

Wilson County NOW

News, Opportunities and Wrap-ups



Q3 2024: July-September

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



COUNTY MANAGER:
RON HUNT

It is fall across Wilson County. Of course we are used to the ups and downs of temperatures, but a cooler change is welcome. As the new season is here, maybe you have been out and about running errands and you have stopped by our County Government Center on Miller

Road to pay a water bill and you have seen our parking lot remodel or the building renovations. You may have driven to the north side of Wilson and saw two new “Future Home” signs showing the new EMS North Central City Station or the new Tax Administration building (former bank building). And in the news you may have seen us discussing a new EMS East Station. My point is that change in county government is similar to a change in the seasons. It has to happen. This helps us to meet the ever-changing and growing needs

of our county. So just to quickly share a few projects we have going on:

- Wilson County Government Center renovations – Soon, our parking lot will double in size and allow more easily accessible parking to our building. All citizen services will move to first floor with a new Water Services and Development Services (planning and inspections) customer center for easier access. After years of failing heating and air and roof leaks, all of this has been repaired or replaced.
- Wilson County Tax Administration Facility move – The Wilson County Tax Administration moves to 2816 Ward Boulevard later this year. This is the former Wells Fargo building. After years of not having parking and easy access to all citizens, this facility is easy to access, has adequate parking and meets the needs of this department for many years to come.
- Emergency Medical Services North Central City Station – We broke ground on September 25 on our new North Central City Station at 708 Brentwood Drive N, Wilson. This station will help us to maintain adequate response times on the north central side of the City of Wilson. In fact, it will quickly pick up on one-third of the 16,000+ EMS calls we receive each year. We look forward to seeing progress and a new facility in 2025.
- Emergency Medical Services East Station – Look for more news coming soon about the new EMS East Station on US-264 Alternate East (directly where it meets Landfill Road). This allows us to maintain adequate response times in the eastern part of Wilson County. This station will handle approximately 1,700 calls each year.

As you can see, it is a busy time with much planning and focus on meeting the needs of our citizens. We could not do any of this without the leadership and support of our Wilson County Commissioners. They guide us with a focus on spending responsibly while focusing on meeting the needs of our citizens. As we work through each of these projects, connect to our social media @wilsoncountygov or our website at wilsoncountync.gov.

And finally, a word about the staff in each of these departments. While these amazing professionals are excited about the new facilities, they are always focused on serving you—our very own Wilson County neighbors. In this edition you will see just how many powerful and positive things are going on in Wilson County. Thank you for the opportunity to serve.



ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT

In the past eight months, Wilson County has been fortunate to welcome five new biopharma companies, bringing over 1,400 jobs to the area. Wilson County Government continues to be a hub for economic development activity in Eastern North Carolina.



- SCHOTT Pharma's Wilson location will be the first U.S. facility to manufacture prefillable polymer and glass syringes that are required for deep-cold storage and transportation of mRNA medications and GLP-1 therapies, which are used to treat diseases such as diabetes or obesity.
- IDEXX Laboratories is a medical device firm that will produce veterinary diagnostic equipment.
- Reckitt Benckiser Health's Wilson facility will manufacture Mucinex in both tablet and liquid form.
- Neopac US, Inc., which first came to Wilson in 2018, will expand their current facility in order to launch a new product line of cosmetic tubes.
- Johnson & Johnson will invest over \$1 billion to build the first biologics plant east of Interstate 95 right here in Wilson.

None of this would be possible without the collaborative efforts of the Wilson Economic Development Council, Wilson County Commissioners and Wilson City Council.



DEPUTY COUNTY MANAGER:

LORI WINSTEAD

Wilson County Government continues to leverage the opioid settlement dollars to provide funds for early intervention strategies. As part of our settlement dollars, we have collaborated with Wilson County Schools and Public School Forum of NC to provide trauma informed training to staff at five area schools. We have provided training to encourage early interventions and identification for those children and adolescents who may be

struggling with mental health conditions or problematic use of drugs. The number of students showing signs of struggle was 233 and those students have been referred for mental health services. We continue to focus on preventing youth substance misuse by addressing causes of substance use disorders.



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.

BOARD OF ELECTIONS:

TASHA BELL, DIRECTOR

Early voting will begin Thursday, October 17 through Saturday, November 2. Hours are Monday - Friday 8:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m.; Saturday, October 19 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.; Sunday, October, 27 1:00 p.m. - 4:00 p.m.; and Saturday, November 2 8:00 a.m. - 3:00 p.m.



Place 1: Wilson County Board of Elections
112 Douglas St. E.
Wilson, NC 27893

Place 2: The Lida Blalock Meeting Room, Wilson County Health Department
1801 Glendale Dr.
Wilson, NC 27893

Place 3: Wilson County Government Center
2201 Miller Rd. S.
Wilson, NC 27893

Election Day is Tuesday, November 5.
As a reminder, voters will be asked to show ID when voting in NC, starting this year.
Get accurate info here: bit.ly/3pTr8GT

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

COMMUNICATIONS:



STEPHEN MANN, DIRECTOR

In the early morning hours of Thursday, August 8, an EF3 tornado touched down in Lucama as a result of Tropical Storm Debby. Springfield Middle School in Lucama was heavily damaged, as well as Friendship Primitive Baptist Church on Creech Road and four homes in the vicinity of Wiggins Mill Road and Lloyd Road.

Unfortunately, there was one fatality as a result of one of the collapsed homes. Our prayers

continue for our Wilson County neighbors who were affected by this storm.

To keep citizens informed before, during and after the storm, here is a recap of the communications efforts:

- Coverage from 48 local, state, national and international media outlets
- 25 Facebook posts
- 4 LinkedIn updates
- 35 Tweets

Wilson County goes through numerous exercises each year to prepare for storms such as this and we have well-seasoned management and response teams.

Another way to help keep you informed is through our weekly Just A Minute update videos. These provide a quick update each Friday to let you know the big news for that week, along with upcoming events the following week. You can view each one on our [YouTube](#) channel.

If you don't already, I encourage you to follow and interact with us on social media:

- **Facebook**- @wilsoncountygov
- **Twitter/X**- @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.

CONNECT WITH US



COOPERATIVE EXTENSION:

NORMAN HARRELL, DIRECTOR

The Wilson Chamber of Commerce, Wilson AgriBusiness Committee and NC Cooperative Extension - Wilson County conducted the Wilson Tobacco Market opening ceremony on August 14 at Horizon LTD auction warehouse. The event celebrated the 135th anniversary of the Wilson Tobacco

markets. The “World’s Greatest” Tobacco Market has a long and rich history of selling tobacco and Wilson continues to be a hub of tobacco production and leaf sales. It is estimated that 2/3 of the United States’ flue-cured tobacco moves through the Wilson tobacco markets.



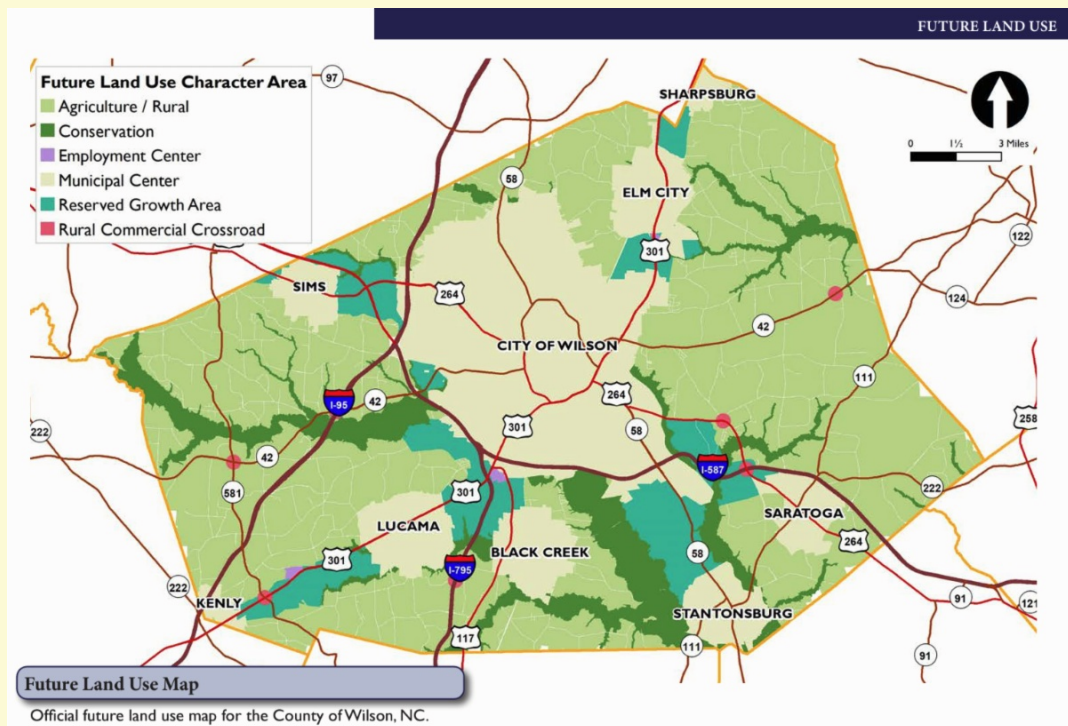
Mr. Pender Sharp, Chairman of the Wilson AgriBusiness Committee, served as master of ceremonies. Bringing comments included Mr. Rob Boyette, Chairman of the Wilson County Board of Commissioners; Mr. Carlton Stevens, City of Wilson Mayor; the Honorable Steve Troxler, NC Commissioner of Agriculture; and Congressman Donald G. Davis, U.S. House of Representatives. Mr. Parker Phillips recited “The Wilson Tobacco Market 135 Years and Counting” and the Wilson County Young Farmers Association sold commemorative 135th anniversary license plates. Commissioner Boyette made a special announcement from the Wilson County Historical Association that the Wilson Tobacco markets received a North Carolina Historical Marker. After the program, a live tobacco auction was held. In total, over 250 people enjoyed the event.





DEVELOPMENT SERVICES:
BRAD THOMPSON, DIRECTOR

On September 16, the Wilson County Planning Board unanimously approved the recommended 2045 Comprehensive Land Use Plan! This year-long process has involved valuable input from citizens, staff and WithersRavenel. The recommended plan is now ready to be presented at the October 7 Board of Commissioners meeting for their approval and adoption.



The Wilson County Local Stormwater Program identifies the specific elements and minimum measures that Wilson County will develop, implement, enforce, evaluate and report to the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (NCDEQ) Division of Water Resources (DWR) to comply with the requirements of the Neuse and Tar-Pamlico nutrient stormwater rule. This Local Program covers activities associated with the discharge of nutrients in stormwater from Wilson County. You can learn more in the video below.



Learn about Wilson County's Stormwater Awareness initiative and what you can do to prevent stormwater pollution

9-1-1 EMERGENCY COMMUNICATIONS:

JEFF WILLIFORD, DIRECTOR



We are excited to see that from July 1 through September 30, the 9-1-1 center:

- Moved all rural fire departments off the old, antiquated VHF radio system to the Viper radio system. This allows the rural fire departments the ability to communicate with other public safety agencies in Wilson and surrounding areas.
- Participated in the full-scale exercise with Emergency Management, EMS and County fire departments on September 14 at Nutrien Ag.
- Began our computer aided dispatch system (CAD) upgrade project.
- Managed the August 8 Tropical Storm Debby and tornado events.
- Answered 41,591 calls. The average time to answer was 2.97 seconds and 99.91% of the calls were answered within 15 seconds.
- Processed 42,740 calls for service. Of those 2,067 were fire calls, 4,650 were EMS calls and 36,023 were law enforcement calls.

EMERGENCY MANAGEMENT:



GORDON DENO, DIRECTOR

Wilson County Emergency Management has been very active this quarter.

On July 8, we migrated our fifteen volunteer fire departments over to the State's VIPER (Voice Interoperable Protocol for Emergency Responders) radio system. This project began in February of 2023 when the Wilson County Board of Commissioners approved a \$1.5 million investment into our emergency response communications system.

On July 17, we hosted a joint Tabletop Exercise with Johnston County. The exercise was built around a simulated hazardous materials release at the Nutrien Ag Solutions facility on US 301, north of Kenly. Response agencies from both counties are integral in the response to an incident at the Nutrien facility. Multiple fire departments participated along with Nutrien Ag personnel, EMS, Public Health, 911, law enforcement, hospital staff, NC Emergency Management, NC Regional Hazardous Materials Teams, and Wilson/Johnston County Emergency Management. The discussion-led exercise allowed responders to discuss their plans and procedures for managing an incident of this type.

On July 18, we assisted multiple volunteer fire departments as they responded to a lightning strike fire at Spring Hill Church. Fire departments from Wilson, Nash and Johnston counties battled the blaze for several hours resulting in major structural damage to the church. EMS and Sheriff's deputies responded also.

On July 24, we assisted with a five-fatality motor vehicle crash on I-95 in Wilson county. Several volunteer fire departments, along with EMS from both counties responded along with Highway Patrol, NCDOT and Mangum's Towing and Recovery. In incidents of this nature, we assist in the coordination of the response of all the agencies to ensure that all aspects of the incident are addressed. Incidents like this take a toll on our responders, both physically and mentally. We are also able to coordinate Critical Incident Stress Management for the responders.

On September 14, we hosted the Full-Scale Exercise (follow up to the table-top exercise in July) at the Nutrien Ag facility. Again, this was a joint effort between Wilson and Johnston Counties. A full-scale exercise involves the actual dispatch of personnel and equipment as would happen in an actual emergency. 110 response personnel from both counties participated. Victims of an agricultural chemical spill were triaged, some were treated on scene and some were actually transported to the hospital. This exercise series was funded by a \$20,000.00 grant that Wilson County Emergency Management applied for in 2022.

At the September Board of Commissioner's Meeting, our Board issued a proclamation declaring September 2024 as Wilson County Preparedness Month. It is the responsibility of Wilson County Citizens to individually prepare themselves, their families and their businesses for eventual emergencies and disasters that will impact them. We urge people to access ReadyNC.gov or Ready.gov for timely and important preparedness information. We also urge citizens to sign up for Wilson County's Code Red Emergency Notification system. <https://www.wilsoncountync.gov/departments/emergency->

management/code-red) so they can receive National Weather Service severe weather warnings directly to their phones and email.



Gordon Deno (Director of Emergency Management) and Stephen Mann (Director of Communications) discuss Emergency Management and Preparedness Month.

EMERGENCY MEDICAL SERVICES:

MICHAEL COBB, DIRECTOR

We are always looking for ways to better serve our citizens, and now Wilson County EMS ambulances will be equipped with Carter Kits.

Carter Kits are sensory bags that contain clinically proven items known to comfort and appropriately focus children who are on the autism spectrum, as well as many other children who occasionally find themselves overwhelmed or otherwise impacted by traumatic events.



Each kit contains the following items:

- 5 lb weighted blanket
- Nonverbal communication card
- Sunglasses
- Noise Cancelling Earmuffs
- Fidget Toys

The kits were funded by the Emergency Medical Services for Children Program. We are excited to have these resources available to our community!

In addition, we celebrated the groundbreaking for our new North Central City Station on September 25. The new station will be located at 708 Brentwood Drive N. in Wilson and will take on over 32% of all EMS calls in a given year.



HEALTH DEPARTMENT:

CINNAMON NARRON, DIRECTOR

Flu Season Is Here: Get Vaccinated to Stay Healthy

The Wilson County Health Department is pleased to announce that flu vaccine appointments will be available Monday through Friday starting October 7. As we enter flu season, it is important to protect yourself and your loved ones against influenza.

Who Should Get Vaccinated?

The flu vaccine is recommended for everyone 6 months and older, but it's critically important for those at higher risk of flu complications, including:

- People over 65 years old
- Adults and children with chronic medical conditions or disabilities
- Pregnant women
- Racial and ethnic minority groups

Free Vaccines Available

We have a limited number of free flu vaccines available for uninsured residents 19 years and older. Don't miss this opportunity to protect your health at no cost.

Don't wait—schedule your appointment today!

To schedule your flu vaccine appointment, please call 252-237-3141. Our staff are ready to assist you in finding a convenient time slot. Remember, staying healthy is a community effort. By getting vaccinated, you're protecting yourself and those around you who may be more vulnerable to flu complications. Please share this information with friends and family to help keep our community healthy!

Stay tuned for more updates on our vaccination programs and health initiatives, such as the upcoming release of the COVID-19 vaccine. As always, your health is our priority!



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!

LIBRARY:

KAREY BLANCHARD, DIRECTOR

Now that we are headed into fall, we look back on the busy summer that we had.

During the summer, we had many events including a reptile visit, weekly cooking adventures, summer family friendly movies and the summer reading program "Adventure Begins at Your Library." All of our events promoted literacy and library fun!



The Library also joined a new e-resource consortium, E-iNC through Libby. Libby is the name of the mobile app used by Overdrive, the most popular provider of eBooks and eAudio to libraries. E-iNC is an Overdrive consortium of many North Carolina libraries who share their resources in order to share a much larger pool of books than any individual library could buy. By joining this consortium, Wilson County residents will have access to a much larger range of titles and authors.

Why are we switching?

- *Increased selection: In addition to our members having access to a much larger selection of books, WCPL can buy extra copies of popular books just for our local readers to speed up your wait times!*
- *Improved app experience: Libby is the most widely used library eBook and eAudio app, familiar to library users everywhere.*
- *Improved Kindle support: Libby supports reading library eBooks on Kindle Paperwhites and other Kindle devices.*
- *Improved accessibility: Libby supports native system text size on most devices, meaning text will zoom when browsing for books as well as reading them.*
- *All your eBooks and eAudio in one place: You can now access all our adult, teen, and children's eCollections from the same app. (Does not include the NCLive Hoopla eAudio collection.)*
- *Car app support: For supported car models, Libby offers an integrated dash app to take your eAudio on the road.*

Some things that the library has going on this fall:

- Financial literacy programs and storytimes
- Dinovember (Dinosaurs in November) children's activities
- Candidate Forums in October before Election Day

REGISTER OF DEEDS:

LISA STITH

Protection from Property & Mortgage Fraud

Sign up for this free service from Wilson County! We now offer a free service that helps protect residents from potential property and mortgage fraud. **PropertyCheck™** will automatically alert you of any recordings regarding the property you specify.



Register for PropertyCheck™ in 4 easy steps:

- 1) Sign up at the website [here](#).

- 2) Select how you would like to receive notifications
- 3) Enter the property owner's name
(as it appears on the official record)
- 4) Click CREATE MY SUBSCRIPTION



SENIOR CENTER:

DR. KESHA HOWELL, DIRECTOR

The fun and learning never stops at the Wilson County Senior Activity Center!

- We hosted a Summer Music Celebration featuring the B Sides Country Music Band in July for a luau theme event, and a Western Theme Night in September with DJ Trouble. Both events totaled over 100 seniors in attendance.
- September was National Senior Center Month and Falls Prevention Month in North Carolina.
- We hosted ECU Health for an informational session on how to prevent falls and Fall Prevention Bingo.
- Session 2 of our “Just for the Health of It” began on 09/23/2024. 11 participants completed the first session. Nine are participating in session 2. Call the Senior Center for additional information if you're interested in signing up- 252-206-4059

October/November Upcoming events

1. Free estate planning workshop for seniors (Thursday Oct. 3 at 1pm) with Attorney Jennifer Bennington & Realtor Nikki Mears to learn about estate planning and protecting your assets.(Free Lunch will provided) Registration is required.
2. Insurance Fraud Town Hall Series w/Commissioner Mike Causey (Thursday October 10 at 2pm)
3. “Think Pink” – October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month information forum (Friday October 11 at 11:30 am) in collaboration with Wilson County Health Department
4. We will be hosting a Vaccine Clinic in collaboration with Carolina Family Health Center on Friday October 18 for Covid-19 and Flu vaccines for seniors (55 and older) from 1pm -4pm. Registration is required and appointments for open enrollment with a SHIPP (Senior Health Insurance Information Program) Counselor will be available.
5. Family Vaccine Clinic for Covid-19 and Flu vaccines (all ages are welcome) in collaboration with Wilson County Health Department (Saturday October 26) at the Senior Activity Center (time to be announced)
6. Santa4Senior adoption begins on Monday November 1 (stop by the center to adopt a senior for Christmas/gifts due by Monday December 9). Monetary donations are also welcome

Other Data and Stats for July – September 24, 2024

- Age Range of Participants –
 - 55-64 (15.5%)
 - 65-69 (21.6%)
 - 70-74 (26.8%)

- 75-79 (19.1%)
- 80+ (15%)
- Below 55 (2%)

- Total Number of Participants Served = 3,972



SOCIAL SERVICES:

ANNIE WARD, DIRECTOR (INTERIM)

I have enjoyed my time as Interim Director of this amazing team. Recently, the Wilson County Board of Social Services announced the hiring of Kimberly P. Irvine as the new Director of the Wilson County Department of Social Services. Ms. Irvine will begin her duties on November 13, 2024. She currently serves as the Director of the Surry County Department of Social Services.



Kimberly Irvine

SOIL & WATER:

JOSH PATE, DIRECTOR

The Wilson County Soil & Water Conservation District (SWCD) is currently accepting applications

for NC Agriculture Cost Share Program, Agriculture Water Resources Program, Community Conservation Assistance Program & Environmental Quality Incentive Program. These programs are voluntary cost share programs designed to assist landowners with installation of various Best Management Practices that help protect or improve water quality in our state.



NC Agriculture Cost Share Program

The major cause of water quality problems in North Carolina and in much of the United States is nonpoint source pollution. In many places, damage to our water resources comes from soil erosion, excessive fertilizer use, animal waste contamination and improper use of agricultural chemicals. The North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program helps address nonpoint pollution by providing technical and financial resources. If you are a landowner or renter of an existing agricultural operation that has been operating for more than three years, you are eligible to participate in the North Carolina Agriculture Cost Share Program. For more information please call the office or visit the program's [website](#).

Agriculture Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP)

The Agricultural Water Resources Assistance Program (AgWRAP) is administered by the NC Soil and Water Conservation Commission through the Wilson County SWCD. The AgWRAP program is actively working towards reserving water resources in Wilson County.

The purposes of the AgWRAP are to:

- Identify opportunities to increase water use efficiency, availability and storage
- Implement best management practices (BMPs) to conserve and protect water resources
- Increase water use efficiency
- Increase water storage and availability for agricultural purposes

For more information please call the office or visit the program's [website](#).

Community Conservation Assistance Program (CCAP)

CCAP is a voluntary, incentive-based program designed to improve water quality through the installation of various best management practices (BMPs) on urban, suburban and rural lands not directly involved with agriculture production. For more information please call the office or visit the program's [website](#).



SOLID WASTE SERVICES:

ANDY DAVIS, DIRECTOR

This quarter's information is something you might not know: the Solid Waste Department is the only scrap tire management site for Wilson County residents and businesses to dispose of tires. Staff have managed 22,168 tires or 480 tons since July 1. As you know, you pay scrap tire tax on new tires that you purchase. The scrap tire tax is then distributed from state to counties to cover the cost for the scrap tire program.

The department receives in revenues approximately \$140,000.00 annually from scrap tire tax. The county can apply for a cost overrun grant to help with those expenses also. Although the department requests approximately \$50,000 annually from grants, we only receive about \$18,000 each year. So, the total revenues for

scrap tires are \$158,000.00 annually.

So, what does the scrap tire program cost the county? The disposal cost is one of the largest expenses for the department. The department budgets \$236,000 annually to cover the expense for disposal of tires. This does not include staff, equipment and facility costs for managing the program. That is just the disposal cost of the tires to Central Carolina Tire in Harnett County. So as you can see, the County is not able to cover the full cost of tire disposal each year. However, the scrap tire disposal program is vitally important to the environment by ensuring proper disposal of tires.

TAX ADMINISTRATION:

CRAWFORD BOLTON, TAX ADMINISTRATOR



As we improve our online services, we transitioned to our new tax website, Devnet wEdge, on October 1. The site will be live for the public to begin using starting the weekend of October 5-6. The purpose of this site is to make your property record search easy and convenient. You can use this tool to search and pay for tax bills. Once this is up and running, the old USTaxdata site will still be available temporarily, but the site information will not be maintained or updated after September 30. All services are available on our **website**.

TRANSPORTATION:

LESLEY BARNES, DIRECTOR

ARRIVE Wilson County Transportation, in coordination with NCDOT and the City of Wilson, provided Advanced Mobility Device Securement Training for Transportation Agencies in this region in September. Earlier this quarter, we also worked with our partner agency, Diversified Inc., to share information about our services and Safety Tips while riding on our vehicles. Lesley R. Barnes was promoted to Transportation Director and celebrated her 8th anniversary with Wilson County.



In partnership with Hendrickson Transportation Group, our ridership has greatly increased this quarter. Safety is always a top priority and last month, our drivers completed required CPR/ First Aid training, along with attending the Operation Lifesaver on Railroad Crossing Safety. Recognizing our drivers who do a great job everyday: Sarah Jones and Trenesha McClary both had their two-year anniversary, and Kathy Blakely reached her one- year anniversary.



Wilson County Government | 2201 Miller Road S. | Wilson, NC 27893 US

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