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### **EMPLOYEE OF THE YEAR, TEAM AWARD HONOREES ANNOUNCED AT COUNTY AWARDS NIGHT**

NEWTON, NC – Catawba County Assistant Chief Financial Officer Jeanne Jarrett has been named Catawba County's Employee of the Year for 2016. Jarrett earned distinction for her "above and beyond" work to ensure the County's Finance Department ran smoothly during the nearly year-long absence of a Finance Director and several other staff transitions during that time.

Jarrett received the honor during the County's Annual Awards Night October 18 at Catawba Valley Community College's Tarlton Complex. She has been employed with Catawba County for 14 years.

"It's rare you find someone who can handle multitasking and attention to detail with such skill," said Catawba County Chief Financial Officer Bob Miracle, who nominated Jarrett for the award. "All of these extra duties led to some very long workdays. It was no surprise to find Jeanne working late and coming in early. At any given moment, she could be asked to 'switch hats' and step up to assist with whatever task was needed. Many people would cave under this tremendous amount of stress; however, Jeanne handled everything with ease and poise."

Miracle noted several achievements Jarrett accomplished during her tenure as interim director, including her preparation of two key award-winning reports for the County: the Fiscal Year 2015 Financial Report, which won the Government Finance Officers Association's Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 27<sup>th</sup> consecutive year, and the Fiscal Year 2015 Popular Annual Financial Report, which won the Government Finance Officers Association's Award for Outstanding Achievement for the eighth consecutive year. Jarrett also presented the Fiscal Year 2015 Annual Financial Report and Update to the community, including the Board of Commissioners, community leaders, and local media.

"It's also worth noting that the Finance Department is known for having a very stable staff with little turnover," Miracle added. "However, during this time, several employees either retired or moved away. These vacancies added stress and uncertainty for the coworkers left to pick up the slack until new employees could be hired and properly trained. Jeanne was able to keep morale, recognition and job satisfaction high while providing the superb customer satisfaction the department is known for."

Nine other Catawba County employees were nominated for Employee of the Year for 2016. They included Susan Branch, Business Manager II, Sheriff's Office; Jennifer Brown, Administrative Assistant I, Sheriff's Office; Greta Bumgarner, Programmer, GIS Technology; Andrew Hopper, Social Worker Supervisor III, Social Services; Jimmiann Huffman, Economic Services Supervisor, Social Services; Donna Mull, 4-H Extension Agent, Cooperative Extension Service; Thu Ngo, Administrative Assistant I, Social Services; Brandy Watts, Administrative Assistant I, Utilities and Engineering; and Tyler Whisenant, Sergeant, Sheriff's Office.

The evening also featured the presentation of the 2016 Catawba County Team Award, which honors

groups of employees whose combined efforts improve County services. A panel of judges in the government field, all independent of Catawba County, awarded this year's recognition to the Library's Latino Community Outreach team comprised of Team Leader Soraya Place, Library Services Specialist, and team members Genoveva Diaz, Library Assistant, and Ivelisse Santiago-Aponte, Library Assistant.

The Latino Community Outreach team was recognized for developing strategies to help increase Library engagement with the Spanish speaking community. This involved focused engagement with customers and community partners; increased translation of materials; targeted bilingual programming; enhanced Spanish collections; and specialized tutoring for young people. The team also translated the Library's monthly newsletter into Spanish for both the Main Library in Newton and the St. Stephens Branch, which have Spanish-speaking populations connecting with Library services.

As the nomination of the team stated, "Because of this team's initiative, we are seeing more Latino families engaged in programs that are presented both bilingually and fully in Spanish. We've seen a Spanish Book Club born out of a partnership with Centro Latino. We're also working with the local school systems' ESL teams to get the newsletter out to their students and families. Not only are we now better able to share our programming and resources with the Latino community, we are also engaging more deeply to tailor our programming, services and collections to meet their needs and interests and empower their lives."

Several employees were recognized for state and national achievements, including five National Association of Counties Achievement Awards and honors from the North Carolina Public Library Directors Association, Government Finance Officers Association, and the Carolinas Association of Governmental Purchasing among others. Thirty-two employees who retired in the past year were honored, along with 172 employees who have served the County from five to thirty-five years.

"Our Awards Night is an opportunity to share in our successes and recognize the hard work and dedication County employees bring to their jobs year-round," said Catawba County Manager Mick Berry. "It is always inspiring to bring everyone together to celebrate how this work makes a difference in our community. Along with our Board of Commissioners, I commend all our employees for their continued commitment to excellence in serving the residents of Catawba County."

Additionally, eight County employees or retirees who passed away in the last year were remembered: Dave Hardin (County Manager's Office), Kerry Hayer (Sheriff's Office), Floyd Yoder (Sheriff's Office-retired), Larry Simpson (Communications Center-retired), Pam Vodek (Library-retired), Phyllis Robinson (Social Services-retired), Rupert Little (Emergency Services-retired), and Terry Bolick (Public Health-retired).

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