

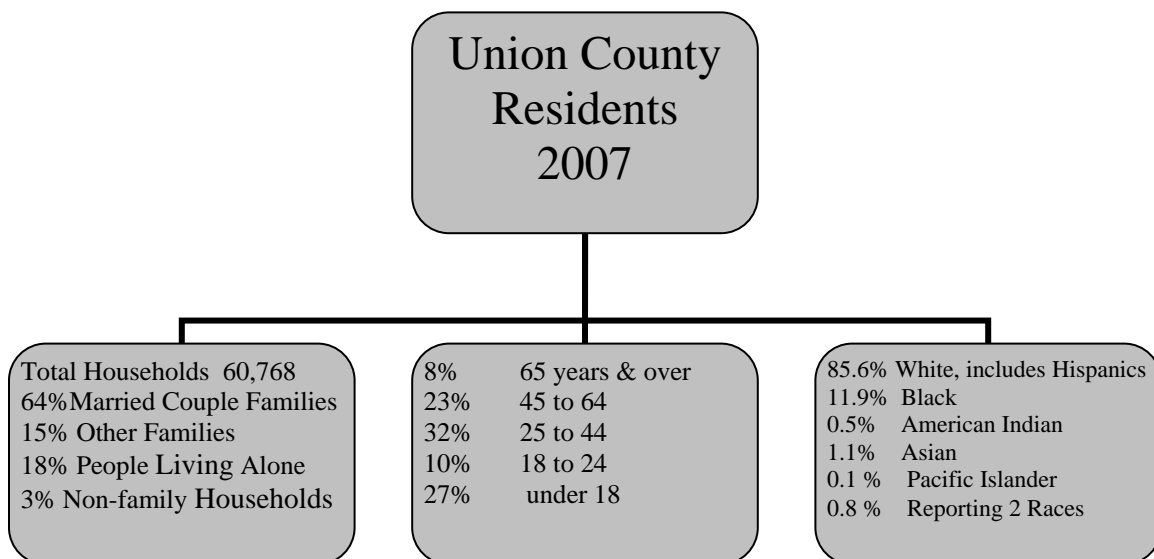


2007 State of the County Health Report

Overview

The intent of this document is to provide an overview of the health of Union County and the residents. The document will provide information on areas that are impacting health.

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Union County 2007

2007 was not unlike 2006 for Union County, the main theme continues to be unprecedented growth. As 2007 closes, Union County is the 12th fastest growing county in the nation, with an estimated population of 175,272. That growth equates to 41.6% since the 2000 Census. The county does have a diverse industrial tax base with industries ranging from poultry production to aerospace, a 4.0 unemployment rate and a labor force of 92,868. Despite these strengths, the county still struggles to meet the infrastructure demands resulting from residential growth. The county's real estate tax base split is a very lopsided \$1.6 billion commercial real estate / \$12.7 billion residential real estate. With such a large residential population and not enough commercial and industrial tax base to assist in covering costs for needed infrastructure and services, county tax dollars are stretched. In FY '07-'08 Health and Human services will receive 10% of the county tax dollars, or 18% of the county budget.

Union County 2007

- 643 Square Miles, 14 Municipalities
- Estimated Population 175, 272
- County growth, 41.6 % since 2000 Census
- Fastest growing County in the Carolinas
- 12th fastest growing County in the nation.
- Median Age 35
- Median Income \$59, 125
- Civilian Labor Force 92, 868
- Unemployment Rate 4.0 (Aug. '07)
- \$17.3 billion dollar total tax base (88% residential / 12% commercial)

Distribution of Wealth

Household Incomes (2006 inflation adjusted dollars)	Number of Households
Less than \$10k	2,937
\$10k to 14,999	1,968
\$15k to 24,999	5,546
\$25k to 34,999	5,717
\$35k to 49,999	8,922
\$50k to 74,999	14,269
\$75k to 99,999	9,391
\$100k to \$149,999	7,890
\$150k to \$199,999	1,887
\$200,000 & up	2,241

Healthcare and access to healthcare is a key component to the health of a community. 2007 saw very small incremental change in the numbers of health professionals practicing in Union County.

Health Professionals in Union County vs. State (2006 , per 10,000 population)

	Union County 2005	Union County 2006	NC 2006
Dentists	2.2	2.1	4.4
Physicians	7.6	7.8	20.8
Primary Care Physicians	4.6	4.8	9.0
Pharmacists	5.0	6.1	8.9
Registered Nurses	45.3	43.1	92.9
Nurse Practitioners	0.89	0.9	3.0
Certified Nurse Midwives	0.13	0.6	1.1
Physicians Assistants	1.08	1.3	3.2

Union County Health Department

As the Health Department moves forward the mission remains the same, to serve the citizens of Union County in the prevention of disease, promotion of health, the protection of our community's health.

The Health Department leadership changed in October 2007, when Phillip Tarte was announced as the new Health Director. The Health Department has a staff of 114 operating Environmental Health and Personal Health services. The annual budget for FY 2006 – 2007 was \$7,892,980.

The health service programs offered at the department are: Maternal Health Clinic, Family Planning Clinic, Dental Health Clinic, Breast and Cervical Cancer Control, Immunization Clinic, Communicable Disease, Child Health Clinic and Health Promotions. The Women Infants and Children Program (WIC) is also housed at the Health Department.

FY 2006 –2007 in Review	Health Department Programs Clients Served Annually
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Staff of 114• Phillip Tarte named Health Department Director• 12, 177 Patients seen (non-duplicated)• 26,816 Patient Visits• Jail Health Program Added• Health Department Volunteers for 2010 Accreditation Site Visit• Community Health Assessment Started	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Family Planning 1,978• Maternal Health 1,103• Child Health 2,222• Child Immunizations 2,959• Child Service Coordination (Avg. monthly case load) 130• Breast & Cervical Cancer Control 127• Communicable Disease 1,859• Dental Clinic 1,138• Oral Health Section 364 (children impacted)• Women Infant Children (WIC) Avg monthly case load 3,534• Health Promotions, on-going programs

The Board of County Commissioners requested the Health Department to take over the Jail Health program in 2007, which had previously been handled by an outside agency on contract. In order to implement the requirements of the Jail Health Program the county allotted \$1,121,540. and created six fulltime positions.

The Health Department does not offer Adult Health services outside of Maternity, Family Planning, Communicable Disease, Immunizations and Dental Health. Adults in Union County without insurance have started seeking healthcare in neighboring counties.

In the spring of 2007, the Union County Health Department entered into a community dialog facilitated by the United Way to look at the need for indigent care in Union County. Clinics being offered over the County line in Mecklenburg were seeing increasing numbers of Union County residents seeking care. The Matthews Health Clinic provided 600 visits in 2006, and 240 were for Union County residents, (over 40%). The numbers of Union County indigent patients seeking care outside the county has continually increased.

In addition to working on existing healthcare issues, the Department moves forward with other activities. The department started working toward the pursuit of Accreditation. The Health Director volunteered the county to have a Site Visit Team come to Union County in the fall of 2009. At which time the county will go through the formal accreditation process.

The County Health Department in conjunction with Healthy Carolinians of Union County began a Community Health Assessment in the fall of 2007 concluding in December 2008. During the Assessment 2,000 adult residents 19 to 54 years old will complete written surveys, 500 senior residents 55 and older will be surveyed, and 500 teens, 13 to 18 will be surveyed. In the spring, focus groups will be held county wide, and stakeholder interviews will be conducted. The Assessment is a requirement of the state for departmental accreditation and certification in Healthy Carolinians. The Assessment will provide information for health and wellness planning to better meet the needs of the county residents and work toward improving the health of all residents.

The Health Promotions Division of the Health Department was awarded two March of Dimes grants in 2007. Programs funded were Smoke Free Babies and Folic Acid Now. Smoke Free Babies targets pregnant women who smoke, as well as women who smoke and have young children in the home. Women can sign up for the program at the Health Department, or may be referred by their healthcare provider. The Smoke Free Babies program offers telephone counseling, hypnosis therapy, pharmacotherapy options and information regarding the dangers of secondhand smoke exposure. A questionnaire administered by CMC-Union from April to October 2007, to pregnant mothers who delivered at CMC, shows a 78% quit and reduction rate for mothers who received their pre-natal care at the Health Department.

The Folic Acid Now program provided information on the benefits of folic acid, emphasizing the reduced risk of neural tube defects. A total of 3,204 women received a three month supply of multi-vitamins and education on the benefits of taking a daily multi-vitamin.

Health Promotions taught *Parenting the Young Child* Class beginning in March 2007. This was an on-going series of classes on six topics with an average attendance of 17. Fifty-five participants had graduated by attending all six classes (nine hours of instruction). Participants filled out evaluations stating that the classes were valuable to them and noted changes they had made in their own families due to information they learned. The Health Department received the Dr. Ann Wolfe Endowment of the North Carolina Community Foundation mini-grant award of \$5,000 to address infant mortality and or child health for their *Parenting the Young Child* series.

Health Promotions provided programs in physical activity and nutrition, these programs were designed to reduce overweight and obesity within the county. During the year, 599 adults and children attended programs, received information on healthy eating and physical activity, 28 Pre-K teachers were trained in Color Me Healthy curriculum. With a growing obesity epidemic nationwide, many more interventions are needed.

The Susan G. Komen for the Cure grant, or About Breast Cancer (ABC), provides breast health information and screening services for uninsured women. In 2007, 132 services were provided, with four confirmed breast cancers. The program identified and enrolled 26 women for the Health Department Breast and Cervical Cancer Control Program which offers regular mammograms and pap tests. A total of 2,690 women were reached by the ABC program.

Citizen Health / Children

Child Population / Health Indicators

- 27.5% child Population 18 and under
- 12,795 Children receiving Public Health Services (2006)
- 9,905 children enrolled in Medicaid (2006)
- 8.8 % children (under 18yrs) living below the poverty level
- 73% of sexual assault victims served by United Family Services were children under 18
- 98 Children received forensic interviews & medical exams at Tree House for child sexual abuse
- 8 % of all births in Union County are low birth weight babies, under 2500 grams
- 2006 Infant Mortality Rate of 9.6 (per 1,000 live births) (exceeds the 2006 state rate of 8.1)
- 27% school age children on free or reduced lunch 2007 (down from 30.2% in 2006)
- 16% Low-income children who are overweight
- 2002-2006 Infant Mortality Rate, 7.3 / 8.4 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2002-2006 Postneonatal Death Rate, 2.7 / 2.6 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2002-2006 Neonatal Death Rate, 4.7 / 5.8 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2002 -2006 Fetal Death Rate, 5.9 / 7.0 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2002-2006 Perinatal Deaths, 10.6 / 12.8 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2005 Union County Estimate of uninsured Children (ages 0 to 17) 4,287 or 9.7%

The need for various types of counseling for children continues to increase in Union County. The need is reflected in the rising statistics at the United Family Services (UFS). UFS has been working collaboratively in Union County on many family and child issues. UFS offers counseling, anger management, anxiety and depression, grief and loss, and child and adolescent behavior problems. In 2005, UFS opened "the Tree House", a place where child victims of sexual assault and their families can receive all the appropriate services, including crisis intervention, counseling, support groups, medical evaluations, and forensic interviews. The intent is to provide the best chance at surviving their trauma and returning them to their normal lives. In 2006, seventy three percent of the victims served by UFS were children under the age of 18. The Tree House (Childrens Advocacy Center that performs medical exams and or forensic interviews) served 98 children in 2006. In an effort to prevent more child abuse from occurring in the county, 3,151 community members in schools, organizations and community groups were provided prevention education and training by United Family Services.

Citizen Health / Adolescents

Union County Adolescent Population 2007

- 7,799 Middle School Students
- 9,426 High School Students
- 1,653 High School Graduates
- 86% of graduates plan to attend college
- 2006 Scholarship monies awarded \$ 19.3 million
- 2.49% drop out rate (grades 7-12) (2004 – 2005 rate)
- 889 Teen Driver Motor Vehicle Crashes (2006)
- 5 Teen Driver Crashes Resulting in Fatalities (2006)
- 21 Teen Driver Crashes Involving Alcohol
- 1 Teen Driver Crash Involving Alcohol with fatality

Adolescent Health Indicators

- 9.7% of Union County Children (ages 0-17) uninsured (2005 Rate)
- 2006 Teen Pregnancy Rate 26.4 / 35.1 NC Rate (ages 15–17, per 1,000 population)
- 2006 Teen Pregnancy Rate Minorities 73.5 / 48 NC Rate (ages 15-17, per 1,000 population)
- 2006 8.9 Teen Abortion Rate (ages 15-17) (above the state rate of 8.6)
- 2006 23.4 Teen Abortion Rate for Minorities (above the state rate of 12.9)

An area of concern for Union County adolescent health is teen pregnancy and abortion. Although the overall teen pregnancy rate comes in beneath the state rate, the situation changes drastically with the minority teen pregnancy rate. In 2006, the teen pregnancy rate for minority girls between 15 and 17 years of age for Union County was 73.5 per 1,000 population, with the state rate coming in at 48.

A related issue for Union County adolescents is the county abortion rates. The overall abortion rate for Union County teens does slightly exceed the state. Union County has a rate of 8.9 versus the state rate of 8.6, these rates are for 15 to 17 years of age, per 1,000 population. The situation becomes more extreme when the minority rate is isolated. Union County abortion rates for minorities, 15 to 17 is 23.4 versus the state rate of 12.9.

Although Union County is experiencing rate increases for minority populations, the state is having very different results. The state of North Carolina's teen pregnancy rates continue to hold steady, with 2006 state rates remaining nearly the same as those reported over the previous three years. North Carolina had 19,192 pregnant teens (ages 15 to 19) in 2006, that number includes both married and unmarried females. Nearly 29% of those pregnancies were to girls who had been pregnant before. Among the minority populations, the highest pregnancy rates were to Hispanics. In 2006 the pregnancy rate among Hispanic adolescents in the state was 173.1 per 1,000 girls aged 15 to 19, while African American teens had a 2006 pregnancy rate of 86.2. Overall at the state level, the 2006 minority teen pregnancy rate dropped 1.6 times that for white teens.

The Union County Health Department, Department of Social Services, Union County WIC, and Help Crisis Assistance Ministry all offer programs, healthcare, counseling, services and assistance for pregnant teens.

Citizen Health / Adults

2006 Adult Statistics / Health Indicators

- 60,768 Total Households
- Married Couple Families make up 38,846 of Union County Households
- Average Family Size 3.2
- 5 % of Families with incomes below the poverty level
- 8 % Elderly Population 65 years and older
- 6.8 % of Elderly people over the age of 65 with incomes below the poverty level
- 17.3% of Union County Adult Population (ages 18-64) uninsured (representing 18,248 people), 2005 statistic
- 15.1% of Union County Residents (ages 0 to 64) uninsured, (representing 22,534 people) 2005 statistic
- 4,274 Union County Households receive Food Stamps (Sept. '07)
- 2006 Pregnancy Rate (ages 35-44) 36.7 / 28.9 2006 NC Pregnancy Rate (per 1,000 population)
- 2006 Fertility Rate (ages 35 to 44) 32.2 / 23.9 2006 NC Fertility Rate (per 1,000 population)
- 2006 Abortion Rate (age 35 to 44) 4.4 / 4.8 2006 NC Abortion Rate

Poverty in Union County

Poverty by Household	% Impacted
All Families	5 %
Married Couples	1.90 %
Female Head of Household	25.60 %
Under 18	8.80 %
65 Years and over	6.80 %
All People	8 %

Union County has a relatively small number of residents living in poverty, only 8% over all. However, when you look at the number by household, the overwhelming majority of people living in poverty reside in a household with a female listed as the head of the household. That already alarming statistic has the potential to increase significantly due to the simultaneously rising teen pregnancy statistics for the County.

2006 Mortality Rates (Age Adjusted per 100,000)	Union County 2001-2005	Union County 2002-2006	NC 2002-2006
Heart Disease	226.9	214.2	217.9
Cerebrovascular Disease	60.4	55.1	61.1
Diabetes	25.4	21.5	27.1
All Cancers	187.3	192.0	196.4
*Cancer of Trachea, Bronchus & Lung	59.1	62.8	59.8
Breast Cancer	24.1	23.5	25.7
Cancer of Colon, Rectum, Anus	16.8	17.8	18.2
Cancer of Prostate	23	21.4	29.1
Septicemia	11.9	12.8	14.4
*Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, Nephrosis	19.7	19.1	18.2
Pneumonia & Influenza	17	15.4	22.5
Chronic Lower Respiratory Diseases	42.4	41.3	47.1
Chronic Liver Disease	6.7	5.8	8.8
*Alzheimer's Disease	50.5	50.8	27.7
*Motor Vehicle Injuries	20.6	19.7	19.1
Suicide Rate	8.5	9.1	11.6
Homicide Rate	3.7	5.1	7.2
All Other Unintentional Injuries	18.8	19.7	27.0
* Mortality Rate greater than the state rate for the same time period.			

Union County has seen mortality rates decrease in several areas in 2006, with the largest decreases occurring in heart disease, cerebrovascular disease, and diabetes. The county's increases occurred in cancers of the lung, trachea, bronchus, the homicide rate and cancer of the colon, rectum and anus. Areas in which the county rate exceeds the state rate are; Alzheimer's, cancer of the lung, trachea and bronchus, Nephritis and motor vehicle injuries.

Despite the county population only having 8% of residents 65 and older, Union County has an alarming Alzheimer's rate for the second consecutive year. The fact that the county's Alzheimer's rate only saw a slight increase in 2006 should be encouraging. However the local rate comes close to doubling the state rate. Several local facilities offer care for Alzheimer's residents; Clairebridge Special Care Unit, Monroe Nursing & Rehab, Elizabethan Gardens, and Lake Park Nursing. The facilities that provide this type of care do take patients from surrounding counties, who after 6 months of residing in a Union County facility, become county residents, and are then able to be factored into the mortality rates. The county does have support groups for families impacted by Alzheimer's, (Indian Trail and Monroe). The Council on Aging employs a Caregiver Support Specialist, offering information, educational classes and support for care givers. A collaborative relationship with the Alzheimer's Association in Charlotte offers a class on Making Sense of Memory Loss to better educate and equip caregivers on dealing with the on set of dementia.

Access to healthcare can be a critical factor in mortality and morbidity rates, the large majority of Hispanics living in Union County are uninsured. The County now has an estimated 30,000 Hispanic residents which are having a tremendous impact on the Healthcare services. Health Department clinics are 45 to 80% Hispanic. A seven member Union County team went to Mexico for one week . The cultural diversity training trip was sponsored by outside agencies and private contributions. After the trip 15 community programs were presented on the insights learned in Mexico. The County representatives each expanded services within their agencies to better meet the needs of Hispanic residents.

Adult Health Indicators / Communicable Disease

Number of Cases	2003	2004	2005	2000-2004 Total
Campylobacter	24	14	28	94
E. Coli	2	4	1	21
Hepatitis A	4	1	0	12
Hepatitis B	5	3	2	13
Hepatitis B Carrier	10	14	15	39
Hepatitis C	0	0	0	1
Lyme Disease	4	3	0	9
Meningococcal	1	1	1	5
Meningitis Pneumococcal	0	2	0	5
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	1	11	3	22
Rubella	0	0	0	8
Salmonellosis	29	44	40	173
Shigellosis	58	2	2	84
Whooping Cough	13	4	6	26

Health Indicators / Sexually Transmitted Diseases

Number of Cases	2003	2004	2005	2006
HIV Disease	14	8	7	25
AIDS	7	7	6	9
Chlamydia	154	204	353	274
Syphilis	1	3	4	3
Gonorrhea	125	144	197	161

Dental Health

The Union County Health Department operates a Dental Clinic for children on Medicaid, NC Health Choice and private pay, as well as seeing adult dental patients that are uninsured at a discarded rate. Payment is due at the time services are rendered. All visits require a pre-set appointment. The program offers preventative services such as basic annual examine, bitewing x-rays and sealants. They also perform dental treatment procedures such as extractions, crowns, and fillings. 2007 was the first full year of having a dentist on staff.

2007 was the first full year with a fulltime dentist on county staff. With the physical changes of the clinic and upgrades of equipment, the dental clinic was able to see more children, added an adult dental program, and began seeing inmates from the county jail.

The adult dental service program was available in the fall of 2006. However, the community was unaware that the adult program existed. In an effort to promote the adult dental services at the Health Department, Dr. Candace Crowe provided information on the clinic to the Council on Aging, as well as speaking at several functions with adult health care providers, and at the County Nutrition Sites for seniors.

The Dental Clinic continued working out of a Smart Start grant to provide dental services to uninsured children under the age of five and uninsured pregnant women. The services can be for preventative care, exams, x-rays or dental procedures.

In 2007 the Health Department applied for and was awarded a Ryan White grant that provides federal funding through Living Waters, a 501c3 non-profit organization. The intent of the grant is to treat HIV positive patients referred to the Health Department Dental Clinic. The patients must be Union County residents to receive dental services. The grant began in 2007 and will run for one year before renewal.

With the addition of the adult dental services, and the expanded capabilities of the dental clinic, two additions to the dental clinic staff were made; one fulltime dental assistant and one part-time dental hygienist.

Union County residents have access to a non-profit sponsored dental bus for dental services. The dental bus is only in the county on an interval basis, as it travels statewide providing services. It is staffed by volunteer dental professionals and operates on a donation basis.

Mental Health

Daymark Recovery Mental health Client Numbers (from January to September 2007)

- **1,520 Adult Mental Health & Substance Abuse services (18 and older)**
- **379 Youth & Family Health, Substance Abuse Services (3 to 17 years of age)**
- **1,135 Residents served Emergency & Mobile Crisis Services (youth and adult)**
- **Bilingual Counselors are needed**
- **Transportation remains an issue for Daymark Clients**

United Family Services Client Numbers (July 2006 to June 2007)

- **Served over 5,000 people in the areas of counseling, education, crisis intervention & advocacy and economic independence**
- **Counselors responded to over 290 rape crisis & child abuse hotline calls**
- **Demand for counseling services has increased over 768% for rape crisis**
- **UFS runs a 24 hour Rape Crisis Hotline**
- **Provided hospital accompaniment for 33 rape victims**
- **Provided 1,269 counseling and play therapy sessions for rape crisis**

Numerous agencies in Union County offer counseling services, two of the largest providers are Daymark Recovery Services and United Family Services.

As part of the mental health care network for Piedmont Behavioral Health, Union County residents on Medicaid seeking mental health services often go to Daymark Recovery for care and services.

In March 2007, Daymark added Mobile Crisis Management to the existing menu of mental healthcare they were already offering. This program is a short-term crisis prevention or intervention service. It is made available to Union County residents who do not have the means to get themselves to outpatient services or emergency services. The primary goal of the program is prevention based, it is meant to keep people from ending up in a psychiatric hospital, prison or the emergency room, (when they do not need medical care). The secondary goal of the program is to assess their functioning capabilities and needs. After the assessment the client would be linked to the appropriate resources and support systems. The actual mobile service is provided in the clients home, or at another safe location. Piedmont Behavioral Health and Daymark both made efforts to market the new Mobile Crisis Management program through town hall meetings, taskforce meetings, Council meetings and with local law enforcement. Residents can access this program by calling the Piedmont Behavioral Health Access Center.

United Family Services provides mental health services and educational programs in Union County. United Family Services offers counseling and referrals within the agency, and among other human service agencies in the greater Charlotte area. United Family Services works on changing lives, by increasing the quality of life, offering support to help them achieve stability, security and self-sufficiency. They have several focus areas in which they provide service; economic independence, counseling and education, crisis intervention and advocacy. Mental health services are available through Employee Assistance programs, insurance benefits, and on a sliding fee scale based upon household size and income. Bilingual services are available.

Emergency Services & Safety Matters

2006 Emergency Stats / Injury Indicators

- 276,000 911 calls received
- 147,204 dispatched calls
- 8.51 minutes, average response time Union EMS
- 9,992 Union EMS Transports
- 59% Union EMS Transports went to CMC Union
- 37% Union EMS Transports went out of County
- 3,875 Motor Vehicle Crashes
- 23 Crashes Resulting in Fatalities
- 199 Crashes Involving Alcohol
- 330 Crashes involving deer (2005)

2007 brought key upgrades to fruition within the County 911 Center. In 2006, a proposal was made and reviewed to make improvements and changes to the County's 911Center and the equipment used by County dispatchers. The first change came with the purchase and installation of the radio system that all local personnel use, including first responders. The system was upgraded to an 800 MHZ. The upgrade provides local emergency personnel the capability to communicate with outside agencies on a common first responder interoperable system. It also eliminates dead spots for radio communications within the county. The system installation began in the fall of 2007.

The County 911 Center also upgraded to a computer aided dispatch system (CAD). The CAD system will improve the ability of 911 Operators to more efficiently and rapidly dispatch emergency responders to handle 911 calls. The system is currently being installed and should be operational by January 2008.

In continued efforts to maintain and plan for a potential pandemic flu outbreak, the County Homeland Security, Emergency Management, and the Health Department attend training and conferences throughout the year. Homeland Security has developed a Continuity of Operations plan for Union County Government and the Community. In 2006, the state made it a requirement for all North Carolina Judicial Centers to have their own Continuity of Operations Plan. Homeland Security is working closely with Union County judges and court officials to have a plan in place for the Union County judicial system.

In August 2007 the County participated in a tabletop exercise Operation "Flu in the Coop". The exercise took place at NC State University and involved over 46 counties and agencies from across the state. Mr. Tom Ward, Union County Preparedness Coordinator, represented Union County in the exercise. The County also had participation from Union County poultry growers.

The purpose of the exercise was to provide participants an opportunity to evaluate current response concepts, plans, and capabilities related to responding to a highly pathogenic avian influenza event in the state of North Carolina. The exercise involved two scenarios, one involving a suspect human case of avian influenza and the other involving a suspect poultry case of avian influenza. The point of the exercise was related to command and control coordination, critical decision-making, notifications, and the interrogation of local, state and Federal, public and industry assets, necessary to save lives and protect public health and safety.

Environmental Health

The Environmental Health Department is vital to the health of the community. It is the Environmental Health staff that enforces regulations, conducts inspections, and evaluations within the community that protect the public from potential health hazards.

Environmental Health Factors

- **New Well Inspection Program started in July 2007**
- **1782 Evaluations of Food & Lodging Establishments**
- **68 Inspections of Rest Home / Nursing Homes, Adult Day Cares**
- **6,735 Site Visits for Septic Permits, Inspections of Wastewater Systems and Complaints**
- **590 Wastewater System Improvements Issued**
- **383 Water Samples Taken**
- **24 Water samples with Coliform and E.Coli bacteria present**
- **448 Inorganic Water Samples**
- **4 Vector Complaints**
- **0 Methamphetamine Labs (Review of Abatement Plans)**
- **52 Solid Waste Complaints**
- **2,950 Loads Disposed of (Landfill Reclamations)**
- **130 Swimming Pool, Wading Pool, Spa Inspections**
- **3 Child Lead Investigation, 0 Child Lead Poisoning cases**
- **14 Tatoo Parlor Inspections**

2007 was the year that the Environmental Health Department went digital. In order to make Environmental Health information available and easily accessible to County residents, the Environmental Health Department created a digital web site offering sanitation scores for ALL County Food, Lodging and Institutions that the staff inspects. This information includes swimming pool inspections, daycares, school cafeterias, pushcart food vendors, nursing homes, bed and breakfasts, etc. When considering a meal out, or what Nursing Home offers the most sanitary conditions, the information is available at the Digital Health Department link on the Union County Health Department web page.

Water and Septic

In September 2007 Union County completed an expansion of its largest wastewater treatment plant from 3 million gallons per day to 6 million gallons per day. The Board of county Commissioners developed and implemented a sewer allocation policy to determine how that new sewer capacity would be allocated. There will be no new sewer commitments for residential development until additional treatment capacity is constructed. The timeframe for making additional sewer capacity available in Union County remains undetermined.

Union County spent the large part of 2007 in drought conditions, and closed out the fall of 2007 in an extreme drought. The county was able to maintain water availability for residents and as of November 2007, had not seen a noticeable increase in dry wells, or subsequent requests to tap onto the County water supply. Public Works was able to meet outstanding commitments for water connections, although they were forced to stop the issuing of new commitments for all residential subdivisions until an additional water treatment source is made available.

Several options to improve the County's water situation are in the planning stages. The expansion of the Catawba Water Treatment Plant is approximately three to four years away. A design plan to receive an additional 3 million gallons per day is in the early stages, as are discussions with Anson County to develop a long term water source from the Yadkin-Pee Dee River.

One result of the severe drought conditions experienced in the county, are increased requests for wells being drilled strictly for irrigation purposes. This increase became most noticeable once the county implemented watering restrictions and began implementing fines.

The Environmental Health Department made preparations for the implementation of the 2008 new well legislation that will go into effect in August. A public hearing at a Board of County Commissioners meeting was held in the spring of 2007. The purpose was to discuss raising the well permitting fees in order to help offset costs associated with the new state mandated well regulations. The new regulations significantly increase the amount of time Environmental Health employees are required to spend when permitting a new well. The new fee for a well permit were set at \$275.

Air Quality

Health Indicators

- **1 Code Red Ozone Day in Charlotte Region (2007)**
- **23 Code Orange Days in Charlotte Region (2007)**
- **1 Code Purple Day in Charlotte Region (2007)**
- **Asthma Hospitalization Rate 136 (2005 stat) (ages 0-14 yrs), per 100,000 population**
- **Lung, Trachea and Bronchus Cancer Rate Increase (Union County rate exceeds state rate)**
- **Union County in Non-attainment Status**

Union County saw a significant increase in the number of poor air quality days in 2007. The County had a code purple ozone day in August. A code purple day would include the following; hot, very hazy, extremely stagnant air, sunny skies with no precipitation. The recommendation for a code purple day would be for active children and adults, and people with respiratory disease such as asthma, to avoid all outdoor exertion. Everyone else, especially children should avoid prolonged outdoor exertion.

Union County saw an increase locally in the lung, trachea and bronchus cancer rate. The county rate has also exceeded that of the state for the same time period. With air quality remaining an environmental issue for the Charlotte region, these numbers may continue to climb.

The Union County bus service that is part of the Charlotte Area Transit System was expanded in Union County in 2007. The route originally started in June 2003 and had only two Union County stops; one in Indian Trail and one in Monroe. The expansion will include one morning stop and one afternoon stop on the eastern end of the County in Marshville. In addition to the new Marshville stops, they are also adding a fourth trip into Charlotte daily. The bus routes run Monday through Friday. Since inception the Union County bus route has shown an 80% increase in usage, with 42,067 rider trips recorded between 2005 and 2006. The additional Marshville routes were initiated by the town of Marshville. Funding for the expansion routes will come from a federal grant in the amount of \$136,964, paid over four years.

Conclusions

Growth remains the theme for Union County. With a population in excess of 170,000, a 41.6% growth rate since the 2000 Census and a median age of 35, the young population made up of families with young children equates to more growing pains moving forward. The county tax base is 88% residential real estate and 12% commercial real estate. All of the factors that come with the residential growth are now impacting the County, both physically and fiscally.

Physically the county infrastructure is unable to keep pace with the demands being placed upon it. The water and sewer capacity issues in 2007 were exasperated by the extreme drought that was suffered by the entire southeast. As the county works on resolutions for the water and sewer issues, county residents will have to continue to conserve. With the drought conditions forcing watering restrictions and residents requesting well permits for the purposes of irrigation, the county will have to look at developing and implementing new policies to address these emerging issues.

Without water and sewer capacity readily available and the non-attainment status resulting from poor air quality, the ability of the county to recruit large industry becomes a challenge. With a tax base that is presently 88% residential, the expansion of the industrial and commercial tax base has become increasingly important for the fiscal health of the county.

Some of the residential growth that the county is experiencing is resulting from the Hispanic people moving into Monroe and the eastern areas of Union County. Meeting the healthcare needs of this population can be challenging. A large percentage of the uninsured residents of Union County are Hispanic. Although the County Health Department clinics are able to see the Hispanics for many of their healthcare needs; maternal health, child health, family planning, immunizations, Breast Cancer and Cervical Cancer Program, communicable diseases and WIC, the adult health piece is not available. Many of the Hispanic residents are going to medical facilities outside Union County for care. Indigent healthcare will have to be a consideration in the planning of healthcare access and services in the years to come.

The state of North Carolina still has one of the higher teen pregnancy rates in the nation. In the area of adolescent health, Union County has minority teen pregnancy rates that are alarming. The county exceeds the state rate of 48, with a rate of 73 (ages 15 to 17, per 1,000 population). The costs of teen pregnancy on the community and the individuals have life long effects; lower educational achievement, poverty and dependence on public assistance. The babies of teen moms have a greater chance of growing up in poverty and higher incarceration levels. The national public sector costs of teen childbearing total \$9.1 billion annually. The teen pregnancy problem is gaining momentum in Union County.

The Union County mortality rates that exceed the state rates include Alzheimer's, cancer of the lung, trachea and bronchus, Nephritis and motor vehicle injuries. The rates that increased locally but remain below the state are; all cancers combined rate, cancer of the colon, rectum and anus, Septicemia, suicide, homicide and the unintentional injury rate.

The successful rates that are both decreasing locally and are below the state rates are; Heart Disease, Diabetes, Cerebrovascular Disease, Breast Cancer, Prostate Cancer, Pneumonia & Influenza, Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease, and Chronic Liver Disease.

Goals

2007 Goals

- **Work toward healthy lifestyles and improved quality of life for Union County residents**
- **Continue Working toward Accreditation of the Health Department**
- **Complete the Community Health Assessment**
- **Plan for Healthy Carolinian Certification**
- **Continue to provide quality healthcare at the Union County Health Department**
- **Work on Indigent Care for Adults**
- **Continue to encourage interagency collaboration for resolution of healthcare issues**
- **Establish the infrastructure for task forces to work on health issues that arise from the Community Health Assessment**
- **Implement a new well inspection and testing program for 2008**
- **Pursue grants to support existing programs and implement new programs to educate and promote healthy lifestyles and improve community health issues**
- **Benchmark with other NC Counties for best practices in healthcare and related programs**

Data Sources

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14. UNC Cecil G. Sheps Center, 2005 County Level Estimates of the Number of Uninsured in North Carolina
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