

RIVER BEND NEWS

FROM TOWN HALL

www.riverbendnc.org



The Evolution of River Bend Governance

BY MAYOR JOHN KIRKLAND

The Town of River Bend was incorporated in 1981 and its charter specified the Mayor–Council form of government. Under this system each member of the Council was tasked with the oversight of a different aspect of Town operations, such as public safety (Police Department); public works; parks and recreation; etc.

This system was somewhat hampered by the fact that decisions on expenditures previously approved in the budget still required a Council vote, thus deferring action to scheduled Council meetings. This weakness made orderly execution of budgeted projects difficult. By 1999 the Council began a deliberate study of the advantages of changing the Town’s governance to the Council–Manager form. After a great deal of research and interviews with a manager from another North Carolina municipality, the sitting Council voted unanimously to call a referendum vote on the proposal to hire a manager. This vote was held in the fall of 2001. The citizens of River Bend voted in favor of adopting the Manager–Council form of government, and the Town’s charter was changed appropriately.

“The citizens of River Bend voted in favor of adopting the Manager–Council form of government, and the Town’s charter was changed appropriately.”

More than thirty applicants submitted resumes for the advertised Town Manager position. A panel of citizens, the Mayor and several Council members reviewed all applications and selected a group of three candidates to invite for formal interviews. Our first manager was selected and onboard by February 18, 2002.

Since the Town’s 1981 incorporation, the Councilmen and Mayor were elected to serve two-year terms. In 2003 the Council debated a proposal to request that the General Assembly change the Town’s charter so that Town officials would be

INSIDE THIS EDITION

- MAYOR’S REPORT
PAGE 1
- TOWN MANAGER’S REPORT
PAGE 3
- ZONING REPORT
PAGE 4
- WRD/PW REPORT
PAGE 6
- WHAT’S HAPPEN’N
(AROUND) RIVER BEND
PAGE 7
- COMING EVENTS
PAGE 11
- LEAF & LIMB SCHEDULE
PAGE 12
- POLICE REPORT
PAGE 13
- GOLF CART REGISTRATION
PAGE 14
- 2011 ANIMAL REGISTRATION
PAGE 14
- ETCETERA
PAGE 14

elected for Staggered Terms. This means that the mayor and two Council members would be elected in one cycle and the next cycle three Council Members would stand for election. After this change was accomplished a citizen's petition resulted in a call for a referendum on the staggered term issue. The referendum resolved that the election cycle would remain with four-year staggered terms.

The Council-Manager form of government has demonstrated many positive aspects, specifically:

1. The Manager is the supervisor of all Town employees. This makes for clear lines of authority and more effective utilization of employee time.

"The Manager is the supervisor of all Town employees. This makes for clear lines of authority and more effective utilization of employee time."

2. The Council, Manager and staff develop the annual budget during a number of meetings. Once the budget is formally adopted by the Council, the Manager is able to proceed with the execution of the approved projects and procurements in an orderly and efficient manner.

3. The Manager, through contacts with government organizations and other managers, is aware of developing issues that will impact the Town. Early awareness of such issues allows appropriate response.

Under the Mayor-Council form of government, issues could pass without the Town being alerted to developing opportunities and possible problems.

"The Manager is available to answer citizen questions as they arise rather than waiting for a scheduled assembly of the Council."

4. The Manager is available to answer citizen questions as they arise rather than waiting for a scheduled assembly of the Council.

Manager Drew Havens has been with the Town for nearly four years. He has continued to very effectively move the Town's administrative effectiveness to a level that has achieved state-wide recognition. Clearly, River Bend has benefited from the change in governance to the Council-Manager form we now enjoy. ●



TOWN MANAGER'S REPORT

BY TOWN MANAGER DREW HAVENS

As the first budget workshop approaches, the staff is busy documenting needs and gathering information in order to present to the Town Council recommendations regarding the fiscal year 2011–12 budget. The approach used by the Town is truly an open and transparent process involving advisory boards, citizens, staff, and elected officials. Our goal is to present the best information available to the Town Council regarding the operation of the Town and its water and sewer enterprises as they make decisions regarding the upcoming fiscal year. We get our direction from the Council during the retreat in November and heed this direction as a draft budget is prepared. While this process is laborious, and involves upwards of 16 hours of public meetings, it is one that produces a workable and informed budget to guide the Town through the next year.

We are nearly done with all our fiscal year 2011 projects. We will be making some improvements to the Springdale park area this spring, and will install some fitness stations near the walking trail on Town Commons. The latter project is funded through a grant from Craven County. Thanks to some fund raising by members of the Parks and Recreation Advisory Board, we will install an outdoor water fountain on Town Commons. This will allow users of the basketball court, walking trail, and other amenities, the ability to get a refreshing drink of water while enjoying their activities.

One of the projects we undertook this year was to work with an architectural firm to have them conduct a community survey and to use the results of this survey, their professional experience and interviews with town staff to formulate a facilities needs analysis. This analysis

includes current and/or potential needs for recreational or community event facilities, and for administrative facilities. The architect met with the Town Council at its retreat in February and will make a presentation to, and receive comments from, the public at the Town Council meeting on March 17th. This public input session is the final part of the work they will do. Soon after this session, we will receive their final recommendations to factor into our ongoing planning efforts.

The residents and business of River Bend have an opportunity to express their

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interest in receiving natural gas service. We had a discussion with a representative from Piedmont Natural Gas about the possibility of having them extend their lines to serve one of the larger energy users in Town, and they expressed an interest in speaking with more potential users. They will need to conduct an analysis to see if it is financially feasible to extend service to all of River Bend. There will be a community forum on Monday, March 28th at 7:00 p.m. in Town Hall where residents can hear from the representative from Piedmont, and let them know the level of interest our residents have in getting natural gas to their homes.

"As always, many thanks to those who volunteer to help in this community. From appointed boards/commissions, to an active Community Watch, to others who quietly lend their assistance, River Bend is a great community because of the combined efforts of all."

As always, many thanks to the members of all our advisory boards and the countless other volunteers who do so much for this community. Whether it is the folks who pick up roadside litter on their morning walk, those who spend their hours serving in the Community Watch, or those who serve on a formal board, this community is better because you serve. It is truly my pleasure to serve you and to serve with you. ●



ZONING REPORT
BY CHRIS SANTOS
ASSISTANT ZONING ADMINISTRATOR
AND FLOOD PLAIN MANAGER

My position as Assistant Zoning Administrator and Flood Plain Administrator for River Bend involves several duties. One of my primary responsibilities includes issuing zoning permits for our residents. For the month of February, 2 permits were issued in the zoning and floodplain development department. These permits included a sign and a screened porch addition. Permit fees for February totaled \$44.00

Even though it may not seem like it, spring is right around the corner which means hurricane season is nearly upon us. As we all know, with hurricanes comes heavy rains and winds pushing the waters inland which can cause flooding. Should you have concerns about flooding, or if you would like information on techniques to make your home more resistant to flooding, please contact me immediately to schedule an appointment. Flooding causes enormous amounts of damage each year and, while we can't always prevent floods from happening, there are many things we can do to help alleviate and mitigate damages should such an event occur. Should you not have flood insurance on your home

and personal belongings, please feel free to contact me to discuss flood insurance and your options. Please know that the sooner you do, the better as there is a 30-day waiting period after the purchase of flood insurance for it to become effective. I strongly urge everyone in our community to get flood insurance; even if you don't live in the 100-year flood zone. As we all know, flooding can happen anywhere.

For all of our residents, please know that residents or contractors

must secure a permit before beginning any construction project. Our most typical projects include new construction, garages, driveways, utility buildings, porches, decks, pools, fences, and drainage structures, but these are not the only items that require a permit. Please call Town Hall before starting work on any project. The Town of River Bend works closely with the Craven County Planning and Inspections Department on all construction projects; Craven County will not issue a building permit until a contractor or resident provides a River Bend Permit. They also will not issue a Certificate of Occupancy until you present a Certificate of Zoning Compliance from River Bend for your completed project. All areas of River Bend, including our extraterritorial jurisdictions, must comply with our Land Use Ordinance. If you, or someone you know, are thinking about doing any work to your property, please contact me at 638-3870 ext. 216 so that all necessary paperwork can

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be completed. Please, also, share this information with your neighbors and, most especially, new residents if you should learn that they are about to begin any type of construction project.

Enforcement of the Town Code and Land Use Ordinances are essential to the

well being of the Town and its residents. If you are aware of a violation, please contact me immediately at 638-3870 ext. 216. If I am unavailable to help you, the Police Department is an essential tool in helping to enforce Town Ordinances; feel free to contact them at 638-1108. ●



WRD/PW JANUARY REPORT

BY CHRISTINA M. MASSENGILL
SUPERINTENDENT
WATER RESOURCES/PUBLIC WORKS

January is the month that we begin to gather pricing and other information to prepare for the new budget. Public Works and Water Resources staff has been collecting budget information while keeping up with their regular duties. It is very important for staff members to collect as much information as possible in order for the Town Manager to present the information collected in a clear and informative way to the Mayor and Council for approval.

With the cold, rainy weather January brought us, Public Works has been doing some inside work. Allen, Mike, and Brandon have been cleaning the Tractor Bays and old shop areas. We now have more room in the Tractor Bays than we ever thought of having. We can actually fit the tractor, John Deere, and the boat if needed under the bay area now. The old shop is being moved to the newly renovated garage area beside the Water Resources/Public Works Office on Wildwood Drive. Allen and Mike have been working very hard to build work benches and install lighting in the new shop to house all of the shop tools and equipment. We hope to have everything completed by the end of February, just in time to begin picnic table repairs and build trash can holders for the Town parks.

Other duties this month consist of sign installation and replacement. Our vandals are at it again! Public Works has replaced or repaired several signs in Town due to theft or damage. Most of the sign replacement and damage occurred in the Randomwood, Rockledge, and Pinewood areas. Some were damaged beyond repair and had to be replaced and the others just disappeared. Replacing these signs over and over again can become very costly to the Town. If you notice someone removing or damaging Town property, please report the damage as soon as possible to the Police Department at 638-1108. You will also notice that Public Works has installed several "Please Clean Up After Your Pet" signs in and around the Bark Park. Public Works has received several complaints regarding people failing to clean up after their dogs have relieved themselves inside the park. If these kinds of actions continue, Public Works will be forced to lock the gates and if you plan to use the Bark Park you will need to let the Assistant Town Clerk know or if the Town Hall is closed call the River Bend Police at 638-1108. The same rules apply in the Bark

"Replacing these signs over and over again can become very costly to the Town. If you notice someone removing or damaging Town property, please report the damage as soon as possible to the Police Department at 638-1108."

Park as they do when you walk your dog around Town on a leash. Please pick up after your pet as a courtesy to your neighbors and friends who use this park to allow their dogs to exercise and socialize with other dogs.

Water Resources has been busy assisting Kevin Weber (Weber Construction) with the installation of the new rest room at the Wastewater Treatment Plant (WWTP). Public Works Technician Mike Steffa has been installing all the electric for the lights, exhaust fan, and water heater. Brandon and Tommy have been installing the plumbing to the shower, sink, and toilet. We plan to complete this project in early February.

“Utility Services came in this month to begin the media cleaning project at Well #3. This project has proven to increase water quality, and we plan to budget to have the filters cleaned and inspected every six years.”

Utility Services came in this month to begin the media cleaning project at Well #3. This project has proven to increase water quality, and we plan to budget to have the filters cleaned and inspected every six years.

If you have any questions concerning the Water Resources/Public Works Department, please call us at 638-3540, 8:00 AM until 4:00 PM , Monday through Friday. After-hours water and sewer emergencies can be reported by dialing the Town Hall at 638-3870. You will be instructed to then dial “9” and follow the directions to contact the on-call duty operator. You will then be asked to enter your phone number at the sound of the tone. After entering your phone number, the automated system will inform you that your page has been sent. Please be patient and our utility operator will return your call. If you do not receive a call back within ten minutes, please notify the Police Department at 638-1108. ●



**What's Happen'n
(around River Bend)**
BY COUNCILMAN PHIL SEYMOUR

Bloated Budget? A resident recently attended a social event sponsored by a local group and related that the discussion at this meeting was, among other things, the Town's “bloated budget.” This resident related that among the examples cited was the number of police officers we employ and the fact that we have a Town Manager. He then asked if there was any substance to these assertions. I briefly explained why I did not believe this to be the case and invited this gentleman to have a little “sit down” where we could discuss in greater depth some of the specifics of the concerns raised by the chairperson of this meeting.

Before addressing some of the specifics raised, I would note that the Town's budget session are, as required by law, all "open" meetings, that is to say, that our residents are welcome to attend – in fact are encouraged to attend – so that they (you) are part of the discussion process that takes place during all stages of establishing our Town's budget. Because this process establishes not only how much funding will be allotted for each Town function, e.g., Police Department, Public Works, Administrative, etc., but how much we need to cover these departments, etc., with our Town's property taxes, it's obviously of serious concern to all of our citizens. Similarly, the need to set our Town's water and sewer rates during these sessions is also of immediate concern to our residents. As such, I'm always surprised, and a bit disappointed, when so few of our residents actually attend any or all of these meetings and participate in the discussions that take place in performing this vital Town function. But possibly of even greater consequence is the fact that, by attending these sessions, our residents who do attend and participate come away with a greater understanding of precisely why and where their tax dollars are committed. It's unfortunate that, as in the past, those few individuals who routinely criticize the Town's budget or its processes are precisely those who did not avail themselves of the opportunity to attend and participate during these budget sessions. Now, addressing some of the specifics:

"... by attending these sessions, our residents who do attend and participate come away with a greater understanding of precisely why and where their tax dollars are committed."

"Criminal activity does not limit itself to daylight hours and many criminals prefer to conduct their business under the cover of darkness. That's simply a fact of life."

Is The Police Department Too Large?

Several years ago, the Town Council determined that the Town would go to a 24/7 police coverage schedule. Criminal activity does not limit itself to daylight hours and many criminals prefer to conduct their business under the cover of darkness. That's simply a fact of life. We're fortunate that we now enjoy a relatively safe community, yet how many of our residents would prefer that we not have our police officers patrolling at night while we're home in bed? Or while we're away traveling? During the daytime? Would it not encourage those inclined to commit break-ins (or other illegal activity) to do so precisely when our police were NOT present and actively patrolling our Town's streets? Ask yourself, "Would I feel

more or less safe in my home if the Town reduced its police coverage and had periods when no police officer was available?" I suspect we would all feel less safe!

We employ five-full police officers: our Chief, two sergeants, and two patrol officers. Additionally, we employ one part-time officer to fill in when any of our full-time officers are sick, on leave, transporting a suspect to jail or a person into voluntary or involuntary commitment, testifying in court, or otherwise unavailable to perform their routine duties. This combination permits us to cover our Town each of the 168 hours each week of each month – that's 24 hours a day, seven days a week! Our staffing model is much more "lean" as compared to our peer municipalities that staff their police force 24/7. Those municipalities of similar size to River Bend typically require seven full-time officers to provide this level of coverage; we do it with five full-time and one part-time officers. How much does our staffing model save our taxpayers? We save approximately \$100,000 per year inclusive of salary and benefits (exclusive of uniforms, training, and equipment). In my opinion, this is not an example of a bloated police budget!

"Ask yourself, "Would I feel more or less safe in my home if the Town reduced its police coverage and had periods when no police officer was available?"

Do we need a Town Manager? Some municipalities have a Mayor–Council form of government; others have a Council–Manager form. Ours is the latter. About ten or eleven years ago, in a simpler time and place, the Town Council recognized that they, as part-time Council members, lacked the qualifications that were becoming increasingly necessary in order to govern our Town effectively. Council members, both when this decision was made and equally so today, are, in effect, simply Town residents who have volunteered to govern our municipality to the best of their ability. We come from various backgrounds and possess a multitude of skills, some of

"Also, as part-time elected officials, we have other commitments that detract from our ability to address the increasingly complex issues that have proliferated over the last decade."

which relate to our Council duties, but many do not. Also, as part-time elected officials, we have other commitments that detract from our ability to address the increasingly complex issues that have proliferated over the last decade.

Myriad statutory requirements, in addition to new federal and state mandates relating to stormwater control, the Town's fresh water supply, our wastewater treatment plant, legal issues/lawsuits, etc. have mushroomed in past years. Hence the decision – and in my humble opinion, a wise decision – to retain the services of a profes-

sionally trained, full-time Town Manager whose job it is to manage the multitude of tasks and responsibilities that we are neither trained for nor for which we are constantly “on scene,” as is often required.

Additionally, the Town Manager’s responsibilities include oversight of the Town staff and associated personnel issues, zoning matters, financial and budgetary issues (to include the formulation of the budget presentation to the Mayor and Town Council), public works project supervision and decision making in the face of repeated state and federal unfunded mandates requiring increasingly technical – and expensive – testing, reporting, etc., rapid response action, often on short-term basis, to ensure continuity of water and sewer services to our residents, contracting matters, interfacing with the Town Engineer and others over technical issues affecting our Town, etc., etc., etc.

If it’s not apparent on its face, these issues and responsibilities are beyond the expertise of all but the most qualified elected official. I graduated with a degree in Business Management with

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highest honors and am a retired attorney. Nevertheless I still am not qualified to perform the plethora of tasks that our Town Manager now handles. I suspect that the other Councilmen feel the same. And, given the proclivity of many people in today’s society to sue over any issue imaginable, it is absolutely essential that we have a trained and educated professional to effectively manage the Town’s affairs. To do otherwise would invite costly litigation that serves only to drive up the tax rate of our residents. Additionally, as is the case with the police coverage discussed above, no one has come before the Town Council in my five years there to argue that they want less protection by our police or fewer Town services with regard to their water supply and sewage discharge.

The other Councilmen and I (and the Mayor as well) are all taxpayers just like yourselves and each of us wants to keep our (and your) tax and enterprise rates as low as humanly possible. Each of your elected representatives is of the same mind when it comes to the absolute necessity of having our Town’s manager and do not believe any elected official, past or present, could perform the duties as effectively as our Town Manager does. Do we have any second thoughts on the earlier decision to switch to a Council–Manager form of government? None whatsoever! ●

COMING EVENTS

*Work Session
March 10, 2011
7:00 P. M.
Town Hall*

*Council Meeting
March 17, 2011
7:00 P. M.
Town Hall*

*March 17, 2011
Public Presentation
Facilities Needs Analysis
7:00 P. M.
Town Hall*

*Community Forum
Piedmont Natural Gas
Monday, March 28
7:00 P. M.
Town Hall*

*Zone 1
Leaf & Limb Pick Up
Begins
March 21, 2011
begin placing debris at street on
March 16*

*Zone 2
Leaf & Limb Pick Up
Begins
March 28, 2011
begin placing debris at street on
March 23*



**RIVER BEND
NEWS**

FROM TOWN HALL
is published monthly by the
River Bend Town Council for
the residents of the Town of
River Bend.

MAYOR
John Kirkland

TOWN COUNCIL
Bert Linkonis
Phil Seymour
Charlie Sharpe
Irving "Bud" Van Slyke, Jr.
Karl Wolfer

TOWN MANAGER
Drew Havens

TOWN CLERK
Ann Katsuyoshi

FINANCE ADMINISTRATOR
Margaret Marshburn

POLICE CHIEF
Earl "Duke" Pratt

**WATER RESOURCES/
PUBLIC WORKS
SUPERINTENDENT**
Christina Massengill

**ASSISTANT
ZONING ADMINISTRATOR**
Chris Santos

**GRAPHIC DESIGN &
TYPOGRAPHY**
Kathleen De Young

Contact Us:
45 Shoreline Drive
River Bend, NC 28562
252.638-3870
www.riverbendnc.org

**Leaf & Limb
Collection
Schedule for
2010-2011**

Residents may begin
placing their yard debris
street side on the dates
indicated in parentheses

Zone 1 Pick Up Begins

March 21, 2011

(March 16)

May 16, 2011

(May 11)

Zone 2 Pick Up Begins

March 28, 2011

(March 22)

May 23, 2011

(May 18)

Pinecones, pine straw and
leaves must be bagged. For
additional important infor-
mation about River Bend's
Leaf & Limb collection
program, please see our
Ordinance online at www.riverbendnc.org. ■

**Town Council
2011 Meeting Dates**

Work Session January 13
Regular Meeting January 20

Council Retreat February 1
Work Session February 10
Regular Meeting February 17

Budget Meeting..... March 8
Work Session March 10
Budget Meeting..... March 15
Regular Meeting March 17
Budget Meeting..... March 22
Budget Meeting..... March 29

Budget Meeting..... April 5
Budget Meeting..... April 12
Work Session April 14
Budget Meeting..... April 19
Regular Meeting April 21

Council Retreat May 3
Work Session May 12
Regular Meeting May 19

Work Session June 9
Regular Meeting June 16

Work Session July 14
Regular Meeting July 21

Council Retreat August 2
Work Session August 11
Regular Meeting August 18

Work Session September 8
Regular Meeting September 15

Work Session October 13
Regular Meeting October 20

Council Retreat November 1
Work Session November 10
Regular Meeting November 17

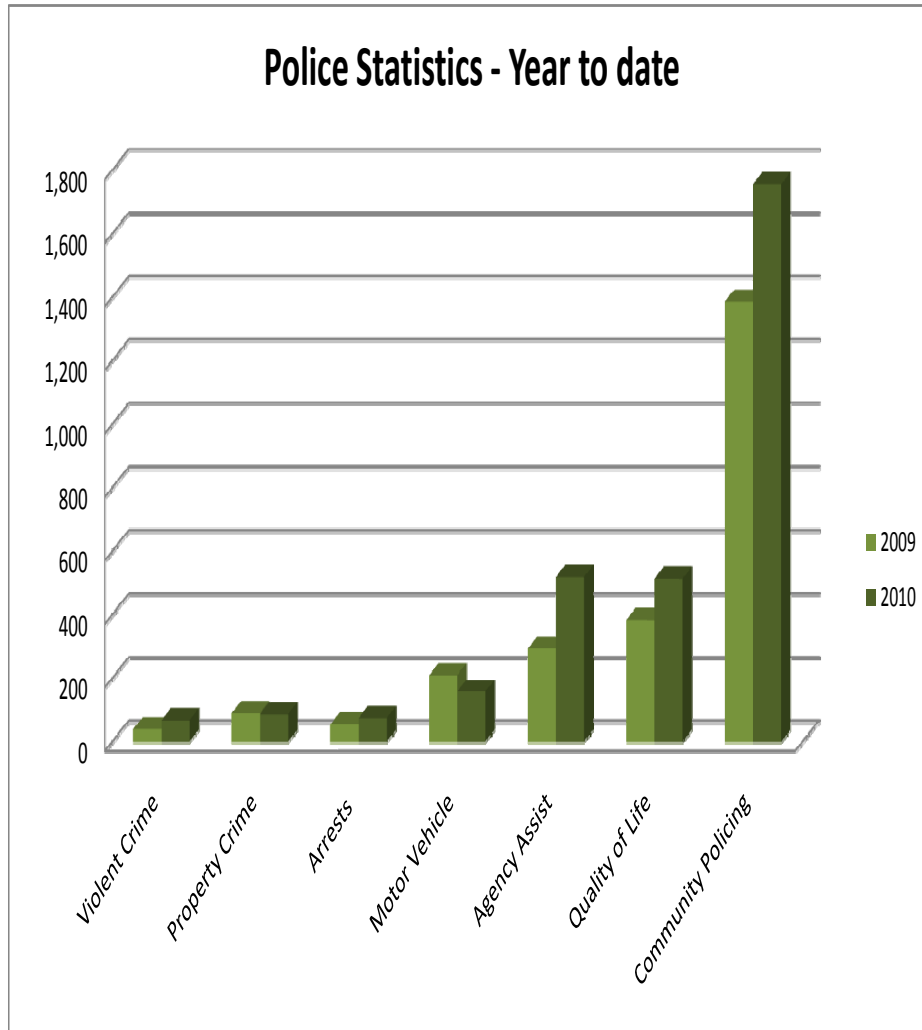
Work Session December 8
Regular Meeting December 15



POLICE REPORT
EARL "DUKE" PRATT
CHIEF OF POLICE

CYTD REPORT as of December 2010

	2009	2010
Violent Crime	40	68
Property Crime	91	87
Arrests	56	75
Motor Vehicle	210	158
Agency Assist	293	520
Quality of Life	384	515
Community Policing	1,387	1,757
Total Activity	2,461	3,180



- Violent Crime: Includes Assault, Robbery, and Domestic
- Property Crime: Includes B&E, Identity Theft, Larcenies, Property Damage
- Arrests: Includes Summonses, Subpoena, and Involuntary Commitments
- Motor Vehicle: Includes Crashes, Warnings, Citations, and Complaints
- Agency Assist: Includes other Law Enforcement, EMS/First Responders, and Fire
- Quality of Life: Animal Complaints, Littering, Loud Music/Noise, Soliciting, Town Ordinance Citations and Warnings
- Community Policing: Includes Alarms, Assist Citizens, Assist Motorists, Juvenile Complaints, Missing Persons, Residential Checks, Roadway Debris, Suspicious Persons, Trespassing, Weapons & Hunting Violations, Welfare Checks



Animal Registration Underway

River Bend 2011 Animal Registrations are due by March 31, 2011. All River Bend dogs and cats must be registered annually.

You may register your pets at Town Hall beginning Tuesday, January 4, 2011.

Office hours are Monday through Friday, 8:00 a.m. through 4:00 p.m. The registration fee is \$6.00 per pet. Owners are required to present a current rabies vaccination certificate at the time of registration.



Town ordinances allow for residents to drive their properly equipped golf carts on River Bend streets provided that they are inspected by and registered with our Police Department.

Inspection and registration are required annually. Registration for 2011 will begin in December. The registration fee for each golf cart is \$10.

For additional information and to make your inspection reservation, please call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.



River Bend has a very active Community Watch program, supported by our Police Department. If you are interested in volunteering, call the River Bend Police Department at 638-3870.



Solicitation List Update

In accordance with the Town of River Bend Code of Ordinances, § 13.01.006, "Regulation of Solicitors," the Town is currently updating its lists of residents who would like to receive solicitations at their door.

Door-to-door solicitation will be permitted only at those addresses on the list. To add your name to the list of those wishing to receive solicitors please call the Town Clerk at 638-3870, ext. 202 or e-mail her at townclerk@riverbendnc.org. Those residents who do not wish to receive solicitors need do nothing.



This spring, the Arbor Day Foundation awarded the Town of River Bend the Tree City USA designation for a second consecutive year. We are one of only 76 communities in North Carolina to achieve this designation. To learn more about Tree City USA, visit our web site.



Our Wildwood Storage Facility offers a variety of indoor and outdoor storage areas to meet all of your storage needs, including parking spaces for RVs and boats. For more information, call 638-3870, ext 216.



If you have a medical condition for which you require any type of special medical care during a disaster or if your medical condition requires assistance to evacuate during a disaster, you may wish to apply to Craven County for their Special Needs Registry. The River Bend Police Department can provide you with the appropriate form and provide some basic information about the County's program.

DOG PARK AT RIVER BEND



River Bend dogs have their own exercise area where they can play with other canines. Situated between the Town Park and Ritter Field, the dog park gives dogs a chance to run while their owners socialize.

The park is open from sunrise to sunset for dogs with proof of current vaccinations. Separate exercise areas accommodate large and small dogs.

For complete list of rules applicable to dog park use, please visit Town Hall for a brochure or view details on our web site at www.riverbendnc.org. Dog park rules are also posted at the entrance to the park.



River Bend has a skateboard park to meet the needs of some of our more athletic residents.

A signed parental approval form is required and helmet use is strictly enforced. For more information about the skateboard park, visit our web site or call the River Bend Police Department at 638-1108.

Sign up for our
Emergency Notification System
 and receive timely emergency notifications by telephone, cell phone and e-mail.

SIGN UP NOW
 at riverbendnc.org

this service provided by the Town of River Bend through
Connect-CTY