



# Employee Newsletter

## APRIL 2017

### Happy Easter!!!



#### APRIL BIRTHDAYS

Amanda Goode	2
Jerry Clark	4
Theresa Creasman	4
Barry Ellis	4
Randy Phillips	5
Denise Cross	7
Mike Rutan	7
Derrick Pruitt	8
Deborah Huskins	10
Diane Brown	11
Jr. Chastain	11
Michelle Mitchell	12
Collin Gray	13
Cody Williams	15
Bobby Deese	17
Lucky Jenkins	17
Kenton Ebersohl	18
Brandon Walls	18
Barbara Haydon	19
Jacob Kitchens	19
Doug Vuick	19
Joshua Nichols	20
Jared Coleman	21
Renee McLean	24
Carmen Edwards	25
Tiffany Enloe	25
Malissa Reel	26
Ages 24 to 74	

#### OPEN ENROLLMENT

It's that time again! Open enrollment will be on May 17th in the upstairs Courtroom (the old Courtroom) in the Court House. This is the only time of the year you may make changes to your medical, dental, cancer, vision, accident and Liberty pre-tax life insurance policies without having a qualifying event (death, birth, marriage, divorce, loss of other coverage, etc.). If you are unable to attend on the 17th, I have scheduled a make-up day on May 25th this year.

This is a mandatory meeting for all full-time employees. There will be representatives there from Crescent, AFLAC, The Hartford, Liberty National, 401(k), Community Eye Care, Sam's Club and the Credit Union. There will be four sessions during the day and a schedule will be distributed sometime late in April or early in May. Mark the date and I'll see you there.

If you are currently enrolled in the FLEXIBLE spending plan, **you MUST RE-ENROLL** to be a member for the 2017-18 plan year. **This is the only benefit that requires you to enroll every year in order to maintain your benefit.** We currently have over 40 employees who are taking advantage of this option. If you have known health, dental, vision or other qualified expenses, you are basically throwing money away if you aren't taking advantage of the Flex plan. It's convenient, easy to use and the only benefit that you for sure get back more than you put into it (if you spend all your allotment). The Flex plan can be used to pay for qualified medical, dental, and vision expenses for you, your spouse and any dependent children—even if you don't cover them on the County insurance plan, plus you are now allowed to carry over \$500 to the next year if you don't use all your funds. Find somebody who is participating and ask them if they like the Flex plan—I think you'll find that most everybody who is participating enjoys the convenience and savings it provides.

What do you call a rabbit with fleas? Bugs bunny!

Where does an Easter bunny eat breakfast? At Ihop

#### New Stuff on the County website

The Hartford life and disability insurance policies are now on the County Website. You may view them by going to [www.cherokeecounty-nc.gov](http://www.cherokeecounty-nc.gov), click on "Departments" in the green bar. Scroll down to Human Resources, click on Employee Information and then click on "Insurance and Privacy Information." The Hartford policies can be found there, as well as information about our health and dental plans, Community Eye Care benefits, the privacy notice for our health insurance and marketplace information.

In addition, on the Employee Information tab, I have placed a couple of years' worth of Newsletters if you ever need to go back and look for something that was in a prior newsletter.

#### What's Your Type 2 Diabetes Risk?

#### American Diabetes Association Alert Day®

Cherokee County is participating in **American Diabetes Association Alert Day®**. On **March 28**, you are encouraged to take a simple (and anonymous) one-minute test to find out if you are at risk for developing type 2 diabetes. Go to <http://www.diabetes.org/are-you-at-risk/diabetes-risk-test/> to take the test (you may copy and paste the link into your web browser.) Then learn more about this disease, how to prevent it and how to fight back to help transform your life. If your test shows you are at risk, contact Alicea Ward at ext. 508 or Breeze Gibson at ext. 534. They will be implementing a Diabetes Prevention program in the near future that will provide you with a fun and interactive way to learn how to decrease your likelihood of developing Type 2 Diabetes.

We hope you will share the test with everyone you care about including family members, friends and colleagues.

#### Commissioners Board Meetings

April 3, 6:30 PM  
April 17, 6:30 PM

Is there something you would like to see in the newsletter? Please email Melody at [melody.johnson@cherokeecounty-nc.gov](mailto:melody.johnson@cherokeecounty-nc.gov) with any suggestions.



## Reporting Child Abuse



### What to report:

Explain, as well as you can, what happened or is happening to the child. Describe the nature of the abuse or neglect. Be as specific as possible.

It is helpful to have as much of the following information as you can when you call:

- Name of birth parents or guardian
- Date of birth for parents and children
- Address of parents and children
- School which the children attend
- Articulate the safety issue (What is the parent or guardian doing or not doing that is causing the child harm?)
- When the safety issue occurred and how often
- Name, date of birth, and location if possible, of the person who is or was causing the hurt or harm.



*Even if you do not know all of this information, report what you do know. Tell all you know about the situation.*

### What will happen?

A social worker from the county department of social services will work with the parents and assess the situation to determine if any support or assistance is needed to protect the child and help the family.

Services available to help the family and the child include counseling, in-home services, mental health and alcohol or drug abuse services, assistance or training in home and financial management, parent education and self-help groups. In severe situations, it may be necessary to temporarily place a child in out-of-home care.

A person who is mandated to report suspected child abuse or neglect will be informed by the county what action, if any, was taken to protect the health, safety and welfare of the child who is the subject of the report.

### Reporting is not “Meddling”

Deciding to get involved in a situation of suspected abuse or neglect can be difficult. It is, however, a decision that may be crucial to a child not only today, but also in the future. Parents who have abused or neglected their children may need services and support to provide safe care for their children.

### FYI

- When reporting a safety incident or concern to the police you should contact the police in the county in which the incident occurred. When contacting Child Protective Services about a safety incident or concern you should contact the county in which the parents reside.
- It is helpful to document for yourself who you spoke to when you called and the time and date.

### Getting help

Children who have been abused need caring adults to help them recognize that they are not responsible for the violence in their homes and to help them find ways to grow past their present trauma into healthy adults. Caring adults must help abused children avoid a cycle of learned abusive patterns by teaching and modeling nonviolent methods of conflict resolution and helping them express their feelings in healthy ways.

**NATIONAL CHILD ABUSE HOTLINE: 1-800-4-A-CHILD (1-800-422-4453). Crisis Counselors are available 24/7**

**To Report Child Abuse** – Cherokee County Department of Social Services (828) 837-7455. If calling after hours, call (828) 835-3144.

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# Are you **ReadyNC?** ... for **Tornadoes**

Tornadoes can occur with little or no warning. March through May is peak tornado season for North Carolina.

## Danger Signs

- When tornado watches or warnings are posted, falling hail can be a real danger sign.
- A cloud of debris can indicate a tornado, even if you cannot see a funnel.
- Before a tornado hits, the wind may die down and the air may become very still.
- Tornadoes occur near the trailing edge of a thunderstorm. You may see clear, sunny skies behind a tornado.

## Be **Safe!** Act **Quickly**

- Listen to NOAA Weather Radio or radio and television news updates. Follow orders from local emergency management officials.
- Be alert to changing weather. Look for oncoming storms.
- Find something sturdy to get under and hold onto to shield you from flying debris and/or a collapsed roof. Use your arms to protect your head and neck.

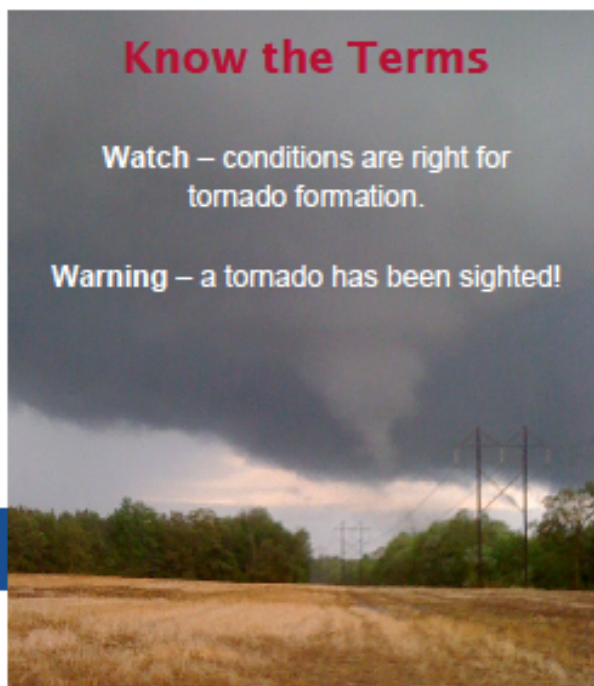
## Know Where to Go

- **At Home** – Go to the basement. Under the stairs or in a bathroom or closet also are good spots.
- **At Work** – Go to the basement if there is one. Stairwells, bathrooms and closets are good spots. As a last resort, crawl under your desk.
- **At School** - Seek shelter in inside hallways, small closets and bathrooms. Get out of mobile classrooms, gymnasiums, auditoriums and other rooms with a large expanse of roof. Bus drivers should be alert for bad weather on their routes.
- **In Stores** - Seek shelter against an inside wall. An enclosed hallway or fire exit leading away from the main mall concourse is a good spot. Stay away from skylights and large open areas.
- **Outside** - Find the nearest sturdy shelter. Or seek shelter in a ditch or low-lying area and cover your head with your hands. **DO NOT** get under an overpass or bridge. You are safer in a low, flat location. Watch out for flying debris.
- **In a car** - Never try to outrun a tornado in a car. Pull over, and seek shelter in a building.

## Know the Terms

**Watch** – conditions are right for tornado formation.

**Warning** – a tornado has been sighted!



**Get ReadyNC!**

Download the ReadyNC mobile app. It's free!

**ReadyNC.org**  
Plan. Prepare. Stay Informed.

# Highlight of County Benefits



This article is for those of you who aren't sure what benefits the County provides to you. I am always a little surprised that folks don't know what their benefits are, so below you will see the benefits the County offers, as well as contact information for the various providers and agents.

## **Full Time Benefits**

- County paid Retirement match (currently 7.42% of gross wages for general employees, 8.0% for law enforcement, will be 7.66 or 7.67% July 1 for general and 8.25% for law enforcement—rates updated annually by the retirement system). Employee contributes 6% of gross pay. Contact # for retirement system (877) 627-3287
- County paid health insurance for employee only—plan year July to June (employee paid offered for spouse and children) Contact # for Crescent Health Solutions who administers our claims (800) 707-7726
- County paid dental insurance for employee only—plan year July to June and employee may choose provider of choice for dental (employee paid offered for spouse and children) Contact # for Crescent Health Solutions who administers our claims (800) 707-7726
- County paid Telemedicine benefit available to employee and anyone in employee's household—provided through AllyHealth, contact # (888) 565-3303
- County paid FICA match (6.2% paid by county). Employee pays 6.2% on wages up to \$127,200.
- County paid Medicare match (1.45% paid by county). Employee pays 1.45% of total gross wages.
- County paid 401(k) match for Law Enforcement officers—administered by Prudential—county pays 5% of gross pay to 401(k) for each employee who is in a sworn law enforcement position. Contact # for Prudential (866) 427-3287
- County paid worker's compensation insurance—amount varies by employee job class.
- County paid cell phones for those employees whose jobs require them to be accessible by phone.
- Life insurance —\$15,000 county-paid employee only policy through The Hartford (employee may purchase additional life insurance for self, spouse and/or children, as well as short term disability (STD) and long term disability (LTD)). In addition to The Hartford, Liberty National offers a different type of life insurance for employee, spouse and children that is employee paid. Contact # for The Hartford (800) 549-6514 for disability claims, (888) 563-1124 for life claims. Contact # for Liberty National (828) 557-3533—Kenny West, agent
- Vision insurance—offered by Community Eye Care—plan year July to June—employee paid benefit. Contact # (888) 254-4290
- Cancer insurance—offered by AFLAC—employee paid benefit. Contact # (828) 342-1993, Josh Fields, agent
- Accident insurance—offered by AFLAC—employee paid benefit Contact # (828) 342-1993, Josh Fields, agent
- Critical Illness insurance—offered by AFLAC—employee paid benefit Contact # (828) 342-1993, Josh Fields, agent
- Critical Incident insurance—offered by AFLAC—employee paid benefit (covers only certain health incidents) Contact # (828) 342-1993, Josh Fields, agent
- Optional 401(k)—administered by Prudential—employee paid pre-tax or Roth options. Employee may contribute up to IRS defined limits. You may enroll in this benefit at any time. Prudential contact # (866) 427-3287
- Optional 457 contributions—administered by VALIC—employee paid pre-tax contributions. Employee may contribute up to IRS defined limits. You may enroll in this benefit at any time. Contact John Richardson, VALIC agent, at (828) 452-9580 to enroll.
- Flexible Spending Accounts (FSA)—employee paid—may only enroll in this benefit at open enrollment and may contribute up to a maximum of \$2600 on a pre-tax basis for plan year beginning July 1, 2017. This is one of the best benefits we offer for folks who have known medical and dental expenses. Can also be used to pay medical and dental for spouse and dependent children, regardless of whether they are on the County's medical and dental.
- Paid Holidays—12 days per calendar year and we follow the State holiday schedule
- Paid leave—12 days paid sick leave per year (may be used for sick for employee and immediate family members and for funeral leave—may never be used in lieu of vacation) plus two weeks to four weeks paid vacation leave per year depending on years of service (may be used for any reason and may be used in lieu of sick if not enough sick leave is available)

## **Part-Time Benefits**

- County paid Retirement match for employees who are scheduled to work at least 20 hours per week on a regular basis (currently 7.42% of gross wages for general employees, 8.0% for law enforcement, will be 7.66 or 7.67% July 1 for general and 8.25% for law enforcement—rates updated annually by the retirement system). Employee contributes 6% of gross pay.
- Holiday pay for holidays actually worked—time and a half up to 8 hours maximum holiday pay. Hours worked are paid at regular rate. Divide hours by two and place in holiday column on time sheet which equals time and a half.
- Optional 401(k)—available to part-time employees who contribute to the retirement system—see provider and contact information above