

TALK OF THE TOWN

The City of Rocky Mount, North Carolina

Quarterly Newsletter Spring Volume 8, No.1, 2020



City Remains Proactive in
the Face of Coronavirus

pages 10-11

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* All group photos presented in this edition of Talk of The Town were taken prior to the state’s social distancing policy.



Quarterly Newsletter
Spring, Vol. 8, No.1, 2020

Published by the City Manager’s Office for retirees, employees and their families.

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ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL

Thank You!



Rochelle Small-Toney

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney has been heavily involved in successfully leading and providing oversight for the city of Rocky Mount operations during this coronavirus pandemic. This issue of *Talk of the Town* focuses on how employees have proactively responded to COVID 19 internally and externally.

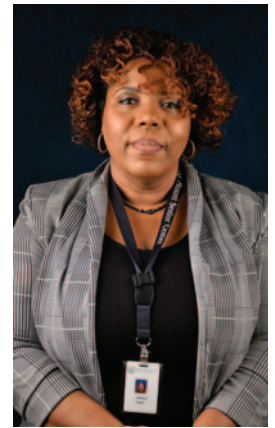
I extend a special thank you to all City employees for their personal sacrifices, hard work and dedication. And I appreciate the way each of you individually and collectively have been involved in developing steps to continue to maintain a safe workplace and protect the health of employees, customers, and citizens. All departments have embraced and transitioned to "essential personnel only" operations, based on their emergency Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP), to ensure that we continue to meet our customers' expectations.

Effective March 31, 2020, employees designated as essential by their departments were required to report to work. This order remains in effect until the executive order has been lifted, and ALL employees will continue to receive full salary and benefits while the order is in effect.

While all our operations have been impacted in many ways, some not as severely or obvious as others to the public, I urge all employees to continue practicing social distancing in order to limit the spread of the virus. During this pandemic, everyone should continue to use telephone and video conferencing instead of face-to-face meetings when practical.

Again, I commend our employees as they too are threatened by the spread of the virus and relentlessly serve the public to the best of their abilities. I hope that everyone and their families remain safe and healthy.

City of Rocky Mount employees have been steadfast in their commitment to providing citizens with excellent municipal services during the Coronavirus pandemic. Throughout the magazine you'll see faces of employees representing various city departments that have continued carrying out the city's mission.



Quarterly Report January – March 2020



**City Manager
Rochelle
Small-Toney**

**Budget and
Evaluation Office:**

Kenneth Hunter and staff successfully completed a second

quarter forecast of revenues and expenditures for Fiscal Year 2020. A policy analyst was hired and is focused on drafting a housing strategic plan for the city and assisting the budget analysts as needed. The office continued analysis and cost of the Rocky Mount Event Center, oversaw development and review of the 2021-2025 Capital Improvement Program and the development of requests for FY 2021 Annual Budget. The office also prepared revised revenue forecasts to determine the financial impact of COVID-19 events.

Communications, Marketing and Public

Relations Office: Consultant Dorothy Brown Smith and the office continued their rebranding efforts by completing branding of the Rocky Mount Sports Complex as well as the implementation of rebranding fleet vehicles. The office continues to reach internal and external stakeholders. More than 55,000 people have been reached via the city's Facebook, Instagram, and Twitter pages. Public utilities customers received the latest edition of My Rocky Mount Magazine, and the office disseminated seven editions of its external e-newsletter, City Beat.

To ensure our citizens are well-informed of the latest information regarding the coronavirus pandemic, the office launched a Citizen Resource Center on its website. "Our City at Work," a campaign that highlights the work employees continue to do during the COVID-19 pandemic was implemented. The office has been instrumental in organizing new procedures for City Council meetings, utilizing Microsoft Teams

for council members and staff as part of the city's social distancing efforts. During the coronavirus pandemic, staff has also arranged a pair of press conferences featuring city of Rocky Mount leaders as well as health officials from Rocky Mount, Nash, and Edgecombe counties.

Energy Resources: Director Chris Beschler and staff hedged an additional 25% of gas supply through Fiscal Year 2024-25, bringing the total amount of gas hedged to 75%. The department also completed an update to its Operations and Maintenance Manual, which included an Emergency Response Plan. An improved training process was put in place for dispatchers and operators. A pipeline bridge attachment also was completed.

The department received several recognitions, including earning "Tree City USA" distinction for the 16th straight year and "Tree Line" city distinction for a 12th consecutive year. Rocky Mount also is one of just two cities in the country to achieve the American Public Power Association's RP3 Diamond level recognition for six straight years. The award recognizes APPA members utilities that achieve excellence in the areas of reliability, safety, training, and system improvement.

Finance: Director Amy Staton and the department implemented a Local Preference Policy for procurement of eligible goods and services, which will support the local economy and businesses by providing an opportunity to price match when legally allowable. The department also took part in repair projects including the repainting of the pool at the Rocky Mount Senior Center, completing exterior and interior repairs to stair towers at City Hall, and refurbishing drive-thru windows at the Business Services Center.

The department has also been instrumental in reporting methods to capture personnel and supply costs of the COVID-19 pandemic.

Human Resources: Interim Director DeNaide Dickens and staff have kept abreast of COVID-19 compliance as it pertains to municipalities. The staff also completed a research and analysis project for the City Manager regarding personnel matters.

Internal Audit Office: The office responded and researched three employee complaints received and continues to assist the City Manager's Office and Human Resource Director with employee interviews on personnel matters as well as the CMO's office on a research and analysis project regarding personnel.

Technology Services: The Technology Services department has been instrumental in the implementation of Microsoft Teams as an outlet for staff and city council members to be part of Committee of the Whole and City Council meetings. Staff has also developed a city of Rocky Mount mobile application that will keep the public abreast of COVID-19 related information as well as future city news and events.



City Clerk Pam Casey

In compliance with North Carolina state law, City Clerk Pam Casey and staff continue to prepare agendas and give notices regarding City Council meetings.

There have been six meetings during the first quarter of 2020, and the office prepared minutes, ordinances, resolutions, proclamations, and correspondence for Mayor/Council, including public presentations and Declarations of Emergency.



Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton

Community and Business Development:

Community and Business Development welcomed new Director Cynthia Jones. Jones and staff oversaw the completion of five urgent repair homes, 20 housing repairs for moderate income homeowners, 23 housing rehab matching rebates and a pair of scattered sites for low to moderate income homeowners. Also, extensive work was performed to catalog conditions of the downtown buildings.

Development Services: Director Will Deaton and staff commenced renovation to the first floor of City Hall and continued to collaborate with stakeholders to implement strategies in the Atlantic-Arlington Land Use Study. During the COVID-19 pandemic, permit updates and process improvements are ongoing and remote processing has been implemented. Staff also completed an annual Boundary and Annexation Survey update to the Census and state demographer to ensure municipal limits are accurately reflected.

Fire: Chief Corey Mercer and staff recognized 16 personnel during a promotional ceremony in January. The department received several recognitions during the quarter, including a “Sound Off” grant to teach lower income communities about fire safety. Blaise Harris, who serves as Fire Safety Educator, was recognized with the Award of Excellence at the 44th annual N.C. Fire & Life Safety Education Conference. The Stoney Creek Fire-Rescue Department also awarded the department with the Cleveland H. Hunt award in recognition of efforts that contributed to growth of the SCFR department. The department also implemented a new records management system and completed an engineering analysis of electrical and plumbing work at stations for installation of extractors and dryers awarded by FEMA as part of its Assistance for Firefighters Grant.

Human Relations: Director Archie Jones and staff completed a busy quarter by hosting three major events, including the 32 annual Martin Luther King Jr. Oratorical Competition, the 32nd annual Martin Luther King Jr. Unity Breakfast, and the 26th annual International Festival of Cultures. The staff launched planning for the city of Rocky Mount efforts in promoting the 2020 Census.

Assistant City Manager Elton Daniels



Event Center: David Joyner began serving as Interim General Manager during the quarter. The Event Center began the year impressively by hosting a series of major youth sporting events in basketball and volleyball, including “Rumble in the Mount.” The tournaments brought in hundreds of teams from the across the state and Southeast region and more than 5,000 visitors to the city.

Parks and Recreation: Interim Director Joel Dunn and staff hosted a number of major events at the Imperial Centre for the Arts and Sciences including two weekends of local theater shows (“Young Frankenstein”), a new Children’s Museum exhibit, “From Here to There,” an opening event for The Black Light project, and a viewing of the documentary “The Other Boys of Summer.” The first youth and adult basketball league seasons at the Rocky Mount Event Center were completed. The department also held a series of public meetings involving the Battle Park Master Plan. Several events planned by the department have been cancelled due to the pandemic, but virtual classes including yoga and children’s arts are being provided.

Police: Chief George Robinson and staff continue to provide support to the community during the COVID-19 pandemic. Staff has assisted organizers of major food distribution events and served meals during distribution with

Nash-Rocky Mount Schools. A response plan has been completed to address COVID-19 issues that may arise, and each sworn officer and patrol vehicle has been equipped with Personal Protective Equipment. The department is experiencing lower than average calls for service at since the onset of Governor Roy Cooper’s Stay-At-Home Order. The Department has encouraged officers to use discretion to cite offenders on scene. Full custodial arrests reserved for serious crimes and similar circumstances. Most officers are continuing to perform their core job responsibilities.

Public Works: Director Brad Kerr and staff have been awarded contracts for greenway bridge repairs as well as the Sunset Avenue Access Management Corridor study. Staff completed the annual crash summary for the city of Rocky Mount as well as the design for a pair of drainage improvement projects. Environmental Services collected 24,150 pounds of litter and completed six clean-ups that resulted in 2,250 pounds of litter. Tar River Transit has continued operations during the COVID-19 pandemic, and the renovation of its driver’s room at the transfer station is ongoing.

Water Resources: Director Brenton Bent and staff prepared and distributed the 2019 Rocky Mount Drinking Water Report. Upgrades included the installation of a new high duty pump at the Sunset Avenue Water Treatment Plant. The upgrade has a rated capacity of an additional eight million gallons per day. The department also broke ground at the Tar River Reservoir Plant to start construction on the hypochlorite conversion project, which will allow the city to transition from gaseous chlorine to hypochlorite (bleach) as the preferred disinfectant in the water treatment process.

Public Information Officers host media trainings

By Jessie Nunery

The public information officers of the Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Office and Energy Resources, Police and Fire Departments have spent the past two quarters strengthening their collaborations efforts through monthly meetings.

Another step in that process took place in March at the Booker T. Theater when the groups came together, along with members of the Executive Leadership Team, to take part in a series of media trainings.

Dr. Angie Arrington of Evolve Consulting, facilitated the sessions which emphasized messaging, prioritizing city and department mission statements and media fundamentals. Separate training sessions were held for Communications, Marketing and Public Relations, Energy Resources, Fire Department and the Executive Leadership Team. Future training is planned for the police department after restrictions are lifted from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Mock press conferences were held, utilizing scenarios that staff members could encounter during crisis events. Small group exercises led to discussions of how other cities have utilized social media platforms and other media outlets to engage citizens with accurate and timely information.

"I am encouraged by the participation from our Executive Leadership team and our various departments in recognizing the importance of sharing our stories in a cohesive manner," City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney said. "We have a dedicated group of employees who provide critical services to our citizens, and it is vital that we accurately represent our work and mission to the public."



"I am encouraged by the participation from our Executive Leadership team and our various departments in recognizing the importance of sharing our stories in a cohesive manner."

—Rochelle Small-Toney



Trio earns first City Manager's Award

By Jessie Nunery



(l-r) Alicyn Wiedrich, Brenton Bent, Rochelle Small-Toney, and Quentin Whitaker

During Spring 2020, City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney began accepting nominations from employees and citizens for the quarterly City Manager's Award, which will be presented to city of Rocky Mount employees who best exemplify the organization's core values of Customer-Centered Service, Professionalism, Respect, Teamwork & Leadership and Supportive Work Environment.

The first recipients were Water Resources Director Brenton Bent, Art Curator Alicyn Wiedrich and construction worker Quinton Whittaker.

"I believe city of Rocky Mount employees are unmatched in their daily commitment to their jobs and the service of our citizens," Small-Toney said. "It's my pleasure to begin this awards process, which will bring to the

forefront some of the outstanding work done by city employees."

Nominations included detailed and accurate accounts about what made nominees outstanding and how that employee exhibits the city's core values.

Nominations were submitted online via rockymountnc.gov and emailed to the Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Office. Drop boxes at city facilities will be made for future nominations.

Awards will also be given in July, October and December.

The recipients will receive a trophy, certificate and letter of commendation signed by the city manager quarterly and recognized during the luncheon at the annual Employee Appreciation Event.

FINANCE

Purchasing Division holds Virtual Workshop

By Jessie Nunery

Innovative ways to engage our citizens are constantly being developed, and an example of such initiatives was the Minority Women Business Enterprise (MWBE) Virtual Workshop that took place in April.

The session took place utilizing Zoom, a website/application that allows for virtual meetings, chats and presentations.

City of Rocky Mount Purchasing Manager Candice Kirtz, who has worked in public procurement for eight years and is a Certified Local Government Purchasing Officer, began the training with an overview of the MWBE program. Kirtz also discussed "Navigating City Contract Opportunities," which outlined the city's procurement processes for obtaining contracts.

Denise Barnes, the Regional Diversity Manager for LeChase Construction, will share information regarding "Navigating General Contractor Opportunities," including topics such as pre-qualification,

branding, marketing, understanding contracts and working on site. Barnes brought more than 14 years of experience in construction administration and diversity management to the session.



Maj. Bill Simmons, who retired recently from nearly 40 years of civilian and active duty service, presented a North Carolina Military Business Center Overview Briefing. The briefing described roles, mission and responsibility for assisting North Carolina businesses who would like to work with the federal government. Simmons has been a member of the North Carolina Military Business Center since January 2020.

"The COVID-19 pandemic has changed the way we operate on a daily basis," Kirtz said.

"What hasn't changed is the city's dedication to increase outreach to the MWBE community. This MWBE Virtual Workshop allowed the Purchasing Division to do just that through remote training."

City launches mobile app

By Jessie Nunery



The city of Rocky Mount continues to utilize innovative ways to engage citizens and employees during the Coronavirus pandemic. The latest example has come in the form of the city of Rocky Mount mobile app.

The mobile app, designed in collaboration with the Communications, Marketing and Public Relations Office and the city of Rocky Mount's Technology Services Division, will keep users updated of the latest information and resources available during the pandemic. The app also provides links to the city's website, rockymountnc.gov as well as its social media platforms and newsletters. Other features will be added at a later date.

Mobile applications are a popular way to stay connected and establish convenient access to information with the city's diverse demographics. Data shows the following:

- 21 percent of millennials use an app more than 50 times per day
- 49 percent of people open an app at least 11 times per day
- 57 percent of all digital media comes from mobile apps
- The average smartphone owner uses 30 apps each month

"During the Coronavirus pandemic, it is more important than ever that our city maintains and expands available communication platforms," City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney said. "The launch of our app will keep our citizens and employees connected to the latest news at the touch of their mobile devices. We are excited about how this will engage users not only during the pandemic, but going forward, as well."

The city of Rocky Mount app is available on all Android and Apple platforms.

Celebrating Fair Housing Month

By Robin Cox



In April 1968, Congress passed the Fair Housing Act. Amended in 1988, the Act guarantees equal housing opportunities for all people and makes it illegal to discriminate based on race, color, national origin, gender, religion, family status or disability. Now, April is celebrated across the United States as Fair Housing Month, and Mayor Sandy Roberson and the City Council proclaimed April as Fair Housing Month in Rocky Mount.

HUD's theme for the 2020 commemoration is: Because Sexual Harassment in Housing is Illegal. The theme serves a dual purpose; first, as a public awareness campaign that urges the persons who experience sexual harassment where they live to call HUD or their local Human Relations office for assistance. Second, the theme reflects continuing efforts to combat this and other forms of discrimination.

While most events highlighting the month were postponed due to the outbreak of COVID-19, the importance of fair housing in light of the pandemic has never been greater.

"The economic impact from the Coronavirus will be felt throughout our region even when the situation is over," said Archie Jones, Human Relations director. "There are folks in our community who have lost their jobs due to the Coronavirus, and that has put their housing situation in jeopardy. Ensuring citizens not be discriminated against, in addition to having access to resources to assist them during this time of crisis, is crucial."

During April, hearings related to eviction and other housing issues were postponed and the courts closed due to the pandemic. When the courts reopen and hearings resume, the concern is that members of our vulnerable populations may be susceptible to discrimination.

While fair housing may be highlighted in April, the principals and ideals embodied in the Fair Housing Act should be observed year-round.

2020 Census efforts move forward

By Robin Cox



Because the 2020 Census will determine funding for housing programs, schools, hospitals, economic development and much more in our community, an accurate is critical for our region. Amid the Coronavirus pandemic, the city of Rocky Mount continued its efforts to encourage residents to complete the 2020 Census.

Lead by the Human Relations Department, the plan targeted the harder to reach populations such as senior citizens, and lower income residents. The hiring of a community outreach coordinator and two community outreach specialists on a part-time basis was integral to reaching those populations.

To assist those unable to leave their residences due to the stay at home order, the Human Relations Department offered residents, such as the elderly and those without sufficient access to the internet, assistance via phone by contacting a representative with the department. Those who did not wish to participate via the internet were encouraged to complete the form via phone or mail in their forms.

Several local employers agreed to place flyers in their employees' paychecks. Community outreach staff connected with the Rocky Mount Chamber of Commerce to reach out to local businesses/employers to remind employees to participate in the Census.

Advertising for the 2020 Census was coordinated by the Communications, Marketing and Public Relation Office and included billboards strategically located in both Nash and Edgecombe counties, advertising boards throughout the city, radio promotions, ads in multiple issues of the city's newsletters and annual magazine, *MY Rocky Mount*, commercials on C.I.T.Y. TV-19, a banner on the city's website, rockymountnc.gov, and much. Specific flyers were developed to assist the Community Outreach team in reaching the traditionally under-counted population.

As of the writing of this article, Rocky Mount had a response rate of 47.3 percent, with the surrounding counties having 47.9 and 44.3 percent for Nash and Edgecombe counties, respectively. Comparatively, the state of North Carolina had a 46.1 percent response rate while nationally the overall rate was 49.8 percent.

The official response date for the 2020 Census was moved to Aug. 14. However, that date could be extended further.

City Remains Proactive in the Face of Coronavirus

By Dorothy Brown Smith



During the coronavirus pandemic, the City of Rocky Mount employees lived its mission to advance community well-being, safety, and quality of life by delivering excellent public services and actively collaborating with the community towards a fulfilling and inspired future for its citizens. They responded to the Centers for Disease Control (CDC) order by being early, empathetic, accurate, and effective in all of their actions.

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney brought the Executive Leadership Team together **early** – and prior to the governor’s stay-at-home order, each department had developed its Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP).

Everyone remained **empathetic** to the concerns and needs of employees and citizens in order to reduce emotional turmoil. Throughout this process accurate and factual information has been shared and new communication methods have been instituted. All employees have worked **effectively** to help build understanding and guide our employees, citizens, media, and other groups in responding to COVID-19 and complying with public health recommendations.

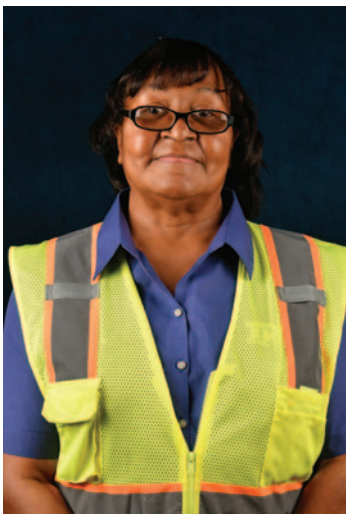
These actions have not gone by unnoticed, as citizens placed “thank you” to City employees signs in their yards and the City launched the “Our City at Work Campaign.” Over 30 photos have been shared to date and Electricities, the Public Power membership organization for municipalities across Virginia, North Carolina and South Carolina, shared a Twitter post of the lineman on their page. In addition to a reach of more than 60,000 people on the city’s social

media platforms, the campaign utilized C.I.T.Y. TV-19, a dedicated page on the city’s website and the digital billboard on Winstead Avenue near I-64 with more than 60,000 weekly impressions.

The Coronavirus Information page was created to assist residents seeking updated information regarding COVID-19. The site, accessible through rockymountnc.gov, contains videos, downloadable materials and more.

A Citizen Resource Center, housed on the

City’s website home page, was launched to ensure our citizens are well-informed of the latest information regarding the coronavirus pandemic. There are a number of



local, state and federal agencies and organizations providing exceptional services and assistance during this pandemic, and we wanted this information to be housed in a centralized place to streamline the way citizens can access the information regarding the many resources available. Information is included on health/healthcare, employees, employers, small business, education, housing, legal assistance and more. So far, the page has received more than 700 visitors.


As we continue to monitor the impact of the COVID-19 pandemic on our community, all

employees are commended on how they continue to provide the exemplary public service our citizens deserve during this unprecedented time.

In a gesture of thanks, a lunch catered by Six Smokin' Bones was provided in April to nearly 400 essential employees working during the pandemic.



Citizen Resource Center



ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL

Find the COVID-19 information you need in one place.

rockymountnc.gov

OUR CITY @ WORK

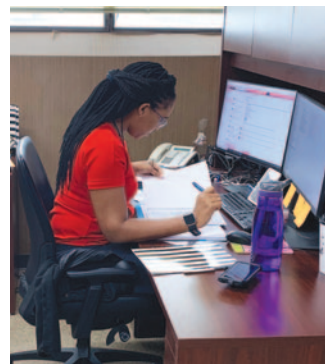
PROVIDING EXCELLENT MUNICIPAL SERVICES



ROCKY MOUNT, NC
THE CENTER OF IT ALL



#ourcityatwork #rockymount





Creating the One Stop Shop

By Robin Cox

The much anticipated One Stop Shop for Development Services is soon to be a reality. Demolition of the former Business Services Center on the first floor of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building began in February and William Deaton, Development Services director, is excited for what the move will mean for the city.

“Customers are our number one priority, and currently our space to interact and consult with them is limited,” said Deaton. “Renovating the more than 5,000 square feet of existing space will allow us to enhance efficiency and improve the customer service experience. Kiosks and meetings rooms will also be available for visitors.”

The mission of the One Stop Shop is to improve the coordination, predictability, timeliness, quality of customer service and the development review process. Delivering those improvements will require four main components, according to Deaton: technology, streamlining review processes, physical space and operational enhancements. All of those items come together in the new One Stop location.

“Currently, we’re housed on the second floor, and our divisions are split. This causes confusion with the number of customers we see under normal circumstances. Combining our location on the first floor will make it easier for customers to navigate what can be a difficult development and approval process at times,” explained Deaton.

“This location will provide a functional space for members of Planning and Inspections to work more closely together and handle any issues that may arise.”

The One Stop Shop will house 21 employees from Planning, Zoning and Inspections.

Planners, plan examiners, permit technicians and administrative staff will provide customer service, development review and multi-department process coordination.

Total cost of the project is \$849,987.66 and includes construction and furniture fixtures, the reconfiguration of the lobby and some work on the second floor. The department hopes to move into the new space in August.

Using Wayfinding to explore Rocky Mount's history

By Robin Cox



The city of Rocky Mount's Wayfinding Project and branding transition continued during the first quarter of 2020.

Phase 1 of Wayfinding included vehicular signs directing residents and visitors to places of interest in the city. Phase 2 focuses on walking traffic with strategically placed pedestrian kiosks throughout Rocky Mount's downtown. The kiosks will include information and details related to events, history and buildings in the city.

Part of the city's rebranding includes the transition of 350 city fleet vehicles to the new brand and vehicular identification signs at the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building, the Police Department and the Business Services Center.



The Rocky Mount Mills area will be included in the next phase of the project.



Barham named Water Resources Employee of the Quarter

—By Jessie Nunery

Tuntima Barham had two career options presented to her by her father when she was growing up in Thailand: Farming or School.

Barham chose to educate herself, and nearly two decades after receiving a college degree, she recently was named the Water Resources Employee of the Quarter.

Barham has been a member of the department for nearly 13 years, and she currently serves as a senior lab analyst. She has moved up the ranks, serving in capacities that included laboratory technician and laboratory analyst.

"Tuntima is a highly dependable employee who consistently strives to do her best," said Amanda James, Water Resources Superintendent. "She plays an important role in water quality services by contributing her talents to benefit our diverse team. Tuntima exemplifies what is needed to be a team leader."

Barham became a United States citizen in 2018, and she said she enjoys calling North Carolina home as she lives in the area with her husband and two boys.

"Life is always an adventure," Barham said. "I'm loving life and enjoying working for the city of Rocky Mount. I'm thankful for being named the employee of the quarter."



RMFD Promotional Ceremony Recognizes Employee Accomplishments

By Kim Whittig

On January 9, 2020, the Rocky Mount Fire Department held a special ceremony at the historic Booker T. Theatre to honor 16 newly promoted employees. The evening began with the presentation of colors by the RMFD Honor Guard, followed by an invocation from RMFD Interim Division Chief of Operations, Mike Roupp.

Fire Chief Corey Mercer offered words of appreciation and thanks to the promotees for their dedication to the employee development process. Assistant City Manager Natasha Hampton congratulated the employees on their accomplishments.

The guest speaker for the evening was Tracey Drewery, Interim Division Chief of Life Safety and Accreditation. Prior to offering words

of encouragement, Drewery thanked all of family members in attendance for their constant support of the employees in their educational pursuits. Drewery then spoke on the importance of attitude and the effect it has in all life endeavors. He reminded each of the promotees they had been chosen, partly due to their attitude for success.

The list of those promoted are listed in the new hires/promotions section of this magazine.

Each employee was recognized for their accomplishments and pinned with their new badge by a family member.

The evening culminated with a reception for the promotees and their families.



Mike Roupp began his career in the fire service with the city of Rocky Mount in November of 1996. Over the past 23 years, he has risen through the ranks as a Fire Engineer, Fire Captain, Battalion Chief, and most recently, was

appointed as Interim Division Chief of Operations.

Chief Roupp's latest accomplishment was completing the Executive Fire Officer program. The Executive Fire Officer Program (EFO) is a joint initiative of the U.S. Fire Administration and the National Fire Academy to provide senior

fire officers with enhanced professional development through a unique series of four graduate level courses consisting of a two week class at the National Fire Academy followed by an applied research project that relates to their organization. Over the course of four years,

Roupp Earns Executive Fire Officer Credentials

By Kim Whittig

senior officers become equipped with skills in personal and organizational leadership, community risk reduction, and emergency services operations. During the 31 years of the program's existence, only 4,100 fire officers worldwide have completed the program, and

only 170 of those have been from North Carolina.

During the four years spent completing the EFO program, Chief Roupp wrote four applied research papers that each identified a need or potential need within our city, community, or fire department. His papers included Fit for Duty Testing for Firefighters, Falls in the Elderly Community, Suicide in the Fire Service, and Chaplains in the Fire Service. In addition to fulfilling his EFO requirements, each of these research papers have provided valuable information for the Rocky Mount Fire Department and aided his peers in adapting programs and practices to address needs that were identified.

Chief Mike Roupp has become the 12th member of RMFD to complete the rigorous four years of study and research projects required to be a graduate of the Executive Fire Officer program.

RMPD makes Spring promotions

By Clay Wilder

"I'd like to extend a congratulations to all the members of our department for their professional work." —Chief George Robinson

The Rocky Mount Police Department takes pride in its promotional process. Promotional advancements are opportunities to improve morale and stimulate efficiency and growth within the agency. This is a time for a newly promoted employee to accept new challenges and responsibilities as they move forward in their career. On February 13, 2020, the Rocky Mount Police Department honored a group of employees whose names are listed in the new hires/promotions section of this magazine.

"I'd like to extend a congratulations to all the members of our department for their professional work," Chief George Robinson said. "These fantastic results are the stepping stones for future promotional advancements. I look forward in continuing to work alongside each of them as we advance this department and provide the highest level of police service to the citizens of Rocky Mount."

COMMUNITY & BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT

Community and Business Development Week recognized

By Jessie Nunery

The Community and Business Development Department strives to enhance the quality of life for Rocky Mount's residents by providing accessible, safe, healthy, and affordable housing; creating a sustainable economy with a focus on local, minority and women-owned businesses; and building collaborative networks to provide the necessary training for workforce development.

The department celebrated Community Development Week in April, where director Cynthia Jones was given a proclamation by Mayor Sandy Roberson and the City Council, proclaiming April 13-17 as Community and Business Development week in the city of Rocky Mount.





Gas division uses technology to improve efficiency

By Amy Blanton

The Energy Resources Department's gas division has introduced mobile technology for field employees in order to improve efficiency in daily operations.

Natural gas is a federally mandated energy source, and utilities are required to document their compliance to federal regulations.

In order to create more efficiency in tracking compliance, and ultimately to minimize the paper trail, the gas division has been using iPads for data collecting in the field.

Each gas worker was given a mobile device equipped with FlowGIS for capturing data, such as service installations and damages. FlowGIS is a software developed by Magnolia River that allows gas workers to digitally report compliance records, including inspections of the gas system, gas leaks and damaged gas lines. All compliance records must be documented for state inspections.

The iPads are also equipped with Field Logic, which documents the installation of gas mains and gas service lines. Field Logic also tracks the gas equipment used, such as piping, using barcodes.

Trackability of equipment will eventually become mandatory, so Energy Resources has been proactive in acquiring this information. Miguel Salazar, gas line supervisor, created as-built service cards for Field Logic, which allow gas workers to draw a map showing the location of new gas services. The service cards are completed in the field, emailed to the gas staking engineer and uploaded to GIS.

Ben Barnes, gas staking engineer, said the information on the service cards is available for all gas division employees and has been especially helpful for locators while marking underground service lines.

Energy Resources earns RP3 designation

by Amy Blanton



The city of Rocky Mount Energy Resources department has earned a Reliable Public Power Provider (RP3)[®] designation from the American Public Power Association for providing reliable and safe electric service.

The RP3 designation, which lasts for three years, recognizes public power utilities that demonstrate proficiency in four key disciplines: reliability, safety, workforce development, and system improvement. Criteria include sound business practices and a utility-wide commitment to safe and reliable delivery of electricity. The city of Rocky Mount joins more than 275 public power utilities nationwide that hold the RP3 designation.

“Receiving an RP3 designation is a great honor and demonstrates a utility’s commitment to implementing industry best practices in utility operations,” says Aaron

“Receiving an RP3 designation is a great honor and demonstrates a utility’s commitment to implementing industry best practices in utility operations.”

—Aaron Haderle, chair of the Association’s RP3 Review Panel

Haderle, chair of the Association’s RP3 Review Panel and manager of Transmission and Distribution Operations at Kissimmee Utility Authority, Florida. “RP3 utilities are consistently looking to improve their workforce, system reliability, and safety to serve their communities better.”

As part of the RP3 designation, Rocky Mount also received the Diamond level for the sixth time. The Diamond level signifies that 95 to 100 percent of the required criteria were met. Rocky Mount is one of only two public power providers to have received the Diamond level recognition six times.

“This is a great honor,” said Chris Beschler, director of Energy Resources. “We take a lot of pride in the work we do to power our community. It’s nice to be recognized as among the ‘best of the best’ on a national level.”

Visit our website



www.rockymountnc.gov

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

New Hires

Congratulations, and welcome to the city of Rocky Mount's new employees:

Photos not taken during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Lossie Deans

Position: Administrative Clerk
Start Date: Apr. 22, 2020

DeNaide Dickens

Position: Interim Human Resources Director
Start Date: Feb. 10, 2020

Bessie Martin

Position: Administrative Clerk
Start Date: Jan. 27, 2020

Marshal Langley

Position: Substation Technician I
Start Date: Apr. 8, 2020

Chad Keeter

Position: Firefighter/EMT
Start Date: Apr. 4, 2020

Dalston Jones

Position: Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator Trainee
Start Date: Dec. 31, 2019

Taylor Black

Position: Police Cadet
Start Date: Jan. 13, 2020

Alfredo Hernandez

Position: Police Cadet
Start Date: Jan. 13, 2020

Brandon Watson

Position: Police Cadet
Start Date: Jan. 13, 2020

Julian Whitney

Position: Assistant Fire Marshal
Start Date: Jan. 22, 2020

Mario David

Position: Water Treatment Plant Operator
Start Date: Jan. 23, 2020

Marilee Contois

Position: Sr. Human Resources Technician
Start Date: Feb. 3, 2020

Samuel Holmes

Position: Police Cadet
Start Date: Police Cadet

Yusef Brown IV

Position: Police Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 4, 2020

Nathan Cook

Position: Police Officer
Start Date: Feb. 7, 2020

Jaquez Moody

Position: Maintenance Worker
Start Date: Feb. 7, 2020

Kandi Phillips

Position: Administrative Assistant
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Elisa Pearson

Position: Wellness Coordinator
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Keith Evans

Position: Building Maintenance/Repair Worker
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Corey Mcauley

Position: Telecommunicator
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Melissa Walters

Position: Telecommunicator
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Netanya Richardson

Position: Telecommunicator
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Daniel Paugh

Position: Telecommunicator
Start Date: Feb. 17, 2020

Cynthia Jones

Position: Community and Business Development Director
Start Date: Feb. 20, 2020

Julius Bates

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Apr. 4, 2020

Joshua Hudson

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 24, 2020

Kyle Garrett

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 25, 2020

Connor Wood

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: March 9, 2020

Janicento Williamson

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 28, 2020

Patrick Flowers

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 24, 2020

Jaquan Wilkins

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 25, 2020

Hannah Genaudeau

Position: Firefighter Cadet
Start Date: Feb. 21, 2020

Raymond Powell

Position: Apprentice Lineman
Start Date: March 3, 2020

Deshantal Battle

Position: Cashier
Start Date: March 4, 2020

Katrina Boseman

Position: Telecommunicator
Start Date: March 5, 2020

Keyana Walston

Position: Management Analyst
Start Date: March 23, 2020

Saunta Albritton

Position: Police Records Technician
Start Date: March 25, 2020

Lisa Templeton

Position: Police Records Technician
Start Date: March 25, 2020

Thumb's Up

Mr. Beschler,

I wish to compliment the outstanding service provided this morning by your electric staff in restoring power to my neighborhood.

At approximately 9 a.m., our service was lost. Apparently a tree limb hitting the power lines, caused by wind associated with the arriving weather front. The outage affected at least a block of my neighbors. I called your very efficient automated trouble report which identifies customers by their landline numbers. Within 10 minutes three trucks appeared and commenced work. Within another 15 minutes service was restored. And, your crews accomplished this during the height of the rain storm despite the extra hazard which that presented to them.

This is not the first time I have had occasion to compliment the quality of service provided by your department and staff, which after more than a decade I have come to happily anticipate. But it deserves appreciation. We are fortunate to have such a high quality in our city employees.

Thank you,

E. F. Williamson

Movin' On Up

Kudos to the individuals within the city of Rocky Mount who have received promotions. The following employees are Movin' On Up:

Donald Moseley, Police Captain

Earl Leroy, Fire Engineer

James Staten, Police Captain

Westlyn Seabreeze, Police Lieutenant

Timothy Bunt, Police Lieutenant

Tyronsa Lawrence, Energy Resources Dispatch/OPT II

Darryl Stother, Energy Resources Electric Operations Manager

Davin Best, Fire Captain

Charles Bunn, Fire Battalion Chief

Michael Wayne, Fire Captain

Kirby Turner, Fire Engineer

Stephen Baker, Fire Captain

Jason Bland, Fire Engineer

Cameron Joyner, Police Sergeant

Walter Keeter, Police Lieutenant

Justin Cannon, Fire Engineer

Cassandra Williams, Human Resources Administrative Assistant

Steven Gupton, Fire Engineer

Tyler Jenkins, Fire Engineer

Thomas Painter, Fire Engineer

Martin Strickland, Fire

David Dugas, Fire Engineer

Jeremy Wells, Fire Engineer

Justin Sanders, Sr. Police Officer

Stephanie Pardo, Sr. Police Officer

Fuquan Battle, Electric/Electrician Helper

Tiara Jenkins, Human Resources Administrative Secretary

Niesha Hinton, Police Cadet

Brenda Williams, Energy Resources Dispatch/OPT II

Carmen Fournillier, Wastewater Treatment Plant Operator I

Cofield-Jones named Human Resources Director

By Jessie Nunery

Rochelle Small-Toney has announced the hiring of Kena Cofield Jones to serve as Human Resources director for the city of Rocky Mount.

“Kena Cofield Jones is the consummate professional,” said Small-Toney. “With over 30 years of experience in Human Resources management, Jones has a breadth of knowledge in all aspects of human resources, including pay classification, benefits administration, employee relations, worker’s compensation and safety, as well as employee development and recruitment.”

Jones is an Adjunct Faculty member at Trinity Washington (D.C.) University’s School of Professional Studies where she provides classroom instruction on Business Administration and Human Resources for undergraduate and graduate students. Recently, she served as a member of the executive leadership team for the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services – Division of Public Health where she led, mentored, coached and developed the human resources team.

Jones has held numerous Human Resources positions with the D.C. Government Department of Human Resources, including Senior Advisor; Associate Director for Human Resources Solutions Administration; Associate Director of Business Operations; Supervisory Measurements, Analysis & Planning Specialist; Human Capital Manager; and Supervisory HR Specialist.

Local government is not new to Jones, who has held numerous managerial positions with the City of Richmond, Virginia for 16 years. While with the City of Richmond, she served as the City Manager’s Chief of Staff, Human Resources Manager and held numerous other human resources positions.

Jones holds a master’s degree in Business Management from the University of the District of Columbia, a master’s in Philosophy from Walden University, and a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Virginia State University. Jones also holds designations as a Certified Public Manager and Lean Six Sigma Green Belt.



Kena Cofield Jones

City centralizes Business Services

By Jessie Nunery

City Manager Rochelle Small-Toney announced that the Business Services Center is being reorganized into a single centralized function for utility billing and collections, fees and loan payments and collections. The new department is named Business Services and Collections and went into effect, May 12, 2020. Latasha Hall, who has served as Business Services Center Manager since August 2013, is being promoted to Interim Director and will oversee the department until a permanent director has been named.

“Hall has made major process improvements since joining the City and I am confident that she will ensure that we continue to follow our collection policies and practices, and retain all billing information for all debt collected upon and owed to the city,” said Small-Toney. “Further, Hall will be responsible for investigating best practices for training all personnel involved in loan arrangements and collections.”

Hall, a graduate of NC Wesleyan College, holds a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration. She earned a master’s degree in Human Services specializing in Business Management and Counseling from Liberty University. Certified in Lean Six Sigma, Kaizen, she also has an associate’s degree in Information Technology.

Hall has more than 17 years in leadership/management experience that consists of a background in Customer Service/Call Center, IT Support, Case Management, Banking Operations, Collections, Project management and Business Analytics.



Latasha Hall

TALK OF THE TOWN

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“Reader’s Choice Awards” for Best Officer

Captain Michael Whitley earned Silver Place in the Rocky Mount Telegram’s “Reader’s Choice Awards” for Best Officer. Lieutenant David Bowers earned a Bronze finish in the same category.



Captain Michael Whitley



Lieutenant David Bowers

Stay Connected

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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:

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www.imperialcentre.org

www.rockymountsportscomplex.com

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