

Item Title: Recognition of Recent Awards

Specific Action Requested:

That the Board of Commissioners recognizes recent award winners.

Item Summary:

Wake County has received seven Achievement Awards from the National Association of Counties (NACo). Achievement Awards recognize innovative County programs.

NACo Achievement Awards

Community Services: Guiding Our Patrons to their Next Great Book

In 2013, as part of an overhaul of adult services, Wake County Public Libraries assessed its readers' services program in an effort to enhance existing services and design new programs. Throughout 2014 and 2015, WCPL rolled out a multifaceted and comprehensive adult services strategy aimed at helping readers find their next great book.

The new programs were tremendously successful, achieving the following results:

- More than 1,100 patrons participated in 45+ new programs.
- More than 2,150 readers participated in 200+ library book discussions.
- The revised Book Club Kit Service accounted for circulation of nearly 35,000 materials.
- Interest in the revised Custom Book List service increased by 269%.

In addition to engaging library patrons and promoting adult reading, the new strategy also enabled library staff to establish system-wide merchandising standards and training. This training was presented to other libraries in North Carolina at their request.

Environmental Services: Happy Trails Christmas Tree Recycling Program

Each holiday season, fresh-cut Christmas trees become the centerpiece of many homes and accumulate in landfills once the season is over. However, a new recycling program in Wake County has proven that Christmas trees still have much more to offer long after the holiday season ends.

Rather than sending biodegradable Christmas trees to be buried in a landfill, the Happy Trails Program encourages residents to drop off trees at designated convenience centers and County parks so they can be recycled into mulch. This mulch is then used on park trails.

In 2012, the Solid Waste Management Division launched the rebranded Happy Trails Program to highlight the partnership with Parks, Recreation and Open Space to provide a "second use" for these trees. Since then, the Happy Trails Program has collected

more than 17,435 Christmas trees, resulting in approximately 347 tons of nutrient-rich, aroma-filled mulch to improve Wake County's park trails.

Environmental Services: Novel Approaches to Animal Hoarding Cases

Wake County's proactive plan for excessive animal cases, which can also be considered animal hoarding, implements a "we're all in this" team approach to assist at-risk pets, hold pet owners accountable and ultimately create a more humane community.

Large scale animal cases can quickly tax agency resources. In 2015, Wake County developed a plan for step-wise intervention in excessive animal cases. This plan involves animal control officers, a veterinary team, a shelter team and transfer partners. To assist with these complicated cases, the County also has an assigned Assistant District Attorney with specific knowledge about animal law. This team approach serves to address both the animal and human welfare challenges associated with animal hoarding cases. In addition, an Animal Hoarding Task Force is being created in an effort to bring a multi-agency approach to these complex cases.

In the past year, the Animal Center has used this approach on six cases involving a total of 100 animals, including 65 cats, 34 dogs and one bird. Animal hoarding cases often involve debilitated and neglected animals, and some animals may have multiple medical issues. Despite these challenges, Wake County's proactive planning helped achieve a 92% live release rate for these six cases, with 43% of the animals being placed with transfer partners.

Environmental Services: Public Landfill Tour Program

The Solid Waste Management Division aims to raise awareness of waste-related issues by providing free public tours of the South Wake Landfill. The tours are an important part of Wake County's waste reduction and education efforts and provide residents with the opportunity to see first-hand the amount of waste they help make, and that trash doesn't just disappear when the cart is rolled to the curb.

To date, 464 Wake County residents have attended the public landfill tours. Each attendee leaves the tour with a new understanding of what happens to their waste and how Wake County is safeguarding the environment and public health by effectively managing the disposal of municipal solid waste. Attendees also learn the importance of their role in helping to reduce waste, with more than 89% of surveyed attendees indicating they would take actions to reduce their waste after attending a tour of the landfill.

Environmental Services: Managing Stormwater: Wake County's Approach

In addition to local regulations, residential and commercial developments in Wake County must adhere to different state-regulated stormwater ordinances, based on the location of the development. To streamline development submittals, Environmental Services redesigned the Wake County stormwater submittal tool to coordinate administration of the three different state regulatory watersheds, as well as appropriate local regulations.

The redesigned Stormwater Hybrid Design Tool includes the state's Neuse/Falls/Jordan nutrient requirements, and the model presented in the tool was reviewed by the state and accepted through a vetting process by engineers involved in local development plans.

Use of the tool reduces misinterpretation for designers, resulting in decreased design complexity and faster creation of development designs. The tool also reduces redundancy in the submittal process to ensure compliance with multiple stormwater regulations, resulting in time and cost savings for customers.

Environmental Services: VetPac Shelter Medicine Certificate Program

The Wake County Animal Center's partnership with the North Carolina State University (NCSU) Pre-Veterinary Club provides students with 50 hours of hands-on animal husbandry, animal preventative medicine and veterinary medicine experience. This win-win program exposes university students to the Animal Center and the need for community involvement with homeless animals.

By partnering students with shelter employees, we are able to give specialized instruction to the students and in return, we have an extra hand to get the job done. Some students in the program go on to become dedicated Wake County volunteers and serve as the next generation of North Carolina veterinarians. These future veterinarians enter veterinary school with an understanding of animal shelters and real-world experience with pet overpopulation.

Since January 2014, 48 students have completed the certificate program for a total of 2,100 hours of hands-on experience. Students enter the shelter certificate program at varying times in their undergraduate training and, to date, ten students have been admitted to veterinary school.

Geographic Information Services and Environmental Services: Drop Off Locator – An Application to Locate Recycling & Disposal Facilities

The Wake County Drop Off Locator is a mobile friendly application that provides citizens and businesses with information about locations for recycling and disposal. Previously, this information was only available as a table of information on a website that was not designed for viewing on mobile devices.

The new application was created collaboratively by Solid Waste Management and Geographic Information Services, as well as an application developer from the City of Raleigh. The mobile application allows citizens to quickly and easily research disposal and recycling options based on location, material, and hours of operation, and provides driving directions from the customer's current location to their facility of choice.

A list of awards can be found at wakegov.com/awards/Lists/Recognitions/AllItems.aspx.

Attachments:

None