

3rd Quarter 2025 Rural Roundup



From Team New Rural Project <info@newruralproject.org>
To Steve Johnston <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <info@newruralproject.org>
Date 2025-10-08 12:01

The New Rural Project's Rural Roundup Monthly Newsletter

Dear Steve,

From the *buzz* of conversation in a Richmond County barbershop to the packed rooms at our rural town halls to the many back-to-school community events, the past few months have served as a powerful reminder of the energy brewing in our communities. At a time when national headlines are dominated by partisan gridlock and division, the work on the ground tells a different story.

Our tale is one of reconnection and renewed purpose. We're having the real conversations that matter, and they're making a difference. We saw this impact firsthand when [a participant of our barbershop conversation, a skeptic of the political process, shared that he now plans to vote in the upcoming municipal elections.](#)

This is the heart of New Rural Project's mission: to meet people where they are and show them that their voice is not drowned out, but uplifted to make a collective chorus. By building relationships one barbershop, one town hall, and one front porch at a time, we are strengthening the civic fabric of rural America. Together, we are proving that when we engage authentically, we don't just influence elections—we reclaim our power and shape our own future.

Warmly,

Cynthia L. Wallace
Executive Director
New Rural Project

JOIN OUR FIGHT FOR RURAL NC

LISTENING

PROGRAMS



Our **Richmond County Barbershop Conversations: F.A.D.E. (Fruitful African American Discussions on Empowerment)** program wrapped up after three Sunday sessions in September in Rockingham! We were overwhelmed by the county's support as participants filled **Professional Cutz & Xpreshunz Barbershop** to the brim each session, bringing energy and chopping it up about issues impacting their communities. We deeply appreciate **Alan Parker** for opening his barbershop to us and for chairing the Richmond County program!



The participants of F.A.D.E. chopped it up on September 7, 14, and 21. The first session was a lively conversation on **entrepreneurship, jobs, and networking**, led by Union County School Board member **Rev. John J. Kirkpatrick** alongside F.A.D.E. chair **Alan Parker** and HR manager for unionized companies **Michael McCrae**. The room was packed, with people continuing to arrive even after the program began!



The second session focused on all things "**civics at the local level**," with participants having raw conversations on community action with Ellerbe Town Councilman and Mayor candidate **Jeremy McKenzie**, Hamlet City Councilman **Maurice Stuart II**, and Zoning & Planning Committee Member **Gerard Morrison**, as New Rural Project board member **Melvin Ingram** moderated the discussion.

The final session covered men's mental health. Clinical social worker **Tavares Bostic**, founder of Bostic Counseling & Consulting, and **Alan Parker** dropped gems about the importance of men's physical health and strategies for improving the mental health of young men in the community.



Town Hall

On September 13, the **Rural Accountability & Transparency Tour** made a stop in Richmond County after our May rural town hall in Hoke County! Organizing Director, **Nisea Moses** led New Rural Project's partnership alongside **Democracy NC, Common Cause NC, Richmond County NAACP, Richmond County Coalition for Environmental Justice, and Blue Springs Community Development Corporation (led by board member, Christina Davis-McCoy)** to host this non-partisan town hall for community members where they could voice their concerns, share local priorities, and hold elected officials accountable.

Our panelists, New Rural Project Executive Director **Cynthia Wallace**, Common Cause Organizing Manager **Rotrina Campbell**, Democracy NC Southeastern Regional Organizer **Lynndora Thompson**, and Richmond County Coalition for Justice & Black Empowerment Co-Founder and Farmer **Shaun Grady Ingram**, discussed important issues from the federal to the local level including the effects of policies passed in the General Assembly, with Richmond NAACP President **Crystal Morrison** guiding the discussion. We are incredibly proud of the many Richmond County neighbors who came out and spoke up about what priorities they want addressed by their elected leaders.



CIVIC ENGAGEMENT

Back to School!

If it's August, New Rural Project will be participating in back-to-school events! Led by our awesome **Organizing Director, Nisea Moses**, and **Organizer Jarvis Peguese**, we participated in events in Union (Marshville), Anson (Morven and Ansonville), and Richmond (Dobbins Heights)!

In Morven, inspired by teamwork in the **Wadesboro Coalition for Peace, NRP and HOLLA!** hosted our first joint **Back to School** event, serving over 75 children! This event blended seamlessly with the **NC Black Alliance's** health-focused brunch, also held at the **HOLLA! Center**.





Wadesboro Coalition for Peace

Since the June 18th launch of the Wadesboro Coalition for Peace, which we announced in our 2nd quarter newsletter, our work with the **Town of Wadesboro, the HOLLA! Center, Anson Men of Action,** and dozens of residents have continued with bi-weekly meetings.



These meetings resulted in three working groups: Parental Engagement, Youth Engagement, and Faith Leader Engagement. The coalition has provided a platform for the new interim chief of police to update the community on his plans and created our first faith leaders luncheon focused on gun violence at the Lady Bug restaurant in Wadesboro on August 12.



Gun Violence Awareness Tour



On Saturday, September 5, the Coalition hosted the kick-off stop of the **Black Voters Matter's Gun Violence Awareness Tour** at Ebenezer Baptist Church in Wadesboro.



Over 200 pieces of fish were handed out, and an outpouring of community support flooded the church parking lot as resources, children's books, & information were shared by NRP and partners from **Black Voters Matter, Anson Branch of NAACP, and Anson Partnership for Children.**

That evening, attendees gathered inside the church, where folks were able to share how gun violence has impacted their families' mental and physical health. Heartbreakingly, a mother shared that she currently has a son in the hospital recovering from gun wounds, with the possibility of never walking again. The coalition ensures the faces and voices of those impacted are always at the forefront of the work.



Oak Hill Community Party

Mark your calendars: On **Saturday, October 11, at 6 pm**, the Coalition is hosting a **Community Party at Oak Hill Apartments**. Join us in bringing families together in fun, support, and action. There will be free hot dogs and burgers, games, and a movie screening!

In a sign that we're seeing progress, Mayor Davis shared at our September 25 meeting that since the coalition's launch, **there has not been a single case of homicide reported in Wadesboro, NC!**

ELECTORAL ENGAGEMENT

Join us for voter outreach this October and November!

Canvassing

Real change starts right at our doorsteps and in the community as we connect with our neighbors in **Anson, Richmond, and Union counties** about the local elections in November. In early September, we kicked off the canvass season in Richmond County, making sure folks knew about our upcoming civic engagement opportunities in Rockingham and Dobbins Heights, along with the upcoming local election.



We're listening to your voices as we have front porch conversations up until Election Day. Sign up to volunteer with us on **Saturdays from 10 am to 1 pm** in **Ellerbe, Marshville, and Wadesboro** to canvass and ensure members of our communities are vote-ready!



On **Wednesdays, October 8, 15, 22, and 29, from 6–8 PM**, we'll be calling into **Anson, Richmond, and Union** counties to ensure folks are vote-ready for the **November 4** local elections. Whether you're local or joining from afar, you can make a difference.

👉 Register [here](#) and let's do this together!

OTHER UPDATES

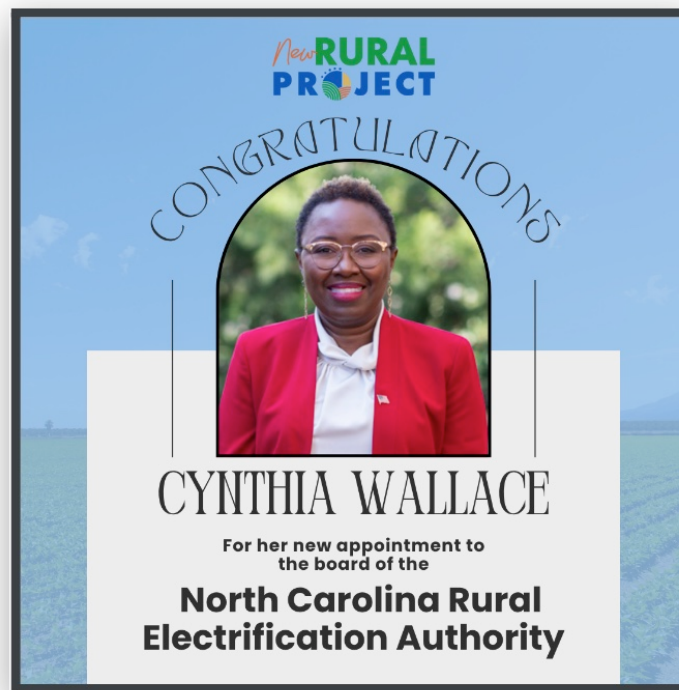
Cohort Announcements

Our team has been working intently to gain new skills to innovate our work in rural advocacy.

Organizing Director Nisea Moses, Communications Associate Eric Reeves, Finance & Operations Director Miriam Carter, and Policy & Programs Director Caroline C. Sumpter have been accepted into various cohorts focusing on rural advocacy, communications, operations, and policy.



In July, **NC Governor Josh Stein** appointed NRP ED **Cynthia** to the **North Carolina Rural Electrification Authority**! She and her fellow board members are working to ensure access to affordable and reliable electricity and telephone services for rural communities.



MDC Rural Prosperity Panel

On September 11, NRP Co-Founder and Board Vice-Chair, **Helen Probst Mills**, and **Caroline**, who is also a member of the Red Springs Town Council, participated in a joint panel discussion at the **MDC Rural Prosperity and Investment Rural Action Network Conference**. The dynamic duo was interviewed about their expertise in running for public office in rural areas while reflecting on their advocacy and community organizing efforts.

Rural Listening Tour in Scotland County

On September 16, **Representative Garland Pierce** held a one-day listening tour in Scotland County in collaboration with **NC Governor Josh Stein's** office. Governor Stein's staff made three stops, visiting Wagram Town Hall, Laurinburg City Hall, and Gibson Town Hall.

Cynthia and Program Assistant Kia Smith attended the Wagram and Laurinburg stops, engaging with residents and the governor's staff while learning about the opportunities and issues impacting Scotland County.

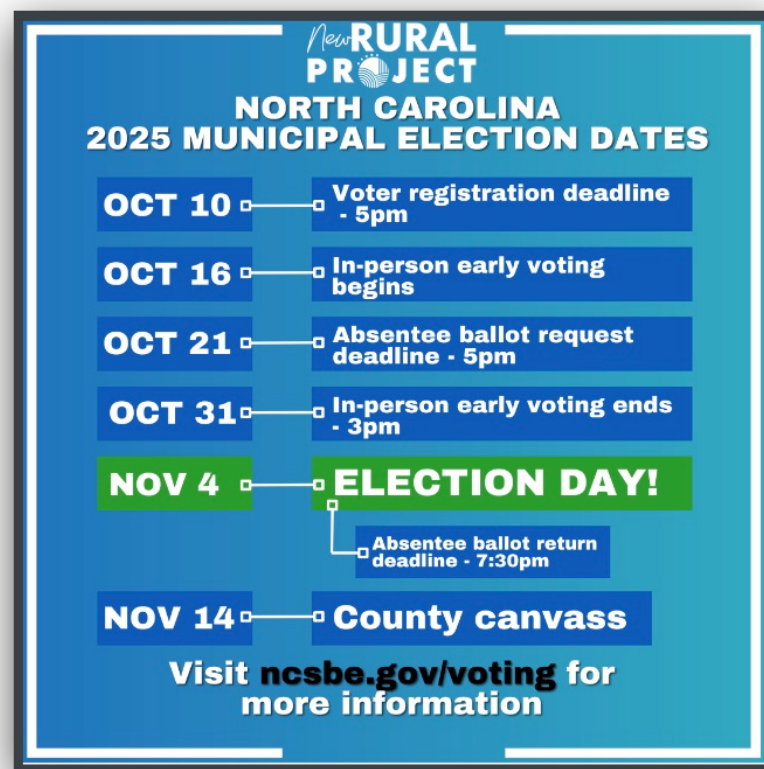


Upcoming Local Elections

Elections happen every year in North Carolina, which means we get to use our voices at the ballot box annually! The [2025 Municipal Elections](#) will be held in October & November, where folks will be able to vote for candidates running for local and county town positions.

The Early Voting period begins Friday, October 16. [Use the Registration Repair Tool](#) to ensure you, your friends, and family members' voter registrations have the required information to avoid casting a provisional ballot. Make a plan to use your voice at the ballot box by **Election Day, Tuesday, November 4, 2025.**

[Stay in the know about the important dates, including voter registration deadlines and your polling location.](#)



Don't forget to follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), add us on [LinkedIn](#), and subscribe to our [YouTube Channel](#) to keep up with our activities and information about what's happening in North Carolina!

Thanks for reading! We appreciate you!

Team New Rural Project

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