



November 10, 2008

## **NEW HANOVER COUNTY/CITY OF WILMINGTON OFFICIALS TO REVIEW PERMITTING PROCESSES USED BY CATAWBA COUNTY AND MUNICIPALITIES**

Local governments across Catawba County and the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce will host a group from New Hanover County and the City of Wilmington during the week of November 17 for a review of the planning and permit processes used by the local governments in Catawba County. The review is being sponsored equally by the public and private sectors in a unique partnership designed to improve the processes used by both.

The team from New Hanover County and Wilmington, which was recommended by the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce's Land Use Development Committee, will be asked to review the planning and permitting process and advise officials governing across Catawba County on the parts of the process that are working well and being done effectively, and on recommendations on ways to improve the processes used.

"Catawba County and its municipalities have a long history of striving for the best possible customer service and for professionalism in the services we provide," said Catawba County Manager Tom Lundy. "In the areas of planning and permitting, this has included a very productive ongoing discussion with the Land Use Development Committee of the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce. While we have reached agreement and received valuable feedback on a substantial number of issues over the last few years, we have continued to hear concerns voiced from the Land Use Development Committee about the efficiency of the processes used by the county and city governments. We believe this is a natural continuation of our collective efforts to enforce planning and safety regulations while providing the best possible, most efficient customer service."

"I commend the staff of Catawba and New Hanover Counties for putting together the planning and permitting meeting," said Jerry Campbell, Regional Director for Catawba, Iredell and Gaston Counties with the Real Estate and Building Industry Coalition. "I believe this is a first time for a meeting of this magnitude in North Carolina and a great way of sharing ideas to develop a more effective process for each county."

The costs of the study will be split on a 50/50 basis between the public sector, including Catawba County, the Town of Catawba, City of Claremont, City of Conover, City of Hickory, Town of Maiden, and the City of Newton and the public sector, which includes the Catawba County Chamber of Commerce and its Land Use Development Committee, the Home Builders Association of Hickory and the Catawba Valley and the Catawba Valley Association of Realtors, Inc.