

## WAYNE COUNTY RECEIVES COUNTY GOVERNMENT PARTNERSHIP AWARD

On August 22, 2015 Wayne County was named the Southeast District recipient of the 2015 NC Cooperative Extension County Government Partnership Award at the North Carolina Association of County Commissioners annual conference in Greenville, NC.

The purpose of the County Partnership Award is to recognize local governments for their outstanding partnership with the NC Cooperative Extension Service. The award highlights best practices based on the following criteria: (1) commitment of resources; (2) inclusiveness in county government and (3) advocacy and/or involvement in Extension programs.

The following is the application submitted by Eddie Pitzer, Chairman of the North Carolina State Extension Advisory Board and Wayne Regional Fair Manager.

*Cooperative Extension has a rich history of programming in Wayne County. Cooperative Extension is unique in that it is a partnership between our counties and the two land grant universities. Wayne County has been an excellent partner throughout the years. Our county government values the impact that Cooperative Extension has in our community and supports the programs accordingly.*

*Wayne County supports local programming through funding. The county provides over \$600,000 for the operating budget for Extension. The county increased its cost share for the livestock agent position in 2013 to insure that the needs of local farmers were met. The county also added an additional 4-H program assistant to work with youth livestock and school enrichment. County Commissioners and County Manager George Wood 100% funded two support staff positions with the new strategic plan in 2015. These additional staff enhancements increased the county budget by \$73,000. As needs have changed, the county has increased funding to provide strong programs.*

*Wayne County supports Cooperative Extension by managing grant funds and user fees utilized in programming. The county finance department partners with Extension to manage over \$600,000 in grants and user fees. These fees are utilized by 4-H and Youth, Family and Consumer Sciences and Agriculture to provide quality educational programs to our local citizens. The Wayne County Extension Center works closely with our county manager and finance office to ensure that these funds are properly utilized for our citizens. Managing grants and fees is an invaluable resource to the Wayne County Extension Center.*

*Wayne County Commissioners have been supportive of our 4-H programs. Not only do they support our programs with funds, they provide additional space as needed. Our local 4-H Robotics Club has been growing in the past few years and has been in desperate need of space. The county commissioners found out about the need and gave the Robotics Club dedicated space within the Facility Services Department. The commissioners wanted the Robotics Club to partner with Facilities Services so they would have access to tools, parts, computers, and trained staff to assist in programs. The Wayne County Commissioners see the value in 4-H and youth development and continue to provide opportunities for the program to grow.*

*Wayne County also partners with Cooperative Extension on several other programs. The Health Department partners with Family and Consumer Sciences to address the needs of health and wellness through a Minority Health Program. The Emergency Management Services department partners with Cooperative Extension to address the needs of the community during natural disasters. The Planning Department works closely with Cooperative Extension on managing the Voluntary Agricultural District Program.*

*Wayne County also has a vision that Cooperative Extension will be educating our citizens for years to come. They are partnering with the City of Goldsboro, The State of North Carolina, and private donors to develop a Regional Agriculture and Educational Center. The Center will house Cooperative Extension along with other county and state agencies that will address the business and promotion of agriculture. This facility will provide space for Cooperative Extension that will meet the needs of Wayne County citizens for decades to come.*

*Wayne County is a valuable partner with Cooperative Extension. The county values the educational programs that extension offers and they support them accordingly. Cooperative Extension in Wayne County is successful because of its partnership with Wayne County government and the support of our county commissioners. Wayne County's efforts to promote and enhance the Cooperative Extension program make them an excellent candidate for the County Partnership Award.*

## Summary

*Wayne County Government has been an excellent partner with Cooperative Extension. The County values the contributions that Cooperative Extension makes in the community and supports their efforts as they provide high impact programs that improve the quality of life its citizens. Wayne County provides over \$600,000 in the operating budget for Cooperative Extension and also manages over \$600,000 in grants and user fees. Wayne County commissioners increased the cost share for the livestock agent position and added an additional 4-H program assistant position to meet the needs of our agriculture community. With Cooperative Extension's new strategic plan, Wayne County funded two secretaries so program would not suffer. Wayne County also provided additional space and resources to enhance the 4-H robotics program. Wayne County partners with Cooperative Extension on other programs such as Minority Health Program, Emergency Programs, and Voluntary Agricultural Districts. Cooperative Extension in Wayne County is a success because of the partnership with Wayne County government and the support of our County Commissioners.*

Photo:

Travis Burke, Interim Associate Dean, College of Agriculture and Life Sciences and Interim Director of the NC Cooperative Extension Service presents the County Government Participation Award to Board of Commissioners Chairman George Wayne Aycock, Jr. Also present: County Manager George Wood, Commissioner Joe Gurley, Commissioner Bill Pate, Assistant County Manager Tommy Burns and North Carolina Association of County Commissioners Executive Director Kevin Leonard.