

MCRC HOLIDAY ISSUE

Not “Just Another COG” Newsletter

December 2024



WORKING OVER THE HOLIDAYS

IN THIS EDITION:

Supporting Western NC

The Importance of New
Years Resolutions

Family
Caregivers
Holiday Social

Spotlight on MCRC
Cares: Barbara White

Staying Productive and Balanced

The holiday season can be a busy time, especially for those working through the festivities. Whether you're managing tasks or supporting clients, it's important to stay productive while also taking time to recharge.

Here are a few tips to help you balance work and self-care:

- **Stay Organized:** Prioritize your tasks to keep focused on the most urgent ones and avoid feeling overwhelmed.
- **Set Boundaries:** Ensure you take breaks and turn off work notifications after hours to maintain a healthy work-life balance.
- **Connect with Colleagues:** Use the quieter moments to check in with your team and maintain a sense of community.
- **Take Advantage of Slow Periods:** Use slower days to catch up on tasks or plan for the year ahead.
- **Plan for Time Off:** If possible, schedule some downtime to relax and recharge.
- **Celebrate Your Efforts:** Acknowledge your hard work—it's a testament to your dedication during a busy season.

Working over the holidays can be challenging, but it also provides an opportunity for growth and connection. Stay organized, set boundaries, and find time to enjoy the season!

Happy holidays and thank you for your commitment!

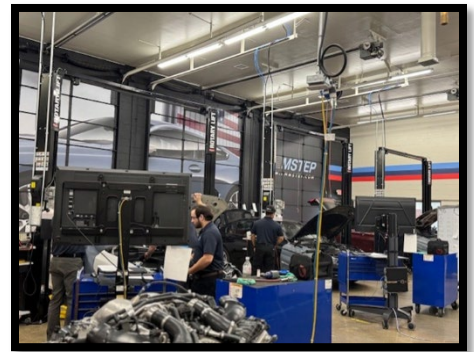


Fort Liberty Visit Highlights Workforce Development for Veterans

On December 2, 2024, representatives from the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board (MCWDB) and NCWorks visited Fort Liberty to observe its innovative programs supporting veterans transitioning into civilian careers. Led by Business Services Representative Veronica

Rozier and Veteran Services Specialist Dwight Butler, the visit offered a firsthand look at training initiatives and provided opportunities to discuss how to enhance support for veterans.

During the visit, the team toured training facilities that prepare veterans for high-demand careers. At the MSTEP-BMW facility, veterans receive specialized training in maintenance and mechanics. Graduates of this program often secure six-figure salaries and permanent roles at BMW facilities across the region. Similarly, the TRANE HVAC training program equips participants with the skills needed to thrive as HVAC technicians, offering comparable starting salaries.



Fort Liberty's success is rooted in its strong partnerships with 22 companies that provide employment opportunities and ongoing support to veterans. These collaborative efforts have paved the way for a new education center, set to open in two years. The facility will house industry partners, educational institutions, and organizations like NCWorks, offering classroom training, certifications, and other resources designed to ease the transition from military to civilian life.

The visit also included a discussion with the manager of Fort Liberty's Transition Assistance Program (TAPS). The conversation focused on identifying additional ways to support veterans after they secure employment or promotions. NCWorks plans to play a vital role in these efforts by providing job coaching, skills training, and other services to help veterans succeed in their new roles.



visit highlighted the exceptional opportunities available to veterans at Fort Liberty. The quality of the programs and the resulting six-figure starting salaries demonstrate the effectiveness of this approach. The collaboration between Fort Liberty, industry leaders, and educational institutions serves as a model for workforce development, creating a pathway to meaningful and lucrative careers for veterans.

As the new education center takes shape, MCWDB and NCWorks are committed to deepening their collaboration with Fort Liberty and expanding access to training and employment resources for veterans. By sharing the successes observed during this visit with local stakeholders, they hope to inspire similar workforce initiatives across the region, ensuring that veterans continue to receive the support they deserve as they transition into civilian life.

A Heartfelt Celebration for Our Caregivers: Holiday Cheer at the Bill Crisp Senior Center



Friday, December 6th, the Mid-Carolina Regional Council Aging Department hosted its annual Caregivers Support Holiday Social at the Bill Crisp Senior Center, a joyous occasion filled with laughter, camaraderie, and festive fun. Co-hosted by the Beauty Spot Missionary Baptist Church Women's Ministry, this year's gathering was a heartfelt tribute to the caregivers in our community who dedicate themselves selflessly to supporting others every day.

The afternoon was filled with lively activities, each one sparking joy and connection among attendees. From the laughter of *Christmas Scattergories* to the creative chaos of the *Marshmallow Snowman Building Competition* and the excitement of *Musical Christmas Presents*, the room buzzed with holiday spirit.

While the games brought smiles, the true focus of the event was on the caregivers themselves. These incredible individuals often put others' needs before their own, demonstrating boundless compassion and resilience. Today's celebration was a chance to pause, reflect, and express gratitude for their unwavering commitment.



Adding an extra sprinkle of cheer was the attendance of Merry N' Bright, Head Elf for the COGG (Committee on Games and Gifts). Merry brought light-hearted banter, infectious energy, and a touch of holiday magic, guiding the games and ensuring every moment was filled with joy. Her playful presence was a delightful reminder of the season's whimsy, creating memories that attendees will cherish.

The partnership with the Beauty Spot Missionary Baptist Church Women's Ministry added an extra layer of warmth to the event, embodying the power of community support. Together, we created a space where caregivers could relax, feel appreciated, and embrace the holiday season surrounded by friends and supporters.

As we close the year, this gathering was a beautiful reminder of the importance of celebrating the caregivers who serve as the backbone of our communities. To all caregivers, we thank you for your sacrifices, your love, and your care. May this holiday season bring you the peace and joy you so richly deserve.



HOLIDAY FUNNY

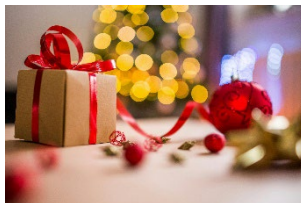


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Christmas Trivia Questions

1. Which country is credited with starting the Christmas tree tradition?
 - a) Germany
 - b) England
 - c) Norway
 - d) Sweden
2. What is the name of the main character in Charles Dickens' *A Christmas Carol*?
 - a) Bob Cratchit
 - b) Tiny Tim
 - c) Ebenezer Scrooge
 - d) Jacob Marley
3. Which beverage is most commonly associated with Christmas?
 - a) Apple cider
 - b) Eggnog
 - c) Hot chocolate
 - d) Mulled wine
4. What color are the berries of the mistletoe plant?
 - a) Red
 - b) Green
 - c) White
 - d) Blue
5. In the song *The Twelve Days of Christmas*, what gift is given on the seventh day?
 - a) Swans a-swimming
 - b) Geese a-laying
 - c) Maids a-milking
 - d) Golden rings
6. What famous ballet is performed during the Christmas season?
 - a) *The Nutcracker*
 - b) *Swan Lake*
 - c) *Sleeping Beauty*
 - d) *Cinderella*
7. In the movie *Home Alone*, where is the family going on vacation when they leave Kevin behind?
 - a) London
 - b) Paris
 - c) Rome
 - d) New York
8. What is Frosty the Snowman's nose made out of?
 - a) A button
 - b) A carrot
 - c) A stick
 - d) A lump of coal
9. Who wrote the poem *A Visit from St. Nicholas* (commonly known as *'Twas the Night Before Christmas*)?
 - a) Clement Clarke Moore
 - b) Charles Dickens
 - c) Washington Irving
 - d) Edgar Allan Poe]
10. Which U.S. state was the first to recognize Christmas as an official holiday?
 - a) New York
 - b) Alabama
 - c) Virginia
 - d) Massachusetts



Spotlight on MCRC Care: Barbara A. White

A Compassionate Advocate for Caregivers and Families



At Mid-Carolina Regional Council (MCRC), we're fortunate to have incredible individuals working tirelessly to make a difference. One such person is **Barbara A. White**, our **Regional Family Caregiver Support and Kinship Care Opioid Program Coordinator**. Barbara isn't just a professional with extensive credentials—she's someone who truly understands the heart of caregiving.

With more than 15 years of experience supporting families and caregivers, Barbara has worn many hats. Her career began with a decade in home health, hospice, and mental health care, where she witnessed firsthand the struggles and triumphs of those caring for loved ones. Coupled with eight years of honorable service in the U.S. Army, Barbara embodies resilience, dedication, and a deep sense of service.

But Barbara's work isn't just professional—it's personal. As a long-distance caregiver for her father, she's navigated the challenges many caregivers face. This personal journey has shaped her approach, giving her a unique ability to connect with others, offer empathy, and craft programs that truly meet the needs of families.

In her role at MCRC, Barbara oversees programs that provide critical resources for caregivers and families impacted by substance abuse, including kinship caregivers who are raising children affected by the opioid crisis. Her efforts extend far beyond day-to-day tasks; she's an advocate, a mentor, and a community builder.

Whether it's developing respite care programs, leading support groups, or collaborating with community partners, Barbara's goal is always the same: to ensure no caregiver feels alone in their journey. Her dedication earned her the prestigious **2023 NADO Aliceann Wohlbruck IMPACT Award**, but Barbara will tell you that her greatest reward is knowing she's made someone's life a little easier.

Barbara's extensive education and certifications reflect her commitment to continuous growth. She holds master's degrees in Counseling and Social Work and has earned credentials as a Certified Dementia Practitioner (CDP), Certified Aging in Place Specialist (CAPS), Certified Senior Advisor (CSA), and Five Wishes Advance Care Planning Facilitator. But what truly sets her apart is her ability to combine knowledge with heart.

When Barbara isn't busy supporting caregivers or creating innovative programs, she cherishes time with her family. Whether it's a quiet evening at home or connecting with friends in the community, Barbara's warmth and kindness shine in every interaction.

Barbara's role is vital to fulfilling MCRC's mission of serving our region's most vulnerable populations. She's a beacon of hope for caregivers navigating the challenges of aging, illness, and substance abuse. Her programs provide not just resources but also a sense of connection and understanding.

Barbara's story is a reminder of the power of compassion and the incredible impact one person can have. If you'd like to learn more about her work or the resources available to caregivers, don't hesitate to reach out.

Let's celebrate Barbara and the amazing work she does every day to make our community stronger.

MCRC to Organize Supply Rooms in January 2025- Get Ready!



The Mid-Carolina Regional Council (MCRC) is gearing up for a major cleanup of its supply rooms, tentatively scheduled for January 2025. This initiative aims to optimize space usage within the building, with plans to reassign the supply rooms to individual departments for their exclusive use.

As part of this effort, all items currently stored in the supply rooms will need to be reviewed, organized, and sorted for potential purging. Departments will be tasked with assessing their materials, organizing them, and setting aside items for disposal. To ensure compliance, Record Retainage Requirements will be shared next month, providing clear guidelines on what needs to be kept and what can be discarded.

This cleanup follows the success of the **Fall into Organization Drive**, where staff diligently worked to organize their individual offices. The Council extends its heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated in this drive. Your efforts have set the tone for this next phase of organization and helped us move closer to a streamlined and efficient workspace.

All staff are encouraged to begin evaluating the items they have stored in the shared supply rooms in preparation for the January cleanup. Further details, including the Record Retainage Requirements, will be provided soon to guide departments through this process.

With your continued support and collaboration, MCRC looks forward to creating an organized and functional environment that meets the needs of all departments. Thank you for your ongoing dedication to improving our workspace!



Supporting Western North Carolina: Helene Recovery Efforts Continue with as Winter Weather Season has begun.

Western North Carolina is facing additional challenges as **winter weather** begins to impact the region, making recovery from **Helene's** devastation even more difficult for local communities. The **North Carolina Association of Regional Councils of Governments (NCARCOG)**, in partnership with **Civic Credit Union** and **Local Government Credit Union**, is committed to providing assistance to those affected by both the storm and the ongoing winter conditions.

The **donation site**, established through the **Civic Local Foundation** and supported by both credit unions, helps communities and individuals in need. All proceeds from the donations will go directly to NCARCOG, which will distribute the funds to local governments, employees, and organizations in the hardest-hit regions.

With roads still difficult to navigate and recovery efforts potentially complicated by the forthcoming snow and freezing temperatures, every contribution makes a difference. If you would like to show your support and help those affected by the storm, please donate via the following link: <https://civiclfsquare.site/>.

Let's come together and provide much-needed aid to those facing both the aftermath of Helene and the upcoming winter conditions. Your generosity will help ensure that communities can continue their recovery and rebuild stronger.



The Importance of New Year's Resolutions

As 2024 comes to a close, the idea of New Year's resolutions is likely on everyone's mind. Resolutions can be more than just personal goals—they're a chance to reflect on workplace habits, set professional aspirations, and create a vision for growth in the upcoming year.

Why Make Resolutions?

Setting resolutions is about progress, not perfection. Whether it's improving communication, finding better work-life balance, or mastering a new skill, resolutions can help us focus on what truly matters.

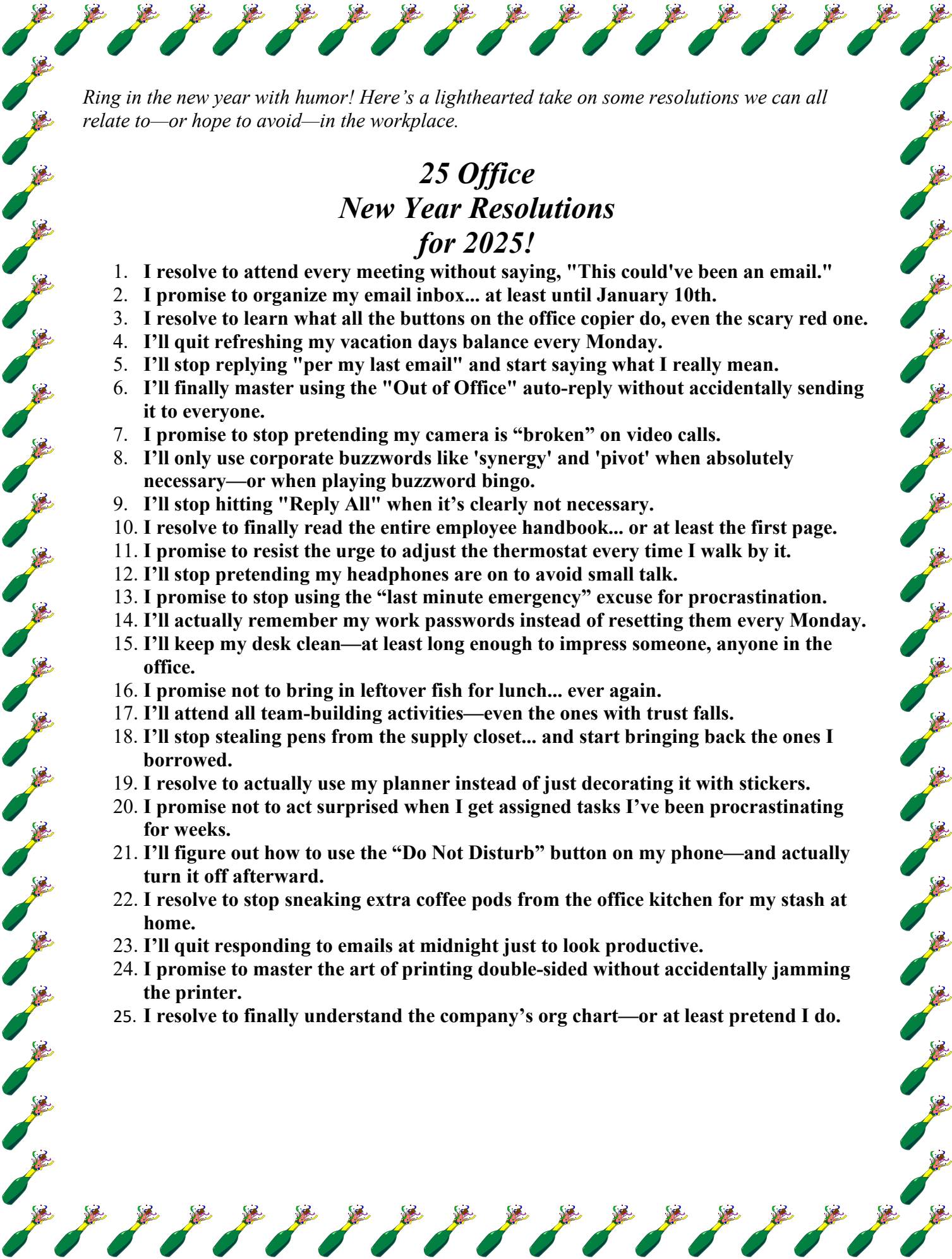
Tips for Effective Resolutions:

1. **Be Specific:** Instead of saying, "*Be more productive,*" try, "*Prioritize three key tasks each day.*"
2. **Set Measurable Goals:** Define clear milestones to track your progress.
3. **Keep It Realistic:** Focus on attainable goals to avoid burnout or frustration.
4. **Make It Fun:** Incorporate humor and creativity—just like with our satirical resolutions!

As we step into 2025, consider both personal and professional goals that align with your values and vision for the future. Let's make this a year of growth, camaraderie, and maybe even a little more patience with the office copier!



2025



Ring in the new year with humor! Here's a lighthearted take on some resolutions we can all relate to—or hope to avoid—in the workplace.

25 Office New Year Resolutions for 2025!

1. I resolve to attend every meeting without saying, "This could've been an email."
2. I promise to organize my email inbox... at least until January 10th.
3. I resolve to learn what all the buttons on the office copier do, even the scary red one.
4. I'll quit refreshing my vacation days balance every Monday.
5. I'll stop replying "per my last email" and start saying what I really mean.
6. I'll finally master using the "Out of Office" auto-reply without accidentally sending it to everyone.
7. I promise to stop pretending my camera is "broken" on video calls.
8. I'll only use corporate buzzwords like 'synergy' and 'pivot' when absolutely necessary—or when playing buzzword bingo.
9. I'll stop hitting "Reply All" when it's clearly not necessary.
10. I resolve to finally read the entire employee handbook... or at least the first page.
11. I promise to resist the urge to adjust the thermostat every time I walk by it.
12. I'll stop pretending my headphones are on to avoid small talk.
13. I promise to stop using the "last minute emergency" excuse for procrastination.
14. I'll actually remember my work passwords instead of resetting them every Monday.
15. I'll keep my desk clean—at least long enough to impress someone, anyone in the office.
16. I promise not to bring in leftover fish for lunch... ever again.
17. I'll attend all team-building activities—even the ones with trust falls.
18. I'll stop stealing pens from the supply closet... and start bringing back the ones I borrowed.
19. I resolve to actually use my planner instead of just decorating it with stickers.
20. I promise not to act surprised when I get assigned tasks I've been procrastinating for weeks.
21. I'll figure out how to use the "Do Not Disturb" button on my phone—and actually turn it off afterward.
22. I resolve to stop sneaking extra coffee pods from the office kitchen for my stash at home.
23. I'll quit responding to emails at midnight just to look productive.
24. I promise to master the art of printing double-sided without accidentally jamming the printer.
25. I resolve to finally understand the company's org chart—or at least pretend I do.

Welcome Alyssa Garcia, Our New MCRC RPO Coordinator

We are thrilled to welcome Alyssa Garcia to the Mid-Carolina Regional Council as the new RPO (Rural Planning Organization) Coordinator! Alyssa brings extensive experience and a deep commitment to local government services, making her a valuable addition to our team.

Alyssa has an impressive career history, having held a variety of roles within the Cumberland County Current Planning Division, progressing from Administrative Support Specialist to Planner III, and serving as Interim Current Planning Manager at the time of her departure. Most recently, she served as the Planning Director for the City of Dunn. Alyssa holds a Bachelor's degree in Sociology and a Master's degree in Public Administration, further strengthening her expertise in transportation and community planning.



Alyssa and her husband have called Fayetteville home for over 10 years. Outside of work, she enjoys reading, running, and spending time with her family.

Please join us in welcoming Alyssa to the team! We are excited to see the impact she will make in supporting transportation planning and development throughout the Mid-Carolina region.

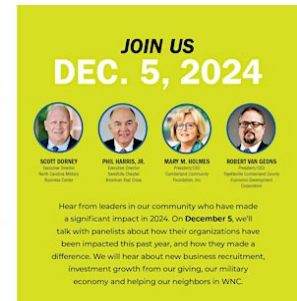


Women Veterans Resource Fair Recap

The Women Veterans Resource Fair, hosted by the Cumberland County NC Works Vet Team took place on Thursday, December 12, 2024, at the FTCC Tony Rand Student Center in Fayetteville, NC. With over 50 resource organizations present, the event offered women veterans an opportunity to explore new possibilities, access support, and connect with a thriving community.

Attendees left inspired and equipped with tools to empower their next steps. Thank you to everyone who participated and made this event a success!

Fayetteville's Most Intriguing People of 2024 Celebrated at Power Breakfast



Fayetteville, NC – On December 5, Fayetteville's community gathered to honor “Fayetteville’s Most Intriguing People of 2024” at the annual Power Breakfast Series. The event showcased leaders who left an indelible mark on the region through their dedication and innovative efforts in 2024.

The breakfast featured a panel discussion highlighting significant accomplishments in business recruitment, investment growth through philanthropy, strengthening the military economy, and providing support to communities in Western North Carolina (WNC). Panelists shared how their organizations overcame challenges and made meaningful impacts in their respective fields.

The Mid-Carolina Regional Council and Workforce Development Board were well-represented at the event. Attendees included:

- **Martin Jones**, Mayor of the Town of Stedman
- **Veronica Rozier** and **Orin Gill**, representing the Mid-Carolina Regional Council Business Services
- **Xavier DeBrough**, Chair of the Mid-Carolina Workforce Development Board
- **Raymond Godsave** from the NC Department of Commerce
- **Samantha Wullenwaber**, Deputy Director of the Mid-Carolina Regional Council

The event offered attendees a chance to hear firsthand the stories of innovation, collaboration, and perseverance that defined 2024. It also served as a platform to celebrate the exceptional individuals shaping Fayetteville’s future and fostering a thriving regional economy.

With a focus on the power of community, the breakfast underscored how leadership and teamwork continue to propel Fayetteville forward. Those in attendance left inspired and motivated to carry the momentum into 2025.

Christmas Trivia Answers

- | | |
|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------|
| 1. <i>a) Germany</i> | 6. <i>a) The Nutcracker</i> |
| 2. <i>c) Ebenezer Scrooge</i> | 7. <i>b) Paris</i> |
| 3. <i>b) Eggnog</i> | 8. <i>a) button</i> |
| 4. <i>c) White</i> | 9. <i>a) Clement Clarke Moore</i> |
| 5. <i>a) Swans a-swimming</i> | 10. <i>b) Alabama</i> |

**'Twas the night before Christmas Break at the Mid Carolina place,
Not a paper was stirring, not even a trace.
The reports were all filed, with care and precision,
As Justin and Samantha made their final holiday decisions.**

**In Admin, Glenda with her usual flair,
Ensured the team's work was way beyond compare.
While Mb, with patience, maintained every file,
Made sure all was perfect, mile after mile.**

**The Local Government team, they worked through the night,
With Haley, Abby, Tony, Andrew and Alyssa keeping things tight.
Their plans and budgets, they handled with ease,
From towns to counties, they aimed to please.**

**Next, the Aging Department was buzzing with cheer,
Tracy, Barbara, and Carla, made sure all needs were near.
Kareem, Lashonda, Ifie, Lanora and Melissa too,
Worked hard to ensure each service was true.
Lisa and Helen, with Vincent so keen,
Made sure each client's needs were fully seen.
For seniors and families, they worked every day,
Ensuring each service would come their way.**

**Over in Workforce Development, the team stayed aligned,
Doug, Tamara and Jennifer, led with vision refined
Lorria Troy always eager to guide
Empowered the workers, helping in stride.**

**Veronica Rozier, with a smile so bright,
In Business Services, kept the future in sight.
And Dr. Orin Gill, with a vision so grand,
Guided the employers with a gentle yet steady hand.**

**So as the holiday cheer began to unfold,
The team at the Council worked strong, brave, and bold.
From Aging to Workforce, from Admin to more,
They worked hard together, their spirit to adore.**

**Soon the offices will fall quiet, the work's done for the year,
The team at Mid Carolina, to all, bring good cheer.
May your stocking be stuffed, with gifts galore,
As laughter and joy fill your home, and more.**

**With hearts full of joy as the year takes its flight,
And Santa, with sleigh bells, will visit tonight!
As he rides through the sky, He says to the staff, who make it all right,
Merry Christmas to all, and to all a good night!**