



Employee Newsletter

From the County Manager

Mark Your Calendar

8/1 Commissioners Meeting, 7:00 PM

8/3 Dept Head meeting 8:30 AM

8/17 Dept Head meeting 8:30 AM



The auditors are gearing up to review FY 10-11. As the auditors do their usual review and ask their usual questions, we are reminded of the good fiscal practices that we all should continue to exercise (or start exercising in some cases). You may think that you're not responsible for the money in your department and the audit has no effect on you, or your work has no effect on the audit; on the contrary. All of us are tied into the County's financial system in one way or another. What you do on a daily basis has a direct or indirect connection. The everyday ways that you collect, use and account for County resources is a part of our financial system and therefore subject to audit. Even doing your time sheet is related and therefore audited.

All employees should be familiar with our financial procedures. If you are not sure or need some help, ask your supervisor; supervisors that have questions should call Finance. Directors should start now taking a close look at your budgets. As a director, you are a financial manager as well as a people and project manager.

More and more departments are now working with grants from outside sources. Any departments that have grants should start administering those as soon as you get them. Follow the guidelines for the program or project, stick to your project schedule, and **SPEND THE MONEY**. As bad as we need resources in this county, we do not want to be in the business of sending back any grant money. If you have any questions about the financial procedures for setting up or administering a grant, contact JoAnne Harrell @ 641-7840.

How's Our Health?

By now, each of you who participate in our insurance plan should have received your Personal Wellness Profile. This is your personal assessment based on your online survey and health screening. Be sure to read it as it contains very helpful information to improve your health.

The overall report, which does not show any individual information, only aggregate data, shows some interesting trends across our staff. Of 463 staff on the health plan, 460 participated in the wellness program. In the overall wellness rating scale, 9.6% of you were rated as "excellent", 62.2% "doing well", 28.3% "needs improving", and no one fell into the "caution, high risk" category. Based on the report, six priorities were identified based on prevalence of risks. They are: blood pressure reduction, weight management, fitness promotion, good nutrition, osteoporosis, and sleep. If you want helpful information on these health issues or others, visit www.mycigna.com.

Interesting Fact

It is impossible to sneeze with your eyes open.

(How many of you are trying to test that right now?)

Redistricting Maps Available for Review

The Commissioners are in the process of redrawing voting districts to reflect population shifts shown in the 2010 Census. A map showing the current and proposed districts are on our website. Comments are welcome. You can email them to publiccomment@co.edgecombe.nc.us

Health Education Tip

Derrick Haskins, Health Education Specialist

Sleep Awareness

Millions of people across America suffer from an affliction that is so common, it is rarely noticed. The affliction is sleep deprivation. In this fast-paced, high tech world, it is easy to get distracted and live off fewer hours of rest. Is it healthy, though? The short answer is no. Sleep deprivation has been linked to increased health problems, weight gain, unintentionally falling asleep, and, in several cases, even death.

Some common symptoms of sleep deprivation are: tiredness, irritability, trouble concentrating, short term memory loss, stress, depression.

The groups that are most at risk are teenagers and young adults. Many older adults do suffer from sleep deprivation as well, though. Sleep deprivation is especially dangerous when a person is behind the wheel. It is reported that as many as 100,000 accidents and 1,500 deaths are caused by, or directly related to, sleep deprivation. Getting adequate amounts of sleep is very important. Here are some quick tips if you're having trouble getting enough sleep at night:

- 1) **Make Time for Sleep-** Even if you're not used to going to bed that early, make a point of being in bed at a certain time (with the tv off). Eventually, your body will get used to it and you will fall asleep faster. Remember 7-9 hours of sleep is the recommended amount for most adults.
- 2) **Take a Nap-** Napping is one of the best ways to recharge if you are sleep deprived during the day. Take a power nap. Set aside 20 minutes during your lunch break to take a nap.
- 3) **Watch for Uppers-** Stay away from caffeine. Caffeine late at night can affect your brain chemistry and disrupt sleep patterns. Some people also find that exercising late at night will keep them up. A good rule of thumb is to find relaxing



Snaaaaaake!!!

Snakes like warm weather, so this time of year they are very active. In the US, about 8,000 people are bit by venomous snakes every year, but only about 15 of them die from it. It's reported that more people die from wasp and bee stings than snake bites.

Sssssome Sssssuggestionsssss!

Leave snakes alone!; Stay out of tall grass; Keep hands & feet out of areas you can't see; If you encounter one, back away; if you have to walk around it, give it at least 6 feet; they can strike about half their length.



Employee News

Congratulations to Allen Peacock, Building Inspector in the Planning Department. Allen passed his NC Code Officials plumbing exam on July 15th. He is now certified as a Plumbing Inspector Level III which is quite an accomplishment.

If you know a senior citizen who could use a fan to help them beat the summer heat, contact the Office on Aging at 641-5831. The person must be at least 60, and some other qualifying factors may apply.

Congratulations to Marva Scott and the DSS staff for successfully receiving a second round of Job Boost funding. Through this program, a qualified candidate can find employment for up to 20 weeks, and the employer is reimbursed up to 75% of wages. Any departments that would like to consider some candidates for employment should call Kathleen Simmons, Coordinator, at 985-5030.

Making the Most of Your Meeting

All of us have to spend time in meetings, some almost on a daily basis. Because they become so routine, we sometimes begin to dread them and often don't make an attempt to get the most out of them. If we have to be in meetings, we might as well make it worth our time.

To make the most of your meeting, it is important to put some thought into what the meeting is supposed to accomplish, who should attend, why you are there, and what should be discussed.

Having decided on the basics, equally important is how the meeting is conducted. If you are running the meeting, ensure that you arrive in plenty of time. Greet everyone warmly and ensure that everyone is comfortable and able to pay attention without distractions.

Use your opening remarks to set the tone of the meeting, establish the purpose and then review the agenda. Give a short overview of each topic and what you need to achieve. For example, for the first item on the agenda, does a decision have to be taken or are you just looking to brainstorm?

During the meeting, it is important to facilitate the discussion. You should put much effort in staying on topic; a free-for-all will leave you with nothing accomplished. Give everyone ample opportunity to contribute and try to keep the strongest voice from dominating the entire conversation. Encourage open discussion and discourage disruptive or negative comments.

At the end of the meeting, summarize the topics discussed, actions agreed and those responsible. Notes or minutes are very helpful as a reminder to everyone of what happened during the meeting and what is meant to be done now, by whom and by what date. It is good practice to circulate those as soon as possible after the meeting has taken place.

If you are not running the meeting, make a conscious effort to contribute to the discussion as well as to receive the information you intend to get from the meeting. What you give to and gain from the meeting is your responsibility.

Remember, it is no longer necessary to wait for everyone to be in the same location to have a meeting. Teleconferencing and web-conferencing have become more affordable or even free. Now go and make the most of those meetings

Excerpt from Meeting.org



How to Beat the Heat

Know the Signs of a Heat Stroke

Already this summer, we have seen the record broken for the most consecutive days above 100. That extreme heat can be dangerous. Exposure to that extreme heat will cause your core body temperature to rise, which over time can lead to heat exhaustion (weakness, dizziness, and sometimes nausea and vomiting). If left untreated, this condition can progress to a heat stroke, which is a severe emergency. This can lead to coma, irreversible brain damage and even death.

What are the signs? Signs and symptoms of heat stroke include: coma or confusion; hot, flushed, dry skin; deep & rapid breathing; and possible seizures. If you think you or someone around you is having a heat stroke, **Call 911 immediately!**

If you feel yourself getting overheated, address it immediately. Stop whatever activity you are doing and find a place to rest; the cooler the better. Unbutton or remove clothing as you are able to allow for heat to escape. If someone around you has progressed to the point of a heat stroke, after you have dialed 911, remove as much clothing as possible, put ice on the armpits and neck area; and cover the victim with a sheet soaked with cool water.

Please be aware of the dangers of extreme heat and remember to be cautious if you have to be out in it.

✿ **Know Someone Who Needs Help Saving Their Home?** NC Housing Finance Agency now has the NC Foreclosure Prevention Fund. It helps homeowners who are struggling to pay their mortgage due to job loss or other temporary financial hardship. For more information call 1-888-623-8631 or visit

www.NCForeclosurePrevention.gov!