

Harnett County

2023

Year In Review

First Half

# January - August

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# County Projects

**February 2023**



**August 2023**



## Harnett Regional Jetport Expansion

### Terminal Construction Project

The Harnett Regional Jetport is a Fiscal Year 2023 Legislative Priority. Harnett County is expanding and enhancing the Jetport.

On Feb. 14, 2023, Jackson Builders began demolition on Harnett Regional Jetport's original terminal building. A new 7,000+ square foot, two-story terminal will soon be home to Harnett Regional Jetport and Harnett County Economic Development.

The new terminal will offer a variety of amenities including conference rooms, a spacious lounge, a pilot's lounge with planning room, and a 2nd-story observation deck overlooking HRJ's midfield.

The terminal project is scheduled for completion in April 2024.

### Runway Rehabilitation Project

In July 2023, KPR Engineering and HASCO, Inc. started a runway rehabilitation project on Harnett Regional Jetport's runway and taxiway.

The project consists of:

- pressure washing the runway and taxiway
- applying a layer of rejuvenator, which extends the life of the asphalt and darkens the asphalt to promote contrast between the asphalt and the painted markings
- routing and sealing crack in the asphalt
- repainting of all painted surfaces

The project is scheduled for completion in September 2023.

# Board of Elections

- Election outreach- Angier Kiwanis (January 2023, 20 people).
- County/Precinct Boundary meetings with GIS.
- Security Assessment at First Entry (SAFE) conducted by US Department of Homeland Security in March.
- Municipal Candidate filing (July 2023, 36 filed).



# Emergency Services



- Initiated their first Paramedic Academy to aid in retention and recruitment issues.
- Expanded the Community Paramedic Program by implementing a Post Overdose Response Team (PORT) to target opioid abuse issues in the county.

# Cooperative Extension

- Pesticide applicators training: 80+ private applicators earned required pesticide credits to maintain their credentials.
- Chainsaw Safety Field Day: 21 individuals learned techniques for safely operating a chainsaw. Two earned International Society of Arboriculture (ISA) credits and two earned safety certifications, which are required for their positions.
- The Forestry Area Specialized Agent has served 1,119 clients ranging from forest landowners to elementary school children with educational programs and technical assistance.
- The mobile poultry processing unit was rented out multiple times. Due to the high usage of this equipment, Extension acquired an Ag Venture grant to secure a second unit.
- Meeting Food Insecurity issues through assistance with four community gardens. Extension has been able to help participants identify pests, weeds, and diseases that threaten their gardens. They have also learned techniques to prevent and treat problems as they arise.
- Community & Rural Development (CRD) agent helped underserved residents with tax returns. The average tax return for clients we helped was \$200. The amount saved by Harnett County residents was \$104,200.
- Approximately 200 youth participated in 4-H summer fun activities.
- Volunteers, including County Advisory Council, 4-H, ECA, Agriculture, CRD, and Extension Master Gardeners, have provided approximately 277 hours of volunteer time with a value of \$8,296.15.

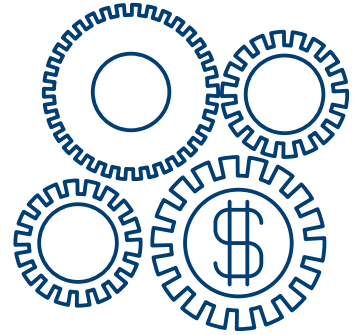


# Economic Development

- The Harnett County Economic Development Partnership Board of Directors held its inaugural planning retreat in Raleigh on February 23, 2023. This meeting convened to review last year's progress and unite behind new annual priorities, outlining a plan of action for the coming year.
- Created and launched new Economic Development website.
- Hired Economic Development Marketing Director.
- Implemented Economic Development Newsletter and enhanced social media campaign.
- Created and distributed monthly business resource e-News for existing industries.



## Development Services



### Planning

- New Planner 1 hired.
- Adoption of Hwy 421 "Ed-Med" Corridor Overlay.
- Started the process of updating the Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- Department won a 2023 Achievement Award from the National Association of Counties (NACo) for their residential Compatibility Design Regulations.

### Central Permitting & Inspections

- Steven Gazlay obtained Standard level II certification in Electrical and Plumbing, making him level II certification in all four trades.
- John Kokoszka obtained Standard level II certification in Mechanical and Plumbing.
- Processed and issued 2,124 permits from January to July.
- Made 13,779 inspection stops, 2,747 of which were in Angier and Dunn.
- Reviewed 882 plans for the county, 64 in Angier, 68 in Dunn, totaling 1,014.

## Facilities

- Installed two new replacement commercial large capacity water heaters at the Detention Center.
- Installed new concrete walkway from the Library to Health Department to aid in pedestrian safety and ease of mobility.
- All maintenance staff are state certified in Fire Sprinkler Maintenance and Repair.

## Finance

- Updated purchasing card policy.
- Implemented paperless system for reporting purchasing card transactions within Enterprise Resource Planning Software (ERP) system.
- Obtained full staffing for the first time since 2018.
- Began implementation of eCivics grant management software.

## Fleet

- Replaced two Dodge Charger engines in-house: cost savings approximately \$8,000
  - Approximate cost if outsourced \$10,000
  - Approximate in house cost \$6,000
- Replaced lifters in Dodge Charger; cost savings approximately \$1,500
  - Approximate cost if outsourced \$2,500-\$3,000
  - Approximate in house cost \$1,500
- Purchased four vehicles in the vehicle replacement program for FY 2023.
- Fleet Department sold 22 assets on GovDeals.com in the amount of \$66,338.14, with 1,112 bids, 29,948 website hits, and 18,042 visitors online.

## Geographic Information System (GIS)

- Converted Addressing and Roads data to NENA standard format.
- Implemented a new addressing tool and procedures.
- Transitioned to mapping in ArcPro from ArcMap (with the exception of parcels).
- Created 1287 Address Points.
- Created 191 Development Sub Phases.
- Created 207 Road Segments (total 27 miles of road).
- Reviewed 299 Plats and Completed the Mapping.
- Completed 75 Custom Map/Project Requests.
- Completed 25 Zoning/Rezoning Requests.
- Completed 3 Annexation Requests.
- Completed 3959 Parcel Transfers, Splits and Recombination's.
- Completed 120 Road Sign Work Orders.



# Health Department

- January 2023, completed the 2022 Community Health Assessment along with Campbell University.
- Staff has been working on the 2023 Accreditation document and getting prepared for the October site visit.
- Purchased and received a Medical Mobile unit.
- The HCHD partners with Rex Mobile Mammography to provide access for breast screenings on campus.
- Girls are Great and Teen Girl Conference was held in April.
- Step into Fitness month was held in April.
- May 2023, Med Assist and Shred a Thon event in conjunction with the NC Department of Insurance Senior Medicare program, was held in the Commons.
- The Senior Volunteer program provided 9,591 hours of volunteer services at 22 sites in the county.

# Human Resources

- Implemented recommendations from the Compensation Study which consisted of multiple step increases.
- Completed implementation of a paperless onboarding process with Neogov.
- Conducted (13) New Hire Orientation sessions which resulted in onboarding 123 new hires for the County.
- Conducted an I9 audit.
- Conducted Benefits Enrollment for plan year 2023-2024.
- Moved to a paperless employee personnel file system

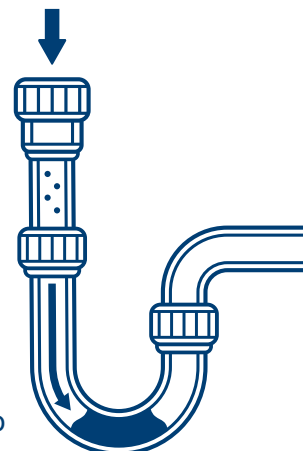
# Information Technology

- Migration of email for county and municipalities to Office 365.
- HR onboarding import into Munis software.
- Tax collection software migration to Bitek.
- Benhaven building project connectivity.
- Public Utilities AT&T project from connectivity to all water distribution SCADA sites.
- Cell service migration to AT&T from Verizon.
- Cloud faxing service implemented.
- Upgraded time keeping system, Executime to latest release.



# Harnett Regional Water

- Continue with Advanced Meter Infrastructure Project deployment-now 90% complete with scheduled completion date of September.
- Completed customer service initiative to remove availability fees from billing protocol.
- Continue working with consulting engineer & NCDEQ to seek Authorization to Construct the North Harnett Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Upgrade Project.
- Completed water line construction, wastewater line, and pump station to serve new Northwest Elementary School.
- Continue to plan joint project with Town of Holly Springs for new pump station and water tower to complete water supply project.



# General Services

## Animal Services

- Initiated Foster to Adopt program to increase animal adoptions and improves spay/neuter rate. All animals in the program 100% success rate.
- Initiated internal spay/neuter program, 95% of all animals of proper age are released altered.
- Attended adoption events at businesses in surrounding counties. Increased animal adoptions and donations with these events.
- Social media page creation has increased foot traffic and outreach across the county.



## Community Development

- Applied for USDA Housing Preservation Grant (\$85,000) - State office recommended funding to Federal level – on-hold until Feds release funds.

## Harnett Area Rural Transit System (HARTS)

- Transit Manager & Operations Supervisor successfully completed NCSU's Transportation Leadership Development Program (a highly sought after credential).
- Transportation Advisory Board approved FY23 – FY24 Senior Center Trip Requests – commitment to provide additional transit service for Centers.
- Citizen survey focused on both Fayetteville – Raleigh area destinations completed.
- NC Capital Area Metropolitan Planning Organization (CAMPO) NW Harnett Transit Study approved.

## Youth Restitution

- Successfully completed a Department of Juvenile Justice program audit with no negative findings.

## Register of Deeds

- Completed Phase I of the Marriage License preservation project. Years 1890 – 1910
- Collected \$1,683,493 in Excise Tax (\$858,581.43 for Harnett County - \$824,911.57 for State) \$841,746,500 in Real Estate has transferred in Harnett County so far this year.
- Issued 458 Marriage Licenses
- Implemented filing of Assumed Business Names electronically
- Finishing up back indexing project. Current index will now go back to 1972 from 1986.





# Library

- Applied for and was awarded food literacy grant funds to purchase a Charlie Cart, a fully equipped mobile kitchen and curriculum for the purpose of bringing nutrition awareness and access to healthy meals for all children, teens, and adults. Programs included, multi-cultural, interactive programs for teens and adults, cooking classes with senior citizens, baking classes for children ages 5-8 in collaboration with NC Cooperative Extension and 4-H, Candy-making classes during that library's summer reading program for ages 6-12, and cooking classes for school-age children and teens at library branches in Coats and Erwin.
- Revised Library Service Policy to streamline and harmonize services, enhance user experience, incorporate best practices, and align policies in the newly consolidated library system.
- Redesigned Benhaven Media Center for future site of Benhaven Public Library.
  - Partnered with Campbell University to provide free tax preparation services more than 200 Harnett County citizens.
  - Offered the following adult technology classes: Computers for Beginners, Microsoft Word for Beginners, Intermediate Microsoft Word, ebooks, eAudiobooks and eNewspapers, Getting Started with Canva, and 3D printing for Newbies.
  - Partnered with Cloudwyze and the Kramden Institute to provide a digital literacy course. All participants who completed the course received a free laptop.
  - Planned, organized, and implemented more than 250 summer activities and programs in libraries throughout Harnett County to promote community engagement and prevent summer learning loss among students.



## Public Information

- Hired Desiree Patrick as the new Community Relations Director in March.
- Website redesign: Layout is complete. The new website incorporates new features including: customized carousels, popular resources, related links, what's new, FAQ's, upcoming events, and meetings. Each department page has a footer including a blurb about what they do and contact information. Each department header has a social media tag if they have their own social media page. Currently, each department is inputting information on their webpages. Would like to launch in September.
- Held the fall Citizen Information Session in June and had 22 in-person attendees and 3 online.
- Received 177 new subscribers for our e-newsletter (Harnett Happenings).
- Increased the open rate for the Harnett Happenings newsletter by 56% from 596 in Jan 2023 to 1,059 in August 2023.
- Constructed Board of Commissioners Recap videos and have been receiving at least 50 views on each video posted to our YouTube channel.
- Lead the 2nd annual Community Day, 767 people registered, and even more attended.
- Increased Facebook page engagement by 72.5% (from 1,869 [Jan-March] to 3,224 [April-August])



# Parks & Recreation

- Offered two Nature Education Programs, two Movie in the Park events, three Barn Quilt Workshops, Afterschool and Summer Camp Programming at Boone Trail Community Center and Library, Church Softball Program at Neill's Creek Park, and host several events for the Mid-Carolina Senior Games.
- Year of the Trail Programming included a Spring Wildflower Hike (March), Treasures of the Trail Photo Contest (April), Memorial May Scavenger Hunt (May), and Partnered with Local Outdoor Recreation businesses in June to offer discounts to trail users.
- Resurfaced 2,700 linear feet of the Anderson Creek Park gravel driveway.
- Began the construction and development of Benhaven Community Park.



- Completed the construction of the Mountain Biking Trails at Anderson Creek Park.
- Began the design process for the Neill's Creek Park Restroom/Concession Building.
- Construction of stairs at the Cape Fear River Trail Park on the trail from the Restrooms to the water access point.
- Hosted athletic programs at Cape Fear Shiner Park for the Town of Lillington (soccer) and Carolina Charter Academy (cross country and soccer).
- Provided over 600 hours of rental facilities at ballfields, picnic shelters, gyms, countywide.
- Estimated 156,263 patrons visited the County parks.

# Veterans Services



- Hosted ASIST Training- Suicide Prevention with 28 attendees.
- Hosted Suicide Forum/Panel Discussion and Vendor Fair.
- Hosted Memorial Day Ceremony/Program.
- Two Veteran Service Officers attended National Association of Veterans Services Officer Training.

*Hope in Harnett* 

Save the Date  
Friday, June 23, 2023  
10AM - 2PM

Suicide Prevention Speakers, Panel Discussion and Information  
Fair for Veterans, Service Members and their Families



## Social Services

- Held New Foster Parent Training (20 people).
- Planned and presented Foster Care Halloween Bash (120 people).
- Held Foster Parent Support Group meeting (16 people).
- Held event for Planting of Pinwheels for Child Abuse Awareness (40 people).
- Held information session with Harnett County Schools social workers and counselors (30 people).
- Held Elder Abuse Awareness Walk (40 people).
- Continuing efforts on Website redesign.

## Solid Waste

- Hosted Hazardous Waste disposal event for County citizens May 6.
- Hosted Shredding event for County citizens May 18.
- Obtained state permit to operate new landfill cell at Dunn-Erwin landfill.
- Participated in Keep Harnett Beautiful Spring litter sweep in April.
- Effective July 1, operation hours at convenience sites were extended.

## Tax

- Completed Bitek Software conversion with yearly cost savings.
- Maintained strong collection rate of 98.51%.
- Increased value of Business Personal Property of \$94 million.
- Added a QR code for to the 2023 tax bills as a convenient payment option.
- Implement Training Guidelines for staff development.
- Implement data clean up measures.
- RFQ for 2026 Reappraisal in progress.

# Soil & Water Conservation District

## Technical Assistance

- Stream Debris Removal: In June we completed projects clearing debris from 89 miles of waterways allowing for unrestricted waterflow and easing lowland flooding during heavy rain events (\$2,514,516 in Federal and State grants); This work restored ability for families to navigate safely by kayak for recreational purposes.
- Agriculture Cost Share Programs: Provided \$66,695 to Harnett County farmers for installation of conservation practices via the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program saving 2,102 tons of soil impacting 941 acres.
- Riverside Drainage Project: Removed 221 tons/13 tractor trailer loads of abandoned tires from a primary drainage way to the Cape Fear River within the Riverside community for a cost savings to the community/landowner of \$85,966. Also cleaned out 1,225 feet of drainage ditches within residential areas of the Riverside community at a cost savings to the community of \$46,026. - Completed June 2023
- Conservation Equipment Rental Program: 746 acres no-till acres planted using District's Great Plains No-Till Grain Drills (2). Average planting per rental is 12 acres (\$120) vs the cost of a same model grain drill is \$33,000.



# Soil & Water Conservation District

## Conservation Education

- Keep Harnett Beautiful: Organized Spring Litter Sweep – Over 800 volunteer hours valued at \$25,500, 79 Cleanups completed on 53 roadways collecting over 1,360 bags and 325 large items – April 2023
- NC Envirothon Program: Coached and sponsored 4 Envirothon teams all advancing from Area level to State level competition (20 students) – Jan - April.
- Facilitated gardening program at LaFayette Elementary School providing student instruction and project resources to meet science objectives and provide increased opportunities for outdoor learning and life skill development (600 students) - Feb - May.
- Other youth teaching events: 1,095 students (Field Days, Classroom Presentations, Camps) Jan-June 2023
- Other adult teaching/speaking events - 395 adults (Farmer/Landowner Meetings, SWCD Area Meetings, S&W Professional Development) - Jan- June.

## Workforce Development

- Provided 286 services to Harnett County Employers (Jan- June 30).
- Registered 26 veterans for training opportunities and referred to Veteran Services offices for benefits.
- 2,040 employment & training services was provided to individuals (Jan-June 30).
- Four employers hiring event.
- Hosted Multi- 20 Employer Job Fair.
- Community Outreach:
  - Beacon Rescue Mission, Brookside Apartments National Night Out,
  - Harnett Food Bank,
  - Angier Food Bank,
  - Recruiters for Christ, Central Carolina Community College, Express Coin Laundromat, Ft. Bragg Army Community Services, Star Academy Career Fair, Dunn Pals, Veteran Treatment Court.
- Provided 50 children with winter coats during our giveaway in the Angier Community.
- Gave away food boxes during Easter.
- Workshops provided:
  - Resume Building, Interviewing Tips, Conflict Resolution,
  - Financial Literacy, Labor Market Information,
  - Job Search Techniques, Career Assessments,
  - How to complete a job application ,
  - Moving forward from the Military to life as a Civilian,
  - The Skills You Bring: Transferable Sills in the Workplace,
  - How to have a Successful School Year,
  - Job Search Tips for Former Offenders and Balance Life & Work-Self Care.
- Provide citizens in need of interviewing clothes or work attire from clothes closet.

Second Half

# September - December

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# County Projects

**Before**



**After**



**February 2023**



**December 2023**



## Harnett Regional Jetport

- HRJ Runway Rehabilitation Project completed in September 2023.
- Harnett County was awarded \$15.6 million in the new State budget for a runway expansion project at HRJ, lengthening the overall runway to 5,500 feet.
- Harnett County acquired ~54 acres of land across Airport Road adjacent to the HRJ terminal for future Jetport expansion.
- HRJ's engineer-of-record submitted HRJ's final draft of the Airport Master Plan/Airport Layout Plan to NCDOT/Division of Aviation and the FAA for final approval, which gives HRJ the ability to expand hangar capacity, redesign fuel farms, and start other key objectives to advance the overall growth of the Jetport.
- Greg Frank was hired as the new Jetport Director, Jacob Penny as the new Operations Manager, Sadler Powell as additional part-time Line Service Technician, and Heather Lawson as Administrative Assistant, bringing staffing up to 100% capacity by January 2024.
- Staff became members of the National Air Transportation Association (NATA) in September, which allows staff to receive formal training and certification in the Safety 1st Basic Apron Safety and Security (BASS) Program, Line Fuel Service Certification Program, Aviation Fuel Quality Control Certification Program, and many others.
- Staff successfully conducted the daily duties of refueling, marshalling, and customer support for over 15,000 total air operations of cabin-class airframes, helicopters, and private piston-driven aircraft from July - December 2023, which also included the successful handling of its 44 based aircraft.



# Board of Elections

- Conducted outreach events including:
  - Angier Kiwanis, Harnett County Community Day, Campbell Street Fair, September National Voter Registration Day, Angier, Coats, Dunn and Erwin town festivals.
- Implemented Voter Photo ID rules and began providing free voter photo IDs.
- Successfully conducted Municipal Elections for Dunn, Erwin, Angier, Coats and Lillington.
- Completed redistricting prior to the beginning of 2024 Candidate Filing.
- Successfully completed filing for 2024 elections.

## Cooperative Extension

### 4-H:

- Harnett County 4-H established 3 new 4-H Clubs reaching 73 new 4-H club members.
- 1,178 second grade students from 11 schools participated in 4-H embryology where they hatched chicks in 63 classrooms.
- 21 4-H members went to 4-H camp on a scholarship provided with a \$10,000 donation secured by 4-H.
- Harnett County 4-H members crafted a [video](#) for the North Carolina Year of the Trails posted on their state YouTube Channel in support of Harnett County Parks & Recreation.

### Farm City Week:

- The 2023 Farm City Week set records for attendance with 250 people attending Ag Day, 350 people attending the Farm Fresh Breakfast and 103 RSVPs for the Awards Banquet.

### Office:

- We received a total of \$180,000 to remodel our kitchen into an educational kitchen with support from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission and Harnett County Government.
- The Cooking Local Foods YouTube Channel has reached 299,016 people between February and October 2023. Watch by clicking QR code.
- 1,075 fifth grade students attended Ag Science Field Days; an event hosted by the Sandhills Antique Farm Equipment Club. Our 4-H & Ag Team lead stations to educate students about Harnett County Agriculture.

- Shannon Adcock joined the Cooperative Extension team as the new Family and Consumer Science agent.

### Agriculture:

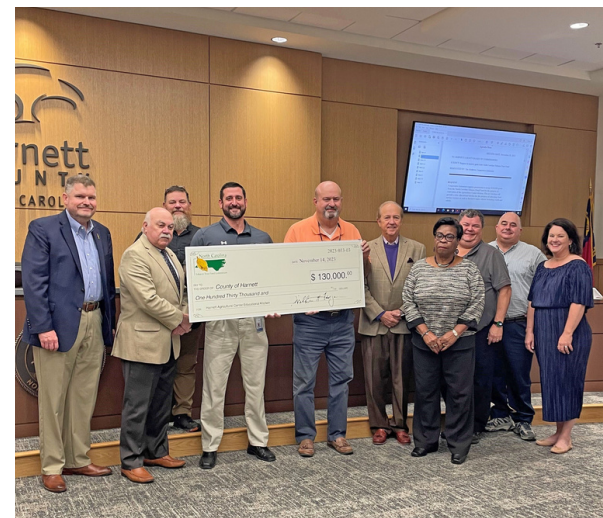
- Harnett County was awarded 5 NC Ag Ventures grants that totaled \$30,720 in 2023. The grant funds were used to build a strawberry marketing structure and helped Cooperative Extension to purchase a second mobile poultry processing unit. The funding also assisted various farmers to expand into local poultry production, establish a horse boarding facility, and purchase a raised bed plastic mulch layer.

### Community and Rural Development:

- 42 People reached for disaster preparedness.
- 5 new non-profits started.
- \$46,000 in grants secured to fight food insecurity and community arts.
- NC A&T Chancellor Martin, Dean Ahmedna, and other administrators visited the STEM program at Simply Girls in Dunn.



Scan the QR code to visit our YouTube channel.



# Development Services

## Planning:

*\*Full year data\**

- Began the process of updating the County's Comprehensive Land Use Plan.
- Reviewed 720 projects:
  - Including 29 Final subdivision plats (consisting of 1,088 lots), 18 Preliminary subdivision maps (consisting of 1,460 lots), and 22 commercial site plans.
- In partnership with the Sheriff's Department, and other County departments, we successfully abated two problem properties.
- One of our Compliance officers successfully complete zoning certification training from the NC School of Government and is now a Certified Zoning Inspector.

## Inspections:

- Our Inspectors have completed 28,751 inspection stops, for an average of 122 inspection stops per day.
- Steven Gazlay has obtained probationary III's and is currently field training.
- John Kokoszka obtained his level II standard in Plumbing and Mechanical

## Central Permitting:

- Our Central Permitting staff has processed 3994 permits this calendar year.

# Economic Development



## New and Expanding Business:

- Facilitated expansion of Cape Fear/Harnett Health via a Medical Office Building and Comprehensive Cancer Center in Lillington. The anticipated services provided by Harnett Health will create at least 20 new full-time jobs at an average annual wage of \$62,000. Targeted services include Oncology, Cardiology, Family Medicine, General surgery, Gastroenterology, Outpatient Rehabilitation, and Residency Clinics. Construction is projected to be completed by September 30, 2024.
- Facilitated Harnett Health's footprint expansion in Lillington through the sale of 26 additional acres across 11 lots in Brightwater Technology Park from the Harnett County Economic Development Partnership (HCEDP).

## Product Development:

- Initiated an industrial site identification project.
- Reviewing site readiness activities for County and Partnership-owned properties.

## Organization:

- Stephen Barrington joined the team as Director.
- Secured a new data tool to enhance Economic Development's ability to respond to RFIs and better tell Harnett County's story.
- Participated in 26 networking events with local, regional, and statewide Economic Development partners.
- Elizabeth Edwards completed the UNC School of Government's Basic Economic Development Course.

## Communications:

- Added "Press Releases" and "Latest News" functionality to our [website](#) to better showcase Harnett County as a business destination.
- Enhanced existing industry efforts to include a company profile series on the Economic Development blog and newly designed monthly email.
- Designed, prepared, and distributed two quarterly economic development newsletters to state and local elected officials, municipality leadership, industry partners, and the community subscribers. Both received a 66% open rate.



# Emergency Services

## EMS:

- Inaugural Paramedic Academy graduation. All six students passed final exams and NC OEMS Certification exam and are cleared to function independently.
- EMS recruitment has significantly increased. Last year, there were 23 Paramedic & EMT vacancies, and now there are 2. Recent pay raises have significantly impacted retention and we are aggressively recruiting new personnel. We attend all local college EMT/Paramedic class graduations and staff additional units at local festivals/parades/public events to provide hands-on skills to the public and displaying our trade to recruit new staff. Our support of Ft. Liberty job fairs has also brought us new employees. We are going to continue these efforts even as our vacancies are filled.
- We have expanded our community paramedic program to become an outreach for substance abuse. We began with conducting follow ups with our overdose patients and have expanded to Medication Assisted Treatment (MAT) and also aid in getting patients into Office Based Opioid Treatment (OBOT). We also added our Team to the dispatch protocol that will page them out directly to an overdose, so interaction with patients can begin quicker.



## Emergency Management:

- Conducted two Hazmat table-top exercises to address a train derailment scenario in the City of Dunn. The initial exercise included responders to address the initial response and recovery issues. The second exercise included our County and Municipal key leaders to discuss the impact of the large-scale situation.
- Completed the transition to new VIPER Radios for County Emergency Services Agencies to include the Sheriff's Office. ARPA funded \$5.6 million was the overall budget for this project.
- We are currently working on the Municipal Law Enforcement VIPER Radio replacement project. ARPA funded \$1.6 million. The portable radios were received, we have met with Motorola to discuss programming and are awaiting the assignment of new VIPER ID numbers from Telecommunications. Once this project is complete all VIPER radios across the county will be compliant with the new FCC ruling deadline 2025.
- Awarded a DHS Grant for \$67,000 to provide a tactical robot to the Sheriff's Office. Robot has been delivered, training conducted, and it is in service.
- EM has taken over management of the County Search and Rescue Team.
- EM applied for funding to provide a Swift Water Rescue Boat Trailer for the Swift Water Team \$37,115 and a variable electronic message board \$19,775. This grant funding was awarded from DHS.



## Fire Marshal:

- Working the Dunn Inspection area quite heavily in the last 3 months to ensure proper assistance to business owners.
- Working with Northwest Harnett Fire Department on their DOI inspection process. They have passed and we are awaiting the notification of their new insurance rating.
- Began the process of preparing data for a required transition of reporting software.
- Fire Marshal has reviewed some fatality fire investigations the last three months.

## Facilities

- Advertised RFP for replacement of two Industrial Water Heaters for replacement at the Detention center in July. Both water heaters were replaced later in the summer.
- Three Facilities Maintenance Technicians enrolled in Backflow Preventer training to be certified to repair and inspect them. All technicians passed the course and are now certified to repair and inspect the devices in all County facilities.
- Completed removal and replacement of potable water lines for the Benhaven School and Library buildings and campus.
- Assisted moving furniture and materials for the new Benhaven Campus Library set to open in February 2024.

## Fleet

- Purchased five of six approved expansion request vehicles for FY 2024.
- Sold 22 assets on GovDeals.com auction platform for \$183,342.00.
- Auctions received 1,338 bids, 33,510 hits and 17,458 visitors online.
- Replaced 2 engines and a suspension in-house, saving over \$10,000.00.
- 767 vehicle work orders completed from 07/01/23 – 12/14/23 on approx. 345 county vehicles; approx. 33 of those vehicles were out-sourced.

## Finance

- Hosted annual Tyler NC User Group training for the second year in a row. User groups are held once a year by Tyler (the County's Enterprise Resource Planning Software) and provides valuable opportunities for users to ask questions and network with peers from other entities.
- Through continued investment strategies and policy implementation, the Finance Office invested County funds and took advantage of a rising interest rate environment. For the first four months of the fiscal year, interest earnings exceeded the total interest earned for last fiscal year.
- Martin Starnes Associates, CPA presented the FY 2023 audit to the Harnett County Board of Commissioners at the December 18th meeting.

## GIS

- Purchased and began implementation of ESRI Enterprise software licensing.
- Created 2183 Address Points.
- Created 291 Development Sub Phases.
- Created 328 Road Segments (*total 27 miles of road*).
- Reviewed 617 Plats and Completed the Mapping.
- Completed 115 Custom Map/Project Requests.
- Completed 29 Zoning/Rezoning Requests.
- Completed 5 Annexation Requests.
- Completed 195 Road Sign Work Orders.

## General Services

### Community Development:

- Secured USDA grant funds in the amount of \$85,000 to be used to rehab/repair owner-occupied homes for very-low to low-income Harnett Citizens. Project is underway with homeowner applications going out in the new year.
- Have set up the necessary infrastructure for the 'handy man' \$10,000 budget funds. Anticipate project will begin in earnest first of the year.

### Harnett Area Rural Transit System (HARTS):

- CAMPO's Two-Year Northern Harnett Transit Study was initiated in November 2023. First meetings with the technical committee are productive and hope to see other stakeholder meetings beginning March 2024.
- HARTS continues to see additional ridership increase with some senior sites picking up, senior trips have started again, and staff have met all requests even though driver recruitment is not as hoped.



### Animal Services:

- Established a new partnership with PETCO in Dunn. To date have adopted over 200 felines and continue to supply adoptable felines on an almost daily occurrence. Felines are spay/neutered; reduces the number of felines euthanized at the shelter and increased our community trapping.
- Pilot program Foster to Adopt is extremely successful. Approximately 90% of participants are keeping fosters and 100% are compliance with spay/neuter guidelines and receiving proper vaccinations.
- Held several community rabies events at the shelter and in the community, have administered over 2400 rabies vaccinations during the year, notably completing neighborhood level rabies vaccination events when animals in the area have tested positive for rabies.

## Harnett Regional Water

- Received the “Gold Star” honor from the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality’s Division of Water Resources for 10 consecutive years of exceeding all federal and state standards for water quality. HRW was one of only 15 water systems in the state to receive this honor.
- Completed the Advanced Metering Infrastructure Capital Project in which we replaced all of our existing manually read meters (over 46,000) with new automated meters at a cost of approximately \$16 million dollars. This project was funded entirely from HRW reserves.
- Received approval from the US Department of Defense and Fort Liberty to use existing sewer infrastructure to enhance our future sewer capacity in the Southwest portion of the County. This was achieved with no additional cost to the County.
- Received authorization and approval to begin the \$111 million-dollar North Harnett Wastewater Treatment Plant Capacity Expansion capital project. This project required the cooperation and coordination to include new legal contract amendments and the securing of funding commitments with three different municipalities in our region.

## Human Resources

- Continue making improvements to our paperless onboarding system.
- Conducted 12 new hire orientation sessions which resulted in onboarding 131 new hires for the County.
- Began PPCN HealthMapRx employee meetings for the management of diabetes or pre-diabetes and medical weight care management. We have 11 employees currently enrolled in the diabetes management program and 17 employees currently enrolled in the medical weight management program. All participants are completing their quarterly meetings with the health coach.
- There are 78 vacancies in the County as of this report.
- Conducted performance evaluation training for all supervisors/managers.
- Held Wellness Day on November 1, 2023, approximately 400 employees attended.
- Held Annual Employee Luncheon and Awards ceremony. Served a total of 991 employees and Commissioners (combination of dining in and take out)
- Implemented the online Safety Data Sheet System with Velocity EHS.

# Health Department

- Awarded Accreditation with honors status by the NC Local Health Department Accreditation Board November 2023. The Health Department met the standards in 147 of 147 activities.
- The Health Department's Environmental Health Division has worked in conjunction with GIS to digitize septic permits and create a layer on the county GIS map.



- Administered 1,886 flu vaccines and 3,887 childhood and adult vaccinations for our residents.
- Implemented a Narcan (Naloxone) distribution program. Our program aims to prevent opioid-related overdose deaths. Narcan is a medicine that can help people who are overdosing on an opioid. Narcan reverses an opioid overdose. Narcan kits are available at the Health Department.
- The Health Department was selected as a recipient of the Dr. Ann Wolfe Mini Grant of \$8,000 from NC Public Health Association. Funds will help to implement the Reducing Access program, that will provide education, medication lock boxes, and gun locks for families. Our goal for this program initiative is to prevent accidental overdoses and reduce firearm related accidents in children.
- The Health Department now offers extended hours which creates better access for our community to receive services.
- Women, Infants and Children (WIC) has implemented extended hours until 6 p.m., Tuesday-Thursday. WIC averages 3,582 participants per month. Annual participation 43,018.
- Initiated an after-hours family planning clinic that is opened until 7 p.m. on the first Thursday of each month.
- Collaborated with Campbell University in November to provide the "Living Well with Diabetes" educational session providing information and resources on prevention and control of Type 2 Diabetes.
- Division on Aging in partnership with the NC Dementia Alliance sponsored a celebration for the Family Caregivers and Grandparents Raising Grandchildren Support Groups on November 14, 2023. The NC Dementia Alliance sponsored the guest speaker, Melanie Bunn, a nationally recognized Dementia Training Specialist who provided an informative program with hands on demonstrations and encouraging information for the Caregivers. 45 individuals were in attendance.
- Division on Aging served 11,025 congregate meals and 40,059 home-delivered meals between Jan –Dec 2023.

## Information Technology

*\*Full year data\**

- Implementation of Multi Factor authentication to enhance email and network security.
- Sheriff's office network infrastructure refresh.
- Fiber installation project across Cape Fear River.
- HRW remote reader project completion.
- Datacenter UPS load balancing and capacity increase.
- Initiated DocuSign project for contracts and other administrative projects.
- Assisted with Harnett.org website redesign project.
- Network security projects including DNS firewall implementation.
- SHF Evidence PADTrax hardware/software installation project.
- Implemented DSS remote worker project.
- Installed 208 computers county-wide.
- Completed over 11,162 technology requests/work orders.

# Library



Before



After



Before



After

## • Benhaven Library Project:

- Shelving, furnishings and outdoor book return installed
- Hired Benhaven staff.
- Ordered and processed library materials for Benhaven Public Library's collection.

## • Service Measures – Jan 1-December 18, 2023:

- Circulated more than 198,000 physical items.
- Circulated more than 59,000 electronic materials.
- Welcomed 163,500 library visitors.
- Registered 6,829 new library users.
- Hosted 1,215 library programs with 25,953 attendees.
- Conducted 249 Book-A-Librarian Appointments.

## • Staff Development and Training:

- All library staff participated in Ryan Dowd's De-escalation training.
- All library staff participated in information session and training on the library's newly revised policy manual.

## • Programming – September –December 2023:

- Hosted 12 adult technology courses with topics that included basic computer skills, 3D printing, and an information session about artificial intelligence.
- Implemented new monthly programming for adults with special needs
- Hosted 4 Genealogy programs with topics including "Finding Family History Documents" and "Genealogy-How to Get Started".
- Hosted Family Christmas event at Main Library with 743 attendees.

## • Staffing:

- New Positions Hires:
  - Community Engagement Coordinator
  - Benhaven Library Branch Manager I
  - Benhaven Library Program Specialists (2 positions)
  - Adult Outreach Coordinator

## ◦ Vacancies Filled:

- Circulation Manager
- Library Assistants (4)
- Library Program Specialists (2)

## • Strategic Plan:

- Established Strategic Planning Committee
- Publicized RFP for Strategic Plan Consultant
- Reviewed 7 Consultant applications
- Interviewed 3 Consultants

# Register of Deeds

- Collected \$1,394,108 in Excise Tax. \$724,936.16 of this money stays in Harnett County.
- Have completed restoration and preservation of all original marriage licenses from 1889-1920.
- Issued 423 Marriage Licenses since July 1, 2023.
- 392 Deaths in Harnett County since July 1, 2023.
- 45 old real estate books received new binders & reorganized the real estate vault.
- Recorded over 9,700 real estate documents since July 1, 2023.
- 92% of real estate recordings are electronic.

# Parks & Recreation



- Offered 2 Nature Education Programs, 2 Movie in the Park events, 3 Barn Quilt Workshops, Afterschool and Summer Camp Programming at Boone Trail Community Center and Library, Senior Citizen State Fair Bus Trip, Senior Men's Golf Tournament, County Department Tree Decorating Contest, Letters to Santa, and Santa's Workshop.
- Added 10 parking spots to the main parking lot and 20 new parking spaces for the Mountain Biking Trails at Anderson Creek Park and added Handicap Parking Spaces to Patriots Park and Shawtown Community Park.
- Completed the construction of Ballfield Fencing, Playground, and Picnic Shelter at Benhaven Community Park. Began construction on the walking trail throughout the site.
- Opened the Mountain Biking Trails at Anderson Creek Park.
- Continued the design process and permitting for the Neill's Creek Park Restroom/Concession Building.
- Hosted a Triangle Trails Initiative Meeting gathering all the local governments to promote and discuss greenway trails and connectivity in the County.
- Began lawncare and trail maintenance of the Dunn-Erwin Rail Trail.
- Partnered with the Harnett Arts Council for the Art on Trails Program. Artists painted nature and water recreation scenes on the asphalt walking trail.
- Started the design and construction drawing process for the former Boone Trail High School entryway monument.
- Started developing the Neill's Creek Park Master Plan.
- Celebrated the Parks and Recreation staff and volunteers with social media recognition during July (Parks and Rec Month).

## Social Services

- Opened a satellite office at the old Benhaven School (Thursdays from 8:30 a.m. -5:00 p.m.)
- Helped plan and hold the 2nd Annual Harnett County Community Day.
- Held a Child Support Roundup in October (collected over \$19,000).
- Held a Halloween Bash for our foster children on Oct. 27th (around 100 children attended).
- Held a Veterans Day Event Nov. 8th and opened it to the public.
- Held a food drive for the elderly for Thanksgiving (helped 30 families).
- Hosted DHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley on Nov. 20th for a press conference on payments for unlicensed kinship providers (40 providers keeping 73 children).
- In October we began planning with Mosley Architects for our flex space on the second floor.
- Prepared for Medicaid Expansion to start on Dec. 1st.

# Public Information Office

- Participated in community outreach by attending four fall municipal festivals to inform the citizens about Harnett County and our offerings.
- Launched the new Harnett County website in October which receives a minimum of 29,000 visits a month.
- Hosted the Fall citizen information session, 24 individuals registered, 6 people attended in person and 3 individuals joined online, and received 190 views on YouTube post-event.
- Continue to distribute the Harnett Happenings Electronic Newsletter, we have received 55 new subscribers from August to December 30 and an average of 43.8% open rate.
- Administered the Grassroots Grant for the Fiscal Year 2024. We will distribute \$90,966.00 in State funding and \$66,275.00 in ARPA funding. We received ten applications for State funding and seven applications for ARPA funding.
- Resumed the Community Relations Committee and meet monthly with county staff to learn about their areas of expertise.
- Revamped the County's social media to incorporate the use of more people and videos.
- Continue to assist various departments monthly with their needs: programming, marketing, promotional material, videos, photography, and more.
- Increased Facebook page engagement by 4.82% resulting in 6,017 engagements from September - December and (1,869 from Jan-March to 3,224 from April-August).



## Solid Waste

- Increased hours of operation at all Convenient Centers. Now open six days a week.
- Refurbished the entire Dunn Erwin Landfill Transfer Station floor.
- Replaced Excavator at the Dunn Erwin Landfill.
- Obtained permit to operate new cell as part of the Landfill Expansion at Dunn Erwin Landfill.
- Consolidated agreement for county waste collections and disposal providing a significant cost savings.

## Tax

- Completed Bitek Software conversion with yearly cost savings.
- Maintained strong collection rate of 98.51%.
- Increased value of Business Personal Property of \$94 million.
- Added a QR code to the 2023 tax bills as a convenient payment option.
- Implement training guidelines for staff development.
- Implement data clean up measures.
- RFQ for 2026 Reappraisal complete and Vincent Valuations was awarded the contract.

# Soil & Water Conservation District

## Technical Assistance:

- Stream Debris Removal: Completed projects clearing debris from 89 miles of waterways allowing for unrestricted water flow and easing lowland flooding during heavy rain events (\$2,514,516 in Federal and State grants); this work restored the ability for families to navigate safely by kayak for recreational purposes.
- Agriculture Cost Share Programs: Provided \$66,695 to Harnett County farmers for installation of conservation practices via the NC Agriculture Cost Share Program saving 2,102 tons of soil impacting 941 acres.
- Riverside Drainage Project: Removed 221 tons/13 tractor-trailer loads of abandoned tires from a primary drainage way to the Cape Fear River within the Riverside community for a cost savings to the community/landowner of \$85,966. Also cleaned out 1,225 feet of drainage ditches within residential areas of the Riverside community at a cost savings to the community of \$46,026.
- Conservation Equipment Rental Program: 1,063 acres no-till acres planted using District's Great Plains No-Till Grain Drills (2). Average planting per rental is 12 acres (\$120) vs the cost of a same model grain drill is \$33,000.
- Community Conservation Assistance Program: Secured \$50,000 for the Town of Erwin to conduct a stream restoration project in Porter Park serving to protect both water quality and citizen safety.
- Farmland Preservation: Secured \$500,000 from the NC Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund to place an agricultural working lands conservation easement on 330 acres of land in Northwest Harnett County protecting water quality along both the Cape Fear River and Hectors Creek.
- Emergency Water Point Certifications: Certified 23 water points for local fire departments allowing creeks and ponds to be official water sources for fighting fires. These certifications assist fire departments in lowering their Insurance Services Office (ISO) Fire score in addition to helping set a lower insurance rate for homeowners.

## Conservation Education:

- Keep Harnett Beautiful: Organized Litter Sweeps – Over 820 volunteer hours valued at \$26,136, 86 Cleanups completed on 57 roadways collecting over 1,421 bags and 351 large items.
- NC Envirothon Program: Coached and sponsored 4 Envirothon teams all advancing from Area level to State level competition (20 students).
- LaFayette Outdoor Learning Program: Facilitated gardening program at LaFayette Elementary School providing student instruction and project resources to meet science objectives and provide increased opportunities for outdoor learning and life skill development (600 students).
- Northwest Harnett Elementary Outdoor Learning Program: Assisted in establishment of outdoor learning program at the new Northwest Harnett Elementary by providing consultation for outdoor space learning area designs and delivered lessons targeting required objectives and life skill development. (560 students)
- Other youth teaching events: 1,725 students (field days, classroom presentations, workshops, camps)
- Adult teaching/speaking events - 705 adults (farmer/landowner meetings, SWCD area meetings, SWCD professional development events).


## Veterans Services



- Hosted Veterans Day Ceremony at Harnett County Veterans Park.
- Worked with Campbell University Football Team to collect toys for the Toys for Tots Program.
- Harnett County Veterans Officers:
  - Serviced 319 in person appointments.
  - Handled 318 phone calls.
  - Attended 15 outreach events.
  - Corresponded 69 E-mails.







**For more information, contact:  
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**Harnett**  
**COUNTY**  
NORTH CAROLINA