



Union UPDATE

January 23, 2013

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Commissioners Begin Budget Development Process

The Union County Board of Commissioners on Thursday kicked off the FY 2014 budget season with the presentation of the Fiscal Year 2014 five-year financial projections.

"Historic trends provide a look at the impact of past decisions made by the Board of County Commissioners and County management," said County Manager Cindy Coto. "However, studying forward trends helps to estimate the future impact of current policies and financial decisions as they relate to the services provided to the residents."

The five-year projection provides commissioners with financial projections, fiscal indicators and demand for services indexing. Findings, developed from the projections, are the basis for County staff's recommended focus areas for the upcoming budget process.

"The five-year projection reflects the proactive financial management of the Board and County management during the recent economic downturn," said Finance Director Jeff Yates. "The County appears to be on solid financial ground moving forward into its next growth cycle."

Financial projections provide a "snap-shot" of future costs and revenues that anticipate resource requirements for the future.

Fiscal indicators offer a more global view of the County's fiscal health. Fiscal indicators use various economic, demographic and financial guides to establish trends that present a sign of fiscal health and long-term fiscal sustainability.

Demand for services indexing looks at past demands for County services to help establish future demand for services, providing the Board of County Commissioners insight into the changing service needs of county residents.

County Staff is recommending the FY 2014 budget development process focus on Solid Waste business planning, renewing the Emergency Medical Services contract, stabilizing school funding, debt management policies, the six-year capital plan and volunteer fire department funding.

"This macro review of the County's needs provides a starting place for the FY 2014 budget development process," Coto said. "During the next several months, staff will develop a budget that is focused

County Public Library's monthly program guide via your email by contacting Shelley Fearn, Reader's Services Librarian, at sfearn@union.lib.nc.us.



on effective, efficient service delivery, while meeting the Board's goal of fiscal sustainability."

County staff will meet several more times with commissioners during the budget development process to receive feedback and guidance. A recommended budget will be presented to the Board in May, with final budget adoption scheduled for June.

Thursday's meeting can be seen daily on UCTV 16 at 10 a.m. and 8 p.m. and on the County's YouTube page at www.youtube.com/unioncountync.

What's Happening at the Library?

That was a Book? Critically Acclaimed Films Adapted from Books

On Saturday, Jan. 26, three classic film's adapted from books will be shown at the Monroe Library: *The Treasure of the Sierra Madre* (1948) at 1 p.m., *Rear Window* (1954) at 4 p.m. and *Double Indemnity* (1944) at 7 p.m. For more information, contact Tim Speasl at 704-283-8184, ext. 240.

Rabies Clinic to be Held on Saturday, Feb. 9

The Union County Animal Services Bureau will hold a rabies clinic for dogs and cats at Tractor Supply in Monroe on Saturday, Feb. 9 from 9:30 a.m. - 10:30 a.m.

The price will be \$10 (cash only) for rabies vaccinations. Microchips will also be offered.

N.C. state law requires the owner of every dog and cat over four months old to have their animal vaccinated against rabies. Vaccinations will be provided by Dr. Brent Glenn.

Union County Receives Exceptional Audit Report

John W. Kapelar, partner in the audit firm of Potter & Company, informed the Union County Board of Commissioners on Tuesday that his firm has provided Union County with an unqualified or clean opinion that its financial statements are fairly presented in conformity with general accepted accounting principals. This opinion is the highest form of opinion that the external auditors can express on the presentation of Union County's financial statements.

The independent audit firm is required to conduct an annual analysis of the County's compliance with various federal and state laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements. Potter & Company reviewed the County's accounting and administrative controls over a wide range of financial transactions such as cash, investments, revenues, receivables, expenditures, payroll, property, debt and grant programs.

For the ninth consecutive year, the auditors found no significant deficiencies in internal control over financial reporting and no instances of material non-compliance with certain provisions of laws, regulations, contracts and grant agreements.

VA, SSA and IRS Cut Red Tape for Veterans and Survivors

The Department of Veterans Affairs announced today it is cutting red tape for Veterans by eliminating the need for them to complete an annual Eligibility Verification Report (EVR). VA will implement a new process for confirming eligibility for benefits, and staff that had been responsible for processing the old form will instead focus on eliminating the compensation claims backlog.

Historically, beneficiaries have been required to complete an EVR each year to ensure their pension benefits continued. Under the new initiative, VA will work with the Internal Revenue Service (IRS) and the Social Security Administration (SSA) to verify continued eligibility for pension benefits.

"By working together, we have cut red tape for Veterans and will help ensure these brave men and women get the benefits they have earned and deserve," said Secretary of Veterans Affairs Eric K. Shinseki.

For more information, call the Animal Shelter at 704-283-8303.

Flu Season Particularly Bad for Seniors

Forty-eight states reported widespread influenza activity in the most recent weekly report from the CDC. The report, called FluView, tracks influenza activity in the U.S.

With some exceptions -- most notably in the West -- fewer states reported influenza at a "high level."

The season has been particularly bad for seniors. More than 90 percent of the deaths have been those 65 and older and the hospital rate for seniors was up sharply to 82 per 100,000 during the week. The predominant strain is H3N2 this season.

Nine more influenza-associated pediatric deaths were reported, bringing the total to 29. [FluView is here.](#)

Did You Know?

1. The percentage of teens in high school who reported they drink and drive has decreased by more than half since 1991.
2. Still, one in ten high school teens drinks and drives-that was nearly one million teens in 2011.
3. Effective interventions to reduce teen drinking and driving include enforcement of minimum legal drinking

VA estimates it would have sent nearly 150,000 EVRs to beneficiaries in January 2013. Eliminating these annual reports reduces the burden on Veterans, their families, and survivors because they will not have to return these routine reports to VA each year in order to avoid suspension of benefits. It also allows VA to redirect more than 100 employees that usually process EVRs to work on eliminating the claims backlog.

"Having already instituted an expedited process that enables wounded warriors to quickly access Social Security disability benefits, we are proud to work with our federal partners on an automated process that will make it much easier for qualified Veterans to maintain their VA benefits from year to year," said Michael J. Astrue, Commissioner of Social Security.

"The IRS is taking new steps to provide critical data to help speed the benefits process for the nation's veterans and Veterans Affairs," said Beth Tucker, IRS Deputy Commissioner for Operations Support. "The IRS is pleased to be part of a partnership with VA and SSA that will provide needed data quickly and effectively to move this effort forward."

All beneficiaries currently receiving VA pension benefits will receive a letter from VA explaining these changes and providing instructions on how to continue to submit their unreimbursed medical expenses. More information about VA pension benefits is available at <http://www.benefits.va.gov/pension> and other VA benefit programs on the joint Department of Defense-VA web portal eBenefits at www.ebenefits.va.gov.

Highway Patrol Offers Simple Winter Driving Tips

With the arrival of winter and the possibility that motorists may have to drive in inclement weather, the Highway Patrol is offering simple and safe driving tips. The weather in North Carolina is unpredictable and this time of year you never know when to expect black ice, snow, icy roads or a mixture of road conditions. The Highway Patrol is asking motorists to prepare in advance for the winter driving months ahead.



"Winter brings new obstacles and responsibilities that the motoring public will experience when inclement weather moves into our state. Despite a rather mild winter so far, North Carolina's weather can often change from one day to the next," says Patrol spokesman, First Sergeant Jeff Gordon.

Here are a few simple steps to help keep you on the road and less anxious.

- Avoid travel unless necessary when winter weather is in your area.
- Decrease speed.

age laws, zero tolerance laws and graduated driver licensing systems.

- Wear your seatbelt.

Driving Considerations

- Leave early - allow more travel time; expect delays.
- Increase distance between vehicles - it takes significantly longer to stop on snow covered or icy roadways.
- Clear all windows on your vehicle prior to travel - having unobstructed vision is vital to avoid running off of the road or having a collision.
- Illuminate your vehicles headlamps.
- Use caution on bridges and overpasses as they susceptible to freezing before roadways.
- Avoid using cruise control - cruise can cause the vehicle's wheels to continue turning on a slippery surface when speed needs to be decreased.

Be Prepared

- Ensure your vehicle has a full tank of gas in the event you are stranded for an extended period of time.
- Charge your cellular phone prior to departure.
- Take a blanket.
- Notify a family member or a friend of your travel plans prior to departure - if you travel is interrupted, someone will know.

Collision Information

- Be patient - weather also limits our capabilities and increases our response time; also, keep in mind that we will be experiencing a high volume of requests for service.
- Attempt to move your vehicle out of the roadway if you are involved in a minor, non-injury traffic collision; especially if you are in a dangerous area such as a curve or a blind hill.
- If your vehicle is stranded or wrecked but not in the roadway, attempts to recover your vehicle will have to wait until conditions improve for safety considerations.

To check the status of road conditions, motorists are asked to go to the Department of Transportation's website at <http://www.ncdot.gov/travel/>. The public is not advised to dial 911 or the Highway Patrol Communication Centers for road conditions.

However, citizens can contribute to highway safety by reporting erratic drivers to the Highway Patrol by dialing *Hp or *47 on their cellular phones. Callers will remain anonymous and should give a description of the vehicle, location, direction of travel and license number if possible.

Highway Patrol Reminds Motorists to be Vigilant of Emergency Vehicles

More than 150 U.S. law enforcement officers have been killed since 1999 after being struck by vehicles along America's highways, according to the National Law Enforcement Officers Memorial Fund. To combat that



problem, the State Highway Patrol is reminding motorists across the state to be vigilant of all emergency vehicles on the sides of highways and interstates.

To date, 43 states have enacted Move Over laws in the hopes of preventing needless deaths and injuries along our nation's highways.

North Carolina is not immune to these deaths and injuries. Since the Patrol's inception, two troopers have been struck and killed while countless others have been injured while conducting traffic stops. Just recently, Trooper Matthew Mitchell, stationed in Madison County was struck during a traffic stop on US19. Trooper Mitchell had exited his vehicle and was speaking to the driver when a passenger car struck him, knocking him several feet. As a result, Trooper Mitchell sustained critical injuries. He has since made immense improvements but the road to recovery is on-going.

In 2002, North Carolina implemented the Move Over law, however many motorists are not familiar with its existence. According to a national poll by Mason Dixon Polling & Research, sponsored by the National Safety Commission:

- 71% of Americans have not heard of "Move Over" laws
- 86% support enacting "Move Over" laws in all 50 states
- 90% believe traffic stops and roadside emergencies are dangerous for law enforcement and first responders

North Carolina state law requires motorists slow down and approach cautiously when an emergency vehicle is stopped on the shoulder of the roadway with its lights flashing. Motorists are required to move over to another lane away from the emergency vehicle on a multi-lane highway or slow down on a two lane highway and can do so safely. Motorists must slow down while maintaining a safe speed.

On Oct. 1, 2012, the law was expanded to include utility vehicles that are on the side of the road performing their duties. The utility vehicles are required to have a flashing amber-colored light. Failure to comply with the move over law will result in a mandatory fine of \$250.00 plus court costs.

For more information on the Move Over law, contact First Sergeant Jeff Gordon at 919-825-2733 or email at Jeff.Gordon@ncdps.gov.

To observe an actual video involving a Trooper who was struck, go to the following link: <https://www.ncdps.gov/Index2.cfm?a=000003,000014,000766,000781,001232>.



Union County
Volunteer Association

Tree Seedling & Fruit Plant Sale

Saturday, February 16, 2013

9:00 am to 12:00 pm

Union County Agricultural Center
3230 Presson Road Monroe, NC 28110
(Off of 74 next to Brooks Tractor)

BARE ROOT TREES NATIVE / ORNAMENTAL	
Persimmon <i>Oxydendrum arboreum</i>	
River Birch <i>Betula nigra</i>	
Flowering Dogwood <i>Cornus florida</i> White	
Bald Cypress ** <i>Taxodium distichum</i>	
Redbud <i>Cercis canadensis</i>	
Southern Crabapple ** <i>Malus angustifolia</i> White	
White Pine ** <i>Pinus strobus</i>	

CONTAINER TREES / SHRUBS	
Figs - 'Brown Turkey' **	\$6
Flowering Quince ** Salmon Pink flowers	\$6
Rose of Sharon **	\$3

BARE ROOT TREES APPLE & PLUM		
Apple Tree - 7/16" caliper 'Gala' Semi-Dwarf	\$11	
Apple Tree - 7/16" caliper 'Fuji' Semi-Dwarf	\$11	
Apple Tree - 7/16" caliper 'Yellow Delicious' S/D **	\$11	
Apple Tree - 7/16" caliper 'Arkansas Black' Standard	\$11	
Apple Tree - 7/16" caliper 'Stayman' Standard **	\$11	
Plum Tree - 24-30" 'Blue Damson' Halford **	\$10	
Plum Tree - 24-30" 'Methley' Halford **	\$10	

No Tree/Plant more than \$20

Pre Order Blueberries !
\$20 each

RAIN BARRELS
60 gal & 80 gal

Rain or Shine !

CONTAINER TREES PEACH		
Peach Tree - 24-30" 'Intrepid' Halford	\$8	
Peach Tree - 24-30" 'Nectar' - white flesh Halford	\$8	
Peach Tree - 24-30" 'China Pearl' - white flesh Hal	\$8	
Peach Tree - 24-30" 'Contender' Halford	\$8	
Peach Tree - 24-30" 'Challenger' Halford	\$8	

FRUIT & VEGETABLE BARE ROOT PLANTS	
Blackberries 'Arapaho' thornless	\$4
Blackberries 'Navaho' thornless	\$4
Raspberries 'Anne' - Golden Yellow **	\$4
Raspberries 'Dorman Red'	\$4
Muscadine Grapes 'Carlos' - 2 yr plants	\$8

**Denotes trees / plants that were not available last year!

Payments accepted in Cash or Checks only!

Order your Rain Barrel by February 11 for pickup on sale day!
Questions or orders: E-mail ucmgwebsite@gmail.com or call 704-283-3822.
Mark your calendars now for our Spring Plant Sale on Sat. April 20th!!

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