of pretrial release and only if a judicial official finds that at least 72 hours has elapsed from the date and time on the defendant's release order. The bill specifically states that a pretrial release program shall not contact or otherwise attempt to gain access to a defendant prior to the expiration of the 72-hour period.

The NCACC voiced concerns that these changes in pretrial programs have the potential to put additional burdens on already over-capacity jails. S756 is in House Judiciary Subcommittee C and is eligible for action in 2012.

Another issue that can be studied is a county's ability to regulate land use. H652 (Property Owners Protection Act/Study) as filed raised a number of concerns for counties. The bill's sponsor, Rep. Tim Moffitt (Buncombe), was receptive to county concerns and met with staff on several occasions to discuss potential changes to H652. He ultimately agreed to an amendment offered by Rep. Chuck McGrady (Henderson) to turn H652 into a study bill.

S486 (Release Subdivided Lots from Tax Liens), sponsored by Sen. Josh Stein (Wake), would release buyers from a potential tax lien on the parent parcel after all current taxes are paid and no delinquencies are outstanding on the par-

ent parcel. However, if the parent parcel owner has an unsavory history of tax payments, the county tax collector may decline to release the tax lien. The bill

Perspective

Continued from page 1

tried, and these task forces give county commissioners from across the state an opportunity to share information and to learn from each other.

I would also like to thank the counties and commissioners who were involved in our legislative goals process. Not only those who turned out for our Legislative Goals Conference in January, but also the counties that submitted goals to be considered, and to the individual commissioners and county staff members who served on our steering committees and the Legislative Goals Committee. Through this process, we identified a clear direction for our advocacy efforts.

It didn't take long for counties to find out that we were going to have a special year at the General Assembly. When Governor Bev Perdue visited us at our Legislative Goals Conference in January and announced that she was not going to pursue privatizing the state's ABC system, we had achieved a legislative goal before the session even started. That momentum helped carry us through the year.

Knowing the state had a significant budget shortfall, counties came together to convince the new leadership in both chambers of the General Assembly that shifting this burden to counties is not a good answer to the state's financial problems. Your officers (Second Vice President Mary Accor, First Vice President Howard Hunter III and President Elect Kenneth Edge) met on numerous occasions with Governor Perdue and her staff and with Speaker of the House Thom Tillis and Senate President Pro Tem Phil Berger. These meetings established a solid working relationship. The Association's officers are to be commended for their efforts. Not only did we work with legislators and the governor to

has passed the Senate.

S413 (Ordinance First Reading Vote) requires a county to hold any required public hearings at least seven days before it votes to adopt the ordinance addressed by the public hearing. This impacts budget ordinances and bond orders as well as any ordinance that requires a public hearing. It passed the Senate on April 6 and has been assigned to the House Rules Committee, where it can be considered in 2012.

H366 (Special Election Dates) would eliminate a county's ability to hold a special election on any date other than a regular general election date, unless the Local Government Commission has determined there is a state of emergency endangering public safety or public health and the referendum is for a bond issue to finance a health and sanitation system. This bill means that elections for other general obligation bonds or any other purpose, such as a referendum for a local-option revenue or an ABC referendum, can only be held on the date of any state, county or municipal general election or on the date of the primary in an even-numbered year. The House passed the bill May 19. The Senate referred it to its Judiciary I Committee, where it will be eligible for consideration in 2012.

keep the state from passing the buck to counties, we also achieved many of our legislative goals.

In all my years as a commissioner, I have never seen this organization so focused and active, and it was all because of the team efforts of hundreds of commissioners and our excellent staff, led by Executive Director David F. Thompson and Director of Government Relations Kevin Leonard.

There were plenty of personal highlights during the past year as well, including my re-election to the Wake County Board of Commissioners, bagging a 10-point buck with a bow, completing my first 20-mile run in preparation for a marathon, interviewing students interested in attending the U.S. Naval Academy, learning that my fourth grandchild is on the way, attending the Veterans Park dedication ceremony in Cumberland County, being North Carolina's candidate (and now elected) as the South Region representative to the NACo Executive Committee, and – most importantly – developing many new friendships.

All of these experiences have helped make this year one of the most rewarding periods of my life, and I am so grateful for all the support that I received along the way. I thank all of my fellow officers for their continued support, and I look forward to passing the torch to Kenneth at the annual President's Banquet on Aug. 20.

This past year was a very challenging year to be in county government, but as we all learned, when we identify a plan and then work together to achieve our goals, there is no limit to what we can accomplish for our citizens. This has truly been a hectic year and one that I wish could continue – but that family vacation at Ocean Isle Beach was also very nice, too.

May God bless you and your family.

MARTIN STARNES & ASSOCIATES, CPAs, P.A.

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Woodruff moving from Camden to Beaufort

Randell Woodruff announced July 5 that he is stepping down as Camden County manager in order to accept the same position in Beaufort County. He will begin work in Beaufort County on Sept. 5.

Chief Financial Officer Jim Chrisman has served as Beaufort County interim manager since Paul Spruill resigned on June 24.

Woodruff joined Camden County in December 2003. He also holds county experience in Lee, where he served as director of the Department of Youth & Family Services.

Blizzard to step down from Craven County post

Harold Blizzard told the Craven County Board of Commissioners on July 18 that he plans to retire at the end of September after roughly 18 years as county manager. Blizzard's 31-year career in North Carolina county government includes stints in Wilson and Johnston counties. Before joining Craven County's staff in 1993 he served as Granville County manager for six years.



Cumberland welcomes new clerk team

Cumberland County has a new team of clerks to the board. Candice White (right), who served two years as deputy clerk to the recently retired Marie Colgan, was sworn in as clerk to the board on July 1. Kellie Beam (left) is the county's new deputy clerk.

Photo courtesy Sally Shutt/
Cumberland County

County attorneys' association crowns new president

Durham County Attorney Lowell Siler was sworn in as president of the N.C. Association of County Attorneys during the organization's summer conference, held July 21-23 in Carteret County. Joining Siler as officers for 2011-12 are Pitt County Attorney Janis Gallagher as first vice president and Wake County Attorney Scott Warren as second vice president.

Catawba County Attorney Debra Bechtel wrapped up a one-year term as president and was honored with the association's Outstanding County Attorney award.

Portman succeeds Norwalk on Wake County board

Ervin Portman is the newest member of the Wake County Board of Commissioners, having been sworn in July 5 to the District 4 seat vacated by Stan Norwalk in May. Portman will serve the remainder of Norwalk's term until December 2012.



Ervin Portman

Portman previously served on the Cary Town Council.

Durham County jumpstarts strategic planning process

Durham County announced in mid-July that it is beginning a strategic planning process that will engage citizens, county employees and officials. Prior to the Durham County Board of Commissioners' scheduled adoption of the plan in February 2012, residents, employees and elected leaders will craft a document that will guide the county in future years.

"The final document will be a specific plan with key goals, objectives and specific initiatives that will be carried out," said County Manager Mike Ruffin. "The end goal is to improve how Durham County serves the community."

An early step in the strategic plan-

ning process took place in the winter of 2011, when the Board of Commissioners established a new mission and vision. The new mission reads: "Durham County provides fiscally responsible, quality services necessary to promote a healthy, safe and vibrant community." The vision states: "Durham County – a thriving, vibrant, diverse community with abundant opportunity for all residents to live, work, learn, play and grow."

Commissioners and county officials are now asking citizens to participate in the planning process by completing a short web survey designed to gather critical information about how citizens would like to see the county provide services.

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- ✓ Improve Morale?
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Cumberland County's King receives leadership award

Cumberland County Commissioner Billy King has received the N.C. Council of Community Programs' 2011 County Commissioner Leadership Award in recognition of his commitment and support to those in need of mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse services. King was honored at a special awards luncheon hosted by the N.C. Council of Community Programs on May 23 in Raleigh.

"Commissioner King's support has significantly increased communication and collaboration with other local agencies leading to the successful implementation and operation of the crisis intervention team, drug court, and DWI court in Cumberland County," said Sharon Yates, public relations director for the Cumberland County Mental Health Center.

Commissioner King is the longest serving Cumberland County commissioner liaison to the Mental Health Center, serving from 1992-2010.

Elected tax collector now a thing of the past in Avery County

The state's last elected tax collector, Mary Daniels Calloway, has retired after 31 years in the Avery County tax collector's office. Her retirement paved the way for the Board of Commissioners' decision on July 5 to eliminate tax collector as an elected position.

The change is part of a larger restructuring of the tax office that combines the offices of tax assessor and tax collector. Commissioners appointed Philip Barrier as tax assessor, Sandy Long as tax collector, and Deanna Phillips as deputy tax collector. Barrier is serving as director of the department.

Hyde County announces new finance officer, acting HR director

The Hyde County Board of Commissioners on July 5 appointed Corrine Gibbs as finance officer and Shelley Carawan as acting human resources director.

"I am excited to be able to promote these two very qualified applicants from within the organization," said Hyde County Manager Mazie Smith.

Gibbs, a county employee since 2007, served as deputy director of finance and budget prior to being made director of finance. Carawan, who has served with the county since 2009, served as the EMS billing technician and administrative assistant to the director of Emergency Services, as well as administrative assistant to the county manager and deputy clerk to the board.



From left to right, Librarian Melanie Stallings, Architect Barney Woodard, Library Project Director Theresa Coletta, Doris Hunter – widow of Library Steering Committee member Ed Hunter – Finance Director and Library Steering Committee member Lynne Hensley, Director of AMY Regional Library System Daniel Barron, and County Manager Nathan Bennett take part in a ribbon-cutting ceremony on July 24.

Photo courtesy Jason Robinson/Yancey County

Yancey County celebrates birth of new library

Yancey County's new library became a reality July 24. The library's opening ceremony marked the culmination of more than a decade of hard work and determination by a dedicated group of volunteers, local governments and private donors.

With its "Technology Gateway" that includes the latest in computer and communications equipment and makes technology available to every resident of Yancey County, the county has meshed

technological advancements with a facility that has roots to the early 1900s.

The new library is housed in the former administration building of the Yancey Collegiate Institute (YCI), a Baptist preparatory school formed in 1901. The building was later used by the public school system for Burnsville High School. It eventually became Burnsville Elementary School. "If this building were a cat it would be on its fourth life," said one speaker at the opening ceremony.

Barrett ends long career in Onslow County

Alvin Barrett Jr. retired as Onslow County's deputy manager and finance officer in July, bringing to a close a career with the county that began in 1978. He has been finance officer since 1986.

Barrett was presented the Order of the Long Leaf Pine and a county proclamation permanently naming the finance office in his honor on June 25.

Under Barrett's leadership, the county earned 19 Certificates of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting, five Distinguished Budget Presentation Awards and five recognitions for Outstanding Achievement in Popular Financial Reporting.

Deputy Finance Officer Ellen McMillan is serving as interim finance chief.

Cleveland County jail annex nears completion

Cleveland County is nearing completion of its expanded jail annex. The \$6.7 million, 152-bed expansion project will bring the county's inmate capacity to 240. The jail opened in 1974 and an annex was added in 1993. The new annex is scheduled to open this fall.

The county's Law Enforcement Center is slated for a renovation after the annex is complete.

Columbus County works toward courthouse addition

Surveys are under way at the site of the future Columbus County Courthouse annex – the first step in a \$15 million project that includes the 40,000-square-foot, two-story courthouse annex and renovations to the historic courthouse, built almost 100 years ago.

The annex will be located behind the county administration office and requires the demolition of two old jails that are now being used as offices for parks and recreation and probation personnel. The old jail was built in 1852.

The annex will include three new courtrooms and offices for the clerk of court and other support staff.

Prayer ruling goes against Forsyth

The 4th U.S. Circuit Court of Appeals in Richmond, Va., upheld a decision by a district court with a 2-1 decision July 29 that Forsyth County commissioners cannot lead prayers that reference a specific deity.

The county was sued following a December 2007 meeting during which commissioners thanked God "for allowing the birth of his son to forgive us for our sins" and closed the pre-meeting prayer in the name of Jesus.

"Legislative prayer must strive to be nondenominational so long as that is reasonably possible – it should send a signal of welcome rather than exclusion. It should not reject the tenets of other faiths in favor of just one," Judge J. Harvie Wilkinson III wrote in his ruling.

Rockingham commissioners appoint Neal as interim manager

Ben Neal will assume duties as Rockingham County's interim manager on Sept. 1 following the retirement of Tom Robinson. Neal is the county's director of personnel. Robinson, who has served as county manager since December 2001, told the Board of Commissioners in June of his pending retirement.

SHORTS

Caswell: Jeffrey Mark Sicz is the county's new Emergency Management Services director. He has worked in the department since 2006. ... **Davidson:** Fred Sink, who served on the Board of Commissioners and two stints as sheriff during a political career that began in 1966, died in early July. He was 78. Sink also worked for the county as emergency management director. ... Commissioners have announced a paper-saving move to iPads. By supplying commissioners and the county manager with Apple's popular tablet computer and distributing paperwork electronically, the county estimates it will save \$5,000 annually. ... **Durham:** Gail Perry was to begin duties as interim director of social services on Aug. 8. Perry, a Durham native, brings 37 years as a social service professional and spent most of that time with Durham County prior to retiring in 2002. ...

Henderson: Commissioners voted July 20 to hold a referendum on countywide alcohol sales in May 2012. Henderson has not held a countywide election on alcohol sales since 1955. Sales are currently allowed in three municipalities. ... **Iredell:** The county opened a new 16,000-square-foot, \$2 million animal control facility on July 17. The building includes indoor and outdoor kennels and an adoption room. ... **Johnston:** Dr. Jerry Wood, who served as a member of the Board of Commissioners for a dozen years, died July 10 at the age of 73. ...

Pender: Shirley Steele took over as director of nursing within the Health Department on July 11.

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NACo

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several Deep South states, including Louisiana and Mississippi.

“When it came time to vote, almost half the people in attendance for the caucus meeting were from North Carolina, and that strong showing of support helped Bryan pick up the victory,” said NCACC Executive Director David F. Thompson.

Catawba County Chair Kitty Barnes, who also serves as the NCACC’s Legislative Goals co-chair, was one of 10 commissioners from across the nation to be appointed by new NACo President Lenny Eliason to a one-year term as a NACo at-large director.

To go along with the three members to the NACo Board that North Carolina receives automatically (Cumberland County’s Billy King and Guilford County’s Kay Cashion were re-elected to two-year seats at the conference, and Robeson County’s Noah Woods was elected last year) and NACo Past President Betty Lou Ward, North Carolina will have six commissioners serving on the 2011-12 NACo Board of Directors – one of the largest contingents of any state.

NCACC Communications Director Todd McGee became first vice president of the National Association of County Information Officers, and he also moderated one workshop and served as a panelist on another.

The conference featured several



Vance County Commissioner Terry Garrison gives a report of the NACo Labor and Employment Steering Committee during the business meeting on July 19. Garrison served as a steering committee vice chair in 2010-11.

Photo by Kevin Leonard

speakers at the various general sessions; perhaps none was more moving than Aron Ralston. Ralston’s story of how he severed part of his right arm when he was pinned by a boulder in a climbing accident has been chronicled in his book “Between a Rock and a Hard Place,” and the film adaptation “127 Hours.”

He told the assembled county officials that the challenges they are facing now are comparable to what he went through during his ordeal. He believes the crisis will give county leaders a new perspective to find the solutions they need to continue to thrive.

“I look at what happened in that canyon as the best thing that has ever happened to me,” he said, recounting how at

one point, he had carved out his epitaph on the stone. “I stepped out of my grave and into my life.”

Eliason elected NACo president; Langston wins 2nd VP race

Athens County (Ohio) Commissioner Lenny Eliason was elected NACo president during the annual business session, while Linda Langston of Linn County, Iowa, was elected NACo second vice president after her opponent, John Sandoval of Cornejo County, Colo., dropped out of the race. Commissioner Chris Rodgers of Douglas County, Neb., moved up to the first vice president seat, while Judge Glen Whitley of Tarrant

County, Texas, stepped into the role of immediate past president.

Eliason was first elected as a NACo officer during the 2009 Annual Conference. He has been a member of the NACo Board of Directors since 2005 and has been an active NACo member for many years.

“I am deeply honored to lead this great organization,” Eliason said. “I believe that through the strong voice of the National Association of Counties, the challenges local governments are facing in Athens County, throughout my home state of Ohio, and all 3,068 counties across the country will be heard loud and clear over the next 12 months. That’s my promise and my commitment to this office.”

After assuming the role of NACo president, Eliason described his goals for leading NACo through July 2012. He said NACo will continue to serve as a strong voice for America’s counties in Washington, D.C., raise public awareness about county government through the County Government Works campaign and National County Government Month, and continue the Veterans Task Force to help counties support those who serve in the military and their families.

He announced that his presidential initiative would be “Healthy Counties” – a county-by-county public awareness campaign to promote healthy living and lifestyle choices in communities. Details of his initiative will be announced in the weeks ahead.

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