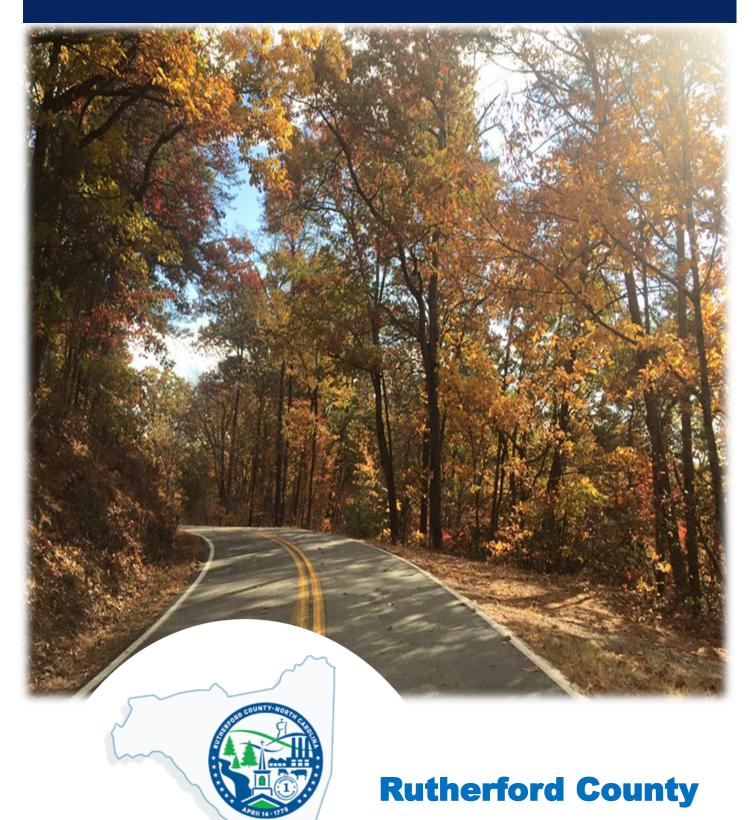
2021 Year End Report

....showcasing activities and accomplishments of the departments within Rutherford County Government.



Another year has come and gone, and we would like to share highlights of events, activities, and programming showcasing accomplishments of all County departments and offices.

The service from every County employee and the impact on Rutherford County during 2021 has been outstanding even with transitioning from COVID-19 challenges to normal operations. Each department has shown their dedication and commitment to serving and growing our County. Please enjoy each featured County department.

Airport



Pictured left, Director Devon Raisch: "This past year has definitely 'flown by' here at the airport. We have been blessed to see an amazing variety of air traffic utilize our airfield and services during 2021. Throughout the past year we have strived to create an environment that is warm and welcoming for our guests. Most of the larger jet traffic at the airport is from Net Jets and chartered flights. We have seen an

increase in corporate and business related traffic in the past several years and continue to have a great deal of interest

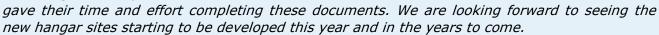
from people wanting to use our airport to keep their aircraft. Several hangars are already in the process of being developed and we have a good many people interested in building hangars here as well. The airport has



been growing and several businesses related to aviation are in process of getting established here on the airfield.

There isn't a year any of us will face without obstacles and mountains to climb. We have had

many challenges presented over this past year and many successful solutions found. I am very grateful for our staff, along with the many county departments that have helped keep us on track and in good repair. This past year has also presented challenges with replacing documents that needed to be updated in order to progress with hangar development. We are thankful for those that



Finally, the best part of the airport are the people that come for many different reasons and those who help keep it running. We have enjoyed giving tours of the airport and hosting the Boy Scouts Aviation Jamboree this year (pictured right).

We are truly grateful for our amazing airport team and the county team that is a big part of keeping the airport mowed, cleaned, repaired, safe, financials, and leadership moving us forward into a bright exciting future.



Thank you all for being a part of making our county a beautiful, peaceful, and pleasant place to live."







May we all feel blessed this season as we count our blessings and choose joy for the journey ahead.



Animal Control

Animal Control has taken in over 1,525 animals this year! Our month with the most intakes was August with 218 pets who found themselves at the shelter. July was our best adoption month with a total of 52 adoptions.



During 2021, one of our main goals was to increase our return-to-owner rate through microchipping our adoptions and encouraging the public to microchip their own pets. We have succeeded in our goal and it has helped us keep pets out of the shelter due to scanning for a chip and returning them to the owner instead of impounding them.



So far this year, Animal Control has transferred out 48% of pets to rescue groups local and afar, wildlife rehabilitators, and TNR programs. Speaking of TNR programs, we have begun to launch a plan for a return to field Trap-Neuter-Return of feral cats. This program will be sponsored by private donors and provided at no cost to the citizens of our county.



Animal Control continues to provide low cost Rabies Clinics on the first Tuesday of each month, and have even partnered with PAWS of Rutherford County to do a Free Rabies Clinic. We also helped Forest City with a Saturday low-cost clinic.



In November 2021, we held a Saturday adoption event at the Copper Penny in Rutherfordton! We brought four cats with us and all of them were adopted into happy homes! This year Dr. Pam agreed to let us try and adopt out cats from her office, and so far this has proven to be successful in increasing our adoption numbers.



Animal Control continued

In late February, we started back up the states low cost spay/neuter program, and to date we have helped the community spay/neuter over 130 personal pets!



Through community donations we have been able to provide treatment for Heart Worms to many shelter dogs prior to adoption, and through a huge donation from Charlotte Animal Control, we have been able to provide heartworm prevention for all of our shelter dogs.





We have partnered with local schools for students to do their community service day at the shelter helping the pets, cleaning and learning about common diseases and the shelter environment.



ACO's Enloe, Keck and Epley went to a training in Polk County for animal cruelty. Director Kilgo, Supervisor Hamilton, and Vet Tech Temple went to conference for three days to learn about new and old law pertaining to all parts of animal control and sheltering. Supervisor Hamilton completed two-week long courses and is now certified as a National Animal Cruelty Advanced Investigator through the University of Missouri. All ACOs, Supervisor and Vet Tech have completed other miscellaneous online trainings about animal sheltering.





Board of Elections



Board of Elections staff had a very busy and productive year. Staff had a lot of time to reflect over happenings in 2020 and to prepare for town elections and the upcoming 2022 election. A few highlights from the year include:

- Angela Rhymer celebrated 15 years working with the county. She is a great addition to our office.
- Appointed Chief Judges and judges for all seventeen precincts.
- Swore in new board members, Angela Plackis and Georgia Steele. Returning members are Gail Parton, Linda Smith and Chairperson Frances Lockwood.
- Filed candidates in July for the 2021 Municipal Elections.
- All staff members attended two virtual conferences, one in April and one in August.
- With state funds, our office was able to get equipment placed in the building for increased security. Keyless entry with badge access for staff only and security cameras were placed throughout the office.
- The State board had a County "wellness check". Staff prepared for several weeks.
- Staff attended several virtual trainings and meetings with the district and the state.
- Staff spent several weeks preparing and getting equipment ready for One-Stop and Election Day.
- Held One-Stop (early voting) for two and a half weeks in October.
- Election day for Municipal Elections was held on November 2, 2021.
- In December, staff prepared for candidate filing for an early March primary for the 2022
 Election year, but after three days of filing, the State put a hold on filing and moved the
 primary to May. Filing dates are still undetermined, but will hopefully be released in January.



Building Inspections

Building Inspections Department experienced much activity during 2021. Total permit fees received were \$519,928 with 2,904 total permits written. Of these, we had 178 new house starts. Total project cost of all jobs permitted is \$115,665,176. Permits include

two new Dollar Generals, one located in Union Mills and the other located on Bostic Sunshine Hwy. Lake Lure Classical Academy added 7,000 square feet of modular class room space to their campus. The Yogi Bear campground is still going strong and looking to add 80 park models, a climbing tower, zip lines and an alpine coaster. The Town of Lake Lure, with the lake down, have several project plans involving a new sea wall, deep water access and revamping the boat ramp located near the marina. Thomas Jefferson was



Hill has gained his Plumbing, Electrical, & Building Level I certifications (pictured above left). Joey Turrubiarte has gained his Fire Level 3 certification (pictured right), Congratulations to these inspectors!

Our new inspector, Jess Foster, was hired in March and obtained his Electrical Level 3. By obtaining his electrical, Jess is now certified in Level 3 in all trades, which include Building, Electrical, Plumbing & Mechanical. Jess came from the big City of Asheville and we are glad to have him join our team (pictured below).





able to move into their new 72,000 square foot high school located at their campus in Mooresboro in early January 2021. The teachers and students were excited to see this new facility and the opportunity it will bring.

Several of our inspectors are still attending classes, taking their State exams, and gaining certifications. Over the past year, Caleb Wilson has gained his Electrical Level 3 certification (pictured above right). Jeremy



Cooperative Extension

Horticulture Program

Home Gardener Program:

- The Rutherford County Extension Master Gardener Volunteer program has welcomed six new student interns, who have completed the first half of the educational training portion of the program. They will be finishing up classes in the spring of 2022.
- The spring and summer home gardening class series was held out in the demonstration garden and hosted classes for new and experienced home gardeners.
- New gardeners were assisted with planning gardens and managing garden challenges throughout the year through phone, email and site visit consultations.
- We shared gardening education through Facebook posts, classes, newspaper and web articles, and individual consultations, reaching over 3,000 people.
- The Extension office demonstration garden received a facelift from the Rutherford Extension Master Gardener Volunteers
- In partnership with our 4H and FCS agents, we offered summer gardening camps and classes for youth at Ruff'ton Roots, and Grahamtown community garden.



Commercial Grower and Food System Program:

- The 2021 Deer Valley donation project successfully grew over \$11,000 worth of fresh produce with the help of our volunteers. In addition to the fresh produce, through cattle donations of local producers in our area, we were also able to donate 744 pounds of beef to our county food system partners. This was aided by the discount extended to us by Pinnacle Meats to process the cattle donated. The food donations were distributed across the county to partners such as Chase Corner Ministries, Basics Christian Ministry, Washburn Outreach. Funding for our produce donations was provided by Rutherford BARN and the Appalachian Sustainable Agriculture Program through their Appalachian Farms Feeding Families project.
- The Rutherford County Food Council has added new members and presented an educational presentation about our food system to various groups across the county. The council mission and vision process will be complete by the end of 2021.



- The NC Foothills Farm Tour was held through the months of June-October, taking place once a month with small groups out on farms to engage food consumers with our local producers and to learn about how our food is produced. We saw farms that raise beef, dairy cows, apples, mixed vegetables, and more. To learn more about upcoming events, visit our website at www.ncfoothillsfarmtour.com or on Facebook and Instagram at @ncfoothillsfarmtour.
- The Small Farms Bootcamp state-wide curriculum was developed by Hannah along with other Extension agents across the state, and is going to be piloted in 2022 across the state. This program is designed for new and beginning market gardeners, homesteaders, and smallscale farmers.

Family & Consumer Sciences Program

There were 660+ direct educational contacts through programs such as:

- Color Me Healthy Preschool Nutrition Series
- Adult Cooking Demonstrations & Videos
- Youth Gardening & Cooking Camps
- Pressure Canner Testing
- Food Preservation Consultations
- Volunteer Training

There were over 121,400 indirect educational contacts through:

- Monthly newspaper column
- Website articles
- Facebook & Instagram posts
- Phone consultations

Worked with community partners to:

- Update Food Access List and Interactive Online Map to direct public to food resources
- Utilize grant funds to increase capacity for food access and availability
- Provide recipe card sets and food storage guidelines for food pantry clients
- Develop kitchen kit project for families living in motels
- Create a healthy food list for donors
- Co-facilitate the county Food Network and the Fresh Produce & Meat Distribution Project
- Promote the 5-2-1-AN health message

Livestock Educational Programming:

- Many livestock producers in Rutherford County are at retirement age or above. Most of them rely on face to face producer meetings as their primary means of producer education and aren't adapted to an electronic learning style. COVID prevented us from being able to offer face to face programming in full swing, but we were able to open back up in the last half of 2021. Additional programs were able to continue throughout the year with one on one visits and phone consultations. Listed below are some of the highlights of Cooperative Extension's Livestock programming efforts.
- Educational efforts in value-added marketing were continued through networking with the Mountain Cattle Alliance, East Tennessee Cattle Alliance, Blue Ridge Cattle Alliance and Virginia Quality Assurance. These producers received on-farm visits from Cooperative Extension and educational materials/advice in the areas of animal health, nutrition, animal handling, genetics and value-added marketing.



 Numerous phone consultations and site visits were completed with new and beginning landowners who are planning to raise livestock in order to feed their families and/or become involved in production agriculture. While these producers are in the "development" stage, Cooperative Extension will continue to work with them to help make them successful.



- Worked with livestock agents across the west district to coordinate a regional small ruminant training held at the WNC Regional Livestock Center in Canton. This was the first in person event we held since the beginning of the pandemic. Participants learned about marketing and parasite management for sheep and goats.
- Hosted an educational meeting for Rutherford County cattle producers at the Rutherford County Livestock Educational Facility. Participants learned about the value of breeding soundness exams for their bulls, and also the negative impacts of BVD, a disease that affects cattle. We also held a follow up event three weeks later where producers could have their bulls tested for breeding soundness. This has a tremendous economic impact on cattle operations due to the potential for loss of calf crop.
- Hosted two Beef Quality Assurance (BQA) workshops one for producers and one for Livestock Extension Agents in order to discuss the importance of responsible cattle management. The mission of BQA is to maximize consumer confidence in, and acceptance of, beef by focusing the producer's attention to daily production practices that influence the safety, wholesomeness and quality of beef and beef products.

4-H Youth Development

We were able to resume 4-H Summer Fun enrichment workshops during the summer of 2021.

We taught a total of 14 classes, serving over 52 different youth in Rutherford County, with most of them enrolling in multiple activities. In order to meet Covid restrictions set by state and county officials, many of our traditional activities had to be modified. Transportation and class size were limited. The Extension staff made sure guidelines were followed while still allowing youth the opportunities to learn and engage in group environments.

Summer Fun topics included: Wildlife, Fishing, Kids and Chefs Cooking, Arts and Crafts, and Agriculture.

We were able to resume a modified version of 4-H School Enrichment in the Spring of 2021:

- Embryology (hatching chicks): Harris Elementary, Cliffside Elementary School, Forrest Hunt, and some homeschool groups
- Entomology Winged Wonders (butterflies): Rutherfordton, Harris, Cliffside, and Forrest Hunt
- Electricity: Cliffside Elementary

A homeschool Co-Op participated in Vermicomposting. Families with middle school and high school students learned about microorganisms, worms, recycling, and made their own worm bins to take home.

An 8-week Electricity Series was taught to the HARC homeschool group from Rutherford and Polk counties, with two separate classes being taught each week (12 students in each). The students learned the basics of electricity, circuits, electrical safety, magnetism, electromagnetism, and how electricity gets from the energy source into our homes. The students enjoyed working with Snap Circuits, testing for magnetism, making a homemade flashlight, and designs out of paper circuits.

Our Poultry Contests remained virtual for 2021. Our teams met weekly from March through July to practice their poultry knowledge. They competed in the state 4-H Avian Bowl contest in July, where the Junior team placed second and our Senior team placed third. This activity takes a lot of time and commitment to learn all the material, which includes Raising Waterfowl, Egg Nutrition, Embryology, Feathers, Raising Layers, and Ratites (large flightless birds).

In early 2021, 4-H youth enrolled in horse projects started working on their horse bowl skills. Six youths decided to compete in the virtual competition for the first time. Four of these six youths placed in the top 10 in the Rookie division!

Two "Just Grow It" Garden programs were taught in June. One group was taught at the Ruff'ton Roots community garden. Ten youth participated in the five-week series. Another group of 15 youth participated through the Grahamtown Garden project. This was a group effort between our Extension staff and Master Gardener volunteers. We also received grant funds through NC State University to cover costs of gardening materials.



County Manager and Commissioners



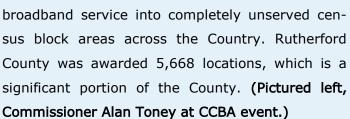
The County Manager and Commissioners wish each of you a happy and healthy New Year and sincerely hope that 2022 will bring a blessed and prosperous year!

 Richard Lawson was appointed as Revenue Director (pictured below)



way West Commerce Park was conveyed to Premier Federal Credit Union for an economic development project.

- Medicaid Transformation began with the Standard Plan going live on July 1, 2021.
- A resolution was approved authorizing County line surveying.
- Charter Communications announced that the company was the recipient of the Rural Digital Opportunity Fund (RDOF), which is a grant to expand



• Rutherford County entered into an agreement with McGill and Associates to assist in the administration and management of the \$900,000 Community Development Block Grant (CV) award for subsistence payments for low to moderate income households (LMI) and for public facility improvements which included broadband connectivity for LMI households.



- A resolution was approved that would allow the Board of Education to enter into a contract with Apple, Inc. for the purchase of certain computer equipment.
- Rutherford County entered into an interlocal agreement with the Town of Forest City for management of a new soccer complex which would include operational expenses and future capital needs. In January RHI Legacy had purchased 59.33 acres of land on Piney Ridge Road in Forest City and had retained Destination by Design to create a preliminary design study with the goal to get a construction estimate.







 The low bid of Site Development Corporation was approved for the public road construction at the Gateway West Commerce Park that would provide public access to future commercial businesses locating in the park and would be funded with the proceeds from the sale of a commercial lot in Gateway West Commerce Park.



- Partners Behavioral Health Management announced that several other counties have joined Partners. These counties included Union, Cabarrus, and Stanly.
- The Board approved a portion of the five percent matching grant request for a Building Reuse Grant which would support the expansion of Fountain Services that will create new jobs and increase the current tax base in Spindale.
- Rutherford County received \$100,000 from the NC Housing Finance Agency under the 2021 cycle of its Urgent Repair Program. These funds will be used for urgent housing repairs to assist very low and low-income homeowners with special needs.
- The Rutherford Railroad Development Corporation (RRDC) and the Trail Partners (the County of Rutherford, the Town of Forest City, the Town of Ruth, the Town of Rutherfordton, and the Town of Spindale) entered into an Interlocal Agreement in 2017 for the management and maintenance of the Thermal Belt Rail Trail. It was anticipated at that time that there would be restructuring of the RRCD to allow the Trail Partners to control and manage the Thermal Belt Rail Trail. To accomplish this, the Trail Partners have each agreed to join as new members of the RRDC. A resolution was approved by the Board that would allow the Rutherford County Board of Commissioners to become members of the RRDC.
- A joint cooperation agreement was approved by the Board that would allow Rutherford County to become a part of a regional housing consortium. The proposed consortium would consist of the four counties and 23 towns representing the Isothermal Region in western North Carolina.
- As recommended by the County's Planning Commission, the Board adopted North Carolina General Statutes 160D Amendments to the Rutherford County planning documents which included Historic Preservation Commission Ordinance, Planning Commission Ordinance, Subdivision Ordinance and Mobile Home Park Ordinance.
- The Board entered into contract with Wampler Eanes Appraisal Group, Ltd. to complete the 2023 Rutherford County General Appraisal.



- The Board approved a resolution authorizing the County Manager, working with the County Attorney, to negotiate the terms and conditions of an agreement to transfer, convey and assign all County ownership interest in and to the gravity sewer collection system located within the Village of Chimney Rock to the Village of Chimney Rock (pictured left).
- The Board approved a local cash grant for use as the qualifying 5% local cash match required by the Rural Economic Development Division Rural Grants Building Reuse Grant in support of an existing industrial project, code named Project Cavill, considering an expansion in Rutherford County.
- Rutherford County is eligible to receive funding from the Coronavirus State and Local Fiscal Recovery Funds of H.R. 1319 American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (CSLRF) directly from the US Treasury Department currently estimated in the total amount of \$13,019,597. The first tranche has been received and the second one will be received in 12 months following the first.
- The Board approved the low bid of Site Development Corporation in the amount of \$673,755 for the construction of a lateral expansion of the Rutherford County Central Facility C&D Landfill.



- The Board approved an exemption per NCGS 143-64.32 for the professional engineering services outlined in a proposal from Odom Engineering, PLLC for the RS Middle School 1925 Building Redevelopment (Conceptual Phase). The Engineer will provide site measurements, data collection and CAD Drawings of existing building(s) in addition to structural inspection, conceptual layout with two revisions and construction cost estimates. These professional engineering services are required to properly evaluate the integrity of the facility and determine if a future phase of construction plans is suitable.
- Carolina Community Broadband Alliance (CCBA) has plans to expand educational and economic opportunities in Rutherford County by increasing access to affordable and fast internet in rural communities in Rutherford County. A tower has been constructed at Sunshine Elementary School. This is the first of seven more towers that are planned with four on additional school property and three located at convenience centers.
- The Board approved a request for 12 additional positions for EMS to staff two 24/7 ambulances that previously had been provided by the two rescue squads in Rutherford County. THERFORD COUNTY Hickory Nut Gorge EMS and Rescue and Rutherford County Rescue ceased operations in October of 2021. The two additional ambulances that Rutherford County EMS will be adding will be at the paramedic level which is a higher level of service than what was pro-



vided previously by the rescue squads. The changes were implemented through projected additional billable revenue and reallocating funds that were originally appropriated to the rescue squads.

• A 4% COLA increase for County employees, along with the restoration of the 1.75% 401K contribution for non LEO full-time employees previously removed during the recession, for a total of 5% 401K County contribution, was approved to be effective in the December 2021 payroll. The County Commissioners would be exempt from the 4% increase.



- A grant was approved for an industrial development grant for a manufacturing operation considering locating in Rutherford County which is code named Project River Ridge. The company commits to invest at least \$50 million and to create more than 300 jobs within the first five years.
- Candidate filing period for the 2022 elections began on December 6, 2021. **Pictured left to right,** filing for re-election, is Commissioners Michael Benfield, Bryan King and Alan Toney at the Rutherford County Board of Elections Office.

Photo compliments of Scott Carpenter, Daily Courier



- County Manager Steve Garrison participated in the 2021 Celebration of the Arts, exhibiting a few of his amazing pieces alongside many exceptional artisans of Rutherford County. He has a particular talent for drawing life-like animals, and his masterful painting, 'Snow Leopard', won first place. Congratulations, Steve.
- August 2021 Mayors/Managers
 Quarterly Meeting (pictured below)



Commissioner Bryan King spoke at the 76th Annual Basil Whitener Breakfast on December 18, 2021 held at Copper Penny Grill in Forest City. Basil Whitener was a member of the U.S. House of Representatives for North Carolina's 11th District beginning in 1941. While Whitener was a Democrat, the breakfast was a bipartisan event that brought officials and others together regardless of political affiliation.

Contributed photo



Finance

The Finance Office had a busy year supporting the County Departments and Management. The Finance Department received the Certificate of Achievement for Financial Excellence in Financial Reporting this November for the 2020 Comprehensive Annual Financial Report (CAFR). This was the thirty-second consecutive year the office has received this prestigious award and has submitted this year's CAFR for consideration. (**Pictured below left to right back row:** Frank Schaffer, Angela Ezell, Holly Keever and Wendy Hardin; **left to right front row:** Chairman Bryan King and Director Paula Roach)



The 2021 annual audit has been completed for the County and the Tourism Development Authority.

In 2021, the office processed almost 23,000 invoices for departments and payroll for over 650 employees during the year.

The Finance Office continues to work closely with Public Works/ Planning to update Vehicle Replacement and Capital Facility Plans. Our team has also had additional responsibilities as a result of COVID-19 – FEMA reimbursements, Coronavirus Relief Fund reporting and other programs as a result of the CARES Act, and most recently funds related to the American Rescue Plan.

With a small team of only five employees, the director is quite proud of her team's professionalism, hard work and dedication they contribute to the office each day.

The Grinch made a visit to the County Administration Offices right before Christmas!









Fire Marshal/Emergency Management



Rutherford County Fire Marshal Frankie Hamrick and staff battled several fires this year, including a fire on Shumont Mountain, bordering Buncombe County. Approximately three acres burned in Rutherford County,

but thanks to the Forest Service and multiple agencies from Rutherford and Buncombe Counties, the fire was

contained (pictured right emergency helicopter at scene of fire).



Fire Marshal Frankie Hamrick dressed up as Santa and pictured dancing to "Santa Claus is Coming to Town"!





North Carolina's Pilot Mountain November Wildfire

(Photo compliments of Neil Stanfield)



Human Resources

From the pen of Director Debra Conner:

2021 continued to be a busy and productive year for Human Resources. Many hours were spent on creating and implementing policies for Covid 19 and constantly viewing changes being made by the CDC, DHHS, and the Governor's office. Offices have opened back to the public and running as close to a normal routine as possible. HR staff continues to work hand in hand with the Foothills Health District to ensure we stay on top of Covid protocols. HR continues to monitor OSHA regulations regarding establishing ETS plans. We are waiting on a final rule from the Courts regarding vaccine/testing mandates.

Staffing has been hard this year with unemployment benefits being extended, attracting someone into the workplace has been a challenge. I am proud of the efforts of HR and the department heads to recruit and retain our current staff.

Additional duties included:

- Navigated and worked through a new and very busy Employment Security Commission web portal. This seemed to change constantly throughout the year.
- Conducted in-person interviews with every participant spaced six feet apart and the areas cleaned after each interview. Covid screenings were held prior to the applicant coming into the building.
- Attended virtual meetings for JCPC and other committees.
- Entered payroll information for over 650 employees each month.
- Restructured orientation process.
- Completed 4% COLA increase that implemented December 2021
- Increased 401k employer contribution to 5% for all full-time employees.
- Implemented Longevity pay November 2021.
- Performance reviews for all departments were completed.
- Conducted 2022 United Way Campaign.
- HR staff have worked hard to scan old files and new ones as they are created.
- Continue to attend yearly training for Personnel Law, FMLA, FLSA, and other functions that impact the services provided by the department although, this year looked a little different as we attended webinars and virtual trainings.
- Constantly joined webinars on the ever changing rules for Covid19 monitoring.

HR hosted the below in 2021:

- Flu vaccine clinic
- Mammogram Day
- 401k seminars online
- Tenure Award Program
- Colonial open enrollment
- State Health Plan enrollment
- Delta Dental open enrollment
- CEC open enrollment
- United Way Campaign

Rutherford County is extremely lucky to have great department heads. We are thankful for your hard work and dedication to the County. We would like to extend congratulations to:

Richard Lawson named Revenue Director in January, 2021.

Our 2021 retirees:

- John Carroll (DSS)
- Teresa Reynolds (DSS)
- Mary McCabe (DSS)
- Judy Ford (DSS)
- Angela Turner (Library)
- Danny Flynn (Revenue)
- Jeanette Bosgra (Finance)
- David Cook (Sheriff's Office)
- Eric Hester (Sheriff's Office)

The Human Resource Department was recognized by Josh Dobson, NCDOL, for 17 years of Safety.

(Director Debra Conner and Analyst Brooke Watson pictured below.)



CONGRATULATIONS AND THANK YOU TO OUR 2021 TENURE RECIPEINTS

(Photos on following page)

5 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT	
	Jennifer Valdez	Communications	
	Malikka Hutchins	Communications	
	Cody Keck Scott Moore	Animal Control Building Maintenance	
	Jessica Keever	EDC	
	Chris Gulledge	EMS	
	Kevin Waldrop	EMS	
	Terri Carswell	EMS	
	Frankie Hamrick	Fire Marshal	
	Joey Turrubiarte	Inspections	
	Susan Laney	Library	
	David McEntyre Caleb Buitron	Sheriff Sheriff	
	Joseph McComas	Sheriff	
	Paul Mitchell	Sheriff	
	Ryan Bailey	Sheriff	
	Kimber Dover-Jackson	Social Services	
	Kim Bailey	Social Services	
	Rhonda Collins	Social Services	
	Ronyal Reep	Social Services	
	Sarah Miller	Social Services	
	Whitney Hardin	Social Services	
	Johnny Garland	Solid Waste	
	Don Cason	Tourism Development	
	Resa Thompson	Veterans	
	Susan Hall	Veterans	
40.7/24.0	NAME	DED A DEMENT	
10 YEAR	NAME Maria Dhyman	DEPARTMENT Communications	
	Marie Rhymer William Greene	Detention	
	Todd McDaniel	Detention	
	Phillip Hill	EMS	
	Luke Rich	Garage	
	April Young	Library	
	Andrew Weathers	Sheriff	
	Brandy Morris	Social Services	
	Brona Causby	Social Services	
	Joann Woods	Social Services	
	Joe Hunt Mendy Hoyle	Social Services Social Services	
	Tammy Carter	Social Services	
	Jeffrey Hill	Transit	
	Mark Eitel	Transit	
15 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT	
	Roman Scruggs	Communications	
	Angela Rhymer	Elections	
	Katie Doherty	GIS	
	Ruth Sams	Inspections Senior Center	
	Barbara Hill Jimmy Upton	Sheriff	
	Janea Adkins	Social Services	
	Sheila Shelton	Social Services	
	Tiffany Dodd	Social Services	
	·		
20 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT	
	Tim Culler	Maintenance	
	Shannon Bradley	Revenue	
	Anitra McKinney Felicia Jefferies	Social Services Social Services	
	Felicia Jefferies Hope Bailey	Social Services Social Services	
	Lori Hall	Social Services	
	Marcia King	Social Services	
	Royanna Martin	Social Services	
	Victoria Hardin	Social Services	
25 YEAR	NAME	DEPARTMENT	
	Linda Greene	Revenue	
	Linda Greene Justin McCluney	Sheriff	
	Linda Greene Justin McCluney Warren Sprouse	Sheriff Sheriff	
	Linda Greene Justin McCluney	Sheriff	

Human Resources continued









Information Technology

Information Technology worked on a variety of projects this year. We completed software, hardware and infrastructure upgrades, as well as installing new equipment in our server rooms and many departments while providing support for all county employees.

Below are a few of the highlights from 2021:

- Successfully implemented Work from Home program during Covid for employees to be able to do their jobs completely from home while out sick or quarantining at DSS.
- Continuing in depth meetings for the transition to new Building Inspections software which should be live around July 2022.
- In the process of deploying a new Helpdesk ticketing system called BossDesk, and Cisco DUO Security. DUO is a 2 Factor authentication software that will provide an additional layer of security for anyone accessing County resources.
- Performed upgrades to the operating systems of our existing server infrastructure and upgraded the hardware components.
- Upgraded software applications for departments.
- Upgraded our desktop virtual environments to provide more resources for the user's virtual desktop experience.
- Desktop support migrated 99% of the user base to our new GRID desktop environment using Windows 10 b1809 LTSC.
- Deployed monitoring software for the virtual environments that will provide a more indepth view to the virtual infrastructure.
- Worked with vendor to facilitate deployment and training of the new software for our Public Safety departments.
- Performed software patches and updates as needed on all computers and laptops.
- Prepared and auctioned several lots of decommissioned equipment on GovDeals.
- Added additional cameras in several locations.
- Completed 5491 SysAid tickets.

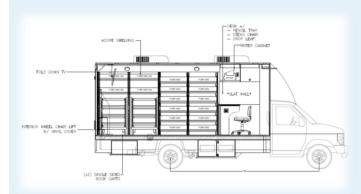


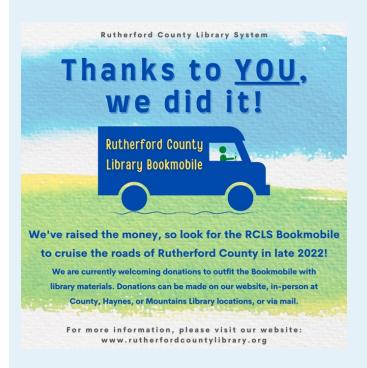


Library

Rutherford County Commissions New Bookmobile

Thanks to the receipt of federal and state grants, and generous donations from local community partners and many individual donors, a brand-new bookmobile has been ordered from Matthews Specialty Vehicles in Greensboro, NC, in order to expand library services throughout Rutherford County. Local administrators are hopeful the bookmobile will be completed and ready to hit the roads across our area by late 2022 or early 2023.





Summer Reading

The theme for Summer Reading 2021 was "Tails & Tales." Library staff went to 5 different locations weekly for 6 weeks, making 30 programming stops and including hundreds of participants. This year we had 102 completed children's reading logs turned in at the end of the summer, with 94,780 total minutes read.



Close to 20 adults submitted Blackout Tails & Tales Tic-Tac-Toe boards, cumulatively reading over 150 books in 42 days.



In 2021 the Library System had two employees move onto other pursuits. Angie Turner, Mountains Branch Library Associate, retired in late November after 17 years of service, and Brianna Robertson left her part-time position at County Library to become a full-time employ-

ee with Mooneyham Library in Forest City. The Library System was able to gain three new employees: Stephany Gutierrez took the part-time position of Bilingual Services Library Associate, Angelo Parks filled the vacant part-time position at County Library, and Jennifer Heaslip took on the Mountains Branch Associate position. Please join us in wishing our former coworkers all the best in their new endeavors, and extending a warmest welcome our newest staff members!



Library continued



The year saw library programming resume at all three RCLS locations. From crafts to cooking demonstrations, STEM workshops and board game days, County, Haynes Branch, and Mountains Branch all welcomed socially-distant small groups back into the buildings for the opportunity to learn new things. Particularly popular this year were the "Sherlock Holmes Month of Mystery" series at County Library in October, our annual Halloween bash, "Dinovember" workshops at County in November, and Maria's cooking demonstrations at Mountains Branch. Patrons and community members can look forward to even more programs as we hit 2022, including special guests, events specifically for young adults, and activities focused on healthy living.

At the beginning of 2021, several members of the library staff assisted with the county's COVID response by answering phones for the local COVID helpline for almost a month. When the first COVID vaccines became available, five full-time library staff members helped residents register to get their names on the list to receive a first dosage. Library staff averaged between 200 and 300 calls per day while answering the COVID helpline.

StoryWalk constructed at Kiwanis Park in Rutherfordton – In a joint partnership between Rutherford County Library System and the Norris Public Library in Rutherfordton, a StoryWalk was built this year at the recently renovated Kiwanis Park in Rutherfordton. The StoryWalk encourages both family literacy and physical activity by posting pages from an illustrated children's book along a path or walking trail. Families walk along the trail, reading a page at a time together, and interacting with the story and with each other. The Kiwanis Park StoryWalk would not be possible without the considerable generosity of our partners, Rutherford Regional Health System, Eaton Corporation, and the Town of Rutherfordton.



Public Works and Planning

As much as I'd hoped to begin this document describing the impacts of a post-COVID world in business and construction, we are not there yet unfortunately. Going on two years now, we as a society are still experiencing severe labor and material shortages, spiked prices for those commodities that are available and so many more challenges in addition to new ones. Many business and management offices have discovered the value of telework and productivity with folks physically away from the office, which has allowed many families to relocate into rural Western NC, placing a microscope on the lack of available housing inventory in our communities. Our society continues to adapt our behaviors of social distancing and mask-wearing to protect others from likely spread. Despite so many parts of our world which seemed to stop for many people, it only increased the responsibilities of this department, and our lives remain busier than ever. Custodians' roles have grown, permits and new addresses increased, land development increased, County services continue full steam ahead and gaining momentum, and our department continues to meet these needs and serve others. In the face of it all, here are some of our department highlights from the past year:

- Web version of the new Addressing system went live for other county departments and government agencies.
- Completed the map service for the new Building Inspections software currently under development for 2022 implementation.
- Continuing to work on updating the 1991 Addressing and Road Sign Ordinance.
- As the NC Property Mappers Education Chairman, Katie in GIS completed a successful Mapping School for all local government land records employees statewide in Clemmons this year. Also received a nomination for Mapper of the Year, 2021.
- Expanded the part-time staff for road sign maintenance and library custodians.
- GIS Department volunteered as a beta county for the Municipal Annexation Pilot Project for the Secretary of State's Land Records office.
- Executed Nationwide NextGen911 project.
- Annually rotation of updating fire district maps
- Welcomed new staff members Jimmy Sprouse (Operations Manager) and Catina Brown (Custodian).
- Sold County-owned Queens Gap lots.
- Adopted a resolution with the Village of Chimney Rock to transfer the wastewater collections system.
- Amended all planning related ordinances for State directed updates of NCGS 160D.
- Continued installation of energy saving HVAC controls in County facilities.
- Guided development of a number of startup RV parks.
- Administered farm development.
- Oversaw the Gateway West Commercial Park development.
- Managed the County Walking Trail improvements (pictured right).
- Worked with engineer and contractor to improve roof access on the Courthouse.
- Designed and began construction for the Transit facility remod-
- Roof replacement of the County's Administration Building
- the Courthouse
- Boiler replacement at



Continue upgrading lighting to energy conserving LED throughout facilities



Young's Mountain Hiking Trail ribbon cutting and opening ceremony was held Wednesday, April 21, 2021. Pictured above: Project Manager Aubrey Clay and Commissioner David Hunt on the far right. Jill Miracle, RHI, cutting the ribbon, and joined by several other citizens and leaders

in the County. The ceremony was hosted by Conserving Caroli-

 Replaced the generator and Installed Bay heaters at the EMS Station 2.

- Replaced HVAC gas-pack units at Veterans
- Developed floor plans for a 4th Courtroom
- Planned and organized capital improvements for all county owned facilities.
- Facilitated NCARTS Grassroots Grant Program for Rutherford County.
- Prepared for and facilitated monthly Planning Commission Meetings.
- Katie Doherty is NCPMA Mapper of the Year 2021. Congratulations, Katie (pictured right)!

Actively participating in:

- Rutherford County's Transportation Planning process.
- Isothermal Regional CTP process
- Involved in Rutherford County's Transportation Advocacy Planning.
- Construction planning of 221 By-pass around Rutherfordton
- Actively advocating for Hwy 74 to become Interstate



This is just a snapshot of some of our significant accomplishments this year in addition to the daily routine of Planning, GIS, Maintenance, Garage, E911 Addressing, Groundskeeping and more. It is our privilege to serve Rutherford County and pray that each of our colleagues, families and citizens are blessed with a joyful new year!

Director Danny Searcy



Register of Deeds

New services were offered in January 2021 by the ROD office to the citizens of Rutherford County.

- Property Check is an alert system that sends notifications when a document is recorded in our office in a certain name. Citizens can go to the Register of Deeds home page on the county website and find the information to sign up. This service is free to use and is very easy to maneuver through.
- Permitium is an online vital records request system. Copies of Rutherford County birth certificates, death certificates and marriage licenses are available for purchase. This system allows individuals the convenience of ordering the record(s), paying with a credit or debit card, and having the record mailed out.

These services have been a huge success so far and we are glad to be able to offer them.

We welcomed a new employee in September, Lindsey Bostic (pictured on following page). She is married to Tyler and has a son, Riley. We are glad to have her onboard with us.

We replaced old plat cabinets over the summer with smaller more efficient cabinets. The Easi File holds up to 1,200 plats that hang within the enclosure (pictured right). It is such a simple and easy cabinet to use and gives quick access to a needed plat by rotating the bars.

Throughout the year, the staff has continued to manually enter older data into the system. We currently have birth records indexed back to 1974, death records back to 1974 and marriage records back to 1981. Once the marriages get to 1974, the online vital records data will match the online data for land records. This project will continue for years until all vital records are indexed in the system.

We will be offering a new plat recording service next year and we will have some training in January. We look forward to working with the Planning Department, the review officers and local surveyors. More information on this service will be out next year.

The Register attended virtual department head meetings, virtual NCARD and NC Archives workshops, and a 3-day virtual conference that was offered by PRIA. The Register also attended several virtual district meetings and virtual notary public work-



shops. The Register enjoyed the NCARD annual conference since it was in person this fall and it was held in Pinehurst, NC.

Vital Records in Raleigh will be rolling out a new electronic death certificate program beginning January 3, 2022, so we have attended many virtual training classes this year. This new program aims to eliminate paper copies of death certificates being taken to different offices for necessary information. This program plans to have all parties submit their information by electronic means only. It is a BIG change for all parties and many issues still need to be worked out for this transition to be smooth. Funeral homes, health departments, vital records and ROD offices throughout NC will continue to work together on this challenging new program.

Register of Deeds continued



Lindsey Bostic

The ROD office maintains all vital records for the county. The records processed and filed this year are as follows:

- Birth Certificates –176
- Death Certificates 932
- Marriage Licenses Issued- 411

All of the accomplishments in the ROD office are made possible by having a great staff to work with daily. Whether working together as a group or individually, the girls always get the job done in a timely manner.

The Register gives many thanks to (L-R) Tina, Lindsey, Christina for their hard work and dedication to the ROD office (pictured below).



WE WISH EVERYONE A MERRY CHRISTMAS AND A HAPPY NEW YEAR

Senior Center

The Senior Center is so excited to be recertified as a "Senior Center of Excellence" this year. We are proud to say that we have remained a Center of Excellence for 15 years.

The Senior Center received numerous grants and funding sources this year:

- \$326,055 Block Grant to assist with Home Delivered Meals, Congregate Meals, Transportation, and Senior Center Operations.
- \$95,000 from NC DOT to allow the Senior Center to contract with Rutherford County Transit to continue providing transportation for seniors in Rutherford County to the Senior Center. During the pandemic, Transit delivered meals to those who couldn't drive to the Center to pick up meals.
- Two grants from RHI Legacy Foundation (\$50,000 for Home-Delivered Meals and \$37,500 to save the Rutherford County Walking Trail).
- \$27,438 from United Way of Rutherford County to help supplement Home Delivered Meals.
- \$25,000 total from Dogwood Health Trust to supplement Home Delivered Meal Clients with breakfast and snack foods (\$20,000), and repair the patio adjacent to the dining room (\$5,000).
- \$6,678 from NC (DOI) Department of Insurance for (SHIIP) Senior Health Insurance Information Program.
- \$6,010 from NC DOI for (MIPPA) Medicare Improvements for Patients and Providers Act.
- \$2,000 Gateway Wellness Grant to be used for anything that helps us with our mission.
- \$4,950 Meals on Wheels of NC grant to use for kitchen needs.

While the Senior Center was closed during the pandemic, some renovations were completed. Flooring was replaced in two rooms, removal of old wall paper throughout the center and added fresh paint throughout, and our mission statement was added to the freshly painted wall in the lobby (before and after pics - right).

The Senior Center held a "Grand Re-Opening and Ribbon Cutting Cere-

mony for the walking trail on November 2. This project was made possible by RHI Legacy Foundation with a grant award of \$37,500 for "Save the Rutherford County Walking Trail". The trail was resurfaced and drainage issues repaired. We received a large donation from Pat Nanney to dedicate one of the bridges in his wife's (Lucille) memory. We also held a couple of fund raisers





Ribbon-cutting marks 'grand re-opening' of walking trail



in order to further the project. We raised a total of \$815 of our \$2,000 goal. This has allowed us to purchase signage, a pet waste station, and trash cans to place throughout the trail (pictured left).

Senior Games: We had 63 participants with both virtual and live events due to COVID restrictions. A special shout out to Stephen Matheny and Mike Daniel for representing Rutherford County in the 2021 State Wide Senior Games in September where they both won gold medals in their age brackets.

We received and dispersed 50 sets of vouchers from the Seniors Farmers' Market Nutrition Program to eligible participants. These vouchers are valued at \$36 a set (total value \$1,800), to be used at the Farmer's Market.

We received \$598 for the purchase of fans from the Duke Energy Grant. Walmart was also very generous by giving us \$100 gift card in order to purchase more fans. We purchased a total of 39 fans in the summer, which were distributed to seniors 60 years of age and older who had a home situation where a threat to health and well-being existed.

SHIIP- Senior Health Insurance Information Program: We currently have two amazing SHIIP volunteers who spend countless hours helping Medicare Beneficiaries. There were 400 contacts made during the Medicare Part D annual election period. During the year of 2020, our SHIIP Counselors served 1,024 clients and saved them a total of \$834,723. A huge should out to Amideus Athougies and Lynn Reinhardt for all they do to help Medicare beneficiaries!

Our Partnership with Second Harvest Food Bank and the Commodity Supplement Food Program (CSFP) is still going strong. CSFP is a Federal program administered by the NC Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services Food Distribution Division for NC residents age 60 and older. The food items are provided by USDA. The program provides a monthly box of food designed to supplement the nutritional needs of low-income senior citizens. This has been a very successful program. We are distributing 135 boxes per month, and 1,620 food boxes this year. We have distributed 5,540 food boxes to low-income seniors who live in Rutherford County since July of 2018.

Home-Delivered Meals

43,799 meals served 178 daily average meals served 287 different participants were served throughout the year



Congregate Meals

66,711 meals served (see breakdown below)

• Lunches served in dining room: 1,835

Lunches served through the drive-thru line: 48,334

• Lunches served at Ellenboro Meal Site: 474

Lunches delivered to Senior Complexes: 10,261

Lunches delivered by Transit: 5,807

Daily average meals served: 271
Different participants served throughout the year: 711



Sheriff's Office

The Sheriff's Office held 'Shop with a Cop" event December 2021.



Contributed Photo

911 Communications



We have been very fortunate this past year with an amazing 911 staff. These are our true *First Responders*. We thank each employee of our department for answering the call to duty! Year to date we have answered over 150,120 calls. Of those, 45,000 were 911 Emergency calls-forservice. Listed below are some of our highlights of 2021. We look forward to 2022!

~Capt. Dotson

F/Sgt. Roman Scruggs received his Advanced Certificate!



911 Communications continued



Happy 1 Year Anniversary!
We are so thankful for this new space.



Regional One, thank you for always supporting our staff on some of the darkest days!



Talent is among us!

Great job crews!

Social Services

Rutherford County DSS Foster Care & Adoption

Foster Home Recruitment & Licensing Specialists, Angela Black and Jovan Baccus (pictured), have been hitting the streets of Rutherford County in 2021 to promote the ongoing need for foster and adoptive families in Rutherford County. They have gained the support of many small business owners, who have gladly accepted a promotional shirt and agreed to proudly wear it in the community to advertise the ongoing need for foster and adoptive homes in Rutherford County. As a token of appreciation to these small business owners, they are listed below and

showcased on the <u>Rutherford County DSS Foster</u> <u>Care & Adoption Facebook</u> page, and we thank them for their support.

- Custom Creations Upholstery
- The Nutrition Hub
- Invigorate Skincare Solutions
- Rutherford Family Acupuncture
- Amp Nutrition
- Hair Kutters Barber & Style
- Rev It Up Nutrition
- Exodus Custom Bikes
- Black Diamond Barber & Styling shop
- Prestige Therapeutic Massage
- Harrill & Harrill Design Co.
- Pampered Pets
- Mary Beth McKinney, a local Scentsy representative, worked with her friends and customers to provide 68 Easter baskets for children and youth in foster care this past Easter (pictured left).



 Judy Ford retired February 2021 (pictured below).



- May 2021 was National Foster Care Month. We are grateful for every foster family and appreciate all they do to support the foster children in their care. If you are interested in learning how you can support Rutherford County DSS Foster Care, please contact Angel Black at angela.black@rutherfordcountync.gov or Jovan Baccus at jovan.baccus@rutherfordcountync.gov.
- Kathy McCabe retired June 2021 (pictured right).



Social Services continued

Director John Carroll retired September 2021



Spook-tacular Office Door Winners



Madison Hartman – Foster Care



Pam Rhom - Adult Medicaid



Mendy Hoyle - FNS



Amber Cox - Foster Care

Soil and Water

- \$54,000 in soil erosion BMPs on Rutherford County Farms
- \$30,000 to improve water accessibility for Rutherford County Farms
- All education classes remained on Zoom





Solid Waste

Happenings at the landfill:

- Hauling dirt and covering old C&D
- Sowing grass and putting out straw
- Contractors are working on the new C&D to extend the present one
- Gas wells have been read quarterly
- Completed spring and fall watering testing

Recycling being dumped in Bay 1 of Transfer Station



Loader operating in Transfer Station clearing Bay Floor



Metal dumped at metal pile.



Solid Waste continued

Electronics Recycling



View of Lateral C & D Expansion Project



- New signs to assist litter officers stop trash being left outside the gate.
- Replaced ramp, floor and cylinder on Compactor at Gilkey.
- Replaced motor and pump on compactor at Hollis.
- Replaced cylinder on compactor at Shiloh.
- Replaced well pump at Green Hill.



Tourism

2021 has been a very busy year for the TDA. With an increase in occupancy tax by 73% overall, business has been strong leading to many successes within the TDA.

Promote Tourism Master Plan Success and Collaboration:

Starting out at the end of January, Chimney Rock Village held their Streetscape Phase I Groundbreaking. Following this groundbreaking there have been a number of ribbon cuttings and groundbreakings for a number of Rutherford Bound projects. The first ribbon cutting held was in February for the new and improved Kiwanis Park in Rutherfordton. This ribbon cutting set the precedence for all other towns working on their Phase I projects. The TDA has also facilitated the Lake Lure Boardwalk and Washburn Marina, The Spindale Streetscape Phase I, and the Chimney Rock Streetscape Phase I ribbon cuttings, as well as the Groundbreaking for The Fac-



tory at Kidsenses. We continue to work closely with our marketing group based in Charlotte, The Agency. The Agency's focus is to promote Rutherford Bound and it's cause to the citizens of Rutherford County and surrounding areas. The Agency manages the campaign's social media and facilitates our current television broadcast contract with Northland Communications and our billboard advertisement with Headrick Outdoor Media. Destination by Design continues to be the TDA's greatest asset in moving Rutherford Bound and it's many capital projects forward. Their team works closely with each town, and project lead, to create site plans, grant opportunities, etc. Destination by Design also runs the main Rutherford Bound webpage where detailed descriptions of each project are continuously updated. The TDA, its Strategic Plan Committee, Board, Tourism Advisory Committee, and Rutherford Bound Partners are continuously working to make Rutherford County a better place to live, work and play, with many great things planned for 2022. To follow updates for Rutherford Bound, and to view a complete list of projects, you can follow us at RutherfordBound.com

Tourism Plan Implementation and Funding:

The Community Foundation of Henderson County continues to serve as Rutherford Bound's 501c3. The Community Foundation focuses on community oriented organizations and their causes to promote the successful fund management of campaigns such as ours. There is a public donation portal at RutherfordBound.com where donors are able to donate any dollar amount they choose, as well as choose which specific project they would like their donation to be applied to. The TDA is beginning to install donation kiosks at all Rutherford Bound project sites that will provide individuals with a QR code that takes them straight to the website to help facilitate the donation process.



Maximize Tourism Occupancy Tax Receipts:



The tourism occupancy tax receipts continue to exceed prior year. Even through the COVID-19 pandemic, tourism to Rutherford County continues to remain steady and even flourish. In 2021, TDA continued its work with the Short Term Rental (STR) monitoring program, which identifies all properties that are promoting themselves for overnight lodging. (The name of the program is STR Helper, which was bought out by Host Compliance. The transition took place in early 2020.) The data provided by this program is

used to help individuals and companies become compliant. The TDA continues to implement and monitor the STR program to keep compliance at a high level, and is doing further research on how to potentially monitor individual STR tax revenue. As we go into 2022, the TDA will continue to work closely with the Rutherford County Finance and Revenue Departments to ensure we are monitoring STR compliance to the best of our ability.

<u>Continue to Grow and Develop Relationships with County, Town, State Representative, and Stakeholders:</u>

The TDA values the time and relationships it has with the County Commissioners, municipalities, Visit NC, State Legislation, and stakeholders. Throughout the continuation of the pandemic, many conferences and meetings took place virtually. The TDA attended meetings in person, when possible, and continued to present a quarterly update to the County Commissioners. The TDA held two coffee talks in person. One in the spring and one in early December. We look forward to 2022 and the opportunity to attend more conferences and meetings in person.

<u>Implement TDA Marketing Plan:</u>

Through 2021, the TDA continued their contract with The Agency Marketing Group. In early 2021, the TDA board approved the 2021 marketing plan to kick off beginning in the spring. The market-



ing plan included a revised campaign to speak to "why' people should come to Rutherford County and to speak to the experience that they will have when they visit here. The marketing plan also included continued use of commercials, new social media content and the use of revised marketing and internal logos. There was also the implementation of a new ad design for 2021. In conjunction with the 2021 marketing plan, the 2021 annual Rutherford County travel guide was produced and released in May. This travel guide was honored with a top award from the North Carolina Travel Industry Association (NCTIA). The award won was the Gold Marketing Achievement Award in the Leisure Marketing category. As of December, the TDA has distributed close to 30,000 travel guides. This is record distribution and is leading to an even earlier release for the 2022 guide. Also, in 2021, the TDA with the assistance of The Agency, worked with Simpleview to relaunch the visitor website, www.VisitNCSmallTowns.com. The website relaunched in mid-November and created a more user friendly experience.

Hospitality Program for Rutherford County:

In 2018, the TDA purchased and implemented A2D Tourism Awareness Program. The program educated the community on Rutherford County tourism assets and benefits and was of primary benefit during the World Equestrian Games. In 2020, the TDA decided to take a look at the program and begin working with Isothermal Community College for a potential partnership for the program. The TDA plans to hold a future meeting, with Isothermal Community College to brainstorm ideas and future use of the A2D program.

Implement Trails and Itinerary Program:

In 2021, the TDA implemented a new committee known as the Trail Committee. This committee includes members of the TDA Board, members of the TDA staff, RHI Legacy, Conserving Carolinas, Carolinas Climbers Conservation, ROC, Chimney Rock State Park, Hickory Nut Gorge Chamber, Destination by Design, and a few other members that join the discussion as appropriate. This group has worked together to comprise a housing document of all trails in Rutherford County that are current, in the works, or future options. Destination by Design has worked to complete a GIS map of all of these trails and is guiding the



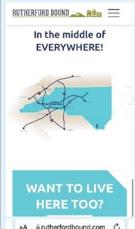
group on grants to apply for in the upcoming year. There are plans for several new trails to break ground in 2022 with two of those being additional paddle trail access areas on 221 and 221A. These paddle trail access points have been made possible by grant funding from RHI Legacy, Duke Energy, and Natural Water Resources. The TDA will be spending 2022 gearing up for 2023, which has already been deemed "the year of the trail". The TDAs goal is to ensure that all trails are in the spotlight for Rutherford County, and that a way is made for future trails in Rutherford County.

Grow Community Programs/Events:

With the pandemic still in full swing, and a second variant of COVID-19, many events were canceled and/or post-poned across the County, in 2021. Due to this, the TDA saw a decrease in grant applications throughout the calendar year. In 2021, the TDA approved and funded 6 grants for a total of \$15,500. A big event for 2021 was the Cycle NC Mountain Ride, hosted in Forest City. This was a three-day event with Rutherford County seeing 333 cyclists, along with their family from 41 NC Counties and 13 states. Another big event that the TDA hosted was the Chimney Rock Boulder's trail Ribbon Cutting November 17th. TDA contributed funds to this project in the 2021 calendar year.

CYCLE

Relocate to Rutherford County:



In 2020, the Rutherford County RetireNC committee decided to officially change the name of this committee to "Relocate to Rutherford". The broader program would benefit and recruit not only retirees, but young families and workforce as well. Given the new scope of the program, the group agreed that there needs to be a partnership in this program with many other county entities. Those would include the Chambers of Commerce, Hospital, School District, Businesses, Realtors, etc. In mid-2021, the new and expanded group came together. After much deliberation, and keeping in mind the current housing shortage at hand, the group decided unanimously to move forward with creating a landing page for Relocate to Rutherford within the Rutherford Bound existing website. In addition to this, the group decided to hold off on actively recruiting individuals and families to move to Rutherford County for the time being. There are plans to reevaluate in late spring/early summer of 2022.

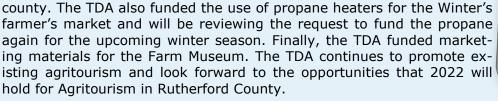
County-Wide Wayfinding Monitoring Program/Kiosks:



Installation of all Wayfinding signs has been completed. The program will now only consist of a once a year check on the county signs that the TDA will be responsible for maintaining and replacing if needed in the small municipalities while the larger municipalities are responsible for their own maintenance. As 2021 wraps up, the TDA is in the process of planning artwork and finalizing locations of kiosk directing locals and visitors to Rutherfordbound.com to learn about all of the improvements that they are seeing before them. So far, only one kiosk has been installed and that is in Chimney Rock Village. There are plans for 14 additional kiosks to be installed across the county. The goal for installation of these kiosks is early 2022.

Research and Develop Rutherford County Agri-Tourism Program:

In 2021, the TDA continued to fund the Rutherford County's placement in the farm app. This app allows visitors to get to farms and artisans when they are visiting the





Enhance and Develop Welcome Center Presence in Lake Lure and Rutherfordton:

In 2021, staff at the Welcome Center greeted thousands of guests to our county. Although COVID-19 is still of great concern, guest traffic totals continue to rise. Rutherford County has an abundance of outdoor activities to offer, which is comforting to guests that are cautious but still want to get out and visit other areas. This year, Kayley Smith was promoted to Welcome Center Coordinator and we welcomed two new staff members to the Welcome Center. Hannah Crawford was hired as our full time Information Specialist and Chloe Vickers was hired as a part time Information Specialist. We also said farewell to Karen Tegen, (previously Project Manager & Welcome Center Manager) as she resigned to enjoy her well-deserved retirement. As a highly frequented place for tourism in our county, we at the TDA strive to retain a positive presence in our county.

Tourism continued

<u>Enhance and Develop Welcome Center continued:</u>

Just before the holiday season, the welcome center received some much needed updates such as new signage on the inside and new vinyl on the exterior doors. By staying up to date on tourism related information and retaining strong community relations, we are able to provide guests with accurate and relevant information when visiting.



<u>Rutherford County – Keep Rutherford County Beautiful:</u>



2021 was an exciting year for Keep Rutherford County Beautiful. In march, the recycle bot challenge took place with over 200 submissions. The KRCB committee initiated a new program called Certified Green Business and is gearing up for implementation. A logo was designed and different levels of sponsorship is being implemented. New yard signs began circulating throughout the county. Roxi the Raccoon, Jenna Bailey and Jess Kerr filmed a short spot for the NCDOT's use statewide urging people to join the Fall Litter Sweep. New t-shirts were designed and were made available for purchase along with new stickers. The KRCB marketing team implemented a new Instagram page, @KeepRCNCBeautiful. The website was renovated with new content. An application was submitted to Keep America Beautiful and was accepted. In the fall, the trash bowl was head. Republic waste management do-

nated bins and the manpower associated with placement, emptying, weighing, and picking up. The trash bowl ran alongside the NCDOT fall litter sweep and took place from September 11th-25th. Six local high schools competed with the winner of the trash bowl being Lake Lure Classical Academy. In the fall trash bowl, over 6000 pounds of trash were removed. To keep track or make donations, you can follow us at KeepRCNCBeautiful.org.

Provide TDA Staff with Education Opportunities:

The TDA staff has the ability to further their education opportunities through the attendance of conferences and classes that are held throughout the region. Throughout 2021, some conferences made the decision to cancel while others decided to move forward with a virtual setting, due to the continuation of the pandemic. Some events attended virtually included, DIY Tourism Marketing, and the VisitNC 365 Conference. The annual NCTTC Conference was held in person. Looking forward to 2022, the TDA continues to look for new learning opportunities.

Strive to Develop RCTDA to be one of the Leading Rural Tourism Development Organizations in the State of North Carolina:

Even with the affects that COVID-19 has left on Rutherford County, The TDA Board and staff are proud of their accomplishments in 2021 as things have begun to return to "normal". Rutherford County has come back stronger than before. We will continue to strive and grow our programs, and strive to be economically feasible in all that we do. With our focus on making Rutherford County Tourism the best that it can be, we want to be one of the leading rural tourism development organizations in the state of North Carolina.



Transportation Services

EMS

- EMS assisted in COVID vaccine clinics in the early part of 2021. We also managed resources during the COVID surge in July-September when almost all hospitals were on diversion due to bed and staffing shortages.
- EMS quickly responded to both rescue squads shutting down in October by obtaining approval to hire 12 new staff positions and 2 additional ambulances 24/7. We were also able to secure FEMA resources in the form of two temporary ambulances and crew members for the month of November to help with staffing shortages.
- Successfully completed and executed seven different contracts for Medicaid Managed Care that went into effect on July 1, 2021.
- We congratulated Dr. Guy Winker on his retirement as our Medical Director in June and welcomed Dr. Matthew Kramer as our new Medical Director in July.
- EMS was selected to be one of just a few rural counties in North Carolina to be a part of the Pediatric Emergency Care Coordinators through UNC Chapel Hill.
- EMS submitted their full system plan and agency renewal requests to the NC Office of EMS in August and received full license renewals.
- Worked with both the different middle schools and high schools to begin developing a strong athletic medical program for football in the fall.
- Hired 15 new full time employees and eight part time employees in 2021.
- Department-Wide Training: Crew Resource Management, handling death and dying, a Culture of Safety, neurological conditions and seizures, special equipment and situations, endocrine, Experience Anatomy, medical emergencies, ventilator training, immunological/hygiene, blood borne pathogens, HIPAA, ambulance operations, de-escalation skills and self-defense tactics, legal and ethical issues, trauma review (head injury, tourniquets, triage), and rescue awareness.
- Five of the administrative team also completed ICS-300 and ICS-400 classes
- EMS thoroughly enjoyed EMS Appreciation Week in May. Congratulations to Lucas Sane (pictured right) named Paramedic of the Year and to Paramedic Mike Fredell, Paramedic Cody Brackett, Paramedic Christian Sheldon, and EMT Ashley Downey for being selected for the Supervisors Awards.
- Sarah Hollandsworth and Cody Brackett were promoted to Level II Paramedics.
- EMS submitted three proposals for consideration under the American Recovery Funds for two new ambulances, power load stretcher system for all ambulances, and a new or renovated main EMS base. All of these requests are needs based on adding additional vehicles and personnel due to COVID-19 and both rescue squads shutting down.



Year End Statistics

Call Disposition Breakdown	Total
Transported No Lights/Siren	6,864
Patient Refused Evaluation/Care (Without Transport)	2,212
Cancelled (Prior to Arrival at Scene)	535
Cancelled on Scene/No Patient Found	456
Patient Evaluated, No Treatment/Transport Required	393
Transported Lights/Siren	300
Patient Treated, Released (AMA)	205
Patient Dead on Scene - No Resuscitation Attempted (Without Transport)	135
Assist, Public	78
Patient Treated, Transferred Care to Another EMS Professional	68
Cancelled (No Patient Contact)	67
Patient Dead on Scene - Resuscitation Attempted (Without Transport)	45
Standby - Public Safety, Fire, or EMS Operational Support Provided	22
Transported No Lights/Siren, Upgraded	21
Patient Dead on Scene - No Resuscitation Attempted (With Transport)	13
Patient Treated, Released (per protocol)	13
Patient Treated, Transferred Care to Another EMS Professional/Unit	10
Assist, Agency	6
Patient Dead on Scene - Resuscitation Attempted (With Transport)	6
Patient Treated, Transported by Law Enforcement	1
Total Calls for 2021	11,450

Transportation Services continued

EMD Complaint Report	# of Calls
Sick Person	1,716
Breathing Problem	1,327
Falls	1,225
Transfer/Interfacility/Palliative Care	1,210
Traffic Accident	1,068
Chest Pain (Non-Traumatic)	687
Unconscious/Fainting	524
Stroke/CVA	315
Heart Problems/AICD	293
Hemorrhage/Laceration	291
Overdose/Poisoning/Ingestion	290
Convulsions/Seizure	275
Medical Alarm	256
Cardiac Arrest/Death	255
Psychiatric Problem/Abnormal Behavior/Suicide Attempt	255
Diabetic Problem	252
Traumatic Injury	166
Unknown Problem/Person Down	165
Abdominal Pain/Problems	160
Allergic Reaction/Stings	124
No Other Appropriate Choice	120
Assault	92
Back Pain (Non-Traumatic)	61
Pregnancy/Childbirth	57
Stab/Gunshot Wound/Penetrating Trauma	52
Assist Invalid	41
Choking	38
Headache	28
Standby	21
Animal Bite	18
Burns/Explosion	16
Heat/Cold Exposure	12
Fire	9
EMS Special Service	7
Well Person Check	7
Pandemic/Epidemic/Outbreak	5
Eye Problem/Injury	4
Electrocution/Lightning	3
Altered Mental Status	2
Industrial Accident/Inaccessible Incident/Other Entrapments (nonvehicle)	2
Drowning/Diving/SCUBA Accident	1
Total Calls for 2021	11,450







B Shift celebrating Thanksgiving

Transportation Services continued



Director Kerry Giles and Operations Manager Kaleb Johnson working a COVID vaccine drive-thru clinic.



Supervisor Justin Moore getting the COVID vaccine



RUTHERFORD COUNTY

Emergency Medical Services

2021 EMS AWARDS

PARAMEDIC OF THE YEAR

Lucas Sane

ROOKIE OF THE YEAR

Nikki Morris

GOING THE EXTRA MILE

Renee Ruff

A SHIFT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Mike Fredell

B SHIFT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Cody Brackett

C SHIFT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Christian Sheldor

CONVALESCENT EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR

Ashley Downey

LOWEST PATIENT REFUSAL RATE

Mark Mosca

EXCELLENCE IN CHARTING

Greg Walker

SAFE DRIVING

Cody Brackett
Terri Carswell
Ashley Downey
Dustin Elliott
Michelle Elmore
Mike Fredell
Victoria Gordon
Chris Gulledge
Kelsea Hendrix
Byran Homesley
Marc Horne
Jessica Hoyle
Luke Jenkins
Kaleb Johnson
Bradley Lowe

Julian Mancipe
Carl McKnight
Justin Moore
Nikki Morris
Mark Mosca
Chris Pietrowski
Renee Ruff
Jordan Sane
Lucas Sane
Christian Sheldon
Kevin Waldrop
Greg Walker
Amanda Watson
Chris Way
Kayla Wynn

PERFECT ATTENDANCE

Terri Carswell
Sarah Hollandsworth
Luke Jenkins
Kaleb Johnson
Justin Moore
Renee Ruff
Greg Walker



TRANSIT

- Successfully implemented the MEDICAID Transformation in July using a Transportation Broker system.
- Recognized and Presented 21 drivers with Safe Driving Awards for 2020. These 21 drivers represented 84 cumulative years of safe driving.
- Took possession of a new 20' ADA equipped vehicle to replace another 20' vehicle that had reached NCDOT replacement mileage.
- Replaced all cameras and DVRs in all vehicles with new HD cameras and DVRs and increased number of cameras in each vehicle by two to have a total of six cameras per vehicle except the two minivans that still have two cameras.
- Received authorization and approval to convert 4 part-time driver positions to two full-time driver positions.
- Was awarded a \$25,000 Grant from RHI to provide free transportation to medical appointments, access to food, and access to other life sustaining needs.
- · COVID response:
 - Received \$385,084 in CARES funding to offset loss of revenue.
 - Transit was fortunate to provide uninterrupted transportation service during the COVID pandemic throughout the year due to the dedication of our employees.
 - Staff volunteered to assist Senior Center staff helping to prepare the meals for delivery during the pandemic.
 - Provided drivers on M-W-F to deliver meals to those that could not travel to the Senior Center to pick up their meals while the Senior Center closed.
 - Provided free transportation for anyone seeking a COVID test or to receive their vaccination from their home to the site and back home.
- Received our annual ROAP funding that had been suspended previous year.
- Monthly Safety Training this year included: Inclement Weather and Radio Procedures, Illegal Drug Use, General Security Awareness, Human Trafficking, Active Shooter Awareness training provided by Department Homeland Security, First Aid & CPR certification, Blood Borne Pathogens, RR Crossing, Sudden Brake Failure, Sudden Tire Blowout, Breakdown Procedures, ADA Sensitivity, Customer Service, Title VI, HIPAA Training, and Defensive Driving.
- Began the renovation of our current offices with increasing the size of kitchen/meeting room. new cabinets and countertops, new appliances, replacing of all flooring, ceiling tiles, new overhead insulation, and fresh paint.
- Provided free employment transportation to county residents going to work inside the county.
- Provided free transportation to anyone going for cancer treatments or needed a ride to the grocery store or food pantry. This included free transportation to citizens to Chase Corner Ministries for free food on every Wednesday.

Year End Statistics

	2021	2020
Total Miles	355,199	323,451
Total Trips	37,533	43,999
Total Unduplicated Passengers	660	735



Veteran Services

- The Veteran Services partnership program completed its fifth year, and continues to grow as we help serve the veterans of our county.
- Monthly socials have resumed the third Thursday of every month. We held our first two events outside and resumed our in office events in June. We would like to thank all of you who help us spread the word about the events!
- In February, the Rutherford County Veteran Service Office received a grant to provide protein boxes to our veterans on a monthly basis. This has been tremendously successful. Through this program, we provide 10 veterans and their families with a protein box each month that includes fresh meats.
- In September, we held our fifth annual End of Summer Bash. Veterans enjoyed pizza, pastas and desserts. The pizzas were donated by Little Caesars. Approximately 60 veterans were in attendance. Every veteran received a T-shirt and drawings were held for prizes donated by community businesses.
- American Legion 74 provided turkeys and hams for our Thanksgiving and Christmas meal boxes.
 They donate food each week to the food pantry. We have also had food donations from the DAR,
 Facebook, DAC, the Republican party of RC and Forrest Hunt Elementary. Thanks to all of our partners for all that you do to help us help veterans.

The State did not hold conferences due to the pandemic. Resa and Susan received their training

online to remain accredited through the NC Department of Military and Veteran Affairs.

 We had a wonderful Christmas party for veterans on December 7th. Approximately 100 attended and each veteran received a gift bag. Jordan Barnes from Senator Thom Tillis' office attended and presented staff with a letter of appreciation.

We continue to help veterans find and apply for benefits. Sometimes the road is long and hard to navigate, but we will not give up. So far in 2021, new claims including monthly pay and back pay are at 3.8 million dollars.

 In November, Adestiny Murray joined our staff as part-time clerical staff (pictured right).

Wreaths Across America event (pictured below)





County Manager Steve Garrison

County Commissioners
Bryan A. King, Chairman
Alan Toney, Vice Chairman
Michael Benfield, Commissioner
David Hunt, Commissioner
Greg Lovelace, Commissioner

<u>County Office</u> Hazel Haynes, Clerk to Board Kim Aldridge, Deputy Clerk Richard Williams, County Attorney

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