

THE RESOURCE

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SERVING THOSE WHO SERVE NC



Neal Alexander
Director,
Office of State
Human Resources

Dear State Employees,

North Carolina state government is undergoing a transformation. Through thoughtful planning, a focus on maximizing efficiencies, and attention to the state's most valuable asset—its employees—the future looks bright. It is a great time to be a state employee.

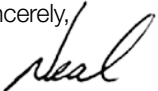
North Carolina's economy is picking up steam: unemployment is down three percentage points since Governor Pat McCrory took office; job creation is up; an increase in state revenues has generated a \$400 million surplus; and the state has paid off \$2.8 billion in unemployment insurance debt to the

federal government. The Governor and state agency leadership set the vision, but it's you, the state employee, who makes the difference and carries out the mission. Although September is Employee Appreciation Month and we'll be recognizing your accomplishments then, I want to say *THANK YOU!* now for your everyday commitment to serving the citizens of North Carolina. Your efforts matter; each and every one of you is a catalyst for positive change.

OSHR is committed to recognizing and showing appreciation for your efforts. For example, we've revamped service awards and employee recognition programs and will continue to improve them; we are in the process of rolling out a new performance management program that will help shine a light on your accomplishments; and we are placing ever greater emphasis on keeping your workplaces safe with ongoing safety training and hazard recognition initiatives – “Be a Hazard Hero!”

The bond proposal initiated by Governor McCrory is something else that should get your attention. In addition to the many benefits it would provide to the citizens of North Carolina, it would also help facilitate important state employee-related benefits. If placed on the ballot and passed, funding will go to modernize and renovate your workplaces, including college campuses, state government buildings, and state parks. Funding will also build and improve NC roads, providing you with greater access and reducing your travel times. To learn more about the bond, visit connect.nc.gov.

Please be safe in all you do each and every day. No job is so important that it can't be done safely.

Sincerely,


Neal Alexander
State Human Resources Director



Maintaining safety awareness

Safety is a top priority, but the day-to-day routines of a job sometimes cause us to overlook potentially hazardous situations. Fortunately, the Hazard Hero program has helped to change that by encouraging employees to remain vigilant in recognizing hazards.

In the March 2015 issue of *The Resource*, state employees from all agencies were challenged to find and report workplace hazards and many of you took that challenge to heart. Dozens of you went out and made our state facilities safer for yourselves, your coworkers, and the citizens of this state.

Some of you even made it fun! Members of the Black Mountain Neuro-Medical Treatment Center under the Department of Health and Human Services created a three-foot replica of the Hazard Hero and documented the hazards fixed as a result of their employees and supervisors (view pictures on Page 2).

STAY TUNED:

Hazard Hunt winners will be announced this month!



[Click here to read more about safety on Page 2](#)

HIGHLIGHTS IN THIS ISSUE

Click on a page number to read more

NC MAKEOVER

Proposed bond would revamp infrastructure

PAGE
3

COMBINED CAMPAIGN

Committee tills ground for season of giving

PAGE
4

BAND TOGETHER

Classification project will combine job classes

PAGE
6

Agencies take Hazard Hero challenge

Hazard Hunt Contest Submissions by Agency

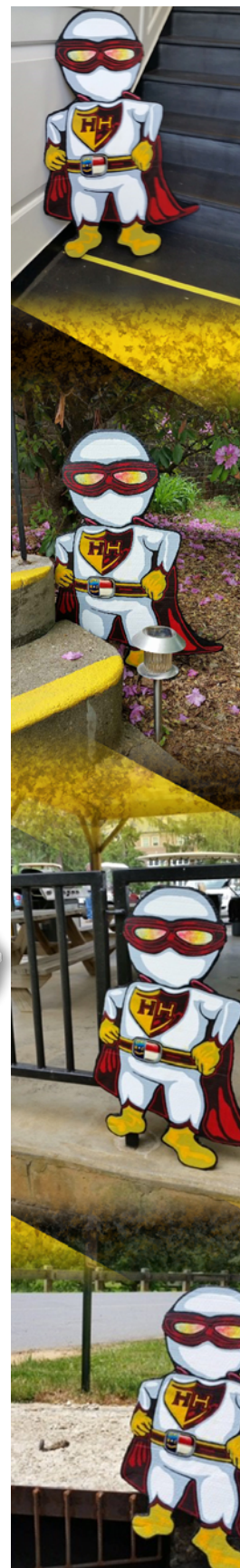
Agency	March	April	May
Community College System			2
Dept. of Administration	2	2	1
Dept. of Agriculture & Consumer Services	6	9	2
Dept. of Commerce	2		4
Dept. of Cultural Resources			1
Dept. of Environment & Natural Resources	6	8	7
Dept. of Health & Human Services	3	3	8
Dept. of Insurance	1		
Dept. of Justice			2
Dept. of Public Instruction	3	1	3
Dept. of Public Safety	5		1
Dept. of Revenue	1	1	3
Dept. of State Treasurer			1
Dept. of Transportation	9	2	5
Governor's Office	1		
North Carolina Court System	2		2
Office of State Budget Management			1
Office of State Human Resources	2	1	7
Wildlife Resources Commission	1		
Monthly Total Submissions	44	27	50
Total Contest Submissions: 121			



Click to read Governor's safety proclamation

Top 10 Hot Weather Safety Tips from the NC Department of Transportation

- Supervisors should schedule the heaviest work during the cooler morning hours whenever possible. Risk factors to consider when scheduling work:
 - high temperature
 - high humidity
 - high exertion
 - heavy loads/gear
- All employees who have not been working in a hot environment must adjust to the heat. It may take 10-14 days of gradually increasing heat exposure before employees are acclimated to working in hot conditions.
- Employees should drink two cups of water before beginning work, then 2-4 additional cups during each hour of work. Avoid caffeinated and energy drinks which contain high caffeine or sugar content. Consider consuming sports drinks when working in hot conditions for more than two hours to replace electrolytes.
- Employees should drink fluids before they feel thirsty to avoid heat-related problems.
- Employees should not take salt tablets but should get extra salt through normal meals.
- Light meals are better than fatty foods as they are easier on the digestive system.
- Frequent, short breaks in the shade are better than infrequent, long ones.
- Employees should wear proper clothing such as loosely woven cotton shirts, sunglasses, sweatbands, a hat, and proper footwear. Light-colored clothing retains less heat than dark clothing.
- Supervisors should ensure that crews have adequate water and that employees are allowed enough break time for drinking and recovery.
- Remember that a lack of sleep, alcohol use, medication use, obesity, and other health-related issues can increase the risk of heat-related injuries.



TEMPORARY SOLUTIONS



The Temporary Solutions team poses outside their new offices near downtown Raleigh.

Their mission is to provide temporary staffing services exclusively to state government in a time-efficient and cost-effective manner, enabling significant savings to the State.

[Learn more.](#)

Investing in North Carolina's future

You may have heard about a bond proposal that could be placed on the ballot this November. If approved, the \$2.85 billion will connect NC cities and towns by building roads, upgrading technology, and modernizing government facilities. About half of the funding will be used for statewide infrastructure projects and the remainder will go toward highway and other transportation projects. The projects are spread across the state; they will benefit not only NC's citizens, but also everyone who visits and does business in North Carolina.

The funding will be used to improve and enhance the beauty of our state parks, renovate buildings on college campuses, and [repair deteriorating state buildings](#) — modernizing them and making them safer and more efficient and appealing places to work. Roads throughout the state will be built and repaired to increase access, prevent bottlenecks, and help you get to your destinations safely and quickly.

Governor Pat McCrory is asking the General Assembly to put the bond measure on a statewide ballot this year. Timing is important. Interest rates are currently at historic lows; if the state waits until next year, interest rates could rise, which could cost taxpayers millions more. Governor McCrory is urging the legislature to let voters decide now. By investing in these critical projects, the Governor says we can boost economic productivity and improve our way of life.

To learn more about the bond, visit connect.nc.gov.

CONNECT.NC.GOV

"This site will serve as a central point for our citizens to learn about our plan to connect North Carolina through statewide investments in transportation, public health, education, parks, and our military."

— Governor McCrory

CONNECT NC
Investing in our future.

NC Benefits System adds new features

A new enrollment system was launched on June 1, 2015, to make it easier than ever to enroll in and make changes to your NCFlex and/or State Health Plan Benefits.

Here are some of the many new features you'll see going forward:

- **Qualifying Life Event**
You can now make that change online without going to your agency's human resource department.
- **Verifying a Dependent**
You can now upload any documentation that may be required.
- **Accessing New Useful Tools**
You can now use the online calculator to estimate your potential medical/pharmacy expenses to help determine how much is needed in your Health Care Spending Account for the New Plan Year.



- **Adding Dependent Social Security #**
You will be required to provide this information for dependents older than six months. If you have already provided it, you are ahead of the game!

Don't wait for Annual Enrollment: go ahead and navigate through the site to get familiar with it! Make sure your personal information is correct and the benefits that you signed up for are still recognized by the system. Don't wait until you need a benefit to discover it's no longer active.

If you have not already received the information to log into the system, please check with your HR Department.

Did You Know...

NCFlex benefits contributions are made through payroll deductions **before** taxes are withheld. This means that you will pay **less** in taxes.

NCFlex serves state employees in two ways:

1. It offers excellent benefits at highly competitive rates.
2. NCFlex reduces the amount of income that is taxed — you end up with more take-home income.





On May 12, 2015, the Office of State Human Resources conducted a Workers' Compensation training session for Workers' Compensation Administrators working in community colleges across the state.

Attendees had some great things to say about the training:

"This is a great program that I found extremely useful!"

The Workers' Compensation team at OSHR will continue to provide training sessions and other WCA information-sharing opportunities as part of the State's Workers' Compensation Consolidation Project.

Streamlining Workers' Compensation

The Office of State Human Resources is continuing to evaluate best practices for managing the state's Workers' Compensation function, particularly within Cabinet Agencies. The goal is to develop a more efficient Workers' Compensation claims process that will not only continue to provide injured state employees with the best possible medical treatment and lost-wages benefits, but also make the best use of state resources and taxpayer dollars.

OSHR has been hard at work gathering feedback and consolidating best business practices from some of the state's top Workers' Compensation experts. A Workers' Compensation Consolidation Core Team has been formed to do this work. This team meets regularly to host multi-agency work sessions. Their mission is to get all the necessary policies and procedures in place to ensure a smooth transition in the short term and more consistent and effective operations in the long term.

2015 State Employees Combined Campaign: "Make It Grow"

The 2015 State Employees Combined Campaign (SECC) doesn't begin for several more months, but plans are already underway to ensure this year's campaign is a success.

Director Neal Alexander, Office of State Human Resources, and Secretary Donald van der Vaart, Department of Environment and Natural Resources, are this year's Chair and Co-Chair. Over the past several months, they've met with the SECC State Advisory Committee and SECC Marketing Sub-Committee to discuss ideas for this year's campaign and explore strategies to help encourage participation, including expanding ways for employees to give.

This year's theme is "Make It Grow." We will break through the \$100 million total contributions milestone this year and hope to grow well beyond it. Our contributions will bring long-lasting benefits to individuals in need and to our communities.

Over the next few weeks, the committee will finish the design and printing of the campaign materials including the 2015 Giving Guide, pledge forms, and posters. Campaign leaders and volunteers will meet for training sessions in Raleigh and across North Carolina. The SECC Statewide Campaign Kick-off is set for August 14, 2015.



Governor honors church's dedication to special needs children

In April, the Brooks Avenue Church of Christ in Raleigh held its 15th Annual Spring Carnival for Children with Special Needs. Paula Woodhouse, Deputy Director of the Office of State Human Resources, started the church's outreach ministry with her late husband, Barry Woodhouse.



State Human Resources Director Neal Alexander presents Paula Woodhouse with the Governor's signed proclamation.

The carnival is a chance for families to have a fun-filled, relaxing day while providing resources and information to help the parents of special needs children feel connected and empowered to advocate for their children.

Governor Pat McCrory proclaimed April 11, 2015, Special Needs Day at Brooks Avenue Church of Christ.

**Do you know a
state employee
who goes above
and beyond?**

*Don't forget
to **nominate**
that person by
June 15, 2015!*



Next stage of NCVIP kicks off in July

What's on the Horizon for Performance Management?

North Carolina Valuing Individual Performance (NCVIP), the state-wide performance management (PM) policy and process, will officially go into effect on July 1, 2015. Human Resources (HR) teams in your agencies have been highly engaged in NCVIP to ensure a successful implementation within your agency.



What does this mean for you?

The standard NCVIP performance cycle is July 1 to June 30. This means that agencies are gearing up for, or are already engaged in, Stage One of the NCVIP process: Performance Planning.

In Stage One, Performance Planning, each employee will create a Performance Plan in the NC Learning Center. The plan will include 3-5 individual goals written in the SMART (Specific, Measurable, Attainable, Relevant, Time-bound) format. Your Performance Plan will also include Organizational Values, which relate to how you accomplish your responsibilities and goals. For example, are you behaving in a safe and ethical manner and are you communicating effectively with coworkers and customers? For the upcoming performance cycle, there will be three Statewide Core Values: Customer Service, Safety & Health, and Diversity & Inclusion. Your agency may also select additional Organizational Values for your Performance Plan.

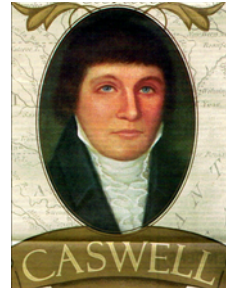
In addition to Performance Planning, you may also be asked to complete NCVIP training online and/or in a classroom setting. There are a variety of learning resources available to help you better understand the NCVIP policy, process, and technology.

There are many improvements on the horizon for performance management in North Carolina state government! OSHR's NCVIP team looks forward to its continued partnership with your agency HR teams to ensure a successful implementation.

Honoring long-serving employees

North Carolina has long been noted for loyal and dedicated employees who provide valuable services in all areas of State Government. The Caswell Award is designed to acknowledge and express appreciation for that dedicated service. This award is often presented at the agency level, but this year there are more than 40 employees receiving this award, so the Office of State Human Resources is hosting a ceremony at the State Capitol on August 13, 2015.

The Governor Richard Caswell Award Program was established in 1998. Like the recipients of his namesake award, Governor Caswell dedicated most of his adult life to North Carolina. He started his career as the Clerk of Courts in Orange County before serving in the military during the Revolutionary War. He then became North Carolina's 1st and 5th Governor, serving from 1776-1780 and again from 1784-1787, acting as state controller between the two terms. Caswell was a delegate to the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia in 1787 and then served as a state senator until his death at age 60.



Employees are eligible for this award who:

- Have completed a total of 45 years of state service
- Are in good standing with no unresolved disciplinary actions
- Are employees of the State's executive and judicial branches, universities, or the General Assembly

Caswell Awards recipients will receive invitations at the beginning of July for the ceremony honoring their 45 or more years of service.

Combating underage drinking



It's not always easy to talk to teenagers and young adults about underage drinking. For some parents, this is an uncomfortable conversation to have with their children. But starting the conversation early is critical to helping children understand the dangers of underage drinking, according to the Alcohol Beverage Control Commission. The reason? Children are exposed to alcohol at a much younger age than parents may realize. According to several reports cited by the commission, the average age that most youths try alcohol for the first time is before they even turn 14. In fact, more kids try alcohol for the first time in middle school than in high school.

To combat the problem, the commission launched a statewide campaign called "Talk It Out" last year, with the support of Governor McCrory. This year, the commission has teamed up with OSHR and other organizations to highlight the seriousness of underage drinking. This month, Talk It Out will introduce OutReach Toolkits. The Toolkit empowers local groups to raise awareness in their communities.

[Learn more](#) about ways you can help prevent underage drinking.



Project consolidates job classes

Employees subject to the State Human Resources Act fall primarily under two compensation systems, both of which need updating. About two-thirds of state agency employees are in the “graded” system and one-third are in the “banded” system (university system employees are all banded). The Statewide Compensation System Project will create one unified system with one set of salary administration policies for all positions at all agencies.

Some of the goals of the Project include:

- Enact salary structures more aligned with labor market data
- Allow for more consistent means to progress within a level
- Reduce the number of classifications for easier administration
- Update the classification/occupational structure (job families and branches)
- Introduce salary policies that will allow for market-based increases and performance pay

- Collect current position description information in order to make classification decisions in the new system
- Modernize the collection and analysis of position descriptions using new technology
- Modernize the collection and analysis of labor market data at OSHR using new technology

Agencies have already begun collecting updated position descriptions using the technology tool, PeopleAdmin, and will continue to do so through the end of the summer. New salary structures are being developed using the market analysis tool, MarketPay, and these should also be completed by the end of the summer. We are also in the process of developing new classifications and should have these set up by the end of 2015. Updated salary administration policies will be put in place in 2016.

[Learn more](#) about the project on our website, or contact your agency’s Human Resources office.

OSHR highlights more Cool Jobs

From inspecting elevators and rides to helping people manage mental health challenges, click on any of the pictures below to see state employees who love what they do.



NORTH CAROLINA MUSEUM OF HISTORY

State Employees Get FREE Admission to Blockbuster Exhibit

Saturday, June 6

The Museum of History in Raleigh extends a special invitation to all North Carolina state employees: Saturday, June 6, get FREE admission to the blockbuster exhibit “Starring North Carolina!” Bring your state ID badge to the Museum Shop to get your ticket.

And there’s more . . . exhibit admission is half-price the entire month of June, so ask your friends and family to join you and take advantage of this special offer!

NCMOH-starring.com



UPCOMING EVENT

Summer starts soon and there are great discounts for you and your family! Log in to [WeSave](#), your very own savings ticket. Enjoy travel deals and discounts to theme parks such as Carowinds, Kings Dominion, Six Flags, and Busch Gardens.

WeSave also offers discount tickets to movies, Broadway shows, car rentals, Falls Village Golf Course greens fees, and many more activities.

Take advantage of your WeSave membership today!



Share your best savings tips and be entered to win an iPad Mini. Email your tip to news@wesave.com. The drawing is on July 4, 2015.

Do you have any suggestions or story ideas?
Email us at The.Resource@nc.gov.

