



2011 State of the County Health Report

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Overview

The intent of this document is to provide an overview of both the health status of Union County and the health issues impacting county residents, both personal and environmental. The document will provide information on areas that were identified in the 2008 Community Health Assessment as priority areas. This report will indicate any actions that have been taken by the Health Department and / or the community toward resolving health related issues and improving health outcomes.

In addition to Community Assessment data updates, the report contains statistical health indicators such as the county's leading causes of death, pregnancy and abortion rates hospital discharge data, air quality data, water quality data, and food and lodging inspection data.

Overview

**Union County 2011
Community Health Assessment Progress
Union County Health Department
Citizen Health
Dental Health
Mental Health
Safety Matters
Environmental Health
Environmentally Friendly Practices
Conclusions & Goals
Data Sources**

Union County Statistics

- **643 square miles, 14 municipalities**
- **207,572 Estimated 2011 Population**
- **\$72,256 Total Household Income**
- **Average Age 35.6**
- **\$66,043 Median Household Income**
- **92,831 Civilian Labor Force**
- **10.3% Unemployment Rate (2011Q2)**
- **21.6 % population 19 to 64 is uninsured**
- **\$19.9 billion dollar total tax base (FY 10-11)**

Union County 2010 – 2011

It was another economically difficult year that included decreased revenues and increased operational costs for local government. The Board of County Commissioners examined county programs and services across the board and implementing service level reductions in an effort to achieve a balanced budget, while maintaining Union County's fiscal responsibility to continue to provide effective and efficient local government services. A balanced budget was adopted without utilizing reserve monies. This did include a county wide staff reduction of 17 fulltime positions.

Two county funded departments did receive increases in funding. The Union County Public Schools saw their funding increase to \$129 million dollars. The Union County Public Safety funding increased from \$29.6 million to \$29.9 million.

Minor fee adjustments were made in the Inspections, Library and Planning Departments in efforts to generate additional revenue for these agencies.

Despite the economic challenges, the County was able to continue with renovations and remodeling in the Union County Government Center.

The Finance Department and the Department of Social Services both had Department Heads resign during the year. As of December 1, 2011 both vacancies remain unfilled. Larry Brinker came on board as the Department Head for the 911 Communications Director position in 2010.

2008 Community Health Assessment Results, and Plans for the 2012 Assessment

The Community Health Assessment (CHA) is an opportunity to study the health of the county, both from an individual perspective and from a community perspective. The CHA includes internal data and external data. The internal data is collected to develop an understanding regarding health concerns, disparities, behaviors and environmental factors impacting the health of residents. External data is collected from the State Center for Health Statistics. The data represents key health indicators of a community. The results categorized below were determined to be problematic for residents in achieving positive health outcomes during the 2008 CHA, the 2012 CHA will detect progress on these issues, identify new challenges and set the course for strategic planning by the Health Department.

Adult

Lack of Exercise
Poor Eating
Alcohol Abuse
Obesity

Senior

Concerns over Long Term Care
Prescription Drug Costs
Medical Problems / Indigent Issues
Lack of Adult Daycare

Teen

Teen Pregnancy
Sex Education
Peer Pressure / Self Image
Soft Drink Consumption

Chronic Diseases

Cancer
Heart Disease
Alzheimer's
Diabetes

Environmental Health

Restaurant Safe Food Handling
Drinking Water Access, Quality
Outdoor Air Quality
Smoke Free Restaurants

General Concerns

Affordable Healthcare
Stress Related to Money
Mental Health Services

The state requires the Health Department to complete a Community Health Assessment every four years to determine the health status of the community that it serves. Union County completed its first official assessment in 2008 and has started work on the 2012 Assessment, due in December 2012. The 2012 CHA process includes a paper survey campaign of county residents. The surveys are broken out into demographic age groups, with age appropriate questions relating to potential health factors for that segment of the population. The 2012 CHA survey groups are as follows: Senior surveys for age 55 and older, Adult Surveys for 19 to 54, Teen Surveys for 13 to 18 years old. In addition to the surveys, the CHA will include focus groups from specific demographic population segments and specific professions that could potentially impact and influence the health and wellness of County residents. Secondary data will be compiled from the State Center for Health Statistics, DENR and the UNC Sheps Center.

Union County Health Department 2011 in Review

Health Department FY 2010 –2011

- **Staff of 100**
(80 Health / 20 Environmental Health)
- **Departmental Budget \$8.1 million**
- **13,726 Patients Seen (non-duplicated)**
- **26,477 Patient Visits**
- **Phillip Tarte wins the Reynolds Award**
- **Tdap Immunization Program wins Samuel L. Katz Award**
- **Community Health Outreach Program implemented**
- **Environmental Health awarded Healthy Homes Grant from CDC**
- **Health Department partners with Union County Schools on Teen Wellness**
- **Grant awarded to Union County Public Schools for Strategic Planning with the Health Department on efforts toward Tobacco Cessation and a Public Health Foundation**
- **International Travel Vaccine Program established**

Health Department Programs

Clients Served in 2010-2011

- **2,182 Family Planning**
- **1057 Maternal Health**
- **352 High Risk Maternal Health**
- **2,639 Child Health**
- **3,349 Child Immunizations**
- **Child Service Coordination**
- **129 Breast & Cervical Cancer Control**
- **822 STD**
- **599 Tuberculosis**
- **1124 Dental Clinic**
- **818 Children in Smart Start Smiles Dental**
- **350 About Breast Cancer (Komen Grant)**
- **15,284 Laboratory Clients**
- **16,273 Lab Tests Processed**
- **4,253 WIC (average monthly case load)**
- **2195 Breast Feeding Program**
- **Diabetes Education classes**
- **272 Parenting Education**

The Public Health efforts of the Health Department extends out to all county residents daily through restaurant inspections, childcare inspections, septic and well programs, immunization clinics, grant funded breast health programs, on-going emergency preparedness planning, child health programs, maternity services, dental services and many other efforts.

2010 – 2011 fiscal year was an economically challenging year for the Health Department, facing budget cuts and streamlining programs and services to meet client and community needs with existing staff and resources. Despite budgetary constraints the department still achieved a great deal and was able to increase community outreach services. The Department did receive two awards and recognition for services and programs provided.

In December 2010 the state of North Carolina granted the Union County Health Department NC State Accreditation status for the first time. Accreditation validates the standard of care and quality of the programs and services provided by the UCHD to the residents of Union County. It illustrates the dedication of the Public Health professionals that offer their expertise and commitment to promoting health, preventing disease and protecting the health of the community.

Citizen Health / Child Health

Child Population / Health Indicators

- 19,149 Elementary School Enrollment
- 926 Children enrolled in NC Health Choice (2010)
- 10,472 Children enrolled in Medicaid (2010)
- 11.2 % Union County children uninsured (0 - 18 years old) (2008 - 2009)
- 13.1 % children (children under 18 years old) living in poverty NC 24.6 % (2010)
- 31% school age children on free or reduced lunch (2010-2011)
- 227 children received forensic interviews & medical exams at Tree House for sexual abuse
- Low birth weight babies (< 2500 grams) Union County Rate 7.5 / 9.1 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births) (2009)
- 1 SIDS death in Union County (2009)
- 17.1% children (2 to 4 years old) seen at Health Dpt had BMI indicating overweight (2009)
- 15.4% children (2 to 4 years old) seen at Health Dpt had BMI indicating obesity (2009)
- 2005 – 2009 Infant Mortality Rate 6.6 / 8.3 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2005 – 2009 Post Neonatal Death Rate 2.3 / 2.7 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2005 – 2009 Neonatal Death Rate 4.3 / 5.6 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2005 – 2009 Fetal Death Rate 5.2 / 6.7 NC Rate (per 1,000 live births)
- 2009 Primary Diagnosis of Asthma Children Ages 0 to 14 Rate 189.0 / NC Rate 175.0

In March 2011, the Union County Health Department began a new program, the Care Coordination for Children or CC4C. This program is administered collaboratively between several agencies: Community Care of North Carolina (CCNC), the North Carolina Division of Public Health and the North Carolina Division of Medical Assistance. The program is an at-risk population management model. The target population for the program is children birth to age five that have the specific priority risk factors. One risk factor would be having specialized health care needs such as having a chronic physical or developmental, behavioral or an emotional condition. These are conditions that could be expected to last 12 months or longer and would require health services of a specialized nature and scope well beyond that required by a normal child. An additional risk factor would be children exposed to toxic stress within their home environment. Toxic stress can include extreme poverty in conjunction with continuous family chaos, recurrent physical or emotional abuse, chronic neglect, severe and enduring maternal depression, persistent parental substance abuse and repetitive exposure to violence in the community or within their family unit. Another qualifier for CC4C children would be babies that start their lives in the Neonatal Intensive Care Unit, that will require assistance and services as they transition back into the community. All children that qualify for the CC4C services would be children that would ultimately become high users of the health care system and would incur extreme health service costs. The program is a safety net for these children to ensure that they receive the necessary medical services to protect, preserve and maintain their physical, mental and emotional well-being.

Citizen Health / Adolescents

Union County Adolescent Population 2010-2011

- **9,514 Middle School Students**
- **11,696 High School Students**
- **2,422 High School Graduates / 89.1 % Graduation Rate**
- **86% of graduates plan to attend college**
- **\$75.7 million in Scholarship monies awarded in 2010**
- **1.4 % drop out rate 9 (grades 7 – 12) (2008- 2009 rate)**
- **87% of victims served for sexual abuse at United Family Services are under 18**
- **267 Teen Motor Vehicle Crashes (2009)**
- **1 Teen Driver Crash resulting in fatality (2009)**
- **1 Teen Driver Crash Involving Alcohol (2009)**
- **2009 Teen Pregnancy Rate 42.4 / 56 NC Rate**
- **2009 Minority Teen Pregnancy Rate 81.6 / 74.3 NC Rate**
- **2009 Teen Abortion Rate 6.9 / 2.2 NC Rate**
- **2009 Minority Teen Abortion Rate 14.5 / 18.8 NC Rate**
(ALL Pregnancy & Abortion Rates are for girls 15 to 17, per 1,000)

The Health Department is partnering with Union County Public Schools to offer a Teen Wellness Program to East Union seventh graders. It is a collaborative effort with the Health Department, Substance Abuse Prevention Services and South Piedmont Community College. The curriculum is taught in five sessions, each covering topics that impact teen health. Session one, Keeping it Real and session two, Keeping it Real Part II are both taught by Substance Abuse Prevention Services. Session one focuses on self-esteem and self-projection, introducing students to ways in which to distinguish between positive and negative peer pressure. The end objective being to increase life skills such as risk assessment and drug and alcohol resistance, while learning to examine the ways their choices will impact their health and their future. Session two teaches self-expression and communication skills. Students will learn how to recognize passive aggressive and assertive communication styles. The third session is also taught by Substance Abuse Prevention Services and builds upon what the students learned in sessions one and two. Session three is an interactive class designed to help students resist peer pressure related to drug and alcohol use, incorporating detailed information about the social and health related consequences of drug use. Session four presented by the Health Department is nutrition based and is intended to assist students in making healthy dietary choices. The discussion covers the causes of obesity and the drawbacks of leading an unhealthy life. It places special emphasis on rethinking their drinks to reduce calorie and sugar intake. The final session is presented by South Piedmont Community College and is called Dream Futures. The curriculum emphasizes the importance of goal setting, and establishing a positive academic foundation. It introduces the concept of networking. Students will learn real life skills: learning to build a resume, draft cover letters, appropriate dressing tips and general positive image building skills.

Citizen Health / Adults

Adult Health Indicators		
Agency for Healthcare Research (2008)		
Prevention Quality Indicators (represent hospital admission rates)	County Rate (per 100,000)	NC Rate (per 100,000)
Diabetes short-term complication	184.7	223.7
Diabetes long-term complication	298.3	297.5
Congestive heart failure	468.8	429.7
Chronic Obstructive pulmonary disease	397.8	577.2
Adult Asthma	108.0	117.1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 8,595 General Hospital Discharges (2010) • 157 CMC Union General Hospital Beds (2010) • 607 Nursing Facility Beds in 6 facilities (2010) 		
Pregnancy, Fertility, Abortion Rates (Rates per 1,000)	Union County 2009	NC 2000 -2009
2009 Pregnancy Rates (ages 35- 44)	24.8	84.3
2009 Fertility Rates (ages 35 – 44)	21.6	68.4
2009 Abortion Rates (ages 35 – 44)	3.0	15.3
Uninsured Adults (2009-2010) Adults 19 to 64	Union County 21.6 %	NC 23.2 %

In FY 2010 – 2011 the Health Department took a pro-active stance and encouraged the community to take prevention measures to improve and protect their health. The department continues efforts to re-introduce Public health by expanding its reach out into the community. In addition to education and clinical programs, the department provides targeted on-site outreach in order to broaden the prevention efforts.

One targeted effort was in the adult immunization realm. The effort focused on the development of an adult immunization initiative targeting the employees of the UCPS. With a rise in pertussis outbreaks nationwide, some resulting in infant fatalities, the UCHD staff took a pro-active stance on prevention. With the re-emergence of pertussis or Whooping Cough, it is often the adult that passes the illness to the child. In an effort to canvas the community and protect both the children and adults, the Health Department worked with school officials to provide both flu and Tdap immunizations to school employees. (Tdap includes Tetanus, diphtheria and pertussis). 430 UCPS employees were immunized for Tdap during the initiative. The program was such a success it received the Samuel L. Katz, MD Award for Excellence in Immunization for this initiative. The award was presented at the Making a Better Tomorrow Conference in Greensboro in August 2011.

The latest statistics from the UNC Sheps Center illustrate the following medical professional availability.

Health Professionals in Union County vs. NC, per 10,000 population			
	Union County 2009	Union County 2010	NC 2010
Dentists	2.1	2.5	4.4
Physicians	7.9	8.3	21.7
Primary Care Physicians	4.9	4.6	9.4
Pharmacists	7.2	7.9	9.1
Registered Nurses	44.7	42.4	97.3
Nurse Practitioners	1.2	1.2	3.8
Certified Nurse Midwives	0.5	0.2	1.2
Physician Assistants	1.3	1.3	3.8
Psychologists	0.5	0.4	2.1
Chiropractors	1.3	1.5	1.6
Occupational Therapist	2.0	2.0	2.7
Optometrist	0.6	0.5	1.1
Podiatrist	0.1	0.0	0.3
Physical Therapist	2.5	2.4	5.3
Respiratory Therapist	1.78	1.5	4.2

Mortality / Morbidity

Mortality Rates (Age Adjusted) (per 100,000)	Union County 2005 - 2009	NC 2005-2009
Heart Disease	183.2	191.7
Cerebrovascular Disease	48.0	50.5
Diabetes	21.4	23.6
All Cancers	167.9	185.6
Septicemia	13.2	13.8
Nephritis, Nephrotic Syndrome, Nephrosis	17.4	18.7
Pneumonia & Influenza	16.7	19.4
Chronic Lower Respiratory Disease	45.9	47.0
Chronic Liver Disease	6.6	9.1
Alzheimer's Disease	57.5	28.3
Motor Vehicle Injuries	16.7	17.6
Suicide Rate	10.7	12.0
Homicide Rate	5.3	7.0
All Other Unintentional Injuries	22.3	28.6

Cancer Data (Cancer incidence rates per 100,000 Population, age adjusted)			
	Union County 2003 – 2007	Union County 2005 - 2009	NC 2005 - 2009
Colon / Rectum	18.4	16.3	16.3
Lung / Bronchus	56.6	52.2	57.1
Breast Cancer	18.5	17.3	23.5
Prostate	23.7	22.6	25.8

Adult Health Indicators / Communicable Disease**Sexually Transmitted Diseases**

	Union County 2009	Union County 2010	NC 2010
Number of Cases			
HIV Disease	0	0	1628
AIDS	0	0	938
Chlamydia	485	440	43,734
Syphilis	4	2	396
Gonorrhea	204	133	14,811

Adult Health Indicators / Communicable Disease

Number of Cases	Union County 2009	Union County 2010
Campylobactor	18	16
E. Coli	1	0
Hepatitis A	1	0
Hepatitis B	3	5
Hepatitis B Carrier	4	9
Hepatitis C	0	1
Lyme Disease	0	0
Meningococcal	2	1
Meningitis Pneumococcal	1	1
Rocky Mountain Spotted Fever	0	2
Salmonellosis	46	66
Shigellosis	7	2
Pertussis (Whooping Cough)	1	10

Dental Health

Union County Dental Clinic

- **1124 Dental Patient Count**
- **293 visits by children 5 years of age (largest age group seen)**
- **246 visits by adults 30 to 34 years of age (largest adult age group seen)**
- **Clinic accepts Medicaid, NC Health Choice and Private Pay**

In a challenging economy parents and guardians are often forced to make choices based upon money, when health related choices are made, traditionally dental health is the first component of healthcare to be eliminated. The Health Department has partnered with Smart Start for five years in order to provide treatment for uninsured and underinsured pregnant ladies and children under five. The grant provides a safety net to keep the dental health of children a priority when the family funds do not exist to support dental care. Many of the children seen in the Smiles Program have never been to a dentist before and are often in pain, or have multiple dental issues that will negatively impact their health if left untreated. The Smiles program provides the foundation for good oral hygiene habits for a lifetime.

Through Community Outreach initiatives county residents are learning that the Health Department has a full service dental clinic that accepts Medicaid, NC Health Choice, Blue Cross, Cigna and Ameritus insurances. With the reduced cost for service and the downturn in the economy, many adults are seeking dental services that would not be affordable outside of the Health Department.

Mental Health

Psychologists vs. NC (per 10,000 population) 2010

Daymark Recovery Mental Health Clients (2010– 2011)

- **2648 average number of clients served per month**
- **53 average number of clients served Emergency & Mobile Crisis Services (per month)**
- **148 Average number of clients seen as walk in patients for Emergency Services / Advanced Access (July 2011)**

United Family Services (UFS) Clients (June 2010 – July 2011)

- **7121 clients served; counseling, education, crisis intervention, advocacy and economic independence**
- **1028 counseling sessions to clients in family and group sessions**
- **UFS runs 24 hour rape crisis hotline**
- **37 Accompanied rape victims to the hospital**
- **UFS Advocacy Center “Tree House” provided 108 medical exams and 119 forensic interviews to children as part of the sexual assault response team**
- **218 education / awareness programs provided to 4,020 community members about child abuse and sexual assault**

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

Daymark Recovery has been experiencing funding limitations which has limited the services that they are able to offer to residents without any insurance coverage. However, they do offer group therapy and medication management.

A change to Daymark's Crisis Recovery Center is that admission criteria is that the admission criteria has been relaxed with regard to the funding source. Previously, only residents with Medicaid or no insurance could be admitted. Currently, residents with other insurances are also able to be admitted if other attempts to place them utilizing their insurance have been made and were unsuccessful.

Unfortunately, residents still have to await placement when they present in the Emergency Room, often for as long as three days. With the new admission criteria expanding the insurance realm for the Crisis Recovery Center, there has been a decrease in the volume of people having to wait three or more days, however, the challenge of the wait time in the Emergency Room has not been eliminated and will continue to be an issue.

Emergency Services & Safety

2010 – 2011 Emergency Statistics / Injury Indicators

- **278,063 calls received into 911**
- **232,831 dispatched 911 calls**
- **Union County hired Larry Brinker as the 911 Communications Director**
- **9.08 minutes, average response time for Union EMS for Emergency calls**
- **18,174 Union EMS Responses resulting in 12,345 Transports**
- **60% Union EMS Transports went to CMC Union**
- **40% Union EMS Transports went out of County**
- **3,653 motor vehicle crashes (2009)**
- **18 crashes resulting in fatalities (2009)**
- **86 crashes involving alcohol (2009)**
- **10 crashes involving alcohol with fatalities (2009)**

During the 2010 – 2011 fiscal year Union EMS responded to over 18,000 requests for service, resulting in 12,345 patients being treated and transported. They are seeing an increase in response times due to an increase in call volumes, crowded highways and extended turn-around times at hospitals. EMS has been constrained by the economy and lack of available funding necessary to deploy additional units.

Despite the economic challenges and increase in demand for services, EMS has continued to make positive changes. New wireless modems were purchased for deployment of mobile network connectivity, Mobile CAD and GPS Tracking for EMS vehicles to improve communications, reduce response times and improve employee efficiencies, with full implementation expected by January 2012.

A strategic plan was drafted for alternative staffing patterns to improve overall system efficiencies and to meet the continually increasing call volumes. The plan will require additional funding prior to being implemented. Funds are not yet available to move forward.

Working collaboratively, they are now able to facilitate the placement of a MedCenter-Air Critical Care Ground Transport Ambulance at CMC Union to handle a portion of the out of county ambulance transfers from the hospital during peak demand hours.

In addition to providing the ambulance services and emergency medical services for the County, Union EMS also provided medical standby coverage for 81 high school and collegiate football games and participated in 47 community relations events.

Environmental Health

Environmental Health Factors and Statistics

- **2735 Inspections and Compliance Visits of Food and Lodging Establishments**
- **121 Food Service Permits Issued**
- **135 Food, Lodging and Institutions Program Complaints Taken**
- **134 Inspections and Compliance Visits of Nursing Homes, Adult Day Cares**
- **228 Well Permits Issued**
- **137 Well Certificates of Completion**
(119 new wells / 18 repairs or abandonments)
- **162 on-site wastewater system improvement permits issued**
- **270 Bacteria Water samples taken (from both new and existing wells)**
- **81 water samples taken with coli form present**
- **7 water samples taken with E. Coli bacteria present**
- **3 Methamphetamine Labs (1 Review of Abatement Plans)**
- **497 Swimming Pool, Wading Pool, Spa Inspections and Compliance Visits**
- **0 child lead investigations, 0 child lead poisoning cases**
- **10 Tattoo Artist permits issued**
- **29 Tattoo Inspections**
- **214 Childcare Facility Inspections, 81 Compliance Visits, 7 Permits issued**
- **5 Adult Day Service Facility Inspections, 12 Compliance Visits, 1 Permit issued**
- **67 School Facility Inspections, 12 Compliance Visits, 1 Permit issued**

The Environmental Health division of the Health Department impacts the health and well-being of children through the Childhood Lead Program. While the prevalence of lead in homes and products has been reduced, the requirement to test children for lead levels and lead poisoning remains in place. The Environmental division and Child Health clinical staff partner on the Childhood Lead Program, in 2010 three childhood lead investigations were conducted, with no lead poisonings found.

With lead still a concern in older housing and a rising population of children with asthma, further measures to improve the home environment were considered. The Environmental Health division applied for and was awarded a \$50,000 Healthy Homes Grant from the CDC. The grant will provide information and education to citizens, particularly those in high-risk neighborhoods. Healthy Homes will engage key partners in the housing sector and community based organizations to help identify health and housing related policies. The program will offer primary prevention activities targeting lead exposure, asbestos and other indoor air quality issues such as mold and mildew. Trained Environmental Health staff will conduct in-home assessments and follow up with each family according to Healthy Homes Program guidelines.

Air Quality

Health Indicators

- **0 Code Red days in Monroe (2010)**
- **21 Code Orange Days in Monroe (2010)**
- **53 Code Yellow Days in Monroe (2010)**
- **Charlotte region designated moderate non-attainment**
- **NC Air Awareness Program educates on air pollution**
- **Pediatric Asthma Rate (children birth – 14)
Union County Rate 189 vs NC Rate 175
(per 100,000 population) 2009**
- **Adult Asthma Rate Union County 108 vs. NC Rate 171
(per 100,000 population) 2009**

The two most significant air quality problems in North Carolina are ground-level ozone (main ingredient in smog) and particle pollution. Both of these pollutants are caused mainly by emissions from vehicles and from coal burning power plants that supply electricity. In urban areas, typically 70% of ozone pollution comes from motor vehicles.

Ozone is a strong respiratory irritant. Short-term infrequent exposure to ozone can result in throat and eye irritation, difficulty breathing and coughing. Long-term and repeated exposure to ozone concentrations above the Federal standard can result in the reduction of lung function, as the lining of the lungs can become damaged with prolonged exposure. Repetitive cycles of damage to the lungs and healing may result in permanent scarring of the lung tissue, which will permanently reduce the lung function in both adults and children. These elevated ozone concentrations are particularly risky to asthmatics and other individuals with respiratory diseases. Ozone may trigger and can worsen asthma attacks. A recent study published in the British Medical Journal, The Lancet, made a strong connection between elevated ozone levels and the development of asthma in physically active children.

Ozone pollution impacts more than just people. The food supply can also be negatively affected. This type of pollution inhibits plants abilities to produce and store food, making them more susceptible to disease, insects, other pollutants and harsh weather conditions.

The NC Air Awareness Program was created to inform NC residents about air pollution. The program is an active partnership between the NC Division of Air Quality, local environmental agencies, local health departments, local governments, transit providers, citizens, educators and the media.

Environmentally Friendly Practices in Union County

Union County continues to take steps toward reducing its carbon footprint. In April 2010 the County, along with the City of Monroe, held the third annual Earth Day event. The event included the a 5K run with all proceeds benefiting Union County Master Gardeners. The focus of Earth Day was on sustainability, environmental stewardship and healthy living, while providing residents the opportunity to drop off items to be recycled. At the one day event, an impressive amount of items were collected for recycling including; 16,855 tons of household hazardous waste, 17.6 tons of electronics, 82 gallons of oil, 28 oil filters, 24 tires and 16 gallons of antifreeze. Next year's event will be held on April 14, 2012.

Recycled Items for 2011 (January through October)

- **27.92 tons of household hazardous waste**
- **1462.43 tons of yard waste**
- **188.92 tons of white goods (appliances)**
- **2512.56 tons of tires**
- **221.94 tons of wood pallets**
- **18,913 gallons of oil**
- **48 drums of oil filters**

Conclusions

Despite facing yet another challenging economic year that included budget and staff reductions, the Health Department not only sustained client and community services but won awards, received full Accreditation Status from the state and established new community partners while securing new grant funding to expand departmental reach going into 2012. At the onset of the FY, the Health Department was preparing for the state Accreditation site visit that occurred on October 2010. The Clinical and Environmental services moved forward maintaining the mission of Public Health, promoting health, preventing the spread of disease and protecting the health of the community.

With Accreditation complete, a new course was being implemented with the intent of expanding the scope and reach of the department by going out into the community itself. It was a concerted effort to reintroduce Public Health to residents, agencies, schools, business and industry. The outreach has increased immunization program numbers by providing on-site immunizations. It provided educational opportunities on hand washing, breast health, dental health and healthy eating. In 2012 the department hopes to expand even further and provide direct services and information to county residents that otherwise would not have access. This initiative correlates to both the agency Strategic Plan and the Community Action Plan, focused on improving access to health services.

The Health Department has strengthened and expanded its partnership with the Union County Public Schools and has increased the number of students and families it serves by virtue of the partnership. During the FY additional new partners came on board, donations were sought and secured and elements of the Teen Wellness Action Plan were activated. The prevention based curriculum has core focus areas to bolster teen health and wellness knowledge, and encourage healthy, safe decision making.

The message and mission of the Health Department directly reflect the NC Division of Public Health's message, "Working for a healthier and safer NC, Everywhere, Everyday, Everybody". The Health Department serves the entire community and the department is taking the message, as well as programs and services, directly to the residents.

2012 Goals

- **Utilize the TRU Grant funds to strategic plan for the establishment of a Public Health foundation to sustain tobacco cessation and other health and wellness related services and programs beyond 2012**
- **Pursue grants to diversify programs and revenue streams**
- **Increase public awareness of the Union County Health Department programs and services through community outreach.**
- **Plan for new Health Department facility in 2015**
- **Conduct the 2012 Community Health Assessment**
- **Promote healthy eating and educate and raise awareness around the importance of eating locally grown foods**
- **Partner with the Union County Local Foods Council and the Union County Cooperative Extension to promote and establish a local food cooperative to expand access to locally grown food**
- **Grow the Union County Employee WELLNESS MATTERS initiative**
- **Establish new innovative Public Health partners to improve the health and wellbeing of residents that are not currently benefiting from Health Department services**
- **Work collaboratively with nursing homes and assisted living communities to deliver on-site dental services, and immunizations**

Data Sources

1. Union County Health Department
2. Union County Health Department, HIS Crystal Report
3. 2011 Union County Annual Report
4. Union County 911 Department
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6. United Family Services
7. Daymark, Union County
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