

WECR-AM 1130
Newland, NC

Issue and Programs Report
For
Station WECR-AM

Quarter 2, 2023
April 1-June 30, 2023

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WECR NEWS

Reports filed in news segments are aired weekdays at 5:55am, 6:55 and 7:55 am.

Special reports are aired in emergencies at other times.

Q2 news stories included:

4/12-

The Boone Police Department is asking for the public's assistance to be mindful of the importance of locking your vehicle when unattended. Officers Assigned to the Patrol Division recently responded to several incidents in which parked vehicles were broken into and property was subsequently stolen. These incidents were reported in multiple residential areas located within the Town of Boone. Boone Police remind you to Lock your vehicle. If available, park in well-lit areas. Remove or least hide valuables out of sight, such as in the glove box or trunk. Do not leave the area while your vehicle is running, even for a brief errand. If you have any information regarding these incidents, please contact (828) 268-6959 to submit an anonymous tip. CD

4/18-

The Town of Boone is looking to hire an experienced Public Works Director. The Director is responsible for a department encompassing street maintenance, facilities maintenance, stormwater management, fleet maintenance, and traffic control. The role also participates with Council committees on transportation, open space, bike ways, and greenways planning. Work involves management of staff, budget, and resources for efficient, effective and customer focused service. Hiring range begins at \$87,361, but salary is negotiable dependent upon experience and qualifications. Application deadline is May 2. The Town of Boone is also seeking a customer service representative in the Utility Billing Department. Salary is \$38,115 negotiable, dependent on experience, plus excellent benefits. Employee will serve a six-month probation. You can get more information and apply online at TownOfBoone.net.

EC

4/25-

The Watauga Community Mental Health Project invites the community to a special Service of Remembrance and Hope, to remember the lives of George and Michelle Ligon, Isaac Barnes, and Watauga Sheriff's Office's Sergeant Chris Ward and K9 Deputy Logan Fox. These individuals lost their lives two years ago in a tragic incident in the Chapel Hills community east of Boone. The Service will be held Thursday April 27 at 12:30 pm at St. Luke's Episcopal Church in Boone, in their Solar Shelter. The Watauga Community Mental Health Project creates connections to increase quality of life and prevent loss of life, by raising community awareness around addictions, mental illness, and mental wellness resources and support through frequent community engagement, shattering the stigma about mental health and addictions, and by promoting opportunities for conversations about mental health and ways to support our residents. You can learn more by visiting CMHPofWatauga.weebly.com.

EH

5/10-

Watauga, Ashe and other counties are accepting funding requests related to reducing overdose deaths, emergency department visits for overdose, and illicit opioid involvement. The money is part of the Opioid Settlement funds awarded to counties and eligible organizations are invited to submit a proposal to implement evidence-based, high-impact strategies to address the opioid epidemic. As a result of the Opioid Settlement announced in July 2021, funds were awarded to North Carolina and counties/municipalities to bring resources to communities harmed by the opioid epidemic. All funding proposals are due no later than Monday May 15. You can learn more about the funding, and details on Watauga, Ashe and Alleghany funding, by visiting AppHealthCare.com.

EH

5/12-

The Blowing Rock Town Council Tuesday voted 3-2 against burying utilities along Main Street during a major water and sewer project. Earlier in May, there was a public information and question and answer session about the proposed project. A large number of citizens attended the town council meeting and spoke both for and against the project, some saying the cost of the project per citizens was small, while others claimed the project was not a true need. The council voted 3-2 against a bid on a portion of the project, effectively killing the proposal.

GA

5/16-

The organization Down Home North Carolina Watauga County Chapter is asking the Watauga County Commissioners to adopt a minimum housing standard for the county. The organization plans a campaign to urge Ashe County Commissioners to take similar action in Ashe, and ensure there is an inspector responsible for checking complaints made by tenants. There are some 27 counties in the state that have some minimum housing standard, that addresses plumbing, electrical, heating, flooring and foundation issues, and weather tight doors and windows. The organization says minimum standards would improve housing for renters, and would help with housing availability in the market, by requiring houses to be improved instead of condemned, and taken off the market. You can learn more about the organization and their efforts by visiting DownHomeNC.org.

HO EH

5/18-

The North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshall this week announced the 2023 Fire Grant recipients, and a number of High Country units are among them. Ashe County's Fleetwood, Jefferson, Lansing, New River, Pond Mountain, Todd, Warrensville and West Jefferson Fire Departments received grant funds totalling more than \$140,000. In Avery, the Banner Elk, Crossnore, Elk Park, Fall Creek, Frank, Green Valley and Linville Volunteer Fire Departments received grants totaling more than \$206,000, and in Watauga, Beaver Dam, Cove Creek, Deep Gap, Meat Camp, Shawneehaw, Beech Mountain, and Zionville Volunteer Fire Departments received over \$168,800 in Fire Grant funds. The Volunteer Fire Department Fund was created by the North Carolina General Assembly to

assist volunteer fire departments in the state to purchase equipment and make capital expenditures. Departments must be all volunteer, and must be rated/certified by the NC Department of Insurance.

CD

5/25-

The Watauga Economic Development Commission met May 18 at Seven Devils Town Hall and Watauga EDC member, and App State Director for External Affairs & Community Relations Matthew Dockham gave an hour-long presentation on Appalachian State University's Innovation District, which will include 156 units of faculty & staff housing. The project also features the Conservatory for Biodiversity Education and Research, which will potentially stimulate federal research grant opportunities while also providing cross-discipline partnerships between the university and K-12 schools. In all, over \$270M of planned construction and renovation will take place on the App State campus over the next six years. Dockham also shared plans for the App State Hickory campus, including renovation timelines and curriculum, with classes scheduled to begin at the facility this fall. Joe Furman, Director of Economic Development for the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce updated the group on ongoing housing-related activities, including the Watauga Community Housing Trust actively fundraising to cover costs related to their first home purchase. The Watauga EDC submitted an application to the NC Department of Commerce for a Rural Transformation Grant, which would provide funds for potential site assessments and engineering work. The Watauga EDC, Watauga Housing Council, and Boone Area Chamber of Commerce will be hosting a conversation on employer-led housing strategies later this month. The Watauga EDC's next meeting is June 15, inside the Gallery Room at Beech Mountain Club. Meetings are open to the public. For more information visit BooneChamber.com.

EC GR

5/30-

Wednesday May 31st, North Carolina Field Office Director Lorenzo Claxton will join Boone Mayor Tim Futrelle, Chairperson Larry Turnbow of the Watauga County Commissioners, the Northwest CoC-516 Lead Executive Director Tina Krause, and the Balance of State NCCEH Continuum of Care Project Specialist Jenny Simmons in announcing \$22,331,610 in additional Continuum of Care Grant funds for North Carolina. These funds are part of an unprecedented \$315 million U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) package to address unsheltered and rural homelessness providing crucial funding to diverse communities across the country. There will be a special announcement and presentation of the check Wednesday at 12:30 at the Hospitality House of Northwest NC, at 338 Brook Hollow Road Boone.

HO

6/7-Several homes have been broken into recently and the Watauga Sheriff's Office is looking for information. The break-ins occurred between May 17 and 22 and several thousands of dollars worth of jewelry was taken, as well as some cash. Any one with information on those involved or any witnesses to these crimes is asked to contact Crimestoppers at 828-268-6959 or Watauga Sheriff's Office Detective Nathaniel Calvert

at 828-265-7621. All information will be kept confidential and you could be eligible for a reward.

CD

6/9-

The Watauga County Board of Commissioners were unable approve and adopt the proposed 2023/2024 fiscal year budget during the June 6 commissioners meeting. As a results COMMISSIONERS WILL CONDUCT AN ADDITIONAL WORK SESSION TO REVIEW AND DISCUSS THE COUNTY BUDGET on ON WEDNESDAY, JUNE 21, AT 5:30 P.M. IN THE COMMISSIONER'S BOARD ROOM LOCATED IN THE WATAUGA COUNTY ADMINISTRATION BUILDING AT 814 WEST KING STREET IN BOONE. Commissioners WILL then HOLD A SPECIAL MEETING ON THURSDAY, JUNE 22, AT 5:30 P.M. to consider adoption of the budget. For more information call 828-265-8000. You can see the proposed budget online at WataugaCounty.net. State law says the budget must be adopted by June 30.

GA

The Watauga Community Housing Trust is teaming up with the Junaluska Heritage Association to raise funds for its first home purchase this summer. The home is one of the longest-standing homes in the historically-black Junaluska community, and according to the Housing Trust, if it were to sell on the open market, there is a high likelihood a new buyer would demolish and redevelop the home on the property. This is a chance to help preserve the house. This partnership with the Junaluska Heritage Association will raise the funds for the land and identify a Junaluska community member to purchase the home. An offer has been signed and there is a three month window to raise the \$200,000 dollars needed to purchase the property and cover the cost of repairs. Donations will go directly toward acquiring and fixing the original home on the property to permanently preserve the home and to provide long-term affordable housing. The project will create a fund for future projects to create and conserve additional housing units through community partnerships. You can learn more and donate to the project online at

WataugaCommunityHousingTrust.org.

HO

6/14-

Avery County is now hiring a patrol deputy. Starting pay is more than \$43thousand dollars, and goes up to over 45\$thousand after passing Field Training, and could go to over \$50thousand depending on experience. Avery County offers a competitive benefits package including medical, dental and prescription coverage, 401K and more. For more information and to apply, call 828-733-2071 or stop in the Avery County Sheriff's Office at 300 Schultz Circle Newland.

CD EC

6/16-

A number of folks around Watauga County reported the ground shaking on Wednesday night. As of Thursday morning, the US Geological Survey had not confirmed a quake in the area, but VolcanoDiscovery.com posts reports of possible quakes and shows over 20

reports from several areas around Watauga, including Boone and Blowing Rock, Vilas, Zionville, Meat Camp, and in Fleetwood in Ashe and Banner Elk in Avery County. According to the website, the potential quake happened at 9:58 pm Wednesday night and was centered in Wilkes County just east of NC Highway 16, and about 19 miles east of Boone.

CD

The Downtown Boone Development Association has been working on a draft ordinance proposal to Town Council that would regulate itinerant street vending on streets or sidewalks. This week the Board, with guidance from the Town Attorney was able to finalize a draft for review. The ordinance has been developed with input from downtown vendors, downtown businesses, and other community partners, and would apply to all town-owned property and town-maintained public rights of way, such as sidewalks or streets, in Downtown Boone. The proposed ordinance would not apply to buskers/performers or on private property. Room upstairs at the Appalachian Theater on King Street. There will also be an opportunity for people to attend virtually. Anyone who wishes to comment in person or virtually should sign up by calling 828-268-6283 or contact Lane Moody by email, Lane.Moody@TownOfBoone.net. Public comment will be held for the first 45 minutes of the meeting.

GA EC

6/26-

Blue Ridge Conservancy has announced the hiring of Dr. Scott Elliott as its Director of Development. Elliott recently retired as Superintendent of the Watauga County Schools, receiving numerous awards and recognitions in his 9 year tenure. He was named the Northwest North Carolina Regional Superintendent of the Year in 2019 and was widely lauded for his leadership during the Covid-19 pandemic. Elliot is replacing Caroline Poteat, who grew Blue Ridge Conservancy's annual fundraising by almost 200 percent, and the number of donors by 40 percent in her five years at the Conservancy. She will be attending law school at UNC Chapel Hill. Elliott currently serves on the board of directors of a number of community organizations including the High Country United Way, the Watauga County Library, the Advancement Board of the Reich College of Education, the ASU Public Schools Partnership, and the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce where he previously served as board chair. In 2021 he was named the Chamber's Citizen of the Year.

AC EH

The Watauga County Commissioners approved the 2023/2024 budget Thursday. After failing to agree on an initial budget earlier in the month, Commissioners were unanimous in their approval after holding emergency sessions to work out differences.

Commissioners addressed issues around solid waste and dumping, overtime and hazard pay for the Sheriff's office, funding for the board of elections, and cost of living increases for staff, agreeing to secure a pay study on the need for salary increases. Watauga County Commissioners meeting Tuesday July 4 is cancelled due to the Independence Day holiday. The next Watauga Commissioners meeting will be Tuesday July 18 and will

begin at 5:30.
GA

CAROLINA NEWSMAKERS PUBLIC AFFAIRS PROGRAM

Q1, 2023

NCNN Public Affairs Programming airs 12 Noon each Saturday, 30 mins

Carolina Newsmakers
PRODUCED BY NORTH CAROLINA NEWS NETWORK
HOSTED BY DON CURTIS

CR—Civil Rights & Activism
CD—Crime & Drugs
ED—Education
EH—Environment & Health
GA—Government Affairs
GR—Growth/Transportation
HSM—Health, Safety, Medical Affairs
IA—International Affairs
NS—National Security
PA—Political Affairs
RE—Religion
SP—Sports

CAROLINA NEWSMAKERS

“Carolina Newsmakers” – Weekly Public Affairs Program
Hosted by Curtis Media Group Founder & Chairman, Don Curtis

Second Quarter, 2023

4-2

INTERVIEW WITH DR. SCOTT RALLS - PRESIDENT OF WAKE TECH
COMMUNITY COLLEGE.
COVID-19, EDUCATION, DISTANCE LEARNING, UNIVERSITIES, HIGH
SCHOOLS, COST OF EDUCATION, TEXTBOOKS, STAFFING NEEDS, SALARIES,
STUDENT AID, LEGISLATIVE NEEDS, AND HUMAN SERVICES.
ISSUES DISCUSSED: ED

4-9

INTERVIEW WITH JOHN HOOD - PRESIDENT OF THE JOHN WILLIAM POPE FOUNDATION.

TRUMP INDICTMENT, POLITICS, GOVERNOR'S RACE, FINANCE, GENERAL ASSEMBLY, LEGISLATIVE SESSION, GUN CONTROL, MEDICAID EXPANSION, EDUCATION, TRANSPORTATION, AND MEDIA.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: GA EH ED GR

4-16

INTERVIEW WITH JOSH STEIN - NORTH CAROLINA ATTORNEY GENERAL.

OPIOIDS, FENTANYL, DRUGS, ROBOCALLS, JETBLUE LAWSUIT, AIRLINES, MV REALTY LAWSUIT, E-CIGARETTES, FRAUD, SCAMS, GUN VIOLENCE, CRIMINAL JUSTICE FELLOWS, SOCIAL MEDIA, AND SEXUAL ASSAULT KITS.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: CD EH

4-23

INTERVIEW WITH PATRICK WOODIE - PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA RURAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT CENTER.

ECONOMY, BROADBAND, INFRASTRUCTURE, RETAINING YOUNG TALENT, WATER AND SEWER, EDUCATION, RETIREES, MEDICAID EXPANSION, ACCESS TO CAPITAL, COVID-19, AND SMALL BUSINESS DEVELOPMENT.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: GR

4-30

INTERVIEW WITH BRAD CRONE - PRESIDENT OF CAMPAIGN CONNECTIONS.

SUPREME COURT RULING, REDISTRICTING, VOTER ID, LEGISLATIVE SESSION, HEALTH CARE, EDUCATION, TENURE, MEDICAL BILLING, FINANCE, MENTAL HEALTH, OPIOIDS, AND ELECTIONS.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: GA ED EJ

5-7

INTERVIEW WITH ERIC BOYETTE - SECRETARY OF THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION.

TRANSPORTATION, FUNDING, TAXATION, ROAD CONSTRUCTION, PUBLIC TRANSPORTATION, RAIL, BICYCLES, GLOBAL TRANSPARK, FERRY SYSTEM, AVIATION, PORTS, TOLL ROADS, REPAIR AND MAINTENANCE, AND ELECTRIC VEHICLES.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: GR EC

5-14

INTERVIEW WITH CHRISTOPHER CHUNG - PRESIDENT OF THE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PARTNERSHIP OF NORTH CAROLINA.

ORIGIN OF ORGANIZATION, TOURISM, BUSINESS RECRUITING, ECONOMY, TAXATION, EDUCATION, POLITICS, INFRASTRUCTURE, RURAL AREAS, FILM

INDUSTRY, ANNUAL REPORT, LEGISLATION, AND EDUCATION RESEARCH.
ISSUES DISCUSSED: AC EC ED GA

5-21

INTERVIEW WITH DALE FOLWELL - TREASURER OF THE STATE OF NORTH CAROLINA.

HEALTH CARE, STATE HEALTH PLAN, MEDICARE, INSURANCE, INFLATION, BANKING, FRAUD, BOND RATING, NC CASH, AND DEBT.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: EH EC

5-28

INTERVIEW WITH RANDY WOODSON - CHANCELLOR OF NC STATE UNIVERSITY.

EDUCATION, RESEARCH, TUITION, COVID-19, WOLFPACK 2030, ADMISSIONS, EDUCATION MODEL, CENTENNIAL CAMPUS, COLLABORATING WITH OTHER UNIVERSITIES, FACULTY, COMMUNITY COLLEGES, AND ATHLETICS.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: ED

6-4

INTERVIEW WITH TOM JENSEN - DIRECTOR OF PUBLIC POLICY POLLING.

POLITICS, PRESIDENTIAL RACE, POLLING, DONALD TRUMP, JOE BIDEN, NORTH CAROLINA RACE FOR GOVERNOR, ABORTION, ECONOMY, FOREIGN POLICY, CRIME, GUN CONTROL, DEBATES, SOCIAL MEDIA, NEWS MEDIA, NO LABELS, AND POLLING.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: PA CD IA

6-11

INTERVIEW WITH DR. MICHAEL WALDEN - NORTH CAROLINA STATE UNIVERSITY PROFESSOR EMERITUS OF ECONOMICS.

ECONOMY, NATIONAL DEBT, TAXATION, INFLATION, INTEREST RATES, RECESSION, LABOR MARKET, TECHNOLOGY, UKRAINE WAR, SOCIAL SECURITY, MEDICARE, STOCK MARKET, AND BANKING.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: EC IA

6-18

INTERVIEW WITH BOB PHILLIPS - EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR OF COMMON CAUSE NORTH CAROLINA.

ELECTIONS, VOTING, MAIL-IN BALLOTS, SAME-DAY REGISTRATION, POLITICAL SPENDING, ADVERTISING, MEDIA, ETHICS, PARTISANSHIP, REDISTRICTING, ELECTORAL COLLEGE, AND NEWS MEDIA.

ISSUES DISCUSSED: PA

6-24

INTERVIEW WITH CHARLES BLACKWOOD - PRESIDENT OF THE NORTH CAROLINA SHERIFF'S ASSOCIATION.

ROLE OF THE SHERIFF, LAW ENFORCEMENT, COURTS, POLITICS, RECRUITING, TRAINING, K-9 UNITS, MENTAL HEALTH, OPIOID CRISIS,

MEDIA, DUTIES, AND MISCONCEPTIONS.
ISSUES DISCUSSED: CD