

Mecklenburg County Manager's "Board Bulletin"

Mecklenburg County [web@subscriptions.mecklenburgcountync.gov]

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To: Steve Johnston



MECKLENBURG COUNTY GOVERNMENT



An update to the Mecklenburg Board of County Commissioners from the County Manager

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Oct. 9, 2017

Results from Independent Evaluation of MeckFUSE Released

I would like to share with you the recently released results of an [independent evaluation](#) of MeckFUSE (Frequent Users Systems Engagement).

The program provides permanent housing for 50 high-risk and high-needs individuals with behavioral health issues who have an extensive history of cycling between jail, shelters and other public systems.

Professor Shelley Listwan of the Department of Criminal Justice & Criminology at the University of North Carolina at Charlotte prepared the evaluation for the [Mecklenburg County Community Support Services](#) Department. The three-year process and outcomes evaluation demonstrated improved housing stability, reduced rates of jail and shelter utilization and reduced hospital charges. Overall, MeckFUSE was successful in reducing system utilization costs among participants.

Key findings of the MeckFUSE evaluation include:

- Nearly all (98 percent) of MeckFUSE participants had an adult conviction record with a mean of approximately 13 adult convictions.
- Over 90 percent of participants reported spending more than 12 months in a homeless shelter or other place not meant for habitation. Of those, the mean time of homelessness was approximately 11 years.
- MeckFUSE participants demonstrated a 90 percent two-year housing retention rate.
- MeckFUSE participants demonstrated significant reductions in shelter usage (87 percent), ambulance service charges (24 percent), and hospital charges (43 percent).
- Housed participants were arrested significantly less than a comparison group (4.5 vs. 9.3 arrests) and had much longer average times to re-arrest post-housing.
- Most participants indicated that MeckFUSE had significantly improved their lives and relationships with their families. For example, 57 percent of the participants indicated that the program helped them improve relationships with their children.

Mecklenburg County plans to continue the MeckFUSE program, operated through a contract with Urban Ministry Center, an interfaith community agency working to end homelessness. Monitoring of arrests and trips to the emergency room will continue too.

For more information, contact CSS Director Stacy Lowry at 980-314-8903 or

Harry L. Jones, Sr. Golf Course Renaming Celebration Set for Saturday

Please join us in honoring the late former County Manager Harry L. Jones, Sr. as we rename the Renaissance Golf Course, located at 1525 W. Tyvola Road, in his honor.

The ceremony will take place this Saturday, Oct. 14 at 10 a.m. I will make brief remarks, along with Chair Scarborough, Commissioner Leake and [Park and Recreation](#) Director Jim Garges. Parking will be available onsite.

Harry had a long and varied career in public administration, spanning from Texas to North Carolina. At the height of his career, he became the first African-American County Manager in Mecklenburg County, serving in this capacity for more than 12 years. He graduated from several leadership programs and was active in many civic and professional organizations. He also served as president of the North Carolina City and County Management Association and two terms as president of the National Forum for Black Public Administrators.

Flat Branch Nature Preserve Now Open

I am excited to announce that Park and Recreation has increased its protection of natural communities with the opening of Flat Branch Nature Preserve, just west of Tom Short Road in southern Mecklenburg.

The 42-acre nature preserve is a mostly undeveloped woodland, and is bordered by residential development. The property protects much needed open space in a rapidly developing area of the County. Its proximity to Polo Ridge Elementary School and Flat Branch Community Park provide ideal educational and nature-based programming opportunities for residents.

This preserve is quite unique as it is one of the last remaining upland depression swamp forest communities in Mecklenburg and is home to a federally endangered sunflower known as the Schweinitz's sunflower (*Helianthus schweinitzii*).

Current amenities include a small parking lot, shelter with bathrooms and a 0.45-mile natural surface trail with a boardwalk.

With the addition of Flat Branch, Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation now manages more than 7,600 acres of nature preserves in the County.

For more information, contact [Park and Recreation](#) Director Jim Garges at 980-314-1012 or James.Garges@MecklenburgCountyNC.gov.

CALENDAR REMINDERS

- Wednesday, Oct. 11, 3 p.m. – BOCC Budget and Public Policy Meeting, CMGC Room 267
- Thursday, Oct. 12, 9 a.m. – County Manager Dena R. Diorio will speak at the NC/SC Counterterrorism Conference at the Fairfield Inn and Suites Marriott Center City
- Sunday, Oct. 15, 1 p.m. – County Manager Dena R. Diorio will welcome participants at the Open Streets 704 event. Details at www.openstreets704.com.

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