Employee Newsletter
December 2019
Wonderful Holidays to All!

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Kamie Johnson  1
Anthony Mariano  1
Amber Dickey  2
Hope Beckham  4
Mark Malone  4
Sara Wilson  4
Shon Crisp  6
Brooke Smith  6
Scottie Queen  7
Sharon Moss  8
Rebecca Hand  10
Cathy Hurt  12
Sheri Goodlet  13
Shereen Bates  15
Richard Harris  15
Jena Szewczyk  15
Kala Headley  18
Kesha Sharp  19
Justin Turner  19
Keith Ownbey  20
Karen Wright  21
Kathy Adams  22
TJ Major  23
Eva Glosson  24
Ashley Gunter  26
Lis Nantz  26
Rebekah Snyder  26
Eddie Allen  28
Sue Chastain  29
Jacob Whitaker  29
Harold Chastain  30
Kevin Luther  30
Natalie McGrady  30

Ages 22 to 73

Commissioner Board Meetings
Dec 2nd @ 6:30 pm

INSURANCE DEDUCTIBLE YEAR

Just a quick reminder—the deductible year for our health, dental and vision insurance runs July 1 to June 30—not January to December. Keep that in mind, especially when you are scheduling dental work since there is a $1000 plan year limit on dental benefits. And to clarify the $1000 plan year limit, the cost of your two free cleanings (no cost to you) counts toward the $1000 maximum per year. For example, if your dentist charged $200 for each of your 2 cleanings, that would leave you $600 additional to spend ($1000 - $400) on dental services for that plan year. So if you have scheduled dental work in January thinking it will be covered and you are close to your $1000 max, you will probably want to reschedule the work to July if you can wait. Also a reminder that we do not have a dental network. You may use the dental provider of your choice until your $1000 plan year maximum is exhausted.

Have you paid your taxes?

Have you paid your 2019 property taxes or your 2018 NC State income taxes. Rest assured that if you have not and become delinquent, your wages will be garnished at 10% of gross wages...plus you will be assessed a garnishment fee for county taxes and penalty and interest for state income taxes. It is much better for you financially if you make some kind of arrangements to pay these before they get to the point of garnishment. It hurts me to see somebody paying more for a garnishment fee than the taxes they owed in the first place. Please make arrangements to get your taxes paid if you have not already done so.

2020 Holiday Schedule

New Year’s Day  Jan 1  Wednesday
MLK, Jr, BD  Jan 20  Monday
Good Friday  Apr 10  Monday
Memorial Day  May 25  Monday
Independence Day  July 3  Friday
Labor Day  Sept 7  Monday
Veteran’s Day  Nov 11  Wednesday
Thanksgiving  Nov 26 & 27  Thursday & Friday
Christmas  Dec. 24, 25, 28  Thursday
                      Friday
                      Monday

PLEASE CHECK YOUR INFORMATION!!

When you receive your direct deposit notice or pay check next pay day, please check to make sure your name is spelled correctly and that your mailing address is correct. If it is not, please let me know as soon as possible so I can get corrections made before the end of the year. We only have two more pay periods before it will be time to do W2s for 2019. They will be emailed to those who have given permission to email those. I hope to have them to you sometime early in January but not sure what date yet.

Also, please go to MUNIS Self Service and check to make sure your personal information is correct. If you have never logged in, you go to the county website, click departments, employee information, and then click Munis Self Service. Your user name is first initial, last name, last four of social (ex. jdoexxxx). The password, if you have never logged in before, is the last four of your social and must be changed. If your phone number is incorrect please correct it or if you have a cell number to add, please do so. And if you don’t have anybody listed under emergency contact please enter the person who should be contacted if something were to happen to you. You can also look at your pay information, your tax information, retrieve prior year W2s, run a pay simulator and see lots of documents on this site. Please take advantage of this resource—you can find almost any kind of payroll or benefit form there. Forms are found by clicking the word “resources” below your name in the upper right hand corner. If you don’t remember your password, the password help portion appears to be working now, so everybody should be able to get into the site.

If you would like something published in the county’s monthly newsletter please send info. to Melody in human resources at melody.johnson@cherokeecounty-nc.gov, or call ext 816.
Be Prepared for Winter Driving

Driving in the winter can be harrowing, especially in snowstorms and icy conditions. By getting your car ready for winter and using some simple tips to drive safely, you can face almost any weather Mother Nature decides to send your way.

Prepare Your Car for Winter

In addition to annual maintenance, here are some tips to winterize your car:

- Test your battery; battery power drops as the temperature drops
- Make sure the cooling system is in good working order
- Have winter tires with a deeper, more flexible tread put on your car
- If using all-season tires, check the tread on your tires and replace if less than 2/32 of an inch
- Check the tire pressure; tire pressure drops as the temperature drops
- Check your wiper blades and replace if needed
- Add wiper fluid rated for -30 degrees
- Keep your gas tank at least half full to avoid gas line freeze

Remember to keep your car’s emergency preparedness kit fully stocked, too.

Before You Start Out

- Clean your car’s external camera lenses and side view mirrors so you’ll be able to see what’s around you
- Remove dirt, ice and snow from sensors to allow the assistive-driving features like automatic emergency braking to work
- In frigid weather, you may want to warm up the car before you drive it
- To prevent carbon monoxide poisoning, never leave a vehicle running in your garage – even with the garage door up
- If the forecast looks iffy, wait out the storm if possible; if you must travel, share your travel plans and route with someone before you leave

How to Avoid a Crash

AAA offers the following driving tips:

- Avoid using cruise control in wintry conditions
- Steer in the direction of a skid, so when your wheels regain traction, you don’t have to overcorrect to stay in your lane
- Accelerate and decelerate slowly
- Increase following distance to 8 to 10 seconds
- If possible, don’t stop when going uphill

If visibility is severely limited due to a whiteout, pull off the road to a safe place and do not drive until conditions improve. Avoid pulling off onto the shoulder unless it is an absolute emergency. Limited visibility means other vehicles can’t see yours on the shoulder.

Know Your Car’s Capabilities

My Car Does What? is a national campaign to help educate drivers about the safety features built into vehicles. Search for your car and find out what safety features are already built in.

Traction control is now standard on most new vehicles. This function helps your vehicle gain traction on snowy, icy or wet surfaces, particularly when accelerating from a stopped or slowed position, or when trying to make it up a slippery hill.

Anti-lock braking system (ABS) helps you steer in emergencies by restoring traction to your tires and is standard on most new vehicles as well. ABS may vibrate or pulse when engaged. This is normal. Continue to press and hold pressure to the brake pedal.

Remember, you are your car’s best safety feature. Take precautions to ensure you arrive safely at your destination. If you become stranded in an unfamiliar area, do not leave your car. Light flares in front and behind the car and make sure the exhaust pipe is not blocked by snow, mud or objects.
AirMedCare Enrollments for 2020

County employees are once again being offered an opportunity to participate in the AirMedCare membership program. The deductions for this will begin with the January 10, 2020, pay day and will end on March 20th, 2020 (for three to ten year memberships)—one year memberships will be complete on January 24th.

Please note that any family members who are enrolled in the Medicaid program are not eligible for the benefit, but if they should lose their eligibility, they could be added as a family member at that time.

Costs for the membership are below:

- 1 year: $60 (2 deductions of $30 each)
- 3 year: $170 (6 deductions of $28.33 each)
- 5 year: $275 (6 deductions of $45.83 each)
- 10 year: $520 (6 deductions of $86.67 each)

Right now, the schedule looks like this:

**Tuesday, Dec 3**
- 1-3 pm: Courthouse (EMS, elections, Code Enforcement, maintenance, Soil and Water and Courthouse employees)
- 4:30-7:30 pm: Sheriff/Detention/Dispatch

**Wednesday, Dec 4**
- 9-11 am: DSS
- 1-3:30: Andrews Rec, Senior, EMS, Landfill, Marble EMS
- 4:30-7:30 pm: Sheriff/Detention/Dispatch

**Thursday, Dec 5**
- 10:30-11:30: Courthouse for anybody who missed earlier in the week

**Friday, Dec 6**
- 1-2:30: Health Department & Transit

LifeForce is one of several providers covered by your membership. See brochure at enrollment for full list of carriers covered.

Shane Headrick, the AirMedCare Rep, is going to try to drop by all of our outlying locations at some point during the week of December 3—10. If you prefer to go to a location other than your own work site, that is fine, too. We wanted to give everybody an opportunity to enroll. If you can’t make any of the locations and would like to enroll, email me and I can send you a blank enrollment form. Note: if you enrolled in the 3, 5 or 10 year membership last year, you do not need to re-enroll this year. I have emailed folks whose membership is expiring at the end of 2019. If you did not receive that email, then you have a plan that takes you out at least one more year, or did not enroll.

Note that in order to do payroll deduction, you must be an employee that gets paid every pay day. If you are as needed and just work occasionally or don’t work every pay period, you may still join but you would need to pay up front and your cost would be $85 per year—$65 for seniors (instead of $60, but still a good deal even at that). I know a few people have already done that. I will email the application to those with county email.

VIEWS OF THE NEW LANDFILL CELL WHERE YOUR FUTURE TRASH WILL GO

Reminder about AllyHealth

This is just a reminder that if you are covered by the County’s health insurance, you also have access to our telemedicine benefit, AllyHealth. This also may be used for anybody who lives in the household with you, regardless of coverage on our insurance and it costs you nothing to use this benefit. The number to call is 888-565-3303 or you may register online at member.alyhealth.net. This is a great benefit to use, especially for those family members who are not covered by our insurance. Please take time to register if you have not already done so. You may also go online and pick a provider who is available if you wish to pick a provider with a certain specialty.
I will email everybody who has county email a copy of the application.

This is a little fuzzy. I have originals in my office if anybody wants to come by and pick one up.

I told Santa you had been good this year...and he hasn’t stopped laughing since.

As a little girl climbed onto Santa’s lap, Santa asked the usual, “And what would you like for Christmas?” The child stared at him open mouthed and horrified for a minute, then gasped: “Didn’t you get my E-mail?”