



June 10, 2009

## 32 complete Rural Leadership Institute

### *Staff reports*

The Rural Economic Development Institute graduated 32 people this month, including several from Western North Carolina, after an intensive, three-month leadership training program.

N.C. Sen. Dan Blue saluted the graduates during ceremonies Friday at the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center. "It's important to have strong leaders in times like this," he said, "more important than when times are smooth."

Blue recounted the steps taken during the Great Depression that turned North Carolina into the most progressive state in the South for decades afterward. A similar set of issues faces the state now, he said. "The decisions we make should be the ones that will hold us in high stead years down the road," he said, "not the ones that will hold us in high stead in the next election."

The class of 2009 brings to 807 the number of people who have completed the institute since 1989.

Sponsored annually by the Rural Center, the institute offers an opportunity for leaders in business, government, economic development, civic groups and grassroots organizations to broaden their understanding of rural community and economic development and to hone their personal leadership skills. Participants attend three sessions over the course of three months.

The new graduates are, by county: Anson, Robert W. Rollins Jr; Ashe, Beth Rembert; Beaufort, Lee Padrick; Buncombe, Kristy M. Carter and Karen C. Smith; Chowan, Sarah Jackson; Columbus, Jacquelyn M. Hampton and Frank A. Wilson; Durham, Jeremy Troxler; Edgecombe, Jenny Braswell; Forsyth, Darren E. Rhodes; Halifax, Phyllis D. Chavis; Harnett, Patsy M. Carson; Haywood, Patrick C. Bradshaw; Hyde, Kris Cahoon Noble; Lenoir, Kathy Howard; Madison, Jennifer Flynn; Moore, Tim Emmert; Orange, Michael Flannelly; Person and Caswell, Karen Bowen; Stanly, Kathy Almond; Surry, Lestine H. Hutchens; Vance, Tobais Fullwood; Wake, Donna L. Flick, Misty Herget, Mary Willistine-Holder and Brian Queen; Washington, Latasha McNair; Wilkes, Dwight L. Smith; Wilson, Ricardo Dew; Yadkin, Stephen Hutchens; and Yancey, Jake Blood.

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center is a private, nonprofit organization whose mission is to develop sound economic strategies that improve the quality of life in rural North Carolina, with a special focus on individuals with low to moderate incomes and communities with limited resources. The center operates a multifaceted program that includes conducting research into rural issues; testing promising rural development strategies; advocating for policy and program innovations; and building the productive capacity of rural leaders, entrepreneurs and community organizations.

### Leadership graduate biographies

Kathy Almond is the director of the Small Business Center at Stanly Community College. She participates in the Stanly County Chamber of Commerce, the West Stanly Business Association and the United Way. She is a native of Mount Gilead.

Jake Blood is the director of the Yancey County Economic Development Commission. He moved to

western North Carolina after retiring from a 29-year career in the U.S. Air Force.

Karen Bowen is the grants director at Piedmont Community College. She participates in both the Person County Chamber of Commerce and the Caswell County Chamber of Commerce.

Patrick Bradshaw is one of three partners with the civil engineering firm of Civil Design Concepts. He manages the firm's office in his hometown of Waynesville. He has served on the Haywood County Planning Board and the Haywood County Board of Health.

Jenny Braswell is the development director of Connectinc in Edgecombe County. She is also a member of the Down East Chapter of the Association of Fundraising Professionals, the American Grant Writers' Association and the Nonprofit Technology Network.

Patsy Carson is mayor of Erwin and owner of the local Nationwide Insurance Co. In 2008, she was named an honorary wing commander with Pope Air Force Base. She is a native of Harnett County.

Kristy Carter works as a community development planner in the western regional office of the N.C. Division of Community Assistance. She previously was the executive director of Hospitality House of Asheville, an organization that works with the homeless and addresses affordable housing issues.

Phyllis D. Chavis is the director at Regeneration Development Group in Halifax County. She is a native of New Bern who now lives with her family in Scotland Neck.

Ricardo Dew is the founder and president of the Workforce Preparedness Association, a nonprofit program that works with former prisoners. Dew also is chairman of the economic development committee of the local NAACP. He lives in Wilson.

Tim Emmert is a community development planner for Moore County. Emmert previously worked with two nonprofits, the Pew Partnership for Civic Change and Central Park N.C. He resides in Carthage.

Michael Flannelly is president of the consulting firm Flannelly Development. He is a member of the International Economic Development Council, Entrepreneurial Development Council and N.C. Sustainable Energy Council. He lives in Hillsborough.

Donna Flick is the underwriter for the Rural Venture Fund, a business capital program of the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center. She has been involved with the American Red Cross - Greater Carolinas Chapter, Swiss Bear Development Corp. and the New Bern Historical Society.

Jennifer Flynn is the town clerk of Marshall. She also works as a consultant to local women entrepreneurs and as a part-time administrator to a small nonprofit. She volunteers with the Asheville Institute, an urban sustainability institute.

Tobias Fullwood works for USDA Rural Development in Raleigh as an area specialist. He is a native of Shallotte.

Jacquelyn Hampton is the town clerk of Bolton. She also works with children of incarcerated parents.

Misty Herget is the program coordinator for the N.C. Small Towns Economic Prosperity (NC STEP) Demonstration Program, a project of the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center. She is a native of Reidsville.

Mary Willistine-Holder is the president and founder of the Rural Community Networking Resource Center. She also serves as a community outreach evangelist. She lives in Garner.

Kathy Howard is the associate vice president of North Carolina's Eastern Region, an economic development group based in Kinston. She is a member of the North Carolina Economic Developers Association.

Lestine Hutchens is the mayor of Elkin. She serves on the legislative committee of the League of

Municipalities and is a member of the Yadkin Valley Chamber of Commerce.

Stephen Hutchens owns a company engaged in computer repair and Web page design. A native of Boonville, he serves on the town's NC STEP leadership team.

Sarah Jackson is the finance officer for the Northeast Commission economic development group based in Edenton. She serves on the executive committee for the local SmartStart for Children. She is a Chowan County native.

LaTasha McNair is the director of a home ownership program with the New Life Community Development Corp. She is a licensed real estate agent and serves on the homeownership committee for the Plymouth NC STEP program.

Kris Noble is a grant technician for the Hyde County Office of Economic Development and Planning. She serves on the board of the Greater Hyde County Chamber of Commerce. She is a native of Swan Quarter.

Lee Padrick is a chief planner with the Washington regional office of the N.C. Division of Community Assistance. His professional interests include strategic planning, mapping and ecotourism development.

Brian Queen works for USDA Rural Development in Raleigh as a community programs specialist, concentrating on water and waste programs.

Beth Rembert owns a consignment shop in Lansing. She is a member of the Greater Lansing Area Development Committee, which is committed to the revitalization and preservation of Lansing.

Darren Rhodes of Winston-Salem is a chief planner with the N.C. Division of Community Assistance. He serves on the Winston-Salem Board of Adjustment and on the Appalachian State Alumni Leadership Committee.

Robert Rollins is pastor of First United Methodist Church in Wadesboro. He serves on the Anson County Board of Education and is a native of Hamlet.

Dwight Smith owns a construction business that focuses on additions and remodeling. He is also an associate pastor with Crossfire United Methodist Church and lives in Wilkesboro.

Karen Smith is a chief planner of the western regional office of the N.C. Division of Community Assistance. She previously worked as planning director for Henderson County.

Jeremy Troxler is the director of the Thriving Rural Communities Initiative at Duke University Divinity School. He has served as a pastor to various Methodist churches throughout Great Britain and in Maggie Valley. He is a native of Brown Summit.

Frank Wilson is the mayor of Bolton. He serves on the board of the N.C. Rural Economic Development Center and is a member of the N.C. Conference of Black Mayors and the National Conference of Black Mayors.

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