

RICHMOND COUNTY GOVERNMENT

COUNTY CLIPS

VOLUME 3, ISSUE 2 FEBRUARY, 2009

ART REACHES MORE CITIZENS

Area of Richmond Transit (ART) provides a valuable service to many of Richmond County's citizens by helping with transportation needs.

From July to December of last year, ART traveled more than 117,000 miles.

Through its Rural General Public operation, ART serves citizens who are not human services agency clients for a small fee.

The agency provides transportation for everything from doctor's appointments and dialysis treatments to simply taking citizens to work or school.

During the week, ART serves seniors by taking them to and from Richmond County meal sites.

A number of people benefit from this service alone, as many senior adults may not have reliable transportation to the nutritional food sites.

In the past year, ART has expanded its services to include a total of 384 new riders.

Some 30,636 trips were also made throughout the year for elderly and disabled citizens alone.

QUICK STATS

- **345:** Number of children in Richmond County served during 2008 by the Department of Social Services' Food Pantry. DSS also helped 375 adults through the pantry.
 - **3:** Number of illegal dump sites investigated during the month of December by Richmond County's Solid Waste Enforcement Officer Allen Hodges. In addition to those investigations, a total of 2.1 tons of trash were removed from the roadways through the coordination of NCDOT.
 - **418:** Total number of requests during the month of December for services offered through Richmond County Veterans Services. All requests are handled by one employee, Director Tonia Hildreth.
 - **1,500:** Number of youth reached last year through Richmond County 4-H Programs.
 - **100:** Number of years 4-H has been serving youth in North Carolina.
- ## Save the Date
- **March 6:** Richmond County's Annual 4-H Auction and Plate Sale. To be held at Browder Park in Rockingham.

WORK CONTINUES AT ELECTIONS OFFICE

Just a few months ago, the Richmond County Board of Elections' staff made sure that more than 19,000 votes were counted during the 2008 General Election.

Though the votes have been counted, the staff's work isn't over.

During the month of February, the Board of Elections will begin conducting List Maintenance, which identifies voters who have not had any contact with the Elections Office - either by updating their voter information or by voting - over a period of two federal general elections.

A nonforwardable first class mailing will be sent to voter addresses on file, said Director Connie Kelly.

"If the mail comes back as undeliverable, a second notice, which is forwardable will be mailed," she said.

If this notice is not returned by the voter within 30 days, the voter then becomes inactive.

An inactive voter will still be eligible to vote upon updating his or her voter information.

A voter who remains inactive through two more fed-

eral general elections will be removed from the list.

A brief breakdown of information from the 2008 General Election follows.

- 19,501 votes were cast in Richmond County, representing 66 percent of registered voters.
- Of those who voted, 11,577 chose to do so early, with 7,358 casting their ballot at the Board of Elections Office. 3,305 chose to vote at the Cole Auditorium, and 914 people voted early in Elberbe.

BENEFIT AUCTION TO HELP LOCAL YOUTH

Mark your calendars for the Benefit Auction and Plate Sale for the 4-H Program in Richmond County to be held on March 6 at Browder Park in Rockingham.

Richmond County 4-H Programs reached 1,500 youth in the county during last year alone, said Michelle Stumbo, 4-H Youth Development Agent.

"We are striving to follow the 4-H motto 'To Make the Best Better' in Richmond County," she said.

Youth from all over the county participated in programs such as school enrichment projects, camps, Summer Fun classes, clubs and service learning throughout the past year.

In addition to celebrating the accomplishments of 2008, 4-H'ers are gearing up for a great year in 2009, Stumbo said.

"4-H in North Carolina turns 100 years old this year, and we are excited to celebrate this milestone with the community of supporters in the county," she said.

One great way to help celebrate and support 4-H programs is by participating in the annual 4-H Auction and Plate Sale.

Barbecue plates will be sold from 11 a.m. to 7 p.m. on March 6, and the auction will begin at 7 p.m.

Volunteers will be soliciting donations from area businesses to ensure a variety

of items will be offered to the highest bidder. If you would like to donate an item, service certificate or check, please call 910-997-8255 to schedule a pick-up.

"Whether you plan to make a donation, grab a plate of lunch, volunteer your time to assist or just come to bid on some great items, know that you are supporting a program that is making a difference in the lives of Richmond County youth," Stumbo said.

All proceeds from the event will be used locally to support leadership and youth development through programs ranging from school enrichment activities to summer camps.

For more information, call the Extension Office.

RICHMOND COUNTY ROUND-UP

PROGRAMS OFFERED THROUGH COOPERATIVE EXTENSION

A Muscadine Pruning Workshop will be held on Saturday, Feb. 7 from 10 to 11:30 a.m.

The hands-on workshop will be held in a local vineyard and led by Lee County Extension Agent Stephanie Romelczk.

Call the Richmond County Cooperative Extension Office to pre-register or for more information on the class.

On Feb. 19, 23 and 26, citizens interested in gardening organically can learn through a series of classes to be held at the Extension Office from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The class, Organic Vegetable Gardening, includes basic topics for the novice gardener. Learn what the term "organic" means, while also discussing soil fundamentals and which veggies to grow during each season.

For more information, call the Extension Office at 910-997-8255.

SCHOLARSHIPS AVAILABLE

Dependent children of wartime veterans have until March 1, 2009 to submit their scholarship applications.

For more information on the application process, high school seniors may contact Richmond County Office of Veteran's Services at 910-997-8232.

SAVE TIME PAYING WATER BILL

Avoid waiting in line to pay your water bill by having it drafted from your checking account each month.

Customers who wish to take advantage of this convenience simply need to provide a voided check to Water Department staff, and sign a form authorizing this service.

Customers may also utilize the drop box located outside the Administrative Building. To use this service, please include the return portion of your bill in an envelope along with a check or money order.

The drop box can be used at any time, even during regular office hours.

SAVE MONEY ON TAXES

Seniors age 60 and over may be able to save money on the cost of tax preparation this year.

For information on services offered to seniors in Richmond County at a reduced rate, please contact Richmond County Aging Services Director Jacqueline Adkins at 910-997-4491.

Referral forms for seniors may also be found at any of the Senior Centers in Richmond County.