



News Release

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To: Area Media
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Re: Reduction in Force/Impact on Services

(New Hanover County)—New Hanover County residents should not see an appreciable drop in the level of service they are currently receiving due to recently announced budget and personnel reductions. “Every attempt is being made to make these painful reductions as transparent as possible to the public,” said County Manager Bruce Shell.

Because of the recent economic downturn, New Hanover County will have 114 fewer employees through the end of 2010 through early retirements and a reduction in force. Forty-five employees will be taking an early retirement incentive by July 1, 2009. In addition, 27 employees learned Tuesday that their employment with the county has ended. The remaining positions had already been frozen prior to the early retirements and layoffs.

Because of these reductions, Shell has announced a restructuring of several departments and reduced hours of operation in others. Under the reorganization plan, the Emergency Management and the Public Safety Communications (911) departments will be consolidated under the direction of Emergency Management Director, Warren Lee. Current 911 director Steve Smith is among the 45 county workers who have accepted an early retirement incentive. The consolidation of the two departments will take place June 1.

The Human Relations Department, which investigates claims of unfair housing or employment discrimination, will close effective June 30. Director Carl Byrd will be relocated to the Human Resources Department where, among other duties, he will continue to refer possible cases to the United States Equal Employment Opportunity Commission. The Human Relations Department is one of the services not mandated by federal or state laws.

Also, due to the retirements and reduction in force, the New Hanover County Public Library will offer fewer hours to the public starting July 1. A growing number of library resources are now available on the Internet. Details of new library hours will be announced at a later date.

With the more than 100 vacancies that will remain unfilled in the upcoming budget year which begins July 1, and ten unpaid furlough days for all remaining employees next year, New Hanover County estimates a reduction of approximately \$12 million to balance the upcoming fiscal year budget (2009-10). The measures were developed with the goal of presenting the FY 09/10 budget recommendation without the need for a property tax increase.

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