



CATAWBA COUNTY

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COUNTY EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR HONORED FOR OVERSEEING OPENING OF SOCIAL SERVICES' NEW FAMILY SERVICES CENTER

Catawba County Social Services has always been one of the County's busiest agencies, but rarely more so than during the present economic downturn. During Fiscal Year 2009-2010, crisis assistance applications increased by 103 percent, food assistance applications were up 32 percent, family medical applications increased 31 percent, and adult protective services reports increased by 60 percent. In such situations, space and facilities are very important as staff works hard to meet the increasing need for services.

Social Services now has additional space in a building that was previously used by Mental Health Services, before the State determined that counties would no longer provide mental health services, and is now the home of the Family Services Center. Converting that building for use by Social Services and organizing the move of dozens of staff members was a major undertaking. The woman who oversaw this large project has been named Catawba County's 2010 Employee Of The Year.



Angie Cales, Facilities Coordinator for Social Services, was presented with the Employee Of The Year honor at the County's annual Awards Night on October 26 at the CVCC Multipurpose Facility, in recognition of her work to open the Family Services Center while carrying on a host of other duties. Cales was nominated for the award by six of her colleagues. She was selected for the honor by a committee of her peers, which includes representation from each Catawba County department.

"None of these projects were simple," said Carrie Morris, Business Manager I with Social Services, in her letter nominating Cales for the award. "Each involved hours of detailed space analysis, meetings with contractors, shopping, scheduling, move coordination...the list goes on and on. Throughout each of these endeavors (some of which overlapped), Angie remained cool, calm and collected. Her positive attitude helped shape others' perceptions so even if things weren't going as planned, chaos didn't ensue. A fellow supervisor stated it best: 'Angie is always upbeat and positive, even when combating pestilence and cleanliness problems. Even her email reminders about what to do and what not to do are comical and easy for staff to understand and follow. She has to deal with a laundry list of daily issues and problems from staff that may sometimes come across as complaints.' I've never heard Angie complain or react negatively to another staff when addressing an issue."

"In the middle of the Family Services Center renovation, a water line to the ice and water machine at Social Services Main broke on a Friday evening and water poured from it most of the weekend," wrote Norm Tipton, Jennifer Vaillancourt, Tona Heffinger and Frances Anthony in their nomination of Cales. "This resulted in a flooded first and second floor of the original building. Carpet was ruined, mold was in the walls and workers had to be displaced."

"So now, Angie got to add that to her list of duties," they added. "Meeting with clean up specialists, insurance adjusters and carpet installers, Angie started working to get Social Services back to normal as soon as possible. Over four weeks, mostly weekends, the carpet was replaced in the halls and offices of the entire A building. When installers wanted to

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stretch it out another week, Angie stood firm and the job was done in four weekends. Not only did she manage to replace the carpet in A building, she was able to also replace the carpet in the halls of most of the rest of the complex, also within the same time. Her infectious humor once again rose when asked by a co-worker why she was moving the ice and water machine to the elevator lobby between buildings A and B. Her answer, short and sweet: ‘Two reasons. Water source and floor drain’. She’s only one person, but if you worked at Social Services, you might think that ‘Angie’ is the name of a whole team.”

Angie Cales began working for Catawba County Social Services, as Facilities Coordinator, in 2005. She is responsible for overseeing the functional aspects of all the facilities within the Social Services organization, assuring an efficient, effective, clean and safe work environment for staff and visitors.

Prior to her service with Catawba County, Cales worked from 1998 to 2005 as an Administrative Assistant for the Burke County Public Schools’ Exceptional Children’s Department and Office of Attendance. She was responsible for office management tasks for twenty-five people; transcribing psychological evaluations for five school psychologists, maintaining confidential student records, processing federal referral paperwork, and fixed asset reconciliation. She was employed with W&L Motor Lines, Inc. as a Credit Manager from 1986 to 1996.

“Angie demonstrated exemplary judgment, planning and performance while coordinating and facilitating the extensive renovation of the Family Services Center and subsequent relocation and merge of 58 professional staff members,” said Carrie O’Hara, a Foster Care Social Worker, in her nomination. “Her attention to detail, consistent communication and her exceptional performance provided a smooth transition for the staff and the consumers they serve.”

“Although most would appear frazzled, Angie maintained a professional, accommodating demeanor,” O’Hara added. “Her anticipation and elimination of obstacles provided minimal interruption of services as she orchestrated the move of employees, furniture, confidential files and hundreds of boxes from three separate locations in the community we serve. She demonstrated a no-nonsense, professional manner while maintaining her sense of humor and encouragement.”

Twelve Catawba County employees were nominated for Employee of the Year. Other nominees included: Britt Abernathy, School Health Charge Nurse, Public Health; Carol Banker, Branch Manager, Library; Sgt. Billy Boston, Shift Supervisor, Sheriff’s Office; Eleanor Castleberry, Clinical Program Manager, Social Services; Falvette Futch, Child Protective Services Social Worker, Social Services; Sarah Keeter, WIC Breastfeeding Peer Counselor, Public Health; Lynne Laws, Community Health Supervisor, Public Health; Julie Raper, Food Stamp Supervisor, Social Services; Cindy S. Travis, Veterans Services Officer, Emergency Services; Dawn Wilson, Special Projects Coordinator, Social Services; and Teresa Wofford, Administrative Assistant II, Utilities and Engineering.

Another highlight of the evening was the presentation of the 2010 Team Awards. "Team Awards honor groups of employees whose combined efforts improve County services," said Catawba County Manager Tom Lundy, who served as Master of Ceremonies for the County's Awards Night. "We certainly appreciate the value of work done by groups of employees who focus their energies on a common goal."

A panel of judges in the government field, independent of Catawba County, selected an Energov Implementation Team and a Success Coach Implementation Team as Team Award winners for 2010.

“The system used by Catawba County for permitting and inspections was over ten years old and could not provide the services expected by the building community,” said Valerie Jones, Catawba County’s Application Development Administrator, who nominated the Energov Implementation Team. “Aside from the City of Hickory, the other municipalities were using separate systems for zoning permits. Replacing the multi-departmental systems was a large undertaking that affected the livelihood of the building community and the daily workings of many County departments. The project team’s assignment was to find a consolidated system to most efficiently manage tracking and approval of building projects.”

“The Energov Implementation Team thought ‘outside the box’ and was able to negotiate a contract with the vendor that included licenses for all the municipalities at no additional cost,” Jones added. “The team also agreed to be one of the first

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jurisdictions to offer electronic plan review. This resulted in a truly collaborative online system that streamlines the permitting process for both prospective builders and local jurisdictions, saving valuable time and money. Electronic plan review will eliminate the need to print up to eight sets of blueprints for each proposed building project, greatly improve turn-around time on changes to the drawings, dramatically reduce postage expense for both the County and architects/engineers, reduce storage space requirements and provide more secure retention of the blueprints.”



The Energov Implementation Team, pictured above, included (front row, left to right) Temple Lawing, IT Project Manager in the County’s Technology Department, who was the Team Leader; Mary George, Assistant Planning Director; Michelle Deese, GIS Administrator; Julia English, Administrative Assistant II, Environmental Health; Kristy Connelly, Accounting Services Manager, Finance; Teresa Wofford, Administrative Assistant II, Utilities and Engineering and Toni Norton, Engineer, Utilities and Engineering and (back row, left to right) David Smith, Building Services Supervisor; Ralph Dell, GIS Administrator Specialist; Bill Bump, Fire Inspector and Steve Lackey, Programmer Analyst. Not pictured: Chris Timberlake, Planner; Susan Ballbach, Senior Planner.

“The Success Coach Implementation Team was charged with the challenge of creating a service for families of children leaving foster care, for which there were no evidence-based practices,” said Chrissy Triplett, Post-Care Supervisor at Social Services, who nominated the team. “The team took time to research several models and, when they could not find one that fit the needs of our population, worked to create a service that would. They identified the philosophical principals, essential functions and activities they believed would provide the needed support to families whose children are exiting foster care. They worked diligently every week during lunch to plan what this service was going to look like for families, and created the “Success Coach”. This service was recently implemented as part of the Child Wellbeing Project, a partnership between Catawba County Social Services and The Duke Endowment. The Success Coach will be the main hub for all post-care services offered through this project; providing support, service coordination, skill building, crisis intervention, referral and other services, with the goal of positively impacting child wellbeing for years to come. The implementation team’s hard work over nine months resulted in the hiring of the first two Success Coaches and a Supervisor to fully implement this service.”



The Success Coach Implementation Team included (pictured above, clockwise from far left) Dawn Wilson, Special Projects Coordinator; LaKeyhisa Hannah, Foster Care Social Worker; Candis Dugan, Foster Care Social Worker/Reunification; Shauna Heavner, Protective Services Social Worker/Family Preservation; and Robert Brown, Post Care Supervisor and Carrie Ross, Outpatient Therapist I, team leaders, all of Catawba County Social Services. Not

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pictured: Karonda Champion-Pender, Foster Care Social Worker/Reunification and Sydney Smith, Program Supervisor of the Guardian Ad Litem Program of the Catawba County Sheriff's Office.

More than 60 other employees, teams and departments were recognized for degrees earned, awards won and accomplishments of the past year during the Awards Night event. County staff who participated in contests based on taking steps to reduce ozone and other air pollutants were honored, as were those contributing to and participating in the County's annual United Way campaign.

Nineteen employees who have retired in the past year were saluted, along with County employees who have served for five, ten, fifteen, twenty, twenty-five, thirty and thirty-five years. Two County employees who passed away in the last year were remembered: Stephanie Gabriel, a paramedic with Emergency Services, and Felicia Gilliam of the Sheriff's Office.

"Our Employee Awards night is one of the most important events we have each year," Lundy said. "The high quality of services delivered to our citizens is a reflection of the fine work done by our employees. It is always a privilege for members of the Board of Commissioners and me to spend an evening recognizing many of our employees for outstanding work, and thanking each and every one for the part they play in helping make Catawba County a great place in which to live and work."