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Metro Mayors Meet in Wilmington

Members of the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition, managers and staff recently gathered in Wilmington for the group's annual meeting. Hosted by Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo and the City staff, the Coalition enjoyed a warm welcome from UNC-Wilmington Chancellor Dr. Jose V. "Zito" Sartarelli, as well as members of the local legislative delegation, Rep. Deb Butler and Rep. Holly Grange, and a



Members of the Metro Mayors Coalition tour Wilmington during their annual meeting.

number of Wilmington's elected officials.

The group took a tour highlighting many of the economic strengths of Wilmington. They visited the 284-acre Port of Wilmington, which contributes more than \$13 billion to North Carolina's economy each year. They also took a bus tour of Wilmington's downtown development efforts and visited Untappd and Next Glass, downtown success stories based on technology. Next Glass offers an app that helps people choose beer and wine based on chemistry and personal taste, and Untappd is a social networking site that lets users rate beers and connect with local bars. The Metro Mayors also heard about TRU Colors Brewing, which was formed by 11 gang leaders to help stop gang violence. A gang member even performed a rap for the group — the very first Metro Mayors Coalition rap!

The meeting also allowed the Metro Mayors to honor some of the legislators who have worked on the issues important to North Carolina's cities. Senator Paul Newton of Mount Pleasant was honored with the Metro Mayors

Legislative Award for his commitment to affirming local governments' authority to collect water and sewer growth-related fees for community and economic development.

Representative Susan Martin of Wilson was recognized for her efforts on economic development, spearheading a comprehensive bill to change economic development incentives in North Carolina as well as the BRIGHT Futures Act which would address, among other things, broadband access issues in rural areas.

The meeting also included remarks from Wilmington Rep. Ted Davis and a keynote address from Secretary of Commerce Tony Copeland, who previously served as an Assistant Commerce Secretary and led the recruitment of



Wilmington Mayor Bill Saffo, who hosted the meeting, welcomes the Coalition to Wilmington.

nearly \$12 billion in investment and the creation of nearly 100,000 jobs in that role.

Rounding out the meeting's agenda was the Coalition's election of new officers. The Executive Committee Members for 2018-2019 are:

- Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer, Chair
- Greensboro Mayor Nancy Vaughan, Vice Chair
- Apex Mayor Lance Olive, Treasurer
- Statesville Mayor Costi Kutteh, at large
- Goldsboro Mayor Chuck Allen, at large
- Charlotte Mayor Vi Lyles, at large
- Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle, at large
- Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger, at large

Metro Mayors: Moving Forward

For more than 17 years, the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition has brought together mayors from cities across the state and helped us to network, to advocate and to find innovative solutions to shared concerns. Regardless of politics or party, we have worked together to support economic development, to promote smart transportation choices and to keep our communities safe.

Just like North Carolina, our Coalition has undergone a number of changes in the past 17 years. We have grown. Our cities have grown. We have been more active at the General Assembly. We have sponsored research. We have shared best practices. And we have built partnerships with statewide organizations like the N.C. Rural Center, most recently launching our sister city program with Kinston.

With all of that growth and change, it is right and necessary that our Coalition take a step back and consider our role and our future. Our former executive director, Julie White, left last year to work for the N.C. Department of Transportation. That transition presented us with the opportunity to review our organizational goals and look toward the future.

It is in that vein that we undertook a strategic planning process, which was led by Julie Brennan with Fountainworks. Mayors, managers and staffers discussed the identity, purpose and organization of the Coalition.



**Message from the Chair
 & Asheville Mayor
 Esther Manheimer**

New Mayor Bios



Mayor Al Heggins
Salisbury

Mayor Heggins is the first African-American woman to be elected to the Salisbury City Council. A native of Rowan County, she is the daughter of the late William and Mary Lipe. She is married to Isaac Heggins, and they have six children and two grandchildren. Her personal motto is "Discover your service purpose to humankind and occupy

that space fully."

Heggins is the founder and owner of the Human Praxis Institute (HPI), a human relations firm based in Salisbury. HPI helps organizations and communities create and sustain inclusive and welcoming environments.

Heggins earned a M.Ed. in TESL and a BA in English from UNC-Charlotte. She was awarded an Honorary Doctorate of Humane Letters from Livingstone College. She also served 19 years as an Army officer in the Adjutant General's Corps and Military Intelligence, worked as the Dean and Associate Vice President at Livingstone College, and was the Human Relations Director for the City of High Point.



Mayor Walker Reid III
Gastonia

Walker E. Reid III worked for 23 years as an Assistant Fire Marshal Fire & Life Safety Educator for the Mecklenburg County Fire Marshal's Office before his retirement in 2009. Prior to this, he was a firefighter and fire inspector for the City of Gastonia. He was also a Fire Service Instructor at

Gaston College.

Reid was first elected to the Gastonia City Council in 1997 and served seven terms. He was Mayor pro tem for four of those terms.

Reid is a 1975 graduate of Hunter Huss High School and received his A.A.S. Degree in Fire Science Technology from Gaston College. He is a Graduate of the North Carolina Fire College and the North Carolina Fire Prevention School.

He is also a graduate of the National Fire Academy in Emmitsburg, Maryland, and the R. Kennett Scott Fire Prevention School. He retired as a Level III Certified NC Fire Inspector and Level III Life Safety Educator.



Mayor P.J. Connelly
Greenville

P.J. Connelly was born in Beloit, WI, and moved to Greenville in 2003 to play baseball at East Carolina University, where he graduated with a concentration in finance. He played baseball in the Los Angeles Angels organization for two years before returning to Greenville in 2007 to open a

real estate company that he and his wife still own and operate.

Connelly was first elected to the Greenville City Council in 2015 to represent District 5. He is married to his wife Jaclyn and has two children, Mary Kate and Caroline.

In his installation ceremony, Connelly said he plans to guide Greenville in building stronger partnerships at the local, state and federal levels with a focus on job expansion and economic growth.



Mayor William C. "Bill" Dusch
Concord

Mayor William C. "Bill" Dusch, a Concord native, has been active in the community as a business owner and a member of City boards and non-profit organizations for 30 years. He and his wife, Debbie, have two grown children.

His Council-appointed board service includes chairing Concord's Planning and Zoning Commission, Board of Adjustment and Historic Preservation Commission. He is affiliated with many local non-profits including Concord Downtown Development Corporation, United Way, Cabarrus Arts Council, NorthEast Foundation, and Big Brothers Big Sisters. Earlier this year, he was awarded the Cabarrus Regional Chamber of Commerce Duke Energy Citizenship Award for community service.



Mayor Woody Washam
Cornelius

Mayor Woody Washam is a Cornelius native who lives on Lake Norman. He was a two-term Mayor pro tem before being elected as mayor. He is a lifetime banker and is currently employed as Senior Vice President and Market Executive for Carolina Trust Bank. He graduated from Catawba

College with a Business Administration major and a minor in Music. He is the former chair of the Lake Norman Chamber of Commerce as well as the Cornelius Transportation Advisory Board. He and his wife Sharon have 2 children and 5 grandchildren.



Mayor Hank Guess
Hickory

Hank Guess retired from the Hickory Police Department as a Lieutenant with 30 years of service in 2008. In 2009, he was elected to his first term on the Hickory City Council as the Ward 4 Councilman.

Guess graduated from Hickory High School in 1977 and continued his education at Gardner-Webb College, where he graduated with a Bachelor Degree in Criminal Justice Administration in 1986. He is also a graduate of the FBI National Academy, Session #210.

Guess currently serves on the Board of Directors for the Pregnancy Care Center, Family Guidance Center, Community Services Block Grant Advisory Committee and the Hickory Aviation Museum. He is a volunteer with North Carolina Special Olympics and is a member of the Rotary Club of Hickory, Western Catawba Kiwanis Club, Hickory Elks Lodge and Winkler's Grove Baptist Church where he has served as a Deacon, Usher and Sunday School Teacher.

Mayor Guess has been married to his wife Tammy for 30 years and they have two adult sons, Justin and Jacob, both of whom reside in Hickory.



Mayor Vi Lyles *Charlotte*

Vi Alexander Lyles became the City's first African-American woman to serve as mayor when she was sworn into office on Dec. 4, 2017. Lyles is a visionary city leader with more than 40 years of public service leadership experience in Charlotte. She is known for collaboration, leadership and commitment to the city.

Lyles was Assistant City Manager for the City of Charlotte from 1996 to 2004. She started her career as an analyst in the City's budget department, and she later became Charlotte's Budget Director. Lyles is most remembered for making the City government a more humane entity with connections to the communities it serves.

Inspired by leaders like Harvey Gantt and Anthony Foxx before her, in 2012, Lyles decided to run for Charlotte City Council. She was elected to an At-Large seat for two consecutive terms. In 2014, the Council elected her Mayor pro tem.

Lyles is a professionally trained facilitator and executive coach, completing programs at the Harvard Institute of Government, North Carolina State University and the Lee Institute's American Leadership Forum.

Mayor Steve Schewel

Durham



Steve Schewel graduated magna cum laude from Duke in 1973. He earned a master's in English from Columbia University in 1974 and a Ph.D. in education from Duke in 1982. He is currently a Visiting Assistant Professor in the Sanford School of Public Policy at Duke.

In 1983, he founded the Durham-based Independent newspaper. Schewel published the paper for 30 years before selling it in 2012. He also co-founded the Hopscotch Music Festival, which he owned and produced until 2015.



Mayor Paul Bailey *Matthews*

Paul F. Bailey served on the Board of Commissioners for nine terms and the CMS Board of Education for one term before being elected Mayor in 2017. He has been serving the community since 1986 on the Matthews Transportation Board and the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Park and Recreation Committee and, being an Eagle Scout, has been active in, and supports, Mecklenburg County Boy Scouts.

Bailey is a graduate of North Carolina State University with a BS in mechanical engineering and the University of South Carolina with a masters in mechanical engineering. Bailey's career in the nuclear industry has included work in the areas of plant design, construction, operation and nuclear fuel, including work with the federal Department of Energy. Paul and his wife, Sherrie, have three children and two grandchildren. They have lived in Matthews for 34 years.

From 2004-2008, Schewel served on the Durham Public Schools' Board of Education, including two years as vice-chair. He was first elected to the Durham City Council in 2011 and served as a member of that body with special interest in affordable housing, public safety and parks and trails. A former English teacher and community organizer, Schewel serves on a number of boards in the local community. He coached youth soccer in Durham for 18 years.

Chair's Column *continued from page 1*

Participants highlighted the benefits of the Coalition to cities and mayors and the Coalition's recent accomplishments. We broke into small groups to discuss the future of the Metro Mayors and our organization.

These activities helped us to begin to clarify our purpose as an organization, recommitting ourselves to a focus on issues of importance to large cities, to providing legislative updates and supporting legislative advocacy and building relationships. The most important benefits of the Coalition were identified as the flexibility to respond quickly and effectively to issues of concern, the strength of our membership's shared interests, the value of allowing mayors to choose priority issues and the unique voice and insight provided by the Coalition.

This strategic planning session highlighted our continued commitment to the Metropolitan Mayors Coalition and its value to our members. We will tackle some of the pressing issues facing our state with new energy and drive. We look forward to working with legislators, policy makers and other partners to forge innovative solutions and grow our economy.

At the conclusion of these discussions, our Board voted to begin the search process for a new executive director, and we are pleased to announce that the Coalition has hired Beau Mills in this role beginning March 1.

Mills previously served as the Metro Mayors Coalition's very first director, beginning in 2001 when it grew out of the earlier mayor-led municipal N.C. Public Transit Coalition, and we are fortunate to have him return. He will make sure we continue to build strong relationships

with our partners at the state and federal levels, but, perhaps most importantly, he is uniquely qualified to hit the ground running and help chart our path forward as the Metro Mayors Coalition approaches its 20th anniversary.

Mills is a native North Carolinian, with an undergraduate degree from UNC-Chapel Hill and an MPA from University of West Florida. In addition to his work with the Coalition, he has wide-ranging experience in government and public policy both in North Carolina and Washington, D.C. He served as a program and policy analyst at the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency, where he concentrated on environmental policy, intergovernmental collaboration and community and economic development. He returned to North Carolina to serve in Governor Jim Hunt's Policy Office before joining the Coalition in 2001. Since then, Mills has done private consulting, led state congressional offices and, most recently, was the leader of UNC-Chapel Hill's federal government relations team.

The Executive Committee will continue to work hard to make sure we move forward in ways that reflect our shared goals, including ongoing discussions to improve collaboration with the N.C. League of Municipalities. In a fast urbanizing and increasingly competitive global economy, it is more important than ever that we all continue to do our best to make North Carolina's larger cities the best places to live and work. That goal is vital for our cities and for all the citizens of North Carolina.

Legislative Update

The regular legislative long session adjourned on June 30, 2017, in the early morning hours. The first five months of the session proceeded a bit more slowly than usual. The bulk of legislative activity occurred in the last few weeks of session with 100 bills debated in the House and Senate on the last Wednesday of session alone.

The Coalition's efforts focused on bills related to economic development, local government regulations and fees and quality of life in our cities. Of particular note was a successful bipartisan effort to prevent passage of H581, legislation that would have dramatically eroded local control of billboards. Another success was the passage of S155, also known as the "Brunch Bill," which allowed local governments to authorize alcohol sales before noon on Sunday.

Also of interest was H310, "Wireless Communications Infrastructure Siting," which was signed into law in July. This legislation encourages the growth of technology but also limits local government regulatory authority. Another new law resulted from H436, "Local Government/Regulatory Fees," which modified the ways impact fees are assessed for water and sewer improvements.

The Legislature provided \$40,000,000 in 2017-18 and \$75,000,000 in 2018-2019 for each of the state's ten commercial service airports in the final compromise budget. This funding was one of the largest new funding priorities during the 2017 session and the largest investment in commercial airports in history. This money can be used for debt service and capital improvements. Since North Carolina commercial airports are important economic drivers for urban, suburban and rural areas, the funding should provide benefits to all parts of the State.

Upon adjournment of the long session, the legislature reconvened for

a number of special sessions between August and October.

The first special session occurred on August 3. Originally, the primary purpose of this session was to conduct veto override votes; however, members focused on completing conference reports they did not finish during the regular session. The following conference reports were passed and sent to the Governor:

- S16, Business Regulatory Reform Act of 2017
- S628, Various Changes to the Revenue Laws
- H770, Various Clarifying Changes

The General Assembly reconvened on August 18, with no votes taken until August 24. This session was focused primarily on legislative redistricting. H927, "2017 House Redistricting Plan A2," and S691, "2017 Senate Floor Redistricting Plan – 4th Ed," both passed and outlined the House and Senate redistricting plans in advance of the federal court imposed deadline of September 1 to redraw the maps.

Members returned to Raleigh on October 4 for a whirlwind two-day session and took up two veto overrides: H56, "Amend Environmental Laws," and S16, "Business Regulatory Reform Act of 2017." The General Assembly also approved a budget technical corrections bill, S582. In addition to a variety of technical and clarifying modifications to the enacted state budget, the bill included a number of substantive provisions such as extending the film production tax credit and requiring the Attorney General to handle all criminal appeals instead of delegating them to local district attorneys.

Pursuant to the adjournment resolution passed in October, the legislature returned for another special session on January 10, 2018. This session was ongoing at the time of finalization of this newsletter but is expected to focus on judicial issues, GenX contamination and possibly redistricting.

City News

Sanford Celebrates Streetscape

The City of Sanford and Downtown Sanford, Inc. recently held the first annual Downtown StreetFest & Fireworks to celebrate the completion of the City's \$6.5 million Streetscape & Pedestrian Improvement bond project. The event featured food trucks, bands and craft beer and ended with a firework display set to live music by the Lee County Community Orchestra.

Apex Residents Approve Parks Bond

Apex residents approved the 2017 Parks Bond during the November general election, paving the way for up to \$48 million to fund four major projects. A large portion of the bond will be used to construct the highly anticipated Pleasant Park, a 92-acre site including a state-of-the-art athletic complex, cross-country course and a 1-acre amenity area with splash pad, inclusive playground and nature education area. Other projects funded are two major greenway connections and an expansion to the Community Center that will allow for expanded offerings for seniors.

Kannapolis Gets Moving

The City of Kannapolis recently launched Loop the Loop – a series of half a mile, mile, two and three miles of walking, running and biking loops around the downtown core. This is part of the "Discover a Healthy Life" initiative started by the City. In its first year, more than 500 people participated.

Gastonia Updates Water Treatment Plant

Gastonia City Council members recently viewed the latest renovations to the City's water treatment plant, a five-year improvement and expansion project costing \$65 million. The overhaul and upgrade of the 95-year-old plant will modernize equipment, improve efficiency and install a state-of-the-art filtration system that provides added protection against contaminants. Gastonia's plant is the first in North Carolina to use membrane filtration technology.

Mooresville Departments Receive Honors

The Town of Mooresville was awarded the Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the CAFR and Distinguished Budget Presentation Award for its work this past fiscal year. In addition, the Town was awarded the Ernest B. Messer Award by the NC Department Health and Human Services/Division of Aging and Adult Services for the Town's efforts to serve its aging population.

Concord Unveils Purple Heart City Placards

City of Concord officials and members of the Military Order of the Purple Heart Chapter 634 unveiled "Purple Heart City" placards on six "Welcome to Concord" signs leading into the City.

Cary's Train Station Honored

The Amtrak station in downtown Cary was ranked No. 1 in "overall station experience" in Amtrak's 2017 customer satisfaction rankings, with a score of 97 percent according to the N.C. Department of Transportation. The Cary Depot is the fourth busiest train station in the state, serving nearly 85,000 passengers in 2016.

Greensboro Scores High Marks in Equality Index

The City of Greensboro scored an 82 out of 100 possible points in the latest listing of the Human Rights Campaign's Municipal Equality Index (MEI). This marks the third consecutive year Greensboro placed first among all other cities in North Carolina and South Carolina. The MEI examines the laws, policies and services of municipalities and rates them on the basis of their inclusivity of lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer (LGBTQ) people who live and work in the city.

Metro Mayors In Action



Senator Paul Newton of Mount Pleasant is presented the Metro Mayors Legislative Award by former Concord Mayor Scott Padgett.



Wilmington Rep. Ted Davis speaks to the Metro Mayors about important legislative issues.



Wilmington Rep. Holly Grange provides the lunch keynote to the Metro Mayors.



Chapel Hill Mayor Pam Hemminger, Secretary of Commerce Tony Copeland and Durham Mayor Steve Schewel pause at the annual meeting.



Secretary of Commerce Tony Copeland gives the keynote address at the Metro Mayors annual meeting dinner.



Former Concord Mayor Scott Padgett receives an award recognizing his contributions to the Metro Mayors.



Rep. Deb Butler of Wilmington gives a legislative update during the annual meeting.



Former Greenville Mayor Kandie Smith is honored for her work with an award presented by Goldsboro Mayor Chuck Allen.



Asheville Mayor Esther Manheimer thanks former Cornelius Mayor Chuck Travis for his service.



Carrboro Mayor Lydia Lavelle presents an award thanking former Charlotte Mayor Jennifer Roberts for her support of the Coalition.

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Goldsboro's Downtown Honored

The Goldsboro Main Street Community, which is a partnership between the City of Goldsboro and the Downtown Goldsboro Development Corporation was awarded the National Great American Main Street Runner-Up Award titled "The One To Watch." Goldsboro is the first North Carolina community to achieve this recognition.

Winston-Salem Joins "What Works Cities" Initiative

Winston-Salem has been accepted into the "What Works Cities" project, an initiative of Bloomberg Philanthropies to help 100 mid-sized American cities enhance their use of data and evidence to improve services, inform local decision-making and engage residents. The initiative will focus on developing an open data policy to promote transparency and accountability in government as well as developing a framework for using data to make decisions, manage performance and align the city budget with city priorities.

Cornelius Mayor Receives Service Medal

Former Cornelius Mayor Chuck Travis received the William H. Deitrick Service Medal from the American Institute of Architects North Carolina Chapter. The award is presented to an AIA North Carolina member who exhibits "extraordinary service to the community, profession or AIA North Carolina."

Town Creek Culvert Project Moves Forward

The Greenville City Council recently approved a \$33 million contract to move forward with the Town Creek Culvert project which will upgrade the downtown area's drainage system. The Town Creek Culvert addresses drainage issues for about 300 acres in downtown and adjacent areas. Completion of the Town Creek Culvert is expected to take 30 months, with work beginning in early 2018.

Accolades

- The National Association of Town Watch awarded **Sanford** with the first place cup for National Night Out.
- The **Apex** Electric Department celebrated its 100th anniversary this year. The 29 men and women of this department have over 250 years of combined service to the town, supplying reliable power to nearly 20,000 residential and commercial customers.
- **Kannapolis** has introduced the state's only double decker carousel at its Village Park.
- The North Carolina Department of Transportation christened a locomotive in the name of **Kannapolis**.
- In August, Governor Roy Cooper appointed then-**Concord** Mayor Scott Padgett to the North Carolina Local Government Commission.
- **Greensboro** topped Waze's annual Driver Satisfaction Index, which includes metrics like safety, traffic and road quality, for the third straight year.
- The website GoBankingRates.com ranked **Greensboro** among the top 24 cities in the country for "How long will my retirement nest egg last?" Greensboro was the lone city represented from the Carolinas.
- **Goldsboro** and its downtown efforts were recently featured in the September 2017 issue of Business World Magazine.
- For a record 16th year in a row, **Winston-Salem** has been ranked as a top-ten digital city by the Center for Digital Government, a national research and advisory institute. Winston-Salem ranked second in the Center's 2017 Digital Cities Survey of cities with a population of 125,000 to 249,999.
- **Sanford** was awarded a \$4 million grant from the Golden LEAF Foundation to provide sanitary sewer to the Moncure Megasite. The total cost of the project is expected to be \$11 million and will be split with Chatham County.