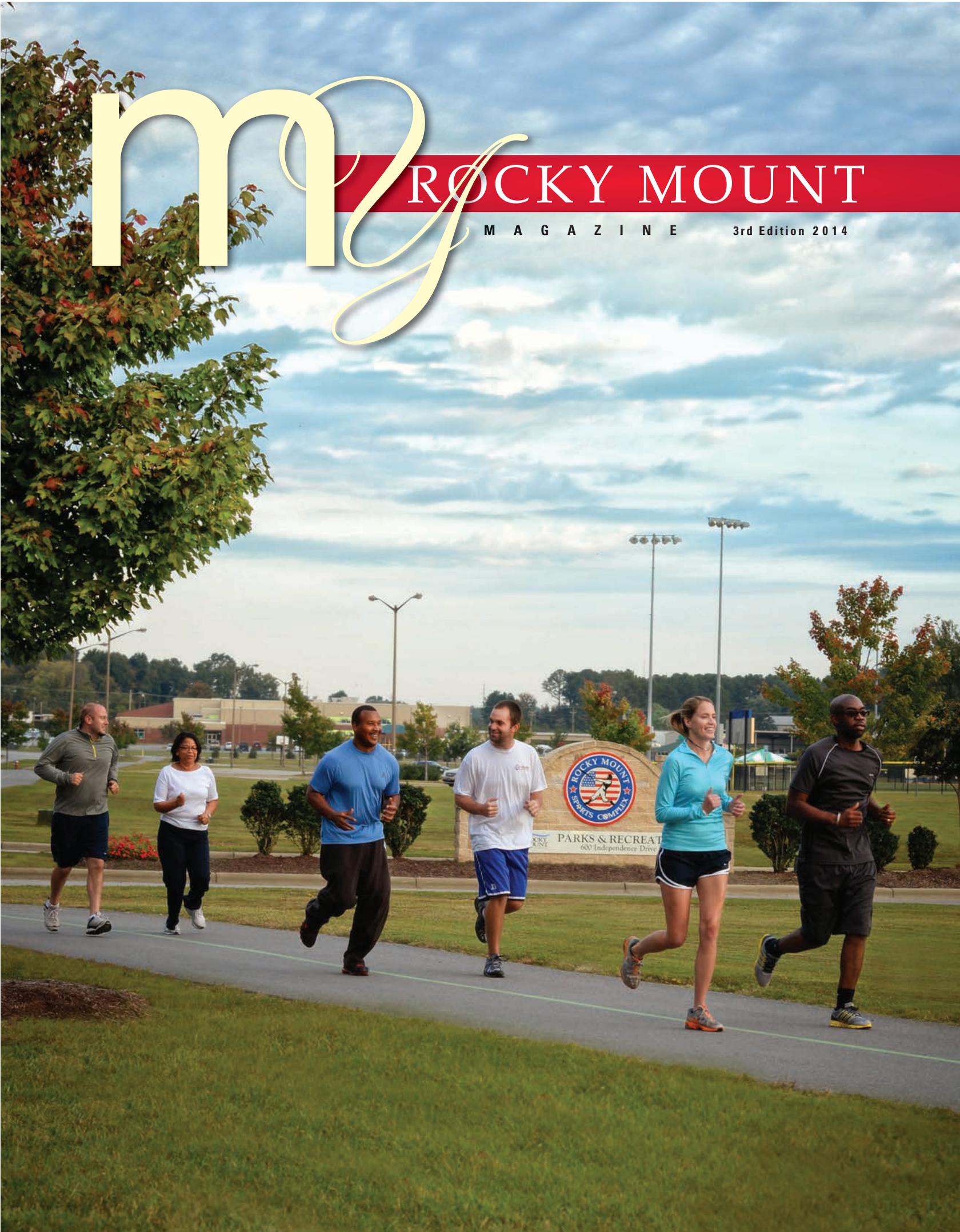


# m Rocky MOUNT

M A G A Z I N E

3rd Edition 2014



T A B L E O F C O N T E N T S

<b>Mayor's Message</b>	3
<b>Summer Snapshots</b>	4-5
<b>The Rocky Mount City Council</b>	6
<b>Meet the City of Rocky Mount's Department Heads</b>	6
<b>Police Department</b>	
Training Becomes Commonplace for the City of Rocky Mount Police Department	7-9
<b>Parks and Recreation</b>	
Upcoming Imperial Centre Exhibit to Foster Appreciation for Outdoors and Natural Resources	10
Transforming South Rocky Mount	11
<b>City Manager's Office</b>	
City Manager's Column	12
President Obama's Federal Initiative Officially Begins in Rocky Mount: David Glasgow Serves as SC2 Team Lead	13
On the Journey to a Prosperous Future: The Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan Process	14
Marketing Rocky Mount	15
Rocky Mount Fills Vacant Assistant City Manager Position	16
<b>Engineering</b>	
Distinct Features for New Tar River Transit Website	16
<b>New Venture</b>	
Rocky Mount to Experience Growth with New Brewmill Project	17
<b>Downtown Development</b>	
Faith Leads Dr. Monique Brown: Downtown Business Owner Receives Chamber's Small Business Woman of the Year Award	18-19
New Downtown Development Manager Draws on Previous Experience to Bring Vibrancy	20-21
<b>Rocky Mount Public Utilities</b>	
Rocky Mount Public Utilities Honored with National Award for Reliable Electric Operations	22
Rocky Mount Public Utilities Receives SOAR Award for Natural Gas Service	23
Rocky Mount Public Utilities Honored with National Award For Outstanding Safety Practices	23
<b>Fire Department</b>	
Become an Ambassador for Rocky Mount by Joining the City's Academies	24
Rocky Mount Fire Department and Area High School Prepare Students for Careers in Fire	25
Firefighters Sharpen Physical Skills with New Initiatives	26-27
<b>Out &amp; About in Rocky Mount</b>	
Turn Your Brain On—With Live Music: Tar River Orchestra & Chorus Celebrates 29th Season	28-29
<b>Events Calendar for 2014 and 2015</b>	30-33
<b>Budget</b>	
Cost of Public Service	34
2014 Operating Budget	35
<b>Property Taxes</b>	35
<b>Frequently Dialed Numbers</b>	35



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*This magazine is written in the Associated Press format.*



## Sharing Proud Moments

When visitors come to town, I share what the city of Rocky Mount, along with the state of North Carolina, has accomplished recently. During a visit, I often explore numerous highlights in Rocky Mount and recent innovations and trends.

While Rocky Mount is not without today's small city challenges, we have so many accomplishments of which to be proud, like this third edition of Rocky Mount's annual magazine, *MY Rocky Mount*. While being boastful may seem vain to some, what matters is the focus of the pride. Rocky Mount has a long history of producing talented individuals and successful businesses. We are still on the right track. Take a minute and focus on the following reasons to be proud of your city, and make sure that you share these positive facts with others.

First, this year's cover of *MY Rocky Mount* shows residents and visitors enjoying some of the city of Rocky Mount's trail system. Maintained by the city of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department, the trail is nearly seven miles. People can walk, jog, ride bikes, and just enjoy nature. The trail runs along the Tar River from Sunset Park to Martin Luther King, Jr. Park. It also passes through several city landmarks, like the Rocky Mount Sports Complex, Battle Park, Stith-Talbert Park and more. The natural scenery is enhanced by each of the four seasons that our area enjoys.

Not too far from the trail is the home of the future Rocky Mount Brew Mill. Area residents are excited about the first craft brewery incubator in North Carolina being built on such a historic site, as well as the expected increase in tourism and economic growth. Read why this

new Rocky Mount business is sure to be a game changer for Rocky Mount and the entire region.

In another article in *MY Rocky Mount*, Dr. Monique Brown, a local pediatrician, relates why relocating her growing practice to Downtown Rocky Mount was a sound decision, and why she supports further Downtown revitalization.

As citizens of Rocky Mount, we are proud of our police department. Increased training opportunities have enhanced the professional abilities of this department. In fact, we are proud to be one of the first departments in the state to have completed Fair and Impartial Police Training, proactive education to insure fair policy enforcement.

*MY Rocky Mount* also features an article on David Glasgow from the White House's Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative. This article will

highlight how he is working with federal agencies and our community to improve the quality of life in this region. There is also an update on the evolving Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan.

Read each page of this edition of *MY Rocky Mount* to discover many more accomplishments, like the new fitness initiatives by the city of Rocky Mount Fire Department, an upcoming exhibit at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, the various new tools used to market Rocky Mount and much, much more. Be proud. Spread the word to everyone. In the words of author Peggy Klaus in the book, "*Brag! The Art of Tooting Your Own Horn Without Blowing It*," Klaus says, "Remaining quiet about your successes only leads to being underappreciated and overlooked."



Mayor David W. Combs

# SUMMER SNAPSHOTS

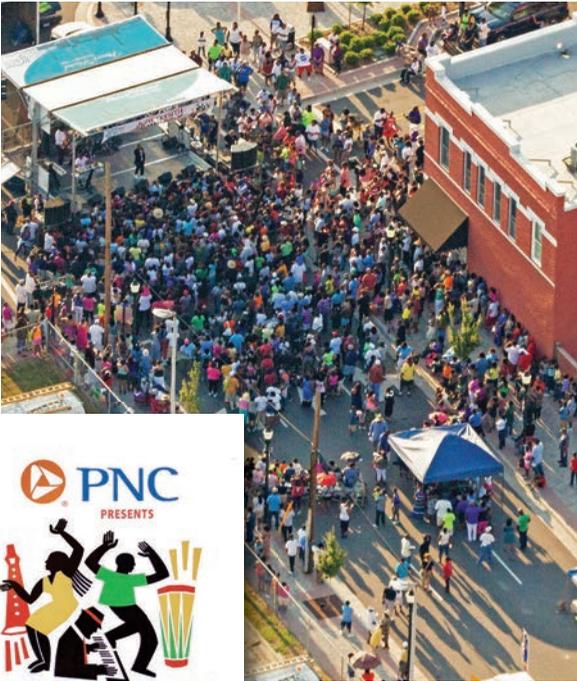
Lots of great things are always happening in our city. Here are snapshots of a few of the standout events which have taken place in Rocky Mount this year.



**Rockin' Classic Auto & Motorcycle Expo** cruised into Downtown Rocky Mount on July 25 and 26, 2014. The public came out to check out cars and bikes, and to enjoy food vendors, live entertainment, a motorcycle and car parade, kids activities and much, much more. This event was presented by PNC.



Live entertainment, vendors and kids activities were all a part of the city of **Rocky Mount's End of Summer Celebration**, held at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex.



**Marques Houston Live!** The ladies love Marques Houston - R&B singer, actor and former member of the 90's group, Immature. Houston performed during the Juneteenth Community Empowerment Harambee Festival held in the Douglas Block.



**Jazz Concert** The Rocky Mount/Edgecombe Community Development Corporation celebrated the musical legacy of Thelonious Monk with a Thelonious Monk Jazz Concert held in June at the Booker T. Theater. The event was co-sponsored by the City of Rocky Mount, the Community Empowerment Association and the Juneteenth Planning Committee.



**Downtown Live!** PNC presented the Downtown Live! Summer Music Series. The free event began in May and ran through September 18. The Downtown Live! kick off featured the Band of Oz. Due to rain, the kick off took place in the Booker T. Theater.

ROCKY MOUNT CITY COUNCIL

(sitting l-r)-Tom Rogers, Ward 5; Chris Miller, Ward 7; David Combs, Mayor; Reuben Blackwell, Ward 2; W.B. Bullock, Ward 6

(standing l-r)-Lamont Wiggins, Ward 3; Lois Watkins, Ward 4; Andre Knight, Ward 1

For Ward maps and more information, visit [rockymountnc.gov](http://rockymountnc.gov).



MEET THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT'S DEPARTMENT HEADS



**Charles Penny,**  
city manager



**Tasha Logan,**  
assistant city manager



**Thomas M. Moton, Jr.,**  
assistant city manager



**Jonathan Boone,**  
director of public works and water resources



**Pamela Casey,**  
city clerk



**Ken Graves,**  
director of planning and development



**Elayne Henderson,**  
director of human resources



**Kenneth Hunter,**  
budget & evaluation manager



**John R. Jesso,**  
downtown development manager



**Archie Jones,**  
director of human relations



**Brad Kerr,**  
director of engineering



**Trey Mayo,**  
fire chief



**Darlana Moore,**  
internal auditor



**James Moore,**  
police chief



**Tameka Kenan-Norman,**  
public affairs manager



**Amy Staton,**  
finance director



**Richard Worsinger,**  
director of public utilities



**Kelvin Yarrell,**  
director of parks and recreation

## Training Becomes Commonplace for the City of Rocky Mount Police Department

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



*Fahnestock shares important information from her recent training during a staff meeting.*

Imagine this—three white male police officers standing around a kneeling African-American man. All but one of the officers are dressed in uniform, while the African-American is also plain-clothed. Two of the officers have their hands placed on his shoulders. The third officer stands in front with his arms extended. Now, change the image slightly to all but the African-American male are in uniform. What do you see?

Sgt. Wayne Morris of the city of Rocky Mount Police Department received several answers—“This is our version of Rodney King,” “it takes all of that to get him down?” and “ooh, what did he do?” Although this was a scenario, Morris said the African-American male needed medical attention.

“Most citizens have a split second to see a situation and make a decision,” stated Morris. “We cannot control everyone’s thoughts, but recognizing that those thoughts exist and how

we can overcome them is why this class exists.”

Morris was one of three instructors who conducted Fair and Impartial Police Training held recently for officers of the Rocky Mount Police Department. A six-hour course, the class utilized scenarios and provided information in helping officers to recognize their own implicit biases and to implement controlled, unbiased responses.

“The best law enforcement officers may manifest biases because they are human, and even the best agencies, because they hire humans, must be proactive in producing fair and impartial policing,” wrote Police Chief James Moore in a memorandum to all police department employees at the onset of training.

Lt. Brandon Medina, Sgt. Wayne Morris and Cpl. Jarrod Edmonds attended a Train-the-Trainer course which equipped them with the information necessary to instruct Fair and Impartial Police Training for the over 160

uniformed officers in the department. Now, the city of Rocky Mount Police Department is among the first in the state to have completed the course.

“With fair and impartial training, officers are more likely to be effective at solving crimes and handling disorder problems,” stated Morris during his presentation. “We also begin to enhance and promote trust on the part of the people we serve.”

While Morris acknowledges that biases are learned behaviors and are not necessarily negative, they are behaviors that may sometimes be subconscious, no matter how well intentioned an officer is.

Medina stated that he, along with the other two trained officers, will teach the course for police staff in other areas who show an interest.

Although the Rocky Mount Police Department has somewhat set a precedent for learning about fair and impartial policing, and while Moore beams at this accomplishment, training has been at the forefront for him and his staff since he started January 2012. During his tenure, officers have attended the Police Law Institute, the FBI’s Law Enforcement Executive Development Association, the district attorney’s prosecution course, a West Point Leadership Program and more.

In the 2013 edition of *MY Rocky Mount*, in regards to training, Moore stated, “If police officers are working in an environment where excellence is expected, then they will do excellent work.”

Moore continues to push this philosophy, and most recently with veteran staff like Capt. Laura Fahnestock. After 23 years with the department, Fahnestock learned about the Senior Management Institute for Police through Moore. Held for three weeks in Boston, Fahnestock was the first from the department to attend. The course, conducted by the Police Executive Research Forum, explored a plethora of subjects.

“We looked at policing efforts, innovation in law enforcement, how to manage an organization, ethics in leadership, diversity and recruitment issues,” said Fahnestock. “You name it and we talked about it for those three weeks.”



*Fahnestock discusses a disturbance call for service with Police Officer Taylor Reges.*

Fahnestock most vividly recalls a class conducted by William Bratton, police commissioner of New York City. Bratton came to talk to the class about the choke hold of 43-year-old Eric Garner by police. Garner later died. He was confronted by police after allegedly selling cigarettes illegally.

“He (Bratton) talked about dealing with the media, how to get on top of the situation, things they are doing from the internal perspective of investigations, and how to work with agencies to identify trends,” said Fahnestock.

The Raleigh, N.C. native also remembers important discussions on the level of force that should be used when citizens are not complying with minor laws.

Fahnestock, the City’s first female sergeant, first female lieutenant and now first female captain, manages the patrol services division which handles calls for service, accident investigations, court paper services, preliminary investigations, community-oriented policing efforts and more. Although busy, she has started sharing what she has learned with her 105 employees.

“I am applying what I have learned in class to what I do every day. I am also assisting other officers and employees with the innovations that were taught in this course.”

Congratulations to Laura Fahnestock for completing a difficult course with 86 other professionals from throughout the United States, of which only 13 were women.



## Text-A-Tip

Text-A-Tip and  
Help Prevent  
Crime

Text RMPOL and your message to  
**CRIMES (274637)**

Your tip is completely anonymous  
*(message and data rates may apply).*

Lt. Henry King is also proud of his latest training feat. The 14-year employee of the city of Rocky Mount Police Department recently completed the Administrative Officers Management Program, or AOMP, offered at NC State University. After 480 class and self-study hours over a 12-week period, King can now say that he is versed in effective law enforcement management skills, like problem solving, goal setting, team management, ethics, research techniques and constitutional and legal principles, just to name a few.

“A lot of the course also dealt with case law. Working in internal affairs, I make sure our policies are in place and stay up to date with current case laws to see the way things change,” stated King.

According to King, AOMP is a graduate level course, with nine credit hours going towards a master’s degree from NC State University. King also recognized that AOMP is a course for those who aspire to be chief, differentiating between being a supervisor and a manager.

“It (AOMP) provides the materials and the tools to be a chief and to manage the department,” exclaimed King. “It also teaches the difference



Lt. Henry King

between being a manager and a supervisor. Supervisors are there all the time and constantly watching people. Managers oversee the entire operation.”

This information was important for King, a graduate of North Carolina Central University, who started as a patrol officer with the department. He aspires to one day become a police chief.

King’s experience at AOMP was also a successful one because he was elected class president, acting as a liaison between the professors and the 25 students. He also had the honor of delivering the graduation speech.

Training for employees is expected to continue in the city of Rocky Mount Police Department for many reasons, but the most important is that it provides even more credibility for an already skilled police force.

“We want our citizens to be confident in our police force,” stated Charles Penny in a recent issue of the *Rocky Mount Telegram*. “We aren’t saying that we won’t slip up, but with good training, resources and equipment to do the job, they should be able to service our citizens well.”



King shares his excitement on completion of AOMP with (l-r) Chris Liv and Natasha Powell

## Upcoming Imperial Centre Exhibit to Foster Appreciation for Outdoors and Natural Resources

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

The Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences is gearing up for its latest exhibit, *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home.”* Scheduled to be on display from Saturday, Jan. 31, 2015 to Sunday, May 17, 2015, the new, interactive piece is a stark contrast to the Imperial Centre’s current *“Grossology.”*

While both appeal to parents, teachers and children because of their educational components, *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home”* has a focus on the outdoors.

“This exhibit will relay to visitors the importance of the outdoor world and nature, and the importance of trees and natural resources,” says Steve Armstrong, curator for the Children’s Museum and Science Center. “Hopefully, the exhibit will encourage family time and teach children about the natural resources that sustain the world, or our ‘home sweet home.’”

While there are many neat attributes of *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home,”* some standouts include a ranger’s station equipped with a log cabin where kids can explore the roles of the forest ranger, firefighter and cartographer (person who produces maps). Kids learn about the tools used in these professions.

A campsite comes with camping gear, first-aid resources, a tent with shadow puppets that can be made by the kids and logs to practice fire-building techniques. Children can also get engaged in pretend boating at the row boat station. Life vests and signage point out safety when in or near the water.

There are a number of other activities that are a part of *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home,”* like a forest trail, puppet tree, fire lookout tower, the Itsy Bitsy Spider Rain Garden and a welcome home entrance with graphics and information about the history of Smokey Bear and Woody Owl.

While most are acquainted with Smokey Bear, designed to educate everyone about the dangers of forest fires, Woody Owl was created for the United States Forest Service. Shouting his current motto, “Lend a Hand—Care for the Land,” Woody gives information and advice to kids which will allow them to appreciate nature.

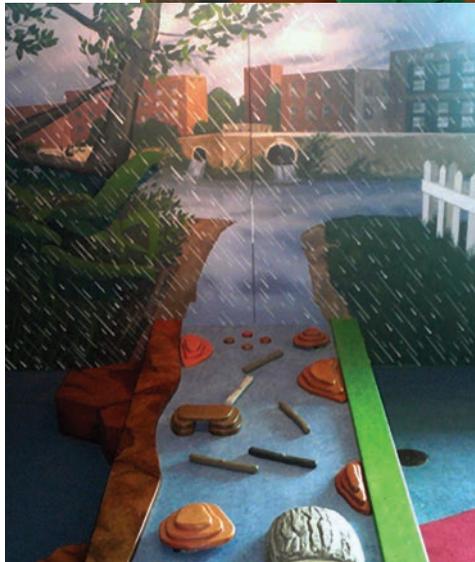
“This exhibit is not only fun, but it’s a great way to tie in with the school system’s STEM (science, technology, engineering and mathematics) program,” notes Armstrong. “Therefore, when the school groups come to see it, their class study can be interwoven with what we have on hand.”

While *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home”* is designed for children ages two to eight, parents and other adults can learn a lot too.

Everyone is invited to see this exhibit through May 2015, a contrast to exhibits in previous years that were up throughout the year.

“We’re trying something new this year,” acknowledges Armstrong. “Years ago, we did two or three exhibits annually. By going back to that, we give visitors an opportunity to come back more often and to see something different.”

Starting Saturday, Jan. 31, 2015, patrons of the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences may visit *“Smokey Bear & Woody Owl: Home Sweet Home”* Tuesdays through Saturdays from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m. The centre is closed on Mondays. Admission is just \$6. For more information, call 252-972-1266.



# Transforming South Rocky Mount

By Kellianne Davis



*South Rocky Mount Community Center architectural rendering*

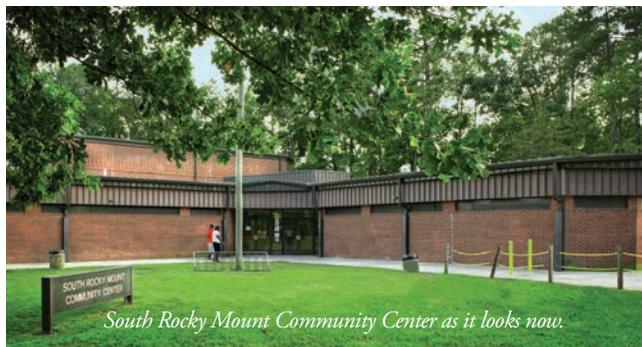
Just off of Raleigh Boulevard and down Ravenwood Drive, the South Rocky Mount Community Center has been a staple of Rocky Mount since 1979. The center is known for having great staff, full-sized sports facilities and a convenient space for social functions such as family reunions. Over the course of its 35-year existence, the center has not received any major renovations, but now, there are plans to improve nearly every quality of the building.

The city of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation department, along with Oakley-Collier Architects, began to assess the community center in 2013 and have taken their time to make sure they identified not only the need for cosmetic and functionality improvements, but structural improvements as well. These structural improvements will ensure an even longer future for such an important establishment that is the center of the community.

The city of Rocky Mount and Oakley-Collier also held several community meetings during the assessment process to determine the needs of South Rocky Mount residents. Overall improvements include replacing the old heating, ventilation and air conditioning (HVAC) system, creating a more well-defined front entrance with lighting, roof repairs, ensuring ADA (Americans with Disabilities

Act) accessible bathrooms, a new gymnasium floor and additional upgraded kitchen spaces.

Since the South Rocky Mount Community Center is such an important gathering place for the South Rocky Mount community, the main goals of the renovation project is to create a center for more



*South Rocky Mount Community Center as it looks now.*

engagement and to repurpose the existing space to be better utilized. The renovation aims at adequately supporting the community's current uses as well as future desired programming. There is no doubt that the renovation of the center will be a reflection of the enhanced quality of life for the South Rocky Mount community and greater Rocky Mount area.

Oakley-Collier will now finalize design documents with a contractor per a budget allowance of \$1.7 million. The city of Rocky Mount and Oakley-Collier Architects fully expect construction will begin no later than

spring 2015 and renovation will last approximately nine months. Parks and Recreation staff plan on keeping parts of the South Rocky Mount Community Center open to the public while renovations are in progress, but considers the safety of the community to be the number one concern.

"We understand that for many, loss of access to the center could cause a lot of inconvenience. We will do our best to keep as much of the center open as possible during the renovation," states Kelvin Yarrell, Parks and Recreation director. "However, we must consider the safety concerns that construction poses, such as asbestos removal, and we may need to close the community center in its entirety for a duration of the renovation."

Yarrell would also like to assure residents that partnerships with nearby facilities will be arranged if it is necessary to close the community center. While closing the facility in full or in part might be a real possibility, the city and design team are confident that no matter what, it will be worth the wait.

"The completion of the renovations to the South Rocky Mount Community Center and surrounding areas will truly transform the neighborhood," Tim Oakley of Oakley-Collier Architects said in a letter to the city.

# The Event Center, More Than Just a Building

Rocky Mount is at a pivotal and critical point in creating a new economy and there is still much work to be done. In order to be successful, it will require public and private investment.

From February 2012 through the summer of 2014, the city has been involved in an economic analysis, a market feasibility study and in discussions about building an Event Center in Downtown Rocky Mount. The economic analysis indicated a market does exist and the facility would create over 300,000 visitors annually to our city by year five and have an annual economic impact of \$12 million on the local economy.

This information has been shared many times through various media and public speaking engagements; however, I want to take this opportunity to share the vision of how the Event Center fits into the overall strategy for the revitalization of Downtown, Rocky Mount and the region. **The Event Center is more than just a building.**

To have a vibrant community attractive to businesses, industries and prospective new citizens, we must have a strong core/city center. As we chart the course in Rocky Mount, we are among over 30 cities in North Carolina currently making strides to reinvigorate and reinvest in their downtowns. We began the journey with the renovation of Harambee Square, the Helen P. Gay Historic Rocky Mount Train Station and the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences. With the Braswell Memorial Library, the new Southern Bank Building, Douglas Block, Brewmill and Edgecombe Community College's Biotechnology and Simulation Center, we are continuing the forward momentum.

- The Event Center is estimated to cost approximately \$42 million; however, the facility would be a catalytic project which will help transform Downtown into a destination location for visitors and citizens. Just as the Rocky Mount Sports Complex, which opened in 2006, attracted 110,000 tournament visitors to Rocky Mount in 2013 and had an economic impact of \$9 million, the Event Center in Downtown Rocky Mount could have a similar effect. Visitors will need a place



Charles Penny

to park, eat, shop and entertain idle children while activities are occurring inside the Event Center. It will help to continue to draw traffic off of Interstate-95 and U.S. 64 to Downtown and to the region.

- The Event Center will help create a sense of place and encourage investment in the center city which is what progressive cities strive to achieve in their Downtown area. Our center city is on the National Register of Historic Places with great buildings and great bones; however, the buildings need reinvestment and businesses that would serve local residents and visitors. We will need green space and outdoor play space for visitors and citizens who choose to mill around and enjoy the sites, the street furniture and the trains.
- It will help investors see the value of the buildings in the National Historic District which will eventually be converted to apartments/condos, restaurants, specialty shops and game rooms. It will help create the critical mass in the Downtown area which ultimately will require more parking, i.e. parking decks, and attract additional Downtown investments.
- The Event Center will help to create a new economy. It will also help to create life after 5 p.m., which will be attractive to young professionals.
- Ultimately, the Event Center and a strong center city will continue to enhance Rocky Mount as an attractive and vibrant community where people will want to live, work and play in Downtown and throughout the region.

**The Event Center is more than just a building** and the mayor and members of the Rocky Mount City Council have chosen to continue to move forward with conducting their due diligence on the proposed project in hope of breathing new life into the center city and the region. This will help attract visitors, businesses and industries. Every city is looking for their niche, or something that distinguishes them from their sister cities, and in Rocky Mount's case, the Event Center would provide a niche which does not exist east of Raleigh and in Northeastern North Carolina.



## Imperial Centre

Explore the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, including a Children's Museum and Science Center, Cummins Planetarium, an Animal Gallery and much, much more. . . .

# President Obama's Federal Initiative Officially Begins in Rocky Mount

## David Glasgow Serves as SC2 Team Lead

Contributed Reports

David Glasgow has joined the city of Rocky Mount, N.C. as team lead for the White House's Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Initiative. Rocky Mount, N.C. was among seven out of more than 90 cities to benefit from the second round of President Barack Obama's innovative and flexible economic and community development program. SC2, created in 2011, is designed to strengthen local capacity and coordinate federal investments to spark growth in economically distressed communities.

Glasgow comes to the program from the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development and has many years of experience in economic and community development. He is currently working in City Hall for up to 24 months coordinating a team of 22 key staff from the 17 federal agencies that work with local governments, nonprofits and the private industry to grow jobs and improve the quality of life for families in the region.

An attorney with a strong communications and community development background, Glasgow is working with city officials to support projects centered around three key parts of the Twin County Vision and Strategic Plan Process, including job creation and workforce development, growing the region's food economy and improving the quality of life in underserved neighborhoods.

"There are many parts to each of these areas of focus," says Glasgow. "Helping local businesses and industry grow jobs can involve infrastructure, healthcare, education and workforce training. The focus on growing the region's food economy involves supporting producers and processors to increase jobs and also includes increasing access to healthy foods and information on how to use them for families in underserved areas of the city. All of these things have an impact on quality of life."

Although the Birmingham, Ala. native has only been working with city officials for a short time, he is already engaged in the community.

"The SC2 team for Rocky Mount started by working with city departments and many of the partners working on the Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan to understand what federal programs are already working in the region," notes Glasgow. "It's very interesting work, learning about the community and the whole area as I meet with the many civic leaders who work with the city to improve life for everyone."



### About David Glasgow

Glasgow received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Birmingham-Southern College, a Juris Doctorate from the University of Alabama School of Law, and he completed the Harvard Kennedy School Program for Senior Executives in State and Local Government.

His previous experiences include the following:

- communications director in the Tennessee State field offices for the U.S. Department of Agriculture, Rural Development;
- assistant to the commissioner in the Department of Commerce and Insurance for the state of Tennessee;
- public information officer for Vanderbilt University; and
- assistant to the federal co-chair at the Appalachian Regional Commission.

"The vision and strategic plan process is a tremendous tool for growth," notes Glasgow. "The community is coming together beyond the city limits with leaders in the twin counties and many community partners to develop a bigger, more productive vision of what the people of

*Federal Team members from the White House Strong Cities, Strong Communities Initiative (SC2) were in Rocky Mount recently meeting with city officials and the regional leaders from the Twin Counties Vision & Strategic Plan working groups.*

this region can achieve working together."

Glasgow is not working alone.

"Our Rocky Mount SC2 team has work groups for each goal that meet by phone regularly on ways to improve the way the federal agencies deliver programs and services in the region. Sometimes that's helping cut through some of the red tape; sometimes that's sharing best practices and connecting city staff with their peers in other cities that have found successful approaches for tackling similar goals," states Glasgow.

Collaboration is also achieved once per week when Glasgow speaks with the SC2 team leads in the other cities participating in the SC2 initiative, discussing the issues in each city and how they are resolved.

Although expertise of the team leads range from working on projects nationwide and even some overseas, Glasgow acknowledges that each city is different and there is no cookie-cutter answer to achieve sustainable economic growth. However, he already sees great potential in some of the city's biggest assets like the parks, greenways and recreational opportunities, and the most consistently nice people he has ever met.

# On the Journey to a Prosperous Future

## The Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan Process

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

### Background

Since the fall of 2011, the city of Rocky Mount, Edgecombe County and Nash County have embarked on a quest to create a shared vision and prosperous future for the Twin Counties region, positioning the area to succeed in a globally competitive economy.

The Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan Process was the result of a 2009 article in *Forbes* magazine which listed the Rocky Mount Metropolitan Statistical Area as one of the 10 most impoverished areas in America. Consequently, the firm SKEO was hired to facilitate the entire process. Additionally, a Community Partners Coalition was established, comprised of representatives from all three government entities.

“The Community Partners Coalition was the overall coordinating body for the entire undertaking,” says Sue Perry-Cole, a member of the coalition and president and CEO for the North Carolina Association of Community Development Corporations.

From there, a core team was created to provide ongoing coordination, and a group of 360 study circle participants provided input.

“This broad range of citizens were given the opportunity to own the process,” says Perry-Cole. “They expressed their needs, priorities and vision for the future, and I think that was tremendously helpful and healthy for our community.”

Input from the study circles, the Community Partners Coalition, core team members and SKEO led to the completion of a Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan. This plan consisted of not only a vision statement, but eight action groups charged with implementing the plan by accomplishing set goals. Here’s a synopsis of the groups and their goals:

**Align regional leadership**—(elected officials, local government staff, etc.) around implementation of the strategic plan;

**Crime prevention and safety**—invest in crime prevention and safety initiatives;

**Food economy**—support a thriving local food economy to make healthy food affordable and accessible to residents in each of the communities, and that grows the economy through support for local producers and businesses;

**Health and mental health**—invest in improved health and mental health outcomes for residents;

**Job creation and talent development**—improve training opportunities, recruitment strategies, business friendly communities and more;

**Positive image**—promote a positive image of the area externally and internally by telling a new story that celebrates the assets and culture of the community;

**Quality of life in underserved neighborhoods**—raise the quality of life in underserved communities by investing in the human, social, physical and economic

capital of these communities and amplifying the efforts of existing community development programs and leaders; and

**STEP (Strategic Twin Counties Educational Partnership): Improving Educational Opportunities**—provide a high quality education system for all learners, from cradle to career.

### What’s Next?

According to Perry-Cole, the implementation phase of the program began when the plan was endorsed by the city of Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County. And now, implementation continues.

“We have re-engaged the core team to be the informal coordinating mechanism now during implementation,” states Perry-Cole. “Right now we are in the early stages, particularly with underserved neighborhoods, because the City has a housing study taking place that has not yet been approved. It would seem to precede the implementation of a plan on how to address conditions spoken to in the study.”

While most of the other groups are in the beginning stages, Perry-Cole says there are some exceptions, such as the

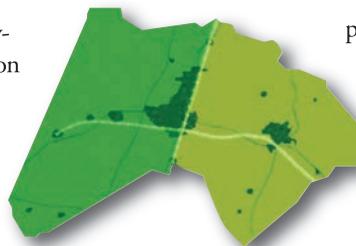
positive image group which seems to be moving along at a faster pace.

Perry-Cole is also excited about the presence of David Glasgow in our community. Glasgow, team lead for the White House Council on Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2), says the plan was one reason why Rocky Mount was chosen as an SC2 city.

“I happen to be chair of the action group on the local food economy, and it has been a challenge on how to actually start a local food economy,” admits Perry-Cole. “Since the team (SC2) has come, we have been able to identify a concept, an entry point. This adds to the capacity to achieve our goals.”

While the local food economy and other action groups strive to reach their goals, expect a meeting to be held in the beginning of 2015 with updates on the Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan Process. A website is also being assembled, which will house news, updates and upcoming events.

“Our elected leaders have stepped up to the plate and said, we believe in the resilience of our people and our community. Therefore, with all of us working together and collaborating to forge a positive collective mindset, we can create a vision statement and strategy for the renewal of our region,” says Perry-Cole. “I think we are going about the revitalization of our community in the right way. It is a long-term process. It is not going to change overnight, but we have begun the journey by building a broad revitalization coalition.”



# Marketing Rocky Mount

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Did you know that Rocky Mount is home to over 50 parks? Were you aware that the Rocky Mount Sports Complex is 143-acres and hosts over 30 tournaments throughout the year? Total visitors to the outdoor facility surpassed 110,000 in 2013. It also provided a major boom to the economy with an economic impact which exceeded \$9 million for that same year.

Or, did you realize that our Parks and Recreation Department maintains over seven miles of greenway and one of the largest senior centers in North Carolina? Furthermore, did you have any idea that the city of Rocky Mount Public Utilities is a four-time recipient of the American Public Power Association's Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3) award at the Diamond Level. Of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities, we are one of only two to achieve the Diamond Level four times in a row.

Out of the nearly 30,000 Rocky Mount public utility customers who receive this magazine, few probably know these and the many other facts about our growing city. As Public Affairs manager, my job is to work diligently to market everything which encompasses our 12 city departments. While getting a positive message to the masses is often difficult, the city of Rocky Mount is utilizing a number of creative initiatives to spread our message to residents, media outlets, potential residents, business owners and many others. And, we are ready to incorporate some new ways to

reach you within the next year. The following description of our major initiatives is to inform you of where to look for our upcoming events and activities, and how to find out more about the unique aspects of Rocky Mount.

The city of Rocky Mount has always maintained an evolving partnership with media outlets in the area. Listen for commercials on major events and other branding efforts on Jammin' 99.3, Power 95.5, 98.5 the Big Dawg, Soul 92 Jams and Life 103.1.

Since early 2013, we also took advantage of a relationship with Suddenlink, where you can often find our ads during local breaks on major networks. This type of advertising has proven to be highly effective, especially during football season.

Our :30 public service announcements, along with talk shows, may also be found on C.I.T.Y. (Connecting Information to You) TV19. TV19 is aired 24 hours a day in Rocky Mount and the surrounding areas, but is only carried by Suddenlink. This channel also provides programming from Nash County.

With the consistent use of smartphones and online searches for news, our online advertising has become more prevalent. When you log onto the Rocky Mount Telegram's website for news, look for our homepage ads and click on them for information.

Additionally, we are very excited to begin spreading our messages to moviegoers. We encourage you to arrive at the Rocky Mount

Premiere Theatre early. Before selections are shown on all 14 screens, there will be a :30 ad on Rocky Mount events and what our city has to offer. You can also see this same ad in rotation on the lobby screens. Videos are airing at Regal Brier Creek and Regal North Hills in Raleigh too.

Also, look for our six whiteboards with information on events at the following locations: the corner of Raleigh Boulevard



Whiteboards are used to market various events.

and Fairview Drive; at Atlantic and Spruce Street; corner of N. Church Street and Independence Drive; the corner of Benvenue Road and Battle Drive; in the amusement area of Sunset Park and on Sunset Avenue near City Lake.

And, please don't forget to visit our website, [www.rockymountnc.gov](http://www.rockymountnc.gov), for continuous updates. Hopefully within the next year, you should see a revamp of the city's website which will be mobile friendly, provide consistency, great photos and easy to find information.

While these marketing efforts, and many others not listed here, are part of the city of Rocky Mount's initiatives, we are also proud of what the positive image group is working on as a part of the Twin Counties Vision and Strategic Plan Process. There are so many great things to share about Rocky Mount, and there are several entities ready to spread the word.

Vinyl billboards to promote Rocky Mount may be found in several locations.



## Rocky Mount Fills Vacant Assistant City Manager Position

Contributed Report



Thomas Moton, Jr.

City Manager Charles Penny has appointed Thomas Moton, Jr. to fill the role of assistant city manager for Rocky Mount. Moton will join Tasha Logan as one of two assistant city managers serving the city.

Moton most recently worked as the city manager in Broken Arrow, Okla. where he oversaw economic development, public safety, streets and stormwater, utilities, finance, human resources and public communications.

Prior to working in Broken Arrow, Moton worked for the city of Greenville, N.C. for over six years as assistant city manager. There, he oversaw finance, information technology, human resources, community development and planning, budgeting, public information and special projects.

Moton's resume also includes other similar roles, such as assistant city manager in University City, Mo. and an assistant to the city manager and later assistant city manager in Corsicana, Texas. Moton's career in local government started in 1996 at the Dallas County Juvenile Department in Dallas, Texas as a human resources trainer/management analyst.

Moton holds a bachelor's degree in business administration and a master's degree in public administration from the University of North Texas. He has also received a credentialed manager certificate from the International City/County Management Association (ICMA). Additionally, he is a member of the City Management Association of Oklahoma and served as a director to the Oklahoma Municipal League.

Moton is recognized for his work in the nonprofit community, as well as professional organizations. In 2007, he was honored as the George C. Franklin award recipient from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill's School of Government Municipal Administration course. The N.C. League of Municipalities presents the award to the class member with the most distinguished record in the Municipal Administration Course. It is given in honor of the League's former general counsel, George C. Franklin.

"I want to continue Rocky Mount's progress and success in meeting the community's needs," says Moton. "I am very familiar with Rocky Mount from my experience working in Greenville, and I have admired the community's creativity and strategic approach in revitalizing downtown."

"Moton comes with a good balance of diverse experiences as a city management professional," says City Manager Charles Penny. "His background and knowledge of eastern North Carolina will complement our management team."

Moton began work with the City of Rocky Mount on Monday, Sept. 22, 2014. He is managing public works and water resources, parks and recreation, human resources and human relations.



## Distinct Features for New Tar River Transit Website

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Have you heard? Tar River Transit has a new website. Operated by the city of Rocky Mount and led by Director Todd Gardner, Tar River Transit provides affordable, fixed-route bus service throughout the area. Starting March 2014, due to feedback from a marketing study completed three years prior, the department decided to create a stand-alone website that has proven to be effective thus far.

"Before we built the new website, patrons had to go through the City's website," says Gardner. "Now, it is easier for riders to navigate through the system in order to get important information."

Although improved navigation is one of the most significant features of [www.tarrivertransit.org](http://www.tarrivertransit.org), according to Gardner, having the ability to download applications for various programs is also a necessity.

"We have a few programs that require an application process," states Gardner, "and the application can be easily downloaded from the website."

For example, the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) Dial-a-Ride program is for individuals with physical disabilities which prevent them from riding the city bus. Instead, Tar River Transit's van system is equipped with ADA equipment, but an application is required for use of this paratransit vehicle.

Another program requiring an application is the SNAP (Special Needs Assistance Program) for riders who have a Medicare card. SNAP applicants receive half-fare cards. However, qualifying persons who do not have a Medicare card but who do have a substantial disability, must complete an application, along with their doctor, who identifies what the disability is. Successful completion of the application will also result in a half-fare card, decreasing a bus ride from \$1.25 to 60 cents.

"We haven't really had any feedback in terms of the look of the website," acknowledges Gardner. "But, we have had customers who come in and say they have easily located and downloaded information from the website like the applications, so that tells us people are using it."

Other distinct features that can soon be expected on [tarrivertransit.org](http://tarrivertransit.org) include an automated vehicle locator system and a trip planner.

"The automated vehicle locator system will be inserted on the buses and will interface with the website," says Gardner. "Visitors can then go to the website to see where buses are in real time."

A trip planner will consist of interaction with Google Maps. Potential riders can input their current address and destination. Google Maps will tell patrons what bus they need to utilize and what, or if any, transfers are necessary.



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Also, visit [youtube.com/CITYTV19](http://youtube.com/CITYTV19)*

# Rocky Mount to Experience Growth with New Brewmill Project

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



A gem along the shores of the Tar River and less than one mile from Downtown Rocky Mount has remained vacant for years. Rocky Mount Mills, one of the first cotton mills in the state of North Carolina, was established in 1818. As a result, the Rocky Mount Mills Historic Mill Village grew in the late 19th and early 20th century, home to those who worked for the cotton mill.

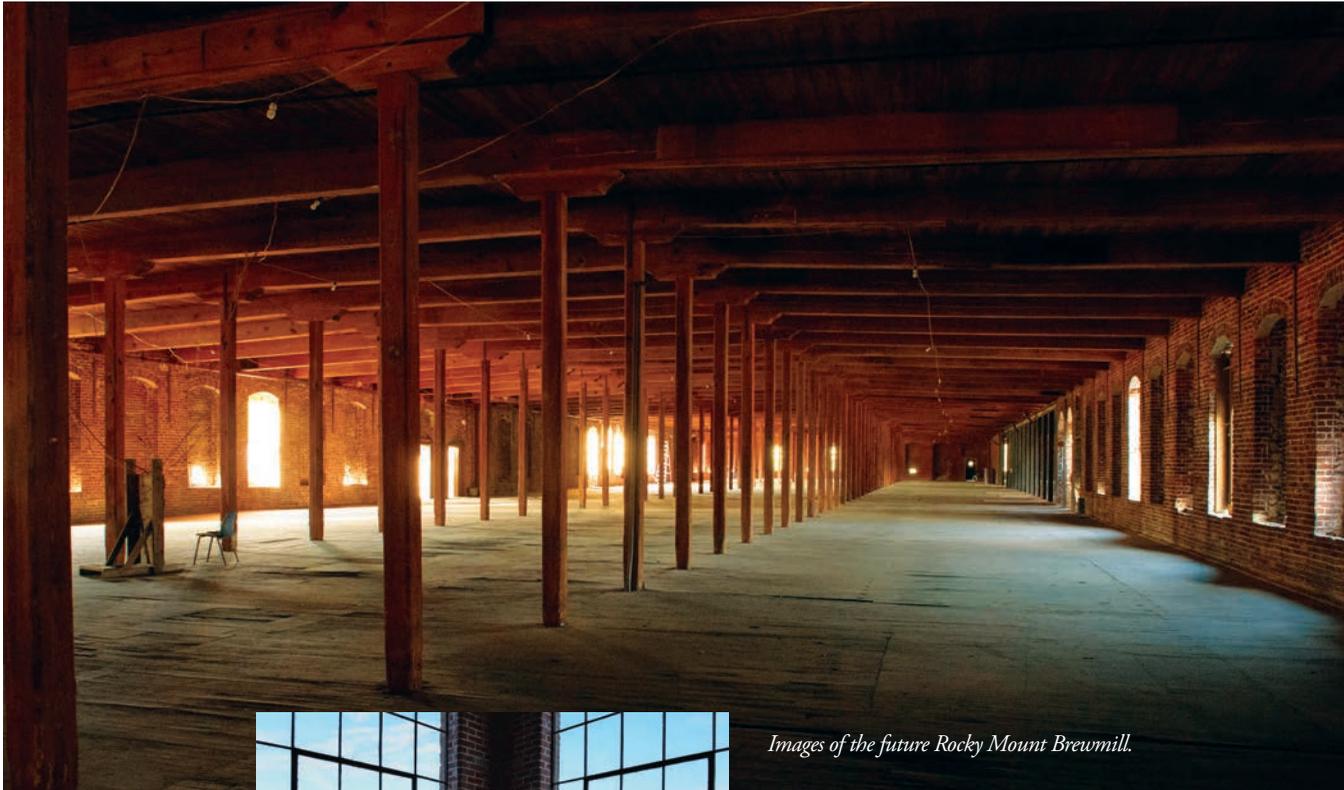
Now, Capitol Broadcasting Company, owner of the old Rocky Mount Mills, sees this “diamond in the rough” and is paving the way for North Carolina’s first craft brewery incubator to be located on this historic site. Residents are looking forward to the future brewery, to be called the Rocky Mount Brewmill.

“It was the connection between location (near Interstate 95); Capitol Broadcasting’s ownership of the Rocky Mount Mills; space requirements for breweries that fit some of the spaces we own; and the idea of bringing several small breweries together in one place to catalyze activity in the area,” says Evan Covington Chavez, development manager for Capitol Broadcasting Company, on why the company decided to invest in a Rocky Mount Brewmill.

A catalyst for economic development and a flagship initiative is just what Rocky Mount needs, and the idea behind the Rocky Mount Brewmill is believed to accomplish just that.

One purpose of the brewmill is to act as a facility for startup craft breweries and an educational hub for individuals who wish to be in the brewing industry.

In fact, a partnership with Nash Community College will result in a degree program in brewing, distillation and fermentation. Not only will these potential brewers learn how to make craft beer, but how to use equipment, work together and understand how to get a brewery started.



*Images of the future Rocky Mount Brewmill.*

Of course, indulging in the product is a given, but with eight possible nano-breweries (small brewery operation) on location, workers can live in the soon-to-be restored Mills Village and tours can be offered.

“Our hope is that by co-locating these small start-up breweries with other supporting industries and similar fields of interest, we will see more activity in the area,” says Covington Chavez.

Tourism activity is already increasing in Rocky Mount. In August 2014, for example, information was released by Alexandra Boncek, executive director of Nash County Travel and Tourism, on the visitor impact for Nash County. According to the press release, the North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development announced that domestic visitors to and within Nash County spent \$257.73 million in 2013, an increase of 0.4 percent from 2012. The travel and tourism industry also employed more than 2,800 in Nash County.

With the upcoming Rocky Mount Brewmill in the vicinity of Downtown Rocky Mount, and because it will be in the midst of other attractions, like Battle Park, the Rocky Mount Sports Complex, the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences and the Rocky Mount Premiere Theatre, an influx of visitors to the area is expected.

In the meantime, as this article was written Capitol Broadcasting was in the process of design development and waiting to obtain approval forms from the National Park Service and the State Historic Preservation Office to begin construction.

For updates on the Rocky Mount Brewmill project, visit [www.brewmill.com](http://www.brewmill.com).

D O W N T O W N   D E V E L O P M E N T

# Faith Leads Dr. Monique Brown

Downtown Business Owner Receives Chamber's Small Business Woman of the Year Award

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



*Dr. Monique Brown*

Most of us have heard of this verse from the Bible: “Faith is the substance of things hoped for, the evidence of things not seen.” Seven years ago, Dr. Monique Brown stepped out on faith, leaving her job at Nash UNC Health Care to establish a practice that would serve the mental health needs of adolescents. Faith was also the operative term for Brown in 2013 when she moved her practice from Sunset Avenue to 154 S.W. Main St. in Downtown Rocky Mount, an area that was just newly renovated and struggling to become a staple for the community.

Now, this faith has led to expansion for Brown’s business, which offers family practice, child and adolescent psychiatry, speech pathology services and a quarterly health clinic. It has also been the pivotal force in increasing Brown’s clientele and assuring her that moving to Downtown Rocky Mount was the right choice. Faith, along with hard work, is why Brown claimed the Small Business Woman of the Year Award from the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce.

“This was a blessing,” says Brown about the receipt of her award. “I don’t believe necessarily that I was so deserving or do so many great things, but everything I do comes from my heart and comes from God’s vision for me and for the community. I have a heart for this community and its spiritual growth. My own spiritual growth has been cultivated through my membership and service at Word Tabernacle Church.”

A native of Buffalo, N.Y., Brown didn’t initially realize God’s vision. A graduate of Michigan State University, the University of Buffalo and Virginia Commonwealth University (VCU), it seems almost happenstance that Brown would end up in Rocky Mount, N.C., a place she had never even heard of before.

“I had a lot of offers from all over the country,” says Brown. “But, I was recruited and accepted the offer from what was Nash General Hospital at the time.”

Brown also took a different career path. Intending to be a pediatrician, after a rotation in pediatrics while completing her medical school degree at VCU, Brown had to change her intended path because she could not take the death of children. Watching sick children whose parents did not visit was heartbreaking for her.

“It was very difficult,” notes Brown. “I couldn’t deal with it. I then wanted to be an internist (a physician who specializes in internal medicine). I really loved it. I loved being able to



*Brown shares information in her office, located Downtown Rocky Mount.*

be a part of people’s lives. The idea of preventing chronic illness is rewarding. Afterwards, I did a rotation in child psychiatry. I absolutely loved that, and I fit into it so perfectly.”

Unable to decide on internal medicine or child psychiatry, Brown married the two, and her practice has been advancing for seven years. The real turning point for the mother of four, however, was her move to Downtown Rocky Mount.

“It has been the best move that I have done since I have been here,” acknowledges Brown, who was prompted to move Downtown for three reasons.

First, Brown has an affinity for Downtown areas. “I like Downtowns,” states Brown. “I came from Buffalo where our Downtown died when industry died. I was a teenager at the time. They then revitalized Downtown, and it brought the city back to life. I am prayerful that the same thing will happen in Rocky Mount.”

Additionally, before deciding to build Downtown, Brown consulted with Sharon Romney of Wee Care Pediatrics, also located in the Downtown area. Romney advised Brown that Downtown was safe, which played a significant role in her purchase of the building.

Finally, Downtown emerged out of two other choice locations for Brown simply because it was on the bus line. “A lot of my patients do not have transportation, or they have unreliable transportation. Being Downtown, I am on the bus line,” says Brown.

Brown believes faith has led to her current location, success of her practice, genuine love of her profession and the recent Small Business Woman of the Year Award from the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce. Her advice to others who would like to follow in her footsteps:

*“Really follow God. You will always be successful if you do that. If He is directing you in any path, that is the way you should go. Even when it looks bad and hard, and even if things don’t look like they are going to work out, you have to trust that He has it.”*

# New Downtown Development Manager Draws on Previous Experience to Bring Vibrancy

By Kellianne Davis



*John Jesso*

history of Downtown to attract investors and new businesses into the area. “The fortitude of those who originally established the railroad, the tobacco market and the cotton and textile industry that Rocky Mount is known for reflects the same fortitude of those who came together after the floods and other challenges,” recognizes Jesso. “I am looking to tap into that same ‘can-do’ spirit that is so prominent in Rocky Mount to bring back and revitalize Downtown.”



*Kimberly Thigpen, owner of The Bath Place, tells Jesso about one of her products.*

John Jesso, the city of Rocky Mount’s new Downtown development manager, began his service to the city on May 19, 2014. Although a native of Boston, Mass. and a long-time resident of Charlotte, N.C., Jesso is already a huge advocate of Rocky Mount and what it has to offer. Jesso and his wife, Stacy, moved to Rocky Mount in July 2013 and were immediately taken by the warm and welcoming community.

Jesso recognizes that Rocky Mount’s location on the crossroads of two major transportation infrastructures positions it as a potential destination for travelers along their routes. Jesso plans on highlighting the character and

Jesso’s previous career responsibilities at Wachovia as a strategic program manager were to manage the growth strategy of the bank by overseeing its expansion when it moved to a new territory or when it needed to integrate a different banking institution into the Wachovia brand. Jesso’s efforts were successful in making Wachovia a market leader, a community partner and ultimately one of the most desirable places to work.



*Jesso talks with Ed Wiley, one owner of the Prime Smokehouse.*

*“I am looking to tap into that same ‘can-do’ spirit that is so prominent in Rocky Mount to bring back and revitalize Downtown.”*

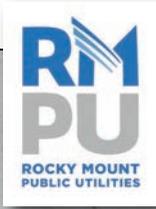
—John Jesso

Jesso hopes to bring those same skills and experiences to Downtown by building relationships in which property owners and business owners are not working alone, but instead are working towards a healthy and vibrant Downtown together.

Upon being hired, Jesso made sure to apply due diligence as he spent time performing an inventory and assessment of the needs of Downtown. Jesso knows that a deliberate and active approach to Downtown is the only way to attract the type of innovation and investment Downtown requires to restore it as “the city’s living room,” a place where people want to gather, eat, shop and support their local business owners.

“Downtowns are important for all communities. A vibrant Downtown is a reflection of our community’s image, pride, level of prosperity and the level of investment, all of which are critical as we are trying to recruit folks, both individuals and companies to come here,” states Jesso. “A healthy Downtown keeps profits in town and defines the phrase, ‘buy local.’”

Jesso believes in this community and wants to help create a Downtown that all residents can be proud of, one that stays true to its roots while being invigorated with new ideas of tomorrow. He encourages anyone who has ideas for Downtown to email him at [john.jesso@rockymountnc.gov](mailto:john.jesso@rockymountnc.gov).



## Rocky Mount Public Utilities Honored with National Award for Reliable Electric Operations

By Amy Blanton

*Rocky Mount Public Utilities employees*

In April 2014, Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) was one of 94 of the nation's more than 2,000 public power utilities to earn Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3®)<sup>1</sup> recognition from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for providing consumers with the highest degree of reliable and safe electric service.

Brent McKinney, manager, electric transmission and distribution at City Utilities of Springfield, Mo., and chair of APPA's RP3 Review Panel, presented the designees on April 7, 2014 during the APPA annual Engineering and Operations Technical Conference held in Oklahoma City, Okla.

The RP3 designation recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development and system improvement. Criteria within each category are based on sound business practices and represent a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity.



**Reliable Public  
Power Provider**

"RP3 utilities are providing a high level of service to communities all over the country," said McKinney. "These 94 designees stand out as models of safe, reliable and forward-thinking utility operations."

As part of the RP3 designation, RMPU also received the diamond level, which signifies 100 percent of the required criteria were met.

"This is the fourth time we have received the diamond level," said Utilities Director Rich Worsinger. "We are one of only two public power utilities in the country to receive the diamond level four times in a row."

"Receiving the RP3 award is truly an honor. It's also a testament to the work and dedication of our employees to provide safe, reliable service to the citizens of Rocky Mount," said Worsinger.

*APPA is the national service organization for the nation's more than 2,000 community- and state-owned electric utilities serving 47 million people.*

<sup>1</sup> RP3® is a registered service mark of APPA.

# Rocky Mount Public Utilities Honored with National Award For Outstanding Safety Practices

By Amy Blanton

Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) has earned the American Public Power Association's (APPA) Safety Award of Excellence for safe operating practices in 2013. RMPU earned the third place award in the category for utilities with 110,000-249,999 worker hours of annual worker exposure. Marlin Bales, chair of the APPA Safety Committee and supervisor of Colorado Springs Utilities in Colorado Springs, Colo., presented the award on April 7, 2014 during the association's annual Engineering and Operations Technical Conference held in Oklahoma City, Okla.

"In our line of work, safety is the top priority," said Bales. "Without safety, we can't serve our customers to the best of our abilities. This award recognizes utilities that have their priorities straight."

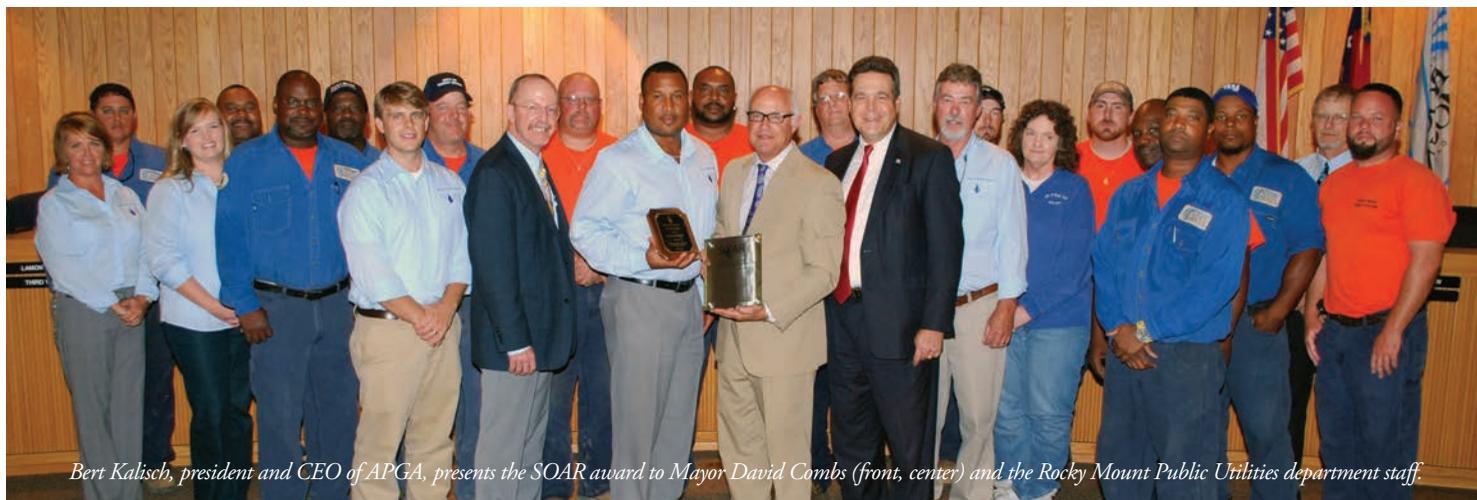
More than 285 utilities entered the annual Safety Awards, which is the highest number of entrants in the history of the program. Entrants were placed in categories according to their number of worker hours and ranked based on the most incident-free records during 2013. The incidence rate, used to judge entries, is based on the number of work-related reportable injuries or illnesses and the number of worker-hours during 2013, as defined by the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA).



*Pictured (l-r): Marlin Bales, chair of the APPA Safety Committee and supervisor, Colorado Springs Utilities; Darryl Strother, electric distribution superintendent and Mike Hyland, APPA senior vice president of engineering and operations*

"We are proud of the service we provide to our customers," said Utilities Director Rich Worsinger. "But above all else, we are proud of our safety record—proud that we do everything we can to send our people home to their families each and every night."

The Safety Awards have been held annually for the last 54 years. APPA is the national organization representing more than 2,000 not-for-profit, community and state-owned electric utilities.



*Bert Kalisch, president and CEO of APGA, presents the SOAR award to Mayor David Combs (front, center) and the Rocky Mount Public Utilities department staff.*

# Rocky Mount Public Utilities Receives SOAR Award for Natural Gas Service

By Amy Blanton

**SOAR** The American Public Gas Association (APGA) announced that Rocky Mount Public Utilities (RMPU) won the Silver Designation Award in APGA's prestigious System Operation Achievement Recognition (SOAR) program.

This is the inaugural year for APGA's SOAR program, and 21 public natural gas systems have won the recognition. SOAR is given to natural gas utilities that demonstrate excellence in the four operational areas of worker safety, workforce development, system integrity and system improvement.

SOAR applications were reviewed by a team of public natural gas utility peers from the APGA Operations and Safety Committee and were awarded a rating based on total cumulative points achieved from the four program criteria areas.

A bronze designation is awarded if the utility scores 80-89 percent of the possible points; silver designation is awarded if the utility scores 90-96 percent of the possible points; and a gold designation is awarded if the utility scores 97-100 percent of the possible points.

"Rocky Mount is one of nine natural gas providers in the country to win the silver designation in the SOAR program," said Utilities Director Rich Worsinger. "Our natural gas division employees have worked hard to maintain the integrity of the system and to stay safe while on the job. We are very proud of this achievement."

## Become an Ambassador for Rocky Mount by Joining the City's Academies

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



*Kim Wittig leads the Citizens Fire Academy.*

Are you interested in taking a look at equipment and procedures used in response to medical, fire and various rescue emergencies? What about viewing demonstrations regarding crime-scene investigations, the use of force and defense tactics? Or, perhaps engaging in a tour of the most historic landmarks and city of Rocky Mount owned sites is more your forte?

You can experience those things and more when you enroll in one of the city of Rocky Mount's academies offered throughout the year. They all provide an opportunity for citizens to learn about their city and the various professions which play a significant role in their lives.

The most recent academy took place Sept. 8, 2014 to Nov. 3, 2014. The city of Rocky Mount's Citizens Fire Academy increased participants' understanding of fire and emergency services, as well as the demanding role of a firefighter.

Attendees got an overview of the Rocky Mount Fire Department's focus on community risk reduction and all-hazards approach to service delivery. They also learned

about fire service accreditation and the Fire Department's role in emergency management.

"Those who have joined the Citizens Fire Academy have learned life saving techniques," says Kim Wittig, Fire/Life Safety educator. "Not only for the control and extinguishment of fires, but how to prevent fire from occurring and how to escape if necessary."

The guiding principles of law enforcement and policies are taught during the city of Rocky Mount's Citizens Police Academy.



*Members of the Citizens Fire Academy receive classroom and hands on instruction.*



relationship between the community and our police department, and community policing has increased. We hope that the Citizens Police Academy will continue to create responsible, well informed citizens."

Learning more about the overall functions of government, the city, and how residents may make worthwhile contributions is the purpose of the City's Citizens Academy. Coordinated by City employee Loretta Braswell, the Citizens Academy prepares citizens for service

to the community.

"What we find is that when people participate in the Citizens Academy, you walk away with a new appreciation for local government," stated City Manager Charles Penny during a recent Citizens Academy graduation. "We

appreciate your willingness to learn, but we don't want this to end. We want this to be the beginning. We have prepared board members for boards and commissions. We have prepared you now for service."

All academies are offered once per week. In 2015, the Citizens Police Academy will take place April 7 through May 19 at 6 p.m. (Tuesday only). The second session will be Oct. 6 to Nov. 17 at 9 a.m. (Tuesday only).

In 2015, the Citizens Fire Academy will be held Sept. 14 to Nov. 9 at 6 p.m. (Monday only). The Citizens Academy will take place March 5 to May 21 at 6 p.m. (Thursday only).

For more information, contact the following: Yvette Jones at 972-1436 for the Citizens Police Academy; Loretta Braswell at 972-1354 for the Citizens Academy and Kim Wittig at 972-1379 for the Citizens Fire Academy.

# Rocky Mount Fire Department and Area High School Prepare Students for Careers in Fire

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

Rocky Mount High School senior Shakeyla Hart already has her future goals set. An aspiring firefighter, the 17-year-old Rocky Mount native wants to do it all.

"I want to be a firefighter, understand EMS (emergency medical services) and everything else that's involved," says Hart. Hart, along with 20 other students, are preparing for careers in the fire industry through the Firefighter Academy, a new class being offered as a pilot program at Rocky Mount High School.

"The program basically teaches the North Carolina firefighter certification classes, or 20 different subjects over 300 hours," says Mike Varnell, assistant fire chief for the Rocky Mount Fire Department. "The goal is to involve the students as early as the ninth grade, and through the four-year process they become certified by the state of North Carolina as firefighters and ready to enter the workforce."

This is only the second year for the program, and although Hart and a few other students will not have received certification at the time of their graduation, Varnell notes that the class piques an interest in the industry. Credits will also be given for any classes taken. Additionally, students are receiving training from a credible professional with classroom and practical experience.

Lee Sudia, a retired fire chief and a fire service instructor for 33 years, now serves as the sole teacher for Rocky Mount High School's Firefighter Academy. When he heard about the class, offered in only a few parts of the state, he jumped at the opportunity.

"I thought this was a new program that has infinite potential," states Sudia. "We really need to start developing our career and volunteer firefighters at a younger age than we have been. This gives the kids something to look forward to and draws some youth away from risky behaviors to a more productive behavior."

Development of these ninth through 12th graders consists of learning in a classroom setting and practical applications, such as using fire hoses, observing the different sizes of hoses and the pressure on hoses. Students are also taught how to calculate the available water in a hydrant, as well as how to tie knots and what knots should be used for different types of equipment in order to hoist it safely.

"There's a lot of math and a lot of physics involved," acknowledges Sudia. "We've found that several of the students have really taken off with that, and they've applied these skills to their other classes. It's actually improved their test scores in these other classes because they see the practical application of what they are learning in school."

Practical application is where the Rocky Mount Fire Department steps in. According to Varnell, the department often brings a fire truck to the class,

carrying all of the needed equipment for training. Students will utilize the truck to pull hose lines, practice with portable fire extinguishers and raise ladders.

Sudia says there will be three fire classes offered next semester, and he is hoping for at least 20 additional students who have an interest in the career and technical education curriculum. While Sudia admits that the bar is set extremely high for the class, he offers words of encouragement for those who plan to enroll in the course.

"These kids are capable of doing it, and we have given them an avenue to prove their capability," exclaims Sudia. "The initiative is there; the energy is there; the will to learn is there; and the initiative to succeed is with them also."



Students Shakeyla Hart (top) and Zane Brannon (bottom) test on properly tying knots for hoisting equipment safely while Lee Sudia looks on.

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## Firefighters Sharpen Physical Skills with New Initiatives

By Tameka Kenan-Norman

The job of a firefighter isn't easy. Not only must firefighters be versed in physics, mathematics and building construction for fire, rescue and safety issues, but they must also be physically fit. Thanks to a new mandatory fitness program implemented by the city of Rocky Mount Fire Department, as well as a renovated fitness facility and the certification of peer fitness trainers, the goals of training are becoming easier for the department to accomplish.

"Our fitness program starts at 8:15 in the morning," says Eddie Harris, fire engineer for the city of Rocky Mount Fire Department. "We start with taking our blood pressure and pulse. Then, we have a warm-up, stretch and begin the workout which lasts until 9:45 a.m."

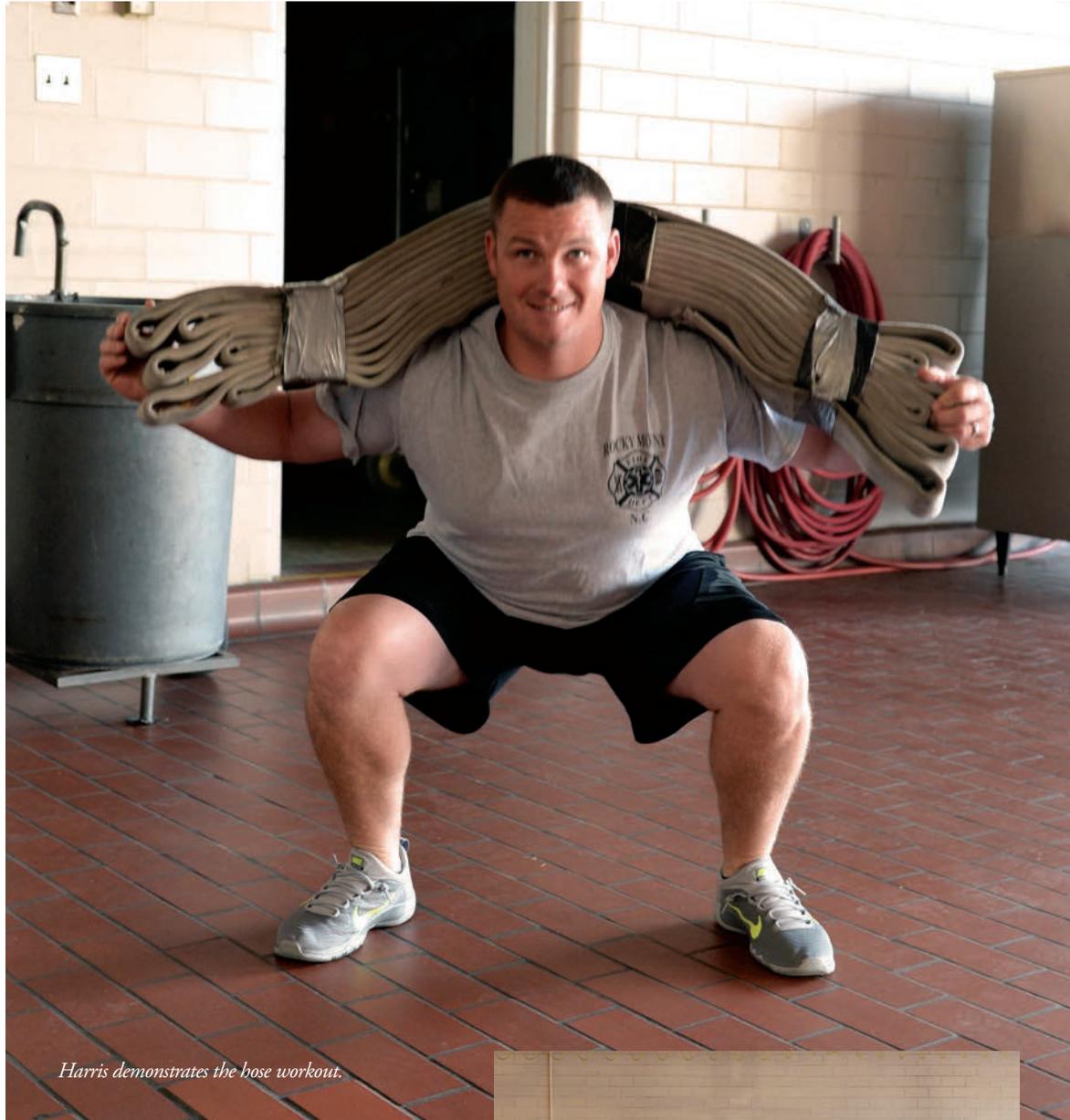
This year, Harris and the other 130 employees of the operations division, are excited about the implementation of the new hose workout. The training is simple. Trainees take an old fire hose and bundle it up in different sizes as a substitution for weights, primarily at 20, 30 and 40 pounds. The various workouts to use with each size hose are taken from the book, "The Fire Athlete Fitness Program" by Ryan Vacek.

"All of the workouts that are in the hose workout book are supposed to be functional fitness, which means that it mimics some movements that we do on the fireground," says Harris. "It actually says that in the book. For example, if you are doing a squat, it tells you the various tasks you could possibly do on the fireground in which a squat would help."

Vacek's book takes the guesswork out of the hose training and answers any questions firefighters may have about their daily fitness program. The illustrations also make the new initiative easier to follow.

Prior to the hose workout, which started February 2014, the department had utilized the same workout routine for several years, but Harris says that can cause an issue.

"Once we do one workout for so long, everyone gets bored with it," admits Harris. "When your body gets used to something, you also plateau physically."



*Harris demonstrates the hose workout.*



*Firefighters begin their workout routine.*



*Firefighters enjoy the renovated fitness facility.*



*(l-r) Ron Clark and Eddie Harris enjoy the renovated fitness facility.*



*Firefighter Brooks Strickland performs the hose workout.*

Aside from the hose workout, renovation of the previous vehicle maintenance shop at fire headquarters has also been a catalyst for improvement. The room is now outfitted with treadmills, ellipticals, bicycles, free weights and more. According to Harris, the goal is to have every station house the same type of equipment. Then, 10 different workouts would be disseminated with groups deciding which workout they would like to complete each morning. The exercises would be predetermined.

“Just like the hose workout, these workouts would be designed so you can get cardio, muscular endurance and muscular strength all in one workout,” says Harris.

And, if the going gets tough for some firefighters who can’t get the hang of the hose workouts, remedial training is provided. Harris is a certified peer fitness trainer.

“I went to New Bern to receive certification,” says Harris. “Peer fitness trainers answer questions for anyone who is struggling with their exercises or needs to lose weight. I would meet with them, counsel them, and find out what they are doing, what they are eating and then go from there.”

Harris hopes to get more peer fitness trainers on hand in order to obtain national recognition through the Wellness Fitness Initiative, designed as a means for peer fitness trainers to develop workouts, implement standardized testing and more.

Whether through the Wellness Fitness Initiative, a renovated fitness facility or the new hose workouts, firefighters train daily and are required to do their very best for the ultimate safety of the community.

“We are required to do a workout. Every morning. It doesn’t matter if it’s a Sunday or a holiday. That is a part of our daily routine,” says Harris. “That is what we do.”

## Turn Your Brain On—With Live Music

Tar River Orchestra & Chorus Celebrates 29th Season

By Tameka Kenan-Norman



*Tar River Children's Chorus*



*Kaitlyn Davis*

Do-re-mi-fa-so-la-ti-do, scales, rhythm, sight singing. These are all probably things you've heard about music, but for Kaitlyn Davis, these "things" have become a way of life. Davis was first introduced to rhythm, music and its accompanying patterns at the

young age of seven when she started taking piano lessons. At 10 years old, she signed up to participate in the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus.

"I had always been interested in singing," notes Davis. "I was part of a local ensemble with a group of kids for about two years. Then my mom found out about Tar River and signed me up."

Now, Davis is applying what she learned from her instructor, Patsy Gilliland, to her classes in the music education program at East Carolina University.

"I had to take four semesters of sight singing, which is where singers just look at a piece of music and sing it without any accompaniment," says Davis. "The exercises and things we did with her prepared me for those kinds of classes."



*Tar River Swing Band*

In addition to sustaining live local music, Dr. Dan Crocker, board chairman for the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus, says Davis' experience is a solid example of what the organization is all about.

"We provide a forum for young people to learn how to exercise their singing and learn how to play string instruments," states Crocker.

While Davis was a member of the Tar River Children's Chorus, five other ensembles provide opportunities for professional and highly skilled local musicians to perform together. The Tar

River Philharmonic Orchestra, or large symphony orchestra, hires 30 to 60 musicians per concert. They travel from Rocky Mount, Greenville, Washington, Winterville, Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill and various other areas throughout the state of North Carolina.

The Tar River Chorus is a volunteer adult chorus that performs major choral works, while the Tar River Symphonic Band (concert band) is comprised of 50 musicians who are superior brass performers. The Tar River Swing Band is a working dance band, and the Tar River Youth

Strings Program offers string lessons to local students. Children as young as three begin learning how to play the violin. Students in third through 12th grades may audition for membership in the Tar River Children's Chorus.

The number and membership of ensembles, along with the variety of concerts, differs greatly from when the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus started. Now in its 29th season, Crocker says concert locations have grown from just being held in area churches, to venues like North Carolina Wesleyan College's Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, Keihin Auditorium on the campus of Edgecombe Community College and the Randy Parton Theatre in Roanoke Rapids, N.C.

While concerts in the area are a mainstay for the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus, many ensembles travel extensively.

"The children's chorus has really been a top flight ensemble," says a smiling Crocker. "They have gone to New York and to the National Cathedral, to the Bruton Parish (Williamsburg, Va.), and they have performed on 'Good Morning America.' The swing band has performed as far as Columbus, Ohio when Rocky Mount's former city clerk, Jean Bailey, was inducted into the presidency of the International Institute of Municipal Clerks there."

Davis acknowledges that although she loves music, some of her most memorable moments as a member of the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus was when they performed during trips.

"The trip that stands out the most was when we went to New York City," states Davis. "The trip itself was so exciting. I had never been to New York City before, but all of our trips were amazing."

Hearing about exciting trips will probably motivate young children to participate in the Tar River Orchestra and Chorus, but the organization offers so much more. It gives young people an opportunity to learn and share their skills, and blesses adults with a chance to play their favorite music. Tar River Orchestra and Chorus also fosters the public's love of various genres of music, stimulating their brain.

"Our existence has always been dependent upon the good support we have gotten from the community," notes Crocker. "We are eager to see even bigger audiences, because no matter the ensemble, you can expect a quality musical presentation."

This year's remaining Tar River Orchestra and Chorus performances will be held at the following venues:

**Friday, Dec. 5, 2014—  
7:30 p.m.**

Fellowship Church  
1114 S. First St., Nashville,  
N.C.

**Annual Holiday  
Concert—**

**A Wintery Christmas**  
Tar River Children's Chorus  
Tar River Strings

Start the Yuletide enjoying the thoughts and sounds of a Christmas filled with snow, fun, a Grinch, love and gorgeous classic Christmas music sung and played by almost 100 children.

**Thursday, Feb. 26, 2015—  
7:30 p.m.**

The Dunn Center for the  
Performing Arts  
North Carolina Wesleyan  
College  
3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd.,  
Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Bring on the Spring—  
Band Classics and  
Competition Repertoire:  
Tar River Symphonic  
Band**

We are excited to expand our educational impact in the greater Rocky Mount area for our first concert this year. A portion of our program will be "by request" from the local school band programs. The first half of the program will feature classic band music from the Symphonic Band repertoire (Holst, Mennin, Mailman and Sousa).

**Thursday, March 19,  
2015—7:30 p.m.**

Church on the Rise  
3520 Bishop Road, Rocky  
Mount, N.C. 27804

**Swingin' is Just the  
Beginning**

Tar River Swing Band  
The Tar River Swing Band features classic swing band sounds from the all-time greats: Ellington, Basie, Goodman, Dorsey and more. The band also cuts

loose with contemporary big band sounds with selections made famous by the likes of Stan Kenton, Buddy Rich, Sammie Nestico, Les Brown and others. You will also always find some great vocal tunes featured straight from the most famous big band singers.

**Saturday, April 25,  
2015—  
7:30 p.m.**

Brown Auditorium  
Nash Community College  
522 N. Old Carriage Road,  
Rocky Mount, N.C.

**TROC ROCK!**

Tar River Philharmonic  
Tar River Children's Chorus  
Classic rock comes to life through the power of a full symphony orchestra. Come enjoy the sound track of your life as the Tar River Orchestra performs the music of Queen, The Doors, The Beatles, Billy Joel, The Beach Boys, Elvis and more. Guest appearance by the award winning Tar River Children's Chorus.

**Saturday, May 30, 2015—  
7:30 p.m.**

The Crocker Farm  
Dan & Brenda Crocker  
3358 Turkey Foot Road,  
Rocky Mount, N.C.

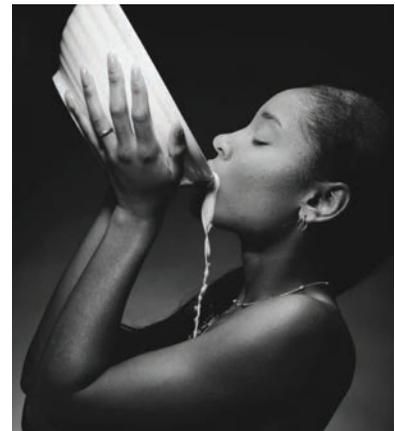
**The Sound of America—  
A Salute to American  
Music:**

Tar River Symphonic Band  
Tar River Children's Chorus  
Tar River Chorus  
For this concert, the band will be joined by the Tar River Chorus and the Tar River Children's Chorus to perform American and Patriot songs. Selections for the band will include: "American Salute," "The Blue and the Gray," "America the Beautiful" and "Fanfare for the Common Man."

# Women of a New Tribe

*On display now through December 7  
at the Maria V. Howard Arts Center.*

See the black and white photographic  
exhibit by Jerry Taliaferro of local  
women who have had an impact on the  
Rocky Mount community.





# Discover DOWNTOWN



Discover the annual events offered in Downtown Rocky Mount: Lawn Chair Theatre, Downtown Live!, Juneteenth Community Empowerment Harambee Festival, Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down, Monk Tribute & Jazz Festival, Independence Celebration, Rockin' Classic Auto & Motorcycle Expo, Rocky Mount Christmas Parade, Winter Wonderland, Ice Skating and much more. For all Downtown events, visit [downtownrockymount.com](http://downtownrockymount.com).

Thanks to the following who have sponsored one or more of our Downtown events in 2014:



**The 46th Annual Christmas Chorus**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 5 & 6, 2014, 7:30 p.m.; Dec. 7, 2014, 2 p.m.  
**Location:** Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** The annual kick off to the Christmas season!  
**Price:** \$10  
**Website:** www.imperialcentre.org  
**Contact Information:** Imperial Centre box office, 252-972-1266

**A Christmas Carol**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 5, 6, 12 & 13, 2014, 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m.; Dec. 7 & 14, 2014, 2:30 p.m.–5 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Musical Theatre  
**Price:** \$13 general; \$11 senior citizens  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org

**59th Annual Rocky Mount Christmas Parade**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 7, 2014, 3 p.m.  
**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:** www.rockymountnc.gov  
**Contact Information:** City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151

**Lighting of the Imperial Centre**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 7, 2014, 5:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Shortly after the Christmas Parade, travel to the Imperial Centre at 5:30 p.m. for a Christmas Tree, water tower and Imperial Centre building lighting, providing a spectacular view for the season. Enjoy FREE 15-minute ice skating sessions.  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.imperialcentre.org  
**Contact Information:** Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

**Ice Skating at the Imperial Centre**

**Date & Time:** Starting Dec. 7, 2014, 5:30 p.m. (Lighting of the Imperial Centre). Ice skating will continue through Dec. 31, 2014. (Closed Dec. 24, Dec. 25 and Dec. 26. Also closed on Mondays.)  
**Location:** Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** The Imperial Centre ice rink is open daily and by reservation for groups.  
**Price:** \$6 per person for 1 hour. Please call for public skate times, group reservations and group prices.  
**Website:** www.imperialcentre.org  
**Contact Information:** Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266

**Senior Clubs Christmas Gala**

**Date & Time:** December 8, 2014, 11 a.m.  
**Location:** Gateway Convention Center  
**Event Description:** A buffet lunch celebration for senior clubs, other senior groups and guests.  
**Age:** 55 and older  
**Price:** \$22 per person  
**Contact Information:** Senior Center, 252-972-1564



**Thomas Pandolfi**  
**Date & Time:** Dec. 11, 2014, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, N. C. Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Boulevard, Rocky Mount, NC 27804

**Event Description:** A definite leader among today's young pianists, this electrifying virtuoso is back for yet another riveting concert. Having shared the stage with several European orchestras and numerous American symphonies, he'll transform you into the spirit of the season with a recital of your favorite Christmas selections.  
**Price:** \$21  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



**Braswell Library Movie Days**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 13, 2014; Jan. 10, 2015 and Feb. 14, 2015, 11 a.m.–3 p.m.  
**Location:** Braswell Memorial Library, 727 S. Grace St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Come out and enjoy movie-based activities, crafts and games from 11 a.m.–1 p.m., and then settle down for a movie from 1 p.m.–3 p.m.

**Movies:**  
 Dec 13, *Polar Express*  
 Jan. 10, *Frozen*  
 Feb. 14, *Romeo and Juliet*

**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.downtownrockymount.com

**Winter Wonderland**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 14, 2014, 1 p.m.–5 p.m.  
**Location:** The Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**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:** www.imperialcentre.org  
**Contact Information:** Imperial Centre, 252-972-1266



**Senior Christmas Tour**

**Date & Time:** December 18, 2014  
**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:** 55 and older  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/seniorcenter.html  
**Contact Information:** Julie Watson, Rocky Mount Senior Center, 252-972-1564

**Alvin Smith Holiday Tribute to Elvis**

**Date & Time:** Dec. 20, 2014, 7 p.m.–9:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Live Music  
**Price:** \$22  
**Website:** nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



**Bill Young Photography Reception**

**Date & Time:** Jan. 2, 2015, 5:30 p.m.–7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Artist Reception  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



**Keith Henderson-- Illusions of The King**

**Date & Time:** Jan. 8, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Come out and celebrate Elvis Presley's 80th birthday with this masterful presentation of the King's performances. For more than 30 years, Keith Henderson has brought back the memories of Elvis through his show, "Illusions of The King." Keith has composed a show that captures the energy and dynamics of an Elvis concert and possesses a stage presence that draws the audience to him. Noted for his superior vocal talent, Keith takes pride that his performance is completely natural and the delivery of each song is filled with emotion so that the audience not only hears the music, but "experiences" the song.  
**Price:** \$16  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



**African-American Music Trail Event**

**Date & Time:** Jan. 16, 2015, 7 p.m.–9 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Live Music  
**Price:** TBD

**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



**The Steel Wheels**

**Date & Time:** Jan. 22, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Soulful mountain music emanates from this band of Virginia's Blue Ridge. Throw in a little Americana Southern Gospel and Mennonite heritage, plus a filled, bass and mandolin. Also, there's the devotion to roots, community and family that's a way of life for this group. Solid values—all portrayed in their music.  
**Price:** \$21  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



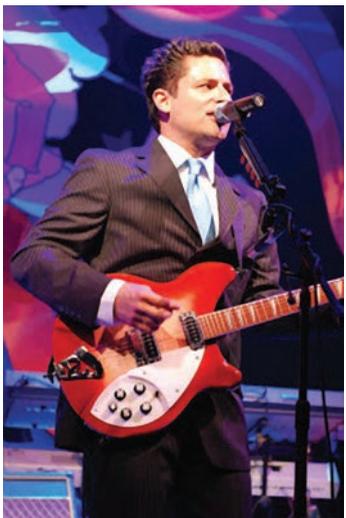
**The Platters**

**Date & Time:** Feb. 13, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Gateway Center, 101 Gateway Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** This is a fundraiser by the Tar River League featuring live on stage, The Platters, as well as a cash bar, dancing and heavy hors d'oeuvres.  
**Price:** \$50  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197, or call 252-443-5197.



### Malpass Brothers

**Date & Time:** Feb. 20, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Two 20-something siblings perform country music with an ebb and flow so natural for brothers, yet possess deep respect for the legends of the business. Dan MacIntosh of Roothog Radio denies they merely sound retro. He insists "they are retro." And SteelGuitarForum.com says they "may be just the kind of effort that saves country from complete pop oblivion."  
**Price:** \$21  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



### Rock Legends

**Date & Time:** March 13, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Remember Billy McGuigan from the Buddy Holly tribute "Rave On!" in 2009? He's back in a brand new audience customized rock concert spanning music from the 50's to 80's You'll be given the opportunity to decide exactly what you want to hear from the likes of Elvis, Billy Joel and Elton John. This is determined through the power of your applause. Come be part of this unique experience while enjoying a brilliant talent aptly described as a "musical chameleon" for his versatility.  
**Price:** \$21  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197

### Denim & Diamonds Gala

**Date & Time:** March 20, 2015, 6 p.m.–10 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Fundraiser  
**Price:** \$25  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



### Mutts Gone Nuts

**Date & Time:** March 27, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Audiences everywhere have been mesmerized by Scott and Joan Houghton and their hilarious rescue mutts. "I laughed until I wept!" declared First Lady Barbara Bush. This mischievous pack of pound puppies is sort of a cross between a doggie circus and a canine thrill show. You'll leave howlin' for more in this family friendly show that emphasizes the importance of animal rescue.  
**Price:** \$16  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



**Easter Eggstravaganza**  
**Date & Time:** March 28, 2015, 10 a.m.–2 p.m. (Rain Date: April 4, 2015)  
**Location:** Sunset Park, 1550 River Road, Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Largest Easter Egg Hunt in Rocky Mount!  
**Age restrictions:** 3-12  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/events  
**Contact Information:** City of Rocky Mount, Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151

### Casmo City Crew Band

**Date & Time:** March 28, 2015, 7p.m.–9 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Live Music  
**Price:** \$11  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org

### Horace Raper Reception

**Date & Time:** April 2, 2015, 6 p.m.–8 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Artist Reception  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org

### Paws in the Park

**Date & Time:** April 11, 2015, 10 a.m.–2 p.m.  
**Location:** ISunset Park and Dog Park, 1550 River Road, Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** The event provides an opportunity for nonprofit organizations, businesses and dog-loving citizens to advance the humane treatment of dogs and promote responsible pet ownership. The events are fun for all participants—humans and their tail-wagging companions! Activities include a pet parade, pet/owner fashion show(s), pet talent contests, and lots of educational material from dog-related vendors, sponsors and local veterinarians.  
**Age:** all ages (dogs and humans!)  
**Price:** Free  
**Website:** www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/paws.html  
**Contact Information:** City of Rocky Mount Parks & Recreation, 252-972-1151



**African American Music Trail Event**  
**Date & Time:** April 17, 2015, 7 p.m.–9 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Live Music  
**Price:** TBD  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org

### The Music Man

**Date & Time:** April 21 & 22, 2015, 7 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** Faith Christian School, Activate Drama and North Carolina Wesleyan College proudly present "The Music Man." "The Music Man" follows fast-talking traveling salesman Harold Hill as he cons the people of River City, Iowa into buying instruments and uniforms for a boys' band he vows to organize—this despite the fact he doesn't know a trombone from a treble clef. His plans to skip town with the cash are foiled when he falls for Marian the librarian, who transforms him into a respectable citizen by curtain's fall.  
**Price:** \$12 adult; \$7 student/senior  
**Contact Information:** activate.drama@gmail.com



### James Gregory

**Date & Time:** April 25, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** By refusing the vulgar and profane, this guy focuses on simpler times before the loss of common sense. Whether you consider him a storyteller, comedian or actor, get ready for some rib-tickling reflections on life from the front porch. James Gregory is back!  
**Price:** \$27  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



### Art Garden

**Date & Time:** April 25, 2015  
**Location:** Imperial Centre Courtyard, Terrace and Education Building, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**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:** www.imperialcentre.org  
**Contact Information:** Imperial Centre, 252-972-1163



### The Bronx Wanderers

**Date & Time:** May 8, 2015, 7:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.  
**Event Description:** For our 2014-15 grand finale, welcome back a group you literally fell in love with last season. Here's a humble and engaging band that, like the title of their new CD suggests, *Dare to Dream*. Come experience what Yo' Vinny and sons Vinny "The Kid" and Nicky "Stix" offer. It's a toe tapping, hand-clapping mix of music from the 50's, 60's and 70's.  
**Price:** \$21  
**Website:** www.dunncenter.com  
**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197

### When You're Smiling—written by Steve Pavelsky

**Date & Time:** May 29 & 30, 2015, 7:30 p.m.–10 p.m.; May 31, 2015, 2:30 p.m.–5 p.m.  
**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C. 27856  
**Event Description:** Theatre  
**Price:** \$13 General/\$11 seniors  
**Website:** www.nasharts.org  
**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, shelly@nasharts.org



**Juneteenth Community Empowerment Harambee Celebration**  
**Date & Time:** June 6, 2015, 12 p.m.  
**Location:** Douglas Block in Downtown Rocky Mount, 201 N.E. Main St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

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

**Price:** \$13 General/\$11 seniors

**Age:** All ages

**Price:** Free

**Website:**

[www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/events](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/parks/events)

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



**Meredith Davis in Concert**

**Date & Time:** June 6, 2015, 7 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C. 27856

**Event Description:** Live Music

**Price:** \$11

**Website:** [www.nasharts.org](http://www.nasharts.org)

**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, [shelly@nasharts.org](mailto:shelly@nasharts.org)

# SHREK THE MUSICAL

**Shrek, The Musical JR.**

**Date & Time:** June 24 & 25, 2015, 7 p.m.

**Location:** Dunn Center for the Performing Arts, North Carolina Wesleyan College, 3400 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Activate Drama and North Carolina Wesleyan College proudly present *Shrek, The Musical JR.* In a faraway kingdom, Shrek finds his swamp invaded by banished fairytale misfits, runaways who've been cast off by Lord Farquaad, a tiny terror with big ambitions. When Shrek sets off with a wise-cracking donkey to confront Farquaad, he's handed a task - if he rescues feisty Princess Fiona from the Dragon-guarded tower, his swamp will be returned to him. But, a fairytale wouldn't be complete without unexpected twists and turns along the way. Part romance and part twisted fairytale, *Shrek The Musical JR.* is an irreverently fun show for the whole family.

**Price:** \$12 adult; \$7 student/senior

**Website:** [www.dunncenter.com](http://www.dunncenter.com)

**Contact Information:** Dunn Center Box Office, 252-985-5197



**44th Annual Independence Celebration**

**Date & Time:** July 3, 2015, 6 p.m.–9:30 p.m.

**Location:** Rocky Mount Athletic Stadium, 1400 North Church Street, Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Fun and fireworks for the entire family

**Price:** Free

**Website:** [rockymountnc.gov/parks/events](http://rockymountnc.gov/parks/events)

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



**Once On This Island, JR.**

**Date & Time:** July 31, 2015 and Aug. 1, 2015, 7 p.m.

**Location:** Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Through almost non-

stop song and dance, this full-hearted musical tells the story of Ti Moune, a peasant girl who rescues and falls in love with Daniel, a wealthy boy from the other side of her island. When Daniel is returned to his people, the fantastical gods who rule the island guide Ti Moune on a quest that will test the strength of her love against the powerful forces of prejudice, hatred and even death.

**Contact Information:**

[activate.drama@gmail.com](mailto:activate.drama@gmail.com)



**4th Annual Rockin' Classic Auto and Motorcycle Expo**

**Date & Time:** July 24, 6pm - 10pm & July 25, 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:** [www.downtownrockymount.com](http://www.downtownrockymount.com)

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



**Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down & Festival**

**Date & Time:** Oct. 9, 2015, 11 a.m.–8 p.m.;

October 10, 2015, 10 a.m.–6 p.m.

**Location:** Downtown Rocky Mount near the Train Station, Hammond Street & Church Street, Rocky Mount, N.C.

**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](http://bbqthrowdown.net)

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

**Downtown Live! Summer Music Series**

**Date & Time:** Every other Thursday, May 14, 2015-Oct. 1, 2015, 6 p.m.–8:30 p.m.

**Location:** Lawn at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Fun, Food, Dancing and Music! 2015 lineup will be:

- May 14 The Tams
- May 28 Band of Oz
- June 11 Jim Quick & Coastline
- June 25 Hip Pocket
- July 9 North Tower
- July 23 Steve Owens and Summertime
- August 6 Holiday Band
- August 20 Legacy Motown Review
- September 3 Fantastic Shakers
- September 17 Fantasy
- October 1 The Embers featuring Craig Woolard

**Price:** Free

**Website:** [www.downtownrockymount.com](http://www.downtownrockymount.com)

**Contact Information:** 252-972-1151

**Lawn Chair Theatre**

**Date & Time:** Every other Friday, June 5, 2014–Aug. 14, 2015, 7 p.m.

**Location:** Lawn at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences, 270 Gay St., Rocky Mount, N.C.

**Event Description:** Free family movies

**Price:** Free

**Website:** [www.imperialcentre.org](http://www.imperialcentre.org)

**Contact Information:** Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation, 252-972-1151



**Nash Arts Summer Camps**

**Date & Time:** June 22-26, 2015; July 13-17, 2015; July 20-24, 2015; Aug. 27-31, 2015; Times to be announced

**Location:** Nash Arts Center, 100 E. Washington St., Nashville, N.C.

**Event Description:** Arts Education: Dance, Drama, Music and Visual Arts

**Price:** \$60 per one-week camp (camps run half days)

**Website:** [www.nasharts.org](http://www.nasharts.org)

**Contact Information:** Shelly Gray, 252-459-4734, [shelly@nasharts.org](mailto:shelly@nasharts.org)



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 **972-1250.**



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C O S T O F P U B L I C S E R V I C E

Contributed Report

Compared to performance in prior years, Rocky Mount maintains consistent and comparable costs for public services, in line with like cities and towns in the Tar Heel State for municipal government and public utility services.

The fiscal year 2015 Cost of Public Services survey, conducted by the Office of Budget Evaluation & Development, compares Rocky Mount to 14 other North Carolina municipalities with respect to average property tax burden and annual costs for solid waste, stormwater management, water, sewer and electricity services. This year, Rocky Mount residents enjoy average annual costs of \$4,042 in Nash County and \$4,342 in Edgecombe County (difference due to county ad valorem tax rates).

These annual costs are at or below the average for the 15 municipality group (\$4,302). Specifically, Rocky Mount's annual cost for public services is noticeably less than Cary (\$5,088), Apex (\$4,961), Monroe (\$4,950), Wilmington (\$4,729), High Point (\$4,666), Wilson (\$4,474) and Greenville (\$4,441).

The Cost of Public Services survey creates an equal analysis of residential usage and tax burden based on the following conditions:

- Application of municipal and county property tax rates on local median household value and one \$25,000 vehicle
- Electric services at 1,000 kWh/month usage
- Water and sewer services at 3,000 gallons/month usage
- Stormwater management, residential solid waste and recycling fees

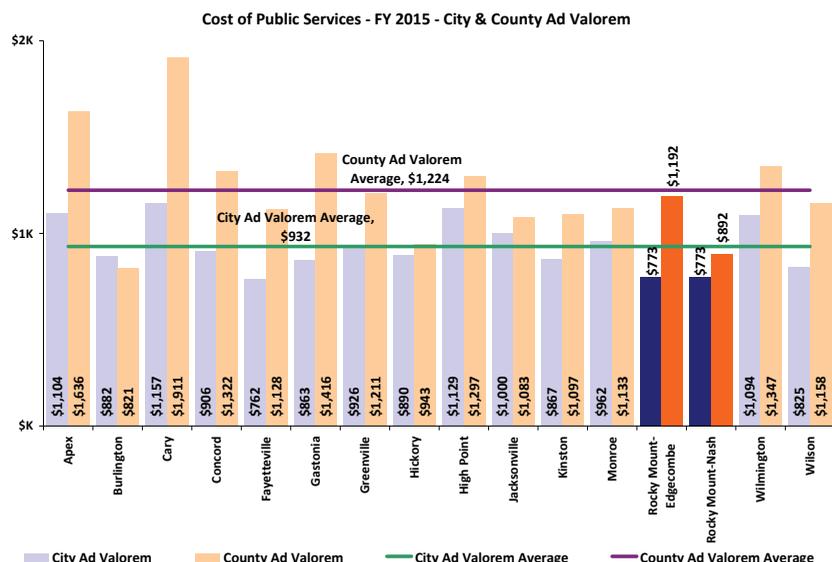
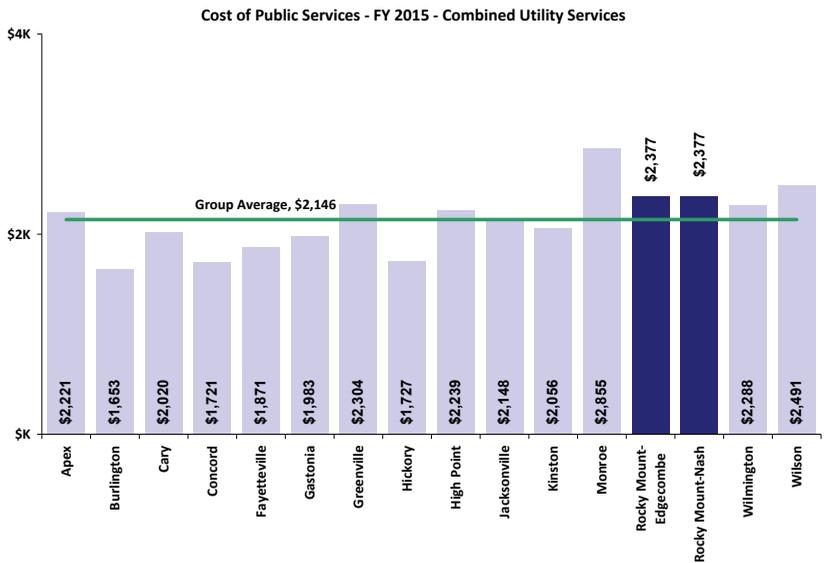
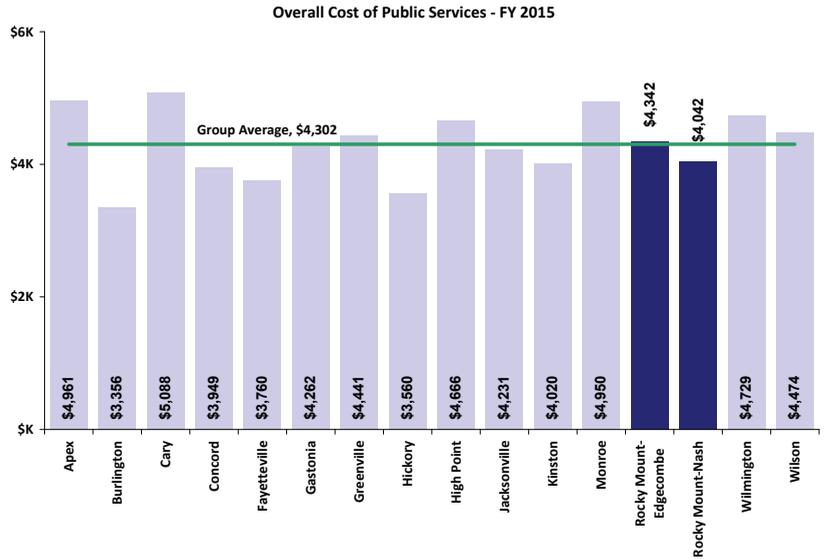
Several members of the comparison group operate municipal-owned electric utilities, while others are served by investor-owned groups like Duke Energy. Analysis reflects taxes and utility rates scheduled to be in effect for each jurisdiction in fiscal year 2015.

“It is very easy to get caught looking at one specific item of cost,” said Kenneth Hunter, Rocky Mount budget and evaluation manager. “In order to make better decisions, we learn to identify and study the total costs. This study is a reflection of such an effort.”

Rocky Mount's consistent position, close to the average for the group, reflects dedication to the essential goals of service delivery and fiscal discipline.

“Citizens have high expectations for the public services they receive in their cities,” Hunter said. “They also want to know we are keeping costs in line with their ability to pay, doing our best to build efficiencies and constrain costs in order to limit the potential for adjustments in tax and utility rates.”

To learn more about the Cost of Public Services study, visit [www.rockymountnc.gov/budget](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/budget). A video report of the survey is also available on the City's YouTube channel, [youtube.com/citytv19](http://youtube.com/citytv19).



# 2014 Operating Budget

By Kenneth Hunter

On June 23, 2014 the Rocky Mount City Council adopted their annual operating budget for the 2015 fiscal year. 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 [www.rockymountnc.gov/budget](http://www.rockymountnc.gov/budget).

## By the numbers...

- \$208.8 million** Total FY 2015 Adopted City Budget (0.5 percent increase from FY 2014)
- \$57 million** Total FY 2015 Adopted General Fund Budget (2.2 percent increase from FY 2014)
- \$17 million** Capital Budget for FY 2014, part of \$139 million Five-Year Capital Improvement Program (CIP)
- \$0.56** Of every \$1 of Tax Revenue is used to fund Public Safety (Police and Fire) operations
- \$0.58** City Property Tax Rate for FY 2015 (per \$100 Assessed Value, same as FY 2014)

## Budgets

Legislative	\$1,270,450
Administration	\$2,333,180
Finance	\$1,429,100
Public Safety	\$26,570,720
Public Works/Engineering	\$12,694,980
Parks & Recreation	\$10,334,020
Planning & Development	\$2,405,780
<b>General Fund Total</b>	<b>\$57,038,230</b>
Surface Transportation & Capital	\$4,057,000
E911 Operations	\$396,000
Public Utilities (Electric & Gas)	\$117,193,590
Water Resources (Water & Sewer)	\$25,744,230
Stormwater Management	\$1,422,220
<b>Total Budget</b>	<b>\$208,786,140</b>

## Property Taxes

2014 property taxes were due to the city of Rocky Mount on Sept. 1, 2014. However, according to Felicia Taylor, revenue collections supervisor, taxes are still payable without interest until Jan. 5, 2015.

"On Jan. 6, 2015, a penalty of interest will be applied on the current year (2014) taxes," says Taylor. "Two percent will be applied in January, and every month thereafter; the interest rate 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

<b>All Departments</b>	972-1111
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<b>City Clerk</b>	972-1319
Clerk of Court (Edgecombe)	212-3102
Clerk of Court (Nash)	212-3100

<b>City Manager</b>	972-1325
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<b>City TV-19</b>	972-1144
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<b>Downtown Development</b>	972-1267
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<b>Engineering</b>	972-1121
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<b>Finance</b>	
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

<b>Human Relations</b>	972-1181
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<b>Human Resources</b>	972-1186
Job Line Phone	972-1199

### Parks & Recreation

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
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
Theatre Box Office	972-1266

## 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	972-1107 or 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 and Water Resources

Public Works and Water Resources	
Administration	972-1290
Appliance/Furniture Pickup	467-4958
Community Code Enforcement	467-4958
Abandoned/Junked Vehicles	467-4958
Dilapidated Houses	467-4958
Overgrown Weeds/Mosquitoes/Rodents	467-4958
Environmental Services (Trash Collection)	467-4958
Dumpster Service	467-4950
Garbage/Recycling/Yard Waste/Limb Collection	467-4958
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 Regional Reservoir Wastewater Treatment Plant	972-1400
Reservoir Water Treatment Plant	972-1292
Sunset Water Treatment Plant	972-1400

## Tar River Transit 972-1174

