

mmg

ROCKY MOUNT

M A G A Z I N E 8th EDITION 2019

INSIDE

Finding your way around Rocky Mount

page 11

Mid-Year Review page 14



TABLE OF CONTENTS

| | |
|--|----|
| Mayor's Message | 3 |
| The Rocky Mount City Council | 4 |
| Meet the city of Rocky Mount's leadership team | 5 |
| Budget | |
| Budget profile and Cost of public services | 6 |
| Public services cost charts | 7 |
| Revisiting 2019 in the Twin Counties | 8 |
| Public Works | |
| Finding your way around Rocky Mount | 11 |
| Police | |
| Police Chief George Robinson | 12 |
| IBIS | 12 |
| Public Service | |
| T.L. Drewery and Laurie Middleswarth earn Officer of the Year designations | 13 |
| Mid Year Review | 14 |
| Fire | |
| Fire Chief Corey Mercer | 16 |
| Fire Department incorporate ballistic vests on fire apparatus | 16 |
| Water Resources | |
| Amanda James promoted to Water Resources Superintendent | 17 |
| Downtown | |
| Accelerated Facade Improvement Grant Program to give downtown buildings a facelift | 18 |
| Human Relations | |
| Building Trust with the Hispanic Community | 19 |
| Parks and Recreation | |
| Black Light Project | 20 |
| Holly Street Playground and Boat Ramp | 21 |
| NC Science Museums Grant | 22 |
| Celebrating South Rocky Mount | 22 |
| Energy Resources | |
| City of Rocky Mount completes conversion of street and area lights to LED | 23 |
| Smart Energy Award | 23 |
| Calendar of Events | 24 |
| Stay Connected | 26 |
| Frequently dialed numbers | 27 |



Published by the City Manager's Office for all Rocky Mount Public Utilities customers.

EDITOR

Doprophy Brown Smith,
Communications, Marketing and Public Realties Consultant

LEAD PHOTOGRAPHER

Mark Adcox

CONTRIBUTING PHOTOGRAPHERS

Robin Cox
Ron Sowers

EDITORIAL & PRODUCTION ASSISTANCE

Jessie Nunery

WRITERS

Amy Blanton
Robin Cox
Kenneth Hunter
Tameka Kenan-Norman
Jessie Nunery

GRAPHIC DESIGN

Bob Unrue, Five Oaks Design

MAYOR

Sandy Roberson

MAYOR PRO TEM

Chris Carroll Miller

COUNCILMEMBERS

Reuben C. Blackwell, IV
W.B. Bullock
Lige Daughtridge
Richard Joyner
Andre Knight
Chris Carroll Miller
T. J. Walker

CITY MANAGER

Rochelle D. Small-Toney

CITY CLERK

Pamela O. Casey

ASSISTANT CITY MANAGERS

Elton Daniels
Natasha Hampton

This magazine is written in the Associated Press format.



A Pledge to Serve

My name is Sandy Roberson and I am honored to serve you all as mayor of Rocky Mount. I would like to first thank Mayor Combs for his many years of leadership, as well as council members Tom Rogers and Lois Watkins for their service to our city. I would also like to thank the citizens of Rocky Mount for providing me with the opportunity to help lead this city.

We have arrived at a pivotal point with changing leadership, incoming businesses, and ongoing development across the city. As mayor, my primary focus is to serve ALL residents of Rocky Mount by pursuing economic success for our region. All city residents should be provided with the tools they need to succeed. Success looks different to everyone and can be measured in many ways. However, success in Rocky Mount starts with better jobs, safer neighborhoods, and stronger schools.

As mayor, I will partner with local leaders and business owners to create innovative ideas that will stimulate economic growth and job creation. I will also work to improve workforce training programs to make sure residents get the skills they need to succeed in today's economy. Training is essential to

ensure the jobs that are created are filled with our own, qualified residents, rather than increasing the large workforce that commutes in from surrounding counties.

Quality education is a critical part of raising a new generation of successful citizens in our city. I plan to collaborate with school administrators, local education leaders,



Mayor Sandy Roberson

and classroom teachers to promote excellence in education in our schools. Beyond schools, there are issues facing students that interfere with their education, such as lack of resources and violent crime. It is necessary that students have a safe place to return to after school that keeps them well and prepared to learn. We need more collaboration with citizens, law enforcement, and all arms of local government to reduce violent crime and make sure neighborhoods are safe. As

mayor, I plan to come together with citizens across this city to build trust between law enforcement and local residents.

Rocky Mount is my home and I want the very best for our city. I look forward to working with each and every one of you to make this city a successful city for all.



C. Saunders "Sandy" Roberson Jr., mayor

Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in Political Science from Hampden-Sydney College

Profession outside of Council: Managing Partner at Healthview Capital Partners

Primary Goal: My primary focus is to serve *all* residents of Rocky Mount by pursuing economic success for our region and especially Rocky Mount. Jobs and job creation will require a city-wide focus on public education, increased public safety and blight reduction.



Andre Knight, Ward 1

Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.

Education: Bachelor of Science in Political Science from North Carolina Central University.

Profession outside of Council: Home care facility operator, Pastor of New Beginnings Temple of Faith Church of God in Christ.

Primary Goal: To speak loudly for justice and the civil rights of all people.



Reuben Blackwell IV, Ward 2

Hometown: Roxboro, N.C.

Education: Bachelor of Arts in English Literature from UNC-Chapel Hill.

Profession outside of Council: President/CEO of Rocky Mount Opportunities Industrialization Center.

Primary Goal: To increase and enhance the quality of life for the entire Rocky Mount region.



Richard Joyner, Ward 3

Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.

Education: Greenville Conley, Pitt Community, Charlotte Divinity School

Profession outside of Council: Pastor of Conetoe Chapel Missionary Baptist Church, founder of Conetoe Family Life Center, Director of Pastoral Care at Nash-UNC Health Care.

Primary Goal: Building community wealth and sustainability.



T. J. Walker, Ward 4

Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in Psychology from North Carolina Central University

Profession outside of Council: Community engagement coordinator and Assistant Pastor .

Primary Goal: To bridge generational and racial divide gaps through equality and social justice in local government.



Lige Daughtridge, Ward 5

Hometown: Rocky Mount, N.C.

Education: Bachelor of Arts degree in Urban Studies from the College of Charleston

Profession outside of Council: President of Daughtridge Sales Company a wholesale distributor of pressure and temperature products. Also, a partner in Top Dog Waste Solutions, a commercial dumpster and roll-off service.

Primary Goal: My focus is on our city's infrastructure and to improve transparency within our city government. Clarity will allow citizens to see the economic interest of city leadership and complete visibility of public information, enabling taxpayers to provide informed feedback to council and city management.



W.B. Bullock, Ward 6

Hometown: Martin County, N.C.

Education: 40-year veteran of Army/Army National Guard and Army Reserve

Profession outside of Council: Retired Insurance agent

Primary Goal: To accomplish anything, you must get along with people. I love people. I'd like to see people accomplish their personal goals.



Chris Miller, Ward 7

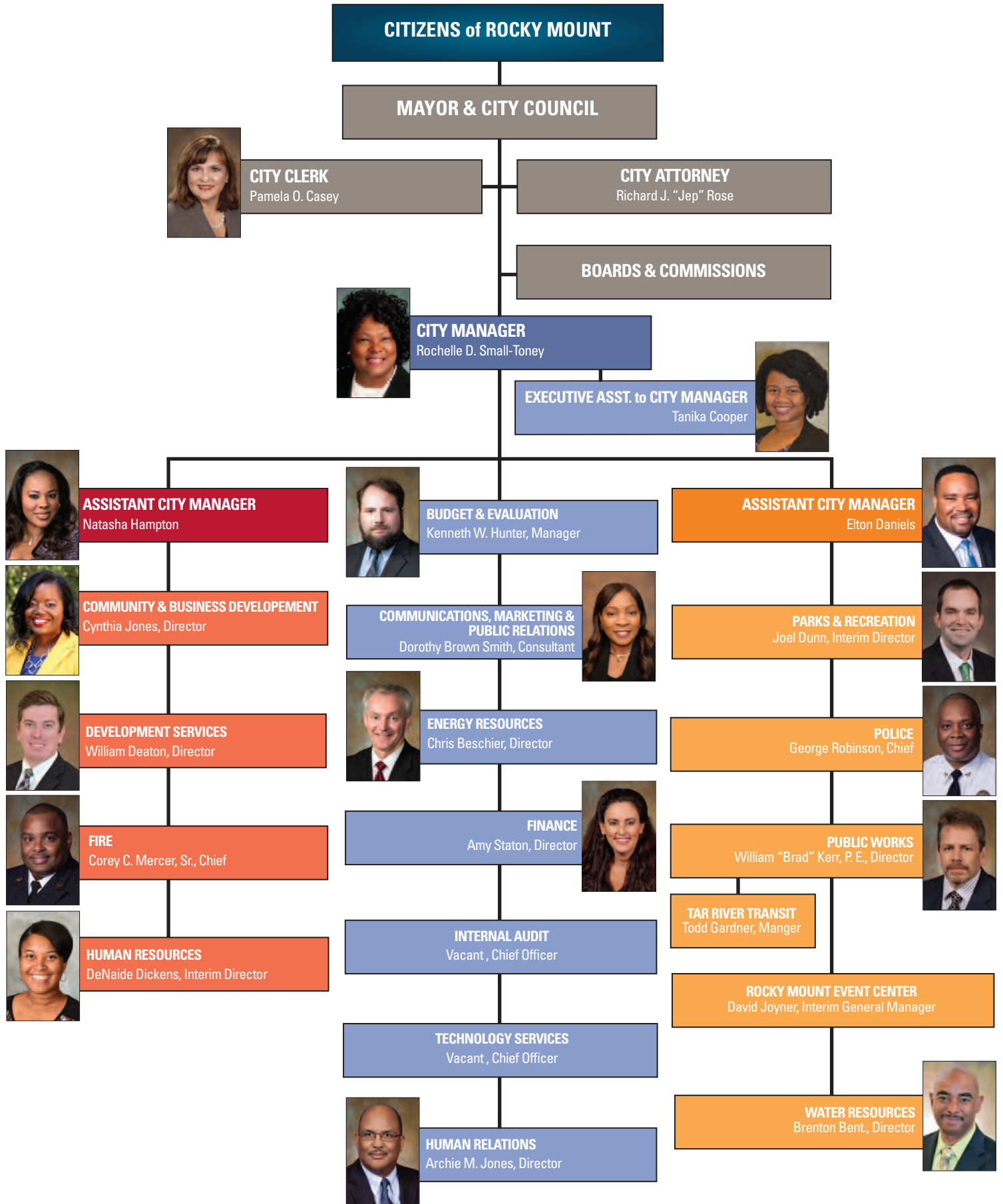
Hometown: Allentown, Georgia

Education: Bachelor's degree in Accounting from Georgia Southern; Master's Degree in Management from Georgia College, completed Phd. coursework in Finance from University of Georgia

Profession outside of Council: Accounting and Finance

Primary Goal: To work with the six other council members and staff to make our city the best it can be.

MEET THE CITY OF ROCKY MOUNT'S LEADERSHIP TEAM



COST OF PUBLIC SERVICE

By Kenneth Hunter

Your city of Rocky Mount continues to achieve the essential balance between providing excellent public services, from public safety and parks, to utilities and public infrastructure, while holding our costs at reasonable and affordable levels for our residents and business owners. Each year, we calculate, survey and evaluate our total cost of public services with other North Carolina municipalities.

Once again, our total costs for public services at the household level remain below those of our peers.

The fiscal year 2020 Cost of Public Services survey, conducted by the Office of Budget Evaluation & Development, compares Rocky Mount to 18 other North Carolina municipalities with respect to average property tax burden (City and County) and annual costs for solid waste, stormwater management, water, sewer and electricity services. This year, Rocky Mount residents enjoy average annual costs of less than \$3,860.

Rocky Mount residents experience total costs for public services 15% below the overall group average of \$4,519 and are the second-lowest cost of services within the sample group.

Most notably, Rocky Mount's annual costs for comparable services are noticeably less than Fayetteville (\$4,974), Cary (\$5,616), Apex (\$5,710), and Wilmington (\$6,344). Rocky Mount's costs are also lower than the neighboring municipalities of Nashville, Kinston, Greenville and Tarboro.

The Cost of Public Services survey creates an equal analysis of residential usage and tax burden based on following conditions:

- Application of municipal and county property tax rates on local median household value and one \$25,000 vehicle
- Electric services at 1,000 kWh/month usage
- Water and sewer services at 3,000 gallons/month usage
- Stormwater management, residential solid waste and recycling fees

“Residential affordability is an important issue for everyone,” said Budget & Evaluation Manager Kenneth Hunter. “Rocky Mount remains prepared to offer the best balance of costs, not just for housing, but also for the services our new residents expect.”

Rocky Mount's consistent position, below the average for the group, reflects dedication to the essential goals of service delivery and fiscal discipline.

“Our City remains committed daily to meet and exceed the expectations of our residents,” Hunter said. “Our staff know to keep their expenses in line with our ability to pay, minimizing the need for potential adjustments in tax and utility rates.”

BUDGET PROFILE

By Kenneth Hunter

This past June 24th, the Rocky Mount City Council adopted their annual operating budget for the 2020 fiscal year, which began July 1st. The budget provides funding for general government operations like Police, Fire and Public Works, capital infrastructure, surface transportation maintenance and improvements, and delivery of public utility services.

Funding for current general government operations were balanced within its existing base revenues. The adopted tax rate for the 2020 fiscal year is \$0.685 per \$100 taxable assessed value. For a home valued \$106,000, this represents a City tax bill of \$726.

More information on the budget, as well as analysis of resident costs for services compared to other North Carolina municipalities, is available on our website at www.rockymountnc.gov/budget.

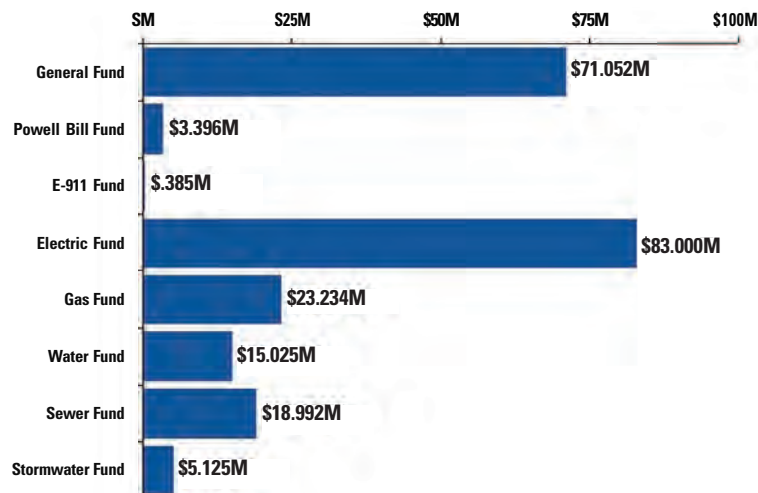
By the numbers...

| | |
|------------------------|--|
| \$220.2 Million | Total FY 2020 Adopted City Budget (6.3% increase from FY 2019) |
| \$71.1 Million | Total FY 2020 Adopted General Fund Budget (6.3% increase from FY 2019) |
| \$16.2 Million | Capital Budget for FY 2020 |
| 52 Cents | Of every \$1 of Tax Revenue is used to fund Public Safety (Police and Fire) operations |
| \$0.685 | City Property Tax Rate for FY 2020 (per \$100 Assessed Value) |

Budgets

| | |
|----------------------------------|---------------------|
| Legislative | \$2,238,900 |
| Administration | \$2,462,120 |
| Finance | \$507,350 |
| Technology | \$730,910 |
| Public Safety | \$30,474,870 |
| Public Works/Engineering | \$11,644,940 |
| Parks & Recreation | \$11,582,960 |
| Planning & Development | \$1,564,860 |
| Community & Business Development | \$1,616,610 |
| Rocky Mount Event Center | \$5,526,190 |
| General Fund Total | \$71,052,040 |

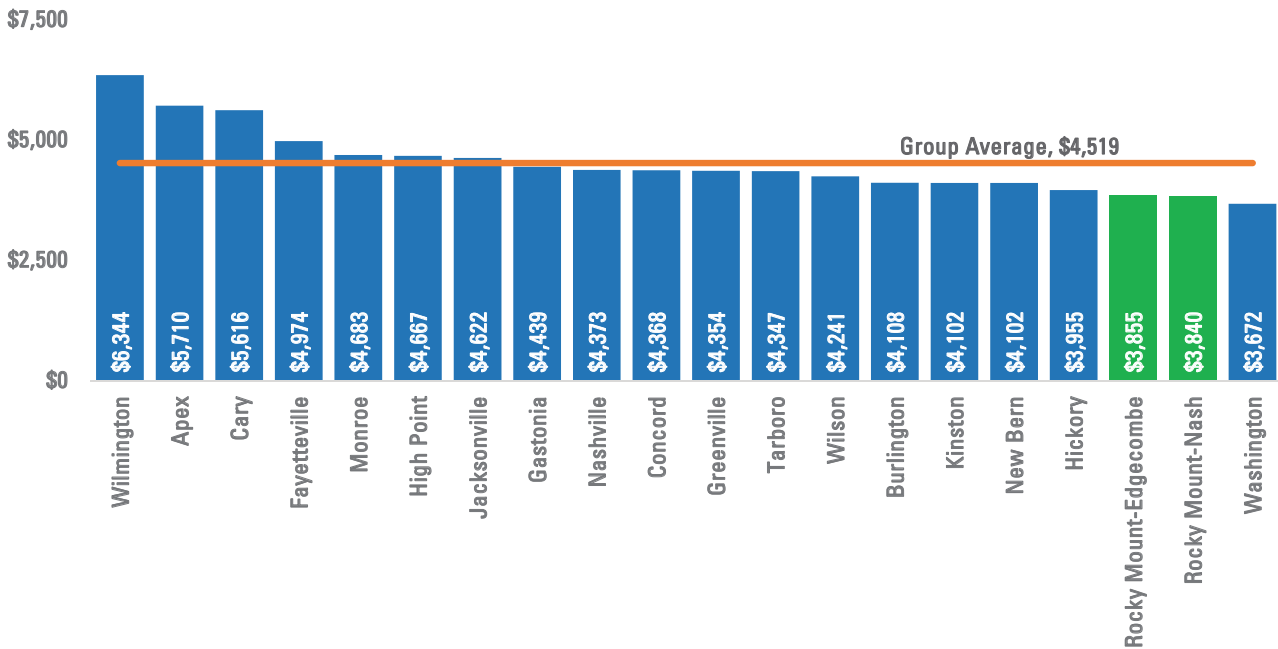
FY 2020 ADOPTED ANNUAL OPERATING BUDGET



COST OF PUBLIC SERVICES SURVEY, FY 2020

| Rank | Jurisdiction | FY 2020 City & County Taxes | Annual Electric | Annual Water & Sewer | Annual Stormwater & Solid Waste | Total Costs | Per Month |
|------|-----------------------|-----------------------------|-----------------|----------------------|---------------------------------|-------------|-----------|
| 1 | Wilmington | \$2,893.53 | \$1,364.77 | \$1,671.24 | \$414.72 | \$6,344.26 | \$528.69 |
| 2 | Apex | \$3,594.51 | \$1,293.37 | \$574.20 | \$247.44 | \$5,709.52 | \$475.79 |
| 3 | Cary | \$3,388.20 | \$1,364.77 | \$628.92 | \$234.00 | \$5,615.89 | \$467.99 |
| 4 | Fayetteville | \$1,998.20 | \$1,800.00 | \$913.92 | \$262.00 | \$4,974.12 | \$414.51 |
| 5 | Monroe | \$2,357.23 | \$1,492.92 | \$567.48 | \$265.80 | \$4,683.43 | \$390.29 |
| 6 | High Point | \$2,361.22 | \$1,432.41 | \$657.12 | \$216.00 | \$4,666.75 | \$388.90 |
| 7 | Jacksonville | \$2,403.05 | \$1,364.77 | \$614.40 | \$240.00 | \$4,622.22 | \$385.18 |
| 8 | Gastonia | \$2,281.36 | \$1,501.80 | \$515.04 | \$141.00 | \$4,439.20 | \$369.93 |
| 9 | Nashville | \$1,905.00 | \$1,364.77 | \$851.40 | \$252.00 | \$4,373.17 | \$364.43 |
| 10 | Concord | \$2,521.24 | \$1,273.51 | \$484.44 | \$88.80 | \$4,367.99 | \$364.00 |
| 11 | Greenville | \$2,165.83 | \$1,311.72 | \$620.52 | \$256.20 | \$4,354.27 | \$362.86 |
| 12 | Tarboro | \$1,891.04 | \$1,377.72 | \$778.66 | \$300.00 | \$4,347.42 | \$362.28 |
| 13 | Wilson | \$2,115.39 | \$1,349.20 | \$722.88 | \$54.00 | \$4,241.47 | \$353.46 |
| 14 | Burlington | \$1,904.68 | \$1,450.60 | \$440.64 | \$312.00 | \$4,107.92 | \$342.33 |
| 15 | Kinston | \$1,994.50 | \$907.32 | \$773.16 | \$426.96 | \$4,101.94 | \$341.83 |
| 16 | New Bern | \$1,822.68 | \$1,362.84 | \$750.00 | \$166.20 | \$4,101.72 | \$341.81 |
| 17 | Hickory | \$2,198.64 | \$1,205.23 | \$280.68 | \$270.00 | \$3,954.55 | \$329.55 |
| 18 | Rocky Mount-Edgecombe | \$1,815.33 | \$1,251.92 | \$568.80 | \$219.00 | \$3,855.05 | \$321.25 |
| 19 | Rocky Mount-Nash | \$1,800.05 | \$1,251.92 | \$568.80 | \$219.00 | \$3,839.77 | \$319.98 |
| 20 | Washington | \$1,941.20 | \$1,132.68 | \$453.96 | \$144.00 | \$3,671.83 | \$305.99 |

TOTAL COSTS OF PUBLIC SERVICES, FY 2020 ADOPTED





Juneteenth featuring Vivian Green

National recording artist Vivian Green graced the stage at the 2019 Juneteenth Community Empowerment Festival. The annual event included local vendors, a celebration of local A/B honor roll students, music, and recognition of the emancipation of slavery.



Inaugural Food Truck Invasion

More than 1,200 people flooded N.E. Main Street between Goldleaf and Thomas Street in downtown Rocky Mount for the inaugural Food Truck Invasion.

From seafood to burgers and Mexican to Cuban, cuisine to suit even the most finicky of taste buds was available. Sponsored by the city of Rocky Mount's Community and Business Development Department, the invasion included an on-site beer garden and music from Rock and Roll Hall of Fame inductee DJ Terminator X.



Celebrating South Rocky Mount

Celebrating South Rocky Mount took place in September and was a day for the community to gather at the area's newest housing development, Ravenwood Crossing, as well as hold a ribbon cutting for the updated playground outside of the South Rocky Mount Community Center. The event was attended by local and state dignitaries.



Youth Council provides items to Nash UNC Health Care’s pediatric unit

The Rocky Mount Area Youth Council sponsored the Children for Life Project by delivering activity items to the Pediatric Emergency Department of UNC Nash Hospital in July. Items donated included board games, educational books, toothbrushes, toothpaste and personally decorated cards that will serve patients from young children through high school ages.



Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down

Downtown Rocky Mount was the place to be in October during the two-day Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down. Vendors competed in annual cook-off competitions, children enjoyed play areas, a Hot Rods Cruise-In was held, and a diverse mix of live musical performances were held on the lawn of the Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station.





Parks and Recreation hosts successful Job Fairs

A pair of job fairs were held in the spring and summer by the Parks & Recreation Department. More than 500 people attended the spring job fair. Each was designed to connect jobseekers with local companies as well as share job readiness and resume preparation skills.



Rochelle Small-Toney honored by local fraternity

Rocky Mount City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney was honored with the 2019 Citizen of the Year award from the Alpha Omicron chapter of the Omega Psi Phi fraternity.

"I am humbled and honored — and certainly appreciative of the recognition," Small-Toney said of the recognition. "But I'd also like to say that I will share the acceptance of that award, certainly with this council and with this community."



Safety Awards recognition

Cherie Berry, Commissioner of the North Carolina Department of Labor, presented 17 safety awards to representatives of city departments and divisions.

Finding your way around Rocky Mount

By Robin Cox

Phase 1 of the city of Rocky Mount Wayfinding Project is well underway. This project is designed to assist both first-time visitors and residents in identifying places of interest. Signs can be found in many areas, including the Atlantic and Highway-64 interchange, Peachtree Street and Franklin Street in front of the Theatre at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences and various areas throughout downtown and along the downtown perimeter.

Currently, 22 Vehicular Wayfinding Signs and 22 Public Parking Signs have been installed at a cost of \$186,000. Municipal identification signs for Holly Street Park, City Lake, Lancaster Park and Marigold Park are expected to be installed in March at a cost of \$22,200. The final downtown locations and content development for five pedestrian kiosks are in process with an anticipated late Summer completion at a cost of \$27,000.

Phase 2 of the project will include both vehicular signage and pedestrian kiosks in the Rocky Mount Mill Village area.



A premier destination for athletes, entertainers, families and more!

www.rockymountevents.com



Police Chief George Robinson

Robinson takes Police helm

By Jessie Nunery

Rocky Mount Police Chief George Robinson has experienced the power of relationships

his entire life.

As a young man growing up in Dunn, he watched his

father, George T. Robinson, serve as a member of the city's police department as well as the Harnett County Sheriff's Office.

"I watched the respect that he received from the community, and that was paramount in my decision to enter this profession," Robinson said. "He would always say, 'Treat people the way that you want to be treated – and stay humble.'"

Robinson spent most of 2019 forming similar relationships internally and externally as the foundation for his first year as Rocky Mount Police Chief.

The 29-year veteran is proud of the work the department is doing in community engagement, including Coffee with A Cop, and most recently, the Police Athletic League.

Approximately 50 youth participated in the outreach program, which, through basketball, allowed officers and players to bond and learn about each other on a first-name basis.

Robinson said he wants to expand the league beyond sports and into hobbies youth might have.

"We have to reach out to the youth because a lot of the crime involves our younger generation," Robinson said. "We have to reach them with whatever we can as a police department, as well as with volunteers."

Robinson said the department places a high value on respect of each other and the citizens of Rocky Mount. A training entitled T.R.R.U.T.H.

(Taking Race Relations and Understanding To Heart) was offered to civilian and sworn employees of the department under the direction of the North Carolina Justice Academy.

Such trainings and built relationships can spill over into neighborhoods, where Robinson said communication and transparency has led to community assistance with solving serious crimes.

The expansion of the Cold Case Unit to a pair of part-time employees and the Homicide Unit to a handful of full-time employees is something Robinson is confident will lead to closed cases.

Housing the IBIS (Integrated Ballistic Identification System) – which has aided in leads of more than 100 cases since May 2019 – will help, too, but Robinson feels the work starts with engagement.

"We have to get out and make more contacts," Robinson said. "We do a great job, but we can always do better. We shouldn't go to a community where the residents don't know their assigned police officer by name."

Year two of Robinson's tenure will include building on community engagement, recruiting and retaining officers, and helping the Rocky Mount Police Department earn accreditation status for the first time in its history through The the Commission of Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies.

Robinson said he believes his leadership isn't just about today, but also the future.

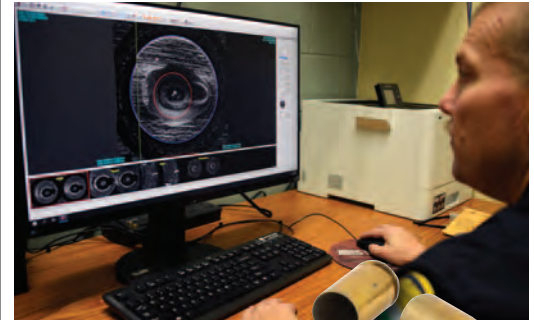
"We want to show we are using the best practices at and industry standards," Robinson said. "This not only strengthens our accountability within the agency, but also the community."

"We have to reach out to the youth because a lot of the crime involves our younger generation."

— Police Chief George Robinson

IBIS

Integrated Ballistic Identification System



The Rocky Mount Police Department has taken the lead on a new initiative to address gun violence with its ballistic identification technology.

The department is now home to IBIS (Integrated Ballistic Identification System). Neighboring agencies who shared in the cost of the system include the Wilson Police Department, Greenville Police Department, Nash County Sheriff's Office, the Edgecombe County Sheriff's Office and ATF (Alcohol Tobacco and Firearm).

IBIS is a database expected to help the Rocky Mount Police Department and surrounding agencies to link crime quicker, including those who might not have been previously connected. This evidence, which can be expressed in simple terms as a "DNA for shell casings," will also help the prosecution of crimes when cases go to trial.

Lt. Chris Ballard said that every time a bullet is fired from a gun, the firing pin creates a unique mark on the shell casing. This fine detail is relatable to fingerprints. Ballard added that if we have two shell casings – one in Rocky Mount and one in Florida – that match, agencies might tie together crimes.

"We're able to say, 'What were you doing in Florida?' Ballard said. "It doesn't make arrests for us, but it gives us investigative leads."

Ballard and Sgt. Scott Dew added that criminals never throw away guns. They might hide or store them away, but use them years later.

Dew and a pair of crime scene investigators have had more than 50 hours of extensive training to use the housed IBIS database.

He said that more than 25 percent of data entered into IBIS by the Rocky Mount Police Department has linked to other cases, including one in Raleigh where an arrest was made.

With Rocky Mount now viewed as the unofficial IBIS hub for Eastern North Carolina law enforcement agencies, Dew said that cooperation is filtering down to smaller-sized towns including Nashville and Spring Hope.

"We're helping them get things done that might not have been done before," Dew said.

Previously, the Rocky Mount Police Department utilized an IBIS system in Fayetteville. Now, the turnaround time is expected to be advantageous for the department and its partners as they work to keep the city and surrounding regions safer.

"We are committed to working with all local law enforcement agencies in this region to nourish a safer community and reduce violent crime," Rocky Mount Police Chief George Robinson said. "This technology will generate real time leads to gun crimes and strengthen prosecution of firearm offenders in this community."

T.L. Drewery and Laurie Middleswarth earn Officer of the Year designations

By Jessie Nunery



Passion for their professions have brought T.L. Drewery and Laurie Middleswarth to their current positions within the Rocky Mount Fire and Police departments.

Their peers have taken notice.

Drewery and Middleswarth were named the Fire Department and Police Department Officers of the Year during a Lions Club luncheon in March.

The honor wasn't earned by a points system, and it isn't appointed by upper management. Instead it comes through nominations from peers within each department who worked daily alongside Battalion Chief Drewery and Cpl. Middleswarth.

At the luncheon, Rocky Mount Fire Department Chief Mike Varnell read one of the nomination forms regarding Drewery that stated, "Chief Drewery is very deserving because of his dedication to the Fire Department and its personnel. He is a true professional and a role model for everyone he encourages. He wants to win, and he wants everyone to win and become better and meet their goals. He is one of many reasons the Rocky Mount Fire Department is a great organization, and he makes me proud to be here."

*"I come to work
every day to
serve the citizens
of Rocky Mount."*

—Cpl. Laurie Middleswarth

Drewery joined the Rocky Mount Fire Department in 1998 and moved up to the rank of captain in 2003. He has served as a battalion chief since 2017. The former Army National Guard Reserve member holds an associate degree in fire protection from Wilson Community College and a bachelor's degree in business administration and computer information systems from N.C. Wesleyan College.

Middleswarth joined the Rocky Mount Police Department in 2013 and was promoted to senior police officer in 2017.

She has served as a corporal since 2018 and is the only female member of the department's Special Response Team.

"The file is thick with all the things Laurie has done for the department," Rocky Mount Police Chief George Robinson said at the luncheon.

Middleswarth earned a master's in criminal justice from N.C. Wesleyan.

"I come to work every day to serve the citizens of Rocky Mount," Middleswarth said. "It's going to be my home for a while."

Mid-Year Review July – December 2019



The City Manager's Office has been heavily involved in the recruitment and selection of key executive positions during this period. I appointed a new Fire Chief, Corey Mercer, a former battalion chief of the department. I also

appointed Chris Beschler as the Director of Energy Resources and filled the vacated position with Elton Daniels as Assistant City Manager. Pay adjustments were made in the Electric and Gas divisions of the Energy Resources Department to stem the threat of our experienced and trained workers leaving city employment for jobs in the private sector. The sanitation worker documentary was first released publicly, after which the City Council passed a resolution issuing an apology for the city's unjustified position that its employee stole the items that were left for trash. The worker, Alexander Evans and others who boycotted this action were dismissed. City Council also directed that the administration compensate the workers or their spouses for those lost wages. Finally, we were engaged with orienting the candidates for Mayor and Council on many aspects of Rocky Mount city government that continued with those who were elected. The City Manager's Office has assisted the former and newly elected Council members in the transition of leadership.

I appreciate all the great work of our mayor, city council, assistant city managers, employees and staff. It is because of you that I have such great confidence in our future. We are heading in the right direction and have many recent successes to celebrate. I want to share some of the great work accomplished over the past six months by our employees.

As your city manager, in addition to my work achieving the goals of the City Council, I directly oversee six departments and two assistant city managers who split oversight of the remaining departments and operations. I hope this information provides insight into your government at work.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney

Budget and Evaluation Office: Kenneth Hunter and staff successfully implemented the Fiscal Year 2019-2020 Annual Operating Budget. The office also completed research regarding activity

performance on the Rocky Mount Event Center and restitution to former employees who participated in the 1978 Sanitation Workers Strike in Rocky Mount. The office continued to provide research on demographic and economic trends and activities.

Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Office:

The office conducted a Communications and Marketing Audit, evaluating all communication tools and processes. An internal Communications Council has been formed comprised of members from the department, as well as public information officers from Energy Resources, Fire and Police departments. The city's internal rebranding has been finalized and external rebranding is nearly complete, including the city's government access network C.I.T.Y. TV 19. To ensure citizens receive accurate and timely information regarding municipal services, activities and events, a study commenced into broadcasting city boards and commissions meetings as well as City Council meetings.

The office delivered 52 press releases, 307 Facebook posts, 176 Twitter posts, 21 Instagram posts, 22 LinkedIn posts and 52 articles via rockymountnc.gov. The social media posts reached more than 16,000 subscribers and our electronic newsletters were disseminated to almost 6,500 readers monthly and growing. The office produced a documentary highlighting the Sanitation Workers Strike and the film made its debut during an unveiling of a North Carolina Historical Marker.

Energy Resources: Director Chris Beschler and staff entered a Liquefied Natural Gas peaking services contract that allows the city to purchase LNG at times of peak demand at a fixed price. This will help reduce gas costs during peak times when pipeline capacity charges are at their highest. The department also obtained city council approval to enter a six-year contract to ensure the reliability of the city's 800 MHz radio system used by public safety departments and first responders. A complete rebuild of Substation 7, critical in supplying power to the city's Southeast area, was finished. Finally, a transmission line upgrade on Nashville Road that feeds Substation 7 was completed to enhance system reliability.

Finance: Director Amy Staton and the Finance Department ended 2019 with several upgrades, physically and electronically. The department underwent a transition from paper to electronic

forms, most notably through purchase orders and payroll direct deposit notification. The department also implemented an automated timekeeping system to replace manual paper timesheets, which has improved accountability, efficiency and reporting. Downtown development projects continue including a capital lease approval pending with the Local Government Commission.

The Finance Department also worked to enhance Minority, Women Business Enterprise efforts, including training for purchasing staff, enhance solicitation and outreach workshops and training material.

City Hall underwent major renovations including a replaced wood ceiling in the George W. Dudley Council Chamber, renovations to the city manager's suite and fifth floor, as well as a new maintenance facility at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex and a new roof at both the Judicial Center and Senior Center.

Internal Audit Office: The office researched and responded to five employee complaints received through the Internal Audit office and Employee Hotline and one citizen complaint. Members of the office also served on the assessment team for three open positions and continued education on Risk Based Auditing conducted by professors at the UNC School of Government.

Technology Services: The Technology Services Department implemented an automated timekeeping system to replace manual paper timesheets. The new system improves accountability, efficiency, and provides better. Also, the department led the transition from paper forms to an electronic automated system. New citywide technology training was offered and will continue throughout this fiscal year.



City Clerk's Office

In compliance with North Carolina state law, City Clerk Pam Casey and the Clerk's Office prepared and advertised 14 legal notices and destroyed 180 boxes in the records center.

The office prepared 22 agendas for city council meetings and as many minutes for Committee of the Whole meetings, while scanning 93,500 pages into Laserfische.



Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton

Community and Business Development:

Interim Director Natasha Hampton and staff were active in revamping and

administering grant and rehabilitation efforts. There were 89 very-low to low-moderate income residents who received preliminary approval for urgent and major housing repairs. In addition, 17 downtown façade grant projects were completed, and nine projects started. The department was active in holding first-time events, including the Downtown Food Truck Invasion, which drew approximately 4,000 guests and sponsoring the Downtown Bar Crawl and Small Shop Saturday.

To ensure these initiatives and events are well publicized, the department completed a full overhaul of downtownrockymount.com.

Development Services: Director Will Deaton and the department adopted the Atlantic-Arlington Corridor Use Study and updated the city's Floodplain Protection Zoning Overlay District as well as the Land Development Code to improve parking within the Central City Area. The Inspections Division issued 77 certificates of occupancy, while the Community Code Division hired an Inspector for the first time in three years.

Fire: Chief Corey Mercer and the Rocky Mount Fire Department completed the N.C. Response Rating Insurance Classification inspection and received approval of an annual Compliance Report for Accreditation. Rocky Mount Fire also promoted 14 personnel including a battalion chief, three captains 10 engineers and a pair of senior firefighters. The department also secured purchase of a new records management system, with full implementation expected in March 2020.

Human Relations: Director Archie Jones and the department focused on internal relations by hiring an Employee Development Coordinator and completing a workforce-wide Employee Relations and Satisfaction Survey. A writing class for the Rocky Mount Police Department also was developed by the Human Relations staff that will now be a part of the RMPD orientation process.

Outreach events and programs included conducting a Hispanic Community Conversations meeting and appointing a Latino resident to the Human Relations Commission as

well as a Renting with a Criminal History Workshop, and an annual Bowling with Disabilities Fundraiser. The Rocky Mount Area Youth Council also hosted the 2019 State Youth Council Mini Grant Conference.

Human Resources: Director Elayne Henderson and staff implemented internal inspections to prevent possible OSHA violations that could have resulted in \$12.5 million in fines. The department also provided reasonable suspicion training to 32 Rocky Mount Fire Department members. Continuing a focus on internal improvement, the department reduced the length of time between interview and start dates for new hires and redeveloped its new hire orientation practices, which resulted in a reduction of lost work time.



Assistant City Manager Elton Daniels

Parks and Recreation:

The Parks and Recreation Department, in conjunction with a grant from the Longleaf

Foundation, installed a new playground at the South Rocky Mount Community Center. Golden Leaf Foundation also contributed a \$208,000 project that ended with the installation of a new boat ramp at Sunset Park. More than 10,000 people attended the 2019 Down East Viking Football Classic at the Rocky Mount Sports Complex. The complex also welcomed more than 300 teams as the home for the 2019 Top Gun Winter World Series baseball event and a lacrosse tournament with more than 50 teams from 10 different states, competing.

The department's community outreach included co-production with Word Tabernacle Church of Langston Hughes' Black Nativity. Six performances drew more than 1,100 visitors to the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences. The South Rocky Mount Community Center expanded its programming by taking students to the African American History Museum and the Holocaust Museum in Washington, D.C.

Police: Chief George Robinson and the Rocky Mount Police Department implemented a pair of training initiatives; TRRUTH (Taking Race Relations and Understanding to Heart) and Human Trafficking Education. The first was established to provide employees with the necessary psycho-social skills needed to effectively mitigate conflicts and build trust with minorities, while the latter educates employees regarding awareness and recognition of human trafficking. The department also established an outreach program via the Police Athletic League for area youth ages 10-18 with the objective of mentoring and building relationships to deter crime and strengthen the community.

Public Works: Public Works Director Brad Kerr and the department finished the installation of the first phase of downtown Wayfinding signs. The department also finalized a beautification project at the intersection of Falls Road and Church Street and secured new contracts for solid waste hauling and disposal, recycling, and emergency management debris removal. Hires included Operations Manager, Streets Superintendent and Stormwater Engineer.

Water Resources: Water Resources Director Brenton Bent and his department initiated and secured the Rocky Mount City Council's approval for approximately \$6 million dollars in infrastructure investments.

Projects are ongoing. The Water Quality Services Division's laboratory section was recognized with a Certificate of Excellence from Environmental Resource Associates for achieving 100% acceptable data in their third quarter proficiency testing study. The department also promoted Amanda James as Superintendent. She is the first female Superintendent in the history of the department. Water Resources also prepared and distributed its first newsletter to support the city's effort to improve employee communication.

This work and these accomplishments help secure a strong start to 2020 allowing the City to begin the second half of the fiscal year from a position of strength. I very much look forward to continuing our advancement of community well-being and quality of life for Rocky Mount's citizens.

Visit our website



www.rockymountnc.gov

for up-to-date information on city events and news.



Fire Chief Corey Mercer

Mercer returns as Fire Chief

By Tameka Kenan Norman

Rocky Mount City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney has selected Corey Mercer to fill the vacancy of fire chief in 2019.

Mercer, who has worked in the fire industry since 1994, will leave his most recent post as Elizabeth City's fire chief. Starting March 2018, the Wilson, N.C. native provided oversight of the fire department and expanded public protection in Elizabeth City while sitting at the helm.

Mercer returned to the city of Rocky Mount where he started January 1994 as a firefighter. The army veteran moved up the ranks, also serving as a fire engineer, fire captain and battalion chief before acquiring the role of fire chief in Elizabeth City.

Mercer is a graduate of Wilson Community College where he received an associate degree in fire protection technology. He also obtained a Bachelor of Science degree in business management from Mount Olive College and a Master of Science in administration from Central Michigan University.

A graduate of the National Fire Academy Executive Fire Officer Program, Mercer is also a member of several other organizations, including the International Association of Fire Chiefs, North Carolina Fire Chief's Association, North Carolina Accreditation Support Consortium, Center for Public Safety Excellence where he serves as a Level 1 peer assessor and North Carolina State Fireman's Association.

"Corey Mercer's 25 year of service in the fire industry and knowledge gained while serving as fire chief in Elizabeth City will be an asset to the city of Rocky Mount," said City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney. "Corey's previous work with the Rocky Mount Fire Department, including his experience in the accreditation process, will also be a tremendous benefit to the city."

Fire Department incorporates ballistic vests on all apparatus

By Robin Cox

While the crime rate in Rocky Mount has declined in recent years, national crime statistics point to an increase in violent crime. According to the Congressional Research Service's Recent Violent Crime Trends in the United States, the violent crime rate has trended upward since 2014.

As part of an ongoing strategic effort by the Rocky Mount Fire Department (RMFD) to be prepared for the situations they may face, the department purchased 58



(l-r) Senior Firefighter David Dugas, Carl Moore and Fire Engineer Joel Rawls

ballistic vests — one for every riding position on each apparatus and several to serve as replacements.

"Our foremost priority concerning our personnel is to ensure their safety when they respond to a call," said Fire Captain Carl E. Moore, III. "As you look at the national trends, acts of violence, such as active shooter incidents, have risen. For the safety of our people, we have to take the mindset that something of that nature can and will happen here and prepare for it."

Much like the turnout gear firefighters wear when entering a blaze, the red and black protective gear is for use in situations where violence has occurred, such as active shooter cases or other incidents where weapons were involved.

During the summer, in collaboration with multiple agencies, the RMFD took part in two large scale active shooter scenarios, one at Nash Central High School and the other at SouthWest Edgecombe High School. The exercises highlighted the need for the vests.

"We need to be able to get to any injured individuals as soon as possible. The vests allow our personnel to enter the scene once areas have been cleared and secured," explained the 19-year Fire Department veteran. "The earlier we can get to the victim, the better chance they have of surviving."

According to Moore, with so many different agencies working together and coordinating responses to large-scale situations, the end result will benefit both citizens and personnel. Fire Chief Corey Mercer agrees.

"Our people are our greatest resource and keeping them safe in dangerous circumstances is a priority," stated Mercer. "These vests allow us to help customers and keep people safe."

Amanda James promoted to Water Resources Superintendent

By Robin Cox



The city of Rocky Mount's Water Resources Department has promoted its first female to serve as superintendent. Amanda James, a 21-year employee of the city of Rocky Mount, began her new role as Water Quality Services superintendent the week of June 17.

In her previous position as laboratory supervisor at the Tar River Regional Wastewater Treatment Facility, James realized how bringing people with different backgrounds together could make for better service in the department.

"Women provide a different perspective and having diversity at all levels of management in the Water Resources industry as a whole benefits everyone," said James.

No stranger to hard work, the wife and mother of two earned her Master of Public Administration degree Dec. 2018, maintaining a 4.0 grade point average throughout the program.

"I'm someone who likes being challenged," said James. "I want to serve Rocky Mount to the best of my abilities, and this is one way for me to do that."

While she knows the term trailblazer applies, she admits that the people she met along the way who encouraged her to grow are a part of her success.

"I had confidence boosters from many people along the way who saw something in me," she said.

As someone who has been helped by others, James feels the need to repay their generosity by helping those who come behind her, especially other women.

"I want them to see that anything is possible," explained James. "If you are willing to put in the work, you can achieve your dream."

This step in her continuing dream is one her director says is much deserved.

"I am very proud to appoint Amanda to the role of superintendent," said Water Resources Director Brenton Bent. "Based on her commitment to the division and to the organization as a whole, her tenure and knowledge of processes in both Water and Wastewater, now is her time. She earned it."

In addition to her institutional knowledge and drive, James holds a plethora of operator certifications including in the laboratory, water, wastewater, pretreatment and land applications.

Overseeing a division that includes four senior lab analysts, two compliance coordinators and a compliance administrator, James will continue to administer the lab she has faithfully managed. Furthermore, the pretreatment of water, adherence to compliance requirements and other duties have also been placed under her supervision.

When she learned she would lead the division, James said she was nervous at first.

"I was a lab tech for one year and have been lab supervisor for the last 20 years, and basically stepping out of that comfort zone, there's a sense of nervousness that comes along with that," she said. "But I also know I have prepared myself for this and I can achieve whatever I put my mind to."

James also understands that she cannot do it alone and values the input of those she works with and for.

"I'm always willing to learn from others so I can better do my job," she explained. "This challenge excites me, and I am ready to move forward."

Bent sees James as the right person to take the division to a whole new level.

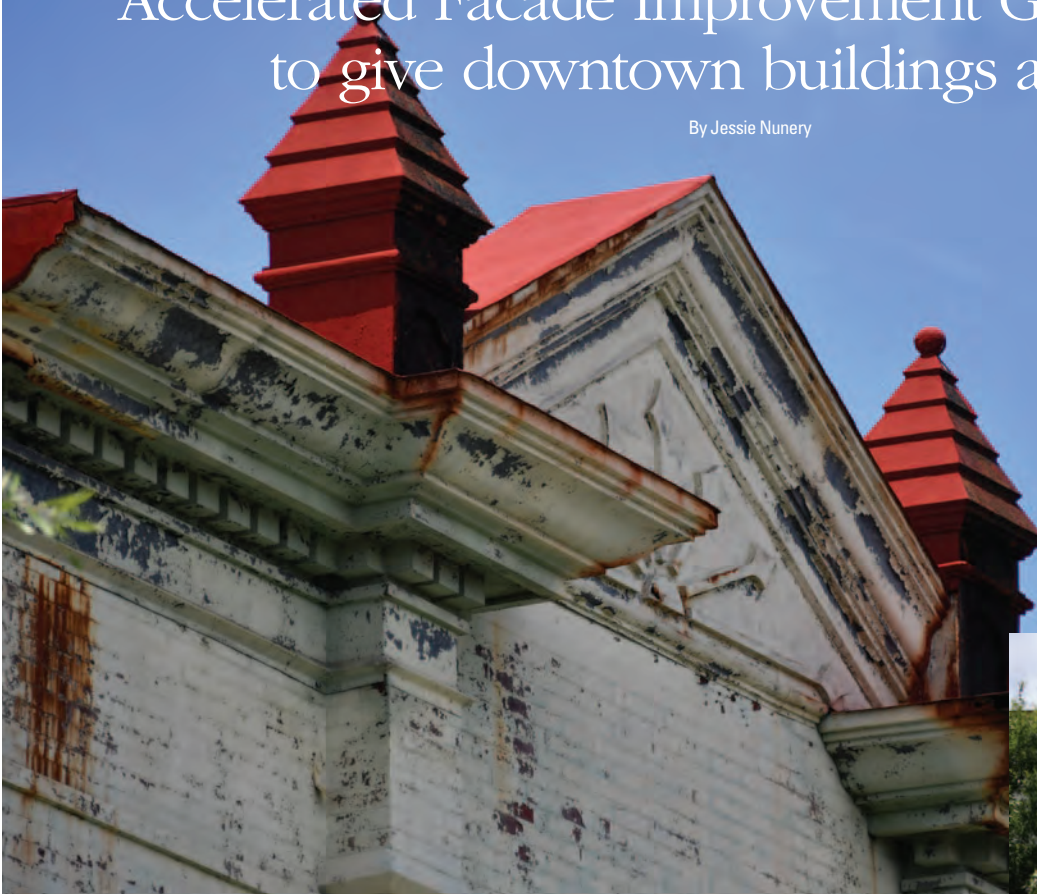
"It is anticipated that Water Quality Services will play a larger role in providing process optimization for our treatment plants. This would include more consistency to operational practices, facilitating knowledge transfer, troubleshooting support and much more," said Bent. "Amanda is the person who can help make those things happen."



Amanda James supervises laboratory testing at the Tar River Regional Wastewater Treatment Plant. She is joined by William Harkins, Sr. (top) and Tuntima Barham (bottom).

Accelerated Facade Improvement Grant Program to give downtown buildings a facelift

By Jessie Nunery



Community and Business Development made 2019 a year of high priority regarding downtown grants.

Whether it was roofs, facades or interior building assistance, the opportunity to improve spaces in the downtown corridor were made possible.

The roof replacement and repair grants were the latest offered to improve roof systems for commercial properties located within the boundaries of Franklin Street, Goldleaf Street, Atlantic Avenue and Raleigh Boulevard.

Commercial properties are eligible for a 50/50 reimbursement, up to a maximum of \$10,000.

Downtown property owners also were able to improve the facades of their buildings through an Accelerated Facade Grant Program. Repairs rolled out in 2018 and included but were not limited to signage, brick or wall surface cleaning and window/door replacements.

The maximum grant award per project is \$5,000.

The Rocky Mount City Council allocated \$75,000 for the project in the 2019 fiscal year

budget and extended the grant into the 2020 fiscal year budget by appropriating an additional \$50,000.

The city of Rocky Mount assigned Kevin Harris to direct downtown development.

“We recognize much of the downtown building stock requires substantial rehabilitation,” Harris said. “That is why we make available roofing, facade, building assistance and development incentives. We also allow property owners to layer the grants and take advantage of each program. Tenants may also access the programs with approval of the property owner.”

Plans for improvements had to conform to existing building regulations for the city of Rocky Mount, and where applicable, the Rocky Mount Historic Preservation Commission Design Guidelines.

To date, there have been 28 Accelerated Facade Grant Improvement applications, with 11 completions and 13 renovations in progress.

The Downtown Building Assistance Program has had seven applicants (1 completed, 6 in progress), while the Roof Replacement Repair

Grant has two with work in progress.

Grant application and policy guidelines are available at the Community and Business Development Department in the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building. Other available downtown incentives include the \$20,000 Downtown Building Assistance Program and the Development Incentive Grant.

Building trust with the Hispanic Community

By Robin L. Cox



Conversations with the Hispanic Community

Conversaciones con la comunidad Hispana

Rocky Mount's multicultural population is one of the city's greatest assets, and the growing Hispanic community is a vital part of that diversity.

"Creating an environment of trust with the Hispanic community is essential for strengthening the relationship between the city and the residents," said Human Relations Director Archie Jones with the city of Rocky Mount. For Jones and Human Relations Commission, on which he serves as the city's staff liaison, building relationships is something they do well.

Jones is fully aware, though, that trust is not earned overnight.

In the spring, a member of the Hispanic community approached the Human Relations Commission with concerns relating to challenges their community faces daily with access to services, neighborhood issues, fear of the police and others.

"While talking with the individual, it became clear, that though they live in the city, they felt as though they were not part of the city," explained Jones. "They want to contribute to the city as a whole, but they felt as though they had not been given the opportunity to be involved."

Since that initial meeting, the Human Relations Department and the Commission have worked diligently to expand communications with the Hispanic community.

In October, the two groups hosted Conversations with the Hispanic Community at the Booker T. Theater in downtown. The meeting's purpose was two-fold; to allow the residents of the Hispanic community to share the challenges and fears their families face in the community and, to dispel any misinformation concerning police and other city departments. It also serves as an opportunity to distribute information regarding the many services and activities that are available to residents. Personnel from Police, Community Code, Development Services and Parks and Recreation were also in attendance to meet with community members and listen to any question or concerns. Later that same month, Carlos Uriel Licona Villa was appointed to the Human Relations Commission as a representative for the

Latino/Hispanic community. His term will expire in 2023.

Diversity, inclusion, trust and time; the main ingredients for a growing city at the center of it all.

"Creating an environment of trust with the Hispanic community is essential for strengthening the relationship between the city and the residents."

—Archie Jones



Black Light Project highlights area males

By Jessie Nunery

Fourteen members of the community have been selected to take part in the Black Light Project photography documentary that were displayed at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences beginning in January 2020.

The Black Light Project, founded by Tonya Jefferson-Lynch, presents black males in a positive manner while shifting narratives that are often shared through media outlets.

Rocky Mount-area males were vetted for the project through nominations and interviews prior to the final selections.

JoSeth Bocoock, Bobbie Clark, Chris Cooper, Troy Davis, Matthew Gailliard, Paul Hines, Kyle Johnson, Maurece Lewis, Brandon Lynch, Brad Mitchell, Jah Murphy, Tremaine McCalston, Yannick McLeod and Mike Wright will represent the area in the exhibit, which also will include on-camera interviews as well as voice recordings available on Ottocast.

Jefferson-Lynch said one of the things she admires about the subjects is their progression through life's ups and downs.

Not everyone's path to success is a straight line.

"This project isn't about perfection, but it's about the seasons that may include feeling unloved and loneliness, but also triumph and joy," Jefferson-Lynch said. "Ultimately, it's about the positive things you can learn and create from that."

Black Light Project visual artists Bryce Chapman and Randy Curtis began photographing the individuals during the fall.

"Typically, I portray the story behind the person," Curtis said. "With African-American males, I want to portray their strength because typically in the media there are images of them looking disheveled or uncouth."

With the aid of a grant from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, artist renderings of eight Black Light Project subjects will be displayed on banners throughout the city beginning in the spring of 2020.

"Hopefully, this project will not only change the narrative but also inspire the next generation of leaders," Elton Daniels said.

For more information about The Black Light Project, visit theblacklightproject.org.

Playground, boat ramp undergo renovations

By Jessie Nunery

Parks and Recreation completed a busy 2019 with the completion of two renovations. Residents of the Holly Street community will ring in the new calendar year with an updated park that has been a centerpiece of the community for nearly 50 years.

Via a \$250,000 Land and Water Conservation Fund grant award and a \$398,008 commitment by the city of Rocky Mount, a project more than six years in the works went into the final phase in August 2019. The park renovation is the result of a total city-team effort, with nearly every city department helping at some point of the project.

Holly Street Park will feature a pair of new basketball courts, asphalt parking, a 1,800 linear foot walking trail, horseshoe pits, a shaded sitting area, picnic shelter, tot lot and an overlook of Parker's Canal. Public art also will be displayed at the park.

"I've only been with the city since February of this year, however, the Holly Street project dates back to 2013," said Elton Daniels, assistant city manager and interim director of Parks and Recreation. "The gratifying part of the project has been the consistent commitment and engagement by the community. As with many grants of this magnitude, community engagement plays an instrumental role in the process. The community decided what the amenities would be and were involved every step of the way."

Another anticipated project was the completion of the Sunset Park boat ramp. The ramp has served generations of area residents who've used the area to fish for bass, catfish, crappie and more. The ramp area even was used for waterskiing in its early days.

The boat ramp has weathered a wealth of hurricanes and storms since being built in the 1930s. Hurricane Matthew's arrival in 2016 submerged the entire ramp.

State of North Carolina Recovery funds administered by the Golden LEAF Foundation in the amount of \$208,022 allowed the city to begin renovation work in September. The project engineering and construction is being completed by the N.C. Wildlife Commission.

According to Parks and Recreation staff, there will be an ADA parking space nearby, allowing for those who have years of experience on the water but perhaps not the physical ability to do a lot of walking, the opportunity to continue fishing.

The site is the only ramp between the Tar River Reservoir Dam and the Rocky Mount Mills Dam.

"One of the benefits of working with the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission is that the ramp will now be included on their website, which is the top source for location of the state's public boat ramps.



The area also will be included on patrols of the Wildlife Resources Commission" Daniels said.

"What you are witnessing here, in Rocky Mount, is the power of partnerships. These two major projects are a testament of what can be accomplished when folks come together for a common cause. Our mission in the Parks and Recreation Department is to advance the quality of life by providing positive, inclusive experiences through: People, Parks, and Programs -- I am confident that if we continue to work together (public, elected officials, staff and community stakeholders) we will continue to rise to new heights and accomplishments."

NC Science Museums Grant

By Robin Cox

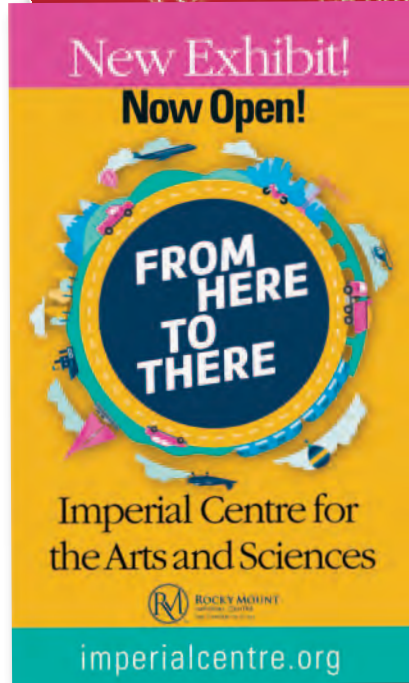
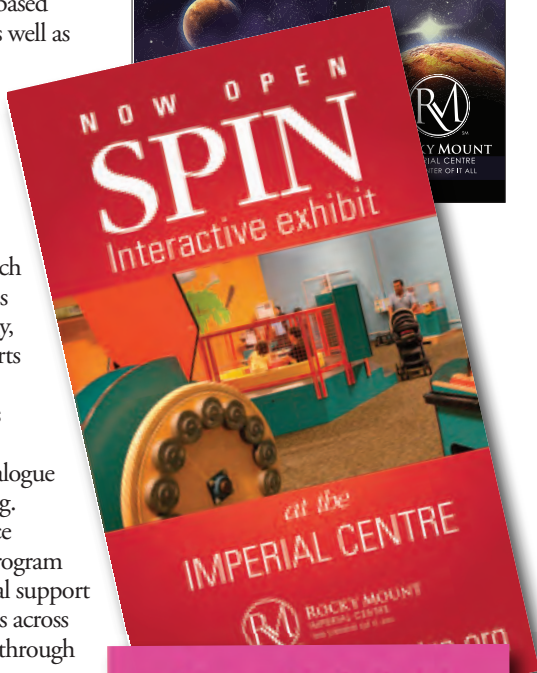
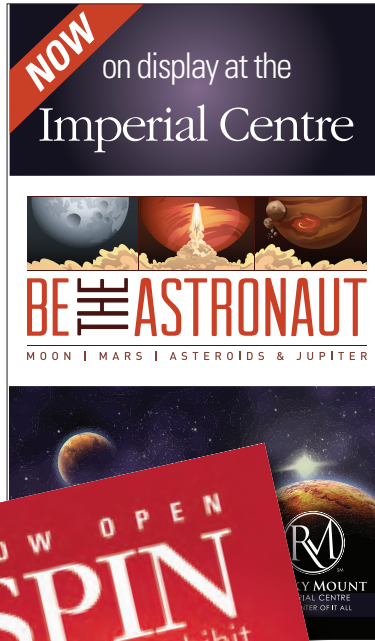
The city of Rocky Mount Parks and Recreation Department was awarded a grant of approximately \$38,000 from the North Carolina Science Museums Grant Program.

“This grant award will enable us to continue to offer multiple STEAM-based traveling exhibits as well as purchase a limited number of permanent exhibits,” Assistant City Manager Elton Daniels said.

STEAM is an educational approach to learning that uses Science, Technology, Engineering, the Arts and Mathematics (STEAM) as access points for guiding student inquiry, dialogue and critical thinking.

The N.C. Science Museums Grant Program provides operational support to eligible museums across the state. Awarded through the North Carolina Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, the criteria is set by the North Carolina state government and includes but is not limited to the economic distress of the county and the proximity to other science or STEAM education museums.

“SPIN” and “Be the Astronaut” were prominent STEAM exhibits at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences during 2019. Summer at the Imperial Centre included a pair of STEM LEGO camps. On Jan. 25, 2020 the facility welcomed a new STEM-based exhibit “From Here To There.”



Celebrating South Rocky Mount

By Robin Cox

Nothing says fun like a playground, and in August, the South Rocky Mount community celebrated with a brand new one.

Local and state officials, community leaders and residents gathered Saturday, Aug. 17 for the “Celebrating South Rocky Mount” event.

The day included remarks from Mayor David Combs, city council members Lois Watkins and Andre Knight, as well as a presentation on incoming industries and the local jobs economy from Carolinas Gateway Partnership President and CEO Norris Tolson. Edgecombe Community College was also on hand to talk about work force readiness and opportunities for those willing to learn new skills and trades.

The event highlighted the ongoing development and future for the South Rocky Mount community and surrounding areas. A ribbon-cutting was held at the playground of the South Rocky Mount Community Center, vendors presented information on jobs, and tours were given of the new apartment homes at Ravenwood Crossing.



City of Rocky Mount completes conversion of street and area lights to LED

By Amy Blanton



This photo was taken during the city's conversion from high pressure sodium fixtures (left) to LED fixtures (right).

The city of Rocky Mount Energy Resources department has completed a project to convert all the city's street and area lights to light-emitting diode (LED) fixtures. The LED fixtures are more energy efficient and have a longer lifespan. LED lights also produce a better color rendition, which means color variations are more detectible.

Another benefit to converting the lights to LED is a reduction to the cost of area light rentals. Area lights provide automatic dusk-to-dawn lighting for public streets outside the city limits, outdoor areas, private streets and private driveways. Area lights are available to customers for rental fees starting at \$5.07 per month. The monthly rental fee varies depending on the type of light fixture and equipment needed.

Customers who wish to see an example of each of the types of area lights may do so by visiting the Best Friend's Dog Park located at 480 N. Lee St. Examples of the area lights have been placed around the perimeter of the dog park with signs on each light providing the type of light, the light output and the monthly rental fees. A map showing the location of the area lights is located at the entrance to the dog park.

To request an area light, customers may call 252-467-4800. For more information about the Area Light Program, including monthly rental fees, please visit rockymount.gov.

Smart Energy Award

By Amy Blanton

Roy Jones, chief executive officer of ElectricCities of North Carolina, Inc., presented the Smart Energy Provider (SEP) award to the city of Rocky Mount during the City Council meeting on Monday, Nov. 25.

The city of Rocky Mount has earned a SEP designation from the American Public Power Association (APPA) for demonstrating commitment to and proficiency in energy efficiency, distributed generation, and environmental initiatives that support a goal of providing low-cost, quality, safe, and reliable electric service.

The SEP designation, which lasts for two years (Dec. 1, 2019 to Nov. 30, 2021), recognizes public power utilities for demonstrating leading practices in four key disciplines: smart energy program structure; energy efficiency

and distributed energy programs; environmental and sustainability initiatives; and the customer experience. This is the first year APPA has offered the SEP designation. The city of Rocky Mount joins more than 60 public power utilities nationwide and is one of only two public power utilities in North Carolina that received the inaugural SEP designation.

"We're honored to be recognized for our efforts to support this community's responsible energy use," said Chris Beschler, director of Energy Resources. "We take a lot of pride in the programs we offer that help customers save money and reduce our collective footprint on the environment. It's encouraging to be recognized as a best-of-breed utility when it comes to smart energy."



2020 EVENTS

Addresses for event locations are at the end of this listing.

— JANUARY —

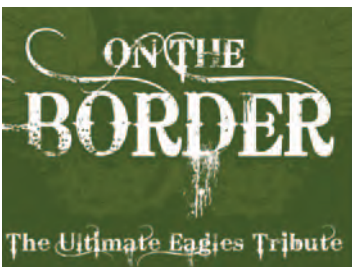


MLK Jr. Oratorical Competition

Date & Time: Jan. 11, 2020, 9 a.m.
Location: Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences
Event Description: Local, middle and high school students will take part in an annual speech competition with themes including "At the Center of It All" (Hope, Love, Peace) and "Continuing the Journey."
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov
Contact: 252-972-1180

Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast

Date & Time: Jan. 20, 2020, 7 a.m.
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts
Event Description: The annual breakfast and program honoring the late civil rights leader will be themed, "The Center of It All," bringing together the city's new brand and one of Dr. King's quotes, "At the center of non-violence stands the principle of love."
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov
Contact: 252-972-1180



The Ultimate Eagles Tribute

Date & Time: Jan. 24, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts
Event Description: The Fillmore Charlotte says that "although the Eagles have encouraged the world to "Take It Easy" for more than four decades, taking on the roles of the genteel Classic Rockers from Southern California is a tough task." Well, here's a group that does.
Price: \$25.71
Website: ncwc.edu/dunn-center-performing-arts/
Contact: 252-985-5197



The Red Badge of Courage

Date & Time: Jan. 31, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Edgcombe Community College
Event Description:

The Civil War had been raging for two years when young Henry Fleming decides to enlist in the Army. On the eve of his first big battle, Henry fears what he will do when the bullets start to fly. Before the battle is over, Henry will have to decide for himself what it means to be a man.
Price: Reserved seating: (\$10, adults; \$5 students, Pre-K through college)
Website: edgcombe.edu
Contact: 252-618-6618

— FEBRUARY —



Freedom Songs: The Music of Black History

Date & Time: Feb. 11, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Edgcombe Community College
Event Description: From the work songs of the fields of people who were enduring the bonds of slavery, to ragtime, jazz, R&B, and the inspired spirituals of the Civil Rights movement, this play follows the compelling story of the role that music played in the history of Black Americans. Sponsored by the Furman Mathewson Trust of Edgcombe County Memorial Library.
Price: Free; reserved seating requires tickets
Website: edgcombe.edu
Contact: 252-618-6618



Dailey & Vincent

Date & Time: Feb. 28, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts
Event Description: This contagious and riveting group returns to The Dunn with a concoction of bluegrass, traditional country and gospel. Tabbed by CMT.com as "the rock stars of bluegrass," their unique blend of American music is set apart by Dailey's tenor and Vincent's reedy harmonies.
Price: \$36.01
Website: ncwc.edu/dunn-center-performing-arts/
Contact: 252-985-5197

— MARCH —



Citizens Academy,

Date & Time: March 5–May 7, 2020
Location: Varies
Event Description: The Rocky Mount Citizens Academy is an initiative to increase awareness and foster positive relations between citizens and city staff. Students may expect to meet with personnel in departments such as, but not limited to, Police, Fire, Parks & Recreation, Human Relations and more.
Price: Free to citizens 18 and older
Website: rockymountnc.gov
Contact: 252-972-1354



Young Frankenstein

Date & Time: March 6-7, 13-14 at 7:30 p.m.; March 8 and 15 at 2 p.m.
Location: Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences
Event Description: From the creators of the record-breaking Broadway sensation, The Producers, comes this monster new musical comedy. The comedy genius, Mel Brooks, adapts his legendary funny film into a brilliant stage creation. Grandson of the infamous Victor Frankenstein, Frederick Frankenstein inherits his family's estate in Transylvania. With the help of a hunchbacked sidekick, Igor and a leggy lab assistant, Inga, Frederick finds himself in the mad scientist shoes of his ancestors.
Price: \$11; seniors and students \$9; 12–under \$7
Website: imperialcentre.org
Contact: 252-972-1266



International Festival of Cultures

Date & Time: March 7, 2020, 12–4 p.m.
Location: Nash Community College, Brown Auditorium
Event Description: The city of Rocky Mount celebrates diversity through food, music, fashion and more at the 302nd annual event.
Price: Free
Website: rockymountnc.gov
Contact: 252-972-1180



New York Theatre Ballet

Date & Time: March 19, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Edgcombe Community College
Event Description: The New York Theatre Ballet will make its eighth consecutive appearance in the Edgcombe Performance Series. Sponsored by the Furman Mathewson Trust of Edgcombe County Memorial Library.
Price: Free; reserved seating requires tickets
Website: edgcombe.edu
Contact: 252-618-6618



Shrek, The Musical

Date & Time: March 29, 2020, 3 p.m.
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts
Event Description: In yet another musical showcasing local talent, Wesleyan Players and Faith Christian School team up to bring you this hilarious fairy tale. Our unlikely hero is on a quest to rescue Princess Fiona. Join him as he contends with a lovesick dragon, Lord Farquaad and a biscuit with an attitude.
Price: Adult ticket \$10.26; child 12 & under \$5.11
Website: ncwc.edu/dunn-center-performing-arts/
Contact: 252-985-5197

— APRIL —



Nashville Legacy

Date & Time: April 3, 2020, 7:30 p.m.
Location: Dunn Center for the Performing Arts
Event Description: Floyd Cramer and Chet Atkins. Two musical giants. Two unique methods of playing the piano and guitar. Two names synonymous with the "Nashville Sound." Though gone, they survive through Floyd's grandson, pianist Jason Coleman, and Chet's niece, guitarist Meagan Taylor. Come join this duo as they close out a season that will be oh, soooo fun!
Price: \$25.71
Website: ncwc.edu/dunn-center-performing-arts/
Contact: 252-985-5197

Easter Eggstravaganza

Date & Time: April 5, 2020, 2 p.m.

Location:

Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences

Event

Description: The Tarboro Choral Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Nettie Jean Williams. Opera Returns to Tarboro will feature a choir of 40 singers with soloists and 30-piece orchestra conducted by Dr. Williams, including sections from Carmen, Madame Butterfly, Il Trovatore, and La Traviata among others.

Price: Free

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact: 252-972-1266



Opera Returns to Tarboro

Date & Time: April 21, 2020, 7:30 p.m.

Location: Edgecombe Community College

Event Description: The Tarboro Choral Society is a 501(c)3 non-profit organization formed in 2018 under the leadership of Dr. Nettie Jean Williams. Opera Returns to Tarboro will feature a choir of 40 singers with soloists and 30-piece orchestra conducted by Dr. Williams, including sections from Carmen, Madame Butterfly, Il Trovatore, and La Traviata among others.

Price: Free; reserved seating requires tickets

Website: edgecombe.edu

Contact: 252-618-6618



Donor 63215

Date & Time: May 7-9, 2020, 7:30 p.m.;

May 10, 2020, 2 p.m.

Location: Booker T. Theater

Event Description: From critically acclaimed playwright Marilyn Barner Anselmi comes this modern drama that dissects the definition of family and the traditional definition of parent while questioning the notion of nature over nurture. A world-premiere production. Mature audiences.

Price: \$11; seniors and students \$9

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact: 252-972-1266

— JUNE —



Juneteenth Community Empowerment Festival

Date & Time: June 19-20, 2020, TBA

Location: Rocky Mount Event Center

Event Description: The Juneteenth Community Empowerment Festival strives to create community cohesion through a two-day event featuring guest speakers, cultural activities and a variety of live entertainment. Bring the whole family for a Friday night jazz celebration and enjoy great food, music and children's activities. The festivities continue Saturday with a full day of community-focused activities, performances and a nationally acclaimed main act.

Price: Free

Website: rockymountnc.gov

Contact: 252-972-1266

— JULY —



Independence Day Celebration

Date & Time: July 3, 2020, 6-9 p.m.

Location: Rocky Mount Sports Complex

Event Description: Happy birthday, America! Patriotic family fun is in store at the Rocky Mount Independence Day Celebration! Enjoy live music, family-friendly activities and fireworks.

Price: Free

Website: rockymountnc.gov

Contact: 252-972-1159

The Little Prince, The Musical

Date & Time: July 24-25, 2020,

7:30 p.m.;

July 26, 2020, 2 p.m.

Location:

Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences

Event Description: This beloved classic now comes alive on stage in a magical full-length family musical. Filled with enchanting music and heart-felt lyrics, it has been touted by critics around the country for its sophisticated appeal to all ages. It tells the story of a world-weary aviator whose malfunctioning plane strands him on the Sahara Desert.

Price: General admission \$11; seniors and students \$9; 12–under \$7

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact: 252-972-1266



— OCTOBER —



Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down

Date & Time: Oct. 10-11, 2020, TBA

Location: Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station lawn

Event Description: Featuring a professional Kansas City Barbecue Society cooking competition, the 13th annual Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down can bring the heat – and the meat! Join us in the heart of historic downtown Rocky Mount.

Price: Free

Website: downtownrockymount.com

Contact: 252-972-1159



Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week Celebration

Date & Time: Oct. 11, 2020, 10:30 a.m.–6 p.m.

Location: Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station

Event Description: Celebrate Public Power and Public Natural Gas Week at the Rocky Mount Public Utilities exhibit featuring safety demonstrations, pole-climbing, kids activities, games, raffle drawings, prizes, giveaways and Plinko.

Price: Free

Website: downtownrockymount.com

Contact: 252-972-1269

— DECEMBER —



Rocky Mount Christmas Parade

Date & Time: Dec. 6, 2020, 3 p.m.

Location: Downtown Rocky Mount

Event Description: Get into the Christmas spirit with a Rocky Mount tradition – the Rocky Mount Christmas Parade! Join us for the annual parade featuring live music by local marching bands, beautiful floats, classic cars and Santa Claus.

Price: Free

Website: downtownrockymount.com

Contact: 252-972-1151



Winter Wonderland at the Imperial Centre

Date & Time: Dec. 13, 2020, 1-5 p.m.

Location: Imperial Centre for the Arts & Sciences

Event Description: Enjoy an afternoon out at Winter Wonderland at the Imperial Centre. Free admission to the Children's Museum and Science Center, pictures with Santa and free crafts and activities provided by the Children's Museum.

Price: Free

Website: imperialcentre.org

Contact: 252-972-1151

Addresses of event locations

Booker T. Theater,

170 E. Thomas St., Rocky Mount

Dunn Center for the Performing Arts,

3044 N. Wesleyan Blvd., Rocky Mount

Helen P. Gay Rocky Mount Historic Train Station,

100 Coastline St., Rocky Mount

Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences,

270 Gay St., Rocky Mount

Nash Community College, Brown Auditorium,

522 N. Old Carriage Road, Rocky Mount

Rocky Mount Sports Complex,

600 Independence Dr., Rocky Mount

Stay Connected

Visit the city of Rocky Mount's website

at www.rockymountnc.gov and sign-up for the city's e-newsletter, *City Beat*, by clicking on the icon located in the footer of the page.

Other city microsites include:

www.downtownrockymount.com

www.imperialcentre.org

www.rockymountsportscomplex.com

Text:

CITY BEAT to 55469 and be the *first* to hear about city events.

Tune in to:



Broadcast only on [suddenlink](https://www.suddenlink.com)

www.youtube.com/user/CITYTV19

Find us on:

www.facebook.com/citybeat/

[twitter@cityofrockymtnc](https://twitter.com/cityofrockymtnc)

[instagram@cityofrockymount](https://www.instagram.com/cityofrockymount)



ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL

Text-A-Tip

and Help Prevent Crime.

Text RMPOL and your
message to CRIMES (274637)



Your tip is completely anonymous.
(message and data rates may apply).



A subsidiary of the city of Rocky Mount

Tune in *now!*

Find C.I.T.Y. TV19 on Suddenlink or
www.youtube.com/user/CITYTV19 from anywhere!

FREQUENTLY DIALED NUMBERS

Police/ Fire/Medical Emergencies **911**

General City Information/Switchboard

All Departments 972-1111

City Clerk 972-1319

Clerk of Court (Edgecombe) 212-3102

Clerk of Court (Nash) 212-3100

City Manager 972-1325

C.I.T.Y. TV-19 972-1144

Community & Business Development 972-1100

Energy Resources

Administration 972-1272

Billing/Customer Services 972-1250

Electric & Natural Gas Divisions 467-4800

Engineering 972-1121

Finance

Accounting 972-1218

Administration 972-1200

Property and Risk Management 972-1202

Property tax bills 972-1250

Purchasing 972-1228

Revenue Collection 972-1250

Utility Bills/Customer Service

(Payments/ New Services/Disconnects) 972-1250

Fire Emergency Only **911**

Fire Administration 972-1498

Fire Marshal 972-1376

Safety and Training 972-1556

Employment 972-1556

Public Education 972-1379

Human Relations 972-1181

Human Resources 972-1186

Job Line Phone 972-1199

Parks & Recreation

Administration 972-1151

Athletics 972-1160

BTW (Booker T. Washington) Community Center 467-4925

Cemeteries (Battleboro-Northeastern- Pineview) 972-1158

Denton Street Pool 977-6231

Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences 972-1266

Maria V. Howard Arts Center 972-1163

Outdoor Recreation 972-1235

Parks Maintenance 467-4922

Park/Picnic Reservations 972-1151

Senior Center 972-1152

SRM (South Rocky Mount) Community Center 972-1170

Special Events

(Eastern Carolina BBQ Throw Down/Christmas Parade) 972-1151

Special Olympics 972-1155

Sports Complex 467-6483

Sunset Park (Carousel/Train/ Spray Park/Skatepark) 446-0500

Theater Box Office 972-1266

Development Services 972-1172

Building Permits 972-1109

Business Licenses 972-1110

Community Code Enforcement 467-4952

Abandoned/Junked Vehicles 467-4952

Dilapidated Houses 467-4952

Overgrown Weeds/Mosquitoes/Rodents 467-4952

Historic Preservation 972-1179

Inspection Services/Plan Review 972-1110

Building 972-1110

Zoning 977-1114

After Hours 972-1350

Police Emergency Only **911**

Non-Emergency 972-1411

Non-Emergency TTY (for the hearing impaired) 442-0975

Animal Control/Stray 972-1390

Animals - Dead Pickup 467-4800

Crime Prevention 972-1436

Crime Stoppers 977-1111

Investigations 972-1450

Police Reports 972-1435

Public Works

Public Works Administration 972-1290

Environmental Services (Trash Collection) 467-4800

Dumpster Service 467-4953

Garbage/Recycling/Yard Waste/Limb/Bulk Waste/

Appliance/Furniture/Tire Collection 467-4800

Loose leaf pickup 467-4906

To Schedule a Debris Trailer 467-4800

Fleet Maintenance 467-4897

Keep America Beautiful 467-4960

Streets & Stormwater Division 467-4906

Drainage Problems 467-4906

Stormwater Hotline 972-1500

Tar River Regional Reservoir Wastewater

Treatment Plant 972-1400

Reservoir Water Treatment Plant 972-1292

Sunset Water Treatment Plant 972-1336

Tar River Transit 972-1174

Utilities

Utility Bills/Customer Service

(Payments, New Services, Disconnects) 972-1250

Electric (Power Outages/Lines Down/ Repairs) 467-4800

Gas (Leaks/Repairs) 467-4800

Water or Sewer (Leaks/Blockages/Dirty Water) 467-4800

Utility Emergencies

(After Hours/Holidays and Weekends) 467-4800

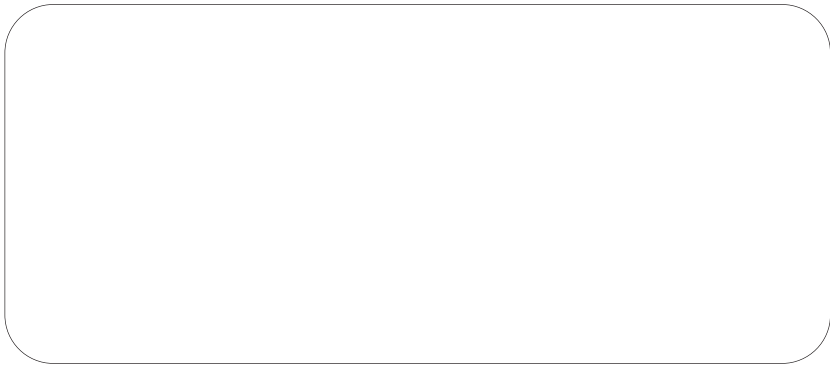
Area code 252 for all numbers.



331 S. Franklin St., PO Box 1180,
Rocky Mount, NC 27802-1180

Published by the city of Rocky Mount's
City Manager's Office for all Rocky Mount
Public Utilities customers..

US POSTAGE PAID
PRST STAND
PT 1
Rocky Mount, NC 27802



United States[®] Census 2020

Be Counted.

The city of Rocky Mount encourages you to make sure all people in your household and your neighbor's household are counted in the 2020 Census. In March, the U.S. Census Bureau will send every household an invitation to complete a questionnaire about who lives at your address. For more information, please visit 2020census.gov.



ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL