

**“Improving Quality of Life”  
City of Salisbury  
Salisbury Sculpture Show**

The annual Salisbury Sculpture show provides unrestricted opportunities for local citizens and visitors to enjoy affordable, first-class sculpture in Salisbury’s historic downtown and on its four college campuses- Catawba College, Livingstone College, Hood Theological Seminary and Rowan Cabarrus Community College.. The show also provides an opportunity to increase awareness of the visual arts throughout a diverse community, reaching out to individuals and families that historically may not have participated in arts events.

Artists enter the 9-month outdoor exhibition through an open call for entries in the fall. An independent selection panel chooses 14-20 pieces based on quality of form, materials and a variety of styles and themes. Each piece is carefully placed to best complement the art and the surrounding architecture. Highly visible sculpture locations maximize opportunities for all citizens to experience art and send a strong message to visitors that Salisbury is a city of the arts.

The show has gained an enthusiastic following both locally and around the state. Visitors from several other North Carolina cities have toured the show with the idea of hosting a similar event in their own towns. Also the Governor has credited the show as innovative and an idea that should be spread around the state. Among others, Hillsborough, Durham, Cornelius and Asheboro now host sculpture shows, building North Carolina’s reputation as a destination for arts and cultural tourism.



**“Clean Cities”  
Town of Matthews**

**For Excellence in Clean Transportation and Clean Fuel Activities**

The Town of Matthews celebrated the installation and opening of a region -first Direct Current (DC) Fast Charger for Plug-in Electric Vehicles (PEV) in its downtown in 2015. The Town decided early on that the installation of this charging equipment for environmentally minded consumers could both attract visitors to its downtown and establish the community as progressive. Ultimately, PEV owners are now able to fully charge a typical vehicle in about 30 minutes at a cost of about \$6, and ideally, are spending that time in Downtown Matthews shops! Since installation, over 65 charge events have taken place and with well over 300,000 plug-in vehicles sold nationally, the usage of this charger is only expected to accelerate as more cars come to the market. In addition to providing local match including leasing out the physical location for the DCFC equipment, the Town was able to partner with several other organizations to make this DCFC possible including:

- NC DOT and NC Clean Energy Technology Center – source of Congestion Mitigation and Air Quality grant funds
- Brightfield Transportation Solutions - received and implemented the project award
- Nissan – provided the actual DCFC unit as grant match (a \$33,000 value)
- BMW – funded additional cord and receptacle equipment
- Centralina Clean Fuels Coalition and the NC PEV Task Force – outreach and partnership/funding development

Given that each year in the US we burn roughly 121 billion gallons of oil in our passenger cars and trucks, the Town of Matthews is doing its part by supporting a switch to plug-in electric vehicles, one of the biggest steps we can take to reduce America's dependence on oil and cut dangerous air pollution.



Centralina Council of Governments

**REGION OF EXCELLENCE AWARDS**

**MAY 11, 2016**

**BACKGROUND**

Centralina COG celebrates the work of member governments through the Excellence Awards. These awards honor the outstanding achievements that work collectively to achieve regional goals.

Elected officials, managers and other staff from our member governments were encouraged to nominate innovative projects implemented by their jurisdictions that contribute to significant and positive advancements in the community.

A panel of impartial judges reviewed each submittal and selected award winning projects based on the following award criteria:

- Innovation and creativity
  - Commitment to goals
  - Contributions to regionalism
  - Program successes and sustainable benefits
  - Engagement of community members
  - Interaction with public/private partners
- Our judges this year included: Sarah McAulay, former Commissioner of the Town of Huntersville; Jennifer Nichols, a private-sector consultant; and Larry Smith, former Manager of the Town of Spencer. A separate team reviewed and selected the winner of the Clean Cities Award. A special thank you to all our Excellence Award judges!

**EXCELLENCE AWARD CATEGORIES**

**“Controlling the Cost of Government”**

The recipient of this award has been creative in implementing a new or innovative program or initiative that is effective and delivers the most value with public funds. Such program exemplifies efficiency through: utilizing economies of scale; partnering with other local governments to maximize the impact of public funds; and/or encouraging best practices to maintain or expand services.

**“Growing the Economy”**

The recipient of this award has implemented innovative solutions to community development/investment challenges and engages in best practice strategies that: utilize public/private sector partnerships to maximize investment opportunities; prepares existing sites and infrastructure to meet the needs of target industries; and/or implements economic development including job creation/retention initiatives, etc.

**“Improving Quality of Life”**

The recipient of this award best leverages resources to improve the quality of life for citizens. The award recipient has implemented innovative program offerings such as those that: enhance social equity; encourage community participation through public and private sector leadership; develop solutions that build on the community’s strengths and improve upon its weaknesses; or use cooperative volunteerism to maintain or expand services.

**“Clean Cities”**

The recipient of this award best recognizes the environmental and economic benefits of reducing consumption of fossil fuels. This recipient has lowered the use of traditional transportation fuels by: purchasing alternative fuel and/or fuel efficient vehicles, using alternative fuels in their fleet, implementing idle reduction policies and/or has partnered with fuel providers to expand alternative fuel availability.

**2016  
EXCELLENCE  
AWARD  
WINNERS**

**Controlling the Cost  
of Government**

Iredell County

*Online Septic Record  
Search Engine*

**Growing the  
Economy**

Gaston County

*Social Services Customer  
Self-Help Resource Center*

**Improving  
Quality of Life**

Gaston County

*Teen Wellness Center*

**Improving  
Quality of Life**

City of Charlotte &  
Mecklenburg County

*Cross Charlotte Trail*

**Improving  
Quality of Life**

City of Salisbury

*Salisbury Sculpture  
Show*

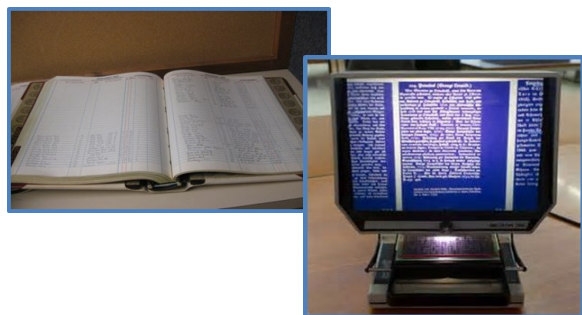
**Clean Cities**

Town of Matthews

*For Excellence in Clean  
Transportation and  
Clean Fuel Activities*



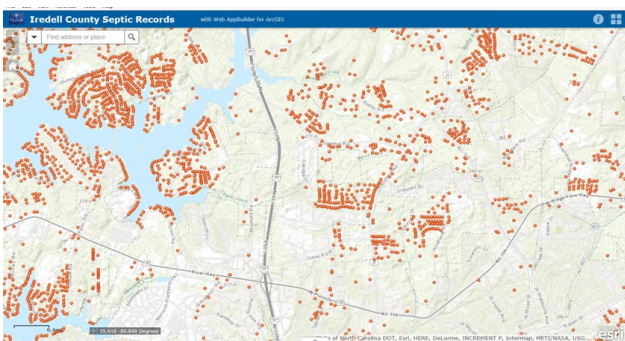
**“Controlling the Cost of Government”**  
**Iredell County**  
**Online Septic Record Search Engine**



The Online Septic Record Engine, developed at the Iredell County Health Department, helps control the cost of government through improved efficiencies. The search engine has over 100,000 septic related electronic images that were converted from antiquated files. The purpose of this engine is to provide 24/7 online access to septic records and permits on file with Iredell County. The system is user friendly because the septic system permit and record information is attached to a point on a map (Parcel ID), which allows customers to visually locate information from the point on the map themselves, saving an enormous amount of staffing hours and providing customers with instant access.

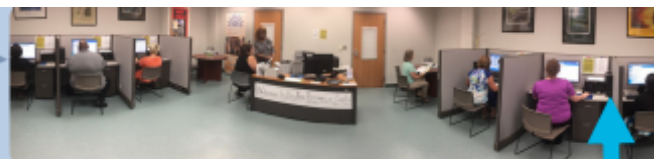
Prior to this efficiency improvement residents, realtors and others had to either call, come in person, or submit an online request which could take three to five days, or longer to receive a response. Today any person can obtain septic records and permits in about five minutes using the Online Septic Record Search Engine.

The estimated staff hours saved by using this engine are currently being redirected to other priority tasks. The total estimated time saved is equivalent to 1,200 hours or 30 full time weeks. Also, the 24/7 access to records allows customers to work at their own speed to accomplish their tasks without the need to conform to typical business hours and constraints.



**“Growing the Economy”**  
**Gaston County**  
**Social Services Customer Self-Help Resource Center**

QUALITY



**CUSTOMER SELF HELP RESOURCE CENTER**

After opening in April, this center promotes personal responsibility by providing technology access to clients in order to search and apply for jobs, create a resume, search for child care providers, complete E-pass applications for Medicaid and Food Stamps, and other client self-help initiatives.

The Customer Self-Help Resource Center offers an easily accessible location for consumers to access comprehensive workforce development services and was made possible by a strong partnership between the Gaston County Department of Health and Human Services and the Work First and Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) programs. The center is open to everyone from 8:00 am—5:00 pm daily and provides the opportunity to search for employment, apply for jobs, register with NC Works, research child care providers, build and submit resumes, apply via E-pass for Food Stamps and Medicaid, apply for WIOA services, and much more.

Promoting personal responsibility and self-sufficiency is underscored by the Self-Help Resource Center that houses six private computer workstations and removes technology barriers by providing not only computers but also a printer, copier, and fax machine. Being centrally located with an onsite public bus stop eases the transportation barrier experienced by many people looking for work in our county. In addition, bus passes are provided to Work First and WIOA participants. Further, being housed within Social Services allows consumers to access the center when utilizing other agency services.

**“Improving Quality of Life”**  
**Gaston County**  
**Teen Wellness Center**

Understanding that teen pregnancy is more than a health issue and is truly a quality of life issue, as it impacts education, employment, economic development, and reinforces cycles of poverty, the Gaston County Department of Health & Human Services (DHHS) decided to tackle teen pregnancy by revamping its teen clinical services.

Prior to the implementation of the Teen Wellness Center concept, a teen that visited Gaston DHHS might be seen in four different clinics in order to receive services ranging from immunizations to STD testing. Many teens coming in for pediatric services were never offered reproductive health services or even asked if they were sexually active.

The new Teen Wellness Center provides a full range of services in one clinical location, makes reproductive health services available during all visits, positions a health educator to work full-time in the Center and uses evidence-based “Teen Friendly Practices” in all aspects of its implementation from appointment structure to clinic design.

The Teen Wellness Center has continued to provide high quality, teen friendly, and comprehensive health care for a critical population and has received regional, state-wide and even national acclaim for their work. They have hosted other health departments from around the state who are working to revamp their own teen services and are using Gaston as a model of excellence.



**“Improving Quality of Life”**  
**City of Charlotte & Mecklenburg County**  
**Cross Charlotte Trail**

The City of Charlotte partnered with Mecklenburg County to create a 26-mile pedestrian and bicycle urban trail and greenway facility that will stretch from the Town of Pineville, through Center City and on to the UNC Charlotte campus and Cabarrus County line. This exciting project is called the Cross Charlotte Trail (XCLT). Once completed, residents will be able to travel seamlessly from one end of Charlotte to the other. Approximately 98,000 jobs and 80,000 residents will be within a half mile of the proposed trail, which will connect many treasured places and major employment centers. The Cross Charlotte Trail is focused on achieving the following four goals:

- Continuous: Closing the gaps between existing trails thereby creating 26-miles of continuous trail.
- Connected: Providing a seamless path connecting people to the larger trail network without using a car.
- Convenient: Offering transportation choices and convenient access to neighborhoods and businesses across Charlotte.
- Separated: Creating a comfortable trail separating you from vehicle traffic for a safe and enjoyable experience.

