

Downtown Herald

March 2010

Volume 9 Issue 9 *and Beyond*

The Corner Chair

How is the economy affecting your services?

With the current state of our economy we are hearing this question very frequently. There is plenty of news concerning the federal and our state economy but it is a little more difficult to get news about our local economy. For most of us the status of our local economy is the most important since most of our business is local. With this report, we will try to provide a brief update to this question.

Without doubt, no matter what the statistics say, if your business is experiencing hard times the economy is bad. For many, as we check around, business remains good in spite of the economy. It has been said that if a person is out of a job then in that person's eyes, we are in a recession. So the joblessness rate is the first indicator I will mention in this article. The December unemployment numbers show Martin County's unemployment rate at 10.8%. The Statewide average for December was 10.9%. A historical review of Martin County unemployment rates shows that our rise in unemployment rate is not as steep as many other counties or the state. So, even though our unemployment rate is over 10%, in relation to other areas we have not been affected as greatly as other areas within the state. The County with the highest unemployment rate in December was Graham County at 17.6%. The fact that our unemployment rate mirrors the State average demonstrates that we are holding our own in this category. However, this does not answer the question about how this has affected the services the town provides to businesses and its citizens.

The Town of Williamston like all other municipalities is experiencing very tight revenues. Our projected sales tax receipts show that if all else remains the same, sales tax revenues for the town will come in more than \$200,000 under budget. This equates to about 5% of our total anticipated revenues for the General Fund. On the other hand, our property tax collections are a little ahead of schedule. Property tax is the Town's other primary revenue source for the General Fund. Based on this forecast of lower than

Corner Chair continued page 2

Small Town Main Street News

Economic Restructuring is working to improve advertising of the available vacant buildings. There are limited vacancies within the downtown district at this time and a couple of those spaces will require renovations to occupy. There are building reuse grant programs available for businesses that utilize those spaces. The amount of Grant Funds are based on number of new employees or jobs created. You can find out more about this by contacting Brent Kanipe at Town Hall.

Design sub-committee has reviewed several façade requests over the past couple of months. The Downtown Board recently approved a request to Martin Supply for renovations to their Main entrance façade. This month the Board will be considering a request for the NAPA building on Washington Street.

Promotions has been working on entertainment for the 2010 "In the Park" Series. They still have a couple of dates not filled and welcome your suggestions. They are also looking for sponsors for the events. Contact Phillip Martin at Town Hall 792-5142 or Heather Harden at the Library 792-7476.

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



Harvey Everett and James Peel load brush and limbs on a recent pick-up route. Public Works will adjust route schedules to be more cost efficient.

Corner Chair continued expected sales tax revenue, all departments within the Town have cut their budgets by 5%. To make these reductions we needed to identify areas within our operation that could withstand these reductions without a major impact on our ability to serve our citizens.

Even though budget reductions were needed to assure a balanced budget, we have no intention of stopping any provided services. We will continue to provide the highest quality services possible within our budget. As examples of where we feel we can cut back, we modified our spraying schedule for mosquitoes. We reviewed and amended our pick up schedule for yard waste. We have initiated a No-Idling policy for all our vehicles and equipment. Additionally, we will not upgrade certain equipment that, under normal circumstances, would be upgraded. To point to a specific instance, the Town Board recently delayed the purchase of a new ambulance. We have also put on hold some planned maintenance items as well.

Bottom-line, the Town remains fully committed to providing quality services to our town and we do not anticipate cessation of any provided services. We remain committed to providing high visibility police patrol to all areas of town including all our businesses. We will continue to offer incentives to businesses such as façade grants and grant assistance. Although the current state of our economy continues to create challenges for all of us, the Town of Williamston is working harder and trying to work smarter with a goal in mind to not allow the economy to significantly affect the services provided to and expected by our businesses and citizens.

Eric Pearson, Town Administrator

Williamston Downtown

presents the

14th Annual NC Country Stampede

September 24 and 25th Main Street Williamston

Vendor Applications and Sponsor packages will be available by March 15th. You may get one by visiting the website : carolinacountrystampede.com or town-ofwilliamston.com and click on Stampede icon. A number of opportunities exist for sponsorships at all monetary levels. Be a Sponsor and help support the largest festival event of year.

Classifieds

For Sale. 1400 +/- sq. ft. office space. Has walk-in safe. Suitable for professional office or small retail. Middle of downtown close to Post Office and other government offices. Needs renovating. Make bid offer to Town of Williamston. Excellent renovation Grant Program available. Contact Brent Kanipe Ph. 252-792-5142.

For Sale or Lease. Two story Building with built in display cabinets, great store front display approximately 2500 sq. ft. Centrally located in downtown on Main Street. 252-792-5041 Bagley's.

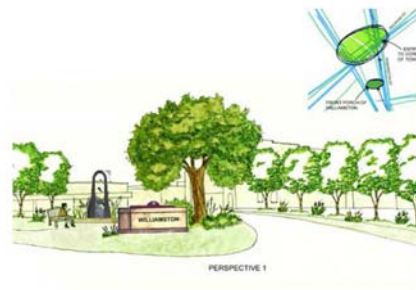
For Lease. Biz Gallery Shoppes. Retail space from 1500 to 5000 sq. ft. Direct access to US 17 North 4 lane highway. On major highway with high traffic count. \$16 per ft. Don Vasnani 252-792-6692.

For Sale. 3 Story Historic Building Main St. 1st floor divided into 2 retail spaces. 2nd and 3rd floor were apartments. Building needs total renovation. Building is vacant and has 20,900 + sq. ft. total. Property qualifies for Historic Tax Credits, Façade grant program along with other financing and incentive programs. Structurally sound. United Country Roanoke Realty Team 252-799-3151.

For Lease. Retail space from 900 to 70,000 sq. ft. Roanoke Landing Shopping Center, US 17 north. Adjacent to Belks, Wendy's, and McDonald's. Easy access and ample parking. Centro Properties, Pam Harrell, 704-759-7343.

Triangle Improvement Project

Williamston Downtown is sponsoring the Triangle Improvement Project with a fund raising campaign. The project will include a complete redesign of the area to make it more pedestrian friendly and to highlight an important component of our community's culture. The design will allow for easier viewing of the fountain, provide benches for a short rest or relaxation along with improved landscaping and parking spaces.



The other element of the Triangle will be a sculpture that represents the Arts within our community. The arts represented are music, crafts, drama, and artists. The sculpture is part of an overarching plan to

eventually have an urban trail for Williamston that represents the various components of our community.

The park downtown at Barnes Plaza is one component and displays the Town's galloping horse logo within the Plaza and represents the equestrian aspect **Continued Page 3....**

Community Policing

Williamston, NC

Unfortunately the possibility of becoming a victim of crime is something to which we all are subjected. To reduce this risk, we should take measures to insure that we minimize our exposure to dangerous situations as much as possible. The Police Department subscribes to a Community Policing philosophy which can help to reduce our exposure to crime. Community Policing is the formulation of a problem solving partnership between the Police Department and the businesses and citizens that it serves. In order for this partnership to be successful, all parties must be represented in the formulation of this team.

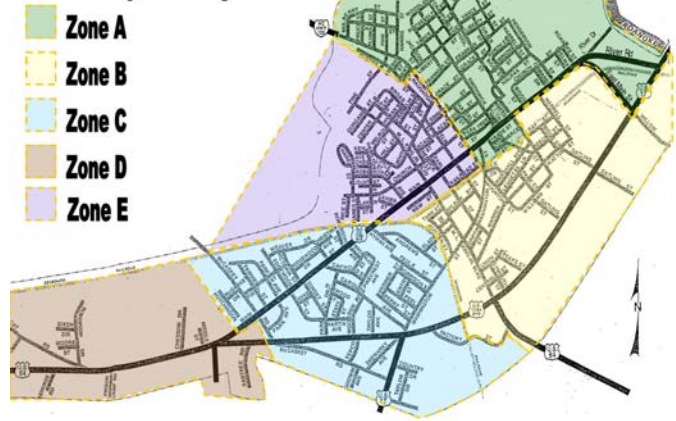


Williamston Police through the Community

Policing effort engage in a variety of community projects and programs to improve community relations and to improve safety within the Town. Most of those programs are youth oriented and include events such as Kids Days shown in the photo above. The Department also holds a bicycle safety event each year near the end of the school to instruct kids in

proper riding and traffic hazards and to remind the adults to be aware of kids since school is out. The Town of Williamston has an established Community Watch program to meet this need. The Town is divided into sections with each section forming a watch group. Police officers are assigned to each section and together with the businesses and citizens they

Community Policing Zones



work to identify and correct problems and concerns within their section. All sections combined work collaboratively to solve broader issues which may affect the Town as a whole.

Through the Community Watch program, services are offered by the Police Department **Continued on page 4.....**

Triangle project cont.... and importance of the Senator Bob Martin Eastern Agricultural Center to our community. The arts will be represented at the Triangle fountain area and ties in nicely with the Martin County Arts Council building nearby. We have more components to highlight such as farming, environmental, river, and historical importance of our community.

Public opportunities in Fund Raising for the Triangle project include the use of dedication bricks. The bricks can be purchased by individuals or businesses to honor, memorialize or permanently etch a loved one, your business, recognize a friend or family member or organization in the community into the project site. Corporate investments can be made in a larger purchase of benches or landscaping beds.

To get a brick order form or to find out more about the project contact Phillip Martin at Town Hall 252-792-5142. Bricks are fifty (\$50) dollars each and will be limited to approximately 400 total brick sales. Once they are sold there will not be another opportunity to get this permanent marking at the triangle.



**Williamston Downtown, Inc.
Board Meeting**

**March 9th 7 am
@ Moratoc Restaurant
W. Blvd**

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
Martin Community College	7:45
Tourism	7:50
Discussion	7:55
Adjourn	8:00 am

Seen on Main Drag... Elton Hardy entering Town Hall, Crystal Fletcher entering Clarks Downtown, Cooper Peel visiting town and walking

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

Community Policing cont.... for businesses and citizens. First, through the neighbor helping neighbor outlook generated through interest in Community Watch, levels of crime deterrence and solvability are raised. Another service offered is security surveys. Security surveys are a free service where officers will come to your business or residence, evaluate your level of security and offer suggestions to improve your security measures. Officers also regularly conduct business checks and residence checks for those who may be traveling or are otherwise away from home. Lastly, officers can help with the mediation of problems or issues that are specific to a particular business or citizen.

If you would like to receive more information about a service that is offered or become more involved in the Community Watch program, please contact Sergeant Louis Banks at 252-792-2124. A list of the officers assigned to each Community Watch group is listed below. Feel free to contact the officer for your zone for more information or to request a service.

- Zone A: Ptl. M. Pope
 Ptl. G. Bullock
- Zone B: Ptl. K. Owens
 Ptl. B. Daniel
- Zone C: Ptl. O. Lopes
 Ptl. C. Garrett
- Zone D: Ptl. A. Smith
 Cpl. B. McKinney
- Zone E: Ptl. D. Lucido
 Ptl. D. Musselwhite

Article by Capt. Travis Cowan

Upcoming Events

March 6
"Music Night" presented by Martin County Arts Council @ Arts Center on Washington St.
March 6 & 7th
Eastern Hunter Assn. Horse Show @ Bob Martin Center
March 12 & 13th
NC Barrel Bonanza @ Bob Martin Center
March 18, 19, & 20th
Martin County Players present the musical, "State Fair" at Martin County Auditorium
March 19—21st
Old Dominion Arabian Horse Show @ Bob Martin Center
March 26-28th
March Magic Dressage Horse Show @ Bob Martin Center
March 26-28 and 31-April 4th
31st Annual Message of Easter drama @ Piney Grove Baptist Church
April 2&3rd
NE District 4-H Horsemanship Clinic and Open Horse Show @ Bob Martin Center

Check out these and other events @
www.visitmartincounty.com or
www.martincountync.com

Williamston Website was recently updated and many new features were added. Check it out at www.townofwilliamston.com

Williamston Downtown, Inc.
PO Box 506
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