



TOWNtalk

A newsletter for Town of Chapel Hill employees

March 2013
Vol. 9, No. 7

www.townofchapelhill.org

On the Front Burner



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Column from Town Manager
Roger L. Stancil

Employee Engagement and Perspectives on the Workplace

Many of the changes we are undertaking today are based on feedback I received from Town employees. To continue that communication, we partnered with the UNC School of Government to conduct an employee engagement study about the Town workplace.

You will soon be receiving an employee engagement survey. The survey asks about your job, job satisfaction and employee morale, and your perspectives on the Town's mission and values, policies and rules that guide how we work, how information is communicated in the workplace, and some of the initiatives and changes we are undergoing as an organization, among other things.

The survey will be rolled out in phases – electronically for employees with email addresses and paper copies for those who do not have email– beginning in late March through April.

The feedback you provide through these surveys is extremely important as we continue to change to meet the needs of our community and thrive as an organization. It will inform us how our most valuable asset, YOU, perceive the Town as a place to work and will shape decisions about how we adapt to a changing world in the future.

I ask that you please take the time, which should be 20-30 minutes, to provide this feedback. I encourage you to complete the survey during work hours, and I am asking all department heads and supervisors to ensure that there are ample opportunities to do so.

Cheryl Warren

Human Resource Specialist III

Only three months into her job as human resources development specialist, Cheryl Warren feels right at home with employees at Chapel Hill Transit and Public Works, for whom she serves as the HR Partner. Her responsibilities include providing guidance and consultation to employees and managers in the areas of policy administration, recruitment and selection, classification and compensation, employee relations and employee benefits.

Prior to her position here, she worked for an information technology company based in Cary that required frequent travel to the West Coast on a nearly weekly basis. Previous positions in human resources were held at UNC-Chapel Hill, Pricewater Coopers and Lincoln Community Health Center. With background and interests in computer science, business administration and organizational development, Cheryl says that she has found a career that is a "natural fit." Her degree in business administration is from Mount Olive College.

"I like working with people from diverse backgrounds," she says. "I also like solving problems."

In her personal time, Cheryl enjoys tending to her rose garden, maintaining a 55-gallon fish tank of tropical fish, and frequent camping trips. She is passionate about basketball, which she enjoys watching with her son, Brian, 31, and his family. Another son, Kelvin, 25, lives in Savannah.

Value in the Spotlight

Professionalism



Catherine Lazorko photo

Employees in the Public Works and Chapel Hill Transit departments can reach Cheryl at cwarren@townofchapelhill.org or 919-969-5032.

If you know another outstanding Chapel Hill employee who should be featured in TOWNtalk, contact Catherine Lazorko at 969-5055 or clazorko@townofchapelhill.org.

COMING UP

Saturday, March 23: Community Egg Hunt, 9:30 a.m., Hank Anderson Community Park, Carrboro. www.townofchapelhill.org/egghunt

Saturday, March 23: Morgan Creek Cleanup, 1-5 p.m. Info: 969-7246

Friday, March 29: Town Holiday. Most municipal offices will be closed.

Saturday, April 13: UNC Science Expo, 10 a.m.-3 p.m., Morehead Planetarium. www.townofchapelhill.org/scienceexpo



New hybrid buses for Chapel Hill Transit celebrated at ribbon cutting ceremony earlier this month.

In Brief



Ross Tompkins (Business Management) and his wife Kate welcomed their first child, Eli, on Jan. 29. He

weighed 8 lbs. 5 oz. and was 20.5 inches long. Eli is getting along well with his feline sister and three canine siblings.



Justin Lanning (Fire) and his wife Elizabeth gave birth to twins on Feb. 2. Benjamin

David Lanning came first, at 6 lbs. 10 oz., and Emma Claire was second, at 5 lbs. 6 oz. They were born at 36 weeks, and everyone is doing fine.

Congratulations to **Matt Cecil** (Transit) for completing the Transportation Leadership Program, coordinated by the Institute for Transportation Research and Education at NC State University (ITRE) and the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT). This 12-week program assists participants in developing leadership skills and improving decision-making and conflict resolution skills.

Keith Simeon (Transit) has joined CHT as Parts Manager - Maintenance Division. If his name sounds familiar, it's because he has been assisting us in the Maintenance Division over the last several months through ExpressPros. Keith has associates' degrees from Ohlone College in business and Sequoia Institute in automotive technology.



TOWNtalk is produced by the Communications and Public Affairs Department
Editorial/Graphics: Catherine Lazorko,
Melanie Miller

Art. On a Bus.

Coming to a bus stop near you – The Mobile Mural – is a highly colorful, super-sized artwork that wraps an in-service Chapel Hill Transit bus.

The bus wrap, designed by Chapel Hill artist Mary Carter Taub, is a map mash-up of Town bus routes and road mark patterns such as yellow lanes and pedestrian crosswalk zebra stripes.

This project is a partnership with Transit and the Orange County Arts Commission, and is part of the Public Arts Office's Downtown Art Program which aims to enhance and benefit the experience of downtown Chapel Hill for visitors, residents and businesses through pub-



lic and cultural arts. An opening reception for the Mural and other Downtown Art Program projects was held at the Courtyard on Franklin Street during the March 8 Second Friday Art Walk.

Edward "Nigel" Frank (Transit) has been promoted to the position of EZ Rider Paratransit Dispatcher. Nigel joined CHT in September 2011 as Transit Operator III (EZ Rider Operator) and has also served as EZ Rider Fill-In Dispatcher.

Employees may no longer cash checks at the central cashiering area on the ground floor of Town Hall or at any other Town operated cash handling area or from any Town cashier or petty cash fund. This prohibition is being instituted in order to improve our focus on providing customer service.

A reduced fee for Kinetix membership is now available to all active employees who are eligible to participate in the Town's health insurance but choose not to do so. The monthly charge will be \$10 (payroll deduction). To join, contact Jim Orr at jorr@townofchapelhill.org or 968-2849.

SMT notes are posted on the Intranet within a day or two of the SMT meetings. Access the notes from the intranet at <http://intranet> by clicking on "Published Documents" on the left-hand side of the page, then clicking on "SMT Meeting Notes" under the "Teams" column.

Do you like seeing your **co-workers doing cool things** in real time? Then you may enjoy the TOWNtalkCH twitter stream! Like the TOWNtalk newsletter, the twitter account is a method of communicating with Town of Chapel Hill employees. Follow it @TOWNtalkCH.



Tax law changes affect your paycheck!

Congress has enacted tax law changes that will affect all employees (full-time, part-time and temporary). Employee deductions for FICA have increased from 4.2 percent to 6.2 percent. New Federal and State Income Tax Tables for 2013 will impact employees' income tax deductions. You can find the new tax tables on the IRS's website (www.irs.gov) in IRS Tax Notice 1036 and Publication 15, Circular E. Many employees may see an increase in Federal taxes withheld.

Overall, employees will see a decrease in their take-home pay by a minimum of the two percent FICA change, although the impact on each employee may differ depending on their filing status and withholdings.

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Compliments



Dan Jones (Fire) was thanked by Durham Technical Community College for supporting the college's Fire Academies.

Jason Belcher and **James Wilde** (both Police) were thanked by Phil Susann for giving Bear Scout Pack 820 of Chapel Hill a tour of the Police Headquarters.

Kevin Gunter (Police) was thanked by Steve Bouser for speaking to newswriting classes at UNC.

Andrew Tipaldos (Traffic Engineering) was thanked by Robert Myers (Traffic Engineering) for informing him that a signal pole was damaged and needed to be replaced.

The firefighters at Station #1 were thanked by Stephanie Troop for hosting a visit for her and her son Charlie. "I really appreciate how welcoming and kind they all were with my little fireman!"

Dan Jones (Fire) and the Chapel Hill Fire Department were thanked by the members of Kernersville Fire Rescue for providing an escort when the body of their Chief, Walt Summer-ville, was brought to Chapel Hill for an autopsy.

Joe McMiller (Transit) was commended by Victor J. Schoenbach for using good judgment when driving.

Tiffany Neal, Nick Pittman, and Matt Cecil (all Transit) were thanked by **Brian Litchfield** (Transit) for assisting with the Community Helpers Exhibit as part of the celebration of the legacy of Martin Luther King, Jr.

Dan Jones (Fire) and the **Chapel Hill Fire Department** were thanked by the UNC Lineberger Comprehensive Cancer Center for donating \$2,000 in support of the Turn the Town Pink campaign.

Joshua Mecimore (Police) and **Matt Lawrence** (Fire) were thanked by Shelly Leslie for assisting WRAL with a video shoot.

Chris Blue (Police) and the **Police Department** were thanked by FBI Director Robert Mueller for their assistance in ensuring the safety of the 2012 Democratic National Convention, with special thanks to **Robert Overton** and **Curt Ray Farrell**.

Thanks to **Public Works crews** for treating roads before wintry weather in January. Bridget Baucom said, "We would like to send a huge thank you to you and your team! They were a tremendous help to us here at the University!" **Brian Litchfield** (Transit) also expressed his thanks, and Public Works Director **Lance Norris** said "I too appreciate the excellent teamwork demonstrated in providing service to one another and to the community we cherish."

Welcome, New Employees!

Michael Chandler (Transit)
Tom Clark (HRD)
Lindsey Davidson (Public Works)
Michael Hayhurst (Transit)
Shamyra Lee (Transit)
Latosha Mabry (Transit)
Latonya McNair (Business Mgmt)
Kevin McNamara (Transit)
Saquita Slade (Transit)
Jerrell Stevens (Transit)
David Vanderhoof (Transit)
Cheryl Warren (HRD)
Timothy Whitfield (Police)
Christina Winston (Library)
Stephanie Yeatts (Parks and Recreation)

Farewell, Retirees!

Beverly Baldwin (Transit)
Anthony Carr (Transit)
Bonnie House (Police)
Louis Jones (Transit)
Caprice Mellon (Fire)
Thomas Mitchell (Police)
Teresa Oliver (Transit)
Kerry Spade (Transit)
Ceberettia Hinton (Transit)
Dennis Jordan (Fire)
Bobby Pettiford (Public Works)
Horace Sewell-El (Transit)



by **Jim Huegerich** and **Faith Thompson**

Many of our visitors have had questions about engaging in a difficult conversation. These have involved peer-to-peer conversations; employee-to-supervisor conversations; and employees across departmental lines. For more information, contact us at the Office of the Ombuds at 308 Rosemary Street, Suite #202 or 919-265-0806 or Ombuds@townofchapelhill.org

#1: Do not use "surprise" as an element. Share your intentions up front. Ask the other party, when would be a good time to talk to them about a matter that is causing you some difficulty. Seek permission to provide the feedback. Even if you are the employee's boss, start by stating you have some feedback you'd

like to share. Ask if it's a good time or if the employee would prefer to select another time and place. (Within reason, of course.) Be as specific as possible about what is causing you to feel that this may be a difficult topic.

#2: Do not adopt a "combat mentality" Assume that the reason that the potential conversation is hard is because neither one of you have all the facts. If you approach it with the spirit that you plan to find out what information your counterpart is acting on as well as sharing what information you have, you may be able to create a win-win situation with both of you sharing and checking out assumptions.

#3: Do not try to "oversimplify" the problem. Take a moment and write down exactly what you believe the problems are. Start with the person in YOUR mirror! It is easier for me to hear that "YOU" believe your problem is that you sometimes act without all the facts instead of you telling me that I haven't shared all relevant information!

#4: Show Respect: To avoid falling into the combat mentality, you need to go further – you need to respect the person you're talking to, and you need to respect yourself. Use words that you would want them to use in a conversation with you. Also, using "I" sentences instead of "You" sentences makes it easier to be heard and less likely to be heard as an attack.

#5: Be aware of what you are feeling. Feelings are neither good nor bad, they just are! The trick is recognizing what we are feeling before we attempt to have a difficult conversation and to avoid difficult conversations when our emotions are heightened. Be as transparent as you can and state what you really want. For example, if you feel as though your counterpart has stopped responding to you, recognize immediately how that is making you feel and offer instead; "I don't know how to interpret your silence."

Spring Ahoy!

Chapel Hill celebrated spring on March 2 with Spring Ahoy. This event included a Town services fair that showcased our municipal services and a Central West Focus Area Community Workshop to discover the community's vision for the Estes Drive area.

Town employees from all departments, including including police and public safety, waste collection, recreation, parks and greenways, public housing, traffic engineering, communications and public affairs, and planning and neighborhood services,

had an opportunity to meet residents, show our services, answer questions, and celebrate our successes. A fire truck, public works trucks, and other Town vehicles were on display in the parking lot. Police dogs from the Chapel Hill Police Department K-9 Unit demonstrated their special skills. Fire personnel demonstrated the proper installation and use of child safety car seats.

Chapel Hill Transit held a ribbon cutting ceremony to celebrate the addition of 15 new hybrid buses to the Chapel Hill Transit fleet.



Have you done the HRA?

The Health Risk Assessment helps us have healthier employees and lower healthcare costs. You can also receive incentives, including cash for achieving health goals and free admission to Parks and Recreation gyms and pools.

The HRA has three steps:

1. Fill out a questionnaire (at chapelhillwellnessatwork.org or at the clinic) to assess your health behaviors.
2. Make an appointment with the clinic through the portal at chapelhillwellnessatwork.org to measure your height, weight, blood pressure, cholesterol and blood sugar.
3. Receive a personalized report of your risk for disease and health coaching to improve your overall wellness.



Percentage of employees who have completed the HRA



The race is on!