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## **EXPERIENCED CHIEF FINANCIAL OFFICER APPOINTED NEW CATAWBA COUNTY TAX COLLECTOR**

Lori A. Mathes was appointed by the Catawba County Board of Commissioners as the County's new Tax Collector, based upon staff's recommendation, at the Board's meeting on February 18, 2013. Mathes served as Chief Financial Officer for Mental Health Partners of Hickory for eight years, responsible for overseeing the agency's expenditures and revenues, its accounting policies and procedures.



Mathes, set to begin her new duties on March 5, will succeed Ona Scruggs, who is retiring effective April 1 after serving as Tax Collector since March 2008. Scruggs will work with Mathes in her final month as Mathes assumes her new job.

As Tax Collector, Mathes will be responsible for seeing that bills are issued accurately and taxes are paid on each property, using available collection methods, such as attachment and garnishment, as set forth under North Carolina General Statutes. She will supervise a staff of eleven under the direction of the County's Tax Administrator, Mark Logan.

"We are very excited to welcome Lori, with her outstanding experience and knowledge, to this important leadership position over tax collection for Catawba County and its eight municipalities," Logan said. "She has worked for almost thirty years in positions of progressively increasing responsibility in financial management and business administration. She also has a strong working knowledge of Catawba County Government both from the years when the County provided mental health services and her completion of the County's Supervisory Training program."

"My goal as I begin my new work is to build upon the current success of the Tax Office and become a part of the already highly functioning team while leading them into the future through providing exceptional customer service, both internally and externally, to all Catawba County citizens," Mathes said "I would also hope to seize those opportunities where I can be creative in solving problems and to be motivating and encouraging to others when it's time to embrace change."

Mathes is a Catawba County native. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree in Business Administration from the University of Maryland and later earned a Masters Degree in Administration and Management from Central Michigan University.

Mathes has worked as both a part of, and alongside, the Catawba County organization for eight years as Chief Financial Officer for Catawba County Mental Health, then for Mental Health Partners, which was formed in 2008 via the merger of Burke and Catawba Counties Mental Health agencies to identify and oversee a provider network to serve persons with mental health, developmental disabilities and substance abuse needs.

Mental Health Partners merged with two similar regional agencies in July 2012 to serve an eight-county region under the name of Partners Behavioral Health Management. Mathes is currently serving as Provider Network Specialist with Partners Behavioral Health Management, overseeing a wide range of management and development issues and providing technical assistance.

As Chief Financial Officer for Mental Health Partners, Mathes was responsible for the management of a \$24.5 million annual budget, tracking expenditures and revenues and overseeing basic accounting policies and procedures. She ensured that all governmental accounting standards and generally accepted accounting principles were followed. Mathes monitored the tracking of single stream funding, and managed and oversaw an internal audit system. She managed the claims adjudication and payment process, monitored processes and guidelines that insured prompt payment, and oversaw the financial components for over ninety providers in the network. Her additional responsibilities included clarifying financial issues for providers, reviewing management reporting to insure accuracy and consistency in the data, and producing a variety of monthly, quarterly and annual reports.

Prior to returning to Catawba County to work with Catawba County Mental Health and Mental Health Partners, Mathes rose to increasingly responsible positions with Xerox Corporation over a total of 17 years of employment, starting out as Support Operator and ending as Client Service Manager. Mathes also spent four years in the banking industry, with experience as both a bank teller and a management associate. She has completed Omega Performance Financial Training, Catawba County's Supervisory Training Program, a series of Finance and Reimbursement Officers Forums and a wide range of training in leadership, negotiation and effective working habits.

"I was very interested in the Tax Collector position because of the challenge," Mathes said. "I embrace challenge because it allows me to be creative. It also provides another opportunity to collaborate and involve my team because challenges are best defeated by many."

Mathes said her parents have been a great inspiration to her and her sister. She enjoys spending quality time with her nieces, nephew and family members. She is active with her church and has served as its Financial Secretary Treasurer for over nine years. She currently serves as president of Ladies in Action Service League, which has existed in Catawba County for over 25 years and assists with numerous scholarship and book awards for less fortunate qualified youth aspiring to achieve a higher education.

"Lori brings the right mix of experience to this role – a solid foundation of financial knowledge, a strong history of customer service, a proven track record in supervising and building strong teams, and a deep connection with and loyalty to the Catawba County community," said Mary Furtado, an Assistant County Manager who led the search for the new Tax Collector. "We are pleased to welcome her back to the Catawba County organization and feel that her hire will continue the tradition of strong leadership within the Tax Office in service to our citizens."