



Connection

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Just One Month 'Til the Heart Walk!

The 2005 Heartwalk is set for October 1, and efforts among county employees are well underway to support the fundraising for the American Heart Association. The county has a goal of raising \$25,000 this year, and we expect to exceed the goal just as we did last year.

In addition to the sale of the hearts – red, silver and gold – that you see adorning the walls of some county departments, the county is fundraising in some innovative ways. A Healthy Heart breakfast was staged last month by the Tax Department Team Captains Rhonda Cherry and Desire Minges. A hotdog sale is scheduled to take place in Room 119 at the Courthouse on September 15 during lunchtime. An ice cream social is also being planned, though not yet scheduled, and an event that will have one of the senior leaders of the County kissing a pig is also being organized. A 50/50 Raffle is underway, with the drawing to be on September 12, to be followed by a Time Off Raffle at the end of September. Other fundraisers that benefit the Heart Association are the sale of limited edition ornaments bearing the County seal – an exact replica of the ornament representing Cumberland County on the Christmas Tree that will be displayed in the State Capitol in December.

Plan now to walk with your colleagues on Saturday, October 1. If we meet our goal, County Manager James Martin has agreed to wear a red dress in the walk!



Learn and Live™



Get Moving!

County Developing New Wellness Plan:

Sustaining A Healthy Workforce, Lowering Medical Costs

The County's insurance plan for employees and their families now requires higher deductibles, and higher co-pays for doctor visits and pharmacy purchases. This is a direct result of the extraordinarily high medical care costs incurred in recent years.

Another initiative intended to lower costs and sustain a healthier workforce is a Wellness Plan. This plan is not yet in place but you can expect that it will be by the end of this calendar year. Both Cape Fear Valley Health System and the Cumberland County Health Department have expressed interest in contributing various elements of a wellness program, and a committee will soon be evaluating how to create an effective and affordable way to keep our employees healthy.

You will be hearing more about this - perhaps the full plan can be unveiled in the next **Connection!**

COUNTY MANAGER'S MESSAGE

Giving

County employees have now begun to see in paychecks the effects of a 5% salary increase approved for this fiscal year by the Board of Commissioners.

The 1% county contribution to 401K plans for employees will be showing up soon on NC401K account statements. I know we are all grateful for the salary increase and the confidence in our workforce that the commissioners have demonstrated.

One positive way of expressing that gratitude is to be as generous as possible in the current fundraising efforts on behalf of the American Heart Association and the upcoming United Way drive. Cumberland County employees have a reputation for being remarkably generous, and I am confident that this year we will continue that tradition.

Another recommendation I make to each of you is to begin contributing to your 401K account. The commissioners have agreed to contribute 1% of your salary to a 401K. It's not required that you also contribute to that account. But how much more quickly your savings will grow if you do. Even a small amount of money saved over time can amount to a significant balance.

Salary increases are not guaranteed to come our way every year, certainly not as substantial as the one this year. My advice? Invest in yourself with a contribution to the 401K plan and invest in your community by continuing your generosity to the United Way and the American Heart Association.



Adopt-A-Soldier

Many soldiers based at Fort Bragg are serving all across the world, and none have tougher duty than those in Afghanistan and Iraq. If you'd like to make life a bit more pleasant for these distant soldiers, you and your family can "Adopt A Soldier" through the Community Relations office at Fort Bragg.



If you would be willing to commit to sending emails, letters and perhaps small packages of snacks and personal hygiene items that some soldiers in the most remote locations don't have access to, here's what to do. Send an email to Vicky Lee, Community Relations Director at Fort Bragg (Vicky.lee@us.army.mil) indicating your interest, and she will match you up with a soldier to adopt.

2030 Growth Vision Plan Kick Off



On June 28th, over sixty local government officials gathered to officially kick off the new Countywide Comprehensive Plan by holding a Growth Vision Summit. Local officials identified issues they felt were most important to Cumberland County's future. Department heads from both city and county will be identifying their most pressing concerns and nine community meetings are planned for September. A Task Force will be working on the Growth Vision Plan over the next 18 months.

County Employee Kudos



Great County Employees Doing Great Things



Deborah Simpson of the Planning and Inspections Department was recently re-elected to serve as Vice-Chairman for the NC Code Officials Qualification Board. The Qualification Board is charged with overseeing the training, education, and certification of code-enforcement officials in the state. Deborah was originally appointed to the Board by the General Assembly in 1998. She currently serves on the Qualification & Evaluation committee and the Certification Task Force for the Board.

Sharon Sanders and **Joanie Rodriguez** have achieved accreditation as representatives of the NC Veterans Affairs as of August 1. Kevin Babcock, Director, Veterans Service Office, says this achievement took lots of hard work and will enable the Veteran Service Office to provide a more rapid response to their veteran clients.

Cumberland County Community Development Department was recently awarded the HOMESTEAD Award by the National Association of Counties. The award was made for excellence in providing affordable housing opportunities for low and moderate income elderly citizens. The County partnered with United Developers in the Legion Manor project, creating a 44-unit, single-story property for residents older than 55.

A Benefit Event For Employment Source

The Second Annual Gourmet Wine Dinner and Auction benefiting Employment Source, an agency employing people with disabilities, is scheduled for Monday evening, October 10, 2005. The multi-course gourmet dinner, accompanied by select wines, takes place at the Trio Cafe. Reserved seating is available for groups of 4 or more. An auction follows the dinner, with some sought-after items and services included in the auction.



Employment Source is one of the local non-profit agencies whose funding is supplemented by Cumberland County. For details about the event, to include ticket prices, call Assistant Finance Director Howard Abner at 678-7750.

There's Help and Hope

The Cumberland County Mental Health Center is recognizing September as Alcohol and Drug Recovery Month. If you know of someone who could benefit from help in dealing with addiction to alcohol or other substances, refer them to the Mental Health Center for information. Sharon Yates of the Mental Health Center wants everyone to know that "there is help and hope." You can reach her at 222-6108.

Library's New Signage

Headquarters Library on Maiden Lane has received new signage! The top photo shows the new



replacement sign located on the front of the building; the lower photo shows the

new illuminated sign located on the back (Ray Avenue) side of the building.

**"Fall Into Work"
Job Fair
September 29
9 am to 2 pm
at the DSS building.**

County Employees Turn Out For Blood Drive



In so many ways, Cumberland County employees and public officials are generous people. Not only do we all support the United Way, the Heart Walk, the holiday season food drive, but we also support the Blood Donor Center of Cape Fear Valley Health System.



Here, Lee Warren, Register of Deeds, donates blood as he often does. Also, Ass't County Manager Cliff Spiller donates blood with the assistance of Chief Phlebotomist for the blood drive, Damita Williams.



**The next blood drive at the Courthouse will be Wednesday, Nov. 2nd.
Plan now to become a donor!**

Manage Your Migraines FREE Program For Migraine Sufferers

Anyone who has ever experienced a migraine knows that a migraine is not "just a headache." Migraines can force people to miss spending time with family and friends, to take time off from work, and to spend more time in a doctor's office than they would like. Fortunately, doctors are learning more and more about what triggers migraines and new treatment options are becoming available.

To help you manage your migraines and stay up-to-date with new treatments, Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina (BCBSNC) has a program specifically for members who suffer from migraine headaches. Whether you are newly diagnosed or have lived with migraines for years, you will benefit from the comprehensive education, personalized support and special benefits this program offers.

Once you enroll in the program you'll receive the following FREE resources:

- Quarterly newsletter - Four times a year, you will receive a newsletter that features the latest information on treatment options for migraines, as well as other useful tips.
- Migraine reference book – Packed with straightforward strategies to help you understand, prevent, and manage your migraines
- One-on-one assistance - Personalized 24-hour support from specially trained nurses
- Personal Health Organizer – Document effective treatments and monitor your progress with this helpful tool

For people with migraines, severe headaches can come on at any time and they often get in the way of everyday life. But they don't have to... Call 1-800-218-5295 or visit bcbsnc.com today to take advantage of the Member Health Partnerships-Migraine program.

Guide to Fall Planting

Most nursery plants are great candidates for fall planting. Trees and shrubs planted in the fall usually perform better the following year than those planted in the spring.

Shrubs and trees that are planted in the fall grow roots because the soil is still warm and the plants are not being required to produce flowers and new leaves. They concentrate their energy on growing roots. Remember that smaller plants establish themselves faster than larger plants.

Complete a soil test so you know the pH of your soil and the nutrient requirements. When possible prepare your soil by tilling a planting bed and adding compost or organic matter. Pick up a soil test kit from the Extension office.

Select the right trees and shrubs for your landscape:

Consider the plants mature height and spread before making the selection. Answer these questions: Does the plant need sun or shade? Does it flower? When does it flower? What type of maintenance will be required? What are the soil requirements? Choose healthy plants. The stem, foliage, and bark should look healthy. Avoid plants that are damaged or have insect or disease problems. When possible look at the roots. Plants should have well developed roots that are white and not encircling the root ball.

Transporting your plants home:

Do not handle plants by their stems or trunk. Always handle by the container. Do not stand your plants up in the back of a truck since wind exposure during transport home can damage foliage. Plants placed in the back of a truck should be laid down and covered. Water the plants as soon as you arrive home. If you are not planting right away, place them in a location away from sun and wind.

Planting the shrubs or trees:

Water the plants prior to planting. Make sure your soil is well drained before planting. The planting hole should be 3 to 5 times wider than the root ball but no deeper than the root ball. Loosening the soil several feet away from the plant will encourage root growth away from the root ball. Do not plant too deep, the soil line should be the same as the original soil line or a little higher. Gently fill the hole with soil removed from the hole until the hole is half filled and then slowly water to remove any air pockets. Then finish filling the hole with soil. Apply a 2 to 4 inch layer of mulch and then water slowly and thoroughly. Do not fertilize this newly planted shrub or tree after planting. Water frequently and slowly (about every 4 days in the absence of rain) until the root system is established.

Contact your local extension office for more information on fall planting and the Successful Gardener "Tree Planting Guide".

Visit www.ces.ncsu.edu/cumberland



Baby Think It Over®

As the new school year approaches, so does the Baby Think It Over® Program. The North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Cumberland County Center implemented this pregnancy prevention program in 1998 and it has made a huge impact on teenagers. A total of 2,401 students have participated. According to the Advocate, the pregnancy rate in Cumberland County has fallen since 1998 from 107.8 to 75.2 in 2003. Students are also given a post questionnaire after taking care of their computerized doll over the weekend. Over 80% indicated the program helped reinforce their decision to wait to have children.

The following schools will participate during the 2005-2006 school year: South View High; Westover High; Douglas Byrd High; Seventy-First High; Pine Forest High; Jack Britt; Albriton Jr. High – Ft. Bragg; Northwood Temple Academy.

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***Cumberland
County
Government...
Working for you!***



Cumberland County

NORTH CAROLINA

MISSION STATEMENT

It is the mission of the Cumberland County Government to assure all our citizens a better quality of life by providing for the public safety, public health, quality education, clean environment and economic development while being fiscally responsible.

VISION STATEMENT

Our vision for Cumberland County is that it be characterized by progressive leadership that provides for a prosperous, affordable, safe, and culturally inviting community.



Come on out to the Fair!

Featuring Live
Entertainment from Fat Joe,
Roxie Dean and Elvis
Tribute Artist Kraig Parker.

Visit our web site for
all the info!

www.cumberlandcountyfair.org.

And Don't Forget!

Crown Center's Broadway's Best subscriptions on sale now! Featuring Miss Saigon, Halley's Comet, and Mame, season tickets as low as \$58! For more information, please go to www.crowncoliseum.com or call (910) 438-4121.