

Hi, just a reminder that you're receiving this email because you have expressed an interest in Western Piedmont Council of Governments. Don't forget to add [jason.toney@wpcog.org](mailto:jason.toney@wpcog.org) to your address book so we'll be sure to land in your inbox!

You may [unsubscribe](#) if you no longer wish to receive our emails.



# WPCOG - Newsletter

June 2019

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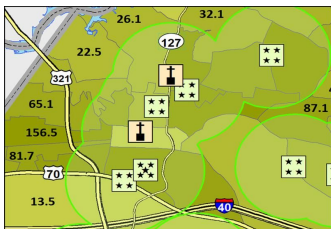
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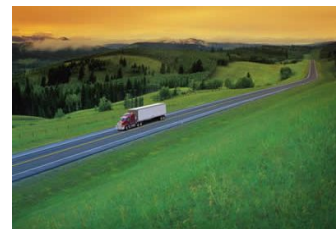
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## Community & Economic Development

### Parks and Recreation Trust Fund Program Site Visits

This month, Western RRS representative, Judy Francis, conducted site visits throughout the region to discuss park projects submitted for grant funding through the Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF). The PARTF program provides competitive grant funding for park land acquisition, development of amenities, and renovation of existing facilities. Applications are accepted annually in early May and funding decisions are typically made in late August. Local governments are eligible to apply for a maximum PARTF award of \$500,000, requiring a 50% match with local or other grant funds.

Nearly every county and municipality in the Western Piedmont region has benefited from the PARTF program over the years. In the 2018 funding round, the Town of Cahah's Mountain was awarded a grant to construct its first town park. The grant has played a critical role in projects such as Rocky Face Park in Alexander County, Shuford Recreation Center renovations in Granite Falls, Veterans' Park in Sawmills, acquisition of the 300-acre Valdese Lakeside Park along Lake Rhodhiss, and many more.

The next call for projects will be in early May 2020. It is recommended that those interested in pursuing the grant begin application discussions at least 6 months in advance. If your local government would like assistance in preparing an application or would like to receive more information about the program, please contact WPCOG Community Development Administrator, Erin Schotte, at 828-485-4240 or [erin.schotte@wpcog.org](mailto:erin.schotte@wpcog.org).

Article by Erin Schotte



Recreation Resources Service (RRS) consultant Judy Francis poses with Recreation Director Doug Knight in front of the Valdese Splash Park, which was funded in part by PARTF. RRS is contracted the NC Division of Parks and Recreation to provide administration for PARTF funded projects.

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## Community & Regional Planning

### Western NC Air & Water Quality Conference Registration



## 2019 WESTERN NC AIR & WATER QUALITY CONFERENCES

### Where

Belk Centrum Lenoir-Rhyne University  
625 7th Ave NE  
Hickory, NC 28601

### When

Water Quality Conference - Thursday, July 25, 2019  
(9AM to 3PM)  
Air Quality Conference - Friday, July 26, 2019  
(9AM to 3PM)

### Contact

Johnny Wear  
Western Piedmont Council of Governments  
828-485-4283  
john.wear@wpcog.org

Please join us for the **2019 Western NC Water Quality Conference** and the **2019 Western NC Air Quality Conference**. The conferences are held each year through a partnership between the Western Piedmont Council of Governments and the Lenoir-Rhyne University Reese Institute for the Conservation of Natural Resources. Both are free conferences and are also sponsored by the Western Piedmont Water Resources Committee (WRC), the Western Piedmont Stormwater Partnership, the Greater Hickory Metropolitan Planning Organization (GHMPO), and the Western Piedmont Air Quality Committee (WPAQC). A **continental breakfast and free lunch** is provided by the Reese Institute. **AICP credits** will be available.

### This year's Water Quality Conference topics include:

- A student project on Land Use and Algal Blooms in the Catawba River Basin
- The Benefits of Land Conservation on Water Quality from the Catawba Wateree Initiative
- An update on the Lake James Watershed Assessment from the Lake James Environmental Association
- Safe Basin Closure at Marshall Steam Station from Duke Energy
- Illicit Discharge and Stormwater from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services
- Coal Tar Sealants and their effects on Water Quality from Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services

### This year's Air Quality Conference topics include:

- A student project on a Health Impact Assessment for the I-26 expansion near Asheville
- The Greensoro Electric Bus Fleet
- Duke Energy presentation on Electric Vehicles
- An Update on North Carolina's Clean Energy Plan Development with NC DEQ
- More topics TBD

**[Register Now!](#)**

Article by Johnny Wear

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## IT/GIS Services

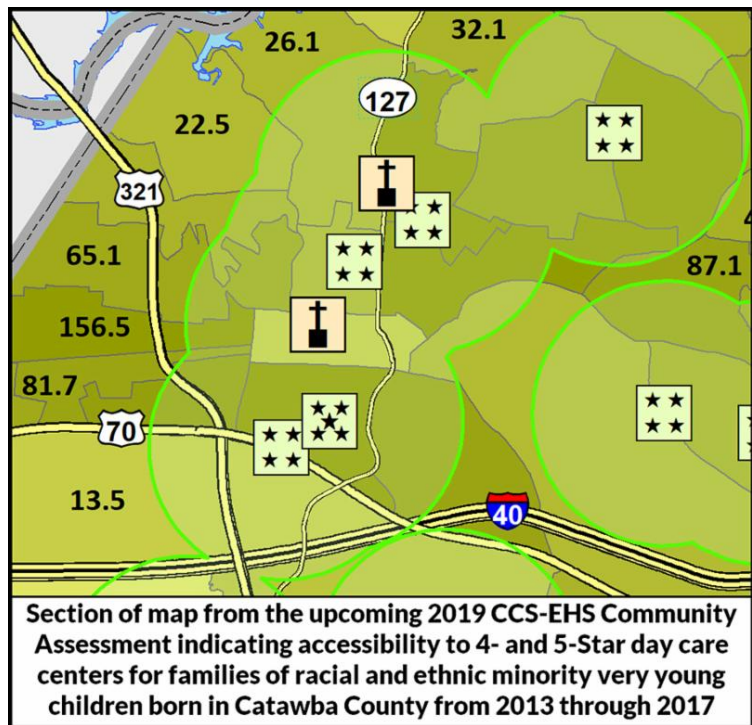
### Community Assessment for the Catawba County Schools Early Head Start Program

Caring for an infant or toddler is a challenging task for any parent, and for financially disadvantaged young mothers, it can be overwhelming. In Catawba County, many of these new families are served by the Catawba County Schools Early Head Start Program (CCS-EHS). Early Head Start is a no-cost, home-based program that provides early comprehensive child development and family support services for disadvantaged mothers-to-be and mothers with children from newborns through age two.



The federal government mandates that CCS-EHS must periodically perform a Community Assessment, which determines the status of the program's target population and the geographic areas that are most in need of services. Over the past decade, the IT/GIS and Data Center sections of WPCOG have conducted three editions of the Assessment, the results of which are used by Early Head Start as well as by the County school system and other local agencies such as the Department of Social Services and the Public Health Department.

One key component of the Assessment is GIS, and the report contains over twenty geographic datasets of various demographic, health, environmental, educational and financial factors which are relevant to disadvantaged families of very young children. The sources of these maps include five years of County birth certificates, which are provided (under strict use guidelines) by the NC State Center for Health Statistics. Other sources include the US Census, the NC Division of Public Health and the NC Department of Public Instruction. These geographic datasets allow CCS-EHS to determine trends in population sizes of various ethnicities and shifts of populations within the County as they relate to the population served by CCS-EHS.



Some examples of GIS data in the Assessment include the birth density of various racial and ethnic minorities, median household income, and the proportion of adults with a high-school education. Also included are percentages of elementary school students eligible for free/reduced lunch. Measures of access to community resources by geography are also analyzed, including access to grocery stores (aka "food deserts") as well as access to daycare services rated at four or more stars (see inset).

The Assessment concludes with a final "Need Index," which is a comprehensive map that weighs and combines all assessed factors of disadvantaged populations with very young children, and which highlights the areas of highest need throughout the County for Early Head Start services. The WPCOG IT/GIS and Data Center sections authored the

two previous Assessments in 2011 and 2014 and will be releasing the 2019 Assessment to the Catawba County Schools Early Head Start Board of Directors at their meeting on June 27.

For more information regarding the use of GIS for Early Head Start, please contact Taylor Dellinger (Data Analyst) or Todd Stroupe (GIS Technician) with WPCOG at (828) 322-9191 or via email at [taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org](mailto:taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org) or [todd.stroupe@wpcog.org](mailto:todd.stroupe@wpcog.org).

Article by Tom Bell

## Regional Housing Authority The "C" in REACH Stands for Commitment

Recently three REACH participants, who committed themselves to obtaining homeownership education, reached their goal.

Last summer Hickory Public Housing received a grant to offer homeownership education to interested tenants. The classes were taught at WPCOG and REACH tenants who had a homeownership goal were offered the option to participate. Three REACH clients completed the program.

On May 15 Hickory Public Housing and WPCOG held a joint graduation ceremony to honor those who had finished the training. A total of 12 tenants completed the program with each receiving a certificate and a gift. After the kick-off meeting in August, participants attended 1 1/2 hour classes each month where they received information on topics such as exploring the different types of mortgages, finding the right lender, and improving their credit.

Participants, family members and staff enjoyed a graduation event that included pizza and cake as well as a time to honor each participant for their hard work.

Kim Duncan, REACH coordinator, said "I'm so pleased that these three ladies completed this course. There is more to do but they have worked hard and stayed with this class for 10 months. I am so proud of each of them."



The coordinator for the class, Helen Whisnant, complimented the class for doing well. She is hopeful that another grant will become available so the class can be offered again.

Any Section 8 tenant who is Head of Household and is interested in setting goals to move forward toward self-sufficiency can call Kim Duncan, REACH coordinator, at 828.485.4299.

[Article by Kim Duncan](#)

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## Transportation

### Transportation Improvement Program Update

In January, the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) released the draft fiscal year (FY) 2020-2029 State Transportation Improvement Program (STIP). The STIP denotes the scheduling and funding of transportation projects located across the state over a minimum four-year time period as required by State and Federal laws. The FY 2020-2029 STIP is expected to be adopted by the NC Board of Transportation at their September meeting and is an update of the current FY 2018-2027 STIP. Key changes from the current STIP include six entirely new highway projects (three in Burke, two in Caldwell, and one in Catawba) and one new bicycle-pedestrian project in Morganton. These seven new projects resulted from the latest round of Prioritization. Other previously programmed projects will advance to a committed funding year with the new STIP, such as the widening of Interstate 40 between Exits 123 and 128 in Hickory, as well as the widening of NC 150 in southeast Catawba County.

The local Transportation Improvement Program (TIP) is a subset of the State of North Carolina's STIP. Both the local TIP and the STIP cover a 10-year period, with the first five years (2020-2024 in this version) referred to as the delivery program and the latter five years (2025 -2029 in this version) as the developmental program. The new local TIP is expected to be released for public comment at the Transportation Advisory Committee meeting on July 24, 2019.

[Article by Brian Horton](#)

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## Workforce Development Board

### NEXTGen Success Story, Internship + Education = Success

# SUCCESS STORY

## NEXTGen Success! Mechatronics

### Internship + Education = Success

Hussein came to the local NCWorks Career Center and met with a NEXTGen Career Advisor with aspirations to become an engineer. NEXTGen Career Advisors assisted Hussein with enrolling into the Mechatronics Fundamentals training at Catawba Valley Community College (CVCC). With the help of Sherrill Furniture Companies we were able to connect Hussein with some valuable experience working alongside engineers and the maintenance teams at one of their facilities, with pay! Now, Hussein is pursuing his Associates in Engineering through CVCC with his NEXTGen scholarship package! Follow us on Facebook to see how other students are climbing their career ladders with NCWorks NEXGen program!!



Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board  
1880 2nd Ave NW | Hickory, NC 28601 | 828.322.9191 | [www.westernpiedmontworks.org](http://www.westernpiedmontworks.org)

Article by Wendy Johnson

## Area Agency on Aging World Elder Abuse Awareness Day

For the last thirteen years, World Elder Abuse Awareness Day has continued to bring awareness to the issue of elder abuse, promote awareness of different types of abuse, and educate the community on ways it can help put an end to elder abuse. Elder Abuse Awareness Day also aims to provide individuals with the tools and courage to report an incident if they see one. In North Carolina alone reports of elder abuse have



increased 96% in the last 10 years. The National Centers for Elder Abuse reports that one in ten seniors may experience elder abuse but only one in 23 incidents are reported. Most people assume this will never happen to them or someone they love. But the facts are, elder abuse is so under-reported many do not realize it may already be happening to someone they love.

Elder abuse can come in many forms that can often be hard to recognize, such as physical abuse, sexual abuse, psychological abuse, financial abuse, neglect, verbal abuse and threats, and abandonment. The abuse can come from a stranger, spouse, family member, caregiver, or friend. Most often, the abuser is someone the victim knows. Many times the individual being abused may not be able to verbalize the abuse, so it is up to others to notice the signs of abuse and to report immediately. It is crucial that we are all aware of those who are at risk, including individuals with dementia, women, and "older" elders.

If you suspect that you or someone you know is being abused, report it. If it is a life-threatening situation, call 911 immediately. Everyone has a responsibility to report abuse if they suspect it is happening. To report elder abuse contact the Department of Social Services, Adult Protective Services and/or local law enforcement. If you suspect abuse in a nursing facility, please contact your Regional Ombudsman or the Department of Health Service Regulations in North Carolina. There are also, many resources within the Area Agency on Aging that can help reduce an older adult's risk of being abused. To find out about these and other resources in your community visit our webpage at [www.wpcog.org](http://www.wpcog.org).

On June 14, 2019, we asked the community to come together to bring awareness to elder abuse by WEARING PURPLE.



To find out more information about World Elder Abuse Day, please visit: <http://eldermistreatment.usc.edu/weaad-home/about/>

Article by Christina Franklin



# Recycle Right NC Campaign Summary



A 10-week statewide, anti-contamination campaign for local governments to execute to educate the public on how to recycle right.



## The Problem

Local governments across the state are seeking solutions to recycling program challenges, including:

- Rising contamination costs being passed from MRFs to local governments;
- Bad press around recycling;
- Limited resources available to counteract the negative messaging;
- A need to educate elected officials, decision makers, the press and public about the current challenges facing recycling;
- Misinformed residents that aren't sure what is and is not recyclable; and
- Confusing guidelines, messaging and public education which make it harder for residents to **recycle right**.



## The Solution: decreasing contamination by participating in a unified statewide recycling education campaign

This fall, DEACS will launch a 10-week statewide, anti-contamination campaign culminating on America Recycles Day. Your **participation** in public **education** through **unification** with your MRFshed will help North Carolina take back recycling. The campaign will include:

- MRFshed-specific accepted materials list, previously vetted and approved by the MRF, to post on your website.
- Sample press releases to counter the alarmist recycling headlines.
- Brochures, inserts and postcards that can be customized or married with your current materials and direct mailed to residents.
- Handouts (Get Cart Smart, Know Your No's, Defending Recycling, Recycling Talking Points), a print ad and other educational materials for you to distribute.
- A social media toolkit with 30 posts to combat contamination.
- An execution strategy that will only require 30 minutes or less per week for 10 weeks. The campaign will begin on September 9<sup>th</sup> and culminate on America Recycles Day, November 15<sup>th</sup>. You can choose to participate in any or all of the strategies. At the campaign's conclusion, a follow up toolkit will be distributed to give you next steps to fight contamination.





## What YOU Can Do

- **Take the Pledge** — Let us know that you will be participating!
- **MRFshed Signage** — Post MRFshed accepted materials list on your webpage.
- **Retool Your Tools** — Align your brochures, inserts and postcards with the guidelines for your MRFshed. Use our templates, marry your existing materials with ours, or stick with what you have if it is already in alignment.
- **Get the Message Out About Recycle Right** — Inform the press, local officials and residents through press releases, print ads, direct mail (brochures, inserts, postcards) and social media.



## What YOU Will Get

By pledging to participate in the campaign, you will:

- Receive special social media posts and press releases to announce your participation in the campaign;
- Receive a **#RECYCLERIGHTNC** window cling and stickers for residents;
- Gain a fully developed and easy-to-execute campaign, saving you time, money and energy;
- Contribute to a larger movement to save recycling and lead the nation in recycling programming and education;
- Help your community decrease contamination;
- Satisfy residents, press, elected officials and decision-makers, who will all be armed with the **RIGHT** recycling information;
- Receive a "Next Steps" toolkit, including 100 more social media posts, a "Train-the-Trainers" presentation for recycling educators and service providers in your MRFshed, and a final sample press release to highlight best practices and what worked across the state.



The N.C. Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) is a non-regulatory division of N.C. DEQ offering technical and financial assistance to businesses, manufacturers, local governments, institutions, economic developers and residents in environmental management. For questions, call 1 877 623 6748.



## WPCOG Calendar

### June

26 - Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (2PM)

27 - Workforce Development Board Meeting (8:30AM)

### July

22 - Region E Aging Providers (2-4PM)

24 - Joint Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) & Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) (2PM)

### August

12 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee (RAAC) (12-2PM)

23 - WPCOG Policy Board Meeting (6pm) - Newton

25 - Water Quality Conference at Belk Centrum (LRU) (9AM)

26 - Air Quality Conference at Belk Centrum (LRU) (9AM)

Stay Connected



1880 2nd Ave NW · Hickory, NC 28601 · 828.322.9191

[www.wpcog.org](http://www.wpcog.org)