

MARCH/APRIL 2020



STATS & STORIES

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

County Manager's March/April Update

March and April have been challenging and strange months for all of us. We have had to face a lot of uncertainty because of the COVID-19 pandemic, both in terms of the nature of the virus and in how it has impacted our economy and everyday life. As an essential government operation, Brunswick County and our peers at local governments across the county and state are tasked with ensuring that the services we provide our communities are available no matter what, such as access to water, emergency response, building inspections, zoning, and our health and social services, to name a few.



**Brunswick County Manager
Randell Woodruff**

I cannot express how proud I am of the Brunswick County team. Our employees have navigated through an unprecedented situation to continue to meet—and in some cases exceed—the high standard of service they are known to provide. This edition showcases some of that exceptional work and how much we have still achieved despite the circumstances.

I would also like to recognize and commend our Health Services, Emergency Services, and EMS team members for their continuous care, strength, and resolve in the face of this pandemic. Thank you for helping keep our county safe and prepared. We are continuing to share information about COVID-19 and health, business, and food resources available to residents on our website and social media channels. We encourage you to learn more at brunswickcountync.gov/coronavirus

You can also reach out to us with health questions you have about COVID-19. Our Public Health Call Line is available at 910.253.2339 or by email at coronavirus@brunswickcountync.gov



MARCH/APRIL 2020 STATS SNAPSHOT



Construction begins on the **Brunswick County Courthouse addition and renovation project**
Engineering



 **419**
Residential buildings started construction between March and April
Code Administration

 **46**
Commercial buildings started construction between March and April
Code Administration

Board of Elections

- During the month of April, Board of Elections processed over 1,100 new registrations.
- There were 107,240 registered voters in Brunswick County at the end of April.
- Received over 500 absentee ballot requests for the general election in November.

Code Administration

- Chad Christensen received his Level I Building Standard Certificate in April.

March Countywide Commercial & Residential Construction Statistics

Construction Type	Building Starts	Construction Costs
Commercial Construction	36	\$102,477,408
Residential Construction	239	\$68,792,208

April Countywide Commercial & Residential Construction Statistics

Construction Type	Building Starts	Construction Costs
Commercial Construction	10	\$2,950,300
Residential Construction	180	\$42,300,113

Q1 2020 Permits Issued

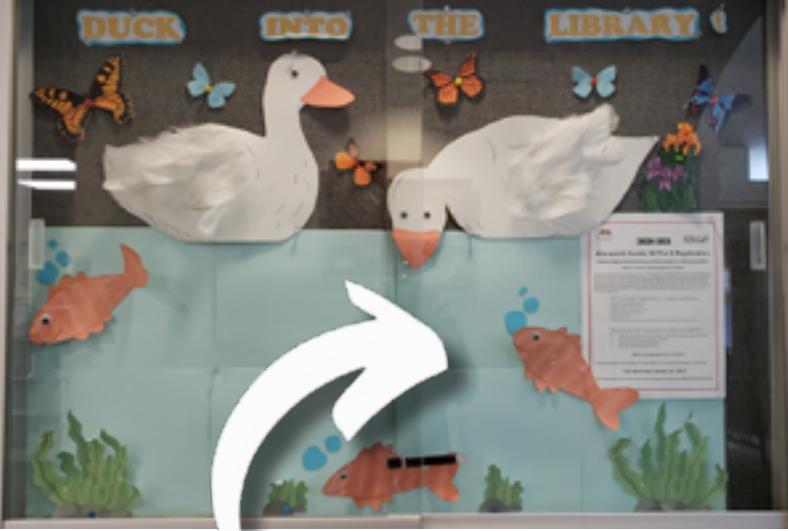
Permit Type	January 2020	February 2020	March 2020
Building Permits Issued	1,979	1,758	2,054
New Home Permits	126	79	138

Cooperative Extension

- We visited Hughes, Williams, and Phillips nurseries to tag maple trees with traps for potato leafhoppers. These pests came early this year; and we were able to find them in time and advise the nurseries to begin their management programs to keep these insects from destroying the nursery crops. Ornamental plants are grown in several nurseries in Brunswick County that are used to beautify our landscapes while enhancing the environment and protecting our natural resources.

Cooperative Extension (continued)

- We are handling Consumer/Homeowner Horticultural inquiries at an increased rate since working virtually. Virtual contacts include Ask an Expert, telephone, and email, all available from our county Extension website (<http://brunswick.ces.ncsu.edu>). Virtual work has worked particularly well with individual office phone lines being forwarded to our cell phones to reach us wherever we are. Feedback from our clients includes such positive comments as: *Thanks Again. You guys are great. Keep up the great work!!* (from AAE). *Thanks for all the great information and explanations* (from phone/email contact).
- Traditionally the Extension Master Food Volunteers have a monthly organizational meeting the first Thursday of each month. The Governor's Stay at Home Order did not deter this group of volunteers. Their meeting was held as scheduled using ZOOM. This was a learning experience and a first time for several of them. The continuing education program on reducing food waste was conducted live by the speaker—a Borlaug Global Food Initiative participant. Thirteen volunteers and staff members participated. EMFV were recruited to assist the Brunswick Wellness Coalition to assist in contacting local food pantries to determine what resources they were providing to Brunswick County residents. The EMFV are planning to touch base by ZOOM mid-month and meet again next month with a continuing education topic on-line. The EMFV have been given the opportunity to participate in on-line continuing education from NCSU while staying home.
- When you work for a university, and you can't get out to teach because the world is locked down in quarantine due to a newfound virus, what happens? We work for Brunswick County Cooperative Extension; a literal extension of NC State University and we have enrolled in video training with university experts Bryce Lane and Simone Keith. They are giving us instruction on how to produce better videos so we can pass on knowledge to the citizens of our county.
- We know there are a lot of folks who rely on Extension for information on horticulture, nutrition, pesticide education, 4-H school enrichment, Safe Plates classes and much more. In order to continue to teach and share information when no one can gather in groups due to quarantining, we are relying upon the internet to reach out to our clients.
- We have learned through our weekly classes, that we must keep the viewer engaged and proper ways to provide audio and good filming practices. It seems to come naturally to some of us, but with this class, passing on knowledge will be a lot more effective. It has been a very enjoyable learning process. Here's an example on our 4-H page about worms and compost with over 2,000 views statewide: <https://www.facebook.com/NorthCarolina4H/videos/509433596600696/>
- 4-H held youth volunteer meetings weekly, and held Adventurers 4-H Club virtually. These meetings are being held more frequently than before by request; the youth involved want more involvement with each other and their 4-H leaders during this time of social distancing.
- 4-H and EFNEP delivered vegetable seeds to be distributed in backpacks by Matthew's Ministry (500 backpacks with food for kids) and Wing's Ministry (150 backpacks with food for middle schoolers). Children and their families are encouraged to track the progress of their gardens through social media and a competition is planned for the summer—either online or in person depending on the coronavirus situation—with prizes for the biggest produce or the fewest weeds, and the opportunity to grow their very own vegetables for everyone involved.



Decorations at the
Rourk Library
Library

604 ✓

Completed work orders between
March and April
Operations Services

4-H and EFNEP delivered vegetable seeds to be distributed in backpacks by Matthew's Ministry (500 backpacks with food for kids) and Wing's Ministry (150 backpacks with food for middle schoolers).
Cooperative Extension

791,075

Views on Nextdoor between
March and April
Public Information



MARCH/APRIL 2020 STATS SNAPSHOT

See a great stat? Contact the Public Information Officer to learn more.

Phone: 910.253.2995 / Email: meagan.kascsak@brunswickcountync.gov

AA- Aa3

Received affirmation and assignment of **high revenue bond ratings** from **Standard & Poor's** (AA-) and **Moody's** (Aa3) for the **Northwest Water Treatment Plant expansion and upgrades project**.

Virtual storytime at the **Leland Library**
Library

4,668

eBooks checked out in April
Library



Received **6 bids** for the concentrate discharge pipeline and **2 bids** for the **expansion and upgrades project** at the **Northwest Water Treatment Plant**. Upgrades include the installation of a **low-pressure reverse osmosis system** to remove PFAS and GenX from drinking water.
Public Utilities

1,100

New voter registrations processed in April
Board of Elections



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Cooperative Extension (continued)

- Our local educator has been planning and providing video content for a first grade curriculum that two PE teachers in Brunswick County plan to use when classes resume. Plans are also in the works to involve teenagers in teaching elementary students nutrition information through two great programs: Teen Cuisine and Eat Smart Move More.

Emergency Services

- In cooperation with Health Services, the Emergency Services team has been actively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts include: full activation of the Emergency Operations Center to assist Health Services with contact tracing efforts and the Public Health call line and email for questions; routine conference calls with local hospitals, medical providers, and long-term care facilities to provide health guidance and help obtain personal protective equipment; routine conference calls with municipal partners to address questions and provide health guidance.

Engineering

- April 1 was the official start date for Monteith Construction Corporation for the Brunswick County Courthouse addition and renovation project. This is a two-year construction contract. The new addition will be built in the first year and the existing courthouse will be renovated in the second year.
- During April the contractor mobilized onsite, built the temporary judges parking lot, removed existing concrete panels on the north side of the building where the addition is going, and worked on the foundation for the new building addition.

Finance

- Despite the impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, the County's financial situation remains strong, as highlighted by impressive fiscal management the past 20 years and having received the recent affirmation and assignment of high revenue bond ratings from Standard & Poor's (AA-) and Moody's (Aa3) for the Northwest Water Treatment Plant expansion and upgrades project.

Health & Human Services

Health Services

- In cooperation with Emergency Services, the Health Services team has been actively responding to the COVID-19 pandemic. Efforts include: contact tracing; operating a Public Health call line and email for questions; routine conference calls with local hospitals, medical providers, and long-term care facilities to provide health guidance and help obtain personal protective equipment; routine conference calls with municipal partners to address questions and provide health guidance; provide screening for COVID-19 among individuals 17 years or younger; provide information and guidance on local COVID-19 screening sites to the public.

Veterans Services

April Veterans Services Statistics

Action	Total
In-Person Clients	85
New Clients Added	23
Telephone Calls	455
Email Responses/Sent Emails	284
Faxed Claims/Applications	76
Completed North Carolina applications for license plates, hunting/fishing licenses, and property tax exclusions	31

Library

March Library Statistics (first three weeks of March)

Action	Total
Total Combined Door Count	20,924 people
Library Card Registration	195 people
Total Circulation (books, eBooks, audio books, DVDs, computers)	32,602 items

April Library Statistics

Action	Total
eBooks checked out	4,668
Reference questions by phone and email	636
Wifi uses	493
Views of Miss Morgan's online storytime from the Leland Library	1,699
Armchair History online classes views (partnership with the Southport Historical Society)	7,025

- Brunswick County libraries closed to the public after March 19 due to COVID-19. Library staff initiated the following in response:
 - Put carts of donated books and magazines out on the front walks
 - Extended all due dates to May 1; suspended accrual of fines
 - Procedure for registering people by phone for virtual library cards so they can use online resources.; explained by phone how to use Axis360 for eBooks
 - Bought several hundred new eBooks
 - Added Tumblebooks (kids' eBooks) with a free subscription until Aug. 31
 - Added links to interesting and entertaining free websites to the Library's homepage
 - Leland Library produced virtual storytimes



Our Custodial Services team members work diligently to sanitize and disinfect county facilities every day

Custodial Services /
Operations Services

455

Telephone calls to assist veterans with services in April
Veterans Services



A performance of *The Magic of Recycling* show and the introduction of the new recycling mascot at local elementary schools in March
Solid Waste and Recycling



MARCH/APRIL 2020 STATS SNAPSHOT

See a great stat? Contact the Public Information Officer to learn more.

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Library (continued)

- Wifi use in March: 1,273 users
- Adult and kid eBooks checked out in March: 3,519
- Libraries remained closed to the public in April. During this month:
 - Staff shifted all collections; dusted and cleaned all shelves; sanitized worktops; searched for missing/misplaced books and DVDs; repaired damaged materials; updated catalog records; answered reference questions by phone and email; helped people with virtual library cards and eBook downloads by phone; attended dozens of continuing education webinars from State Library; cleaned out storage areas and inventoried supplies; took a load of food and children’s books to Brunswick Family assistance; planned alternative Summer Reading with no group programs.
 - Supervisors also completed all evaluations; continued to order and process new books; planned and plotted ways to offer service and to eventually reopen using state and local guidelines.

Operation Services

March Operation Services Statistics

Division	Open Work Orders as of March 1, 2020	Requested Work Orders	Completed Work Orders	Open Work Orders as of March 31, 2020
Building	111	399	341	169
Maintenance				
Housekeeping	10	3	10	3
Construction and Grounds	23	20	19	24
Vector Control	6	3	0	9
All Divisions Total	150	425	370	205

April Operation Services Statistics

Division	Open Work Orders as of April 1, 2020	Requested Work Orders	Completed Work Orders	Open Work Orders as of April 30, 2020
Building	169	161	214	116
Maintenance				
Housekeeping	3	1	0	4
Construction and Grounds	24	17	16	25
Vector Control	9	3	4	8
All Divisions Total	205	182	234	153

Building Maintenance Division

- Building Maintenance glazed and painted windows in April at the Waccamaw Community Building and renovated press boxes at Smithfield Park.

Mosquito Control / Water Management Division

- The Beaver Bounty program is ended March 31. There were 240 beavers caught this trapping season.
- The 2020 mosquito season is starting off slow. We had 41 requests in April; 20 of those were from the City of Southport. The County assisted the City with an unusual early season brood of salt marsh mosquitoes. Our program conducted the field assessment to locate the breeding site while the City of Southport addressed the adult population already on the wing. The spring is always a great opportunity to locate new mosquito sites and implement larvicide strategies which target immature mosquitoes before they emerge and start biting as adults. Salt marsh mosquitoes can fly 10-15 miles and there are thousands of acres of salt marsh to evaluate.
- This year we are getting a number of calls about extremely large mosquitoes. (approximately the size of a silver dollar). This insect belongs to the insect family *Tipulidae* and are cousins of mosquitoes but do not have biting mouthparts like mosquitoes. Crane flies are sometimes called mosquito hawks, they do not actually eat mosquitoes. Crane fly larvae mostly feed on roots of forage crops, turf grasses, and seedling field crops, while adults, if they feed at all, feed primarily on liquids such as plant nectar.
- Our current investigation process has changed a bit with the introduction of COVID-19. When someone makes a request to the Mosquito Division, we follow up by phone initially, then conduct a site investigation on the requestors premises independently. The technician then follows up with a phone call to the resident describing any action taken. Currently the mosquito programs emphasis is applying larvicides to mosquito habitats. We also apply biological control measures when appropriate.



Crane Fly

Custodial Services

- Continued disinfecting protocols that allow for increased cleaning of commonly touched items and areas.
- Hand washing stations have been placed at various facilities with high customer traffic.
- Maintaining inventory of supplies and PPE for various departments.

Parks and Recreation

- Playgrounds are closed due to the Governor's executive orders concerning COVID-19.
- Park restrooms are open only Monday through Fridays from 8 a.m. until 3 p.m. to ensure proper disinfecting when staff is present.

Public Information

- The Public Information Office produced and distributed a daily update on the COVID-19 situation beginning March 12 in cooperation with the Health Services team responding to the pandemic. Each media release was sent to multiple email distribution lists, posted on three social media platforms (Facebook, Twitter, and Nextdoor), and sent to municipal partners, community public information officers, and property owner association representatives each day.
- The office responded to several media inquiries related to COVID-19 in March and April.
- Assisted Health Services in producing and sharing material and information concerning COVID-19 on the county website and social media platforms.

March Public Information Statistics

Action	Total
Media / Open Records Requests	61
Facebook Likes	10,659 (+798)
Facebook Follows	11,128 (+948)
Twitter Followers	3,940 (+170)
Tweet Impressions	122,000
Nextdoor Views	303,539
Nextdoor Email Opens	131,550

April Public Information Statistics

Action	Total
Media / Open Records Requests	41
Facebook Likes	11,228 (+536)
Facebook Follows	11,804 (+640)
Twitter Followers	4,018 (+78)
Tweet Impressions	118,000
Nextdoor Views	487,536
Nextdoor Email Opens	119,672

Public Utilities

- Brunswick County received six bids for the concentrate discharge pipeline project March 6 and two bids from qualified contractors April 6 for the expansion and upgrades project at the Northwest Water Treatment Plant. All of Brunswick County's water customers and wholesale water customers receive either all or a part of their water supply from the Northwest Water Treatment Plant. For the past two years, the County has proactively worked toward expanding capacity at the plant and installing an advanced water treatment system to remove regulated and unregulated per- and polyfluoroalkyl (PFAS) substances including GenX present in the Cape Fear River primarily due to contamination.

Public Utilities (continued)

- Utilities staff and water tank contractors have completed painting and routine maintenance work at Boiling Spring Lakes elevated water tank, Shallotte Point elevated water tank and Sunset Beach elevated water tank.
- Key water treatment and distribution facilities have been upgraded and hardened to provide better protection to utilities employees that monitor facilities during times of significant storms and catastrophic events.
- The Board of Commissioners approved the construction contract with Carmichael Construction Company, Inc. for the construction of the 211 Water Treatment Plant Gravity Sand Filter Demolition and Replacement Project at a cost of \$1,049,000.
- The Board of Commissioners approved construction contracts for disaster response emergency/on- call construction services with State Utility Contractors Inc. and Carmichael Construction Company, Inc.
- The Board of Commissioners approved a contract with Dewberry Engineers, Inc. for engineering services for Spill Prevention Control and Countermeasures (SPCC) Plans at thirteen Brunswick County Public Utilities sites that store larger amounts of diesel fuel.

Register of Deeds

March Details of Instruments Recorded (Number Recorded)

Instrument Type	March 2020	March 2019	Difference (+ or -)	Year-to-Date FY 2019-2020
Deeds and Deeds of Trust	2,071	1,819	+252	17,564
Plats	44	49	-5	446
UCCs	74	43	+31	513
Cancellations/ Miscellaneous	1,675	1,354	+321	14,281
Marriage Licenses	58	64	-6	578
Notary Oaths	44	42	+2	336
Instruments with Excise (Included in Above Totals)	771	759	+12	6,853
Total	3,966	3,371		33,718

Register of Deeds (continued)

April Details of Instruments Recorded (Number Recorded)

Instrument Type	April 2020	April 2019	Difference (+ or -)	Year-to-Date FY 2019-2020
Deeds and Deeds of Trust	1,977	1,690	+287	19,541
Plats	47	39	+8	493
UCCs	71	54	+17	584
Cancellations/ Miscellaneous	1,330	1,424	-94	15,611
Marriage Licenses	31	88	-57	609
Notary Oaths	20	30	-10	356
Instruments with Excise (Included in Above Totals)	663	747	-84	7,516
Total	3,476	3,325		44,710

Risk Management

- The NEO-GOV training platform is an online training tool that is designed to be both easy-to-use and easily updated to fit the County's growing needs. The new system will not replace previous training methods but instead compliment them in order to provide employees additional information on a variety of safety, health, and other workplace topics. Employees will be sent an email with directions on how to sign up when the system goes live on July 1.

Solid Waste and Recycling

- The landfill served over 5,850 customers in March and over 6,000 customers in April. All visitors are encouraged to follow the three Ws when visiting the landfill: wear a cloth face covering, wait six feet between others to avoid close contact, and wash your hands regularly. Individuals who are sick or who are considered at high risk for severe illness should stay home.
- Performed *The Magic of Recycling* show to the following elementary schools in March: Town Creek, Supply, Lincoln, the Academy, Virginia Williamson, and Belville.
- Working to complete the installation of a permanent household hazardous waste (HHW) building and program at the landfill to take the place of the twice annual HHW events
- The Free Clean-up Week at the Brunswick County Landfill is rescheduled for June 22-27.
- Postponed Shred Event that was scheduled for April 24 until a later date due to COVID-19.

MARCH/APRIL 2020



STATS & STORIES

BRUNSWICK COUNTY

Looking for more stats?

Check out these links for information available online.

Board of Elections

- Weekly voter registration and other statistics:
<https://public.tableau.com/profile/brunswickcountyboe#!/>

Code Administration

- Monthly reports: <https://brunswickcountync.gov/permit-reports/>

Finance

- Monthly financial reports with summary information for general and enterprise funds, key indicators of revenues and expenditures and cash and investments:
<https://brunswickcountync.gov/finance/reports/>

Tax Office

- Property record cards and collections information: <https://tax.brunasco.net/itsnet/>

See a great stat? Contact Public Information Officer Meagan Kasczak to learn more.

- Phone: 910.253.2995 / Email: meagan.kasczak@brunswickcountync.gov
- Sign up to receive this monthly newsletter via email at
<https://brunswickcountync.gov/info/email/>