

Downtown Herald

November 2009

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The Corner Chair

Dear Friends,

Are We Having Fun Yet?!!!!

A lot of good things are happening in our community if you haven't noticed or been paying attention. The County received \$326K dollars from the State Parks and Recreation Trust Fund for improvements to be made to Moratoc Park. The Town is using National Recreational Trails grant funds to build the River Landing elevated camping platform adjacent to the Boardwalk. The Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center added a new Dressage Championship Show for November. Domtar announced a 70 million dollar expansion of their Martin County paper mill plant that will help secure jobs into the future. Heather Harden did a super job this year with the "In the Park" Series held at Barnes Plaza. Fall Y'all was a huge success. NC Meat Packing is up and running making Gyro meat and shipping their product to Florida, California, New York and Chicago. They have over 16 employees now. This is just a sampling of some of the great things that are occurring in our community.

Williamston was awarded Certification as a Sustainable Community by Audubon International on October 14th. Williamston is the first town or city in North Carolina to be awarded this certification and the second in the U.S.. The Sustainable Community designation was an effort coordinated by Dr. Tom Ward. While he is very modest about his work on the project it was a monumental task that he accomplished for our community. As Dr. Ward will tell you sustainability has been around Williamston and Martin County for a long time. No-till farming, protecting the river, protecting our wildlife, developing opportunities for business development, improving our quality of life, working to improve the educational opportunities for our children, protecting our heritage, and the list can go on.

One effort that is recognized in the Sustainable Communities program is the Martin County Arts Council. They have provided so many opportunities for the community through their grassroots efforts that it is almost unbelievable. Art Shows, artistic samplers, music events, dance classes, art classes and more. Most recently they received grant funds of \$10,000 that will bring the NC Dance Theater here to conduct a five day Art in Education residency for over 400 students in 3-5th grades at EJ Hayes Elementary School. They also secured grant funds to host the NC Symphony's Children's

See Corner Chair page 2.....

Small Town Main Street News

Economic Restructuring : With the national economy on the mend we have seen increased interest in business growth and expansion in Williamston. We have several potential entrepreneurs that are considering opening businesses downtown. Each one has a unique and beneficial idea that could be successful within our community.

The Design sub-committee: The Triangle Project is well under way in the Fund Raising phase. We plan to raise \$45,000 for this project. So far we have collected almost \$12,000 !!! The dedication bricks are \$50 each and can be purchased by contacting Phillip Martin at Town Hall for order forms and questions. This will make a great Christmas present.

Promotions: The Promotions committee is working on a "In the Park" Christmas Special for Thursday December 10th.

REMINDER: Tuesday November 10th @ 7 am

Downtown Board meeting at

Moratoc Restaurant (former Holiday Inn)

If you have questions about these or other projects contact Brent Kanipe @ 792-5142



Photo courtesy of Edwin Modlin

Mayor Tommy Roberson accepts **Audubon International Certified Sustainable Community Award** from Suzi Zakowski, Manager of Audubon's Sustainable Communities Program at the October 14th Award Ceremony. Dr. Tom Ward, Williamston Sustainability Coordinator and Commissioners Jerry Knox, Al Chesson and J.J. Horton join in the presentation. The event was held at the Senator Bob Martin Meeting Center with over 100 folks in attendance.

Williamston Downtown, Inc.,

November 10, 2009

7 am @ Moratoc

Restaurant

(former Holiday Inn)

Call to order	7:00 am
Invocation	7:01
Minutes of last meeting	7:05
Financial report	7:10
Committee Reports	7:15
Economic	
Design Sub-comm.	
Promotions	
Arts Council	7:30
Friends of Courthouse	7:35
E.J. Hayes Alumni Assoc.	7:40
Tourism	7:45
Discussion	7:50
Adjourn	8:00 am

Seen on Main Drag.. J.L. Peaks supervising drive-thru window installation, Dallas Coltraine on the way to Post Office, Bill Smith riding bicycle,

Williamston Downtown, Inc. Chairperson: Wilbur Edwards Vice Chair: A. R. Chesson Secretary: Jean Stevens Treasurer: John Spilman Newsletter Editor: Brent Kanipe

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Corner Chair Continued..... Concert to all 3rd—5th graders in Martin County. We are very fortunate to have people with the energy and dedication to the arts in our community that are willing to share their time and talents to improve our quality of life.

Back to my original question... Are we having fun yet? I think in many ways we are having a great deal of fun. Many of us are having fun putting some of these things together and working with other individuals, organizations and agencies to make them become reality. The leaders of our community are enjoying the benefits of cooperation between agencies and organizations as they lead us into the future. Most importantly, residents and visitors are the beneficiaries of all these projects, programs and activities.

If you want to truly enjoy these things and have some fun then become involved in the positive efforts to move our town forward. Help us to become more sustainable. Join Williamston Downtown, Martin County Arts Council, Rotary Club, Lions Club, or another organization of your choosing. Volunteer at the Library, participate in your child's school PTO, walk in the Crop Walk or support another cause that makes a difference. **You can make a difference.**

Brent

This month Williamston Downtown will meet for breakfast at the Moratoc Restaurant at 7 am. We encourage everyone to attend and bring a friend. We will discuss Christmas promotions and membership drive. See you on Tuesday at 7 am.

Upcoming Events

- Nov. 5th 7pm**
Town-wide Public Meeting to provide input on the Town's Long Range Comprehensive Plan @ Martin Memorial Library.
 - Nov. 7th 9 am—until**
Mid-Atlantic Fall National Garden Tractor Pull @ Bob Martin Center-East Building. Admission Nov 7th 7-9:30 PM
 - Arts Music Night @ Martin County Arts Council, Washington St., Williamston.**
 - Nov. 7-8th**
Southern Horse Festival @ Bob Martin Ag Center.
 - Nov 7 & 8th 9am each day**
23rd Annual Fort Branch Battle Re-enactment @ Fort Branch in Hamilton.
 - Nov 13—15th Begins at 12 PM on Friday**
28th Annual Roanoke Arts and Craft Guild Fair @ Martin County Farmers Market Hwy 64 Alt. West, Williamston.
 - Nov 14 & 15th**
Harvest Moon Dressage & NCDCTA Championships @ Bob Martin Ag Center.
 - Nov 20 & 21st**
NC Barrel Bonanza @ Bob Martin Center.
 - Dec 5th 10 AM**
Martin County Farm Heritage Day Fair @ Sen. Bob Martin Ag Center.
- Check out these and other events @ www.visitmartincounty.com or www.martincountync.com*



Construction has begun on the River Landing camping platform. This will be available for users of the Roanoke River Paddle Trail.