



ECC'S FEBRUARY 2025 NEWSLETTER



NEWS AND EVENTS

Register for the ECC Legislative Breakfast on February 24th - ECC is excited to host a Regional Legislative Breakfast on Monday, February 24th at the La Grange Community Center in La Grange. Connect with Legislators & hear about the issues of the 2025-26 Legislative session. We will begin gathering at 8:30 a.m., with a welcome / buffet breakfast starting at 8:45 a.m.

Pre-registration is required (including a separate email address for each attendee), and registration is now open at

<https://lp.constantcontactpages.com/ev/reg/gfrxx4k/lp/651a106d-db24-4818-bacc-93b095481608> or use the QR Code below.





LEGISLATIVE BREAKFAST

FEBRUARY 24, 2025

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Counties and municipalities are invited and encouraged to register elected officials and members of their management team for the event. Please register for the event by February 17th.

We look forward to seeing you there!

8:30 a.m. on Monday,
February 24, 2025

La Grange
Community Center
410 Washington St.,
La Grange, NC

Join Legislators,
municipal and
county elected
officials and
managers from our
9-county region

This is a great
opportunity to
connect with state
and local
leaders!

REGISTER



Two Eastern Carolina Counties Selected to Participate in an UNC Program to Address Affordable Housing Needs! Congratulations to Jones and Carteret Counties who will participate in the *Our State, Our Homes* program with 22 other NC communities! More than half of the State's 100 counties applied to participate in the 18-month program in which strategies will be designed and implemented to improve access and the availability of affordable housing.

More than \$1M households in NC are cost-burdened by housing and spend more than 30% of

their income on it. This includes nearly 1 in 5 homeowners and almost half of the State's renters. With a limited supply of affordable houses, rising costs, and other issues, community leaders are challenged to meet local needs for safe, accessible, and affordable housing.

Since housing is a multifaceted challenge, this pan-university program will bring together campus partners from a wide range of disciplines, including the UNC School of Government's Development Finance Initiative, the Department of City and Regional Planning, Kenan-Flagler Business School, and the UNC School of Medicine.

For more information on this program, visit <https://carolinaacross100.unc.edu/unc-chapel-hill-collaborating-with-22-counties-to-address-affordable-housing-needs-in-north-carolina/>.

Update on the Regional Opioid Mapping Asset Project The ECC General Membership Board received an update on the Regional Opioid Asset Mapping Project during its Jan. 9th Meeting. All 9 counties in our region are collaborating with ECC to develop a comprehensive assessment across the continuum of care for adult substance use disorder. The primary regional goal is through collaboration to create an assessment map of the ECC region to be used to identify and address gaps. ECC is working with the Recovery Alliance Initiative (RAI) on this project; it is an organization that brings sectors of communities together to explore opportunities for collaboration and solutions to address the opioid epidemic. Stakeholders from the nine counties met on January 23rd to discuss the next steps, which include:

- Begin collecting data in February.
 - Share preliminary results with county managers in late March.
 - Present the final report to address the Opioid Crisis in June.
-

Digital Inclusion Listening Sessions in Craven and Wayne Counties - ECC will hold two more Digital Inclusion Plan Listening Sessions in the near future:

- Craven County – February 26th
- Wayne County – March 10th

This is a part of ECC's Digital Inclusion Plan project, in which ECC is partnering with North Carolina State University's Institute for Emerging Issues (NCSU IEI) and the NCSU Friday Institute for Educational Innovation to develop a Regional Digital Inclusion Plan for our nine-county region.

A digital inclusion plan is a tool and resource for a community to assess who has the access and resources to utilize, broadband, the internet, computers, and all the resources that come along with that. Developing a digital inclusion plan will help support our local governments' efforts to identify gaps and help our communities develop plans to improve computer literacy and access. Input gathered through these listening sessions will provide better data to assist us in developing a plan that meets the true needs of our communities.

More information on these sessions is below.



YOU'RE INVITED!

**A Digital Inclusion Listening Session open to ALL
residents of Craven County**

*We'd love to hear from you about your experiences using technology
and getting online.*

- WHEN
 - WEDNESDAY, FEBRUARY 26TH, 4:00 -5:00 PM
- WHERE
 - NEW BERN TOWERS
 - 1125 WALT BELLAMY DRIVE, NEW BERN, N.C. 28562

* LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED!



YOU'RE INVITED!

**A Digital Inclusion Listening Session open to ALL
residents of Wayne County**

*We'd love to hear from you about your experiences using technology
and getting online.*

- WHEN
 - MONDAY, MARCH 10TH, 6:00 -7:00 PM
- WHERE
 - WAYNE COUNTY PUBLIC LIBRARY
 - 1001 E ASH ST, GOLDSBORO, NC 27530

* THIS IS A FAMILY-FRIENDLY EVENT | LIGHT REFRESHMENTS WILL BE SERVED!



2025 NC Black Alliance's Environmental Justice and Healthcare Summit Held on Saturday, Jan. 18th. ECC Community Planner, Sara Deskar, took part in a panel discussion during the 2025 NC Black Alliance's Environmental Justice and Healthcare Summit. The Summit focused on themes of empowerment, resilience, and reclaiming control over health and environmental challenges. Attendees participated in targeted breakout sessions designed to provide practical tools and knowledge for strengthening community resilience. Sara joined the Disaster Resiliency panel alongside Kelly Hotzel from Saint Bernard Parish and Michelle Lovejoy from the Environmental Defense Fund. The discussion centered on community preparedness and strategies for building resilience in response to evolving climate risks. More information about the NC Black Alliance may be found at <https://ncblacksummit.org/ejh/>. Pictured below from left to right are - Sara Deskar, Kelly Hotzel, and Michelle Lovejoy.



GRANT WRITING WORKSHOP

Tues., Feb. 18th and Wed., Feb. 19th, 2025, 9:00 AM – 4:30 PM.



[Register Now](#)

ECC AREA ON AGING (AAA) NEWS



North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature: The North Carolina Senior Tar Heel Legislature (NCSTHL) was created as a nonpartisan, unicameral body by the North Carolina General Assembly (NCGA) with the passage of Senate Bill 479 in July 1993. Each of the 100 NC counties is entitled to 1 delegate to the STHL; most counties have an alternate delegate. Delegates and alternates must be age 60 or older and reside in the county from which they represent.

The Senior Tar Heel Legislature was created to:

- Provide information to Senior citizens on the legislative process and matters being considered by the NCGA.
- Promote citizen involvement and advocacy concerning aging issues before the NCGA.
- Assess the legislative needs of older citizens by convening a forum modeled after the NCGA.
- Senior Tar Heel Legislators meet 3 times a year (March, June, and October), usually in Raleigh, to advocate on behalf of older persons. They have 4 officers: Speaker, Speaker Pro Tempore, Deputy Speaker Pro Tempore, and Secretary. Each year the legislators choose the top 5 legislative priorities. Delegates and alternates from each county advocate with the NCGA for the passage of legislation to improve the lives of older adults.

For further information on your counties Delegates and Alternates visit:

<https://eccog.org/volunteer-opportunities/>. For further information about the NC Senior Tar Heel visit: <https://www.ncdhhs.gov/divisions/aging/division-aging-councils-and-committees/nc-senior-tar-heel-legislature>.

Dementia Live Presentations: ECCAAA staff provided Dementia Live large group, dementia, caregiver crisis, and Senior presentations to Lenoir County Police Officers on January 8th and Wayne County Law Enforcement on January 14th. The presentations were provided as part of the Crisis Intervention Training (CIT) curriculum. Participants participated in a hands-on simulation that provided them with empathy and understanding of what an individual with dementia may experience. Officers also learned about dissociation techniques for individuals - how to approach and work with older adults, elder abuse, and community resources. ECCAAA staff also will provide CIT training for Greene and Duplin County law enforcement in February, and Craven County's officers in March.

The Dementia Live Simulation training also was presented to facility volunteers at the NC Aquarium on January 29th.

This January during the Senior Games Conference, Carteret County received 3 awards, including the Summit Star Award - for the highest participation to date in their local games. Last year 178 participants received Certificate of Excellence honors, which acknowledged continuous growth in the last 5 years. And finally, the Unity Shield Award was conferred for raising the number of performing arts entries in a single year from 0 to 7. Congratulations!

Community Advisory Council (CAC) Training: Ombudsman conducted CAC training recently. We greatly appreciate the work and continued efforts of our CAC members and all volunteers!

RAAC and STHL Meetings Held: ECCAAA hosted its regularly scheduled RAAC and STHL

meeting on January 13th. Attendees received updates on the Digital Navigator program from Dr. Cynthia Livingston, reviewed By-Laws, and received information from the AAA staff.

ECC Welcomed an ECU Intern: ECCAAA is hosting the ECU intern, Elyna Arthur, who began on January 14th and will continue through the end of April. She is studying Social Work and will continue her educational pursuits.



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2025 Senior Games Registration: The North Carolina Senior Games began in 1983 with a vision to create a year-round health promotion and wellness education program. Each Spring, Individuals 50 years old and older from across the State of North Carolina participate in local Senior Games throughout the state. Registration will begin over the next month.

Please find your local Senior Games information below.

- **Carteret Senior Games** - March 24-April 30, 2025; Registration now open.
<https://ccpr.recdesk.com/Community/Page?pageId=3013>
- **Neuse River Senior Games** (Counties Served: Craven, Duplin, Greene, Jones, Lenoir, and Pamlico) – April 14- May 18,2025. <https://www.ncseniorgames.org/neuse>.
- **Onslow Senior Games** – March- May 2025.
<https://www.onslowcountync.gov/1683/Senior-Games>.
- **Wayne County Senior Games** - April 1 to April 30, 2025.
<http://www.goldsboroparksandrec.com/seniorgames/>.

UPCOMING MEETINGS AND EVENTS

NC City-County Managers Association – Winter Conference, Feb. 5-7, Winston-Salem.

Ethics Training for Elected Officials, Feb. 5, 6:00-9:00 PM, ECC Offices.

ECC Executive Committee Meeting, Feb. 13, 6:00 PM Dinner, 6:30 PM Meeting, ECC Offices.

ECC Grant Writing Workshop, Feb. 18-19, 9:00-4:30, ECC Board Room.

ECC Legislative Breakfast, Feb. 24, 8:30 a.m., La Grange Community Center.

ECC / Craven County Digital Inclusion Plan Listening Session, Feb. 26, 4:00 p.m., New Bern Towers, 1125 Walt Bellamy Dr., New Bern

ECC / Wayne County Digital Inclusion Plan Listening Session, March 10th, 6:00 p.m., Wayne County Public Library, 1001 E. Ash St., Goldsboro

NC Main Street Conference, March 11-13, Mooresville.

ECC General Membership Board Meeting, March 13, 6:00 PM Dinner, 6:30 PM Meeting, ECC Offices.

2025 Recovery Alliance Initiative Symposium, "Healthy Recovery Communities," March 13-14, Riverfront Convention Center.

DERPO TCC Meeting, March 18, 10:00-11:30 AM, ECC Board Room.

ECRPO, TCC and TAC Meeting, March 20, 9:30-10:30 AM, at the La Grange Community Center.

DERPO TAC Meeting, March 25, 10:00-11:30 AM, ECC Board Room.

NC Rural Center's Rural Summit, March 25-26, Raleigh.

CONNECT WITH US!



Eastern Carolina Council Mission - *to improve the region's quality of life by providing human, planning, and economic development services to local governments and area residents by leveraging resources and collaborating regionally.*

Eastern Carolina Council | PO Box 1717 | New Bern, NC 28560 US

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