

IPDC's September Newsletter

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New Employees at IPDC

Amy Elliot Bridges, Project Manager in Grant Services

Amy is a native of Cleveland County and she graduated from Clemson University with a degree in Agricultural Mechanization and Business. She also attended Appalachian State University.

Before coming to work for IPDC, Amy had seventeen years service with the United States Department of Agriculture-Natural Resources Conservation Service, serving as a soil conservationist and district conservationist in both North Carolina and South Carolina. She is also a licensed K-6 teacher having taught three years with Cleveland County Schools. She, her husband, Kevin and their two children, Madison and Isaac, reside in Shelby.

Todd Frashier, Construction Manager in Grant Services

Todd is a native of Rutherford County, North Carolina Todd furthered his education at Lees-McRae College in Banner Elk, North Carolina. In 1989, Todd began work with KCH Services as purchasing manager. In October 1993, Todd made a career change and began working for Professional Surveying Services. At this time, Todd enrolled in the civil engineering/land surveying program at Western Piedmont Community College where he completed the fundamental courses for the profession.

In December 1998, Todd accepted a position with Odom & Associates as Construction Administrator. His responsibilities included field inspections of projects under construction as well as easement and right of way acquisitions. Todd currently resides in Rutherfordton with his wife Terri Jo, 10 year old daughter Lauren and 3 year old son Zac.

Fall 2009—Litter Sweep, September 19th through October 3, 2009

From NCDOT's booklet, *Litter Sweep* is the North Carolina's annual statewide roadside litter cleanup event! Volunteers are needed to partner with NCDOT to help keep our communities clean and beautiful! Please see www.ncdot.gov/~beautification for more information on the program and how to get involved.

Walkable neighborhoods found to raise home prices

The "walkability" factor comes into play in a new national study on home values. Its researchers found that homes located within walking distance of amenities such as schools, parks and shopping aren't only more convenient for their owners, often they're also worth more than homes in neighborhoods where driving is the rule.

The report looked at 94,000 real-estate transactions in 15 markets. In 13 of those markets, higher levels of "walkability" were directly linked to higher home values.

The report, "Walking the Walk: How Walkability Raises Housing Values in U.S. Cities," was commissioned by CEOs for Cities, a national network of urban leaders from the civic, business, academic and philanthropic sectors.

Locally, the Arlington Street Neighborhood of Forest City ranked the highest on the walk score index: www.walkscore.com, receiving a score of 91 out of 100. This lofty score was the highest score of any neighborhood in the area and enviable to neighborhoods found in most major cities.

Even in this down housing market, homes in the Arlington Street neighborhood continue to sell near their asking price. Local realtor Leniece Lane examined recent home sales in this neighborhood "Home sales are strong in this neighborhood because of the proximity to the growing downtown area as well as easy access to highways. Most of the homes sold in the last year have closed within 7% of the list price which is well above the average for other neighborhoods in the county." She continues "Restoration of older homes is a large part of this neighborhoods appeal. Residents are taking pride in this street and restoring the original character and charm of the homes that have been neglected. I see nothing but good things continuing to happen in the Arlington Street Neighborhood."

It's an important point for home-buyers who are trying to identify which homes will hold their value, said Joseph Cortright, the report's author and a senior policy adviser to CEOs for Cities. Cortright is an economist and president of Impresa, a Portland, Ore.-based consulting firm.

Walkable places have some of the best chances of performing well in years ahead, he said.

The study's analysis used transaction information from ZipRealty. It calculated walkability of the homes using the Walk Score algorithm, which grades addresses based on amenities that are nearby, from restaurants and coffee shops to parks and libraries. Scores range from 0 to 100, with 100 being the most walkable; a score higher than 70 indicates it's possible to get around in the area without using a car.

Controlling for other factors including a home's size, the number of bathrooms and bedrooms, age, neighborhood income levels, distance from the Central Business District and access to jobs, the study found that a one-point increase in Walk Score is linked to an increase in home value between \$500 and \$3,000, depending on the market, according to the study.

The premium for homes in neighborhoods with above-average Walk Scores ranged from \$4,000 to \$34,000, according to the report.

There are environmental and health benefits from living in a place where the car can stay parked. In promoting Walk Score, said Matt Lerner, chief technology officer of Front Seat, the software company behind the score, his firm emphasizes how walking rather than driving can play a part in preventing global warming and how people who live in walkable areas weigh seven pounds less, on average, than those who don't. Places with higher Walk Scores also often have better mass transit services, according to the report.

This study, however, puts the focus squarely on housing values.

"I don't know of any other study that has put a dollar value on walkability," he said.

Consider two neighborhoods in Charlotte, N.C. In Ashley Park, with a typical Walk Score of 54, the median home price was \$280,000. In Wilmore, where the average score was 71, a similar home would be valued at \$314,000, according to the report.

While convenience does play a role in the desirability of walkable neighborhoods, consumers still haven't forgotten the days of \$4-a-gallon gas -- and that scar is influencing where they want to buy a home, Lashinsky said.

"When people are looking to buy a house now, they know in the back of their mind that there is a risk that gas prices can be higher than they are right now," Cortright said.

"This is not about people having to live without cars." Rather, it's about giving people the option to use them less often. "They don't need to use them for every single trip, and when they do have to, they don't have to drive as far," he said.

The findings are also important for policy makers, said Carol Coletta, president of CEOs for Cities, in a news release.

"They tell us that if urban leaders are intentional about developing and redeveloping their cities to make them more walkable," she said, "it will not only enhance the local tax base

but will also contribute to individual wealth by increasing the value of what is, for most people, their biggest asset."

The full report can be accessed on the RPO Blog: isothermalrpo.wordpress.com or by calling Josh King at 828-287-2281. To find your neighborhood's walk score and find ways to make it more walkable check out www.walkscore.com.

---McClatchy Newspapers contributed to this report

Chronic Disease and Self Management Program

The Isothermal Planning & Development Commission Area Agency on Aging in conjunction with Western Piedmont Council of Governments Area Agency on Aging are pleased to have trained several people in the Stanford's Chronic Disease Self Management Program. The training took in Hickory, NC in August with Linda Miller from Region F and Rebecca Chaplin from Region B serving as Master Trainers. With this training, several people from surrounding areas are now certified as Leaders who are able to train in their particular locale.

Additional training sessions are planned for individuals suffering from chronic diseases and family members on how to self manage their conditions.

The Healthy Living workshop is held for two and a half hours, once a week for six weeks, in community settings such as senior centers, churches, libraries, and community centers. People with different ongoing health problems attend together. Workshops are facilitated by two trained leaders, one or both of whom live with an ongoing health problem.

The first of these training sessions should be should be scheduled by December 2009. For further information contact Michelle Templin with the Area Agency on Aging at 828-287-2281, ext. 1258.

Weatherization Program Update

The Weatherization Assistance program is off to a great start in the new fiscal year 2009-2010. The goals for the year are 49 weatherization units and 33 HARRP (heating appliance repair and replacement) units. The weatherization staff has already completed 14 units plus replaced or repaired 11 units with HARRP funding.

At the recent Southeast Weatherization Conference at Myrtle Beach, SC several staff members were recognized for their years of service and dedication to the program. Flynn Walters received recognition for his 29 years of service, and Kirby Gantt with 28 years of service. Congratulations to Flynn & Kirby for their excellent work in Region C communities! The Weatherization program is expected to receive additional funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act of 2009. IPDC is seeking qualified contractors to assist in this expanded weatherization effort. Please contact Becky McKelvey, 828-287-2281, ext. 1238 for more information.

Recycling News: As of October 1st, PET (triangle with 1 inside) *Cannot Be Sent to Landfill!*

From Cape Fear COG in Wilmington: On October 1st it will become illegal to dispose of PET (#1) and other plastics in any landfill. But did you know there is a growing list of other banned items as well? Go the website below for more information, http://www.p2pays.org/press_releases/081909.pdf.

As you would imagine, enforcement will be a challenge, and it may be dependent on the honor system. There will be debates on the obligations of local governments, most of whom already are shifting the burden to the solid waste haulers to comply or have their load refused at the local government operated disposal site. One thing is for sure, plastic are forever and if you bury them, they don't go away. One day we will run out of space to bury our problem!

It is important to acknowledge the problem and seek a solution. While recycling is one answer, it is the third best way to deal with it...as we recall the three "R's" REDUCE, REUSE, and then recycle.

Table: Indirect Estimate of Percent Lacking *Basic Prose Literacy Skills* in the IPDC Region: North Carolina 2003

Indirect estimate of percent lacking <i>Basic prose literacy skills</i> in Cleveland, McDowell, Polk & Rutherford Counties: North Carolina 2003			
Location	Percent Lacking Basic Literacy Skills		
Cleveland County	15%		
McDowell County	14%		
Polk County	10%		
Rutherford County	14%		

Source: U.S. Department of Education, Institute of Education Sciences, National Center for Education Statistics, 2003 National Assessment of Adult Literacy

Calendar of Events

9/17-Isothermal RPO TAC/TCC at 12 noon at IPDC main office. Contact Josh King at 828-287-2281, ext 1264 for more information.

9/21-25-Introduction to Public Employment Law at SOG in Chapel Hill

www.sog.unc.edu/courses/0385

9/23-Wetlands workshop on Pivers Island in Beaufort

<http://www.nccoastaltraining.net/Course-Catalog/Coastal-Training-Events/Getting-to-Know-Wetlands-Value-Regulations-And-Con/142.aspx>.

9/23-LID and Green Building Workshop Currituck County Extension Center

www.ncsu.edu/WECO/lid

9/25 -6th Annual Eastern Regional Trauma Symposium in Greenville, NC

<http://eahec.ecu.edu>

9/25-Rural Center Pre-Applications due for Economic Infrastructure funds

http://www.ncruralcenter.org/grants/eifpreapp_revmay2009.doc

9/28-29- NC AWPAC Conference in Wilmington <http://northcarolina.apwa.net/>

9/30-10/2-NC APA Annual Planning Conference in Greensboro www.nc-apa.org

10/8-Workshop: Utility management in an Economic Downturn in Raleigh

<http://www.regonline.com/builder/site/Default.aspx?eventid=746898>

10/8-Carolina Thread trail meeting from 5-7 PM at City Park in Shelby

10/8-9- NCSEA's Annual meeting and sustainable energy forum in Charlotte

www.energync.org

10/14-Innovate: Trails meeting from 3-7 PM at Harmon Field in Polk County.

Contact Josh King at 828-287-2281, ext 1264 for more information.

10/20-Innovate: Trails meeting from 5-9 PM at Spindale House in Rutherford County.

Contact Josh King at 828-287-2281, ext 1264 for more information.

10/27-28-Workshop: Grant writing for environmental improvements in Beaufort

<http://www.nccoastaltraining.net/Course-Catalog/Coastal-Training-Events/Funding-Environmental-Improvements-In-Your-Communi/138.aspx>.

10/20-Innovate: Trails meeting from 3-7 PM in Marion for McDowell County.

Contact Josh King at 828-287-2281, ext 1264 for more information.

11/4-6-Transportation Planning Conference in Raleigh

http://www.ncsite.org/index_ncsite.html

11/5-6-Rural Partners Forum at North Raleigh Hilton www.ncruralcenter.org

11/12-**Note changed date**-Isothermal RPO TAC/TCC at 12 noon at IPDC main office.

Contact Josh King at 828-287-2281, ext 1264 for more information.

Upcoming Grant Application Deadlines

NCDOT has announced the annual Bicycle and Pedestrian Planning Grant Program.

IPDC staff would be glad to help communities prepare an application before the

December 4th deadline. Please see the following link for more information:

http://www.ncdot.org/transit/bicycle/safety/programs_initiatives/planninggrant.html

Contact Josh King, 828-287-2281, ext. 1264 or Chuck Nance, 828-287-2281, ext. 1251 for assistance.

PARTF Grant Reminder!

The deadline for Parks and Recreation Trust Fund (PARTF) Grants is February 1, 2010. For local governments interested in applying for a PARTF Grant, now is a good time to begin putting information together and conducting surveys or public meetings. For assistance in applying for a PARTF Grant, contact Senior Planner Chuck Nance at 828-287-2281, extension 1251.

Check NCLM's Federal Stimulus Information page at <http://www.nclm.org/stimulusguidance.htm> and NC's page at <http://www.ncrecover.gov/> for ARRA grant information and deadlines!!