Rutherford Monthly

JUNE 2025

RUTHERFORD COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA

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

Animal Control Services



RUTHERFORD COUNTY
ANIMAL CONTROL SERVICES
OPERATED BY
Heart of the Foothills ANIMAL RESCUE



Please join us in celebrating the grand opening of the new Rutherford County Animal Control Facility with a ribbon cutting ceremony on:

Date: Monday, June 30, 2025
Time: 5:30 PM
Location: Rutherford County Animal Control Facility
545 Laurel Hill Drive, Rutherfordton, NC 28139

We are also proud to introduce Heart of the Foothills Animal Rescue and Director Karen Smith as the new managing entity for our new Animal Control Services. Come tour the facility and learn more about the critical services our team provides to the community. Light refreshments will be provided.

We look forward to seeing you there!

County Manager/Commissioners

The County Manager, commissioners, and staff actively participated in multiple productive telephone conferences and in-person meetings with the following individuals, departments, boards, and businesses:

- Community Health Council
- NCACC Call for County Managers
- Gatespring Zoom meeting
- Juvenile Crime Prevention Council
- Monthly Team Meetings with Department Heads
- June Board of Commissioners
- Board of Education
- Dogwood Health Trust
- Hurricane Helene Managers Virtual meeting
- Public Works and Planning Department
- Foothills Regional Commission
- Economic Development Board
- State Led Disaster Housing Task Force
- Pangaea Board
- Partners Board
- DSS Board
- Library Trustees
- Building Inspections
- Debris Removal Discussion
- Senior Center Advisory Board
- RC BOC Special Meeting for Fiscal Year 2025-2026 Budget
- Broad River Water Authority
- Board of Commissioners Agenda Review for July meeting

The June Board of Commissioners' meeting was held on June 2, 2025. The meeting was also livestreamed and can be seen by visiting the Rutherford County webpage at www.rutherfordcountync.gov.



The next Board of Commissioners' meeting will be held
Monday, July 7, 2025 at 6:00 pm.

County Manager/Commissioners continued

Highlights from the RC Board of Commissioners' June Agenda

Public Hearings

- **Resolution Approving Changes in Adjoining Service District Boundaries** presented by Fire Marshal Frankie Hamrick **(pictured right)**
- **Resolution Regarding the Abolition of the Service District Served by the Fairfield Mountains Volunteer Fire Department** presented by Fire Marshal Frankie Hamrick
- **Budget for Fiscal Year 2025-2026** presented by County Manager Steve Garrison **(pictured below)**







Commissioners/Appointments

- **Recognition of Isothermal Community College Student Sam Lovelace -** Ms. Lovelace **(pictured 3rd from left)** was honored with the Uplifting Counties Award for her award-winning film *Driving Possibilities,* featured in the NCACC 100 Strong Film Festival. **Pictured front row from left:** ICC Vice President Greg Thomas, ICC Instructor Carolyn Young, Sam Lovelace, and Transit Director Kerry Giles **Pictured back row from left:** Chairman Bryan King, Commissioners Mike Benfield, Hunter Haynes, Donnie Haulk, and Vice Chairman Alan Toney



- **Recognition of Rutherford County Transit -** RC Transit was honored with the 2025 NCPTA Rural Transit Systems of the Year for the second consecutive year. This year, the recognition was awarded collectively to all Western NC transit systems in acknowledgement of their heroic efforts in evacuation and recovery operations following Hurricane Helene. **Pictured right:** Transit Director Kerry Giles
- **World Elder Abuse Awareness Proclamation** presented by Senior Center Director Tammy Aldridge **(pictured below right)**.
- **Voting Delegate for National Association of Counties**
- **Appointments to Forest City Board of Planning and Adjustment Representing Extraterritorial Jurisdiction (ETJ)**
- **Appointments to Rutherford County Boards and Commissions**





New Business

- **Budget Amendments** presented by Finance Director Paula Roach.
- **Compilations for Volunteer Fire Departments** provided by CPA Crystal Hamrick.
- **Rutherford County Detention Facility Renovation/Expansion Project - Phase 1 Update**
- **Resolution Awarding Sergeant William Ed Toney's Service Side Arm** presented by Chief Randy Greenway.
- **Amendment to Soccer Complex Interlocal Agreement**

Emergency Communications (911)

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to two new members of our team — Alexander Jones and Faith Sheridan. We're excited to have them on board and look forward to their contributions.



Finance

The Rutherford County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) proudly recognized Ben Roach for his outstanding service at its June 5th meeting. Ben, the son of Finance Director Paula Roach, served as a youth member on the JCPC, fulfilling one of the Council's recommended roles for individuals under the age of 21. His commitment to the mission of juvenile justice and advocacy for the youth of Rutherford County has been unwavering and deeply appreciated.

Ben recently graduated and will be relocating to South Carolina to pursue his college education. In appreciation of his dedicated service and steadfast advocacy, the JCPC presented Ben with a plaque to honor his contributions and wish him continued success in his academic journey and beyond. **Pictured:** JCPC Chairman Paul Holden and Ben Roach



HR Director and HR Analyst:

- Held meetings to discuss personnel issues, exit interviews, and retirements.
- Attended the following meetings:
  * Board of Commissioners
  * Budget Adoption
  * HR Association
  * JCPC
  * State health Plan Changes Webinar
  * Safety Awards Banquet **(pictured below)**
- Completed payroll changes
- Conducted monthly orientation
- Held interviews for several positions
- Hosted training with NCACC

May 22, 2025 Safety Awards Banquet, Shelby, NC

Pictured l-r: HR Analyst Brooke Watson, NC Commissioner of Labor Luke Farley, and HR Administrative Assistant Amy Hamrick



NEW EMPLOYEES

Full-time

Faith Sheridan (911)

Andy Dobbins (Sheriff)

Pamela Toms (Solid Waste)

Jenna Bracket (DSS)

Everette Hair (DSS)

Carole Taylor (DSS)

Alicia Lund (Sheriff)

Part-time

Michael Dills (Solid Waste)

Trevlyn Riggs (EMS)

Makayla Suttle (EMS)

CONDOLENCES

Our thoughts and prayers continue for employees and families listed below:

- Alan Greene (retired from Sheriff's Office) and Julie Greene (Sheriff's Office) as they grieve the recent passing of Alan's mother and Julie's mother-in-law, Kazuko Susie Greene.
- Logan Hudson (Sheriff's Office) and Ashley Hudson (EMS) and family as they mourn the loss of Logan's mother and Ashley's mother-in-law, Carrie Michelle Hudson.
- Jennifer Fowler (Veteran Services) and family in the passing of her father.

CURRENT JOB POSTINGS

911 Telecommunicators (Full and Part time)

Transit Van Drivers

We had a BLAST at our annual Summer Reading Kickoff Party, hosted at Forest City POPS on June 16th. All six libraries of Foothills Library Consortium (the three county libraries, plus Mooneyham, Norris, and Spindale Public Libraries) gathered to inform children and their families about all the amazing free resources and programs we'll be offering over the summer. The Little Blue Choo, Chick-fil-A, Kona Ice, and Partnership for the Children of the Foothills were there as well. We had over 200 people attend this year!



Spanish Language Associate Juanita Bautista and Library Director April Young



Haynes Branch Manager Tamara Price assists children with an activity

Now that we've had the kickoff, our Summer Reading Program is truly in full swing! Readers of all ages can participate in reading challenges throughout the summer. Children ages 0-5, 6-12, and 13-18 can fill in logs based on the amount of time spent reading, with small prizes given out for each milestone reached. Completed forms will also earn entries into our grand prize drawings.

There will be multiple winners for each age category. Adults can participate in a paint palette-themed reading challenge. Reading all eight book types listed on the challenge earns an entry into the grand prize drawing. Reading logs are due for all age groups by August 4, 2025.

Here are just a few of the programs we're offering in July: For kids, there's a Bluey Bedtime Bash Story Time, peach slime craft at Chick-fil-A, a presentation about animals from the WNC Nature Center, a Lego brick building challenge, a musical presentation, and an interactive Shakespeare-inspired play. For teens we'll have a tie-dye tote bag craft, escape rooms, and the return of our Fiction-to-Fabulous Fashion Competition. We'll also continue to host our teens-only Dungeons and Dragons! Adults can enjoy multiple crafts and cooking demonstrations, a presentation on Medicare, a cookie decorating class, a Titanic-themed dinner party, and two book clubs.

Check out our full calendar at www.rutherfordcountylibrary.org/events.







Fiction-to-Fabulous
Upcycled Fashion Show

County Library
Thursday, July 24th
6:00pm

Join us as the participants of our 2025 upcycled fashion show walk the runway and try to impress the judges!

Teams will be judged on creativity, utilization of library materials, and showmanship.
This year's theme is FANTASY!



Photo From The 2022 Fashion Show!

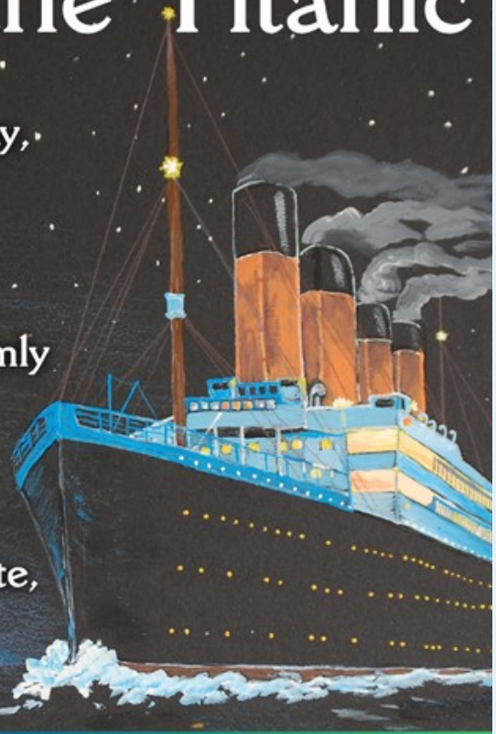
County Library // 828-287-6115
www.rutherfordcountylibrary.org

Welcome Aboard: Dinner on the Titanic

Adults are invited to Mountains Branch on Friday, July 25th at 6:30pm for a Titanic-themed dinner experience.

Upon entry, you'll be randomly assigned a real Titanic passenger. Will you be a First Class passenger? Learn more about your passenger, including their fate, as the dinner continues.

Registration is required.



Mountains Branch // 828-287-6392
www.rutherfordcountylibrary.org

Planning and Projects

Paving work at the US 221A Broad River Water Park near Cliffside has been completed, and the remaining construction is expected to be finalized soon.



An aerial view of the new Government Services Center at 145 College Avenue — a soon-to-be home for several County departments! Look for news coming soon on the ribbon cutting ceremony!





Register of Deeds

Assumed Business Names	16
Certificates of Satisfaction	165
Deeds	256
Deeds of Trust	167
Plats/Surveys	33
Powers of Attorney	41
Various other recorded documents	141
Certified Vital Records Issued	706
Marriage Licenses Issued	25
Notary Public Oaths	24

Revenue Office

Customer Service	
Phone Calls	1,665
Taxpayer Office Visit Assistance	845
County Growth Indicators	
Deeds Transferring Property	349
Transfer by Estate	179
Plats Reviewed	0
Parcels with Mapping Changes (Split or Merged)	37
Parcels Reviewed with Building Permits	420
Parcels Reviewed w/o Building Permits	664
Collections Progress	
Deeds Certified	156
Legal Actions (Garnishments, Attachments, etc.)	104
Total Taxes Collected	$492,457.60

Revenue Office continued

Jennifer Hill and Donna Hardin participated in the North Carolina Secretary of State's Land Records Workshop in Gastonia on May 29. The session covered current topics in Land Records Management including riparian rights, various forms of property ownership, and County boundary surveys.



Do you have concerns about paying your tax bill in full?

If so, Rutherford County Tax Collections is here to help. We understand that meeting your tax obligations in one lump sum can be challenging, and we are committed to working with you to find a solution. You are able to start payments plan as early as January each year.

A payment plan may be an effective way to manage your bill by breaking it into smaller, more manageable installments. Our team is available to assist you in setting up a payment schedule that works for your financial situation. Below, you will find important information about available payment plans and key dates to keep in mind.

What types of payment plans does Rutherford County Tax Collections offer?

We offer the option to spread your payments over the course of the year, allowing you to manage your tax bill without the need for a lump-sum payment. Enrolling in and staying current with your payment plan helps to prevent any potential collection actions, such as payroll or bank garnishments.
There are two payment options available: The **Casual Payment Plan** and the **Preauthorized Debit Payment Plan**.

The **Casual Payment Plan** allows you to send in a predetermined amount every month; it will not be automatically drafted from your bank account.

The **Preauthorized Debit Plan** automatically withdraws a predetermined amount from your bank account every month.

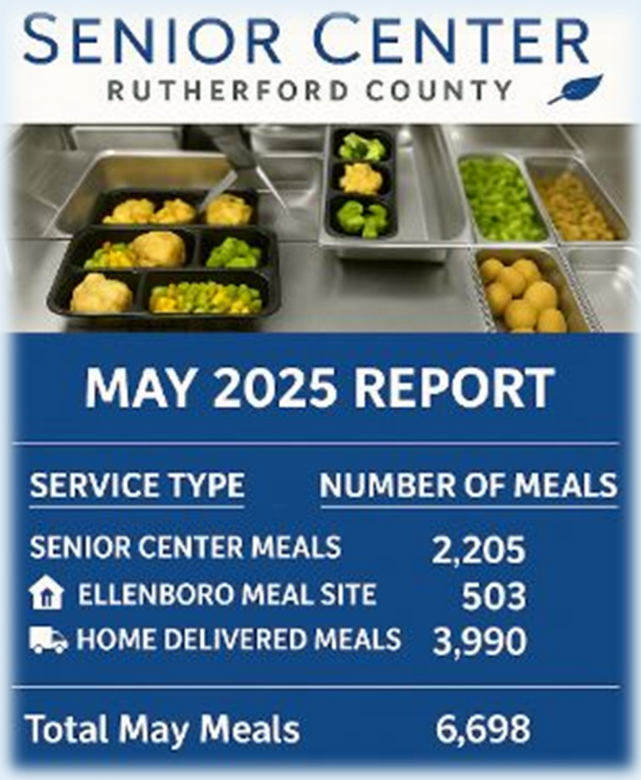
You may also choose to have your taxes paid through a **Voluntary Wage Garnishment**. With each pay period, a predetermined amount can be withheld and sent directly to our office.

All payment plans require you to contact our office. For more information or to enroll in a payment plan please call 828-287-6000 or email us at collections@rutherfordcountync.gov**. The sooner you begin making payments the smaller your monthly payments will be.**

Important dates:

- August 2025: Tax bills are mailed.
- Sept. 1, 2025: Tax bills are due (interest is not added to an unpaid amount until Jan.6).
- Jan. 5, 2026: Last day to pay taxes without interest.
- Jan. 6, 2026: Tax bills are delinquent and collection actions may take place at any time.

Please note: Additional fees may be added to an amount due if collection actions are initiated. If you have any questions about your tax bill or payment plans our helpful Collection specialists are standing by at 828-287-6000, or collections@rutherfordcountync.gov.



New Participants
We welcomed 25 new participants in May across all programs—congregate meals, home-delivered meals, and food boxes. Our reach continues to grow!

Active Participants
We had 754 active participants engaged in programs and services during May.

Volunteer Impact
A heartfelt thank you to our 45 volunteers who donated 285 hours of their time in May. Your generosity keeps our programs thriving!

Employee Work Anniversary
Tammy Aldridge - 8-year anniversary (6/2/17)



Employee Work Anniversaries ***continued***



Angie Miller – 2-year anniversary (6/5/23) **pictured left**

Susan Toney – 11-year anniversary (6/9/14 FT) **pictured below**



Accreditation Success Announcement



The Senior Center is thrilled to announce that we have successfully passed our 5-year accreditation review with flying colors! We have been recertified as a Center of Excellence, with our accreditation now extended through 2030. This achievement reflects the dedication, hard work, and compassion of our entire team in providing outstanding service to our seniors and upholding the highest standards of care and community engagement. Thank you to all our staff, volunteers, partners, and participants for contributing to this success. Here's to continuing our mission of excellence for many years to come!

June 6 Staff Training Recap

We are grateful to all who made our June 6 staff training day a valuable and memorable experience!



CPR Training: A heartfelt thank you to Jamie Guillermo, Chief of Spindale Fire Department, for delivering an outstanding CPR training session. His instruction was hands-on, engaging, and could truly help save lives.

Safety Preparedness: We also appreciate Pat Staggs from the Rutherford County Sheriff's Department for leading essential training on situational awareness, lockdown procedures, and active shooter response. These skills are critical in today's environment, and Pat's expertise was much appreciated.

911 Center Tour: To wrap up the day, a huge thanks to Scott Schiefelbein and the dedicated 911 Communications Team for offering us a behind-the-scenes look at 911 operations. The tour of their state-of-the-art facility was both educational and inspiring.

We are incredibly fortunate to have such dedicated public safety partners. Thank you all for your service and for helping to keep our team informed and prepared!

Solid Waste

Material	Weight in Tons
MSW/Household Garbage	4,585.07
Construction/Demo Debris	862.45
Metal	100.32
Recycle	275.28
Electronics/TV	1.97
Tires	96.47

Convenience Centers Opening on Wednesdays

Effective July 23, 2025, the hours of operation will be as follows:

- All Centers will be open on Wednesday from 6:00 am to 6:00 pm with the exception of the Hollis Center.
- Hollis Center will open on Wednesday from 7:00 am to 6:00 pm.

If you have any questions, please contact Eddie Mote at 828-287-6127.



Convenience Centers

Avondale Center: 2310 Ellenboro-Henrietta Rd. Ellenboro, NC 28040	828-657-6952
Bills Creek Center: 2130 Bills Creek Rd. Lake Lure, NC 28746	828-625-8516
Colfax Center: 1676 US 74 Business Ellenboro NC 28040	828-248-1268
Danieltown Center: 1381 Bethany Church Rd. Forest City NC 28043	828-245-6524
Gilkey Center: 2489 HWY 221 N, Rutherfordton NC 28139	828-286-8829
Golden Valley Center: 6075 Bostic-Sunshine Hwy. Bostic NC 28018	828-245-1328
Pea Ridge Center: 3892 Pea Ridge Rd. Bostic NC 28018	828-287-1358
Green Hill Center: 204 Rainbow Rapids Rd. Rutherfordton NC 28139	828-286-8458
Hollis Center: 4480 Hollis Rd. Ellenboro NC 28040	828-453-1021
Shiloh Center: 152 Richland Dr. Forest City NC 28043	828-245-6108

Tourism Development Authority

Tourism Master Plan

- The Towns, County, and the TDA continue to move Rutherford Bound forward.
- Rutherford Bound has completed 9 projects and has 16 projects in process for a total funding raised of 23 million.
- Rutherford bound anticipates five to six groundbreakings/ribbon cuttings before the end of the year.
- TDA/RB/DbDTowns applying for a number of grants for tourism asset projects.

Be sure to follow us at: RutherfordBound.com

Marketing

- 2025 Travel Guide is available!



If you would like a case of guides, please contact Elizabeth Toney, Administrative Coordinator for the TDA by email at Elizabeth.toney@rutherfordcountync.gov.

Agri-Tourism

- TDA supporting Rutherford County Farmer's Market.
- TDA manages Rutherford County portion of VisitNC Farms App.
- TDA has a partnership with People 1st Tourism to help with agritourism efforts in Rutherford County...three to four evens each month. Events are being boosted on social media.

Rutherford Trails Collaborative

- Collaborative is working with Great Trails NC and TDA marketing team, The Agency, for trail marketing.

Keep Rutherford County Beautiful

- There are a number of ways to get involved in the Keep Rutherford County Beautiful cause, including Adopt/Sponsor-a-Highway sign-ups, independent litter pick-ups, and donations. Please visit the KRCB website for more information. https://www.KeepRCNCBEautiful.org/

Financial Health

Currently, we are collaborating with local partners and national Medicaid brokers to implement updated reimbursement rates aligned with actual operating costs. Director Giles has led this effort over the past several months, and new rates will take effect at the start of the fiscal year. Current Medicaid broker rates have remained unchanged since July 1, 2021.

FY 24-25 May Transit Numbers

Operating Week	# of Total Miles	# of Local Trips	# of Out of County Trips	# of Unduplicated Passengers	Total Revenue
May 05 - May 11	10343	1141	135	158	$ 19,277
May 12 - May 18	10646	1175	134	161	$ 18,396
May 19 - May 26	11294	1184	110	164	$ 18,761
May 27 - Jun 01	8405	939	82	143	$ 15,181
Average	10172	1110	115	157	$17,904

Marketing and Planning

Following our service advertisements, we've seen increased demand for grocery, employment, and older adult transportation. Staff also attended the RS Central High School Job Fair on June 23.







Staffing and Workforce Development

Transit continues to be in need of part-time drivers. We have adjusted drivers schedules to allow them more flexibility with their weekly work schedule. This has proven to be a popular option for the part-time drivers but for it to work we must remain at or near full staffing which continues to be an issue. Interested applicants can call 828-287-6308.

We're also working with our scheduling software provider to explore advanced features for streamlining trip planning. Additional onsite training is being considered for the new budget year to enhance our use of the platform.

Staff Safety Training

In June, staff completed Basic First Aid/CPR/AED certification, a biannual requirement. Training was conducted in coordination with ICC's Health and Public Services Department over three consecutive Fridays to maintain uninterrupted transit services.

Rutherford County TRANSIT
DrivingPossibilities.com



Looking for a new job or career opportunity? Click here for current opportunities available with Rutherford County.

Vibrant Communities
New Possibilities

RUTHERFORD
EST. COUNTY, NC 1779

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: June 17, 2025
NCDOT Opens New Segment of Shelby Bypass



SHELBY, N.C.- On Monday, June 16, 2025, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) announced the opening of a new 4.8-mile segment of the Shelby Bypass, providing improved travel options for motorists in Cleveland County.

This newly opened stretch extends the bypass from N.C. 226 to N.C. 150. The project includes the construction of 12 new bridges and three interchanges at N.C. 226, N.C. 18, and N.C. 150. Additionally, three roundabouts have been constructed at the N.C. 150 interchange to improve traffic flow without the use of signalized intersections.

Construction on future segments of the Shelby Bypass is already underway:

- Section 'D' will extend the bypass approximately four more miles from just west of N.C. 150 to U.S. 74.
- Section 'E' will complete the full project at U.S. 74 Business in Kings Mountain.

The entire Shelby Bypass is expected to be completed by winter 2029. Motorists are reminded to use caution in the new corridor, obey all posted speed limits, and allow additional travel time as they become familiar with the updated traffic patterns.

For real-time travel updates, visit DriveNC.gov or follow NCDOT on social media.
6.17.25 PDF Press Release Link

Media contact:
Karyn Owens
Marketing and Communications Director
Cleveland County Government
704-484-4800
karyn.owens@clevelandcountync.gov

PRIVATE PROPERTY DEBRIS REMOVAL

Rutherford County is **accepting applications** for a Private Property Debris Removal program (PPDR) through FEMA that can assist residents with:

- Removal of potentially eligible storm-generated debris from private property, private roads and/or driveways
- Demolition of hazardous structures

DEBRIS:

Eligible debris must be the direct result of Hurricane Helene and must be located within Rutherford County. To be considered eligible the removal of the debris must be in the public interest, meaning:

- Eliminates immediate threats to life, public health, or safety
- Eliminates immediate threats of significant damage to improved public or private property

Types of eligible storm-generated debris includes:

- Vegetative debris
- Construction and demolition debris
- White goods (household appliances)
- Household hazardous waste

If you are a residential property owner that has the above mentioned, please contact our DebrisTech personnel by contacting:

828-319-2880 (online link to sign-up)
or
ppdr@debristech.com

REQUIRED DOCUMENTS:

- **Most Recent Tax Bill/Record** *** **(NOT OPTIONAL)**
- **Valid Driver's License or State Issued I.D.**
- **Utility Bill from the time of event (power, water or gas)**
- **Homeowner's Insurance Policy**
- **House Deed**
  **Deed is only required if signing up for demolition of a structure*

Need additional information or have questions? Call 501-604-6453.

Effective July 1, 2025, Heart of the Foothills (HFAR) will assume responsibility for the daily operations of the County Animal Shelter. All shelter staff will be employed and trained through HFAR. If you are interested in employment opportunities, please contact Karen at karen@heartofthefoothills.org.





We’ve got some exciting news… we’re back!

After exactly nine months of recovery since Hurricane Helene, Chimney Rock at Chimney Rock State Park is officially reopening to the public on Friday, June 27.

Thank you for all your love and support during our closure. We’re incredibly grateful to everyone who has worked tirelessly behind the scenes to make this reopening possible. It’s been a long road, but we’re excited to have you back on the trails with us soon.

HEADS UP: Reservations will be required for all guests, including Annual Passholders. Initially, we’ll be open Friday–Monday and space will be limited as we get back up and running. Reservations go live in the coming weeks at chimneyrock-park.com.

Follow us for more important travel updates and info to help plan your visit. We’ve missed you and can’t wait to see you soon!





ROC's official trail maintenance crew had an amazing first month! Our new Trail Tamers Crew worked hard, venturing from ICC and Dittmer-Watts trails to Weed Patch and Buffalo Creek trails clearing and repairing trails, trimming brush, removing trees, and filling in root balls. Thank you to our amazing team for a great first month.

Don't forget to join the Trail Tamers email list for upcoming work days!

When: Every Wednesday at 9AM

Where: Location will vary by week. Click here to be added to our Trail Tamer email list and be redirected to our events calendar to check for upcoming workdays.

Register: Click here!

County Commissioners
Bryan A. King, Chairman
Alan Toney, Vice Chairman
Michael Benfield, Commissioner
Hunter Haynes, Commissioner
Donnie Haulk, Commissioner

County Office
Steve Garrison, County Manager
Hazel Haynes, Clerk to Board
Kim Aldridge, Admin Asst/Deputy Clerk
Richard Williams, County Attorney

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