

City Works



City of Burlington, NC - "Connecting the Triad & Triangle"

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CBC Experiences Record Number of Tips Program Continues Success

Spring showers bring May flowers, but they also signify the annual increase in CBC calls. Heading into its third year, the Connecting Burlington Communities (CBC) program continues to experience phenomenal success.



For the first part of 2010 through May 31, CBC tips have increased 44.7% compared to 2009 numbers. The statistics currently break down with:

January
27 tips (2010) vs. 21 tips (2009)

February
27 tips (2010) vs. 20 tips (2009)

March
49 tips (2010) vs. 20 tips (2009)

April
86 tips (2010) vs. 23 tips (2009)

May 1-5
138 tips (2010) vs. 121 tips (2009)

Total so far:
327 Tips (2010) vs. 226 Tips (2009)

"It's evident that community buy in continues to fuel the success of this program," said David Beal, Assistant Director of Planning Services.

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Become a Facebook fan of Burlington at **Facebook.com/BurlingtonNC**.

Spay & Neuter Clinic of Alamance County Open for Business

The Spay and Neuter Clinic of Alamance County is now open at 1919 South Church Street, Burlington. A ribbon cutting ceremony and open house were held on March 27.

A division of Burlington Animal Services, the clinic provides low-cost spay and neuter surgery for dogs and cats.



Fees are as follows:

- Male cat - \$50**
- Female cat - \$70**
- Male dog - \$80**
- Female dog - \$90**
- A rabies vaccine (\$10) will be required if the animal's status is unknown or not current as required by law.**



The Spay and Neuter Clinic of Alamance County is committed to reducing the number of unwanted animals that come to the animal shelter each year.

See **CLINIC** on Page 2

CBC, Spay & Neuter, & BGMPO



The clinic strongly recommends that animals be current on all vaccinations prior to surgery for their safety. **CLINIC** from Page 1

Due to the limited services offered, the clinic also recommends pet owners establish a relationship with a veterinarian to provide a complete health program for their pets. A rabies vaccine will be required if the animal is not current at a cost of \$10.

The clinic is currently open on Tuesdays and Wednesdays with plans to open more days as the demand increases.

For more information visit: [www. BurlingtonNC.gov/spay](http://www.BurlingtonNC.gov/spay), or to schedule an appointment call 570-6767.

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“We’ve been able to keep our clear rate high and provide citizens with feedback on the issues that concern them most.”

Recently, the City of Burlington announced the release of the Citizen Request Tracker™ (CRT) application for the iPhone and iPod Touch. This app works in conjunction with the Burlington’s online Connecting Burlington Communities (CBC) Request Tracker system to allow citizens to report issues on the go. This free app is now available to all residents at the iTunes App Store.

The Citizen Request Tracker app gives City of Burlington residents the same citizen-power to report civic issues that were previously available only in large metropolitan areas such as New York City and Boston. However, unlike New York City and Boston’s iPhone apps, the Citizen Request Tracker app will work nationwide and is linkable on the go to any CivicPlus client.

When a citizen observes a non-emergency issue, they access the app, designate the City of Burlington as their default location, add an optional description, insert a photo and then submit the issue. Using the iPhone’s GPS technology, the application automatically pinpoints the address of the issue to improve the speed and efficiency of Burlington officials’ response.



Once submitted, the request is filtered through the City of Burlington’s integrated CBC Request Tracker™ system, where it is automatically routed to the appropriate personnel and tracked to maximize accountability. Once the request is received, the citizen receives a confirmation e-mail and can log in to view the status of their request along with comments posted by City of Burlington staff.

The Citizen Request Tracker app is compatible with any iPhone or iPod Touch with operating system version 3.0. Visit the iTunes App Store to download the application.

To report CBC Tips via the Web, visit www.BurlingtonNC.gov/cbc or call the CBC Tip Line at 222-5024.

BGMPO Launches New Website

The Burlington–Graham Metropolitan Planning Organization recently launched a new website: www.bgmipo.org. The site features information on a variety of projects including: Transportation Improvement Projects (TIP), Corridor Studies, and planning reports.

Additionally, citizens can find updates and minutes from the Transportation Advisory Committee (TAC) and the Technical Coordinating Committee (TCC) meetings. Member communities of the BGMPO include: Alamance County, City of Burlington, City of Graham, City of Mebane, Town of Elon, Town of Gibsonville, Town of Green Level, Town of Haw River, Town of Whitsett, and the Village of Alamance.



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Hot Stuff: Pine Straw Fire Risks

Hot Stuff... Fire Department Advises Caution When Using Pine Straw

At the April 5, 2010, City Council work session, Assistant Fire Chief Michael Willets presented to Council the risks of using pine straw as decorative ground cover/mulch in close proximity to homes with combustible siding. From testing data documented in a joint effort by the National Institute of Standards and Technology (NIST), the Building and Fire Research Laboratory (BFRL), the University of Florida, and the United States Forest Service Research Station, the flammability characteristics of pine straw have been tested and documented to show that pine straw has inherent properties that yield high ignitability, flame spread and heat release rate. Its low surface area to mass ratio makes it easy to ignite and quick to be consumed. Additionally, its resin content produces high heat release rates when compared to other landscape mulches.

Mulch type	Rate of spread (inches per min)	Temp (F)	Flame Height (in)	Burn Depth (in)
Pine straw	90	706	21.9	4.4
Large pine bark	4.8	690	7.1	4.2
Small pine bark	6.3	463	2.8	2.7
Cypress	11.5	359	3.0	2.0

As an example, Willets pointed to a recent fire at the Pine Knoll Townhomes in Raleigh on February 22, 2007. The fire, started by a cigarette igniting decorative pine straw landscaping, ended with the destruction of 32 townhomes. Due to the extremely combustible characteristics of pine straw, the small fire quickly grew and extended to combustible siding on the buildings' exteriors and traveled vertically through the soffit, involving the buildings' attics.



Following this catastrophic fire, the Raleigh City Council contracted with Schirmer Engineering of Charlotte, NC, to provide a fire protection study of the incident, which includes recommendations to reduce similar instances. Researchers presented information concluding that pine straw should not be used close to structures. Although most products used for mulching/bedding purposes in landscaping are combustible, the ease of ignition, fast rate of spread and high flame rate make pine straw inherently dangerous.

In local instances, fire ignition has taken place in the pine straw, which has transferred fire to adjacent combustible, decorative vegetation. The document *Firewise Landscaping in North Carolina* is available at www.ncfirewise.org and lists plant species found in North Carolina with flammability ratings of Low, Medium, High and Extreme.

The Burlington City Council and the BFD want to make sure all citizens are aware of the risks associated with using pine straw next to homes with combustible siding. For additional information on this topic, contact the Burlington Fire Department Fire Prevention Bureau at 229-3133.

Bond Rating Increase & Water Rates

Increase in City's Bond Rating

Despite difficult financial conditions and a recession, the City of Burlington's bond rating recently increased. The City was notified by Standard & Poor's that the City's bond rating was reevaluated from "AA-" to "AA".

According to Burlington's statement, outlook letter: "The rating outlook is stable. The City has retained its healthy financial position despite sustained decline in textile manufacturing in recent years, which weakened the property tax base and increased area unemployment. The economy has rebounded, evidenced by growth and diversification of the tax base and improvement in the unemployment rate. Continued diversification in the economy should contribute to higher wealth and income levels for the City. The stable outlook further reflects Standard and Poor's expectations that City management will continue to adhere to its financial policies and adjust them when necessary."

"This is wonderful news," said Mayor Ronnie Wall. "This goes to show that even in difficult times, the City's fiscal discipline has paid off."



Water Rates Remain Below State Average Despite Rate Increase

On Monday, May 3, City Manager Harold Owen presented Council with the 2010-11 fiscal year budget for the City's General and Water Resources funds. The proposed budget holds the line on any tax increases; however, the Water Resources fund asks for a 7% increase in service fees. While actual operating expenses are projected to be down 3% for the year, major infrastructure improvements must be offset. In order to achieve compliance with the State's newly mandated Jordan Lake Rules, the City is upgrading its wastewater treatment equipment.

In addition to the Jordan Lake Rules, the City needs to address repair work at two of the City's dams. Stoney Creek dam has served residents since 1928, while the Lake Cammack dam has been in operation since 1961. The repair work will help mitigate any future risks associated with heavy rains while keeping the structures safe and operable for many years to come.



Even with the increase, the City's water and sewer rates remain among the lowest in North Carolina. Burlington ranks in the lowest 10% out of 383 North Carolina water utility providers.

Including water, sewer, stormwater and solid waste/recycling, the average customer (6,000 gallons/month) will only see an increase of \$2.69 per month. A single person household using 2,500 gallon per month would only see an increase of \$1.13. There were no fee increases for stormwater or waste removal.

For additional information on these infrastructure improvements, contact the Burlington Water Resources Department at 222-5133.

