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## Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Building Hometown Pride: The importance of celebrating the achievements of local residents

By CED Program Interns & Students

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Recently, I was told a fun piece of trivia about Kinston, NC. "Do you know the song 'Get Up' by James Brown?" a resident asked me. After I replied yes, she continued, "In it James calls out a band member by name. 'Maceo!' Do you know where Maceo is from?" she asked with a smile on her face. "He's from Kinston." Hometown pride is a critical factor in the development and improvement of any community. While news stories about the major economic development achievements of Lenoir County have excited and inspired residents it is important to consider the positive impact that the smaller, less visible local achievements can have on their sense of community pride. Such stories help people feel connected to the growth and improvement of their hometown. They illustrate that local residents can have a positive impact on their community. They show that their contributions, regardless of size and scope, do matter. And all of these things can fuel the desire of residents to actively participate in ongoing efforts to improve the area, helping to increase their impact and hopefully bring them closer to success.

This summer, I have been collecting and summarizing such stories for the Kinston-Lenoir County Chamber of Commerce. The Chamber, in partnership with the Committee of 100, is working to bring attention to positive news stories as a part of their "Kinston, We're on the Way" campaign. While some of the area's more high profile achievements, such as the Global Transpark and STEM Education, have been widely publicized some of the more local human interest stories, unsurprisingly, have not reached a large audience. Below are a few summaries of local stories that illustrate the positive contributions local residents have made this summer.

### *Kinston Company donates roof work to Havelock Boys and Girls Club*

Curtis Construction Company, a local Kinston business, completed roof repairs last week on the Boys and Girls Club in Havelock, fixing the 30-year-old roof that had been leaking for just about a year. The company donated their services in support of organization and the benefits it provides to the community.

### *Kinston High School's student newspaper earns prestigious distinction*

The Kinston High School student newspaper, The Viking Press, earned numerous distinctions during the North Carolina Scholastic Media Association summer institute at the University of North Carolina in June. The paper earned the highest ranking for overall achievement among small schools and boasted 16 total awards. Among the awards were second place for photography, third place for its sports section and honorable mentions for graphics, overall design and its editorial page.

### *Kinstonian appointed to state position*

Wanda P. Dawson of Kinston has been appointed by Gov. Bev Perdue to the North Carolina Center for the Advancement of Teaching. Prior to her appointment she served as associate superintendent of Pamlico County Schools.

### *Young people volunteer in Lenoir County*

Erasing the Lines, a week-long community service camp, culminated on Thursday, June 24th with a celebratory picnic attended by over 100 people. During the camp, 168 young people built five wheelchair ramps, renovated a home, ran a vacation bible school, painted a care center, worked at the Boys and Girls club in Greenville, painted a church, helped



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build the restroom facility at the dog park, painted all the benches and trash cans on Queen street, passed out food, packaged meals to send overseas and worked at The Refuge camp in Greene County. Erasing the Lines is an effort of an inter-denominational, faith-based, non-profit organization called Son Set Ministries.

*Local Volunteer Fire Department holds a monster truck and tractor race*

Recently, the Lenoir County Fireman Association fire department held a fundraising truck and tractor race at the county fairgrounds. Events were held Friday, July 9th and Saturday July 10th. Approximately 30 participants from across the southeast competed for the title of Kinston 300 National Truck and Tractor Pull champion. Proceeds benefit the Lenoir County Fireman Association.?

Without a doubt the recent major economic and community development achievements are of great importance to community leaders and residents in Lenoir County. But, as shown in the summaries above, positive things are also occurring on a smaller scale and these activities are having immediate impacts on the residents of the community. Some may not see the significance of such contributions but for the people who live in Lenoir County they can serve as a source of inspiration and go a long way towards contributing to hometown pride.