

January 2024 Rural Roundup



From Team New Rural Project <info@newruralproject.org>
To Steve Johnston <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <info@newruralproject.org>
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The New Rural Project's Rural Roundup Monthly Newsletter

Dear Steve,

Helen Probst Mills and I founded New Rural Project in April 2021 after we saw that many rural Black, Hispanic, Native American and Asian American registered voters didn't show up in the November 2020 General Election in North Carolina in the districts where we were both on the ballot. At the same time, the statewide race for chief justice of the NC Supreme Court was **decided by just 401** votes out of the five (5) million cast while almost **60,000 Black and Brown** registered voters in the seven rural counties we decided to focus on didn't vote in 2020.

Three years later, **the important 2024 elections are here!** Everyone across the country will get to vote for the president and their congressperson in our federal elections. At the state level here in North Carolina, we will be electing a new governor, lieutenant governor, and attorney general. All of our other statewide Council of State offices like treasurer, state auditor, and secretary of state will also be on the ballot, and at the local level, many of us will be electing county commissioners and school board members.

Your support of NRP's work over the past three years shows the impact we can make together when we civically and electorally engage with rural folks outside of election time. Our work allows rural folks to be seen and heard before and after they enter the voting booth. Thank you for your continued efforts to make sure we influence more folks to vote in 2024!

With gratitude,

Cynthia L. Wallace
Executive Director
New Rural Project

INVEST IN OUR 1st QUARTER WORK



P.S. Follow us on [Facebook](#) and [Instagram](#) throughout February as we honor remarkable Black leaders from #NorthCarolina and delve into the impactful voting history that has shaped the lives of Black North Carolinians.

LISTENING

Aligned with our pledge that our work begins and ends with listening, in our polling with Change Research in Spring 2022, we asked about the issues important to frequent and infrequent rural North Carolina voters of color who live in our focus counties (Anson, Hoke, Moore, Richmond, Robeson, Scotland, and Union). Responses about their Top 10 issues form the backdrop of New Rural Project's four core issues which guides our work: **Education, Healthcare, Public Safety, and Voting Rights.**



Which THREE of the following issues are the most important issues facing this part of North Carolina?

	Total	Biden Voters	Trump Voters	Undecided in 22	18-49	50+	Women	Men	Black	Lumbee
Inflation for groceries and gas	52	43	73	58	49	56	53	51	43	67
Rent and housing costs are too high	33	35	32	36	35	30	40	26	38	15
Rising crime rates and gun violence	32	30	34	26	29	35	35	28	29	41
Lack of economic opportunity and good-paying jobs	27	32	16	37	32	20	27	26	26	28
Issues related to K-12 public education	25	18	40	34	33	16	20	31	24	25
Racism & discrimination	24	28	10	23	22	27	23	25	33	12
Protecting voting rights	22	27	19	5	16	31	19	26	23	14
Drug addiction and/or mental health issues	22	16	32	24	24	19	20	23	15	42
Access to quality, affordable health care and prescription drug costs	18	23	10	18	12	26	19	18	22	18
Protecting abortion rights	15	19	6	10	17	13	16	14	17	9

We will continue to connect the dots between the issues rural voters care about and how their civic and electoral engagement can be a part of the solution to fixing them.

Keep reading to see what New Rural Project was up to in January and what is coming in February.

CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

MLK Celebration Foundation Parade



NRP always pauses in January to recognize the life and impact of the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.'s contribution to our democracy. On **Saturday, January 13**, NRP participated in our second MLK parade in downtown Rockingham (Richmond County).

Cynthia also stopped in Anson County on her way to Richmond County to visit our friends including **Leon Gatewood, CEO of the HOLLA! Center,** and **Garrett Snuggs, barber-owner of Triad Barber School, newly elected Wadesboro City Councilman,** and grand marshal of their MLK Parade!



Left to right: Garrett Snuggs, Cynthia, Leon Gatewood

Anson County Barn Blast

If it's January, it's time for the Anson County Barn Blast! On **January 26**, NRP was proud to participate again in this fundraising event sponsored by our long-time partners, the **Anson County Partnership for Children.**



Regional Organizing Director Nisea Moses and **Program Assistant Kia Smith** helped out with the games while **Executive Director Cynthia Wallace** and **NRP board member Jamie Hildreth** mingled with the members of the Anson County community who turned out to support this worthy cause.

ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Election Alert: In-person early voting for the North Carolina **March 5 primary begins on Thursday, February 15 and continues through Saturday, March 2.** Folks can register and vote during this window.

Canvassing



On February 24 from 10 am - 1 pm in Scotland County, New Rural Project will be canvassing the Laurinburg community reminding folks about the March 5 Primary election and the importance of having their voices heard through the power of their vote.

Click [here](#) to join **Nisea Moses**, and New Rural Project as we have conversations at the front doors with our neighbors in Laurinburg, NC.



Megaphone NC



New Rural Project is teaming up with [Progress NC Action](#) for an awesome initiative called Megaphone NC. Megaphone NC is revolutionizing online engagement by fostering a community of trusted advocates to counter misinformation and amplify progressive voices.

Whether you've got little time or a lot, and whether you have a small following or a big one, you can join Megaphone and help shape the future of NC. For more information, fill out the [interest form](#) or contact our digital organizer, [Lauren](#).

#UniteNC Tour: "Ready to Vote" Event

On February 20, Program Director **Alexa Roberts** is leading NRP's partnership with **Common Cause NC, the League of Women Voters (NC & Charlotte-Mecklenburg), the Union County NAACP, and Rehoboth Church of Monroe** in hosting a non-partisan voter information event to help folks navigate the new voting laws and understand the recent redistricting changes. **The event begins at 6:30 pm at Rehoboth Church of Monroe, 600 E. Franklin St, Monroe, NC.**



Click [here](#) to RSVP for the event. Space is limited so register soon!

OTHER UPDATES

ELECTION INFORMATION

New RURAL PROJECT	
IMPORTANT DATES	
2024 PRIMARY ELECTION	
FEBRUARY 15	IN-PERSON EARLY VOTING BEGINS AT 8:00 AM
FEBRUARY 27	ABSENTEE BALLOT REQUEST DEADLINE IS 5:00 PM
MARCH 2	EARLY VOTING ENDS AT 3:00 PM
MARCH 5	ELECTION DAY POLLING PLACES WILL BE OPEN FROM 6:30 AM TO 7:30 PM
MARCH 5	ABSENTEE BALLOTS DUE BY 7:30 P.M.

As we mentioned earlier, [North Carolina's Primary Election Day is Tuesday, March 5](#), but you can make a plan to vote early!

One-stop early voting begins on Thursday, February 15 at 8:00 AM and ends on Saturday, March 2, at 3:00 PM. And remember, you can register to vote and vote at the same time during early voting!

If your state is still getting ready for the 2024 primary, find out dates, locations, and times, and who's on the ballot [here](#).

2024 MLK, Jr. Speaking Engagement

On Friday, January 12, Cynthia spoke at Charlotte's Temple Beth El's Justice Shabbat remembering Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. where she emphasized the power of collective action between rural and urban communities, the importance of voter turnout, and the historical connection between the Jewish community and the civil rights movement. If you have Facebook view her speech [here](#).



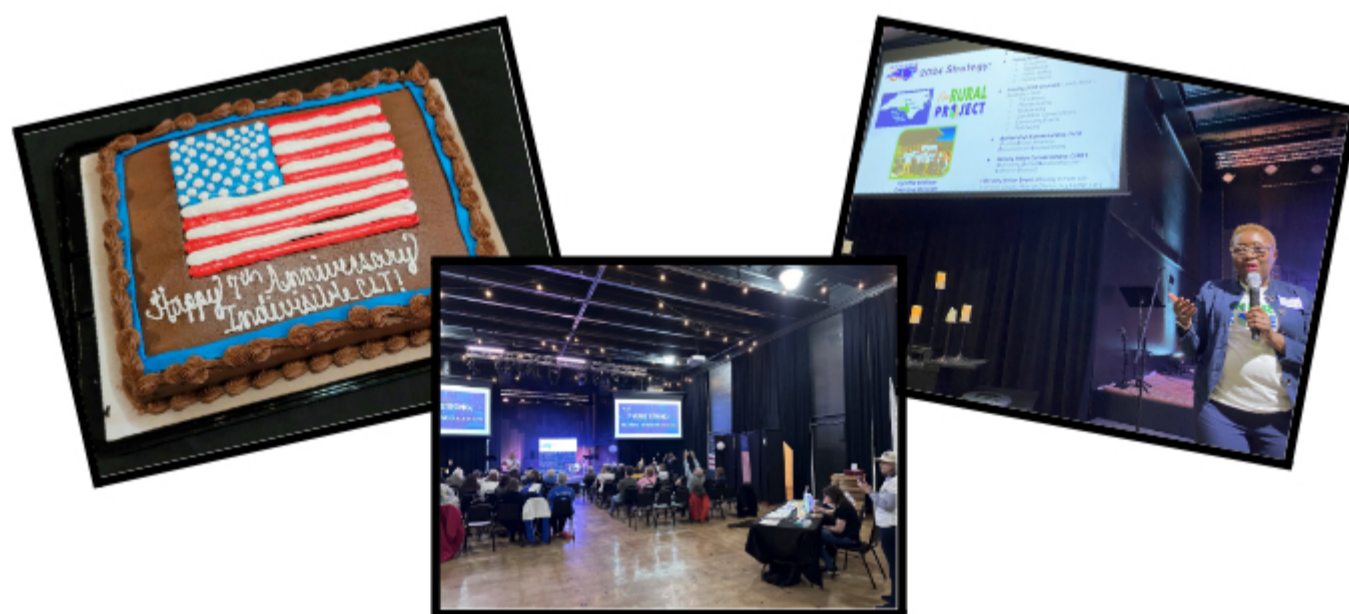
To view the entire service outside of Facebook, including Cynthia's remarks around the 50 minute mark, click [here](#).

Other NRP Happenings



On **Thursday, January 11**, NRP Executive Director, Cynthia helped greet Vice President Kamala Harris at the Charlotte-Douglas airport. VP Harris was in Charlotte to highlight the Biden-Harris Administration's latest actions to reduce gun violence, including \$12 million in federal funds to North Carolina schools for mental health services. The funding comes from the 2022 Bipartisan Safer Communities Act and will help bring over 300 new counselors to NC schools.

On **January 25**, Cynthia and Maryjane Conti, NRP administrative assistant, attended the 2024 Kick-off and 7th-anniversary celebration for one of NRP's earliest partners, [Indivisible Charlotte](#). An engaged and energized crowd listened as Cynthia spoke about NRP's efforts to connect with rural Black and Brown voters in rural North Carolina through deep canvassing, our barber and beauty shop programs, and our successes in the 2023 municipal elections.



NRP Anniversary Shoutout!

If you follow us on social media, you are familiar with the work of our awesome social media guru, **D'Angelo Gatewood**, who celebrated his Second "Work-iversary" with New Rural project on **January 31!**

Congratulations, D'Angelo, and thanks for all you do to help us raise awareness and spread the word about rural empowerment!



As always, thank you for your support.

Team New Rural Project

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