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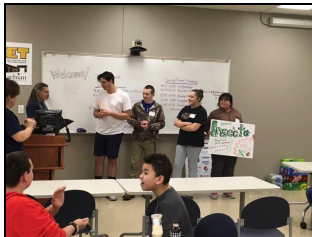
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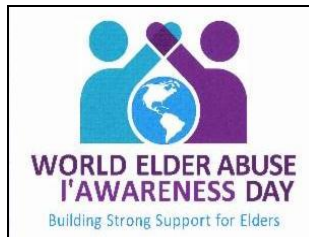
WPCOG - Newsletter

April - May 2018

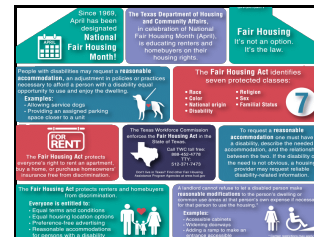
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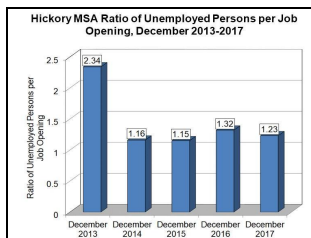
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Workforce Development Board Western Piedmont Youth Summit



On Tuesday, March 20th and Thursday, March 22nd, the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board Youth Council hosted the local youth summit at the NC Center for Engineering Technologies. There were 86 in attendance from Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties across the two days. The youth participated in group activities, a tour of the NC Center for Engineering Technologies and lunch. Michael McNally, Director, NC Center for Engineering Technologies, welcomed the group on Tuesday and Tina Mullinax, Assistant to the Director, NC Center for Engineering Technologies, welcomed the group on Thursday. Each day, the youth were divided into groups and reported to 1 of 3 or 4 rooms. There they received a group of random items, including anything from paper clips to ceiling fan blades. The instructions stated that they would use these random items to create something useful. They had approximately 2 hours to create the item and develop marketing for it because after lunch, they had to show and sell the item to their peers and then the winners from each room proceeded to the final presentation before a group of professionals who then determined the overall winner each day. The winner from Day 1 was Ping Pong on the Go! It was a ping-pong table that folded up for traveling ease and came with paddles and a ball. The winner from Day 2 was Insecta which was a device created to pick up dead bugs without touching them. It consisted of a small bathroom cup and pipe cleaners. The feedback from students and staff was great!

June 15, 2018 Wear Purple to Raise Awareness!



- ◆ Every year an estimated 5 million older adults are abused, exploited, or neglected.
- ◆ It is estimated that only 1 in 14 cases of elder abuse are reported to the authorities each year.
- ◆ If you see something, say something!
Everyone has a duty to report elder abuse as soon as it happens.
Don't let your loved one be a statistic!

- ◆ To report elder abuse contact your local department of social services.

Alexander County DSS
828-632-1080

Catawba County DSS
828-695-5600

Burke County DSS
828-764-9600

Caldwell County DSS
828-426-8200

June 15th is World Elder Abuse Awareness Day. Area Agency on Aging staff have been hard at work preparing to recognize this important date by distributing posters, table tents, and purple bracelets to Long-Term Care facilities and others throughout the region. The AAA will also be recognizing the Adult Protective Services workers at the Departments of Social Services in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell and Catawba counties by providing breakfast on June 15th. The WPCOG is encouraging everyone to wear purple along with their purple bracelets and submit pictures of their group photos to christina.franklin@wpcog.org.

Article by Christina Franklin

Community & Economic Development

Fair Housing is the Law

The federal Fair Housing Act prohibits the denial of housing to a person based on the person's membership in one or more of the classes protected under the Act. The protected classes are race, color, religion, national origin, sex, familial status, and disability. It is, therefore, illegal to discriminate against a person in the provision of housing because of a person's membership in a protected class in the following situations:

- the sale or rental of most housing;
- the terms, conditions, privileges of sale or rental, or provision of services or facilities in connection with the sale or rental of most housing;
- the advertising of a sale or rental of housing;
- the representation of the availability of housing for rental or sale;
- the provision of reasonable modification to a dwelling for persons with a disability at their expense when necessary for the full use and enjoyment of the dwelling;
- the provision of reasonable accommodations to the rules, policies, practices or services when necessary to provide persons with a disability the equal opportunity to use and enjoy the dwelling
- the financing or refinancing of housing; and
- the provision of real estate brokerage services.

In addition, it is illegal to coerce, intimidate, threaten or interfere with a person seeking to exercise rights under the Fair Housing Act.

WHAT IS PROHIBITED?

FALSE DENIAL OF AVAILABILITY.

Advising someone, because of his or her class membership, that there are no available units when, in fact, there are.

"Sorry, we just rented the last unit."

REFUSAL TO DEAL.

Refusing to rent, sell, or negotiate with a person because of class membership.

"We don't rent to Jews." or

"We don't sell to families with children."

DISCRIMINATORY TERMS, CONDITIONS AND PROVISION OF SERVICES OR FACILITIES.

Giving less favorable terms in sales or rental agreements because of class membership.

"The rent is \$200 higher for tenants with a service animal

DISCRIMINATORY ADVERTISING.

Indicating any preference, limitation or discrimination because of class membership.

"No African Americans need apply."

FINANCIAL DISCRIMINATION.

Denying any type of home loan for discriminatory reasons by lenders, including banks, savings and loan associations, insurance companies, and others, or giving less favorable loan terms because of class membership.

REFUSAL TO PERMIT A REASONABLE MODIFICATION TO THE UNIT AT THE EXPENSE OF THE PERSON WITH A DISABILITY, IN ORDER THAT THE PERSON MAY HAVE FULL ENJOYMENT OF THE UNIT.

"You may not install grab bars in the bathroom."

DENIAL OF A REASONABLE ACCOMMODATION TO THE RULES AND REGULATIONS OF RENTAL IN ORDER THAT THE PERSON WITH A DISABILITY MAY HAVE EQUAL OPPORTUNITY TO USE AND FULLY ENJOY THEIR UNIT.

"It's against the rules to have another person live with you, even though there is enough room and the person is necessary to help you with your health needs."

Learn What Fair Housing Means to YOU!


EQUAL HOUSING OPPORTUNITY

Since 1969, April has been designated **National Fair Housing Month!**

The Texas Department of Housing and Community Affairs, in celebration of National Fair Housing Month (April), is educating renters and homebuyers on their housing rights.

Fair Housing
It's not an option.
It's the law.

People with disabilities may request a **reasonable accommodation**, an adjustment in policies or practices necessary to afford a person with a disability equal opportunity to use and enjoy the dwelling.

Examples:

- Allowing service dogs
- Providing an assigned parking space closer to a unit

The **Fair Housing Act** identifies seven protected classes:

- Race
- Color
- National origin
- Disability
- Religion
- Sex
- Familial Status

7

FOR RENT

The **Fair Housing Act** protects everyone's right to rent an apartment, buy a home, or purchase homeowners' insurance free from discrimination.

The Texas Workforce Commission enforces the **Fair Housing Act** in the State of Texas.

Call TWC toll free: 888-452-4778
TTY: 512-371-7473

Don't live in Texas? Find other Fair Housing Assistance Program Agencies at www.hud.gov

To request a **reasonable accommodation** one must have a disability, describe the needed accommodation, and the relationship between the two. If the disability or the need is not obvious, a housing provider may request reliable disability-related information.

The **Fair Housing Act** protects renters and homebuyers from discrimination.

Everyone is entitled to:

- Equal terms and conditions
- Equal housing location options
- Preference-free advertising
- Reasonable accommodations for persons with a disability

A landlord cannot refuse to let a disabled person make **reasonable modifications** to the person's dwelling or common use areas at that person's own expense if necessary for that person to use the housing.*

Examples:

- Accessible cabinets
- Widening doorways
- Adding a ramp to make an entrance accessible

* Certain restrictions may apply

Article by Jennifer Cannon & Lisa Helton

Community & Regional Planning

Spring 2018 EIN Highlights Hickory MSA Population Projections and Hickory MSA Job Market Information

The current issue of the Economics Indicators Newsletter addresses Hickory-Morganton-Lenoir Metropolitan Statistical Area (MSA) unemployment rates, Hickory Metro bank deposits, Hickory MSA job population projections and Hickory MSA job market information.

Here are a few key highlights of the EIN:

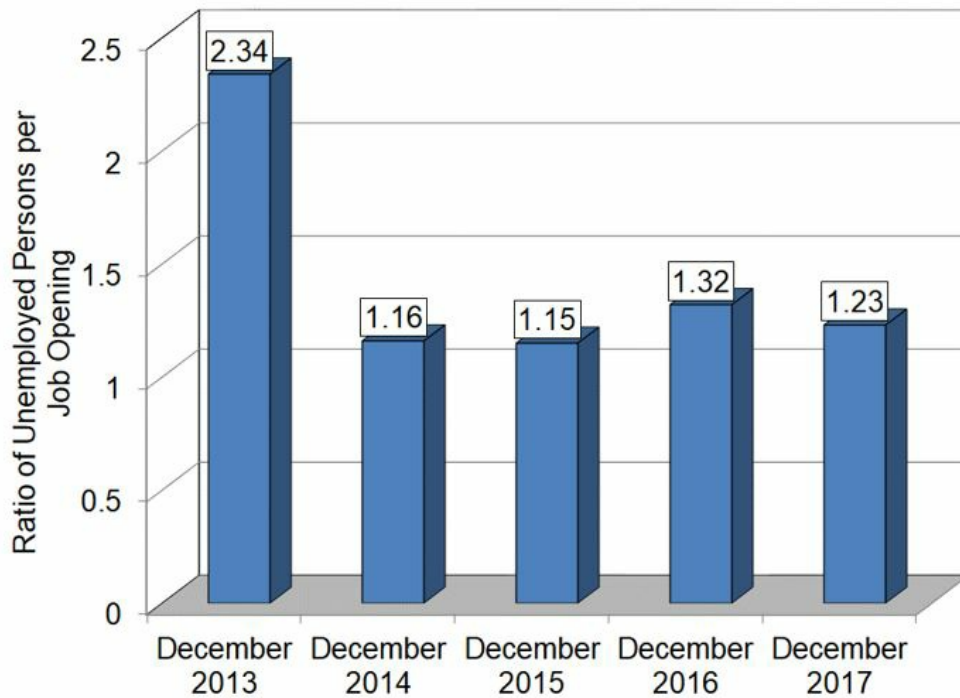
- The Hickory MSA's unemployment rate equaled 4.2% in January 2018, unchanged from July 2017.
- Between July 2017 and January 2018, the estimated number of employed persons increased from 164,855 to 166,552, while the civilian labor force grew from 172,171 to 173,853.
- The population of the Hickory MSA is forecast by the North Carolina Office of Management and Budget to grow from 368,950 in 2017 to 398,938 in 2037. The predicted 8.1% increase is the fifth slowest (or tenth fastest) population growth rate among the NC MSAs.
- The 65 years and older cohort is expected to be the fastest growing age group (43.6% or 29,460 persons) in the region over the next 20 years. This prediction is due to baby boomers reaching retirement age during the next two decades, as well as some retirees moving into the Hickory MSA.
- Population projections indicate that the number of people in age 45 to 64 group is expected to decline 13.9% from 104,914 in 2017 to 90,366 in 2037 due to baby

- boomers aging into the 65 and over group.
- The ratio of unemployed persons to job openings in the Hickory MSA fell from 2.34 in December 2013 to 1.23 in December 2017.
- December 2017 ratios of unemployed persons to job openings were 2.84 in Alexander County, 1.25 in Burke County, 2.28 in Caldwell County and 0.90 in Catawba County.
- Healthcare practitioners and technical occupations, production occupations and transportation and material moving occupations had the most Hickory MSA online job openings in December 2017. These three occupation groups accounted for 29.5% of all job openings.

See the selected figures below for additional information. The EIN is produced quarterly and is a publication of the Western Piedmont Workforce Development Board. To subscribe to the EIN, please visit www.wpcog.org or contact Taylor Dellinger, Data Analyst at 828-485-4233 or by email taylor.dellinger@wpcog.org.

Figure.

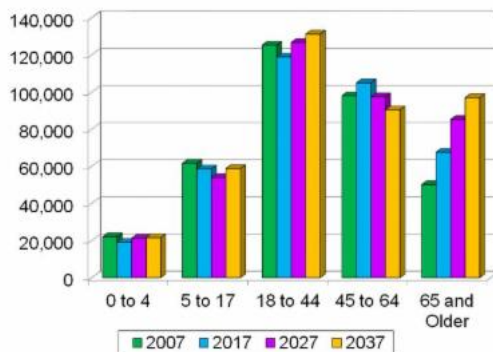
Hickory MSA Ratio of Unemployed Persons per Job Opening, December 2013-2017



Source: NC Works Online, NC Department of Commerce 2018.

Figure.

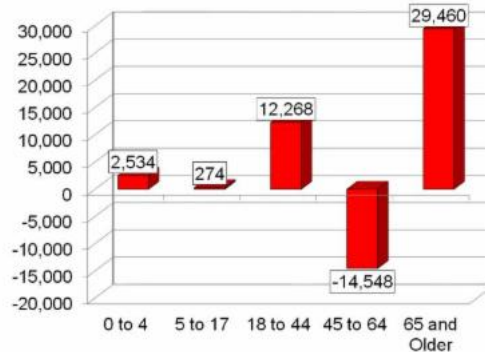
Hickory MSA Age Group Projections, 2017-2037



Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2018.

Figure.

Hickory MSA Change of Age Group Populations, 2017-2037



Source: NC Office of Management and Budget, 2018.

IT/GIS Services

WPCOG Small Unmanned Aircraft System / "Drone" Services for Local Governments



Drexel Fair.



Hudson Festival.

WPCOG announces the addition of its Small Unmanned Aircraft System (sUAS) services program, commonly known as "drone" services. This new offering for local governments includes photo and video production, as well as Geographic Information Systems (GIS) integration.



Hudson CruisIn.

Staff GIS Technician Trey Schweitzer recently earned the Federal Aviation Administration's (FAA) Small UAS Rule (14 CFR part 107) certification. This certification is now required for all commercial and government-related drone projects (or for any drone activity performed as more than a non-monetary hobby). WPCOG proudly extends the opportunity for sUAS/drone-related services to our local governments and community organizations.

Potential uses for local governments include:

- Promotional footage of downtowns, festivals and fairs, and areas of natural beauty. This footage can be added to websites or used in presentations, advertisements, etc.
- Mapping of sewer or electric utility outfall lines in-and-across areas that may be impossible or impractical to traverse by vehicle or foot.
- Inspection/ cataloging of electric utility equipment on poles.
- Site evaluation for potential industry development.
- Storm damage assessments.
- Traffic Assessment / Automobile Accident Analysis
- Consulting with Public Safety and Emergency staff to set up and maintain certified drone programs

"When operating the drone throughout the region, I am often struck with the beauty from above of our mountains, water and forests - assets which surround each of our communities, but which we often fail to see because we are stuck on the ground."

-- Trey Schweitzer, WPCOG GIS Staff and FAA-Certified Drone Pilot

To learn more about WPCOG's sUAS/Drone services, and to see examples of the program's aerial footage from Hudson's 2018 Butterfly Festival and Drexel's 2018 Spring Carnival, view our Facebook project page [here](#), our YouTube video [here](#) or contact Scott Miller, WPCOG Information Services/GIS Director, at (828) 322-9191 or by email at scott.miller@wpcog.org

Article by Tom Bell

Regional Housing Authority Landlord Information and Updates

The Regional Housing Authority (RHA) issues vouchers to approximately 50 families each month. These families receive a voucher and begin to search for housing. Families are given 60 days to locate a landlord who has an open unit and will accept a Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher.

Several families are unsuccessful in their housing search, for various reasons. The RHA believes that promoting healthier relationships with landlords will help our prospective

tenants secure housing at a higher rate. The RHA is willing to work with any landlord who is willing to abide by Section 8 regulations. If you are willing and would like more information, the RHA would be honored to have the opportunity to explain those regulations to you.

The RHA recently updated the website with forms and information that may be useful to both current and new landlords. Please visit www.wpcog.org/landlords and let us know what you think! Your feedback is appreciated. The RHA looks forward to working with you to provide decent, safe and sanitary housing to families in need. Each year in November, all current and new landlords are invited to attend the Landlord Seminar where program related information is shared, as well as ways for landlords to protect themselves against damages and lease violations.

If you are a landlord, property owner or property manager in Alexander, Burke, Caldwell or Catawba and would like more information on the Section 8 Housing Choice Voucher program, please contact Kala Guido at 828.485.4282 or kala.guido@wpcog.org.

Article by Kala Guido

Transportation

Burke Women's Fund Awards Funds to WPCOG in 2017 - 2018 Grant Cycle



Burke Women's Fund, operating under the auspices of the Community Foundation of Burke County, awarded Western Piedmont Council of Governments \$10,000 for the Burke Fixed Route Transit Project. Burke Women's Fund's mission is to "invest in the needs and promise of our women and families." The proposed circulator route will have the potential to impact over 11,000 women and over 5,000 children. The proposed route will improve access for women and their families to a wide range of victim's assistance services, women's and children's homeless shelters, child development centers and daycare locations. Many of these facilities are either sites of proposed bus stops, are within a half-mile of a proposed bus stop, or can be served upon request as part of the proposed transit system's "Flex Service."

The scope of this project centers on the design and implementation of a transportation system that will provide access to care and services for marginalized populations in Burke County by establishing a trial bus route connecting Rutherford College and Morganton. Reliable transit is crucial to providing access to healthcare, employment, education, and

healthy food options. According to Carolinas HealthCare System - Blueridge, hundreds of healthcare appointments in the area are missed each year due to the lack of reliable transportation. Establishment of the proposed bus route will help reduce the number of missed medical appointments, while also providing reliable transportation to many major employers, a variety of educational facilities, and several USDA-defined full-service grocery stores.

In addition to the \$10,000 contribution from Burke Women's Fund, other committed funds include: Federal Transit Authority, Community Foundation of Burke County, Blueridge Health, Western Piedmont Community College, Community Foundation of Western NC, Blue Cross Blue Shield, Town of Valdese, Town of Rutherford College, City of Morganton, Burke County, Town of Drexel, and one private donor. All committed funding sources should be determined by June of 2018.

Article by [Averi Ritchie](#)

Vacant Housing Workshop

2018 Vacant Housing Workshop

Addressing vacant and abandon housing in neighborhoods



Please join us June 26, 2018

Agenda

| | |
|-------------------|---|
| 10am to 10:30am | Registration |
| 10:30am to noon | Vacant property approaches <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Overview of land banking approach · Example: Kinston |
| Noon to 12:45pm | Lunch will be provided |
| 12:45pm to 1:45pm | Vacant and abandoned housing regulatory powers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Brief overview of inspections authority · Housing codes for repair and maintenance (general police power and minimum housing) |
| 1:45pm to 2pm | Break |
| 2pm to 3pm | Local government land banking – legal authority <ul style="list-style-type: none"> · Acquire · Hold & stabilize · Convey to redeveloper · Provide financing |



Tyler Mulligan & Marcia Perritt



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

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AICP Credits Available

[Register here](#)

Calendar of Events

June

- 27 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm)
- 26 - WPCOG Executive Committee Meeting (6pm)

July

- 18 - Water Resources Committee Meeting (11am)
- 22 - Regional Aging Provider Meeting (2pm)

August

- 13 - Regional Aging Advisory Committee/STHL Meeting (12pm)
- 22 - Greater Hickory MPO TAC/TCC (2pm)

26 - WPCOG Vacant
Housing Workshop

28 - Mayor/Chairman/
Manager Meeting (6pm)

24 - WPCOG Policy Board
Meeting (6pm)

25 - Greater Hickory MPO
TAC/TCC (2pm)

26 - Water Quality
Conference (8:30am)

27 - Air Quality
Conference (8:30am)

28 - WPCOG Executive
Committee Meeting (6pm)

29 - Regional Managers'
Meeting (12pm)

30 - Mayor/Chairman/
Manager Meeting (6pm)



Stay Connected



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