



## Community and Economic Development in North Carolina and Beyond Blog: Town of Yanceyville/NC STEP Internship Update

By CED Program Interns & Students

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Having just wrapped an 11-week internship with the Town of Yanceyville in Caswell County, the author reports on the various projects that kept her busy during the summer. Given these uncertain economic times, internships may provide a cost-effective way of securing adept talent to tackle important, albeit short-term, projects that often end up placed on the back burner due to time and resource issues.

### STEP Projects:

#### 1) Signage

Yanceyville has many great attractions around town, but it is hard to know how to find them! The primary job functions with this project included helping the town find sign contractors, designing the signs and making decision regarding placement in order to obtain the greatest effect. These signs should help bring additional recognition to the great assets Yanceyville has to offer not only travelers, but nearby residents as well.

#### 2) Downtown Wi-Fi:

This is Yanceyville's most innovative project. Once the final contract is signed, this project will offer free internet access to all wifi enabled devices within the downtown area. This type of access is available in very few other municipalities across the country and can be a model to other cities wanting to provide equal accessibility to the internet.

#### 3) Streetlights

Unfortunately, as in all construction projects, there are some that just do not work out. Yanceyville's street light project was one of those instances. Due to rising construction costs, the Town was unable to move forward with installing these lights.

#### 4) Small Business Grants

As mentioned in a previous blog post, via a small business grant program, the Town of Yanceyville awarded three local businesses with \$4000 grants. These businesses recipients were very excited and report that the grants will help each of their businesses grow and change in ways that will help the local economy.

### Other Projects:

#### 1) Town GIS:

A new computer system was loaded with GIS software, allowing the Town to update zoning and historic district maps as well as incorporating sewer and water utility maps into the system. Maps were laid out for various printing sizes, automating the map printing process. These maps will be a valuable resource to the town to prepare for more local economic development.



2) General Grant Research:

A limited amount of time was dedicated to researching grant opportunities for the local water plant. Although no applications were submitted during the internship, the assembly of possible resources for the Town will make it easier for leadership to pursue funding.

3) Caswell County Grant Application

Caswell County applied for a grant from the Danville Foundation to help the county join the Community Fishing Program (offered by the North Carolina Wildlife Commission). This will help the town and the county take advantage of their natural resources and attract more recreational users to Farmer Lake.

4) Town Website Update

This will help get accurate information to the public. All of the information from the old website was transferred to the new website including new photos from around town and coordinating a new website design. The new website should be online soon.

5) Town Code Digitization

In tandem with the new website, it was important that the town be able to provide a digital copy of its code of ordinances. Although it seems simple, scanning and digitizing documents is a multi-step process that required a lot of editing and reformatting. On August 16, the project was completed and the new digital code will be available in word and pdf format on the new website.

6) Historic Association:

After reaching out to the Caswell Historic Association (CHA), the author was asked to assist the CHA with find base map materials and historic district boundaries for a walking tour brochure. Although the entire walking tour update was not completed during the internship's timeframe, this project was so closely related to the town's GIS update that the author was able to locate the boundaries of the Yanceyville Historic District, historic properties on the National Historic Properties and study corridors previously unreferenced by the town. Additionally, the GIS system provided for mapping the information and providing maps to the CHA. Hopefully the CHA will continue with the update, providing yet another resource to citizens and tourists alike to appreciate the beautiful architecture still remaining all around Yanceyville.

Thanks are in order to the Community-Campus Partnership and the NC STEP program for providing this internship opportunity. Being in Yanceyville reinforced the importance of helping small towns with limited resources achieve their goals, especially in the face of tough economic times.