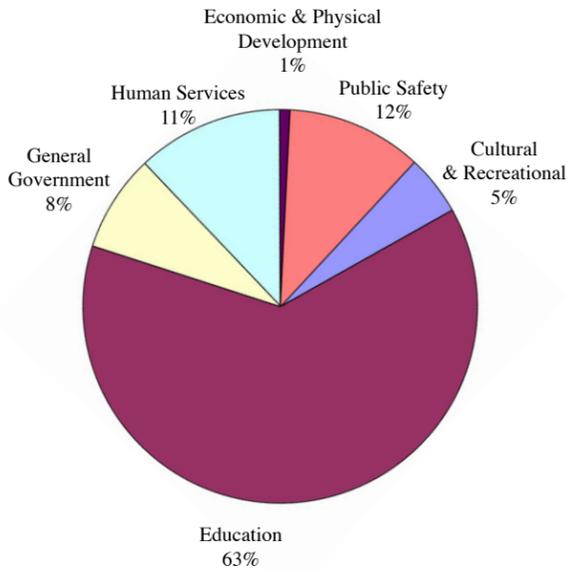


Union County Financial Highlights

Where
Your County
Property Taxes
are Spent...



NOTE:
General Government costs, representing services such as tax billing and collection, human resources and court facilities, are the lowest in the Charlotte region and lower than NC counties of similar size.



A Message from the Interim County Manager

On behalf of the Union County Board of Commissioners, I am pleased to present the 2006 Union County Annual Report. This document highlights the accomplishments of Union County government over the past year.

The year was exciting for Union County as we welcomed three new commissioners to the Board of County Commissioners, opened a new animal shelter, dedicated a new commissioners' meeting room and welcomed a new county Health Director.

Union County is in the midst of exciting times, and with direction from the Board of Commissioners and the hard work of Union County employees, we will continue to set the right course for the future of Union County.

Richard Black

Mission Statement

The county of Union will respect, value and respond to the dynamic needs of our residents, businesses, and visitors. Working in partnership with our community, Union County will become the county of choice as people elect to live, work and do business in our safe, healthy and vital neighborhoods.

Contact Us...

Union County Departments

Main Number	(704) 283-3500
Animal Services	(704) 283-2308
Board of Elections	(704) 283-3809
Cooperative Extension	(704) 283-3801
Emergency Communications	(704) 289-1591
Board of Commissioners	(704) 283-3810
Clerk to the Board	(704) 283-3810
Emergency Management	(704) 283-3536/3575
Environmental Health	(704) 283-3553
Finance	(704) 283-3813
Fire Services	(704) 283-3524
General Services	(704) 283-3872
Health Department	(704) 296-4800
Homeland Security	(704) 292-2670
Information Systems	(704) 283-3841
Inspections	(704) 283-3816
Internal Audit	(704) 283-3630
Legal	(704) 283-3673
Library	(704) 283-8184
Parks and Recreation	(704) 843-3919
Personnel	(704) 283-3818
Planning	(704) 283-3565
Public Information	(704) 283-3546
Public Works	(704) 296-4210
Register of Deeds	(704) 283-3843
Risk Management	(704) 283-3663
Sheriff's Office	(704) 283-3789
Social Services	(704) 296-4300
Stormwater	(704) 283-3520
Tax Administration	(704) 283-3746/3848
Transportation and Nutrition	(704) 283-3713/3712
Veterans Services	(704) 283-3711/3744



Check our Web site for detailed information, employment opportunities and upcoming events.

www.co.union.nc.us

Union County 2006 Annual Report

Board of Elections

The Union County Board of Elections implemented new voting equipment as required by the state to meet federal HAVA standards and successfully conducted two primary elections and a general election using the new voting equipment. A recount of the 8th Congressional District resulting in only a three votes change in the final outcome proved the new equipment and procedures operated effectively.

The county's number of registered voters surpassed 100,000 following the registration of 7,871 new voters in 2006.

Emergency Communications

Union County Emergency Communications Director Gary J. Thomas received a Presidential Award from the Association of Public-Safety Communications Officials (APCO) for his participation in a workgroup that developed a fire service communications training course that is taught to emergency communicators worldwide.

Kellee Irving was named Union County Telecommunicator of the Year.

Sungard OSSI was chosen as the vendor to provide Union County with a comprehensive, fully integrated, full-featured multi-agency and multi-jurisdictional system for Emergency Communications, Sheriff, Police, Fire, Rescue and EMS.

All full-time telecommunicators have completed advanced Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) and Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) training, along with the APCO public safety telecommunicator course.

Union County Annual Report 2006



www.co.union.nc.us



The new Union County Board of Commissioners' meeting room was dedicated on Dec. 1, and the first Board of County Commissioners' meeting was held in the room on Dec. 4.

Finance

Three of the nation's most respected bond rating agencies, Moody's Investors Service, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings, awarded excellent credit ratings to Union County's \$76.9 million series 2006 certificates of participation (COPs) and affirmed the ratings of the county's outstanding general obligation (GO) bonds. The COPs proceeds are being used to construct three elementary schools and purchase property for a four campus school site.

Moody's Investors Service, a firm that provides independent assessments of the credit risk associated with buying and holding bonds, raised its long-term rating on Union County's \$243.3 million in general obligation debt to Aa2 from Aa3. With the Aa2 rating, Union joins the nation's top 10 percent of "best credit issuers."

Union County received a clean opinion on its 2006 financial statements, and for the third consecutive year the external auditors found no instances of material non-compliance or questioned costs in connection with applicable laws and regulations.

Health Department

The Union County Health Department received a 2006 GlaxoSmithKline Child Health Recognition Award in the local Health Department category for its Bilingual Health Check Coordinator program. The program is a collaborative effort between the Partnership for Children, Health Department, Union County Department of Social Services and the Union County Latino Outreach Coalition. It focuses its efforts on bilingual staffing to respond to the ever increasing Latino Families' needs for Medicaid for young children and educates families about the importance of well child check ups.



Jenny Kirksey (see photo) was named the new director of the Union County Health Department in January 2006.

Cindy Boyer of the Union County Health Department was awarded an Elizabeth S. Holley Scholarship from the NC Association of Public Health Nurse Administrators.

The Health Department's Child Advocacy Center received accreditation.

Pamela Pate of the Union County Health Department received an educational scholarship from the NC Association of Local Nutrition Directors.

Immunization rate of children in Union County rose to 98 percent.

A pandemic flu drill was held during the Health Department's flu clinic in November. Participants included the Health Department, Environmental Health and the Red Cross.

Homeland Security

In May, several agencies in Union County spent two days in a statewide exercise responding to a simulated influenza pandemic that overwhelmed the county's medical system.

Union County was declared a StormReady community by the National Weather Service. StormReady is a nationwide program that helps communities better protect their citizens during severe weather. The program encourages communities to take a proactive approach to improving local hazardous weather operations. StormReady provides emergency managers with clear-cut guidelines on how to improve their hazardous weather operations.

Library

Dana Eure, assistant director for Union County Public Library, was named a "Mover & Shaker" by the *Library Journal*. A "Mover & Shaker" is a person helping shape the future of libraries in the U.S.

The Union County Library Foundation, Inc. is working on raising money to build and furnish the South Western Union Regional Library in Weddington.

Union County Public Library began offering Smart Start Family Literacy workshops funded by a grant from the Union County Partnership for Children. The workshops, offered in English and Spanish, promote the importance of early literacy by teaching parents how to read with their children.



Union County Public Library was presented a Region of Excellence Award for excellence in local government efficiency and effectiveness for its **Hispanic Services program**.

The county's libraries circulated a total of 861,000 materials, of which 667,226 were books.

Union County Public Library has 95,937 registered users.

524,956 people entered the county's libraries during the year.

The Reference Department fielded 100,300 reference questions.

The Union County Public Library offered a total of 3,473 programs (this includes programs for children and adults and includes programs in the library and outside the library). More than 102,000 people attended the programs.

244,607 patrons used a public Internet computer.

Union West Regional Library in Indian Trail added 26 spaces to its current parking lot to accommodate the high number of patrons visiting the library.



Parks & Recreation

Readers of *Charlotte Parent* magazine selected Cane Creek Park as the "Best Hike for Kids" in the Charlotte metro area.



Improvements at **Cane Creek Park** in 2006 included a new entrance at Cane Creek Park Campground, new game courts in the park's day use area, horseshoe pits in the day use area and campground, the replacement of railroad tie retaining and seat walls around the playground and shelters with landscape block walls, and a new amphitheater in the park's festival area.

Personnel

The county's on-line application system received 87,055 page hits, and Personnel received 7,569 online job applications.

Personnel introduced a CritiCall skills testing program for 911 Telecommunicator job applicants. Of the 219 applicants tested, 66 scored 80 or higher.

During 2006, Union County Prescription Drug Discount card holders had 13,036 prescriptions filled and saved \$158,047 on their prescriptions.

Public Works

Union County Public Works activated the Snuggs Booster Pump Station at the intersection of Rocky River Road and Watkins Road to bolster the county's water distribution system to meet current and future water demands.

Union County Public Works initiated UCPW Connect, a telephone system known as Interactive Voice Response or IVR and an online computer system known as eCare, that allows utility customers to hear or view their account information and pay their bill by telephone or online.

Sheriff's Office

Sgt. Kevin James and deputies Walter Owens and Ken Goodrum of the Union County Sheriff's Office were presented with the National Lifesaving Certificate of Merit Award from the Union County Chapter of the American Red Cross for resuscitating a man who collapsed while visiting the Union County Judicial Center.

The Town of Indian Trail and Walmart donated \$11,960 to the Union County Sheriff's Office for the purchase of eight Automated External Defibrillators.

Union County Sheriff Eddie Cathey launched a new Web site (<http://watchsystems.com/nc/union>) that informs Union County citizens as to the whereabouts of registered sex offenders. The system, called OffenderWatch, makes it easy for the public to access information on registered sex offenders, such as their names, physical description and photographs, as well as a map that shows the approximate location of the offender's residence.



The Union County Sheriff's Office introduced the **PepperBall Gun** to its arsenal of weapons. The PepperBall Gun is a non-lethal weapon that is safe, effective and a simple-to-use alternative to other existing compliance weapons.

The new **Union County Animal Shelter** opened on Nov. 13. The shelter has 22 adoption kennels, eight quarantine kennels, 72 kennels for strays and an area to house cats in rolling, stackable kennels.



The Sheriff's Office received an \$85,000 Technology Transfer Program Grant from the Office of National Drug Control Policy, Counterdrug Technology Assessment Center to purchase StarWitness Video Pro, a video evidence-finding tool that makes obscure details visible by brightening low-light scenes; stabilizes moving targets; sharpens blurred images; and provides unmatched video or still-frame enhancement through multiple filters.

Social Services

A team made up of representatives from the Union County Department of Social Services (DSS), Union County Sheriff's Office, Monroe Police Department, Union County Fire Services, Monroe Fire Department, Carolinas Medical Center-Union, Union County EMS, Union County Department of Homeland Security, Daymark Recovery Services, State Bureau of Investigation, Dr. R. Kedijevic, Piedmont Behavioral Healthcare, and Union County Community Child Protection Team developed a response protocol for children, elderly and disabled adults living in clandestine methamphetamine drug lab situations.

Union DSS is ranked sixth in North Carolina for Medicaid overpayment (fraud) collections.

DSS received a TANF grant of \$15,600 from the state for its Work First program to increase the participation rate in work and educational activities.

The number of children in DSS foster care decreased by 18 percent in 2006.

The DSS CAP In-Home Services program for elderly and disabled adults and children served 26 percent more people during the past year.

DSS Children's Services met all the federal outcome goals for protecting and establishing permanent homes for children.

Tax Administrator's Office

The Tax Administrator's Office appraised a record 3,891 new homes in 2006, a 23 percent increase over 2005.

Tax Administration developed and implemented a data management system named "Paperless" in order to maximize data flow between areas, improve efficiency and track work production.

Tax Administration led a county initiative to develop and implement a new software system to integrate real estate data between Planning, Public Works, Environmental Health, Building Inspections, Register of Deeds and Tax Administration as well as 12 municipalities. This system will facilitate end to end coordination and visibility of real estate data from development through construction and taxation.

County tax bills were mailed August 18, the earliest date in more than a decade.

An integrated tax administration system, which includes property appraisal, tax bill administration and tax collection in one software package, was successfully implemented.

The Tax Administrator's Office was reorganized to better align dependent functions under a single manager and thereby improve the processing time of land record documents.

Union County's highest ever collection rates were achieved in both real estate (98.42 percent) and motor vehicle (91.23 percent) taxes for an overall rate of 97.66 percent, which ranks among the top 12 counties in the state.

Three employees completed the North Carolina Tax Collector's requirements for certification as deputy tax collector and were administered the oath of office as such.