

Courthouse Reopening Marks Start of Sestercentennial Celebration

On Tuesday, February 26, 2013, Mecklenburg County will kick-off the community's 250th birthday with the reopening of the Historic Court House and Sestercentennial Celebration to be held at 2 pm. The event will feature performances by students from Northwest School of the Arts (NWSA), fife and drum by re-enactors from the North Carolina 6th Regiment, and remarks by N.C. Supreme Court Chief Justice Sarah Parker and others. Tours of the Court House and light refreshments will follow the ceremony. Baking and pastry arts students from Central Piedmont Community College (CPCC) are preparing a special sestercentennial cake. All living current and former members of the Board of County Commissioners, along with other County, State, and City officials have been invited to the event.

In addition to NWSA, N.C. 6th Regiment and CPCC, other event sponsors are the District Attorney's Office, Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office, Mecklenburg Historical Association and Armin's Catering.

As part of the sestercentennial celebration throughout the year, residents and others can access the Mecklenburg County sestersentennial interactive website, www.Mecklenburg250.org, to share their personal histories, watch monthly Mecklenburg Minute history videos, and view the calendar of events.

The 2013 sestercentennial partners (so far) are Mecklenburg County, WTVI, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library, the Mecklenburg County Sheriff's Office, Charlotte Chamber, Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools, Mecklenburg Ministries, Foundation for the Carolinas, Charlotte Center City Partners, CPCC, The May 20th Society, City of Charlotte, Johnson and Wales University, Carolina Asian-American Chamber of Commerce, The Lee Institute, the towns of Davidson, Matthews and Cornelius; Mecklenburg Historical Association, Arts and Science Council, Ortho Carolina, and the Community Building Initiative.

Board members with questions about the February 26 event or other sestercentennial activities should contact Citizen Involvement Coordinator Sophia Hollingsworth at 980-722-2111 or Sophia.Hollingsworth@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov.

Mecklenburg County Volunteer Program Update

In October 2011, Mecklenburg County and Hands on Charlotte entered into a partnership to establish and operate the County's volunteer program throughout all County departments. As part of this partnership, between October 2011 and March 2012, Hands on Charlotte provided the County's 18-member Volunteer Council six customized training modules. The Volunteer Council is an employee group responsible for working with department leaders to create, supervise, and implement volunteer

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An update to the Board of County Commissioners from the County Manager

opportunities for residents. The training modules helped prepare the Volunteer Council to guide the County in implementing the volunteer program. In addition, in April 2012, Hands on Charlotte and the Volunteer Council created volunteer job descriptions. In May 2012, those opportunities were listed on the Hands on Charlotte website (with links from the County's website).

From July 2012 to December 2012, a total of 1440 volunteers were placed within County departments, including those recruited directly by the Park and Recreation Department. Based on the volunteer hours submitted, volunteers have provided \$309,025 in volunteer value to Mecklenburg County. This amount is calculated using the standard set by The Independent Sector, a nationally recognized source for volunteer hour values that places a national value of volunteering at \$21.79 per hour served.

Volunteers recruited by the County and Hands on Charlotte support staff in the execution of their duties and, at times, provide expertise not otherwise available to County staff. The volunteer program also allows Mecklenburg County residents to experience firsthand the workings of their County government.

In October 2012, Hands on Charlotte posted online a special recognition of its top two volunteers, both of whom are volunteers for Mecklenburg County (Francine Farrar in Geospatial Information Services and Carla Gaddy in the Office of Management and Budget). Also

this past fall, the Sheriff's Office began a new inmate program called The Adult Men's Literacy Program in which two volunteers teach literacy to inmates so the inmates can read books to their children.

For many years, Mecklenburg County has had successful volunteer programs within individual departments, such as the Park and Recreation Department and Social Services Department. The partnership with Hands on Charlotte provides a consistent system to enable all County departments to utilize volunteers, relying on Hands on Charlotte's expertise in volunteer recruitment, training and management.

The volunteer program is one aspect of MeckConnect, Mecklenburg County's multifaceted strategy for increasing and enhancing citizen involvement.

Board members with questions about MeckConnect and/or the Volunteer Program should contact Citizen Involvement Coordinator Sophia Hollingsworth at 980-722-2111 or via e-mail at Sophia.Hollingsworth@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov

- Harry L. Jones, Sr., County Manager

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