

# Hoke County Newsletter

Holiday 2013

## Inside this issue:

Health Department	2
Social Services	3
Parks & Recreation	4
Senior Services	5
Library	6
Animal Shelter	7
Elections	8

## Welcome!

Welcome to the Hoke County Newsletter. Inside you'll find information of what's going on inside Hoke County.

If you have any questions, comments, or concerns, please email

[Newsletter@hokecounty.org](mailto:Newsletter@hokecounty.org)



## Hoke Board of Education and Hoke Board of Commissioners named best in state

The evening of November 19 proved to be rewarding for Hoke County, as the Hoke County Board of Education and the Hoke County Board of Commissioners attended the North Carolina School Boards Association Annual Conference.

The NCSBA recognized Hoke County representatives with three awards, all of which stem from their leadership and dedication to student achievement.

The Hoke County Board of Education was recognized as the NC School Board of the Year with the presentation of the Leadership Award for School Board. This honor is presented to one school board for extraordinary leadership during the 2012 - 2013 school year.

The Hoke County Board of Commissioners were named the County Commissioners of the Year.

This honor is presented to a board of county commissioners that has demonstrated extraordinary leadership that advances student achievement in the district. Sandy Grove Middle School, a learning community brought to fruition by the collaboration of the Hoke County Board of Education, County Commissioners, and Sfl+a Architects, received the Award for Excellence in Architec-

tural Design.

The NCSBA Award for Excellence in Architectural Design is a People's Choice Award that is given to architects for the building design of public schools. The goal is to raise awareness and discussion among board members about the relationship between good design and effective teaching and learning.

*Hoke County Schools*



## Holiday Closing Dates

The Hoke County Offices will be closed on the following days in observance of holidays:

Thursday, November 28

Friday, November 29

Tuesday, December 24

Wednesday, December 25

Thursday, December 26

Wednesday, January 1

## Hoke County Health Director Awarded 2013 Public Health All Star Award!

Helene Edwards, the Hoke County Health Director, is a 2013 North Carolina Public Health All Star Award Recipient. She was nominated for this award by her employees and comrades who surprised her by submitting a detailed application packet to the North Carolina Public Health Association Awards' Committee.

The presentation of the 2013 Public Health All Star Awards was during the opening session of the educational conference on September 18, 2013. The Public Health All Star Award Winners were unaware of their nomi-

nations until their names were announced after a brief narrative of the All Star's accomplishments. Ms. Edwards was recognized for her leadership style, positive work environment, and success with empowering Health Department employees to accomplish full accreditation status.

The Hoke County Health Department was fully accredited on June 21, 2013. The accreditation for the Health Department ensures that Hoke County can continue to receive State and Federal funds to operate mandated programs. Also, the healthcare services

provided are optimal and standardized across North Carolina. Ms. Edwards and the Health Department employees have not stopped with accreditation. The employees of the Health Department value the patients' health care experience; therefore at the present time employees are assessing patient waiting times and ways to decrease long appointments.

Ulva Little  
*Health Department*

## First Annual Walk Against Breast Cancer Event

In recognition of Breast Cancer Awareness Month in October, the Hoke County Health Department held the first annual Walk Against Breast Cancer event. The goal of the event was to have 25 participants walk the event, which was exceeded. Breast cancer survivors led the walk. Each paid participant received a pink lunch bag and lunch. Positive comments were made regarding the event and many of those who participated are already looking forward to event next year tentatively scheduled on October 17, 2014.

Cynthia Morton MPH BSN RN  
*Health Department*



## What's Happening at the Health Department?

Join the **Public Health Advisory Council** & make a difference your community, Contact Ulva at (910) 875-3717 ex: 2106.

Flu Shots are available by appointments only from **8AM-4PM**.

Hoke County Asthma Coalition will meet at the Health Department on **December 18th at 12PM**.

Teen-Time : Health Clinic for teens; **December 2nd & 16th** from **4:30PM-7PM**.

### Save The Date

2014 Survivorship Summit **Thursday, April 24 & 25**. For more information, contact Cindy Morton at 910-875-3717 ex: 2115.

Community Health Opinion Survey Is now Available. To participate, Contact Cornelia at (910) 875-3717 ex: 2104.

Happy Thanksgivings  
from all of us at the  
Hoke County Health Department!

## National Adoption Month

November is National Adoption Month. Please help us support and spread the word...every child deserves a family! You may not want to adopt a child, but you can support the children in foster care waiting for adoption in many other ways. Talk to your friends, your family, your church family...help children in foster care find a forever family by talking about foster

care adoption with everyone you know!

To find out more about foster care adoption, please visit the following websites: [www.adoptUSkids.org](http://www.adoptUSkids.org)  
[www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov) or  
[www.hokecounty.org](http://www.hokecounty.org)

Tammy Johnson  
Social Services



## Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP)

The Hoke County Department of Social Services will begin taking applications for the Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) on Monday, December 02, 2013. This year we are targeting the elderly population age 60 and above and disabled persons receiving services through the Division of Aging and Adult Services. We will only be taking applications for persons meeting these criteria from December 02, 2013 through January 31, 2014.

Outreach dates and locations for the target populations will be:

**December 2nd** from **9:30AM** to

**1:00PM** at Holly Park Apartments located at 390 Birch Street in Raeford.

**December 4th** from **9:00AM** to **1:00PM** at Twin Oak Apartments located at 1100 Bethune Avenue.

**December 5th** from **9:00AM** to **2:00PM** at Woodcreek Village Apartments located at 307 Woodcreek Villa Avenue.

**December 13th** from **9:30AM** to **1:00PM** at the Senior Services Center located at 423 E. Central Avenue.

If funds remain, all others may apply beginning **February 03, 2014**. Eligibility is based on income, resources,

citizenship or legal alien status and households that have a heating source. Eligible applicants will receive a one-time payment that will go directly to the vendor. Aged and disabled applicants that are unable to come into the office to apply can do a phone application.

If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Melanie Harris at 878-1947 or Sheffie Turner at 878-1945.

Hoke County  
Social Services

*All Native Americans must apply at the Lumbie Tribal Office, located in Pembroke.*

## Gift for Giving

Social Services has set aside **December 9, 2013** as the day of "GIFT FOR GIVING" where employees can bring gifts of personal care items to be given to the residents at the rest home and nursing home. Items are also being collected for the homeless coalition. If anyone else would like to contribute to "GIFT FOR GIVING" please bring your items to DSS on **Monday, December 9, 2013**.



Items to Donate to Open Arms Retirement Center, Autumn Care Nursing Center, and the Homeless Coalition:

Men & Women Deodorant  
Hand & Body Lotion  
Body Wash  
Toothpaste & Toothbrushes  
Mouthwash  
Socks  
Throw  
Blankets



Soap  
Vaseline  
Shampoo  
Hand Sanitizer  
Wipes  
Hand Soap  
Lysol  
Kleenex  
Feminine Hygiene Products  
Bath Tissue



## Parks & Recreation Athletics

We are wrapping up an awesome fall season of football, cheer leading, and soccer. It was an excellent turn out and a great season!

We are now getting ready for basketball and wrestling.

Winter sports registration began November 4th and will go all the way up until November 29th.

Registration fee is \$30.00 cash or check, and a birth certificate to verify age.

Candace Hargrove  
*Parks & Recreation*



## Breakfast with Santa



Parks and Recreation will hold their annual Breakfast with Santa on **Saturday, December 14, 2013.**

Please register your children early! Tickets will be on sale November 12th-November 29th. Tickets are \$2.00 per child and \$3.00 per adult.

There are only 65 children slots available.

Children will be able to take pictures with Santa and be served a hot breakfast. Arts and crafts and face painting will be also be available.

## In Other News...

The fish fry was a great success!

Parks & Recreation will also be wrapping presents for the public **December 10th-December 17th** from **10 a m - 4 p m**  
1 gift - Free | 2-4 gifts - \$5.00  
5-8 gifts - \$10.00 | 9 or more - \$15.00

Zumba is either every Tuesday and Thursday or every Monday and Wednesday at the Rockfish Community Building from 5:30 to 6:30. The cost is \$30.00 per month.

Candace Hargrove  
*Parks & Recreation*



The Panthers Cheerleaders collected canned goods for the Community Support Services Food Bank located in Raeford!

## Medicare Enrollment Update

According to Tanya Studivant, our SHIIP coordinator for Hoke County, the enrollment period is off to a great start and she expects a dynamic finish. Her appointment slots are rapidly filling up so if you still haven't made

yours yet-do not delay. She can review your current plan, and evaluate the new plans being offered to make sure you get the best fit for your needs.

The enrollment period ends December

7th, all changes must be confirmed by that date.

Hoke County  
Senior Services

## Adopt a Meals-on-Wheels Senior for Christmas!

Senior services will be sponsoring an adopt a meal-on-wheel senior for Christmas. We have 40 women and 20 men. Gifts should be non-perishable and should be at least \$10. We will be accepting gifts for the adopt a meal-on-wheel senior beginning December 1, 2013 thru December 17, 2013.

Anyone interested in adopting a meal-on-wheel senior should contact Senior Services at 910-875-8588.

Hoke County  
Senior Services



## Medications to avoid with Respiratory Disease

Many people have respiratory problems, such as asthma, wheezing, emphysema, or chronic bronchitis. Several categories of nonprescription products tell you not to use them without first talking to your physician.

If you have asthma, you should avoid

the use of cough products for a chronic cough that accompanies asthma, including such ingredients as dextromethorphan (e.g., Delsym) and guaifenesin (e.g., Mucinex). Asthma patients also must take care with nonprescription analgesics. All products containing salicylates (e.g., aspirin,

Pepto-Bismol) warn against use (without medical advice) by those with asthma, further cautioning that use can result in a severe allergic reaction that may include asthma (wheezing). Products with ibuprofen (e.g., Motrin IB) and naproxen (e.g., Aleve) carry similar warnings.

## In Other News...

### October Recap

October was a busy month for the seniors as well as the staff. The fish-fry fundraiser was a great success. 200 dinners were sold. The proceeds allowed the seniors to enjoy a trip to the State Fair in Raleigh (514.50) and also the Martin Luther King Jr. Banquet (460.00). A big thank-you to everyone who supported the seniors!!

During October the seniors also visited Southern Supreme in Bear Creek,

NC. They toured the kitchen, where it was explained to them the process of making the fruitcakes. They also received samples. Every-one could not stop talking about how tasty the fruitcakes were. Some even said that it was the best that they ever tasted.

### Senior Halloween Party

The senior Halloween party was held on October 31, 2013 The seniors and staff looked amazing with all their costumes. Ms. Anna Hoback won first

place for best costume, with Ms. Ola Scott coming in second. South Hoke and Ephesus won for best Arts & Crafts for the month.

We would like to thank all the staff members for their help in making the Halloween Party a success.

Hoke County  
Senior Services

## BEDTIME STORYTIME & STUFFED ANIMAL SLEEPOVER

Bedtime Storytime will be held **Tuesday, December 3rd at 6:30 pm** at Hoke County Public Library. Children are invited to wear their pajamas and bring their favorite stuffed animals and blankets.

Following the program, teddy bears &

other “stuffies” are invited to stay for a sleepover at the library, where they will enjoy their own storytime, make crafts, have snacks, and get tucked in for a good night’s sleep in the stacks. Stuffies can be picked up after 5:00 pm on Wednesday, December 4.



## F\*A\*R | Families All Read

HCPL’s Smart-Start funded family literacy program is back, offering **FREE BOOKS** for children ages 0-5!

For further information, call or email Jackie at 875-2502 or [hokefamiliesallread@gmail.com](mailto:hokefamiliesallread@gmail.com).



### Family Reading Night 6:30-7:30 pm

Thursday, December 5, 2013  
Thursday, December 19, 2013  
Thursday, January 2, 2014  
Thursday, January 16, 2014  
Thursday, February 6, 2014  
Thursday, February 20, 2014  
Thursday, March 6, 2014  
Thursday, March 20, 2014  
Thursday, April 3, 2014  
Thursday, April 17, 2014  
Thursday, May 1, 2014  
Thursday, May 15, 2014  
Thursday, May 29, 2014

### Family Reading Saturday 3:00-4:00 pm

Saturday, December 14, 2013  
Saturday, January 11, 2014  
Saturday, February 15, 2014  
Saturday, March 15, 2014  
Saturday, April 12, 2014  
Saturday, May 10, 2014

## In Other News...

### Email Notification is Here!

Now you can receive email messages from the library’s automated system, letting you know when a requested book has arrived, or when items you have checked out are almost due or overdue.

Hoke County Public Library staff can add or update your email address anytime you come to the library, or you can do it yourself!

Just go to [www.srls.info](http://www.srls.info), click “Catalog”, click “Log in”, and log on to your account to update any of your contact information. While you’re there, you can also place holds, and check your due dates!

### Preschool Storytime

Hoke County Public Library offers a Preschool Storytime program every Tuesday at 10:00 for children ages 3-5 -- older & younger siblings also welcome to attend!

### Homework Central

Homework help for students in grades K-8, available at Hoke County Public Library on Tuesday & Thursday afternoons from 3:30-5:30 pm. To sign up, call or email Natalie at 875-2502 or [nspencer@hokecounty.org](mailto:nspencer@hokecounty.org).

### Need to Know More About the Affordable Care Act?

Call 1-855-733-3711 for an appoint-

ment with Navigator Francine Chavis from Legal Aid of North Carolina. Location: Hoke County Public Library

### Dates:

December 4, 2013 | January 15, 2014  
February 5, 2014 | March 5, 2014

### Free WiFi

Hoke County Public Library offers free wi-fi for patrons with their own laptop, tablet, or other device. Please sign in at the Circulation Desk to get the password.

For more information, call us at 875-2502.

## "Broken" German Shorthaired Pointer Gets Perfect Home

We recently had a German Shorthair Pointer come to our shelter. His perseverance touched all of our hearts. I sent his story in to the Helen Woodward Heartwarming Story Contest and Zeus is now in the running to be the big winner, but I think he already is a big winner. If he wins our shelter will receive \$500.00.

\*\*\*

Kane, now Zeus, was found emaciated and wounded.

On October 7, we received a very sad and broken German Shorthaired Pointer. This dog was severely emaciated and so weak he almost could not eat the food we carefully prepared for him. His hind leg was injured and he walked with a limp. He was so unsteady and weak, he stumbled and swaggered when he walked. His ears were eaten up from flies and you could see the fleas diving in and out of his fur. It was obvious that his frail body was broken, and so was his spirit.

Despite his hurts, we instantly fell in love with our new friend and named him Kane. We were unsure if anyone would be able to look beyond what some may see as "flaws" and provide Kane with a forever home full of patience and unconditional love.

Boy, were we wrong! On October 11, we received a call from a very kind man named Phillip. He saw Kane's photos and read his story on our Facebook page. He began to tell me about the last German Shorthaired Pointer he had rescued many years ago. We asked him if he would be okay with the fact that Kane had "fly strike" on his ears and was not in the best of health. Phillip said, "Well, if he can deal with my receding hairline and some of my other flaws then I guess we will be alright!" We were tickled by that! We told Phillip everything we knew about Kane from what we had observed of his frail body and gentle

demeanor. Phillip jumped in the car right then and made the two-and-a-half hour drive to Raeford.

When the two were introduced we knew that not only had Kane found a home, but he found a family that would love him and care for him the rest of his days. We bathed Kane before his adoption and Phillip, in nice dress clothes, stood right there with us holding Kane in the bath and scrubbing him down! Once Kane was all cleaned up and the adoption paperwork was finalized, Phillip and Kane were on their way. This was the update that we just received from Phillip...

Dear Hoke County Animal Shelter,

It has been exactly one week from adopting Kane. Today, he has a new life along with a new name, Zeus. He is a big-framed lad, and with another 40 pounds he will easily grow into his mighty name.

As we were leaving the shelter, I told you guys that we would stop off at the drive-thru to get him some chicken nuggets. We did, but it showed me just what type of sad life he must have had. As we neared the fast food shops on the main street, in my mirror, I could see Zeus in the back; his nose went straight up in the air, smelling all the delicious smells. After going through the drive-thru, we parked and I broke the nuggets in half and cooled them in the air vents. I offered one in my hand... he looked away and then curled up in a ball as if to say, "My life sucks..."

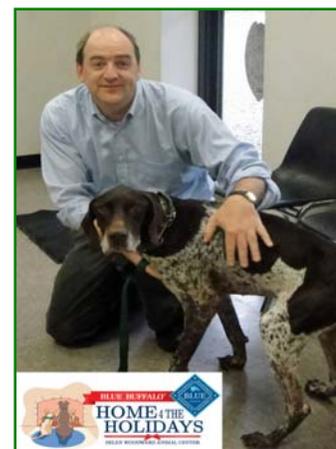
I was confused, how can a dog refuse a chicken nugget?! I placed the nugget by his nose... he did not move a muscle and all the time glancing nervously at me and then avoiding eye contact. I then looked the other way, and after what sounded like a vacuum, the nugget disappeared. I then placed another and looked the other

way, then petted him after each nugget. Finally he stood up as if to say, "Oh, I get it, I am allowed to eat this wonderful food!" and he then started eating from my hand. It was probably a life-altering moment for him, and rewarding to know that, maybe the first time, he was able to be spoiled a little.

It was rewarding to know that, maybe the first time, Zeus was able to be spoiled a little.

Despite how previous people may have treated him, he greets everyone with love and appreciates everything that you do for him with a wag, and even a "thank you" whimper. He is such a wonderfully kind boy and I feel it so rewarding being able to help this kind, loving and very appreciative dog. My wife and kids hug and pet him a thousand times a day, and he has brought so much to us.

A big thank you to all at the shelter, for such a wonderfully deserving new family member. Also thank you to all of you who have posted kind wishes to us, it is really heartening to know that there are so many caring people in the world. We can never stop the evils of the world, but hopefully we can outnumber them with compassion and love... and if Zeus could type this message, that is exactly what he would tell us!



## 2013 MUNICIPAL ELECTION RESULTS

The City of Raeford Municipal Election was held on Tuesday, November 5th, 2013 for residents of the city to elect a Mayor and two City Council members.

325 voters voted in this election comprising a rather low turnout at 10.87%, in comparison to the 14.45% state average. The election results

were:  
**For Mayor (1)**  
 John K. McNeill III.....283  
 Write-ins..... 5

**For City Council (2)**  
 Charles D. Allen.....180

Shelley Wilburn.....169  
 Wayne Willis.....238  
 Write-ins..... 2

The winning candidates will take the oath of office on Monday, December 2nd, 2013, and will serve for four years.

CITY OF RAEFORD MAYOR (VOTE FOR 1)			
4 of 4 Precincts Reporting			
Choice	Votes	Percent	
John K. McNeill	283	98.26%	<div style="width: 98.26%;"></div>
Write-in (miscellaneous)	5	1.74%	<div style="width: 1.74%;"></div>
<b>Total</b>	<b>288</b>		

CITY OF RAEFORD CITY COUNCIL MEMBER (VOTE FOR 2)			
4 of 4 Precincts Reporting			
Choice	Votes	Percent	
Charles Allen	180	30.56%	<div style="width: 30.56%;"></div>
Shelley Wilburn	169	28.69%	<div style="width: 28.69%;"></div>
Wayne Willis	238	40.41%	<div style="width: 40.41%;"></div>
Write-in (miscellaneous)	2	0.34%	<div style="width: 0.34%;"></div>
<b>Total</b>	<b>589</b>		

## 2014 CANDIDATE FILING INFORMATION

### STATE AND COUNTY OFFICES

#### CANDIDATE FILING BEGINS

Monday, February 10, 2014  
 at 12:00 NOON

### CANDIDATE FILING PERIOD ENDS

Friday, February 28, 2014  
 at 12:00 NOON

### PRIMARY ELECTION DAY

MAY 6, 2014

### GENERAL ELECTION DAY

NOVEMBER 4, 2014

## January is the Time to List Your Taxes!

ALL persons who own or control business, farm, and any personal property subject to taxation in Hoke County or made improvements to real property, MUST LIST all such property and/or improvements for year 2014 between January 2 and January 31, 2014.

There is a 10% late list penalty for failing to list your property before January 31.

All Exemption or Exclusion applications are due no later than January 31, 2014 with the exception of the Elderly/Disability exclusions. This includes but is not limited to churches,

non-profit organizations, educational facilities, etc.

The Elderly/Disabled exclusion and the Veteran Disability exclusion applications will be accepted until June 1, 2014. The income limit for the Elderly/Disabled exclusion for 2014 is \$28,600.

Present use applications for agriculture, forestry or horticulture are also due no later than January 31, 2014.

For more information, visit the Hoke County Website, [www.hokecounty.net](http://www.hokecounty.net), choose Your Government – Taxes – Assessor’s De-

partment. Tax Forms are available on the web. You may also visit our office at 227 N Main St or reach us by phone at 910-875-8751.

Jennie Gibson  
 Assessor



## A Word from the License Plate Agency

The Hoke County license plate agency is ready for the holiday season! Our new employee, Yolanda McCoy, is picking things up quickly learning lots of new information. She is a joy to work with, and having a third employee should prevent our office from having to close for lunch hours in the future so we can better serve our customers.

Our office has maintained a steady increase in customers and transactions, even with the new office opening up in Laurinburg. Even with the increase in customer traffic, we have continued to obtain excellent monthly audit reports as well as maintain an outstanding error rate – one of the best in the state! We are very proud of these achievements and will do our best to continue to be the license plate agency of choice for our customers, many of which travel great distances to utilize our office due to the short lines and speedy service.

According to the state reports, there has been a steady increase in customer transactions in the last several

years. 2011 reported a total number of transactions for the year at 36,192. In 2012 that number increased to 41,512 and so far for 2013 we are already soaring much higher at 58,054! That means we have increased our traffic flow by more than half since 2011. We are honored that so many customers choose to utilize our office.

Most everyone has heard there are some changes being implemented in the state of North Carolina in regards to how we pay our vehicle property taxes. According to House Bill 1779, the goal for the change is to combine vehicle property taxes and license plate renewal fees into one bill. Their hope is that this change will make the renewal process easier for the general public, as well as improve the collection rates of vehicle property taxes across the state. So far, the change has had a few hiccups and a rather large portion of our customers are still surprised when we tell them about the new system (by no fault of the Tax Collections Department, who has been advising the public of this change for

years!), but all-in-all, has gone pretty smoothly. We are still learning all the details of this new system, but we have high hopes that it will all transition smoothly and will ultimately be a better system for North Carolinians. For more information, please log on to <http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/vehicle/tagtax>.

We would like remind everyone that all license plate agencies in North Carolina are compensated per transaction by NCDMV. Therefore, since our agency is operated under the County of Hoke, all transactions you bring to us rather than processing by mail or online will ultimately benefit the county!

The Hoke County License Plate Agency is open Monday through Friday, from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m. We are located at 520 W. Donaldson Ave. in Raeford, NC. We look forward to serving you!

Amanda Ward  
License Plate Agency

## A Word from Solid Waste

The holidays are here again, and we are expecting the usual onslaught of debris associated with Santa Claus. We will be closed on Thursday, November 28th and Friday, November 29th for Thanksgiving.

Pending the approval from our Governing Body, we will be also be closed on Tuesday, December 24th and Wednesday, December 25th for Christmas. Please check the Hoke County website for any additional information on closings.

For those bringing Christmas trees to any of our sites (after the holidays) we

ask that you remove all ornaments and tinsel so that we may dispose of them in an environmentally friendly fashion.

We at Solid Waste wish you a safe and prosperous holiday season and look forward to sharing the spirit of that season with all our many wonderful customers.

Don Russell  
Solid Waste Director



## Subdivision Fee Changes

In the Summer of 2013 the Hoke County Board of Commissioners approved a change to the fee schedule for the Hoke County Planning Department that helps mitigate the cost of subdividing property in Hoke County for citizens, property owners and families. When a property owner creates a subdivision that results in five (5) or less new lots the cost is now only \$100.00 per each new lot created. Another change is related to Family Subdivisions. In Article 1 of the Hoke County Subdivision Ordinance the definition of "Family Subdivision" was changed to read as:

"A division of land solely among direct

lineal descendants (parent to child only) and direct lineal ascendants (child to parent only); when a parent makes a one time gift to a child or a child makes a one time gift to a parent of a parcel of land divided from the child or parent's property. All Family Subdivisions must comply with Section 4.12 Family Subdivisions of [the Subdivision] ordinance. Family Subdivisions are exempt from the Subdivision Fee requirements of Hoke County."

This means that if a property owner wants to give a piece of property to their child or a child would like to give a piece of their property to their par-

ent there is no fee in the Hoke County Planning Department for the review of the subdivision plat or the creation of the new lot. It is important to remember that only professional surveyors licensed by the State of North Carolina are qualified to draw a subdivision map and that all subdivisions of property must be recorded with the Hoke County Register of Deeds.

If you have any questions about subdividing your property please contact the Hoke County Planning Department at (910) 875-8407.

Robert Farrell  
*Hoke County Planner*

## OLD CELL PHONES ARE NOT A TOY

At least, not until you take the battery out!

You got a new cell phone a couple of weeks ago. As most people do, you took the old one and put it on a shelf or in a drawer. All of a sudden, local law enforcement is at your door wanting to know who has the cell phone that keeps dialing 911. Of course, you know no one has your phone. The Officer tells you that it is a cell phone that is no longer active, maybe an old one you no longer use. You say that one is still on the shelf and you go to look and it is not there. You ask the children did anyone take that phone and one of them holds it up. It is powered on and the number dialed is 911. You ask "How can it dial 911, it is not an active phone?"

This is not an uncommon scenario as many people do not know that by Federal Communications Commission (FCC) regulation, ALL call phones whether active (e.g. having service being paid for) or not must be able to call 911. The intent was to allow a

phone to be used only for emergencies if that is all the owner had. It had good intent, but over the years, millions of cell phones have been sold and unfortunately they have been given to children as toys and to adults as mediums to make malicious calls. Cell phones that are not active are called uninitialized cell phones.

Some people carry them for just what it was to be used for-calling 911 for help. It is when they are used for other purposes that it becomes an issue. One of the more common problems is allowing children to use them as a toy. This is perfectly all right, so long as the battery is removed. As long as the battery is in the phone and has a charge, it can call 911. Carrying an uninitialized cell phone just to be able to call 911 is a good idea if you do not have an active phone. The downside is that the 911 Center is not able to call you back on that phone because an uninitialized call phone cannot receive calls, even from 911. Also, the phone may not plot your location if it

is an older phone, only what tower you are using.

911 Centers across the United States answer an enormous amount of thousands of hang up calls, misdials, prank calls and calls from uninitialized cell phones. The simple act of removing the battery before giving it to a child to play with will save time and effort and allow 911 Telecommunicators to deal with emergencies.

Jimmy Stewart  
*E-911 Director*



## Tips for Secure Shopping Online During the Holiday Season

Cyber Monday (the Monday after Thanksgiving) and online shopping throughout the entire holiday season have become increasingly popular in recent years, and the trend is expected to continue this season.

According to MarketLive, an e-commerce software and solutions provider, online shoppers in the U.S. are projected to spend more than \$54 billion this holiday season, nearly a 17 percent increase over the \$47 billion spent last year. The increase in online shopping coincides with an increase in mobile device use, and more shoppers will be using special holiday smartphone apps to find the best deals.

Before you click or tap to buy that "must have" item on your holiday list, check out these tips below to make sure you're doing everything you can to avoid becoming a victim of cyber-crime:

**Secure your mobile device and computer.** Be sure to keep the operating system and application software updated/patched on all of your computers and mobile devices. Be sure to check that any anti-virus/anti-spyware software installed is running and receiving automatic updates. Confirm that your firewall is enabled.

**Know and trust your online shopping merchants.** Limit your online shopping to merchants you know and trust. If you have questions about a merchant, check with the Better Business Bureau or the Federal Trade Commission. Confirm the online seller's physical address and phone number in case you have questions or problems.

**Look for "https" when making an online purchase.** The "s" in "https" stands for "secure" and indicates that communication with the webpage is encrypted. If you submit your credit card information through an organiza-

tion's website, be sure to look for indicators that the site is secure. Look for a padlock or key icon in the browser's status bar and be sure "https" appears in the website's address bar before making an online purchase. You should also make sure that your browser software is current and up-to-date.

**Password protect your mobile device and computer.** It's the simplest and one of the most important steps to take to secure your mobile device and computer. If you need to create an account with the merchant, be sure to use a strong password. Use at least eight characters, with numbers, special characters, and upper and lower case letters. Adhere to the tenant "a unique password for every unique site."

**Do not respond to pop-ups.** When a window pops up promising you cash or gift cards for answering a question or taking a survey, close it by pressing Control + F4 for Windows and Command + W for Macs.

**Avoid scams and fraud.** Don't ever give your financial information or personal information over e-mail or text. Be aware of unsolicited communications purporting to represent stores or charities. Always think before you click on e-mails you receive asking for donations and contact the organization directly to verify the request. Information on many current scams can be found on the website of the Internet Crime Complaint Center, a partnership between the Federal Bureau of Investigation and the National White Collar Crime Center: <http://www.ic3.gov/default.aspx>.

**Do not use public computers or public wireless for your online shopping.** Public computers may contain malicious software that steals your credit card information when you place your order. Additionally, crimi-

nals may be intercepting traffic on public wireless networks to steal credit card numbers and other confidential information.

**Pay by credit card, not debit card.** The safest way to shop on the Internet is to pay with a credit card rather than debit card, as credit cards are protected by the Fair Credit Billing Act and may reduce your liability if your information was used improperly.

**Print your online transactions.** Print or save records of your online transactions, including the product description and price, the online receipt, and the e-mails you send and receive from the seller. Carefully review your credit card statements as soon as you receive them to confirm that all charges are legitimate. Contact your credit card company immediately if you have unauthorized charges on your account.

**Review privacy policies.** Review the privacy policy for the website/merchant you are visiting. Know what information the merchant is collecting about you, how it will be stored, how it will be used, and if it will be shared with others.

\*\*\*

What to do if you encounter problems with an online shopping site?

Contact the seller or the site operator directly to resolve any issues. You may also contact the following:

NC Office of the Attorney General  
<http://www.ncdoj.gov/>

The Better Business Bureau  
[www.bbb.org](http://www.bbb.org)

The Federal Trade Commission  
<http://www.ftccomplaintassistant.gov>

Candace Pierce  
*Information Technology Director*

## NC Cooperative Extension News

### Parents As Teachers

During the month of September, Parents As Teachers program offered a group connection meeting that focused on the different stages of writing that young children display. In October, families were shown how to help their children learn about cultural diversity through the use of books.

October 2-4 Glorimar Santiago, Bilingual Parent Educator, and Brenda Currie, Program Coordinator/Parent Educator, attended the National Parents As Teachers Conference in Atlanta, Georgia on. North Carolina State PAT Leader and Southeast Regional Technical Support Specialist, Robin Roberts, presented Brenda with a PAT service pin. Brenda will be celebrating 10 years as a PAT parent educator in February.

### Family Consumer Science

#### Event Date : October 17, 2013

North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Hoke County Center, partnered with Hoke County Schools to present a Lunch and Learn Workshop "Eating Well on a Budget". We're living in tough economic times and sometimes it's hard to make ends meet. Thirteen participants attended. Participants learned how to make healthy food choices and how to prepare a nutritious meal with a limited budget. Evaluations showed as a result of participating in the program, they intended to plan meals ahead of time, make a shopping list and stick to it, eat fewer meals away from home, use coupons and store circulars to compare prices, and use My Plate nutrition guide to make healthy food choices

#### Event Date: October 30, 2013

North Carolina Cooperative Extension offered "Delicious, Delectable and Dehydrated Workshop"

Drying is one of the oldest methods of preserving food for later use. It can be either an alternative to canning or freezing, or compliment these methods.

Participants participated in a hands on training, learning which fruits and vegetables can be dehydrated, how long dehydrated food will last, helpful tips on dehydration at home and how to rehydrate dried food and use in a recipe.

### Horticulture Upcoming Calendar of Events

#### Master Gardener Course

February 18, 2014 - April 15, 2014  
9 a.m. – 12 noon

Do you want to learn the basics of horticulture, teach others what you have learned in the class or discover new ways of gardening. If you are like thousands of other people and enjoy gardening this program may be for you. You will gain valuable knowledge in subject areas such as soils, plants, vegetable gardening, insects, diseases, weeds and much more. If you are interested in this class give Mary Hollingsworth, your Extension horticulture agent, a call. The cost for the course is \$100.00 and will cover course materials, name badge, and state fees.

#### Gardening Basics

March 20, 2014

Vegetables are never better than when they are home grown! Find out how to grow your own vegetables, how to prepare your garden soil, what makes a good quality transplant, planting times, fertilizing, weed control and other important cultural practices to have a successful garden. The gardening basics class will be offered at two different times on March 20, 2014. The first class will be from

1:00 p.m. until 3:00 p.m. and the second will be from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. Free educational materials and refreshments will be provided. Class size is limited to 30 people, to register call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Hoke County Center at (910) 875-3461.

#### Totally Tomatoes

May 8, 2014  
6 – 7 p.m.

Tomatoes are one of the most difficult and most prized vegetables grown in the Carolinas. In this class learn about different varieties of tomatoes, cultural practices, nutritional requirements, and disease issues associated with tomatoes. The totally tomatoes class will be offered on May 8, 2014 from 6 -7 p.m. Educational materials and refreshments will be provided. Class size is limited to 30 people, to register call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension, Hoke County Center at (910) 875-3461.

#### Caring for the Centipede Lawn

May 13, 2014  
6 -7 p.m.

Caring for a lawn in the Sandhills can be quite discouraging to many especially if you are new to the area. The centipede lawn class will give you the information you need to understand our soils, know how and when to plant centipede grass as well as how to maintain a healthy lawn. You will learn how to fertilize your lawn and control those pesky weeds we see growing in the lawn. To register, contact the North Carolina Cooperative Extension Center, Hoke County Center at (910) 875-3461.

## 4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit

The results of the 4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit were announced at the banquet in Hoke County on Friday, November 8 at the Raeford Presbyterian Church. These youth accumulated points for their placing in showmanship at a series of shows in the South Central District of North Carolina this fall. If you have a child, grandchild, or neighbor who

may be interested in competing in our Circuit, please call the Hoke County 4-H office at 875-2162.

The 4-H Farm Credit Showmanship Circuit is for youth showing lambs, heifers, and goats. There are three divisions for all species. First place in each division won a belt buckle and a banner ribbon, second place received a

banner ribbon, and third through fifth place received tri-fold ribbon. Cape Fear Farm Credit and Carolina Farm Credit proudly sponsor the Circuit, providing the funding to operate it. Each participant received a Circuit tee shirt. The final point rankings for the Circuit and counties that the winners represent are below:

### LAMB SHOWMANSHIP WINNERS

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
	1. Fiona Walsh, Union	1. Benjamin Herndon, Cumberland
		2. Brittany Truesdale, Stanly
		3. Emerald Layton, Stanly
		4. Tanner Riegal, Stanly
		5. Hannah Carter, Stanly

### HEIFER SHOWMANSHIP WINNERS

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
1. Luke White, Chatham	1. Cara Smith, Guilford	1. LeAnn Harward, Stanly
2. Hunter Batchelor, Chatham	2. Thomas Smith, Guilford	2. <b>Morgan Rockwell, Hoke</b>
	3. Marie Harward, Stanly	3. Wesley Dobbins, Randolph
	4. Mattie Harward, Stanly	4. Catherine Harward, Stanly
	5. Katelyn Batchelor, Chatham	5. Austin Cameron, Moore

### MEAT GOAT SHOWMANSHIP WINNERS

Junior	Intermediate	Senior
1. Taylor Chappell, Richmond	1. Coleman Berry, Richmond	1. Madelyn Chappell, Richmond
2. Noah Beeson, Guilford	2. Savannah Chappell, Richmond	2. Jordan Carroll, Richmond
3. Payton Smith, Guilford	3. Brianna Hamilton, Richmond	3. Kayla Butler, Richmond
4. Eli Maske, Richmond	4. McKensie Beeson, Guilford	4. <b>Morgan Rockwell, Hoke</b>
5. Kane Butler, Richmond	5. Agibail Hamilton, Richmond	5. Sarah Maske, Richmond



Shown left to right: Natalee Jonas, Morgan Rockwell, and Onalise Jonas representing Hoke County 4-H. Natalee and Onalise are Cloverbuds.

*Warmest wishes from  
Hoke County  
for hope,  
happiness,  
and peace  
during this  
Holiday Season  
and throughout  
the coming year.*

*Happy Holidays!*

---

## **To All Employees**

Due to changes in NC individual income tax laws, a new NC-4 tax withholding form will be needed from each employee by January 2014.

Important: You must complete a new Form NC-4 EZ or NC-4 for tax year 2014. As a result of recent law

changes, how you determine the number of allowances for tax year 2014 will differ from previous years. Most taxpayers will not be entitled to as many allowances, and as a result, more taxpayers should claim zero (0) allowances. Additionally, you are no longer allowed to claim a N.C. withholding exemption for yourself, your

spouse, your children, or any other qualifying dependents.

Please contact your tax advisor for your individual questions.

Pick up forms from Human Resources and have them turned in no later than 12/27/2013.

---

# HAPPY THANKSGIVING DAY



## Thanksgiving Product Safety Tips



### Turkey fryers

UL considers turkey fryers to be dangerous to use presenting numerous safety hazards to consumers. "We're worried by the increasing reports of fires related with turkey fryer use," says John Drengenberg, consumer affairs manager of UL. "Based on our test findings, the fryers used to produce those great-tasting birds are not worth the risks. And, as a result of these tests, UL has decided not to certify any turkey fryers with our trusted UL Mark."

### Turkey fryer hazards

- Many units easily tip over, spilling the hot oil from the cooking pot.
- If the cooking pot is overfilled with oil, the oil may spill out of the unit when the turkey is placed into the cooking pot. Oil may hit the burner or flames, causing a fire to engulf the entire unit.
- Partially frozen turkeys placed into the fryer can cause a spillover effect. This too may result in an extensive fire.
- With no thermostat controls, the units also have the potential to overheat the oil to the point of combustion.
- The lid and handles on the sides of the cooking pot get dangerously hot, posing severe burn hazards.

### Important safety information

If you absolutely must use a turkey fryer, please use the following tips.

- Turkey fryers should always be used outdoors a safe distance from buildings and any other flammable materials.
- Never use turkey fryers in a garage or on a wooden deck.

- Make sure the fryers are used on a flat surface to reduce accidental tipping.
- Never leave the fryer unattended. Most units do not have thermostat controls. If you do not watch the fryer carefully, the oil will continue to heat until it catches fire.
- Never let children or pets near the fryer even if it is not in use. The oil inside the cooking pot can remain dangerously hot hours after use.
- To avoid oil spillover, do not overfill the fryer.
- Use well-insulated potholders or oven mitts when touching pot or lid handles. If possible, wear safety goggles to protect your eyes from oil splatter.
- Make sure the turkey is completely thawed and be careful with marinades. Oil and water do not mix, and water causes oil to spill over causing a fire or even an explosion hazard.
- The National Turkey Federation (NTF) recommends thawing the turkey in the refrigerator approximately 24 hours for every five pounds in weight.
- Keep an all-purpose fire extinguisher nearby. Never use water to extinguish a grease fire. If the fire is manageable, use your all-purpose fire extinguisher. If the fire increases, immediately call the fire department for help.



# A Season for Sharing in Fire Safety

## A Factsheet on Holiday Fire Prevention

**E**ach year fires occurring during the holiday season claim the lives of over 400 Americans, injure 1,650 more, and cause over \$990 million in damage.

According to the U. S. Fire Administration (USFA), there are simple life-saving steps you can take to ensure a safe and happy holiday. By following some of the outlined precautionary tips, individuals can greatly reduce their chances of becoming a holiday fire casualty.

### PREVENTING CHRISTMAS TREE FIRES

Special fire safety precautions need to be taken when keeping a live tree in the house. A burning tree can rapidly fill a room with fire and deadly gases.

#### SELECTING A TREE FOR THE HOLIDAY

Needles on fresh trees should be green and hard to pull back from the branches, and the needle should not break if the tree has been freshly cut. The trunk should be sticky to the touch. Old trees can be identified by bouncing the tree trunk on the ground. If many needles fall off, the tree has been cut too long, has probably dried out, and is a fire hazard.

#### CARING FOR YOUR TREE

Do not place your tree close to a heat source, including a fireplace or heat vent. The heat will dry out the tree, causing it to be more easily ignited by heat, flame or sparks. Be careful not to drop or flick cigarette ashes near a tree. Do not put your live tree up too early or leave it up for longer than two weeks. Keep the tree stand filled with water at all times.

#### DISPOSING OF YOUR TREE

Never put tree branches or needles in a fireplace or woodburning stove. When the tree becomes dry, discard it promptly. The best way to dispose of your tree is by taking it to a recycling center or having it hauled away by a community pick-up service.

### HOLIDAY LIGHTS

#### MAINTAIN YOUR HOLIDAY LIGHTS

Inspect holiday lights each year for frayed wires, bare spots, gaps in the insulation, broken or cracked sockets, and excessive kinking or wear before putting them up. Use only lighting listed by an approved testing laboratory.

#### DO NOT OVERLOAD ELECTRICAL OUTLETS

Do not link more than three light strands, unless the directions indicate it is safe. Connect strings of lights to an extension cord before plugging the cord into the outlet. Make sure to periodically check the wires - they should not be warm to the touch.

#### DO NOT LEAVE HOLIDAY LIGHTS ON UNATTENDED

### HOLIDAY DECORATIONS

#### USE ONLY NONFLAMMABLE DECORATIONS

All decorations should be nonflammable or flame-retardant and placed away from heat vents.

#### NEVER PUT WRAPPING PAPER IN A FIREPLACE

It can result in a very large fire, throwing off dangerous sparks and embers that may result in a chimney fire.

#### ARTIFICIAL CHRISTMAS TREES

If you are using a metallic or artificial tree, make sure it is flame retardant.

### CANDLE CARE

#### AVOID USING LIT CANDLES

If you do use them, make sure they are in stable holders and place them where they cannot be easily knocked down. Never leave the house with candles burning.

#### NEVER PUT LIT CANDLES ON A TREE

Do not go near a Christmas tree with an open flame - candles, lighters or matches.

Finally, as in every season, have working smoke alarms installed on every level of your home, test them monthly and keep them clean and equipped with fresh batteries at all times. Know when and how to call for help. And remember to practice your home escape plan.



#### For more information contact:

The U. S. Fire Administration  
16825 South Seton Avenue  
Emmitsburg, MD 21727  
or  
Visit the USFA Web site:  
[www.usfa.fema.gov](http://www.usfa.fema.gov)



**Homeland Security**

## **Safe End to the Holiday Season**

For many folks, it's hard to let go of the holiday spirit, and taking down the Christmas tree isn't nearly as much fun as putting it up. But the longer a tree stays up, the greater a fire hazard it becomes. It's best to discard trees within one month after purchase. The best way to dispose of your tree is to take it to a tree recycling center or have it hauled away by a community pick-up service. If you live in the country or town where there is no tree recycling or pick-up program, contact local authorities for a recommended means of disposal.

Never burn Christmas trees (branches or needles) in a fireplace or wood stove. Firs and pines have lots of sap, which can explode. The needles burn like tinder, quickly and fiercely. Flames can flare up out of control and send sparks flying across a room. They can also ignite creosote deposits in the chimney and cause a fire in the chimney.

After gifts are opened, quickly discard the wrapping paper and packaging in a safe manner. Wrapping paper is very flammable. Never burn gift wrapping in the fireplace or wood stove. It can ignite suddenly and cause a flash fire. Some gift wrapping contains material that can throw off dangerous sparks and/or cause a dangerous chemical buildup in the air of your house. Gift wrapping burns very hot, causing large flames, which can ignite creosote deposits in the chimney and cause a fire in the chimney.

Remove outdoor lights as soon as the season is over; they are not designed for prolonged exposure to the elements, especially in winter weather. Careful handling of lights when you are taking them down and repacking them will reduce the chances of damaging a good set of lights.

# Winter Holiday Safety

Winter holidays are a time for families and friends to get together. But that also means a greater risk for fire. Following a few simple tips will ensure a happy and fire-safe holiday season.

## HOLIDAY DECORATING

- » Be careful with holiday decorations. Choose decorations that are flame resistant or flame retardant.
- » Keep lit candles away from decorations and other things that can burn.
- » Use lights that have the label of an independent testing laboratory. Some lights are only for indoor or outdoor use, but not both.
- » Replace any string of lights with worn or broken cords or loose bulb connections. Connect no more than three strands of mini light sets and a maximum of 50 bulbs for screw-in bulbs.
- » Use clips, not nails, to hang lights so the cords do not get damaged.
- » Keep decorations away from windows and doors.



## HOLIDAY ENTERTAINING

- » Test your smoke alarms and tell guests about your home fire escape plan.
- » Keep children and pets away from lit candles.
- » Keep matches and lighters up high in a locked cabinet.
- » Stay in the kitchen when cooking on the stovetop.
- » Ask smokers to smoke outside. Remind smokers to keep their smoking materials with them so young children do not touch them.
- » Provide large, deep ashtrays for smokers. Wet cigarette butts with water before discarding.

## BEFORE HEADING OUT OR TO BED

**Blow out** lit candles when you leave the room or go to bed. **Turn off** all light strings and decorations before leaving home or going to bed.



## FACTS

- ! December is the peak time of year for home candle fires.
- ! **Roughly two out of five** home fires start in the kitchen.
- ! Unattended cooking is the leading cause of home fires.



Your Source for **SAFETY** Information

NFPA Public Education Division • 1 Batterymarch Park, Quincy, MA 02169

[www.nfpa.org/education](http://www.nfpa.org/education)

# Winter Fires

*Safety Tips for  
the Home*

**T**he high cost of home heating fuels and utilities have caused many Americans to search for alternate sources of home heating. The use of woodburning stoves is growing and space heaters are selling rapidly, or coming out of storage. Fireplaces are burning wood and manmade logs.

All these methods of heating may be acceptable. They are, however, a major contributing factor in residential fires. Many of these fires can be prevented. The following fire safety tips can help you maintain a fire safe home this winter.

## KEROSENE HEATERS

- ◆ Be sure that kerosene heaters are legal in your area.
- ◆ Be sure your heater is in good working condition. Inspect exhaust parts for carbon buildup. Be sure the heater has an emergency shut off in case the heater is tipped over.
- ◆ Never use fuel burning appliances without proper room venting. Burning fuel (coal, kerosene, or propane, for example) can produce deadly fumes.
- ◆ Use **ONLY** the fuel recommended by the heater manufacturer. **NEVER introduce a fuel into a unit not designed for that type fuel.**
- ◆ Keep kerosene, or other flammable liquids stored in approved metal containers, in well ventilated storage areas, outside of the house.
- ◆ **NEVER** fill the heater while it is operating or hot. When refueling an oil or kerosene unit, avoid overfilling.
- ◆ Refueling should be done outside of the home (or outdoors). Keep young children away from space heaters—especially when they are wearing night gowns or other loose clothing that can be easily ignited.
- ◆ When using a fuel burning appliance in the bedroom, be sure there is proper ventilation to prevent a buildup of carbon monoxide.

## WOOD STOVES AND FIREPLACES

Wood stoves and fireplaces are becoming a very common heat source in homes. Careful attention to safety can minimize their fire hazard.

### TO USE THEM SAFELY:

- ◆ Be sure the fireplace or stove is installed properly. Wood stoves should have adequate clearance (36") from combustible surfaces and proper floor support and protection.
- ◆ Wood stoves should be of good quality, solid construction and design, and should be laboratory tested.
- ◆ Have the chimney inspected annually and cleaned if necessary, especially if it has not been used for some time.
- ◆ Do not use flammable liquids to start or accelerate any fire.
- ◆ Keep a glass or metal screen in front of the fireplace opening, to prevent embers or sparks from jumping out, unwanted material from going in, and help prevent the possibility of burns to occupants.
- ◆ The stove should be burned hot twice a day for 15-30 minutes to reduce the amount of creosote buildup.

*continued on reverse*

## OTHER FIRE SAFETY TIPS

Never discard hot ashes inside or near the home. Place them in a metal container outside and well away from the house.

- ◆ Never use a range or an oven as a supplemental heating device. Not only is it a safety hazard, it can be a source of potentially toxic fumes.
- ◆ If you use an electric heater, be sure not to overload the circuit. Only use extension cords which have the necessary rating to carry an amp load.  
**TIP:** Choose an extension cord the same size or larger than the appliance electrical cord.
- ◆ Avoid using electrical space heaters in bathrooms or other areas where they may come in contact with water.
- ◆ Frozen water pipes? Never try to thaw them with a blow torch or other open flame, otherwise the pipe could conduct the heat and ignite the wall structure inside the wall space. Use hot water or a laboratory tested device such as a hand held dryer for thawing.
- ◆ If windows are used as emergency exits in your home, practice using them in the event fire should strike. Be sure that all the windows open easily. Home escape ladders are recommended.
- ◆ If there is a fire hydrant near your home you can assist the fire department by keeping the hydrant clear of snow so in the event it is needed, it can be located.

### FINALLY...

- ◆ Be sure every level of your home has a working smoke alarm, and be sure to check and clean it on a monthly basis.
- ◆ Plan and practice a home escape plan with your family.
- ◆ Contact your local fire department for advice if you have a question on home fire safety.

- ◆ Don't use excessive amounts of paper to build roaring fires in fireplaces. It is possible to ignite creosote in the chimney by overbuilding the fire.
- ◆ Never burn charcoal indoors. Burning charcoal can give off lethal amounts of carbon monoxide.
- ◆ Keep flammable materials away from your fireplace mantel. A spark from the fireplace could easily ignite these materials.
- ◆ Before you go to sleep, be sure your fireplace fire is out. **NEVER close your damper with hot ashes in the fireplace.** A closed damper will help the fire to heat up again and will force toxic carbon monoxide into the house.
- ◆ If synthetic logs are used, follow the directions on the package. **NEVER** break a synthetic log apart to quicken the fire or use more than one log at a time. They often burn unevenly, releasing higher levels of carbon monoxide.

## FURNACE HEATING

- ◆ It is important that you have your furnace inspected to ensure that it is in good working condition.
- ◆ Be sure all furnace controls and emergency shutoffs are in proper working condition.
- ◆ Leave furnace repairs to qualified specialists. Do not attempt repairs yourself unless you are qualified. Inspect the walls and ceiling near the furnace and along the chimney line. If the wall is hot or discolored, additional pipe insulation or clearance may be required.
- ◆ Check the flue pipe and pipe seams. Are they well supported and free of holes and cracks? Soot along or around seams may be an indicator of a leak.
- ◆ Is the chimney solid, with cracks or loose bricks? All unused flue openings should be sealed with solid masonry.
- ◆ Keep trash and other combustibles away from the heating system.

For more information or copies of this publication, please contact:

Department of Homeland Security • U.S. Fire Administration  
16825 South Seton Avenue • Emmitsburg, Maryland 21727  
800-561-3356 • [www.usfa.dhs.gov](http://www.usfa.dhs.gov)

FA-249F/March 2008



FEMA

