



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**  
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**Contact: Todd McGee, (919) 715-7336**  
[todd.mcgee@ncacc.org](mailto:todd.mcgee@ncacc.org)

## **Cumberland County wins two statewide awards**

Cumberland County has been recognized with two 2009 Outstanding County Program Awards from the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners. The Outstanding County Program Awards have been handed out each year since 1991 by the NCACC. The intent of the program is to recognize and share information with other counties about innovative programs that address common problems faced by many counties. A team of judges selected four winning programs in each of three categories: General Government, Human Services and Public Information/Participation.

Cumberland County has been recognized for its Cumberland Matters program, which was submitted by Communications Manager Sally Shutt. Cumberland Matters is one of four winners in the Public Information category. Cumberland is also being recognized for its Crisis Intervention Team, which was submitted by Sharon Yates, Public Relations Director for Cumberland County Mental Health Center. The program is one of four winners in the Human Services category.

The Cumberland County Crisis Intervention Team (CIT) is an innovative jail diversion program involving community partnerships and collaborations that has improved services, enhanced access to care and resulted in financial savings. It is a specialized law enforcement response to an individual experiencing crisis related to a mental illness, addiction disease or developmental disability. Designed as a pre-booking jail diversion program, it seeks to prevent arrest and incarceration for misdemeanor crimes and to connect consumers to treatment resources instead.

The Fayetteville-Cumberland CIT/Jail Diversion Committee was convened in March 2008 and continues to meet monthly to provide oversight of the program, review and refine the 40-hour CIT curriculum, and promote ongoing communication among our many community partners. For more information on the CIT, contact Sharon Yates at (910) 222-6108.

In July 2009, the county launched its communications initiative "Cumberland Matters." The brand is designed to tell the county's story through various outlets. The goal is to inform citizens about county services and happenings. The title is used on three products – a weekly column in *The Fayetteville Observer*; a 30-minute television show (broken down into five 5-6 minute segments with segues hosted by the county's Communications Manager); and a three-quarter-page section appearing twice each month in *Up & Coming Weekly*.

Produced by a local company in Fayetteville, the video segments are shot on-site at various county venues. The 30-minute monthly show airs on cable twice weekly and also airs during the broadcast of the commissioners meetings when they enter into closed session. It is posted on the county's web site and YouTube and is also shown in waiting areas of several county facilities. For more information on Cumberland Matters, contact Sally Shutt at (910) 437-1921.

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***About the NCACC:** The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners (NCACC) is the official voice of all 100 counties on issues being considered by the General Assembly, Congress and federal and state agencies. Founded in 1908, the Association provides expertise to counties in the areas of lobbying, fiscal and legal research, communications, intergovernmental relations, information technology, field visits and risk management services.*