

Union County View

Employees Further Their Educations with Help from County

Union County's Tuition Reimbursement Program is helping Union County employees pay for their college educations.

The Tuition Reimbursement Program was established to financially support Union County employees in their educational endeavors where those pursuits benefit the County. The Tuition Reimbursement Program has specific criteria that must be met to participate in the program. Since the program started, the County has reimbursed approximately \$100,000.

Currently, 26 employees have or are participating in the program. Three participants have recently received their degrees:

- Traci Colley (Environmental Health) - Masters of Science in Environmental Health from East Carolina University
- Karen Deese (Public Health) – Bachelors of Science in Nursing from Grand Canyon University
- Amanda Austin (Administrative Services) – Bachelors of Science in Business and Economics from UNC Greensboro

Karen Deese says she is very appreciative of the County's interest in employee development. "To say they are interested is one thing, but to provide financial support demonstrates the County's commitment. I had started my journey prior to the Tuition Reimbursement Program, but I certainly appreciate the financial burden being lessened through this opportunity."

To find out more information about the Tuition Reimbursement Program, contact Donna D'Alessandro at donna.dalessandro@unioncountync.gov or 704-283-3831. Information is also available on County Connect.

Congratulations to Union County Sheriff's Office Deputy Allan Nolan on being named the Crime Stoppers' Law Enforcement Officer of the Year!



Union County Teams with U.S. Army to Teach Solid Waste Management

Union County Public Works (UCPW) is teaming up with the U.S. Army to help developing nations improve their solid waste management practices.



UCPW was contacted by Echo and Fox Companies, 98th Civil Affairs Battalion (Airborne), to help prepare eight Civil Affairs Teams (CATs) for an upcoming deployment during which the teams will work with foreign governments, security forces, and populations to assess and help address critical needs, including essential infrastructure. The efforts of the CATs are designed to improve stability by better connecting foreign populations with their legitimate governments. Having a multifaceted Solid Waste Management Facility (SWMF), UCPW was asked to share the logistics, environmental impact and challenges of solid waste management with the CATs prior to their deployment.

“This training is extremely useful for our teams that are preparing to do their missions overseas,” said Major Kyle Goodridge. “It helps them understand how these kinds of facilities operate, how to interact with local officials and understand the impact that this kind of facility has on the population, and how to effectively run an operation like this not only for the benefit of the county, but for the population it services as well.”

Over the course of four days, Chris Medlin, Landfill Operations Superintendent and Ron Gilkerson, Director of Solid Waste for Union County Public Works, hosted eight groups at the 174-acre UCPW SWMF located on Austin Chaney Road. Each group received a tour of the facility, with presentations on disposal municipal solid waste (garbage), construction and demolition debris, yard waste and other recyclables.

“Working with the Army on this project has been extremely rewarding,” said Gilkerson. “Everyone in Union County Public Works is very appreciative of their service and what they’re doing to help other nations. We’re proud to be a part of this effort and look forward to seeing the results of their hard work.”

County Donates Land to Town of Waxhaw

Union County will donate approximately 3.523 acres at the Twelve Mile Creek Reclamation Facility on Kensington Drive to the Town of Waxhaw.

The Town of Waxhaw and the YMCA of Greater Charlotte have established a collaborative relationship with the goal of bringing a state of the art exercise facility and park to Union County. The plans include a 100,000 square foot YMCA facility along with an adjacent park that will accommodate YMCA recreational sports while doubling as park space for residents. The donated parcel will be used for recreation athletic field space.

Watch Union County Spotlight episode about this here - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AhntKvi2J5s>

Union County Public Works Selects Construction Company for Human Services Building

Union County Public Works is excited to announce a milestone in the progress of the County's new Human Services building. The County has awarded the construction contract to Monteith Construction Company, which is set to break ground in spring 2016.

The new 144,000 square-foot Human Services building will house the Division of Social Services, Division of Public Health and Human Services Administration. It is replacing the existing 90,000 square-foot facility known as Union Village, currently being leased to house those agencies. The building will be located at the intersection of US 601 (Skyway Drive) and Concord Avenue in Monroe on approximately 30.53 acres of land. It is targeted for completion in fall 2017.

"We're very excited to continue the progress of the Human Services building," said Ed Goscicki, Executive Director for Union County Public Works. "The new facility will allow us to provide adequate space and equipment, efficiently organized for the Human Services staff to better care for our residents and offer improved customer service. We're looking forward to working with Monteith Construction Company on this project."



Architect renderings of the new Union County Human Services building set for completion in fall 2017

On November 19, 2015, five bids were submitted for the project. After the bids were received, they were opened and reviewed in a public forum. The architect for the project, Perkins and Will, Inc., recommended award of the construction contract to Monteith Construction Company based on their reputation for quality, cost-effective projects. Monteith's bid was \$24,376,000, the lowest of the five received and was nearly \$5 million below the budget for this construction.

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**Nominations are now being accepted for the 2016 Sgt. Jeff Greene Memorial
Humanitarian Award. The nominations deadline is Feb. 19.**

The banquet is March 12. Please go to:

**<http://www.ncheroesreality.com/#!heroes-of-union-county/c24vq>
to see all the details.**

Tax Preparation Assistance Available at DSS

The Union County Division of Social Services is scheduling appointments to assist taxpayers with filing their federal and state income tax returns. The agency's Volunteer Income Tax Assistance (VITA) program is in its 12th year providing free tax preparation to individuals with gross incomes of \$54,000 or less per year, persons with disabilities, the elderly and limited English speaking taxpayers who need assistance in preparing their own tax returns.



Beginning Feb. 1, taxpayers will be served by volunteers who are certified through the Internal Revenue Service and have had extensive training and testing to ensure a quality return is prepared and submitted. DSS electronically files each tax return, and income refunds are usually direct deposited in the taxpayer's banking institution within 7 -10 days.

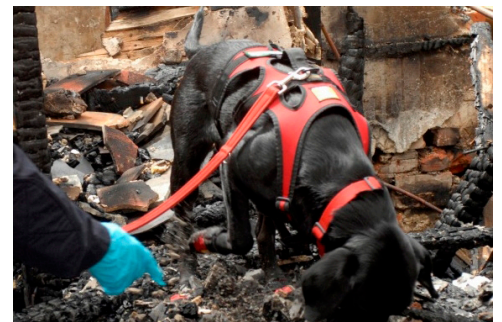
The VITA site this year is at SPCC's Center for Technology and Health Education at 3509 Old Charlotte Highway in Monroe. Appointment times are available each weekday between 8:30 a.m. and 5 p.m. However, there are days when appointments can be made as late as 6:30 p.m.

To schedule an appointment to have your taxes prepared at no cost, call 704-296-4312.

County to Apply for Accelerant Detection Canine

Union County Emergency Services will apply for an accelerant detection canine from the United States Department of Justice, Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF). If the application is approved by ATF, one employee of the Fire Marshal's division will undergo training and serve as the dog's handler.

Currently, there are only three accelerant canines in North Carolina, two NC-SBI canines in the Asheville and Raleigh areas and one ATF canine in Wilmington.



An accelerant canine will enhance the Fire Marshal's ability to more rapidly determine the presence of flammable or combustible liquids at fire scenes, reducing the hours investigators spend on scene. The canine will help fire investigators conduct more thorough inspections of "black hole" fires and assist in the detection of ignitable liquids, which makes fire scenes safer for investigators who won't need to remove respirators to detect ignitable liquids. Fire samples will also be processed quicker by state laboratories since ATF and SBI canines receive the highest priority.

The Union County Sheriff's Office will provide general veterinarian services, except injury or sickness, for the canine, and the City of Charlotte Arson Task Force will provide up to \$2,000 annually for five years to assist in offsetting costs, such as food. Emergency Services will provide the funds needed to purchase a dog carrier to transport the canine.

County Donates Vehicles to Community Shelter

The Union County Board of Commissioners on Monday approved the donation of two surplus County vehicles, a 2001 Chevy Blazer and 2006 Ford Ranger, to the Union County Community Shelter.

The vehicles will be used by the Community Shelter for client and agency transportation services and to facilitate programs such as Home Again furniture donations for the newly housed homeless.



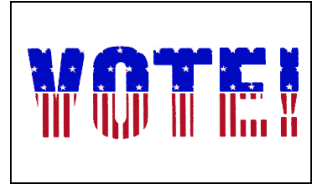
<http://www.co.union.nc.us/Portals/0/centraladmin/Union%20County%202015%20Annual%20Report.pdf>



<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=BH5u9dBsbIM>

Voter Registration Deadline Set for March 15 Primary Election

The deadline to register to vote in North Carolina is 25 days before the date of an election. The deadline for registering and changing party affiliations for the March 15 Primary Election is Friday, Feb. 19. The voter registration application must be received by the Union County Board of Elections by this date.



For more information, contact the Board of Elections at 704-283-3809 or union.boe@ncsbe.gov.

Union County Board of Elections is Recruiting Election Officials

Anyone wishing to earn extra money for approximately 18 hours of work, please call the Union County Board of Elections at 704-283-3809 between 8 a.m. and 5 p.m. or email union.boe@ncsbe.gov. Members of the community are needed to work at the polls for the March 15 Primary Election and the November 8 General Election.

If interested in becoming a part of the election process in Union County, we'd like to hear from you. The application process is quick and easy and can be completed over the phone. Applicants must be a registered voter in Union County, be available for both the primary and general election and not be a candidate or relative or a current holder of an elected office.

Election officials must attend a three hour training session for which both day and night options are available. Precinct officials will be expected to work from 5:30 a.m. to 8:30 p.m. on election days.

If you're looking for a way to serve your local community while earning a little extra money, this is a great way to do just that.

Union County Employee Book Picks on Display at Union County Public Library

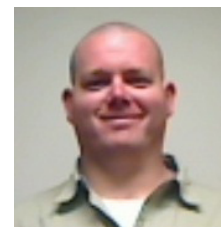
During the month February, Union County Public Library will display book picks from Union County employees. The library hopes to foster a love of reading, the library and the county through this latest display.



Max Price of Public Works received his Grade I Wastewater Certification, and Church Derrick of Public Works received his Grade III Certification.



Price



Derrick

McNeill Takes Fond Memories into Retirement

This article appeared in the Jan. 28 edition of the Home News

Sally McNeill's husband has definite plans for Monday, Feb. 1 and has even noted them on her calendar: "Sally's first day of retirement - Sleep in!"

After more than 22 years as a family and consumer science agent with the N.C. Cooperative Extension, McNeill said she may sleep late for a day, but then she'll be busy with the next chapter of life, which she expects will include travel to visit family, more time for church activities and work with child literacy. She also hopes to put the canning and sewing skills she's used for years in her job to work for herself.



Whatever she does, she'll take with her fond memories from the Extension.

"The best part is the people I have met along the way. The saying goes 'I am a part of all that I have met,' but I feel that 'All that I have met are a part of me,'" McNeill said. "I am extremely fortunate to have had this job and have loved every day of it."

After 17 years in healthcare, McNeill took a post with the N.C. Extension in Mecklenburg County in 1993, and in mid-2004 she transferred to Union County. A Charlotte resident, she said she didn't mind the commute to the "beautiful agricultural center with its wonderful class and demonstration space."

Over the years, her classes in everything from food safety and preservation to weight management have touched thousands of local residents. Though the information she taught was straight from the state's land-grant universities - N.C. State and North Carolina A&T - she said the Extension allows agents the freedom to put their strengths to work however they see fit.

"The neatest part of the job was the ability to be creative and put myself into the program that I was teaching," she said.

Whether giving a SelfServ class for restaurant managers and other food handlers or partnering with the Council on Aging to plan the annual Union County Senior Wellness Expo, McNeill's main goal was to "provide knowledge and skills to help people make good decisions." She worked with a range of community groups, from garden clubs to children's summer camps, sharing her expertise as a registered dietician and a home-economics educator.

Though Friday, Jan. 29 was her last day on the job, McNeill said her post at the Extension may not be filled until July, when the new fiscal year budget takes effect.

Her advice for her replacement is to put his or her unique talents to work.

"Each agent comes in with a different background. They don't have to do things exactly as the person before the," she said. "If you have as good as an experience as I did, you will love the job."

Union County Service Award Recipients February 2016

5 YEARS OF SERVICE

MICHAEL BOITNOTT
RAE ALEPA
JERICA RHODES

SERVICE AREA

SHERIFF'S OFFICE
HUMAN SERVICES
HUMAN SERVICES

10 YEARS OF SERVICE

TONDA HORNE
MARIA NEWLOVE
KEVIN WILLIAMS

SERVICE AREA

PUBLIC WORKS
HUMAN SERVICES
HUMAN SERVICES

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

PAM RIVERS

SERVICE AREA

GROWTH MANAGEMENT

20 YEARS OF SERVICE

CYNTHIA SMITH

SERVICE AREA

HUMAN SERVICES

New Employees



Jeremy Adams
Systems Support
Information Systems



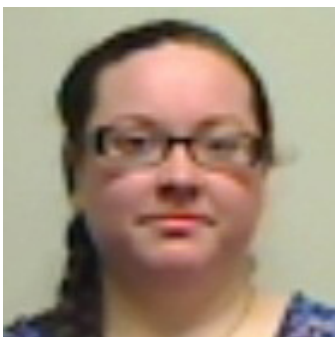
Paula Alanis
Patient Relations Rep. IV
Human Services



Justin Anderson
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Leslie Belk
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Catherine Bernatine
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Cassidy Brazeltine
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Elisha Carrasco
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Michael Gallagher
Deputy Sheriff I
Sheriff's Office



Kristen Hartis
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Lindsay Hasty
Customer Service
Specialist
Public Works



Gregory Howey
Systems Support
Information Systems



Joy Lemelle
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Melissa McAdams
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Tamara McKinney
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Winter Moore
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services



Kimberly Nelson
Income Maintenance
Caseworker II
Social Services

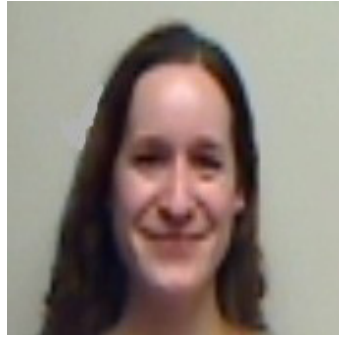


Tony Underwood
Crime Scene
Investigator I
Sheriff's Office



Duane Wingo
Project Manager
Public Works

Promotions



Leigh Ellen Dudley
WIC Nutrition Manager
Public Health



Emily Kelly
Public Service Technician
Tax Assessor



Union County Playmakers

Love Letters

by A. R. Gurney

February 5, 6, at 7:30 pm & Sunday, 7 at 2:30 pm
Monroe Library, 316 E. Windsor Street

Saturday, February 13 at 7:30 pm
Lois Morgan Edwards Memorial Library,
414 Hasty St., Marshville, N C

Sunday, February 14 at 2:30 pm
Union West Regional Library
123 Unionville-Indian Trail Rd., Indian Trail, NC

Limited Seating



Doug Pressley, Deb Smith, Sandra McAlister, Fran Wilbourn, Dink Nolen

\$12 each—\$2 Coupons available at
select local florists.

Tickets: 704-238-3394

This project is supported by the Union County Community Arts Council





2016 RABIES & MICROCHIP CLINICS

**Where: Union County Animal Shelter
3340 Presson Rd.
Monroe, NC 28112**

**When: January 21, February 18 & March 17
1:30pm-3:30pm**

Microchip your pet for \$15.00 donation

Rabies vaccine - NO COST

The only vaccine available will be rabies.

We are offering no cost rabies vaccines to Union County residents at these clinics. Rabies is a deadly virus that can be transmitted to humans. Bats, raccoons, coyotes, and other mammals are very likely to be infected with rabies and can transmit the virus to humans and other animals.

Many pets are not vaccinated against rabies because of the expense. We have teamed up with Friends of the Union County Animal Shelter (501c3 organization) and our veterinarian for these clinics to provide no cost vaccines.

Monetary donations will be accepted to help further our efforts to make sure all pets are protected against rabies.

Donations can be made by cash or check. Make checks payable to Friends of the Union County Animal Shelter.

Please join us for the next
SUCCESSFUL GARDENER MEETING
Thursday, February 4, 2016 at 7pm
Union County Agricultural Center
3230-D Presson Road, Monroe, NC 28110

**Edible Landscaping from
Berries to Herbs to Trees**
with Vikki Tesar

This event is FREE and there will be door prizes!

For more information or to RSVP please contact our
Grow-line 704-283-3822 or ucmgwebsite@gmail.com
<http://www.mastergardenersunioncountync.org/>





Please join us for the next
SUCCESSFUL GARDENER MEETING

Thursday, March 3, 2016 at 7pm

Union County Agricultural Center
3230-D Presson Road, Monroe, NC 28110

Backyard Habitats

Creating Butterfly / Pollinator Gardens

with Lisa Tompkins of
It's Elemental Landscape Design

This event is FREE and there will be door prizes!

For more information or to RSVP please contact our
Grow-line 704-283-3822 or ucmgwebsite@gmail.com
<http://www.mastergardenersunioncountync.org/>



Extension
Master
Gardener

Union County

NC COOPERATIVE EXTENSION



Lisa Tompkins

It's Elemental Landscape Design

Lisa Tompkins, a native of the North Carolina Piedmont, earned a BA in Psychology from UNCC and an AAS in Horticulture Technology from CPCC. She began working as a landscape designer in 2004 with an increasing emphasis on native plants and sustainable design (It's Elemental Landscape Design). In addition to landscape design, Lisa currently operates a small native plants nursery, Carolina Heritage Nursery. She serves as Co-Chair for the NC Native Plant Society – Southern Piedmont Chapter and continues to be an active member in that organization. Lisa is certified in NC Residential Rain Gardening, a NC Plant Professional and is *near* completion of a certificate in Native Plant Studies from UNCC Gardens. When not working, she tends her own gardens and scouts the woods and roadsides in search of native plant discoveries in the Carolina Piedmont.