

# Wilson County NOW

News, Opportunities and Wrap-ups

Q2 2024: April-June

Welcome to Wilson County *NOW*—your quarterly source for News, Opportunities and Wrap-ups from Wilson County Government.



**COUNTY MANAGER:**  
**RON HUNT**

It's summer across Wilson County. I hope you are staying cool on the hot days and taking some time with family.

Our 2024/2025 Wilson County Government Budget was approved on May 30, 2024 after numerous meetings and work sessions with commissioners, department heads, public feedback and a public hearing. Below, you will find a link to our approved budget book, budget message and our latest budget video. All of these are a part of our continuous efforts to communicate with you. I sincerely appreciate our commissioners, department leaders and staff for a smooth budgeting process this year. Our commissioners provide valuable insight and guidance throughout the year and during the development of our annual budget. We are thankful for their leadership and support.

In this issue, you will see many of our departments' events, activities and items that impact you as citizens or may offer an opportunity for your involvement. Citizen feedback is valuable. In the past few months there have been opportunities for feedback on our **Development Services' land-use plan**, which we still have more public events ahead of us, our Wilson County Health Assessment from our Health Department, and as mentioned, our 2024/2025 budget. We appreciate your participation.

While our fiscal year finished June 30, 2024, we are now in July and have started a new fiscal year. What's ahead you may ask? As mentioned in my budgeting message, we have much capital planning ahead in Wilson County. Wilson County is growing, and our facilities need improvements. Watch us on Facebook, Twitter/X and our website as we keep you updated on our capital planning and facility improvements. Our goal is to keep our buildings and facilities updated, accessible and ready to meet the needs of our citizens today and for the future. We are currently working on our Wilson County Government Center at Miller Road. By the fall, you will notice new customer service areas for county Water Services and county Development Services on our first floor. We are working on projects to enhance our tax office by relocating them to a more updated and easily accessible facility and will soon focus on our 100-year-old courthouse and judicial facility downtown. Stay tuned. There will be more we will share soon.

With growth, comes opportunities and change. We will keep you informed and involved. I say this often: if you are new to Wilson County, welcome – it is the best place to live, work, play and thrive. If you are already one of our amazing citizens, thank you for all that you do to make this county the best it can be.

- **[Link to Approved Budget Book](#)**
- **[Link to Budget Message](#)**



County Manager, Ron Hunt, and Communications Director, Stephen Mann, present you with the important details of the adopted 2024-25 fiscal year budget.

**DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER:**  
**LORI WINSTEAD**

Wilson County Government is partnering with Wilson County Public Schools to provide internship experiences to five public high school students. Each student is offered a unique internship experience within county government while being provided an opportunity to learn how different departments function. We are extremely supportive of providing learning opportunities for the students.



Wilson County Schools summer interns learn about Wilson County EMS during a tour on June 19.

**WILSON COUNTY OPIOID MULTIDISCIPLINARY TEAM:**

Wilson County Government partners with the Wilson County Substance Prevention Coalition to provide recovery services and resources to the citizens of Wilson County. Wilson County Government supports this nonprofit annually while they provide evidence-based addiction treatment through in-patient and/or out-patient services.

See the video spotlight below from the West Virginia Drug Intervention Institute showcasing the great work that Wilson County is doing to combat the opioid crisis.



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### **BOARD OF ELECTIONS:**

**TASHA BELL, DIRECTOR (INTERIM)**

The **filing period** for Soil & Water began Monday, June 10 at noon and will end on Friday, July 5 at noon. The filing fee for Soil & Water is \$5.00.

Filing for School Board seats 2, 4 and 6 begins Friday, July 5 at noon and ends Friday, July 19 at noon. The filing fee for School Board is \$36.00.

For more information please contact the Wilson County Board of Elections at 252-399-2836.



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### **COMMUNICATIONS:**

**STEPHEN MANN, DIRECTOR**

Now that we've wrapped up our second quarter of 2024, I hope that you find the information in Wilson County *NOW* useful. My goal is to keep you informed about what's going on in Wilson County through as many channels as possible. If you don't already, I encourage you to follow and interact with us on social media:

• **Facebook**- @wilsoncountygov

• **Twitter**- @wilsoncountygov

• **LinkedIn**- linkedin.com/company/wilson-county-government-nc

• **YouTube**- @wilsoncountygov

If there are items that you'd like to see covered in future editions of this newsletter, please feel free to reach out to me at **smann@wilsoncountync.gov**.



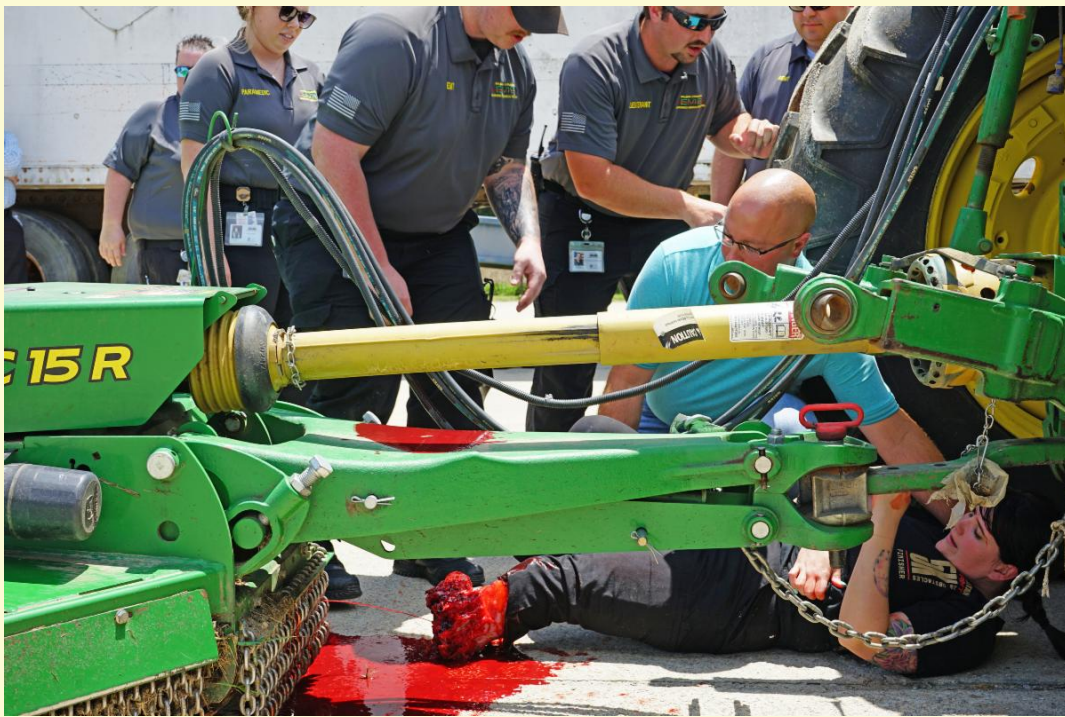
**COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:**  
**NORMAN HARRELL, DIRECTOR**



Agriculture is an important industry in Wilson County, but it can be a dangerous occupation. Farm vehicles are the most likely source of traumatic farm injuries with roadway collisions cited as a significant number of injury events. A report from NC Farm Bureau indicates over 1,000 incidents involving farm vehicles on NC roads between 2015 – 2019.

NC Cooperative Extension recently partnered with the NC AgroMedicine Institute and Wilson County Emergency Medical Services to offer “First on Scene” training for Paramedics, Emergency Medical Technicians and first responder volunteers with local fire departments. The training included a morning classroom portion at Wilson Community College and an afternoon session was held at Sharp Family Farms. The training was provided through a \$15,000 grant funded by the Southeastern Center for Agricultural Injury Prevention. The program allowed participants to learn more about agriculture, pesticide awareness, farm hazards and provided a theater element as a novel intervention for traumatic farm injuries. A professional moulage artist was used to make scenes realistic. Participants had two traumatic farm scenes that they had to respond to. After these scenes, participants were debriefed and reviewed proper procedures.

Two sessions were conducted with a total of 62 participants. The participants learned about agriculture in Wilson County, agriculture equipment, hazards on the farm, pesticide awareness and training in traumatic agriculture injuries. This training helped prepare the paramedics, EMTs and first responders for agriculture injuries.



EMS employees react to a realistic farm injury scene on May 28 during a training exercise at Sharp Family Farms.

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**DEVELOPMENT SERVICES:**  
**BRAD THOMPSON, DIRECTOR**

As a reminder, Wilson County is in the process of updating its **Comprehensive Land Use Plan**. The plan will provide guidance on land use and infrastructure decisions for years to come.

The Plan will build on the visioning goals and work performed for previous planning efforts and work to create an updated list of recommendations and policies to assist local decision makers in the management and growth of Wilson County. Feedback from stakeholders, members of the public, and elected and appointed officials is essential.

The next step of our process will be a Public Input Meeting on Tuesday, August 20 from 5:30 p.m. until 7:00 p.m. at the Wilson County Agricultural Center.



View a recap of the 2045 Comprehensive Plan Public Meeting held on April 17.

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**9-1-1 EMERGENCY**  
**COMMUNICATIONS:**  
**JEFF WILLIFORD, DIRECTOR**

As of June 18, our Computer-aided Dispatch (CAD) system and the CAD system in Pitt County are now connected. This allows us to send and receive calls electronically, significantly enhancing our efficiency and reducing the reliance on radio channels to relay calls between our agencies.



Some of the benefits of this integration are:

- Improved communication: Electronic call transfer helps ensure vital information is shared quickly and accurately between our departments.
- Increased efficiency: Telecommunicators can now focus more on managing the incidents rather than relaying information manually over the radio.
- Enhanced coordination: This integration allows for better coordination between our emergency services and those in Pitt County, leading to more effective response times.

This was the culmination of a yearlong project between our agency and Pitt County. To complete this project, Pitt County was awarded a grant to cover the cost of all expenses that were not 9-1-1 fund eligible resulting in no Wilson County general funds being used. All of this is to ensure that if you call 9-1-1, we can provide the fastest and most efficient service.

We're proud to share some impressive statistics from January 1 - June 30, 2024:

- Total Calls Answered: **76,538**
- Quick Response: **99.73%** of calls were answered within 15 seconds
- Average Answer Time: **4.07** seconds
  
- Calls for Service Processed: **91,708**
- EMS Calls: **8,938**
- Fire Calls: **3,778**
- Law Enforcement Calls: **78,992**

In addition, our Telecommunicators completed **1,374** hours of training during this period, ensuring they stay sharp and ready to serve our community effectively.



## **EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:**

### **GORDON DENO, DIRECTOR**

June 1 marked the beginning of hurricane season in North Carolina and it runs through November 30. Wilson County Emergency Management wants you to be prepared in order to protect you and your loved ones from the impact of severe weather such as hurricanes.

Having a family emergency plan and supply kit can be the difference between being a hurricane victim or a hurricane survivor. Take the time to write down your hurricane plan and update your emergency supply kit with enough non-perishable food and water to last each person in your family a minimum of one week. Kits should also include:

- First-aid kit

- Weather radio and batteries
- Prescription medicines
- Sleeping bag or blankets
- Changes of clothes
- Hygiene items such as toothbrush, toothpaste, soap and deodorant
- At least \$200 in cash
- Pet supplies: food, water, bedding, leashes, muzzle and vaccination records

Stay informed when severe weather strikes by tuning in to local news or listening to a NOAA Weather Radio. Stay alert for evacuation information and know evacuation routes in your community. Heed the warnings from state and local officials and evacuate quickly when told to do so.

More information on severe weather and hurricane preparedness is located on [www.ReadyNC.gov](http://www.ReadyNC.gov).

Wilson County also has the CodeRED™ Emergency Telephone Calling System for mass emergency notifications to notify residents and businesses within minutes of an emergency or a potential hazard. You must opt in for Weather Warnings. The system will call each number and will leave messages on answering machines and cell phones. If you wish to receive notifications, you must register.

**Sign-up for Code Red**—It's one more way we can keep you informed about emergencies.

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## **EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:**

### **MICHAEL COBB, DIRECTOR**

Safe Kids Wilson County is an injury prevention coalition. We are the lead agency for Safe Kids Wilson County.

Summertime is here and everyone is ready to have fun! Accidental drownings and children being left in hot cars are two of the leading causes of child death in the world.

All children should be supervised by an adult while around a pool. Swimming lessons at an early age decreases the likelihood of drowning. Always wear a life jacket when you're on a boat. These are a few tips that will help keep children safe around pools and open water.

Keep in mind temperatures in vehicles rise quickly. Children should not be left alone in a vehicle for any amount of time, during any time of the year. The temperature in a vehicle can get more than 50 degrees hotter than outside. It is easy to get distracted and forget that your child is in the backseat. Leave an item such as a briefcase or a shoe in the backseat with your child so that if you forget and get to your destination, you will have to open the back door. Looking in the backseat before you lock your car can save a child's life.







# Water Safety

- Watch kids around water. Keep **young children within arm's reach** of an adult.
  - Enroll children in **swim lessons** and teach them water survival skills.
  - Install **4-sided fences** around home pools.
  - Teach children that swimming in **open water is different** from swimming in a pool.
  - Teach children to **wear U.S. Coast Guard-approved life jackets** when boating.
  - Learn **CPR** and basic water rescue skills.
- SAFE KIDS



## HEALTH DEPARTMENT: CINNAMON NARRON, DIRECTOR

The Wilson County Health Department offers dietician services provided by our Nutritionist, Amber Burgess, RD, LDN. As a Dietitian, she provides nutritional counseling to health department patients, county employees and patients referred from outside provider offices on a variety of chronic diseases like diabetes, obesity, high blood pressure and cholesterol.

During the initial appointment, she meets with the patient to develop an individualized plan to help them reach their health goals. This involves learning the patient's dietary and lifestyle habits and counseling them on ways they can make changes to improve their health. At each successive visit, they meet to discuss their ability to make changes and how they are progressing towards their goals. Patients can get overwhelmed with the amount of information received initially and adhering to the behavior changes can be difficult. It's important to continue to communicate to determine the need for additional education or possibly a change in the original goal or plan.



Amber Burgess, RD, LDN

## HUMAN RESOURCES: TIM BILDERBACK, DIRECTOR

Wilson County Government is a great place to work, offering many attractive benefits. We're always looking for great people to join our award-winning departments. Our commitment to quality public service is obtained by attracting and retaining quality employees. If you want an exciting career in public service, check out our job openings. You can view all open



positions that we're currently hiring for [here](#). Come work with us!

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## **LIBRARY:**

### **KAREY BLANCHARD, DIRECTOR**

We have activities for community members of all ages! Right now, our Summer Reading Program is in full swing with this year's theme of *Adventure Begins at Your Library*.

Our new Music and Movement Storytime has been very popular. The first program had 85 attendees! This Storytime blends songs, rhythms and instruments for ages 0-5 and their caregiver(s). This program also includes a craft.



We offer Friday morning movies each week during our Summer Reading Program. The family-friendly films start at 10:30 a.m. and includes popcorn and lemonade.

Our monthly Cooking Adventure Program uses our mobile kitchen. We inspire literacy during this program by reading children's books with coordinating topics. As you can see, some of our youngest patrons were really enjoying decorating and eating the cupcakes!

To keep up with the latest events happening at the Library, visit our [online calendar](#).



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## **SENIOR CENTER:**

### **DR. KESHA HOWELL, DIRECTOR**

On Wednesday, May 29, we held a much anticipated ribbon cutting and grand reopening of the recently remodeled Senior Activity Center. Renovations began in April 2023 with the addition of 2,200 square feet, bringing the total footprint to 11,900 square feet. The remodel and expansion includes a new wellness pavilion, additional restrooms, an arts and crafts room, conference rooms, new office space, multi-use space,

recreation room improvements, a new welcome center entry with a handwashing station and a modern, covered drive-thru. In addition to some of the aesthetic updates, the center also now includes clinic rooms which can be utilized for health screenings, blood pressure checks, vaccinations and other prevention services.



Hear from Dr. Kesha Atkinson Howell, Director of the Wilson County Senior Activity Center, as she tells you all about what the newly remodeled building offers and takes you on a tour.



- Save the date for Senior Day at the Fair on Wednesday, September 18.
- We will be holding a Welcome Back Barton 2024 event on Monday, August 26 from 4:30 p.m. until 6:30 p.m.
- Join us for our new Walk with Ease Program and Healthy Eating Classes—Just for the Health of It! — Info Dates: July 12 at 11:00 a.m., July 16 at 11:00 a.m. and July 24 at 3:00 p.m.

## **SOCIAL SERVICES:**

**ANNIE WARD, DIRECTOR (INTERIM)**

April was National Child Abuse Prevention Month. You might have seen blue pinwheels throughout the county in more than 40 locations, which



represented the desire that all children have great childhoods. In 2024 Imagination Station and all Wilson County Public Schools were among the newest pinwheel partners.

In celebration of the Week of the Young Child and Child Abuse Prevention Month, the Rotary Park in Wilson served as the location for the Mary Artis Kids on the Lawn celebration on Saturday, April 20. The day featured fun activities for children and families, including bounce houses, face painting and bubbles. Parents also interacted with numerous community and nonprofit groups on hand to share important information.



Wilson County DSS celebrated Older Americans Month by hosting the 31st Senior Awareness Day on Thursday, May 16.

Held at the Wilson County Fairgrounds, the theme for 2024 was Senior Derby, a Kentucky Derby-based theme in honor of that May event.

Hundreds of older adults and adults with disabilities participated, enjoying lunch, entertainment, health screenings and educational opportunities provided by 40 community partner vendors. Many lucky participants won door prizes and everyone received either a derby-style hat or a red silk rose for their lapel.

Senior Awareness Day is held in conjunction with Older Americans Month, a time to celebrate the contributions of older adults in the community. A planning committee of volunteers, community partners and Wilson County DSS staff worked over several months to create the event. They secure sponsorships from local businesses, host fundraising events to raise additional funds and plan all the day's activities.

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## **SOIL & WATER:**

### **JOSH PATE, DIRECTOR**

On April 13, Wilson Soil & Water Conservation and the City of Wilson Storm Water Department held their second gas and oil drop at P.L. Woodard & Co. This event was held for the citizens of Wilson County to dispose of these products in an environmentally friendly way. The event resulted in 47 gallons of oil

and 96 gallons of fuel being recycled, for a grand total of 143 gallons.



Each year, Wilson Soil & Water Conservation sponsors a speech contest in Wilson County Schools. This year, the theme was “The Living Soil.” For the second year in a row, Ella from Springfield Middle School, advanced to the state competition held in Raleigh.



**SOLID WASTE SERVICES:**

**ANDY DAVIS, DIRECTOR**

Did you know that mulch is available for sale to the public at our county landfill? The leaves and limbs that are brought to the landfill are ground up, screened and placed into windrows. The processed material is a mulch, not compost.

Mulch loading times are Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m.-Noon and 1:30-4:30 p.m. and also on

Saturdays from 8:00 a.m.-Noon.

**On-Site Fees:**

Pickup: \$5

Single Axle Trailer: \$5

Dual Axle Trailer: \$10

Single Axle Dump: \$10  
Tandem Dump: \$20  
Tractor/Trailer: \$100  
Load by hand: FREE (anytime during operating hours)

We will also deliver mulch. Call 252-399-2823 to schedule delivery.

**Mulch Delivery Fees:**

In-county dump truck: \$75  
In-county tractor trailer: \$200  
Out-of-county dump truck: \$150  
Out-of-county tractor trailer: \$425



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**TAX ADMINISTRATION:**  
**CRAWFORD BOLTON, TAX**  
**ADMINISTRATOR**



At the June 3, 2024 Board of Commissioners meeting, Wilson County Commissioners voted unanimously to approve the purchase of the vacant Wells Fargo building located at 2816 Ward Blvd. in Wilson for \$2 million. This will allow the county needed growth space for the Tax Administration, along with drive-thru service, adequate parking and access for persons with disabilities.

In 2023, the county worked with Oakley Collier Architects on a downtown county facility study. Part of that study included recommended new space for our Tax Department of at least 10,500 square feet. After researching several options, including the construction of a new building, it was determined that the purchase of the vacant Wells Fargo building (10,500 sq.ft.) amounted to cost savings of at least \$2 million. Building a new facility would have cost the county at least \$4 million based on the architectural study. Moving the Tax Administration from our current location in downtown Wilson to the Wells Fargo building also fits well with the county's citizen services, as it will be approximately one block over from the future EMS North Central City Station. As of the date of this newsletter, the County has not

closed on this property and is working through the process.

With the 2024 countywide revaluation of real property wrapping up, the number one question asked has been “how much will I pay in property taxes this year?” The Wilson County Tax office wants to assist with this question by providing you with an easy-to-use **Tax Calculator**. On our webpage, under the collection section, you can locate a handy **Tax Calculator** that will allow you to input your current assessed value for 2024 and apply to updated 2024 property tax rates for your area. Whether you live in a rural fire district, or inside of a local town or city, this calculator can help answer your question for the upcoming year.



The vacant Wells Fargo building at 2816 Ward Blvd. will be the future site of the Wilson County Tax Department

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