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Popular Government

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Deaths from Domestic Violence in North Carolina 2007

January 2, Connie Whitson, 46, Jacksonville, Onslow County • January 3, Madelyn Carol Williams Sellars, Burlington, Alamance County • January 4, Denita Smith, 25, Durham, Durham County • January 8, Darleen Neals Johnson, 42, Washington, Beaufort County • January 15, Lawana Mason Engle Morton, 26, Lincoln County • January 22, Lynn Chambers Gibbs, 50, Person County • February 2, Regina Little, 44, Williamston, Martin County • February 12, Nneaka Wilson, 24, Raleigh, Wake County • February 15, Ingris Edilia Medina Garcia, 33, Whitakers, Nash County • February 22, Rosa Morales-Carranza, 26, Raleigh, Wake County • February 22, Dayna Elamrani, 1 month, Raleigh, Wake County • February 24, Kathy Conrad Rogers, 48, Waynesville, Haywood County • February 25, Michelle Vasquez, 27, Cumberland County • March 6, Eddie Crowfoot, 42, New Bern, Craven County • March 11, Lakkysha Marie Glover, 27, Jacksonville, Onslow County • March 12, Ashley Henry, 6, Clayton, Johnston County • March 12, Gregory Henry, 4, Clayton, Johnston County • March 13, Jana B. Rowell, 41, Davie County • March 14, Stephen Thomas Clark, 37, Arden, Buncombe County • March 17, Carol Denise Reagan, 37, Morganton, Burke County • March 25, Delnata Morring, 20, Plymouth, Washington County • March 30, Thomasina Jones, 34, Mocksville, Davie County • April 1, Billy Ray Williams, 65, Harnett County • April 2, Shana Hutchins, 28, Fremont, Wayne County • May 1, Lorricile Watkins, 29, Raleigh, Wake County • May 7, Austin Wilson, 69, Red Springs, Robeson County • May 10, Elvira Hernandez, 17, Franklin County • May 24 (body found), Jonathon Elee Grice, Carthage, Moore County • May 28, Diane Locklear, 49, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • June 10, Susan Pearce Hayes, Boone, Watauga County • June 18, Sharlene Freeman, 46, Edenton, Chowan County • June 25, Tammy Duval, Greenville, Pitt County • June 25, Ronald L. Hunter, 41, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • July 1, Veronica Elaine Malone, 38, Raleigh, Wake County • July 3, Katherine Mardell Krejci, 23, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • July 5, Andrew Andre Allen, 33, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • July 10, MacArthur Thompson, 40, Gibsonville, Guilford County • July 25, Laura Renee Triplett, 34, North Wilkesboro, Wilkes County • July 26 (body found), Robert Lincoln Slaydon, 87, Asheboro, Randolph County • August 10, Joanne Anderson, 45, Ranger, Cherokee County • August 10, Maria Micaela DeLeon Rubio, 33, Wilson, Wilson County • August 16, Sonia Long, 32, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • August 18, Tina Choate Hosch, 25, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • August 23, Kimberly Arnetta Davis, 35, Durham, Durham County • August 24, Catherine Smith, 31, Hickory, Catawba County • August 26, Jessica Leigh Johnson, 20, Raleigh, Wake County • August 26, Cylvonnia Freddy, 39, Grifton, Pitt County • August 26, Robert Bizzel, 33, Grifton, Pitt County • August 27, Yolanda Duprec, 35, Rocky Mount, Nash County • August 27, unknown child, 2, Durham, Durham County • August 29, Tina Callahan, 33, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • September 3, Stephanie Belk King, 27, Gaston County • September 12, Stephanie Turner, 54, Mocksville, Davie County • October 4, Kaye Delaine Conrad, 46, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • October 4 (reported missing), Donald Bradley Smithwick, Ahoskie, Hertford County • October 7, Joyce Gabbard, 61, Currituck County • October 13, Richard Louis Deas, 40, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • October 28, Terrie Dewberry Bertha, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • November 6, Naomi Taylor, Kernersville, Forsyth County • November 7, Donna Berry, 33, Gastonia, Gaston County • November 8 (body found), William Brouillard, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • November 10, Anthony Devon Judd, 19, Zebulon, Wake County • November 10, Azucena Diaz, 28, Dunn, Sampson County • November 11, Naomi Elizabeth Harris, 61, Raleigh, Wake County • November 12, Carolyn Barnette, 50, Bessemer City, Gaston County • November 27, Anna Loebsack, 36, lived in Gastonia, N.C., murdered in Aiken, S.C. • December 1, Barbara Jean Jackson, 44, Chadbourn, Columbus County • December 3, Beatrice Fells, 49, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • December 7, Ebony Chatell Robinson, 21, Durham, Durham County • December 17 (missing since November 28), Marsha Gregory Welch, 49, Spruce Pine, Mitchell County • December 20, Stephanie McLean, 44, Spring Lake, Cumberland County • December 24, Heather Lynn Lowery, 25, Forest City, Rutherford County • December 25, A. Jeffrey Lee Walton, 50, Orange County • December 29, Ashlee Jade Holland, 27, Indian Trail, Union County • CONTINUED ON PAGE 4

Also In This Issue • Three Profiles of Community Visioning • One Community's Experience with Collaborative Leadership • Variables Influencing G.O. Bond Ratings

Popular Government

James Madison and other leaders in the American Revolution employed the term "popular government" to signify the ideal of a democratic, or "popular," government—a government, as Abraham Lincoln later put it, of the people, by the people, and for the people. In that spirit *Popular Government* offers research and analysis on state and local government in North Carolina and other issues of public concern. For, as Madison said, "A people who mean to be their own governors must arm themselves with the power which knowledge gives."

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The School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill works to improve the lives of North Carolinians by engaging in practical scholarship that helps public officials and citizens understand and strengthen state and local government. Established in 1931 as the Institute of Government, the School provides educational, advisory, and research services for state and local governments. The School of Government is also home to a nationally ranked graduate program in public administration and specialized centers focused on information technology, environmental finance, and civic education for youth.

As the largest university-based local government training, advisory, and research organization in the United States, the School of Government offers up to 200 classes, seminars, schools, and specialized conferences for more than 12,000 public officials each year. In addition, faculty members annually publish approximately fifty books, periodicals, and other reference works related to state and local government. Each day that the General Assembly is in session, the School produces the *Daily Bulletin*, which reports on the day's activities for members of the legislature and others who need to follow the course of legislation.

Operating support for the School of Government's programs and activities comes from many sources, including state appropriations, local government membership dues, private contributions, publication sales, course fees, and service contracts. Visit www.sog.unc.edu or call 919.966.5381 for more information on the School's courses, publications, programs, and services.

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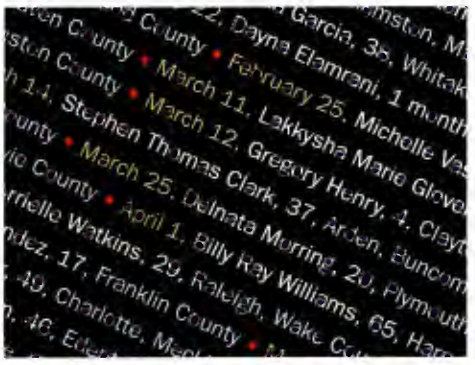

ON THE COVER *Sexual assault and domestic violence affect people of all ages and both sexes, in urban, suburban, and rural settings. The numerous deaths recorded on the website of the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence represent only the most extreme losses.*

Cover Article

Feature Articles

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N.C. Journal

ISSUES, EVENTS, AND DEVELOPMENTS OF CURRENT INTEREST TO STATE AND LOCAL GOVERNMENT

Updated Analysis Available of North Carolina Laws and Procedures on Property Assessment and Taxation

Sixteen North Carolina counties have revalued all real property effective January 1, 2008, and twenty-six more are revaluing real property effective January 1, 2009 (see table). Many property owners experience sticker shock when the assessed value of their home and land jumps by 100 percent or more in a revaluation year. A new online resource, the February 2008 issue of *Property Tax Bulletin*, will help them and government officials understand the laws and the procedures governing property assessment and taxation by counties, and the process for review of assessments in response to taxpayer appeals. Titled "A Guide to the Assessment and Taxation of Property in North Carolina," the resource is available at www.ptax.unc.edu/pubs.htm. In this publication, Shea Riggsbee Denning explains the legal framework underlying property assessment and taxation in North Carolina and the laws and the procedures governing review and appeal of assessments.

Counties with Revaluation of Real Property Effective January 1, 2008	Counties with Revaluation of Real Property Effective January 1, 2009
Cabarrus	Alamance
Caswell	Caldwell
Cherokee	Chatham
Cleveland	Davie
Durham	Duplin
Jackson	Edgecombe
Lincoln	Forsyth
Perquimans	Gates
Pitt	Harnett
Richmond	Hyde
Surry	Lenoir
Union	Martin
Vance	Mecklenburg
Wake	Mitchell
Wilson	Nash
Yancey	Orange
	Person
	Polk
	Rockingham
	Stanly
	Stokes
	Swain
	Transylvania
	Tyrrell
	Warren
	Yadkin

Six Cities Complete Pilot of Citizen-Informed Performance Measurement

Performance measurement is usually a government staff function: identify benchmarks and process steps to design a way to provide services more efficiently, more effectively, or both. For the last eighteen months, six cities—Concord, Durham, Edenton, Knightdale, Marion, and Salisbury—have experimented with obtaining structured citizen input in creating or revising their performance measures.

The pilot project, citizen-informed performance measurement (CIPM), was supported by the North Carolina League of Municipalities (NCLM) Local Leadership Foundation. Facilitation and leadership came from Fountainworks of Raleigh. NCLM and the School of Government evaluated the project. The work concluded in January 2008 with a report and a guidebook for public officials interested in implementing CIPM.

Campbell Honored as Public Official of 2007

Debra D. Campbell, Charlotte planning director, has been named Public Official of the Year for 2007 by *Governing* magazine. Campbell was praised for her passion and collaborative work in building and preserving neighborhoods in Charlotte. A planner in Charlotte since 1988 and planning director since 2004, she helped develop and manage the City within a City program, a revitalization effort for residential areas and distressed business communities in a sixty-square-mile urban core.

Campbell joins Washington Governor Christine Gregoire, Los Angeles Police Chief William J. Bratton, and six other honorees in the national competition. Profiles of the honorees appear in the November 2007 edition of *Governing*.

Kelly A. Smith (City of Charlotte Corporate Communications)

Four other North Carolina public officials were Public Official of the Year recently:

2004 Richard H. Moore, state treasurer

1999 Pamela Syfert, Charlotte city manager (retired in 2007)

1995 Harlan Boyles, state treasurer (deceased)

1994 Thomas W. Ross, Superior Court judge (now president of Davidson College)

CIPM can be a challenging process. It calls for feedback from citizens about how well certain services are delivered, what is important to them about a particular service, and why they value a certain aspect of a service over other aspects. Citizens' views may present a picture of a service that varies from the picture seen by professional staff. For example, while staff may consider a road to be in "good condition" because it is structurally sound, citizens may rate the condition as "poor" because the road is bumpy from the use of sealant to fill cracks and potholes.

The six municipalities were paired with an additional six municipalities, which sent representatives to observe sessions at which the pilot cities were seeking citizen input. The other cities were Hickory, Laurinburg, Matthews, Pinetops, Stallings, and Winston-Salem. Representatives of all twelve municipalities analyzed strategies and obstacles that other municipalities should consider in addressing CIPM.

The work will conclude in early 2008 with a report and a guidebook for public officials interested in implementing CIPM.

Model Ordinance on Solid Waste Fees Available Online

The School of Government has developed a model ordinance for local governments that want to bill and collect solid waste fees along with property taxes.

Local governments have flexibility in providing and financing solid waste services. Traditionally, counties have offered disposal services (that is, county landfills), whereas municipalities have offered collection services or relied on private haulers. Both disposal and collection services have been financed by general fund revenue, such as the proceeds of local property and local sales and use taxes.

Over the past decade, there has been a blending of solid waste services provided by counties and municipalities and an increased reliance on user fees to fund the services. In 1991 the North Carolina General Assembly authorized local governments to impose three types of fees for solid waste services: collection fees, fees for use of disposal facilities, and fees for making disposal facilities available. Local governments may bill these fees either (1) by including them on a bill for other public enterprise services (such as water, wastewater, or stormwater services) or (2) by including them on the property tax bill.

Governments choosing the second option gain several powerful collection remedies, including an automatic lien provision. Unfortunately, the law governing property tax administration does not offer much guidance on which of its provisions apply to billing and collecting solid waste fees. For example, may a local government collect the fees owed in advance? If so, may it provide a prepayment discount? Who is responsible for paying the fees? And what happens if solid waste services are discontinued during the fiscal year?

The model ordinance, available at www.sog.unc.edu/programs/ncptca/index.htm, will help local governments address such questions.

For more information about the model ordinance or about billing and collecting solid waste fees, contact Kara Millonzi, millonzi@sog.unc.edu or 919.962.0051.

New Mental Health Screening Introduced in County Jails

In 2007 the North Carolina General Assembly directed local mental health management entities, county public health departments, and sheriffs' offices to work together to improve procedures for identifying and treating people with mental illness who are incarcerated in North Carolina jails. One requirement was development of a standardized evidence-based screening tool to better identify inmates in county jails suffering from mental illness. The tool, to be used statewide, was to be implemented as of January 1, 2008.

In mid-December, the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services selected and forwarded to the sheriffs' offices two new mental health screening forms to be used in admissions, one with male inmates and one with female inmates. The forms are intended to identify inmates who would benefit from a further mental health evaluation. The new screening forms do *not* do the following:

- Assess an inmate's suicide risk
- Evaluate whether an inmate is a danger to self or others
- Take the place of existing admissions protocols
- Alter any existing policy or procedure that jail personnel deem necessary to the safe admission of the inmate

For further information about the implementation of the new forms, contact Bob Kurtz at 919.715.2771 or Bob.Kurtz@ncmail.net. For answers to legal questions about the new forms, contact Jodi Harrison of the School of Government's Jail Health Law Project at 919.962.0103 or jharrison@sog.unc.edu.

Deaths from Domestic Violence in North Carolina 2006

January 1, Karen H. Crawford, 48, Chatham County • January 1, Deana Prince, 36, Cumberland, Cumberland County • January 2, Malachai Loftin, 52, Pender County • January 8, Dwayne Jenkins, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • January 17, Rosenda Albino Prudente-Rodriguez, 25, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • January 28, Colonel Roberts, Granville County • January 30, Christina Palmer, 29, Forest City, Rutherford County • February 1, James Aaron Tant, 30, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • February 3, Myra Wilkes, 42, Thomasville, Davidson County • February 15, Hugh Edward Walters, 57, Lincoln County • Date unknown, reported dead in February, Tony Thomas, Edgecombe County • March 3, Misarachi (Sara) Miranda, 8, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • March 3, John Charles Miranda, 5, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • March 17, Christopher Tony Dial, Robeson County • March 24, Earl Thierry Brown, 42, Raleigh, Wake County • March 25, Torie Carpenter, 22, Selma, Johnston County • March 26, Terry Donnell Waddell, Brunswick County • March 29, Betty Skipper Godfrey, 41, Gastonia, Gaston County • March 30, Connie Lynn Newton, 37, Anson County • April 2, Sara McCormick, 32, Lumberton, Robeson County • April 6, Rebecca Grogan Hicks, 24, Taylorsville, Alexander County • April 6, Keara Lynn Hart, 30, Chapel Hill, Orange County • April 9, Delores Anderson, 49, Oxford, Granville County • April 18, Rhonda Barnes, 38, Clayton, Johnston County • May 7, Nakia Antione Harper, 31, Durham, Durham County • May 27, Shaundra Dayle, 37, Franklin County • May 27, Velman Busch, 62, Greensboro, Guilford County • May 28, Shirley Arrowood, McDowell County • June 6, Ashley Garner, 19, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • June 10, Andrea Scott, 17, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • June 10, Monica Gacutan, 38, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • June 11, Hopeton Cardannius Davis, 19, Selma, Johnston County • June 11, Andy Lawson, Snow Camp, Alamance County • June 14, Ryan Minor, 10, Union County • June 17, Tammy Diane Wilson, 39, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • June 23, Joey Antonio Nesmith, 26, Mecklenburg County • June 23, Annjannette Lloyd, 31, Guilford County • June 28, Carolyn Perkins Jordan, 72, Burlington, Alamance County • July 15, Amy Devonne Reese, 19, Sparta, Alleghany County • July 16, Emmali McCrae, Robeson County • July 17, Shannon Ellis Tessnear, 34, Ellenboro, Rutherford County • July 18, Donald West, 39, Johnston County • July 26, Marcus Cureton, Union County • July 26, Audrey Chavis, 33, Aberdeen, Moore County • July 27, Neal Cochran, 30, Morganton, Burke County • July 30, Kenneth Ray Martin, 55, Rockingham, Richmond County • July 31, Patrice Eller Ikard, 36, Catawba County • July 31, Harry Ponds, Shalotte, Brunswick County • August 26, Joy Mills Morgan, 48, Raleigh, Wake County • August 26, Ceritha Williams, 34, Greensboro, Guilford County • August 27, Cassandra Martin, Graham, Alamance County • September 5, Angela Carmon, 39, Greenville, Pitt County • September 13, Vanessa Martinez Lopez, 22, Pitt County • September 15, Antoine Marquis Clanton, 24, Greensboro, Guilford County • September 16, Latrina Daniels, 34, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • September 18, Bonnie Woodring, Sylva, Jackson County • September 21, Sophia McRae, 25, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • September 24, Gloria Silos Zelaya, Hendersonville, Henderson County • September 28, Cecil Poythress, 31, Lillington, Harnett County • October 9, Larry Dierickx, 63, Clayton, Johnston County • October 23, Latashia Toomer, 18, Wilmington, New Hanover County • October 23, Priscilla Huffman, 29, Rowan County • November 2 (body found), Narskelsky Pastuer, 52, Franklin County • November 20, Wendy Sellers, 31, Robbinsville, Graham County • November 20, Nancy Williams Orr, 53, Robbinsville, Graham County • November 20, John Drew Anderson, 28, Robbinsville, Graham County • November 20, Liza Ann Pierce, 35, Wilkes County • November 27, Gloria Cobos, 22, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • November 30, Carolyn Jean King Gray, Pitt County • December 4, Sherri Deniese Jackson, 27, Greensboro, Guilford County • December 8, Julie Rowland Bowling, 45, Nash County • December 9, Travis Mabine, 24, Ahoskie, Hertford County • December 11, Phaedra Renee Mcrimmon, 34, Lee County • December 16, Charles Larry Hauser, 52, Thomasville, Davidson County • December 17, Nicole Marie Moore, 24, Henderson County • December 17, Rebecca Ann Wilson, 24, Greensboro, Guilford County • December 19, Jorie N. Washington, 43, Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County • December 19, Xavier Z. Washington, 18, Elizabeth City, Pasquotank County • December 25, April Dawn Caldwell, 17, Greensboro, Guilford County • **CONTINUED ON PAGE 6**

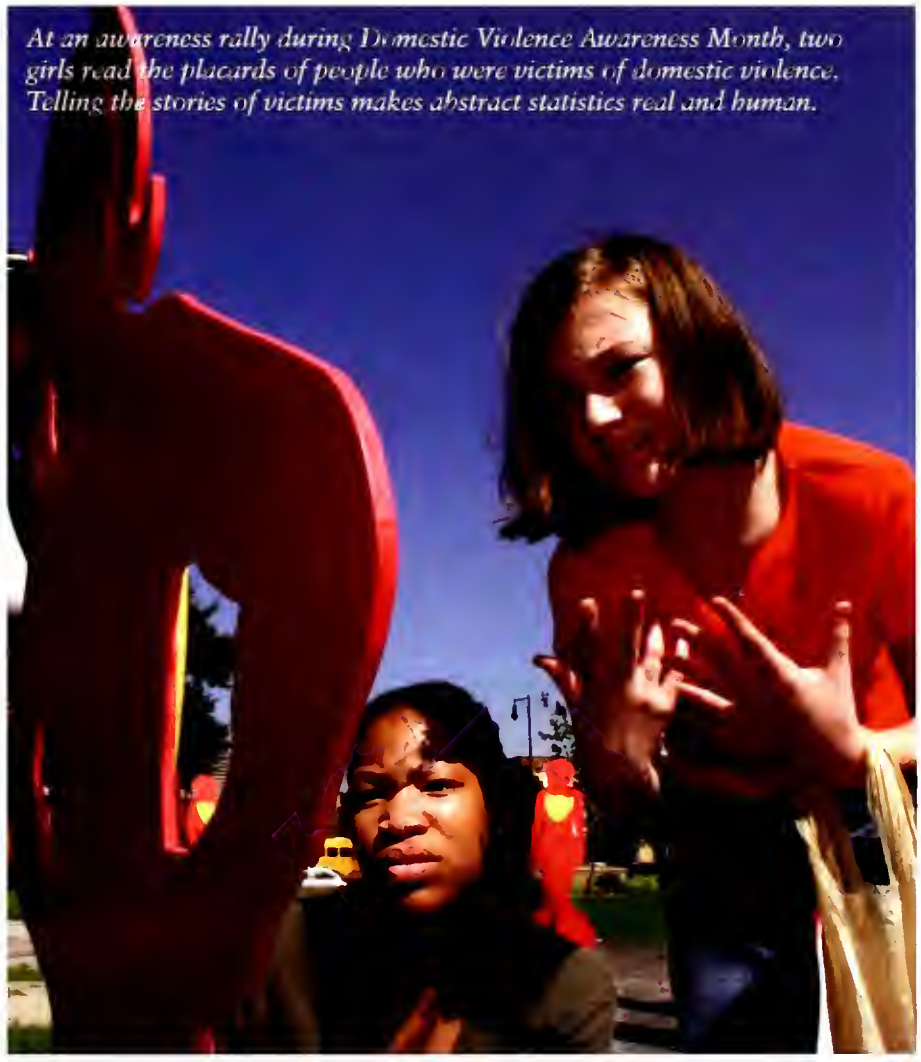
Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence: The Community's Role in Weaving a Safety Net

Margaret Henderson, Gordon Whitaker, and Lydian Altman

In every community, there are places that hold terrible memories of violence: where a child was last seen, where a woman was attacked, where witnesses happened to be, where bodies were found. Often, physical locations of sexual assault or domestic violence—a parking lot outside a workplace, a dropoff site for day care, the kitchen of a shelter, the steps of a courthouse—become very personal and local symbols of a social epidemic that touches all communities throughout the country.

Sexual assault and domestic violence are widespread and serious problems that are expensive in personal devastation and societal response. The causes, the interventions, and the long-term impact of these forms of violence are complex, so the responsibility for intervention and prevention is appropriately shared among many organizations, both inside and outside government. The complexity creates challenges for anyone who works to develop a response to the violence or, as we can attest, simply to describe what organizations are doing to respond.

Fortunately, people and organizations are increasingly willing to address sexual assault and domestic violence issues individually and collectively. They are tackling the problems from different perspectives, with different resources and different motivations. Two challenges inherent in the increased interest are the need to track the varied efforts, and preferably to coordinate them, and the need to explore the relative compatibility of the outcomes being sought.



At an awareness rally during Domestic Violence Awareness Month, two girls read the placards of people who were victims of domestic violence. Telling the stories of victims makes abstract statistics real and human.

Corey Lowenstein / News & Observer

For example, a motivation to end domestic violence might be to promote family cohesion. For some, this motivation might conflict with others' desires to maximize their personal safety and healing or to hold the perpetrators accountable. With issues as complex and intertwined as sexual assault and domestic violence, each perspective might be legitimate, but together they might be contradictory.

The state government provides some basic funding for responses to sexual assault and domestic violence, but communities still depend heavily on federal grants administered through the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. In recent years, the security of those grants has been seriously threatened at times. The risk

Henderson and Altman are School staff, and Whitaker is a School faculty member. All specialize in cross-organizational problem solving. Contact them at margaret@sog.unc.edu, whitaker@sog.unc.edu, and lydian@sog.unc.edu.

Deaths from Domestic Violence in North Carolina 2005

January 24, Gina Raquel Younce Puckett, Indian Reservation • February 19, Corene Davis, 48, East Bend, Yadkin County • February 26, Zachary Rinehart, 14 months, Hickory, Catawba County • March 4, Teresa Lambert Crenshaw, 51, Asheboro, Randolph County • March 7, Deborah Jean Coley, 47, Rocky Mount, Edgecombe/Nash County • March 11, Crystal Johnson, 29, Pilot Mountain, Surry County • March 12, Alycia Nichelle McKinnon, 22, Jackson Hamlet, Moore County • March 13, Neiko Michelle Eller, 30, Mount Holly, Gaston County • March 18, Janet Diaz, Pineville, Mecklenburg County • March 19, Velma Lynch, Weldon, Halifax County • March 25, Melissa Mayer, 16, Johnston County • March 25, David Jack Snow, Surry County • April 3, Kimberly Pitts, 40, Waynesville, Haywood County • April 9, Jessica Allyne Crews, 23, Greensboro, Guilford County • April 10, Bruce Clawson, 51, Raleigh, Wake County • April 12, Melfa Khasadi Miller, 43, Manteo, Dare County • April 18, Jennifer Murray, 39, Wilson, Wilson County • May 1, Suzanne Clark, 52, Caldwell County • May 3 (died May 8), David Lee Michael, 32, Randolph County • May 8, Lee Scott Carter, 32, Dilworth, Mecklenburg County • May 14, Pam Bryant, Wilson, Wilson County • May 14, Vaishali Bipinchandra Sarode, 32, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • May 15, Alfred Dwayne Douglas, 32, High Point, Guilford County • May 16, Dujuana Stallings Massenburg, Raleigh, Wake County • May 21, Ronna Valentine, 29, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • May 22, Joni Snider Railey, Randolph County • May 24, Barbara Jean Wheless Jackson, 62, Raleigh, Wake County • May 25, Emily Elainna Maccione, 3, Burlington, Alamance County • May 25, Katharine Broome Johnson, 36, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • May 27, Dallas Sullivan, 69, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • May 31, Bonita V. King, 41, Greensboro, Guilford County • June 6, Sarah Felisha Kersey, 24, Broadway, Harnett County • June 6, Amy Marie Greene, 40, Onslow County • June 11, Austin Berry, 2, Altamahaw, Alamance County • June 14, Nancy B. Hill, 70, Statesville, Iredell County • June 15, Larry Junior Laborn, 22, Alamance County • June 20, Johnetta Wrisborne Duncan, 33, Leland, Brunswick County • June 22, Jean Marie Cartrette Gray, Columbus County • June 24, Elizabeth Ann Messer, 19, Matthews, Mecklenburg County • June 29, Gloria Salmeron, 40, Raleigh, Wake County • July 1, Darrel Johnson, 20, Sanford, Lee County • July 6, Christy Ann Galvin, 26, Mecklenburg County • July 7, Rhonda Shanita Roane-Smith, 28, High Point, Guilford County • July 30, Betty Lambert Hunt, 40, Lumberton, Robeson County • July 31, Belinda Davis, 38, Rocky Mount, Edgecombe/Nash County • August 8, Tammie White Savage, 36, Benson, Johnston County • August 19 (body found), Brenda Lee Owens, 48, Goldsboro, Wayne County • September 1, Freda M. Medlin, 45, Nash County • September 13, Quinn Witherspoon, 34, Mooresville, Iredell County • September 13, Yoland Cotton, 22, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • September 18, Jerry Michael McQueen, 42, Seagrove, Randolph County • September 19, Teri Marie Sokoloff, 31, Greensboro, Guilford County • September 19, Skye, 8 months, Greensboro, Guilford County • September 20, Lori Lail, 43, Burke County • September 21, Amy Padgett Condry, 28, Caroleen, Rutherford County • September 24, baby of Maria Reyes, Sanford, Lee County • September 28, Jeri Couch Langley, 45, Smithfield, Johnston County • September 29, Jerry Lewis Culbreth, Raleigh, Wake County • October 10, Iva Nicholson, 84, Sanford, Lee County • October 10, Tina Nicholson, Sanford, Lee County • October 12, Tammy Greene Austin, 36, Caldwell County • October 12, Johnny Tyrod Davis, 29, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • October 27, Especiales Taliaferro, 35, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • November 9, Jaysiei Dantory, Smithfield, Johnston County • December 4, Joyce Hoskins, 47, Wilmington, New Hanover County • December 4, Arlene S. Mabe, 53, Danbury, Stokes County • December 18, Paul Berkley, 46, Raleigh, Wake County • December 22, Vicky Meeks Fernandez, Pitt County • December 29 (date missing - January 7, 2006 (body found), Emily Anderson, 49, Lenoir, Caldwell County • December 29, Lenka Vaculikova Grosholz, 30, Leland, Brunswick County • December 31, Tammy Gail Brantley, 39, Bessemer City, Gaston County • CONTINUED ON PAGE 8

of losing federal funding has been serious enough that the department has encouraged local communities to become more proactive in building their capacity to respond to the violence.

This article describes an ongoing effort of the Public Intersection Project at the School of Government to build local capacity to stop sexual assault and domestic violence in North Carolina communities. In it we describe the incidence and the impact of the violence, the need for local governments to share responsibility with other organizations to create an effective community response, and the assistance provided by our project, called Building Community Capacity to Stop Domestic and Sexual Violence.[1]

Our purpose in writing this article is to enable communities to learn from one another's experiences, to share the resources developed as a result of the project, to invite communities to request technical assistance, and, most important, to encourage dialogue among local governments, nonprofits, philanthropies, faith-based organizations, and the private sector about meeting their shared interests by exploring ways to strengthen local support for community interventions.

A Limited Picture

Pieces of the picture of sexual assault and domestic violence are evident, but not a comprehensive image. The multiple systems of data collection are limited by their technological infrastructure and by functional challenges, such as their using the same term to mean different actions, collapsing several types of offenses into a single category, and employing different social, professional, or legal standards in use of a particular term. For example, data collection systems oriented toward victims, offenders, law enforcement, or mental health services might use the term "rape" differently. Similarly, until recently, the judicial system has been unable to distinguish easily between an assault on a stranger and one on an intimate partner.

A service provider oriented toward the victim or the whole society is likely to use broad definitions like these:

- "Domestic violence": "a pattern of domination in which batterers intentionally choose to cause fear, injury and/or pain in order to gain and maintain power and control over their partners. In addition to physical violence, battering often includes sexual, emotional and economic abuse." —North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence[2]

Different definitions of terms frustrate accurate gathering of information.

- "Sexual violence": "sexual activity by force against a person's will. It is using sexual activity as a way to hurt, humiliate or gain control over someone else. These actions are committed by boyfriends, girlfriends, friends, acquaintances, family, lovers, partners and strangers."—Orange County Rape Crisis Center[3]

In contrast, the judicial system uses focused definitions, specifying the body parts involved or the actions required to meet the elements of an offense.

Because of rapid developments in technology, new forms of nonphysical violence, in particular, are being created faster than related laws are. For example, functionally, a "peeping Tom" is no longer just someone looking through a window to see another person in an intimate or vulnerable moment. But if society has not defined a criminal offense, the crime records have not counted it.

The result of the fragmented data collection and the varied definitions of terms across many kinds of service providers is that society glimpses pieces of the problem from different perspectives. People cannot see the whole picture at once, and they are not consistently using a common vocabulary. In the following section, we provide data that present pieces of the puzzle of sexual assault and domestic violence. We use the specific terms employed by the source of the data.

Widespread but Often Hidden Violence

The odds are good that your community has a homicide listed on the website of the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence (NCCADV). That website lists all the murder victims of domestic violence in the state over the last five years. (For the dates, the names, and the locations in 2007, 2006, 2005, and 2004, see the front cover and pages 4, 6, and 8.) Comparing the informal NCCADV list with official state mortality statistics provides an estimate that 12 percent of all homicides in North Carolina are related to domestic violence.[4]

Although homicides represent a small but visible fraction of all the sexual assault and domestic violence that occurs daily across the state, most of both forms of violence continue to be relatively hidden. Sexual violence remains underreported to law enforcement, and domestic violence is frequently recorded in ways that are indistinguishable from similar violent acts committed for other motives.

Sexual Violence

The actual incidence of sexual violence is largely invisible because the crime is not widely reported to law enforcement. Nationally, on average, only 31 percent of all rapes and sexual victimizations were reported to the police from 1992 through 2000.[5] The probability that an arrest will be made when a rape is reported is 50.8 percent. The overall probability that a rapist will be sent to prison for his or her crime is 16.3 percent, and the average sentence is 128 days.[6] Thus the people serving time in prison are being held accountable for a small fraction of all the sexual offenses that take place.

Information about convictions in North Carolina has been accessible through the North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry since January 1996.[7] Anyone who has a "reportable conviction" as defined by G.S. § 14-208.6(4) is required to register. Reportable convictions consist of "offenses against minors," "sexually violent offenses," or an attempt to commit either of those offenses. Anyone can search the database by zip code, city, county, or name. As of January 16, 2008, there were 10,988 sex offenders on file.[8]

Deaths from Domestic Violence in North Carolina 2004

January 1, Asenath S. Wooten, 30, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • January 14, Wendy Cranford Wallace, 29, Southmont, Davidson County • January 17, Dafina Molena, 43, Sampson County • January 19, Carlene South Johnson, 46, Warrensville, Ashe County • January 30, Tammie Renee Benfield, Wilkes County • January 30, Reba Faye Clark, 41, Weaverville, Buncombe County • February 4, Jeanetta D. Ford, 24, Kannapolis, Cabarrus County • February 6, Tony Dale Biggs, 44, Rockingham, Richmond County • February 7, Pauline Blevins Church, 66, West Jefferson, Ashe County • February 12, Cindy Moore Parker, 26, Burgaw, Pender County • February 27, Sherry Lynn Cobb, 44, Wilson County • March 19, Christine Stephens, 34, Greensboro, Guilford County • March 25, Shelton Henry Little, 51, Asheboro, Randolph County • April 4, Jocelyn London, 58, Greensboro, Guilford County • April 4, Joanne Brooks, 44, Raleigh, Wake County • April 5, Vera Mae Herbin, 39, Greensboro, Guilford County • April 6, Antonio Tyrone Wright, 31, Plymouth, Washington County • April 19, Valri Baker, 22, High Point, Guilford County • May 6, Cynthia Johnson, 33, Spring Hope, Nash County • May 6, Gregory Lamont Langley, 31, Raleigh, Wake County • May 7, Katrina Ann Locklear, 38, Maxton, Robeson County • May 8 (body found), Tallie Antolin, 31, Morganton, Burke County • May 14, Merritt Ennis, 24, Clinton, Johnston County • May 25, Diane Howell, 43, Lillington, Harnett County • May 28, Myiesha Danielle Bishop, 10, Mebane, Alamance County • May 31, Jose' Gerino, 31, Springlake, Cumberland County • June 2, Cassandra Carol Pittman, 45, Tarboro, Edgecombe County • June 4, Christen M. Naujoks, 22, Wilmington, New Hanover County • June 18, Vonice Dickerson, 38, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • June 21, Latisha Renee Pinnix, 21, Alamance County • June 23, Rodney Dylan Council, 33, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • June 29, Karen Leigh Medford, 38, Cornelius, Mecklenburg County • July 3, Shaudria Barfield, 24, Raleigh, Wake County • July 5, Francis Louise Lytton, 83, Sunset Beach, New Hanover County • July 13, Jose Gonzalez, 29, Shelby, Cleveland County • July 18, Judy Lorraine Warren, Sampson County • July 18, Debra Howell Best, 19, La Grange, Lenoir County • July 20, Leon Thompson, 46, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • July 28, Lillian Denise Bryant, 34, Kenly, Johnston County • July 31, Alex Rowland, 29, Fuquay Varina, Wake County • August 1, Teresa Edwards Forte, 23, Fayetteville, Cumberland County • August 2 (body found), Marnita Bynum, 40, Sanford, Lee County • August 7, Micheal E. Eason, 50, Angier/Coats, Harnett County • August 11 (body found), Anita Jackson Leary, Edenton, Chowan County • August 17, Pamela Joye Virzi, 47, Edenton, Chowan County • August 21, Marsheida Dorsey, 24, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • August 21, Karla Patricia Chavez, Cary, Wake County • August 22, Sabry Ann Jenetta Stevenson, 52, Chatham County • August 30, Chanda Brown Mwicigi, 36, Durham, Durham County • September 8, Mary Chappell, 66, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • September 8, Deanna Hanna, 56, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • September 14, Priscilla Mason, 28, Durham, Durham County • September 19, Teresa Tysinger, 34, Raleigh, Wake County • September 21, Miriam McLeoud, 45, Harnett County • September 29, Gail Tice Hewson, 62, Wilmington, New Hanover County • September 30, Phillip Tillman Horton, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • October 6, Melissa M. Tittle, Stokes County • October 8, Sandra K. Raper, 48, Wilson County • October 8, Emerson Ray Batchelor, 27, Wilson County • October 12, Rachel Antonia Martin, Chadbourn, Columbus County • October 24, Darwin Richard Dawley, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • October 24, Elizabeth Dawley, Winston-Salem, Forsyth County • October 26, Azyia Yolanda McLaughlin, Wilmington, New Hanover County • October 28, Michelle Wyzanowski, Marshville, Union County • October 28, Ronald Faulk, Unionville, Union County • October 28, Ronnie Joe Deese, Unionville, Union County • October 28, Christopher Schrader, Unionville, Union County • October 29, Deirdre Hinton Hines, Raleigh, Wake County • November 5, Nereida Camacho Garcia, Durham, Durham County • November 26, Valerie Holt Craven, Lexington, Davidson County • November 29, Shenel McCrimon McKendall, Chapel Hill, Orange County • November 30, Tracy Michelle Sellars, Alamance County • December 3, Carmen Allen Davis, 62, Durham, Durham County • December 8, Suzette Joseph, Wilson, Wilson County • December 18, Megan L. Miles, Charlotte, Mecklenburg County • December 19, Marvian Ransome, Wilmington, New Hanover County • December 20, Mary Rose, Mill Springs, Polk County • December 21, Bethany Brintle Goins, 35, Dobson, Alleghany County • December 23, Richard Wayne Burgess, Leland, Brunswick County • December 24, Kim Harvey, Newton Grove, Sampson County • December 26, Cheryl Hawks, Davidson County

From the North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, www.nccadv.org/homicides.htm. Used by permission.

Domestic Violence

Statistics about domestic violence also are difficult to see, but for a different reason. The North Carolina Criminal Code defines charges primarily by physical actions, not by the relationship between the victim and the offender or the motive for the action. For most charges, there is no easy way to distinguish violence that occurs between strangers from violence that occurs between intimate partners. Two exceptions to these broadly defined categories are the charges of domestic criminal trespass and violation of a domestic violence protective order. These two charges capture the intimate relationship between the perpetrators and the victims of the violence.

Statewide, 32,400 district court civil cases involving domestic violence issues were filed during the year beginning July 1, 2005, and ending June 30, 2006. This figure includes restraining orders that were granted, voluntarily or involuntarily dismissed, or denied.[9] As of December 2004, statistics tracking domestic violence began to improve because judges now are required to indicate, on the judgment for all assaults and all cases involving the communication of threats, if a case is related to domestic violence.[10]

Data on services to victims also are incomplete. With the current data collection forms, there is no consistent means to recognize when a client has multiple needs or experiences (for example, a client might need immediate legal advocacy to deal with recent battering and marital rape, and long-term counseling to heal from childhood sexual abuse). Neither is it possible to track the amount of time that service providers spend with each client for one kind or many kinds of assistance. A client who benefits from a 45-minute crisis call is counted the same as a client who receives hundreds of hours of service, from the moment she arrives in the emergency room through the entire, extensive judicial process.

Since July 2007 the NCCADV and the North Carolina Coalition Against Sexual Assault have been collaborating to design a new data collection system, supported by a grant from the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. Building on existing data collection systems in other states, the coalitions are spending the first year gathering feedback about desired characteristics of the new system, designing a prototype, and testing it in pilot sites. Using that experience to refine the new system further, the two coalitions hope to implement the unified reporting system by mid 2009. The expectation is that a new system will provide a more accurate picture of the number and the types of services provided to victims across the state.

Society bears most of the expense related to domestic violence.

Common Practice of Denial

No matter where the community or what the available data, many people choose to deny that the violence exists, to discount the impact of the violence, or to resist changing personal and community priorities to address the problem. Reluctance to work on the problem takes many forms and originates from a variety of motivations. The following illustrations come from participants in the workshops described later in this article:

- A health director who did not want to divert resources from established departmental priorities
- Neighbors in beach communities who did not see, and did not want to see, direct evidence that violence existed among residents as well as tourists
- College administrators who were concerned that acknowledging the violence would have a negative impact on marketing
- An animal shelter manager who avoided making the correlation between a teenager's torture of the family dog and his future as a domestic batterer
- A minister who would not look at the cast on a woman's arm because he was convinced by her charming and persuasive husband that her injuries were the result of something other than his domestic violence

These examples all involve community members who were not professional providers of services to victims of domestic or sexual assault but who were in positions to help stop the violence. Maybe they did not understand what constitutes abusive behavior and perceived the violence as "normal." Perhaps they did see the violence but thought that it was too difficult to challenge or did not know how to access resources. Sadly, they either did not recognize the influence they could have, or did not choose to intervene. Ignoring the violence, leaving the victims to fend for themselves, failing to hold the offenders accountable for their actions, and denying individual responsibility to intervene are all stances that represent a wound to a community's corporate well-being. They are lost opportunities to stop the violence.

Costs of Sexual Assault and Domestic Violence

In addition to the direct societal expense incurred as law enforcement and the judicial system respond to the violence, the budgets and the personnel of local and state governments are directly affected in many ways. Here are a few examples of direct costs:

- Child Protective Services, a division of the state and county social services system, exists to investigate claims of abuse that involve family or caregiver violence of one form or another. As a result of investigative assessments during 2005, there were 20,394 children substantiated as victims of maltreatment.[11]
- The same year, the foster care system provided homes for 9,820 children who had been displaced (in that year or earlier years) as a result of abuse, neglect, abuse and neglect, or dependency.[12]
- Medicaid and other forms of health care insurance pay for the physical treatment of victims' injuries.

One national study estimated that the annual economic cost of violence perpetrated by intimate partners against women in the United States was $5.8 billion in

Table 1. **The Cost of Violent Crime**

Category	Party Directly Bearing Cost of Violence: Victim	Offender	Society	Other
Property Losses				
Losses not reimbursed by insurance	X			
Losses reimbursed by insurance			X	
Medical and Mental Health Care				
Losses not reimbursed by insurance	X		X	Victim's family
Losses reimbursed by insurance			X	
Lost Workdays				
Lost wages for unpaid workdays	X			
Lost productivity			X	Employer
Lost School Days				
Forgone wages due to lack of education	X			
Forgone nonmonetary benefits of education			X	Employer
Forgone social benefits due to lack of education			X	
Lost Housework	X			
Pain and Suffering/Quality of Life	X			
Loss of Affection/Enjoyment				Victim's family
"Second Generation" Costs				
Precautionary expenditures/effort				Potential victim
Fear of crime				Potential victim
Criminal Justice System				
Law enforcement and investigation			X	
Prosecutors and courts			X	
Public defenders			X	
Private attorneys		X		
Incarceration			X	
Nonincarceration sanctions			X	
Victim time	X			
Jury and witness time				Jury, witnesses
Incarcerated Offender				
Lost wages		X		Offender's family
Lost tax revenue and productivity			X	
Value of lost freedom		X		
Psychological cost to family				Offender's family
Victim Services				
Organization's administrative costs			X	
Volunteer time				Volunteers
Victim compensation programs		X	X	
Victim time	X			
Other Noncriminal Programs				
Hotlines and public service announcements			X	
Community treatment programs			X	
Private therapy/counseling		X	X	

Source: Adapted from "Comprehensive List of Costs and Consequences of Crime," *Victim Costs and Consequences: A New Look*, by Ted R. Miller, Mark A. Cohen, and Brian Wiersema, National Institute of Justice Research Report (Washington, DC: U.S. Department of Justice, January 1996), tab., p. 11.

1995. This included $320 million for rapes, $4.2 billion for physical assault, $342 million for stalking, and $893 million for murders. In 2003 dollars, those costs would be more than $8.3 billion.[13]

The economic irony is that violent offenders do not pay the majority of the costs associated with their crimes. Of the 33 kinds of losses associated with crime, 5 are paid for by the violent offender, 8 by the victim, and 17 by society, frequently in the form of governmental services that are supported by taxpayers (see Table 1).

A 2004 study found that 12 percent of Medicaid-eligible women were currently experiencing severe domestic violence. The average cost of care was twice as high for these women as for women who were not experiencing such violence. The researchers estimated from the study that Medicaid would save $1,000 per year for each domestic violence victim who could be identified early and provided intervention to achieve safety.[14]

Drawing from these national data, we offer an estimate of costs in North Carolina: There were 1,602,645 North Carolina residents eligible for Medicaid in fiscal year 2006. Thirty-three percent (528,873) of all Medicaid recipients were ages 21–64, and 61 percent (977,613) were females of all ages.[15] Although the actual number of adult women on Medicaid is likely to be higher, we estimate that 61 percent of the 528,873, or 322,612, were women. If 12 percent (38,713) of them were experiencing domestic violence, the state might save more than $38 million a year through early identification and intervention.

The indirect costs are sizable. For example, women and children displaced by violence often rely on the public sector for emergency housing and food. Fifty percent of the twenty-four cities surveyed by the U.S. Conference of Mayors in 2005 identified domestic violence as a primary cause of homelessness.[16]

Witnessing or experiencing violence has a long-term impact on children. Almost one-third of the youth in the North Carolina juvenile justice system come from a family with a history of domestic discord or violence.[17]

Local governments incur expenses as a result of violence that both their

employees and their citizens experience. Texas Health Resources offers a domestic violence cost calculator for employers.[18] Although the estimates are likely to be conservative, given the limitations of the formula, it does provide information that will likely motivate any employer to encourage early intervention against domestic violence. For example, a workplace with 500 employees, 35 percent of whom are female and earn an average hourly wage of $15, will incur an annual cost of $60,907 for medical and mental health expenses, as well as lost work days.

Children who abuse animals may become adults who abuse their spouses.

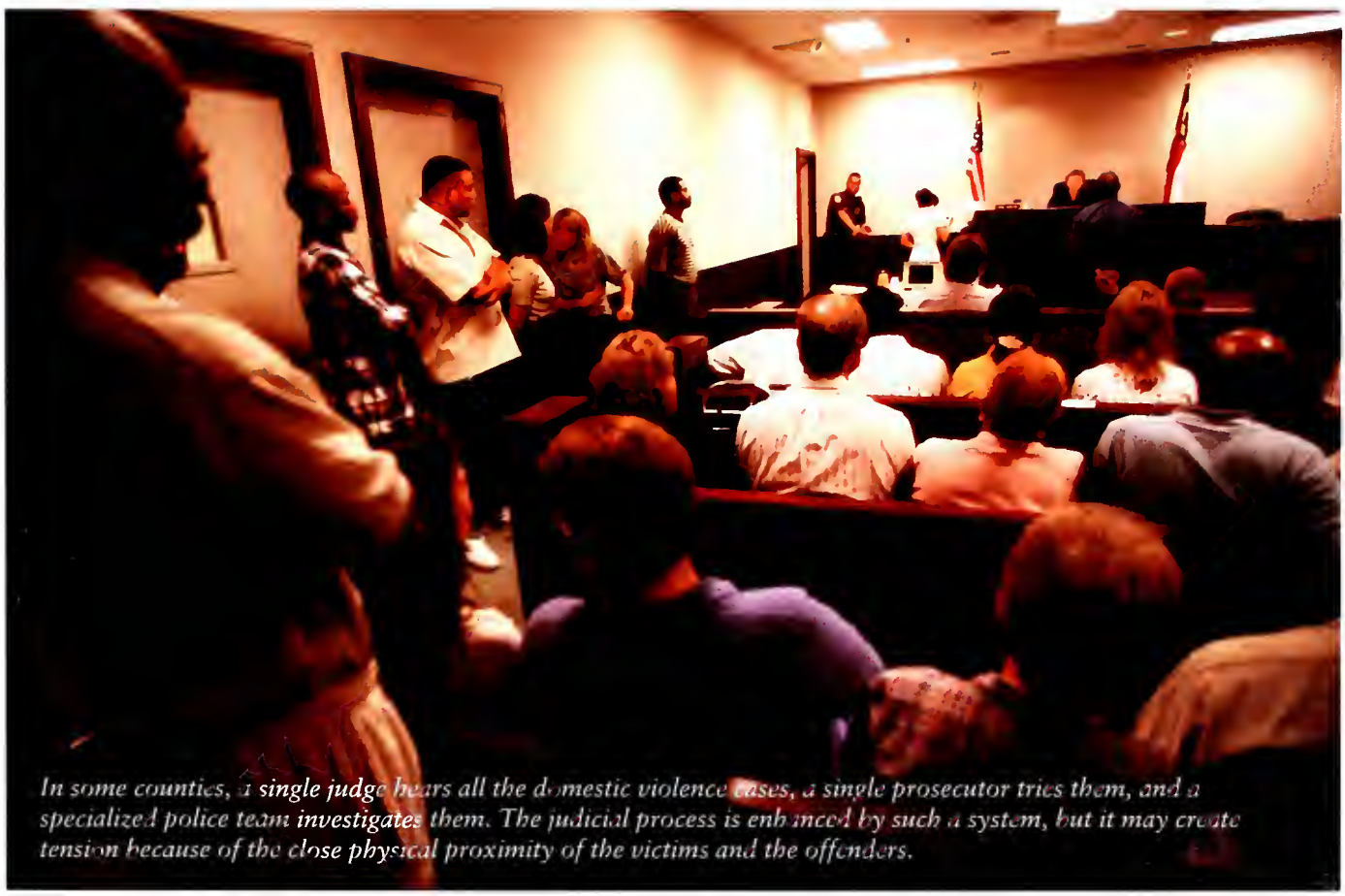
For both humane and financial reasons, local governments should be interested in promoting efforts to reduce the incidence and the impact of sexual assault and domestic violence. Staff and elected officials can participate in change efforts by offering personal and institutional encouragement. For example, they can support professional training to enhance identification of and intervention with victims, encourage efforts to strengthen local systems of response, fund community-based programs that provide services for victims, hold the violent offenders accountable for their actions, and engage in the new efforts at primary prevention taking place in selected communities across the state.

In her public life, Lynda Clay served one term as a Carteret County commissioner. In her private life, she is a survivor of family violence who speaks out about its devastating impact. Understanding better than most that local governments have to place priority on issues that affect all or most residents, Clay reminds people that

> *domestic violence cuts across all boundaries, all classes, all educational levels, and all ethnic groups. It is a problem that can be dealt with, but only if our society will, first, acknowledge its extensive existence and, second, put some of our tax dollars toward helping deal with it. Most people, and perhaps even less frequently, most state and local governments, never consider the hidden costs to taxpayers in terms of money spent to deal with this problem.*[19]

The Need for a Community-Wide Response

Sexual assault and domestic violence issues are too complex for any organization to address in isolation. Dealing with them requires people with expertise in fields as varied as social services, medicine, mental health, public health, law enforcement, the courts, victim assistance, shelter management, and health and safety education. Professionals and volunteers in these fields are located in many different government and nonprofit organizations. Given the diversity in services, philosophies, and experience, these local organizations must learn to work together effectively to alleviate, or to eliminate, sexual assault and domestic violence.



In some counties, a single judge hears all the domestic violence cases, a single prosecutor tries them, and a specialized police team investigates them. The judicial process is enhanced by such a system, but it may create tension because of the close physical proximity of the victims and the offenders.

Chris Seward / News & Observer

North Carolinians benefit from efforts to stop sexual assault and domestic violence when the following conditions exist:

- Their community systems have many options for people to use in finding and receiving help and information.
- Assistance is offered or referrals are made in a seamless, integrated manner.
- There is a strong and committed system of leadership across businesses, civic groups, nonprofits, religious institutions, and governments to share and sustain the work.

In many North Carolina counties, the focal organizations for this work are nonprofit domestic violence or rape crisis programs. These groups typically operate shelters and hotlines, and they provide victim advocacy and counseling services. They often conduct violence education and prevention efforts in their communities. Many counties also have specialized response teams, typically consisting of the community professionals who work with victims: staff from the department of social services, law enforcement agencies, emergency rooms, and the district attorney's office, and program advocates.

Strong systems are those that provide participants with periodic opportunities to discuss current situations, to respond to changes, to exchange information across organizations, and to build positive personal relationships with peers.

But these systems, like all others, are only as strong as the weakest participants, no matter what the source of fragility might be. Over the past five years, one point of fragility has been the stability of federal funding.

Sources of Federal Funding and Potential Threats to It

Across the state, the staff and the volunteers of local sexual assault and domestic violence organizations have convened meetings of other professionals and encouraged other agencies to improve service response to victims. For many years, they often were the voices speaking loudest about these forms of violence.

Attempting to leave batterers typically places victims at even greater risk of violence. In some emergency rooms, personnel offer victims telephone numbers where they can get help. The numbers are written on small pieces of paper that the victim can easily hide.

Robert Willett / News & Observer

Typically, these community programs have modest budgets, and many could not exist without the financial support coming from three federal government sources: the Violence Against Women Act, the Victims of Crime Act, and Rape Prevention Education funds. Communities are and will continue to be affected by changes in these three federal funding streams. Both the implications of the changes and the processes used to effect the changes are complex, with key decisions being made in Washington, D.C. Relatively few people inside North Carolina track the gradual process of negotiation or modification and can fully understand the potential local or long-term implications of each change. Yet any of these changes have the potential for major disruptions of services at the local level.

The Violence Against Women Act

Originally enacted in 1994, the Violence Against Women Act (VAWA) funds cross-organizational, collaborative efforts to respond to victims of stalking, sexual assault, and domestic violence. Community programs, state coalitions, law enforcement agencies, and the judicial system are all eligible to apply for grants. Virtually every municipality and county in North Carolina has directly or indirectly benefited from this funding, with projects ranging from basic crisis services; to specialized investigators, prosecutors,

and court processes; to legal aid and outreach to marginalized populations. The VAWA funding coming to North Carolina from 2003 to 2006 varied from $2.9 million to $3.3 million annually.[20] This variation might not seem big in terms of a large governmental budget, but the impact is felt dramatically at the local level, where a $50,000 grant might represent a significant percentage of a program's total budget.

Although some of the projects funded by VAWA grants have created permanent systemic change in North Carolina communities, other efforts to stabilize local response to the violence or to address it innovatively remain dependent on this support. Should this federal funding ever be lost, most North Carolina communities would immediately lose capacity in their systems of response for victims. VAWA was reauthorized and expanded in 2005 by Congress, and President Bush signed the reauthorization into law in January 2006. It is considered for reauthorization every five years. The programs contained in VAWA 2005 have yet to be fully funded, but on December 26, 2007, funding for VAWA programs did increase by $17.3 million. Overall, the funding package created some new programs but cut some others back.[21]

Because federal support for VAWA has the potential to vary significantly from year to year, the threat of decreased federal funding only adds to the constant organizational anxieties that sexual assault and domestic violence organizations experience.

In addition to changes in the funding allocation, there is a proposed change in the VAWA decision-making process that would affect the way VAWA money is distributed to communities. Currently VAWA funds go to the state governments, which consider grant applications in a competitive process. The current federal proposal centralizes the grant-award process at the national level, which moves the decision making from the state level to the federal level. Although the change tightens the focus on the federal objectives for that funding, it potentially affects the state in two ways: (1) there is no guaranteed total to be awarded to North Carolina recipients, and (2) the distanced decision making could result in a loss of valuable community-specific informarion that the state grant-review team currently holds.[22]

The Victims of Crime Act

The amount that North Carolina received from the Victims of Crime Act (VOCA) grew from $9.7 million in 2003 to $11 million in 2006. Funds are broadly distributed across the state to programs that respond to the needs of child or adult victims of sexual assault, domestic violence, and other abuse or neglect, or that enhance investigation of the crimes and the prosecution of the offenders.[23] This federal funding is repeatedly threatened because VOCA funds are generated from fees, fines, and penalties levied on criminals, not from taxes levied on citizens. The source is seen as easy money to reallocate to other federal initiatives. Political support at the federal level for victims of crime fluctuates from year to year.

Cuts in funding and changes in decision-making processes can undermine local programs.

The threats to these dollars that have had a significant impact across North Carolina are not well publicized, and the full implications can be difficult to understand. The average citizen knows nothing about the details of VOCA funds and legislation, but any proposal to change the legislation can potentially have a direct effect on the stability of local programs.

Rape Prevention Education (RPE) Funds

Finally, a change at the federal level is directly affecting education conducted through rape crisis programs. North Carolina is one of six states working with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention to implement a public health approach that focuses on primary prevention of violence rather than on education about violence. Instead of continuing to allocate $14,280 annually to each of the sixty-one rape crisis programs in the state, this federal funding stream now funds seventeen North Carolina programs with up to $50,000 a year, for two years. This shift in focus and funding affects communities in at least two fundamental ways:

- To continue traditional educational programs, all communities will have to identify new funding sources to replace the $14,280 that was lost.
- To implement the rape prevention work, the funded communities will have to engage other local stakeholders in designing their primary prevention efforts.

In either case, local rape crisis programs will likely be seeking the participation of local governments for both planning and fund-raising efforts.

Resources Directed to Proactive Capacity Building

Other elements are key to sustaining sexual assault and domestic violence programs, such as organizational skills, systems and infrastructure, and a community's culture and values. But no one can dispute the importance of adequate funding. Aware that programs came uncomfortably close at different times to losing significant levels of federal funding, members of the Governor's Crime Commission Division of the North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety wanted to encourage them to maximize the support available from state and local sources—governmental, philanthropic, and private. They also wanted to encourage communities to look more holistically at the broader economic and personal impact of the violence and consider how it affects everything from medical costs and departments of social service budgets to school and job performance.

With these motivations and challenges in mind, the Public Intersection Project sought and received a grant to create a two-phase effort to help communities assess and build their capacity to stop sexual assault and domestic violence. During Phase 1, community members could attend one of seven workshops held across the state from January through April 2006. During Phase 2 (which continues through June 2008), communities can receive focused technical assistance to help them strengthen their efforts at home.

An underlying challenge of operating a statewide effort to effect positive change at the local level is that sexual assault and domestic violence services and prevention efforts differ greatly from county to county—from fully functional to struggling to inadequate—because of geographical, cultural, professional, and financial differences. The local nonprofit programs may lack adequate funding and staff. Cooperation with other key partners may be weak or even nonexistent. Leaders of other agencies may not list sexual assault and domestic violence among their priorities. There also might be philosophical, political, or religious resistance to addressing these issues. A community's capacity to address sexual assault and domestic violence depends on each participating organization's ability to do its part and on the various organizations' ability to work together.

Community problem-solving consists of nine dimensions. A weakness in any one dimension can create a community-wide deficit.

Because of the variations from community to community, the Public Intersection Project did not try to implement a one-size-fits-all model of change for participants. Instead, the intent for Phase 1 was to create an opportunity and a structure for conversations that would enable community teams to take a collective step forward in whatever direction they chose.

In Phase 2 our technical assistance has targeted both individual and collective aspects of community capacity, striving to help (1) focal organizations (typically nonprofit domestic violence or rape crisis programs) improve their capacity to provide services and (2) leaders of the various efforts involved in combating sexual assault and domestic violence strengthen their working relationships with one another.

Both phases of the project were based on nine dimensions of capacity: aspirations, strategies, organizational skills, human resources, systems and infrastructure, organizational structure, culture, funding, and value (previously described in *Popular Government* and described again in Table 2).[24] If any of these dimensions is weak in a single organization or across the community, then the whole system of care is challenged, and residents might not receive what they need to rebuild healthy lives.

The nine dimensions of capacity, and the challenge of keeping them all in balance, apply at the individual, organizational, community, state, and federal levels of violence prevention or response. A change at one level can generate changes that require attention in systems at other levels, as well as at the level at which that change occurs. Consider these examples mentioned in the workshops:

- If the success of law enforcement investigations relies on the expertise and the interest of one detective, then the whole system of response will suffer if that person ever leaves.
- If the rape crisis center is constantly changing its programs as it pursues different sources of grant funding, then community members will not know what to expect in terms of services.
- If the directors of the domestic violence program and Child Protective Services are in conflict over shared protocols, then the tension and the inconsistency will negatively affect both victims and employees.
- If a community values the entitlement of men over the safety of women and children and the authority of state law, then it likely will not support a shelter for battered victims.

Phase 1: Workshops

The workshops were designed to bring together community stakeholders concerned about sexual assault and domestic violence so that participants could learn about one another's work, discuss ways to support it, and assess their community's capacity for addressing the violence. During the daylong session, participants received new information from speakers and from other participants, and they engaged in local problem solving with people who knew and cared about their community.

Community members decided for themselves which of the seven regional work-

Table 2. **The Nine Dimensions of "Capacity"**

Aspirations	How much do people in your community share a clear understanding of what it takes to eliminate sexual assault and domestic violence?
Strategies	How well developed and widely shared is your community's plan for accomplishing its goal?
Organizational Skills	How well does your community reflect all the different kinds of expertise it needs to eliminate sexual assault and domestic violence?
Human Resources	How well does your community recruit and retain all the people it needs to accomplish its goals?
Systems and Infrastructure	How adequate are your community's office space, furniture, equipment, policies, and processes used to combat sexual assault and domestic violence?
Organizational Structure	How clear are the various roles and responsibilities of each organization, program, or person in your community in ending sexual assault and domestic violence? Are checks and balances or an evaluation plan in place?
Culture	How well would the effort's identity or practices be sustained if a key person or organization left?
Funding	How adequate and diversified are the community's financial resources and funding streams?
Value	How much does the community value this work?

Table 3. **Counties Represented in Phase 1 Workshops, Held January–April 2006**

County	Number of Participants
Alamance	6
Alexander	3
Alleghany	3
Avery	3
Beaufort	2
Brunswick	6
Burke	5
Cabarrus	8
Caldwell	3
Carteret	5
Catawba	7
Chatham	3
Cherokee	3
Chowan	6
Craven	2
Forsyth	9
Gaston	3
Graham	4
Granville	1
Guilford	6
Harnett	7
Haywood	10
Jackson	11
Johnston	1
Macon	3
Madison	6
Mecklenburg	7
Mitchell	5
Montgomery	1
New Hanover	17
Orange	8
Pasquotank	3
Pender	1
Pitt	8
Rowan	6
Stanly	1
Surry	3
Tyrrell	1
Union	4
Wake	9
Warren	5
Washington	5
Watauga	7
Yadkin	2
Total	**221**

Total number of counties represented = 43.

shops they wanted to attend. Although we encouraged representatives from a community to come together to the same event, that did not always happen.

During roundtable discussions, those from each community did the following:

- Heard about emerging trends in funding related to sexual assault and domestic violence
- Conducted evaluations of their community's capacity to stop the violence
- Shared and developed strategies to be more effective contributors to efforts to increase capacity, including application of local resources, financial and otherwise
- Considered how to find others who could also contribute to service and prevention efforts

Overall, 221 people participated in the workshops. They came from forty-three North Carolina counties and represented 165 organizations. Although the design for the workshops called for groups of eight participants per county, the numbers attending from each county varied from a single person (six counties) to seventeen people (one county). Only eighteen counties had six or more participants at a workshop. Typically those six or more participants represented a broad range of organizations. (For a list of the participating counties and the types of organizations represented, see Tables 3 and 4.)

Participants did not need to be experts in the delivery of services. In addition to representatives of sexual assault and domestic violence organizations, law enforcement agencies, health services, and the judicial system, we suggested inviting people in the following types of positions:

- City and county managers
- Local government department heads, such as the directors of the social services and health departments
- County commissioners and town council members
- Staff or key volunteers from local United Way organizations
- Staff or key volunteers from local private, public, or corporate foundations
- Leaders of faith-based organizations
- Other formal or informal community leaders

Why did we suggest these types of people and not the ones who work

Table 4. **Organizations Represented in Phase 1 Workshops, Held January–April 2006**

	No. of Agencies	No. of Participants
Sexual assault and domestic violence service provider	52	68
Local government	36	46
Law enforcement	25	31
United Way/community foundation/funder	14	25
Community-based organization/volunteer	8	18
Education	6	7
Judicial system/court/legal organization	6	6
Health care/counseling	6	8
Faith-based organization	3	9
Chamber of commerce/business	2	3
Additional organization represented by participants with dual professional/volunteer roles	7	0
Total	**165**	**221**

directly with victims? Although issues related to direct services surfaced during the day, the emphasis was on how to apply community resources directly or indirectly to stopping the violence and helping victims. The workshop was not meant to be the equivalent of a Sexual Assault Response Team meeting. Such a team typically consists of the community professionals who work with victims: staff from law enforcement agencies, emergency rooms, the district attorney's office, rape crisis programs, or other organizations providing direct services. They meet to discuss the efficacy of existing services and protocols, and to engage in joint problem solving about local concerns.

To work on overall organizational capacity with a long-term focus, we sought stakeholders who understood their community's big picture—complementary and competing interests, tangible and intangible community resources, policy-making processes, funding streams, emerging trends, opportunities for innovation, and so forth.

Such professionally diverse stakeholders have valuable perspectives to share. For example:

- City and county clerks know the people in their communities, particularly the staff and the elected officials of local government. They are a valuable resource for programs inviting community members to participate in developing strategies for change.
- People who work with animal protection or antiviolence efforts are especially useful in communicating the link between those who abuse women and children and those who abuse animals. They can contribute to creating safety plans for pets when victims are trying to leave their abusers.
- Staff from economic development offices offer workforce connections as shelter residents develop plans for self-sufficiency.
- Smart Start staff provide the sexual assault and domestic violence programs with educational opportunities for both young children and their caregivers.

Even traditional stakeholders can contribute innovative perspectives on building community capacity. In one workshop, a sheriff educated the group on using a political mapping process to develop strategies to influence public decisions. In another workshop, a staff person with United Way reported that while cultivating donor relationships with well-to-do retired women in gated communities, she learned that many of them had lived through domestic violence and were interested in helping other women get out of dangerous situations. Some of them were in unsafe relationships within their high-priced homes and needed referrals both to the local shelter and to people who could help them develop safety plans.

To prepare for the workshop, the most important thing for participants to do was to work together to identify and encourage other key community stakeholders to attend.

Many communities hold public awareness events like the Clothesline Project that provide victims of sexual violence with an opportunity to break their silence and bear witness to the impact of the violence. In the project as implemented at UNC at Chapel Hill, t-shirts designed by victims hang on a clothesline. The written and artistic expressions on the t-shirts convey the victims' diverse experiences and emotions as they transform themselves from victims into survivors.

Harry Lynch / News & Observer

The need for background material varied according to stakeholders' familiarity with local services, community resources or processes, and one another. Participants were invited to bring fact sheets or other reference material related to services and prevention programs so that specific questions about their respective organizations and services could be answered for the group as it assessed current community capacity.

The North Carolina Governor's Crime Commission supported the full cost of the workshops, including travel expenses for those who might not otherwise be able to attend. We encouraged community participants to carpool if possible, partly to economize but primarily to use the time together to strengthen relationships.

We announced the meetings broadly. We sent letters to directors of sexual assault and domestic violence programs and to city and county managers. We also sent e-mail and website announcements through a dozen governmental and philanthropic organizations across the state. In addition, we made telephone calls and sent e-mails directly to the programs closest to the workshop locations as the day of each workshop approached.

We learned by reflecting on the experiences and the evaluations of each workshop that the challenges to the sexual assault and domestic violence organizations represented were functions of both external logistics (finding the correct contact information for outreach) and internal stressors (staff being too overloaded by work to attend; directors being in transition or otherwise unavailable, or too disconnected from other key community stakeholders to recognize the benefits that could be derived from these conversations). One county manager came and brought the heads of the social services and health departments. Another manager came as the sole representative of the manager's office and elected officials. Many members of law enforcement agencies or departments of social services attended, because they deal with the same victims.

Workshop participants identified several strategies to strengthen relationships. One of the most successful is to set up meetings to discuss what is happening in the community, no matter how it might be defined. For example, staff of the Jackson County Department of Social Services and REACH, the local sexual assault and domestic violence program, meet once a month over a meal to share information. Leaders at the county or state level might not need to meet that frequently, but they do need to communicate often enough to uncover both aligned and competing interests.

Regular communication and consistent relationship-building are key strategies.

Simply getting to know one another often enhances response, but sometimes the conversation might need to focus on particular points of divergent thought, whether it be across organizations, among staff, or between staff and victims. Conflict can develop over differing perceptions of the same situation, and identifying those differences can be the first step to understanding and reconciling them.

For example, the members of one community attending a workshop realized that they were working with different interpretations of the mandatory reporting required in a specific type of situation involving juveniles. In another community, the challenge was that shelter residents equated any department of social services worker with Child Protective Services employees, and they resisted applying for Aid for Dependent Children or Food Stamps because they feared that their children would be taken from them. In both cases, taking the time to uncover, discuss, and resolve the differing perspectives helped service providers strengthen relationships and provide better service.

The participation in and the results of the workshops were as diverse as the communities themselves. A common theme among participants was that having this time for "forced reflection was a luxury." Many reported that the dynamics of the day were successful but the significant challenge was to sustain the energy over time. (For some results of the workshop evaluation, see the sidebar on page 18.)

Phase 2: Technical Assistance

Since fall 2006, the project team has offered technical assistance to any community effort focused on sexual assault or domestic violence. This work will continue through June 2008. More information about the technical assistance available, plus an outline of the format and copies of the forms used during the workshops, is available on the Public Intersection Project's website.[25]

The technical assistance emphasizes capacity building and offers services such as coaching and problem solving one-on-one, convening or facilitating meetings among stakeholders, providing training or conducting workshops, and sharing information through conversation, print, and the Internet. Technical assistance is tailored to meet the individual situation. By June 2007, eleven of the requests for technical assistance were to facilitate board retreats or strategic planning efforts of the sexual assault and domestic violence programs. Seven of the programs invited key community stakeholders outside the organization to participate. In addition, seven community leaders received one-on-one coaching or problem-solving assistance. The project staff also has shared print resources with two communities, offered training at a state conference, and shared the format of this activity at two national conferences.

The outcomes of the technical assistance have varied widely, just as the needs of the organizations have. Despite any local challenges they face, all the organizations that held retreats reported benefiting from having the time to communicate with one another, to consider the changes affecting the program or the community, and to identify the key areas on which to focus. Other outcomes ranged from highly individualized to general:

- The executive director of the sexual assault and domestic violence program in one community began the retreat disheartened, depleted of energy, and contemplating resignation, but was reenergized by the effort and the interest of the participants.
- Another program used the retreat to integrate new board members

into the culture of the organization and to make plans for the upcoming year.

- Still another used the retreat to build relationships with the local Hispanic population, staff of the substance abuse treatment program, and potential board members and to consider the local impact of upcoming federal legislation.
- Several programs viewed the retreat as an opportunity to build relationships between board and staff or to heal tensions that had evolved from differences of opinion about resource allocation or program direction.
- Representatives from several organizations figured out new ways to convey their interests to elected officials: by engaging respected community members external to the program as advocates or by reframing their requests for support or policy change in terms of interest to elected officials.

In almost every retreat, participants discussed ways to overcome current obstacles to providing better service for victims. In some places, those obstacles were relationships that might or might not have the potential to change for the positive as long as the same people held the same positions. In other places, new obstacles were external, such as managing the impact of mental health reform.[26]

As Karen Foster, executive director of Helping Hands in Warren County, described the impact of the facilitation services,

> *Since the retreat, our board has become much more focused, responsive, and responsible to the program. Board members seemed to have gained a greater understanding of what it really takes for a program such as ours to be successful. They're much more attentive to community situations that impact the program and are participating more in the overall project.*[27]

At every retreat, people acknowledged the importance of nurturing new and existing relationships (the result of transitions in staff or new populations moving in) and of managing change originating from outside their communities (changes in law or economic vitality). In every community, participants left the retreat proud of the investment of time and energy they had made, relieved to have a specific focus for the upcoming year, and respectful of the complexity of the work facing them.

Excerpts from Workshop Evaluations

Six to eight weeks after each workshop, we sent surveys to participants. We mailed a total of 160 surveys, and we received 45 completed ones, for a 28 percent response rate. Following is a summary of the responses to selected items:

- Sixty percent agreed or strongly agreed that "this workshop presented the most extensive opportunity I've had to discuss our community response with some people who were unfamiliar to me." Twenty-seven percent were neutral, 11 percent disagreed, and 2 percent strongly disagreed. (The disagreement could have been a result of the participant having had other opportunities to discuss these topics with community members or because no unfamiliar stakeholders participated in the workshop.)
- Seventy-eight percent agreed or strongly agreed that "it was useful to learn about and consider a model for sustaining community capacity over the long haul." Twenty-two percent were neutral.
- Seventy-three percent agreed or strongly agreed that their "community relationships strengthened, or showed the potential to strengthen, as a result of the conversations held during the workshop." Twenty-three percent were neutral; 4 percent disagreed.

Conclusion

Although available physical or financial resources undeniably limit community capacity to address sexual assault and domestic violence, the most successful efforts are a function of cooperative relationships and aligned can-do philosophies. Strained interactions between people or across organizations often trace back to differences in attitudes, historical mishaps, lack of respect, or inaccurate information, any of which can continue to affect program design and delivery. The challenges of physical distance or turnover in staff or elected positions may hinder development of productive working relationships.

Of course, in some communities, the differing philosophies are much more personal and fundamental, reinforced by lessons learned from families, religions, or society. The perceived inevitability of sexual assault and domestic violence does get reinforced by witnessing or experiencing it in life, as well as by viewing or reading about it in the media. Even so, positive developments of any sort cannot begin without conversations about the possibilities of changes in policies, services, resource allocation, and attitudes. Luckily for North Carolina, people in every community, in all walks of life, share an interest in responding to yesterday's violence and preventing it from happening tomorrow.

Notes

1. This project was supported by Award No. 068-1-04-4VA-AW-107, from the U.S. Department of Justice, through the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety.

2. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, Domestic Violence Information, http://nccadv.org/domestic_violence_info.htm#Definition%20of%20Domestic%20Violence.

3. Orange County Rape Crisis Center, www.ocrcc.org/violence.html.

4. North Carolina State Center for Health Statistics, www.schs.state.nc.us/SCHS/data/vitalstats.cfm. Follow the link to North Carolina Vital Statistics, Volume 2: Leading Causes of Death, which presents statistics by year. There were 639 homicides in 2002, 592

in 2003, 610 in 2004, and 655 in 2005. The lists of domestic violence–related homicides on the NCCADV website include 79 deaths in 2002, 72 in 2003, 81 in 2004, 70 in 2005, and 75 in 2006. The victims include the spouses/partners/boyfriends/girlfriends of the abusers, children, people who tried to intervene to stop the violence, and innocent bystanders.

5. Timothy Hart and Callie Rennison, *Reporting Crime to the Police, 1992–2000* (Washington, DC: Bureau of Justice Statistics, U.S. Department of Justice, March 2003).

6. National Center for Policy Analysis, *Crime and Punishment in America: 1999*, NCPA Policy Report No. 229, October 1999 (Dallas, TX: 2001), www.ncpa.org/studies/s229/s229.html.

7. North Carolina Sex Offender and Public Protection Registry, http://ncregistry.ncsbi.gov/(S(tem04cnqzsczy145ovfy4sya))/Default.aspx.

8. Jennifer Canada (assistant public information officer, North Carolina Department of Justice), e-mail to Margaret Henderson, January 16, 2008. Recent updates to the website provide maps showing where sex offenders live, and make possible e-mail notifications when sex offenders move into neighborhoods.

9. North Carolina Department of Justice, Administrative Office of the Courts, Research and Planning, *District Court Civil (CVD) Cases with a Domestic Violence Issue, by Case Filing and Order Result of the Domestic Violence Issue, Cases Filed or Order Results during July 1, 2005—June 30, 2006*, www.nccourts.org/Citizens/SRPlanning/Documents/dome2005-2006.pdf.

10. North Carolina Coalition Against Domestic Violence, *Civil and Criminal Law in North Carolina Related to Domestic Violence* (Durham, NC: NCCADV, 2007), www.nccadv.org/civil_and_criminal_remedies.htm.

11. *2006 North Carolina Children's Index*, "Child Maltreatment," 15, www.ncchild.org/images/stories/Index/nc_childrens_index_a3_2006.pdf.

12. Ibid., 17.

13. Wendy Max et al., *The Economic Toll of Intimate Partner Violence against Women in the United States* (San Francisco: Institute for Health and Aging, University of California, San Francisco, 2004). The analysis uses national survey data, including the National Violence Against Women Survey and the Medical Expenditure Panel Survey, to estimate costs for 1995. Expenditures include medical care, mental health services, and lost productivity from injury and premature death.

14. Ann L. Coker et al., "Physical Partner Violence and Medicaid Utilization and Expenditures," *Public Health Reports* 9 (2004): 557–67.

15. North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, Division of Medical Assistance, *Medicaid in North Carolina, Annual Report, State Fiscal Year 2006* (Raleigh: NCDHHS, 2006), 53–54, www.ncdhhs.gov/dma/2006report/2006report.pdf.

16. U.S. Conference of Mayors and Sodexho, Inc., *Hunger and Homelessness Survey: A Status Report on Hunger and Homelessness in America's Cities, a 24-City Survey, December 2005* (Washington, DC: U.S. Conference of Mayors and Sodexho, Inc., 2005), www.usmayors.org/uscm/hungersurvey/2005/HH2005FINAL.pdf.

17. North Carolina Department of Juvenile Justice and Delinquency Prevention, *2004 Annual Report* (Raleigh, NC: NCDJJDP, 2005), as quoted in *2006 North Carolina Children's Index*, www.ncchild.org/content/view/326/186/.

18. Texas Health Resources, Domestic Violence Cost Calculator, www.texashealth.org/main.asp?level=2&id=E6064010D7AE4E4BA69D54C1114FD25A&lang=en.

19. Lynda Clay, e-mails to Margaret Henderson, February 28 and July 29, 2007.

20. Barry Bryant (lead planner, Victim's Issues, VAWA and VOCA, North Carolina Department of Crime Control and Public Safety), interview by Margaret Henderson, in Raleigh, February 12, 2007.

21. National Alliance to End Sexual Violence, www.naesv.org.

22. Bryant, interview.

23. Ibid.

24. Lydian Altman-Sauer, Margaret Henderson, and Gordon P. Whitaker, "Building Community Capacity to Meet Public Needs," *Popular Government*, Winter 2005, 28–36. A link to the article can be found on the Publications page of the Public Intersection Project website, www.publicintersection.unc.edu/.

25. Public Intersection Project, Sexual and Domestic Violence, www.publicintersection.unc.edu/sexdomvio.html.

26. In one rural community, there no longer is a mental health care provider in the county who can write prescriptions. Residents who have no personal transportation are frequently unable to travel to the service providers in nearby counties. The lack of access creates gaps of time in which they are off their medications, which in turn create behavioral stressors that can lead to violence or other inappropriate behavior. The shelter is experiencing a shift in its client population and an increased need for staff to be trained in mental health and substance abuse issues. Another community program that also is experiencing an increase in the number of clients with mental health issues has considered ways to provide in-house counseling.

27. Karen Foster (executive director of Helping Hands, Warren County), e-mail to Margaret Henderson, August 10, 2007.

Wicker Scholarship Available for First-Year Student Entering UNC at Chapel Hill in 2008

If you are a local government employee with a rising high school senior who has been accepted for next year by UNC at Chapel Hill, encourage him or her to apply for the Warren Jake Wicker Scholarship.

Each spring the UNC at Chapel Hill Office of Scholarships seeks first-year undergraduate applicants for this $1,000 scholarship.

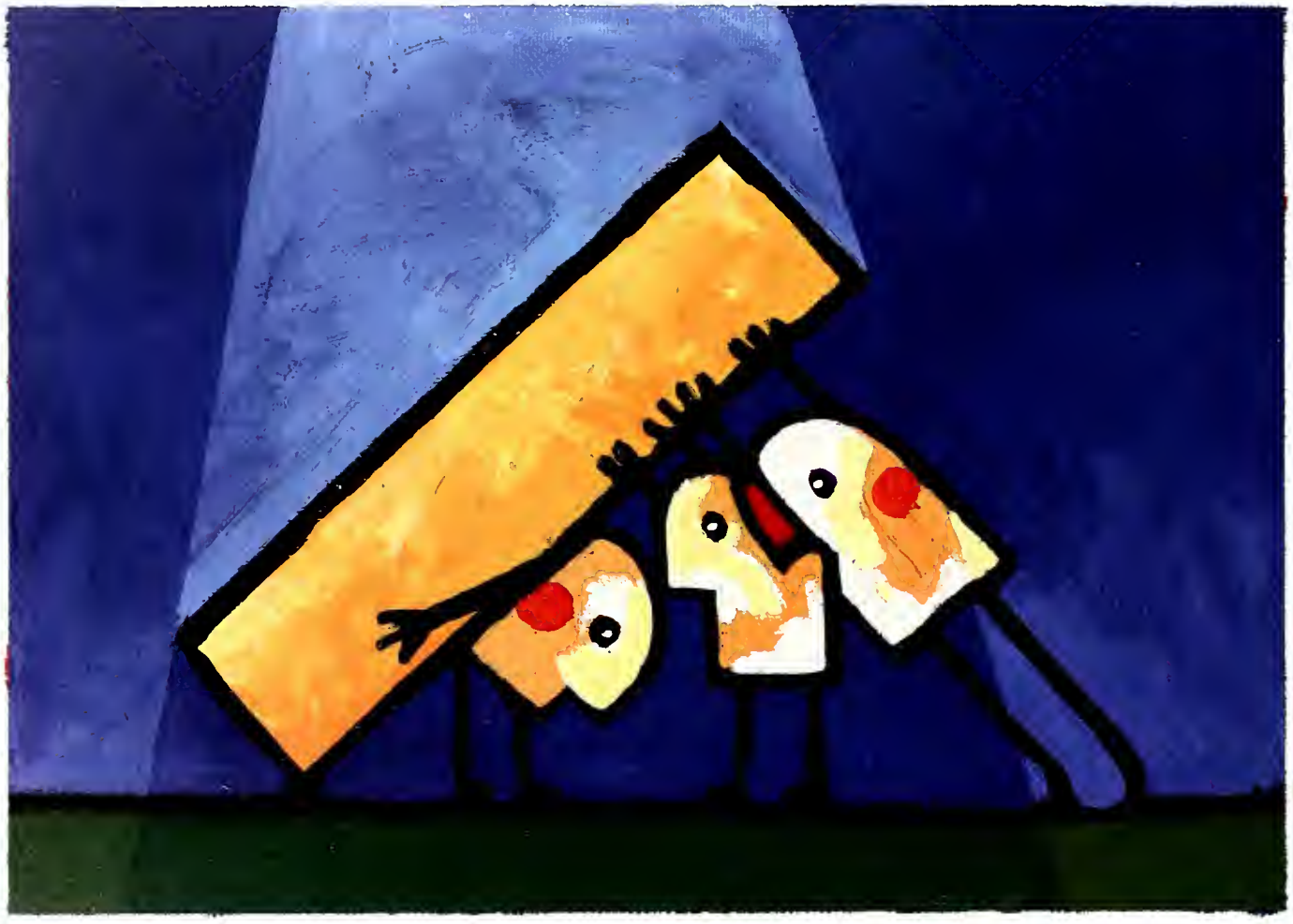
The student must have at least one parent who has been continuously employed full-time by a North Carolina city or county government for at least five years before January 1, 2008. The scholarship is awarded on the basis of relative financial need and academic promise.

To apply, send a letter of application to Wicker Scholarship, UNC at Chapel Hill Office of Student Aid, P.O. Box 1080, Chapel Hill, NC 27514. For additional information or to e-mail a letter of application, contact Megan Dillin at megan_dillin@unc.edu or 919.962.3620.

The application must be received on or before April 1, 2008.

Creating Their Own Futures:
Community Visioning and North Carolina Local Governments

Lydian Altman and Ricardo S. Morse



In a memorable scene from Lewis Carroll's classic, *Alice in Wonderland*, Alice comes upon the Cheshire Cat and asks, "Would you tell me, please, which way I ought to go from here?" The Cheshire Cat replies, "That depends a good deal on where you want to get to." Alice responds, "I don't much care where." The Cheshire Cat answers, "Then it doesn't matter which way you go."

Like Alice, community leaders often face the quandary of what path to take. The journey is not merely a personal one, however. The whole community will embark on it. But, unlike Alice, community leaders must make deliberate decisions about the direction and the destination of their community's journey.

Do community leaders faced with deciding "Where do we go from here?" really know where the community wants to go? Some presuppose that they understand a community's will, and they act until their assumption is proven wrong. Others simply act without considering where the community wants to go, thinking only of where they want the community to go.

But community leadership is not about the knowledge, the action, or the direction of a single person or organization. It is a collective process that cuts across

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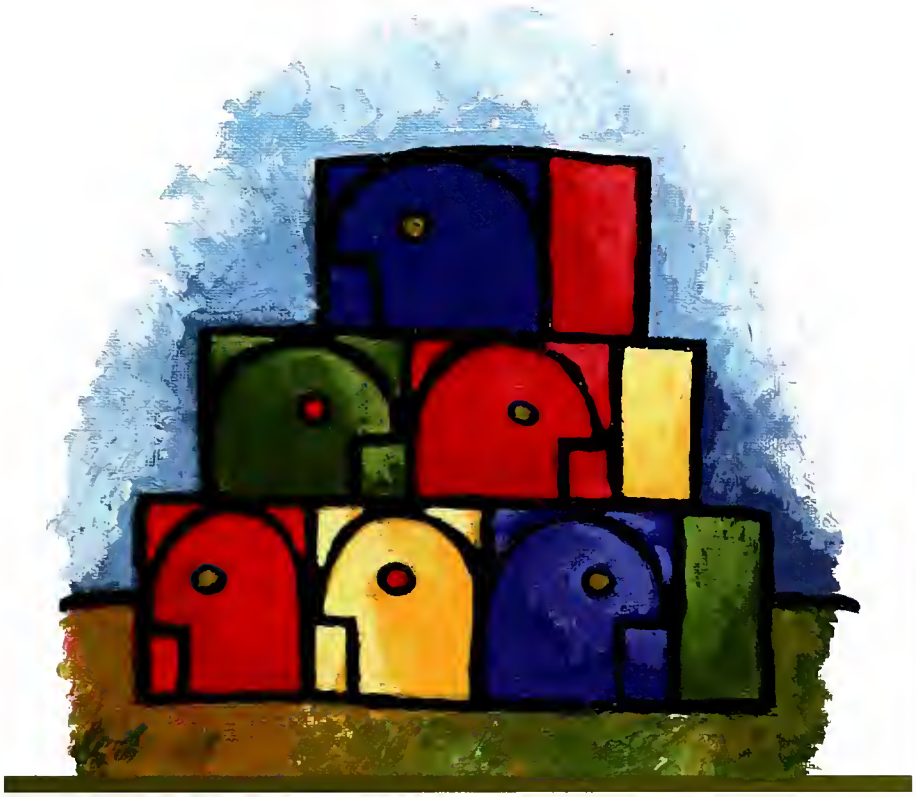


Guidebooks on Community Visioning and Planning

Building Our Future—A Guide to Community Visioning
An extensive guidebook published by University of Wisconsin Extension that includes specific content areas in addition to overall process guidance. Available as a free download at www.drs.wisc.edu/green/community.htm.

The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook
Another oft-cited resource, published by the National Civic League Press. Available as a free download at http://ncl.org/publications/online/VSPHandbook.pdf.

Planning for the Future: A Handbook on Community Visioning (3d ed.)
A concise overview, published by the Center for Rural Pennsylvania. Available as a free download at www.ruralpa.org/visioning3.pdf.

Vision to Action: Take Charge Too
Another extensive and user-friendly guidebook, published by the North Central Regional Center for Rural Development. Available as a free download at www.ncrcrd.iastate.edu/pubs/contents/182.htm.

local governments, schools, businesses, churches, civic organizations, and more. Thus, if a community is to know where it wants to go, it must consider the perspectives of all its component organizations and groups. This jointly developed, collective sense of direction is called "community vision."

As a key decision maker and driving force in any community, a local government, in particular, needs a shared vision or a "clear sense of direction of where the community is headed and how it is to get there."[1] A familiar proverb states, "Without a vision, the people perish." In the absence of a shared vision, members of the public respond only to the issues that are directly in front of them and "mobilize primarily in confrontation, seeking to stop initiatives in which they do not see personal gain."[2]

Communities without a shared vision risk falling behind in this time of rapid change. Change always has been a part of the public sector, but today the time available for local governments to react to change has greatly diminished. The dramatic economic and social changes experienced in North Carolina —such as loss of traditional industries, a growing immigrant population, and rapid growth in the state's urban crescent —all place significant pressures on local communities.

This article addresses how elected and appointed local government leaders can help develop an authentic and comprehensive community vision to steer their communities during times of upheaval or relative calm. We discuss community visioning and strategic planning as tools that help communities understand current realities and trends, articulate desired conditions for the future, and develop and implement strategies for achieving those conditions.

We begin by defining "community visioning," its relationship to strategic planning, and the place of these ideas in a broader stream of collaborative governance concepts. Then, drawing on the experiences of three North Carolina communities, we outline general principles of successful community change, highlighting how they specifically relate to community visioning and strategic planning. Finally, we suggest some issues for local government leaders to bear in mind as they consider how their community might benefit from visioning.

Community Visioning and Strategic Planning

Community visioning is a relatively new process of local government planning. Its genesis was in the "futures projects" of the 1970s, dubbed "anticipatory democracy" by futurist Alvin Toffler.[3] This movement shifted long-range planning in the public sector from quantitative forecasting to more qualitative, participatory approaches. Steven Ames, a pioneer in community visioning, explains that these early programs "varied widely in their design and effectiveness" and were mostly "one-time efforts." Through the 1980s and the 1990s, however, visioning evolved substantially and became an increasingly popular planning concept in local communities.[4]

By the mid-1990s, visioning had come to be widely recognized as an essential element of successful community leadership. The great transformation of Chattanooga, Tennessee, was widely attributed to Vision 2000, initiated in 1984, and ReVision 2010, initiated in 1993 after most of the goals of the original effort had been reached.[5] Some of the dramatic outcomes attributed to the city's visioning efforts are as follows:[6]

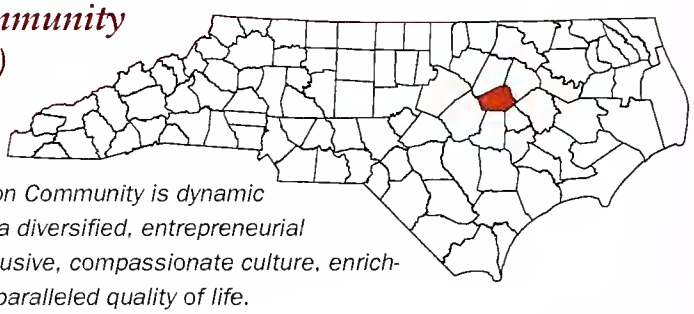
- Moving from being named the most polluted city in the nation in 1969 to being recognized on Earth Day 1990 as "the best turnaround story" in the nation. By that time the city was one of the few in the Southeast to be in compliance with all six national standards for air quality.
- Development of hundreds of projects serving more than 1.5 million people.
- Renovations of historic buildings and sites.
- Construction of a new river park, aquarium, and performance hall.

Chattanooga continues to receive accolades and is internationally known for the remarkable transformation stimulated by community visioning.[7]

What exactly is community visioning? How is it different from strategic planning? Ames explains the logic behind visioning as follows:

> *If we wish to create a better world, we must first be able to envision that world. Community visioning is simply a process through which a community imagines the future it most desires and then plans to achieve it. Through visioning, citizens come together to create a shared image of their preferred future; once this image has been created, they can begin working to achieve their goal. Visioning does not*

Example of a Vision Statement: Greater Wilson Community (April 2007)



The Vision

The Greater Wilson Community is dynamic and vibrant, with a diversified, entrepreneurial economy and inclusive, compassionate culture, enriching all with an unparalleled quality of life.

We are a regional employment center. Our strategic location, transportation and information technology infrastructure, abundant water and land resources, and highly trained workforce sustain a diverse commercial and industrial base. We nurture new and existing business growth.

We carefully manage commercial, industrial, and residential growth in ways that preserve open space and our history and encourage investments across all parts of the community. Our vital, historic downtowns are hubs of cultural and commercial activity. Sidewalks, bikeways, and greenways connect our beautiful neighborhoods.

We are a community of educational excellence, with a culture that embraces lifelong learning, providing opportunities for all. Our families, early childhood programs, K–12 schools, Barton College, Wilson Community College, business, faith-based, and other community organizations, work together to prepare students for a rapidly changing world.

We enjoy a rich variety of social, educational, cultural, and recreational activities for persons of every age and income. Our superb athletic facilities, parks, arts, cultural attractions, and other amenities make our community highly desirable for young adults, families, and retirees to call home and for tourists to visit.

We are a healthy community with a holistic view of wellness for all our citizens at all stages of life and socioeconomic status. Healthy lifestyles are supported by excellent health care professionals and facilities; comprehensive, caring, community-based wellness programs; and a clean environment.

We are "one" community that respects and celebrates our diversity with active efforts to assure justice, harmony, and understanding. We take pride in our beautiful, safe neighborhoods where civic engagement is strong and local leadership is developed.

We are a community that works together to support this shared vision. Our local governments and other community institutions cooperate extensively to create a friendly climate for home grown businesses, community betterment efforts, and excellent quality of life. We create and achieve our vision because we are a collaborative community.

necessarily replace other forms of community planning, but rather provides a broader context from which to approach those activities.[8]

Visioning refers to both a process and a product. The process is a broad-based, collaborative effort in which members of a community come together to "build consensus on a description of the community's desired future and on actions to help make goals for the future a reality."[9] The product is a community "vision statement" and usually an accompanying plan of action.

The theory of community visioning rests on a few key assumptions. One is that a community can in fact develop and articulate a common vision. A community vision is not something that exists and awaits discovery. Rather, it is new knowledge created by a community through dialogue and deliberation. Although all visions do not meet this criterion, the theory of community visioning is based on a certain faith in citizens being able to come together and create consensus on the direction their community should take.

A second assumption of community visioning is that a vision can be a useful policy tool, that its benefits are evident and meaningful. This speaks to the product of visioning, the vision statement. A true community vision "may be used to assess the compatibility of new initiatives and programs with the residents' ideas." Also, most visioning programs lead to specific strategies and initiatives that can be implemented and monitored to gauge success. Opportunities continually arise, of course —new businesses, road projects, or government programs, for example. "But it is up to residents to determine if these opportunities will either hinder or help their community achieve its vision for the future."[10]

A third assumption is that the process is inherently valuable, that the effort creates unquantifiable and potentially unintended benefits of great worth. Community visioning provides a structure "for people to have a meaningful coming-to-grips with the issues—even though [they] do not know the answers and have no perfect models."[11] A visioning process "serves as a vehicle for articulating community-wide values" and makes a "significant contribution to transforming political culture," turning "skeptics into citizens who believe their efforts will make a difference."[12] For many, the most important aspect of visioning is "its ability to engender civic dialogue and discourse."[13] Further, because the process is broadly inclusive and emphasizes dialogue and consensus building, it "paves the way for future cooperation and collaboration among a community's diverse stakeholders."[14]

What does a visioning project look like? Realistically, each visioning effort is as unique as the community it serves. Several models of visioning are available online for downloading (see the sidebar on page 21). Generally these models view visioning as a broader planning effort that complements local comprehensive and/or strategic plans.

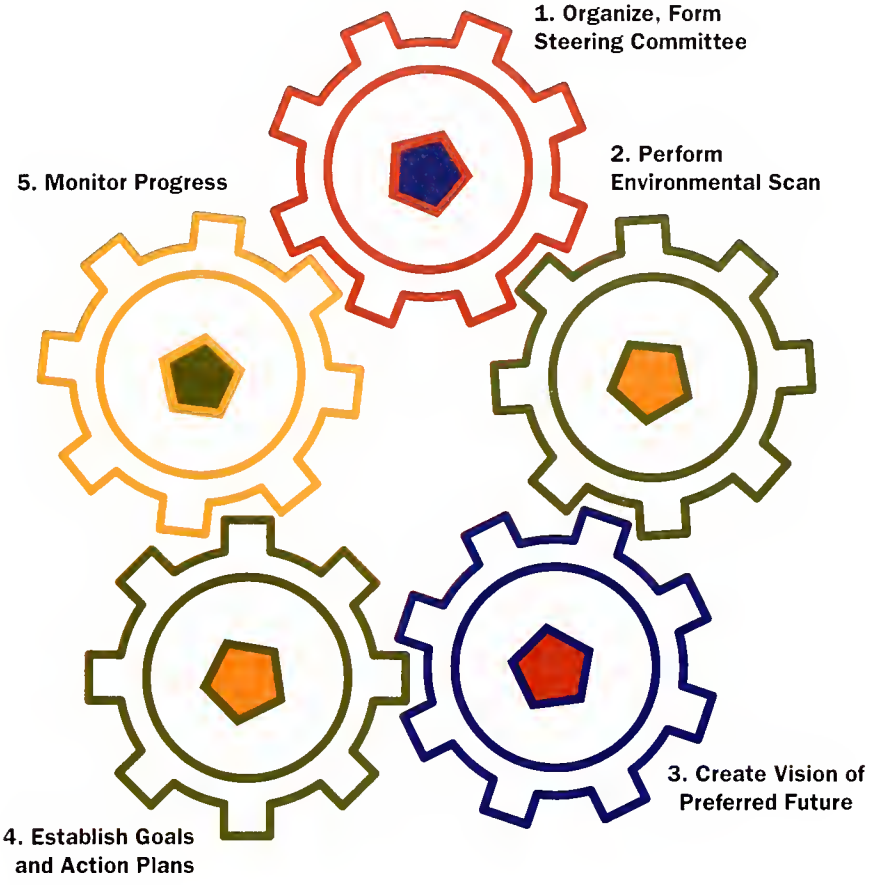
Also, "community" in many cases is broader than a single jurisdiction. Many visioning efforts represent collaboration among cities, towns, and their encompassing counties.[15]

Some visioning programs are general, beginning with no particular emphasis or area of focus. Others are more specific, as in the emphasis of so-called strategic visioning programs on economic development.[16]

Despite different starting points, successful visioning efforts address all aspects of a community, recognizing the interrelatedness of land use, economy, community health, and so forth. Indeed, one of the important contributions that visioning can make to local governance is its holistic approach. By working together to develop a preferred vision of the future, community members necessarily touch on and wrestle with the ways in which different community problems are intertwined.

Although there certainly are differences across approaches, they are minor. A generic model of visioning drawn from the wide variety of visioning programs and materials consists of five

Figure 1. **Typical Phases of Community Visioning Programs**



primary steps or phases (see Figure 1; page 23). First, a steering group of diverse community stakeholders is formed. This group provides leadership and coordination for the project. It is important that the steering committee include representatives from the key community institutions (local governments, schools, chambers of commerce, community-based organizations, and so forth). The leadership group should reflect the diversity of the community, and its deliberative process should be open and transparent—and be seen as such.[17] Often a small group of community leaders initiates the effort, but project guidance through a steering committee or a task force should be broadly inclusive, lest it become perceived as elitist or otherwise closed to the community at large. Some kind of stakeholder analysis is typically employed to ensure that representation on such a committee includes key groups and organizations in the community and generally reflects its diversity.[18]

Second, in a public gathering of some kind, the stakeholder committee and (often) a broader group of citizens assess where they are now, performing an environmental scan of the community as a whole and exploring trends and forces that shape the community's current state and possible future. This phase may examine quantitative and qualitative indicators as well as data from interviews or focus groups. Many communities use the National Civic League's Civic Index to assess current realities and the capacity for change.[19] A SWOC analysis (an examination of strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges), a popular element of strategic planning, also is useful in this phase.[20]

The third phase is creation of a community vision that clearly states how the community sees itself in the future. Creation of a vision may involve articulating a mission, goals, and values, as a group does during strategic planning, but the key component is the articulation of a desired future state often 15–20 years out. The vision statement is what unifies and guides the collaborative work that follows. The key issues and themes identified in the environmental scan should help inform the issues and themes addressed in the statement. Additionally, and perhaps more important, "the vision statement must be reached by consensus and encourage the commitment of diverse community members."[21]

Vision statements vary from a few sentences to several paragraphs. The statement of the Greater Wilson Community features a short sentence on overall vision, accompanied by thematic subparagraphs (see the sidebar on page 22). It is a good example of a statement created by consensus that speaks directly to the issues and the themes identified in an extensive public-engagement campaign during the environmental scan.

After creating a vision, participants establish goals and strategies for achieving it. This phase involves identifying

Re-Visioning Roxboro

To develop a long-term vision for their city and engage people from throughout the community in strengthening its future, Roxboro's elected and appointed officials, with the assistance of staff from the UNC at Chapel Hill School of Government's Public Intersection Project, undertook a strategic planning process in late 2005. This was the first strategic planning process in which the city had ever engaged.

The process that was ultimately chosen and undertaken was guided by input from the city council and the newly hired city manager. Although council driven, it took other community members' and employees' viewpoints into consideration, ultimately leaving the decision making and the priority setting to the council with input from senior city staff. To aid city officials in their deliberations about what kind of process would be best for the city at that point, School of Government consultants developed much of the decision-making framework that is presented under the heading Gauging the Value and the Level of Participation in this article.

The process began with a facilitated conversation with the council to set the stage for undertaking a long-term plan. In the first meeting, the council determined its vision for Roxboro, the city government's role and support for accomplishing that vision, and principles that the council sought to uphold in conducting its work.[1] The conversations included all members of the council plus the city manager. Key senior staff members (the management team) were brought in periodically to provide background information and to help evaluate priorities.

In the next step, the council developed a list of key issues facing the community. Although the list was developed without input from the larger community, the issues were a combination of new initiatives, continuing work, and mandates posed by other organizations. They also represented areas in which the council might have direct influence—such as planning for water and sewer extensions or making upgrades to city employees' information technology needs—or more opportunities to build partnerships—such as through economic development, planning for growth, or beautification.

In many cases, the actions that the council listed supported multiple goals and objectives. For example, "Adding another staff person to complete the unified development ordinance" also supported plans for annexing adjacent territory, updating the land use plan, and providing greater code enforcement to upgrade problem properties.

After grouping issues in like categories and ranking and prioritizing the issues, the School of Government consultants used this list to gather feedback and reactions from both employees and citizens. Two employee focus groups were held, with a total of twenty-one employees participating, to gather additional ideas and test their reaction and support of the council-developed goals and objectives. Three citizen focus groups, with twenty-four participants altogether, provided similar feedback that was shared with the council and senior staff members in a later session.[2]

The council members observed that the feedback and ranking data from these focus groups did not differ substantially from their own priorities but did have implications for many of the activities or for the emphasis applied to the overall goals. For instance, as they considered how to apply stricter code enforcement, the number one criterion for deciding which properties to target first was the threat the properties presented to public safety. This supported and addressed the concern raised in the citizen focus groups about drug use and related activity. Furthermore, as a result of the focus group feedback, the council incorporated some additional strategies to communicate more effectively with citizens.

Finally, the council and the staff agreed to revisit this work regularly. They scheduled specific review sessions (an annual update was done in spring 2007), and in the year following the plan's initial adoption, they devoted every other management team meeting to implementation of the strategic plan. In essence, Roxboro has obligated the time and the effort to the review, committed itself to making necessary adjustments, celebrated and shared accomplishments, and added new goals as appropriate.

Notes

1. The council's operating principles: (1) We value and strive for a team approach to governing that includes the perspectives, skills, and abilities of council, staff, citizen, and other potential partners. (2) We always serve others in a courteous, professional, and fair manner. (3) We want to make a positive difference in the lives of our residents by making decisions that consider the greater good of our community. (4) We appreciate and encourage a diversity of viewpoints; therefore, we listen with respect, respond promptly to all inquiries, and consider all input. (5) We expect to be fully informed in our decision making and will not govern by anecdote. (6) We are passionate in our discussions, yet maintain a respect for each other. (7) We are willing to compromise.

2. Questions for employee and citizen groups: (1) Do you see this as an important issue for the city to focus on? (2) Do you agree or disagree with the way the council has suggested the city can move toward each goal (the objectives)? Why, or why not? (3) What suggestions can you offer for achieving this goal? (4) Recognizing that all these are long-term goals, which two do you think need the most immediate attention in the next 3–5 years? (5) *For citizens:* What might compel you to get more involved with planning for the future of this community?

goals that flow out of or support the vision statement, selecting key performance areas, and drafting action plans to meet the goals. The key is to identify clear goals, measurable objectives (desired outcomes), and concrete strategies to meet those objectives, and to set timelines and assign responsibility for implementing strategies.

Finally, most flourishing visioning endeavors create formal and standing systems to monitor implementation and evaluate outcomes. Some communities have formed a monitoring committee or a new organization whose sole focus is to oversee implementation of the vision. Identifiable and measurable indicators of progress help demonstrate success and track goal achievement as the community progresses.

"Community" Strategic Planning

Many practitioners use the terms "community visioning" and "strategic planning" interchangeably or together, implying that they are synonymous.[22] Both processes entail roughly the same steps (shown in Figure 1), yet it is important to distinguish between the two and understand them as related but different processes. The key distinctions relate to the user of the vision and the plan of action, the ability to influence the planned outcomes, and the degree of engagement or participation by others outside the primary organizing group. (For a summary of the distinctions, see Table 1, page 23.)

If the plan is for a single organization, such as a municipality, then it is more appropriate to speak of a strategic plan. Strategic planning is an important tool in the larger toolbox of strategic management. Organizations can be managed and guided by a strategic vision and plan, but the community, as a collective entity, cannot. On the other hand, a community vision—a shared statement of values and direction for the entire community—can serve as a guide to the various organizations in that community, including its key institutions of governance.

A local government's strategic plan might be termed a "community strategic plan" because its goals and objectives are intended for the betterment of the community demarcated by the jurisdictional boundaries. Budgetary decisions and other policies of the local government are used to implement the plan. Although these decisions may affect the entire community, they are made by just one organization.

Strategies outlined in the action plan component of a community vision, on the other hand, are implemented collaboratively by organizations, groups, and individuals across the community. This is another key distinction between the two processes.

There also are differences in community engagement. For a visioning process truly to be of, by, and for the entire community, it must be broadly and extensively participatory. Nongovernmental representatives do not participate merely to

give input to the government's plan. Rather, they are co-creators and co-owners of the product.

On the other hand, a single-organization local government's strategic plan can be created with varying degrees of public input. In fact, such a plan can be developed in a board or staff retreat with no public input whatsoever. However, if it is to be guided by a community vision—one that truly reflects the community—the best advice is that the process of creating it be broadly participatory, including stakeholders beyond the organization's decision makers.[23] Whereas most community visioning efforts are likely to cross jurisdictions as well as sectors, the local government strategic plan is for one jurisdiction and might engage only jurisdictionally based stakeholders.

Thus because a strategic plan is for an organization and not an entire community, there is no need to make the participation as extensive as in a community visioning project. Strategic planning by a local government can take on many

Table 1. **A Comparison of Community Visioning and Strategic Planning**

	Community Visioning	Strategic Planning
Locus of Practice	Coalition (public-private partnership)	Single organization (e.g. city government)
Starting Point	Scan of current environment SWOC analysis	SWOC analysis
Implementers	Multiple implementers	Single implementer
Approach to Implementation	Through action teams, work groups (collaboration)	Mostly through budget and policy decisions of organization
Level of Community Involvement	Broad-based, extensive	Range (none to some)
Long-Term Vision	Yes	Ideally, but not necessarily
Time to Develop	Months to years	Weeks to months

Table 2. **A Comparison of Planning Processes: Roxboro City, Wilkes County, and Wilson County**

	Re-Visioning Roxboro	Wilkes Vision 20/20	Wilson 2020 Community Vision
Start	December 2005	Fall 1998	October 2006
Initiators	Public sector City council	Private sector Chamber of commerce	Private and public sectors Cross-sector collaborative group
Governance	City council City manager Management team	Chamber board of directors Steering committee Foundation teams	Management committee Steering committee Action teams
Input	Some outreach to employees (21) and citizens (24)	Large numbers, extensive: town hall meeting (400)	Large numbers, extensive: community forums (630); survey (900); summit (150)
Ongoing Oversight	City of Roxboro City government	Wilkes Vision 20/20 Nonprofit organization	Management committee Cross-sector collaborative group
Follow-through	Ongoing and regular review, integration, implementation, and revisions of plan by council, management team, and employees	Ongoing and regular review, integration, implementation, and revisions of plan by committees Paid staff	Ongoing and regular review, integration, implementation, and revisions of plan by committees Paid staff
Consultants	Public: UNC School of Government[1]	Private: Luke Planning Inc.	Public: UNC School of Government[2]
Cost	$17,000[3]	$53,500[4]	$40,000[5]

Throughout this article we provide examples of strategic planning and community visioning projects from the Roxboro, Wilkes, and Wilson communities. Two of these efforts began relatively recently. The third has been under way for nearly a decade. Just as each community is unique, each planning process is distinctive to fit local circumstances. These examples purposely provide variations along a spectrum of options and approaches so that readers can consider what elements might be adapted to their own situations.

1. School of Government staff from the Public Intersection Project, www.publicintersection.unc.edu, consulted on the Roxboro strategic plan.

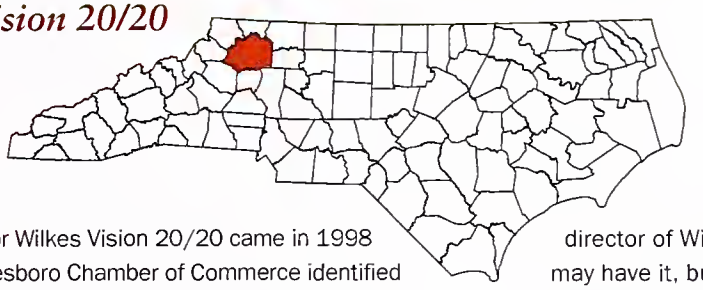
2. School of Government staff and faculty from the Public Intersection Project and the Community and Economic Development Program, www.sog.unc.edu/programs/cednc, consulted on the Wilson 2020 Community Vision project.

3. This figure includes the cost of initial plan development in 2005–6, work with the management team on incorporating the strategic plan into departmental work plans, and first-year review of the plan in 2007.

4. Henry Luke, of Luke Planning Inc., Jacksonville, Florida (www.lukevision.com), facilitated the process at an initial fee (quoted in 1998) of $44,000 for Phase 1 and provided first-year oversight in Phase 2 for $9,500. Travel and other expenses were additional.

5. This figure represents the cost of the School of Government contract. Significant additional costs were covered by several community organizations, including Barton College, the City of Wilson, and Wilson County. The effort continues to be funded by public and private dollars.

Wilkes Vision 20/20



The impetus for Wilkes Vision 20/20 came in 1998 when the Wilkesboro Chamber of Commerce identified a need for a long-range planning process for the community. The process did not arise from an immediate threat. Rather it began as a way to identify needs, elevate causes, and envision the future without demeaning the present.

After hiring a private consultant, the community solicited input through a community summit and formed a 150-person task force, whose job was to organize all community input into working areas (education, economic development, government, quality of life, infrastructure, and private-sector leadership) and develop a draft long-range plan.[1]

The Wilkes Vision 20/20 plan was presented for additional community comment in spring 1999 and completed later that year. Since then, committees focused on the working areas have formed and meet regularly to implement, evaluate, and add to the plan.

Practical Challenges of an Inclusive Planning Process

With the benefit of hindsight, Wilkes Vision 20/20 participants identified five challenges that they faced:[2]

- **Overcoming issues of trust.** Sometimes, people can be distrustful or suspicious of others who work in a business or a field that they do not understand. "The process has helped us get through that by recognizing shared responsibility and shared vulnerability," said the Reverend Nelson Granade. "We've developed trust."
- **Sustaining momentum.** Vision takes energy, and in most communities, large and small, a small percentage of the population seems to do most of the work. Carrying such a load can lead to burnout. Also, once things start moving and some positive changes occur, it is easy to stop. When people start behaving more collaboratively, leaders may congratulate themselves on the good job that they have done, and forget that there is another step: renewal. They must keep renewing themselves and the plan. "It's like faith," said Fran Evans, director of Wilkes Vision 20/20. "You may have it, but if you don't feed it, you become complacent."[3]
- **Avoiding turfism.** Everyone has his or her own interests, and often the interests compete. Finding common ground can be a struggle. According to Linda Cheek, a Wilkesboro Chamber of Commerce employee with a long history of involvement in the visioning process, Wilkes Vision 20/20 was able to meet this challenge by integrating varied opinions into the plan. "Make sure diverse voices are heard," she said. "Even if their issue doesn't get prioritized as most important, there is validity in hearing their opinion and having them understand why other issues may take higher precedence for action."[4]
- **Being realistic.** It is important to examine the realities of what is working and what is not working in the community. The community must compare itself with other communities. The visioning effort must raise the anxiety level enough to get action and motion but not so much that it generates overreaction or pessimism.
- **Keeping people informed.** If the visioning process is to sustain itself, there must be effective communication and partnerships. The Wilkes Vision 20/20 director sends out a newsletter to more than 1,200 people ten times a year, sometimes as an insert in the chamber of commerce newsletter.

Notes

1. *See* Wilkes Vision 20/20, www.wilkesncvision.org.
2. Ken Noland, Wilkesboro town manager, telephone interview by Lydian Altman, August 14, 2007; Nelson Granade, pastor, First Baptist Church, telephone interview by Lydian Altman, September 11, 2007; Linda Cheek, employee, Chamber of Commerce, and Fran Evans, director, Wilkes Vision 20/20, telephone interview (conference call) by Lydian Altman, October 18, 2007.
3. Evans, interview.
4. Cheek, interview.

elements of a broader community visioning effort, though—including developing a community vision—by involving a variety of community stakeholders. Roxboro's recent strategic planning effort illustrates such a participatory process (see the sidebar on page 24).

As mentioned, in practice the two processes overlap considerably. Ideally, self-defined metacommunities that span multiple jurisdictions (like the Greater Wilson Community) create shared visions that connect to component organizations' strategic plans. A local government doing a strategic plan (including a vision) should seek consistency with a broader community vision if one exists. If one does not exist, the plan's vision would be the community's vision and have the potential for impact beyond the local government. In such a case, the local government's strategic plan might take on more visionlike elements. The visioning/strategic planning comparison may be thought of more as a continuum of practices than as distinct choices. Every community is unique. Thus the most appropriate model for community visioning will vary.

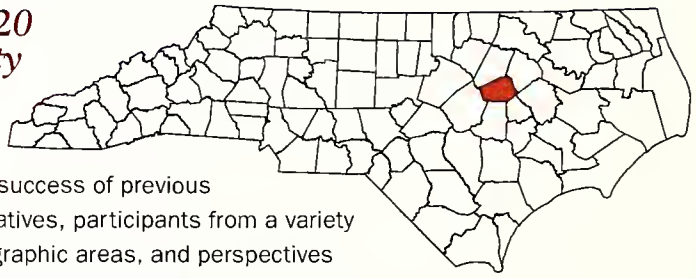
Benefits of Using a More Inclusive Planning Process

Community visioning is one of many emerging "collaborative governance practices" that emphasize "diversity and interdependence, processes that support dialogue and deliberation, the building of trust and ongoing capacity to collaborate in the face of continuing uncertainty and change, and the search for solutions that embody good outcomes for the public."[24] It is an ongoing process of investing time, energy, and resources in the development of a community's capacity for leadership; creating a new level of civic engagement; and plotting and regularly updating the vision of a community's future. To engage the community continually and meaningfully in developing, implementing, and overseeing change, the benefits of which may not be apparent for years or make headline news, is hard work. Yet the payback of stronger community connections and involvement can have lasting impact on how a community presents itself to others.

As noted by Ken Noland, manager of Wilkesboro, whose community is nearly ten years into a visioning process,

> *The visioning process and resulting plan has positioned us to better respond to rapid change. We are much more adaptable and able to understand what the potential change might mean for all our community. We realize that change doesn't affect just our own entity but multiple entities, target groups, and stakeholders. When we lose a factory providing 1,000 jobs, it is not just the city's tax rate that's facing problems. All of us have to deal with the issues. Doing that together gives us the advantage of a think tank approach to community problem solving, and positions us to respond to change quickly and comprehensively.*[25]

Wilson 2020 Community Vision



Building on the success of previous countywide initiatives, participants from a variety of sectors, geographic areas, and perspectives shaped and guided the most recent effort to engage the entire Greater Wilson Community in mapping its future and building the capacity of its leadership to guide and sustain change. Representatives from local governments, businesses, nonprofits, health care organizations, the media, the faith community, and primary, secondary, and higher education institutions all became involved. The sixteen key community leaders who made up the original management committee served as the primary planners and overseers of the organizational structure, financial resources, consultants, and logistics of what became Wilson 2020 Community Vision.

As the planning process began, the management committee recruited and engaged important stakeholder groups and additional community members from across the county to form a fifty-member steering committee. That committee rallied community support for the work; determined, tested, and approved various strategies to engage the community; facilitated community forums; and guided the integration of different data sources.

The Wilson 2020 Community Vision visioning process, begun in fall 2006 and continuing today, has followed a four-phase model (see Table A).

Table A. **Overview of the Wilson 2020 Community Vision Visioning Process**

	Building Infrastructure	Gathering Information	Visioning/Holding Summit	Action Planning and Implementation
Purpose	Develop community engagement strategy	Identify trends, patterns, perceptions for directing change	Come to agreement about future vision and identify issue areas	Compile action plan and implementation steps
Activity	Groundwork Interviews with steering committee members Community scan	Community engagement activities Community analysis Development of draft vision	Community-wide summit Formation of action teams Development of and work on recommendations In each issue area	Refinement of action plan by action teams Implementation of action plans, continued dialogue, and projects in each issue area

Recognizing impending changes that could and would affect his community, one local business leader began to rally financial and human resources in the private sector to support a comprehensive and community-led visioning process to better position the Wilkes County community to shape and respond to its future. As the process and the project expanded, they encompassed public-sector, faith-based, and community-based leaders and institutions as well. The benefits to the community and the local governments that participate have been extensive:[26]

- There is greater collaboration and less competition among local governments. No longer does each town solely work toward what is best for it. "If an issue falls within the scope of our vision plan, then we take it to the visioning group to ask them to convene all the elected and appointed officials to discuss it. This creates a different sounding board," said Manager Noland. "These less affluent communities in North Carolina can't afford overlapping services."[27]
- The overall needs of the community are addressed because ideas and issues are not hindered by jurisdictional boundaries. In some cases, visioning groups recommended a more expensive but politically viable alternative because it might result in a win-win scenario and make the difference between the success or the failure of the project. "Some in Wilkes County joke that there are three political parties in the county: Republicans, Democrats, and Vision 20/20," said Nelson Granade, pastor of the First Baptist Church.[28]
- More ideas get considered because they are raised by a politically neutral and collaborative body. Often, dealing with an issue is difficult from the start if just one entity has introduced it.
- There is better buy-in from the public as a result of a more open and deliberative process. "During our deliberations about lowering the high school dropout rate, citizens kept asking elected officials, 'How are we going to get there?'" said the Reverend Granade.[29] This challenge by citizens prompted action and demonstrated the community's commitment to change.
- The visioning has developed a sense of community by bringing people together around a cause. As the Reverend Granade put it, "Cause creates community. You can get people together without it, but it is easier for communities to form around a cause."[30] This sense of community has long-lasting benefits. As a result of the visioning process, said Linda Cheek, a chamber of commerce leader, "there is an amazing spirit here of optimism, even when times are tough."[31]

Various data-gathering methods were employed during the gathering-information phase. They were designed to help leaders better understand how citizens viewed the community and to give them an opportunity for input and involvement.

Specifically, the building-infrastructure and gathering-information phases had four primary components:

- **Telephone and in-person interviews** (41), which assessed the strengths, weaknesses, opportunities, and challenges (SWOC) in the Greater Wilson Community and recorded phrases and ideas that represented the ideal vision for Wilson.
- **Community forums** (39), which gave about 630 people an opportunity to express their views about the current and future state of the Greater Wilson Community. These sessions, which were facilitated by both School of Government consultants and School of Government–trained steering committee members, generally reflected the racial, ethnic, and gender composition of the county.
- **Online survey**, which drew more than 900 responses on the Wilson 2020 Community Vision website.
- **The community scan document** (available data on community indicators, such as demographic profiles from the U.S. Census Bureau and economic data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce), which provided a factual snapshot of the community.

The steering committee used the large body of data generated to craft a unified vision and set of goals. The vision statement (see the sidebar on page 22) and the seven issue areas that emerged served as the foundation for developing action teams during and after the community summit.

About 150 people gathered in a community summit at Barton College in April 2007 to extend the visioning process to an ever-widening circle of participants and involve them in responding to the strategic vision and goals drafted previously. As of August 2007, action teams were continuing to expand their membership to reflect the resources needed on each team; refine outcomes to make them measurable, succinct, and meaningful; and develop a mix of strategies, both short- and long-term. This work will be refined, documented, tracked, and evaluated as it proceeds.

In the remainder of the action-planning-and-implementation stage, the management committee will coordinate the work of the teams and set priority areas for action. This will result in a final action plan to be shared with the entire community. For more information, visit www.wilson2020vision.org.

- The community is better positioned to respond to rapid change because a team is in place and used ro working together. "When we were competing with a neighboring county for a state construction project," said Manager Noland, "we had a forum and process already developed that enabled us to put aside individual interests and band together as a county to win the project. That would not have happened ten years ago."[32]

A big challenge: true buy-in, not just lip-service support.

A specific example of progress through the visioning process is the high school graduation rate, which has gone from 52 percent to 72 percent since the subcommittee responsible for working on this portion of the community plan came into existence. Several of the programs developed to keep young people in school have come from this group, including graduation partnership programs and infrastructure improvements at schools. Said Manager Noland,

> *It's hard to pin down those successes to the work of that one [visioning subcommittee] group, but it has provided us the venue to be out in the community and get people talking together. I can't say those things the visioning group did were solely responsible for that change, but they certainly were supplemental, complementary, and contributed to the overall success in improving the high school graduation rate.*[33]

Principles of Successful Community Change

Many examples of successful (and unsuccessful) community visioning projects exist. The reasons for their success or failure can be complex and varied. Each community is unique in its strengths and assets, makeup and leadership, history and geography, politics and outside influences. These distinctions demand that each community carefully consider strategies that fit its needs rather than adopt a cookie-cutter approach to planning and visioning. Furthermore, each community must consider how much public or cross-sector participation is desirable. Choosing a more participatory, boundary-spanning approach will pose challenges and call for trade-offs.

We present a set of general principles that communities might consider before undertaking a community change effort. The principles draw on our experience and that of our colleagues.[34] They are supported by a review of relevant literature and best practices.[35] Each principle is followed by suggested practices and several examples from the experiences of the three North Carolina communities that we are highlighting. These examples represent equally valid but significantly different approaches to planning. (For more details on the communities' processes, see Table 2 and the sidebars on pages 24, 27, and 28.)

1. Value and seek broad community recognition of and support for the civic importance of work on community change.

- Obtain formal and true support or buy-in (that is, not just lip service; for example, formal resolutions of support, or endorsements) from existing governing institutions, civic organizations, and other important entities.
- Collect, share, and use community-wide indicators to measure progress.
- Adopt the vision, the values, and the philosophy on a community-wide and personal basis.

Once the vision and the goals of Wilson 2020 Community Vision were adopted, the steering committee sent an informational summary to more than 100 organizations, officials, and education and community leaders announcing the upcoming summit, inviting their impressions of the vision and the goals, and asking for their endorsement of the vision statement. Thirty-five responses were received, nearly all positive.

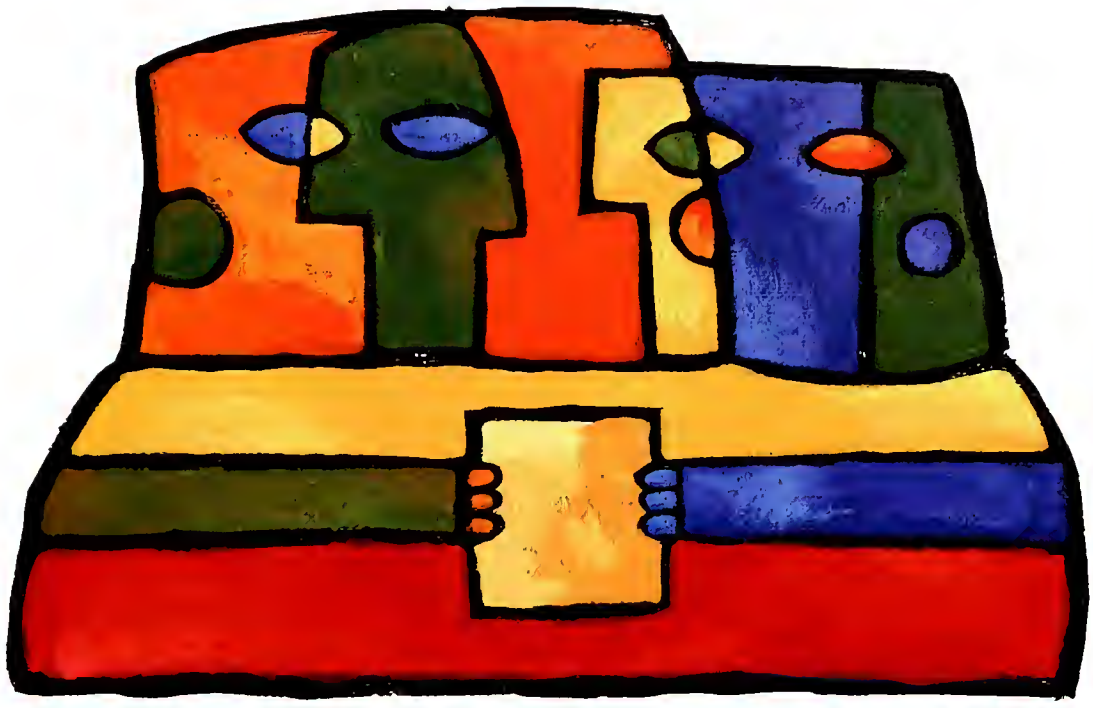
At the start of the Wilkes Vision 20/20 process, organizers spent time gathering data and indicators. A series of articles appeared that raised awareness and challenged the community to question its status relative to other places with questions like these: What is our pay compared with the rest of North Carolina? How does our high school dropout rate compare? What is the poverty rate among senior adults? This advance work was partly responsible for galvanizing public support for the visioning effort and brought more than 400 community members to the kickoff town hall meeting.

2. Structure and formalize the leadership and management functions of the community change effort.

- Adhere to regular meeting times, arrangements, and documentation.
- Routinely share information between meetings.
- Recruit, inform, and orient new leaders.
- Dedicate staff and professional support to the effort (through direct hires, job sharing, assignment of responsibilities to existing positions, contracts, rotation of responsibilities or functions, and so forth).

The Roxboro management team sets aside every other meeting to discuss ways in which it can implement the strategic plan and integrate or improve service delivery to support implementation. In the first few months after adopting their initial strategic plan, city officials did the following:

- Posted major changes to the website
- Purchased and installed new software to allow intracity information sharing
- Offered training in team building to foster a collaborative governance approach
- Rewrote individual performance objectives for the manager and the department heads in support of the plan's objectives
- Hired a public information officer



3. Emphasize shared responsibility between the public and private sectors.

- Contribute local and existing assets or resources to implement strategies.
- Weave together the comprehensive and strategic planning efforts of both sectors and integrate them into the community vision and goals.
- Undertake joint pilot programs.
- Plan for, seek, and leverage outside resources together.

Initial funding for the Wilkes Vision 20/20 effort came entirely from private corporations. Contributions from local government have come more recently. Original pledges were for five years. They have been renewed for another five years.

4. Intentionally build on local assets to increase civic capacity and leadership.

- Focus community development and planning efforts on what the community does well (its assets) rather than on what it lacks (its needs).
- Recognize and value methods and practices that emphasize the processes of leading, not just the products, thereby creating a stronger civic infrastructure. Equipping community members to be "process literate" enhances a community's ability to mobilize, manage, and sustain effective working relationships.

Using feedback from the community and its own sense of what building the community's capacity would take, the Wilson 2020 Community Vision Steering Committee chose two of its seven goals to emphasize collaboration and community. Specific strategies to support those goals included leadership development programs and other ways to build civic infrastructure, such as local government sponsorship of forums about the local political process and strengthening of neighborhood and community association through greater coordination, education, and communication.

5. Continually seek pertinent and valid information and the input and the perspective of the community as community change is planned, organized, and executed.

- Ensure that planning efforts mirror community intent by checking in with community members and incorporating community involvement in all phases, stages, and strategies.
- Periodically revisit existing feedback and material generated during the community visioning stage for continuing integration.

Recognizing that change is inevitable and that planning too far into the future is impractical, the Roxboro City Council decided to treat its final document as a work in progress, subject to continual review and revision in order to adapt to changing conditions, circumstances, partners, and opportunities. The final document is intentionally brief, and its format intentionally user-friendly, to encourage sharing, discussion, and understanding of the document by a variety of community organizations and citizens.

In 2006, Wilkes Vision 20/20 brought together a diverse group of people to brainstorm possibilities, prioritize options, and work toward consensus on emerging community issues. In addition, organizers asked, "Is the Vision 20/20 process still relevant? Do we need to exist?" According to Fran Evans, Vision 20/20 director, "The answer was a resounding yes!"[36]

6. Focus on achieving visible results that get the community closer to the vision and stimulate continued commitment.

- Choose a mix of short- and long-term priorities, and concentrate on some early results.
- Develop a successful collaborative effort early, even if it is on a relatively small or insignificant project.

- Report progress to the community on an ongoing basis.
- Celebrate accomplishments.

The comprehensive nature of Wilson 2020 Community Vision required a continuous flow of messages to the greater Wilson community. This outreach was especially important for the success of the various strategies of community engagement. Early on, a website was developed and was subsequently housed and maintained by Barton College. The *Wilson Daily Times* supported the project with newspaper coverage throughout the process and extensive advertising of project-related events. Additionally, a marketing subcommittee kept a steady stream of advertising, radio spots, and stories running. A videographer was used at the community summit, and segments from the event were put together in a twenty-minute video to publicize the visioning effort. Shortly after the summit and the refinement of action plans, the management committee identified short-term, "low-hanging fruit" strategies and long-term, "stretch" strategies. Some have already been accomplished, such as development of a comprehensive community calendar, hosted on the *Wilson Daily Times* website.

7. Continuously monitor the process and the products (outcomes), and evaluate them against the action plan.

- Use group critiques and self-critiques to improve effectiveness.[37]
- Update initial indicators using new information.
- Set up an evaluation system for integration across teams, projects, collaboratives, and partnerships.

Self-evaluation is continuous in Roxboro city government. Elements of the final draft of the strategic plan, especially those that require changing policies or procedures and strengthening or developing relationships, were factored into the annual work plans for the council, the manager, department heads, and other staff. In this way, the plan became a tool and a guiding force for holding all personnel accountable for their work.

Most of Wilkes Vision 20/20's indicators of progress are qualitative rather than quantitative. Each indicator is periodically reviewed by the appropriate committee to see if it is still relevant, if the related activity is on target, and what else may have changed in the community. "For example, one goal of the infrastructure committee was to have the highway widened and install natural gas," said Manager Noland. "All that has happened, so now that group has folded into a support group for the government committee."[38]

Table 3. **Levels of Citizen Involvement in Developing a Vision or a Plan**

Telling	"We've got to do this. It's our vision/plan. You be excited about it." *Governing body imposes vision.* People don't get voice.*
Selling	"We have the best answer. Let's see if we can get you to buy in." *Governing body develops vision, enrolls people in it.*
Testing	"What excites you about this vision/plan? What doesn't?" *Governing body gauges acceptance, support, and relevance of its vision. If there is not sufficient community support, governing body goes back to drawing board. Success depends on people's willingness to be truthful and realistic.†*
Consulting	"What vision/plan do other stakeholders recommend that we adopt?" *Governing body engages people in designing vision. They consider ramifications of their choices.† Governing body plays role of judge in accepting/ignoring what people say. Governing body determines content of vision and decides how to begin moving in direction of vision.*
Co-creating	"Let's create the culture we individually and collectively want." *Every step involves discussion and shared choice by both governing body and community members.†*

* "Governing body" refers to any formal group leading the planning effort, be it a local government board, a collaborative leadership team, or some other body that has ultimate responsibility for the vision or the strategic plan.

† The governing body will have to consider whether various stakeholders know enough about the roles and the responsibilities of city government to be able to make these judgments or understand the ramifications of their decisions. If not, community participants will have to be educated in using this approach.

Issues for Local Government Leaders to Consider

Gauging the Value and the Level of Participation

Assuming that a community wants to include a broad range of stakeholders, how does it decide how much participation is desirable? As one local government official said, "The biggest issue we're wrestling with is the scope of the project. We're wondering whether a large-scale, time-consuming project would yield significantly better results than a less ambitious strategy."[39] As elected and appointed officials wrestle with this basic dilemma, they might ask themselves these questions:

- What are our motivations for undertaking a planning effort?
  - __ To develop a comprehensive approach to services that can guide staff and elected officials in preparing budgets?
  - __ To explore ways to increase the local resources available to undertake community problem-solving efforts?
  - __ To minimize citizen opposition to decisions?
  - __ To engage people from throughout the community in guiding their shared future?
  - __ To build an open community in which people trust and care about one another?
- What do we hope to gain by involving citizens? What do they need to know? What do we need to know from them?
- How will we decide what approach is right for our community? Who will make the decision?

- What are the added financial implications of involving citizens?

Every approach has its trade-offs. Chief among the elements to consider are time, community commitment and support, costs, and information. Community planning processes that are highly citizen-driven are extremely time-intensive and often expensive. The challenge for a community is to balance the competing considerations of efficiency and cost-effectiveness while building in mechanisms to encourage community involvement in decision making.

A community can choose from a range of approaches in undertaking a community planning project (see Table 3). These can be seen as stages, if the ultimate goal is a broadly inclusive effort that will yield a shared vision. Alternatively, in preliminary conversations to design the scope of work, a community can use the table to assess and discuss the trade-offs of the approach it chooses. In this way, it can ensure a shared understanding among those involved before it gets started or if confusion arises in the midst of work.

Addressing Political Considerations

There is value in having elected officials participate in the planning without dominating it or tainting it with political overtones. Community planning processes provide an arena for raising issues of value to the community. Therefore all voices must be counted and heard. By encouraging broad participation and input, community leaders create the expectation that the perspectives of people who often are marginalized or are out of the mainstream are considered on equal footing with all others. Yet how priorities are ultimately chosen and implemented can unintentionally (or intentionally) exclude these voices in an effort to strive for efficient or expedient decisions, avoid politically sensitive or uncomfortable situations, or simply deny the existence of opposing viewpoints. Elected officials must be fully aware of the impact that they can have on a visioning effort.

Measuring Progress

Community indicators are an important accountability component for community development efforts. Before the visioning process even began, the leaders of Wilson 2020 Community Vision recognized a need to have a specific set of indicators that could be kept and updated continually, both to monitor progress and to facilitate future planning. Part of the implementation phase of Wilson 2020 Community Vision is to determine which indicators will be used to monitor progress. In making this determination, two kinds of indicators are important to consider. First, there are several global indicators that are readily obtainable and easily compared across counties and

All photos by David Dalton / BlueWater Media

Scenes from the Wilson 2020 Community Visioning Summit, held April 16, 2007, at Barton College.

from county to (at least) state—for example, high school graduation rates, unemployment rates, homeownership rates, and household incomes. The North Carolina State Data Center is a good resource for many of these indicators.[40]

The second category of indicators is more specific to a community's vision. Each thematic action area should include a set of goals, outcomes (or objectives), and strategies. Ideally, each outcome would have associated with it at least one measurable indicator. Some of these indicators may be found in the list of global indicators. However, most indicators specific to a stated desired outcome or objective are likely to be more community-specific and thus may need to be collected locally. An excellent resource for understanding how measuring results fits into vision-driven, collaborative governance is the book *Results That Matter*.[41] The authors argue that "advanced community governance" entails alignment of "getting things done" with engaging citizens and measuring results.

Choose clear indicators to monitor progress. Consider using both global and specific indicators.

Maintaining Accountability

As communities engage a broad range of stakeholders in designing, planning, and developing their future, the interactions among potential partners increase, and so do the opportunities for misinformation, miscommunication, or misunderstanding. Often the visioning partners are exploring innovative ways to address broad public problems and new ways of working together to do so. They are not sure what specific activities will be successful, so their agreements are in terms of general services or outcomes, such as improved quality of life. This represents a change in the way people traditionally view accountability, with a focus on restraints and reports. Measures that have customarily defined successful programmatic outcomes and relationships may not be appropriate for new ways of working together.

The traditional lines of control and accountability are blurred and may no longer be appropriate to the new partnerships and collaborative efforts. Yet visioning participants can design new accountability patterns if they are willing to share decision making, take time to deliberate and experiment, and respect the different perspectives of the various organizational representatives. Given community visioning's focus on product, process, and creation of new relationships, accountability measures used in community visioning projects must be flexible enough to accommodate expanded collaboratives.[42]

Conclusion

Local governments in North Carolina face a sea change that will affect their communities in immediate and real ways. The trends toward outsourcing of jobs and population shifts are key drivers of change. More and more people are able to choose where they want to live on the basis of what type of lifestyle and location appeals to them the most. As a result, quality-of-life issues are becoming at least as important as traditional forces of economic development. Quality-of-life issues span the spectrum, so they cannot be adequately addressed by just one sector. Shaping the multitude of community characteristics that determine quality of life requires cross-sector relationships and contributions.

Visioning entails citizens creating a shared sense of direction for their community. It is both a product and a process, built on the common ground discovered in the journey. The product provides tangible results, often an action plan that identifies strategies for achieving the goals expressed in the vision statement. The process itself, one of broad-based citizen engagement, is meant to extend beyond the specific activities and contribute to building the overall civic capacity of communities and regions.

Today's multitude of economic and social forces can be viewed as a tumultuous sea on which a ship (the community) is operated by a diverse crew (the various community groups and organizations). For the ship to sail effectively and in the right direction, all crew members must work in synchrony toward the desired destination. Too often, ships are tossed around by the sea, become directionless, and drift under the force of the wind or the waves. A shared vision serves as a beacon, guiding the crew to work together to steer the ship in the desired direction.

Local governments are in a prime position to catalyze efforts to create such a vision. In North Carolina, many local governments are stepping up to the challenge of engaging their communities in new ways to develop visions that not only help government leaders know which way to go, but also enable the direction to be shared with other key community partners.

Notes

1. Norman Walzer, preface to *Community Strategic Visioning Programs*, ed. Norman Walzer (Westport, CT: Praeger, 1996), at xi.
2. William R. Potapchuk and Jarle P. Crocker Jr., "Exploring the Elements of Civic Capital," *National Civic Review* 88 (1999): 180.
3. Alvin Toffler, *Future Shock* (New York: Bantam Books, 1970).
4. Steven C. Ames, "Community Visioning: Planning for the Future in Oregon's Local Communities" (paper presented at the national conference of the American Planning Association, San Diego, CA, April 5–9, 1997), 5; Robert Shipley and Ross Newkirk, "Visioning: Did Anybody See Where It Came From?" *Journal of Planning Literature* 12 (1998): 407–16.
5. Bruce Adams and John Parr, *Boundary Crossers: Case Studies of How Ten of America's Metropolitan Regions Work* (College Park, MD: James MacGregor Burns Academy of Leadership Press, 1997).
6. Derek Okubo, ed., *The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook* (Denver, CO: National Civic League Press, 2000), 6.
7. For links to numerous articles on Chattanooga, *see* www.chattanooga-chamber.com/GetToKnowUs/americastalking.asp.
8. Ames, "Community Visioning," 6.
9. David E. Booher, "Collaborative Governance Practices and Democracy," *National Civic Review* 93 (2004): 36.
10. Center for Rural Pennsylvania, *Planning for the Future: A Handbook on Community Visioning* (3d ed.) (Harrisburg, PA: Center for Rural Pennsylvania, 2006), www.ruralpa.org/visioning3.pdf, 6.
11. Ames, "Community Visioning," 10.
12. Potapchuk and Crocker, "Exploring," 180; William R. Potapchuk, "Building Sus-

tainable Community Politics: Synergizing Participatory, Institutional, and Representative Democracy," *National Civic Review* 85 (1996): 57.

13. Christopher L. Plein, Kenneth E. Green, and David G. Williams, "Organic Planning: A New Approach to Public Participation in Local Governance," *Social Science Journal* 35 (1998): 519.

14. Carl M. Moore, Gianni Longo, and Patsy Palmer, "Visioning," in *The Consensus Building Handbook: A Comprehensive Guide to Reaching Agreement*, ed. Lawrence Susskind, Sarah McKearnan, and Jennifer Thomas-Larmer (Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage, 1999), 561.

15. Two of the cases in this article (Wilkes Vision 20/20 and Wilson 2020 Community Vision) are multijurisdictional.

16. *See* Walzer, *Community Strategic Visioning Programs.*

17. An alternative but related approach is to maintain a small, more exclusive leadership team that appoints a large group or task force to participate in the visioning process. Instead of broadly engaging the whole community, the team pulls together a large, representative group that represents the broader community. The large group may then complete the visioning process over a shorter period, possibly in a retreat setting. This approach may have the advantage of being more focused and taking less time. However, it may seem more exclusive and not engage the whole community as effectively as a broadly participatory approach.

18. John M. Bryson, *Strategic Planning for Public and Nonprofit Organizations* (3d ed.) (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004). *See* Resource A.

19. National Civic League, *The Civic Index: Measuring Your Community's Civic Health* (2d ed.) (Denver, CO: National Civic League, 1999).

20. Bryson, *Strategic Planning*. *See* chapter 5.

21. Okubo, *The Community Visioning and Strategic Planning Handbook*, 36.

22. The National Civic League guide is for "community visioning and strategic planning." No distinction is made between the two terms. Consultant Henry Luke calls the facilitated portion of visioning "community strategic planning," implying that strategic planning is part of a broader visioning effort. *See* Luke Planning Inc., Community Strategic Planning, www.lukevision.com/strategic.htm.

23. Bryson, *Strategic Planning*.

24. Booher, "Collaborative Governance Practices," 34.

25. Ken Noland, Wilkesboro town manager, telephone interview by Lydian Altman, August 14, 2007.

26. Noland, interview; Nelson Granade, pastor, First Baptist Church, telephone interview by Lydian Altman, September 11, 2007; Linda Cheek, employee, Wilkesboro Chamber of Commerce, and Fran Evans, director, Wilkes Vision 20/20, telephone interview (conference call) by Lydian Altman, October 18, 2007.

27. Noland, interview.

28. Granade, interview.

29. Ibid.

30. Ibid.

31. Cheek, interview.

32. Noland, interview.

33. Ibid.

34. Ricardo S. Morse et al., *Wilson 2020 Report and Recommendations* (Chapel Hill, NC: School of Government, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2007).

35. Suzanne W. Morse, *Smart Communities: How Citizens and Local Leaders Can Use Strategic Thinking to Build a Brighter Future* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2004); David D. Chrislip, *The Collaborative Leadership Fieldbook: A Guide for Citizens and Civic Leaders* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2002).

36. Evans, interview.

37. Following are examples of the self-evaluation questions for Roxboro's council, staff, employees, and citizens: What improvement in work processes can you suggest to meet the goals outlined in the city's strategic plan? What products, events, or projects have your strategic planning efforts produced so far? What unanticipated opportunities or challenges also required your attention during the evaluation of this session or the planning process?

38. Noland, interview.

39. David Leonetti, management intern, City of Hickory, e-mail to Lydian Altman, August 3, 2007.

40. North Carolina State Data Center, http://linc.state.nc.us/.

41. Paul D. Epstein, Paul M. Coates, and Lyle D. Wray, *Results That Matter: Improving Communities by Engaging Citizens, Measuring Performance, and Getting Things Done* (San Francisco: Jossey-Bass, 2005).

42. Accountability relationships are viewed as processes—ways of interacting—around the expectations created in answering four questions: *Responsibility*—Who is expected to carry out which actions or produce what results for whom? *Discretion*—Who is expected to invoke, interpret, or alter those responsibility expectations? *Reporting*—Who should provide what information to whom about how responsibilities are carried out? *Reviewing and revising*—Who is expected to use what information to make decisions about the future of the relationship?

How the answers to those questions are put into practice constitutes accountability. Who answers each of the questions and how those answers are developed in large part determine whether accountability is an adversarial process, focused on punishment, or a collaborative process, focused on improving the quality of public life. For a full discussion of this concept, *see* Lydian Altman-Sauer, Margaret Henderson, and Gordon P. Whitaker, "Developing Mutual Accountability in Local Government–Nonprofit Relationships," *Popular Government*, Fall 2003, 5–6.

Collaborative Leadership in Sampson County

Heather Scarbrough

As part of documenting the experiences of communities in North Carolina facing numerous challenges and demands for change, we offer this case study of one rural county addressing education needs in the face of limited resources.—Editor

When governments decide to try to solve a problem, they often find themselves running more of a marathon than a sprint. Along the way, many drop out of the race or lose momentum. However, in Sampson County, North Carolina, a core group of visionary leaders recognized the importance of endurance and persevered when the tasks at hand seemed unattainable.

"We realized in 2002 that school construction was a priority in Sampson County," said Kermit Williamson, former chair of the Sampson County Board of Commissioners.[1] Improving the quality of education in the community became the executive leadership's focus, and the marathon began.

"We hit several different hurdles throughout," said Scott Sauer, Sampson County manager. "It would have been really easy to be disheartened. We had to very quickly pull together commissioners and school boards, and there were times commissioners had to make hard decisions and bring bad news." The commitment made by the leading officials and administrators in the city and the county would be challenged along the way, but this agricultural community rallied behind the executive leadership's decision to construct and fund three new high schools simultaneously.

Starting the Race

Slightly smaller than Rhode Island, Sampson is the largest county in the state. Despite its size, it is home to only about 63,000 people.[2] It is one of the fifteen counties in North Carolina that continue to operate both a city and a county school system.[3]

Too many school trailers, not enough money.

As serious overcrowding worsened in the Clinton City and Sampson County school systems, Sampson County Superintendent L. Stewart Hobbs and the Sampson County Board of Education started the first leg of the race. Hobbs invited the county commissioners to visit Midway High School on a routine day and observe students changing classes.

"We got stampeded," explained County Commissioner John Blanton.

"I've never been so startled in my entire life," said former County Board Chair Williamson. "I couldn't believe how many people were in that building. I immediately drove to Union High School and saw the same thing."

Currently the Sampson County School System uses 119 mobile units. Some schools in the system have more mobile units outside than classrooms inside.[4] Furthermore, the county has more students attending classes in mobile units than the entire city school system has.[5]

"When the commissioners saw [the overcrowding], they were bound and determined to help us," said Superintendent Hobbs.

"We realized we couldn't continue to say, 'We'll do it next year,' and that helped pull us together," said Clinton City Superintendent Gene Hales. "The schools need something now, and we can't wait."

As the need for new school buildings in the city and the county became a priority, a collaborative movement built among the core leadership at the city and county levels. This collaboration led to the current construction of two county high schools and one city high school, which will open their doors in fall 2008.

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Preparing for the Challenge

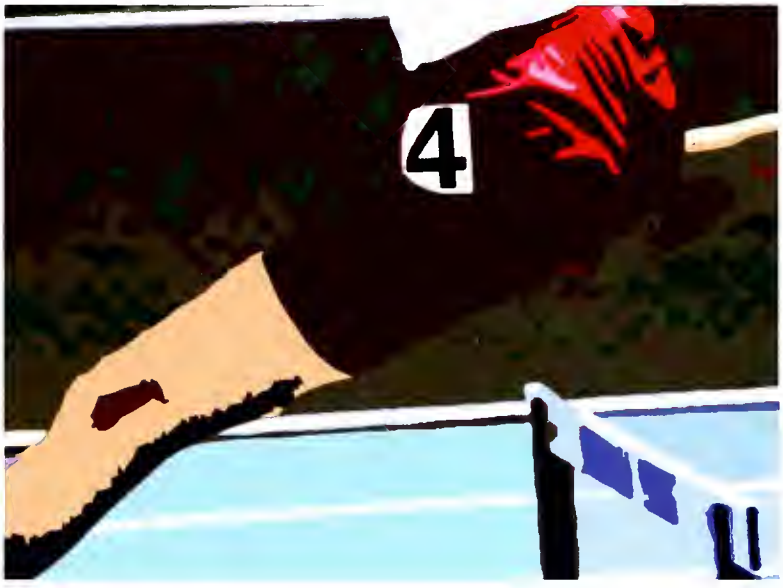
Some local governments might have been overwhelmed by the need for new schools and the resources to finance them. However, community leaders in Sampson County developed a unique synergy and created a unified effort to get results.

The synergy was a result of the relationships that had developed among the executive leadership. Ten years ago, a select group of community leaders began meeting quarterly.[6] The meetings did not have an agenda. Instead, the goal was to build relationships, keep communication lines open, and talk in a nonthreatening environment about the issues at hand.[7]

Quarterly meetings eventually became monthly breakfast meetings that now are hosted at Sampson Community College. The leaders present each month include the Sampson County manager, the chair of the Sampson County Board of Commissioners, the chair of the Sampson County Board of Education, the chair of the Clinton City Board of Education, the chair of the Sampson Community College Trustees, the superintendent of Sampson County Schools, the superintendent of Clinton City Schools, and the president of Sampson Community College. The informal networking opportunity provides a safe place for these city and county officials and administrators to discuss ideas in an unusual forum.

In 2001 the theme of the executive leadership meetings became sharing a vision and planning for the future of Sampson County.[8] The theme soon focused on schools, particularly on how Clinton and Sampson County could have a shared vision for relieving overcrowding while planning for growth.

Having these relationships in place laid a foundation of trust and collaboration that would be necessary later for the success of school financing and construction.



Overcoming Hurdles

Informal networking lays the foundation for collaboration in financing new schools.

Once schools became a priority among the executive leadership, the monthly meetings provided an environment that fostered collaborative discussions on ways to make the shared vision a reality. The group hired an independent demographer to examine the state's growth patterns and projections. The school systems already were seeing growing enrollments each year, and the demographer projected that the schools would see an increase of about 800 students from 2001 to 2010.[9] This projection validated the school boards' priorities and showed the decision makers where the greatest needs lay.[10] Following the study, the school boards determined that building three new high schools would have the greatest impact on the students.[11]

A planning committee was formed to address how the community could fund a project of this magnitude. "We had to come together as a committee to discuss the pros and cons of what we could and could not do," said Commissioner Blanton. "We began to discuss what we wanted to do, when we wanted to do it, and how we were going to get the funds."

"Initially, we just didn't have the money," said Superintendent Hobbs. There were funds to build one high school, but the concern was that building just one would be political suicide for some board members who served other attendance areas that needed new facilities.

"You were dealing with different communities wanting their school built first, and that's where the problem came," said Commissioner Blanton.

The county hired Doug Carter, a financial adviser who had helped the county with projects in the past. He talked with finance department personnel and the county commissioners to figure out a way to finance the three schools, explained Sylvia Blinson, finance officer for Sampson County. The finance department calculated that funding school construction completely for three high schools would require $110 million. The commissioners determined that they could provide partial funding but the county would have to look for other ways to fund the projects.[12]

The commissioners had a difficult decision to make. Although they were fiscally conservative, they committed themselves to raise taxes by up to 30 cents over several years if necessary to fund school construction.[13] "A 30-cent tax increase—that's heresy in Sampson County," explained former County Board Chair Williamson. "You have to understand: It's a bipartisan board, but fairly conservative. But [the project] was so imperative that something had to be done."

On March 3, 2005, the board of commissioners and the school boards held a public meeting at the civic center to present the school construction priorities and funding decisions to the citizens.

"I felt pretty confident that the boards would vote [for the project and commit to the tax increases]," said Jeff Wilson, current chair of the Sampson County Board of Commissioners. "As far as public input—you never know what the public input is going to be."

"[It] was packed the night we voted on the whole thing," recalled former County Board Chair Williamson. Hundreds of parents, teachers, interested citizens, and the press filled the civic center for the meeting.

"Dr. Hobbs asked me if the board of commissioners had the guts to do this, and I said, 'Sometimes you just have to do the right thing,'" said current County Board Chair Wilson.

"At that point, we couldn't back up," said County Manager Sauer. "Kermit [Williamson] had to encourage his colleagues that now was the time to vote."

The boards voted unanimously to move forward. Some parents and teachers were upset, but not for the reasons that might be expected in the face of a potential tax increase. "It wasn't 'Don't build them, don't tax us,'" said County Manager Sauer; "it was 'My school first.'"

"[This] was a big undertaking by the county commissioners," said Superintendent Hobbs. "We were surprised the county commissioners didn't face more backlash," said Hobbs.

"Nobody came in there and said anything negative. The ones that came in said, 'We appreciate what you're doing for the schools,'" reported Commissioner Blanton. This confirmed the perception that schools were a priority among the citizens.

Once the boards voted unanimously, they raised taxes 9 percent the next year. "[We wanted] to go ahead and start generating revenue before we even needed it, to show everyone we were serious about this project," said former County Board Chair Williamson.

Following the meeting at the civic center, the boards, the finance department, and the planning committee continued to investigate where the remaining funds would come from.

"Public bonds have never been real big in this county," said Superintendent Hobbs. To date, only a bond referendum for water has passed.

Commissioners explore a novel approach to funding school construction.

The planning committee assessed whether a countywide bond referendum would pass and decided that it might not. Instead, the county began examining a combination of funding sources. Unlike bonds, certificates of participation (COPs) do not require voter approval, so the board of commissioners decided to pursue this alternative. Further, Sampson County had a history of working with the Rural Development program of the U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) to fund projects. However, it had never attempted such an approach to fund school construction.[14] The board of commissioners decided that a blended strategy of COPs and Rural Development funds had more chance for success "because of the size of the proposed debt load for a rural county," said Manager Sauer. "The security of federally financed loans over a forty-year amortization at 4.25 percent was an attractive mix for the financial bond markets and the rating agencies."

Past successful relationships with USDA had helped the county develop a strong rapport with the Kinston office of the Rural Development program, explained County Manager Sauer. The county viewed the Kinston office "like an extension of county government that enhances our ability to manage."

When school construction became a priority, this relationship with the Kinston office allowed commissioners to be open and honest about their need for funding. Ed Causey, area manager for the office, credited the county for its eventual success in obtaining funds: "You have to be ready to spring when the resources are ready."

Continuing to pursue potential USDA money, the county leaders decided to take their strategy to the Local Government Commission (LGC) in Raleigh. The purpose of this meeting was to hear the LGC's review of the proposed strategy and gain its informal buy-in before taking the project much further.[15] "When we went to the LGC, we were not sure they were going to okay this thing," said former County Board Chair Williamson.

For this preliminary review with the LGC, the board of commissioners, the county attorney, the county manager, the county finance officer, USDA representatives, bankers, and bond counsel attended. Their presence showed the LGC that everyone was on board and willing to work together to see this project through, explained Blinson.

As the county representatives shared their strategy with the LGC, the main

question raised was how a county so small in population was going to manage a project of this proportion. "The selling point was that the USDA was viewed as a partner and would be involved at every step of the process: negotiating with the architect, developing construction bids, verifying proposals, and attending monthly progress meetings," said County Manager Sauer. In addition, the commissioners' commitment to raise taxes in anticipation of the project was viewed favorably. The board of commissioners took the minutes from the public meeting to the LGC. "They could see we didn't have any opposition," said former County Board Chair Williamson.

On receiving the LGC's blessing, a delegation from the county traveled to New York City to pitch the capital project to bond rating companies. The delegation included the chair of the board of commissioners, the county manager, the county attorney, the county finance officer, a USDA representative, and the financial consultant. The group made presentations to various agencies to get bond insurance so that Sampson, as a rural county, could get a AAA rating for its COPs and thus obtain the lowest possible interest rate.

On receiving that rating, the county focused its efforts on gaining USDA loan funds. In all, it obtained $49.5 million for school construction. "If you develop a good relationship with your local office, when the money becomes available and there are projects ready to go, you have put yourself in a position to be ready at the right time," said Finance Officer Blinson.

"We got the word [about available funding] in December 2005," said Area Manager Causey. "When [developing] an application, whoever gets one in first and the fastest has the most opportunity." Several staff gave up their Christmas vacations to get the application through in time, said Finance Officer Blinson, and "we believe we were the first application in that year."

Across the country, other local governments did not have the time for discussion if they wanted to act on this available money. Sampson County leaders, however, had been having proactive discussions all along about what they would do if and when an opportunity presented itself. "From our standing, it all came back down to the county. They were willing to adapt their system," said Area Manager Causey. "What happened here could have happened anywhere in the country."

In the meantime, Clinton City High School's design was finished and went out for bidding. "The successful bid for the Clinton City High School project was $138 per square foot and within budget," said County Manager Sauer. "A month later, the two county high schools were bid, and the result was a $13 million budget shortfall due to the bid pricing at $197 per square foot. The bids for the two county high schools were rejected, and the school board and county commissioners began exploring an alternative delivery method to construct these two projects."

The bid for Clinton City High School was good for only sixty days, so the executive leadership had to move quickly."[16] One commissioner recommended using the construction management-at-risk approach.[17] Taking this approach resulted in a complete shift in the bidding process for the two county high schools.[18]

"To be honest, some of our own people didn't think it was possible," said Superintendent Hales. "You run up against a wall trying to look at a vision and think about some of the things that you really want to do as a school system."[19]

The chair of the Sampson Community College Board of Trustees, Larry Barnes, described one breakfast meeting during the process when spirits were low. Superintendent Hales came with a book on visionary leadership, related Barnes. Hales said, "We cannot let this thing die," when everyone had been about ready to give up.

This mentality was called on again following the bidding process, when construction prices rose after Hurricane Katrina. Now facing a $1.4 million shortfall, Clinton City High School was going to have to cut portions of its building project. "Literally, storms would come up, and we still did not give up," said Superintendent Hales. He kicked off a community effort called A March to a Million and raised more than $2 million in six months for an auditorium and a gym at the new high school.

"It was just a gift of God for us to get this through, because there were so

many problems," said Commissioner Blanton. "We just sat back and held on, and said, 'What next?'"

"It all goes back to perseverance and looking for another way to make it happen," said Superintendent Hales.

Reaching the Finish

Often local governments do not have the stamina for a strong finish. However, the executive leadership of Sampson County pulled together, building on the foundation established in the monthly breakfast meetings and overcoming the many obstacles along the way.

The culture of the executive leadership in the county is to be united and cooperative, encouraging free-flowing information. Officials and administrators are willing to set personal agendas and turf issues aside. "We try to find our common interest and lock arms with one another," said County Manager Sauer. "Sampson County is blessed with elected leadership that would rather work together than fight together."

The promise of a steak dinner if victorious.

This mentality has contributed to Sampson County's many successes. USDA has invested more in Sampson County than in any other county in the United States, and Clinton City High School is the only school in the country completely funded with Rural Development dollars.[20] Furthermore, the county has "the distinction of being the first county in North Carolina to have certificates of participation executed and delivered for school construction."[21]

Although many people were skeptical along the way, including the superintendent of the county schools, who still owes the board members a steak dinner, this project will bring tremendous benefits to the county.

Although the county school systems still have many needs, they will be able to discard about eighty mobile units by building the two high schools, and they plan to continue with school improvements and capital construction projects.[22] "I don't think the public will ever fully realize what has been done here," said Board of Trustees Chair Barnes. "There are a lot of challenges still ahead, and the job isn't finished."

Learning Lessons from the Race

Local governments could learn from Sampson County's example. County Manager Sauer attributes much of the success to the elected officials, who could literally sit around a table each month and put differences aside.[23] "You have to build relationships first. That sort of initiated everything else," said Superintendent Hales. "First you fight [for yours], but then you help others also. To me, that's the biggest piece."

"We had to have buy-in," said Superintendent Hobbs. "We all have our battles; we're like brothers. We like to fight together, but then we can still come together."

Communication and involvement of stakeholders from the beginning were features that many of the elected and appointed leaders identified as important to the process.

With regard to elected officials and boards, former County Board Chair Williamson stressed the importance of unanimity: "If one of my commissioners had said, 'No, I'm against this project,' it would have never gone."

"You need someone to shepherd the process, and Sampson County is lucky to have longevity in many positions," said County Manager Sauer. "Unless vision and leadership are coming from the elected spot, it won't happen. Ideally the elected officials have to come to the table with a vision, a spirit of cooperation, and a willingness to set priorities based on physical need."

Notes

1. Unless otherwise noted, all quotations and attributions are from interviews by Heather Scarbrough, in Clinton, N.C., August and September 2007, with Larry Barnes (chair, Sampson Community College Board of Trustees), John Blanton (commissioner, Sampson County Board of Commissioners), Sylvia Blinson (finance officer, Sampson County), Ed Causey (area manager, U.S. Department of Agriculture–Rural Development, Kinston Office), Dr. Gene Hales (superintendent, Clinton City Schools), Dr. L. Stewart Hobbs (superintendent, Sampson County Schools), E. R. Mason (former chair, Clinton City Board of Education), Scott Sauer (manager, Sampson County), Kermit Williamson (former chair, Sampson County Board of Commissioners), and Jeff Wilson (chair, Sampson County Board of Commissioners).

2. The North Carolina Office of State Planning estimated the population of Sampson County to be 63,566 in 2005.

3. Sauer, interview.

4. Hobbs, interview.

5. Interview by Heather Scarbrough, in Clinton, N.C., August 2007.

6. Williamson, interview.

7. Sauer, interview; Williamson, interview; interview by Heather Scarbrough, in Clinton, N.C., September 2007.

8. Hales, interview.

9. Ibid.

10. Sauer, interview.

11. Hobbs, interview.

12. Sauer, interview.

13. Ibid.

14. Sampson County has worked with USDA on a number of projects, including a water system infrastructure and a jail and law enforcement facility.

15. Sauer, interview.

16. Williamson, interview.

17. Construction management-at-risk involves interviewing qualified contractors and selecting one on the basis of qualifications and experience. There is a negotiated guaranteed maximum price, which eliminates surprises and ensures that a project can come in under budget.

18. Sauer, interview.

19. Hales, interview.

20. Causey, interview; Hales, interview.

21. Official Statement prepared by Sampson County, N.C., Certificates of Participation, Series 2006 Evidencing Proportionate Undivided Interests in Rights to Receive Certain Revenues Pursuant to an Installment Purchase Contract with the County of Sampson, North Carolina.

22. Hobbs, interview.

23. Sauer, interview.

FROM THE MPA PROGRAM

What Drives General Obligation Bond Ratings for North Carolina's Counties?

Creighton Avila

Between 1990 and 2000, North Carolina experienced a 21 percent increase in population.[1] Since 2000 the state's rapid population growth has continued. The influx of new residents has placed a burden on the state's infrastructure. The American Society of Civil Engineers has cited many current infrastructure needs in the state, including the following:[2]

- $5.92 billion in wastewater needs
- 55 percent of school buildings with at least one inadequate feature

To help finance projects to meet these needs, the state and its local governments must incur debt. Nearly all this debt will be in the form of bonds that are marketed in public sales.[3] Debt that is sold publicly is marketed through investment bankers to interested individuals, mutual funds, banks, and other investors, and it is typically rated by bond rating agencies. Bond ratings directly affect the interest rates charged for debt (the total amount a local government owes) and debt service (the amount that is due each year). A high or superior bond rating can save considerable amounts of money for any governmental entity issuing large amounts of debt. As a result, public officials involved in decisions to finance major infrastructure projects want to know what variables can result in high or improved bond ratings.

The potential variables that result in high or improved bond ratings fall into four categories: management strategies/administrative, debt, economic, and

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What Is a Moody's Credit Rating?

Following are the generic rating classifications used by Moody's, from Aaa to Caa, accompanied by explanations of their meaning. Moody's applies the numeric modifiers 1, 2, and 3 in each classification from Aa to Caa. The modifier 1 indicates a ranking in the higher end of the generic rating category; the modifier 2, a ranking in the middle of the generic rating category; and the modifier 3, a ranking in the lower end of the generic rating category.

Aaa
Bonds rated **Aaa** are judged to be of the best quality. They carry the smallest degree of investment risk.

Aa (Aa1, Aa2, Aa3)
Bonds rated **Aa** are judged to be of high quality by all standards. Together with the Aaa group, they are generally known as high-grade bonds.

A (A1, A2, A3)
Bonds rated **A** possess many favorable investment attributes and are considered to be upper-medium-grade obligations.

Baa (Baa1, Baa2, Baa3)
Bond rated **Baa** are considered to be medium-grade obligations; that is, they are neither highly protected nor poorly secured.

Ba (Ba1, Ba2, Ba3)
Bonds rated **Ba** are judged to have speculative elements; their future cannot be considered well assured.

B (B1, B2, B3)
Bonds rated **B** generally lack the characteristics of a desirable investment. Assurance of interest and principal payments or of maintenance of other terms of the contract over any long period may be small.

Caa (Caa1, Caa2, Caa3)
Bonds rated **Caa** are of poor standing. Such issues may be in default, or elements of danger may be present with respect to principal or interest.

Ca
Bonds rated **Ca** represent obligations that are highly speculative. Such issues often are in default or have other marked shortcomings.

C
Bonds rated **C** are the lowest-rated class of bonds. They can be regarded as having extremely poor prospects of ever attaining any real investment standing.

Source: From *Moody's Approach to Local Government Financial Analysis*, by Illiana Pappas, James Mintzer, and Linda Lipnick (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 2002).

financial. Moody's Investors Service has stated, "Each of the four credit categories carries equal weight."[4]

This article reports the results of a study examining how selected variables from the four credit categories influence general obligation (G.O.) bond ratings for the seventy-seven North Carolina counties that have a Moody's Investors Service rating. (For an explanation of Moody's ratings, see the sidebar on page 41.) The study used Moody's ratings for two reasons. First, Moody's rates the G.O. bonds of more North Carolina counties than do its two competitors, Standard & Poor's and Fitch Ratings: 77, versus 73 and 15, respectively. Second, earlier research on which the study builds uses Moody's ratings exclusively.

The article also reports what variables influence bond ratings for North Carolina counties when the counties are grouped by population: large (200,000 and up), medium-sized (50,000–199,999), and small (49,999 and below).

Background

The approach to identifying the bond rating variables in this study is based on an initial analysis by economics professors Paul Farnham and George Cluff of Georgia State University.[5] Unlike the Farnham and Cluff study, which focused on bond rating variables for municipalities nationwide, this study looks exclusively at variables affecting North Carolina's counties. (For examples of the bond ratings of selected North Carolina counties, see the sidebar on this page.)

Methodology

To determine what variables are currently influencing North Carolina counties' G.O. bond ratings, a linear regression and a correlation matrix were employed.[6] The linear regression analyzed variables influencing the bond ratings for all North Carolina counties, and the correlation matrix evaluated the effect of these variables on the bond ratings when North Carolina counties were grouped by population.

All the variables studied in the linear regression and the correlation matrix were ones that Moody's or Farnham and Cluff identified as important to local government G.O. bond ratings. (For a list of the variables, see Table 1.) The variables represented all four of Moody's rating categories.

Results and Discussion

First, I present and discuss the results of the regression analysis. Then I present the results from the correlation matrix relating to North Carolina counties of different population groups.

Regression Analysis

Of the eleven variables selected, six were statistically significantly related to the G.O. bond ratings for all counties: percentage of property tax levy collected, net debt per capita, net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation, median household income, population per square mile, and property tax growth. The remaining five variables—full value per capita, percentage of housing units built before 1940, percentage change in population, fund balance, and change in fund balance—had statistically nonsignificant relationships. Both the significant and the nonsignificant variables related to bond ratings in ways that were expected, unexpected, and, in a few cases, thought-provoking.

Expected Findings

As expected, three variables had significant relationships with North Carolina G.O. bond ratings: percentage of property tax levy collected, net debt per capita, and median household income. The first and third variables had positive relationships; the second variable, a negative relationship.[7]

Unexpected Findings

Three other variables that were significantly related to county G.O. bond ratings produced surprising findings:

- **Net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation.** This variable had a positive relationship with G.O. bond ratings of North Carolina's counties. That is, when the level of net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation went up in a county, so did its bond rating. This finding contrasts with literature suggesting that the more

Examples of North Carolina Counties with Various Moody's Ratings for G.O. Bonds (2006)

Aaa—Durham County
Aa1—Guilford County
Aa2—Catawba County
Aa3—Gaston County
A1—Onslow County
A2—Currituck County
A3—Halifax County
Baa1—Hertford County
Baa2—Graham County

There are no counties in North Carolina with ratings of less than Baa2.

Source: Moody's Investors Service.

Table 1. **Variables Studied, by Category**

Category	Variable
Administrative	Percentage of property tax levy collected
Debt	Net debt per capita
	Net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation
Economic	Full value per capita
	Median household income
	Percentage of housing units built before 1940
	Population per square mile
	Percentage change in population (1990–2000)
	Property tax growth (2001–5)
Financial	Fund balance
	Change in fund balance (2001–5)

debt a county or another local government carries, the higher the chance it will see adverse credit implications.[8] The fact that the largest North Carolina counties, which have the highest bond ratings, are carrying, on average, more than double the net debt as a percentage of valuation that the medium-sized and small counties carry, may explain this finding.

- **Property tax growth.** Property tax growth had a negative relationship with county bond ratings.[9] In other words, as the property tax grew in a county, the bond rating went down. This is inconsistent with Moody's reports citing property tax growth as an important variable in sustaining or increasing a bond rating.[10] One explanation may be that between 2001 and 2005, a significant number of North Carolina's small and medium-sized counties saw a relatively larger increase in their property tax revenues than large counties did. More research is needed relating property tax growth and bond ratings in jurisdictions of different sizes.

- **Population per square mile.** Population per square mile, or population density, showed a positive relationship with G.O. bond ratings. Thus, as population density increased in a county, its bond rating rose. This finding might be expected because it suggests that as a county becomes more urban, its wealth and its economic diversity are likely to increase. Accordingly, so is its bond rating. However, increasing population density will support a higher bond rating only if the increases are accompanied by growing wealth. If they are accompanied by proportional increases in economic or social problems, a higher bond rating is unlikely.

Four variables that were not significantly related to G.O. bond ratings also produced surprising findings.

- **Fund balance and change in fund balance.** The most unexpected findings were that fund balance and change in fund balance did not significantly affect a bond rating. Moody's and other rating agency literature identify fund balance as an important variable in a G.O. bond rating.[11] A possible explanation of why fund balance and change in fund balance were not related to bond ratings is that North Carolina local governments have relatively high levels of fund balance, compared with local governments in most other states. Thus, when a North Carolina county's high level of fund balance goes up or down marginally, it does not affect the county's bond rating.

- **Full value per capita.** "Full value per capita" is the full market value of all taxable property within a county, divided by the county's population. This variable is used to look at a county's property wealth. Moody's considers it to be one of the most important economic factors underlying a local government's G.O. bond rating.[12] One possible explanation for its statistical insignificance in the present study relates to North Carolina's property-rich coastal and mountain counties. Properties in these counties have high valuation levels per capita, but the counties themselves have average bond ratings. Despite the high property values, median household incomes are not as high as in some of the state's metropolitan counties. Many of the coastal and mountain counties' residents are retirees living on fixed incomes. Moreover, the counties' economies rely heavily on tourism, an industry that generally offers low-paying jobs. For coastal counties, hurricanes might limit the bond ratings, and for mountain counties, remoteness.

- **Percentage change in population.** A possible reason for the insignificance of this variable is that North Carolina's small and medium-sized counties experienced a relatively larger increase in population than did the large counties, which have higher G.O. bond ratings. This trend could continue as North Carolinians search for less expensive housing in counties neighboring the state's large counties. For example, Union County, which has become a bedroom community for Charlotte, experienced a 32 percent increase in population from 1990 to 2000. This increase was more than twice that in Mecklenburg County, where Charlotte is located.

- **Percentage of housing units built before 1940.** This variable, which Farnham and Cluff found to influence bond ratings significantly, did not significantly affect North Carolina counties' G.O. bond ratings.

Correlation Matrix

Some of the more interesting findings from the correlation matrix were similarities and differences among the large (N = 10), medium-sized (N = 35), and small (N = 32) counties in the sample with regard to the relationship of the variables studied to county G.O. bond ratings. The variables that displayed similarities were percentage of property tax levy collected, full value per capita, and percentage change in population. The variables that exhibited unexpected differences were net debt per capita, net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation, fund balance, and change in fund balance.

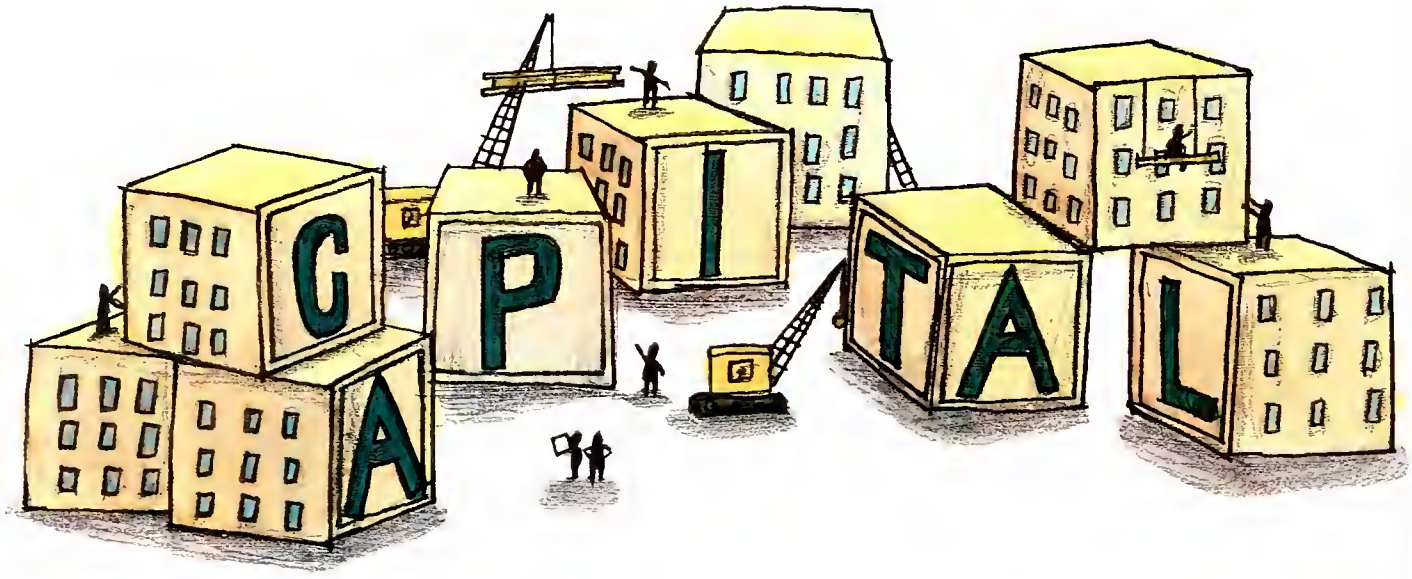
Expected Findings

Percentage of property tax levy collected, full value per capita, and percentage change in population positively correlated with G.O. bond ratings in all three county population groups. I expected these correlations because Moody's identifies each of these variables as influential in a local government's G.O. bond rating.[13]

Although the finding of a positive correlation for full value per capita was not surprising, it differed from the results of the regression analysis. The conflict was due to the ability of the regression analysis to eliminate the influence of other variables on the relationship between bond ratings and full value per capita.

Unexpected Findings

- Net debt per capita and net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation. Both debt variables had



a positive relationship with G.O. bond ratings for the large counties. In other words, the more debt held by a large county, the higher the bond rating it obtained. In contrast, for both the medium-sized and small counties, the debt variables did not correlate with bond ratings. This difference may be explained by the ability of North Carolina's more affluent large counties to carry relatively larger sums of debt, in the view of Moody's, than the small and medium-sized counties can. A possible reason for the finding regarding the large counties is that Moody's considers North Carolina counties' G.O. debt levels, even for the large counties, to be moderate compared with debt levels for counties and other local governments in many other states.

- **Fund balance and change in fund balance.** The two financial variables correlated negatively in some of the population groups. In the large-county category, fund balance correlated negatively with bond ratings. One possible explanation is that North Carolina's lower-rated large counties are carrying higher levels of fund balance than the higher-rated large counties, in an attempt to improve their finances and bond ratings. Similar to the findings of the regression analysis on changes in fund balance, the findings of the correlation matrix showed change in fund balance to have a negative relationship with medium-sized county bond ratings. Both small and large counties' bond ratings did not significantly correlate either negatively or positively with change in fund balance. This finding prompts the question, Why would increases in fund balance not result in higher bond ratings, or why would decreases in fund balance not result in lower bond ratings? As previously stated, Moody's identifies fund balance as important to a bond rating. A reason for this finding, again, might be the healthy or relatively high levels of fund balance that North Carolina counties carry. Another reason might be that marginal changes in fund balance may have little effect on bond ratings.

Limitations and Future Research

Although the study produced some interesting results, the research methodology had a few limitations. First, because of data and time constraints, the study used only one administrative variable. Second, the study examined the effect of only eleven variables on G.O. bond ratings and only for North Carolina counties with a Moody's bond rating. Third, the study looked at North Carolina counties only as one large group and three smaller groups. Because of these groupings, the study could not identify all of North Carolina counties' individual influential variables. Each county may have different variables contributing to its bond rating. Hence, this study should not be used as a substitute for an evaluation to determine what variables are influencing a specific county.

Future research on North Carolina counties' G.O. bond ratings could shed more light on the subject. It might look at other administrative variables and their effect on bond ratings, because local government officials have more potential to control such variables. Future research also might statistically evaluate the effect of other debt, economic, financial, and factors on bond ratings of counties and other local gov-

Table 2. **Categories, Variables, and Government Influence**

Category	Variable	Government Influence
Administrative	Percentage of property tax levy collected	Higher
Debt	Net debt per capita	Higher
	Net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation	Higher
Economic	Full value per capita	Lower
	Median household income	Lower
	Percentage of housing units built before 1940	Lower
	Population per square mile	Lower
	Percentage change in population (1990–2000)	Lower
	Property tax growth (2001–5)	Lower
Finance	Fund balance	Higher
	Change in fund balance (2001–5)	In between

Note: **Higher** = The variable can be affected by year-to-year decisions of the local government. There is a stronger link between government actions and changes in the variable. **Lower** = The variable is difficult for government to affect in the short run. It is subject to influence by government actions only in the long term, and it may be affected as much or more by private-sector actors.

ernments in North Carolina. Finally, it might study the complex relationships between a variable and a bond rating and the factors that affect this relationship.

Conclusions

Several conclusions emerge from this study. First, local government officials may be able to affect the G.O. bond ratings of their county positively. For example, of the six variables that influenced bond ratings, local officials can effectively control three: percentage of property tax levy collected, net debt per capita, and net debt as a percentage of appraised property valuation. (See Table 2).

Second, economic variables are important to G.O. bond ratings. Of the six variables that influenced bond ratings, three were economic. Although economic variables can be more difficult to control than administrative, debt, or financial variables, local government managers should become aware of these variables and understand their potential ramifications for a county's bond rating.

Economic variables are important to G.O. bond ratings.

Third, there is a complex relationship between a variable and a G.O. bond rating. A variable's relationship to or effect on a G.O. bond rating can be affected by the presence, the absence, the strength, or the weakness of other variables affecting bond ratings in specific local governments. In addition, a variable's relationship can be affected by certain situational conditions, such as a state's finance regulations (for example, North Carolina's fund balance regulations). These interactions can cause a variable's relationship to a G.O. bond rating to vary significantly. Because a variable's relationship to a G.O. bond rating can vary significantly from county to county, each county should determine what factors are influencing its bond ratings instead of relying exclusively on general information.

Notes

1. U.S. Census Bureau, Population Finder, http://factfinder.census.gov/servlet/SAFFPopulation?_event=Search&_name=&_state=04000US37&_county=&_cityTown=&_zip=&_sse=on&_lang=en&pctxt=fph.

2. American Society of Civil Engineers, "Report Card for America's Infrastructure: North Carolina [2005]," American Society of Civil Engineers, www.asce.org/reportcard/2005/page.cfm?id=73.

3. North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, *The State Treasurer's Annual Report 2004–2005* (Raleigh: North Carolina Department of State Treasurer, 2005),www.nctreasurer.com/dsthome/OfficeOfTheTreasurer/AnnualReport.htm.

4. Linda Lipnick et al., *The Determinants of Credit Quality: A Discussion of Moody's Methodology for Rating General Obligation, Lease-Backed and Revenue Bonds* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 2002), 3.

5. Paul G. Farnham and George S. Cluff, "Municipal Bond Ratings: New Results, New Directions," *Public Finance Quarterly* 10 (1982): 427–55.

6. A full description of methodology and a more detailed report of results appear in *What Drives General Obligation Bond Ratings for North Carolina's Counties?* by Creighton Avila, a paper presented at the School of Government's Capstone Conference on Practical Research for Public Officials, April 20, 2007. This paper may be obtained by contacting the UNC at Chapel Hill Master of Public Administration Program at mpastaff@unc.edu or 919.962.0425.

7. Lipnick et al., *Determinants*, 6.

8. Linda Lipnick et al., *Moody's Approach to Analyzing Municipal Long-Term Debt: A Focus on Local Government Analysis* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 2004), 2.

9. In a 2003 publication, Patrick Mispagel and his coauthors state, "[E]conomic growth is not necessarily a harbinger for high credit quality. While consistent growth of assessed valuation offers the potential for increased property tax revenue, sales tax revenue, and other economically driven revenues, it also introduces new challenges, including increased demand for services and the need for continuous investment in infrastructure." Patrick Mispagel et al., *How Moody's Examines Economic Conditions as a Factor in Its Local Government Credit Analysis: A Review of the Quantitative and Qualitative Economic Variables Considered in the Bond Rating Process* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 2003), 2.

10. Ibid., 6.

11. John Incorvaia et al., *Your General Fund Balance—One Size Does Not Fit All!* (New York: Moody's Investors Service, 2002), 4.

12. Lipnick et al., *Determinants*, 3.

13. Ibid., 3–6.

MPA Program Honors Kitchen, Vogt, Allred

Left to right: Ed Kitchen, Jack Vogt, Stephen Allred

At its third annual Dean's Dinner, held during the November Conference on Public Administration, the School's Master of Public Administration (MPA) Program reported the establishment of two new scholarships and announced the recipient of the MPA Alumni Association's 2007 award to a distinguished alumnus.

Michael R. Smith, dean, School of Government, introduced the J. Edward Kitchen Public Administration Scholarship and recognized Kitchen himself as an outstanding MPA Program alumnus. Kitchen served in a number of positions with the City of Greensboro for thirty years before retiring as city manager in 2005. He is currently vice-president of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation in Greensboro. On his retirement from the city, Kitchen's friends and colleagues made a gift in his honor to the School. At Kitchen's request, the gift recently was used to initiate the new scholarship.

Lee Worsley, MPA Alumni Association president, announced establishment of the Jack Vogt Public Administration Scholarship. The scholarship was created by alumni and friends of the MPA Program to honor A. John "Jack" Vogt's retirement after three decades on the faculty. Alumni Mary Vigue (2004) and Rod Visser (1985) presented "A Moment with Jack," recounting experiences as Vogt's students. Vogt was recognized for his years of excellent classroom teaching and for his mentoring of generations of Carolina MPA students during their time in the program and long into their professional careers.

Both scholarships are permanent endowments that will help educate many new generations of the most promising young public leaders in North Carolina.

The MPA Alumni Association presented its 2007 Distinguished Public Service Award to Stephen Allred, executive associate provost of UNC at Chapel Hill, in recognition of his outstanding contributions to the MPA Program, the School of Government, and the University. The award honors people who exemplify high standards of service to the public and to organizations in which they serve. The award is the highest honor bestowed by the MPA Alumni Association.

Allred was a member of the School of Government faculty for fifteen years and served for seven years as director of the MPA Program. He was instrumental in bringing the program to the Institute in 1997 and securing the resources to support it.

"We will always be in his debt for this good deed," said Dean Smith.

Robert E. Stipe, 1929–2007

The School of Government lost a valued longtime colleague in September with the death of Robert E. Stipe of Chapel Hill.

A Duke University graduate in economics and law, Stipe early on realized that historic preservation was his true calling. Following his heart, he studied urban and regional planning at UNC at Chapel Hill. In 1957 he joined the Institute of Government faculty. At the Institute he specialized in land-use planning, historic preservation, and urban design. His pioneering work at the Institute laid the foundation for the state's modern public history program and helped propel the nation's historic preservation movement.

Courtesy of Fred Stipe

In 1968–69, Stipe was a senior Fulbright Research Fellow at the University College of London, where he studied problems of historic preservation, amenity planning, and countryside conservation in England.

Stipe remained at the Institute until 1974, when he left to serve as director of the state Division of Archives and History. In 1976 he joined the faculty of the School of Design at North Carolina State University and was awarded emeritus status in 1989.

In the course of his career, Stipe became recognized worldwide for his expertise in historic preservation. His teaching included planning law, community design policy, historic preservation planning and law, and the legal, administrative, and political aspects of landscape and townscape conservation.

Stipe was the author of many local ordinances and significant state statutes addressing historic preservation, including the 1965 legislation authorizing towns to set up historic district zoning. He also was a prolific writer of articles, essays, and books, among them two collections of essays on historic preservation: *The American Mosaic: Preserving a Nation's Heritage* and *A Richer Heritage: Historic Preservation in the Twenty-First Century*. The latter collection won the 2005 Antoinette Forrester Downing Award from the Society of Architectural Historians, granted annually to an outstanding publication in historic preservation.

With characteristic energy, Stipe served on national and international preservation boards, such as the National Trust for Historic Preservation, US/ICOMOS, and the National Alliance of

Dean Smith added that for the past six years, during which Allred has served in the Office of the Provost, he has "brought a calming influence to the regular roils of academia, lent a voice for progress, and offered firm leadership steadied by long experience."

Previous recipients of the award, which is not given every year, include Gordon Whitaker (1993), Richard Stevens (1997), Cal Horton (1998), and Deil Wright (2001).

One Member Returns to Foundation Board, Two New Members Join

At its November 2007 meeting, the School of Government Foundation Board of Directors welcomed one returning member and two new members.

DeWitt F. "Mac" McCarley, city attorney for Charlotte, was reelected for a second term on the board. He is a Greensboro native with an undergraduate degree and a law degree from UNC at Chapel Hill. Before going to Charlotte, McCarley was assistant general counsel for the North Carolina League of Municipalities and Greenville city attorney. He is a past president of the North Carolina Municipal Attorneys Association, third vice-president of the International Municipal Lawyers Association, and president-elect of Charlotte Rotary. McCarley was first elected to the School of Government Foundation Board in 2005 and currently serves as chair.

Ann Simpson

Left to right: Mac McCarley, Susan Patterson, Ed Kitchen

J. Edward "Ed" Kitchen is vice-president of the Joseph M. Bryan Foundation in Greensboro. Before his work with the foundation, Kitchen was employed by the City of Greensboro in a variety of capacities, including personnel director, assistant city manager, deputy city manager, and city manager from 1976 until his retirement in 2005. Kitchen holds an undergraduate degree in political science and a master's degree in public administration from UNC at Chapel Hill. On his retirement as city manager, colleagues and community members helped establish a scholarship in Kitchen's honor for the School of Government's Master of Public Administration Program (see the story on page 46). He is a past president and an honorary life member of the North Carolina City/County Management Association.

Susan Patterson is city attorney for the City of Sanford. A native of Havelock, she holds a bachelor's degree from St. Andrews Presbyterian College and a law degree from Campbell University School of Law. She began her law practice in Pinehurst as a clerk with former Governor James E. Holshouser Jr. She subsequently became an associate and then a partner in the firm. In 1996, Patterson became the first full-time in-house attorney hired by the City of Sanford. She is a member of the Lee County, North Carolina, and American bar associations; the North Carolina Municipal Lawyers Association; and the International Municipal Lawyers Association. She has served on the Transportation, Communication and Public Safety policy committee of the North Carolina League of Municipalities and on the Paralegal Advisory Board for Central Carolina Community College.

The School of Government Foundation was established in 1996 to strengthen public and private support for the School. The board is composed of up to twenty-seven members who reflect the composition of the School's major client groups. They include leaders in state and local government, business, the nonprofit sector, and philanthropy who support the long-term improvement of government operations and public problem-solving processes in North Carolina.

Five New Faculty Members Join School

Since November 2007, the School of Government has welcomed five new faculty members. They will assist North Carolina local officials in civil procedure, estate administration, tax administration and appraisal, criminal law and procedure, community development, and contract law.

Ann Anderson, who joined the faculty as an assistant professor of public law and government, specializes in civil procedure and administration of estate law. She also continues the work of previous faculty with clerks of court. Anderson came to the School from the Kennedy Covington law firm in Durham and Raleigh, her practice there focusing on real estate litigation and quasi-judicial proceedings. She received her JD with honors from the UNC at Chapel Hill School of Law, where she was a member of the *North Carolina Law Review*. Anderson also holds a BA in history with highest distinction from UNC at Chapel Hill. She worked in the School's library while she was an undergraduate.

Ken Joyner is a lecturer on public finance and government, focusing on property tax appraisal and tax assessment administration. Joyner began his public service career in Harnett County as a real property appraiser. Since 1996,

Preservation Commissions, as well as on state and local boards, including Preservation North Carolina, the Conservation Trust for North Carolina, and the Stagville Center for Preservation Technology. As a member of the Chapel Hill Historical Society and the Chapel Hill Preservation Society, he worked for decades to place important buildings and neighborhoods on the National Register of Historic Places.

Stipe was widely praised for the excellence of his work, receiving the Ruth Coltrane Cannon Award from the North Carolina Association for the Preservation of Antiquities (1973), the Distinguished Conservation Service Award from the U.S. Secretary of the Interior (1978), and the Louise DuPont Crowninshield Award for Superlative Lifetime Achievement, the highest award presented by the National Trust for Historic Preservation (1989).

Stipe is survived by his wife, Josephine, of Chapel Hill, and two sons, Daniel and Frederick.


Michael Zirkle

Ann Anderson


Michael Zirkle

Ken Joyner


Michael Zirkle

Tyler Mulligan


Michael Zirkle

Jeff Welty


Michael Zirkle

Eileen Youens

he has served as the tax administrator in Durham, Onslow, and Chatham counties. Joyner is a past president of the North Carolina Tax Collectors' Association and received the Presidential Award from the North Carolina Association of Assessing Officers. He is chair of the Uniform Standards of Professional Appraisal Practice and Appraiser Regulatory Committee of the International Association of Assessing Officers (IAAO) and is an instructor in the IAAO international education program. Joyner earned a BS in accounting from North Carolina State University and holds the Residential Evaluation Specialist (RES) designation from the IAAO.

C. Tyler Mulligan is an assistant professor of public law and government, specializing in community development and affordable housing law. Earlier, Mulligan worked in the Raleigh office of the Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice law firm, where he focused on community development law and economic development law. Mulligan also served in the U.S. Navy as a diving officer and as a Judge Advocate General Corps attorney. He earned a BA in public policy studies, summa cum laude, from Duke University, and was elected to Phi Beta Kappa. He holds a JD from Yale Law School, where he was awarded the Yale University Elm-Ivy Award for his clinical work on a neighborhood revitalization project.

Jeff Welty is an assistant professor of public law and government, concentrating on criminal law and procedure. Before joining the School, he practiced law independently in Durham, N.C., and as an associate with Poyner & Spruill in Raleigh. Before practicing law, Welty clerked with the Honorable N. Carlton Tilley Jr. in Greensboro, N.C. Welty earned a JD with highest honors from Duke Law School and was the executive editor of the *Duke Law Journal*. He also holds an MA in economics from Duke and a BA in philosophy from the University of California at Berkeley. He is a member of the North Carolina State Bar and the National Association of Criminal Defense Lawyers.

Eileen Youens is an assistant professor of public law and government, specializing in property tax and public contract law. She previously practiced law with Womble Carlyle Sandridge & Rice in Raleigh and Vinson & Elkins in Dallas and clerked for the Honorable A. Joe Fish, chief judge of the U.S. District Court for the Northern District of Texas. She is a member of the North Carolina State Bar and the Texas State Bar. Youens earned a BA in music literature from Southwestern University and a JD from Southern Methodist University, where she served as editor-in-chief of the *SMU Law Review*.

Wunsche Is New Legislative Reporting Service Director

In November 2007, Christine Wunsche assumed a new role as director of the School's Legislative Reporting Service (LRS). For the past year, she served as one of three attorneys in the LRS's office at the North Carolina General Assembly in Raleigh.

Wunsche succeeds Martha Harris, who retired as director in November. In 2005, Harris became the first director in the seventy-year history of the LRS who was not a School faculty member. She previously served as a staff attorney in the N.C. General Assembly's Bill Drafting Division.

Christine Wunsche

"We are grateful for Martha's efforts in transitioning the LRS from a service in which faculty created all of the content to one with a mix of faculty and part-time staff lawyers dedicated to the LRS. She masterfully led our staff, with very strong assistance from office manager Jennifer Henderson, and worked with me to create this new approach to the LRS," said Tom Thornburg, senior associate dean at the School.

"Christine is an excellent successor to Martha," Thornburg continued. "She has a proven track record at the LRS and good legal experience." Wunsche earned a JD and a BA from UNC at Chapel Hill, and, before joining the LRS staff, was an attorney with Environment North Carolina in Raleigh.

At the LRS, Wunsche is responsible for producing the electronic *Daily Bulletin* and the service's annual summary publication, *North Carolina Legislation*. She manages the overall office operation, which includes coordinating a staff of two LRS lawyers, School law faculty, and professionals who create the bulletin and the summary.

LRS was established in 1935 to inform local governments, agencies, and citizens in the state about the status and the content of state legislation. The *Daily Bulletin* is the centerpiece of the subscription-based service. Published each day the General Assembly is in session, the *Bulletin* contains a summary of every bill introduced and every amendment, committee substitute, and conference report adopted. It also records the daily action taken on the floor of the House and the Senate with respect to each bill.

In 2006 the LRS started a new online service offering summaries of each version of every bill introduced in the General Assembly since 1987. Digests of these bills provide insight into context and background, as well as evidence of legislative intent, allowing researchers to trace the evolution of a bill from proposal to law.

To read about the LRS, visit www.sog.unc.edu/dailybulletin/index.htm. To access the free online service, click the "Archives" link.

Off the Press

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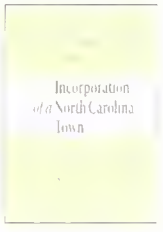
A view-only PDF version of the supplement is available at www.iogcriminal.unc.edu/faculty.htm. Users may view this file on their computers and save it for future viewing, but they will not be able to print it.



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