

2020 Halifax County Accomplishments

Your Government at Work for You

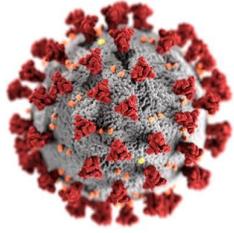


"Our very survival depends on our ability to stay awake, to adjust to new ideas, to remain vigilant and to face the challenge of change."

– Dr. Martin Luther King Jr.



HALIFAX COUNTY ACCOMPLISHMENTS



COVID-19 Challenges

How can we begin to talk about 2020 without addressing COVID. Across the board since March, COVID has affected the operations of every county department, our employees, and our method of delivering services to the public. But throughout the pandemic, our amazing Halifax County team has proven to be extraordinarily resourceful, innovative, and dedicated.

Protecting Lives & Property



Sheriff's Office

- Enhanced building security, including secure detention processing and privacy for victims and complainants
- Continued community outreach, including senior checks, residential and commercial security checks, neighborhood watch, food pantry, and the Benefitting the Children of Halifax County program
- Served 60 kids safely for Sheriff's Summer Camp

Improving Life-Saving Services

Central Communications

- Improved retention rate in 911 Center, the first point of contact in an emergency
- Implemented better resources for communications and updates to telecommunicators
- Submitted funding reconsideration for updating "end of life" equipment

Emergency Management

- Functioned as primary contact for ordering, receiving and distributing PPE and supplies throughout Halifax County, including medical and non-medical facilities, as well as governmental and non-profit volunteer agencies to distribute masks to residents

EMS

- Placed four new Stryker Powerload Stretchers into service with Stairchairs
- Worked with Halifax County Health Department on COVID-19 response
- Placed 12-hour in-service in the Scotland Neck area

Health Department

- Passed accreditation with honors
- Received \$100,000 in grants to help citizens with COVID
- Received as much money in grants as in state funds
- Served on front lines giving flu shots, preparing for mass COVID vaccinations
- Offered education/compliance training to each department with three WWW's
- Received necessary protective equipment (PAPRS) to conduct mass COVID vaccinations
- Enacted no tethering law



Helping Citizens Thrive

Social Services

- Have seen a tremendous increase in the number of people seeking assistance from Food & Nutrition Services due to the effects of COVID on households
- Distributed CRISIS funding to those who needed assistance with power bills
- Currently processing applications for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)
- Experienced an increase in Medicaid applications received due to COVID

Keeping Citizens, Buildings & Employees Safe

Operations

- Spent many hours rearranging offices, installing Plexi-glass to ensure the safety of all Halifax County staff, as well as the safety of the public who enter our buildings
- Increased cleaning (especially in public areas) and disinfecting to help decrease any spread of COVID
- Purchased electrostatic disinfecting equipment and completed spraying in the Department of Social Services, Sheriff's Office, and Halifax County Visitors Center





Boosting the Economy & the Bottom Line

Economic Development

- Worked with The Retail Coach in completing Business Development Strategy for Exit 171 and held stakeholders' meeting to review findings
- Facilitated/Coordinated Peanut Belt RPO administration and hiring of Planning Consultant
- Completed construction of rail spur for JBB Packaging
- Work of HCEDC helped to maintain Top 100 Micropolitan Designation for the fourth year in a row
- Completed major in-house website update - HalifaxDevelopment.com

Tax Administration & Revaluation

- Successfully completed the 2020 revaluation of 39,095 parcels and billed all real property accordingly
- Updated the Schedule of Values to reflect current market trends and calculated all real property records per the 2020 Schedule
- Processed a total of 508 taxpayer appeals, equating to only 1.3% of parcels, far below the expected number of 5-10%
- Completed Fiscal Year 2019-2020 with a final collection percentage of 97.42%, in spite of the unusual circumstances associated with the COVID-19 pandemic
- Revamped enforced collections procedures to accommodate financial hardships imposed by dramatic changes to economic conditions during the first months of the pandemic
- Successfully reorganized typical processes to collect payments from late-March through the end of July while closed to the public



Making Our Voices Heard

Board of Elections

Conducted the Primary Election with short staff and the General Election with new staff under extremely challenging conditions due to COVID

Enhancing Our Water System for Current & Future Needs

Public Utilities

- Achieved ability to accept credit and debit cards for in-person payments at our customer service counter for customer convenience and sanitary transactions for staff and customers
- Installed mixers in Summit & Medoc elevated water tanks to improve water quality
- Worked with NCDOT on water issues on Highway 125/Premier Blvd. project
- Currently negotiating with stakeholders to establish water service area around Highway 125/Premier Blvd. project



Planning for Future Growth

Planning & Development

- Continuously identify properties with illegal construction projects (home additions, garages, sheds, piers, etc.) that have been built without permits & coordinate with the Tax Department to reevaluate property with new building values to increase County's tax base
- Offer ongoing support for the Peanut Belt RPO in prioritizing road projects, as well as improvements to other modes of transportation, to be included in the recommendations to NCDOT for the Transportation Improvement Plan
- Improved building code enforcement rating with the Insurance Services Office, Inc. (ISO) to a classification of 4 in both residential and commercial properties

Putting Technology & People to Best Uses

Information Technology Services

- Continued pandemic set-up/support, with website virtual postings, to accommodate County Management/Commissioners' request to enable socially distanced citizen and media participation in meetings
- Recommended separate circuit for Sheriff's Office/EMS/911 to obtain most efficient future bandwidth throughput



Human Resources Management

- Distributed Total Compensation Statements to all benefit-eligible county staff
- Created Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for each division in HRM
- Created medical files for all county staff
- Completed the personnel file project
- Brought in over \$42,000,000 to Halifax County Veterans through Veterans' Services, an increase from previous years
- Continued to feed our aging citizens even through the pandemic and took on feeding coordinator role through Council on Aging

Extending Services to Benefit Children & Communities

Cooperative Extension

- Packaged COVID-19 safety kits for farmworkers in our county
- Safely continued nutrition and healthy eating programs virtually and partnered with Hertford & Gates Extension to offer 6-week virtual class
- Provided an outdoor summer camp experience for nearly 200 youth over a four-week period at the 4-H Rural Life Center
- Continued partnership with Five Corners Produce in Hollister to offer healthy food options for customers
- Transitioned embryology program to a virtual format, reaching 300 students through various online platforms
- Offered virtual 4-H summer workshops for youth in a wide variety of interest areas
- Established three new 4-H Clubs in the county
- Delivered hot lunches and educational packages to students during the spring, offered youth summer employment, hosted a nine-week summer educational day camp, created a virtual learning worksite at the Extension office for youth with limited broadband access, and worked with youth at various county food banks through Operation Restart
- Enabled six youth offenders to receive their GED at Halifax Community College, coordinated youth to work with area churches to distribute food to their communities, and had two students receive their drivers licenses through WIOA



Ensuring Accountability & Protecting County Assets



Legal Department

- Aggressively pursued actions necessary for a positive resolution of the failure of Klausner

Lumber Two to complete construction and commence operation of its lumber manufacturing facility, including negotiation of a settlement agreement that should result in a new owner of the facility

- Continued to provide assistance to the county tax collector, resulting in a collection rate of 97.42% for FY 19-20

Finance Department

- Received the GFOA CAFR award for the audit of FY18-19 (on 6-30-19), the 21st consecutive year receiving such a distinction
- Ran an eight-person office with two alternating staff during COVID without a break in service
- Took on additional reporting requirements due to COVID: EFMLA, Emergency Paid Sick Leave, CARES Act funds for municipalities and Airport

ACCOUNTABILITY
is the glue that ties
COMMITMENT
to **RESULTS**

Overcoming Obstacles & Getting Creative

Library System

- Worked with Electronic Resource vendors to increase number of resources for people to access remotely
- Provided virtual reference assistance to information seekers via email, text, phone calls, social media or messaging
- Offered virtual Reader Advisory to assist patrons in locating books of interest to check out by tracking the patrons' tastes and notifying them when new materials arrived
- Shifted all in-house programming to virtual programming for adults and children
- Hosted hugely successful virtual Back to School Reading Bash with volunteer readers that at this point has reached over 16,000 viewers and continue to provide virtual weekly story time
- Instituted a safe, efficient system of providing fax, copy, scan and book circulation to ensure those services continued to be offered
- Worked with school systems to provide access to Chromebooks and hot spots for students who did not have access during virtual learning



Conserving Our Natural Resources



Soil & Water Conservation

- Provided technical services for farmers and landowners regarding issues with drainage & installed 3,300 feet in 2020
- Hosted annual Field Day events and demonstrations with such topics as improving soil health for cotton farmers & using cereal rye as cover crop
- Participated in programs to address non-point pollution from soil erosion, excessive fertilizer use, animal waste contamination, and improper use of agricultural chemicals; to increase water use efficiency; and to achieve long-term protection of environmentally sensitive land

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