

## Veterans Day Ceremony is Nov. 11

On Nov. 11, the Harnett County Veterans Council will host one of the biggest Veterans Day ceremonies the county has ever seen.

In addition to the Veterans Day ceremony at Veterans Memorial Park and the annual Veterans Day parade in Lillington, this year's ceremony will memorialize a local Vietnam veteran who will finally come home to Harnett County after more than half a century.

Staff Sgt. Donald D. Stewart of Coats was serving in the Vietnam War when he was killed in action in a plane crash on Dec. 11, 1965, in Phú Yên, Vietnam, along with four crew members and 81 Vietnamese troops who were fighting with the Americans. He left behind a wife, Wandra Raynor, and an unborn daughter, Donna. The remains of those who died in the crash were collected and some were buried in Arlington while others were held in Hawaii.

It was only recently that Staff Sgt. Stewart's remains were identified using DNA samples from his daughter and brother, Robert G. Stewart of Coats. Those remains will be flown to North Carolina next week and will be escorted back to Harnett County where Staff Sgt. Stewart will finally be laid to rest as part of this year's Veterans Day commemoration.

This year's Veterans Day ceremony will begin on Nov. 11 at 10 a.m. in Veterans Memorial Park beside the Harnett County Courthouse in Lillington. Guest speakers will include N.C. Sen. Ron Rabin, 440th Airlift Wing Commander



**Staff Sgt. Donald D. Stewart of Coats was killed in action in Vietnam.**

Col. Karl Schmitkons, and Lt. Col. Ret. R.C. "Doc" Weaver, a pilot who was supposed to be on the plane that crashed and killed Staff Sgt. Stewart, but was not due to an overage of flight hours.

Following the speeches, officials will unveil the Harnett County Vietnam Veterans Monument. Staff Sgt. Stewart's name is already on the monument, but two additional names will be added – Pfc. Neal Denning was killed in action in the Vietnam War and Master Sgt. Willie Wilkerson died of wounds he received in the war. Their families will also be recognized during the ceremony.

Additionally, a traveling version of the National Vietnam Veterans Memorial Wall in Washington, D.C. will be on display.

Following the ceremony, lunch will be served in the Government Complex Commons. The lineup for the Veterans Day parade will begin at noon with the parade kicking off at 1 p.m. in Downtown Lillington. The parade will start on 10th Street and end on West Lofton Street. Staff Sgt. Stewart's family will be honored as the grand marshals along with any Vietnam Veterans who would like to participate.

After the parade, a memorial service will be held for Staff Sgt. Stewart at Coats Baptist Church at 3 p.m. The public is invited to attend. Following the service, Staff Sgt. Stewart will be buried by the U.S. Air Force with full military honors at Lakeside Memorial Gardens in Angier.

A wake will be held Tuesday, Nov. 10 from 6 until 8 p.m. at Bryan-Lee Funeral Home in Angier.

"This is truly an awesome occasion for Harnett County as our nation commemorates the 50th anniversary of the Vietnam War," said Amy Noel, president of the Harnett County Veterans Council. "We're proud that we will be able to bring a Vietnam veteran home during the commemoration and we invite the public to come out and take part in this occasion with us."

For more information on Veterans Day events in Harnett County, contact Amy Noel at (910) 893-7574 anoel@harnett.org.

Keep up with Harnett County on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram, and go to [www.harnett.org/publicinfo](http://www.harnett.org/publicinfo) for news releases, important updates, a community calendar and other information.



# Department Spotlight

## Harnett County Veterans Services

For veterans, navigating the complex system of state and federal benefits can be a never ending headache of phone calls to different agencies without much help.

Harnett County Veterans Services is specially equipped to make sure the county's 14,000 veterans get the benefits they've earned through their military service.

Eric Truesdale leads the department as Harnett County's veterans services director. Truesdale is a retired senior master sergeant with the U.S. Air Force and has been with Harnett County Veterans Services since 1996.

Assisting Truesdale in the department are Veterans Services Specialist Amy Noel and Administrative Support Specialist Cathy Bryant.

Truesdale says one common misconception is that he is affiliated with the Department of Veterans Affairs.

"I'm a veterans advocate," he said. "I work for the veterans, not the VA."

He said his job is to help veterans through the process of receiving benefits from the state and federal government and to connect veterans with veteran agencies and organizations.

"It can be a nightmare for these veterans," he said. "My job is to help veterans and their family members find the benefits they're eligible for."

Dealing with the myriad of agencies that provide benefits for veterans can understandably leave many veterans feeling frustrated.

Truesdale said the hardest part of his job is dealing with people who are angry at the system.

"You've got to change gears," he said. "This job is about dealing with people."

In addition to serving the veterans of Harnett County, Truesdale represents the county on numerous veterans organizations. He is a member of American Legion Post 28 in Lillington, Disabled American Veterans Chapter 74 in Erwin and Veterans of Foreign Wars Post



**Harnett County Veterans Services works to make sure the county's 14,000 veterans navigate the system to get the benefits they've earned. Veterans Services staff include, from left, Administrative Support Specialist Cathy Bryant, Veterans Services Director Eric Truesdale and Veterans Services Specialist Amy Noel. The office recently relocated to 817 S. 8th St., Lillington.**

6722 in Lillington, along with numerous other civic organizations.

He is also a member of the Harnett County Veterans Council, which Noel chairs, and which puts on numerous veterans events in the county, including ceremonies at Harnett County Veterans Park, which commemorate Memorial Day and Veterans Day. Veterans Park is located in the Harnett County Government Complex beside the courthouse.

Earlier this year, Truesdale was appointed to the Governor's Working Group on Veterans, Service Members and their Families by Governor Pat McCrory. The organization was established to bring veteran support agencies across the state together to collaborate to better meet the needs of North Carolina's veterans and their families.

"This is a conglomeration of government agencies, nonprofits and businesses that want to help veterans," he said.

In October, Veterans Services moved from its former location in the Harnett County Administration Building to the former Board of Elections office at 817 S. 8th St., Lillington. The new location provides a lot more room, which means more ways to serve veterans in Harnett County. The office features a computer terminal where veterans who come in can apply for benefits online.

"Our new location offers more room and more services for our veterans," said Truesdale. "We're excited about it."

For more information on Harnett County Veterans Services, go to [www.harnett.org/veterans/](http://www.harnett.org/veterans/).

The website provides a list of phone numbers for veterans agencies and important links to websites with important information for veterans and information about how to obtain different types of benefits.



## County EOC Participates in Harris Drill



Dozens of Harnett County employees and officials took part in the FEMA Graded Hostile Action Drill Tuesday, Oct. 27. The drill involved terrorists attacking the Shearon Harris Nuclear Power Plant in Wake County. Harnett County Emergency Management participated in the drill along with emergency officials from Wake, Chatham and Lee counties. County employees manned stations in the Emergency Operations Center (EOC) including Direction and Control, Administrative Support, Communications, Operations, Logistics, Planning, Finance, Public Information and Rumor Control. The exercises are designed to make sure the county is prepared in the event of an emergency.

## Employees Take Part in Health Fair

Harnett County employees were invited to take part in the county's annual Employee Health Fair, which was held Oct. 8 in the Government Complex Commons. Employees were able to speak with representatives from various health care and resource providers about programs relevant to their lives including physical therapy, identity theft, audiology, sleep disorders, men's health, dental health and much more. Employees were also able to receive flu vaccinations for free during the health fair. Attendance at this year's health fair, which is hosted by Harnett County Human Resources, was 256 employees.



## November is Adoption Awareness Month

The Harnett County Board of Commissioners adopted a proclamation declaring November 2015 as "Adoption Awareness Month" and Nov. 21, 2015, as "Adoption Awareness Day."

The proclamation encourages Harnett County families "to share their

hearts and homes with youth ages nine and older waiting to be adopted."

The Harnett County Department of Social Services works diligently with the State of North Carolina to place foster children in adoptive homes. In 2014, 10 children in Harnett County

were adopted from foster care.

In passing the proclamation, Harnett County hopes to spread awareness "on behalf of the hundreds of children in foster care in North Carolina who continue to wait for a loving permanent family."

# Emergency Services Stages Drill at CCCC



Emergency responders from Harnett County, local law enforcement and other area jurisdictions took part in a training exercise at Central Carolina Community College's Lillington campus on Oct. 13. The drill simulated an active shooter on campus. Students and faculty with CCC took part in the drill, posing as hostages and victims, and used makeup to create their "injuries." During the drill, law enforcement worked to clear several buildings on campus of suspects while emergency responders rescued and treated victims.

# Utilities Not Affiliated with Water Test Bags

The Harnett County Department of Public Utilities wishes to inform the public that plastic bags, which have been placed on residents' doors with materials to conduct a "Community Water Test" are not affiliated with Harnett County Public Utilities. The bags have been distributed by a company that sells water filtration products.

"Harnett County Public Utilities has nothing to do with and is in no way promoting the use of these filter systems for our customers," said Public Utilities Director Steve Ward. "The sales pitch used by the company can be misleading in that it may imply that Harnett County's water contains certain chemicals that may not be good for someone's longterm health."

Ward said the trace amount of chemicals present in Harnett County's public water are used to disinfect the water so that it remains safe for public consumption.

"It is up to the consumer to decide whether or not to purchase these filter systems, but we do not believe they are necessary," he said.

For more information about water quality in Harnett County, visit Harnett County Public Utilities at <http://www.harnett.org/utilities/>.



# Dula Takes Part in RTRP Economic Development Panel

Nick Dula with Harnett County Economic Development took part in the Research Triangle Regional Partnership (RTRP) South Economic Summit, held Oct. 13 at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford. Dula participated in a panel that featured economic development leaders from Lee, Chatham and Moore counties. Panelists talked about opportunities and challenges their counties face in bringing economic development projects to the area. They also answered questions from the audience. Triangle Business Journal also sponsored the event.





## Human Resources Corner

# Ways to Make Retirement Savings Last Longer

More and more Americans are living longer and healthier lives. But, planning for that life during retirement can be hard to do. In some cases, retirement can mean a limited amount of money and no idea on how long you're going to need to make it last.

Ask yourself the following questions to see how to make your retirement savings last longer.

### Am I really ready for retirement?

Use a retirement calculator to get a rough estimate of how much you'll need to live comfortably during retirement. You may want to talk to a financial advisor, since he or she may be able to draw on details that a retirement calculator can't pick up on and help you arrive at a more realistic figure.

### Do I need to change my housing arrangement?

It might make more financial sense to sell your \$200,000 house and move into a smaller, \$90,000 condo to save on your housing costs. If you want to keep your home, follow the lead of Felix Unger and Oscar Madison, and consider sharing the living expenses with another person.

Also, don't rule out living with a

family member. This may give you a chance to pay less in housing costs in exchange for other services like babysitting or minor home repairs, not to mention adding more family time to your life.

### Do I need to work full time a little longer?

You may need to delay retirement and continue working for a while longer. This option could give you more time to contribute to tax-deferred investment accounts and a chance to postpone withdrawing funds from those accounts early. If you leave your money in a little longer, you're giving your savings more time to grow. In short, the longer you remain in the workforce, the less you must save for your retirement years.

### Do I need to work part-time during retirement?

Working after retirement — at least part-time — may be a necessity, but it doesn't have to be the same career you just had. Consider part-time work making money from a hobby you enjoy or

with a local non-profit who could benefit from your expertise. This way you earn extra income and continue to interact with your local community.

### Can I delay collecting Social Security?

If you begin collecting at age 62 your Social Security benefits will be greatly reduced. However, if you can wait a few years to collect, your payments will increase about 8 percent each year up to age 70. Therefore, you should determine the best time to start receiving payments in order to receive the most benefit. Contact your nearest Social Security office to better understand your options.

### Do I need an investment check up?

Talk to your financial advisor to see if it's time to modify your investment strategy. Maybe the market has changed since you last reviewed your financial plan. Or perhaps it's time to invest more conservatively.

Whether you've applied for retirement or are still thinking about it, use these tips to help stretch your savings.

## Employees Now Have Access to Wellness Stations

The Harnett County Employee Wellness Committee has set up Employee Wellness Stations to allow employees more control over their health.

Each station includes a scale and blood pressure cuff along with instructions for using the station.

Wellness stations have been set up at the following locations with an employee contact for each station:

- Human Resources (serves HR, Administration, Finance, Planning and Parks & Recreation) — Margie House
- Tax (serves Tax, GIS and Register of Deeds) — Jenny Harrop
- Engineering & Facility Maintenance (serves Engineering & Facilities, and General Services) — Beth Blinson
- IT (serves IT, Veterans Services and Board of Elections) — Lisa McFadden
- Library — Amanda Duntz
- Child Support — Ann Burgun
- Public Utilities — Carol Murayama
- Sheriff's Office (serves Sheriff's Office, Jail and E-911) — Wanda Thomas
- Social Services — Judy Wheeler
- Emergency Services (serves EMS, Animal Control and the Garage) — Calla Godwin

"The idea is that every department has access to a station," said Wellness Committee Member Judy Wheeler. "We want to give employees the tools so that if they exercise, they can see the positive impact on their weight and blood pressure."

For questions or information regarding the stations, contact Judy Wheeler at (910) 814-6800.

## Wheeler Recognized for Earning Clerks Certification from UNC



The Harnett County Board of Commissioners recognized County Clerk Gina Wheeler during their Nov. 2 board meeting for completing the 2015 International Institute of Municipal Clerks (IIMC) Certification Course at the UNC School of Government in Chapel Hill. The course consisted of four week-long sessions, spread over the course of a year.

## Employees Shoot Hoops for a Good Cause

Harnett County employees took part in a charity basketball game Oct. 22 to benefit Harnett County Partnership for Children's Dolly Parton Imagination Library program. Participating employees included Nick Dula, Matt Willis, Tyrone Fisher, Carl Davis, Drew Bryant, Jay Sikes and Darvin Springfield. Board of Commissioners Vice Chairman Gordon Springle also played in the game, which his team won. In recognition of the victory, Partnership for Children Executive Director Tara Fish presented Commissioner Springle with the game ball during the Nov. 2 commissioners meeting.



## Upcoming Events

- The Harnett County Public Library will host "Thank a Veteran," Saturday, Nov. 7, where children can write letters to veterans, thanking them for their service. The letters will be given to veterans during Harnett County's Veterans Day celebration.
- The next Lillington Community Blood Drive will be held Nov. 12 from 1 to 5:30 p.m. in the Government Complex Commons. To schedule an appointment, call (910) 893-7578.
- In recognition of November as National Diabetes Awareness Month, the Harnett County Health Department will host "Living Well with Diabetes," a free Lunch & Learn Nov. 13 from noon until 1 p.m. in the Harnett County Government Complex Commons. Lunch will be provided, but you must register by this Friday, Nov. 6 to attend. To register, call (910) 814-6298.
- Harnett County Cooperative Extension will host the 2015 Farm City Week Banquet Tuesday, Nov. 17 at 6 p.m. at Ron's Barn in Coats. Tickets are \$10 and include dinner and an awards ceremony. Call (910) 893-7530 for tickets or for more information.

*If you know of any important events for December or future months that should be included in this newsletter, email [bhaney@harnett.org](mailto:bhaney@harnett.org).*

# November Employee Birthdays

The following Harnett County employees and board members celebrate birthdays in November. Please join us in wishing these employees a happy birthday.

Nov. 1	Alex Pinkerton (EMS)	15	Harold Manning (Public Utilities)
	Carla Harris (Health)		Mark Ennis (Library)
	Melinda Beasley (Social Services)		Dominic Alvarado (Sheriff's Office)
2	Dennis Cain (Sheriff's Office)		Cynthia Jackson (Social Services)
	Wanda Thomas (Sheriff's Office)		Princess Mercer (Social Services)
3	Marsha Johnson (Department on Aging)	16	Lori Crabtree (Social Services)
	Amber Lucas (Sheriff's Office)	17	Brian Parrish (Cooperative Extension)
	Melvin Rodriguez (EMS)		Ira Hall (IT)
	Cynthia Pierce (Health)	18	Jessica Fish (EMS)
	Duncan Jagers (Sheriff's Office)		Kevin Ennis (Sheriff's Office)
4	Aaron Thomas (Public Utilities)	20	Terry Rearic (Planning)
	Jonathan West (Sheriff's Office)		Angela Warren (Social Services)
5	Jason Faircloth (Sheriff's Office)		Monica Moore (Social Services)
	Isabell Rolle (Social Services)	21	Clinton Durham (JobLink)
	Amanda Hartman (Social Services)	22	Paula Stewart (Administration)
	Wanda Tart (Tax)		Isabel McCormick (Library)
	Grace Kelly (Transportation)		Johnny Carroll (Sheriff's Office)
6	Jason Guinn (Sheriff's Office)	23	Jamie Strickland (Finance)
	Corey Stephenson (Sheriff's Office)		Travis Collins (Sheriff's Office)
	Angela Schaeffer (Social Services)		Jeffrey Williams (Sheriff's Office)
	Moses Pendergrass (Transportation)	24	Derrick Jones (EMS)
8	Alfreda Hicks (Cooperative Extension)		Alphonse McDougald (Public Utilities)
	Jeremy Pope (Public Buildings)		Victoria Payseur (Public Utilities)
	Tara Young (Sheriff's Office)		Angela McCauley (Library)
	Paul Davis (Transportation)		Cris Nystrom (Planning)
9	Allison Norris (Sheriff's Office)	25	Heather Wilkins (Sheriff's Office)
	Bryan McSwain (Health)		Stephen Caviness (Public Utilities)
	Janet Faircloth (Social Services)		John Holder (Sheriff's Office)
	Traci Haire (Social Services)		Ronald Lebrun (Transportation)
10	Kathy Combs (Social Services)	26	Gale Greene (Health)
11	Christopher Toler (EMS)		Danielle Little (Social Services)
	Charmaine Nordquist (Health)	27	Jan Snipes (EMS)
	Autumn Landers (Library)		Roger Krautkramer (Public Utilities)
	Brenda Thomas (Sheriff's Office)		Stacie Taylor (Tax)
12	Lisa Barnes (Health)	28	Christopher Hawk (GIS)
	Caroline Dupree (Social Services)		Jay Sikes (Planning)
13	Kenneth Slattum (Planning)	29	Colleen Kelly (Social Services)
14	Anna Peele (General Services)		Gabrielle Sye (Social Services)
	Michael Blackman (Sheriff's Office)	30	Laquan McKoy (Sheriff's Office)

# Employment Anniversaries

The following Harnett County employees celebrate employment anniversaries this month:

5 years	Jessie Arnold (Fleet Maintenance)	Johnny Allen (EMS)
	Dave Cameron (Public Utilities)	Dorothy Holder (EMS)
	Alphonse McDougald (Public Utilities)	James Johnson (Public Buildings)
	Ashley Howard (Social Services)	15 years
10 years	Harold Flowers (EMS)	20 years
		Barry Blevins (General Services)
		Pamela Hawley (Health)



# Rooms To Go Opens Huge Facility in Dunn



Hundreds of area residents joined interstate travelers from as far away as Florida Saturday, Oct. 17 as Rooms To Go officially opened its 1.45 million square foot regional distribution center and retail store in Harnett County.

The \$40 million facility will create more than 400 jobs for area residents along with more than 100 trucking contracts as Rooms To Go sells furniture to area shoppers and customers traveling up and down I-95, and ships online orders from the store to homes across the region.

For months, the facility has been impossible for interstate travelers in Harnett County to miss as it has been construction along a half-mile stretch of land off Jonesboro Road at I-95 Exit 75.

Rooms To Go held a ribbon cutting for the store and distribution center along with the grand opening, which included comments from Rooms To Go officials along with Harnett County Board of Commissioners Chairman Jim Burgin, N.C. Rep. David Lewis and Dunn Mayor Oscar Harris. Rooms To Go also announced it would donate a portion of the opening day profits to the Dunn Police Athletic League and invited Dunn PAL Director Lt. Rodney Rowland to speak as well.

The night before the grand opening, Rooms To Go held a special reception and invited leaders from around the County and the business community to celebrate the store's opening and tour the massive facility.

## *U.S. 421 to Close for a Month Beginning Nov. 16*

The N.C. Department of Transportation will start road closures and detours on U.S. 421/N.C. 27 beginning Monday, Nov. 16 in Buies Creek as work continues on a new pedestrian tunnel at Campbell University.

During this time, motorists will follow a signed detour using Johnson Farm Road to Sheriff Johnson Road to Old Stage Road to N.C. 27 and back to U.S. 421. The detour is anticipated to last about one month before U.S. 421/N.C. 27 is reopened to one lane of travel in

each direction. Local traffic will still have access to campus via Leslie Campbell Road and Harmon Road.

Located under U.S. 421/N.C. 27, the tunnel will make it safer and easier for pedestrians to navigate the university and the area around campus, including the football stadium. In the last several years, multiple students have been hit by vehicles while trying to cross the highway. The project includes paving, drainage, retaining walls and an underground culvert.

Other North Carolina universities have similar tunnels to access areas of the campus, but this will be the first for Campbell University. NCDOT anticipates the tunnel will open to the public in the summer of 2016. Crews will continue work to the surrounding area, including planting vegetation, through December 2016. The contractor for the \$2.6 million project is Branch Highways of Roanoke, V.A. The contract was awarded to the lowest bidder as required by state law.



# Wings Over Harnett 2015



The second annual Wings Over Harnett fly-in, presented by Hiester Automotive, was held Saturday, Oct. 17 at Harnett Regional Jetport. This year's event, attended by thousands of residents, featured a tandem parachute jump from the All Veteran Group Parachute Team.