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## **CATAWBA COUNTY HIRES NEW BUILDING SERVICES OFFICIALS TO MEET INCREASING DEMAND**

Catawba County has hired five new employees in Building Services and converted one part-time position to a full time position following approval of these new positions by the Board of Commissioners earlier this year.

The new Building Services staff includes four new Building Services Officials and one new Permit Center Specialist

“This is an excellent example of the Board of Commissioners reacting quickly to a change in building activity in our county,” said Barry Edwards, Catawba County Director of Utilities and Engineering. “Earlier this year, the County experienced numerous instances in which the scheduling of inspections extended two to seven working days beyond the staff’s outcome of providing next day inspections. Two to seven working days may not sound too bad until a weekend or holiday falls in the same time period, giving the customer the reality of waiting ten or more calendar days to have a requested inspection performed.

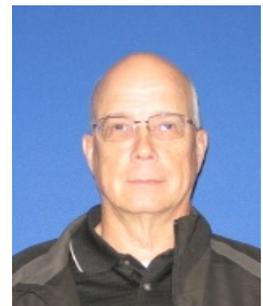
“This resulted in multiple complaints from our clients and discussion by the Land Use Development Board of the Chamber of Commerce,” Edwards added. “The Board of Commissioners recognized that positions that had been eliminated during the worst of the downturn in construction following the 2008 recession were needed again. We believe having these new staff on board will allow us to meet our internal expectations for customer service and we thank the Board for their support.”

The new Building Services officials include:



**Russell “Russ” Ehrhart** hired as a Building Services Official III assigned to Plan Review with Building Services. He grew up in the suburbs of Detroit, Michigan, but has spent the past 30 years in south Florida. He plans to live, work, and retire in western North Carolina. In the first part of Russ’s career he was a successful licensed journeyman, master electrician, and electrical contractor. Recently, he has been working as a code official for 15 years and enjoyed the learning experience of such a challenging job. He has achieved Standard Level III certifications in building, electrical, plumbing, and mechanical trades.

**James “Jimmy” Martin** hired as a Building Services Official I assigned to Field Inspections with Building Services. He is a native of Newton, graduating from Newton-Conover High School in 1977. He attended Catawba Valley Community College graduating in 2011. He became a licensed plumber in 1984 and worked for Yount Plumbing Company, LT Mechanical of Charlotte, and Martin Plumbing Service. He served as a firefighter both as a volunteer and during his 36 year career with the City of Newton Fire Department. While at Newton, he attained the rank of Deputy Chief in 2012.





**Susan McCaslin** hired as a Permit Center Specialist in the Permit Center, Building Services Division. Susan owned and managed Susan McCaslin Construction Co. of Conover.

**Sheila Nadeau** hired as a Permit Center Specialist in the Permit Center, Building Services Division. Sheila is very excited to be working for Catawba County and looks forward to the future, feeling that she has a job that can learn and grow in. Sheila is thankful for the opportunity and believes that working with permits and inspections is her destiny.



**Elizabeth "Liz" Smitherman** hired as a Permit Center Specialist in the Permit Center, Building Services Division. She began working for Catawba County Environmental Health in December 2009 but left Catawba County in 2015 to work for Surry County when she and her new husband moved to that county. She missed her work family at Catawba County so when the opportunity presented itself, she knew she was meant to come back. She says she is very excited to be back "home" and working for U&E and looks forward to the future.

**Craig Taylor** hired as a Building Services Official I and assigned to Field Inspections with Building Services. Craig comes to us with more than 16 years experience in the construction industry having worked for Gerald Kamp for 16 years. He started his own construction business after working for Kamp, but with the housing slow down he went to work for Lowe's Hardware in 2000.



**Damon White** hired as a Building Services Official I and assigned to Field Inspections with Building Services. Damon comes to Catawba County with a lifetime of experience in the concrete and building industry through his family's business. He has lived all his life in Catawba County.

For more information on Catawba County Building Services, you may visit <http://www.catawbacountync.gov/building/> or call 828-465-8261