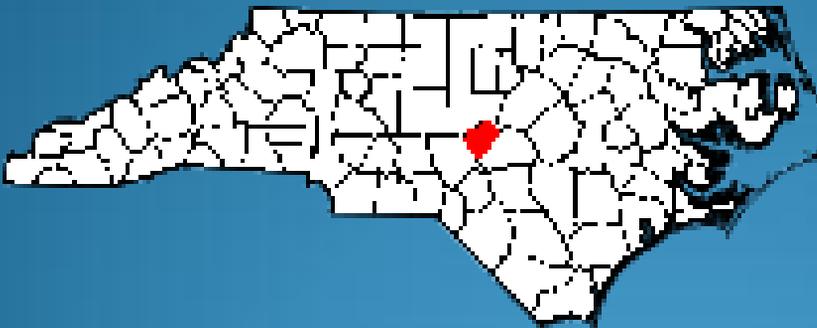




# Lee County's 2012 State of the County Health Report



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**A Message From the Health Director,**  
**A. Terrell Jones, III, MPH**

The 2012 State of the County Health (SOTCHR) Report follows with updates in health related programs targeting barriers to good health for the citizens of Lee County. The SOTCHR is an annual update of our comprehensive, four-year Lee County Community Health Assessment, last completed in 2010. The Community Health Assessment and the SOTCH report both compile health data and county citizenship consensus on health issues that need to be addressed in Lee County and act as a guide for public health involvement with the goal of allowing the quality of life for all citizens in Lee County to be at the highest possible level it can be.

Several new programs to improve health outcomes in Lee County have been developed and/or implemented in 2011-2012 at the Lee County Health Department over the past year including two Susan G. Komen grants to address breast health care access for uninsured/underinsured women over age 40, and a major region-wide Community Transformation Grant project that targets policy development by local and regional authorities to improve healthy lifestyles and activities. These new activities match the goals of our 2010 Community Health Assessment and our annual SOTCH targets.

For 2012 the Lee County Health Department received its own health checkup, professional health, that is. During 2011-2012 the health department prepared for and completed its first NC Local Health Department Accreditation Board assessment with a score of 97.7%. Citizens of the county can now be assured that we follow strict policy and structure guidelines deemed necessary for professional public health facilities in North Carolina.

While much is being done to improve the quality of life for all citizens in Lee County, there is much more that needs to be done. There are homeless people and others with no or inadequate health insurance living in our county with no access to ongoing health care. They end up at the emergency department (ED) of our local hospital which is very costly to the community, and they don't get the follow up care they should to prevent return visits to the ED. Obesity, teen pregnancy, heart disease, cancer and numerous other health disparities burden individuals, families and our community with time and resources that could be spent on other aspects of our lives.

Many of these ailments are the result of poor personal choice such as tobacco use, (heart disease and cancer), and over eating, eating unhealthy foods, and not exercising (heart disease and diabetes). We have known for a long time that health education is an effective way to get people to make better choices. We are now also learning, in these harsh economic times, that policy development by local authorities offers new, effective ways to encourage healthy choices and lifestyles.

Lee County Health Department is working in 2012 to broaden collaborations and partnerships in our community as we seek to improve the health outcomes of everyone in the county. I invite any individual, group, or organization to call me at 919 718-4640 or email me at [tjones@leecountync.gov](mailto:tjones@leecountync.gov) if you have ideas or suggestions that can help us as a community to improve the lives of all Lee County citizens.

Here's to your good health!



A. Terrell Jones, III  
Health Director

# HEALTH PRIORITIES

## Purpose

The 2012 State of the County Health Report (SOTCHR) for Lee County will update the community on the progress of the health priorities identified by the 2010 Community Health Assessment (CHA). This report will also describe updates from the 2011 State of the County Health Report (SOTCHR) since its release in January 2012. As you analyze the 2012 SOTCHR, you will become aware of the progress with the 2011-2015 Action Plans targeting Lee County's health priorities.

## Health Priorities

Health priorities help in guiding the plans for public health programs and initiatives in Lee County. During the 2010 CHA, the citizens identified the top five health concerns of the community: Access to Mental Healthcare, Dental Healthcare, Obesity, Sexually Transmitted Infections, and Teen Pregnancy. Access to Mental Healthcare, Obesity, and Teen Pregnancy were also identified in Lee County's 2006 CHA. The 2012 SOTCHR will discuss each listed health priority and the actions being taken or planned to address each priority. Additionally, the top five leading causes of death related to human health: heart disease, cancer, stroke, COPD, and diabetes are also being considered in developing health priorities for Lee County.

## Population Update

According to the U.S. Census 2011 Estimate, Lee County's population is 58,752. The primary races are White (75.5%), Black/African American (20.4%), and Hispanic/Latino (18.6%). Females make up 51.0% of the county population and males make up 49.0%. Lee County's median age is thirty-seven (37) years.

	North Carolina	Lee County
Population	9,656,401	58,752
Percent of Females	51.3%	51.0%
Percent of Males	48.7%	49.0%
Percent of Whites	75.5%	72.1%
Percent of African Americans	22.0%	20.4%
Percent of Hispanic/Latino	8.6%	18.6%
Percent of Asian/Pacific Islanders	2.4%	1.1%
Percent of Native Americans	1.2%	1.5%

Source: 2011 U.S. Census Bureau and County Quick Facts

**\*Disclaimer: Data reflected in this report is the most current that is available at this time.\***

## WORKING ON HEALTH PRIORITIES

Since the 2011 SOTCHR's release, the LeeCAN "A Healthy Carolinians Partnership" taskforces (Access to Mental Healthcare, Dental Healthcare, Obesity Prevention, High School Dropout, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), and Teen Pregnancy Prevention) have been diligently working to address the top five health priorities. Below you will find updates on the activities and initiatives taking place or being planned by the taskforces to work on the health priorities in Lee County.

## Access to Mental Healthcare Taskforce Update



The Mental Healthcare Taskforce continues to work with local mental health providers to address the stigma relating to mental illness by educating the community through health fairs, articles in the newspaper as well as doing radio talk shows. During the past year, 12 new providers have joined in their effort to address the issues surrounding access to mental health care. LeeCAN is currently developing a Mental Health Resource List that will educate the public about the mental health services available to citizens. This resource will be available to the public after January 2013.

The central focus of the taskforce for 2012, was to work toward an intervention targeting the evaluation of training procedures in regards to crisis intervention, referral procedures, and incidence of response to mental health crises within the community. This includes review of the interaction between law enforcement and the local hospital in responding to mental health crises and obtaining of mental health services.

The Mental Health Task Force Partners decided on Crisis Intervention Team (CIT), an evidence based program utilized nationally. CIT is a specialized curriculum designed to support law enforcement officers in addressing mental health crisis situations, prevent unnecessary incarceration, and get people who need mental health treatment the help they need. This is a 40-hour training program which utilizes mental health and substance abuse experts, legal experts, consumer/family advocates, and experienced CIT officers. The goal of the CIT is to educate law enforcement officers on mental disorders and teach them how to de-escalate explosive situations involving those with mental health disorders. The training includes role playing, learning about the likely behavior of people experiencing a mental health crisis, listening and interaction skills, hospital emergency room protocols, resources available for the mentally ill, and other information. Lee County held its first Crisis Intervention Training on July 9–13, 2012 at Carolina Community College's Emergency Services Training Center. Thirteen officers from the Lee County Sheriff's Office, Sanford Police Department and Broadway Police Department graduated. The CIT training was a major collaborative effort by the entire LeeCAN Partnership.

## Dental Healthcare Taskforce Update



According to the NC Oral Health Section assessment data (2008-2009), 21% of kindergarten students entered Lee County schools and had untreated tooth decay. The state average for 2008-2009 was 17%. The 2009-2010 NC Oral Health assessment data for Lee County is 12% and the state average is 15% in kindergarten children for untreated tooth decay. The five year objective is to decrease the amount of untreated tooth decay by 5% by the year 2015. The Lee County's State Public Health Dental Hygienist will continue to work to identify and refer children prior to entering kindergarten. Activities have and will continue to include screening/education and referral services for all NC Pre-Kindergarten students, kindergarten registration screenings at most Lee County schools, one-on-one parent consultations, and group information for parents during kindergarten registration screening. The taskforce works with the local radio station and the Sanford Herald to get information to the public about early childhood decay. The Dental Healthcare Taskforce also works closely with the Lee County Partnership for Children Outreach committee, Head Start Health Advisory Committee, and teacher pre-service programs.

The Lee County Dental Society will continue to promote the use of dental varnish by primary care doctors as an early intervention to tooth decay in young children (0-3 years of age). This initiative is called by the Dental Society, "Into the Mouths of Babes". The Dental Health Subcommittee will continue to work on these goals and the public health dental hygienist will continue to gather data and monitor the amount of dental disease in children entering kindergarten. The Lee County Health Department and Lee County Dental Society are also working with Central Carolina Community College to sponsor a "Mini MOM", a Mission Of Mercy to have a weekend event to treat adults with no dental insurance.

## Obesity Prevention Taskforce Update



The obesity taskforce is shifting gears in its approach to educating the community regarding obesity. Research has shown that health and wellness are largely shaped by the environments in which people live, work, play, and learn. As a result, public health has begun to focus on making “built environments” healthier for all community residents. According to the Center for Health Behavior Research at the University of Pennsylvania, a built environment is defined as, “...the buildings, roads, utilities, homes, food stores, restaurants, fixtures, parks and all other man-made entities that form the physical characteristics of a community. The built environment includes nutrition and physical activity environments, streetscapes, transportation environments, and everything in between.” Thus, public health can work together with government officials and local planners to create built environments that decrease food deserts (areas where access to large grocery stores/supermarkets is limited), increase balanced food environments (where healthy food choices and unhealthy food choices are equally available), and provide opportunities for residents to be physically active (for example, the creation of bike lanes, greenways, and sidewalks).

In Lee County, a new Center for Disease Control funded project, known as the Community Transformation Grant Project, is working toward improving our built environments by developing local/regional policies that increase community access to healthy foods and physical activity opportunities, and limiting community exposure to tobacco products through policy change. The Division of Public Health awarded 10 multi-county collaboratives through a non-competitive process to serve as the Regional Community Transformation Grantees (CTG). The Lee County Health Department received a five year grant from the Cumberland County Health Department which serves as the lead county for the Region Six Community to sponsor a regional healthy foods/physical activities coordinator position.

The health department is also partnering with NCSU Sociology Department, Cooperative Extension at NCSU and NC A&T, and the *Faithful Families: Eating Smart and Moving More* project. The Faithful Families project is part of the USDA’s Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program (EFNEP), which aims to help low-income families make better decisions about healthy eating. This study, *Community-Based Approach to Reducing Childhood Obesity in Low-Income Communities: Research to Action*, works with community groups in Durham, Harnett, and Lee counties and seeks to understand how community “food environments” affect patterns of childhood obesity. The staff will track low-income families over a five-year period, asking them about their eating and cooking habits and beliefs with the goal of reducing obesity within our county as a whole.

Safe Time is another initiative in response to many citizens expressing their concerns with not feeling safe to participate in evening physical activities in various neighborhoods during the 2010 Community Health Assessment. Therefore, by placing regularly scheduled evening patrols in target neighborhoods, Safe Time is providing a greater sense of security to our Lee County citizens when they and their families are outside at play. The Lee County Sheriff’s Department and City of Sanford Police Department have collaborated with LeeCAN and are committed to ensure the safety of the citizens. Safe Time began on April 5, 2012. The Sheriff’s Department and Police Department are reporting that the residents in the identified neighborhoods are pleased to see these efforts being taken.

LeeCAN is currently working with the Lee County Schools System on the possibility of implementing the national evidence-based Instant Recess Program. The goal is to increase physical activity by producing a 10 minute exercise DVD to be performed at seven elementary schools during the school day. This program not only encourages physical fitness but also improves the behaviors and classroom performance of students who participated, according to the program developer, Dr. Toni Yancey, MD, MPH of UCLA School of Public Health. Instant Recess has been functioning in Forsyth County Schools System for over two years under the guidance of Dr. Melicia Whitt-Glover, Ph.D., who is CEO of the Gramercy Research Group in Winston-Salem, NC. Within the Forsyth County School System, results show that the students who participated in the Instant Recess Program made noticeable improvement in their behavior and academic performance overall.

## Obesity Prevention Taskforce Update *Continued*

Lee County is part of the Piedmont Region, which has a lower percentage of overweight and obese children age 10-17 than the state as a whole between 2008-2010. LeeCAN will continue promoting access to healthier food options and increased physical activity through policy change. The obesity taskforce will also continue to collaborate with partners in the community to increase access to fresh fruits and vegetables and to reduce the incidence of overweight and obese children and adolescents. See chart below:

<b>Percentage of Children Ages 10-17 who are Overweight or Obese</b>				
	2008 - 2009*		2009 - 2010*	
	Overweight	Obese	Overweight	Obese
<b>Piedmont Region^</b>	16.70%	14.30%	14.30%	13.70%
<b>North Carolina</b>	17.10%	15.40%	14.70%	16.40%

Source: The Child Health Assessment and Monitoring Program (CHAMP) survey combines two years or responses to produce regional estimates due to small samples of regional data. NC State Center for Health Statistics.

### Positive Behavior Taskforce (PBT) Update

The Positive Behavior Taskforce (PBT) works in close collaboration with numerous key agencies within the county, such as Lee County Schools System, The Coalition for Families, The Boys and Girls Club, and Lee County Public Health Department. The 2011-2015 Action Plans for PBT consist of reducing the High School Dropout, Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs) and Teen Pregnancy rates within the county.

Concerning the high school dropouts, the Lee County Schools System worked aggressively in the 2011-2012 school year to ensure that high school students and their families were contacted if a student did not return back to school, as well as when absences and tardiness were accumulating.

The Lee County Public Health Department has broadened their adolescent health classes to reach the youth residing in the Sanford Housing Authority properties, Hillcrest Youth Shelter, as well as increasing their presence at both of the high schools covering issues affecting young people as a whole, which often times affects a young person's desire to continue their education. The health department continues to offer classes within the clinic setting as well as throughout the community to include faith based organizations targeting Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs), Higher Education, Gang Deterrence, and much more. According to the NC Department of Public Instruction, Lee County's High School Dropout Rate has continued to improve over the past five years. As you review the data below, you will notice that these rates have fluctuated from 2006 to 2011 but, Lee County's Dropout Rate has declined from a rate of 5.83% to 4.72%.

### Lee County Schools High School Dropout Rate

<u>2006-2007</u>	<u>2007-2008</u>	<u>2008-2009</u>	<u>2009-2010</u>	<u>2010-2011</u>
5.83%	4.97%	5.61%	4.97%	4.72%

Source: NC Department of Public Instruction [www.ncdpi.gov](http://www.ncdpi.gov)

## Positive Behavior Taskforce (PBT) Update *Continued*

Although, we are witnessing improvement in the area of High School Dropout, there is still much work to be done in the area of STIs within Lee County. According to the NC Department of Health and Human Services' Epidemiology Section, this county continues to show highs and lows in the area of STIs. Lee County continues to have a large number of Chlamydia and Gonorrhea cases affecting all age groups. The Division of Public Health also maintains Quarterly and Annual reports on Primary/Secondary/Early Latent Syphilis, HIV and AIDS. Below you will see a four year chart for Lee County's STIs, HIV, and AIDS cases for 2008 to 2011. The chart below demonstrates that Lee County is making strides in the right direction with Syphilis, HIV, and AIDS.

### Lee County's STI 2008-2011 and HIV/AIDS Report

STIs	2008	2009	2010	2011
Chlamydia	182	230	226	275
Gonorrhea	57	50	77	126
Primary/Secondary Syphilis	0	4	0	2
Early Latent Syphilis	1	2	5	2
HIV	27	2	12	9
AIDS	12	10	4	3

Source: NC Division of Public Health and Human Services: <http://epi.publichealth.nc.gov>

The North Carolina Center for Health Statistics still has Lee County ranked the 7<sup>th</sup> highest county in the state for teen pregnancies. However, Lee County's teen pregnancies are continuing to decline. For instance, in 2010 the county had a total of 143 teen pregnancies in the age group of 15-19 but, had 130 pregnancies in this group for 2011. PBT continues to work with Frank Theatres showing a commercial promoting the Family Planning Clinic at the health department. Also, The Coalition for Families continues to partner with PBT through their afterschool Teen Outreach Program (TOP). The TOP classes are now being conducted at Lee County Senior High School and Southern Lee High School, East Lee and San Lee Middle Schools. PBT has also continued its work with Lee County Schools to ensure the success of the changes in accordance with the Healthy Youth Act/House Bill 88. In June 2009, the NC General Assembly passed this Bill which requires all NC School Systems to offer an Abstinence and Comprehensive Sex Education Program to students in the seventh to ninth grades. This taskforce is increasing their work with faith-based organizations in equipping their youth congregation as well as parents about adolescent health. On the next page you will see a chart showing the Teen Pregnancy Data in Lee County and North Carolina for 2009-2011.

**Positive Behavior Taskforce (PBT) Update *Continued***

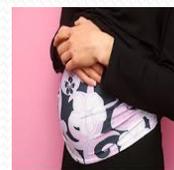
**Lee County's Teen Pregnancy Data 2009-2011**

<u>Year</u>	<u>County</u>	<u>North Carolina</u>
<u>2011 Data</u>		
Pregnancies among 10-14 year olds	***	***
Pregnancies among 15-19 year olds	130	13,909
NC County Ranking (1 <sup>st</sup> highest – 100 <sup>th</sup> lowest)	7	N/A
<u>2010 Data</u>		
Pregnancies among 10-14 year olds	1	282
Pregnancies among 15-19 year olds	143	15,957
NC County Ranking (1 <sup>st</sup> highest – 100 <sup>th</sup> lowest)	7	N/A
<u>2009 Data:</u>		
Pregnancies among 10-14 year olds	2	324
Pregnancies among 15-19 year olds	145	18,142
NC County Ranking (1 <sup>st</sup> highest – 100 <sup>th</sup> lowest)	20	N/A

\*\*\*\* Indicates that numbers are not currently available

Source: Adolescent Pregnancy Prevention Campaign of NC [www.appenc.org](http://www.appenc.org)

Teen Pregnancy and Sexually Transmitted Infections are health issues and High School Dropout rates concerns us all. The high school dropout rate appears to be related to teen pregnancy and STIs and are being addressed by the PBT. PBT will continue to work with all the organizations within Lee County and welcomes the opportunity for new collaborative efforts. As you have seen in the data, no one agency can tackle these issues alone.



## TOP 5 LEADING CAUSES OF DEATH

For detailed information of the leading causes of death in Lee County, please view the 2010 Community Health Assessment on the Lee County Government Website at [www.leecountync.gov](http://www.leecountync.gov)



### Heart Disease

Heart Disease: According to the NC State Center for Health Statistics in 2010, Lee County had 140 deaths caused by heart disease with a total of 618 deaths from 2006-2010. There was a 25 percent increase in the number of heart disease related deaths from 112 in 2009 to 140 in 2010 in Lee County.

### Cancer

In 2010, Lee County had 120 cancer related deaths with a total of 531 deaths between the years of 2006-2010 (NC State Center for Health Statistics). There was a 14 percent increase in the number of cancer related deaths from 105 in 2009 to 120 in 2010 in Lee County.

### Cerebrovascular Disease (Stroke)

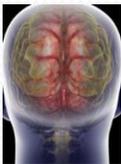
In 2010, Lee County had a total of 29 stroke caused deaths. Between 2006-2010, 148 Lee County residents died due to a stroke (NC State Center for Health Statistics). There was a 19 percent decrease in the number of stroke related deaths from 36 in 2009 to 29 in 2010 in Lee County.

### Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease (COPD)

In 2010, Lee County had 25 deaths attributed to COPD with 149 deaths during 2006-2010 (NC Center for Health Statistics). There was a 17 percent decrease in the number of COPD related deaths from 30 in 2009 to 25 in 2010 in Lee County.

### Diabetes

In 2010, 12 deaths were due to diabetes with a total of 81 deaths during 2006-2010, according to the NC State Center for Health Statistics. There was a 43 percent decrease in the number of Diabetes related deaths from 21 in 2009 to 12 in 2010 in Lee County.





### Lee County Public Health Preparedness

Lee County Public Health Preparedness has made tremendous strides within the community in the last year implementing new concepts and conducting practice exercises to improve our preparedness response capabilities to the citizens of Lee County. During the past few months alone, the Strategic National Stockpiles (SNS) Plan has been modified and parts of the capabilities tested during a real world event. The SNS is the medication that is needed during a public health emergency and mass dispensing is required. These modifications were scored by the State in April 2012. The actual score given by the State was a 97.7 out of a possible 100. Lee County had one of the highest scores in the State of North Carolina.

The SNS plan has recently been tested twice by working collaboratively with Lee County Public Schools and the Lee County Government Center by providing the Tdap vaccine to all interested Lee County Public Schools faculty and administration and Lee County Government employees. Both tests were Closed POD exercises. These exercises were the first in which the entire health department had an opportunity to participate. During the mass vaccination clinics, many new ideas and concepts were discovered on ways to improve the exercise. This is the main reason for testing: to learn and improve upon existing models. During the Closed POD exercises, 208 vaccinations to the school personnel and 119 were given to county employees by the public health nursing staff. Overall, these were two successful exercises in working collaboratively to protect the public health of the citizens of Lee County.

As part of the SNS Plan, private industries and other interested organizations have the capabilities to create their own Closed Point Of Distribution (POD), if so desired. Closed PODs take place when vaccinations are being conducted for a certain group of people and not the entire community. These Closed PODs will assist the Lee County Health Department by reducing the number of individuals who would need to show up at an Open POD (for entire community) provided by the Lee County Health Department. Lee County Preparedness drafted and the Board of Health approved, a Memorandum of Agreement (MOA) to allow this process to occur. With this capability, any approved organizations will have the ability to mass dispense medical countermeasures to their staff and staff families provided there is an agreement in place. Lee County Preparedness is currently collaborating with two private organizations, as well as two Alternative Care Facilities (nursing homes) in this effort.

Along with providing shelter for our residents, the health department, school system, emergency management, and animal services have collaborated to ensure shelter options for the pets of our residents in the time of an emergency. Discussions and meetings are being held regarding the implementation of a Companion Animal Mobile Equipment Trailer (CAMET). A CAMET is an animal shelter on wheels but without the building and staff. Lee County has a goal of bringing ease to the hearts and minds of our residents regarding their animals in the time of a public health emergency situation.

Lee County Public Health Preparedness has also drafted the Lee County Health Department All Hazards Plan. This plan provides a model for Lee County Health Department to continue to provide services to the citizens of Lee County. This plan, in collaboration with an All Hazards Continuity of Operations Plan (COOP) provides the who, what, when, where, and how the Lee County Health Department will provide essential services to the citizens of Lee County.



### Accreditation

The Lee County Health Department completed its first ever accreditation evaluation after months of preparation and a three day site visit from the NC Local Health Department Accreditation (NCLHDA) Board Team on May 1-3, 2012. The health department was evaluated using a system called the Health Department Self-Assessment Instrument and received a score of 97.7%. This process included writing and updating 345 policies and procedures for the board of health, administration, finance, and health department functions.



### Power of the Pink

The Lee County Health Department received a one year grant from the Susan G. Komen for the Cure, NC Triangle to the Coast Affiliate in the amount of \$41,675. The "Power of the Pink Partnership Project" is in collaboration with Central Carolina Hospital. The project will address breast health needs through education, screening, diagnosis, treatment and follow up to one hundred women age forty and older. Outreach breast health education is a major component of this grant. Eligible women will be referred from Lee Primary Care, Family Planning Clinic and the Helping Hands Clinic. The County of Lee Transit System through the Lee County Senior Services will provide vouchers for free transportation for women to get to mammogram appointments for treatment. The Lee County Health Department is also collaborating with Moore County to improve access to the Hispanic/Latino Population for Breast Healthcare Access. This new initiative will be called The Amando la Vida-Loving Life Project.

### Lee County's Animal Service

The Health Department worked to improve animal services in the county in close collaboration with the Sheriff's Department for day-to-day operations and with Emergency Management for animal shelter operations during emergencies. As of February 2011 the Lee County Sheriff's Department assumed enforcement of state law and county ordinances. The Lee County Animal Services provides a shelter for stray or unwanted animals. This shelter is for the citizens of Lee County and the Sheriff's Department to have a place to take domestic animals. The shelter performs the follow-up, animal quarantine, and the procedures for animal testing for rabies when contact occurs between humans and possibly rabid animals. The shelter is also responsible for the adoption of the animals that come through the shelter and also tries to find the owners of stray animals brought to the shelter. The animal shelter also performs the euthanasia of animals which are unadoptable or adoptable animals when the shelter capacity has been reached and adoption was not obtained.



### **Sanford Comprehensive Bicycle Plan**

In 2012, the City of Sanford was awarded a matching grant called the Bicycle and Pedestrians Planning Grant Initiative from the NC Department of Transportation (NCDOT). The purpose of the grant is to encourage municipalities to develop comprehensive bicycle plans and pedestrian plans. This program has assisted more than 100 North Carolina communities and is administered through NCDOT's Division of Bicycle and Pedestrian Transportation.

The Plan will combine past planning efforts with new research and analysis, including public input. When complete, it will provide an up-to-date framework for moving forward with tangible bicycle improvement, complimented by a series of programmatic recommendations to educate and encourage cyclists and motorists in Sanford.

On Wednesday, August 22, 2012, the Steering Committee kicked-off the Comprehensive Bicycle Pan and developed a vision statement and goals to guide the planning process. The bicycle plan is scheduled to be completed in 2014.



### **Family Promise of Lee County**

Thousands of people in North Carolina are affected daily by the problem of homelessness. Homelessness is a growing problem in Lee County as well. More than two years ago several concerned citizens began meeting to discuss the plight of homelessness in our community. In the spring of 2010, the Lee County Schools System along with the concerned citizens conducted a survey to determine the number of students that were homeless in the school system. The data indicated that there were approximately 200 children attending public schools in our county that were considered homeless. Families are the fastest growing segment of the homeless population. The only facilities to serve this population are the men's shelter and the women's shelter but there was no shelter facility for the entire family. Therefore, the committee discovered a national non-profit organization and contacted them to help facilitate the Family Promise of Lee County (FPLC).



FPLC is a program based on the model and principles established by the Interfaith Hospitality Network. Family Promise is a non-profit organization that provides assistance to homeless families in Lee County. Family Promise is a 90-day program while they are working towards independence in securing a job and obtaining an affordable place to live. FPLC opened its doors on November 11, 2011. Family Promise is successful due to the fact that local congregations work as partners and provide an outreach ministry focusing on the needs of the homeless families in the community.

Presently, there are 22 churches in the Network, each prepared to serve family members. Thirteen churches are the Host Church and nine serve as Support Churches. Guests stay at a church in the network from 5:30 p.m. until 7:30 a.m., 7 days at a time. Hosts provide dinner, accommodations for the overnight stay, breakfast and lunch (when needed). This allows the Guests a safe, homelike shelter where families can stay together. Volunteers make the program work. They prepare dinners and breakfasts, set up and tear down sleeping accommodations, stay with the guests at the church, and help clean up.

Guests use the Day Center, located at 2302 Woodland Avenue during the hours of 7:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. At the Day Center, families inquire about jobs, receive counseling, work on budgeting, are provided with transportation to and from work, doctor appointments, and school for the children, to name a few services. The Day Center also provides a mailing address, a phone number and a base for housing and employment searches, care for preschool children, laundry, shower, and school age children to do homework.

### Emerging Issue in Lee County



### Food Deserts

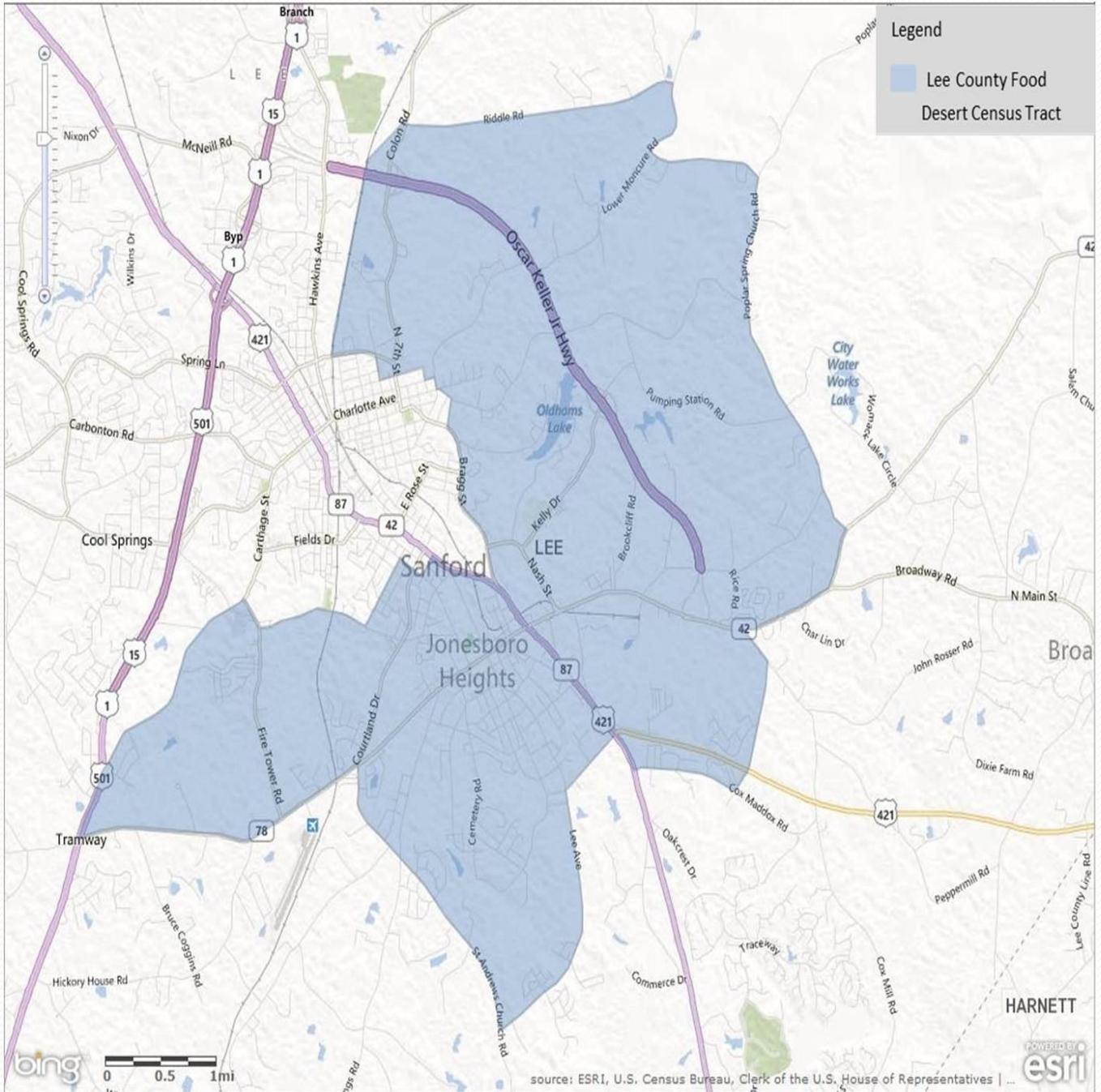
As of August 23, 2012, the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture (USDA) identified one census tract in Lee County, North Carolina as a “food desert.” The USDA defines a food desert as a “low-income census tract where a substantial number or share of residents has low access to a supermarket or large grocery store.” Furthermore, the USDA identifies a census tract as “low-income” and “low access” if at least 20 percent of residents are at or below the poverty level, and if at least 33 percent of the residents in that tract live more than one mile from a large grocery store or supermarket. For Lee County, the identified food desert includes the boundaries of US1/15/501 and Highway 78 to the west, Saint Andrews Church Road and Lee Avenue to the south, Popular Spring Church Road to the east, and Riddle Road to the north. Major roads included within this area are Kelly Drive, Bragg Street, Nash Street, Oscar Keller Jr. Highway, Fire Tower Road, Courtland Drive, Pumping Station Road, parts of Highway 42, and a section of Highway 87/421. While the Census Tract in the map on the next page may include large grocery stores, this tract qualifies because the majority of the population lives more than one mile from a large grocery store or supermarket.

**Food Deserts**

In the next five years, a new project in Lee County, known as the Community Transformation Grant Project, hopes to reduce the size of this food desert through policy change aimed at providing healthier foods in local corner stores, and the establishment and enhancement of local farmers' markets.

Data for Lee County Food Desert Census Tract*	Number of Residents (n)	Percent of Total Population (%)
Total Population for Lee County Food Desert Census Tract	8985	100
People with Low Access to a large grocery store or supermarket	4709	52.4
Residents identified as low-income and have low access to a large grocery store or supermarket	848	9.4
Children (0-17 years of age) residing in the census tract with low access to a large grocery store or supermarket	1310	14.6
Seniors (65+ years of age) residing in the census tract with low access to a large grocery store or supermarket	500	5.6
Residential housing units in the census tract without a vehicle and with low access to a large grocery store or supermarket	141	4.3
Data collected and published by the Economic Research Service of the US Department of Agriculture, August 23, 2012 <a href="http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-desert-locator.aspx">http://www.ers.usda.gov/data-products/food-desert-locator.aspx</a>		

# Food Desert Census Tract in Lee County, North Carolina



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### REPORT CREDIT

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We would also like to thank all the agencies in Lee County that contributed to this report!