



CONNECTION

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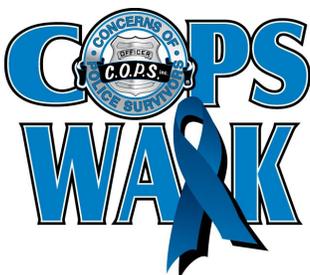
A Long Walk, On a Long Road Toward Acceptance

A member of our Cumberland County family is embarking on a long and difficult journey, and she needs our support.

Many of you remember that THELMA AND RON MATTHEWS lost their oldest child, Christopher Brian Matthews, on September 30, 2005. Brian was a Cumberland County Sheriff's deputy who was lost in the line of duty.

Thelma is honoring the memory of her son on the weekend of October 11 when she and other survivors, friends and law enforcement professionals will participate in the 4th annual COPS (Concerns of Police Survivors) Walk. The two-day walk will span 25 miles along the Potomac River outside Washington, DC. Thelma's goal is to raise no less than \$2,500. The funds are used to assist the surviving families of those in law enforcement who lost loved ones in the line of duty. Last year's walk raised more than \$100,000. Call Thelma at 678-7743 or email her at tmatthews@co.cumberland.nc.us and she'll tell you how you can contribute. She hopes to honor Brian's memory in this way, and to gain strength as she continues to work toward acceptance of her family's great loss.

"Rebuilding Shattered Lives"



A Message from Thelma

"It has been almost three years since I lost my son Brian, and the pain is still very real. I know that my family will never be the same again. Birthdays, holidays, just being together, it still feels as though Brian should be here with us.

Even though we are all together, we are not all together.

I have heard people say that your whole life can change in an instant, but I never imagined the truth of that statement until that day in September of 2005.

I never, ever imagined that I would lose a child. The pain that I feel from the loss of Brian is deep, and never-ending, but it has also made me learn to appreciate each day, and to find joy in even the smallest things. When I found out about the COPS walk, I felt it was something I could do for my Brian. Every step I take will be for him, just as they are now, as I walk to prepare for this event.

I want to thank each of you, for the kindness and love that you have shown to my family and me, and also thank you for supporting me, as I walk for Brian."

— Thelma Matthews

COUNTY MANAGER'S MESSAGE



This newsletter comes just as we begin a new fiscal year. The Board of Commissioners adopted the budget for FY 08-09 on June 16. It includes funding for a new public health department building, much-needed additional staff at the animal control department, and a 4% cost of living allowance for all full-time county employees. I am pleased that the budget could be developed to include all these things as well as other operational costs, and that is in large part due to the successful ¼-cent sales tax referendum in May. Thank you to all who supported that referendum.

With the arrival of July, we are now well into the summer hurricane season. I remind you to be aware of emergency procedures that are in place should we experience a hurricane here. We always want our employees to be safe and due consideration will be given to our emergency operations should weather conditions warrant that action.

We all spend more time outdoors in summer, and even with high gas prices, many of you will be traveling. I urge you all to be safe this summer.



EMPLOYEE KUDOS

LARETHA CLARK of the Legal Department was recently voted Vice President of the Cumberland County Paralegal Association. Among her responsibilities in that role are to further the educational opportunities for paralegals in North Carolina.

Cumberland County's Crème de la Crème

All Cumberland County employees contribute to a better quality of life for all citizens in Cumberland County with the work they do. But, as in all things, there are outstanding examples – those employees who will go the extra mile, try an innovative approach to solving a problem or who somehow buoy an entire department with optimism and dedication to the mission. Cumberland County Board of Commissioners Chairman Breeden Blackwell made it one of his goals to recognize such employees with public acknowledgement of their importance to the workforce and to the County at large.



The first three employees to be so honored are in the top photo, left to right, BOBBY HOWARD, Solid Waste Director; CAROLYN HODGES, NC Cooperative Extension, and KENNY CURRIE, Emergency Services Director. They were presented plaques at the Commissioners' meeting on May 5, and given certificates for four hours of paid time off. In June, JANICE DAVIS, of the Cumberland County Detention Center, seen in the photo at left, was selected as an Outstanding Employee and she received her plaque and certificate at the June 2 Commissioners' meeting.



If you have an employee, or a peer, or a supervisor whom you believe to be an outstanding county employee, you can get the form to do so by going to the Employee Information section of the county's website, www.co.cumberland.nc.us.

THE ACCOMPLISHED AND ADMIRABLE BRUNSON FAMILY

A RMY STRONG, FAMILY STRONG. As the County gears up for the BRAC, there is a lot of talk regarding the Army. However, here at the County, our very own AL BRUNSON, along with his family, has been representing the Army for the past year as an accomplished and exemplary Army family.

Al's family was asked to represent Army families across the country by speaking at the Army's AUSA Convention last October in Washington, D.C. The Brunsons were part of the Army's new campaign of Army Strong, Family Strong. Led by Al, who is a retired Sergeant Major, the family spoke of its service in the Army and in the public sector. Al's wife, Delphine, works at a local public school, E.E. Miller. During the convention, she spoke of all the opportunities her family was afforded while traveling around the world during Al's service in the Army.

All of Al's sons followed in his footsteps, and they are now all officers in the Army. His oldest son, Xavier, is a Lieutenant Colonel who will soon take command of a battalion in the 82nd Airborne Division. His other two sons are twins, LaHavie and Tavi, who are both Majors in the Army and were featured in the news last year when LaHavie relinquished command of his unit to his brother Tavi. Al's daughters-in-law are also accomplished: Kirsten is a Lieutenant Colonel serving as a judge in the Army, Karyn is an Assistant City Attorney with the City of Fayetteville, and Miryam is a Captain in the Adjutant General's Corps. This military family has accumulated over 600 parachute jumps and more medals than one can count.

After the Convention, the family continued to represent the Army and were featured on the nationally syndicated radio shows The Tavis Smiley Show and the Steve Harvey Morning Show. As a result, the entire family was invited to meet Mr. Harvey when he came to Fayetteville.

Al's family continues to grow, as he currently has 5 grandchildren, two of which were recently born. "The future generations of Brunsons have a lot to look forward to," says Al. He is looking forward to a reunion this July with the entire family.

Listening to Al and his family speak of their close relationship and their many accomplishments, one wonders how it is possible to create such a strong family unit. Al knows. "It's communication and a belief in God," he says firmly without hesitation.

Whatever the secret, the Brunson family is worthy of admiration and emulation. We're proud that Al is one of us here with Cumberland County Government.



THE BRUNSONS - Al Brunson and his family were recently honored at an AUSA Convention and were invited to be part of the "Army Strong, Family Strong" campaign in Washington DC.

GO SLOW IN THE CONE ZONE

Even with the horrific gas prices Americans are paying these days, the summer travel season is on. As you travel across the state's and nation's highways, be mindful of the work zones you will pass through. There are more than 3,000 such zones in place on American highways this summer.

Don't think this guidance is only to protect the highway workers. Motorists themselves are four times more likely to be injured or killed in a work zone accident than highway workers. So drive slowly, don't tailgate, and don't permit yourself to be distracted by texting or talking on a cellular phone while driving.



Take 'Em Out To The Ballgame!

The Swamp Dogs are offering county employees an opportunity to get together and "take it out to the ball game."

Normally, adult general admission tickets are \$5 – but if you get a group of more than 25 people together, the price drops to \$4. If you get more than 100 together, the price drops again to \$3. Put together a department outing, bring along the spouses and kids, and meet up at the ball park for a 7:05 p.m. game. The Swamp Dogs will be playing Wilson on the 1st and 3d of July, Gastonia on the 5th of July, Florence on July 11, Wilmington on July 15 and 18 at JP Riddle Stadium on Legion Road. Got questions? Call the Swamp Dogs at 426-5900.

If you just want to take in a game all by yourself, the prices are \$5 for adult general admission, \$6 for children 14 and younger, senior citizens and military.

COMING UP @ THE CROWN



BACKYARDIGANS: TALE OF THE MIGHTY KNIGHTS

July 11 & 12

Crown Theatre

3 shows

Group discount available



TNA (TOTAL NONSTOP ACTION) WRESTLING

July 25 8:00PM

Crown Coliseum

Military discount available



CUMBERLAND COUNTY FAIR

September 18-28. Save money with advance (tickets available in August), www.CumberlandCountyFair.org

www.AtTheCrown.com

910-438-4100 • Box office hours: M-F 9-6, Sat 10-2



CUMBERLAND COUNTY GOVERNMENT... WORKING FOR YOU!

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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.

VISIT US ON THE WEB: [HTTP:// WWW.CO.CUMBERLAND.NC.US/](http://www.co.cumberland.nc.us/)

Heart Association Fundraiser



Department reps look on as Carolyn Price, Co-Chair of the 2008 Heart Association fundraiser for the county, hands Jim Long, Exec. Director of the local Heart Association, \$6,260 as the contribution from county employees.

The raffle winners of the Heart Association fundraiser were:
Lou Wagner, of Information Services, \$300
Terri Robertson of Board of Elections, \$400;
James Revels of the Health Dept, \$500
Congratulations to the Winners, and THANK YOU to everyone who worked so hard to make this year's fundraiser such a success!

THERE WHEN YOU NEED A FRIEND

Everyone needs a real friend now and then. The kind of friend that can be trusted to keep a confidence, the kind of friend that truly wants you to be untroubled and unperturbed.

The Employee Assistance Program (EAP) can be a friend to you and your family members. Whether you are being overwhelmed with a personal or a work-related concern, let your EAP professional work with you to solve your issues. Your supervisor does not have to be made aware you are using the program, unless you choose to share that information.

To initiate the assistance of the Employee Assistance Program, please call 222-6157. If you call, you'll find a friend who wants to help.



COUNTY HOLIDAY

*Independence
Day*

**Friday,
July 4th**