



CENTRALINA

REGIONAL COUNCIL

THE CENTRAL LINES

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UPCOMING EVENTS

March 14	Centralina AAA Webinar: Care in the Long Term
March 14	Centralina Workforce Development Meeting
March 15	Centralina Regional Managers Meeting
March 23	Centralina Learns: Transportation in a Post Pandemic World
March 30	Alzheimer's Disease and Dementia Care Training
Save the Date - Centralina Learns	Medical Marijuana: Planning for Legalization (April 20) Grant Writing Workshop (May 18)

CAPITOL CORNER

**Following the Farm Bill - Nutrition,
Conservation and More**



The Farm Bill is the primary piece of legislation that determines our nation's food and agriculture policy. This historically bipartisan five-year authorization bill is set to expire on September 30, 2023, and contains both mandatory and discretionary spending. It has a tremendous impact on both rural and urban communities, farming livelihoods, and food economies, which affect

local and regional economic growth as well as the environment and public health.

[Continue Reading](#)

FEATURED ARTICLES

Celebrating Women's History Month

Director Spotlight: Geraldine Gardner



March is Women's History Month, a time to reflect on and honor the contributions of women in American history. In celebration of the work and accomplishments of women who have paved the way for progress and equality, we're highlighting Centralina's first female Executive Director, Geraldine Gardner. We sat down with Geraldine to learn more about her journey as a woman working in local government and her advice to women aspiring to have successful careers.

[Learn More About Geraldine](#)

Women in Workforce



Women's History Month celebrates the contributions women have made to the United States and recognize the specific achievements women have made over the course of American history in a variety of fields. In

honor of Women's History Month, the Centralina Workforce Development Board (WDB) is celebrating "Women in Workforce," highlighting leading women in the Centralina WDB region and their contributions to the workforce.

[Read the Interviews](#)

Anna Rice Wins Region of Excellence Aging in Action Award



In the spirit of honoring the work of women in our community, we're highlighting Statesville's Anna Rice, this year's Region of Excellence Aging in Action award winner for her outstanding 45+ years of service with Iredell Council of Aging. Rice's dedication, fiscal responsibility and support for her staff and the seniors they serve has had a lasting impact on the community and the aging network in NC. We took time to talk with Anna about her exemplary career and ask her how other women aspiring to careers working with older adults can grow and succeed as she has.

[Learn More About Anna](#)

Transit as a Women's Issue

While transportation choices benefit the entire community, gendered differences emerge when considering issues such as poverty and earnings, how women are employed and caretaker roles for children and aging parents. As we collaborate, plan and lead to benefit our communities and strengthen our region, making sure women are around the table and have a voice in planning and decision-making processes is a critical first step. In 2019, Michelle Nance, Centralina Regional Planning Director, and Emily Scott-Cruz, Transportation Planner II for AECOM, explored this very topic in their article, "Transit as a Women's Issue" published in the Carolina Planning Journal. The article focuses on why transportation – and public transportation in particular – is important to women and how transportation and transit planners can make transportation more effective and successful by centering women in all phases of transit planning, design and operations.



[Read the Carolina Planning Journal Article](#)

Centralina Learns: Affordable Housing

& The Missing Middle Recap



Access to affordable housing is essential to cultivating healthy, equitable and prosperous communities. The lasting impacts of the COVID-19 pandemic, changes in the national economy, population growth and other factors have increased housing prices and rental rates and decreased the supply of housing units that are affordable for low- and middle-income households. The panel

from a recent Centralina Learns session shared insights and identified opportunities for addressing the affordable housing crisis and the missing middle.

[Learn Top Takeaways](#)

Putting the 'Regional' in Regional Resilience Collaborative – an Update from Centralina's RRC



Upon identifying a significant gap in disaster recovery processes, the Centralina Economic Development District (EDD) embarked in a collaborative process that connects the region in developing long-term disaster recovery plans. In

April 2021, the EDD partnered with Centralina Regional Council and the nine-county emergency management (EM) directors to launch the Regional Resilience Collaborative (RCC) program. The RRC program examines the viability and resiliency of EM disaster recovery plans and economic resilience needs to ensure the region benefits from greater efficiency in responding to current and future natural and man-made disasters and economic shocks.

[Continue Reading & Access the RCC Tools](#)

Second Annual ARPA Report Due April 30th

The second annual report for your local government's allocation of American Rescue Plan Act (ARPA) funding is due **no later than April 30th**. Centralina's ARPA support team is available to assist local governments in our region with completing the report and meeting this deadline. We ask that our local governments complete this [short intake form](#) to request support. We've compiled a few tips to help you get prepared.

[Read The Tips](#)

Centralina AAA Distributes At-Home COVID Tests



In response to the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic, the Administration for Community Living and the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services Administration for Strategic Preparedness and Response are partnering to provide at-home COVID-19 tests at no charge to aging and disability networks. Through this partnership, Centralina Area Agency on

Aging (AAA) can order test kits at no charge directly from the Strategic National Stockpile to help distribute to older adults and people with disabilities within the region. With the end of the Public Health Emergency on May 11, 2023, Medicare and many other insurances will not cover at-home kits free of charge. Having test kits available continues to be valuable for older adults and their families as they remain a high-risk population for contracting COVID-19.

[Learn More](#)

UNC Asheville Launches PEARLS With Help of Centralina AAA

North Carolina Center for Health Wellness (NCCHW) at UNC Asheville is working to launch a Program to Encourage Active, Rewarding Lives (PEARLS) in North Carolina to help aging adults improve their mental and physical health. A new three-year grant of \$660,189 from the Administration for Community Living (ACL) will support that effort by allowing the Centralina Area Agency on Aging (AAA) to pilot PEARLS in North Carolina. Studies show that people who completed the program have fewer hospitalizations than their peers and can experience up to a 50 percent reduction in or complete remission from depression symptoms.

[Read the UNC Asheville Article](#)

Region of Excellence: James D. Prosser Excellence in Government Leadership Award Winners

The success of local governments is dependent upon the strong and effective leaders within them. The Region of Excellence Award for Excellence in Government Leadership, named after former Centralina Executive Director James D. Prosser, honors those in our region who have demonstrated transformative and outstanding leadership within their town, municipality or county government. This month, we spoke with our 2021 and 2022 winners about their careers, accomplishments and what they're looking forward to for the future of their community.

2022 Small Community Winner: Jonathan Blanton

The Town of Ranlo, located in Gaston County, had never had a Town Manager before Jonathan Blanton was hired in 2020. With a worldwide pandemic in full effect, along with crippling financial trouble within the Town, Blanton had his

work cut out for him from day one. In just three years on the job, Blanton worked to sheer back spending and issued a tax increase to help balance the Town budget and cease the consistent need for the Town to dip into savings.



[Learn More About Jonathan](#)

2022 Large Community Winner: Mike Downs



Mike Downs's service with Cabarrus County dates all the way back to 1986 when he started out as Zoning Inspector. Over the years, he has worked his way up through several positions as Zoning Manager, Director of Development Services, Director of Public Safety Services and Deputy County Manager. He was

appointed to his current position as County Manager in 2011 by the Cabarrus County Board of Commissioners. During his various positions with the County, he has spearheaded and collaborated on projects that greatly benefited the county government and surrounding community. Some examples include his involvement in the construction of the new County Emergency Medical Services Center headquarters, revamping the County's website and communication efforts, organizing the quarterly Elected Leaders Summit and leading the creation of the County's first strategic plan.

[Learn More About Mike](#)

2021 Award Winner: Mike Legg

City of Kannapolis Manager Mike Legg serves as a role model in his community, consistently exhibiting high professional and personal standards through all aspects of public service. Mike has been in his position as City Manager since 2004, having worked for the City since 1995 in various capacities. Over the past two decades, he has been involved in several projects in the community focused on transforming the once textile-based economy towards a regional economy expanding in areas of biotechnology and tourism. He has extensive experience working in local and regional government for the City of Charlotte, the City of Cape Coral, Florida and the Western Piedmont Council of Governments.



SERVICE SPOTLIGHT: *Meeting Facilitation & Strategic Planning*



Learn about our [meeting facilitation](#) and strategic planning services for local governments, led by our Government Affairs & Member Engagement team. This work supports our effort to equip local governments with information, resources and technical assistance that enables them to do their best work. [Watch here.](#)

IN THE NEWS

Celebrating Black History in our Region Beyond February

Even though Black History Month has ended, there are plenty of ways you can continue to honor and celebrate diversity in your own backyard. We've highlighted several local museums and initiatives in our region that you can visit and take part in all year round to learn, experience and appreciate the history and culture of the Black community in your own neighborhood. [Read More!](#)

Will they stay or will they go? Recruitment and Retention Strategies and Patterns in NC

The NC Association of Regional Councils of Government and the NCImpact Initiative at the UNC School of Government will be holding a special hybrid training on March 22nd from 9:30 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. This interactive presentation will focus on the current nationwide worker shortage and how local governments are turning to survey data to implement tactics that will slow employee turnover, attract qualified employees and build adequate job candidate pools. The session will consist of two hours of instruction by School faculty, followed by 30-minute regional sessions hosted by each council of government. Centralina will be hosting our session virtually via Zoom. Local government management professionals and staff from regional councils of governments are encouraged to attend. [Click here to register.](#)

[View Centralina Job Opportunities](#)

[Access the Member Portal](#)





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