

NO JOKE THIS TIME

OCTOBER 2025

The Rant

SANFORD, NORTH CAROLINA

Monthly

TARGET IN SANFORD:
HOW WE GOT HERE AND
WHAT STILL NEEDS TO HAPPEN

ALSO INSIDE: GIRLS HIGH SCHOOL FLAG FOOTBALL | ATHLETIC PARK OPENS | LEE FAIR PHOTOS



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The Rant Monthly

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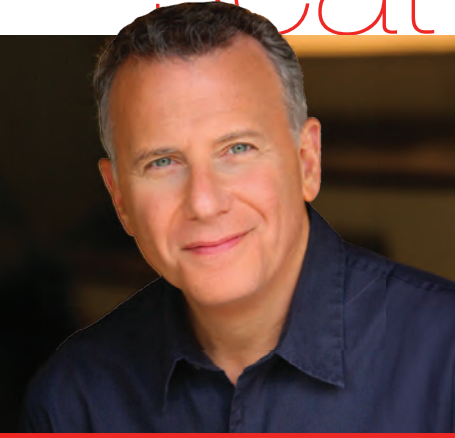

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Thur. Oct. 16 • 7 PM



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COLD OPEN

Target announcement was once jokingly unthinkable

Back in April of 2015 — a full four years before *The Rant* would start publishes a monthly printed newspaper — we played a little, harmless April Fools joke.

Long before you could create any image you wanted using generative AI, we used Photoshop to move a sign from a future Target store in Arizona to Sanford. In our April 1 Facebook post, we hinted that we saw this sign behind Bojangles in Tramway.

After more than 100 shares, several comments and very few figuring out what day it was, we had to put out that fire quickly and declare the post a joke. It wasn't the first time ... a year before, our April Fools joke was that we were going to start publishing a newspaper.

Funny how things work out.

The cover story of this month's edition of *The Rant Monthly* — a very real newspaper that's been in print for over six years now — goes into detail the many steps that have been taken (and still need to be taken) to make a Target store a reality in Sanford.

Whether you are a Target shopper or whether WalMart is more your thing, you should still be interested in Target's likely arrival here. Target's arrival in other similarly sized communities often means the arrival of new restaurants, new retail stores and new grocery stores. Walmart's expansion in south Sanford over 15 years ago marked an important first step in that area's commercial and residential development (which is still expanding with recent announcements of subdivisions and new business parks).

Target's addition to Riverbirch Corner in west Sanford will not only total revitalize that shopping center, it will provide a commercial shot in the arm to that area along the busy U.S. 1 corridor as well.

We know many of you are excited about this news, and many of you are weary of the continued growth. Is Target a 100-percent done deal in Sanford? No ... but the important steps of incentive approval from the city and county are complete, and now the ball is in their court.

Should it happen, it will completely change the Spring Lane we know today. It will also force us to think of new April Fools jokes ... *Bucee's, anyone?*

— Billy Liggett



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FOUR UNIQUE COLLEGE MASCOTS

The Campbell Fighting Camels are just down the road ... here are some other unique mascots:



Blue Blobs

Xavier University's mascot is a peculiar, blue, amoeba-like creature with googly eyes and a wide grin.



Banana Slugs

University of California, Santa Cruz' mascot was chosen by students in 1968 as a protest, and it stuck.



Fighting Okra

Delta State University's mascot has a fierce expression, a boxing glove, and a slogan: "Fear the Okra"



The Cobbers

Concordia College in Minnesota pays tribute to its agriculture roots with a walking corncob.



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October is Breast Cancer Awareness Month, and there's no better time to schedule your mammogram. One in eight women will someday experience breast cancer. That's why preventive screening is a vital part of a healthy life. If you are 40 or older, a 3D mammogram can detect breast cancer early, when treatment is most effective.

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LEE COUNTY GOVERNMENT

Parks & Recreation

OCTOBER HAPPENINGS

Athletics (Winter)

Basketball

Registration Opens: October 6th

6U Co-ed	\$30	M/T & S W/Th & S	Tramway Elem.
8U Co-ed	\$50	M/T & S W/Th & S	B.T. Bullock Elem.
10U Boys	\$50	M/T & S	Bob Hales Center
12U Boys	\$50	W/Th & S	Bob Hales Center
14U Boys	\$50	M/T & S	W.B. Wicker Elem.
11U Girls	\$50	W, S	W.B. Wicker Elem.
14U Girls	\$50	Th, S	W.B. Wicker Elem.

Gymnastics

Session 6: Oct. 27 - Dec. 20

Registration Opens: Oct. 6th

Various Ages: Walking - Adults

Various Skill levels; All Abilities

Arctic Avalanche Camp

Registration Opens: Oct. 6th

Dec. 29-31 & Jan. 2; 7:30 AM - 5:30PM

Ages: 5-12

Cost: \$120

Programs

Youth Art Classes

Registration Closes: October 10th

10 weeks October 13th - January 8th

Cost: \$60; Ages 5-13

1-hour Class on either M, T, W, or Th

5:30 PM

Cheerleading (Basketball)

Registration Opens: October 6th

Game locations based on Basketball

6U	\$30	M/T & S	Greenwood Elem.
8U	\$30	W/Th & S	Greenwood Elem.
11U	\$30	M/T & S	Greenwood Elem.
14U	\$30	W/Th & S	Greenwood Elem.

Special Events

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Community Event!

Carthage Street Parking Lot

Friday, October 10th

7:30 PM

Other Community Events to see Lee County Parks & Recreation

10/11 ~ Downtown Sanford Inc.'s Streetfest

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Local schools join growing flag football trend

Girls flag football debuts at Southern Lee and Lee County high schools this fall, as both programs see big interest from students

High school flag football is the fastest-growing sport in the country, and Lee County is boosting those numbers with two new teams heading into this fall. Lee County and Southern Lee have joined the more than 100 North Carolina high schools in officially starting programs in the last three years.

Both schools have benefited from the Carolina Panthers’ new flag football initiative, helping programs purchase new equipment and uniforms through a \$2,500-per-school grant. Roughly 30 girls at LCHS and 20 at Southern Lee tried out for their school’s inaugural programs, following a trend of high interest in schools all over the state.

“At a time when we are seeing many athletic programs across the state and nation — especially those for women — have difficulty fielding full rosters and junior varsity programs, it is so encouraging to see

girls taking an interest in being active and participating in a sport,” said Lee County Schools District Athletic Director James Alverson. “Education-based athletic programs give our students a great opportunity to try something new, make new friends and feel like a part of the wider school community.”

perfectionists not get something and come back and try again without being asked, it really is amazing and shows me just how great the potential of this program is.”

Southern Lee senior Lauris Petty said she was thrilled to have the opportunity to play football in her final year.

“I’ve been around football all my life ... I was hoping to have an opportunity to make a real team, and here it is.”

Lee County High School Coach Cherice Washington said more than 60 girls expressed interest in being part of the first Yellow Jacket team, and more than 40 attended tryouts this fall.

“We put the girls through an intrasquad scrimmage, and it was incredible to see their competitive drive, to see the smiles on their faces and how hard they hustled,” she said. “Just seeing students who are normally shy and reserved go out there and give it their all, seeing girls who are normally

“I’ve been around football my whole life,” she said. “My dad coached when I was younger. I always wanted to play, but being a girl, I didn’t really feel I could play when I was younger. I love watching football. I love coming to the games. I even loved powderpuff. I was hoping to have an opportunity to make that into a real team, and here it is.”

As of last December — before Lee County and Southern Lee announced their teams — North Carolina was home to 116



Senior Lauris Petty is the quarterback for Southern Lee’s first flag football squad. Petty said she is grateful for the opportunity to play the sport in her final year.

Courtesy: Lee County Schools

girls high school flag football programs. The North Carolina High School Athletic Association Board of Directors decided not to vote on a proposal that would have sanctioned the sport last December, as the board said it needed more consistent data on rules before moving forward. NCHSAA Commissioner Que Tucker has said it will “no doubt” eventually become a sanctioned championship sport.

In the meantime, schools are setting their own schedules in the districts used by their other sports. Southern Lee began its season on Sept. 24 against South Johnston and West Johnston. Lee County was scheduled to kick off its season on Oct. 1 against those same two teams. Lee and Southern held a scrimmage in September to celebrate the start of the programs. The regular season will conclude with Southern Lee hosting West Johnston and Lee County on Oct. 21. All conference games start at 5 p.m., and each matchup lasts approximately 45 minutes.

Opportunities for girls to play flag football at the collegiate level are on the rise. In 2026, the NCAA Division II Conference Carolinas will adopt women’s flag football as an official sport. This means four North

Carolina colleges will offer more opportunities, including potential scholarship opportunities, for high school female athletes — Barton, Chowan, Lees-McRae and Mount Olive.

There are currently 24 NAIA and seven NJCAA schools that already offer women’s flag football program. Recently, Mooresville High School’s Lilly Rumrill committed to Milligan University to play flag football.

Alverson said he is just glad to see more opportunities for student-athletes in Lee County and hopes flag football continues to draw big interest.

“Our athletic programs are about more than wins and losses,” Alverson said. “They exist to build community on campus that drives a sense of belonging and purpose. These programs are focused on developing student well-being. They are extensions of the classroom where our students get to learn the lifelong lessons of teamwork, grit, resilience, and integrity that will help them thrive in their future challenges. We are thrilled about being able to extend those benefits to more students in the fall.”



Ava Baldwin is quarterback for the first Lee County High School flag football team, which held its first scrimmage against Southern Lee in September. The team’s opener was scheduled for Oct. 1.

ALL POLITICS IS LOCAL

LET'S BE CLEAR:
This election isn't about party lines – it's about Sanford's future and the people who make it home. I'm proud of what we've built together – and I'm ready to keep showing up for our community with the same dedication and heart to serve.

Sanford is growing. It's a city with small-town charm and big potential – welcoming, family-friendly, and on the move. Let's keep that momentum going. Let's keep working together to make Sanford the very best place to live, work, and thrive.

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OPINION

Target brings much more to Sanford

By Jonathan Laverentz
Guest Columnist

I recently heard the exciting news that Sanford has been fortunate enough to get the attention of a high-profile national retailer, Target. They're looking at CASTO-owned Riverbirch Shopping Center, which right now is little more than a derelict eyesore. With less than 30 percent occupancy and a crumbling façade, it's in desperate need of new life. Which is why I was shocked to learn that while the Sanford Area Growth Alliance is all for it, there are actually voices speaking up against it.



Why?

To be fair, I am still a relative newcomer to Sanford. I moved my family here four years ago. We chose Sanford because it was presented as a growing, progressive community with potential. Sanford billed itself as the "City of Bricks," for its strong foundation built on a history of embracing opportunity. The city had commuter rail expansion in the works, a vibrant downtown revival, cultural institutions, and leadership that seemed intent on growth. It was easy to picture our three children thriving here.

Since moving to Sanford, just beneath the surface I have noticed a troubling mindset take hold: fear of change. Where we expected progress, too often I hear, "That's not our way." This reluctance risks holding Sanford back at the very moment it should be leaning into growth.

And let's be honest. I know this can't be about faith. Like us, this is a town full of passionate Christians. But remember, Christianity itself is built on change. Ecclesiastes 3 reminds us, "To everything there is a season. While Jeremiah 29:11 reassures us that though change can be uncertain, God's plans are for our good. Faith frames change as natural and purposeful. It calls us to embrace it, trusting that renewal brings growth. It tells us to trust God and step into it.

Target isn't just another store. It's more jobs for Sanford. It's tax revenue. It's the spark that can bring other businesses with it. Right now, Sanford, west and north of US1/501 is dry when it comes to retail. And

while this area makes up at least 30 percent of the city, we are plagued with empty storefronts, and smattering of gas stations and fast food spots, and the only movie theater in town that is hanging on by a thread. That is not prosperity.

Is it the concern that Lee County may need to offer "concessions" or some sort of tax incentive for Target to put down roots? Let me assure you that, provided Lee County leaders can negotiate at all, the volume of tax revenue created by this retailer will far outpace any breaks we have given them. Other towns in North Carolina have welcomed Target and seen their local economies grow. Jobs increase, home values rise, and small businesses benefit from new foot traffic. Target isn't a threat to community character, it's proof that your city has arrived. When one national brand plants roots, it says your town has potential, when the second arrives, it tells the rest of the world that your town is open for business. That's exactly the kind of signal Sanford needs to send.

Are people worried about traffic? Riverbirch sits less than a mile off US 1/501. It is not going to clog neighborhoods. Are they worried about downtown? Target won't kill downtown. It will help it. In fact, national retailers often create spillover traffic for local restaurants and shops. People coming for Target will stay to explore. And don't try to tell me Riverbirch is historic. It is a meandering concrete relic from the 1970s with no architectural or cultural value.

Sanford was built on progress. It grew because people took chances, created jobs, and welcomed change. Change isn't something to fear; it's something to embrace. A healthy, thriving city honors its past but invests in its future.

For my family, this isn't abstract. We've made Sanford our home. We've invested our savings, our time, and our hope for our kids' future here. I want them to grow up in a community that doesn't shy away from opportunity, but one that has the courage to adapt and thrive. Saying no to Target isn't just saying no to a store. It's saying no to jobs, no to growth, and no to a future that could be brighter for all of us.



Guest columnist Jonathan Laverentz lives in Sanford and is director and global head of product marketing and content for Prometheus Group.

EDITORIAL

HARD WORK PAYS OFF

You'll find on Page 20 of this edition of The Rant Monthly a story — sent to us by Lee County Schools — about the district's performance in the most recent N.C. Report Cards release.

It's significant, because while Lee County Schools still has its share of problems — underfunded, getting crowded, behavioral issues, aging buildings and subpar athletics facilities, to name a few — the district has its pretty big wins, as well.

Take West Lee Middle School, for example. To point out that this school raised its state grade from an F to a D might sound like we're setting a pretty low bar for success. But West Lee's performance is certainly worth celebrating.

For the first time in five years, the school — one of three public middle schools in Lee County's district — is no longer classified as a "low-performing school." According to LCS, on the 100-point scale, West Lee's growth score climbed from a 52 to a 95, and its overall performance grade rose by 17 points from the previous year.

It's also the first time West Lee has exceeded growth since 2016, and it's the highest growth the school has achieved since the state adopted the "grading" program a decade ago.

West Lee Principal Aimee Petraraca was named the district's Principal of the Year heading into the fall, and the scores certainly justify the award. We know teachers, staff and students at West Lee, and we're certain the school's turnaround has been a team effort.

At a time when the state of North Carolina and our local elected officials continue to do all they can to leave our public schools behind — such as the heavy focus on publicly funding private education — it's heart-warming to see our public schools succeed despite all of the noise.

Kudos to West Lee and to Lee County Schools and to the community as a whole for not giving up on our public schools.

TALKING TARGET

Many readers of *The Rant* were intrigued by the news last month that Target is looking at opening a store in west Sanford. Many are excited, while many others see the store (and Sanford's high growth rate) as a negative:

The city and county will recoup their investment in spades and quickly. Will reduce a great portion of the retail leakage that is leaving Lee County to buy goods in neighboring counties. Current leakage is over \$75 million. Just as importantly, we eliminate a very sad and blighted shopping center and give our residents more of what they have wanted locally for years. Also, developer studies have shown when a Target comes in higher quality retail follows. Ending the amount of Dollar General, tire stores, vape shops, etc. for more desirable and retail and restaurants. This project is a no brainer for Lee County.

Chet Mann

Not a Target fan, but the thought of them revitalizing Riverbitch and making a nice

place to shop again is very exciting. This side of town, right off of U.S. 1, needs that.

Karen Stone

The proposed Riverbitch redevelopment sounds like a game-changer. Awesome news for the local community.

Sue Corbitt

Sanford is growing and will continue to grow over the next five to 10 years. Retail, grocery stores, schools — it will all be necessary to help the growing area and community thrive. Infrastructure will follow, it always does. This could be a HUGE step in the right direction for this area, whether you prefer Target or not.

Gaby Rodriguez Conner

We do not need a Target here. What we need are smaller shops. Yes, we want that area to look great. But bringing a target to town. I think it's just too much.

Tammy Mims Tickle

Target is going to be wonderful to revamp Riverbitch. That plaza could be beautiful with proper funding. Such a great addition for this side of town.

Brittany Bronson

Amazing how people are against improving their city and would rather go to another city and put money in that city/county instead — meanwhile, leaving a town that has been stagnant and down for so long now. Amazed so many in Sanford are against progress and revitalizing.

Rodney Horsley

I wish people would stop complaining — all I've heard since we moved here in 1988 is there's nothing to do in Sanford/Lee County. You have to drive to Cary/Raleigh/Durham for shopping, dining. Now its coming. If you see other areas, they are building like crazy. So many people moving to North Carolina.

Jim Sandlin

While it would be nice for that money to go to local small businesses, it's hard to ignore how much tax revenue is currently lost by Lee County residents having to shop out of county.

Allison Fulcher

How about these companies float their own investments once and for all? Taxpayers consistently get shafted by paying for things like this and it in the end we get nothing in return.

George Howard

Welcome to Sanford, where our slogan used to be "Well Centered," but now we decided to be a little sister of Fayetteville — overpopulated, our schools have not been updated in years, the roads kind of sketch. But, hey, look at the bright side. We have a Target. And we're avoiding any questions about the homeless problem here in Sanford, because we don't wanna offend Pittsboro for shuttling off their homeless and dropping them off at the depot..

Derrick Niedworok

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COVER STORY

ON TARGET

WHAT HAPPENED, WHAT NEEDS TO HAPPEN AND WHAT ALL OF IT COULD MEAN AS SANFORD INCHES CLOSER TO THE BULLSEYE TO LAND TARGET, RIVERBIRCH OVERHAUL



Computer rendering of the proposed Target store potentially coming to Riverbitch Shopping Center in west Sanford. Rendering (which is subject to change) provided to The Rant by Casto, which purchased Riverbitch Corner in in 2022.

By Gordon Anderson
gordon@rantnc.com

Without a doubt, the No. 1 question with regards to retail among the general population in Lee County for more than a decade has been some variation of “when are we getting a Target?”

Now, we know the answer appears to be sometime in 2027.

After months of rumors (and years of speculation) about a major retailer looking to locate in the area, the news came in a fairly rapid series of bursts. On Sept. 3, we learned that commercial real estate developer CASTO, which purchased Riverbitch Corner in west Sanford in 2022, had submitted plans to the city-county Planning Department’s Technical Review Committee which call for a near-complete demolition of the shopping center and a total redevelopment of the site that would be centered around a Target store if undertaken.

That news was positive, but by itself not necessarily indicative of action. CASTO had submitted ambitious plans for Riverbirch before (they didn't name any specific retailers), and submission of plans to TRC doesn't necessarily mean a given project will go forward. TRC is a group of public stakeholders — think fire, police, utilities, etc. — who review proposals to make sure they meet all applicable codes and standards. Are there enough entrances and exits? How will water and power get to the site? What kind of response time can be expected in the event of an emergency? That sort of thing.

But paired with CASTO's submission was another piece of information that caught eyes all over Sanford and beyond — the Ohio-based developer was asking the city of Sanford for an economic incentive of up to \$4.4 million to help fund the development, and had promised a Target and a "new to market grocery store" at the site. Incentives of this type require the city

council to hold a public hearing, and a notice of the public hearing that contained the Target language went out the same day CASTO's submission to TRC became public.

More dominoes fell after that. About a week later, it became public that the Lee County Board of Commissioners was considering adding up to \$2 million to the deal that would help fund water and sewer upgrades at the site. That board voted 4-3 on Sept. 15 to enter the deal, and the City Council voted 6-0 the following night to approve the incentive package.

From the local government side of things, the deal was done — upon completion and opening of the Target and the unnamed grocery store, \$6.4 million in exchange for a total rehabilitation of the aging Riverbirch shopping center, which opened in the 1980s and served as both a community center and a gateway into west Sanford off U.S. 1 for decades, but had fallen into severe disrepair in the past several years.

NEW STRATEGY

Should Target decide to set up shop in Sanford, it will continue a recent trend of choosing smaller "micropolitan" areas for its stores. A recent article published by *Modern Retail* looked at Target's decisions to open stores in places like Quincy, Illinois; South Lake Tahoe, California; and Southern Pines, North Carolina (all three have smaller populations than Sanford).

From the article: Since 2017, the company has been thinking of its stores as delivery hubs for online orders, and stores now fulfill the vast majority of Target's online purchases. That relies on having enough space to receive, store and move inventory close to where customers live.





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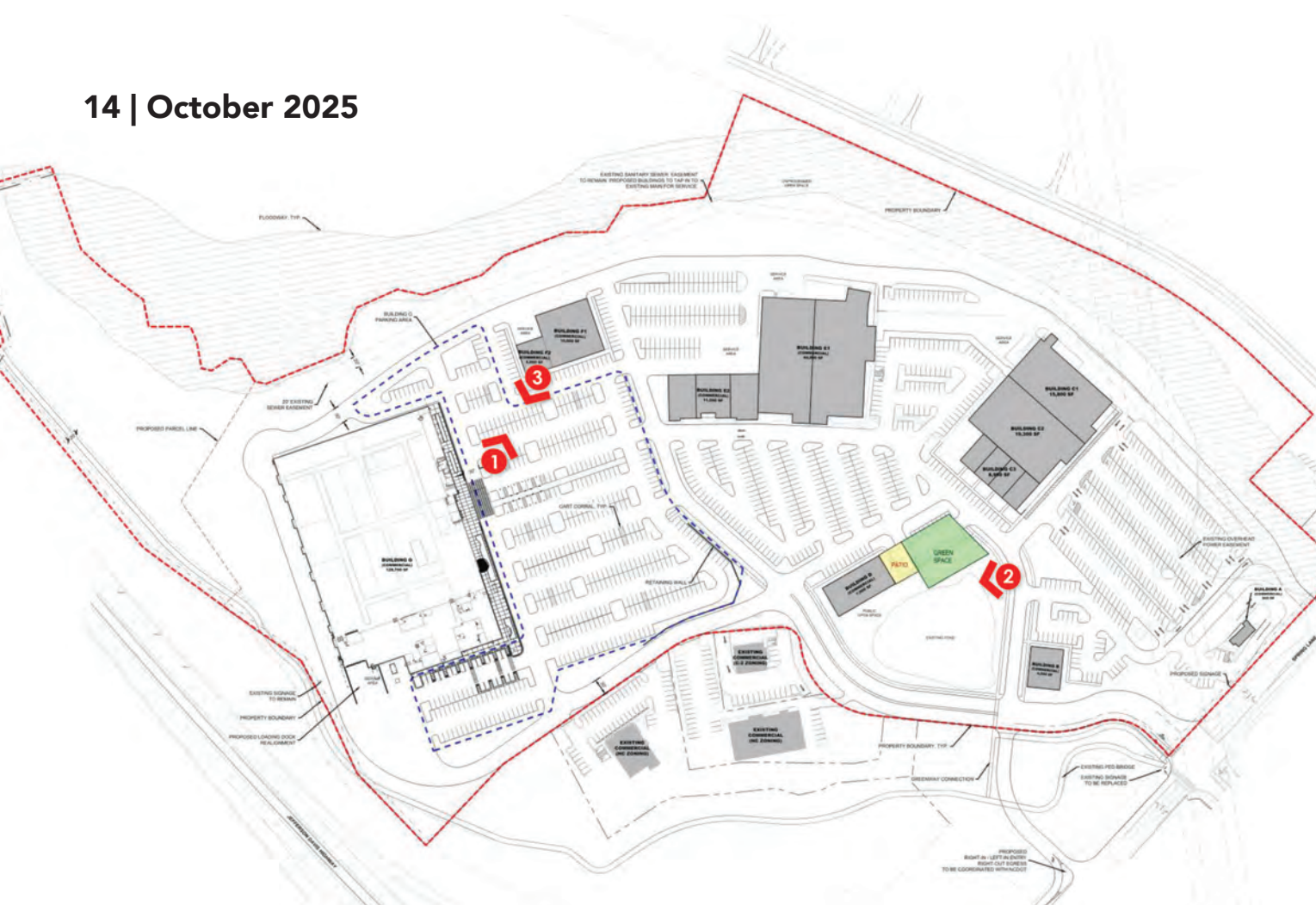
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WHAT COMES BACK?

So what do Sanford and Lee County get in return for their \$6.4 million?

To start with, the Sanford Area Growth Alliance (SAGA) and others involved in the deal estimate the cost of CASTO’s redevelopment at more than \$60 million. Between Target, the new grocer and whatever other retailers occupy the remainder of the new Riverbirch footprint, it’s estimated to generate upward of \$100 million in annual sales, meaning between property taxes and sales taxes the project could generate as much as \$3 million in local tax revenue.

SAGA and city government in particular have touted those numbers as the process played out, but they only paint a part of the picture. A *Triangle Business Journal* story from March of this year titled “The Target Effect” discusses the ripples caused by Target’s decision to locate in a given community, using nearby areas like Southern Pines and Selma.

“What started as Moore County’s first Target has exploded into many other ‘firsts’ for the area,” that story reads. “The first Whataburger. The first Chick-
en Salad Chick. The first BJ’s Whole-
sale Club. All of the stores have either opened, or will open soon, in Morganton Park South. And it’s safe to say Target spurred on those investments.”

So instead of focusing only on the Riverbirch footprint, draw a one-mile radius circle around the shopping center and consider that the only area included which could reasonably support any commercial development is North Horner Boulevard — currently home to a long-vacant grocery store, some industrial activity, a handful of restaurants and motels, and a bunch of vacant land. Imagining the other upscale retailers which could be enticed by Target’s location at Riverbirch (the *TBJ* store calls them “parasite stores,” not derisively, but to identify them as “smaller stores who basically don’t have to do anything to attract the shopper or the consumer ...



Computer renderings provided by Casto (subject to change ... so don’t expect a “Kipotle”) show what retail and restaurants could look like if Target was to move forward with building a store in Riverbirch Corner in west Sanford. The area would also see new restaurants, new stores and a new grocery store and gas station, according to plans.



because they're attracted by Target") reasonably opens the door to imagining added returns on that \$6.4 million public investment.

THE DECLINE OF RIVERBIRCH

To the public eye, the process appears to have unfolded pretty fast. But behind the scenes, CASTO and local leaders in the government and economic development sectors have been working to make this or something like it happen at least since 2022.

Riverbirch's decline has been no secret to anyone paying attention. *The Rant's* earliest coverage of the issue came in 2017, when the shopping center was listed as a foreclosure property up for auction. It sold that year, but the new owners weren't exactly attentive, and the decline exacerbated with tenants leaving and city-issued \$250-per-day civil violations for bad lighting, potholes and uncut grass began piling up.

In August 2020, this publication spent several thousand words detailing "The Slow Demise of Riverbirch" complete with photos of puddle-filled potholes, empty storefronts and even those working in the few remaining parcels of

occupied space.

CASTO arrived on the scene a couple years later, purchasing the center in November 2022, and while big changes weren't immediately visible, the hope for better things loomed large. CASTO is a private company with commercial developments across the country, and a look at their portfolio then and now reveals a company with a deep connection to Target and other national retailers.

BEHIND THE SCENES:
CONVERSATIONS THAT NEVER STOPPED

Jimmy Randolph, SAGA's CEO, said local leaders knew from the time of CASTO's purchase that there were "extraordinary costs" associated with any potential redevelopment of Riverbirch when they acquired the property in 2022, but there was hope from the start that some kind of deal could be struck that would give everyone involved a win.

"They've done economic development projects in other states, where there are different laws about incentives," Randolph said. "They're not apples-to-apples comparisons, but the



In August of 2020, *The Rant Monthly's* cover story looked at the "Slow Demise of Riverbirch" and how the once jumping retail district had fallen on hard times in the 21st century.

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conversations kept happening. What it really came down to was eliminating a blight on that part of Sanford, and the prospect of replacing it with something that adds value.”

CASTO’s first stab at adding value came in August 2023, when it submitted a proposal to TRC that would have transformed Riverbirch into a mixed-use development with both commercial and residential space. That proposal would have required additional entrance and exit ways due to the residential component, requirements that proved too costly to pursue.

Additionally, the residential component created another issue with regards to the expectation that CASTO would need an incentive to move forward — for all the activity in Sanford and Lee County on the part of residential development companies in recent years, there’s not one that’s asked for an incentive, and even opening talks to that effect would create a sticky precedent. Why incentivize with public money

“The Riverbirch redevelopment is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform a key corridor of Sanford.”

— Sanford Mayor Rebecca Salmon —

something that’s already happening in spades without it?

It wasn’t until December of last year that the public heard more. At a meeting of the Lee County Board of Commissioners that month, local GOP Chairman Jim Womack urged commissioners — in the face of “rumors” that “some kind of anchor store ... is going to be coming to the Riverbirch area” — to reject any kind of public funding for such a deal, arguing in words that may have hinted at the specifics of the rumor that any retailer locating in Sanford would do so “with or without a targeted financial incentive.”

Meanwhile, CASTO’s conversations with Randolph and SAGA continued. And although the talks nearly fell apart on multiple occasions, they never stopped.

At one point, CASTO asked Randolph to have a conversation directly with Target representatives, a conversation which apparently took place to underscore to Randolph and by extension the rest of the local government stakeholders just how serious Target was about locating a store in Sanford. And although plenty of daylight still existed between the sides at that point, by late summer the outline of a

deal was in place and the only remaining hurdle was for the politicians atop the local government infrastructure to cast their votes.

WHY THIS DEAL WAS DIFFERENT

That doesn’t answer all questions about incentives though, and some critics have been correct in noting that retail incentives have never been a part of the strategy employed by SAGA and local government bodies in attracting businesses. Instead, they’ve typically lured larger manufacturers who then get a refund for a set period of some portion of the property taxes they pay.

Randolph acknowledges the situation with CASTO and Target is different. But he argues it’s so unique that it’s extremely unlikely to be repeated.

“This isn’t about going to the next parcel of farmland outside the city limits and building another highway commercial project that’s going to happen anyway,” he said. “There’s no need



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for any public assistance for something like that,” he said. “The truth is there’s not a developer out there that can pencil out a profitable plan to redevelop Riverbirch, and in all our conversations this has always been about redeveloping a blighted center.”

John Crumpton was Lee County manager when discussions about the potential for a cash incentive surrounding a Riverbirch redevelopment began (he’s since retired). At the time, he was staunchly opposed to any such deal — it violated county policy that incentives be limited to manufacturing, and wages for jobs generated by retail operations typically fall beneath the county’s average wage. Additionally, despite calls from the public for more retail options, it’s not like Sanford and Lee County are retail deserts. But community development grants are separate mechanism from incentives for attracting business, and Crumpton said “it became clear the Riverbirch project would fit within

the community development stature better than economic development” because community development involves mostly infrastructure grants and projects to address areas that are in disrepair and need to be upgraded.”

“Local Government not only can help the property itself become more valuable, but the areas around the project area also benefit from the improvements,” he told *The Rant*. “Property values in the community go up as the property becomes more valuable. Inducements in infrastructure such as roads, water, sewer, stormwater control, and internet service, help the developers with their project, but also helps the surrounding areas that can use these improvements. Within the County’s economic development policy, infrastructure is part of the inducements there as well. The City is well positioned to handle the infrastructure improvements since they control most of the essential utilities. Helping the City with those costs is



CASTO partnered with the city of Snellville, Georgia, a suburb of Atlanta, for a reimagined city center that featured nine new buildings, a central park and large parking deck. The Grove at Towne Center was completed this spring.



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not unprecedented for the County.”

It seems at least some of the politicians shared a skepticism of either an incentive or any kind of community development grant. Three of the county Board of Commissioners’ Republican majority — Chairman Kirk Smith, Commissioner Andre Knecht and Commissioner Samantha Martin — voted against the deal. Republican Commissioner Taylor Vorbeck joined Democrats Mark Lovick, Robert Reives Sr. and Cameron Sharpe in voting yes. At Sanford City Hall, Republican Councilman Charles Taylor wasn’t present for the incentive vote, but the council’s six remaining Democrats voted unanimously for its passage.

‘DRAWN TO THIS TYPE OF PROJECT’

Shannon Dixon is CASTO’s executive vice president of development and leasing, and has lived in central North Carolina for nearly 40 years. She said the company has been interested in Riverbitch for some time.

“I remember driving by it in the 80s and 90s and thinking this was just the best retail,” she said. “When that went into decline it was disappointing for everyone. But CASTO has kind of been drawn to this type of project – historic areas where there are opportunities for revitalization. It’s an established location and can serve Sanford and the surrounding areas.” Dixon said the company plans to break ground on the rede-

velopment in the spring of 2026 with an eye toward opening in the fall of 2027 if all goes according to plan. The plans filed with TRC show the development would be anchored by a 128,000 square foot commercial space where the shopping center backs up to U.S. Highway 1, as well as a new 53,000 square foot building near the location of Riverbitch’s current Belk men’s store (formerly Winn-Dixie). The building that currently houses Belk’s back half — commonly known as the women’s Belk — is one of the only structures currently part of Riverbitch that wouldn’t be demolished (a 900 square foot building at the edge of the property on Spring Lane would also remain). The plans

show six other new commercial spaces, as well as a new secondary exit from the property onto Spring Lane just east of the existing entrance.

Dixon said CASTO is “still in the process of working on the tenant mix,” so even though one of Belk’s buildings will remain, it’s not a guarantee that Belk itself will stay (it’s not a guarantee that Belk is gone either — as Dixon said, the “tenant mix” is still up in the air). She added that whoever ends up on the roster, local shoppers should be happy.

“CASTO is a 99-year-old family company with a long term philosophy of holding properties long term,” she said. “We have better flexibility as a

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private company in terms of picking out the right tenants and not signing them just to sign them. You work with and develop relationships with your tenants that way.”

Now, with all the pieces in place, CASTO has five years to complete the project. If a Target and a “new to market” grocery store aren’t open by that time, the deal is void. Sanford Mayor Rebecca Wyhof Salmon is confident that won’t happen.

“The Riverbirch redevelopment is a once-in-a-generation opportunity to transform a key corridor of Sanford. With more than \$60 million in proposed private investment, it sends a clear signal to retailers and investors that Sanford is on the map,” she said. “Together, we are turning a declining property into a vibrant destination. The return on investment will be measured not just in dollars, but in renewed energy and momentum for our entire community.”



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'TEXAS CHAINSAW MASSACRE' ACTOR TO APPEAR AT SPRING LN. CINEMAS SHOWING

Spring Lane Cinemas will host a legend of horror film lore in Sanford just in time for spooky season.

Allen Danziger, who appeared as Jerry in the original "Texas Chainsaw Massacre" film in 1974, will be present at the theater on Oct. 22 for a Q&A/autograph signing before screening of the film. Admission to the screening and the Q&A/signing is free with a purchase from the concession stand.

"As one of the few surviving cast members, it's a rare privilege to hear (Danziger's) firsthand stories from working on such a legendary piece of cinema, and I'm beyond excited to have him here to share these experiences with our community," said Jared Campbell, Spring Lane Cinemas' general manager.

"The Texas Chainsaw Massacre" is widely regarded as a cult classic of the genre, if a grisly one. Campbell's screening will come from an original 35 mm print, complete with a "rare X rating logo." The X rating has been long retired, and was used at the time to label films considered too graphic for younger audiences — in this case due to violence.

"While the print is worn and riddled with scratches, the colors are remarkably vibrant," Campbell said. "This is truly the definitive way to experience the film."

Danziger's initial career as an actor was brief — he appeared in just two films, both directed by horror legend Tobe Hooper, before retiring after his appearance in The Texas Chainsaw Massacre." He made two independent film appearances in 2022.

Campbell said Spring Lane Cinemas will also raffle off a 27x40 theatrical poster of the film for \$1 per ticket. While the screening is open to the public, seating is limited and expected to go quickly.

— by Gordon Anderson

LCS report card highlights growth

Courtesy of Lee County Schools

The North Carolina State Board of Education released the 2025 School Performance Grades in September, and while the results show that continued improvement is needed, Lee County Schools is celebrating a number of achievements.

For the first time in five years, West Lee Middle School is no longer classified as a low-performing school — a milestone that highlights just how far the school has come. On the 100-point scale, West Lee's growth score climbed from a 52 to a 95, and its overall performance grade increased by 17 points in a single year. This is also the first time West Lee has exceeded growth since 2016 and represents the highest growth the school has achieved since the state adopted this model ten years ago.

"We are incredibly proud of the work happening at West Lee, under the leadership of principal Aimee Petrarca" said Dr. Chris Dossenbach, superintendent of Lee County Schools. "This kind of progress shows what is possible when leaders, educators, students, and families come together with urgency and purpose."

Across the district, schools at every level demonstrated growth. Deep River Elementary posted the highest growth of any elementary school. Broadway Elementary not only improved its growth conversion score by 14 points but also raised its overall performance grade by nine points. J.R. Ingram Elementary sustained a positive trend with measurable gains in student growth, and Tramway Elementary earned a B grade for the third consecutive year.

At the secondary level, SanLee Middle School exceeded growth expectations for the second consecutive year while also raising its overall performance grade. Lee Early College earned another A grade for the eighth consecutive year. While Bragg Street Academy does not receive a formal grade because it is an alternative school, it is notable that the school recorded a dramatic 29-point increase in overall performance.



For the first time in five years, West Lee Middle School in Sanford is no longer classified as a 'Low Performing School.' The school's principal, Aimee Petrarca (pictured) was named Lee County School's Principal of the Year for the 2025-2026 school year.

Dossenbach emphasized that these results reflect the dedication of the entire school community. "Anytime you see meaningful improvement, it is because a team of people came together with a shared focus," he said. "From the teachers in our classrooms, to the bus drivers who get students to school safely, to the cafeteria staff who keep students nourished — every role matters. Families, community partners, and our Board of Education are also essential to creating an environment where students can thrive. This is truly a collective effort."

The district also acknowledged that five schools are classified as low-performing under the current grading formula: Broadway Elementary, W.B. Wicker Elementary, East Lee Middle School, Lee County High School and Southern Lee High School. Both Broadway and W.B. Wicker met expected student growth, and Broadway recorded a nine-point improvement in its overall grade.

"These classifications can sometimes

be misleading," Dossenbach noted. "The current school grading system is closely tied to poverty, often penalizing schools that serve more low-income students. While we will never use this as an excuse, we want our families to know that a letter grade does not define the worth of a child, a teacher or a community. What matters most is the progress our schools are making, and we are proud of the gains we see across the district."

Dossenbach added that the district is not ignoring the areas of concern.

"We have carefully analyzed this data to identify our weaknesses, and we have already met with each principal to review their school's results. We are putting plans into action now to address these challenges head-on. While we celebrate the progress, we are equally committed to tackling our shortcomings and ensuring that every student in Lee County Schools has the opportunity to succeed."

Town of Broadway to pursue national Purple Heart designation

By Richard Sullins

richard@rantnc.com

The town of Broadway, already known for its honoring of the veteran community, is about to take another step in remembering those who have served.

As the pace picks up towards America's 250th birthday, Broadway's town commissioners are applying for recognition as a Purple Heart Town, a designation that recognizes the men and women who were wounded in battle in the defense of the United States as far back as the days of the American Revolution.

Mayor Donald Andrews presented the item for discussion at a meeting of the town board on Sept. 22. Andrews spoke briefly of the town's place through the years in providing men and women when they were needed in America's defense and who "left home to meet the enemy at such a distance that those at home were protected."

The commissioners' vote authorizes

the mayor to draft a resolution requesting that Broadway be recognized for its support of those men and women who have been wounded or paid the ultimate price in combat. The resolution would be presented for a vote on October 27 and if approved in time, would then be proclaimed at the state's Veterans' Day remembrance service on Nov. 11.

A VERY AMERICAN TRADITION

The Purple Heart is the oldest recognition of military service in the history of the United States. After the surrender of British general Cornwallis at Yorktown in 1781, scattered fighting continued while treaty negotiations dragged on in Paris. Unable to pay his soldiers or even provide them with food, Washington devised a means of recognizing those who paid the price for his country's newly found freedom with their own blood.

Washington designed the award while encamped just outside New York in

1782 as the Badge of Military Merit which could be awarded to service members who displayed extraordinary loyalty. Pushed aside almost as quickly as it was created, the recognition was made only three times and nearly forgotten for the next 150 years. General Douglas MacArthur revived the award in 1932, gave it its modern name and appearance, and expanded its eligibility criteria to include those who were injured or killed in combat.

It's not possible to know the number of veterans from Broadway, from Lee County, or even from North Carolina that have been recipients of the Purple Heart. The Pentagon does not keep official public records of those who were wounded in armed conflict.

Lee County is designated as a Purple Heart Community, and Broadway would be the first municipality within the county, and the 139th in the state, to receive the designation.



LOCAL ATTORNEY, COMMUNITY ADVOCATE REMEMBERED AS COMPASSIONATE LEADER

Attorney Bill Wilson, who founded the Wilson, Reives & Doran law firm in Sanford, died on Sept. 24.

Wilson founded the law firm in 1977 after moving here from his hometown of Apex, and had practiced law locally since. One of his law partners since the 1990s, Robert Reives II, is a member of the North Carolina House of Representatives, where he serves as the House Democratic Leader. Reives said Wilson was involved over the years in a number of civil rights issues that reverberate today locally — including the drawing of districts for the Lee County Board of Commissioners which resulted in the election of its first black member, and the saving of the historically black W.B. Wicker School.

"Those aren't issues that were monetarily advantageous," Reives said. "You could argue that they made his life harder, especially being new to Sanford."

Other tributes from community leaders poured in on the website of the Albright Funeral Home in Apex, where Wilson's obituary was posted. "Bill was a good, compassionate and decent human being. It is difficult to forget your Christian love and respect for the under dogs and the impact that you had in the community. I will surely miss you my friend," wrote Mark Akinosho, a member of the Sanford City Council and a former chairman of the Lee County Board of Education.

A celebration of life will be held at noon on Oct. 2 at the Dennis Wicker Civic Center, with internment to follow at the Greater Christian Chapel Church Cemetery in Apex.

— by Gordon Anderson

Petty unseats longtime councilman in primary

By Gordon Anderson

gordon@rantnc.com

A political newcomer defeated the Sanford City Council's longest-serving member **Tuesday** in the Democratic primary for the city's Ward 3 seat.

Thirty-year-old Christopher Petty defeated J.D. Williams by a margin of 60-40 percent. No Republican filed for the seat, so Petty will be unopposed on the general election ballot in November. The 77-year-old Williams has represented Ward 3, which covers most of east Sanford, since the 1990s.

Despite the decisive total in percentage terms, the race was decided by only a



Petty

handful of votes. Overall, Petty earned 66 votes to Williams' 44. Just 110 voters cast ballots — out of 2,071 eligible — in the race.

The result was fairly uniform across the board, though. In total votes, Petty led 41-32 after ballots from the early voting period were tabulated, and that margin expanded to 51-37 after results from two of the Ward's three precincts had been counted.

Partisan primaries in City Council races are relatively new. Before 2013, City Council races in Sanford (and Lee County's Board of Education) were run on a nonpartisan basis, and primaries of this kind weren't necessary until a law that year passed by the North Carolina General Assembly in response to a request from then-Representative Mike Stone.

Local voters will have two more choices to make in the 2025 municipal election cycle this November. At-large Councilwoman Linda Rhodes, a Democrat, faces a challenge from Republican Louis Williams, and Broadway's nonpartisan Town Board race features five candidates vying for three at-large seats.

Coca-Cola building to house county's transit system

By Richard Sullins

richard@rantnc.com

Lee County Commissioners voted unanimously on Sept. 15 to buy the large building at the corner of Hawkins Avenue and Burns Drive that was owned in previous years by Coca-Cola of Sanford and convert it into space that will accommodate several immediate needs of county government and others that may arise in the immediate future. But a handful of people showed up before the vote was taken to let the commissioners know of their disapproval after hearing how much money the county will have to spend on the acquisition.

The costs of the project are expected to be around \$7.8 million and could potentially go even higher, so the county has said it will consider adding any available funds from other sources so the building's repurposing isn't hindered by a lack of funding. The proposal was approved on a 5-2 vote, with commissioners Andre Knecht and Samantha Martin voting in opposition.

Lee County Board of Education member Alan Rummel, a Republican, attended the meeting in an unofficial capacity and asked the commissioners whether their plan to buy the building outright was really the best option. Rummel mentioned a meeting in June where renting the building was discussed as an option but dropped.

"I think there surely there would be room for some negotiation to rent the entire space. Maybe that would drive that price up some, but after you buy the building, you'll have to pay even more for repairs," he said. "The government's job is to protect our rights and interests. Buying this building will not do that."

Another speaker, local GOP Chairman Jim Womack, said the decision to purchase the building was nothing more than a waste of taxpayer dollars, calling it "one of the highest per-square-foot prices that's ever been purchased in Lee County for a building that's got limited growth capacity that isn't really necessary."

Womack said that just as bad, a decision to use local obligation bond dollars now amounts to poor financial planning, coming at a time when the county is facing the coming need to replace high-cost ticket items like a new jail.

"We're looking at \$70 to \$80 million for a new jail we can't really afford, and if we can't, if we're really stretched to have to afford it now, we're making it even more difficult by purchasing this building when we don't have to purchase it. We can actually bank that money and start seriously setting aside the funds that we need for a new jail, or at least the debt capacity for one," he said.

During the public hearing, Chief Financial Officer Jen Waterhouse said the bonds would be secured by a mortgage on the value of the warehouse. In response to a Request for Proposals on the funding package, six proposals were received. The lowest interest rate came in a proposal from JP Morgan of 3.97 percent. The vote clears the way for 32,114 square feet of new space

to be made available to the county that will accommodate the storage of several types of public safety vehicles and equipment. The building will also become the home of the county's new microtransit system, to be known as the Buzzline, with offices and storage space for the fleet of vehicles.

WHAT'S ALL THE BUZZ ABOUT?

Sanford is one of 11 communities in the Tar Heel state to receive grant funding this year to pilot a "Mobility for Everyone, Everywhere in North Carolina" program, an on-demand microtransit service.

The new microtransit service to be operated jointly by Sanford and Lee County will be funded through a \$3.4 million grant that's part of a federal assistance package adopted during the Biden Administration in 2021. It's known formally as the "Infrastructure Investment and Jobs Act," but it's more widely recognized as the "Bipartisan Infrastructure Act" administered by the U.S. Department of Transportation.

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Lee County and Sanford signed an MOU on May 25 that spells out the details of how the Buzzline will provide on-demand transportation services to a designated service area that will expand from Sanford into the county's countryside regions. Commissioners Chairman Kirk Smith expressed his support and optimism for the project during a joint signing ceremony for the MOU with Sanford Mayor Rebecca Salmon earlier this year.

"The No. 1 challenge for our citizens reentering the workforce, accessing mental, behavioral health, or substance abuse treatment, is the lack of transportation," Smith said at the time. "The microtransit project we are about to undertake will help eliminate this barrier to treatment or employment by providing reliable transportation and overcoming this critical need."

Increasing the number and variety of transportation options available for residents has been a priority concern for Sanford's City Council, and one that it constantly works on and revises.

"A consistent goal of our strategic framework has been to improve access for those who live in our community," Salmon said. "This pilot project is an opportunity to provide an affordable transportation option in a collaborative and sustainable way. And it gives us the right tool to make a system like this work here - the flexibility to create the right program for the Sanford community."

Based upon the city's microtransit study completed in December 2022, the objectives of the Buzzline will be to provide affordable, efficient, reliable, and accessible transit in Sanford, complement the Lee County COLTS System by filling in gaps and offering services on weekends, create access that's attractive to both workers and employers, including those with multiple shifts, provide students with dependable transportation, give elderly, disabled and everyday people the ability to attain access to goods and services on an on-demand basis, and strengthen the travel and hospitality industries by enabling staff to leverage transit service for visitor mobility.

More information on the Buzzline service, as well as employment opportunities for Transit Operators and Dispatch staff, is anticipated to be made available in the coming weeks.



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Q&A: Rhodes, Williams for Sanford Council

Editor’s Note: Part 1 of 2. The second half of this questionnaire will appear in the November edition of *The Rant Monthly*. The entire Q&A can be found online now at rantnc.com.

Voters in Sanford will choose on Nov. 4 between Democratic incumbent Linda Rhodes and Republican challenger Louis Williams in the 2025 municipal race for an at-large seat on the Sanford City Council. Early voting begins on October 16. *The Rant* asked five questions to Rhodes and Williams, and their answers are printed as received below.

Question: Introduce yourself – your name, age, professional background, why you’re running, and why you feel you’re qualified for the office you’re seeking.

Rhodes: My name is Linda Kelly Rhodes, and I retired in 2022 from UNC-Chapel Hill following a 32-year

career with the General Alumni Association, the School of Social Work, and the Department of Athletics. I am 66, and used to think that was really old!

I’m running because I believe in public service and that we benefit when we have multiple voices at the table. No one has all the answers, and I have the skills to cooperate with others and develop solutions to the challenges currently faced by cities and towns.

Williams: Hello Sanford. My name is Louis Williams. I’m 65 years old and I’m a carpenter by trade. I have also worked within the legal, retail and homeless sectors. I’m qualified for public office by virtue of being a US citizen. Voters can no longer afford to be apathetic about their own local governance.

“One of the penalties for refusing to participate in politics (governance) is that you end up being governed by your inferior” — Plato

Question: What three or four things would be your top priorities if you’re elected?

Rhodes: No.1: Growth is on everyone’s list. It can be considered “the good, the bad, and the ugly.” But it’s here, and we must manage it. No. 2: Infrastructure — roads, water, transportation and housing. No. 3: Continued economic development success — I know what it’s like to commute for more career opportunities. I want people to have the choice to work in Sanford. And how fortunate we are to have CCCC and their impact on our labor market. They are one of our greatest resources. No. 4: Public Safety and Quality of Life — supporting police, fire and EMS while investing in parks, recreation, and community spaces.

Williams: My campaign focus is to encourage all voters to participate in the local elections. Historically, the midterm and local elections indicate the lack of interest



Rhodes



Williams

in the election cycle.

I am in favor of physical town hall meetings. While the city has made meetings available online, it limits public access by virtue of space. The public should know and fully participate in the planning of projects before seeking contracts and not just in the paying process.

Sanford lacks sufficient dining and entertainment options. Citizens have concerns about venues for the entire family. Funding for schools, which is in county control, business owners are frustrated by the council’s tabling issues and then never following up.

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- Criminal Law

Question: Growth has been a major issue in Sanford over the past few years. What are some of the challenges you see associated with this growth, and what role should the city play in addressing them?

Rhodes: One of our challenges is maintaining our “Sanford way of life” and not becoming a cookie-cutter community. Thoughtful planning is key—directing growth into designated areas while protecting historic neighborhoods, cultural landmarks, and natural spaces. Investing in walkable downtowns, greenways, and community gathering places fosters a sense of connection.


Smart infrastructure, including efficient transit, sustainable housing and modern utilities ensure growth is managed without overwhelming existing systems. Strong design standards and architectural guidelines can protect Sanford’s unique look and feel. Most importantly, involving residents in decision-making builds trust and ensures new development reflects community values. By combining innovation with tradition, growth becomes an opportunity to strengthen our identity. This balance allows us to welcome new people and businesses while remaining a place that feels authentic, livable and proud

of its history.

To build a strong city, you can’t just look ahead and grow for the sake of growing. Long-time residents that have invested their lives here deserve to feel valued and appreciated. We welcome newcomers and their opportunities, but we must ensure those that built our community are included in the decision-making process and benefit from the progress. That means protecting established neighborhoods, supporting legacy businesses, and making sure city services are fair and accessible to all. Growth shouldn’t come at the expense of our traditions. Instead, growth should supplement what we already have. Sanford is proud of where we have been and excited about where we are going.

Williams: The spur in growth is going to change the community in ways that will make Sanford more like the Triangle, isn’t why they made Sanford their home. The city will be impacted on various aspects. Healthcare, education, infrastructure, traffic. I suggest open forums and discussion. Voter’s don’t feel that their opinion or ideas matter and that the old guard will do whatever it wants. This leads to a limited mindset and stagnation even in the midst of growth.

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RECREATION

County celebrates long-awaited athletic park

By Gordon Anderson
gordon@rantnc.com

Hundreds of people were on hand on Sept. 13 at the grand opening of the Lee County Athletic Park, a project that's been in the making for at least 10 years.

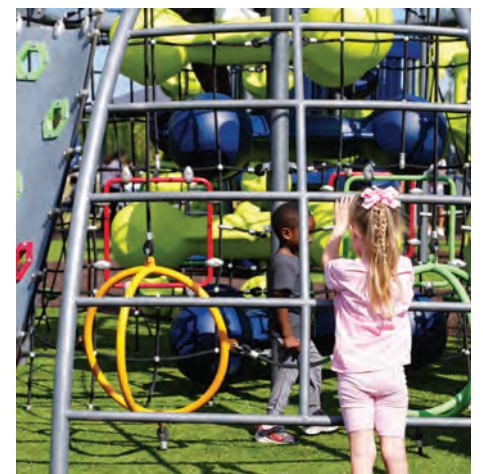
The event included live music, a multi-plane flyover from the Bullseye Flight Team, speeches from several local leaders involved with the project, and a drone show to end the night. Throughout the events of the day, youth athletics contests were going on throughout the park.

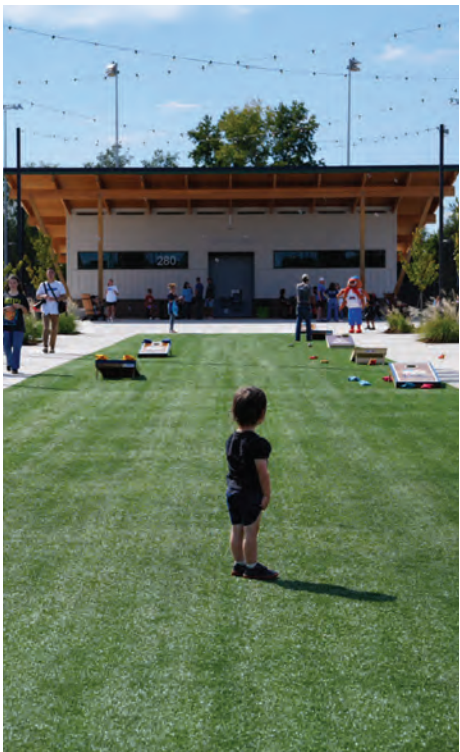
The idea for the athletic park, at 210 Champion Road off Broadway Road near the U.S. 421 Bypass intersection, sprang up about a decade ago. After several years of planning and studies, Lee County voters approved a \$25 million bond referendum to fund the project with just shy of 59 percent of the vote.

In addition to multiple sports fields, the LCAP has walking trails, play areas and more. Although the rising cost of materials put the project on pause for a short time in 2022, leaders broke ground in December 2023 after awarding the contract to Sanford Contractors that September. The park officially opened for team use at the start of this month, and is now open to the public.

"Thank you to everyone for recognizing that we can have nice things in Lee County, that reinvestment in our community is integral to its continued health and success, and that we deserve top of the line assets for us all to enjoy," Susan Keller, who chaired a political committee that lobbied for passage of the bond in 2020, told the crowd. "This park was never just about sports, it's about pride, growth and opportunity for everyone in Lee County."

Photos by Billy Liggett





BRIEFS

CONSTRUCTION, DEMOLITION LANDFILL PROPOSED ON COLON ROAD

The Lee County Board of Commissioners heard a request in September from a Raleigh waste company to place a construction and demolition landfill on a 116-acre plot at the intersection of Colon and Amos Bridges roads.

Bob Joyce, a former economic developer with the Sanford Area Growth Alliance, addressed the commissioners on behalf of Liberty Waste of Raleigh. Liberty Waste operates 11 similar facilities across the state.

Joyce said materials accepted at the site would include construction debris, waste lumber, brick, sheetrock, concrete and other similar items, and that 50 percent of the facility will be dedicated to recycling. He differentiated the facility from a municipal solid waste landfill, which accepts other types of garbage.

“The odors and gasses and toxicity associated with a [municipal solid waste] landfill are not associated with this project,” he said.

According to Joyce, the site in question is the original location of Sanford Brick from 1920 to 1945 and was used for mining and manufacturing of brick in those years. It has been out of use since the 1970s and contains more than 30 mining pits that have become ponds over the years.

“This is just a rough and ugly site,” he said. “We believe this is the highest and best use of this site, because other uses in the heavy industrial zoning include chemical or fertilizer plants, tire plants, animal slaughtering operations, junkyards, and hazardous waste sites. All these uses are allowed by right, which we think would not be consistent with the area.”

Joyce said the lifespan of the facility is estimated at between 15 and 18 years, and that Liberty Waste intends to cap the site when it's filled and donate the land to either local government or a nonprofit for use as a park. He pointed to Green Hills Park in Wake County as an example of a former Liberty Waste site that's been converted in that fashion.



Congratulations to Sanford Police Department NC officers Raun Beard and Tyler Toro received official commendations recognizing their heroic actions during a life-threatening emergency on Sept. 17. According to SPD, “their quick response, courage and commitment to protecting others reflect the high standards of service held by the Sanford Police Department.

Liberty’s proposal requires a franchise agreement from the county, which commissioners will have to approve after details are negotiated. County Attorney Whitney Parrish told the board Monday that in anticipation of Liberty’s presentation, county staff realized an update to the county’s solid waste ordinance would be required. One of the primary changes — which the Commissioners approved unanimously — was a requirement for companies seeking a solid waste franchise to fill out an application.

That application, when submitted, will be a matter of public record. A public hearing will be required, likely in October, before any franchise agreement can be approved by the county.

Republican Commissioners Chairman Kirk Smith suggested commissioners take a field trip in the near future to one of Liberty’s other facilities to get an up close look at their operations.

BROADWAY WOMAN ARRESTED AFTER NEWBORN CHILD FOUND IN TRASH CAN

A Broadway area woman faces charges of “concealment of birth” and attempted murder after her newborn child was found in a trash can on Sept. 13.

Lee County sheriff’s deputies responded to a 911 call on Sept. 13 from someone claiming a woman was lying in a yard in the Broadway area.

When law enforcement arrived, they found the woman in need of medical care and an infant inside a nearby trash can. Deputies administered aid to both the woman and the child until EMS crews arrived. Both were taken to Central Carolina Hospital in Sanford. As of Sept. 24, the newborn was in stable condition, and the mother was released from the hospital and jailed.

The woman was identified as 29-year-old Mishayla Elisabeth Iles, whom deputies confirmed to be the child’s mother. Sheriff Brian Estes commended the “swift actions and lifesaving measures” of the deputies and first responders.

MI CANCUN RESTAURANT TO OPEN IN FORMER BRICK CITY GRILL LOCATION

The former location of Brick City Grill will re-open soon as a location in the Mi Cancun Mexican restaurant franchise.

Work is under way at 120 Bank St., and Mi Cancun’s website lists a Sanford location as “coming soon” at the address.

Brick City Grill closed in July after several years in business, and shared a Facebook post about Mi Cancun buying the location in August. Mi Cancun has locations in Pittsboro, Durham, Angier, Holly Springs, Apex, Cary, Morrisville and Elizabeth City.

MAN CHARGED WITH SCAMMING ELDERLY OUT OF THOUSANDS

An Apex man was arrested on Sept. 25 when the Lee County Sheriff’s Office received information about financial exploitation (computer scams) targeting an elderly resident. According to deputies, the victim had previously withdrawn several thousand dollars from their bank after being contacted by the suspect falsely claiming to represent Microsoft. The scammer told the victim their computer was locked and demanded the money to unlock it.

The victim was instructed to gather the cash, which was then picked up in person by an individual associated with the scam. The scam came to light when the suspects attempted to solicit additional funds from the victim the following day. The victim’s bank contacted the Lee County Sheriff’s Office.

Deputies arrested 19-year-old Avinash Chandreshbhai Patel of Apex during an in-person attempt to collect more money. Patel was arrested for “attempted obtaining property by false pretense” and “felony conspiracy.” He was taken before the Lee County magistrate and issued a \$75,000 secured bond.

Lee County Sheriff Brian Estes said the case highlights “the importance of vigilance and swift action in preventing further financial harm to vulnerable members of the community.”

BRUSH & PALETTE CLUB'S 60TH ANNUAL ART SHOW TO RUN OCT. 11-18

The Sanford Brush & Palette Club will host its 60th Annual Art Show from Oct. 11-18, titled “Breaking Out! Beyond the Palette,” in the Harper Center at First Presbyterian Church, 203 Hawkins Avenue in Sanford. Admission is free.

The show will feature nearly 1,000 pieces of art from a variety of artists in Sanford and the surrounding area.

“Nested in a rich history, the Sanford Brush & Palette Club has expanded its canvas to include many talented artists that live here and the surrounding area,” said JuliAnn Robinson, SBPC president and show chair. “We recognize these artists and are thrilled we have many new members in our club that will add to the intrigue of our annual art show.”

This year’s show will feature a diverse range of artistic expressions across various mediums, including a special photography exhibit. Additionally, the third Annual Bowl & Vessel Show will run concurrently, featuring functional and decorative pieces

that highlight the craftsmanship of artists throughout North Carolina.

Show hours are as follows:

- Saturday, Oct. 11: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Sunday Oct. 12: 2 p.m. to 5 p.m.
- Monday-Saturday Oct. 13-18: 10 a.m. to 6 p.m.
- Friday Oct. 17: 6 to 9 p.m. (Art After Dark)

COLTS SAYS IT WILL UPDATE ITS TRANSIT SYSTEM SOFTWARE

The County of Lee Transit System (COLTS) will transition to a new software system beginning this month. The county says this upgrade will “enhance trips through improved scheduling, more accurate pickup and delivery times, and the increased reliability of service schedules.”

Once the software is implemented, passengers will begin to receive calls the night before your trip as a reminder and when the van is on the way. During this software transition, staff will be working to minimize disruptions, delays and changes in reservation times.

BROADWAY BOARD MEMBER WITHDRAWS FROM ELECTION

Broadway Town Board member James Paschal has withdrawn from the 2025 municipal election, bringing the field to four candidates seeking three at-large seats.

The Lee County Board of Elections made public the notice of Paschal’s withdrawal in September, the same day he filed the paperwork. Paschal filed for re-election to the board in July. He’s served on Broadway’s governing body since 2017.

His withdrawal leaves four candidates vying for three at-large seats (voters can choose up to three candidates). Incumbents Thomas Beal and April Collins are both seeking re-election, and are joined in the race by challengers Wendy Bryan Laura Duval.

SANFORD MAN WANTED FOR MURDER ARRESTED IN TEXAS

A Sanford man wanted for first degree murder after a shooting at a business on Lee Avenue on Sept. 6 was taken into custody by the Houston Police Department in Texas a week later. Joel Aragon Gutierrez, 26, was wanted in the shooting death of Eugenio Nicolas Bolainez Vanegas at ETS Gaming.

MAN ARRESTED FOR SEXUAL EXPLOITATION OF A MINOR

Jason Daniel Holwager, 38, was arrested on Sept. 9 and charged with four counts of second degree sexual exploitation of a minor after an investigation by the NCSBI’s Computer Crimes Unit and Sanford Police.

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photos by Billy Liggett





EDUCATION BRIEFS

WICKER TEACHER
IS EC EDUCATOR
OF THE YEAR

Lee County Schools recognized Natalie Johnson, the Exceptional Children (EC) Teacher from WB Wicker Elementary School, as Lee County Schools' 2025 EC Educator of Excellence.



Johnson was nominated by a co-worker who explained their reason for nominating her for the award saying, "Ms. Johnson exemplifies what it means to be an exceptional educator. She is hard-

working, dedicated, and deeply committed to the success of every student she serves. Her classroom is a warm, welcoming space where students feel safe, supported, and valued. Ms. Johnson builds strong relationships with her students, who all adore her. Her passion for teaching and her ability to meet each student's unique needs make her truly deserving of this honor."

Johnson earned her bachelor's degree in elementary education and special education from NC State University and has served as the WB Wicker EC Department Chair for the last three years, providing guidance, mentorship and support to her colleagues.

"I'm just honored that my department chose me — out of everyone in the district, all the staff that do such incredible work everyday — it just really makes it special," said Johnson. "I think in a certain way the job chose me. It's just what I was meant to do. I just love helping the kids learn new skills every day and working with a great team of adults here at W.B. Wicker. My kids are just really special."

BRAGG STREET ACADEMY
RECOGNIZED AS NC BREAKFAST
INNOVATOR AWARD

Bragg Street Academy has been honored with the 2025 North Carolina Breakfast Innovator Award, a recognition that highlights the school's commitment to student well-being and nutrition.

This achievement is the direct result of the dedication of Cheri Freeman, who serves as



Central Carolina Academy in Sanford celebrated the induction of 14 students into the Gregory D. Batten Chapter of the National Honor Society in September. These scholars exemplify the four pillars of the National Honor Society: Scholarship, Service, Leadership and Character.



the school's cafeteria manager. She made it her goal last year to increase student participation and supplemental sales in the breakfast program. Through her warm approach and outstanding customer service, Freeman helped make breakfast a welcoming part of each day for Bragg Street's middle and high school students.

"This award is a reflection of the heart, effort, and commitment put into ensuring students have access to the nourishment they need to be successful," said Amanda Cagle, the director of child nutrition for Lee County Schools.

She said Dr. Shannon Shuey's leadership as principal of BSA and full support of school breakfast and the Child Nutrition Program have been "instrumental in creating an environment where nutrition is prioritized as a key part of student success."

CCCC RESIDENCY LICENSURE
PROGRAM AIMS TO BOLSTER
LOCAL TEACHER WORKFORCE

Central Carolina Community College is leading a transformative initiative aimed at addressing the growing demand for elementary school teachers in central North Carolina. The college is now offering the Elementary Education Residency Licensure Certificate program in partnership with Chatham, Harnett and Lee County Schools. It's a pathway for people who hold bachelor's degrees in subjects other than education who are currently working in classrooms to earn full teaching credentials.

Designed for individuals currently employed as elementary teachers without formal licensure, the program provides a flexible and supportive route to certification. It combines academic coursework with real-world teaching experience, allowing participants to

continue working in their school roles while progressing toward state licensure.

"We are proud to partner with our three county school systems to provide a supportive pathway for dedicated professionals already serving in our elementary schools," said Dr. Lisa M. Chapman, President of Central Carolina Community College. "It's a win for our schools, our communities, and most importantly, for the students who benefit from qualified, committed teachers in their classrooms."

The program has been welcomed by Lee County Schools, where the need for certified educators continues to grow.

"We are excited to continue our strong partnership with Central Carolina Community College through the launch of the Elementary Education Residency Licensure Certificate program," said Superintendent Chris Dossenbach. "This initiative provides a valuable local pathway for aspiring educators to earn their teaching license while helping

us grow and support our own teacher pipeline. We deeply value the ongoing collaboration between our organizations as we work together to make Lee County an even better place to learn, work, and thrive.”

For more information, contact Ginger Harris Bartholomew at gharr082@cccc.edu or (919) 718-7260.

**CCCC COURSE ANNOUNCEMENT:
WRITE YOUR OWN NOVELLA**

Central Carolina Community College is offering a course for aspiring authors who want to start and finish their own novellas.

The six-week course, “Write Your Novella” begins began on Sept. 29 and will take place from 11 a.m. to 1:30 p.m. on Mondays and Fridays at CCCC’s Center for Workforce Innovation on Enterprise Park Drive in Sanford. Registration is required to participate.

The course is taught by Stephanie Sellers, a published fantasy author, journalist and CCCC English instructor. In this workshop-style class, students learn how to craft compelling characters, build tension, develop dialogue that pops off the page, and outline a

strong story arc. They will also receive encouraging feedback from Sellers and their peers, gain confidence in their voices and learn tools to edit and revise like professionals.

CCCC PARTNERS WITH SANFORD CONTRACTORS FOR ACADEMY

Twelve students from six local high schools completed a nine-week 2025 Construction Academy held by Sanford Contractors, Inc. in partnership with Central Carolina Community College.

Students worked alongside Sanford Contractors mentors gaining valuable industry experience, building new skills and laying the foundation for potential future careers — all while getting paid and earning CCCC college credit. The summer program started out with a week of classroom training, followed by a couple months of hands-on work interspersed with visits from guest speakers and with other educational opportunities.

Following the program, six of the students have returned to high school, four are attending community college, and one is attending a four-year university. Two are working full-time with Sanford Contractors.



Recently, SanLee Middle School welcomed NC State University Teaching Fellows and College of Education students to see AVID (Advancement Via Individual Determination) in action. These future educators saw firsthand how AVID strategies help students grow, thrive and prepare for the opportunities ahead. *Photo: Lee County Schools*



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CCCC STAFF AWARDS

ATHLETICS DIRECTOR
NAMED CCCC STAFF
MEMBER OF YEAR

Helping people figure out how to pursue their dreams, despite obstacles, is a challenge. It is also one of the most fun parts of Kelvin Hunt's job.

"In this business, you are really changing lives," he said, "Because you are meeting people where they are and then trying to show them the path that can get them to where they want to go."

CCCC selected Hunt, the college's executive director of athletics and student outreach, as Staff Member of the Year for 2025-26. Hunt has been working in outreach at CCCC since 2005, first as an admission specialist, then as director of student outreach and recruitment. He was promoted to his current, expanded role in July.

At CCCC, Hunt is known for his caring and passion in student recruitment, his data-based strategy, and the insights and suggestions he shares with other college departments. Scott Byington, the college's associate vice president for onboarding and advising, said Hunt would, "modestly say that our record enrollment is due to a lot of people."

"But let's face it, he's leading the way."

Ellie Mummert, CCCC's associate director of outreach and recruitment, said Hunt goes out of his way to engage with the wider community in Chatham, Harnett and Lee counties, and beyond.

"Even when he isn't 'on the clock,' Kelvin is talking to people about the college and all of the great opportunities we offer," said Mummert. "When he is working, he is cultivating meaningful, lasting relationships with students, colleagues, and other college stakeholders."

Hunt grew up in a small town called Chadbourne, about 44 miles west of Wilmington. He played baseball at UNC-Pembroke and got a bachelor's degree in education. After college, he worked at a juvenile detention facility, and for a short time in adolescent drug prevention and mental health, before getting a call from his former baseball coach about a job opportunity doing general student recruitment for UNC-Pembroke. He took the job.

"I loved what I did, but I was on the road



Kelvin Hunt with family members following CCCC's annual employee convocation and accepting the Staff Member of the Year Award.

a lot and basically lived out of a suitcase for about two years," he said.

At CCCC, Hunt found an opportunity to continue with his passion for student recruiting, while staying closer to home and his then-girlfriend, now wife.

Hunt works with community organizations to help disconnected and incarcerated youth by going out to juvenile group homes and detention centers and works with NCWorks and other community groups to reconnect adult learners to CCCC.

His conversations with potential students can happen on campus, and by phone or email. But he also talks to them at events in the community and other forums. He even fields questions in the grocery store.

It's an amazing feeling, he said, to run into a student at graduation and receive a hug and thanks for what he did to help them.

"But really, it's what they did," he said. "Because they did the work to get there."

— Jessie Pounds, CCCC



Peterson named CCCC faculty member of year

Dane Peterson loves math. He also loves helping students who have had a hard time with math find success. Peterson, the chair of CCCC’s Academic Transitions Department, is the recipient of the college’s Faculty Member of the Year award for 2025-26.

“He’s known across campus for his ability to make even the most intimidating math concepts approachable and understandable,” said Claudia Clayton, CCCC’s dean of career and academic engagement. “Through humor, calm explanations, and consistent encouragement, Dane helps students who have historically struggled with math succeed — many for the first time in their academic careers.”

Academic Transitions provides classes that help students transition in or out of com-

munity college. Among those offerings are CCCC’s first-year experience course, as well as math and English classes that help some students make up for skills or requirements they are missing from high school.

At CCCC, Peterson teaches these students and leads other faculty in his department. He has also played a major role in the department’s adoption of a new model for the classes it offers.

In the past, some of those classes were “prerequisites” at CCCC, meaning that students were required to take them before they could move on to other required math and English college courses. Now, CCCC has a fully “corequisite” model, where students take support classes alongside their college-level math or English courses. That

strategy has been showing promise in helping students succeed, locally and nationally.

Peterson collaborated with others at CCCC to develop, promote and provide training on the new model. “When my students pass, I’m happy for them, hopefully as happy as they are,” Peterson said. “And when they don’t, I hurt, just like they hurt.”

He was inspired by students who have different learning experiences than he did. “Math is hard and that’s why I like math. It can be cruel and unforgiving, but it’s beautiful when you make it past the difficult parts. I don’t think I realized the challenges others faced, and I wanted to help them overcome those challenges.”

—Jessie Pounds, CCCC



Dane Peterson, CCCC’s chair of the Academic Transitions Department, was named the college’s faculty member of the year.



Early College Coordinator Nick Testa accepts CCCC’s Excellence in Advising award and congratulations from President Lisa M. Chapman at the college’s annual employee convocation. Testa advises Early College students and plays a pivotal role in managing collaboration between the schools and the college. On graduation day, students mention Testa as a person who has helped them on their academic journeys.



Associate Human Resources Director Kelly Blakley is this year’s recipient of CCCC’s Cougar Champion award. Blakley has helped shape the structure of the college through thoughtful hiring practices and team realignments. The Cougar Champion award goes to one full-time employee per year to honor exceptional contributions and service inside or outside of their departments.



Adjunct History Instructor Stephen Holeczy accepts CCCC’s Adjunct of the Year award from President Lisa M. Chapman. Holeczy was commended by colleagues for being caring, professional, thorough, fair, and always available to students. Students appreciated his timely grading, variety of assignments, diversity of resources, useful feedback, and open, honest communication.



OCTOBER 4

TRIP CROWN CHARITY CAR SHOW

The third Triple crown Charity Car Show will be held from 9 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford. Admission is free for all outdoor cars, and \$5 to view the display of “legendary vehicles,” a collection of rare and exotic cars. To have your car judged, the fee is \$20. CCCC will host an events area for childrent, and there will be food trucks, a tractor show, a Lego and model show and live music from Dalton Davis Band.

OCT 3: Ampersand will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8 p.m.

OCT 3: Hugger Mugger Brewing will host **First Friday Karaoke** from 8 to 10 p.m.

OCT 4: Raleigh Exec will present its annual **Family Day at the Jetport** from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m. Join the fun at a free communication celebration of aviation.

OCT 5: Hugger Mugger Brewing and Sanford Yoga & Community Center will host **Beer Yoga** at 11 a.m.

OCT 8: Hugger Mugger Brewing will host its Second Wednesday **Book Club** at 6:30 p.m.

OCT 10: Johnny Rambo will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8 p.m.

OCT 10-25: A **haunted house**, presented by Ingaboo Books, will run at Frog Hollow Farm (940 Holt Road) in Sanford on Fridays and Saturdays from Oct. 10 to 25. Visit ingaboobooks.com to learn more.

OCT 11: Downtown Sanford’s **StreetFest** will be held from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m. This annual daylong celebration celebrates the revitalization efforts of Sanford’s historic downtown while showcasing the community’s artistic talents.

OCT 11-18: The Sanford Brush & Palette Club will host its **60th Annual Art Show**, titled “Breaking Out! Beyond the Palette,” in the Harper Center at First Presbyterian Church, 203 Hawkins Avenue in Sanford. Admission is free.

OCT 11: The special event for October at the Sanford Farmer’s

Market is called “**Let’s Give Them Pumpkin to Talk About.**” The Farmer’s Market will run from 8:30 a.m. to noon at 115 Chatham St.

OCT 16: Downtown Alive!’ **Trick or Treating Fun** event will be held in downtown Sanford from 5 to 7 p.m. Family-friendly trick-or-treating at local businesses. More details coming on Halloween fun, such as a jack-o-lantern walk and more.

OCT 17: Rodney Brady will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8 p.m.

OCT 23-31: Downtown Sanford Inc.’s **Boo & Brew Ghost Tour** will run from Oct. 23-25 and Oct. 30-31. This pub crawl and self-guided audio tour pairs local shops, restaurants and bars with bone-chilling ghost stories.



OCT 16-NOV 2: Temple Theatre's mainstage production of **The Addams Family** will run Thursdays through Sunday for three weeks beginning Oct. 16. Ticket information and show times available at templeshows.org.

OCT 24: The Kevin Ragan Band will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8 p.m.

OCT 25: Live comedy with **Brendan Eyre** (as seen on Late Night with Seth Meyers and Comedy Central) will be held at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford for one night only. Proceeds will benefit Zoomies Funny Farm, a nonprofit animal rescue organization. Show begins at 7 p.m.

OCT 25: Sanford Car News' **Cruise'N** will be held from 3 to 6 p.m. in front of Camelback Brewing on Spring Lane in Sanford. Live music, door prizes, 50/50 tickets and more, along with sweet rides displayed by local car enthusiasts. Free admission.

OCT 25: HAVEN's 24th annual **No Scare Fair** will be held from 11 a.m. to 4 p.m. at the Dennis A. Wicker Civic Center in Sanford. Enjoy an afternoon of kiddie crafts, games, vendors, food trucks and "no scare" trick-or-treating while supporting HAVEN of Lee County.

OCT 31: Colby Jack & The High Lifes will perform at Smoke and Barrel in downtown Sanford at 8 p.m.

NOV 7: Hugger Mugger Brewing will host **retro arcade games** from 3 p.m. to midnight — choose from any of the 15 to 20 games available.

NOV 8: The **Heart of Carolina Jazz Orchestra** will feature acclaimed jazz vocalist Evan Cornelious at Temple Theatre at 7:30 p.m.

NOV 9: Downtown Sanford's **Holiday Open House** will be held from noon to 4 p.m. 'Tis the season to shop and dine downtown — Temple Theatre Company will fill the streets with carolers to entertain you as you get a glimpse of all things Christmas at participating downtown businesses.

MONDAYS: Circle M City in Sanford will host **Monday Music Jam** Monday nights at 7 p.m. The town comes alive with pickin' and singing — guitars, mandolins, banjos, fiddles, bases and their players will gather in the livery stables.

MONDAYS: Lee County Library hosts **Story Time in the Park** each Monday at 10 a.m., rotating between Horton Park and Kiwanis Family Park (check the library website for details).



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		7		5				1

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Fill in the blank squares in the grid, making sure that every row, column and 3-by-3 box includes all digits 1 through 9.

CROSSWORD: Children's Books

ACROSS

1. *The Big Bad Wolf: "I'll ____ your house down"

5. Edgar Rice Burroughs' Kerchak or Kala

8. Cosine's buddy

12. Target of grand theft

13. Influencer's journal

14. Food-grinding tooth

15. Bear's hang-out

16. Like a maxi skirt

17. Get up

18. *Robert McCloskey's "Make Way for ____"

20. March Madness org.

21. Expenditure, in the olden days

22. *"Four and twenty blackbirds baked in a ____"

23. Turn pale

26. Lachrymatory agent (2 words)

30. Swimmer's distance

31. Rinse and ____

34. Consequently

35. Join forces

37. Bruin legend Bobby

38. Jury duty event

39. Per person

40. Hockey player, e.g.

42. Approximated landing time

43. What naughty children do

45. Fortification made of wagons

47. Preceding month

48. Unnecessary embellishment

50. Customs document

52. *He had a terrible, horrible, no good, very bad day

56. Popular pie nut

57. Not final

DOWN

1. Like a certain eagle

2. Oahu shindig

3. Related to ear

4. Exert persuasive powers (2 words)

5. Jennifer Aniston's movie " ____ Came Polly"

6. *Canine father in Dodie Smith's "The Hundred and One Dalmatians"

7. *Dr. Seuss: "I do not like green ____ and ham"

8. *Philosopher in American "Harry Potter and the Philosopher's Stone"

9. Hipbone

10. U.S. space agency, acr.

11. *"I heard him exclaim, ____ he drove out of sight, Merry Christmas..."

13. Not serious

14. Bipolar disorder phase

19. Filthy cabbage

22. Favorite student

23. Protected steel from rust with coating

24. Hawaiian veranda

25. Long stories

26. *The Queen of Hearts baked more than one of these

27. "In the Hall of the Mountain King" composer Edvard ____

28. Popular gemstone

29. Type of renewable energy

32. *Janette Sebring Lowrey's "The ____ Little Puppy"

33. Pitcher's stat

36. *"One ____ and One Nights"

38. ____-____-la refrain

40. Group of exercise reps

41. a.k.a. philosopher's stone

44. Flavorless

46. Aluminum+nickel+cobalt, magnetic alloy

48. What time does

49. Button on electrical outlet

50. Bride's cover

51. International Civil Aviation Organization

52. *Green Gables resident ____ Shirley

53. Gloom's partner

54. Evening purse

55. Wholly engrossed

56. Pipe material, acr.

CROSSWORD

1	2	3	4		5	6	7			8	9	10	11
12					13					14			
15					16					17			
18				19						20			
			21						22				
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30				31		32	33				34		
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39				40					41		42		
43				44					45		46		
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56						57					58		
59						60					61		
62						63					64		

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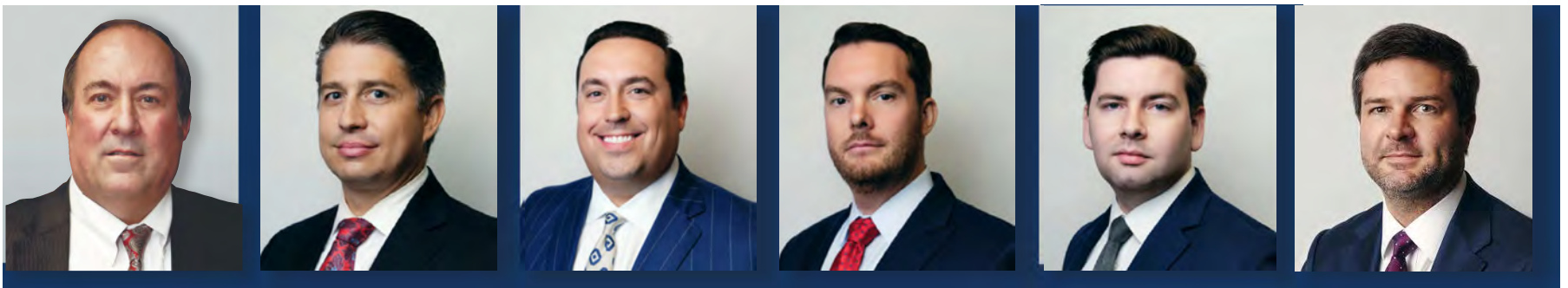
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