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ROCKY MOUNT

MAGAZINE 2nd Edition

2013



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MY Rocky Mount – Second Edition

It has been one year since the City of Rocky Mount distributed its first annual magazine. I was elated then, and am equally excited now, to present the second issue of *MY Rocky Mount* to our utility customers. The City Council, City Manager, City employees and residents alike were happy to claim ownership of this product which highlighted never-before-told stories about the City's many events, resourcefulness, upcoming activities and unsung heroes. Many even cited it as a guide, serving to demonstrate the scope of City services and the governmental process.

Set almost two years ago, the Rocky Mount City Council's primary goal was, and continues to be, to share the good news of our beloved City. We are striving to move forward in honing our image and becoming a transparent organization for you, our citizens. *MY Rocky Mount* is one medium we will use to relay information to you.

The second edition of *MY Rocky Mount* features many stories, including one on the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences. You may travel to larger areas for entertainment, but right here in our own backyard is an often undiscovered treasure. While you may visit the Imperial Centre for events like Downtown Live! and Winter Wonderland, many citizens do not know all of the Imperial Centre's offerings. This article will give you more insight on the numerous activities available in Rocky Mount.



Through the years, Rocky Mount has been seen and described as a city divided, with the train tracks being a symbol of the division. However, Police Chaplain Howard Kendrick captured the most poetic description of the railroad at the ground breaking of the Douglas

Block in 2010 when he stated, “The railroad track is like a big zipper which brings us all together.”

With the growth of events in the Center City, the renovation of Downtown Rocky Mount and the addition of several new businesses in the Downtown area, people are beginning to see the possibilities and vision for the Center City.

Explore the magazine further and you will find a number of initiatives which we hope will ultimately mean

economic development opportunities and an influx of tourists and new residents to our area. We are proud of the favorable responses of out-of-towners as Rocky Mount hosted the USA South Spring Sports Championships, when the Downtown Streetscape Project was complete, when the Battling Bishops were seen in a new, larger stadium, when the Down East Viking Football Classic drew more than 10,000 fans in its 16th year and when seniors tell their friends who live miles away that the City of Rocky Mount hosted their trip to Italy.

I encourage you to read every page of our second edition. See why so many joyfully claim ownership of this area and exclaim to the world, “This is *MY Rocky Mount*.”

S U M M E R S N A P S H O T S

Lots of great things are always happening in our city. Here's a snapshot of a few of the standout events which have taken place in Rocky Mount this year.



End of Summer Event: The first ever End of Summer Celebration was held August 15, 2013 as a make-up event for the July 3rd celebration, canceled due to inclement weather. The End of Summer Celebration featured The Tams, fireworks, kid's activities and much more.



Rockin' Classic Auto & Motorcycle Expo:

A motorcycle stunt show, a car and motorcycle parade, classic cars and numerous motorcycles lined Main Street for the Rockin' Classic Auto & Motorcycle Expo.



Downtown Live! PNC presented the 2013 Downtown Live! Summer Music Series. The free event featured 10 bands, vendors and more on the lawn of the Imperial Centre.

Lawn Chair Theatre: Lawn Chair Theatre, also presented by PNC, consisted of six family-friendly movies on the Imperial Centre lawn. There were also activities coordinated by the Children's Museum and Science Center.



Winter Events:

Everyone had fun during the City's Christmas events, including Winter Wonderland and the 2012 Christmas parade.



Q&A

Mayor David Combs and Rocky Mount City Council



Mayor David Combs

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

Several things come to mind, but I would say getting our local economy back on track and unemployment down to single digit would be a huge

accomplishment. We have been through a lot of transition in our area over the last 15 years. This has created challenges with regards to our economy. Hopefully, the work that the Rocky Mount City Council has done, along with the Nash and Edgecombe County Commissioners and the Carolinas Gateway Partnership, will begin to pay off as the national economy continues to grow.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

I would say the Sports Complex and the Downtown Streetscape Project are the two most important achievements in the last five years. While the Sports Complex has been finished for a while, the real value of having a Sports Complex is now really paying off. The Downtown redevelopment was way too long in coming, but it has made a huge difference in how people look at our Downtown area. It should also begin paying off as new businesses see opportunity in locating in the Downtown area.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

I grew up in Rocky Mount, and one of my best memories was going to Sunset Park to ride the train or the carousel when I was very young, or the Christmas Parade in Downtown Rocky Mount when I was about eight years old.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

I think it is the ability of citizens in the community to work together to get things done and to help each other when the need is there. The flood was a good example of how this community worked together during a very difficult time. It brought citizens together for the good of this community.



WARD 1

Andre Knight

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

I would like to see us move forward with our employment diversity plan and continued development of the Twin Counties Visioning and Strategic Planning Process..

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

In the last five years, our biggest achievements have been focusing on Rocky Mount's inner city neighborhoods, including the redevelopment of housing, as well as the revitalization of the Downtown area.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

My favorite memory of Rocky Mount is going to the Lincoln Park Restaurant and enjoying the homegrown food available there. I also relish in the past in which we had several local entrepreneurs like Bob Melton and Clarence Pittman who began reputable businesses.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

I would brag about the fact that Rocky Mount is a family hometown. It is a small city with a friendly atmosphere.



WARD 2

Reuben C. Blackwell, IV

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

I would like to see us complete our evaluation of the Event Center. We should also determine how to move forward in our recommendation to the public about how to continue our revitalization of Downtown and our regional economy.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

We have been able to translate the will of our community into powerful public policy positions that have resulted in visible improvements to our City—a remaking and rebirth of Downtown, cleaning up inner city communities, vibrant sports and arts programming and a dynamic and well-rounded regional planning initiative that will secure our competitiveness in many areas for the next 20 years!

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

My first taste of Rocky Mount chicken on the grill. Nobody grills like Rocky Mount!

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

The spirit of courage, innovation and participation. A Rocky Mount bank once coined a statement that they were the "Can Do" bank. Well, I think that we are the "Can Do" city and we can do and be anything that we want to! There is no end to talent and commitment in this city and this region.



WARD 3

Lamont Wiggins

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

As both a personal and a Council accomplishment, I will be ecstatic when we can finally say that Phase 1 of the Southern Loop or the Kingston Avenue Widening Project is complete. I have been actively involved and advocating for the project for approximately six years. It is a long overdue and needed transportation project that will enhance the South Rocky Mount community and provide an improvement that will be efficient and safer for the motoring and pedestrian public.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

It's hard to talk about one without speaking of many. Nonetheless, I would categorize the uptick in overall Central City redevelopment activity as a significant accomplishment. This

uptick is highlighted completion of the Downtown Streetscape Project, completion of the Douglas Block redevelopment, completion of the R. A. Batts Housing Development Partnership and other neighborhood stabilization projects. And this year in particular, it's having the single highest revenue producing weekend ever for the Sports Complex and associated activities.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

Looking back and then moving forward to the present day, the most impressionable thought that comes to mind is how the city has grown. When I was growing up, there was very little area within the Rocky Mount city limits once you went west of US Highway 301. Also, the wastewater treatment plant was in the middle of a residential neighborhood. Now, that wastewater treatment plant is the current MLK Park and the city limits have grown in all directions - north, south, east and west.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

It's hard to choose one, so I will mention many. I would be remiss if I did not acknowledge the many great people who live in and have built this community. Additionally, for a city of its size, Rocky Mount has great amenities that include: 1) a state of the art public library that is second to none; 2) the Imperial Centre, including a state of the art Children's Museum, a planetarium, Arts Center and Community Playhouse; 3) a multi-use Sports Complex that is one of the best anywhere;

4) the Tar River Trail is an inner gem; and 5) a state-of-the-art high school. And I could go on!! Accentuate the positive!!



WARD 4

Lois Watkins

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

I would like to see the City Council successful in forming a prosperous and productive partnership with Edgecombe and Nash counties.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

Biggest accomplishments in five years include: the development of the Douglas Block, developing Rocky Mount into a destination location for sports with the marketing of our Sports Complex, and the partnerships with Elizabeth City State University and N.C. Wesleyan College.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

It was visiting my father and stepmother at Greenfield Apartments (later renamed Clairmont Apartments). It was a time when the village raised the children.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

I would brag about the restoration of the Douglas Block, the collaboration and support in spite of naysayers.



WARD 5

Tom Rogers

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

Evaluate initiatives that have the potential for great economic and quality of life impact. Two items include the consideration of a central city event center and exploring ways to fund much needed infrastructure improvements. There are many issues to review in the coming months, especially the analysis of quality of life benefits, cost and financial risk. Public safety is always a prime objective and remains a top Council focus.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

The Visioning project initiated by the City, along with Edgecombe and Nash counties, has the potential to transform our city and region. This effort is sowing seeds for the future and brings us together to make good things for where we live. While set in motion by local government, it is citizen led, which is significant in creating a shared vision and positioning Rocky

Mount and the Twin Counties Region to succeed in a globally competitive economy.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

My first summer in Rocky Mount was in 1973 when I had graduated from college. The sweet smell of cured tobacco waffled from the markets and processing facilities and permeated the air in Downtown. Having grown up on a farm, it reminded me of the excitement of completing the harvest and the resulting economic gain. There was a bustle, a vibrancy in Downtown that seemed associated with the smell of tobacco.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

The City's investment in the Imperial Centre, the Train Station, the Douglas Block and the Sports Complex are impressive by any measure. They greatly enhance quality of life for citizens and are symbolic of what caused Rocky Mount to grow and even contribute beyond its border.



WARD 6

W.B. Bullock

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

Remain positive, always striving to provide the best

services possible to our citizens while maintaining the cost for each service, making it affordable for everyone.

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

Our city can be proud of the restoration and beautiful additions to older buildings Downtown, and the new look and addition of businesses on Main Street.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

My earliest memories of Rocky Mount were the friendly merchants and restaurants that were all located within walking distance for mostly everyone; remember, cars were expensive and many didn't own one, gas was almost thirty cents a gallon in the sixties, but the new Hardee's and 15 cent burgers were just down the street.

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

The wonderful people, those who have supported the area and our City through the years in so many ways. We have grown with great leadership, and are now home to a new high school, NC Wesleyan College and two of the finest community colleges in the state. These as well as our other amenities for youth and adults add to our quality of life. Our strong churches and the faith community, Twin County Hall of Fame, and our Veteran's Memorial remind us of those who loved Rocky Mount before we did.



WARD 7

Chris Carroll Miller

What would you like to see the City/Council accomplish for 2013-2014?

In 2013-2014, I would like us to make great progress in communicating with our citizens so that they know what a great city we live in! Exciting projects are always in the works in Rocky Mount! Council should soon receive Phase II of the Feasibility Study for the proposed Event Center. We are about to begin work on a new Parks and Recreation Master Plan which will assess current facilities and help identify needed facilities. I would very much like us to find a way to fund street improvements so that we can redo those city streets that are beyond resurfacing and need total reconstruction!

What's the biggest accomplishment(s) the City has achieved in the past five years?

Our Downtown Revitalization efforts: completion of the Downtown Streetscape and, before that, the Douglas Block. Both those public projects have stimulated private investment and brought new businesses Downtown. New construction will begin Spring 2014 on Edgecombe Community College's (ECC) new Allied Health Facility/Biotech Center in Downtown Rocky

Mount. That investment by ECC will bring more students, faculty and visitors to eat and shop Downtown.

What's your favorite or earliest memory of Rocky Mount?

My earliest Rocky Mount memory is of registering my 7th grader at Benvenue Middle School (then on Goldrock Road at Benvenue Road, current site of Wal-Mart!) on January 28, 1986, the day the Space Shuttle Challenger broke apart shortly after launch.

There are so many Rocky Mount 'highs' that choosing my favorite Rocky Mount memory is difficult! Local citizens' volunteer efforts after Hurricane Floyd and the opening of the Imperial Centre to replace our Floyd-flooded Children's Museum, Art Center and the Playhouse are two favorite examples of our community triumphing over tragedy!

If you could choose one aspect of Rocky Mount to brag about, what would it be and why?

From Rocky Mount's many aspects worth bragging about, it is very difficult to choose JUST one! Even within categories such as City facilities, the Imperial Centre and the Sports Complex are both top choices. I am very proud of our City staff in all departments who win awards and recognition from their professional organizations. Local praiseworthy organizations include Braswell Memorial Library, the Down East Partnership for Children and the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus. And, among City staff and local non-profits, the vision and enthusiasm for continued improvements!

Who Knew...

Theatre, Science, Galleries and Activities Galore in Your Own Backyard

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



On this particular day as I enter the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, my attention, as it is on most days, is directed towards the unique art pieces sitting at the entrance of this complex which covers approximately 7.1 acres of land.



On this day, however, my attention is redirected to two school buses in the parking lot, wondering why kids were here on a hot summer day. Shortly after passing Milton & Miles Restaurant and smelling the aroma of fresh coffee, and after strolling through the first few brick walls laden with photos and video as a part of the PNC Legacy Project Exhibit, I can almost instantly hear the screams and chatter of these school aged children as they admire the animals in the Children's Museum and Science Center's live animal gallery. These same youth will soon experience a planetarium show in Cummins Planetarium, equipped with full dome video technology. After that, they'll get lost in the museum's latest exhibit, *Play*, as they experiment with larger-than-life versions of their favorite games, like bowling, billiards, football, dominoes and more. Soon after, they'll venture to the Maria V. Howard Arts Center to get engulfed in the art galleries and perhaps to learn more about how kids can get involved in music, drama, art, dance, pottery and more.

My excitement and attention to these children stems from seeing individuals' reactions when they experience the Imperial Centre for the first time. Although the complex has been in this location since January 2006, almost seven years later, residents and visitors remain impressed; yet, some are unbeknownst to the expansiveness of the Imperial Centre's offerings. I hope this article serves as a guide to most things that you can find at the Imperial Centre and as a form of encouragement for you to discover the gem which lies within the confines of our Rocky Mount. So, join me on the tour.

Our first stop is the Maria V. Howard Arts Center. Formerly led by Cultural Arts Administrator Maureen Daly, the center is comprised of a wide variety of visual art, such as sculptures, basket weaving, photographs and

more. There are also a number of galleries with art from local, national and international artists.

Simply put, "we have a bunch of rooms we call galleries and they have art in them," says Daly. "When you come in, we want people to walk around and look at things. We want you to step through the door and see visual art from people right here in town or by people from across the country who couldn't be more different from us."

The galleries also include the center's permanent collection with over 400 works by

classes and workshops. According to Daly, classes are small and varied, which has a positive impact on the Rocky Mount community.

"Being in this building has allowed us to do some great things," states Daly. "Pottery has always been our strongest program, but now we have this entire building and we've been able to add things like painting and drawing on a consistent basis. Because of that, we've been able to strengthen the influence the programs have in this community."

Classes are also offered during structured summer camps, with 12 kids along with a teacher and teacher's assistant. Up to 20 children are accepted for the afterschool program, with three instructors/mentors available for students in grades kindergarten through fifth.

"Everybody's looking for more efficient ways to stretch their dollars, and very often music, drama and art are being cut out of classes," notes Daly. "For us, music, dance, art, pottery, these are our core, so we decided to create an afterschool program."

While a number of residents take advantage of classes offered at the Imperial Centre's Education

Building, the Imperial Centre Theatre is also popular. On one hand, the 300-seat theatre is almost always sold out when the seven in-house productions are presented; on the other hand, budding actors and actresses flock to the Imperial Centre to be included in these productions, consisting of four community shows, two summer workshops and the annual Christmas Chorus.

"Whenever we do a community theatre show that involves kids, a ton of kids come out. We would like to have kid's performing arts programming year-round," acknowledges Daly. Currently, there are two summer camps in the programming arena—PlayShop, referred to as Playhouse, for 8 to 12 year-olds and Young Actors Theatre for teenagers.



A scene from Peter Pan at the Imperial Centre Theatre

artists primarily from North Carolina and the Southeast, often gained through the Center's many juried art shows. Aside from the permanent collection, exhibits in the galleries are changed three times a year, in January, May and September. Currently, *Peanuts Naturally* is on display.

"Most artists lend us their work to exhibit, but on occasion we will rent an exhibit, and that is what we are doing with *Peanuts Naturally*. The original piece will be comprised of the entire Peanuts crew—Charlie Brown, Patty, Snoopy and the others. Daly and her staff are working with the Charles M. Shultz Museum in Santa Rosa, California on the project. The museum reflects the personality of Shultz, the internationally famous cartoonist.

Daly not only supervised the Maria V. Howard Arts Center, but also the areas on the next leg of the tour, the Imperial Centre's Education Building and programs, along with the Imperial Centre Theatre. The Education Building is the home of summer camps, after school programs,



Adults who love the theatre also take advantage of the arts and play an important role in securing plays shown in the Imperial Centre Theatre. “We have a number of adults in our community who we ask to read plays,” says Daly. “Then we have conversations with them and staff members to create a list. Ultimately, the staff takes the best six or seven plays of opportunity and we do the final scheduling.”

Final scheduling is often a result of the synergy that exists between the Maria V. Howard Arts Center and the Children’s Museum and Science Center. For example, *Peter Pan* was featured at the Imperial Centre because of the exhibit *Play* at the Children’s Museum and Science Center, our final stop on this tour.

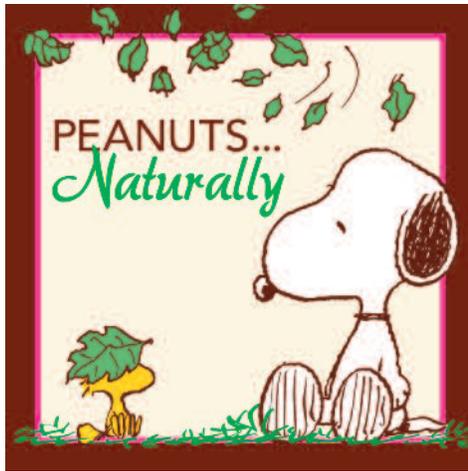
“*Play* is all about being a kid,” says Daly. “We knew that ahead of time, which is why we pursued *Peter Pan* for our theatre and one of the reasons we pursued Peanuts. It has a kid element, so any time we can try to find opportunities for our work to link up together we’re going to take advantage of that.”

Taking advantage of different opportunities is something that Children’s Museum and Science Center Director Candy McCroskey knows all too well. A 20-year veteran of the center, McCroskey has taken advantage of many traveling exhibits like *Play*. In January 2014, *Play* will move on to its next home while the Children’s Museum and Science Center will fascinate youngsters and adults with *Grossology*.

“Anything that stinks, smells, that’s slimy and gooey, we’re going to talk about it,” says McCroskey. McCroskey realizes many parents may think staff have “lost their minds,” but kids will learn and perhaps be encouraged to eat healthier after seeing the exhibit.

“Urine and body odor, all of it has science and there are reasons behind every single thing our body does. Kids will have so much fun learning about these things, and it makes them more sensitive in understanding why their body works and reacts the way it does. They will understand why types of food may prevent their upset tummy or why their nose runs.”

Grossology will not be the only reason for next year’s visitors to the Children’s Museum and



Science Center. Many of last year’s 106,000 Imperial Centre visitors checked out the center because of its traveling exhibitions, living collection of animals on display, such as Lizzy, a 50-year-old boa, Cummins Planetarium and Trashasaurus Rex, just to name a few. All

says McCroskey. “You may not see it all in one visit.”

As for the animal collection, animals are given spectacular environments to live in, simulating their natural homes. McCroskey calls it designing a museum from the animal’s perspective. “Our live animal exhibits are very different from some of the other museums because we designed them from the animal’s perspective as opposed to from the viewers perspective,” states McCroskey. “So from the animal’s perspective, we designed these habitats, not just holding areas or cages. We

had to recreate their home. There’s special lighting in the exhibits. The water is filtered through an osmosis filtration system so it’s especially clean.”

Finally, Cummins Planetarium is unique because it is the first museum in North

Carolina to have the full dome video technology. In the planetarium, not only will you enjoy comfortable seating, but shows are beneficial to adults and kids.

Dynamic Earth explores the inner workings of Earth’s climate system and *Seasonal Stargazing* is a brief overview of seasonally occurring changes in the night sky. Other scheduled planetarium shows for 2014 are *Laser Motown* in February; *Laser Michael Jackson* in March; *Laser Beatles* in April; *Spirit of America* in July; *Laser Halloween* in October and *Laser Holidays* in November and December.

“We want to be for everyone,” says McCroskey. “Our focus is children but we also welcome adults. We promote lifelong learning and we want everyone to come in and learn.”

Lifelong learning and catering to everyone in the city and beyond has always been the focal point for the Imperial Centre. But at one point, it seemed difficult to reach the masses. Hurricane Floyd devastated the city of Rocky Mount in 1999 and was responsible for almost 60 fatalities. Many people lost their homes and struggled in its aftermath. Employees of the Children’s Museum and Science Center and the Maria V. Howard Arts Center were not strangers to the devastation, suffering at home and at work. The Children’s Museum and Science Center, located at Sunset Park, and the Maria V. Howard Arts Center and Tank Theatre,

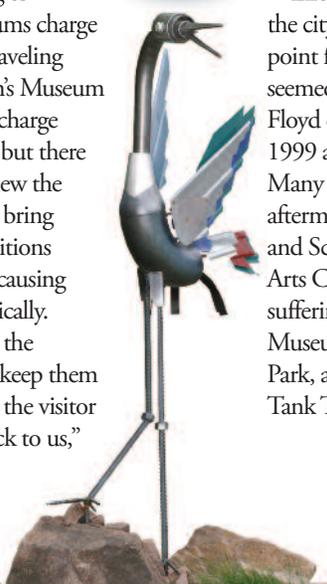


Teens enjoying “Play” at the Childrens Museum

of these features have some elements distinct from other museums.

For example, according to McCroskey, many museums charge a separate fee to see the traveling exhibitions. The Children’s Museum and Science Center does charge a nominal admission fee, but there is no separate charge to view the exhibition, so visitors can bring their kids to see the exhibitions more than once without causing a strain on them economically.

“The fact that we have the traveling exhibits and we keep them for a year at a time allows the visitor the flexibility to come back to us,”



previously at Bethlehem Road, were relocated to Church Street at the site of the current Booker T. Washington (BTW) Alumni Resource Center.

"We had just renovated the planetarium at the time with new seats, and we had resurfaced the dome," says McCroskey. "We had run 10 shows when the flood hit. Half my staff lost their homes."

With 20 of 23 specimens lost and exhibitions floating like barges down Sunset Avenue, what was left from the two centers was compiled in the Booker T. Washington (BTW) Resource Center.

The center served its purpose for a short time, but staff and the Rocky Mount City Council knew if they wanted a complex to benefit the citizens of Rocky Mount, a change had to take place.

Daly looks in amazement when I ask her about the appearance of the Imperial Centre when she first saw it. The center was once the site of the Imperial Tobacco Company. The Education Building was the former Braswell Memorial Library.

"It was kind of scary," admits Daly. "There were large portions of the roof that were gone or compromised with large holes. We were trying to get to the second floor when I first came here, and there were portions of the stairs missing. There was nothing like it."

McCroskey agrees but saw the potential the Imperial Centre offered. "Things were completely demolished and crumbled, but we saw the brick and the arches and the architecture of it. There were certain components of it with that industrialness, and we knew we could take that and make it something really special. That's how it started."

Completion of the Imperial Centre was a huge undertaking. Staff had to choose the tile, light fixtures and more. McCroskey's team examined the size of the door openings to ensure that traveling exhibits could be easily maneuvered in and out of the facility. Both centers and the theatre also had to fill the extra space they gained with a new, bigger building, and collections began shortly after the flood.

McCroskey recalls artist Marilyn Brackney who made an incredible donation to the center after hearing about the flood. "She contacted me and was so sweet about what had happened, and Trashasaurus Rex was our first donation for getting back on our feet. Two-hundred other children's museums vied for Trashy who had appeared on Nickelodeon numerous times. Brackney chose the Imperial Centre as Trashy's new home, and Trashy, made of solid waste by kids years ago, still sits at its entrance.

The museum also received support from the Cape Fear Museum in Wilmington, N.C.; Life and Sciences Museum in Raleigh, N.C. and Imagination Station in Wilson, N.C. "Eastern NC took a huge hit in 1999," states McCroskey, "but our community really came out and supported us during that."

Now, as I look around at the children and parents who are enjoying everything at the Imperial Centre, and as I hear the chatter of small children excited about science, it's hard to imagine what this once was. As I recall visiting during Downtown Live!, Lawn Chair Theatre, ice skating and Winter Wonderland, it's also hard to fathom the Maria V. Howard Arts Center and the Children's Museum and Science Center operating apart from each other. Thanks to a vision, this gem is here, and with further community support, the possibilities are endless. Spread the word that activities are here, right in our own backyard.

"We really are interested in being the community's center," says Daly. "To do that, we really need the community to be involved. We need to hear from you."

For more information on the Imperial Centre and/or how to get involved, call 972-1266, or visit www.imperialcentre.org.

Bishops Return to Rocky Mount Athletic Stadium

By Rikki Rich



l-r City Manager Charles Penny and NC Wesleyan College President Jim Gray; Standing, Mayor David Combs.



The North Carolina Wesleyan College football program recently headed back to the Rocky Mount Athletic Football Stadium located at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex. In a joint press conference held July 31, 2013, the two parties announced a partnership that has brought the Battling Bishops back to the venue where they played their inaugural game in 2004 and secured their first USA South championship in 2007.

Mayor David Combs offered opening remarks while attendees also heard from N.C. Wesleyan College President Jim Gray, Director of Athletics John Thompson and Head Football Coach Jeff Filkovski. The event concluded with President Gray and City Manager Charles Penny signing the official agreement.

The Bishops had played their previous five seasons at Northern Nash High School, and Thompson was quick to offer his gratitude to the Nash-Rocky Mount School System for their hospitality in recent years. The move back to the stadium, however, should prove beneficial for Wesleyan, which is just four miles from the complex. Located at 600 Independence Drive in Rocky Mount, the stadium seats more than 5,000 spectators and features a large press box and elevated coaching areas.

"We have a home now," said Filkovski. "We can put our logo on the field, hang our blue and gold banners, and give our current players and recruits a sense of pride in 'their' field. I hope we can continue to foster this relationship with the City and make the Battling Bishops Rocky Mount's football team."

Those sentiments echoed previous comments by Gray, who expressed his wishes to engage more students and alumni with Wesleyan athletics.

"This is a beautiful facility, and we value this partnership with the City very highly," he said. "It is our ultimate goal to make N.C. Wesleyan Rocky Mount's team by providing a high quality of play and a great atmosphere."

The Battling Bishops' schedule includes five home dates this fall. Games began September 14, 2013. The last date this season includes a Senior Day match-up on November 2, 2013 with Ferrum College set for a 1 p.m. kick-off. For more information on games, visit www.ncwc.edu.

Prom Night Becomes Popular Attraction for Some Citizens

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Ask Whitney Perry about her prom night and she only has positive things to say, ranging from the food served at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences to her stunning attire. "I liked it," says Perry. "I loved the music the most."

Perry says she also enjoyed socializing with friends, dancing and taking her prom pictures.

Those are the same reasons why Perry decided to attend prom night for a second year, joining 145 individuals who attended the prom, serving the special needs population and hosted by the City of Rocky Mount.

"A lot of the participants have never been to a prom," noted John Battle, Recreation Services Supervisor for the City of Rocky Mount. "So, this event was something special."

According to Battle, this unique prom caters to the special needs populations of the region, including Nashville, Tarboro, Halifax and Wilson. And, the event is growing consistently, with 60 attendees in 2011, 80 participants in 2012 and 145 when the prom was last held on May 7, 2013. "Between the sitting and the dancing, we are on the verge of outgrowing our venue," said Battle.

Growth is the result of diligent efforts from the Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department and sponsors like Helping Hands of Nash County. In fact, the special needs prom was conceived by Helping Hands President Susan Battle. Susan and Helping Hands staff have been a sponsor of activities for the Parks and Recreations' Special Needs Division for several years, volunteering for the Special Olympics and a host of other events. Almost four years ago, Susan thought of doing something different with the division.

"One day as I was helping my relatives get ready for their senior prom, I saw the joy it brought to them," says Susan. "I wanted to bring some of this excitement to others, so I approached John Battle and asked if we could

sponsor a special needs prom and he agreed. The first year we did it, seeing the excitement on their faces was rewarding and fulfilling."

This feeling is shared with other organizations that have helped to take prom night from a concept to an actual event. The Salvation Army has played a key role in the prom since its inception. "Everybody doesn't have a suit or gown and everyone can't afford one," stated Battle. "However, we wanted everyone to dress up at the prom."

According to Battle, the Salvation Army in the city distributed vouchers to participants who searched for prom dresses, tuxedos and suits, serving more than 60 prom goers.

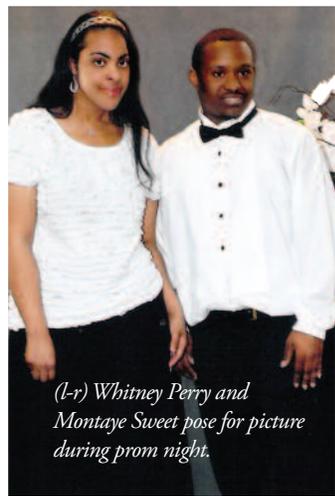
This year's sponsor was also BB&T Insurance Services, and Sam's Club played an important role.

While volunteers from Helping Hands took the pictures and provided the backdrop, Sam's Club processed and framed the prom photos by 9:30 pm. "It was so much easier than previous years," stated Battle. "Before, pictures were processed the next day and we received calls consistently on getting pictures back to the participants. With Sam's Club, pictures were taken during the first hour and a half of the prom, and Sam's Club provided them before the end of the prom. Everyone could pick up their photos before leaving."

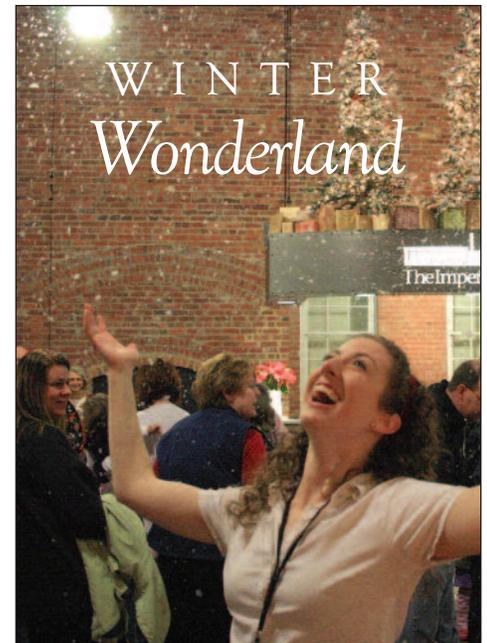
The fourth annual prom night will be held April 26, 2014 from 7 p.m. to 10 p.m. at the Imperial Centre. "I would like to see more people get involved," stated Susan. "I want to try and touch as many lives as possible within the community."

"We are always looking for someone to be a co-sponsor along with Helping Hands," urged Battle. "It is a low cost sponsorship with a high profile."

For more information on prom night or to become a sponsor, call John Battle at 972-1155.



(l-r) Whitney Perry and Montaye Sweet pose for picture during prom night.



Coming Soon to the Imperial Centre!
Details to be provided at
www.rockymountnc.gov



Travel made easy with
TRavel Smart

For seniors, disabled and low-income individuals. For more info., call 972-1515.



Seniors Praise Reflections of Italy

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Mary Newsome vividly recalls traveling to Italy almost 15 years ago. Although the experience was worthwhile, she ventured there alone. "I had a good time, but I was by myself," says Newsome. "When I traveled there by myself, it was very scary."

Fast forward from 1999 to February 2013 and find 69-year-old Newsome in Italy with friends from the Rocky Mount Senior Center, a stark contrast to her previous trip. "It was fun because the attendees were my age group or older," notes Newsome. "We did a lot of walking, and going with the seniors was just a really good experience."

The Rocky Mount Senior Center hosted the trip to Italy. Taking place February 18, 2013 to February 27, 2013, the trip, entitled Reflections of Italy, entailed a locally guided panoramic tour of Rome, a scenic journey through Tuscany, a cultural tour of Florence, sightseeing and much more.

Newsome fondly remembers some of her favorite sites. "Venice was my favorite spot," recalls Newsome. "Well, it was just fun everywhere I went."

One of the most memorable stops was at the castle, Castello Del Trebbio, where seniors met family members who resided there, ate at the dining room table and were enthralled by its rich history. "The family prepared lunch for us," says Newsome. "The menu they prepared was on a menu pad which had the history of the castle, and we also had wine because there was a winery there. It was just so nice."

Newsome was equally impressed by the Italian tour guide who coached seniors in the language. "Each day, we had to say words like bathroom, thank you, good morning and good evening in Italian," says Newsome. "We had this big bus to ourselves and the tour guide would often drill us on the language. It was a great experience, and I wouldn't hesitate going again."

Rocky Mount resident Wanda Thayer echoes that sentiment. "Everything was just fascinating," states Thayer, remembering sites they visited, like the Sistine Chapel. "You think, I can't believe I'm seeing this; I can't believe this is real. I would go anywhere the Rocky Mount Senior Center plans a trip because this one was such a wonderful experience."

According to Alex Langley, Reflections of Italy was just one of the many trips seniors can expect the center to host. "With a holiday trip to Asheville, N.C. in November 2013 and trips to the Grand Canyon and Orlando, Fla. in March and April 2014, there is sure to be something for both the novice and experienced traveler to enjoy," says Langley.

In the meantime, seniors may visit the center, located at 427 South Church Street, to indulge in other activities, including swimming, yoga, day and overnight trips, aerobics, line dancing, health screenings, a fitness center and more.



Wanda Thayer takes in the Italian countryside.



Mary Newsome disembarks from a gondola in Venice. (Right) Newsome says goodbye to the tour guide.



Check out these events and activities scheduled with the Rocky Mount Senior Center:

Aqua Zumba w/Victoria Sowers

Wednesdays & Thursdays @ 5:30 p.m.
Rocky Mount Senior Center

Cardiopulmonary Connections Lunch & Learn Series

3rd Tuesday of every month @ 11:30 a.m.
Rocky Mount Senior Center

Arts & Crafts Series

2nd and 4th Wednesday of every month @ 10 a.m.
Rocky Mount Senior Center

Christmas Gala

Monday, Dec. 9, 2013 @ 11:00 a.m.
Gateway Convention Center

Great Trains & Grand Canyon Trip

Mar. 9, 2014 – Mar. 14, 2014
Register by Dec. 13, 2013

Orlando, Florida and the Holy Land Experience Trip

Apr. 27, 2014 – May 3, 2014
Register by Feb. 3, 2014

For more information on the Rocky Mount Senior Center, please call 252-972-1561.

Organization for Teens Encourages Learning, Leadership and Good Deeds

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Alicia Whitaker has a great story to share with her new friends and classmates at East Carolina University. The 18-year-old 2013 graduate of Nash Central High School and outgoing vice president for the Rocky Mount Area Youth Council (RMAVC) loves to expound on her many experiences with the organization. After all, this is where Whitaker was exposed to the 43rd annual Youth Legislative Assembly (YLA) in Raleigh recently. The YLA is a mock general assembly that provides high school students the opportunity to develop a better understanding of local, state and national government, as well as confidence in their ability to debate current issues. The RMAVC is also how the Nashville, N.C. native learned more about leadership and networking.

"I loved the leadership conferences we attended," says Whitaker. "Leadership is something you can take with you anywhere. At school you can be a leader, and you can be a leader at work too."

Other students representing the RMAVC also attended leadership conferences in Winston-Salem, Goldsboro, Wrightsville Beach and Raleigh, and they echo Whitaker's sentiments for the RMAVC, which has been in existence since 1974. According to RMAVC Advisor Felisa Hunter, the RMAVC is geared towards ninth through 12th grade students residing in Nash and Edgecombe counties, and according to the website, it is a vital means of communication between youth and area adults. Members also initiate and organize community projects and programs, represent the Rocky Mount area at state leadership and community conferences, and represent the interests of other youth in their school and community. With so many activities, and meetings held every third Wednesday during the months of September through June, members also establish friendships with teens from other schools. Whitaker had the

opportunity to meet Kelly Harris during her two-year stint with RMAVC. "I really like it," says Harris, incoming president for the RMAVC. "I like the relationships, conferences and service learning."

Harris has been a member of the RMAVC since her freshman year of high school. She now has two years remaining at Nash-Rocky Mount Early College and plans to be a member of the organization until her graduation.

"This has been a really great opportunity to meet new people, including adults in Rocky Mount who hold great career positions. It's also great to help people out in the community and to serve others."

Service provided by the RMAVC consists of serving as greeters and ushers at the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. program; participating in various Christmas celebrations; visiting area seniors at assisted living facilities on Valentine's Day; holding an Easter Egg Hunt; working with the Boys and Girls Club; providing drinks and serving in the kids area at the International Festival of Cultures and organizing a summer car wash.

The future looks bright for the RMAVC.

Having already assembled a fundraising committee, social networking committee, scrapbook committee and a marketing advisory committee in 2013, the group plans to do even more in 2014.

"We are putting a lot of things in place this year," notes Hunter. "And, there are a lot of things we would like to do. I want us to really make an impact in the community."

Whitaker, an aspiring lawyer, and Harris, who would like to one day open a clinic in a third world country, encourage teens to learn more about the RMAVC and everyone to play a role in some capacity.

"Basically, get involved," says Whitaker. "The RMAVC is one thing, but if the entire community is spreading the word about what we do, it will have an even bigger impact."

For more information on the RMAVC or to become a member, visit rockymountnc.gov/humanrelations/, or call 972-1184.



(l-r) Felisia Hunter and Alicia Whitaker take a look at the RMAVC scrapbook.



Kelly Harris

Rocky Mount Fire Department Gets International Accreditation for Third Time

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



(l-r) Fire Chief Randy Bruegman, President of Center for Public Safety Excellence Board of Directors; Fire Chief Steven Locke, Peer Team Leader, Chairman of Commission on Professional Credentialing Commission; Rocky Mount Fire Chief William Mayo; Assistant Fire Chief Michael Varnell; Division Fire Chief Ronnie Raper and Fire Chief Alan Cain, Chairman of CFAI Commission



The team Raper is referring to includes peer assessors led by team leader Chief Steve Locke. “The role of the team leader is to facilitate the accreditation process,” says Raper. The team leader is assigned to an agency along with three additional peer assessors who review the department’s many documents. The documents outline the department’s performance and capabilities relative to its organizational processes, services and programs. The team’s function is to validate, through visual inspection and interviews, the accuracy of documentation and data that is written within the documents.

“The team is also responsible for completing the report and preparing all information shared with CFAI for their review and decision in support of or against the team’s recommendation,” says Raper.

According to Raper, the team leader and peer assessors were from the states of Vermont, South Carolina, Florida and Virginia, and all from various ranks in fire service, ranging from battalion chief to fire chief.

“The team was complimentary of how organized and well structured the Rocky Mount Fire Department is, as well as the policies in place and the effectiveness of those policies. The team expressed they were very pleased with our organization,” notes Raper.

The team leader and peer assessors worked well to support the department’s re-accreditation efforts; however, the internal team of individuals who contributed were instrumental in the re-accreditation process. Aside from Mayo, Raper and Varnell, “there was a team of individuals who worked to respond to the criteria within their area of expertise,” notes Raper. “Everything the subject matter experts worked on would come to me for review and I would ensure it appropriately responded to the criteria as required by CFAI.”

The Rocky Mount Fire Department will be up for re-accreditation again in 2018.

While that seems to be a long time from now, accreditation is a perpetual process. “We are continually monitoring our progress toward completion of our goals and objectives,” says Raper. “As a result, we are able to more effectively monitor outcomes and focus our efforts to sufficiently respond to the needs of the community.”

The Rocky Mount Fire Department has done it again, maintained their stellar record of international accreditation for the third time since 2003. Accreditation is defined as a self-assessment tool for measuring and analyzing performance data and service delivery outcomes. In fact, accreditation is the foundation by which the fire department functions. Without proper measuring and planning tools, it would have been more difficult for the department to adequately analyze its performance and improve its capabilities over the years in areas such as adequate staffing, proper equipment, planning and training. All of these areas support its mission of providing excellent service to citizens.

In August 2013, Fire Chief Trey Mayo, Assistant Fire Chief Mike Varnell and Ronnie Raper, Division Chief of Life Safety and Accreditation Manager, represented the Fire Department during the Commission on Fire Accreditation International’s (CFAI) semi-annual commission hearing held in Chicago, Ill. where the department was awarded re-accreditation. Re-accreditation takes place every five years, and the Rocky Mount Fire Department went through the accreditation process in 2003, the re-accreditation process in 2008 and now in 2013.

“It feels really good,” says Raper. “We had a great peer team and they worked well with our department throughout the process.”

In last year's edition of *MY Rocky Mount*, the Public Affairs Office interviewed Police Chief James Moore after he served in his position for almost one year. With the addition of initiatives like the Gang Unit; an Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms Task Force Officer; enhancement of the Bars, Taverns and Nightclubs Ordinance and overall aggressive policing, residents wondered what would likely transpire the following year from Moore's efforts as he continues to lead the Rocky Mount Police Department.

Moore delivered a report to the Rocky Mount City Council in March 2013 highlighting the 2012 crime statistics and successful police operations resulting in felony convictions. Moore also discussed community engagement programs which are evolving on the brink of his second year in office.

First, in Moore's report, it was revealed that overall part one crime is at its lowest in 10 years. In 2012, part one crime decreased by 8.6 percent compared to 2011. Part one crime is divided into two sub-categories, which are property crimes and violent crimes. Rocky Mount experienced a 13.5 percent reduction in property crimes. In fact, overall property crimes are also at its lowest in 10 years. There was a 26.5 percent increase in violent crimes, which consist of aggravated assaults, robberies, homicides and rape. However, while overall violent crimes increased, murder decreased by 33.3 percent compared to 2011.

According to Moore, an increase in violent crimes could be attributed to an increase in aggravated assaults, domestic assaults and shootings into individual's homes. "When a shooting occurs at an occupied home, the number of incidents is equal to the number of residents or visitors inside the home, not the number of those who sustained an injury," noted Moore.

"Community engagement assisted with the overall decrease in numbers," stated Moore. He, along with many Rocky Mount citizens, were strong advocates of community engagement programs such as National Night Out, designed to heighten crime and drug prevention awareness; strengthen neighborhood spirit and police-community partnerships; and send a message to criminals that neighborhoods are organized and residents are fighting back. Several community watch/neighborhood associations participated in the 2013 National Night Out.

Badges for Baseball was a 12-week program, teaching principles like sportsmanship, leadership and teamwork to youth at the Lucy Ann Boddie Brewer Unit of the Boys and Girls Club. Summer Night Lights also returned on July 5, 2013. Summer Night Lights, coordinated by the Rocky Mount Police Department and Parks and Recreation, was developed as an anti-crime initiative held during peak times to combat violence. Summer Night Lights took place on weekends in July and August at various parks throughout the city.

In addition to community engagement, aggressive policing took place in 2012 and continues under Moore's leadership. The U.S. Marshals Service, Eastern District of North Carolina, and the Rocky Mount Police Department held Operation Fall Harvest in October 2012. This multi-agency operation was the culmination of a three-month undercover narcotics campaign and resulted in approximately 53 arrests and 200 warrants served, the majority of which were for felony offenses. Officers also seized one firearm, \$2500 in U.S. currency, \$280.00 in counterfeit U.S. currency, 100 grams of marijuana and additional quantities of crack and powder cocaine. This operation was the first of its kind in Rocky Mount.

Seventeen convicted felons were charged May 2013 with federal gun crimes in a joint investigation with the ATF (Federal Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms) in what was dubbed Operation Direct Impact. In April 2013, Operation Indago occurred. A four-month operation targeting individuals selling street level narcotics, the operation resulted in 22 individuals charged with drug related offenses. And, in the spring of 2013, Operation Jackpot was aptly titled, as it meant the seizure of approximately \$55,000 in cash, 240 computers, a vehicle and a number of other items involving the investigation of sweepstakes businesses.

Aside from the various operations, a Data Driven Approach to Crime and Traffic Safety (DDACTS) was conducted in November and December 2012. "With DDACTS, we concentrated on traffic in certain areas to reduce collisions and crimes," stated Moore. "It's about getting blue lights everywhere so property crime violators will know officers are out there. Officers will deter them from engaging in these types of crimes."

Moore is also adamant on training for his department. In 2012 and 2013, 47 officers attended the Police Law Institute, a two-week class on search and seizure. Twelve officers also participated in the FBI's Law Enforcement Executive Development Association and 44 officers successfully completed the district attorney's prosecution course. During the course, participants learned their weaknesses as police officers, how to develop cases and how to communicate more effectively.

"If police officers are working in an environment where excellence is expected, then they will do excellent work," noted Moore.

There are many other initiatives and operations that have taken place with the Rocky Mount Police Department since last year's release of this annual magazine, and while it would take more than just a few pages to document them all, Moore's goal remains relatively the same, to make a difference by decreasing crime and by enhancing the quality of life for our citizens.

"I have heartfelt hope and faith that the good guys will win the war against crime and disorder," stated Moore.



By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Aha!

Embracing and Celebrating Change in Rocky Mount



Charles Penny

Have you taken a good look at our city recently? If not, I challenge you to drive around Rocky Mount to experience your *Aha* moment. You'll notice the parking lots filled Downtown; new restaurants like the Prime Smokehouse; new businesses; an improved look for some businesses, such as the movie theater, Applebee's and Red Lobster; and an improvement along our corridors. This includes a new façade for the Fairview Shopping Center on Raleigh Boulevard, with Super Roses and Dollar Tree. (This was an area

once considered a food desert). And, on most Saturday's during the summer, it pleases me to see all of our fields teeming with activity at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex.

An *Aha* moment is often described as a moment of sudden insight or discovery. I have written this column to share with you just a few of the positive changes happening in Rocky Mount, as well as the strides being made towards additional improvement. If you haven't seen or read about what's happening yet, I hope by the end of this article, you will have experienced your *Aha* moment about Rocky Mount, embrace the change that's happening, and celebrate it with me.

We should first applaud the change happening in our economy. While unemployment remains high in the City, as well as in Nash and Edgecombe counties, incremental change is taking place. The first change is seen when you step onto the grounds of Hospira's facility and see their new lab. The second largest employer in the region experienced the largest economic development project in the history of Nash County when ground was broken in 2012 for the company's new pharmaceutical lab. By organizing an aggressive incentive package, the Rocky Mount City Council and the Nash County Board of Commissioners were able to reinvest in this facility and to employ 200 additional workers.



Hospira is not the only company adding jobs in Rocky Mount. A recent article in the *Rocky Mount Telegram* also highlighted over \$12 million in capital investments being made along the US 301 corridor. This investment will ultimately mean an increase in employees. In fact, staff was needed for the new 77,000 square foot Dunham's Sports in the Golden East Crossing Mall. Jobs were also created at the former Hollywood Video site, now home to Factory Mattress and a \$2.75 dry cleaning operation. Additionally, staffers were added for Fast Med Urgent Care, a leader in offering medical care. It is located in the old Blockbuster building.

The economy may also receive a jolt and newcomers to the City with the addition of vehicle charging stations at the Doubletree. Tesla Motors has reached an agreement with the hotel to place eight charging stations in the parking lot. Tesla, produced on the West Coast, is a luxury electric car with a five-star safety rating. Currently, there are only two charging stations on the

East Coast, in Connecticut and Delaware. Future plans also include the implementation of charging stations in Plymouth, N.C.; Richmond, Va. and Lumberton., N.C. Imagine the number of travelers who will need to get their Tesla cars charged in Rocky Mount, thus exposing them to our City.

Aside from the economy, City officials are often questioned about housing. Improvements to housing were a main item of discussion during the City Council retreat held in Fayetteville, N.C. We have been taking the appropriate steps to address housing, first by demolishing dilapidated properties. We are also working with a housing consultant who will assess our neighborhoods, develop strategies to improve housing and determine how to use funds to create growth in the inner city. Stakeholder involvement is necessary to provide input on changes scheduled to take place.

Stakeholder, or citizen participation, is being utilized for the improvement of our parks system. Look at all we have accomplished at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex, where we recently celebrated the grand opening of phases two and three. We would like to do the same with our Parks and Recreation Department. That's why we have hired AECOM as the prime consultant for the creation of a City of Rocky Mount Comprehensive Parks and Recreation Master Plan. The goal is to create a 10-year strategy on the direction,



development and delivery of parks and recreation services. Citizen input is being used to determine opinions on the current state of our parks system and what is needed. After all, recreation is more than just the over 50 parks we have; it's about culture and providing a quality of life for families and all citizens.

The addition of new businesses, expansion, creation of jobs, a plan for better housing, and the goal to enhance our quality of life are all things happening now. So, have you experienced your *Aha* moment yet? Please join me in embracing and celebrating the wonderful change happening right now in Rocky Mount.

Rocky Mount Public Utilities Celebrates 30 Years of "Beating the Peak" with

Load Management

By Amy Blanton

Since 1983, Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) has been implementing the Load Management Program throughout Rocky Mount to help control the cost of electricity citywide. For instance, over the course of 30 years, the program has saved RMPU and its customers over \$37 million!

We often tell customers, "Ask me how you can save up to \$129 per year on your electric bill." Without hesitation, the response is always... "How?" Once we tell them they can save money by enrolling in the "Beat the Peak" Load Management Program, there are often many questions that follow. So, whether you are already enrolled and enjoying your savings or have never heard of the program, we want to give you the inside scoop on load management and what it means to customers and owners: you.

What is "the peak?"

Peak or peak demand is the greatest amount of electricity used at one time by an electric system. This typically happens when a large number of customers are using appliances at the same time. These peaks determine how much RMPU must pay for power. Higher peak demands mean more power-generating capacity and, therefore, higher prices. By controlling electric load or practicing "load management," the cost of electricity for customers can be controlled.

When do peak demands typically occur?

Peak demands are seasonal and weather-based. Load management does not require daily load control. Rocky Mount averages approximately two to ten days per month load managing. Typically, peak times occur on hot summer days between 2 p.m.-6 p.m. and on cold winter mornings between 7 a.m.-8 a.m.

How does Load Management help control the cost of electricity?

Customers who participate in the program allow RMPU to install a radio-controlled switch on one or more appliances in the home. During periods of heavy



Load Management Technician Terry Pittman explains the benefits of being enrolled in the Load Management Program to a customer.

demand for power (i.e. peak demand), the device allows RMPU to send a radio signal to briefly interrupt power to the appliance. By cycling the controlled units off, RMPU can reduce the demand on the overall system. The more switches in place, the greater the impact of the program. Power is purchased from North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) in blocks of demand. By reducing the peak demand, RMPU is able to purchase power at a lower cost.

What are the benefits of being enrolled in the program?

By participating in the program, you are helping RMPU hold down the cost of providing power. These savings



RMPU staff, busy installing switches for the Load Management Program.

are passed on to you as a credit on your monthly electricity bill for every switch installed. Since there is no cost to you for the installation or maintenance of the switches, that's literally "money in the bank."

What types of credits are available?

There are three types of credits available to customers through participation in the program:

- **Electric Water Heater Control**
Customers receive a \$2.00 credit each month.
- **Electric Heat Strip Control**
Customers receive a \$15.00 credit each month during three months of the winter season (January, February and March).
- **Central Air Conditioner Total Control**
Customers receive a \$20.00 credit each month during three months of the summer season (July, August and September).

How will the switches affect my appliances?

Customers usually do not notice when their load management switches are activated. With the Water Heater Control switch, your water heater would be cycled off during load management periods. The water in the tank will remain hot and available for use. However, the water heater will not generate additional hot water during load management.

With the Electric Heat Strip Control switch, heat strips are controlled during the winter load management periods while compressors continue to provide heat.

During load management with Central Air Conditioner Total Control, compressors are cycled off for the entire period. Fans will continue to circulate the air, but the compressor will not generate any additional cool air.

What if I don't want all the switches installed in my home?

Participation in the program is voluntary and customers may choose which appliances to have switches installed.

Do I have to be the property owner to participate?

You do not have to be the property owner to participate in the program, but rental property tenants must have the owner's signed permission.

How do I sign up for the program?

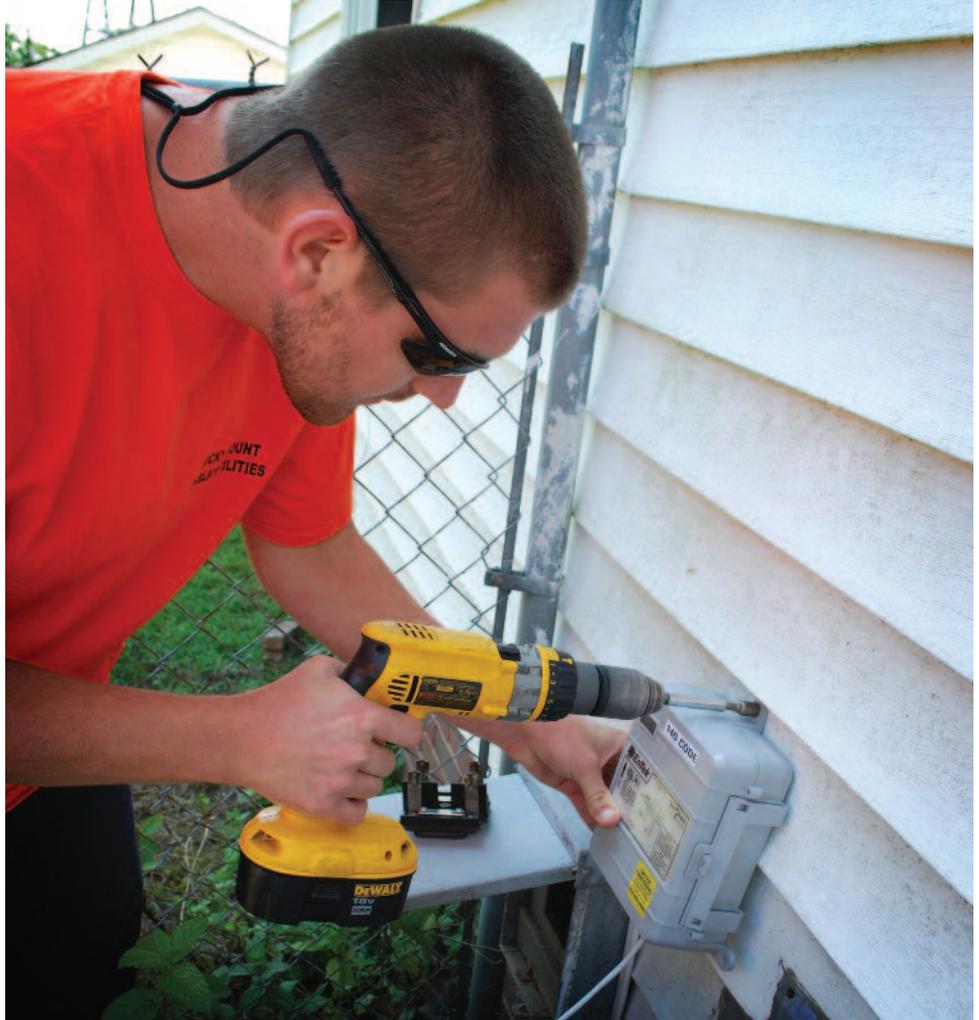
Customers may sign up by calling 252-467-4803 or completing the online enrollment form at www.rockymountnc.gov/utilities/loadmanagement.html. A utilities representative will call to verify which switches you would like installed and to schedule the installation appointment.

What if I no longer wish to be enrolled in the program?

Satisfaction in the program is guaranteed. If you become dissatisfied for any reason, you may call 252-467-4803 at any time and the switches will be promptly removed at no charge to you.

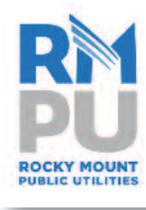
Enrolling is easy!

Scan this QR code using your smartphone for quick access to the online enrollment form. (Free QR-code readers are available for download from your app store.)



Load Management Technician, Tim Phelps, installs a Central Air Conditioner Total Control switch.

Your Energy Connection



Rocky Mount Public Utilities' monthly newsletter is now available by email.

To get your Rocky Mount Public Utilities e-newsletter, simply go to rockymountnc.gov and look for the City Beat sign-up section. Enter your email address and select to receive the e-newsletter. For more information, email energyspecialist@rockymount.gov

Join the Housewarming

Please support the **W.A.R.M.** Program (Winter Assistance for Rocky Mount) to help disabled persons, low-income individuals and those recently laid off.

For more information on how you can help, call **972-1256, 972-1533 or 972-1358.**

City Completes First in Series of Tank Painting Projects

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

If you have driven on US-64 in Nashville or on Old Carriage Road near Nash Community College, you have probably noticed a major transformation of the one million gallon water tank. First, it was an eyesore for area residents. Often referred to as the Nash Tech Tank, it was commissioned in 1973 and was last painted in 1995. Eighteen years later, the tank sat with rust accumulation and the original exterior lead-based paint.

Now, thanks to completion of the Tank Painting Project initiated by the City of Rocky Mount, the lead-based paint has been removed, it has been repainted, and the tank has been adorned with the words The City of Rocky Mount in navy blue facing the west and, to the east, Nash Community College, with letters up to five-foot tall. According to Public Works and Water Resources Director, Jonathan Boone, along with Jim Connolly, Water Treatment Plant Supervisor, the process has not been easy and is the first of many tank painting projects to be completed between now and 2018.

“Ninety days is the typical amount of time it takes to paint the tank,” notes Connolly. “We were hoping crews would be finished July 17, but there was a lot of high winds, high humidity and rain which all caused a stoppage of work.” High winds often damage the shrouding and scaffolding. Blasting and priming are also prohibited on rainy or humid days.

The tank’s painting was completed by Southern Corrosion based out of Roanoke Rapids, N.C. The crew was comprised of six individuals from Conway, S.C. However, at times the crew had as many as ten members for faster completion of the project.

The process of painting a tank of this magnitude includes shrouding the tank and site preparation, which consists of draining the tank so the interior can be accessed and the exterior will not be prone to sweating. Next, stripping the surface down to the metal, sandblasting and priming in sections of a manageable size.

“When you strip something down to the bare metal, the metal is vulnerable to corrosion,” states Connolly. “That’s why crews are only able to sandblast certain sections of a manageable size with the idea they will prime it within hours.” If the humidity rises over 85 percent or if the temperature gets extremely cold, sections must be redone before priming takes place.

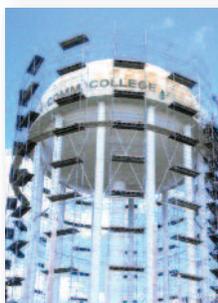
“During the process, paint crews use temporary elevators, interior ladders and fall restraint systems to maneuver around the tank,” says Connolly.

Crews are also monitored by The Wooten Company, an engineering firm with experience in monitoring tank paintings. The company ensures the contractor is keeping correct records on the temperature and humidity and that the paint and surface preparations are being done correctly and to the proper thickness.

The final steps in the process are refilling the tank with water, bleach and chlorine. “This is done to make sure everything is clean and disinfected,”

states Connolly. “We’ll hold that water in the tank for a day and then do a chlorine and bacterial test. If we’re happy with those results, we’ll drain that water, refill it and put it into service.”

The tank painting was officially completed in September 2013 and serves most of Rocky Mount west of US Highway 301 Bypass (Wesleyan Boulevard), NC 43 (Benvenue Road) and the town of Nashville. Thanks to Nashville, the City was



able to minimize the impact of taking the tank out of service while it was being repainted.

“We relied on their elevated tank to back-feed our system while this tank was out of service,” says Boone. “If it weren’t for the Nashville tank, we would have an immediate loss of pressure in this portion of the system.”

The City of Rocky Mount is back on schedule, with a goal of painting water tanks every ten years. The next tank to be completed in 2013 is the Airport Road tank, located near the YMCA and the Rocky Mount Sports Complex. In 2014, expect a repainting of the Paul Street tank, with the Marigold Street tank’s repainting to take place in 2015. In addition to repainting a handful of tanks, the City may disassemble the Battleboro tank which was decommissioned in the early 1990s. The other tanks painted in the recent past include the Mitchell in 2003, Gold Rock in 2002 and Whitakers in 2001.

The total cost of the repainting and lead abatement for the Nash Community College Tank was approximately \$700,000. The cost for this tank and all remaining tanks will be taken out of the City’s Capital Improvement Plan budget, a plan identifying capital projects and equipment purchases over the next five years.

“The tanks are essential to our water distribution system and an asset to our community,” says Boone. “We know from time to time we have to go in and do some routine maintenance, and it’s just part of our ongoing maintenance program.”

CITY of ROCKY MOUNT Receives Awards from the Arbor Day Foundation

By Amy Blanton



Pictured (l-r) Peter Gilliland, Tree Advisory Board member; Bill Lewis, Nash County Ranger; Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs; Allen Richardson, City of Rocky Mount Forester; Doris Cooper, Tree Advisory Board member; Rich Worsinger, Rocky Mount Public Utilities Director

The City of Rocky Mount has been named a Tree City USA community and a Tree Line USA utility. The Arbor Day Foundation, in cooperation with the USDA Forest Service and the National Association of State Foresters, sponsors the Tree City USA program.

Rocky Mount met the four standards to become a Tree City USA community: having a comprehensive community forestry program, a tree board or department, a tree care ordinance and an Arbor Day observance. This is the 10th year the City of Rocky Mount has been nationally recognized as a Tree City USA community.

The Tree Line USA recognition includes both public power providers and investor owned utilities. For this recognition, utilities must demonstrate a commitment to public education, tree planting and quality tree care. Rocky Mount met the three requirements for this recognition, which include a tree planting and public education program, a program of quality tree care, and annual worker training in quality tree care practices.

The City of Rocky Mount manages an aggressive tree trimming program to maintain the integrity of the power system and provide customers with safe and reliable electricity. Part of Rocky Mount's effort includes public education concerning proper tree planting and site selection. Fallen trees and limbs are a major source of widespread power outages, especially after severe weather or an ice storm.

For more information regarding the City of Rocky Mount's tree trimming program, please contact Allen Richardson, Forester, at (252) 467-4856.



Rocky Mount Celebrates Streetscape

By Jo Anne Cooper, The Nashville Graphic



(l-r) Mayor David Combs and City Councilman, Reuben Blackwell present U.S. Congressman G.K. Butterfield (far right) with a rendering of Downtown Rocky Mount.

Rocky Mount city officials and merchants welcomed U.S. Congressman G.K. Butterfield to a celebration in May marking the completion of a \$7.5 million Downtown streetscape project. Butterfield was recognized for his support of the project due to his efforts of securing \$4.6 million in federal funds for the project in 2006.

"The city of Rocky Mount has been important to Eastern North Carolina," said Butterfield. "Rocky Mount, whether you know it or not, has a long, long history of commerce. It was home to one of the first cotton mills in North Carolina. It had Weldon Railroad coming through as early as 1845 enabling commerce for many, many years." He continued in regards to the Streetscape Project, "I am here today to celebrate this great progress; I am proud to have a small piece of it."

Kim Thigpen, owner and operator of The Bath Place on the Douglas Block, encouraged people to visit and shop Downtown. She spoke at the celebration giving her testimony of the opportunity Rocky Mount had given her and that she was now a proud business owner in Downtown, selling her first bar of soap in Downtown Rocky Mount as a vendor at the City's annual festival.

Rocky Mount High School's Drum Line kicked off the celebration, marching into Downtown. After the ceremony, other events were planned for the afternoon and evening including an open house tour of businesses and buildings and the City's

Downtown Live event at the Imperial Centre.

Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs and City Councilman Reuben C. Blackwell presented a framed art rendering of buildings in Downtown showing their appreciation of Butterfield's support. All downtown merchants will receive a copy as well.

For more information on Downtown Rocky Mount, go to www.downtownrockymount.com.



Rocky Mount High School's drumline kick off Streetscape.

New Businesses Attract Patrons to Downtown Rocky Mount

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

It's almost as if it happened overnight, businesses burgeoning in Downtown Rocky Mount. From the 2012 edition of *MY Rocky Mount* to this issue, one year later, Downtown Rocky Mount is now home to six new shops with additional ones coming in the near future. Those who once doubted the area's progress, which started with a few small shops in the Douglas Block after years of major revitalization, now walk into these stores and restaurants with admiration, ready to support THEIR Rocky Mount. This is all blatantly obvious when we see cars fill the once empty spaces and crowds filling buildings which were once desolate.

"All of this is just really exciting," says previous Downtown Development Manager, Vanessa McCleary. "You see more people walking around, and it just feels more alive. Parking is also getting to be an issue because you see more cars." So, what is bringing people together and to Downtown Rocky Mount? There are several answers to this question, and one is The Prime Smokehouse.

The Prime Smokehouse

Our first taste of diversity in many years in Downtown Rocky Mount can be seen as soon as you step through the doors of The Prime Smokehouse, in the Douglas Block. Since its soft opening May 31, 2013 during the Juneteenth

Community Empowerment Harambee Festival, crowds have indulged in the restaurant's signature authentic Texas-style, hickory-slow-smoked barbecue. Soon after, reservations were needed to accommodate customers who not only wanted to taste the popular Southern cuisine, but who wanted to hear jazz music on the weekends.

The sounds of notable musicians like saxophonist Stanley Baird, vocalist Aubrey Brejanay and the Baltimore blues duo of legendary guitarist Earl "Goldfinger" Wilson and organist Greg "Hotfingers" Hatza, soon caught the attention of Rocky Mount residents and out-of-towners who now flock to the city's latest attraction.

"People can come together and sit in this restaurant," says Ed Wiley, one of three owners of The Prime Smokehouse. "They can enjoy music together; they can enjoy food together; it is in unity; it is in harmony; it is in enjoyment."



A Prime Smokehouse patron reviews the menu.



(l-r) Yalem, Ed Wiley and Beverly Ringler. Not pictured—Harold Worrell Jr.

Envisioning The Prime Smokehouse as a unifier for all races and generations has been a priority for Wiley and the other three managing partners—his wife, Yalem, Harold Worrell Jr. and Beverly Ringler. For years, Wiley has seen unity made possible through food and music, thanks to his family, which owned a catering business and, particularly, his father, Ed Wiley, Jr., a renowned jazz musician and a great cook. But, with three managing partners who have the skills necessary to succeed in the business, it's no wonder Wiley, Yalem, Worrell and Ringler are already getting rave reviews on a restaurant a little more than four months old.

"It could not work with just me," says Wiley. "What makes this business work is the expertise that all four of our partners bring."

Wiley brags about Yalem's eye for detail and colors, as well as her handling of logistics and detail. Yalem has worked for medical centers such as Johns Hopkins Hospital, Duke University Hospital and WakeMed Health & Hospitals. Born in Ethiopia, Yalem has lived throughout the world, including in Sri Lanka, Israel, Baltimore and Washington, D.C.

Worrell attended historically black Lincoln University in Chester, Pa. before Wiley convinced Worrell to join him at California State University in Fresno where Worrell studied business administration. Worrell and Wiley had grown up together in the Philadelphia suburb of Levittown, Pa.

"I always loved to cook, and Harry (Harold) told me that if I ever decided to open a restaurant, he was with me. I guess it was one of those things in the universe," states Wiley.

After convincing Yalem and Worrell to join him on his quest for a great restaurant, and beginning The Prime Smokehouse's first establishment in

Garner, N.C., the three found Beverly Ringler, previously a cook, bartender, server and restaurant manager.

"She came in and was such a workaholic and so trustworthy," acknowledges Wiley. "She had experience and was such a good worker, we invited her to be part of the team and be a co-owner because we felt like she had earned it."

Wiley worked in his family's catering and restaurant business for several years. The bulk of Wiley's career was as a journalist and ultimately as news director and managing editor of Black Entertainment Television's (BET) online division.

“Every skill we have, we need here,” states Wiley. “I understand why businesses fail all the time. Someone thinks because he likes to cook, he’ll open a restaurant, or because he likes jazz, he’ll open up a jazz restaurant. There are so many facets to this thing, and that’s where having a good team comes in.”

Aside from skills and passion, an additional facet is location. The Prime Smokehouse went from Garner, N.C. to Raleigh, N.C. and now Rocky Mount, N.C. Most people questioned Wiley and his partners about their decision to move from the capital of North Carolina, the second largest city in the state, to a less populated Rocky Mount. But there was a vision for opportunity.

Wiley and Yalem have witnessed once blighted areas become wonderful investments for those who saw the potential early. Raleigh and Washington, D.C., once home for the Wileys, are examples of communities once underdeveloped and now flourishing.

“This has the same kind of flavor to it,” Wiley states. “It feels as if we are on the ground floor of something that is going to be really nice. If we can be that spark that ignites other businesses, people will be able to leave our restaurant, go across the street and shop, go up the street to get an ice cream cone, just make it sort of a full day thing.”



Janice and Kelvin Brinkley

Brinkley’s TVs & Appliances

Wiley’s dream of enhancing Downtown Rocky Mount’s vibrancy is on the right path. Thanks to the City of Rocky Mount, McCleary and the Rocky Mount Edgecombe Community Development Corporation, change is taking place. You can

now go across the street and in the city’s Manhattan Building to shop at Bourgeois Bella Boutique, an upscale ladies boutique offering high-fashion accessories and clothing. In the same building, you’ll find Brinkley’s TVs & Appliances. Husband and wife, Kelvin and Janice Brinkley, are the owners. The store is new, but Downtown Rocky Mount and the appliance business is no stranger to Janice.

Janice worked for Weaver’s in 1991, a minority-owned business offering a similar concept and similar products compared to Brinkley’s. When you visit Brinkley’s TVs & Appliances, you can order name brands like GE, Frigidaire, Whirlpool, Hot Point, Toshiba, LG and Ashley Furniture, and the Brinkleys are committed to making the credit process and payments less painful.

“We try to work with people in the community,” says Janice. “There are those who may be a little bit credit-challenged, or maybe they don’t have a credit card to go into a store and buy a major purchase.” Janice says

payments can be as low as \$50 down and \$50 a month.

“We even allow them to choose the date for payment,” states Kelvin. All financing also is done in-house. “We work with them so we can fit within their budget.”

Janice remembers how a community in need of name brands but with less money depended on Weaver’s. There, she managed the books and picked up payments from the elderly. “I just wanted to open a business like Mr. Weaver because it was so significant to me that he helped people in the community.”

Ironically, when the Brinkley’s current store was up for sale in the Douglas Block, Janice ran into a familiar face from Weaver’s who encouraged her to purchase the building and fulfill her dream. One year later, Janice, along with Kelvin, her husband of three years, walked into their new store.

“This is a blessing,” says Janice, “and it really is a great experience to be a part of this historic Downtown.”



Bryan Rankin

Milton & Miles

Having been raised in Indian Trail, N.C., between Charlotte and Monroe, Bryan Rankin also finds it a blessing to be a part of Downtown Rocky Mount. Rankin’s Milton & Miles Café is situated in a popular spot, the entrance of the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences. Members of the Rocky Mount City Council played a role in convincing Rankin to locate his business here, but it was Rankin’s passion and general interest in Rocky Mount that convinced him to begin a restaurant.

“Living in Rocky Mount, I found myself and other folks we knew often driving to other cities for dining options,” says Rankin. “We found ourselves asking why don’t we have that in Rocky Mount? With access to over 50,000 people, we felt like we should have it here at home.”

The it Rankin is referring to is what drives residents to Milton & Miles: higher-end coffee, chicken salad sandwiches, turkey and avocado and more. A favorite of Rankin’s is ensuring the menu is seasonal. For example, customers can purchase a turkey cranberry panini in November, tomatoes primarily in July/August, and vegetables, including squash and pumpkins, are incorporated in the fall.

continued next page

“One of the first sandwiches we ever offered was based on a Thanksgiving meal with a little bit of a twist,” says Rankin. “It is a grilled sandwich with roasted turkey, house made cranberry sauce, green chilies and Muenster cheese.

“It’s sandwiches like these that embody our approach to food. Quality ingredients that come together in unique ways, but still acknowledge the traditions they come from,” says Rankin. “We are appreciative that our customers expect and encourage this uniqueness in our menus.”

Investing in Downtown Rocky Mount

Unfortunately, we just don’t have the necessary space to feature all of the new businesses in Downtown Rocky Mount, but Dr. Monique Brown’s office at 152-154 S.W. Main Street recently opened, along with Footwerks at 132 N.W. Main Street. Brown is a Pediatric Psychiatrist, and Footwerks offers a variety of shoes at discounted prices.

At the time this article was written (August 20, 2013), more new businesses were expected to move into Downtown Rocky Mount. Renovations are being completed at 111 N.E. Main Street for the sports bar, Bar None. D’s Wingz, in Battleboro, will have a second location Downtown, and Dr. Christi Davis will soon open a dental practice in the vicinity.

Financially, now may be the prime time to open a business in a Downtown location. “We have buildings ranging from as low as \$25,000 to \$200,000, depending on property,” says McCleary. Most buildings exceed 5,000 square feet.

McCleary is also there to aid individuals interested in purchasing property, assisting with financing and finding a contractor. She shows buildings to potential investors, assembles financing packages and more.

There is still more work to be done in the Downtown area, but most can see the improvements and a positive vision for the future.

“Rocky Mount is the kind of town where there is opportunity for people who recognize it,” says Wiley. “The business opportunities are astounding for people who have vision and understand that this Downtown can go places.”



Signal System Upgrade Expected in 2014

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Major work items completed or underway include:

- Installation of fiber optic cables which link traffic signals to a central computer—*Complete*
- Signal cabinets at intersections—*Underway and being replaced at a rate of two to three per day*
- Flashing yellow arrow signal displays are being implemented at several intersections—*Underway*
- Installation of the central system equipment at City Hall—*Underway*
- Fifteen additional closed circuit television cameras for monitoring—*Underway*

The City of Rocky Mount and the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT) are collaborating on a city-wide signal system upgrade, and lots of progress has been made since the initial announcement in 2012.

Installed in 1996, the City’s existing signal system must be improved in order to meet NCDOT standards. “NCDOT recommends that traffic signal systems be upgraded every 15 years,” says Steve Yetman, Assistant City Engineer. “The project will include replacing the central equipment at City Hall and the signal cabinets at every signalized intersection in the city.”

The signal system upgrade will also mean major changes, including more reliable traffic operation and additional traffic monitoring cameras. All signals will be interconnected to communicate back to a central computer staffed in the City’s Engineering Department, thereby allowing timing plans to be changed remotely.

“We have different timing plans that are in operation based on the traffic volumes taking place each day,” says Yetman.

Research indicates that better coordination of timing plans will improve traffic flow. It can also mean a reduction in stops, which improves safety and ultimately decreases fuel emissions and consumption.

At City Hall, space has been added for the storage of central equipment, servers and equipment racks. However, transitioning from five to 20 traffic monitoring cameras is the biggest change. “It will give us more real time information, and this will allow us to better monitor

our busiest corridors in order to reduce delays and congestion,” says Yetman.

NCDOT has awarded a construction contract to ALS of Fayetteville valued at approximately \$4.5 million. Construction is to be completed by April 2014. Under an agreement with NCDOT, the City is only responsible for eight percent of the construction costs. The City will also maintain the traffic signal system once completed and approved by the NCDOT.

Want to learn more about what’s happening in the City of Rocky Mount? Check out C.I.T.Y. TV 19 on Suddenlink or log on: www.youtube.com/CITYTV19.



NCDOT to Improve Travel Efficiency with Two Major Projects

Contributed reports

The North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) has been busy this year with an effort to improve roadways and traffic flow in the city of Rocky Mount and the Twin Counties. In addition to a number of bridge replacements in both Nash and Edgecombe counties, the two most visible projects underway by NCDOT include the widening of Hunter Hill Road and Winstead Avenue.

After awarding a \$9.7 million contract in April 2011 to PLT Construction Co. of Wilson, work began on widening 1.4 miles of Hunter Hill Road from Country Club Road to Benvenue Road (NC 43/48). The two-lane road is being widened to four lanes divided by a median, and the bridge on Hunter Hill Road over U.S. 301 is being replaced with two bridges. Additionally, sidewalks are being installed along the south side of Hunter Hill Road. NCDOT closed the bridge over U.S. 301 to traffic in February 2012 to accelerate completion of the project. The westbound bridge over U.S. 301 opened to traffic in April 2013. The project is scheduled to be completed by December 2013; however, crews are currently working towards having the project done earlier, weather permitting.

Another widening project is taking place on Winstead Avenue, expanding this area to four lanes with a median from south of Hunter Hill Road to U.S. 64, and to six lanes with a median from U.S. 64 to Sunset Avenue. Bridges on Winstead Avenue over U.S. 64 and Stoney Creek are also being widened and sidewalks are being installed on both sides of the road. Barnhill Contracting Co. of Tarboro was awarded a \$13.9 million contract in July 2011 for construction of the project, which is scheduled to be completed by December 2013.

The purpose of these projects is not only to widen these roads to improve capacity. Research shows that a median constructed along a congested roadway improves safety, reduces the potential for crashes and improves traffic flow. Motorists traveling on Hunter Hill Road or Winstead Avenue will go to the nearest intersection or break in the median to make a left turn or U-turn.

For more information on projects in the area, visit www.ncdot.gov.



Power Plant Gets Local Historic Landmark Status

By JoSeth Bocook

In recent years, the City of Rocky Mount has joined numerous locales across the country in acknowledging May as National Preservation Month. On May 13, 2013 an especially momentous recognition was bestowed on the Power Plant, located at 1701 Sunset Avenue, as the City Council approved a request from the property owners to designate the building as a Local Historic Landmark. The remarkable five-story building that rises from the bank of the Tar River became only the third structure—joining the Rocky Mount Mill, the Imperial Centre and old Braswell Memorial Library complex – to be granted landmark status.

Planning Department staff directed the process to have the property classified as a Local Historic Landmark. Frank Harrison, Managing Agent for the Power Plant building, commissioned local historian-extraordinaire, Bill Ferguson, to complete a report detailing the historical significance of the property. The report is a requirement of the State Historic Preservation Office that mandates a 30-day review and comment period on the merits of the property. Upon receipt of a favorable review from the state, the City's Historic Preservation Commission held a public hearing at their regular meeting in March. After a comprehensive review of the report, the commission unanimously recommended approval of the request to designate the property as a landmark to the Rocky Mount City Council.

The history of power production at the site began in 1909 when the Power Plant was the main source for electricity production for the city of Rocky Mount. The initial costs for construction of the facility were covered by a bond issue in the amount of \$135,000 for improvements for both power and water utilities. The site near the Tar River was chosen for its expansion possibilities and for the convenience of having the water treatment facility next to the power plant. As the demand for electricity increased simultaneously with the population and electric powered equipment, the Power Plant underwent phases of expansion: in 1924, an entirely new facility was constructed between the original 1909 building and the river in the footprint the building currently sits today; 1938 saw minor additions; finally, in 1946, the City would issue a \$1.5 million bond to finance raising the building to five stories to accommodate equipment that allowed the plant to double its electrical output.

The building that currently houses a number of offices and the local favorite “Chico’s Mexican Restaurant,” has existed in its current form since 1946. The Power Plant, also known as the electric plant in its early existence, experienced a period of abandonment from 1963—when the City closed the industrial facility due to the promise of larger more efficient energy production from investor-owned utilities—to 1985, when Harrison and other local businessmen converted the building into its present glory.



Meet Tasha Logan: Rocky Mount's Newest Assistant City Manager

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

It's obvious that Tasha Logan, Rocky Mount's Assistant City Manager, has had a career in local government which spans nearly 10 years. She has many achievements under her belt and has already set long-term goals after starting with the City of Rocky Mount on May 21, 2013. "When you come into a community as a manager, you always want to make sure you leave the community better than it was when you came," says Logan. "It's also important to be engaged in the community and to learn what people want to see and hear what some of their concerns are. The third piece is staff development, making sure you are supporting staff and that your staff is continuing to grow professionally. As they're growing professionally, that just raises the level of services they can provide to the community."

Logan's prior experience as a manager was honed at the City of Goldsboro where she began work in 2004 as an Administrative Assistant to the City Manager and Manager of the City's Code Enforcement Operation. She quickly advanced to Assistant City Manager in 2005 and gained responsibility for five service areas, including Downtown Development, Information Technology, Travel and Tourism, Community Affairs and the Paramount Theatre. While providing leadership to the directors of these service areas, she managed two key construction projects, oversaw the acquisition and plan development phase for the restoration of the Union Station Multi-modal Transportation Facility, served as Interim City Manager in 2011 and worked previously as Interim Public Works Director and Interim Human Resources Director for the City of Goldsboro.

In general, the service areas managed "were smaller with two to three individuals in each department, but they were very high profile," says Logan. "Some of these departments had separate funding sources or separate boards, and you quickly learned how to become a facilitator there as an Assistant City Manager."

Logan is now learning the art of facilitation for a different group of employees in her new community. Logan, who obtained an undergraduate degree in Human Development and Family Studies from the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, along with a Master of Public Administration degree from North Carolina State University, is similarly supervising five departments for the City of Rocky Mount. Police, Planning and Development, Fire, Engineering and Downtown Development are under her purview. Logan can clearly see the parallels between the departments in the City of Goldsboro and now Rocky Mount.

For example, in the City of Rocky Mount, the Tar River Transit System falls under her service area of Engineering. Likewise, in Goldsboro, Logan served as the liaison between the Gateway Transit System and the City of Goldsboro. Also, Logan arrived in Rocky Mount a few weeks prior to the City's Streetscape Celebration, a short time after Goldsboro completed a

similar project.

"We had just finished the first block of Streetscape in Goldsboro as I was leaving," notes Logan. "The relationships you have to build with individuals to move projects forward are similar. I'm learning all of these key players and how they're involved in making investments in our Downtown Rocky Mount community. All of us have to do our part in making this happen."

Building relationships seems easy for Logan, most likely because of her upbringing. Raised in a military family, Logan now refers to Goldsboro, N.C. as home; however, she was born in Charleston, S.C. and also resided in the Netherlands and Tennessee. She once had aspirations of becoming a social worker, but that goal was changed following an internship with the City of Goldsboro's City Manager's Office and Parks and Recreation where she discovered an affinity for local government. Logan was exposed to a new arena where she could use her passion to help others.

Following graduate school while working for Self-Help in Durham, N.C., Logan was able to see first hand how reinvestment and vision for an area can bring forth new life and change, which is what leaders are trying to accomplish in Rocky Mount, one neighborhood at a time.

When asked about her commitment to Downtown reinvestment, Logan states, "The investments that we're making are not just for Downtown, but it's about strengthening the core of the community. Not to mention, the strategies used in strengthening Downtown can be applied to other areas as well, to empower residents to combat crime, redevelop neighborhoods and to attract economic development which in turn can be the catalyst for a better quality of life and improved choices for residents. We have a vision that's been set and we can't lose sight of that goal. Our leaders have taken bold steps investing in infrastructure, planning for future transportation, housing and recreational needs. It's going to take all of us pressing towards the mark to realize this vision."

Logan is learning more about the City of Rocky Mount every day and meeting new people, some of whom she has been acquainted with as a Credentialed Manager for the International City/County Management Association and as Vice President for the NC City and County Management Association. Logan has even met Peter Varney who provided 41 years of service to the City of Rocky Mount as the former Assistant City Manager.

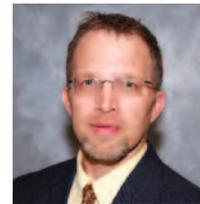
"The first City Manager I served with in Goldsboro was roommates with Mr. Varney when they attended UNC-Chapel Hill," says Logan. "So, it's kind of ironic that I end up in Rocky Mount."

Logan joins Ann Wall, also an Assistant City Manager for Rocky Mount.

Congratulations to the City of Rocky Mount's New Department Heads



Kelvin Yarrell,
Parks and Recreation
Director



Jonathan Boone,
Public Works and Water
Resources Director



Pamela Casey,
City Clerk

Upcoming Events for 2013 and 2014

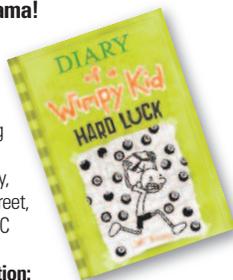


Nash County's Got Talent Finals

Date & Time: November 7 & 8, 2013, 7:00 p.m.–9:00 p.m.
Location: Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington Street, Nashville, NC 27856
Event Description: First night, top 20 compete for round two. Second night, top 10 compete for cash prizes.
Price: \$15, two-day pass; \$10, one-day pass
Website: nasharts.org
Contact Information: Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org

Zoo-Wee Mama!

Date & Time: November 19, 2013, 6:00 pm
Location: Warner Meeting Room, Braswell Memorial Library, 727 N. Grace Street, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: Celebrate the release of a new Diary of a Wimpy Kid book with a special wimpy event at Braswell Memorial Library!
Age restrictions: Six and up
Price: Free
Website: braswell-library.org
Contact Information: Melissa Corso, 252-442-1951



Paul Saik
Date & Time: November 22, 2013, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N.C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: Having a passion for sacred music, this versatile musician enjoyed great early success in opera, symphony and Broadway. Changing course in 2004, he released his first Christian CD. For his inaugural Dunn Center gig, Paul will perform Broadway hits and offer a festive jumpstart to the 2013 Christmas season with many of your yuletide favorites.
Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197

58th Annual Rocky Mount Christmas Parade

Date & Time: December 1, 2013, 3:00 pm
Location: Downtown Rocky Mount
Event Description: Toys For Tots is this year's parade theme. The U.S. Marine Corps Reserve will be collecting toys at the parade for Toys For Tots. Bring the family out for this Christmas tradition to watch the parade, which includes floats, bands and, of course, Santa Claus! (Note: U.S. Marine Corps will be located at the corner of City Hall collecting toys—corner of Nash Street & Church Street.)
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov
Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151



A Christmas Carol
Date & Time: December 6, 7, 13 & 14, 2013, 7:30 pm-9:30 pm; Matinee Performance, December 8, 2013, 2:30 pm - 4:30 pm
Location: Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington Street, Nashville, NC 27856
Event Description: Play based on the Charles Dickens novella, adapted & directed by Jim Singleton.
Price: \$12 general; \$10 senior citizens and students 17 years and under
Website: nasharts.org
Contact Information: Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



A Holly Day Celebration
Date & Time: December 7, 2013, 7:00 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N.C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: Ronnie Ezzell and Southern Comfort presents A Holly Day Celebration in loving memory of Holly Frances Reams
Price: \$15
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197

Senior Clubs Christmas Gala
Date & Time: December 9, 2013, 11:00 am
Location: Gateway Convention Center
Event Description: A buffet lunch celebration for senior clubs, other senior groups and guests. This year's special guest is Diane Wilson from ABC channel 11 news. Registration deadline is November 22, 2013.
Age restrictions: 55 and older
Price: \$22 per person
Contact Information: Senior Center, 252-972-1564

Mr. & Mrs. Santa Claus

Date & Time: December 10, 2013, 6:00 pm
Location: Warner Meeting Room, Braswell Memorial Library, 727 N. Grace Street, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: Enjoy listening to Santa and Mrs. Claus in a special reading of The Night Before Christmas. Santa will be available to listen to last minute requests.
Price: Free
Website: braswell-library.org
Contact Information: Linda Bunch, 252-442-1951



Chinese Golden Dragon Acrobats

Date & Time: December 12, 2013, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: You loved them so they're coming back! The ancient art of Chinese acrobatics is a time-honored tradition that began over 25 centuries ago, portraying the hard-working nature of the Chinese people. As today's premier Chinese acrobatic touring company, the Golden Dragons return to the Dunn for another sensational show of breathtaking skill and spellbinding beauty.
Price: \$15
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197

Senior Christmas Tour

Date & Time: December 19, 2013
Location: Rocky Mount communities and Brown Auditorium
Event Description: Tour the scenic sites of Rocky Mount, decorated for the Christmas holidays. Afterwards, meet at Brown Auditorium at Nash Community College for dessert, beverages, entertainment and a short program
Age restrictions: 55 and older
Price: Free
Contact Information: Julie Watson, Rocky Mount Senior Center, 252-972-1564

Holiday Tribute to Elvis by Alvin Smith

Date & Time: December 21, 2013, 7:00 pm–9:00 pm
Location: Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington Street, Nashville, NC 27856
Event Description: Elvis Tribute
Price: \$10
Website: nasharts.org
Contact Information: Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



The Legend of Johnny Cash

Date & Time: January 17, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: A tribute to the Man in Black that is dead-on. Charlie Daniels has said that "Philip Bauer's portrayal of Johnny Cash is the best I've ever seen." You'll be amazed by Bauer's uncanny look as he performs top hits like Get Rhythm, Man in Black, I Walk the Line and Ring of Fire. This is a must-see for any fan of the king of country music.
Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197



Alpin Hong
Date & Time: February 8, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Event Description: Called "a pianistic firebrand" by The *New York Times* and described as "classical for the iPod generation" by the *Ocala Star-Banner*, he is a truly unmatched creative force. A man of contrasts: rooted in extensive classical training, yet enjoying the likes of skateboarding, snowboarding, martial arts and video games. Meet Alpin Hong—pianist.
Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197



Sweet Potato Pie

Date & Time: February 21, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804
Event Description: Dishing out a unique style of music called Sweetgrass (which is a blend of bluegrass, country and gospel), this delightful, all female, acoustic band will melt your heart. Appropriately based in North Carolina, a leading sweet potato producer, these sweethearts serve up a lip-smackin', toe-tappin' good show!
Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197



A Mighty Fortress Is Our Basement

Date & Time: February 21, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Event Description: They're back! Following the tradition of the church basement ladies, here's the fourth installment of the series of musical comedies. Facing change, these wacky pillars remain firm in their faith, friendships and lessons reluctantly learned. Fortunately, amity with past shows not required!

Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197



Anything Goes!

Date & Time: March 7, 8, 14 & 15, 2014, 7:30 pm; March 9 & 16, 2014, 2:00 pm

Location: The Theatre at the Imperial Centre
Event Description: Cole Porter's classic madcap shipboard musical, complete with stow aways, an heiress, aristocracy, public enemy #13 and night club singer Reno Sweeney. The musical includes some of Cole Porter's most famous music, including Anything Goes, You're the Top, Blow, Gabriel, Blow and I Get a Kick Out of You.

Price: \$11/adults; \$9/seniors & students (with ID); \$7/children (12 and under)
Website: imperialcentre.org
Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

Citizen's Police Academy, 32nd Session

Date & Time: April 1, 2014 - May 20, 2014
 Tuesday mornings, 9:00 am - 12:00 pm
 Tuesday evenings, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm
Location: Rocky Mount Police Department Training Room

Event Description: Citizens learn about their local law enforcement agency.
Price: Free
Contact Information: Yvette Jones, Community Services Supervisor, 252-972-1436



Steep Canyon Rangers

Date & Time: April 11, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N.C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Event Description: Although a North Carolina bluegrass quintet based in Asheville, these dudes extend out internationally, having toured extensively in Europe. Named Emerging Artists of the Year in 2006, they play heavily on the festival circuit. Seeing that Examiner.com calls them "the genre's current Rembrandt" leaves little doubt this group is hot!

Price: \$30
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197

Easter Eggstravaganza

Date & Time: April 19, 2014, 10:00 am - 2:00 pm
Location: Sunset Park
Event Description: Largest Easter Egg Hunt in Rocky Mount!
Age restrictions: 3-12
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov/parks/events
Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount, Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151



Moonlight and Magnolias

Date & Time: April 25 & 26, 2014 and May 2 & 3, 2014, 7:30 pm; May 4, 2014, 2:00 pm
Location: The Theatre at the Imperial Centre

Event Description: A laughter-filled glimpse of how Gone With the Wind made its way to the silver screen. Producer David O. Selznick locks himself in a room with Director Victor Fleming and Script Doctor Ben Hecht, intent upon re-writing the script.

Price: \$11/adults; \$9/seniors & students (with ID); \$7/children (12 and under)
Website: imperialcentre.org
Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

Art Garden

Date & Time: April 26, 2014
Location: Imperial Centre Courtyard, Terrace and Education Building
Event Description: A collaborative event between the Arts Center, local garden clubs and county master gardeners. The event features artists demonstrating and selling their work, a floral experience and on-hand demonstrations with the gardeners.
Price: No admission fee; a variety of art, flowers and plants available for sale
Website: imperialcentre.org
Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266



Masters of Motown

Date & Time: May 9, 2014, 7:30 pm
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N.C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

Event Description: Abounding with names like Gladys Knight, Smokey Robinson, Martha Reeves and groups such as the Supremes and the Temptations, Detroit was a magical place in the early '60s. A fully choreographed tribute to these artists backed by a live band resurrects the Motown era.

Price: \$20
Website: ncwc.edu/arts/dunncenter/
Contact Information: Dunn Center, 252-985-5197



Juneteenth Community Empowerment Harambee Celebration

Date & Time: June 7, 2014, 12:00 pm
Location: Douglas Block in Downtown Rocky Mount
Event Description:

A unity event that will promote cultural tourism and economic development strategies of the Douglas Block area. The event will also highlight community empowerment and celebrate Juneteenth.

Age restrictions: All ages
Price: Free
Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151

12th Annual Junior Police Academy, June Session

Date & Time: June 23-27, 2014; 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Location: Rocky Mount Police Department Training Room
Event Description: Law enforcement summer fun camp for teens ages 13-18.
Price: Free
Contact Information: Yvette Jones, Community Services Supervisor, 252-972-1436



43rd Annual Independence Celebration

Date & Time: July 3, 2014, 6:00 pm - 9:30 pm
Location: Rocky Mount Athletic Stadium, 1400 North Church Street, Rocky Mount, NC
Event Description: Fun and fireworks for the entire family
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov/parks/events
Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151

12th Annual Junior Police Academy, July Session

Date & Time: July 21-25, 2014; Monday-Friday, 8:00 am - 4:00 pm
Location: Rocky Mount Police Department Training Room
Event Description: Law enforcement summer fun camp for teens ages 13-18.
Price: Free
Contact Information: Yvette Jones, Community Services Supervisor, 252-972-1436



3rd Annual Rockin' Classic Auto and Motorcycle Expo

Date & Time: July 25, 6pm - 10pm & July 26, 9 am - 3 pm
Location: Main Street, Downtown Rocky Mount
Event Description: Friday night, cruise-in and block party to kick off the Rockin' Classic. Saturday, Car and Motorcycle Expo on Main Street
Price: Free
Website: downtownrockymount.com
Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151

31st Annual National Night Out

Date & Time: August 5, 2014, Time varies
Location: Varies
Website: downtownrockymount.com
Contact Information: Yvette Jones, Community Services Supervisor, 252-972-1436

Citizens' Fire Academy

Date & Time: Every Monday night beginning September 8, 2014 – November 17, 2014, 6:00 pm - 9:00 pm

Location: Various City of Rocky Mount Fire Stations

Price: Free

Website: rockymountfire.org

Contact Information: Kim Wittig, 252-972-1379

National Fire Prevention Week

Date & Time: October 5-11, 2014

Location: Events are scheduled at various locations in the city based on requests

Price: Free

Website: firepreventionweek.org
www.rockymountfire.org

Contact Information: Kim Wittig, 252-972-1379

Citizen's Police Academy, 33rd Session

Date & Time: October 7—November 25, 2014, Tuesday mornings, 9:00 am—12:00 pm;

Tuesday evenings, 6:00 pm—9:00 pm

Location: Rocky Mount Police Department Training Room

Event Description: Citizens learn about their local law enforcement agency.

Price: Free

Contact Information: Yvette Jones, Community Services Supervisor, 252-972-1436



Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down & Festival

Date & Time: October 10, 2014, 11:00 am – 8:00 pm; October 11, 2014, 10:00 am—6:00 pm

Location: Downtown Rocky Mount near the Train Station, Hammond Street & Church Street, Rocky Mount, NC

Event Description: The Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down is a festival you do not want to miss! There, you will find great barbecue, great music and plenty of activities for the entire family. Kick up your heels Friday night at the BBQ Bash. There will be great entertainment with plenty of food and beverages including a beer garden. Continue the celebration into Saturday with a national barbecue competition, more great entertainment, lots of vendors and family activities.

Price: Free admission; vendor items and food will be available for purchase

Website: bbqthrowdown.net

Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151



Fox on the Fairway

Date & Time: November 7, 8, 14 & 15, 2014, 7:30 pm; November 16, 2014, 2:30 pm

Location: The Theatre at the Imperial Centre

Event Description: A tribute to the great English farces of the 30's and 40's, Fox on the Fairway is an irreverent mix of golf, romance and fashion.

Price: \$11/adults; \$9/seniors & students (with ID); \$7/children (12 and under)

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

59th Annual Rocky Mount Christmas Parade

Date & Time: December 7, 2014, 3:00 pm

Location: Downtown Rocky Mount

Event Description: Bring the family out for this Christmas tradition to watch the parade, which includes floats, bands and of course, Santa Claus!

Price: Free

Website: rockymountnc.gov

Contact Information: City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151



Winter Wonderland

Date & Time: December 14, 2014, 1:00 pm - 5:00 pm

Location: Imperial Centre

Event Description: A day of free winter time activities for the whole family! Music, activities, ice skating, carriage rides, and even the big man himself—it all adds up to a great event to celebrate the best of winter!

Price: Free

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266



Flurries in the Lobby!

Date & Time: December 16-24, 2014, 3:30 pm (closed on Mondays)

Location: Imperial Centre Lobby

Event Description: The best, most accurate weather prediction of all! Everyday at 3:30, you can expect to see flurries in the lobby—yes, it snows—Inside!!

Price: Free

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact Information: Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

Senior Center Trips



Biltmore Estate & Asheville, North Carolina Trip

Date & Time: November 11-14, 2013



Great Train & Grand Canyon Trip

Date & Time: March 9-14, 2014



Orlando Florida Trip

Date & Time: April 27—May 3, 2014



South Africa featuring Zambia & Victoria Falls Trip

Date & Time: October 23—November 2, 2014

Contact Information: Julie Watson, 252-972-1564

Downtown Live! Summer Music Series

Date & Time: Every other Thursday, May 15, 2014—September 18, 2014, 6:00 pm-8:30 pm

Location: Lawn of the Imperial Centre

Event Description: Fun, Food, Dancing and Music!

Price: Free

Website: downtownrockymount.com

Contact Information: 252-972-1151

Lawn Chair Theatre

Date & Time: Every other Friday, June 6,

2014—August 15, 2014, 7:00 pm

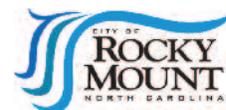
Location: Lawn of the Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences

Event Description: Free family movies

Price: Free

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact Information: 252-972-1151



DISCOVER DOWNTOWN ROCKY MOUNT

Coming Soon

Rocky Mount Christmas Parade
December 1, 2013

Winter Wonderland
December 15, 2013

Please check
www.rockymountnc.gov
for the complete calendar of events.

Stay up-to-date
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Rocky Mount.

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The cost of public services' survey for fiscal year 2014 ranks Rocky Mount in the lower half of annual household costs for municipal government and public utilities. Our annual costs for Nash County (\$3,931) and Edgecombe County (\$4,168) residents within Rocky Mount are both below the group average (\$4,211). Additionally, Rocky Mount residents enjoy lower combined costs, which also include electric service, than residents in Wilson (\$4,408), Greenville (\$4,438), Apex (\$4,683) and Cary (\$4,932).

The cost of public services' survey compiles the following annual costs reflective of a typical family residence:

- Application of municipal and county property tax rates on local median household value and one \$20,000 vehicle
- Electric service at 1,000 kWh/month
- Water and sewer services at 3,000 gallons/month
- Stormwater, residential solid waste and recycling fees

Several of the cities in the comparison group operate municipal-owned electric utilities, while others are served by investor-owned utilities like Duke Progress Energy. Analysis reflects taxes and utility rates scheduled to be in effect for each jurisdiction for fiscal year 2014.

"It is essential to compare costs of living in an accurate fashion," said Rocky Mount Budget and Evaluation Manager, Kenneth Hunter. "Much like our 'bundled bill' for utility services, this survey takes into account all public services a resident would be responsible for, regardless of where they chose to live."

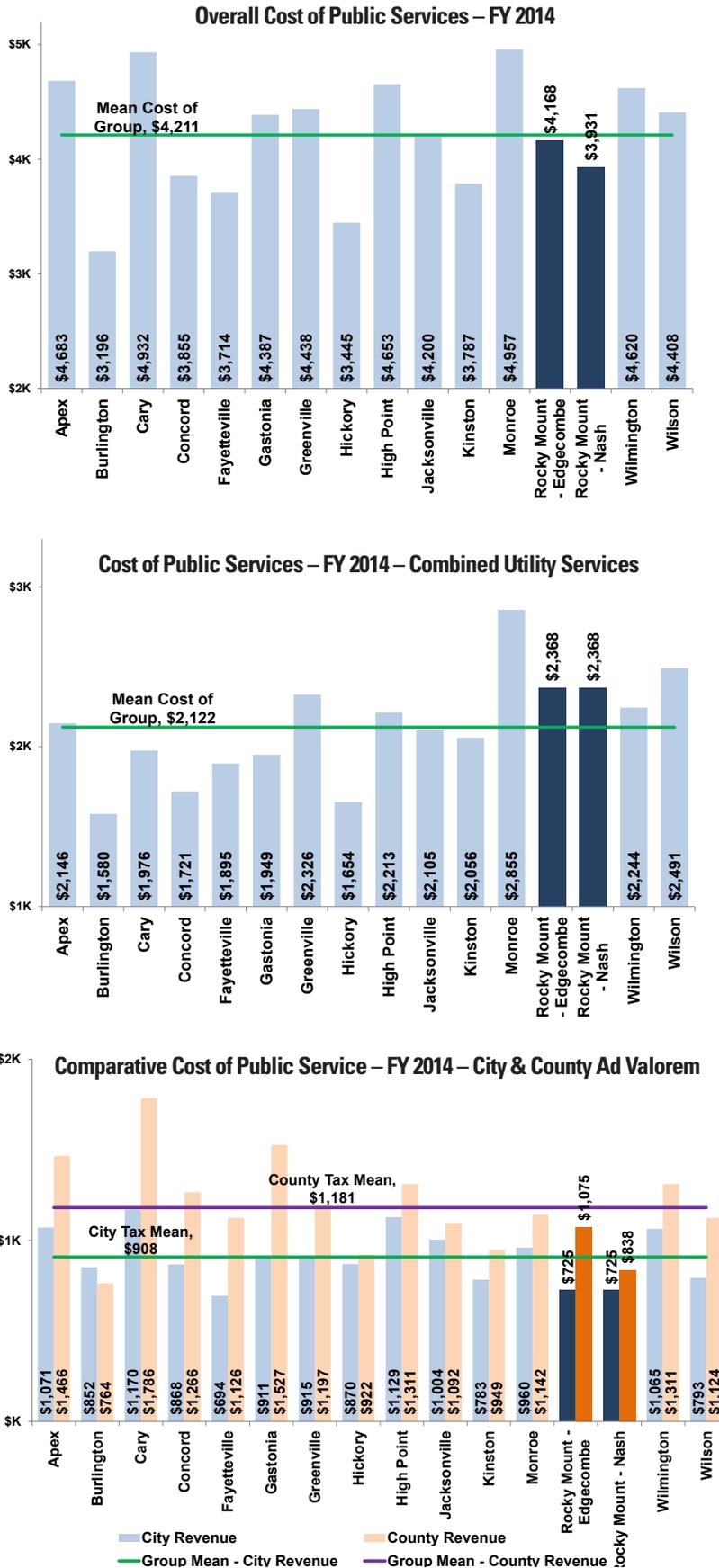
The survey compares Rocky Mount to similar-sized municipalities in North Carolina, including Apex, Burlington, Cary, Concord, Fayetteville, Gastonia, Greenville, Hickory, High Point, Jacksonville, Kinston, Monroe, Wilmington and Wilson.

"We also compare Rocky Mount separately with respect to Nash and Edgecombe counties to take into account their differences in county property tax," Hunter added.

Rocky Mount's rankings for costs remained consistent compared to last year, reflecting our continued efforts to provide an affordable quality of life featuring high-level delivery of essential and desired public services.

"City residents expect the best, no matter where they live," Hunter said. "When it comes to our Fire, Public Works, Parks & Recreation and other services, I would certainly say they are among the best in the state, if not the country. The fact we are able to deliver this quality at an affordable cost to citizens reflects well on the purpose and dedication of all of City employees."

To learn more about the cost of public services survey, visit rockymountnc.gov/budget. A video report of the survey is also available on the City's YouTube channel, youtube.com/citytv19.



2014 Operating Budget

By Kenneth Hunter

On June 24, 2013 the Rocky Mount City Council adopted their annual operating budget for the 2014 fiscal year, which began July 1, 2013. The budget provides funding for general government operations like police, fire and public works; capital infrastructure; surface transportation maintenance and improvements and delivery of public utility services.

More information on the budget, as well as analysis of resident costs for services compared to other North Carolina municipalities, is available on the City's website at rockymountnc.gov/budget.

By the numbers...

\$207.8 Million	Total FY 2014 Adopted City Budget 2.1% less than FY 2013)
\$55.8 Million	Total FY 2014 Adopted General Fund Budget (0.2% less than FY 2013)
\$13.8 Million	Capital Budget for FY 2014, part of \$105 Million Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP) (21% less than FY 2013 Capital Budget)
\$0.57	Of every \$1 of tax revenue is used to fund Public Safety (Police and Fire) operations
\$0.58	City Property Tax Rate for Fiscal Year 2014 (per \$100 Assessed Value, same as FY 2013)

Budgets

Legislative	\$1,300,810
Administration	\$2,047,270
Finance	\$1,483,930
Public Safety	\$26,109,420
Public Works/Engineering	\$12,718,740
Parks & Recreation	\$9,884,300
Planning & Development	\$2,260,290
General Fund Total	\$55,804,760
Surface Transportation & Capital	\$2,767,500
E911 Operations	\$343,700
Public Utilities (Electric & Gas)	\$118,938,190
Water Resources (Water & Sewer)	\$25,553,350
Stormwater Management	\$4,394,500
Total Budget	\$207,802,000

Property Taxes

2013 property taxes were due to the City of Rocky Mount on September 1, 2013. However, according to Felicia Taylor, Revenue Collections Supervisor, taxes are still payable without interest until January 6, 2014.

"On January 7, 2014, a penalty of interest will be applied on the current year (2013) taxes," says Taylor. "Two percent will be applied in January, and every month thereafter, the interest is three-quarters of a percent."

For property tax payment arrangements, please contact the City of Rocky Mount's Customer Service Office at 252-972-1250.

Police/Fire/Medical Emergencies 911

General City Information/Switchboard
All Departments 972-1111

City Clerk 972-1319
Clerk of Court (Edgecombe) 212-3102
Clerk of Court (Nash) 212-3100

City Manager 972-1325

City TV-19 972-1144

Downtown Development 972-1267

Engineering 972-1121

Finance
Accounting 972-1216
Administration 972-1200
Property and Risk Management 972-1202
Property tax bills 972-1250
Purchasing 972-1226
Revenue Collection 972-1250
Utility Bills/Customer Service (Payments/New Services/Disconnects) 972-1250

Fire Emergency Only 911
Fire Administration 972-1498
Fire Marshal 972-1376
Safety and Training 972-1556
Employment 972-1556
Public Education 972-1379

Human Relations 972-1181

Human Resources 972-1186
Job Line Phone 972-1199

Parks & Recreations
Administration 972-1151
Athletics 972-1160
BTW (Booker T. Washington) Community Center 467-4925
Cemeteries (Battleboro-Northeastern-Pineview) 972-1158
Children's Museum & Science Center 972-1167
Denton Street Pool 977-6231
Imperial Centre 972-1266
Maria V. Howard Arts Center 972-1163
Outdoor Recreation 972-1235
Parks Maintenance 467-4922
Park/Picnic Reservations 972-1151
Senior Center 972-1152
SRM (South Rocky Mount) Community Center 972-1170
Special Events (Eastern Carolina BBQ Throwdown/Christmas Parade) 972-1151
Special Olympics 972-1155
Sports Complex 467-6483
Sunset Park (Carousel/Train/Spray Park/Skatepark) 446-0500

Planning and Development 972-1172
Building Permits 972-1109
Business Licenses 972-1110
Historic Preservation 972-1179
Housing Rehab/Community Development 972-1100
Inspection Services/Plan Review 972-1110
Building 972-1110
Zoning 972-1114
After Hours 972-1350

Police Emergency Only 911
Non-Emergency 972-1411
Non-Emergency TTY (for the hearing impaired) 442-0975
Police Information 972-1443
Animal Control/Stray 972-1390
Animals - Dead Pickup 467-4950
Crime Prevention 972-1436
Crime Stoppers 972-1111
Investigations 972-1450
Police Chief 972-1471
Police Reports 972-1435

Public Utilities
Utility Bills/Customer Service (Payments, New Services, Disconnects) 972-1250
Electric (Power Outages/Lines Down/Repairs) 467-4800
Gas (Leaks/Repairs) 467-4800
Water or Sewer (Leaks/Blockages/Dirty Water) 467-4800
Utility Emergencies After Hours/Holidays and Weekends 467-4800

Public Works
Public Works Administration 972-1290
Appliance/Furniture Pickup 467-4950
Community Code Enforcement 467-4952
Abandoned/Junked Vehicles 467-4952
Dilapidated Houses 467-4952
Overgrown Weeds/Mosquitoes/Rodents 467-4958
Environmental Services (Trash Collection) 467-4950
Dumpster Service 467-4950
Garbage/Recycling/Yard Waste/Limb Collection 467-4950
Loose leaf pickup 467-4906
Fleet Management 467-4897
Keep America Beautiful 467-4960
Street & Stormwater Division 467-4906
Drainage Problems 467-4906
Stormwater Hotline 972-1500

Tar River Transit 972-1174

Water Resources
Administration 972-1290
Reservoir Water Treatment Plant 972-1292
Sunset Water Treatment Plant 972-1293
Wastewater Treatment Plant 972-1400



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Like Us on Facebook



Various departments within the City of Rocky Mount are now on Facebook. You are encouraged to visit their pages to find out what's happening in the City, and to spread the word to your friends, families and others. The more likes that we receive, the more positive news that we can spread in this area and beyond, so please, "like us" on Facebook at the following locations:

- Rocky Mount Government Offices (our main Facebook page which caters to all departments)
www.facebook.com/citybeat

- Rocky Mount Public Utilities
www.facebook.com/RockyMountPublicUtilities?fref=ts
- Rocky Mount Fire Department
www.facebook.com/rockymountfire

If you forget to send the link to your friends, simply have them search for the names of the departments listed above.

