

Introducing Sheriff Wayne Coats

In the lobby of the Harnett County Sheriff's Office, there are pictures of all 23 of Harnett County's previous sheriffs (with a few early exceptions), dating back to James A. Johnson in 1855, the year Harnett County was established. A new name will soon be added to the wall. Wayne Coats was appointed Harnett County's 24th sheriff on March 21 by the Harnett County Board of Commissioners. He was named to the post following the resignation of Sheriff Larry Rollins, who served since 2002.

Coats has been with the Harnett County Sheriff's Office 20 years and has served under four previous Harnett County sheriffs – Wade Stewart, Lewis Rosser, Larry Knott and Rollins.

Coats came to Harnett County in 1964 and graduated from Erwin High School. He attended Mitchell Junior College in Statesville on a baseball scholarship.

He went to work for the Dunn Police Department in 1974 and spent two years in Dunn before going to work for the Harnett County Sheriff's Office in 1976. He left the sheriff's office after three years, but returned in 1999 as a deputy at Campbell University. He worked his way up through the Sheriff's Office, being promoted to the rank of corporal in 2001, sergeant in 2007, lieutenant in 2009, captain in 2013 and



Harnett County Sheriff Wayne Coats

major in 2015.

The funny thing is Coats never planned on a career in law enforcement.

"When I came home from school, my dad told me I was not going to live off of him and mom," he said. "He gave me two weeks to find a job."

When two weeks passed and Coats hadn't found a job, his father, who was himself a deputy sheriff, told him to get in the car. He promptly drove Coats to the Dunn Police Department and got him a job working for Chief Joe Davidson.

"I didn't know a thing about law enforcement, but they sent me to Basic Law Enforcement Training (BLET) and that's how I got into it," said Coats.

Forty-two years later, he said he's

enjoyed it so far.

"I've never gotten up and said I don't want to go to work today," he said. "Not many people can say that."

He said one thing he enjoyed about the job is that he never did the same thing from day to day.

"You just get out there and do your job serving the citizens and protecting them the best you can," he said.

Coats said it was always his goal to be sheriff one day.

"A lot people asked me over the years if I was going to run, but I wouldn't run against Sheriff Rollins," he said. "I always thought I would run if he retired, but I didn't realize it would happen like this."

He thanked Sheriff Rollins for his service to the county and wished him well in retirement.

"I'm glad for him to be able to go home and enjoy his children and grandchildren," said Coats. "Forty-five years is a long time to be in law enforcement."

Over the years, Coats said, he's formed a good relationship with his coworkers in the sheriff's office.

"Most of them that have come through, at some point in time, they came through me, so I've had contact with them somewhere along the way," he said. "They may not agree with everything I do, but they know where I

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



stand and they respect that.

He said his job is to support the people who work for him.

“My dad always said to surround yourself with good people and you’ll do well in life,” he said. “I just feel blessed and fortunate to be in the position I am now, to lead this organization of great men and women,” he said. “It’s a hard job they have to do and they do a great job. My goal is that every night they go home to their families.”

He said he also wants to be responsive to the public.

“I work for the citizens of Harnett County and I’m going to be available to them,” he said. “My door is open and I plan to see everybody who comes up here – it might not be that day, but I plan on being accessible.”

Coats said he plans to attend the upcoming Community Update meetings at various locations in the county along with the deputies who serve each area to introduce them to the citizens they serve.

“I want the public to get to know the deputies who serve them on a personal basis,” he said. “I don’t want them to feel like these guys are strangers – I want them to feel like they can talk to them if they have an issue.”

He said his goal is to make sure the relationship between the Sheriff’s Of-



Harnett County Sheriff Wayne Coats was sworn into office on March 22 along with his deputies.

ice and the community is a positive one, but noted that the relationship works two ways.

“Our goal is to serve and protect the citizens of this county and we’ll respect you, but we want respect in return,” he said. “When you call us, we’re going to be honest with you and it may not be what you want to hear, but we’ll help you if we can and if we can’t, we’ll try to guide you in the right direction.”

Coats is married to Harnett County native Diana Webb and has three children – Steven Wayne Coats, Leslie Nicole Coats and Meredith Ashley Coats — and one grandchild. He attends Glad Tidings Church in Dunn.

For more information on Sheriff Coats and the Harnett County Sheriff’s Office, go to www.harnettsheriff.com/ or call the sheriff’s office at (910) 893-9111.

Community Meetings Planned Across County

Following the March 3 Community Update meeting at Benhaven Elementary School, Harnett County officials are planning four additional informational meetings to be held throughout the county. The purpose of these meetings is to provide residents with an update from county leaders and department heads on projects and programs currently underway in Harnett County, and to give citizens the opportunity to ask questions.

The next meeting will be held Tues-

day, April 26 at 6 p.m. at Lillington-Shawtown Elementary School.

Additional meetings will be held at Northwest Harnett Fire Department on Thursday, May 5 at 7 p.m., and at Erwin Elementary School on Thursday, May 12 at 6:30 p.m. Another meeting is being planned in late May for the Anderson Creek area.

“The goal of these meetings is to go out into the community and share what we’re doing in county government — we’re taking our show on the road,”

said Public Information Officer Brian Haney. “We want to be as accessible to the public as possible. People are welcome to ask questions at these meetings and we’ll give them answers if we have them. If not, we’ll do our best to find the answers and point them in the right direction.”

Even beyond the meetings, he said, people are welcome to call the county manager’s office with questions at (910) 893-7555 or go to www.harnett.org for a full listing of county departments.

Want to know about events taking place in Harnett County each month? Check out the Harnett County Community Calendar at www.harnett.org/publicinfo. And if you know of an event that should be on the calendar and isn’t, email information to bhaney@harnett.org.

Department Spotlight

Master Gardener Volunteer Program

Now that spring is here, the weather is warming up, things are turning green and flowers are blossoming around the area, you may have questions about the best way to plant, grow and care for flowers and plants. That's where the Harnett County Master Gardener Volunteer Program can help.

Harnett County Master Gardener volunteers are trained in home gardening and share their knowledge with residents through activities that promote healthy landscapes, productive gardens and a safe environment.

The volunteer program is open to anyone who is interested in both gardening and volunteer service. No previous formal training is necessary, though some gardening experience is preferred.

Matt Jones, agriculture extension agent for horticulture and forestry, works for Harnett County Cooperative Extension, and runs the volunteer program and heads up the training.

"The Master Gardener Volunteer Program is designed to educate volunteers and help the Extension fulfill its mission related to home gardening and home horticulture," Jones said.

He said the Master Gardener Volunteer Program was started in the 1970s by the Washington State University Cooperative Extension to accommodate a growing interest in urban horticulture and requests for gardening advice. Initially, booths were set up in malls and volunteers were trained to assist extension agents in doing their jobs. After the program proved successful, it was expanded to every extension agency in the United States.

Master Gardener Volunteer training programs are offered annually in Harnett County at the Extension building at 126 Alexander Drive, Lillington.

The program consists of 40 hours of training, spread across weekly three-hour sessions. Topics include indoor plants, vegetable gardening, fruit production, lawns, soil and fertilizers, pesticide safety, pruning, and landscape design, among others. The course culminates in an open book exam.

"It's not about memorizing the material," said Jones. "You're training to do research and explain things — it's about finding information and giving it to consumers."

Once a Master Gardener volunteer has gone through the program, they are required to give back 40 hours of volunteer service in the first year after completing the program—one hour for every hour of training.

After being certified, Master Gardener volunteers are expected to take 10 hours a year of continuing education and provide 20 hours of volunteer service. Volunteering can consist of answering the phone in the Extension office or working events. Volunteer hours are typically conducted during regular office hours. When Master Gardener volunteers are not present, Jones answers the phone and fields questions.

Master Gardener volunteers field questions like how and when to plant, and can help identify different bugs and diseases that affect plants. Residents can also submit photos and samples to volunteers for more information.

The goal of the program, Jones said, is "to promote more sustainable gardening practices among Harnett County residents."

At present, there are 25 active Master Gardener volunteers in Harnett County. Another 21 volunteers are enrolled in the current class include County Commissioner Gordon Springle.

In addition to fielding questions, Master Gardener volunteers participate in programs including demonstration gardens, educational demonstrations, vegetation and pollinator gardens, plant sales, and a plant swap event in May. Jones said he wants more youth involvement and is working with the Extension's 4-H program. Master Gardener volunteers can also serve as consultants for community gardens.

For more information on the Harnett County Master Gardener Volunteer Program, go to www.harnett.org/coop/master-gardener-volunteer-program.asp. You can also email mastergardener@harnett.org or call (910) 893-7530 and ask to speak to a Master Gardener volunteer.



Harnett County Master Gardener volunteers participate in last year's Master Gardener Volunteer Program plant sale.



Harnett County Board of Commissioners Chairman Jim Burgin takes the oath of office to serve on the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees. Above, Chairman Burgin stands with his wife, Ann, their daughter, Meredith Gregory, and grandchildren, Aleda and Natalie. N.C. Sen. Ronald Rabin, at right, administers the oath.

Burgin Appointed to State Retirement Board

Harnett County Board of Commissioners Chairman Jim Burgin has been appointed by Governor Pat McCrory to serve on the North Carolina Local Governmental Employees' Retirement System Board of Trustees. His term on the council began April 1 and will end March 31, 2020.

"We need leaders such as you in public service to help promote our vision and realization of a better North Carolina," said Gov. McCrory in a letter to Chairman Burgin.

County Attorney Dwight Snow said the North Carolina Retirement System was established in 1941 and covers more than 960,000 current and former public servants. The system, he said, has more than \$89 billion in assets.

"It takes a lot of responsibility to manage that fund and Harnett County is very honored ... that one of our commissioners is being appointed as a trustee," said Snow.

"I appreciate the confidence Governor McCrory has shown in me in making this appointment and I look forward to working with him," said Chairman Burgin.

Chairman Burgin was elected to the

Harnett County Board of Commissioners in 2008 and is currently serving his second term on the board. He is president and owner of C&D Insurance and Insurance Network Group. He is chairman of the board for New Horizon Insurance Group and president of B.C. Property Inc., a real estate development company. He is also a partner with John Hiester Automotive.

Chairman Burgin serves on the boards of numerous organizations including Triangle South Workforce Development, Mid Carolina Council of Government, Central Carolina Community College, North Carolina Association of County Commissioners and First Bank.

In addition to his most recent appointment, Chairman Burgin is currently serving a two-year term on the North Carolina State Health Coordinating Council, to which he was appointed by Governor McCrory last year.

Chairman Burgin and his wife, Ann, have been married 35 years and have three children and two grandchildren. He is an elder, Sunday school teacher and life group leader at Crossroads Baptist Church in Lillington.

Upcoming Events

- Harnett County Parks & Recreation will host a series of movies in local parks during May. Movies include "Minions," which will be shown at the Angier Depot on April 15 at 8 p.m.; "The Spongebob Squarepants Movie: Sponge Out of Water" at Al Woodall Park in Erwin on April 22 at 8 p.m.; and "Inside Out" at the Angier Depot on May 7 at 8 p.m.
- Harnett County Relay for Life will be held Friday, April 29 in the Harnett County Governmental Complex Parking lot behind the Health Department and Social Services. The opening ceremony will begin at 6 p.m. To sign up, donate or for more information, go to http://main.acevents.org/site/TR/RelayForLife/RFLCY16SA?pg=entry&fr_id=70972.
- The next Lillington Community Blood Drive will be held Thursday, May 12 from 1 to 5:30 p.m. in the Harnett County Government Complex Commons Area. The blood drive is sponsored by Harnett County Public Health and Harnett County RSVP. To make an appointment, call (910) 893-7578. All eligible donors are needed.

If you know of any important events for May or future months that should be included in this newsletter, email bhaney@harnett.org.

Human Resources Corner

Get Kids Off to a Good Start with Money

If you're a parent, you can bet your child will mirror your behavior and values, including how you manage money. As your child grows, create opportunities to make learning about money fun!

Challenge her imagination

Kids from pre-school to second grade learn from play. Have your child be the shopkeeper of an imaginary general store. Gather items from your pantry to stock the shelves of the store. You can use coins for buying and selling. This is a great time to introduce her to a piggy bank, as well.

Visit your bank or credit union

Your child's elementary school years are a prime time for learning the value of saving and working for the things they want. Introduce her to chores and

an allowance. She's going to need a place to keep the money she saves, so take her to your bank or credit union to open an account. Tell her about when you opened your first account. Then visit the bank or credit union together every month to get her in the habit of consistent savings and to learn new things about money.

Conquer the supermarket

As your child moves from elementary school to junior high, she's becoming more open to learning life lessons. Take her shopping and have her read price labels at the supermarket. Show her how to identify items on sale, find an item's price per ounce or quantity, and compare generic to brand name items. If you take her shopping frequently she may become your own personal shopper!

Getting a better handle on money

Your teen can become sharper about money and savings by being a manager-in-training. Have her clean out your basement, attic, and closets to manage a yard sale. Between handling inventory, pricing, haggling, and keeping up with the cashbox, her sense of responsibility and understanding of value will grow.

Put her in charge of the table and have her deposit money earned in a savings account where it can grow with dividends and additional deposits.

Sharing your experiences with your kids and engaging them with learning-by-doing will set the table for good choices and values.

The advice provided is for informational purposes only. Contact your financial advisor for additional guidance.

Harnett Employees Come Out Against Child Abuse



Dozens of Harnett County employees came out on April 11 to plant pinwheels on the lawn in front of the Harnett County Department of Social Services in recognition of April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. Many employees wore blue, which is the color for child abuse prevention awareness. The Harnett County Board of Commissioners also adopted a resolution recognizing April as Child Abuse Prevention Month. 'It's important to bring awareness to this important issue,' said Harnett County Social Services Director Paul Polinski.

April Employee Birthdays

The following Harnett County employees and board members celebrate birthdays in April.

April 1	Brandy Champion (Public Utilities)		David Abney (Sheriff's Office)
2	Angela McLean (Transportation)		Martha Allen (Social Services)
	Jeanette Grady (Transportation)		April Fowler (Social Services)
3	Lawrence Smith (Emergency Services)	18	Calla Godwin (Emergency Services)
	John Tadlock (Emergency Services)		Donda Blake (Social Services)
	Letitia Maynor (Finance)	19	Vicky Walden (Department on Aging)
	April Gale (JobLink)		Mary Atkinson (Library)
4	Morris Damato (Sheriff's Office)	20	Spencer Elmore (Sheriff's Office)
	Cherie Shaw (Public Utilities)		Jason Lee (Sheriff's Office)
5	James Williams (GIS)		Rebecca Gibson (Social Services)
	Jean Kidd (Sheriff's Office)	21	Michael Knodel (Sheriff's Office)
	Kimberly Lockamy (Tax)		Jennifer Owen (Emergency Services)
	Theresa Satterfield (Tax)		Jenna Whittington (Emergency Services)
6	Brandon Purvis (Emergency Services)		Darren Wilkins (Emergency Services)
	Donna Smith (Social Services)		Wesley Roberson (Public Utilities)
	Gary McNeill (Social Services)		Hannah Fenerty (Library)
	Randall Smith (Solid Waste)	22	Yolanda Parker (Health)
7	Matthew Poole (Emergency Services)		Susan James (Transportation)
	Scot Ward (Emergency Services)	23	Sonia Vela (Emergency Services)
	Bradley Mosingo (Public Utilities)	24	Allison Beam (Health)
	LeeAnn Bradley Champion (Health)		Haley Edwards (Social Services)
	Brad Truelove (Sheriff's Office)		Kay Wilson (Social Services)
	Jerry White (Transportation)	25	Christopher Elledge (Public Utilities)
8	Amy Noel (Veterans Services)		Tamara Hill (IT)
10	Timothy Matthews (Public Utilities)	26	Walter Temple (IT)
	Kelly Clark (Public Buildings)		Kim Hargrove (Register of Deeds)
	Anita Lynn (Restitution)		Debra Chance (Social Services)
11	Justin Saunders (Emergency Services)		Britta Nipper (Social Services)
	Amber Skipper (Tax)	27	Deborah Rinehardt (Department on Aging)
13	Jonathan Stone (Fleet Maintenance)		Kami Jackson (Department on Aging)
	Jason McNeill (Public Utilities)		Jerry Jones (Public Utilities)
14	Nakesia Montgomery (Transportation)		Christopher Strahan (IT)
15	Ricky Denning (Emergency Services)		Verna Thibodeaux (Transportation)
	Angela Edwards (Public Utilities)	28	Seth Kosem (Emergency Services)
16	Joseph Bowden (Development Services)		Melissa Page (Public Utilities)
	April Hammond (Emergency Services)	29	Timmy Byrd (Emergency Services)
	Sheila Bennett (GIS)		Ronald Lackey (Sheriff's Office)
	Carlton Thompson (Public Utilities)	30	Jill Carter (Public Utilities)
	Robert Kimbrough (Sheriff's Office)		Glenisha Faison (Health)
17	Darleen Miller (Sheriff's Office)		David Baker (Solid Waste)

Employment Anniversaries

The following Harnett County employees celebrate employment anniversaries this month:

5 years	Rodney Ellen (Public Utilities)	15 years	Pamela Freeman (Public Utilities)
	Jason McNeill (Public Utilities)		Stephanie Artis (Register of Deeds)
	Larry Weathers (Public Utilities)		Robert Burlock (Sheriff's Office)
	Kelly Johnson (Sheriff's Office)		Christa Reid (Social Services)
	Shannon Warren (Social Services)	20 years	Kimberly Honeycutt (Finance)
10 years	Heather Giunta (Library)		Eric Truesdale (Veterans Services)

JCPC Holds Community Partners Breakfast



The Harnett County Juvenile Crime Prevention Council (JCPC) held its annual Community Partnership Breakfast March 23 in the Harnett County Governmental Complex Commons Area. The event featured numerous speakers who extolled the organization and its programs, which aim to dramatically reduce and prevent instances of juvenile crime in the community. The keynote speaker for the event was Cindy Porterfield, director of community programs for Juvenile Justice under the North Carolina Department of Public Safety, above at right. The event also featured artwork from sixth graders at Harnett Central Middle School around the theme of Harnett County's motto, "Strong Roots, New Growth." Additionally, informational booths from JCPC partner organizations were set up around the room. Harnett County JCPC board members are appointed by the Harnett County Board of Commissioners and the board meets the third Monday of each month. For more information, go to www.harnett.org/jcpc.

Faulkner Appointed to New Term as Tax Administrator

The Harnett County Board of Commissioners appointed Harnett County Tax Administrator Keith Faulkner to a new two-year term during their April 4 meeting. Faulkner has worked for Harnett County since 1992, when he was hired as Business Personal Property Auditor in the Tax Office. He was promoted to chief appraiser in 1997 and was appointed tax administrator in 2014. He said he appreciates the board's confidence and he will continue working for the citizens of Harnett County.

Pictured from left are Tax Collections Supervisor Wanda Spivey, Faulkner, Deputy Tax Administrator Jenny Harrop, Listing and Billing Program Assistant Amy Bain, Administrative Assistant Stephanie Wilson and Commissioners Chairman Jim Burgin.

