



2009



Union County
Annual Report

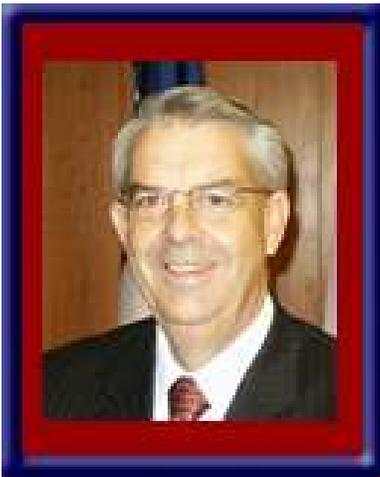
Board of County Commissioners



Chairwoman Kim Rogers



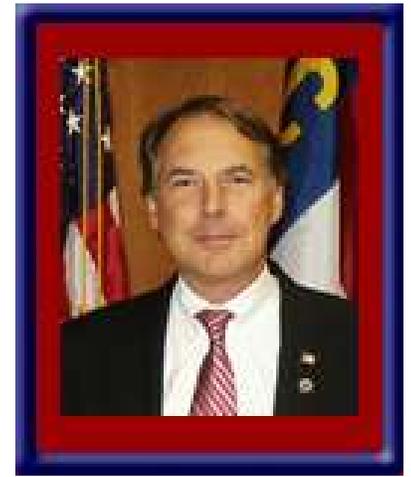
Vice-Chairwoman Tracy Kuehler



Allan Baucom



Parker Mills



Lanny Openshaw

The Board of County Commissioners is the legislative and governing body of Union County. The five-member commission is responsible for establishing policies to protect the health, safety and general welfare of Union County residents.

Commissioners are elected to serve four-year staggered terms. All five commissioners are elected at-large. Commissioners take office four weeks after they are elected in general elections held every two years on the first Tuesday in November. At its first meeting in December, the Board of Commissioners selects a chair to preside over the County Commission and vice-chair to assume those duties in the absence of the chair. The chair and vice-chair of the Board are elected annually for a term of one year and cannot be removed from the office of chair unless they become disqualified to serve as a Board member. Lanny Openshaw served as chair from December 1, 2008 - December 14, 2009. Kim Rogers was elected Union County's first chairwoman on December 14, 2009.

Exercising their legislative powers, the County Commission adopts ordinances and resolutions to establish policies and programs and to provide public services and facilities primarily for the unincorporated areas of Union County. The County Commission considers major problems facing county government and guides the growth and development of the county in a manner consistent with public interest.

Unless otherwise specified, Board of Commissioner meetings are held the first and third Monday of each month at 7 p.m. in the first floor Board Room of the Union County Government Center, 500 N. Main Street in Monroe. Meetings are broadcast on a tape-delay basis on Time Warner Cable Channel 16 (UCTV 16) daily at 2 a.m., 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. Agendas for upcoming meetings are available the Thursday prior to each meeting at the County's website: www.co.union.nc.us.

County Manager

Message from the County Manager

I am pleased to present the 2009 Union County Annual Report. This report is intended to inform citizens of Union County about the accomplishments of County government during the past year. The report takes you through each month of 2009 and highlights significant news and events that occurred each month.

Union County's biggest challenge in 2009 was reacting to the country's economic downturn which had significant effects on Union County's operating and capital budgets. Rising unemployment, declining retail sales and consumer confidence, reduced household wealth, anemic sales of new and existing housing and declining interest rates directly affected Union County's revenues and its ability to fund critical services. Projected revenues from property taxes, retail sales, building permits, excise taxes, environmental permits, and lease and investment income fell short of budget estimates by millions. In order to balance the County's budget, tough decisions had to be made including reducing our workforce by 78 positions and making major operating and capital cuts.

Despite bleak economic conditions, Union County's financial stability remained strong through the 2009 recession. In February, the country's three most respected bond rating agencies awarded excellent credit ratings to Union County's general obligation school bonds and affirmed the ratings assigned in August 2007 to the County's outstanding general obligation bonds. Also in 2009, Moody's Investors Service and Standard & Poor's upgraded Union County's utility system to A1 from A2, a rating which is indicative of above-average creditworthiness.

Additional noteworthy news and events in 2009 included:

- Richard Melton took over as director of Cooperative Extension in April
- Ed Goscicki became director of Public Works in June
- The Board of Commissioners in June reappointed Tax Administrator John Petoskey to a two-year term
- The County's Water Conservation Ordinance was amended and water restrictions were eased
- The Jesse Helms Park Soccer Complex was dedicated in June
- Kim Rogers was elected chairwoman and Tracy Kuehler was elected vice-chairwoman of the Board of Commissioners in December

In reading this report, I am confident that the citizens of Union County will see that the County's capable and committed staff are being responsible stewards of the public trust and utilizing public resources efficiently and wisely.

Al Greene

County Manager

Al Greene, County Manager
704-283-3853
algreene@co.union.nc.us

The county manager is appointed by, and serves at the pleasure of, the Union County Board of Commissioners. Al Greene serves as the chief executive officer of the County, and it is his responsibility to implement all decisions, policies, programs and motions approved by the Board. This execution is done through the department directors and administrative personnel who report directly to the county manager.

In addition, the County Manager's Office recommends an annual County operating and capital improvement budget to the Board and coordinates the Board's meeting agendas and workshops.

Al Greene has served as county manager since May 2008. Before coming to Union County, Greene served as interim county manager for Pender County, N.C. His career in public service began in 1985 when he served as town administrator of Richlands, N.C. before becoming town administrator in Murfreesboro, N.C. in 1986. He was named the town manager for Beech Mountain, N.C. in 1990 and moved to York County, S.C. in 1994 where he served as assistant county manager from 1994 - 1999 and county manager from 1999 - 2006.

Greene holds master of arts and bachelor of science degrees in political science/public administration from Appalachian State University.



Financial Highlights

Union County Maintains Excellent Credit Rating

During 2009, the nation's most respected bond rating agencies, Moody's Investors Service, Standard & Poor's, and Fitch Ratings, awarded excellent credit ratings to Union County's general obligation school bonds and affirmed the ratings assigned to the County's outstanding general obligation bonds.

Given the turmoil in the financial markets during 2009 and the affects of the Great Recession, affirmation of the County's excellent credit ratings is considered a financial highlight of the year.

Moody's assigned an 'Aa2' rating to Union County's \$140.8 million general obligation bonds; comprised of \$64.5 million general obligation school bonds and \$76.3 million in

refunding bonds. The agency also affirmed the 'Aa2' rating on the County's \$353.8 million in outstanding general obligation debt and the 'Aa3' rating on \$107.44 million of outstanding Certificates of Participation.

Fitch gave the County's GO school bonds an 'AA' rating and affirmed the 'AA' rating on the County's outstanding GO debt. Standard & Poor's assigned its 'AA' rating and stable outlook to the County's GO school bonds and affirmed its 'AA' rating on the County's previously issued GO bonds.

The credit ratings assigned to the County's GO bonds are enjoyed by fewer than 10 percent of the more than 6,000 local governments in the U.S.

Utility System Upgraded by Moody's and Standard & Poor's

In connection with the sale of \$20 million in utility revenue bonds, Moody's Investors Service in September upgraded Union County's utility system to A1 from A2, a rating which is indicative of above-average creditworthiness relative to other issuers. Moody's joined Standard & Poor's (S&P) in upgrading the utility system; S&P having done so earlier in March 2009 when it raised the credit rating to AA- from A. S&P and Fitch Ratings affirmed their ratings of AA- and A+ respectively on the \$20 million utility system revenue bonds.

Similar to the credit ratings assigned to consumers, the ratings help investors determine the creditworthiness of a

bond issuer. The improved ratings are significant since the cost of interest and bond insurance premiums are lower and the bonds will be viewed by potential investors as higher grade with less credit risk.

The upgrade by Moody's reflects various credit strengths including strong financial performance, good long-term economic fundamentals and solid financial and operations management. In their credit report, Moody's also noted strong debt service coverage, robust liquidity and low debt to plant ratio. These measures are indications of a system that has a strong cash position and favorable debt loads.

Union County Receives Superior Audit Report

John W. Kapelar, partner in the audit firm of Potter & Company, informed the Union County Board of Commissioners on December 14 that his firm has provided Union County with an unqualified or clean opinion that its financial statements are fairly presented in conformity with general accepted accounting principals. This opinion is the highest form of opinion that the external auditors can express on the presentation of Union County's financial statements.

The independent audit firm is required to conduct an annual analysis of the County's compliance with various federal and state laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements. Potter & Company reviewed the County's accounting and administrative controls over a wide range of financial transactions such as cash, investments, revenues, receivables,

expenditures, payroll, property, debt and grant programs.

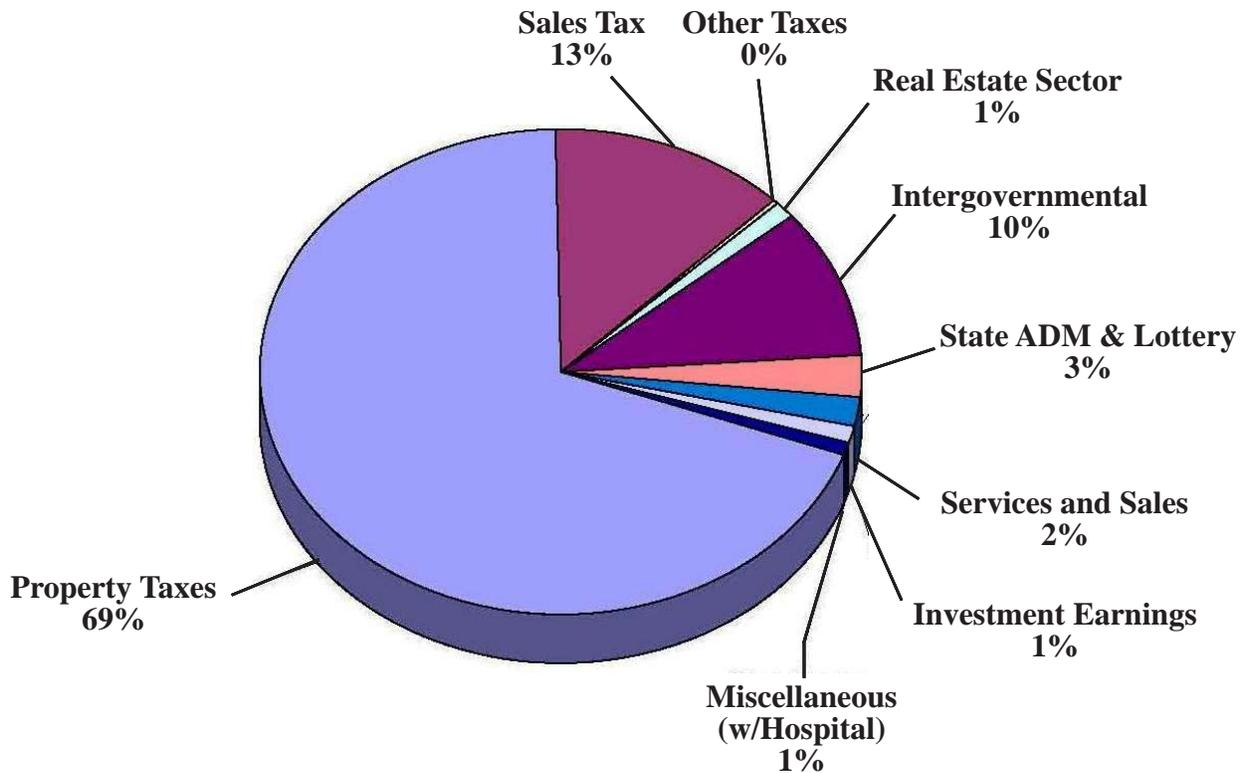
For the sixth consecutive year, the auditors found no deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting and no instances of material non-compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements.

"The favorable report is the result of extraordinary effort by County senior management, internal audit and finance staff in developing and maintaining internal financial controls," said Union County Finance Director Kai Nelson.

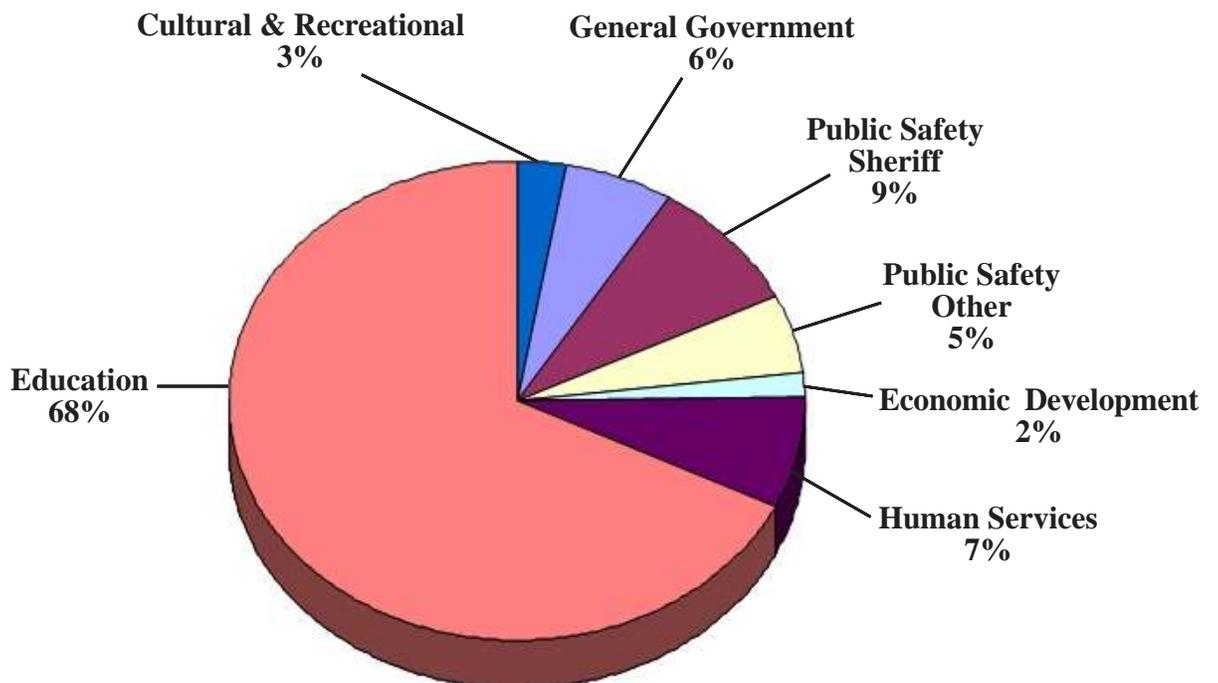
The audit report can be viewed on the County's website at www.co.union.nc.us.

Financial Highlights

Where the County's Money Comes From



Where Your County Property Taxes are Spent



Significant News in 2009

January

Union County Reduced Work Force

Major operating and capital cuts

Union County announced in January it would reduce its workforce by 40 employees in order to lower operating expenses and balance the FY 2008 - 2009 budget. An additional 38 positions vacant through attrition and retirement were also eliminated. The combined reduction of 78 positions represented 7.3 percent of the County's workforce.

Rising unemployment, declining retail sales and consumer confidence, reduced household wealth, anemic sales of new and existing housing and declining interest rates all directly affected Union County's revenues and its ability to fund critical services. Projected revenues from property taxes, retail sales, building permits, excise taxes, environmental permits, and lease and investment income were expected to fall short of budget estimates by \$6 - \$7 million. During fiscal years 2005 - 2008, revenues typically exceeded budget by an average of \$9 million.

According to Union County Finance Director Kai Nelson, balancing the FY 2008 - 2009 budget would require a reduction of expenses in the range of \$15 million to achieve a balanced budget by June 30.

The reduction in force affected positions in all areas of County government. General Government functions experienced the largest reduction with the elimination of 20 positions representing 15 percent of its workforce. General Government includes Central Administration, Finance, Personnel, Legal, Tax Administration, Internal Audit, Register of Deeds, Information Technology, Elections, and General Services.

Those employees whose jobs were eliminated received severance benefits based on their length of service and were given first opportunity to apply for essential positions with the County as they became available.

Board Approved Proposal to Reduce 11 Positions in Sheriff's Office

In late January, the Union County Board of Commissioners approved a proposal from Sheriff Eddie Cathey that reduced his workforce without eliminating current employees and losing the investment the Sheriff had already made in hiring and training current personnel. The proposal also allowed the Sheriff flexibility to adjust his organization in face of changing economic times and demands for service. The proposal agreed upon follows:

1. Sheriff agreed to keep up to 11 positions vacant.
2. The Sheriff had until June 30, 2009 to achieve the vacancies. This accommodated pending retirements.
3. The Sheriff inactivated eligible vacant positions immediately.
4. Sheriff could request county manager to "swap" inactive position for active position.
5. Allowed Sheriff the authority to fill any vacancies

immediately, without commissioner or county manager approval, as long as 11 net vacancies are maintained.

In order to achieve the goal of keeping 11 positions vacant, the Sheriff suspended his D.A.R.E. program in Union County schools and reassigned three D.A.R.E. officers to other areas of his organization. However, Commissioner Kim Rogers made an amendment to the motion to accept the Sheriff's proposal that gave the Sheriff flexibility to work with UCPS to possibly modify the current D.A.R.E. program so that one officer could be retained to continue the program.

D.A.R.E. is a police officer-led series of classroom lessons that teaches children from kindergarten through 12th grade how to resist peer pressure and live productive drug and violence-free lives.

Union County Reduced Take-Home Vehicle Use

In an effort to lower operating expenses and balance the current year's budget, the County in January eliminated more than 100 vehicles from its take-home fleet. Take-home vehicles are used by employees to respond to after-hour calls and emergencies.

At the time, Union County had 251 vehicles assigned to employees for take-home use. The Sheriff's Office had 142 of the 251 vehicles. Not including the Sheriff's Office, only 16 vehicles remained for take-home use. The take-home

Significant News in 2009

vehicle reduction saves the County approximately \$43,000 a year on fuel costs. Other savings are noticed because vehicles require less preventive maintenance. Removing more than 100 vehicles from its take-home fleet reduces

mileage by approximately 470,000 miles a year. And, vehicle life increases by almost three years, which means costly vehicle replacement won't occur as often.

Irrigation Allowed Twice a Week

Following consultation with the Union County Board of Commissioners and the interim Public Works director, County Manager Al Greene declared a Stage II Water Shortage Condition for Union County water system users effective Thursday, January 29, 2009. The county had been under a Stage III Water Shortage Condition since October 15, 2008.

The county manager also announced a new irrigation

schedule that allowed Union County water customers to water lawns and landscaping twice a week.

Customers were previously permitted to irrigate lawns only on one weekday (Monday – Friday). The irrigation schedule is related to the geographic location of homes in the county. Under the new irrigation schedule, most customers maintained their weekday for watering, but were allowed an additional irrigation day during the week.

February

Missing Person Located with Project Lifesaver Technology

An 84-year old Monroe man was returned to his home in February just 22 minutes after being reported missing by his wife thanks to the Project Lifesaver wristband he was wearing. The man had only received his wristband the day before.

The Union County Sheriff's Office and the Pilot Club of Monroe unveiled the Project Lifesaver program in May 2007. This incident was the first time the Sheriff's Office used Project Lifesaver technology to find a missing person.

Project Lifesaver is a program that utilizes state-of-the-art technology to help locate and return wandering adults and children to their families and caregivers. Wandering is a leading safety concern for individuals suffering from Alzheimer's disease or a related dementia disorder, as well as families with children afflicted with Down Syndrome, autism or brain injuries.

Participants in Project Lifesaver wear a one-ounce bracelet on the wrist or ankle that emits a constant pulsating radio tracking signal 24 hours a day, 365 days a year. Each bracelet has a unique radio frequency. If a person becomes lost or missing, an officer is dispatched to the area and searches with a mobile locator tracking system that can be used on ground or in the air.

The man's wife called 911 at 6:25 p.m. to report him missing. Union County Deputy Brian Griffin was in the area of the client's home when the missing person call came in. Knowing the man was wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband, Griffin activated his electronic tracking equipment at 6:33 p.m. After only a few

minutes Griffin picked up the wristband's signal, and at 6:47 p.m., he was located at the corner of Windsor and Hayne streets.

"The events of Tuesday prove the Project Lifesaver program saves lives," Sheriff Eddie Cathey said. "If this gentleman wasn't wearing a Project Lifesaver wristband, it could have taken much longer to find him."



Deputy Brian Griffin demonstrates Project Lifesaver technology.

The Pilot Club of Monroe is a strong supporter of Project Lifesaver, and Project Lifesaver is an initiative endorsed by the club's national organization.

Those interested in purchasing a wrist transmitter package should contact Deputy Griffin at 704-292-2685. Wrist transmitter packages can be purchased for \$250. It cost an additional \$7.60 per month for replacement batteries and wrist bands, which must be replaced every 30 days. Currently, community donations underwrite the cost of the batteries, so clients have no ongoing expense from the initial purchase of the wristband. The agency does have an application process for indigent clients.

Project Lifesaver is totally funded from grants and private donations. Anyone wanting to help more adults and children have access to this life-saving technology can donate to the project by contacting the Sheriff's Office or the Pilot Club.

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Saturday Library Hours Change

All branches of the Union County Public Library began opening at 1 p.m. on Saturdays on February 7. The reduced hours were a result of cost-cutting measures necessitated by the County's budget deficit.

According to Library Director Martie Smith, loss of the Saturday morning hours have the least negative impact on regular library users. "It was one way to reduce costs without interfering with evening hours or mornings when programs for preschool children are scheduled," she said.

March

Commissioners Make Changes to Boards

The Union County Board of Commissioners in March voted to restructure the County's Planning Board and Board of Adjustment.

The restructuring:

1. Reduced the number of regular members of the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment from nine to seven members.
2. Changed the appointment of regular members of the Planning Board from residents of each of the county's nine townships to an at-large appointment.
3. Removed the prohibition against Planning Board members serving on a municipal board of adjustment

4. or planning board. Required all applicants to complete a conflict of interest form.
5. Prohibited Planning Board and Board of Adjustment members from serving on other County boards which influence land use or property value.

At its February 16 meeting, commissioners clarified that a citizen could only be a member of one of the following advisory boards: Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Parks and Recreation Board, Union County Partnership for Progress, Historic Preservation Committee, Library Board, Agricultural Advisory Board, Public Works Advisory Board, and the Board of Equalization and Review.

Sheriff's Office Launches New Website

Sheriff Eddie Cathey in March launched a heavily enhanced Union County Sheriff's Office website. The site extends the agency's reach into the communities, and provides an easy point of access to the information most requested from the Sheriff's Office.

"I am very excited about the capability that this website provides the average citizen," said Sheriff Cathey. "Our site is now a one-stop shop for many types of public information requested about the criminal justice system."

The revamped website includes many new features not previously available on the old site. By clicking on the appropriate tab, users have access to jail inmate information, arrest information, unserved warrants for arrest, incident reports for crime victims, registered sex offenders, and the status of civil process papers sent to the agency for service.

"We previously had an inmate look-up function online, but nothing like what is available now," said Sheriff Cathey.

Other features include online information about gun permit applications, concealed-carry applications and a link to the employment application process.

The site offers a mechanism to report missing pets, as well as crime analysis functions that allow users to run crime histories by street address or subdivision. The home page offers a quick-link to missing persons in Union County, as well as information on Union County's "Most Wanted" criminals.

A "Community Events" page allows the agency to post upcoming agency or community events, and the agency's Community Resources Bureau offers crime prevention tips. Citizens may also explore the agency's organizational structure, along with a description of services offered by each bureau. Citizens may also see adoptable pets at the Animal Services Shelter.

Continued on next page

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Links to state statutes and county ordinances provide easy access to questions about specific laws. Additionally, access to information on affiliated organizations and other law enforcement agencies is included on the site. Crime Stoppers and the Project Lifesaver programs are examples of such affiliates. All area local, state and federal law enforcement

agencies are linked on the site at <http://sheriff.co.union.nc.us>.

“We are very excited about the opportunity that this new website offers us,” said Sheriff Cathey. “Until now we have not had the web design capability to implement such a versatile and comprehensive site.”

April

Melton is Union County Extension Director

Richard Melton, agricultural extension agent in Anson County since 1995, was named Union County extension director in April. Melton succeeded Jerry Simpson, who retired from Cooperative Extension in January.

Melton is no stranger to Cooperative Extension. Prior to becoming an extension agent in Anson County, he was an agricultural extension agent in Sampson County from 1989-1995 and an associate agricultural extension agent in Hoke County from 1982-1989.

Melton holds a master’s degree in agricultural economics and a bachelor’s degree in animal industries from Clemson University.

“Richard brings a wide variety of experiences, not only in the animal science area, but in the extension programming area as well,” said Donald Cobb, district extension director

for the South Central District, which includes Union County. “He will be an asset to the staff and citizens of Union County.”



North Carolina Cooperative Extension partners with communities to deliver education and technology that enrich the lives, land and economy of North Carolinians. Extension professionals in 100 counties and the Cherokee Reservation provide education and technical assistance based on research from North Carolina’s land-grant universities, N.C. State University and N.C. A&T State University. Extension specializes in agriculture, youth, communities, health and the environment by responding to local needs.

Union County Emergency Communications Selects 2009 Telecommunicator of the Year

Dan McCall was chosen as Telecommunicator of the Year for 2009 by his colleagues in Union County Emergency Communications (E-911).



E-911 serves as the warning point for Union County, receiving all requests for assistance in emergency situations and dispatching the proper agencies, including the Sheriff’s Office, police, ambulance, fire/first responders and Emergency Management.

McCall has been with Union County since August 2007. Some of the comments on his nomination ballots included:

team player; focused and attentive to his job responsibilities; flexible and adapts quickly to change; is always willing to help and can work all dispatch channels proficiently; very hard working; great all-around guy; always has a wonderful attitude towards work; is always willing to step up to the plate to help others in anyway possible; never complains about work load and always brings a positive attitude to the room; excellent team player; and an asset to the department.

Whitley Elected District Rep

Union County Director of Elections John Whitley was elected District Representative for District 2 by District 2 North Carolina Association of Directors of Elections. Whitley’s two-year term began May 1.



District 2 represents Alexander, Cabarrus, Catawba, Cleveland, Gaston, Iredell, Lincoln, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Rutherford, Stanly and Union counties.

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Water Conservation Ordinance Amended

Several amendments to the County's Water Conservation Ordinance were approved by commissioners in April.

Amendments included:

- Customer violations of the ordinance will be accumulated on a calendar year basis. Previously, violations by customers were accumulated for the period of time that the ordinance was continuously in effect and for one year thereafter. For example, a customer having two violations in 2007 would be subject to a \$500 civil penalty for a third violation occurring in 2009 under the previous ordinance. Under the amended ordinance, the violation in 2009 would constitute the first violation of the calendar year, thus subject to a written warning and no monetary penalty.
- The amended ordinance allows for the review of violations resulting in civil penalties prior to the County's right to terminate service. This provides another level of review for those who believe the determination of violation to be in error. The previous ordinance provided an opportunity for appeal of Public Work's determination to terminate water service following a fourth violation.
- Public Work's can now issue variances for new lawns or landscaping installed incident to new construction. The customer must apply for the variance within 90 days of issuance of a certificate of occupancy and pay a nominal fee (< \$20). Upon issuance of the variance, customers may water

water the new lawn/landscaping for 45 days.

Variances terminate upon the earlier occurrence of expiration of the 45 days or declaration of a Stage IV Mandatory Water Shortage Condition. The county manager may also direct that no new variances be issued if it is determined that further issuance will likely result in increased demand that will equal or exceed the treatment and/or transmission capacity of the water system.

- Customers are now allowed to operate irrigation systems when otherwise prohibited if irrigation systems are being serviced by a



professional irrigation contractor. Public Works can register contractors and provide them with signage designed to indicate that service is being provided. To safeguard against abuse and to avoid unnecessary concern on the part of the public, the sign must be posted at the entrance to the property during such time, and only such time, as maintenance is being provided. The contractor must remain on-site at all times that the system is operated, and Public Works can verify that the contractor is legitimate and that the maintenance is necessary. Violation by a contractor results in a civil penalty of \$500 and loss of the opportunity to operate systems for maintenance when such use would otherwise be prohibited. Previously, contractors could only work on systems during assigned irrigation days.

May

County Receives Safety Award from State

Risk Manager Keith Richards in May accepted on behalf of Union County a Gold Award from the N.C. Department of Labor. The award recognized Union County's commitment to safety in the workplace.

Under program rules, companies must have been free of

fatal accidents at the site for which the award is given to be eligible. The Gold Award criteria are based on a DART (days away, restrictions and transfers) rate that is at least 50 percent below the statewide rate for its industry. The rate includes cases of days away from work, restricted activity or job transfer.

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Farmers' Market Nutrition Program Provides Fresh Local Produce to Seniors

Senior citizens participating in Union County's congregate nutrition program were able to buy locally grown produce from the Union County Farmers' Market last summer thanks to a grant from the U.S. Department of Agriculture that funds the state's Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program. The program is administered by the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services Division of Aging and Adult Services.

The County's congregate nutrition program offers nutrition assistance to people age 60 and older by providing lunchtime meals Monday through Friday at four locations in Union County – Indian Trail United Methodist Church, First Baptist of Indian Trail East Campus, Mineral Springs United Methodist Church and Bragg Street Community Center.

Through the Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program, congregate nutrition participants received one set of coupons

worth \$24 during the summer of 2009 to redeem at the Union County Farmers' Market. Each congregate nutrition site scheduled "field trips" to visit the Farmers' Market and allowed seniors to purchase fresh produce. The 2009 program time period was July 1 through October 30.



"The Senior Farmers' Market Nutrition Program will help seniors stretch their limited incomes and make them healthier by enabling them to purchase fresh fruits and vegetables at our local Farmers' Market," Annette Sullivan, director of Union County Nutrition for the Elderly, said in June. "The program also stimulates business for local farmers and creates a greater awareness of the Farmers' Market."

Show Spotlighting Union County Departments Begins Airing on UCTV 16

A new show named "Union County Spotlight" began airing on the Union County Government Channel, UCTV 16, in May.

Each episode of the biweekly show features a program or service provided by a Union County department. The show's first episode focused on the Health Department's Diabetes Self-Management Education Program.

"We are very excited to be able to offer this new program on our government channel," said Union County Public Information Officer Brett Vines. "I believe the public will enjoy the shows we have planned to educate them about County programs and services."

In June 2007, Union County assumed operation of Channel 16 from Time Warner Cable and began utilizing UCTV 16 as one of the primary tools to disseminate information to the public.

June

Board Extends Contract with CATS

The Union County Board of Commissioners in June extended the County's agreement with Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) to provide the 74X express bus service from Union County to Charlotte.

Under the agreement, the City of Charlotte provides public transit services, and Union County assists with the cost. Union County and the City of Charlotte each pay 50 percent of the cost of the service after deducting rider fares and grant revenue.

For FY2010 the estimated cost for each party will be \$90,557. Fares have been raised by CATS which will provide additional revenue to offset costs. Fares for the express service are currently \$3 per trip. Five trips are made in both the morning and evening. Two of the routes in the morning and two in the evening extend to Marshville.

Ridership from June 2008 - June 2009 increased by 19 percent, from 44,295 to 52,750. On average, 216 people ride the 74X each day.

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Tax Administrator Reappointed

The Union County Board of Commissioners in June reappointed John Petoskey to a two-year term as Tax Administrator. Petoskey has held the position since 2003.

Like many larger jurisdictions, Union County has consolidated the offices of Tax Collector and Tax Assessor into a professional Tax Administrator position. According to North Carolina General Statutes, the Tax Assessor is

appointed by the Board of Commissioners for a term of not less than two nor more than four years.

Petoskey is the most experienced Assessor in North Carolina, and his service as Assessor in the state is second in terms of years.



Edward Goscicki Takes Over as Public Works Director

Edward Goscicki joined Union County as director of Public Works on June 1.

In his role as director, Goscicki is responsible for the infrastructure development programs including strategic and business planning, operational performance evaluations, asset management, capital planning and programming, development of integrated water resource solutions, and the planning, design and operations of water, wastewater and solid waste programs.

Prior to joining Union County, Goscicki held several senior executive positions for private and public utilities including director of Strategy and Development of North American Operating Services for Severn Trent Services, president of Severn Trent's southeastern contract utility operation-Avatar Utility Services LLC, executive director of Environmental Services for Sarasota County, Fla. and director of the Office of Environmental Services for Broward County, Fla. He also served as vice president and area manager for a national

engineering firm and was president of his own consulting firm.

Goscicki earned a bachelor's degree in civil engineering at City College of New York, and an M.A.S. in business administration at Johns Hopkins University in Baltimore, Md.



Established in the 1970's, Union County Public Works is a government enterprise headquartered in the Union County Government Center in Monroe. With more than 100 employees, Public Works provides a full range of water and wastewater services to more than 38,000 customers and solid waste services across the county. Operational activities include utility facilities management, meter reading, customer service and billing, plant operation, field maintenance and repair, and capital improvement management and design.

Union County Commissioners Adopt Budget

The Union County Board of Commissioners on June 15 adopted a 2009-2010 budget of \$222.3 million. The budget contained no tax increase; the county's tax rate stayed put at 66.5 cents per \$100 assessed valuation. The county's sewer and water rates, fire fees and fire tax rate also remained the same.

The adopted budget of \$222.3 million is \$17 million less than the 2008-2009 budget of \$239.3 million, representing a 7.1 percent decrease.

The budget included a \$79.5 million current expenditure appropriation for Union County Public Schools, an increase of \$2.2 million or 2.9 percent over the 2009 budget of \$77.3 million. Current expense funds are used to operate and maintain school facilities and allow more resources for high

priority and targeted schools and additional teachers, teacher assistants, principals, instructional supplies, nurses, counselors and psychologists within the school system.

In addition to current expenditure appropriations, the budget included \$2.3 million for routine capital outlay. Capital outlay funds make resources available to purchase and replace buses, mobile units, technology, furniture and equipment.

\$86.3 million is set aside in the budget for County departments and agencies such as the Sheriff's Office, Fire Services, Public Health, Social Services, Public Library

Continued on next page

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and Parks and Recreation. That is \$11 million less than the previous year's budget of \$97.3 million, a decrease of 11 percent.

Debt service expenditures are projected at \$54.2 million in

FY2010, \$2.2 million more than FY2009's \$52 million. The increase in debt service expenditures relates to school bonds sold to complete Cuthbertson middle and high schools and Poplin Elementary.

Water Restrictions Eased

The Union County Board of Commissioners at a special meeting in June approved modifications to the County's Stage II mandatory water conservation restrictions and changes to the water and sewer monthly service charges.

Beginning in June, Union County water customers were allowed to

- Fill newly constructed swimming pools
- Wash residential vehicles
- Wash public buildings, streets, sidewalks and driveways
- Use water for dust control during construction
- Conduct flushing or hydrant testing programs

"With the overall supply of water in the region relatively back to normal, we can relax some of these water restrictions," said Public Works Director Ed Goscicki said in June.

Several restrictions remained in effect. Water customers are still prohibited from:

- Using water from public or private hydrants for any purpose outside Union County other than emergency fire protection and bona fide farm purposes which are defined in Article II, Section III of the County's Water Conservation Ordinance
- Using water for any unnecessary purpose or wasting water
- Serving drinking water at restaurants except upon request
- Irrigating lawns on days other than their scheduled two days per week

"We still have concerns with limitations in our water treatment plant capacity to meet peak demands," Goscicki said. "That is why we need to keep our current irrigation restrictions in place."

Each Union County water customer is designated two specific days (Sunday-Friday) they are permitted to irrigate based on their geographic location within the county. Customers irrigating on non-scheduled days are subject to fines from Public Works. Fine amounts for violators of the water conservation declaration include a notification for

first offenders, a \$100 fine for a second offense, a \$500 fine for a third violation, a \$500 fine and discontinuance of water service for a fourth violation, and a \$1,000 fine and discontinuance of water service for a fifth violation. Subsequent violations will result in a \$1,000 fine, discontinuance of water service and possible legal remedies described in Article VII of the Water Conservation Ordinance.

Modifications to monthly water and sewer charges included making the monthly water and sewer usage charges for monthly gallons billed the same for Stage II restrictions as they are when the County is under Stage I or no restrictions.

Rates before July 1, 2009:

Monthly Gallons Billed	Rates/1,000 Gallons	
	IF No Shortage	IF Stage 2
0-3,000	\$2.10	\$2.10
3,001-8,000	\$2.45	\$2.45
8,001-10,000	\$3.45	\$3.45
10,001-15,000	\$5.45	\$8.18
Over 15,000	\$9.45	\$14.18

Rates between July 1, 2009 and May, 1, 2010:

Monthly Gallons Billed	Rates/1,000 Gallons	
	IF No Shortage	IF Stage 2
0-3,000	\$2.10	\$2.10
3,001-8,000	\$2.45	\$2.45
8,001-10,000	\$3.45	\$3.45
10,001-15,000	\$5.45	\$5.45
Over 15,000	\$9.45	\$9.45

The rate changes were recommended because the drought had subsided, and the County didn't want to penalize its customers for using a little more water on their scheduled irrigation days.

Commissioners can rescind or further modify the monthly usage charges at any time if drought conditions resurface.

Significant News in 2009

Grant Helps Students, Parents and Staffs Lead Healthier Lives

A three-year project aimed at reducing the rising incidence of overweight and obese students at three elementary schools in Union County - East, Rock Rest, and Walter Bickett – concluded its first year in June.

The Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust funded Food, Fitness, and Fun Project, administered by the Union County Health Department, began at the schools in September of 2008 and will conclude in June 2011.

The schools were selected for the project because they were expected to have a higher percentage of students with weight management needs than the rates for Union County as a whole. All participants are expected to benefit by developing healthier lifestyles and reducing their risk of future disorders and diseases.

For maximum impact the project targets students, staffs, and parents. Staffs at East were offered Nutrition 101 classes and those at Rock Rest and Walter Bickett were offered classes in aerobics, yoga, and strength. Staffs who attended a maximum number of these sessions were provided with free passes to the Monroe Aquatics and Fitness Center and a few additional rewards. Two parents' programs on healthy eating and physical activity were provided at each of the three schools and several healthy living resources in English and Spanish were made available.

East has a student population of 500 with 36 percent African-American, 59 percent Hispanic and 5 percent white and other races. At East, 90.6 percent receive free and reduced lunch.

The student population at Rock Rest is 530 with 23 percent African-American, 65 percent Hispanic and 12 percent white and other races. Free or reduced lunch is provided to 93 percent of Rock Rest's students.

Walter Bickett's student population is 685 with 38 percent African-American, 53 percent Hispanic and 9 percent white or other races. At Walter Bickett, 86 percent receive free or reduced lunch.



Each school's top three classrooms with the maximum number of physical activity and nutrition interventions carried out by the classroom teachers from September 2008 until April 2009 received a reward funded by Kate B. Reynolds. The reward, a Hatley's Family Skating Center family skate pass at a reduced rate, was provided to the families of approximately 159 students and their homeroom teachers.

The evaluation report for the first year of the grant indicates that 96 percent of school staff and 95 percent of parents reported making one or more positive health behavior changes after participating in the program.

On a questionnaire testing students' knowledge of importance of good nutrition and physical activity and their current eating and physical activity habits, as compared to baseline testing, students achieved an 8.83 average percent change at follow-up.

"The first year results indicate the overall success of the Food, Fitness & Fun program," said Neetu Verma, health educator with the Health Department. "We are extremely thankful to the Kate B. Reynolds Charitable Trust for funding us in this initiative to combat obesity."

Kensington 4th Graders Protect Four-Legged Crime Fighters

Two 4th grade classes at Kensington Elementary School raised over \$700 in an effort to buy ballistic vests for two Union County Sheriff's Office K-9s.

The effort, called "Walk a Mile for Eric," was held by Mrs. Whitley's and Mrs. Miller's 4th grade classes. "Eric" is the name of one the Sheriff's law enforcement canines. The fundraiser originated with a 4th grade Sunday school project at Mineral Springs United Methodist Church and spread to the kids at Kensington Elementary. An additional \$1,000 was raised by the kids at Mineral Springs UMC. The

money was used to purchase vests for canines "Eric" and "Cash." The ballistic vests cost about \$650 each.

While the Sheriff's Office tries to budget for canine vests, priority goes to purchasing vests for officers.



Deputy Scott Green with "Erik" answers questions from 4th grade students at Kensington

Significant News in 2009

The kids asked that left-over money from the fund raisers go toward purchasing other K-9 equipment for the dogs, including leashes, harnesses and other specialty equipment.

The effort was a surprise to Union County Sheriff Eddie Cathey. "I was told that the kids just wanted to do something to help the community, and this was the effort that they took on," Sheriff Cathey said. "We are very appreciative that they chose our four-legged crime fighters as the subject of their effort."

The Sheriff's Office held a "Meet & Greet" for the kids and several canine officers at Kensington Elementary on June 8. Sgt. Dan Rogers introduced the dogs to the kids and hosted a demonstration of their capabilities. Afterwards, the kids had a chance to pet the animals and ask questions.

"That these young people would take such an interest in helping protect their community is heartwarming," said Sheriff Cathey. "On behalf of the dogs, their handlers, and the entire Sheriff's Office, I thank them for their support."

July

Jesse Helms Park Soccer Complex Opens



Union County Parks and Recreation dedicated the new Jesse Helms Park Soccer Complex at 1505 Summerlin Dairy Road on Saturday, July 25.

Jesse Helms Park is a 250-acre tract of land that was purchased in 2001 at a cost of \$1.4 million. After the purchase of the property was completed, approximately 20 acres was cut from the property and deeded separately for the Union County Agricultural Services and Conference Center located at 3230 Presson Road. The remaining 230 acres were planned for passive and active recreation areas for Jesse Helms Park.

The soccer complex, which contains 18-20 acres, was the first active recreation area within Jesse Helms Park to be completed.

"The citizens of Union County spoke out and voiced their opinions as the Parks and Recreation Department went through the planning phase for this property," said Parks and Recreation Director Wanda Smith. "Soccer fields were the number one need in

recreation for Union County residents at that particular time, which was recognized from the planning process."

Costs for the Jesse Helms Soccer Complex, including the entire land purchase of 250 acres, is approximately \$4 million. Two grants were awarded to Union County that assisted with the development of

the soccer complex - a Park and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) Grant in the amount of \$250,000 was awarded in 2003 and a Land and Water Conservation Trust Fund (LWCF) Grant was awarded in 2004 also in the amount of \$250,000.

The PARTF and LWCF grants helped pay for the development of three soccer fields, a playground, picnic shelter, trails, four individual picnic sites, a workout station and other facilities. The restroom facilities and concession stand as well as the three remaining soccer fields were paid for with funding provided by Union County.



Left to right - Bill Whitley, Union County assistant Parks and Recreation director, Sen. Eddie Goodall, Wanda Smith, Union County Parks and Recreation director, Charles Helms, County Manager Al Greene, Commissioner Tracy Kuehler, Glendora Bention, chairman of Union County Parks and Recreation Advisory Committee, Commissioner Parker Mills and Commissioner Lanny Openshaw.



Charles Helms, son of Jesse Helms, addresses the crowd as John Dodd, president of the Jesse Helms Center looks on.

Significant News in 2009

County Residents Save Money on Prescription Drugs

Prescription drug costs continue to rise, but not for the more than 400 Union County residents who use the County's free prescription drug discount card each month. The County makes the free prescription drug discount cards available under a program sponsored by the National Association of Counties (NACo).

In the first six months of 2009, prescription drug discount card holders used the free card 2,929 times to have 5,202 prescriptions filled, saving participants \$97,396. Since the program began in September 2005, more than 46,000 prescriptions have been filled through the discount card program for a savings of \$680,890. The average participant saves 24 percent off the retail prescription price.

"Prescriptions are very expensive, especially for the under-insured and non-insured," said Union County Public Information Officer Brett Vines. "Most card users save between \$12 and \$15 on each prescription filled. Over time, that adds up to a lot of money."

Monroe resident Jack Ross has saved hundreds of dollars by using his discount card. "It's a great program, especially if you don't have insurance," Ross said. "It sure beats the alternative of paying full price."

The cards may be used by all county residents, regardless of age, income, or existing health coverage, and are accepted at 95 percent of the county's pharmacies. All commonly prescribed prescription medications, including pet medications, are eligible for a discount. The discounts are available to consumers who do not have prescription drug insurance or the particular drug they need is not covered by their insurance.

More than 1,060 of the nation's 3,068 counties are participating in the program and more are joining the program every month. More than 59,000 retail pharmacies, including the major pharmacy chains such as CVS/pharmacy, Rite Aid, Walgreens and Wal-Mart, accept the NACo discount card along with many independently owned and operated pharmacies.

Here are the key factors that make the NACo discount card program unique and effective:

- **It's easy**— There are no enrollment fees, no forms to fill out, no age or income requirements, and no medical condition restrictions. The entire family is covered with just one card and all commonly prescribed medicine is covered (including pet medication);
- **It's free**— The discount cards are provided free to residents living in Union County.
- **It's for everyone**— There is no cost to the County, county taxpayers, or consumers to participate.
- **Consumers always receive the lowest price**— On occasion, pharmacies will price a particular medication lower than the discount rate available with the NACo card. If that occurs, consumers will receive the best price available from that pharmacy.

To find out more information about the card and view a list of card distribution sites, visit the Union County website at www.co.union.nc.us/HumanServices. Additional assistance with the program can be received by calling toll-free 1-877-321-2652 or visiting <https://naco.advancex.com>.

August

Board of Election Members Take Oaths of Office

Clerk of Court J.R. Rowell administered the Oath of Office on August 11 to members of the Union County Board of Elections.

Board members Bobby H. Griffin, chairman, Betty Couick, secretary and Shirley Bossbach will serve a term from 2009 – 2011. The board members have been certified by the State Board of Elections.



Pictured, left to right, are: Bobby H. Griffin, chairman, Betty Couick, secretary, Shirley Bossbach and J.R. Rowell.

Significant News in 2009

Tax Office Mails Property Tax Bills

The Union County Tax Office in August mailed approximately 105,000 tax bills. The tax bills were mailed directly to individuals who pay the bill - either property owners or mortgage companies with which taxes are escrowed. The approximately 35,000 property owners who escrow their property taxes with their mortgage companies did not receive a tax bill.

Property tax bills for residents of Wingate, Wesley Chapel and Hemby Bridge received one tax bill that included both county and municipal taxes. This partnership will continue to provide the residents of these municipalities with one point of contact for all their property tax questions and issues.

September

Commissioners Approve Development of Fire Study

The Union County Board of Commissioners in September authorized County staff to negotiate an agreement with Emergency Services Education and Consulting Group (ESECG) to develop a fire study that will, among other things, determine adequate fire protection for the county as

a whole and for each of the 18 volunteer fire departments, make recommendations for funding fire protection services and propose changes to fire district lines that might be needed to accomplish sufficient fire protection. The study is scheduled to be completed in March 2010.

Marvin to Have Additional Law Enforcement

The Union County Board of Commissioners in September authorized the county manager to approve a new deputy agreement with Marvin which will add two more deputies to the village once the village's involuntary annexation, currently working its way through the court system, is resolved.

agreement for one deputy to provide law enforcement to the community. Union County also has interlocal agreements with Indian Trail, Lake Park, Weddington and Union County Public Schools.

Marvin and Union County presently have an interlocal

The current agreement and new agreement require Marvin to pay 90 percent of the cost for deputies with the County paying 10 percent.

Appointments Made to Transportation Advisory Board

Commissioners in September completed appointments to Union County's Transportation Advisory Board by choosing five citizens of unincorporated Union County and a parks and greenway representative to serve on the new advisory board.

The advisory board consists of one representative from each of the county's 14 municipalities, one member from Union County Public Schools, members from unincorporated Union County, a parks and greenway representative and a Chamber of Commerce representative.

The Transportation Advisory Board was established in 2009 to investigate, evaluate, advise and make recommendations to commissioners concerning all matters relating to transportation in Union County, including, but not limited to, the need for construction, operation, relocation, or improvements of streets, bridges, sidewalks, and bikeways as well as the possible formation and improvement of alternative methods of mass transportation.

Board members:

Monroe - Councilman Bob Smith
Stallings - Mayor Linda Paxton
Fairview - Bill Thomas
Unionville - Commissioner Ken Brown
Mineral Springs - Councilman Jerry Countryman
Marvin - Mayor Pro Tem Terri Patton

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Waxhaw - Mayor Duane Gardner
Weddington - Mayor Nancy Anderson
Wingate - Councilman Barry Green
Marshville - Councilmember Denise Whitley and (alternate)
Councilmember Margaret Bivens
Hemby Bridge - Alderman Chris Baker
Indian Trail - Councilman Dan Schallenkamp

Wesley Chapel - Mayor Brad Horvath
Lake Park - Mayor Kendall Spence
Unincorporated Union County - Jonathan Thomas, John
Barker, Jack Ross, Jerry Simpson and Mark DiBiasio
Parks & Greenways - Rick Becker
UCPS - Adam Johnson, Transportation Director
Chamber of Commerce - Jim Carpenter

Union County to Improve Water System

The Union County Board of Commissioners in September authorized County Manager Al Greene to approve construction bids of \$5,044,849 from Dellinger, Inc. of Monroe for improvements to Union County's water system that will allow Union to accommodate more water from Anson County.

Union County currently has an agreement with Anson to provide up to 4 MGD of water. Because Union's infrastructure is limited in capacity, the County can only receive 1.9 MGD of the contracted capacity during peak times. Improvements to the water system are designed to allow the County to deliver the contracted amount of 4 MGD, with the potential to distribute up to 6 MGD.

"The possibility of a future increased allocation from Anson County to 6 MGD was incorporated into the final design of this project with an initial pumping capacity of 4 MGD," said Public Works Director Ed Goscicki.

Infrastructure improvements include a new U.S. 74 Water Booster Pumping Station and construction of a 24-inch water transmission main from the pump station to the existing Marshville elevated water tank. The pump station and water main will provide for 4 MGD peak day flow to the Marshville water tank. Approximately 1.5 MGD of this capacity will be used in the Marshville and Wingate service area.



The new pump stations will look similar to this pump station on Rocky River Road.



A new pump station will also be constructed at Olive Branch Road. This pump station will have the ability to transfer approximately 2.5 MGD from the Marshville area to the County's northwest elevated water storage tank. The new Olive Branch Road Pump Station will be connected to existing 16-inch water mains to transfer this water. Flow from the northwest tank will serve the north central part of the service area which will reduce the amount of water transferred to the area from the Catawba River Water Treatment Plant.

The U.S. 74 Pump Station will be able to accommodate three pumps with an initial installation of two pumps. The two initial pumps are sized to pump 4 MGD each – one operating, one as a backup. If the County's allocation is increased to 6 MGD, one additional pump would be required and the pump impellers changed on the two original pumps.

Construction on the project should take approximately 15 months.

Crump Elected to Two Positions with Registers of Deeds Association

Register of Deeds Crystal Crump was elected Secretary of the North Carolina Association of Registers of Deeds and re-elected as District Chair of District III for the state's Registers of Deeds Association.



As district chair, Crump serves as a liaison with the association and other departments within state government. District III is comprised of Anson, Cabarrus, Davidson, Davie, Forsyth, Iredell, Mecklenburg, Rowan, Stanly, Stokes, Surry, Union and Yadkin counties.

Significant News in 2009

Library has New Assistant Director

Nina Zanjani is Union County's new assistant library director. She began her new position on September 28.



Zanjani came to Union County from Caldwell County, N.C. where she was the assistant director of the Caldwell County Public Library for three years.

"I was interested in this position because it was a similar job to what I was doing, but just on a larger scale," Zanjani said. "I thoroughly enjoy administrative work and wanted to stay in that role in the library."

"We chose Nina because of the scope of her practical knowledge gained as an assistant director in Caldwell County," said Library Director Martie Smith. "Her previous

director highly recommended her abilities as a manager and a leader."

Zanjani earned her bachelor's degree in English from Anderson University in Anderson, S.C. She holds a master's degree in library science from Appalachian State University.

Originally, Zanjani attended library school to be a school/children's librarian. But since graduation, she has only worked in public libraries as an administrator. She does still enjoy working with the youth. She serves on the Library Science Advisory Board at ASU, is an avid reader who enjoys a good mystery and loves libraries.

"I am most looking forward to maintaining the high level of service the Union County Public Library already has and working with the staff and the public to ensure that both parties' needs are met," she said.

October

Three New Items Banned from Union County Landfill

Effective October 1, motor oil filters, wooden pallets and plastic bottles were banned from solid waste disposal in North Carolina.

The Union County Landfill and Transfer Station accepts plastic bottles (with #1 PETE or #2 HDPE inside the triangle, beside, or under it), wooden pallets (\$1.50/one hundred pounds or \$30/ton), oil and oil filters. The County also accepts plastic bottles, oil and oil filters at the numerous collection sites, but no wooden pallets.

Oil filters, wooden pallets, and plastic bottles join a list of previously banned materials



and other items (computer equipment and televisions) with disposal ban dates approaching on January 1, 2011. The full list of banned materials include used oil, yard trash, white goods, aluminum cans, scrap tires, lead-acid batteries, antifreeze, oyster shells, and ABC beverage containers. This list can be found in the North Carolina General Statute and at www.p2pays.org.



"Recycling is a proven job creator in North Carolina and if we do our best to recycle the newly named materials, we will not only grow businesses in the state, but protect disposal capacity, recover resources and save energy" said Jennifer Nance, recycling coordinator for Union County Public Works.

Significant News in 2009

North Carolina Agricultural Cost-Share Funds Assist Local Farmers

The Union Soil & Water Conservation District in October received its cost-share allocation from the state for non-point source pollution control from agricultural activities. These funds are available to assist farmers in installing conservation practices which help decrease the amount of sediment, nitrogen, phosphorus, chemical and other pollutants in the surface and ground water of North Carolina.

The district received approximately \$95,000. Landowners and operators of existing agricultural operations are eligible for cost-share assistance to install conservation practices such as animal waste storage structures, poultry mortality incinerators, and poultry composters. The state of North Carolina will pay up to 75 percent of the average cost of these measures as an incentive.

Big Changes for Work First Program

The Union County Department of Social Services' Work First program changed in 2009 so that participants receive their monthly cash assistance only after they have shown they have completed enough hours to warrant benefits through the program.

The new rules, which went into effect statewide on October 1, affected about 398 families in Union County. These families depend on Work First money for help as they complete at least 35 hours each week of work, job search, training, education or other activities.

Before the change, participants received their monthly benefits at the beginning of each month. Those who didn't meet program requirements were penalized by not getting a check.

Under the new rules, participants get their monthly cash

assistance once the month has passed and they meet their program goals.

According to Steve Ramsey, social work supervisor with Union County DSS, eligible participants will get a special one-time payment from the state in early October to bridge the payment gap created by the change.

State officials said that the change is primarily designed to emphasize more responsibility. But there's an important financial incentive too. If the state fails to meet federal goals for getting people off welfare, it could jeopardize the flow of federal money that pays for programs such as Work First.

The new rules don't apply to cases in which the money goes only to support children. The new rules do apply to cases where the money goes to support both adults and their children.

Reservoir to be Built at CRWTP

The Union County Board of Commissioners unanimously supported moving forward with final design and construction of a one billion gallon reservoir at the Catawba River Water Treatment Plant. The reservoir project was approved in 2007 as part of Public Works' Capital Improvement Plan.

In 1991, Lancaster County, S.C. and Union County, N.C. entered into a unique joint venture agreement to construct and operate the water treatment facility.

The reservoir will cover 90 surface acres and will allow the plant to withdraw water from the reservoir during times of drought when the Catawba River typically has low water flow. This will ensure a more reliable, better quality and sufficient supply of water to the plant.

The preliminary design of the reservoir is complete and environmental permitting is moving ahead. The reservoir design includes a new dam, reservoir pumping station with

access bridge, overflow spillway and conveyance piping. The existing reservoir will receive hydraulic improvements and will be utilized for pretreatment of river water before it is transferred to the new reservoir.



The area shaded in blue is the 90-acre reservoir that will hold one billion gallons of water. The blues become darker as the water depth increases.

Final design of the reservoir is scheduled to be completed in the summer of 2010 and construction should conclude in the fall of 2012.

Significant News in 2009

Cane Creek Park Lake Closes to Boat Traffic

Cane Creek Park Lake fell 16 inches below its normal water level on October 21 causing the lake to close to boat traffic.

When the lake gets 16 inches or more below normal, stumps, anchors and buoys become exposed making it dangerous for boats and their occupants. The lake remained closed until October 28 when rain caused the lake to rise two

inches. Another heavy rain a few weeks later increased the lake's water level to seven inches above normal.

Cane Creek Park is a family oriented, water based recreation facility encompassing 1,050 acres of land surrounding a 350-acre trophy bass lake.



November

JROTC Cadets Receive Patriot Awards

Six JROTC (Junior Reserve Officers' Training Corps) cadets from Union County high schools were presented with Patriot Awards at the November 16 Union County Board of Commissioners meeting.

The Patriot Award was established in 2002 by the Union County Board of Commissioners to recognize one outstanding JROTC cadet from each of the high school programs in Union County. Recipients are selected for the award for demonstrating a high degree of patriotism, leadership, military bearing, scholarship and general excellence. This year's recipients were:

- Cadet Lieutenant Commander Cameron Howard of Forest Hills High School. Cadet Howard is a recent distinguished graduate of the Cadet Leadership Academy. He was selected to represent Forest Hills at the Cadet Leadership Academy along with 100 other cadets from North Carolina, South Carolina and Georgia.
- Cadet Captain Anthony McBride of the Monroe High School Air Force JROTC. Cadet McBride is serving his fourth year in JROTC, and is a member of both the Honor Guard and Drill Team. For the past two summers, Cadet McBride has attended Cadet Officer Leadership School at The Citadel in Charleston, SC. He is a member of the track and cross-country teams and performs community service for the Union County Hospice Auction, Toys for Tots, and the Battered Women's Shelter.
- Cadet Major Caleb Hutson of Parkwood High School. Cadet Hutson is as Cadet Group Commander in Union County's newest JROTC program. Cadet Hutson represented Parkwood at The Citadel's Cadet Officer Leadership School



From left to right - Anthony Parker, Union County Assistant Veterans Service Officer; Cameron Howard, Anthony McBride, Caleb Hutson, Bryce Powers, Charles Dellinger, Christian Rhone, Matthew Delk, Assistant County Manager, and Michelle Marcano, Union County Veterans Service Officer

this past summer. Largely due to Cadet Hutson's efforts in establishing and meeting unit goals, Parkwood's JROTC earned its second consecutive Distinguished Unit Award from Headquarters Air Force JROTC for the 2008-2009 school year. He will attend college at The Citadel.

- Cadet Major Bryce Powers of Piedmont High School. Cadet Powers has excelled in all positions of leadership in Piedmont's unit, working his way up to his current position of Vice Commander. He organizes cadet community service events, social activities and leads after school drill team practice at Piedmont High School.
- Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Charles Dellinger, Corps

Significant News in 2009

Commander of Porter Ridge High School's Air Force JROTC unit. He commands a solid JROTC unit and does so while commuting from a neighboring school. He organizes cadets for various community service projects and assigns positions while maintaining order. Cadet Dellinger leads drill practices after school at Porter Ridge High School and ensures the daily reveille/retreat ceremonies are conducted at the flag pole.

- Cadet / Master Chief Christian Rhone of Sun Valley High School. Cadet Rhone serves as Chief Master

at Arms in the Sun Valley High School Navy JROTC unit. She also plays volleyball, softball, basketball, and runs indoor track. Cadet Rhone volunteers at Lake Park Nursing Home, works at Office Max and still finds time to tutor elementary through high school students.

The awards were presented by Union County Veterans Service Officer Michelle Marcano, Assistant Veterans Service Officer Anthony Parker, and Assistant County Manager Matthew Delk.

December

Board Elects New Officers

Kim Rogers was elected the first chairwoman in the history of the Union County Board of Commissioners on December 14. Tracy Kuehler was elected vice-chairwoman on the same date.

Ruth Helms served as vice chairwoman from December 3, 1984 - December 7, 1987. Susan Baucom served as vice chairwoman from December 3, 1990 - December 2, 1991 and December 6, 1993 - December 5, 1994.

The chair and vice-chair of the Board are elected annually for a term of one year and cannot be removed from the



New Commission Chairwoman Kim Rogers

office of chair unless they become disqualified to serve as a Board member.

The chair presides at all Board meetings. The chair works with County staff to establish meeting dates and agendas and has authority over commission meetings as defined by N.C. General Statutes.

The vice-chair acts in the absence or disability of the chair. If the chair and vice-chair are both absent from a meeting of the Board, the members present may choose a temporary chair.



New Commission Vice-Chairwoman Tracy Kuehler

APFO Ruling Affects Schools

The NC Court of Appeals on Tuesday, December 8 issued its ruling in a lawsuit filed by several real estate developers challenging the validity of Union County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance (APFO).

The Court, in making its ruling, recognized the existence of serious issues associated with overcrowding in the county's school system and with the provision of adequate educational facilities to address these issues. The Court further acknowledged that these issues affect the public welfare and that the County had clearly worked in good faith to draft an ordinance that would meet the statutory framework for counties in North Carolina. However, in ruling against Union County's ordinance, the Court of Appeals opined that the adoption of the APFO was not within the statutory

authority granted to local governments in the state.

The APFO was established and approved by the Union County Board of Commissioners in October 2006.

The major purpose of the APFO is to ensure that adequate school facilities needed to support the demands associated with new development are in place when developments come online, or soon thereafter.

Since 2000, Union County has grown by more than 70,000 residents. During that same time period, more than 20,000 new homes have been constructed in the county. A majority

Continued on next page

Significant News in 2009

of these homes were occupied by families with one or more school-aged children. During this period, enrollment in Union County Public Schools has increased from 21,608 students to 38,437 students. This represents a phenomenal 78 percent increase.

Since the summer of 2002, UCPS has opened a total of 12 new elementary schools, three new middle schools, and three new high schools; all to relieve overcrowding caused by growth. The financing of school facility construction is the primary contributing factor in the County's recent

spiraling increase in debt load. Union County has the highest debt per capita of any county in North Carolina.

On December 14, commissioners approved a motion directing attorneys who have represented Union County in the case of Union Land Owners Association vs. Union County to prepare and file a Petition for Discretionary Review with the North Carolina Supreme Court, seeking review of the December 8 decision of the North Carolina Court of Appeals that invalidated Union County's Adequate Public Facilities Ordinance.

Sewer Rats Win First Prize

A team of Union County Public Works (UCPW) employees took home the first-place prize in the American Water Works Association Sewer Tapping competition held at its annual conference in Raleigh. UCPW's team, known as the Sewer Rats, defeated two highly competitive teams from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities.

The competition consisted of making a sewer tap on a simulated active 8-inch sewer main. The tap had to be leak-free and able to maintain 3-psi of pressure. Additionally, an automated wastewater sampler had to be properly programmed as part of the competition. The Sewer Rats performed these tasks in the quickest time and won the competition.

"I'm very proud of the fact that we beat out Charlotte-

Mecklenburg Utilities," said UCPW Director Ed Goscicki. "It proves you don't have to be the biggest to be the best."

The Sewer Rats team is made up of Coach Greg Morgan, Captain Josh Carpenter and team members Travis O'Leary, Matt Hargett and Chris Love. The Sewer Rats took first place in the 2007 state competition and second place in last year's competition.



From left to right: Travis O'Leary, Greg Morgan, Matt Hargett, Josh Carpenter and Chris Love.

Health Department Provides H1N1 and Seasonal Flu Shots

In response to the large outbreak of H1N1 or "swine" flu cases in the United States, the Union County Health Department held nine H1N1 flu shot clinics throughout the county in the fall of 2009.

Initially, H1N1 flu shot clinics targeted the groups most susceptible to the virus. These groups included pregnant women, caregivers for children that are 6 months and younger, children and young adults age 6 months to 24 years of age, healthcare and EMS workers, and persons age

25 to 64 who have medical conditions (diabetes, asthma, respiratory illness, heart disease, kidney disease, neurological disorders and others) that put them at higher-risk for flu related complications. As the H1N1 vaccine became more readily available, clinics were held for anyone who wanted to receive the vaccine.

The Health Department also held three seasonal flu shot clinics in 2009.

4-Hers Help Seniors Save on Power Bills

The Union County 4-H Club on December 12 helped several senior residents of the county begin saving money on their power bills by replacing incandescent bulbs with new compact fluorescent light bulbs.

4-Hers began collecting compact fluorescent light bulbs last summer. 4-Her Lora Cretella contacted Union Power about the 4-H effort, and Union Power generously donated several cases of bulbs.

Significant News in 2009

4-Hers worked with the Union County Council on Aging to identify senior residents who would allow the 4-Hers into their homes to replace their incandescent bulbs with compact fluorescent light bulbs. A compact fluorescent light bulb can save a person as much as \$30 over the bulb's lifetime. Most seniors have an average of 20 light bulbs in their home. Compact fluorescent bulbs last 10 times longer than incandescent bulbs, which means these seniors will save around \$900 over the lifetime of the compact fluorescent bulbs.

After months of collecting bulbs, 4-Hers, Lora Cretella and Shawn Linnen of Waxhaw, Jordan Purser of Monroe, Caleb

Crowder, Jasmine Hood, Jeral Fletcher, Scottie Hammond and Katie Allen of Wingate and William Alt of Stallings visited 10 homes and changed all the resident's light bulbs to compact fluorescent bulbs.



4-Hers sit with Mary Tucker of Monroe after changing her light bulbs to compact fluorescent.

Contact Union County

Union County Main Number	704-283-3500
Animal Services	704-283-2308
Board of Elections	704-283-3809
Cooperative Extension	704-283-3801
Emergency Communications	704-289-1591
Board of Commissioners	704-283-3810
Clerk to the Board/County Mgr.	704-283-3810
Emergency Management	704-283-3536/3575
Environmental Health	704-283-3553
Finance	704-283-3813
Fire Services	704-283-3524
General Services	704-283-3872
Health Department	704-296-4800
Homeland Security	704-292-2670
Information Systems	704-283-3841
Inspections	704-283-3816
Internal Audit	704-283-3630
Legal	704-283-3673
Library	704-283-8184
Parks and Recreation	704-843-3919
Personnel	704-283-3818
Planning	704-283-3565
Public Information	704-283-3546
Public Works	704-296-4210
Register of Deeds	704-283-3843
Risk Management	704-283-3663
Sheriff's Office	704-283-3789
Social Services	704-296-4300
Stormwater	704-283-3520
Tax Administration	704-283-3746/3848
Transportation and Nutrition	704-283-3713/3712
Veterans Services	704-283-3711/3744