



# TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

September 2007  
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[www.townofchapelhill.org](http://www.townofchapelhill.org)

## A Short Report

By Roger L. Stancil,  
Town Manager

When I heard that an employee group had brainstormed “Change Counts” as the theme for the Town’s Combined Campaign for charitable causes, I was pleased. Their first message is that all levels of giving make a difference – including pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters. The second message is that things are changing in our organization, and it matters. Employees are recognizing those changes in a positive way.

But I also know that change can be unsettling and challenging. This is why I am making efforts to provide all employees with information about the changes ahead. The more you know, the more involved and engaged you can become with that change. You will help shape our future by asking questions, sharing concerns and ideas and addressing potential outcomes.

Last June, I distributed “A Roadmap for Organizational Realignment,” a document outlining plans to restructure the Town organization. I stated the intended goals were to arrange our organization around key focus areas for the community and the Council and to bring related functions closer together. If you have not seen this document, I urge you to contact your department’s administrative unit and request a copy. Also in the spirit of engaging employees through good information, I have begun distributing a summary report from the weekly Senior Management Team meetings. These summaries should be available to you; if not, please ask your departments for copies.

I want to involve in discussions those individuals who are affected by proposed organizational changes. It takes all of us working together to move forward in positive new directions. I am asking you to think outside the usual and expected; to ask questions if you do not understand; and share your knowledge and experience.

## Valerie Meicher

**Human Resource Development Director**

**Department:** Human Resource Development

**Joined Town:** September 2007

**Duties:** Valerie Meicher (pronounced my-ker) will be tasked with transitioning a traditional personnel office into a Human Resource Development Department, a center that will guide employees toward sustainable excellence. She will address the changing needs of employees and their departments through proactive planning, research, and investigation of new techniques, theories and approaches to adult education.

“Valerie will focus on developing our employees and our organization, reviewing our human resource systems to ensure they accomplish our goals of strengthening our organization through our people,” Town Manager Roger L. Stancil said. Meicher plans to build on the Human Resource Team’s strength in listening to employees to evaluate issues and develop potential solutions. Her focus is to serve the Town’s employees so that they can better serve the Town’s citizens.

**Personal:** A native of Dayton, Ohio, Meicher holds a master’s degree in public administration from West Virginia University, a master’s degree in library science from Simmons College and a bachelor’s degree in anthropology from State University of New York at Buffalo. She has more than 20 years of

## In the Spotlight



Zach Meicher photo

experience in management and human resources and has held leadership positions in professional organizations in her field.

Meicher enjoys outdoor activities, including kayaking and mountain biking. She once dreamed of owning her own restaurant, and now volunteers at the cooking school at A Southern Season. Meicher’s son Zach, 16, a junior at Chapel Hill High School, enjoys acting and singing, and is completing a project to become an Eagle Scout. They enjoy traveling, and recently took a road trip through California.

**Quote:** Happiness is not a station you arrive at, but a manner of traveling.

— Margaret Lee Runbeck

## COMING UP

**Friday, Sept. 21:** Car Free Day

**Thursday, Sept. 27:** Crossing Carolinas Challenge Kick-off

**Saturday, Sept. 29:** Big Sweep Litter Clean-up

**Wednesday, Oct. 3:** Walk to School Day in Chapel Hill (organized by Go! Chapel Hill Active Living by Design)

**Sunday, Oct. 7:** Festifall Street Festival, West Franklin Street

**Friday, Oct. 12:** Combined Campaign Kick-off

**Friday, Oct. 19:** Employee Service Awards



Catherine Lazorko photo

**Family Fun** — The Festifall Street Fair will be held from 1 to 6 p.m., Sunday, Oct. 7, on West Franklin Street in downtown Chapel Hill. Information: [www.festifall.com](http://www.festifall.com)

# In Brief

**Ron Aiken** (Public Works) has assumed a portion of the responsibilities of the Occupational Health and Safety Officer, including workers comp claims and other on-the-job injury issues. Ron will maintain office hours in the Human Resources Department at Town Hall for about two hours each day. At other times he will be available in his office at the Public Works. Ron can be contacted at 969-5118 (Public Works) or 969-5035 (Human Resources).



**Eric Jones** (Fire) and his wife, Shelley, gave birth to a beautiful 8 lb. 10 oz. bouncing baby girl, Isabel, at 2:30 p.m. Aug. 22.

Mom and baby Isabel are doing well.



**John Matthew "Matt" Lawrence** has been appointed Fire Marshal/Deputy Chief of Life Safety. He holds certifications

as a Fire Inspector III, Fire Instructor II, NC Fire/Arson Investigator, NC Haz Mat Tech, EMT, NC Fire & Life Safety Educator I and NFA certified Juvenile Fire-setter Intervention Specialist, and is a nationally certified child safety seat technician instructor.

**John Wellons** (Fire) and his wife, Rosemary welcomed their first child, James William Wellons, at 8:15 a.m. Sept. 17. He weighed in at 10 lbs. 12 oz. Mom and baby are doing well and Dad is as proud and happy as he can be.



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**Congratulations to our winning bus drivers!** Chapel Hill Transit drivers took home awards this June from the NC Rodeo in Wilmington, where the best transit drivers from across the state test their skills and concentration. The team, which included (l-r) Stephen Wright, William Carter, Tony Combs, David Damin and Travis Parker, won first place as a team in the van category. Travis Parker placed first in the individual van category, and Tony Combs placed third in the same category.



**Brian Parker** (Fire) was named Chapel Hill's 2007 Firefighter of the Year for his work with the department

and to raise money and awareness for causes such as MDA, the UNC Burn Center, Habitat for Humanity, the Ronald McDonald House, and St. Baldrick's Children's Cancer Fund.

**A permanent exhibit** on the history of the Chapel Hill Fire Department, "Heroes of Yesterday, Heroes of Today," opened Aug. 23 at the Chapel Hill Museum. Thanks to **Chris Bradley** (Fire) for his hard work on this project.

**The NC Big Sweep Litter Cleanup** will be held from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. Saturday, Sept. 29. The clean up event is part of the 20th annual statewide NC Big Sweep Litter Clean-Up, sponsored by Chapel Hill's Stormwater Management Division. Volunteers are encouraged to pre-register for this event by calling the Stormwater Division's Educator Wendy Smith at 969-7246, or by e-mailing her at [wsmith@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:wsmith@townofchapelhill.org). Volunteers may also register the day of the event at Chapel Hill's Umstead Park.

The Town has established a **Communications and Public Affairs Department**, to be led by **Sabrina Oliver**. The department will be tasked with increasing public awareness, understanding and participation in government, and supporting the Town's strategic directions. The department will improve citizen outreach through news media relations, internal and external communications, vital records maintenance and provision, citizen education and service programs, and marketing activities. A key strategy is to enhance the Town's web presence and use technology to expand civic engagement and services.

Harvard University is accepting applications for **Innovations in American Government Awards**, given annually to programs that are examples of creative and effective government at its best. Each winner will receive a \$100,000 grant. The deadline for applications is Oct. 15. Applications and information are available at [www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu](http://www.innovationsaward.harvard.edu).

The **Individual Development Account** program, facilitated by the Women's Center, teaches future homebuyers budgeting skills to help them to save money and prepare for the financial responsibility of homeownership. First-time homebuyers who are able to save \$1000 may receive \$2,000 toward either a down payment or closing costs.

For information, contact Tarin Washington, director of the Orange County IDA Program, at 968-4610 or [twashington@womenspace.org](mailto:twashington@womenspace.org).

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## Employee Forum

### We Want You!

Have you been employed with the Town on a permanent basis for at least one year in good standing? Do you want the opportunity to make a change? Have strong leadership skills? Consider lending your skills to the Employee Forum! The following departments will have an Employee Forum member whose term will expire in December.

- Transit: Wallace Alston, Annie Edwards
- Public Works: Kay McDaniel, Mike West
- Police: Bryan Walker, Karen Rose
- Planning: Dana Stidham
- Parks and Recreation: Marian Kaslovsky
- Library: Ken McDouall
- Housing: Jackie Thompson
- Fire: Keith Gaudette
- Finance: Vacant

Participating departments should receive a notice of the election and a request for nominees in September. Please return your nomination form to Human Resources. Human Resources will distribute ballots in mid-October for all viable nominees and by the end of November the election process should be complete.

The Employee Forum is an advisory committee to the Town Manager consisting of supervisory and non-supervisory employees who are elected by their peers. This group will:

- Identify ways to recognize individual worth and uniqueness of each employee
- Identify ways for the Town to value diversity
- Identify ways for all employees to provide input to the Town administration and provide a venue for that communication
- Encourage a sense of community among all Town employees
- Assist in the communication of issues and activities affecting employees.

— Elections Work Group

## Employee Mobility Survey

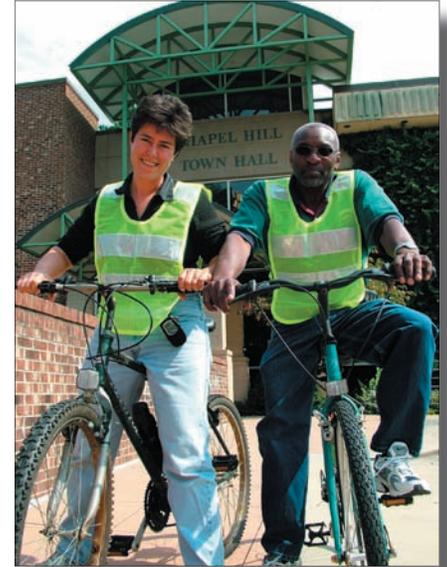
Town employees are urged to complete the 2007 Employee Mobility Survey by Oct. 31.

While responses are anonymous, employees are asked to sign a form affirming that they have completed the survey. The names of these employees will be used in a drawing for small prizes.

Employees may take the online survey at [http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2uAb8rTg06an7wCxQEwmPg\\_3d\\_3d](http://www.surveymonkey.com/s.aspx?sm=2uAb8rTg06an7wCxQEwmPg_3d_3d). Paper surveys also are available in each department, or contact Len Cone at 969-5065 or [mcone@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:mcone@townofchapelhill.org).

The survey is issued every two years and helps give planners an understanding of how employees are getting to and from work. The information will be compiled in January 2008 and a final report will be given to Town Council.

Thank you for your participation.



*Maggie Bowers (Inspections) and Bobby Pettiford (Inspections) parked their vehicles at the Eubanks Park and Ride lot and bicycled to work last year on Car Free Day.*

## Combined Campaign Kickoff

The Town's annual Combined Campaign Kickoff will be held from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. Friday, Oct. 12, at Town Hall. Employees are invited to learn more about the campaign and enjoy hot dogs, games, baked goods and a raffle.

The annual combined campaign, the only charitable drive authorized to solicit Town employees for payroll deduction pledges, raises money for numerous agencies, including a wide variety of health care, service, and environmental organizations. Each department has an assigned representative who will collect employee pledge forms.

The four combined campaign federations – Triangle United Way, Earth Share of NC, Community Health Charities of NC, and NC Community Shares – will have tables set up at the Campaign Kick-off, and chances for prizes will be available when employees visit tables.

Consider attending the kickoff. You will have fun with your co-workers while helping to support worthy causes. Last year, employees who participated in the campaign contributed about \$18,400, and the kick-off raised about \$600. If you would like to contribute baked goods, raffle prizes, games or energy to the kick-off event, please contact Catherine Lazorko at 969-5055 or [pio@townofchapelhill.org](mailto:pio@townofchapelhill.org).

## New HVAC for Town Hall

Finally, it's coming. Bids are out for the installation of a new HVAC system for Town Hall, including the replacement of rooftop air conditioning units and the addition of an energy management and control system.

Parking adjustments will need to be made during the construction period, which is expected to begin in January.

Updates will be forthcoming.

## Recycling

Mixed paper recycling is now available at apartment sites where recycling service is provided in roll carts. All types of clean, dry paper that tears, except corrugated cardboard, can be placed in the roll carts. At most complexes, cans and bottles do not need to be separated. Please check cart labels for instructions about which materials may be placed in them.

The recycling drop-off site at the Orange County Animal Shelter in Chapel Hill will close at the end of September. Also beginning in September, the five County solid waste convenience centers will now be open during lunch from noon to 1 p.m. Monday, Tuesday, Thursday and Friday. They will be closed Wednesdays and open on Saturdays from 7 a.m. to 5 p.m. and Sundays from 1 p.m. to 5 p.m.

— Blair Pollock (Orange Community Recycling)

# Town Operations Center Opening Celebrated

The Town of Chapel Hill celebrated the dedication of the new Town Operations Center on Sept. 10. The facility houses the Public Works Department and Chapel Hill Transit. The design of the Town Operations Center includes a number of sustainable design features intended to reduce the facility's use of non-renewable resources and minimize its impact on the environment. Sustainability features include systems for water conservation, solar-oriented design, permeable pavement, bio-retention, and a water quality pond.



Photos by Erin Kawamata (Public Works)



Chapel Hill Deputy Town Manager Flo Miller, left, and Orange County Manager Laura Blackmon, both seated, admire the marble bench artwork titled "Around Town" by artist Larry Kirkland.

**THANKS FOR YOUR HELP IN GETTING THE JOB DONE!** Town employees, both current and retired, were thanked for their hard work in the planning, design and construction of the Town Operations Center. Pictured above are (l-r) Don Wells, Jeanmarie Curtis, Carmen Cole, Curtis Brooks, Bruce Heflin, Sonna Lowenthal, Cal Horton, Roger L. Stancil, Lance Norris and Ralph Karpinos.



Kim Weaver (Transit) helps guests sign the guest book and pick up paperweight mementos from the special occasion.



Speakers who participated in the special event included Mayor Pro Tem Bill Strom, NC Department of Transportation Public Transit Division Director Miriam Perry (pictured at podium), Town Manager Roger L. Stancil, Town Assistant Manager Bruce Heflin, Transit Director Steve Spade and public artist Larry Kirkland.