

UNION COUNTY, NORTH CAROLINA
2012-13 ANNUAL REPORT



FIREFIIGHTERS'
MEMORIAL



Welcome from the County Manager

I am pleased to present the Fiscal Year 2012 - 2013 Union County Annual Report to the residents of our great county. The annual report provides you with highlights and accomplishments of Union County government and its employees.

The annual report focuses on the Board of County Commissioners' Plan of Work for Fiscal Year 2012 - 13 as initiated by commissioners on January 11, 2012. These priorities are in addition to many other processes, initiatives, work plans and programs currently underway and the day-to-day operations and services provided to the community.

The purpose of the Plan of Work is to be a sustainable plan that achieves identified objectives, a means to measure the county's performance, a method to communicate the Board's priorities to residents, and form a foundation for the organization's FY 2014-15 objectives for the operating budget and capital program.

Cindy Coto

UNION COUNTY BOARD OF COMMISSIONERS

The Board of County Commissioners is the chief administrative and policy-making body of Union County. It consists of five members, elected at-large. Commissioners serve four-year staggered terms. During its first meeting of December, the Chairman and Vice Chairman are elected by and from the Board of Commissioners. In 1965, the Union County Board of Commissioners voted to choose the Commissioners/Manager form of government and appointed the first county manager.



(L To R) Commissioner Richard Helms, Commissioner Jonathan Thomas, Commissioner Jerry Simpson (Vice Chairman), Commissioner Todd Johnson, Commissioner Frank Aikmus (Chairman)



Public Safety

- Union County Emergency Communications was awarded reaccreditations as an Emergency Fire Dispatch Center of Excellence and Emergency Medical Dispatch Center of Excellence by the International Academies of Emergency Dispatch.
- Union County Sheriff's Office assigned 17 deputies to Union County Public Schools to provide an additional level of protection against potential threats or emergencies.
- The Governor's Highway Safety Program recognized the Sheriff's Office for 100% participation in all state traffic initiatives.

- LT. Chase Coble became a member of an elite group of 10 officers in the Sheriff's Department to graduate from the National Academy in Quantico, VA.



- The Sheriff's Office expanded the K-9 program to include an explosives detection dog.
- All Union County Sheriff N completed the SHEILD training program, an online leadership and ethics course.

- Sgt. Scott Stroud completed the Law Enforcement Executive Program through N.C. State University.



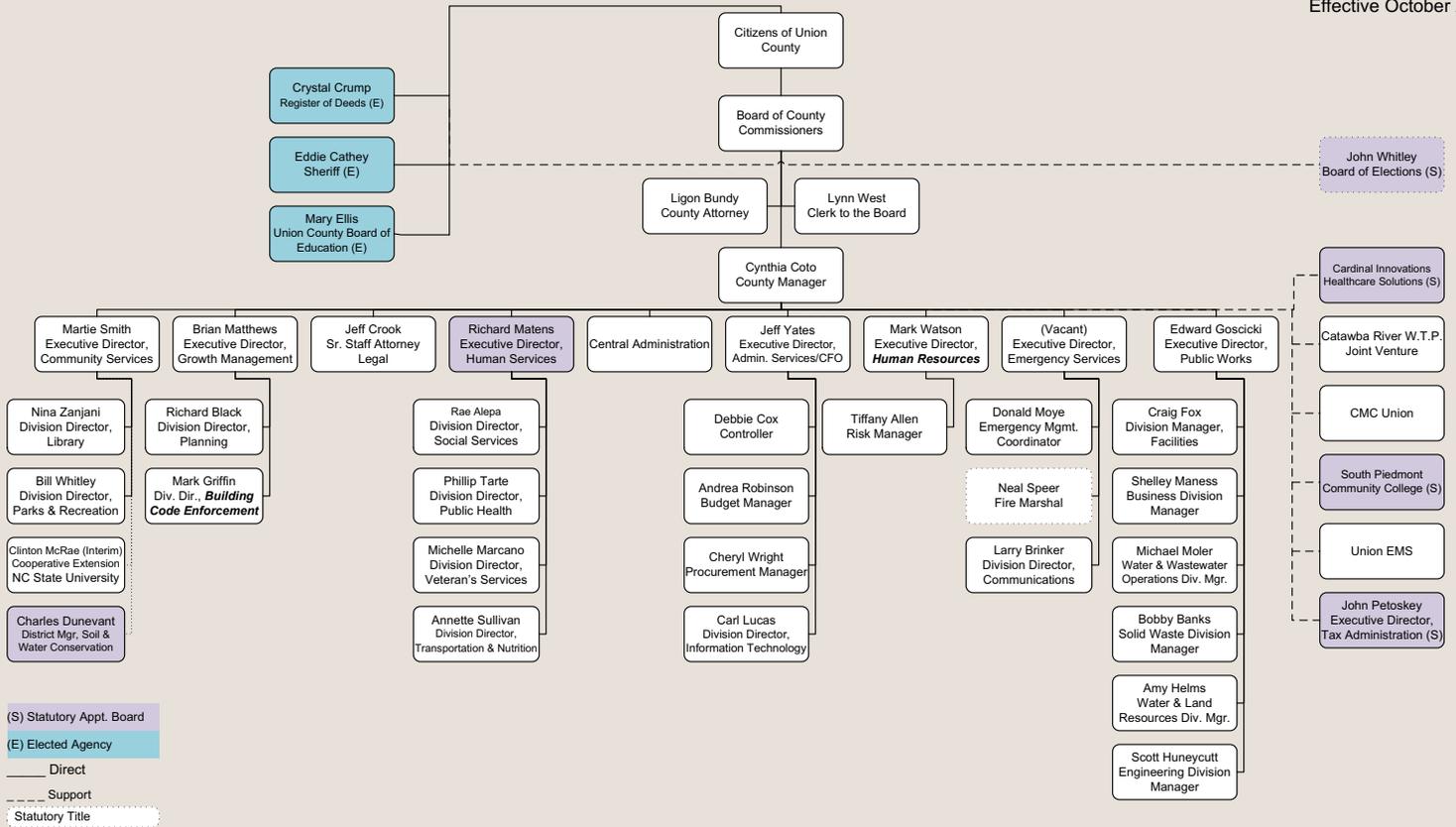
- Detective Brian Keziah became certified to conduct forensic analysis of computers and hard drives at the National Computer Forensic Institute operation by the U.S. Secret Service.
- The Union County Sheriff's case and clearance rate increased 5% cent officers began using LeadsOnline to track the transfer of stolen property.
- The Sheriff's Office partnered with the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police during the 2012 Democratic National Convention. Deputy positions included a 12-man field force team, foot patrol platoon and supervisor of a sensitive security function in one of the event's operation centers.

- In 2011, a 161 acre site was purchased to build a Sheriff's Office training complex to include a qualification range, rifle range, tactical range, skeet range, multi-use range, training facility support building, driver training area and pad, and an outdoor physical fitness area. As of this year, conceptual designs for the complex have been reviewed and the scope is being revised to reflect the current available funding.
- The Sheriff's Office received a grant from the Governor's Highway Safety Program to provide two additional deputies in the Indian Trail area focused on traffic enforcement.
- The Sheriff's Office implemented E-crash software enabling deputies to electronically take accident reports inside their patrol vehicles. This software allows deputies to assist the Highway Patrol in handling accidents occurring in Union County.
- The Sheriff's Office has deployed mobile fingerprint scanners to the field allowing officers to identify individuals they encounter by use of real-time live-scan fingerprints when immediate identification is necessary.
- The Sheriff's Office purchased a fully armored tactical vehicle (BATT) with federal asset forfeiture funds from drug cases. The Special Response Team uses the BATT in emergency situations and when additional protection is required during high-risk incidents.
- The Sheriff's Office has part-time task force officers embedded with the FBI, DEA, Secret Service, Homeland Security and SBI.

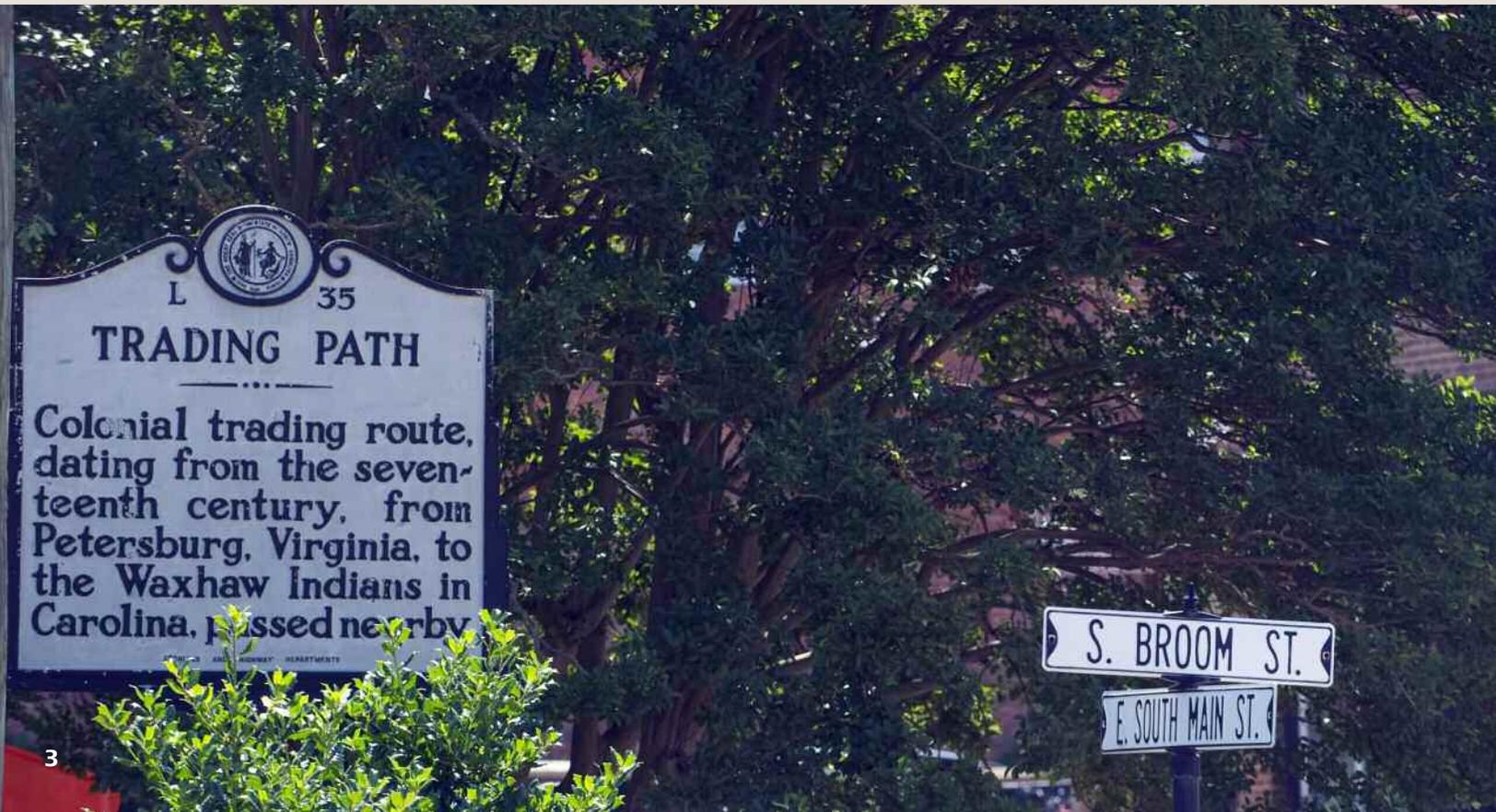


Organization

Effective October 2013



(S) Statutory Appt. Board
 (E) Elected Agency
 — Direct
 - - - Support
 [Dotted Box] Statutory Title



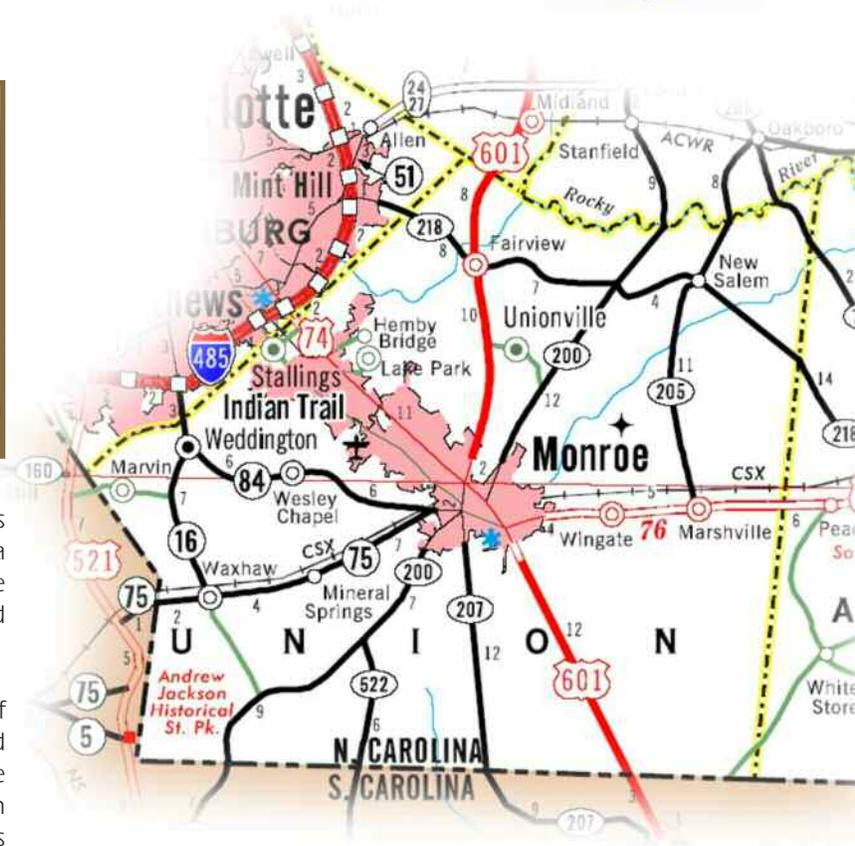


About Union County



Established in 1842, Union County was formed from parts of Anson County and Mecklenburg County. Its name was a compromise between Whigs, who wanted to name the new county for Henry Clay, and Democrats, who wanted to name it for Andrew Jackson.

Union is one of the fastest growing counties in the state of North Carolina. It provides a unique blend of rural and metropolitan lifestyles. While having vast areas of nature untouched by development, it also has areas flourishing in suburban and industrial growth. The primary factors contributing to Union's economic growth are agriculture, business and industry.



UNION COUNTY STATISTICS

Population: 205,463 (2011)

Area (Square Miles): 640

Established: 1842

County Seat: Monroe

Median Household Income:
\$64,486 (2010)

Source: U.S. Census Bureau

Efficient and Effective Government

A new rate structure at the county's six solid waste convenience sites was initiated and customer disposal rates increased from 25 cents to 75 cents for 13-gallon bags and 75 cents to \$1.25 for 33 gallon bags. Until now, solid waste convenience sites operated at a loss of approximately \$300,000 each year. The new rate structure makes sites more financially sustainable.

The Board of Commissioners adopted a new policy for replacing reduced funding. Moving forward, the County will not automatically replace funds from state, federal or private agencies with local money when agencies reduce or eliminate funding to Union County or Union County funded programs.

The policy adopted by commissioners prevents, to the extent possible, the shifting of financial responsibility for state, federal or privately funded programs to the residents of Union County by not replacing funds with local money when agencies reduce support to community programs that rely on that funding.

Employee Separation Pay and Benefits

In light of rapidly increasing costs to provide post-employment benefits such as healthcare and separation allowance, the Board of Commissioners approved several benefit changes limiting the eligibility to participate in post – employment health plans and other benefits.

Fee Adjustments

In order to bring development and permitting fees in line with market rates, fee adjustments were approved in Union County's FY 2014 Operating and Capital Budget. The fee adjustments took effect on Aug. 1, 2013 and are anticipated to generate approximately \$180,580 annually. Fee adjustments occurred in Building Code Enforcement, Planning and Environmental Health.

Agreement with Town of Norwood

Union County and the Town of Norwood in Stanly County entered into an inter-local water intake and transmission agreement that allows both organizations to achieve improvements to their respective infrastructure and obtain a long-term, secure source of raw water for their utility customers in the Yadkin-Pee Dee River Basin.

Under the agreement, Union County will pay for a new raw water intake for Norwood on Lake Tillery and build a water treatment facility in Union County. Union County will also install a raw water transmission line through Stanly County to move water to the new treatment facility. Permitting, design and construction are expected to take 7 to 10 years.





Weddington Water Tower

The Morris property on Hemby Road in Weddington was chosen as the site of an elevated water tower. The elevated water tower will help improve water pressure for homes and businesses in the Weddington community.

Human Services Building

Union County is working to construct a 130,000 sq. ft. Human Services building with 575 parking spaces centrally located in the city of Monroe. Union County currently leases Union Village on Roosevelt Boulevard in Monroe that houses Public Health, Social Services, Juvenile Services and Daymark. Excluding Daymark, the county occupies 79,855 sq. ft. of space that is inadequate to meet existing and future needs.

Public Works Extends Water Service

An annual program allows Union County Public Works to extend water service to citizens. The ongoing program, which started July 1, 2012, offers a limited number of property owners funding assistance for residential and non-residential short water line extensions.

Funding assistance is limited (approximately \$500,000 per year) and applies to the first 1,000 linear feet of pipeline needed to connect Union County's water system. If more than 1,000 linear feet of pipeline is required for a connection, the additional length is paid 50 percent by the property owner, except in situations where documented health hazards exist. To qualify for an extension, a line must be within a publicly maintained road right-of-way.

Budget Adopted

The Union County FY 2014 Operating and Capital Budget of \$297.9 million was adopted by commissioners on June 17.

The largest expenditure in the budget, which accounts for more than 86.7 percent of the ad valorem tax rate, is the \$133.1 million funding for Union County Public Schools related costs. These costs include \$82.26 million for current expense funding, \$3 million of capital contributions, \$46.3 million of school-related debt service and \$1.55 million for the School Resource Officer program.

Commissioners focused on student needs by fully funding the UCPS funding request for classroom instruction at \$45,573,236, fully funding the UCPS request for

payments to charter schools at \$3,520,000, and allowing the Union County Board of Education the flexibility to make the needed reductions in the non-instructional, support services by partially funding the request at \$33,167,172, bringing the total funding to \$82,260,408.

Among other key components, several significant budget highlights include:

- 31 full-time and part-time positions were added throughout the county, primarily in law enforcement.
- To bring development and permitting fees more in-line with market rates, fee adjustments were approved which will generate approximately \$180,580.

County Government Restructuring

One of the five goal areas of the Plan of Work was to create and maintain an effective and efficient government. One of the objectives within this goal was the completion of an organizational assessment that identifies areas where increased efficiency could be obtained. The restructuring approved by commissioners in April 2013 is the result of our organizational assessment and went into effect July 13.

Key elements of the organizational restructuring included county departments being organized into functional groups called service areas and departments becoming divisions of the new service areas.

Document Imaging

Union County Administrative Services is working with Human Services to implement document imaging to capture, store, manage, retrieve and route documentation in an electronic manner. The implementation of imaging will reduce the need for physical storage for the large volume of documents circulating throughout the county.

Succession Planning

Union County is proactively preparing for successive replacement and uninterrupted delivery of key supervisory, management and leadership services when vacancies occur.

Development of the formal succession program includes identification and development of high potential employees, organizational restructuring and targeted hiring.

Supervisor and leadership training was provided to employees who have been identified as potential candidates for key supervisory positions.

Replacement of Phone System

Union County Administrative Services identified the need to replace the county's phone system due to end of life cycle and a lack of vendor support. The new phone system will improve efficiency and access to county services and staff.

Planning/Economic Development

US 74 Corridor

U.S. 74 Corridor Revitalization Plan Being Developed
The U.S. 74 Corridor Revitalization Plan is a coordinated land-use, urban design, multi-modal transportation plan that integrates existing and projected land-use patterns with strategic regional transportation needs for the U.S. 74 corridor between the Mecklenburg County line and the city of Monroe.

The plan includes an overall vision of U.S. 74, general land-use types, transportation systems required to serve U.S. 74, an access management strategy, esthetics and market conditions of the corridor.

The final draft report of the plan is currently being reviewed, and adoption of the plan is anticipated in early 2014.

Obtaining Permits Made Easier

Building Code Enforcement has simplified the acquisition of permits by providing an online permitting system that allows an applicant to complete a permit application and pay online. This prevents the need for the applicant to fax or email additional documents in order to complete the application process.

Growth Management becomes "One-Stop" Shop

The newly established Growth Management Service Area is now the centralized location responsible for collecting all plans and fees associated with proposed construction projects and distributing project plans and information to the appropriate divisions. This creates a "one-stop shop" for clients. Prior to Growth Management providing this service, builders, contractors and citizens had to deal with multiple departments to purchase permits and have plans and projects approved.

Goulston Technologies Receives Incentive Grant

Commissioners in March approved an incentive grant of \$58,152 for Goulston Technologies of Monroe. Goulston is recognized as the leading manufacturer of fiber lubricant products.

The incentive grant will help fund an expansion requiring

\$5,500,000 worth of equipment and machinery. The expansion will strengthen the stability and retention of Goulston's 120 employees and is anticipated to require the hiring of five additional employees with an annual wage exceeding \$57,000.

Unified Development Ordinance or Land Development Code Update

County Creating Unified Development Ordinance
Union County is creating a Unified Development Ordinance that incorporates zoning, subdivision and other regulations controlling physical development in unincorporated Union County and Hemby Bridge. The ordinance addresses development regulations that deal with contemporary development and zoning, modernizes regulations to reflect current design principles and practices, identifies regulatory deficiencies and needs, and implements land-use goals and policies in the 2025 Comprehensive Plan.

Transportation Plan Takes Shape

Union County is developing a county-wide Long-Range Transportation Plan that reflects a 20-25 year planning horizon, vision and goals for transportation throughout the county.

The plan creates a policy framework and more workable strategy that can help guide decisions about growth, development and protection of natural resources.

The plan is important to Union County as it serves as a policy document to guide future decisions. It provides a vision for the county by establishing how the county will look in the future, the quality of life that citizens will experience, and the mechanisms for accomplishing that vision. The plan also recognizes that the county is a community keenly aware of its heritage, which is integral to a vibrant sense of place.

The plan provides policies for unincorporated Union County and municipalities by which land-use, neighborhood preservation, economic development, transportation, social, environmental and quality of life decisions are made. It provides direction for land developers and homeowners on the future land-use, transportation networks and policies guiding the future development of the county, thereby enabling landowners to protect their investments and focus their efforts. Finally, the plan will guide the financial decisions of the county to most effectively direct limited public resources to serve the greater public good.



Outstanding Accomplishments

The Union County Department of Social Services converted to a new Food and Nutrition system called N.C. Fast. Its purpose is to provide new technological tools and business processes that enable workers to more efficiently serve families.



In response to a growing demand, Dustin Adcock was hired as Union County's new area extension agent specializing in the field of local foods. Adcock develops programs and assists other area agents to build a stronger and safer food market for producers and consumers.

Union County Cooperative Extension's Farm Fresh Ventures program provided weekly food boxes packed with seasonal food to subscribers and generated \$42,400 for local producers.

Senior Nutrition provided 85 program participants with \$21 each in vouchers for the purchase of North Carolina grown fresh fruits and vegetables at the Union County Farmers' market.

Union County's WIC Farmer's Market Nutrition program for the third year in a row had the highest redemption rate of 37 counties. The program increases access to fresh fruits and vegetables for WIC participants as well as

supporting local farmers and vendors at the Union County Farmers' Market.

Cooperative Extension provided information and assistance in disease prevention, breed selection, egg care and waste management to commercial and small flock poultry farmers, enabling Union County to maintain its position as #3 poultry producing county in the state.

The Union County Soil and Water Conservation District allocated more than \$50,000 in North Carolina State Cost-Share Program funds and \$14,000 in USDA funds in Union County.

Parks & Recreation provided approximately \$87,000 in athletic grant funds for five athletic associations to include assisting South Union Athletic Association with the removal of the remnants of the old South Union School, making the property safer for children using the facilities.



Union County Register of Deeds Crystal Crump was elected president-elect of the North Carolina Association of Register of Deeds and vice-chair of District III for the state's Registers of Deeds Association.

Union County unveiled a new website in 2013. The address is www.co.union.nc.us. Features include a video tour of the county and improved tools to help visitors quickly locate the information and services

Visit Union County on Social Media



UnionCountyNC



UnionCountyNC



@unioncountyNC



Union County Government



Outstanding Accomplishments (cont.)

- The Division of Public Health's Breastfeeding Program surpassed two national goals set by Healthy People 2020.
- More than 8,100 individuals received gifts through the Union County Christmas Bureau.
- Social Services established permanency for 55 children in foster care.
- The Union County Public Library partnered with the Literacy Council of Union County to assist with the Council's Summer Literacy Program.
- Union County Veterans Services provided more than 900 trips to veterans through the Union County Transportation office and Veterans Council of Union Council.
- Social Services provides assistance to elderly and low-income residents of Union County to assist with heating costs through the Low Income Energy Assistance Program.
- Operation Fan/Heat Relief, a program run by the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services and distributes fans to senior citizens every summer, is now available in Union County.
- Union County DHHS provides whooping cough vaccines for children and adults, regardless of insurance status.
- DSS spends more time helping families with a new Food and Nutrition system in 2012.
- Seven Union County 4-H'ers Win Honors at State 4-H Congress.
- Union County Public Library offers new programs like On the Road to School Readiness workshops, eReader Assistance, Computer Assistance, Team Trivia Game Nights, Movie Nights, Classes- Crafts, Special Guest Presenters, Spotlight on Local Authors, Ancestry Online Courses, GenHistory Help Clinic, Teen Activities, Adult Summer Reading Program, Book Sales. The library also launched a digital magazine and book borrowing programs.
- Jeff Yates is named Director of Administrative Services and Chief Financial Officer.
- Richard Matens named new Human Services Director.
- Union County residents saved a combined total of \$1,192,585 on more than 71,000 prescription drug purchases over the past seven years by using the free prescription drug discount card sponsored by Union County and the National Association of Counties (NACo).more than 36,000 participants have saved an average of \$12.96 or 26 percent off the retail price of prescription drugs.
- Commissioners discontinued their health insurance benefits to save taxpayer's money.
- Veterans Affairs program provides free flu shots and healthcare registration for all former and current military members.
- The Union County Sheriff's Office and CMCUnion Safe Kids have installed three medicine drop boxes for citizens of Union County to discard their unwanted or expired medications.
- The Union County Public Information Office, in conjunction with Union County Cooperative Extension, launched a monthly cooking show on the County's government channel, UCTV 16, and its YouTube channel at www.youtube.com/unioncountync The new show, "What's Cookin' in Sally's Kitchen", features Family and Consumer Science Educator Sally McNeill.
- The Union County Board of Commissioners began the process to establish a Consolidated Human Services Agency.
- Parks and Recreation adds new programs like Archery Clinics, Outdoor Compass Courses, Introduction to Geocache (a GPS treasure hunt), Bird Watch Walk, Master Gardening Classes, Letterboxing, Nature Hikes, Bird Watching, Pontoon Lake Tours, Introduction to Fishing, Learn to Canoe, Fishing Competition, Take Kids Fishing Day, Family Health and Wellness Day, Backyard Bird Count,
- Heating assistance offered through LIEAP.
- Health Department helps build garden at Monroe Middle School.
- County Manager Cindy Coto's contract extended until end of 2015
- Union County Emergency Communications awarded reaccreditations as an Emergency Fire and Medical Dispatch Center of Excellence.



Moving Union County Forward

City of Monroe and Union County Create Economic Development Program

An inter-local agreement between Union County and the City of Monroe to create a county wide economic development program was approved by the Union County Board of Commissioners in November 2012.

There is a 24 member advisory board and annual funding for the program is shared by Union County and the City of Monroe. There are five staff members who are City of Monroe employees.

The group is concentrating recruitment and retention of new capital investment and job creation from four (4) Areas of Focus:

- Precision Manufacturing
- Agri-Business
- Logistics
- Commercial



Goals for FY2015

Executive Team strategy sessions suggest a continued focus on implementing those programs, services, and strategies that promote and sustain Union County's quality of life and lifestyles:

- Public Safety
- Building Community Consensus
- Planning/Economic Development
- Fiscal Sustainability
- Efficient and effective service delivery



UNION COUNTY GOVERNMENT CENTER
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