

Mayors Honor Legislators, Elect Leaders

The North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition held its annual meeting in December, where the group presented its legislative awards and elected new officers. Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane hosted the event, which brought together Mayors representing the state's 28 largest cities.

N.C. Speaker of the House Thom Tillis addressed the group, providing his perspective on the upcoming legislative session. In addition, John Davis of John Davis Consulting gave the dinner keynote address on the lessons learned from the recent election.

The Coalition presented Senator Bill Rabon of Brunswick County, Senator Kathy Harrington of Gaston County and Representative Ric Killian of Mecklenburg County – with its 2012 legislative award. The legislators were honored for their leadership on transportation issues critical to the future of the state as well as their collaboration with the Coalition during session.

Senator Rabon, Senator Harrington and Representative Killian have focused on codifying in



House Speaker Thom Tillis speaks to members of the Coalition during its annual meeting in Raleigh.

statute the data driven process that removes politics from transportation project selection and worked to limit transportation funding cuts. These legislators have also been active in creating and funding the Mobility Fund, an innovative way to generate new

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A Mayor in the Mansion

For the first time in more than 60 years, a North Carolina Mayor has moved into the Executive Mansion. And, this is likely the first time in our history that a mayor of a big city has served as our state's leader. Governor Pat McCrory's election is a reminder of the increasing importance of our cities in fueling success for our entire state.

Certainly, Governor McCrory has been a friend of the Metro Mayors, in fact, he was instrumental in the creation of our Coalition. Recognizing the shared challenges in our cities, Governor McCrory joined forces with fifteen other big city mayors to create the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition. He played an important role in expanding the breadth of issues that we addressed, focusing on transportation, economic development and crime.

Governor McCrory will bring a different perspective to Raleigh. He knows the challenges that our cities face each and every day and he understands the importance of metropolitan areas in driving our economy and supporting growth. As mayor, he worked with coalitions from across the state and from across the political spectrum to advance legislation beneficial for North Carolina cities.

His administration brings with it an opportunity for our Coalition and for our metropolitan regions to implement common-sense changes that can grow our economy and pave the way for a strong future. We have already seen that one of his major areas of

focus will be transportation. Governor McCrory has said North Carolina needs a 25-

year transportation and infrastructure plan "to send a clear signal to the business community of the state's future investment in roads, railroads, bridges, ports, airports and other infrastructure." That commitment is in keeping with Governor McCrory's work in Charlotte, where he led the charge for light rail as Mayor.

We look forward to working with Governor McCrory, his administration and the General Assembly on transportation and other issues that face North Carolina's cities. Our Coalition will continue to work with leaders from across the state and from both political parties to ensure that transportation, economic development and public safety remain top priorities in Raleigh.

In this newsletter you can read more about our advocacy agenda and our priorities for this session. Carefully and thoughtfully, we have selected smart, practical initiatives that will make a difference for our cities, and ultimately yield success for North Carolina. We welcome the opportunities before us, and we respect our responsibilities to both our constituents and the entire state.



Message from
the Chairman

**Mayor
Nancy
McFarlane**

- RALEIGH**
Mayor Nancy McFarlane
Chair
- HUNTERSVILLE**
Mayor Jill Swain
Vice Chair
- ROCKY MOUNT**
Mayor David Combs
Treasurer
- DURHAM**
Mayor William V. "Bill" Bell
Past Chair
- APEX**
Mayor Keith Weatherly
- ASHEVILLE**
Mayor Terry Bellamy
- BOONE**
Mayor Loretta Clawson
- BURLINGTON**
Mayor Ronnie Wall
- CARRBORO**
Mayor Mark Chilton
- CARY**
Mayor Harold Weinbrecht
- CHAPEL HILL**
Mayor Mark Kleinschmidt
- CHARLOTTE**
Mayor Anthony Foxx
- CONCORD**
Mayor J. Scott Padgett
- FAYETTEVILLE**
Mayor Anthony Chavonne
- GASTONIA**
Mayor John Bridgeman
- GOLDSBORO**
Mayor Al King
- GREENSBORO**
Mayor Robbie Perkins
- GREENVILLE**
Mayor Allen Thomas
- HICKORY**
Mayor Rudy Wright
- HIGH POINT**
Mayor Bernita Sims
- JACKSONVILLE**
Mayor Sammy Phillips
- KANNAPOLIS**
Mayor Robert Misenheimer
- MONROE**
Mayor Bobby Kilgore
- MOORESVILLE**
Mayor Miles Atkins
- SALISBURY**
Mayor Paul Woodson
- WILSON**
Mayor Bruce Rose
- WINSTON-SALEM**
Mayor Allen Joines
- WILMINGTON**
Mayor Bill Saffo
- DIRECTOR**
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New Mayor Profile —

Name: Bernita Sims

Occupation: BPR Management, Inc. (Hotelier)

Age: 62

**Education: University of the District of Columbia,
UNC-Wilmington Graduate Fellow – Institute
of Political Leadership**



Bernita Sims is a native of High Point, N.C., attending High Point City schools until she moved to Seat Pleasant, Maryland for her senior year – graduating from Central High School in Seat Pleasant. She attended the University of the District of Columbia where she studied communications. She went on to become a graduate fellow of the Institute of Political Leadership at UNC-Wilmington.

Sims has served on the High Point City Council for 10 years and was selected as the Mayor Pro-Tem in December 2005. She served a one year term in that capacity. She continued to represent Ward 1 of the City of High Point and went on to chair the Public Safety and Community Redevelopment Committees.

Mayor Sims is High Point’s first African- American mayor and values the input and guidance of the community as she seeks to improve High Point’s quality of life and holistically address community needs. She hopes that her unique set of life experiences provides a needed perspective as the city moves forward in the coming years.

Sims brings a resume filled with years of community involvement including service as a board member with the National League of Cities and the North Carolina League of Municipalities, where she is the Chair of the Finance and Administrative Legislative Action Committee. Mayor Sims also serves as Chair of the Democratic Party’s 12th Congressional District. She is Chair of the Welfare Reform Liaison Project and serves on the Executive Committee of the Greensboro-High Point- Guilford County Workforce Development Board. Locally she serves as the Chair of the High Point Children’s Cabinet and the Black Leadership Roundtable. She is a member of the Williams Memorial C.M.E. Church in High Point, N.C., where she serves in various leadership capacities, including Chair of the Trustee Board.

Mayor Sims was honored with the High Point Housing Authority’s Pillars of Fame award in 2009 and named the Child Advocate of the Year by the High Point Children’s Cabinet. In 2010, she was named as the Minority Business Advocate of the year by the High Point Chamber of Commerce.

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dollars for transportation projects of statewide or regional significance and a top priority of the Coalition.

This year, the Metro Mayors also created a new award to honor a statewide leader who is a partner on the Coalition’s priority issues. The recipient of the first “Friend of Mayors” award was Jim Trogdon, N.C. Department of Transportation Chief Operating Officer. Trogdon has spent his four years at NCDOT working to strengthen the Department’s partnership with cities, including taking an active role with the Metro Mayors. He has also implemented the data driven process for transportation project selection and has been at the forefront of identifying innovative ways to strengthen transportation infrastructure.

“As mayors of the state’s largest cities, we know that strengthening our transportation system is essential for economic growth and, ultimately, the success of our state,” said Mayor Bill Bell, past chairman of the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition. “We value

our relationships with Sen. Rabon, Sen. Harrington, Rep. Killian and Jim Trogdon, and we are proud to honor them. These leaders have demonstrated the commitment to forward-thinking strategies that will build a strong future for our entire state.”

Also at the meeting, the Coalition elected Mayor McFarlane as its new chair, and Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain as vice chair. Rocky Mount Mayor David Combs will serve as treasurer, and Durham Mayor Bill Bell, the past chair, rounds out the officers. Members of the executive committee are Burlington Mayor Ronnie Wall, Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, Greensboro Mayor Robbie Perkins, Charlotte Mayor Anthony Foxx and Mooresville Mayor Miles Atkins.

Led by McFarlane, an Independent, the group’s leaders are evenly balanced with four Republicans and four Democrats. The officers will lead the Coalition in its work with the General Assembly in the new session, advocating for policies that support economic development, strengthen transportation and promote public safety.

Metro Mayors In Action



New Coalition Chair and Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane listens during the Metro Mayors' Annual Meeting.



Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain presents Senator Kathy Harrington of Gaston County with the Metro Mayors' legislative award for her support of the Mobility Fund and her efforts to remove politics from transportation project selection.



Burlington Mayor Ronnie Wall presents the first "Friend of the Mayors" award to Jim Trogdon, Chief Operating Officer at NCDOT.



In recognition of his ongoing work to improve and strengthen transportation, Senator Bill Rabon of Brunswick County is presented with the Coalition's legislative award by Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo.



Durham Mayor Bill Bell is honored by the Coalition for his service as Chair.



Attendees at the Triad listening session for the Piedmont Crescent Partnership discuss the importance of strengthened transportation in furthering economic development.

Piedmont Crescent Partnership Moves Forward

Last year, the Metro Mayors launched a new effort to advance economic competitiveness in the region stretching from the Triangle to Charlotte-Mecklenburg through transportation advocacy on a regional scale. The Piedmont Crescent Partnership (PCP) is a group of business, civic and elected leaders advocating for policies that promote a strong transportation infrastructure in the Piedmont Crescent corridor.

This innovative partnership, supported by the Rockefeller Foundation and Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation, made significant strides this fall, holding a series of listening sessions across the state. The meetings, held in Charlotte, the Triangle and the Triad, brought together a select group of civic, business and elected leaders to review current and projected transportation challenges in each region. They also discussed a vision for Piedmont Crescent leaders to address North Carolina's shrinking transportation revenue base.

The Piedmont Crescent is currently home to more than two-thirds of the state's residents and is projected to see a 50 percent or greater population increase over the next few decades. During the listening sessions, Jeff Michael of the UNC-Charlotte Urban Institute demonstrated that, with the corridor containing 67 percent of the state's jobs, current area highway congestion will only worsen over time if decisive steps are not taken to address this demographic change.

During the listening sessions, stakeholders overwhelmingly noted the need for additional transportation revenues indicating support for expanded tolling, user fees for electric and hybrid vehicles, eliminating the transfers out of the Highway Fund, uncapping the gas tax and a vehicle-miles-traveled tax. They stated that they want transportation funding decisions to be based on need, with supporting data, rather than political factors. Stakeholders are interested in multi-modal options for transportation, demonstrating a desire for transportation considerations to be broader than roads.



Attendees at the Charlotte listening session for the Piedmont Triad Partnership learn about policy options to strengthen transportation.

For all participants in all regions, the most popular policy options included expanding the Mobility Fund, which was created by the General Assembly in 2010 to fund transportation projects of statewide and regional significance that relieve congestion and enhance mobility across all modes of transportation. Other priorities included a "Fix-it-First" transportation focus to ensure that existing investments in transportation systems are maintained in order to reduce the long-term costs of repair by slowing the deterioration of existing roads, bridges and other infrastructure.

PCP staff will synthesize the information learned and present the material for consideration to the Partnership's full Leadership Team. The Leadership Team will release a set of recommendations for cooperative action among the three urban regions to ensure the Piedmont Crescent continues to be a strong economic engine for the state.

Metro Mayors Set Advocacy Agenda

At its annual meeting, the North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition established priorities for the new legislative session, focusing on policies to improve transportation, support economic development, create safer communities and ensure cities have the resources necessary to address the needs of their residents.

"As a new legislative session starts, we look forward to working together on the issues facing North Carolina because what is good for our cities is good for our state," said Metro Mayors Chair and Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane. "Urban areas are the job centers that drive our economy, and we will work to enact policies that support economic development for today and the future."

In fact, 81 percent of the state's economic output is taking place in the metropolitan areas, according to a study for the U.S. Conference of Mayors. In addition, 67 percent of the jobs in North Carolina are located in the Piedmont Crescent, the urban corridor stretching from Charlotte to Raleigh.

Huntersville Mayor Jill Swain, the Coalition's vice chair, said that transportation will be a key focus for the group.

"As North Carolina continues to grow and shift to more urban centers, transportation improvements are key," Swain said. "A major goal will be working with legislators to craft innovative and forward-thinking transportation strategies."

The Coalition will support efforts to address the state's overwhelming transportation needs and ensure that the existing road network is sufficiently maintained. In addition, the Metro Mayors will work with legislators on proposals that begin to transition

the state's reliance on shrinking gas tax revenues to other revenue sources sustainable over the long term. Innovative funding streams to be explored include expanded use of tolling on new capacity, new regional and/or local revenue options, increasing existing transportation related fees, capturing user fees from hybrid and electric vehicle users and executing a comprehensive, in-depth study of the vehicle miles traveled revenue model.

The Coalition will also support legislation to expand multimodal transportation options like bike and pedestrian paths, buses, and passenger rail, light rail, and commuter rail. To promote local economic development, the Metro Mayors will seek legislation authorizing the NCDOT to allow dining and entertainment business activities along state-owned sidewalks within municipal limits.

The Metro Mayors will focus on protecting existing local revenues and preventing efforts to shift state responsibilities onto cities. Developing strategies to modernize the tax system will help ensure that cities have the resources they need to remain the economic backbone of the state.

"Speaker Tillis committed that they're not going to balance the budget on the backs of cities and counties," McFarlane said. "That's good news for us. Unfunded mandates are always troubling, because someone still ends up paying."

Finally, the Coalition will focus on strengthening public safety and working to create safer communities across the state by supporting the needs of the judicial system, local law enforcement and other legislation.

City News

Former Mayor Joins McCrory Administration

Governor Pat McCrory has named former Salisbury Mayor Susan Kluttz as the new secretary for the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources. Together, Kluttz and McCrory helped found the N.C. Metropolitan Mayors Coalition in 2001, and Kluttz served as vice chairwoman from 2009 to 2011. In Salisbury, Kluttz also made an impact on the arts, helping to develop the city's Cultural Arts Plan and creating a Tourism Master Plan, including reorganization of the Rowan Arts Council.

Asheville Restaurants Go Green

Asheville has been named America's first Green Dining Destination. The designation comes from the Green Restaurant Association (GRA), a national nonprofit organization that provides the only Certified Green Restaurants mark in the country. All of Asheville's Certified Green Restaurants have met the GRA's certification standards in the categories of food, water, waste, energy, chemicals and disposables. Each restaurant also has eliminated use of polystyrene foam and has implemented a full recycling program.

Burlington Recognized for Softball Tournaments

The Amateur Softball Association (ASA) of America awarded the City of Burlington with the 2012 James Farrell Award of Excellence for hosting ten of the highest rated tournaments.

Chapel Hill Launches 'Participate Chapel Hill'

The Town of Chapel Hill has launched "Participate Chapel Hill," an effort to make local government data easier to access and to make new opportunities for the public to share ideas and information through <http://www.townofchapelhill.org/participate>. This initiative is designed to make it easier to get information and interact with Town government.

Greensboro Receives \$1 Million for Economic Development

The City of Greensboro was one of three cities in the country selected as a winner of the U.S. Department of Commerce's Strong Cities, Strong Communities (SC2) Planning Challenge. As part of the challenge, the City is able to leverage \$250,000 to receive an additional \$1 million from the US Department of Commerce's Economic Development Administration to administer a program to generate economic development analyses and strategic plans.

Rocky Mount Celebrates 30th Anniversary of City Hall

Mayor David Combs and the Rocky Mount City Council celebrated the 30th anniversary of the Frederick E. Turnage Municipal Building on October 5. The event was held in the City Hall courtyard, and the theme was "A Glimpse Back-Moving Forward."

Fayetteville Receives Transit Grant

The City of Fayetteville was awarded a Federal Transit Administration (FTA) grant for \$8 million to construct the downtown Multi-Modal Transit Center, which will be utilized by the Fayetteville Area System of Transit (FAST). The project was selected on a competitive basis through the fiscal year 2012 Bus Livability Program.

High Point a Finalist in Mayors Challenge

High Point has been selected as a finalist for the Bloomberg Philanthropies' Mayors Challenge, a competition created to inspire American cities to generate innovative ideas that solve major challenges and improve city life – and that ultimately can be shared with other cities across the nation. High Point was selected based on its innovative idea for an Offender Focused Domestic Violence Initiative, which combines local government and community partnerships to adapt an evidence-based, cease-fire approach to domestic violence reduction. High Point will now compete against nineteen other cities across the country for the \$5 million grand prize as well as one of four additional prizes of \$1 million each.

Winston-Salem Supports Veterans

Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines proclaimed the week of Nov. 11 – 17 "Employ a Veteran Week" in support of an initiative by the N.C. Division of Workforce Solutions to raise awareness of the number of military veterans who need jobs. During the 2011 fiscal year, the Division of Workforce Solutions partnered with the Veterans Administration and other community organizations to hold 41 job fairs for veterans, and helped place 3,816 veterans and other eligible persons in jobs.

Concord City Manager Heads Association

Concord City Manager W. Brian Hiatt was sworn in as president of the North Carolina City and County Management Association (NCCCMA) at its annual Summer Seminar in Asheville. The Association, which is affiliated with the International City and County Management Association, dates back to 1938 and consists of approximately 480 active members.

Durham Honored for Innovation

The City of Durham received an Outstanding Achievement in Local Government Innovation Award from the Alliance for Innovation at the 2012 Transforming Local Government Conference. The award recognized the Northeast Central Durham Livability Initiative, a community-driven collaborative functioning in partnership with the U.S. Departments of Housing and Urban Development, Transportation, and the Environmental Protection Agency.

Raleigh Makes Top Cities Lists

Yahoo! Finance has named Raleigh sixth on its "Hottest American Cities of the Future" listing. Raleigh also made Rent.com's list of the 10 best cities for college graduates.

Cary Police Department Recognized

The Town of Cary Police Department is the first agency in North Carolina to earn reaccreditation under the Commission on Accreditation for Law Enforcement Agencies, Inc. (CALEA)'s new assessment standards. Known as the Gold Standard Assessment, this voluntary assessment format works to measure the impact of accreditation as opposed to simply confirming compliance through a file-by-file review. In addition to being reaccredited, the seventh time over the last 20 years, the Town of Cary Police Department for received the Accreditation with Excellence award.

Boone Wastewater Treatment Plant Earns Award

The Town of Boone's Jimmy Smith Wastewater Treatment Plant has been selected as a 2012 recipient of the NC AWWA-WEA Wastewater Treatment Plant Operation and Maintenance Excellence Award of the Year for the Western Region.

Wilmington Trail Fully Funded

The Wilmington City Council has officially accepted \$550,000 from Blue Cross and Blue Shield of North Carolina for the construction of one of the last remaining sections of the Gary Shell Cross-City Trail. Acceptance of this gift fully funds the 15-mile trail.

Mayors Urge Lawmakers to Address Fiscal Cliff

Five Metro Mayors are serving on the steering committee for the North Carolina chapter of The Campaign to Fix the Debt, a national non-partisan coalition of business leaders, elected officials, community leaders, academics and citizens calling on national lawmakers to address the ballooning national debt. Durham Mayor Bill Bell, Asheville Mayor Terry Bellamy, Winston-Salem Mayor Allen Joines, Raleigh Mayor Nancy McFarlane and Greensboro Mayor Robbie Perkins called on lawmakers in Washington to put aside political differences to forge a credible plan to stabilize and bring down our national debt, and encouraged North Carolinians to ask their elected representatives to take action.

Accolades

- The U.S. Green Building Council has awarded the City of Asheville's newest community center, the Dr. Wesley Grant Sr. Southside Center, with the designation of LEED platinum certification.
- Burlington Mayor Ronnie K. Wall was elected to serve as the 2nd Vice President of the North Carolina League of Municipalities.
- Chapel Hill ranks No. 10 among the top 100 "Best Places to Live in America" based on a survey of cities with populations between 50,000 and 300,000 by *Money* magazine.
- The City of Greensboro has received a Savvy Award of Excellence (third place) for the best overall website for cities with a population of more than 110,000 at the 24th Annual City-County Communications and Marketing Association (3CMA) Annual Conference.
- The USA South Athletic Conference has partnered with the City of Rocky Mount to host 2013 and 2014 spring sports festivals featuring the tournaments of all six Conference spring sports.
- Beginning Feb. 14, 2013, United Airlines will provide three round-trip flights from Washington Dulles International Airport to Fayetteville Regional Airport.
- Keep Winston-Salem Beautiful received a \$10,000 "Think Green" grant from Waste Management to support the 2012 Community Roots Day on Oct. 27.
- The N.C. League of Municipalities (NCLM) awarded the City of Concord with 2012 Susan M. Burgess Sustainability Award at its Annual Conference in October.
- Durham Parks and Recreation has been recognized as a 2012 Playful City USA community by KaBOOM! for the fourth year in a row.
- *Forbes* magazine ranked Raleigh seventh on its survey of best big cities for jobs.

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The North Carolina Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, founded in 2001, is comprised of the mayors of the state's 28 largest cities, with more than three million citizens. The Coalition is part of the N.C. League of Municipalities, which represents all North Carolina municipalities. The Coalition is a non-partisan, mayor-driven organization and focuses on issues that are of special interest to our large cities in a fast-growing and urbanizing state. The Coalition has worked successfully with federal and state elected officials, and other municipal officials, to promote job creation, protect local revenues, invest in public infrastructure, and keep our cities safe.