

**Lenoir Planning Retreat Agenda – Friday, February 6, 2026
Blue Ridge Energy Community Room, 8:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.**

8:00 a.m. - Noon

Breakfast [8:00am]

Call to Order, Introductions & Opening Remarks - Mayor Joe Gibbons/Anthony Starr [8:30am]

Mission Statement & Vision Review - Anthony Starr [8:35am]

Customer Service Team Update - Joshua Harris [8:45am]

State of the City “2025 Review” Presentation - Scott Hildebran/Mayor Gibbons [9:00am]

Break [9:45am]

Presentations [10:00am]

- ***Population, Housing & Employment Update*** - Taylor Dellinger, Senior Data Analyst, WPCOG [20 min.]
- ***East Harper Avenue Streetscape*** - Edith Peters, Senior Transportation Engineer, FNI [20 min.]
- ***Greenways/Sidewalks Update*** - Jon Hogan, Public Works Director/Hannah Williams, Planning Director [20 min.]
- ***Lenoir Retail Update*** - Joshua Davis, Portfolio Director, Retail Strategies [20 minutes]
- ***Lenoir Housing Update*** - Hannah Williams, Planning Director [20 min.]

Review of 2025-26 Strategic Priorities - Scott Hildebran [11:40 pm]

Questions/Comments - Anthony Starr [11:55pm]

Break - Lunch [12:00pm]

12:45 p.m. - 3:00 p.m.

Presentation [12:45pm]

Grant Funding/Projects Review - Scott Hildebran/Donna Bean [45 minutes]

Facilitated Discussion - Priorities - Anthony Starr [1:30pm]

- A. What are threats that face the City? What are weaknesses that should be addressed? What problems require resources or attention?
- B. Ranking Exercise
- C. What current issues/projects should be continued as strategic priorities for 2026-27 and what new issues/projects should be included for future consideration?
- D. Ranking Exercise

Wrap Up: Questions/Comments - Anthony Starr [2:45pm]

- A. What is one key takeaway from today’s discussion, stated in about 30 seconds?

Adjournment [3:00pm]

Enclosures

- City of Lenoir Mission/Vision Statement
- 2025 Customer Service Team Update
- Customer Service Keys
- 2025-26 Strategic Priorities
- 2025 Department Updates/2026 Department Focus Areas
 - Communications
 - Finance/Administration
 - Fire Department
 - Main Street
 - Parks & Recreation
 - Planning & Community Development
 - Police Department
 - Public Services - Public Utilities
 - Public Services - Public Works
 - Public Services - Brownfields
 - Special Projects & Grants

Items to be distributed at meeting (February 6)

- State of City 2025 Slide Show
- Presentations – Slides
 - *Population, Housing & Employment Update*
 - *East Harper Avenue Streetscape*
 - *Greenways/Sidewalks Update*
 - *Lenoir Retail Update*
 - *Lenoir Housing Update*
- Projects Review/Grants

CITY OF LENOIR MISSION STATEMENT

The mission of the City of Lenoir is:

- to serve our citizens and the community by providing a clean, safe, healthy, and attractive living and business environment, through the efficient delivery of essential city services in a fiscally responsible and equitable manner.
- to identify, prioritize, plan, and act on opportunities for preserving and improving the quality of life of all of our citizens and community.

VISION FOR THE CITY OF LENOIR

We aspire to be the city of choice in western North Carolina for current and future generations—beautiful, clean and safe.

We will achieve our vision through:

- *a healthy economy*
- *strong businesses*
- *vital neighborhoods*
- *a vibrant downtown*
- *extensive recreational and cultural opportunities*

We will preserve Lenoir's friendly, small town atmosphere and celebrate the diversity of our people.

We require a city government that is:

- *accessible and engaged with the public*
- *accountable*
- *efficient and responsive*
- *an employer of choice*
- *forward thinking*
- *honest and ethical*
- *inclusive and equitable*
- *innovative and collaborative*
- *transparent*
- *fiscally responsible*



Customer Service Team 2026 Report

For Service Beyond Measure in 2025 | By Joshua Harris, Jan. 27, 2026

The mission of the City of Lenoir Customer Service Team is to encourage and equip all city employees to work together to exceed the expectations of our residents, businesses, visitors, and each other, and to motivate our coworkers through support and recognition of a job well done.

The Customer Service Team continued their efforts in 2025 to provide resources to city staff so that we can all deliver “Service Beyond Measure” to the residents and businesses in Lenoir.



MEETINGS

- The Customer Service Team (CST) met monthly throughout the year to plan employee appreciation events, host new hire orientations, create current employee training materials, and to discuss and share citywide service stories.

TRAINING

- CST held nine new hire customer service orientations throughout the year. During each orientation, CST members give an overview of city departments and services, introduce the customer service keys, and set expectations for new employees.

RESOURCES

- In 2025, CST continued hosting a city tent at local festivals. The city tent serves as place where citizens can learn more information about the city, the services offered, job opportunities, activities available, and general information about the festivals.



EMPLOYEE APPRECIATION

- CST hosted our annual Employee Pizza Party at Mulberry Recreation Center in March. In August, we hosted the Fall Employee Appreciation Event at the Lenoir Splash Pad. Employees were invited enjoyed loads of fun, free food, and good company.
- CST also worked with HR to bring back Employee Service Awards. During the fall Employee Appreciation event, CST recognized staff and provided certificates of services and bonus checks to employees.
- For 2026, CST plans on hosting the Pizza Party in the spring and the Employee Appreciation event in August. Location to be determined.
- CST continued giving out employee birthday cards in 2025. Every month, employees with birthdays that month receive a personal birthday card from the city.

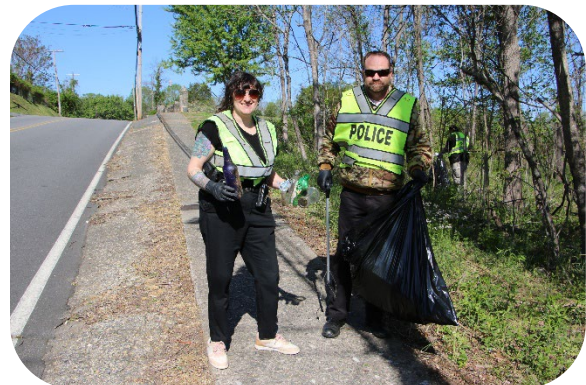


GOLDEN TICKETS

- In 2025, City employees gave out 15 Golden Ticket nominations to their coworkers, about half of the previous year. Golden Tickets are given to employees who go above and beyond to provide service beyond measure.
- A couple years ago, CST began announcing the annual and quarterly Golden Ticket winners at the City Council meetings. This is another way to recognize our employees that go above and beyond their duties!

COMMUNITY EVENTS

- CST organized two Employee Litter Sweeps in 2025. In the spring, City staff collected about 40 bags of litter, and in the fall, we picked up 35 bags. Staff from every department participated.



GOALS FOR 2026

- Continue current employee appreciation programs.
- Explore options for community outreach events.

Comprehensive Customer Service Training Program

One big goal for 2026 is to reinvigorate Customer Service Training for all City employees. The original CST training was started under former City Manager Lane Bailey. For many years after that initial training, City staff and the Customer Service Team kept up a sustained effort to promote customer service training with the organization. Around 2020, our consultant began a phased retirement and concluded his work with the City. Since then, the team has done a great job at managing outreach such as employee appreciation and golden tickets, but we have a lot of new staff who have never went through the original, comprehensive customer service team training.

This year, we think it would be good for our employees to work with an outside consultant once again go through an extensive customer service training program. This training would be mandatory for all staff, including directors, and would include a thorough review of our Customer Service Keys and positive customer service methods. We think this would be a worthwhile way to reenergize the customer service mentality among employees and ensure that the City of Lenoir continues to provide Service Beyond Measure.

CUSTOMER SERVICE TEAM

- **Crystal McCurry**, Police, Co-Chair
- **Joshua Harris**, Administration, Co-Chair
- **Ashley Smith**, Downtown
- **Ty Sturgis**, Fire
- **Autumn Vogler**, Parks & Recreation
- **Juliana Tripician**, Parks & Recreation
- **Garrett Williams**, Public Works
- **Jeff Church**, Public Utilities
- **Scott Lingle**, Public Utilities
- **Jon Hogan**, Public Works



CUSTOMER SERVICE KEYS

- Key 1 - Personable
- Key 2 - Pro-Active
- Key 3 - Effective Communication
- Key 4 - Professionalism
- Key 5 - Timely and Efficient
- Key 6 - Teamwork
- Key 7 - Equitable Service
- Key 8 - Successful Service Recovery



Lenoir's Customer Service Keys

Key #1 Personable

- Be approachable and make a positive first impression
- Demonstrate caring and patience
- Be friendly and outgoing
- Provide polite and helpful service

Key #2 Pro-Active

- Anticipate customer needs
- Make customers feel important
- Go above and beyond – exceed expectations

Key #3 Effective Communication

- Demonstrate positive body language
- Be a good listener
- Keep people updated and informed

Key #4 Professionalism

- Know your job
- Create and maintain a customer friendly atmosphere
- Pay attention to detail
- Be knowledgeable about city services
- Take time and show interest in our customers
- Treat others as you would like to be treated

Key #5 Timely and Efficient

- Be consistent
- Fulfill commitments in a timely manner
- Respond to phone calls and emails promptly

Key #6 Teamwork

- Develop and know your community partnerships
- Provide seamless service between departments
- Deliver good value

Key #7 Equitable Service

- Treat everyone with respect
- Apply policy evenly and fairly
- Be sensitive to the situation

Key #8 Successful Service Recovery

- Listen effectively
- Show empathy and concern
- Take responsibility
- Try to resolve customer concerns
- Follow up promptly



2025 City Council Priorities

1. Continue efforts to offer competitive compensation and benefits for employees to improve recruitment and retention.
2. Develop options to increase code enforcement and improve beautification in three primary areas:
 - Abandoned and neglected housing
 - Dilapidated commercial properties
 - Appearance of downtown buildings
3. Update the Lenoir Comprehensive Pedestrian Plan and improve walkability.
4. Evaluate long-term Downtown parking needs.
5. Continue to fund and support the Water and Sewer Capital Improvements Plan.



COMMUNICATION & PUBLIC INFORMATION ANNUAL REPORT

Joshua Harris, Communication & Public Information Director, Jan. 15, 2026



Accomplishments in 2025

CONTENT

- **66** news releases
- **5,119** photos
- **27** videos
- **1,010** website updates
- **0** radio interviews/PSAs
- **295** alerts
- **301** questions & answers
- **1,217** form requests
- **12** messages on the electronic sign at the LFD Station 1
- **19** items for Mayor and Council (*resolutions, speeches, etc.*)
- **53** items for Committees (*Customer Service Team & Safety Committee*)

NEWS RELEASES

In 2025, **41,000 active users** viewed City news releases more than **62,800 times**, which is 5.9% of total website traffic for 2025.

The **Top 10** releases from 2025 are:

1. [City of Lenoir opens new splash pad](#), June 14, 2025
2. [City building splash pad at Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex](#), June 28, 2024
3. [Fire Chief promotes three up the ranks](#), Feb. 7, 2025
4. [Caldwell County and City of Lenoir approve economic development incentive for Google](#), Oct. 23, 2024
5. [Andy Wilson to be promoted to Chief of the Lenoir Police Department](#), June 12, 2025
6. [Christmas and holiday events in Lenoir](#), Nov. 18, 2025
7. [Celebrate Independence Day in Lenoir](#), July 2, 2025
8. [Mulberry Recreation Center playground temporarily closed](#), June 9, 2025
9. [City of Lenoir wins drinking water award](#), Dec. 31, 2024
10. [City Council welcomes new canines to the Police Department](#), March 20, 2025

PHOTOS

Staff created **5,119 photos** while creating new releases, covering city events, attending Council meetings, and more. We used those photos in more than 60 news releases and more than **1,736 social media posts!**



New gym floor at Mulberry Rec



New trees in Downtown Lenoir



Lenoir Police new K9s



New pickleball courts at Mulberry



David R. Horn Education Pavilion



Lenoir Bicycle Festival



Tennis court resurfacing at MLK J. Center



Lenoir Splash Pad Ribbon Cutting



A Tomato Blast at Unity Park & Community Gardens



MLK Jr. Center Renovation



Christmas decorations in Downtown Lenoir

VIDEOS

Staff created **27 videos** in 2025, the majority being Council meetings and events.

All City videos received **101,805 views** with **1,212 hours** of watch time on Facebook and YouTube during the past year.

Staff **live streamed** almost all Council meeting videos. The public was able to watch Council meetings in real time, and the meetings were available online immediately following the stream.



WEBSITE

Staff made **1,010 updates** to www.cityoflenoir.com in 2025. Updates ranged from updating pages, adding documents, adding news releases and calendar events, updating staff, and posting alerts.

The website received more than **546,000 views** from nearly **227,000 unique users**, according to Google Analytics. Most users, 61.5% access the City website from a desktop computer, while 37.6 use a mobile device.

TOP PAGES for 2025 excluding the home page were:

#	Page	Views	Users
1	Payment Options	56,032	19,692
2	Jobs	28,616	18,575
3	Water & Sewer Service	19,782	9,511
4	Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center	15,478	8,150
5	Property Taxes	12,990	6,301
6	Calendar	11,810	6,568
7	Search	10,434	4,586
8	Jobs • Concession Attendants, Scorekeepers, Umpires/Referees	8,579	8,593
9	Police	8,519	8,593
10	Jobs • Telecommunications Officer I (Part-time) *	7,910	7,718

ALERTS, QUESTIONS & REQUESTS

In addition to providing content to the public such as news releases, department information, and event updates, the City website can send alerts to the public, and, the public can use the website to ask questions and make requests.

ALERTS

Staff sent out **295 alerts** in 2025 via the website and CivicReady covering topics from meeting notices, agenda packet updates, news releases, job openings, events, and service messages such as road closings and trash collection delays.

QUESTIONS & REQUESTS

The public used the Contact Us form to submit **301 questions** and **1,217 request forms** last year.

	2025	2024	2023	2022
<i>Alerts</i>	295	302	475	360
<i>Questions</i>	301	424	377	332
<i>Forms</i>	1,217	1,142	1,324	1,230

Current forms on the website are:

- ADA Title II Grievance Form
- Additional Garbage Cart Request
- Bulk Collection Request
- Contact Us
- Garbage Cart Issues
- Garbage Collection Request
- LCRR Customer Self-Assessment
- Nuisance Issue Form
- Public Records Request
- Report a Concern
- Utility Bill Payment Plan Application
- White Goods Collection Request

MEDIA COVERAGE

In 2025, City news releases appeared nearly **92 times** in newspapers and more than 170 links on various websites that staff track and follow.



SOCIAL MEDIA & ENGAGEMENT

PAGES

We have 10 primary social media accounts for the City of Lenoir and various departments. The City, Downtown, Fire, Parks & Recreation, and Police have Facebook pages. The City and Downtown have accounts on Instagram. We also have City of Lenoir accounts on X, Nextdoor, LinkedIn, and YouTube.

 [City of Lenoir, NC Government](#)

 [Downtown Lenoir](#)

 [City of Lenoir Fire Department](#)

 [Lenoir Parks & Recreation](#)

 [Lenoir Police Department](#)

 [City of Lenoir, NC](#)

 [cityoflenoirnc](#)

 [downtownlenoir](#)

 [City of Lenoir, NC Government](#)

 [City of Lenoir](#)

 [City of Lenoir](#)

POSTS

In 2025, City staff made **1,736 social media posts** across our social media channels.

FOLLOWERS

City followers increased from 57,869 at the start of the year to **63,393** at the end of 2025. That's nearly **5,524 new followers**, which is a **9.5% increase**.

For reference, in December 2017, City accounts had 12,906 followers. We've seen **a 391% increase in followers in the last 9 years**.

Goals for 2026

- Launch Leadership Lenoir Citizens Learning Academy
- Restart staff Communications & Marketing Team with members from various departments
- Work with Public Works to renovate Veterans Plaza in Downtown
- Work with Fire Chief to incorporate an Emergency Communication Plan into our updated Emergency Response and Mitigation Plan
- Continue growth of followers on social media



CITY OF LENOIR FINANCE DEPARTMENT
801 West Avenue
Lenoir, NC 28645

Donna Bean
 Finance Director
 828-757-2180

Below is a list of goals and objectives the Finance Department was able to accomplish in 2025:

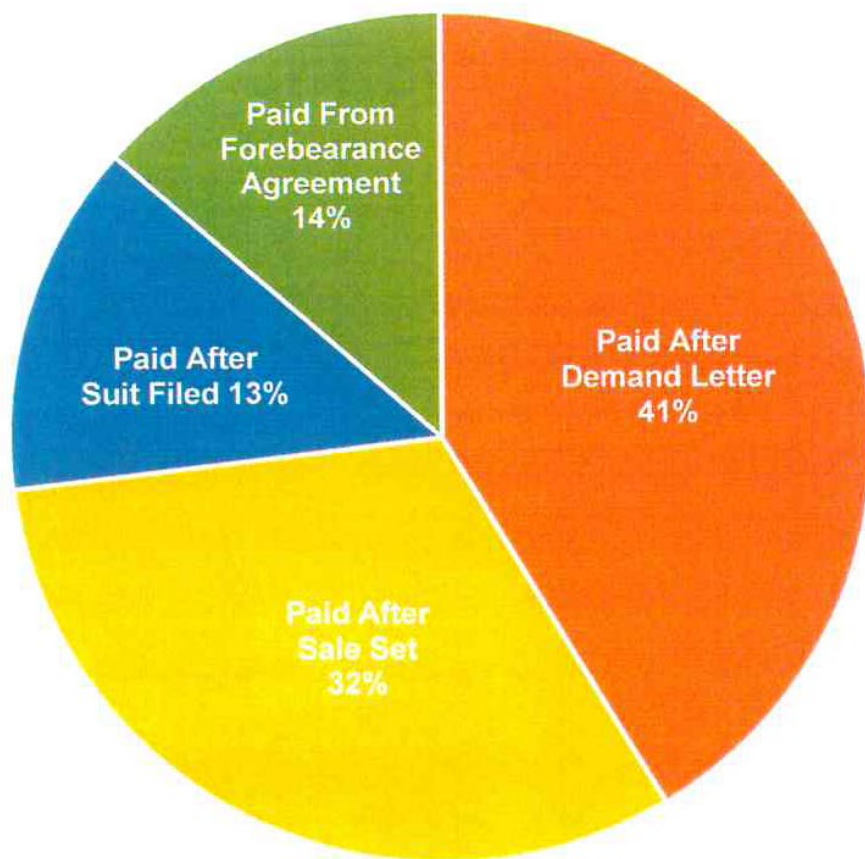
- During 2025, the Collections Department processed over 104,990 transactions totaling over \$26,990,200. The number of transactions was down 4% compared to the prior year and the amount collected was down 2%. Again, the largest percentage of the transactions was water and tax payments. The majority of the transactions were in the form of checks at 89% with cash making up 3% and credit cards being 8%.
- The Finance Department, including Human Resources, continued organizing training for departmental staff to insure all staff had the necessary information to be successful. Topics covered included managing across generations, communications and other areas of importance to those in leadership roles. With the input of the staff, training for 2026 is being developed to cover various leadership areas where staff identified the need for additional training.
- The City of Lenoir was awarded the GFOA Certificate of Achievement for Excellence in Financial Reporting for the 34th year.
- During the past year, our long-time auditor, Eric Bowman retired which was a transition for the Finance Department as Eric had been the auditor for 25+ years.

Billing and Collections

- The Revenue Collector continued working with Metersys, Watersmart and Mueller vendors to improve the meter reading billing process. The Revenue Collector has worked with water staff verifying meter reads to ensure bills continue to be accurate and on schedule. As mentioned in previous years, the Watersmart system provides those customers who utilize it, a robust platform for bill management. At the end of 2025, approximately 10.8% of customers have created accounts in the new system, this is up 1% over last year.
- The City uses the NC Local Government Debt-Set Off Clearing House to assist with the recovery of delinquent debts by offsetting debtors' North Carolina state tax refunds and Education lottery winnings. As long as the debt is \$50 or more and has been delinquent 60 days the process can begin. There is no cost to participate with the NC Debt Setoff Clearinghouse. During 2025, \$26,941.82 was collected compared to 2024 where \$27,113.57 was collected. In total, since 2002, a total of \$737,084.20 has been recovered.
- Strategic Foreclosures have become an important tool for tax collections and code enforcement. Over the past year, 38 new cases were filed and \$54,721.70 was collected due to foreclosure proceedings. A total of \$408,895.63, has been collected since 2017 with 13% of that amount being collected during the current year. During that same time period, 170 cases have been referred and 126 cases were resolved. Of the 126 cases, 46 parcels were set for sale. Of the sales, 31 were sold to 3rd party purchasers and 15 were deeded to the City. These foreclosures have assisted in several nuisance properties being clean up. The chart below provides you with information regarding when, during the foreclosure process, parcels owners paid their taxes.

City of Lenoir Statistics

The Kania Law Firm, P.A.



Analytics for Finance

Activity	2025	2024	Change
Amount of vendor checks written	\$ 32,032,122.00	\$ 29,566,000.00	\$ 2,466,122.00
Vendor checks written	6,053	6,103	(50)
Utility bills generated	117,293	122,856	(5,563)
Amount billed for utilities	\$ 11,030,834.00	\$ 10,264,400.00	\$ 766,434.00
Property taxes levies	\$ 16,030,145.00	\$ 16,687,750.00	\$ (657,605.00)
Payroll checks/deposits processed	8,360	8,222	138
Amount paid in payroll	\$ 14,566,717.00	\$ 13,974,974.00	\$ 591,743.00
W-2 Wage Statements	394	397	(3)
Job applications	275	282	(7)
New water accounts	68	50	18
Worker Compensation claims filed	6	19	(13)
Property and Liability claims filed	20	35	(15)
POs generated	261	276	(15)
IT work orders completed	1,925	1,754	171
Total phone calls to IT support staff extensions	4,000	3,364	636
Email accounts created or deleted	88	71	17
Security cameras maintained	247	198	49
Door access systems maintained	64	40	24
Unifi Servers maintained for cameras and door access devices.	48	32	16
VOIP phones maintained	212	185	27
Desktops/laptops maintained	310	287	23

Human Resources and Payroll

- Staff from Human Resources and Payroll attended several trainings over the past year to prepare for the new overtime rules for the One Big Beautiful Bill Act (OBBBA).
- Staff began testing a new employee self-services platform and will begin rolling it out to employees by March of 2026.

Risk Management

- During 2025, the Risk Manager took on the Interim role of the Capital Project Manager and has done well in this role. His expertise from his time in the construction industry as well as his time at the City, has made his very effective in this role. During this transition period, the Safety Coordinator has taken on some of the roles of the Risk Manager such as purchase orders and some insurance claims.
- The Risk Manager and the Safety Coordinator assisted with an underground gutter drain piping upgrade and install at the Mulberry Rec Center along with Public Utilities, Building Maintenance and the Streets Department. This was truly a Team Lenoir project. Their ability to self-perform this saved the City thousands of dollars.



- Again, Team Lenoir was able to save funds by working together on a playground improvement project. The Risk Manager, Safety Coordinator, Building Maintenance, Parks and Public Properties and Parks and Recreation pulled together to make this project happen. The team took down the old equipment, installed the new playground set and removed and replaced the mulch at the Mulberry Recreation Center and West End Park.

New Playground at Mulberry Recreation Center



New playground at West End Park



- The Risk Manager and the Safety Coordinator continued to spearhead a targeted focus on safety training and awareness. The Safety Committee completed the audit of all City owned facilities this year under the direction of the Risk Manager and Safety Coordinator. The committee identify safety concerns and has been able to correct several safety issues as well as continuing to work on preparedness plans. Risk Management and the Police Department worked together to get a NCLM safety grant to partially fund the purchase of 60 water filled barricades to provide additional vehicle traffic control and create a safer and more secure event spaces when streets are closed for downtown events. These barricades were used for the first time at the parade in 2025.
- The Risk Manager and Safety Coordinator administered OSHA training via NEOGOV to provide staff with online learning for safety topics as well as FEMA/NIMS training.

Information Technology (IT)

- During the 2025, the Information Technology Department continued to expand, upgrade, and maintain critical network, security, and access control infrastructure across multiple City properties. These efforts supported public safety, operational efficiency, and long-term technology planning.
- IT completed multiple team projects in 2025 which required all IT staff to work diligently to complete various projects such as:

- Multiple network upgrades
- Upgraded desktops/laptops to Windows 11 Operating System since Windows 10 End of Life was October of 2025
- Began transitioning email addresses from ci.lenoir.nc.us to lenoirnc.gov
- Completed Electronic Door Access installations at Lenoir Police Department, JE Broyhill Park, and Broyhill Walking Park
- Designed, constructed, and installed LaserCube chassis for Downtown Stage for Christmas
- Multiple agencies have had major changes in their IT methodologies including Caldwell County and the State Bureau of Investigation (SBI) which involved the entire IT team to transition DCI/SBI from Cisco AnyConnect to Palo Alto Networks GlobalProtect
- As covered in the Police Department's section, Colton Rich, IT staff member, was a former LPD officer which provided a unique opportunity for IT to partner with the Police Department to improve their cybercrime capabilities.
- Several infrastructure upgrades are underway in various phases at year-end:
 - Electronic Door Access installations for all the Fire Department locations
 - SCADA and Camera network overhaul at George Bernhardt Water Treatment Plant, Gunpowder and Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plants
- The need to evaluate IT security is constant and the IT Manager continually looks for new ways to improve our systems as 2025 continued the trend of cyber threats for all municipal governments. Fortunately, due to measures already in place, the City was able to remain secure. Daily, the City gets an average of 25+ serious virus threats and an average of 1,000+ phishing attempts. To combat external security threats, IT staff continues to enable multi-factor authentication on critical accounts.

The following IT projects were completed or in progress during the year

Equipment Installed				
Location	Cameras	Door Access	Upgrades	Solar Power
Complete				
Rotary Soccer Complex - Splash Pad	12	2		
Broyhill Walking Park	5			
Lenoir Fire Department - Station 1	3			
Greenway Tunnel	2		1	
Hibriten Mt. Radio Room	1		1	1
Lenoir Police Department		3+		
Downtown Lenoir Free WIFI and Cameras	6		14	
In Progress				
Gunpowder WWTP	1+	1		
Lower Creed WWTP	1+			
Lenoir Fire Department All Stations		3+		
Lenoir Police Department		1+		
Martin Luther King Center	1+			
Lenoir Aquatic and Fitness Center			1+	

- Upon reflection after Hurricane Helene, there were opportunities identified to mitigate IT issues in the event of another disaster. The mitigation action taken in 2025 was to prepare an emergency phone system to allow for City departments to communications during a major phone or power outage. This emergency communications system is easy to deploy in an event where all communications networks go down. This system will allow for the City to be able to communicate internally using Grandstream WIFI phones and other phones that can be set-up in each conference room at each emergency essential city facility. The goal is to avoid outages in communications during a small-scale or large-scale emergency response incident.

Future

- Below is a list of projects, concerns, and impacts the Finance Department plans to focus on in the calendar year:
 - IT plans to continue evaluating the City's hardware and infrastructure needs and continue to look for ways to improve the data infrastructure and identify ways to be as cost efficient as possible. Off-site storage remains a high priority as well.
 - IT will continue to do some simulated disaster recoveries to provide proof that multiple backups of city data can be recovered in a worst-case scenario. The focus is continuing to take a proactive rather than a reactive approach to cyber security and threats.
 - Council and the City Manager have ranked salaries as a priority for several years and again, compensation remains a priority. The COLAs and new pay plan the past few years have made some progress toward closing the pay gap however; there is still work to be done. Feedback from department heads continues to indicate that employees feel positive about the recent attention this item has received from Mr. Hildebran and City Council. Specifically, the bonuses given over the past ten years and the COLA percentages appear to have improved morale. The graduated holiday bonus given the past two years recognized longevity which was received positively. Paying competitive salaries is critical to recruiting and retaining quality employees. New hires seem to be more concerned with immediate return rather than the value of benefits. This is especially true for the millennial generation. City staff is continuing to review the City's current pay plan and hiring practices, with the goal to become more competitive while staying within the framework of the current pay plan.
 - Staff will work to maintain information regarding the 50+ projects identified that the City is working on currently. This number has more than doubled in the few past years.
 - Since the production of pennies ended in 2025, the City will have to determine how to handle the penny shortage.
 - With the growth of AI, it is going to be necessary for the City to determine what uses will be utilized for AI and develop a policy for its use.

City of Lenoir
Financial Highlights
Year Ended June 30, 2025

	<u>2025</u>	<u>2024</u>	<u>Increase (Decrease)</u>
<u>General Fund</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	23,062,366	19,626,284	\$ 3,436,082
Total assets	25,560,225	22,189,455	3,370,770
Fund balance	24,260,505	21,356,498	2,904,007
Total revenues	25,657,698	24,821,646	836,052
Total expenditures	23,342,352	22,514,994	827,358
Other financing sources (uses)	1,083,857		1,083,857
Change in fund balance	3,399,204	2,144,652	1,254,552
Percent of taxes collected	97.1%	97.4%	
Unassigned fund balance as a % of general fund expenditures	93.0%	83.7%	
Total Expenditures by Department:			
General Fund:			
General government	3,704,909	3,712,692	(7,783)
Public safety	12,946,878	12,040,725	906,153
Transportation	2,006,059	2,496,750	(490,691)
Environmental protection	1,101,785	1,305,564	(203,779)
Economic and physical development	768,236	814,866	(46,630)
Cultural and recreation	2,684,800	2,014,713	670,087
Debt service	129,684	129,684	-
<u>Special Revenue Funds</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	221,003	2,628,627	(2,407,624)
Total assets	249,835	2,628,627	(2,378,792)
Fund balance	141,900	535,935	(394,035)
Total revenues	4,213,594	3,638,349	575,245
Total expenditures	4,607,629	3,731,411	876,218
Change in fund balance	(394,036)	(93,062)	(300,974)
<u>Enterprise Fund - Water and Sewer</u>			
Cash and investments (including restricted cash)	14,903,501	14,106,587	796,914
Total assets	92,268,872	85,544,720	6,724,152
Net position	62,088,666	61,587,053	501,613
Total revenues	11,446,400	10,879,292	567,108
Total expenditures	10,767,070	10,114,737	652,333
Nonoperating revenues (expenditures)	421,032	198,569	222,463
Change in net position	1,749,792	1,152,244	597,548



Lenoir Fire Department

602 Harper Avenue, N.W.
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645



It is my privilege to submit to you a report reflecting on 2025 and a vision for the future for Lenoir Fire Department. 2025 was another year of change for the department with the retirement of several senior officers. In 2025, Deputy Chief Nelson, Captain White, Captain Dillard and Captain Clark each retired from Lenoir Fire Department. Battalion Chief Bradshaw has announced his retirement for February 1, 2026. Together they had nearly 150 years of combined service to the City of Lenoir. Though I'm excited for them for being able to retire, their knowledge and experience is extremely hard to replace.

Calls for service in 2025 were down from 2024. Calls for 2024 were inflated partly because of Hurricane Helene and the extremely high call volume related to the storm. In 2025, Lenoir Fire Department responded to 3,251 calls for service. This included fifty-three (53) incidents with property loss. The estimated value of property and contents pre-fire was \$43,213,800. The estimated value of fire loss of this property and content is \$2,180,100 which resulted in an estimated potential property and content value saving of \$41,033,700.

All staff are continuing to be encouraged to evaluate ways we may improve our departmental operations that would promote a better service for our citizens. Some of these are reflected in this report below and this evaluation will continue as we move into the future. In addition, several internal committees are being formed in 2026 to help guide our department and its operations into the future.

The following few pages will outline some of the many accomplishments for the department.

Grants / External Funding

In August the department received notification of being awarded a Disaster Relief Grant in the amount of \$50,000. The grant allowed the department to purchase a Polaris Ranger UTV, Enforcer 30 foam suppression system and 25 gallons of Class A/B foam to enhance our wildland firefighting capabilities. The Enforcer 30 produces approximately 600 gallons of finished foam product with 30 gallons of water and 60 ounces of A/B foam concentrate. In addition, the UTV will be able to be used at Downtown events to increase our fire suppression capabilities when streets are closed to vehicles. The total project cost was \$50,206.15 which resulted in a cost of only \$206.15 to the citizens of Lenoir.



Equipment Replacement / Upgrades

VIPER Radio Update and Replacement

Prior to July 1, 2025, all VIPER radios were required to be P25 Phase II compliant. This project was included on the 2024/25 CIP and was completed in May 2025. As part of this project 31 of our current VIPER radios had to be updated and reprogrammed. In addition, 12 new VIPER radios had to be purchased as part of the upgrade. The total cost of this project was \$61,266.86.

Protective Gear Replacement

The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) recommends replacement of protective equipment at a minimum of every ten years, or when wear reduces its ability to properly protect our firefighters. To maintain compliance, in 2025 the fire department purchased 6 sets of turnout gear, 14 fire helmets and 20 pairs of firefighting boots. In addition, as part of the SCBA / Turnout Gear upgrades 5 SCBA with spare bottles and masks were purchased. Total cost of this project was \$76,435.70.

Automated External Defibrillator (AED) Replacement

After an evaluation of current Automated External Defibrillator (AED) it was determined that 3 AEDs needed to be replaced. The recommendation by the American Heart Association is to replace AEDs every 8 to 10 years. In addition, our AEDs are serviced and tested annually by Southeastern Biomedical Associates to help ensure their readiness. Total cost of this project was \$8,183.55.

Four Gas Detector Replacement

Four new 4 Ventis Pro5 Gas Detectors were purchased. These replaced aging detectors that were too costly to repair and maintain. In addition, this made all multi-gas detectors within the fire department the same to help simplify operations by staff. Total cost of this project was \$7,147.98.

Thermal Imaging Camera Replacement

Two new Seek Thermal Imaging Camera (TICs) were purchased to increase firefighter safety. These cameras replaced older model TICs that lacked new technology and were having operational issues. Total cost of this project was \$10,094.29.

Fireground Portable Scene Light Replacement

To increase firefighter safety on the fireground new scene lights were included in the 2024/25 CIP. This allowed 22 battery operated scene lights to be purchased and placed on each apparatus. These lights are quicker to deploy compared to older lights and are LED lights which are brighter and more energy efficient. Total cost of this project was \$12,560.91.

New Equipment for Ladder 1

As part of 2025/26 City of Lenoir budget, the replacement of Ladder 1 was approved contingent upon assistance with Blue Ridge Energy in obtaining funds through the government's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG). In planning for this purchase equipment to be placed on the new Ladder 1 was purchased. This equipment included a Hurst StrongArm, Hurst Combi Tool, SuperVac PPV Fan and Sthil Rescue Saw, Chainsaw and Cut-off Saw. Total cost of this project was \$30,510.44.

UTV Replacement

As part of the 2024/25 CIP a new UTV was approved. The UTV arrived in December 2024, but the project was not completed until spring 2025. The Polaris Ranger had a custom box constructed by All Pro that could carry patients in a stokes basket if needed from locations such as the Greenway. In addition, an Enforcer 10 Suppression System was installed that produces up to 200 gallons of finished foam product with 10 gallons of water and a SCBA bottle. This foam system can be utilized in both the wildland setting and during downtown events when access by a larger fire apparatus would be delayed due to road closures. Total cost of this project was \$45,800.59.



Ranger 1 is on display at SAFRE in Raleigh.

Training is a daily occurrence in the fire service. This year the fire department was able to purchase a forcible entry door that allows firefighters to practice their skills in gaining entry into various style doors. Total cost of this project was \$9,110.00.



Staff training with new forcible entry door.

Station Upgrades

IT has been working on upgrades to all three stations. These upgrades are required to be able to install the previously purchased new door locks for each station that will increase departmental security. The new locks will increase areas of each station that is lockable to limit access to the public when bay doors are open. Once completed this project will require keycard access to the living quarters at each station and staff will be able to deactivate cards on a single computer.

A new HVAC unit was purchased for the administrative offices at Station 1. This new unit will be more efficient and reliable than current unit.

Equipment Maintenance

In late 2023 a decision was made to move maintenance and repairs to All Pro (A fire truck repair vendor that is currently conducting maintenance for over 100 departments in western North Carolina). From their initial service of apparatus our staff has worked with All Pro to address safety and mechanical issues that need to be completed. This process will take multiple years to complete with safety items being addressed first on each apparatus.

Each year annual tests are required to be completed on the pumps on each truck, aerial test on ladder trucks, fire hose, ground ladders, AEDs and SCBAs. In previous years tests for both ground ladders and fire hose have been conducted by staff. In 2025, the decision was made to have All Pro test all ground ladders. During this test, it was determined that several ladders needed to be replaced due to extensive wear.

Community Involvement

An increased focus on community involvement has been placed on staff. This year staff participated in multiple events with plans on expanding these opportunities in the future. Staff have already started discussions with facilities such as Koinonia Apartments and The Thrive to provide public education to those who may currently be missed. In December 2025 an interactive session was held at The Thrive to allow an opportunity for our senior citizens to learn about fire safety. In addition, a committee is being formed to evaluate and expand our current Community and Risk Reduction programs to include developing a Citizens' Fire Academy with a projected start of Fall 2026.

The department applied with the Office of State Fire Marshal and was approved to participate on June 7th in the North Carolina Smoke Detector Canvas as an extension of our current smoke detector program. This was the second year for Lenoir Fire Department participating in the program and staff were able to install all 36 smoke alarms in a single Saturday. The 2025 campaign limited each participating fire department to 36 smoke alarms.

In addition to the Smoke Detector Saturday canvas, 23 additional smoke detectors were installed within the City of Lenoir. These detectors were provided by the American Red Cross as part of a grant program.

We had seventeen staff members participate in the Spring and fourteen staff participate in the Fall City of Lenoir Litter Sweep.

Staff participated in multiple events within the City of Lenoir. These events include the Blackberry Festival, July 4th Fireworks, Light Up Lenoir, Luminaries, Lenoir Christmas Parade, Turkey Tuesday, Downtown Halloween Spooktackler and the MLK Center Trunk-or-Treat.

Staff assisted with traffic control during the funeral processional for Andy Day, retired Police Chief for the Town of Hudson.

Staff participated in several local summer camps. These included the Keith Owens Firefighter Academy at Gamewell Fire Department and the summer reading and enrichment program at New Covenant UMC.

Collaboration

The Fire Department continued to focus on working with other departments and agencies during the year. During the year, the Police Department and Fire Department had shifts join for breakfast on multiple occasions at Station 1. This gives them opportunities to fellowship and build relationships.



In 2025, Lenoir Fire Department began actively participating with the Safe Kids of Caldwell County. This group is comprised of multiple agencies within Caldwell County with a focus on keeping your kids safe. Additional opportunities to participate in community events will be explored in the future.



Supporting Hickory Fire Department

On June 5, 2025, Hickory Fire Department requested assistance from Lenoir Fire Department following the death of Firefighter Jake Bridges. Jake passed away on shift shortly after returning to the station from a structure fire.

The initial request was for an Engine Company for twenty-four hours. The request expanded to coverage by City of Lenoir Firefighters for multiple twenty-four-hour shifts. In addition, staff assisted Conover Fire Department with displaying the flag at the funeral home when Firefighter Bridges was returned from Baptist.

This tragic event shows the Brotherhood and Sisterhood of the fire service. Within minutes, our staff volunteered to cover twenty-four-hour shifts and drop whatever they may have had scheduled on one of their days off.

City Manager Warren Wood sent the following email to all City of Hickory Fire Department staff:

I spoke with Capt. Hubbard of the Lenoir Fire Department yesterday at Station 6. He told me that the firefighter brotherhood is like no other. He is right, it is legendary, and I saw it firsthand yesterday. Please take advantage of that to seek support from others and to provide it for those who need it. There is nothing I can say that will take the pain away of Jake's passing, but just know that we are also here to provide whatever support you need and we will do the same for Jake's family and loved ones.



Ladder 1 assisting Conover Fire Department with displaying the American Flag.



Lenoir Engine 2 at Hickory Fire Department Station 6.

Training

Training is a daily occurrence for staff at the Lenoir Fire Department. Depending upon the position of an employee at Lenoir Fire Department training requirements vary. During the year, staff documented 16,840 training hours. Topics include EMT in service, firefighter, rescue, fire cause determination, officer and hazardous materials.

In 2025, staff participated in training opportunities, such as:

- Two Chief Officers attended the South Atlantic Fire Rescue Expo in Raleigh.
- Three of our Certified Fire Investigators attended the NC / SC International Association of Arson Investigators Seminar and received 36 hours of training towards their recertification.
- Two firefighters attended a weekend High Angle Rescue class offered by the North Carolina Association of Rescue and EMS.
- Two firefighters attended the first offering of Fundamentals of Fire Investigations offered by the North Carolina Office of State Fire Marshal. In addition, two of our instructors assisted with the scenario burns for this training class.
- One firefighter attended the NC Fire Prevention School.
- Twelve staff members of various ranks completed the 48 hours Technical Rescuer – Trench Rescue certification course.
- Ten firefighters completed the 36-hour Fire and Life Safety Educator (FLSE) Level I certification. Four completed the 36-hour FLSE Level II certification and two completed the 36-hour FLSE Level III certification.
- Eight firefighters completed the 64-hour Driver Operator Aerials certification course.
- Two firefighters completed the weeklong North Carolina Safety and Survival School.

Station Response Districts

In October 2024 after months of evaluating calls within each district a modification was made in the districts of Station 1 and 3. These changes slightly affected the initial response areas of these two districts. Station 3 started being dispatched first to all calls for service on both sides of Blowing Rock Boulevard from Smith Crossroads to Nuway Circle. This includes areas on east side of Blowing Rock Boulevard that had been previously covered by Station 1. As part of this redistricting Green Mountain Park was reassigned to Station 3. These changes were made to eliminate some of the dangerous intersections and road congestion on initial responses from Station 1.

2025 was the first complete year of the new districts. Overall response times were not affected by the distribution of call volume resulted from the change. The chart below shows the comparison of calls originating within each district for 2024 and 2025.

Station	2024	2025
Station 1	2,005	1,801
Station 2	857	772
Station 3	587	679
Total	3,449	3,251



Staff on scene of a fire at JBS Meats.



Engine 1 on scene of machine fire at Harper Plant

Lenoir Fire Department 2026/27 and Beyond

Below is a list of items that will impact Lenoir Fire Department in the physical year 2026-27 and beyond. This list has items that were included last year with relevant updates, and items that have been identified to be added. The staff continue to design a more definitive replacement plan to help with future budget planning. Each of these projects are important to the safety and operations of the fire department, but staff understand the need for prioritizing the projects over multiple years due cost associated with several items:

Goals for 2026/27:

During January 2026 staff of Lenoir Fire Department are being tasked with pursuing several goals for the department. Some of these will take multiple years to fully achieve but will be part of the common mission of all staff within the Fire Department. To help ensure these are obtainable, committee / work groups are being implemented within each area to help guide the department into the future.

These goals are:

- Strategic Plan:
 - Complete strategic plan for department to allow input from LFD Staff, City Administration, Elected Officials and the Public to help guide the department into the future.
- Community Risk Reduction:
 - Expand public education programs to include facilities not currently served such as Koinonia that are considered “large-loss potential occupancies” by the North Carolina Rating and Response program.
 - Develop and offer a Citizen’s Fire Academy to be able to educate our citizens of department operations and services.
 - Increase completion rates of meaningful and complete prefire plans.
- Training:
 - Offer and participate in meaningful facilities training that is two-fold. (Increase firefighter knowledge / skills and obtain ISO credit.)
 - Continue to evaluate new training courses and offerings to enhance staff knowledge, skills and abilities (KSAs).
 - Ensure 100% of personnel meet ISO training hour requirements.
- ISO:
 - Develop a long-term plan to not only ensure maintaining a Class 2, but determine lacked processes, resources, and/or facilities to obtain a Class 1.
- Social Media:
 - Increase presence on various social media sites with relevant and accurate information regarding departmental operations.
- Recruitment / Retention:
 - Evaluate and develop strategies to increase retention of current staff and ability to recruit new staff.

Station 1 Sinkhole Repairs

We continued to be concerned with the sinkhole at Station 1. In fall 2025 the sewer replacement portion of project was completed. Though plans for the stormwater replacement are nearing completion, the uncertainty around the entire project does cause concern of staff housed at Station 1. As with the sewer project, a concern for response to emergency calls without delay will be at the forefront of administration as the project gets started. Staff will be fluid in how to respond from Station 1 as they were with the sewer replacement and maintain constant communication

with onsite contractors regarding road closures. The administrative staff continues to update firefighters of the progress of the project and address any concerns with Public Works.

Current Departmental Apparatus Status

NFPA makes recommendations on apparatus replacement based on age of and mileage on apparatus. These recommendations are based upon not only the normal wear and tear on the apparatus, but the enhanced safety features that are installed on the new apparatus. Simple examples are technology in lights from halogen to LED, engine noise level of apparatus and seat belt warning systems. NFPA is only a recommendation but needs to be considered as part of our replacement plan. Our fleet continues to get older and with this we are witnessing increased maintenance costs and out-of-service times due to the number of repairs. The older fleet lacks newer safety appliances that are available on newer apparatus. We are starting to have issues with finding replacement parts on some of our older apparatus as vendors are no longer producing and stocking certain parts. An example is while trying to repair A/C units in some of the older apparatus it was found the needed parts for those units were no longer available, so workarounds had to be developed.

Apparatus maintenance is one of my primary concerns as Fire Chief. Knowing citizen and firefighter safety depends on the availability and dependability of our apparatus is concerning with some of the known issues. Repairs are having to be prioritized based on safety and operability.

Ladder 1 was out of service for 30 days for repairs. These repairs include replacing transmission, replacing turbo, replacing fuel tank, and replacing rear torque arms. Ladder 1 was approved to be replaced but still waiting for approval from external funding. *(Ladder 1 is scheduled for replacement in 2025/26 budget contingent upon receiving funding with REDLG.)*

Ladder 2 was out of service for 14 days for repairs. These repairs include replaced lift cylinders, replaced TCM, multiple air leaks, motor mounts and air conditioning.

Rescue 1 was out of service for 16 days for repairs. These repairs include rear brake replacement, steering knuckle replacement and belt tensioner replacement. In addition, the elevated light tower cannot be repaired due to the inability to find replacement parts.

Engine 1 went to All Pro January 7, 2026 with the intention of it being there for an extended period of time to complete needed repairs. These repairs include multiple electrical / wiring issues, multiple valves leaking, tank water gauge, speedometer and air conditioning unit.

Engine 3 was out of service for 18 days for repairs. These repairs include cab lift cylinder rebuilds, air conditioning and electrical issues which resulted in the truck not properly cranking. A complete rewiring on the starting system is pending once diagrams are received from Sutphen and apparatus availability allows the truck to be out of service for multiple days.

Tower 1 was out of service for 50 days for repairs to include T-handle shifter, hydraulic leak in the stabilizer system and oil cooler. Pending repairs on Tower 1 are bucket controls, which will be an extended repair. Parts for Tower 1 are having to be retrofitted by the manufacturer as the correct replacement parts are sometimes unavailable.

To reduce some of the wear and tear on the current fleet we have adjusted responses to fire alarms and CO alarms in single family residential structures to only 2 Engines and a single Ladder, unless upgraded by a Chief Officer based on information received during dispatch or information gained while enroute. Research is currently being conducted to reduce these numbers further to help longevity on larger apparatus. All current and potential changes will be consistent with NC Rating Requirements.

Short-term Apparatus Replacement Plan

A new Pierce Ascendant 107' Ladder truck was approved as part of the 2025-26 City of Lenoir Budget contingent upon assistance with Blue Ridge Energy in obtaining funds through the government's Rural Economic Development Loan and Grant program (REDLG). To date these funds have not been secured for the replacement of Ladder 1 and reduce dependency on Tower 1 for structures the 100' reach is needed.

Once the replacement of Ladder 1 is complete with the Pierce Ascendant 107' Ladder truck the dependency of Tower 1 will be decreased. The bucket on Tower 1 will still be necessary when completing certain fire scene tasks, but the new Ladder 1 will be able to absorb some of the daily demands on fire alarms to locations that Tower 1 current responds to such as UNC Health Caldwell, J.E. Broyhill Civic Center, Koinonia and Google.

The next need is replacing Engine 1, which is a 2000 model Sutphen. This needs to be done as soon as financially possible due to the rising occurrence of issues. Continuing prior administration's vision of purchasing another Pumper with Rescue style body would replace Engine 1 and help reduce the strain placed on Rescue 1. A truck with a similar design to the truck purchased in 2023 would allow for an increased capacity to carry equipment needed initial on most fire and rescue scenes. Consideration of upgrading to a 2,000 GPM pump in the new Engine 1 would be recommended due to buildings located within the primary district of Station 1 to help ensure capabilities to flow necessary water in the event of a fire.

As part of an apparatus replacement plan, new trends are being explored to help reduce overall long-term cost of for the citizens. Other departments ideas are being explored to see the benefits if they were incorporated at Lenoir. An example is the new QRVs being utilized by the City of Nashville, Tennessee. They are purchaseing a QRV slightly larger than the ones currently being used by the City of Lenoir. In addition to medical calls, Nashville is equipping their QRVs to respond to motor vehicle accidents and light rescue incidents.

Staff Recruitment, Retention and Experience

Nationally there is a trend in the decline of volunteer firefighters. The decline of these volunteers affects us in our recruitment of new paid firefighters. Generally, our new hires are from volunteer fire departments. In addition, due to this decrease in volunteers more of these volunteer departments are hiring full-time paid staff, which increases our competition in recruiting staff.

Staff experience and training are a concern based on recent and future retirements. In 2025, Deputy Chief Nelson, Captain White, Captain Dillard and Captain Clark retired. In addition, Battalion Chief Bradshaw has announced his retirement for February 1, 2026. An Assistant Chief and a Battalion Chief each have enough time to retire. In addition to the retirements Lenoir Fire had resignations for other fire department jobs (3), EMS jobs (1) and private sector job (1).

Together the 2025 retirements and resignations account for over 140 years of service to the City of Lenoir. That experience and knowledge with the City of Lenoir is impossible to replace. Promotions have been made for the three Captain, two Lieutenants and five Driver Operator positions, but a thorough evaluation of the needed skills and knowledge is being finalized for the position left vacant with Chief Nelson's retirement.

In addition to these retirements, Lenoir Fire saw several other firefighters resign for various reasons. With the number of new firefighters, greater emphasis has been placed on basic fire training. Crews have spent more time training on working as a team and the basics of firefighting. This will expand in 2026 as staff will start participating in quarterly off duty shift training at training facilities within the areas. There will be multiple benefits for this training. First, crews will gain confidence in each other's skills and allow them to work as a shift on various fire scene scenarios. Secondly, staff will learn new techniques from instructors from other departments. Thirdly, "Facilities" training will be recorded for each staff person which was one of the deficient areas in last ISO Insurance Inspection. ISO wants 18 hours per firefighter and there are 35 available points in which we received 3.15 points during our last inspection. The addition of these points could potentially add 3 points to our total score in our next insurance rating.

With the number of officer retirements from 2024 to 2026 the need for an Officer Candidate School was recognized. In 2026 this program will be developed and offered to both current and future officers at Lenoir Fire Department. This program will be developed based on the knowledge and skills needed for a new officer and processes as they relate to Lenoir Fire Department. This void is a fire service issue, but one we will locally focus to help us prepare our department for our next round of retirements.

As part of this process succession planning will have to be strategic. We must ensure that we can get employees the needed credentials and experience to be the next person to step up into a higher position. Increased opportunities for training must be explored, and some will require a creative approach to ensure staffing levels are maintained at the minimum level while allowing personnel to attend training. In addition to officer related training, advanced firefighter and rescue skills will need to be developed by less tenured staff as they advance into more senior level positions.

Employee recruitment and retention continue to be a major concern for our organization. The City of Lenoir has been able to make great progress in this area, but as other fire departments have vacancies, they are making similar adjustments to compensation, benefits and schedules. Also, other departments are adding additional positions, which increases opportunities for those seeking a job within the fire service. Turnover is a national issue within the fire service. Surrounding departments are now offering increased / alternative benefits such as different scheduling options to include less annual hours worked per year, contributing to 401k, longevity pay, paying for NC Firefighter and Rescue Squad Workers Pension Fund and / or paying for retiree insurance.

Future hiring practices at Lenoir Fire Department will most likely involve hiring recruits with no prior experience or certifications. After hiring the recruit, we would enroll them in both an EMT class and a Firefighter certification program and pay them while they complete their training. This will open avenues for new recruits that we currently do not take advantage of, but will be a culture change for our department.

Station Renovations and Updates

Station 1 and Station 2 are both needing renovations / updates. Since these stations opened (Station 1 in 1969 and Station 2 in 1974) only moderate renovations and upgrades have been completed. These renovations will not only improve the aesthetics of the facilities for staff, visitors and potential new hires, but include some enhancements to help reduce operational costs.

Renovations at Station 1 would include:

- Replace carpet with laminate flooring.
- Replace wood paneling with sheetrock.
- Redesign the top floor to include area for training room.
- Remodel and update kitchen.
- Remodel and update all restrooms / showers in station.
- Remodel and update dayroom.
- Replace external windows and doors for greater efficiency.
- Add proper insulation.
- Replace bay doors.
- Replace heaters in engine bay.
- Replace roof.
- Add secure access to fire poles.

Renovations at Station 2 would include:

- Replace carpet with laminate flooring.
- Remodel and update kitchen.
- Remodel and update all restrooms / showers in station.
- Paint all current sheetrock.
- Update training room with new technology.
- Replace external windows and doors for greater efficiency.
- Add proper insulation.
- Replace bay doors.
- Add secure access to fire poles.

Cancer Prevention

Firefighters face significantly higher cancer risks, with studies showing a 9% increased cancer diagnosis and 14% higher cancer death rate than the general population. This is primarily from inhaling carcinogens in smoke and soot, leading to higher rates of mesothelioma, testicular, prostate, kidney and skin cancers. Occupational cancer now accounts for about 70-75% of career line-of-duty deaths, surpassing heart disease.

Recently, both the State of North Carolina and United States Government have added additional focus on cancer-related line of duty deaths (LODD) to State and Federal LODD benefits for firefighters.

North Carolina's Firefighter Cancer Benefit Program provides lump-sum payments (\$37,000 per cancer, \$74,000 max) and monthly disability income (75% salary up to \$5,000 for employed firefighters and \$1,500 for volunteers) for diagnosed firefighters effective July 1, 2025, extending to retirees (10 years after retirement date) and covering various cancers. North Carolina firefighters LODD benefits of \$100,000 are also eligible for the following cancers that are

occupationally related to firefighting: mesothelioma, testicular cancer, intestinal cancer and esophageal cancer.

In December 2025, the Honoring Our Fallen Heroes Act was signed into law which expanded the Public Safety Officers' Benefits (PSOB) program to include certain occupational cancers.

This increase in cancer awareness and prevention must be taken seriously locally by providing as much protection possible for our staff. In 2024, the first sets of turnout gear were purchased at Lenoir that have a cancer barrier (gear shield) inside to limit carcinogens from getting into the gear. There is a slight increase in the cost, but it provides additional protection for our firefighters. Also, this past year respirators were purchased to be utilized by all staff during fire investigations to limit the inhalation of dangers smoke and toxins.

Additional protection measures must be explored in the future to help ensure the safety of our firefighters. Examples of prevention measures are minimizing on-scene exposure (full PPE, SCBA always, immediate gross decon), post-incident hygiene (shower within the hour, clean gear, separate clean/dirty areas), station design, proper gear management (2 complete sets of gear to allow for cleaning) and lifestyle/health (healthy diet, exercise, sleep, regular screenings).

Several of these measures have already been started such as station exhaust systems, monitoring gas readings post-fire prior to allowing SCBA removal and mandatory daily exercise. However, this is an area that is at the forefront of many of our staff and a big concern.

NFIRS to NERIS

The National Fire Incident Reporting System (NFIRS) was established by the U.S. Fire Administration around 1975-1976 to collect national fire data. By January 31, 2026, all fire departments are required to transition to the National Emergency Response Information System (NERIS). Lenoir Fire Department made the switch to NERIS on January 1, 2026, to meet this deadline and to allow a yearend change to help with current and future reporting of local data.

NERIS does not require certain data which in turn has caused our selected software vendor (ESO) not to allow input of this data into searchable fields. Instead, data such as property value, property loss value or owner / occupant can only be entered into the narrative of a report which does not allow it to be queried for future reports. Based on the current version of ESO future reports would require each individual call report to be examined to generate data currently being reported.

These concerns have been expressed to both NERIS and our current software provider (ESO). To date ESO's advises the information is not required by NERIS which is why it is not a searchable field. Concern has been expressed to NERIS, though they may not want to information, to help encourage reporting software companies to include these searchable fields for later data to be used locally as they have been in the past. Staff have started to evaluate other reporting software programs to potentially replace ESO to ensure needed statistically data can be compiled.

The short-term concern is the potential of not being able to provide as much data as in recent years. Staff continue to encourage our vendor to add these data fields back into the system along with exploring other vendor products that can provide these data fields in their product.

NC Rating and Response (ISO)

In 2022 Lenoir Fire Department was able to obtain an ISO Class 2 Insurance Rating. Of the possible 105.5 points, Lenoir Fire received an 81.56. The range for Class 2 is 80.00 to 89.99, so the department must be vigilant to ensure we do not revert to a Class 3 and ideally, we would have

a long-term goal on achieving a Class 1. The rating looks at many aspects of a fire department and some such as communications are outside of our control. A review of the documentation from the last inspection outlines how points were distributed. Initially, we are focusing on the items we can control and ones with little to no cost in improving our score.

During the last rating LFD only received 5.73 of the 9 possible points for training. The primary deficiency was lack of training at a training facility. To receive complete credit each staff member must participate in 18 hours of facilities training annually. Beginning in February 2026, staff will start attending once quarterly off duty training at a training facility that meets the NCRRS requirements. With completion of this annual training by all staff and an increased focus on preplans along with a continued focus on current training, all 9 of these possible points are obtainable in future inspections. To help ensure current training meets ISO requirements 6 to 8 hours of online fire related training have been assigned to all staff members to complete while on duty each month. This online training program started in January 2026.

Current Public Works projects, such as the Finley Water Project, should help with some of the areas of water concern. In addition, Fire Department staff and Water Department staff are working on a plan to complete testing of hydrants in areas that have not recently been tested. (As part of the NCRRS process to receive full credit all hydrants must be inspected and flowed annually, and all hydrants must be tested every five years.) Items like testing of hydrants will take multiple years to see the benefit during an inspection.

In addition, conversations have been had with Caldwell County to explore implementation of Emergency Fire Dispatch (EFD) into fire dispatch to allow for increase credit on communications. Also, the proposed communication consolidation could potentially have an effect on this area.

Automatic Aid Agreements for Fire Protection is an additional opportunity to ensure not only appropriate response to fire scenes, but has ISO benefits. The City of Lenoir has multiple volunteer fire departments that borders our boundaries. An agreement with a selected few of these could benefit both the City of Lenoir and that volunteer department. In some instances, these volunteer departments can beat us to certain parts of the City. An agreement could allow for automatic aid of a single truck and crew to all structure fires in the agreed upon districts. Currently, we provide mutual aid that must be requested by these departments, but there is a greater benefit with ISO for an Automatic Aid Agreement. In addition, all other departments in Caldwell County currently provide automatic aid with neighboring departments. This may also be a recruitment tool for future full-time employees as working on a fire scene can help build relationships.



Review of LFD credit during most recent ISO Rating

Evaluated Area	Earned Credit	Credit Available
Emergency Communications		
414. Credit for Emergency Reporting	3.00	3
422. Credit for Telecommunicators	3.20	4
432. Credit for Dispatch Circuits	1.35	3
440. Credit for Emergency Communications	7.55	10
Fire Department		
513. Credit for Engine Companies	6.00	6
523. Credit for Reserve Pumpers	0.00	0.5
532. Credit for Pump Capacity	3.00	3
549. Credit for Ladder Service	4.00	4
553. Credit for Reserve Ladder and Service Trucks	0.41	0.5
561. Credit for Deployment Analysis	6.92	10
571. Credit for Company Personnel	10.11	15
581. Credit for Training	5.73	9
730. Credit for Operational Considerations	2.00	2
590. Credit for Fire Department	38.17	50
Water Supply		
616. Credit for Supply System	25.58	30
621. Credit for Hydrants	2.25	3
631. Credit for Inspection and Flow Testing	5.50	7
640. Credit for Water Supply	33.33	40
Divergence		
	-1.40	
1050. Community Risk Reduction	3.91	5.5
TOTAL CREDITS	81.56	105.5



Powell Road Live Burn

FIRST RESPONDER / MEDICAL CALLS

The first responder program that was developed in Caldwell County in the early 1980s was started to provide basic medical care by fire departments for instances of true medical emergencies. During this time several dispatch protocols have been in place and followed by local fire departments. The current Emergency Medical Dispatch (EMD) program that falls under the oversight of Caldwell County was adopted in or around 2005. Since that time the program has not been fully re-evaluated to determine if changes need to be made to the program.

Fire Departments are initially dispatched on calls based on answers given to questions asked by a dispatcher to determine the level of their medical emergency. Unless otherwise advised, when a fire department is dispatched, they respond emergency traffic (lights and sirens). In recent years the calls for service have increased and number of calls that are true emergency have become a lesser percentage of all medical calls. Calls that are now being dispatched as emergency calls are nose bleeds, urinary tract infections, vertigo, sick calls and patients just not feeling well. The concern of the EMD process has been brought to the attention of the Medical Director for Caldwell County due to the increased number of non-emergency type calls staff are being dispatched to respond.

A concern is responding emergency traffic to these calls when a true emergency does not exist. Staff and citizens are placed in danger anytime the fire department responds emergency traffic. In addition, while these calls are important, it does put the department at greater risk of not being able to respond to fire-related calls which is our primary function or being delayed in response due to crews from a different station having to respond.

Call Review in 5 Year Increments

Year	EMS Calls	Fire Related Calls	Total Calls for Service
2005	1,297	765	2,062
2010	1,593	1,027	2,620
2015	1,598	1,297	2,895
2019	1,911	1,204	3,115
2020	975	856	1,831
2025	2,218	1,033	3,251

***2019 was included due to 2020 COVID restrictions for medical calls.*

CLOSING

Thank you for allowing me an opportunity to showcase some of our many accomplishments in 2025 and express our focus on 2026 and beyond. The fire service is a very traditional profession, but staff are being challenged to find a balance between tradition and modernity to ensure we have success in the future.



Downtown Lenoir & Main Street Revitalization

Goals and Objectives

City of Lenoir Main Street Program
and Downtown Economic Development Department
2025

Presented by Brenda Floyd, Downtown Economic Development Main Street Director

In 2025, our focus as the Downtown Lenoir Main Street team was building on the strong partnerships that make our community thrive. Over the past year, our team of two has embraced collaboration, creativity, and connection as guiding principles for our work. Together, we've refined programs, deepened engagement with local businesses and residents, and advanced new initiatives that highlight Downtown Lenoir's unique character and economic potential.

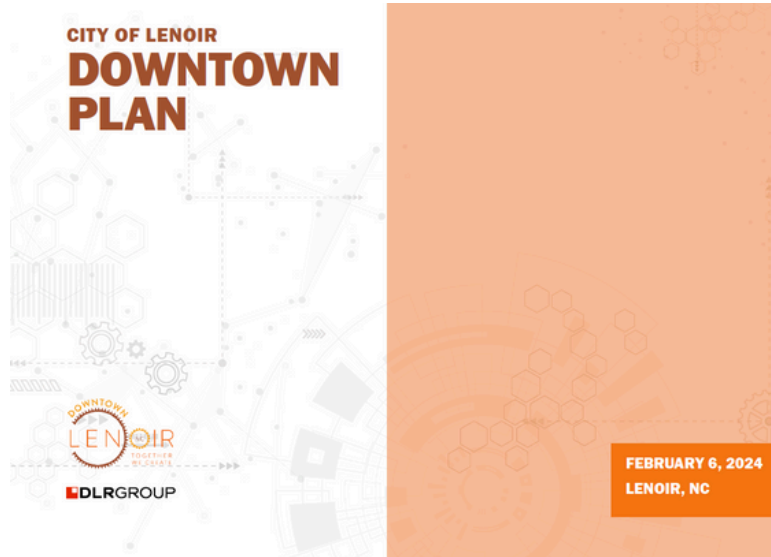
The year ahead offers exciting opportunities to continue this progress. Guided by the City's shared vision for growth and vitality, that celebrates local heritage while encouraging innovation and investment. With the continued support of the City Manager, Council, and our fellow departments, we look forward to another year of partnership, progress, and purpose as we shape the next chapter of Downtown Lenoir's story.



Promotional Efforts and Recognition

- Continued strategic marketing raised awareness about downtown initiatives on local, state, and national level through marketing efforts and participating in award recognition programs.
- The 2025 NC Main Street Conference held in Mooresville, NC in March where four DLDA board members attended and featured in two sessions regarding best practices in promotion and outstanding volunteer programs.
- The Downtown Lenoir Awards were held in April 2025 at the Harper Room where Michelle and Cliff Mahaffey of Tybrisa Books were honored with the Gibbons Award and recognized for their contributions to downtown Lenoir. The Gibbons award recipients have a longstanding impact and are ambassadors for downtown.
- Two ribbon cuttings for new businesses in downtown were performed.
- The LBAB Grants Committee supported one BUILD Grant for \$5k on H. Lewis Price where an apartment renovation was completed.
- Three Downtown properties continue to be monitored by the Lenoir Main Street Program and the National Park Service until 2029 as part of the National Park Service agreement following their 2024 project completion.
- The 35-foot glowing numbers atop Hibriten Mountain were submitted to Main Street America by NC Main Street as an innovative way to commemorate America 250. The display was also shared at the Uplift Tourism Summit for ways that rural communities around NC are celebrating America 250.





Master Plan Implementation

- The Master Plan adopted in 2024 includes strategies as a framework and vision for the downtown and has proved to be a useful tool to communicate the municipality's program and commitment.
- The planning and design principles in the master plan are used as a framework for the annual Main Street workplan. The addition of wayfinding and gateway signage improves connectivity in downtown for pedestrians and motorists.
- The sidewalk study and ordinance adopted in 2025 is an opportunity for downtown businesses to self promote and added connectivity for pedestrians.
- The Harper Streetscape plan with Freese and Nichols completed to include recommendations from the master plan converting to a complete street. This detailed plan illustrates the multi-modal circulation, connectivity and parking framework for neighborhood gateway improvement to downtown. The enhancements in the streetscape plan include improvements that connect the West District for motorists and pedestrians.
- The Campus Project is moving with the selection of a CMAR and support from Mauer Architecture to begin phase 1 that includes the auditorium and gymnasium. Private support to supplement the public investment and awarded grants to move the project forward continue.
- Recommendations in the Master Plan proposed the addition of a pavilion in the West District that is currently under site revision to accommodate stormwater. The Overmountain Victory Trail Pavilion and OVT Support Building are part of the next phase. The planned location adjacent to the Overmountain Victory Trail is well-positioned to provide a site for a host of community gatherings and event types.
- The anticipated one-year construction time begins in February 2026 for the gymnasium and auditorium portions of the campus project.



Public Art: "Time Well Spent" Clock Tower Sculpture

The unique design created by the Executive Director, Joe Bigley of WNC Sculpture Center to blend the creative spirit of Downtown Lenoir and preserve the historic clock. The refurbished O.B. McClintock Co. historic clock has been part of the Downtown Lenoir landscape for more than 100 years. Civil engineering services completed by Mattern & Craig in 2025 were needed to secure a survey, civil site design and structural design to move the project forward.

The project is a public private partnership with half of the cost shared. The fabrication of the structure was completed by Cajahs Machine and Flexible Products in October and transported to WNC Sculpture Center in December where community made tiles will be welded to the structure. Next steps are site preparation with projected installation Q2 2026.

The 220+ tiles placed on the structure have been cataloged for identification to create an interactive attribute for residents and visitors.

Since 2021 the process of this public art project has been captured by a local videographer for a documentary. This LTDA supported project will be used for community education and promotion. The anticipation of the Time Well Spent clock tower in 2026 has spurred interest from NC Main Street for a design award.



Events and Festivals

The Downtown Lenoir Development Alliance nonprofit board serves in advisory capacity for Downtown Master Plan and Entrepreneur Eco-Systems project, participate in Main Street event promotion. In 2023, the DLDA took the production of the Blackberry Festival and the WOOD.FIRE.SMOKE. Artisan Festival. They executed loyalty and business passport programs for downtown businesses.

The passport program will continue in 2026 after more than 400 passports circulated downtown and patronized business for stamps to fill their passports in 2025. The month-long promotion increased February downtown foot traffic by 25% and more than 100 passports visited every stop downtown. The completed passports are entered a drawing for 5 baskets worth \$500 each.



The 24th NC Blackberry Festival in July was a tremendous success, drawing over 19,000 visitors over the course of two days. The Friday visitation was the most visited in 5 years with almost 9k visitors in Downtown Lenoir. Despite the cancellation for weather mid-afternoon Saturday, the overall economic impact of the festival was positive. Generating approximately \$1.7 million in local economic activity and producing \$40k+ in new sales tax revenue. City divisions worked together to plan for a smooth safe festival. The festival footprint required a few revisions for safety this year and an Incident Action Plan was created. Modifications were made for the Kids Zone location, food trucks throughout the footprint and handicapped parking lot locational proved to positive. Promotions for the festival included radio, tv, print, and social media. The 600+ vendor applications for the festival allow for a curated and diverse vendor pool for the festival.

The WOOD.FIRE.SMOKE. Artisan Festival, planned for October 2025 was paused this year and replaced with a holiday market. The financial health of the festival was the biggest consideration and with plans to re-vision and schedule in 2027.

The addition of a branded holiday season in 2025 was created to celebrate the downtown holiday décor and encourage repeat visitation during the holiday season. Repeat visitation to downtown businesses is vital to the health of our small businesses. Lenoir Lights the Way stretched November 21, 2025-January 4, 2026. The 6 week stretch with 10+ community events reflected a 15% uptick in visitation downtown from 2024. To kick off the season a Window Display Contest where residents and visitors could vote for their favorite window display in downtown added to the already festive atmosphere. Three downtown business winners were awarded prizes valuing \$1k+ for promotional use of their small business. The partnership with Caldwell County Schools to put on the Light up Lenoir event was well attended despite being postponed. More than 400 students participated in Light up Lenoir before Mayor Gibbons illuminated the large downtown tree with new topper and ornaments. The addition of a tree to commemorate America 250 stood on the corner of Main Street and West in front of the Veteran's Memorial. The partnership with Caldwell County Smart Start allowed the addition of Storytime with Mrs. Claus the night before the Merry Markey on Main. The Night of Lights Parade had almost 6k in attendance and continues to be a cherished holiday community event with 150 parade units participating. Three improved weekend evenings of Hometown Holiday Carriage Rides were contracted with a local carriage company and had more than 150 riders enjoy the ride through downtown.



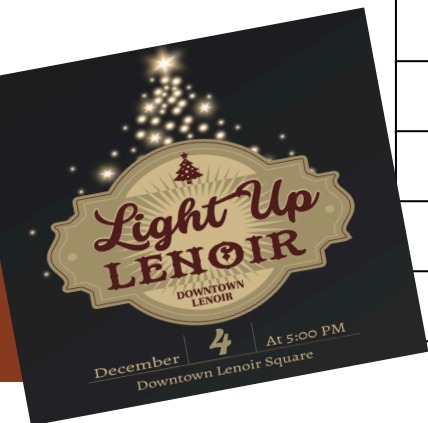
In November 2025, a Merry Market on Main was unveiled in downtown on Main Street. This inaugural one-day festival brought 50+ craft vendors into downtown. Incorporated during the Lenoir Lights the Way holiday season, more than 4k visitors attended the vendor booths, holiday demonstrations and entertainment. The vendors at the market were from the region and limited food and beverage vendors were accepted to encourage downtown restaurants to be patronized by market visitors. City Departments support and community partnerships helped shoulder the responsibility of a new festival. The attendance and community support proved the addition to be a positive impact for downtown businesses.

The City of Lenoir vetted applications for over 35 community events in 2025. The continued use of the web-based application, Cognito, makes for seamless internal coordination, an improved user experience and allows document sharing and communication for events. In addition to event applications, Cognito was used for parade applications, downtown business surveys, social district renewals, volunteer sign-ups, canine academy applications and the Christmas window contest.



PROMOTIONAL ACTIVITIES & EVENTS

2/1/25	Love Letters for Local
4/5/25-12/7/2025	Lenoir Cruise-Ins
4/11/25	National Pet Day
4/19/25	Bootlegger 100
4/19/25	Arbor Day
4/26/25	Lenoir Bike Festival
5/10/25	Bloom Blast
5/17/25	Downtown Lenoir Dog Day
6/21/25	National Yoga Day
6/27/25	Neon Night Ride
6/6/2025-8/15/25	Friday Night Live
6/19/25	Juneteenth
7/11/25	Blackberry Festival
7/19/25	Crack of Dawn Dash
8/16/25	Sundowner 4 miler
8/29/25	Carolina Tattoo Gathering
10/1/25	Police National Night Out
10/11/25	Fall Bloom Blast
10/31/25	Downtown Halloween Spooktacular
11/21/25	Storytime with Mrs.Claus
11/22/25	Merry Market on Main
12/4/25	Light Up Lenoir
12/5/25	Night of Lights Christmas Parade
12/18,19,20/25	Holiday Hometown Carriage Rides



Downtown Lenoir Event Safety and Improvement Program

- Quarterly events meetings include individualized safety discussion and improvement standards for downtown events.
- Security continues to be a high priority for downtown events through strategic planning with Law Enforcement, Fire Department, Public Utilities and Streets Division for the placement of 'bike gates', heavy equipment, county assets and personnel.
- Risk Management purchased water-filled barricades that can be used for downtown events.
- Collaborated with Lenoir Police Department, Fire Department, Public Works and IT to determine recommended emergency intercom use of Downtown Lenoir's audio system during events.
- Distributed Bicycle safety helmets to participants in need at the Bicycle Festival and Neon Night Ride with Parks and Recreation Department.
- Street lighting, video cameras, and internet hot spots for improved downtown safety.

Downtown Lenoir Social District

- The Downtown Lenoir Social District was adopted in 2023 and requires annual renewals and ongoing education for property and business owners. Maintenance of the Social District boundaries are maintained by the Streets Department. Renewals conducted in 2025 confirmed 6 ABC Licensed locations and 12 non-ABC locations in the Downtown Lenoir Social District. The new renewal process is a user-friendly web-based system for business owners. Each Social District ABC Licensed location in downtown provides their own branded stickers for social district cups so purchasers can freely explore downtown within the social district. For events with alcohol vendors, stickers are distributed for use during the festival. The stickers have information helpful to social district locations as well as law enforcement. Lenoir Police Department continues to schedule downtown shifts during social district hours and downtown events. The defined boundaries and operational guidelines adopted in 2023 are working well and community use continues to grow.



Residential Development and Education

- Two residences/apartments were added to H. Lewis Price in 2025 make 26 units in the municipal service district.
- Downtown property owners and potential downtown property owners are given literature for using Historic Tax Credits if they own or have interest in one of the contributing properties in the historic district. This encourages historic building renovations and residential living options downtown.
- Downtown Lenoir has the best scores for walkability and bike ability in the county. The 2025 Caldwell County Housing Plan shared results from the 2020 Census indicate that Caldwell County population densities are greatest near downtown Lenoir and between US 321 and US 321-A south of Lenoir. Downtown Lenoir is a model for mixed-use development with available parcels updated regularly on the Downtown Lenoir website.
- Inventory of the existing residences in downtown is necessary to re-launch Moving Lenoir to the Second Floor as recommended in the Downtown Lenoir Master Plan. Along with the support of the Planning Department, Fire Department and Economic Development, the inventory was created. Bringing back this initiative in 2026 and improving processes to include identification and retention for reporting will inspire property owners to pursue adding living spaces to vacant and unused second floors in downtown.

Recent Property Acquisitions

Private Property Acquisitions	Date	Formerly
216 Boundary Street: Zafar	11/13/2024	Doris & Dawn Medlin/Charlotte
214 Ridge Street Northwest: The Two Bears Family Trust	2/1/2025	Vanderbloemen & White



Recent Business Openings / Expansions

New Businesses	Date
El Dorado Restaurante y Pupuseria: 104 Main Street	7/2024
The Banquet Shop: 910 West Ave	5/2025
Cork and Barrel: 912 West Ave	5/2025
Sunshine and Chaos: 626 Harper Ave Suite 8	5/2025
CPA: 205 Ridge Street	4/2025
Unique Perfections: 626 Harper Ave	4/2025
Business Expansions	Positions Added
Caldwell Pregnancy Care Center: 210 Ridge Street	3 PT
Liquid Roots: 1048 Harper Ave.	1 PT
J.B. Plaster, Architect: 626 Harper Ave.	1 PT
Wolf Moon Salt Cave: 814 Harper Ave.	11 PT
Appalachian Pediatric Therapy: 214 Ridge St.	1 FT

Vehicular Sculptural Wayfinding and Gateways

In 2022 the plan for wayfinding and gateway signs was created. The wayfinding signs with artistic embellishments were partially installed before the first of the year. The City of Lenoir's Planning Department and Public Works Department finalized the 55 sign wayfinding project after a pause due to NCDOT. Now, pedestrians and motorists can guide themselves to amenities throughout the city. Many of these will guide motorists to downtown and twelve will be installed in downtown. This branded installation demonstrates the city's commitment to public investment, encourages community pride in Lenoir, and guides Highway 321 travelers to turn off and explore.



The 4 remaining gateway signs will round out and complete the 2022 plan. These 12' vertical structures have the same feel as the Smith Crossroads illuminated gateway sign and match the directional wayfinding signage.

Locations for the gateway signs are

- Hickory Boulevard/US321 South
- Hickory Boulevard/US321 North
- Wilkesboro Boulevard/Highway 18 East
- Wilkesboro Boulevard/Highway 18 West.



City of Lenoir CIP 2025-2026 Reference:

The addition of holiday enhancements to the downtown area make it an inviting place during the season. The Public Utilities, Maintenance and Downtown Economic Development Departments together vetted custom designs from Carpenters Decorating Company, Inc. The custom additions included the Old Man Winter scene with wonderland trees displayed at the Thomas Sayre Sculpture area. Stage décor to include a backdrop for the laser show and trees created a finished look for downtown holiday events. The laser programming for the show was created by the IT Department and upfitted to dance with the holiday music already playing on the downtown speakers. The large tree used to 'Light up Lenoir' got a custom topper to compliment the existing downtown holiday décor and all new ornaments. A patriotic tree to commemorate America 250 was added to the corner of Main Street and West Avenue in front of the Veteran's Monument. Lastly, many of the twig trees around downtown were replaced.



Looking Ahead: 2026 Goals-Prioritizing new and existing initiatives and executing the Downtown Master Plan.

- Plan downtown programming with equitable accessibility and inclusive design and continue events that stimulate economic activity through engaging the community and visitors
- Partner with DLDA to produce the NC Blackberry Festival, Merry Market on Main and Public Art Projects
- Continue enhancing holiday decor with coordinating embellishments
- Support finalization and maintenance of citywide vehicular and pedestrian wayfinding systems
- Continuing partnerships for safety improvements and event planning with all City of Lenoir Departments
- Continue promoting America 250 federal, state and county initiatives and partnerships for 2026
- Collaborate celebration of celebrating 175 years for the City of Lenoir in 2026
- Facilitate entrepreneurial programs that support downtown businesses and encourage use of the Main Street America small business educational resources and Destination University through North Carolina Main Street
- Collaborate to advance The Campus at the Historic Lenoir High School project as potential event spaces to maximize the use of these city owned properties
- Work towards a facility assessment of the Harper Band Building
- Continue to work with Public Works Department & Parks & Recreation to brainstorm engaging programming for an outdoor farmer's market OVT Pavilion in Downtown
- Relaunch Moving Lenoir to the 2nd Floor, utilize Main Street Facade Program and enhance delivery of recommended processes to current and potential downtown property owners and help to facilitate rehabilitation
- Work collaboratively with the NC Sculpture Center, the Caldwell Arts Council, Public Works, and Administration Staff to complete the TIME WELL SPENT clock tower sculpture for the Downtown Historic Clock and promote and celebrate its completion through engaging community programming
- Monitor, document and report property updates to State Historic Preservation Office regarding the National Park Service/ National Main Street Facade Improvements Grant properties through 2029
- Continue promoting gratis design services to contributing property owners in MSD/Historic Register for facade and 2nd floor residential space designs focusing on historic preservation from Main Street Fellows at UNCG-G
- Collaborate with LTDA contracted marketing team for a unified message to visitors about happenings downtown to include social media, Main to Main Trail Program and printed promotions
- Contribute to Caldwell County Historic Trail efforts and identify historic locations for downtown promotions

The Economic Development Department remains steadfast in its mission to enrich Downtown Lenoir through innovative programs, strategic planning, and community collaboration. Thank you for your continued support, and here's to an exciting 2026 with even greater accomplishments ahead!



Recreation Administrative Offices (828)757-2165 - Fax (828)758-1315

Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center (828)757 2196

Mulberry Recreation Center (828)757-2165

Martin Luther King Center (828)757-2170



Below is a list of goals and objectives Lenoir Parks & Recreation Accomplished in 2025

- Retaining wall at the TH Broyhill Walking Park
- Draining system at Gymnasium relocated at Mulberry Recreation Center
- All lobby-activity room flooring installed at Martin Luther King Center
- All toilets at MLK Center replaced
- Outdoor basketball courts- remodeled with pressure washing – new paint- new benches for seating at Martin Luther King Center.
- All gutters replaced at Martin Luther King Center
- New Exercise equipment added at the Martin Luther King Center
- New HVAC System at Martin Luther King Center
- Both tennis courts at Martin Luther King Center renovated
- New tables and chairs and lettering of facility- ceiling fans added at the Martin Luther King Center
- Parking lot repaved at Martin Luther King Center
- All three parking lots repaved at Rotary Soccer Complex
- New picnic tables and water fountain added at the Splash Pad
- Parking lot at Unity Park repaved
- West End Park- Shelter updated
- West End Park- new playground equipment added to the park.
- New playground equipment and mulch added at Mulberry Recreation Center
- Update the Parks and Recreation master plan – through 2045
- The second phase of renovations has begun with the Aquatic Fitness Center- phase one is complete with the men’s locker room- additional restroom in the rear of the facility, added staff breakroom, phase two is just under way.
- We have added adult fall softball this past year- it went really well, with eleven teams.

Updates:

Lenoir High School Property Enhancements:

Renovations on the LHS Auditorium project should be underway really soon. These upgrades are being done with CDBG Funds/ city funding/ other funding. Engineers and contractors have looked at the facilities and submitting quotes for the campus.

Phase one which will include the auditorium renovations as well as the gymnasium renovations should be soon. Phase two which will be the LEO building and the pavilion should be in the early spring of 2026.

Dog Park:

Staff has identified a location for a three track park within the city. Our special projects staff has worked on an all in quote for that project to include ADA assess ability, parking and restrooms. I am working with businessmen/women currently that will hopefully assist with some cost.

Below is a list of concerns and impacts Lenoir Parks & Recreation may incur in 2026:

- Interior of Mulberry Recreation Center, needs walls painted, ceilings painted and New light fixtures and new flooring.
- Exterior doors at Mulberry Recreation Center all needs to be replaced.
- Skate park at Mulberry Recreation Center needs painting.
- Replacing the indoor pool filtration system at Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center
- Digital Marquee needed out front at the Mulberry Recreation Center/Administration office to market all the parks and recreation programs along with city programming.
- Outdoor pool cover at the Aquatic Fitness Center
- Resurfacing the basketball court at West End Park.

Highlights for future projects:

- Interior/Exterior Renovations to the Optimist Park Clubhouse.
- Adding picnic tables to West End Park shelter.
- Renovations to MLK Center, Cut/Sand/Paint & Refinish gym floor.
- Adding a deck Tron system to LAFC indoor pool to help with moisture issues.

LAFC Improvements (PARTF Grant):

The Recreation Department was awarded the PARTF Grant on November 1, 2022 in the amount of \$500,000. The grant is a 50/50 matching grant. The total project will be a little over 1 million dollars. This project is nearing completion. The city has three years to complete this project. City staff had to request a six month extension that was awarded by RRS that runs through May 2026

West End Park Improvements:

Renovations to the West End Community Park would include updating shelter and basketball court. This would include adding 4 new picnic tables, two new trash cans, resurfacing the basketball court, replacing some fencing around the court, replace backboards, rims and nets. We may be able to renovate the park by using CDBG funds.

Old City Property – Stage/Prospect Streets (Old Tennis Court Area):

The city owns five or six parcels of land around these streets which at one time had tennis courts and playground equipment on some of the property. The property has not been used in quite a long time. There is no parking at these sites. My suggestion would be to sell the property or possibly work with Habitat for Humanity to see if there is interest.

2025 Facility usage for each facility

	Rentals	Open Gym Y/A- B-Ball	Pickleball play
Mulberry Recreation Center- inside	59	12,000 + year ave 40 per day	3,290 + year 14 per day
Martin Luther King Center	21	1,500 + year ave 5 per day	2,350 + year 10 per day
Pickleball outside- Mulberry Rec.		30 participants x 300 days per year	9,000+ per year
Pickleball Horizon Gym- Jan-March		10 participants per day x 3 nights week + 2 sat month	540+ per year
		Total open play	28,680
Aquatic Fitness Center- Inside-Out	76		
Optimist Club House	68		
Shelter rentals -Mulberry/Optimist	46		
Participants for rentals	6,750 +		
<u>Programs</u>	Participants		
MLK Center (10)			
Martin Luther King events	3 events		310 participants
Black History Month events	4 events		225 participants
JH Jones Sr. Basketball League	70	8 games	560 participants
Cheer Camp	30	8 games	240 participants
Basketball Camp	40	3 dates	120 participants
Harambee Arts Festival	7 events		650 participants
Trunk or Treat			230 participants
Thanksgiving Dinner			120 participants
Turkey Giveaway			400 participants
Santa Coming to Town	100		100 participants
		Total	2,955
Mulberry Recreation Center(6)			
Youth basketball/Cheer program	235	8 games	235 participants
Youth and Adult Tennis Lessons	42	15 clinics	23 participants
Adult basketball league	85	8 games	85 participants
Easter Egg Hunt	300		300 participants
Youth baseball/ Tball/ Softball league	180	8 games	180 participants
Adult Fall softball league	170	8 games	170 participants
		Total	993
Aquatic Fitness Center(13)			
Lap Swim	2750		2750 participants
Rec Swim	8910		8910 participants
Leprechaun 5K/10k Race	241		241 participants
Fire Cracker 5K/10K Race	172		172 participants
Water Aerobics	910		910 participants
Floor Aerobics	280		280 participants
Racquet ball	175		175 participants

Weight Room	2300	2300 participants
HS Swim Team	111	111 participants
Kayaking	44	44 participants
Lenoir Makos	52	52 participants
Swim Lessons	118	118 participants
Special Olympics	35	35 participants
		Total
		16,098

Special Events(3)		
July 4th Celebration	5000+	5000 participants
Sculpture Celebration	3500+	3500 participants
Christmas Parade	4500+	4500 participants
		Total
		13,000

Grand Total participants for the year **61,726**

This number does not reflect the residents/non residents that utilize our parks and Greenway system.

2025 Planning & Community Development Annual Report

City of Lenoir, NC ★ CREATE WITH US

February 2026

1. Executive Summary

The Planning & Community Development Department had a strong and steady 2025, even with staffing transitions, maintaining solid performance in permitting, enforcement, and long-range planning while successfully completing the Living Lenoir 2045 Comprehensive Plan. Development activity remained active across the city, Planning Board handled a diverse caseload, and floodplain management remained active and on track with previous years. Despite challenges, the department continued advancing placemaking efforts, supporting neighborhoods, and providing reliable service, positioning the team for a productive year ahead.

Planning Staff kicked off 2026 with a department strategic meeting to come together and develop a shared vision based on common values and goals. Planning Staff reviewed City Council's mission and vision statements, and the 2045 Comprehensive Plan vision statement, and drafted their own:

Mission Statement

The mission of Lenoir Planning Department is to guide development fairly and equitably, and to implement the goals of the Comprehensive Plan for the greater Lenoir community while providing reliable, responsive, and collaborative customer service.

Vision Statement

The mission of Lenoir Planning Department is to partner with the Lenoir Community to provide a lasting value that strengthens our built environment for current and future generations.

Values

- Integrity & Fairness
- Community Partnership
- Stewardship & Service
- Knowledge & Education
- Perseverance with Purpose

By grounding their efforts in common goals, the Planning Department is well-positioned to carry forward the goals of the Comprehensive Plan and continue delivering excellent customer service.

2. 2045 Living Lenoir Comprehensive Plan Adoption

The new comprehensive plan was formally adopted by City Council in August 2025 following a collaborative effort led by the Planning Department, Freese and Nichols, and the Comp Plan steering committee. It is a long-range policy document guiding Lenoir's growth and development and an update to the 2007 Comp Plan, reflecting major demographic, economic, and community changes.

The 2045 Living Lenoir Plan establishes a shared vision for Lenoir's future, based on community values and priorities informed by an 18-month public engagement process. The Future Land Use Map, a key component of the Plan, is a high-level guide that uses defined land-use categories to illustrate the city's desired growth pattern and identify the most appropriate future uses for different areas. The Plan supplies an implementation strategy that prioritizes actions, assigns responsibilities, and sets timelines. It serves as a foundation for future ordinance updates, capital planning, and grant applications.

City Council will hear **quarterly updates** on implementation of the plan from Planning Staff at Committee of the Whole. The Comp Plan also serves as the basis of "consistency statements," which are required when approving any changes to the Lenoir Zoning Ordinance and/or Zoning Map. Together, these tools ensure City Council remains closely connected to the plan's implementation and its role in guiding land-use decisions.

3. 2025 At-a-Glance

Quick Permit Stats:

Category	2025 Total	% Change from 2024
Total Permits Issued	316	-4%
Single-Family Homes	71	+45%
Driveway	43	
Accessory & Addition	67	
Manufactured Homes	10	-62%
Site Plan Reviews	9	0%
Non-residential	25	
Floodplain Permits	11	-45%
Sign Permits	32	-20%
Temporary Sign	23	
Zoning Verification	31	

Quick Code Compliance Stats:

Category	2025 Total	Open	Closed
Total	182	62	120
Zoning	59	34	25
Minimum Housing Cases	92	23	69
Floodplain Enforcement	5	1	4
Signs (Permanent and Temp)	23	4	19
Driveway	3	0	3

4. Major Projects & Initiatives

Major Development in Lenoir

A. Current Development

Development Spotlights

Palisades/Southwood Realty – 220 Unit Apartment Complex at 2115 Hickory Blvd planned.

JBS/Swift Beef Company – \$10M freezer expansion project.

Food Lion Upgrades – Food Lion upgraded both Lenoir stores valued at \$1M each.

Caldwell Arts Council – Ongoing renovations to the Arts Council’s new downtown location are valued at \$1.5 million and will likely be phased by floor.

UPS Distribution Center Addition – Added 2,200 square feet and expanded parking.

Other Notable Projects – Precision Landscaping on Hickory Blvd, Exela improvements at various sites, and Appalachian State receiving warehouse and office space at 1437 Blowing Rock Blvd.

B. Code Compliance & Minimum Housing

- **Total cases opened:** 182 (Zoning, Minimum Housing, Sign, and Floodplain)
- **Housing Abatements:**
 - 6 abatement ordinances passed (5 cases started in 2023, 1 started in 2024)
 - 3 Owner-abated properties
 - 10 demolitions totaling \$126,704 (\$101,000 spent in FY25)

- **Mobile Home Park Inspections** – 17 Licenses issued
- **Ordinance Changes to Code Enforcement:**
 - Lenoir Planning contracted N Focus Planning and Design to update Non-residential Minimum Standards (Ch.4) and Minimum Housing (Ch. 10).
 - Staff will implement Non-residential minimum standards enforcement in 2026.

C. Stormwater Program

In March 2025, NCDEQ conducted an audit of the stormwater program and preparedness for 2026 permit renewal. Notices/results of NPDES audits are on hold across NC.

WPCOG stormwater partnership maintains compliance with MS4 Phase 2 NPDES requirements. The WPCOG administers the six minimum control measures including permitting Stormwater Control Measures in new developments, enforcing illicit discharges, and providing opportunities for environmental education and engagement. See the Stormwater Report from WPCOG for more information.

D. Community Development and Placemaking Efforts

- **Vehicular Wayfinding Implementation:** Lenoir obtained final NCDOT approval in August 2025 to install wayfinding signs. The sign manufacturer Rite Lite made the signs in the following three months, and installation began in December 2025. Local artist embellishments will be added once signs are installed.
- **Harper Avenue Streetscape:** Freese and Nichols designed a welcoming and pedestrian friendly corridor into Downtown Lenoir along Harper Avenue between McDonald's and Fire Station 1. Lenoir held an introductory public meeting in June 2025 and a follow up meeting in January 2026 when the final design was completed.
- **Greater Hickory MPO/WPCOG:** Lenoir Planning maintains Technical Coordinating Committee membership, making recommendations in policy direction to the deciding board (TAC). Hannah Williams also participated in the development of two transportation plans this year: The **Western Piedmont Bicycle and Pedestrian Plan 2025** and the **Western Piedmont Transportation Safety Plan**.
- **Retail Strategies:** Retail Strategies provides great insight into the retail trade areas of Lenoir and assists with recruiting national businesses. Planning staff collaborates with Retail Strategies on new development sites and potential brands interested in the Lenoir market.

E. Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, and Historic Preservation Commission

- In 2025, Planning Board met 9 times and held one HPC session, and Board of Adjustment met 2 times.
- **Cases:** 7 Rezoning, 3 Ordinance Amendments, 1 Special Use Permit, 1 Variance
- **Ordinance Amendments**
 - B-7 Multi-family Permitted Uses (ZOA 1-25): clarified that high density multifamily is allowed as a permitted use in B-7.

- Setback Exemption on Historic Lots (ZOA 2-25): reduced side and rear setbacks proportionally to the size of the lot on historic lots.
 - Downtown Sidewalk Use Ordinance (ZOA 3-25): provided outdoor display options for businesses in the downtown MSD and clarified sidewalk café ordinance and social district standards. Planning Board formed a subcommittee and provided outreach opportunities to businesses in developing this ordinance.
-

4. Personnel Updates

- **Matt Bolick** joined Planning staff as Code Compliance Officer in March 2025. Matt has worked for the city for 17 years in the Fire Department and Public Works.
 - **Kim Staines** hired as Planning Technician in September 2025.
 - **Matt Duchan**, Planner/GIS Specialist obtained the American Institute of Certified Planners (AICP) credential in Jan 2026.
 - **Hannah Williams**, Planning Director finished Municipal County Administration course in May 2025, and attended Civic “Leading for Results” Fellowship Program in Fall 2025.
 - **Teresa Kinney** (WPCOG) assisting weekly with zoning, sign, and floodplain enforcement.
 - **Winifred Rhea-Unruh** served as an intern for Planning and Downtown Development in Summer 2025, providing excellent help to the sidewalk use subcommittee, updating Main Street databases, and mapping city sidewalks and sidewalk gaps.
-

5. Outstanding Long-Term Projects

- **Greenway 911 Location System** – 54 markers created; need to finalize post locations
 - **Neighborhood & Greenway Signs** – Branding and placemaking opportunity
 - **Watershed Property Zoning** – Conditional zoning concept pending
 - **Stormwater Utility Fee** – Framework complete; awaiting policy direction
 - **National Register Districts** – Funding gap of ~\$10,000; need project champion
-

6. Department Budget Requests (FY 2026–27)

Zoning Ordinance Update (Unified Development Ordinance)

Early cost estimate: \$175,000

Demolition & Legal Fees

- Budget for housing demolition and foreclosure is adequate at \$100,000.
- Non-residential building structure code enforcement can lead to vacate and demolish ordinances. While we do not anticipate city abatements in 2026, there may be a need in future years for non-residential building demolitions.

Greenway 911 Signs – \$1,000

- \$25 per sign; approx. 35 signs
-

7. Looking Ahead to 2026

Key Priorities

- Implement Non-Residential Buildings and Structures Ordinance
 - Explore UDO rewrite as recommended by the Comprehensive Plan.
 - Continue foreclosure and abatement efforts
 - Source funding for Harper Avenue Streetscape.
 - Continue to set priorities and goals as listed in the Comprehensive Plan, including neighborhood stabilization strategies in Whitnel and West End.
 - Improved customer service through technology updates, Spanish translation of documents, and cross-training staff on basics of code enforcement and permitting.
-



2025 Stormwater Program Report



Western Piedmont
Council of Governments

Planning & Natural Resources

CITY OF
LENOIR
NC ★ CREATE WITH US

PUBLIC OUTREACH

275**People**

In July 2025, our team returned to the Blackberry Festival in Lenoir. Our booth featured brochures, infographics, signage, and activities for kids such as a prize wheel, word search, and cornhole. Our materials addressed topics including stormwater pollution prevention, litter prevention, pet waste precautions, and volunteer opportunities.



PUBLIC YOUTH EDUCATION

3

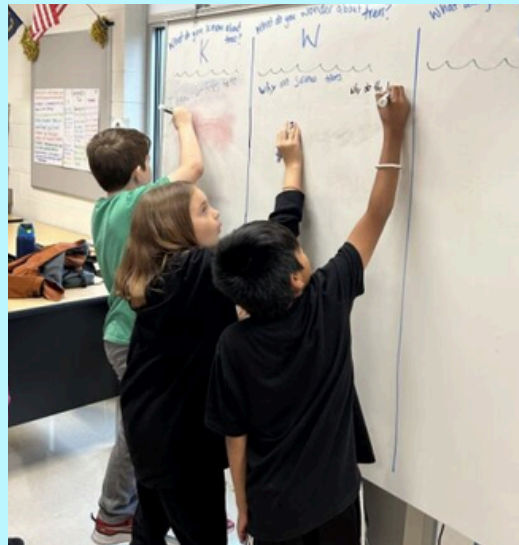
Lessons

In January 2025, WPCOG staff delivered a presentation to youth at the Caldwell County Library. This lesson included an Enviroscape demonstration to help students visualize how water moves across the watershed and a storm drain sign stenciling activity to remind library visitors that all storm drains lead to the waterway.

320

Students

Additionally, WPCOG staff visited William-Lenoir Middle School in April and December, each time giving a series of presentations to sixth graders about tree benefits, water quality, soil health, and environmental careers. This was part of a grant-funded project in collaboration with the NC Forest Service. Students enjoyed learning about watersheds, pollution prevention, and the water cycle with hands-on activities. The project will continue in 2026.



PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT

In July 2025, WPCOG hosted a Lenoir Greenway Clean-Up event starting at the Caldwell County Public Library. Volunteers helped pick up bag-fulls of trash from the greenway, preventing the contamination of Zacks Fork Creek and making the greenway a cleaner, safer space for visitors.

**4****Volunteers****175****Lbs of Litter**

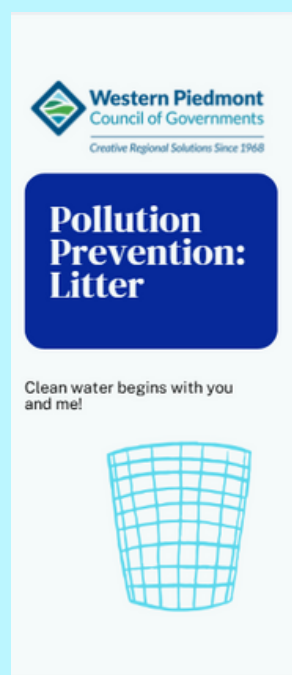
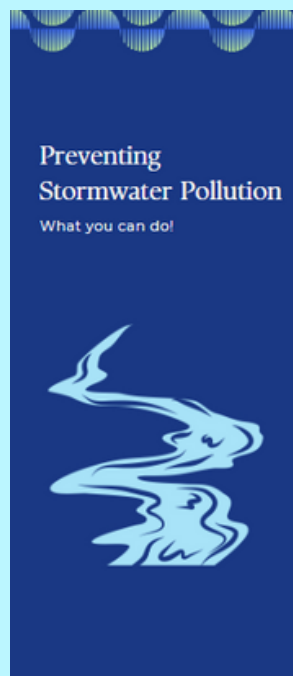
MATERIAL DISTRIBUTION

WPCOG delivered informational stormwater flyers to the Caldwell County Public Library and Lenoir City Hall for members of the community to view. These flyers and brochures cover basic pollution prevention, how to report polluters, and how to manage household waste. Our stormwater brochure is also available in Spanish.

Stormwater flyers were also distributed at the Blackberry Festival and youth education events.

362

Flyers Distributed



WATER RESOURCES COMMITTEE

WPCOG hosted four Water Resources Committee Meetings in 2025, providing updates and inviting a guest presenter to share their expertise in the water resources field. Topics covered in 2025 included water management in the USFS, Charlotte's proposed interbasin transfer, the AppAqua Program, and environmental planning in Western NC.

56

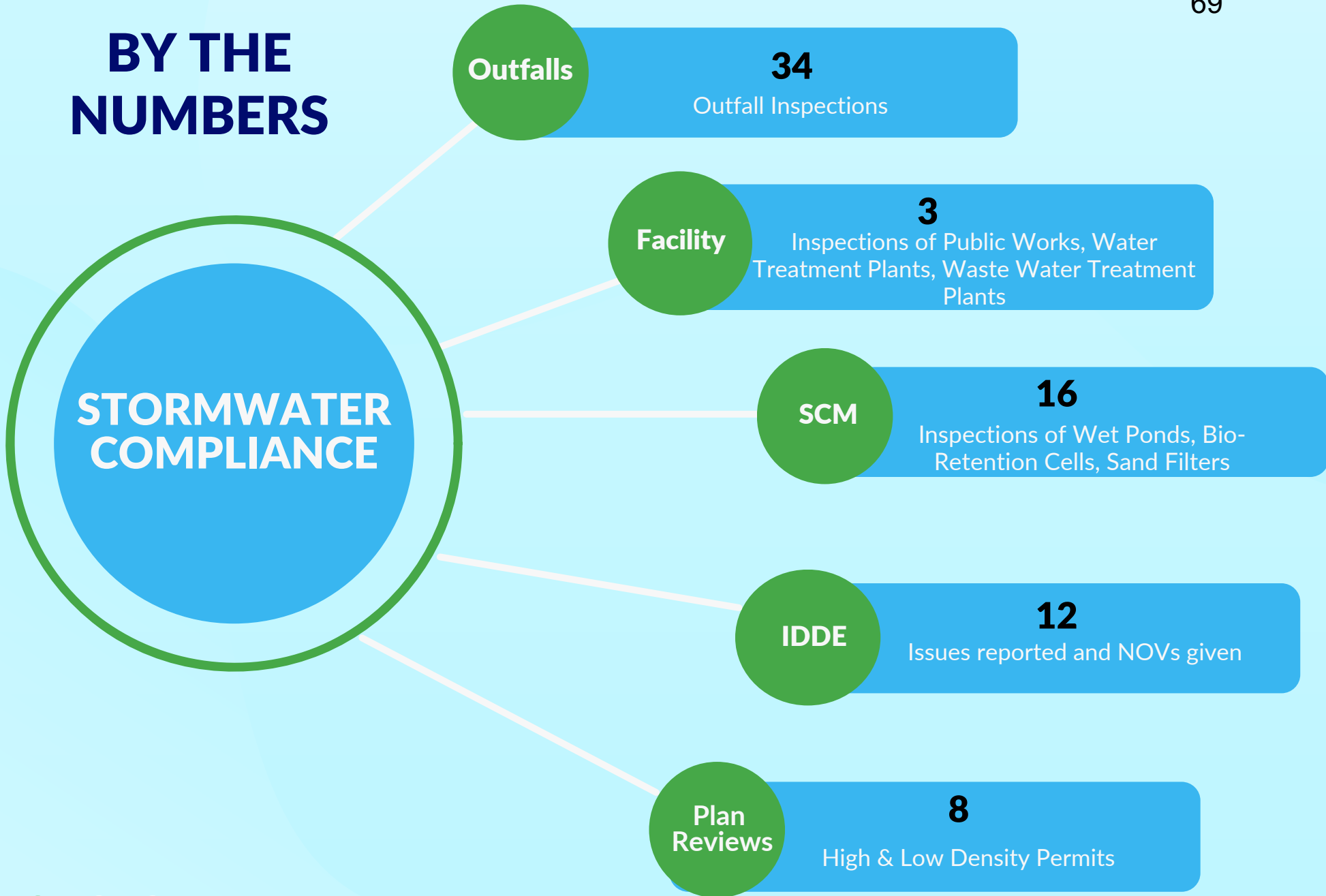
Total Attendees

STORMWATER COMPLIANCE

This year, WPCOG administered Lenoir's NPDES MS4 permit through a wide range of duties including outfall inspections, mapping, facility inspections, plan reviews, and illicit discharge enforcement. WPCOG also facilitated reporting during NCDEQ's audit of Lenoir's MS4 program alongside City of Lenoir staff. In December of 2025 a draft of Lenoir's stormwater management plan was submitted for the next permit cycle.



BY THE NUMBERS



Contact Us



stormwater@wpcog.org

www.wpcog.org/stormwater-partnership

www.facebook.com/WPCOG





Andy Wilson
Chief

CITY OF LENOIR POLICE

1035 West Avenue NW
Lenoir, NC 28645
828-757-2100



Scott Hildebran
City Manager

The Lenoir Police Department plays a vital role in maintaining the safety, stability, and quality of life for the citizens and visitors of the City of Lenoir. This retreat briefing is intended to provide City Council with a comprehensive overview of departmental operations during 2025, and highlight service demand, personnel development, technology investments, and community-focused initiatives across all divisions.

At the core of the department is the Patrol Division, which serves as the backbone of daily operations. Patrol officers provide uninterrupted coverage 24 hours a day, 365 days a year, and are the first responders to every call for service, regardless of severity, weather conditions, or risk. In 2025 alone, patrol officers responded to 39,566 calls for service, both self-initiated and dispatched, underscoring the consistent demand placed on frontline personnel and their critical role in ensuring Lenoir remains a safe place to live, work, and visit.

Supporting Patrol is a coordinated structure of specialized divisions, including Criminal Investigations, Support Services, and Community-Oriented Units, each contributing to public safety through focused expertise. Investigators addressed crimes against persons and property, narcotics-related offenses, nuisance abatement, and complex investigations, while Support Services ensured the department remained operationally sound through communications, training, logistics, records, and evidence management.

Throughout 2025, the department continued to emphasize professional development, accountability, and modernization. Officers and staff achieved advanced state and national certifications, completed thousands of hours of training, and assumed leadership roles through promotions. Strategic investments in technology such as drones, Automated License Plate Readers (ALPR), upgraded communications infrastructure, enhanced firearms optics, and digital evidence storage were made to improve efficiency, accuracy, and safety while remaining mindful of privacy and community trust.

Equally important is the department's ongoing commitment to community engagement. From School Resource Officers, D.A.R.E. instruction, and youth programs like C.A.D.E.T. Camp, to large-scale events such as National Night Out and Project Graduation, LPD officers continue to build positive relationships that extend beyond enforcement and into partnership.

This retreat provides an opportunity to review accomplishments, recognize the dedication of department personnel, and discuss future needs and priorities. The successes outlined in this report reflect not only the professionalism of the Lenoir Police Department, but also the continued support of City Council, city staff, and the citizens we proudly serve.

Patrol Division

The Patrol Division of the Lenoir Police Department is the backbone of the agency. The men and women who make up this division staff these positions 24 hours per day, 365 days per year. They are the initial responders to all calls for service no matter the nature of the event.

The Lenoir Police Department Patrol Division consists of three platoons. A Platoon and B Platoon is comprised of four patrol squads responsible for responding to calls for service and patrolling our community. In 2025, through the restructuring of divisions, C-Platoon was reassigned to the Patrol Division. C Platoon consists of our School Resource Officers, Neighborhood/Community Watch Programs, D.A.R.E, the Downtown District, and coordinates security for all city events.

In 2025, the Patrol Division responded to a combined 39,566 self-initiated and response call for service. Through these calls for service the Patrol Division has been able to provide a safe place for residents and visitors to live, work, and play.

Patrol Officers must be able to respond to any call for service no matter the current weather condition or level of danger. One of the many on-going equipment projects completed this year was the procurement of new EOTECH Holographic sights for all department issued rifles for all sworn personnel. These optics are intended to enhance officer accuracy, target identification, and response effectiveness during high risk incidents while maintaining the highest standards of public and officer safety.



EOTECH Sight

The Lenoir Police Department also procured additional drones for Patrol use. These drones assist in locating suspects, missing persons, and runaway juveniles, as well as enhancing security at special events, schools, and athletic events.



Newly Acquired Drones

Patrol Officer Recognition

Several patrol officers received their Intermediate and Advanced Law Enforcement Certificates. In order to be awarded such a certificate an officer must acquire a certain amount of training hours as well as credible experience. In most cases officers must possess at minimum of four to eight years of credible service to receive this professional certificate.

Cpl. Jesse Pennell and SRO Joshua Pyle received their Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificates through North Carolina Criminal Justice Training and Standards.

SRO Cesar Rubio received his Advanced Law Enforcement Certificate through North Carolina Training and Standards.

Sergeant Brandon MacLeod received the American Legion Post 29 Officer of the Year award.

Lieutenant Martin Crisp was promoted to Captain and was assigned as the Patrol Division Commander in 2025.

Sergeant Patrick Moser and Detective Marcus Hartley were promoted to Lieutenant and assigned as Patrol Platoon Commanders in 2025.

Detective Landon Annas and Corporal Miguel Zambrano were promoted to Sergeant and assigned as Patrol Supervisors in 2025.

SRO Jesse Pennell, SRO Herbert Reid, MPO John DiBella and MPO Chase Miller were promoted to Corporal and assigned as Patrol Supervisors in 2025.



Capt. M. Crisp



Lt. P. Moser



Lt. M. Hartley



Sgt. L. Annas



Sgt. M. Zambrano



Cpl. J. Pennell

Cpl. H. Reid

Cpl. J. DiBella

Cpl. C. Miller

SRO Chris Smith was promoted to Corporal and assigned as the Community Resource Officer.



Cpl. C. Smith

Three new K9 Units were added to the Lenoir Police Department Patrol Division in 2025. Cezar and Mia were assigned to patrol shifts while Genghis was assigned to our city schools.



K9 Cezar



K9 Mia



K9 Genghis

The Lenoir Police Department Patrol Division welcomed many new faces in 2025:

- Dalton Inman
- Robert Reed
- Austen Absher
- Elsie Alward
- Joshua Earp
- Ethan Lovette
- Phillip Eller
- Eden Worley
- Jake Ward
- Hunter Smith
- Justin Kilby
- Ben Holdorf

Six Lenoir Police Department Patrol Officers received Golden Ticket Awards for their impeccable service to our community in 2025:

- Sgt. M. Foust
- Cpl. C. Miller / K9
- MPO M. Ruppard
- Ptl. L. Barret / K9
- Ptl. M. Severt
- Ptl. J. Brown

Lieutenant Chris Bumgarner successfully completed the Federal Bureau of Investigation National Academy in 2025.



Patrol Officers Community Involvement

Patrol Officers continue to focus their efforts on reports of debris left by encampments and individuals throughout the City of Lenoir. In 2025, officers responded to numerous calls related to these situations. Officers work with businesses, code enforcement, and property owners to assist the homeless population in locating resources to benefit whatever current situation they may be facing.

Often these abandoned sites are littered with large amounts of trash and debris that needs to be removed. Patrol Officers make it a priority to revitalize these areas in order to limit the number of reoccurring incidents while improving the aesthetics and reducing the environmental impact.





School / Youth Engagement

Hibriten High School SRO Cesar Rubio, became a K-9 officer and now he and Genghis, an English Springer Spaniel, work together as a team both in and out of the school. Lenoir Police Department is the first agency in the Western part of North Carolina to implement a K-9 full-time at a school. Genghis works hard but also plays hard, putting smiles on the faces of students, teachers, and everyone else he comes into contact with throughout the course of his day.



Horizons Elementary SRO Jason Ramsey, participated in a fundraiser to purchase school supplies. His “winning” the competition resulted in him kissing a donkey – anything for a good cause!

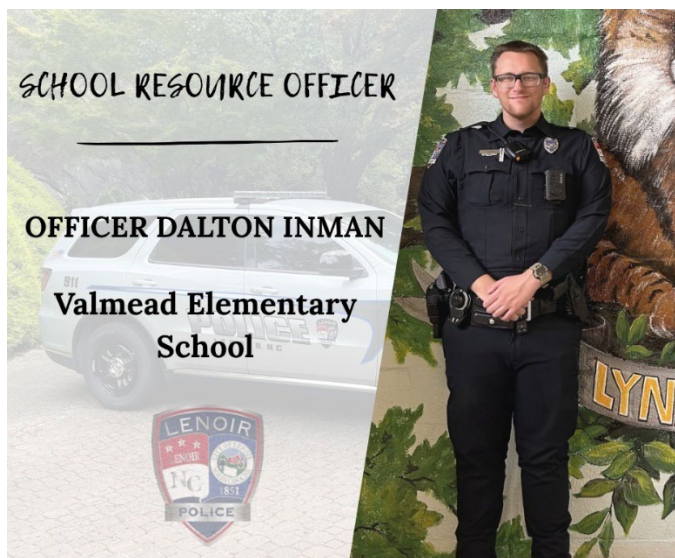
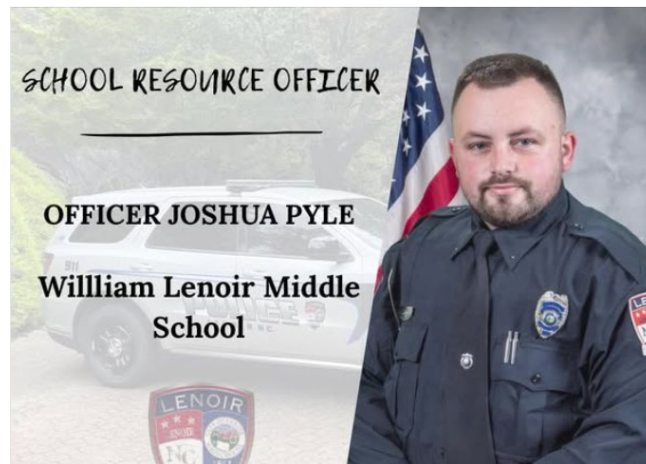
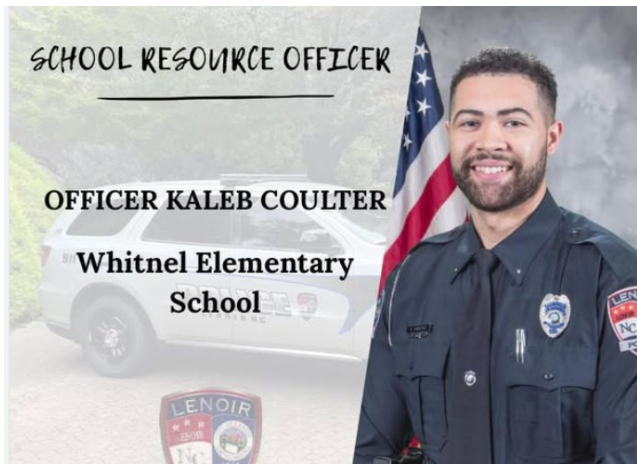


SRO’s from Davenport Elementary and Valmead Elementary taught DARE to 5th grade classes at their respective schools. Kids who participated learned a lot about personal responsibility and making good decisions. DARE is more than “say no to drugs;” it is life lessons to cultivate good citizens.

Immediately after Hibriten High School’s graduation, many of the graduates attended Project Graduation and Bo’s Family Entertainment Center. Our SRO’s also attended the event providing security for the venue and celebrating with the graduates.

With the new school year approaching, C Platoon conducted a coordinated school supply drive to support local students. Officers visited Walmart to purchase backpacks and essential school supplies, including notebooks, paper, pencils, markers, crayons, erasers, and other necessary items. The filled backpacks were distributed to Lenoir’s elementary schools and provided to students who might otherwise lack these essential resources.

After the start of the school year, C Platoon welcomed Officer Kaleb Coulter as the new SRO for Whitnel Elementary, Officer Dalton Inman as the new SRO at Valmead Elementary, and Officer Joshua Pyle as the new SRO of William Lenoir Middle School. All of these outstanding officers quickly assumed their roles and integrated seamlessly into the school environment, earning the respect and appreciation of students, teachers, and staff alike.

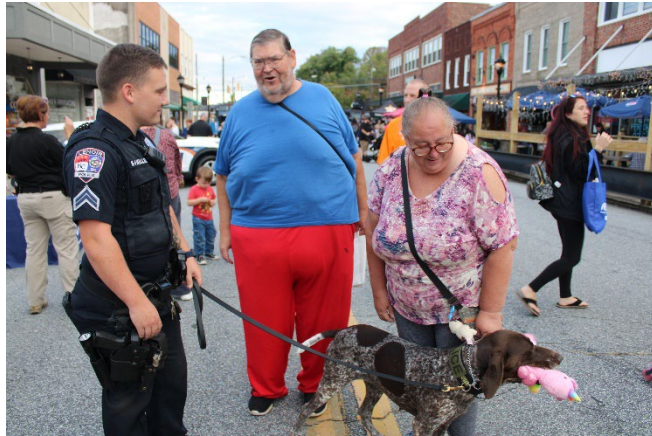


CADET Summer Camp 2025

The crown jewel of C Platoon's event calendar is CADET Camp, an action-packed weeklong camp for local youths who want to get up close and personal with first responders while also going on field trips and having a blast with their peers. This year's lineup included indoor rock climbing, the Hickory Aviation Museum, swimming, fishing, and a Hickory Crawdads baseball game with fireworks to end the night!



National Night Out 2025 in Downtown Lenoir!



Criminal Investigations Division

During 2025, the Criminal Investigations Division continued to work diligently with the citizens of Lenoir and within our various communities to investigate criminal acts, as well as deter criminal activities of all types. The Criminal Investigations Division investigated an array of cases in 2025 totaling 743. Crimes against persons and property will continue to be a top priority to assure our citizens have a safe place to live, work and play.

Investigator Recognition

During 2025, the Investigations Division underwent several personnel transitions. Lieutenant Nathaneal Blache transferred from the Patrol Division to assume leadership of the Investigations Division. Sergeant Mark Coffey transferred to the Narcotics Unit, where he now serves as a Detective I. Corporal Shane Woodward joined the division as the Nuisance Abatement Investigator. Patrol Officers Seth Clark and Autumn Ryerse were promoted to Detective I and transferred into the division, and Detective Jesse Massey was promoted to Detective II.

Ongoing training remains critical to ensuring investigators maintain the skills and knowledge necessary to effectively serve the citizens of Lenoir. Throughout 2025, division personnel completed a broad range of specialized training courses, including interview and interrogation techniques, the Police Law Institute, forensic classes, crime scene investigations, and narcotics-related instruction.

Supervisory staff also completed advanced leadership training during the year. Lieutenant Blache completed the North Carolina Association of Chiefs of Police Institute in September. Sergeant Stella January finished the FBI LEEDA Trilogy in April, and Sergeant Derek Brown completed the FBI Command College in September.

To qualify for Intermediate and Advanced Law Enforcement Certificates, officers must complete a required number of training hours and demonstrate multiple years of credible law enforcement service. Typically, four to eight years of service are required to obtain these professional certifications.

In 2025, Detectives Seth Clark and Brandon Mooney were awarded Intermediate Law Enforcement Certificates by the North Carolina Training and Standards Division. Additionally, Senior Detective Joe Hamrick received the “Top Gun” award for the fourth consecutive year.

Nuisance

The Investigations Division continues to work closely with Code Enforcement and the City of Lenoir Planning Department to address nuisance violations throughout our communities. Whenever possible, investigators collaborate with property owners to resolve these issues voluntarily.

In 2025, targeted enforcement efforts led to the investigation of 250 properties for a variety of nuisance violations. Of these cases, 177 were successfully abated either by the property owner or by the City of Lenoir.

Pictured below are examples of properties that were abated by Investigators in 2025:



527 Prospect Street Before abatement



527 Prospect Street after abatement



239 Drum Circle before abatement



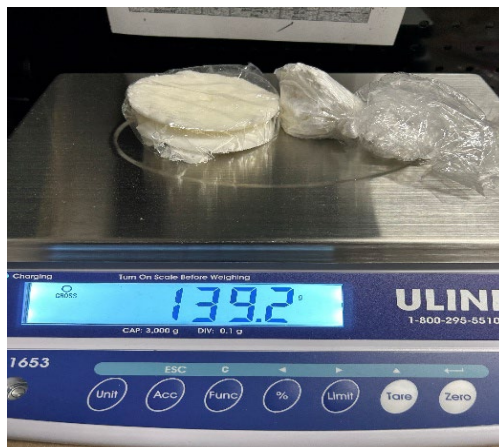
239 Drum Circle after abatement

Narcotics Investigations

The opioid crisis continues to impact families throughout the City of Lenoir and Caldwell County. In 2025, investigators responded to 87 overdose cases, 53 of which were directly linked to opioid use. These incidents continue to disrupt families and strain our community.

Narcotics investigators remain committed to combating the influx of illegal drugs by working in close partnership with local, state, and federal agencies. During 2025, investigators seized \$372,531.90 in illegal narcotics within the City of Lenoir and assisted other agencies in seizing an additional \$2,680,074.40 worth of illegal substances.

The investigation and prosecution of individuals who illegally distribute these deadly narcotics remain a top priority. Below are photographs from several of the many drug seizures conducted in 2025.



Red Roof Inn Abatement

Beginning in May 2025, Investigators with the Lenoir Police Department, with assistance from the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement Division, initiated a nuisance investigation involving the Red Roof Inn located at 206 Blowing Rock Boulevard. The investigation was opened in response to direct community complaints regarding ongoing issues at the property, as well as an excessive number of calls for service.

The property had become increasingly taxing on public safety resources, including the Lenoir Police Department, the Lenoir Fire Department, and Caldwell County Emergency Services. In the three years preceding the initiation of the investigation, the property generated more than 1,000 calls for service. Based on this information, the property met the definition of a public nuisance as prescribed by Chapter 19 of the North Carolina General Statutes.

The investigation revealed that the property had become a location where repeated acts were occurring that created and constituted a public nuisance. These activities included, but were not limited to, drug abuse, drug sales, overdoses, assaults, physical altercations, fights, affrays, loud, abusive, and profane language, as well as impaired and disruptive behavior.

At the conclusion of the investigation, the property owners signed a Consent Judgment in September 2025, agreeing to conditions set forth by the court. The Consent Judgment was signed by Superior Court Judge Warren and filed with the Caldwell County Clerk of Court and the Caldwell County Register of Deeds. Since that time, the property has been better managed, and issues associated with the property have significantly subsided.



Automated License Plate Readers (Flock System)

The Flock Automated License Plate Reader (ALPR) system is a network of fixed, high-resolution cameras paired with cloud-based software that captures license plate numbers and vehicle attributes, such as make, model, color, and other identifying characteristics, when vehicles pass through designated locations. The system allows law enforcement to search vehicle data, receive real-time alerts for stolen vehicles or vehicles of interest, and more efficiently develop investigative leads, focusing on vehicle information.

In 2025, the Lenoir Police Department implemented the Flock ALPR system at 15 strategic locations throughout the city to enhance crime prevention efforts, improve response times, and strengthen investigations into vehicle-related crimes, missing persons, and other public safety concerns. The system is integrated with the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database, allowing officers to receive immediate alerts when a license plate associated with a stolen vehicle, wanted person, missing person or other NCIC entry is detected, further increasing the effectiveness of the department's proactive policing efforts while operating under established privacy protections and data retention policies.



Through the continued support of the City Council, city staff, and citizens, investigators have been able to acquire advanced audio and video technology to more effectively investigate crimes that have already occurred, as well as criminal activity in general. As technology advances in society, so do the methods used by those who commit crimes. To thoroughly investigate incidents, it is essential that we remain current with equipment needs, provide ongoing training opportunities, and maintain strong partnerships with local, state, and federal agencies. Utilizing all of these resources will enhance investigative success and help ensure the safety and peace of mind our citizens deserve.

In 2025, former officer Colton Rich, who currently works within the City's Information Technology Department, was tasked with aiding in the investigation of crimes surrounding audio and video technology. Finance Director Donna Bean, recognizing the need to improve the City's position amid the rapidly evolving pace of technology, appeared before Council to propose amending his position to include shared responsibility for the City's IT needs and law enforcement investigations. Rich has shown to be an asset with his IT background and sworn law enforcement status to propel the department forward in investigating these types of crimes.

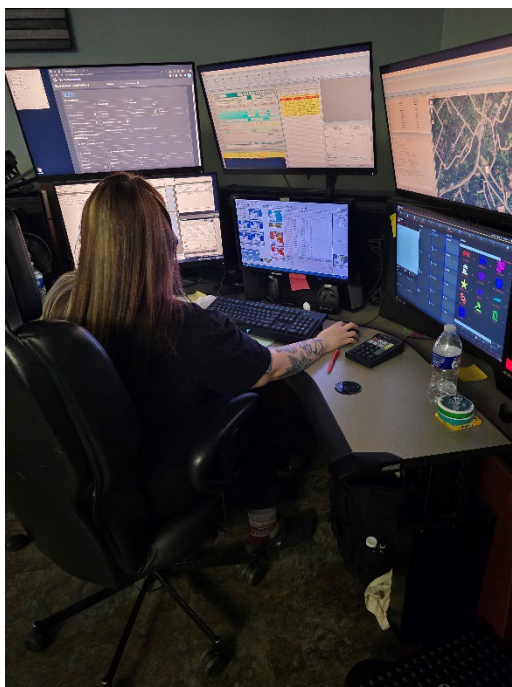


Support Services Division

The Support Services Division manages and oversees various administrative functions for the police department. These functions include training, logistics, records, evidence, and the communications center.

Communications Center

In 2025 Communications received 52,813 total phone calls. Of those calls, 7,220 were processed as 911 emergency calls and 10,292 were non-911 calls for service. The communications center processed 21,642 officer-initiated calls and made 39,566 CAD entries. In addition, communication's personnel processed and received 315 after-hours water and sewer service calls for the City of Lenoir.



Communications Training

Our communications personnel continue to advance their level of knowledge through various training, and certification opportunities.

In 2025 we had a few changes in Communications. Avery Hollingsworth became the new Director of Communications, while Dustin Eller transitioned to Evidence Technician.



E911 Communications Director
Dustin Eller was promoted to
Property & Evidence (Aug 2025)



Master Telecommunicator Avery
Hollingsworth was promoted to E911
Communications Director (Sep 2025)

Three new dispatchers were hired during 2025 to fill current vacancies. These positions require individuals that are highly skilled and possess the ability to multi-task as communications becomes quite busy throughout a regular duty shift.

Stephanie Dula and Zylah Walker were Golden Ticket Award recipients during the 2025 year for their recognized service beyond measure while going above and beyond their regular duties.

Director Avery Hollingworth was voted # 1 Best of Caldwell Dispatcher for 2025.



Communications Upgrades

In early 2025, the procurement and installation of Kenwood VM5930 mobile radios was imperative to ensure compliance with P25 Phase 2 Viper Radio requirements by the recognized deadline of July 1, 2025. The purchase and install of (43) mobile in-car radios at a cost of \$147,000 accomplished this goal assuring continued communication and compliance by the deadline.



Along with the upgraded in-car radios to stay in compliance with Phase 2 of Viper Radio requirements, our current radio infrastructure within the in-house communications capabilities had to be upgraded as well encompassing a cost of \$3,400.

Our Communications Center is staffed 24/7, 365 days a year. Due to ongoing wear and tear, the replacement of existing chairs with new chairs was completed in 2025.



Training

The training section of the Lenoir Police Department is responsible for all hiring processes, promotional processes, as well as overseeing annual in-service training and maintaining records on officer certifications. During 2025, the training section oversaw 35 background investigations and 28 hiring processes. There were 10 promotional processes (1 Evidence, 2 SRO, 1 K-9, 1 Communications Director, 2 Detective, 2 Corporal, and 1 Lieutenant).

The training section also implements, coordinates, and tracks training for all department personnel throughout the year. In 2025, LPD personnel participated in 10,409 training hours. At the end of each year, the Training Coordinator is tasked with preparing and submitting an agency compliance report to North Carolina Training and Standards. The 2025 report was completed and submitted at the beginning of January, 2026.

During the year our Training Coordinator completed a Field Training Manual evaluation and implemented the necessary amendments to maintain effectiveness and efficiency. Other added improvements consisted of digitizing numerous documents in order to minimize over use and waste of paper.

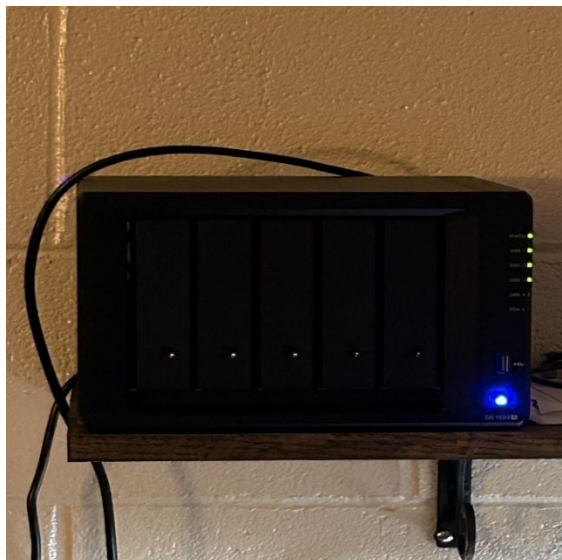
Evidence

In 2025, Dustin Eller took over as the Evidence Technician. He processed 2,327 pieces of incoming evidence. He was able to dispose of 2,119 pieces of evidence per Court Order. He took in 144.6 pounds of unused or unwanted medication through one community event and our department's lobby drop box. The department continues to focus on an overall evidence audit to ensure accountability and overall best evidence practices.



Evidence Upgrades

A new evidence storage hard drive was added to assist with digital media storage. Digital evidence is increasingly more prevalent and this new equipment provides the ability to maintain this extra workload.



Logistics

Logistics oversees inventory and purchasing for the Support Services division, as well as assists in Internal Affairs. In 2025, Logistics procured 3 new vehicles for the department which were assigned to the Patrol Division.

In August, 2025 the department switched to Lenovo in-car computers for Patrol vehicles so that we can keep pace with the ever-changing, ever-increasing digital security and capabilities. Desk top computers will be replaced with Lenovo laptops and docking stations.

Logistics oversaw the upgrading of our entry gate keypads. This upgrade allows the use of entry door cards and cell phones to activate the gates therefore increasing facility security.



The Police Department received a surplus trailer from the Parks & Recreation Department and renovated it for use as a cone trailer. This interdepartmental transfer saved the City of Lenoir several thousand dollars compared to the cost of purchasing a new trailer. The trailer can be deployed to incident scenes or special events to efficiently transport cones and assist with traffic control and area closures.



Governor's Highway Safety Program



Throughout the year, officers of the Lenoir Police Department consistently demonstrated their commitment to maintaining the safety of the City of Lenoir's highways and streets, ensuring a secure environment for both residents and visitors.

A substantial portion of the Governor's Highway Safety events took place beyond the standard duty hours of patrol officers.

- Speed A Little Lose A Lot
- Move Over or Get Pulled Over
- Click It, or Ticket
- Booze It and Lose It
- Child Passenger Safety Week

The Governor's Highway Safety Program allows agencies across North Carolina to use points earned throughout the year to obtain equipment that would otherwise cost the department significant funds. To address the immediate operational needs of the Lenoir Police Department in 2025, the following items were acquired through this allocation.

- Traffic Cones - \$750
- Bosch Crash Data Recorder (CDR) - \$4,500 with one-year subscription - \$1,500
- Alco sensors - \$2,000

Total money saved through allocation: **\$8,750**

Community Engagement and Social Media Communications

The Police Department has maintained a social media presence, primarily on Facebook, for many years as a means of sharing information with the public. In September, the department began a more intentional and strategic approach to its social media efforts, placing increased emphasis on consistent posting, professional branding, and purposeful messaging.

This enhanced focus has strengthened communication with the community by providing timely updates, educational content, and insight into departmental operations. A more deliberate social media strategy has also improved transparency by offering residents greater visibility into police activities, initiatives, and community partnerships. Additionally, a consistent and professional online presence supports recruitment efforts by highlighting the department's culture, values, and commitment to service, while reinforcing public trust and engagement.

Moving forward, social media will continue to serve as an important tool for informing the public, fostering positive relationships, and supporting the department's mission through clear, accessible, and reliable communication.

To evaluate the impact of these strategic changes, the department reviewed Facebook Insights data from the fourth quarter of 2025 (October–December). The metrics below highlight measurable improvements in reach, engagement, and overall audience interaction following the implementation of a more intentional posting and branding strategy.

4th Quarter 2025 (October – December)

Total Views	Change from Previous Quarter	
852,624	↑ 30%	<i>The total number of views represents the number of times posted content was played or displayed</i>

Engagement (Overall)	Change from Previous Quarter	
104,764	↑ 124%	<i>Overall engagement represents the total number of reactions, comments, shares, and clicks on a post.</i>

Audience Data			
Audience (Total Followers)	Change from Previous Quarter	Age/Gender	Top Locations
14,298	↑ 1%	69% Women / 31% Men 32.9% (Ages 25-34) 24.8% (Ages 35-44) 23.4% (Ages 45-54)	41.3% Lenoir 35.1% Other 13.0% Hudson 10.5% Granite Falls

Opportunities for Future Improvements

The Lenoir Police Department anticipates several significant obstacles in 2026 that will require both strategic planning and adaptable resource management.

Recruitment and Retention of Police Officers - This topic remains a concern and mirrors trends faced by agencies across North Carolina and the nation. Fewer applicants entering the profession, competition from surrounding agencies, and the increasing complexity of police work all contribute to staffing pressures. Retention is equally critical, as experienced officers are essential for mentoring new hires, sustaining specialty units, maintaining community trust, and continuing our goals of succession planning. Without adequate staffing, response times, proactive policing efforts, and officer wellness can all be negatively impacted.

Lenoir Police currently ranks 13th out of 17 (1= highest, 17 = lowest) among surrounding agencies in starting salaries. However, as of FY 25/26, the Lenoir Police Department offers the highest starting salary for sworn law enforcement officers within Caldwell County. Addressing this issue as a whole will require ongoing evaluation of both hiring and current employee salaries, training opportunities, career development, and workplace conditions.

Nuisance Enforcement / Greenway Patrols / Downtown Visibility - One ongoing challenge will be increased nuisance enforcement and the need for sustained patrolling of the city's greenway system and downtown district. As these areas continue to grow in public use, recreation, tourism, and business activity, the demand for a consistent police presence increases. Patrols in these locations not only deter undesirable behavior but also help maintain a welcoming environment for residents and visitors. Meeting this expectation may require additional funding and could include exploring the use of part-time civilian personnel to support non-enforcement functions. This approach would help maintain visibility and responsiveness while preserving sworn officers for duties requiring full police authority.

Police Vehicles - Another ongoing need for the department is the continued purchase and replacement of police vehicles. Patrol cars experience constant use, long hours of operation, and regular exposure to demanding conditions, all of which contribute to accelerated wear and higher maintenance costs. As vehicles age, reliability decreases, repair frequency rises, and downtime can impact both officer safety and response capability. Keeping a consistent replacement cycle ensures that officers have dependable equipment, reduces long-term maintenance expenses, and maintains a professional and functional fleet.



Equipment Inadequacies - Specifically related to our current handheld mobile radios, these devices represent another operational challenge. The department's current radios experience a delay when powering on and have recurring reception and connectivity issues, both of which create vulnerabilities in time-sensitive or high-risk situations. A reliable communication system with the capacity to have a secondary mode of communication is fundamental to officer safety and incident response, especially during incidents of multi-agency response and times of disaster. However, modern radio systems come with significant financial costs, meaning any replacement or upgrade will require careful budgeting, potential grant exploration, and prioritization among other operational needs.



Un-Sheltered and Un-Housed Individuals - This continues to be a multifaceted challenge that overlaps public safety, public health, and social services. The police department must balance enforcement of ordinances with compassionate outreach efforts and partnerships with community agencies and mental health resources. The increasing visibility of this population necessitates consistent engagement and long-term planning to manage safety concerns, service calls, and community expectations.

Department Renovations - The Lenoir Police Department also recognizes the importance of continued progress on long-needed facility improvements within the current building. Constructed in the 1980s, the structure is now showing clear signs of age and routine wear that must be addressed to maintain a safe, functional, and professional working environment. Several areas require particular attention. The flooring throughout portions of the building contains cracks, worn sections, and holes that not only detract from the appearance of the facility but also present potential safety concerns for staff and visitors. The stairwell covering has visible damage, including broken and torn sections that pose elevated trip and fall hazards, making its replacement a priority for both safety and liability prevention. Additionally, various offices and interior rooms require updates to remain functional and meet modern workspace expectations. After decades of use, these areas need renovation to ensure they continue to support current operational needs and technology requirements.



Replace current policy-only software with Employee Development and Intervention Software –

Essential Personnel is a cloud-based workforce and professional standards software designed specifically for public safety and government agencies designed to centralize employee data. This type of platform provides tools that go beyond traditional policy storage by helping organizations manage performance development, training, certifications, safety, wellness, and overall personnel readiness. Agencies use the system to document performance, track training requirements, monitor injuries or exposures, organize personnel data, and maintain policy compliance. Essential Personnel supports leaders by giving them a centralized, secure way to monitor employee development, ensure accountability, and promote a healthier, more prepared workforce.



Overall, these anticipated challenges reflect the natural growth and evolving needs of our department and our community. By staying proactive, working together, and continuing to invest in the areas that matter most, we can navigate these issues and keep moving in a positive direction. With steady progress and a practical approach, the Lenoir Police Department will be well-positioned to meet the needs of 2026 and beyond.



Andy Wilson
Chief of Police
Lenoir Police Department



Public Utilities
2026 Annual Report
 January 23, 2026

WATER

Rhodhiss Water Treatment Plant

The water plant treated over 2.2 BILLION gallons of water in 2025 to a US EPA Area-Wide Optimization Program (AWOP) award winning optimized performance level of clarity. The water treatment plant due to the hard work of the Division Superintendent, Kevin Matheson, received no violations from NCDEQ for the entire year and will receive, for the eleventh time, the AWOP award for optimized turbidity removal and disinfection treatment. The dedication of our operators, the support of the City Manager and the City Council, and the purposeful ongoing investments into the plant infrastructure were critical in insuring this success.

Finley Area Water System/Pressure Improvements Project

This project was identified and placed in the CIP several years ago. Its purpose is to improve the low-pressure concerns in the area around the Finley water tank through system improvements that create a medium pressure zone in the specified area. The NC Division of Water Infrastructure determined the project eligible to fund using State Capital and Infrastructure Fund (SCIF) funding made possible by the assistance of Representative Destin Hall. The project was awarded to two contractors in the fall of 2025. The summary is listed below:

Line Work

Contract A: TP Howard, Inc, \$6,092,350

NTP: 10/27/2025

Substantial: 4/20/2027

Final: 5/20/2027

Tank Construction

Contract B: Caldwell Tanks, Inc. \$2,063,700

NTP: 10/27/2025

Substantial: 10/22/2026

Final: 11/21/2026

Lenoir-Valdese Interconnection Project

The City received funding in the amount of approximately \$17,000,000 through Session Law 2023-2024, House Bill 259, Section 12.2.(e) to construct a water interconnection between the City of Lenoir and the Town of Valdese. McGill Associates are the design engineering firm. The design team just completed the preliminary engineering phase of the project and has entered into

the design phase.

Lead and Copper

The water system EPA required Lead and Copper Rule study is currently underway. The initial inventory was submitted and certified in October of 2024. The required letters to property addresses with Galvanized Requiring Replacement (GRR) and Unknown (UKN) service lines were mailed in November of 2024. This year, a revised inventory was submitted, and required letters mailed, by December 31, 2025. The City, in 2025, received a 100% principal forgiven loan in the amount of \$1,000,000 to continue the efforts to comply with the EPA's Lead and Copper Rule. Derek Goble and Kevin Matheson, with the assistance of the engineering firm of Freese and Nichols, are leading this effort for the City. The team is focusing on a predictive modeling approach, with continued visual inspections, approach to further identify the unknown service lines.

Flash Mix Basin Repairs (Rhodhiss Water Plant)

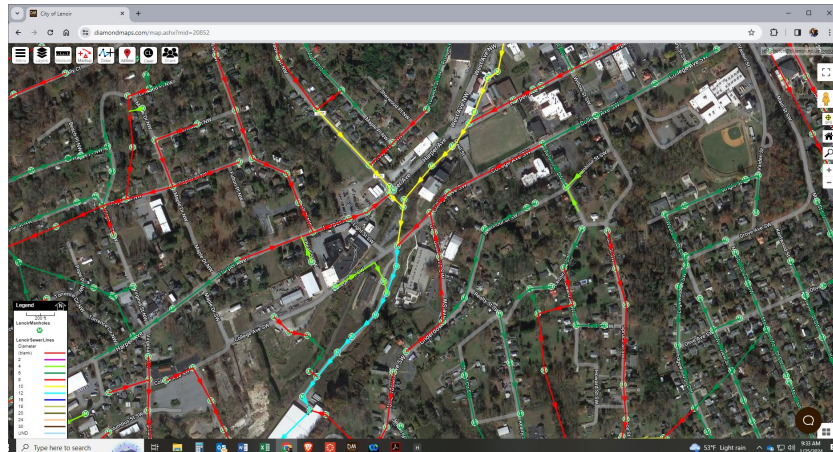
This project includes concrete repairs and replacement of old equipment. This project is nearing completion. Freyssinet, Inc. is the general contractor. The consulting engineering firm of SKA, Consulting Engineers, is providing McGill Associate consultation services for this project.

Collections and Utility Service Policy and Fees

With the implementation of the new metering system, Division Superintendent, Derek Goble, and his staff conduct ongoing reviews of our policies and fees related to service applications, cut on and cut off procedures and policies. Billing and collection policies are also reviewed. The technology in the smart meters is much more expensive than the traditional analog meters. Fees for tampering with or damaging a meter have increased to reflect the increased cost of the meters and the transmitters associated with the AMI network. City staff reviews the current water and sewer tap fees to insure they are adequately covering the cost for a new service installation. This process is ongoing. The water and sewer tap fees were last updated in the fall of 2022.

Diamond Maps

The utilities department subscribes to an online GIS platform, based on Google Maps, to inventory our utilities infrastructure. The platform is very user friendly and is able to be updated on a daily basis, thus, making it a living document. Each member of the distribution and collections crew has access to the mapping platform. A link for the program overview can be accessed at www.diamondmaps.com and a sample screenshot of the sewer system showing direction of flow and manhole locations is pasted below. In 2025, Collections and Distribution staff, under the leadership of Superintendent Derek Goble, took full advantage of the platform and are utilizing it on a daily basis.



Utility Department Capital Asset Inventory

Freese and Nichols completed a Capital Asset Inventory of all of the water and wastewater facilities and capital assets such as treatment plants, water tanks and sewer pump stations to assist with capital planning and to better track maintenance and repair needs at the facilities in fall of 2023. The document is a living document updated by the Utilities Division Superintendents in October of every year.

Utilities Maintenance Division

The Utilities Maintenance Division, lead by Superintendent Tommy Mann, completed numerous water system projects this past year. A few of the drinking water projects include installing a new manual transfer switch for the Harpertown Booster Pump Station, installing a new pump at the Hudson water tank and updating the controls for the Cahah's Mountain tank pumps.

WASTEWATER

Gunpowder Wastewater Treatment Plant Dry Wells

The dry wells at the Gunpowder plant are aging. Utilities Maintenance staff oversaw the remediation of the wells through the application of a spray on coating to repair rusting and deteriorating surfaces. The project had a budget of \$70,000 and was able to be completed for approximately \$51,000, a savings of \$19,000.

2025 Lenoir Sewer Replacement Projects

Ridge Street Sewer Line Replacement

Iron Mountain Construction Company, Inc. replaced approximately 900 feet of gravity sewer line along Ridge Street and Harper Ave. This purpose of this project was to shallow up the existing sewer lines, approximately 27 feet deep in some areas, to prepare for the upcoming stormwater replacement project being bid in the spring of 2026. The project bid price was \$989,200.00.

Harper Avenue Sewer Line Replacement

Carolina Grading & Utilities, Inc. is set to begin, the spring of 2026, the replacement of approximately 1,300 feet of gravity sewer line along the creekbank along Harper Ave from Shields Hardware to Print Dirt Cheap businesses. The purpose of this project is to upgrade aging sewer lines that contribute to inflow and infiltration during rain events. The project bid price was \$845,620.00.

Utilities Maintenance Division

The Utilities Maintenance Division completed numerous wastewater projects this past year. The main projects include:

- A new carport/storage facility for the portable generators
- Replaced #3 raw pump for Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant (LCWWTP)
- Upgraded the automatic transfer switch (ATS) controls at LCWWTP (the generator was starting when not called for)
- Installed Mission Supervisory Control and Data Acquisition (SCADA) controls at Gunpowder Wastewater Treatment Plant (GWWTP) to monitor influent flow
- Installed a building roof access ladder at LCWWTP to safely access roof fans to facilitate the preventative maintenance process
- Installed a new AC unit for the bio-solids control room at LCWWTP
- Replaced four of the five tank diffusers at GWWTP
- Began the process of making diffusers for Tank 5 (the Utilities Maintenance Staff saves the Utilities Department approximately \$25,000 by making the diffusers themselves instead of purchasing units off the shelf)

Lower Creek Wastewater Treatment Plant Updates/Upgrades

The City has been approved to receive Clean Water State Revolving Fund (CWSRF) funding in the amount of \$5.6 million for the project. The project will address the ammonia Notice of Violations (NOVs) by replacing the mixers, diffusers, and air piping within the Process Basins and blowers to support efficient and effective Biological Nutrient Removal (BNR). The project includes the replacement of mixers in the anaerobic, anoxic, and aeration basins, replacement of diffusers in the aeration basins, replacement of air piping that feeds the diffusers, replacement of all three (3) blowers, concrete repairs to treatment basins, and all associate electrical wiring, conduits, instrumentation, and panels for this equipment. The upgrades and equipment replacements will not increase the treatment capacity, 6.0 MGD, of the WWTP. Lisa Triplett, Division Superintendent and Donnie Hawkins, Division Assistant Superintendent and Operator in Responsible Charge (ORC), along with Tommy Mann, will play a leading role in this project

GRANTS

Water and Sewer Asset Inventory Assessment Grants

The City received notification from the North Carolina Division of Water Infrastructure (NCDWI) in 2023. The asset inventory assessment grant application was approved by the State Water Infrastructure Authority (SWIA) to receive grant funding from the American Recovery Plan Act (ARPA) and the State Reserve Program (SRP) in 2024. The grant is approved to fund one hundred percent of eligible project construction costs up to a maximum of \$200,000 for each inventory assessment. Currently, McGill Associates are completing the assessment for the City and should be completed in the spring of 2026.

FUTURE PROJECTS

Lenoir, Granite Falls, Hickory Interconnect

In order to create redundancy, build capacity, and to protect customers during times of unexpected events, Lenoir will investigate a water distribution interconnect, through the Town of

Granite Falls, to the City of Hickory.

Meadowood Lift Station Pump Upgrades

This project is identified in the Capital Improvement Plan. The lift station serves approximately 50%-60% of the Gunpowder basin. In times of heavy flow, the 12" sewer line flowing into the plant fills to capacity. This contributes to possible sanitary sewer overflows (SSOs) upstream from the station.

Collection System Line Replacement in the Hudson/Boxwood Street area

This project is identified in the Capital Improvement Plan. This project is a sister project to the Meadowood lift station pump upgrades project. If SSOs continue after the pump upgrades the next phase is to upscale sewer pipe size from the existing 8" sewer pipe.

Whitnel Water Transmission Line Replacement

This project was identified in the water distribution system analysis as a top priority project. It would replace the existing 20-inch line from the water plant to Sawmills with a 24-inch line. Cost estimates range from \$7 million to \$10 million dollars. Surveying has been completed to determine the location of the new line. Funding sources are currently being identified.

Morganton Boulevard Water Line Loop

This project would connect the Whitnel 20-inch transmission line from east of Harrisburg Drive to Fairview Drive along Morganton Boulevard.

Divisional Valve Replacements

This project would begin the process of replacing the valves that separate the high-pressure side of the distribution system (Cajah's Mountain side) from the lower pressure side of the system (Whitnel side). This project is ongoing as funds and time allows.

Pressure Reducing Valve Vault

Replacement of the vault located on Fairview drive that connects the high-pressure side to the low-pressure side on the 24-inch main transmission line from the Cajah's Mountain tanks.

Hudson Valve Insertions

Add strategic valves to the Lenoir distribution system in the Town of Hudson to improve divisional separation during water main repairs.

Lenoir Valve Insertions

Add strategic valves to the Lenoir distribution system to improve divisional separation during water main repairs.

AWIA Compliance Projects

This project may include the purchase of large, portable generators, security cameras and alarms and fencing to improve security measures at the water treatment plant. This is an ongoing project planned over several years in the CIP.

Water Plant Operational Building Upgrades

This may include interior and exterior painting, HVAC updates, window replacements and lighting improvements. This project is partially funded in the current FY budget.

Vehicles and Equipment

Replacement of service trucks, mowers and other maintenance equipment. This is ongoing and included in the CIP.

Manhole Improvements

This project includes the repair or replacement of old brick or deteriorated manholes in the collection system.

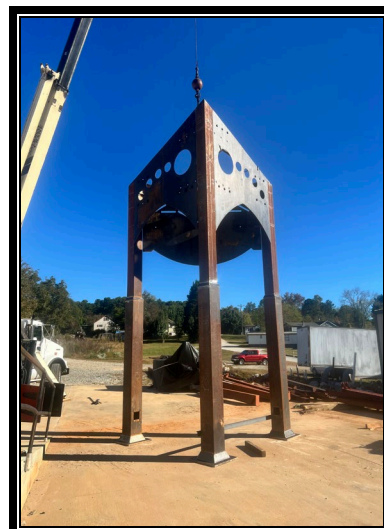
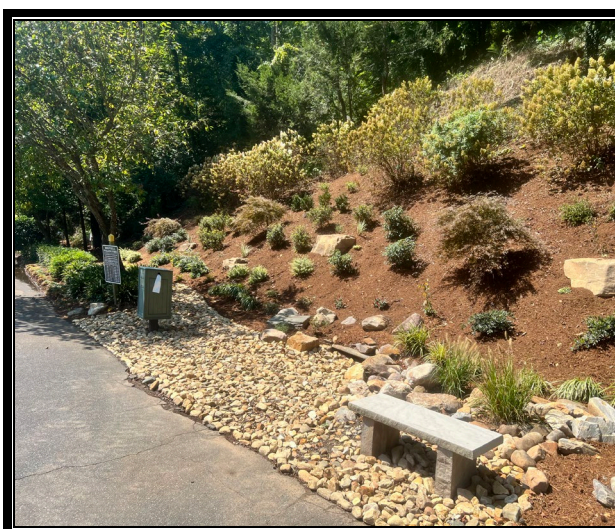
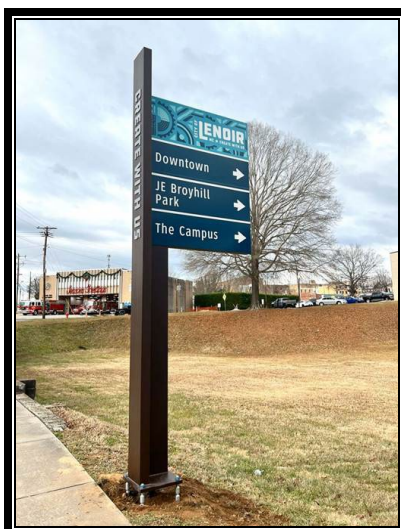


Public Works Department

510-B Greer Circle SW
Lenoir, North Carolina 28645

Director of Public Works
Jonathan Hogan
(828) 757-2183

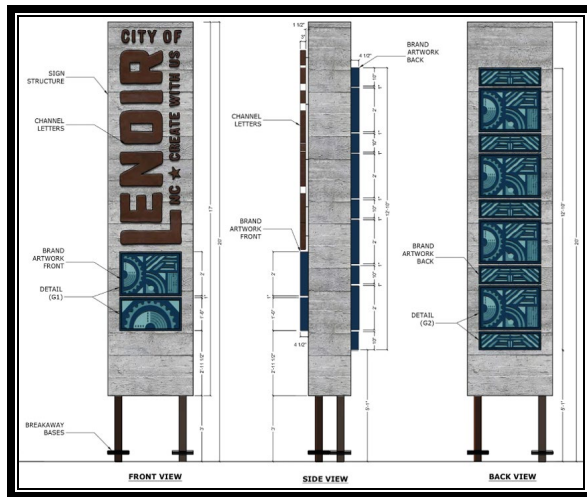
Public Works Department – Annual Report for Calendar Year 2025



Engineering Division (1 FTE)

- Worked with our Parks and Public Properties team in purchasing and implementing (16) new planters along Harper Ave and into downtown.
- Continued to work with the Downtown Economic Development staff to select and purchase new Holiday decorations extending our footprint beyond downtown closer to entranceways.
- Worked with Freese Nichols, city staff and public to complete a Conceptual Streetscape plan for Harper Ave. from Ridge St. to Morganton Blvd. Conceptual Design was presented at Public Meeting on Wednesday January 7, 2026.
- Worked with Planning staff, Destination by Design, NCDOT and Rite Lite Signs Inc., on Wayfinding sign standards and design, ROW encroachments. Sign manufacturing was completed in November of 2025. Installation began in December. Currently 13 Wayfinding signs have been installed.
- Worked with Destination by Design, to begin design of Phase II Gateway project. Design was approved early 2025 by Committee of the Whole. Design documents were completed and ROW encroachments were secured in October of 2025. The project was LET in December of 2025 with three qualifying bids received. The bid was awarded to Rite Lite Signs Inc... We are currently finalizing contract documents.
- Continued to work with Wetherill Engineering, NCDOT on EB-5806 Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project. Mattern & Craig Engineering was selected to provide CEI (Construction Engineering Inspection) for this project. The project was LET in February 2025 and the project was awarded to Neill Grading Inc. The project start date is 01/19/2026.
- Worked with Mattern & Craig Engineers to design a .50-mile Greenway loop that connects the Zack Fork restroom facility and Splash pad to existing greenway and parking. Greenway was installed in April of 2025 just prior to Splash Pad opening.
- Worked with City staff, Parks and Public Properties to design and install ADA sidewalk connectors and a new landscape to the new Zacks Fork Splash Pad.
- Worked with Freese & Nichols to complete a drainage study on Shady Lane after homeowner reported damage due to stormwater. We received the final report January 2026 and will evaluate and implement as needed.
- Worked with contractors to complete sealing and restriping of parking lots located at Zacks Fork Soccer Complex and Unity Gardens.
- Worked with Parks & Public Properties and contractors to complete design and installation of new hardscape and plantings at the entrance of Broyhill Walking Park and at the new boulder wall installation at the rear of the park.
- Worked with Parks and Public Properties to design and install new landscape median at N. Main & Creekway Drive.
- Completed Signal Warrant Analysis and Signal Removal with Matter & Craig Engineers in December 2025.

- Continue to work with WNC Sculpture Center on construction of the Clock Tower.
- Served as Director on the APWA-NC Streets and Equipment Services Board.
- Supervised building updates at the Public Services Complex. New flooring and paint throughout.



Streets & Solid Waste

Streets (15 FTE)

- Supervised resurfacing of ten (10) streets in the City of Lenoir. Resurfacing for the current fiscal year is ongoing. Streets paved in 2025:

**Rocky Top
Powell Rd
Sharon Av
Woodland Pl
Greenvalley Pl
Ideal Dr
Locust Pl
Ridgewood Pl
Cambridge Ct
Coventry St**

- Replaced 36” Storm Pipe at 1003 Pennell St.
- Replaced 36” Storm Pipe on Powell Rd.
- 32 Work Orders for Special Events: Cleaning sidewalks, sweeping and barricading streets in preparation for all events (Blackberry, Christmas Parade, Car Shows etc.). ***This is equal to 527 total extra hours.***
- Leaf Collection: All three pickups were completed by **12/31/2025**. Staff will continue to check routes through January.
- Continues to work with Planning Department on permitting and other issues.
- Assisted Park & Public Properties with demo of 321 Sculpture landscaping.
- Assisted with numerous projects such as West Lenoir play system, Mulberry play system, Zacks Fork Splash Pad, Unity Gardens paving project to name a few.
- Successfully managed one snow event in January 2025
- Street Staff competed in the 2025 APWA Backhoe Rodeo in Raleigh in May 2025.
- Standard operations included the following:
 - Completed 3,892 work orders
 - Hauled 305 loads of brush
 - Approximately 133 uses of “Hot Box” asphalt recycling equipment
 - 30 potholes and 130 utility cuts patched
 - 8 Streets scraped and graveled per 25 work orders
 - 58 Storm calls for Snow/Ice and/or tree removal
 - 180 Storm Drains cleaned/ general maintenance

Solid Waste (13 FTE)

- Staffed multiple Special Events throughout the year to include Blackberry Festival, Car Shows, and Christmas Parade etc.
- Purchased new 25yd Side loader to replace old worn out Mack truck.
- Standard Operations included the following:
 - 855 Bulk piles collected
 - 7,100 tons of garbage collected
 - 393 Rollout Carts Repaired
 - 1,124 Loads of refuse hauled to the county landfill

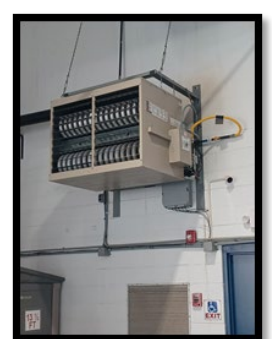
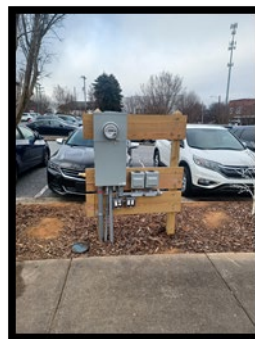


Building Maintenance Division (6 FTE)

- Continued installing g new RGB landscape lighting throughout downtown.
- Replaced two HVAC Units at LFD #2
- Built and installed additional services for Blackberry Fest locations.
- Installed washer and dryer units at LPD.
- Wired electrical and cameras at new Splash Pad/Shelter.
- Installed LED lighting at City facilities; this is an ongoing project with more facilities planned for Installation during CY2022. A summary and 2025 update of completed facilities and description of fixtures is included below:

LED Lighting Retrofit Project	
Facility	Description
Mulberry Recreation Center	Currently Quoting Indoor /Outdoor complete
Martin Luther King Center	10% Complete
Lenoir Aquatic Center Ind.	Currently in process; will be 50%
Lenoir Aquatic Center Out.	75% Complete
Blue Ridge Memorial Park	50% Complete
Optimist Park	16 Lights left for installation

- Built additional room at LAFC as well as new mini-split HVAC and pool heaters.
- Built storage building at LPD Shooting Range
- Installed all electrical and HVAC for the LAFC creating a major cost savings.
- Standard operations included the following:
 - Performed monthly inspections of City buildings (exit signage, plumbing, lighting, and HVAC systems)
 - Performed maintenance and repairs on City-owned traffic signals (downtown area)
 - Performed required inspections of the TH Broyhill Walking Park Dam.
 - 356 Work Orders Completed
 - Continued to staff all downtown events for mechanical and or electrical services (Blackberry, Light-Up Lenoir, Music Madness, Christmas Parade etc.).



Cemeteries Division (6 FTE)

- Hosted the annual *Luminary Display* at Blue Ridge Memorial Park. Over 150 volunteers from numerous agencies and institutions assisted with bag placement and lighting of candles. The event in 2025 proved to be a tremendous success once again with a great turn out and community involvement.

- Removed 4 downed trees and other debris from the cemeteries from Hurricane Helene.

- Standard operations included the following:
 - Seasonal maintenance of City cemeteries (Blue Ridge, Belleview, Fairfield – approximately 30 acres total), managed grave site and monument sales, performed tree and shrub pruning, and refuse removal and pesticide application for weed control and helped with downtown snow removal.
 - 2025 Burials - 128
 - 2025 Plot Sales – 153
 - 2025 Monuments and scrolls 34 bought (does not include monuments that have to be taken up and reset after burials).

- Current number of available spaces as of December 31st, 2024:
 - Serenity Cove – 262 graves
 - Rockhill – 56 grave (7 lots of 8 Graves)
 - Columbarium – 120 niches



Parks & Public Properties (8 FTE)

Team	Responsibilities
Superintendent	
Turfgrass Crew (4 crew members) One Vacancy Currently	Unity Park Community Garden/ Facilities/Parks/Greenways/Field maintenance/City right-a-ways
Landscaper	Broyhill Walking Park/Business district
Horticulturalist	Business District
Downtown Attendant	Business District

Baseball/Softball/Soccer Fields:

- Updated Mulberry Field #2 drainage and added sod ring at home plate.
- Painted 9 soccer fields (Lenoir Rotary Soccer Complex and Mack Cook Stadium) between February – May
- Painted 7 baseball/softball fields between August – October
- Added 70/30 sports field dirt to Optimist LL/Softball and Mulberry Field #2
- Soccer fields were mowed once/week throughout the summer
- Both baseball and softball fields were mowed a minimum of once/week throughout the summer
- Fertilized all ballfields/soccer fields in the spring
- Used 160 bags (4 tons) of fertilizer
- Sprayed for weeds around city and on the fields as needed which included 60+ gallons of chemicals for Kudzu control as well as other like chemicals for weed control

Turfgrass Crew – Responsibilities

The following maintained areas consist of approximately 120 acres

- Maintained and mowed the following areas: soccer complex, Mulberry Recreation Center, Optimist Park, Mack Cook Stadium, Wilson Park, Unity Park, J.E. Broyhill Park, Recreation facilities, West End Park, Greenways, City Right-of-Way including Smith's Crossroads and up Highway 321 to Lowes Hardware
- Painted/drug and lined soccer, baseball and softball fields for all events.

Weekly:**As needed:**

- Cleaned and painted 321 tunnel, storm clean-up, cut trees, fertilized, sprayed for weeds, general maintenance on all equipment to include oil changes replaced air filters and sharpened blades



Horticulturalist - Responsibilities

Weekly:

- Maintained areas in business district to include area around the Police Department, landscape beds and the area around the new City of Lenoir sign at Smiths Crossroads. This maintenance includes blowing of sidewalks, picking up trash and weed control etc.

Projects:

- Re-designed, planted and maintained the sculpture area on Highway 321
- Planted and maintained all hanging baskets and planters downtown and at the Broyhill Walking Park
- Re-designed, planted and maintained new landscape median at N. Main and Creekway.
- Designed and landscaped new shelter, greenway and splash pad at Zacks Fork Soccer Complex.
- 38 Trees planted and 648 Shrubs

As needed:

- Assisted Landscaper at the Broyhill Walking Park

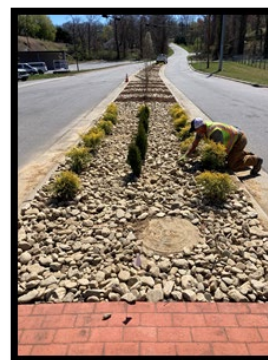
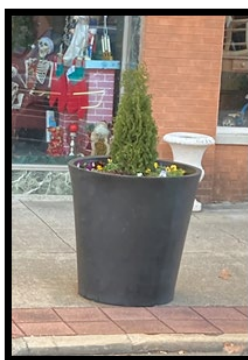
Landscaper - Responsibilities

Weekly:

- Maintained the Broyhill Walking Park; assisted Horticulturalist downtown with mowing, trimming, mulching, spraying and over-seeding.
- Preparations and assistance with Sculpture Event.

Team – Responsibilities

- Trash pick-up around city's business district three days/week or as needed
- Assisted with set-up for downtown events (Ex. Blackberry Festival, Christmas parade, etc.)
- Responsible for the delivery of tables/chairs for all events
- Responsible for the set-up and preparation for the Sculpture Celebration at the Broyhill Walking Park
- Superintendent met with West Caldwell High School's "Field Maintenance" class and explained the field maintenance processes to include overseeding, fertilization and best agronomic practice



Vehicle Services Division (5 FTE)

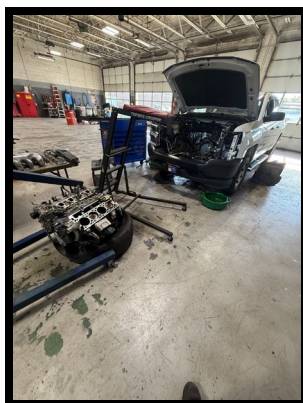
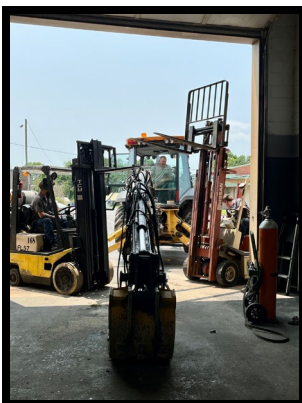
- Maintenance Mechanic Dustin Jones received TIA Auto Tire Service Certification
- Garage offices and breakroom were painted and new flooring installed
- Replaced engine in Lower Creeks truck #604
- Replaced transmission in Streets dump truck #518
- Rebuilt the Extend-A-Hoe on Streets backhoe #569
- Replaced the Pack Cylinders on Solid Waste truck #378
- Rebuilt the vacuum system on Leaf Machines #366 & #373 and truck #318
- Rebuilt the swivel on Water Distributions Bobcat Excavator
- Continued focusing on the preventative maintenance program.

Off-Site Service Call Summary (6-Year)						
Calendar Year	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024	2025
	35	32	27	48	52	53

- Managed the GovDeals program for the disposal of surplus vehicles and equipment:

GovDeals Summary – CY2024		
Item Description	Quantity	Sale
Miscellaneous small parts	N/A	1,442.00
Vehicles	8	27,307.00
	TOTAL:	\$ 28,749.00

- Standard operations included the following:
 - Completed **1,347** work orders (**Maint.507, Repairs 600, NC Inspections 187, Service 53**)
 - Facilitated **9** Wreck Repairs
 - Warranty/Recall Claims **28**
 - Glass Replacement **10**



Public Works Department**Calendar Year 2025 Concerns and considerations (update), and Calendar Year 2025 outlook:**

The Public Works Department has continued to complete infrastructure and facility upgrade projects, and sincerely appreciates Council's commitment to funding projects throughout the City. Over the past couple of years we have been fortunate to acquire much-needed vehicles and equipment replacements, and complete important facility upgrades, but we still consider our fleet to be aging and in need of significant investment. The below sections identify vehicle, equipment, and facility needs that have been scheduled in recent years, completed, deferred, or added as needs evolve.

- **Capital Improvements – Vehicle/Equipment Needs (update): See next page**

In an effort to assemble a comprehensive list of capital/equipment needs, each Division superintendent supplied a list of vehicle and equipment replacements to be entered into the 20yr CIP to aid in future budget planning and ensuring an adequate and efficient schedule for replacement based on projected service life. (*Example: Garbage collection vehicles and street sweepers should be scheduled for replacement at 3 to 5 year intervals, commercial mowers/tractors 5 to 7 year and pickup trucks 7 to 10 years*)

Public Works FY2025 CIP Summary				
Division	Equipment Description	Comment	Cost	Priority
Streets	Single Axle Dump Truck	MY1997 replacement	\$170,000	High
Streets	Street Sweeper	Replacement for MY2009 Sweeper Truck	\$400,000	High
Streets	Single Axle Dump Truck	Replacement for MY2000 Truck	\$170,000	Mod.
Streets	Ford F350 Sign Truck	Replacement for MY2004Truck	\$125,000	Mod.
Streets	Chevrolet 1500 Pickup Truck	Replace MY2015	\$60,000	Mod
Streets	Asphalt Roller	Replacement for MY1998 Arrow Asphalt Roller	\$25,000	Mod.
Streets	2006 Ford Backhoe	MY2006 Ford Backhoe	\$145,000	Mod.
Streets	2015 John Deere Backhoe	Replacement for MY2015 JD Backhoe	\$150,000	Mod.
Streets	Skidsteer Loader	Replacement for MY2008 Equip.	\$100,000	Mod.
Streets	Snow Plow	NEW 7' Snow Plow	\$9,500	Purchased
Streets	Salt Spreader	New 3yd Salt Spreader	\$10,000	Purchased
Streets Total			\$1,364,500.00	
Solid Waste	Automated Garbage Truck	Replace MY2009 Mack SL (314)	\$425,000	Purchased
Solid Waste	Automated Leaf Collection Truck	Replace MY2009 Freightliner M2106 LT	\$300,000	Mod
Solid Waste	Automated Garbage Truck	Replace MY2013 Mack SL (378)	\$425,000	High
Solid Waste	Swap Loader	Replace MY2001 Chevrolet C6500	\$175,000	Low
Solid Waste Total			\$1,325,000	
Building Maintenance	2016 Pickup Truck	Replace MY2016 Pickup Truck (136)	\$72,000	Mod
Building Maintenance	2014 Ford F-150 Pickup	Replace MY2014 F-150 Pickup Truck	\$72,000	High
Building Maintenance	Backhoe	Replace MY1999 New Holland Backhoe	\$162,500	Mod
Building Maintenance	Tractor	Replace MY1975 Ford Tractor	\$82,000	High
Building Maint. Total			\$388,500	
Vehicle Services	Pickup Trk	Replace MY2008 F-150	\$45,000	
Vehicle Services	Car	Replace MY2004 Chevy Impala	\$40,000	
Vehicle Services	Floor Renovation	Epoxy Motor Pool Floors	\$70,000	
Vehicle Serv. Total			\$155,000	
Cemeteries	Heavy Duty Crew Cab-1 ton 4WD	Replace MY2004 Service Truck	\$70,000	
Cemeteries	F-250 Pickup Truck	Replace MY2005 F250	\$50,000	
Cemeteries	Zero- Turn Mower 60"	Replace TORO 5000	\$17,000	Purchased
Cemeteries	Zero- Turn Mower 60"	Replace TOR 328D	\$17,000	
Cemeteries	Tractor	Replace MY2007 Kubota Tractor	\$60,000	
Cemeteries	Furniture	Replace Office Furniture	\$5,000	Purchased
Cemeteries	UTV Attachments	Add Attachments/ Plow	\$6,000	
Cemeteries Total			\$225,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Zero- Turn Mower 60"	Replace MY2017 Toro 3000	\$14,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Zero- Turn Mower 72"	Replace MY2018 Toro 3000	\$17,700	Purchased
Parks & P. Properties	Zero- Turn Mower 72"	Replace MY2018 Toro 3000	\$17,700	
Parks & P. Properties	Zero- Turn Mower 60" Propane	Replace MY2014 Toro 5000	\$15,500	
Parks & P. Properties	(NEW) John Deere QM850M 54"	Add Walk-Behind Mower to fleet	\$15,000	Purchased
Parks & P. Properties	(NEW) John Deere QM850M 54"	Add Walk-Behind Mower to fleet	\$15,000	
Parks & P. Properties	(NEW) Ventrac 4520Pro 4-wheel	Add Ventrac Pro-Wheel to fleet	\$33,700	
Parks & P. Properties	1 Ton Dump Truck 4WD	Replace MY1998 1Ton Dump Truck	\$68,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Pickup Truck 4WD	Replace MY2001 Chevrolet	\$45,000	
Parks & P. Properties	F-250 Crew Cab Utility Truck 4WD	Replace MY2009 F-250	\$54,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Ventrac Attachments	Add needed attachments to current Ventrac machine	\$25,400	Purchased
Parks & P. Properties	Turf Tank Robot Painter w/paint	GPS guided field painter w 1 yr paint supply	\$18,000	
Parks & P. Properties	(NEW) Toro 6040 Infield Groomer	New Groomer for turf fields	\$40,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Addition to Maint. Build. Optimist Park	Additon plus restroom for maintenance staff	\$92,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Additional Fencing Maint. Building. Optimist	Fencing for building addition	\$10,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Addition to Maint. Build. Broyhill Walking Park	Addition to building for storage	\$60,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Pre-Fab Greenhouse	Greenhouse for storing plant materials	\$12,000	
Parks & P. Properties	Self Watering Planters (uptown)	16 Self Watering Planters	\$12,000	Purchased
Parks & P. Properties Total			\$565,000	
Public Works Total:			\$4,023,000	

Capital Improvements – Facilities (update):

Over the past four years, the City has completed several important facility upgrades, roof replacements and numerous, LED lighting upgrades, as well as HVAC system replacements. The updated spreadsheet below contains projects from previous years that have been completed, are scheduled or planned for in the immediate future, or have been recently added due to facility condition assessments:

Facility	Project Description	Comment	Priority	Notes
Public Works	Painting/Flooring	Needed updates	High	Complete
Clock Tower	New Clock Tower	Tower removed due to safety	High	Tower construction complete
Motor Pool	2 HVAC Roof Units	Adding Cooling to facility	High	Complete
Public Works Salt Shed	Salt shed for storage	Bernhardt Lease Improvements	MED	Complete
Public Works Solid Waste Shed	Shed for Solid Waste Vehicles	Bernhardt Lease Improvements	MED	Complete
Mulberry Rec. Center	LED Lighting	Complete LED Conversion	High	Outdoor Complete
L AFC	HVAC (1 unit)	Ordered, Mar-April	High	Complete
L AFC	LED Lighting	Full LED Conversion	High	50% Complete
MLK Center	HVAC (2 Units) multi. room	Increasing repair frequency	High	Complete

Capital Improvements – Projects (current and future):

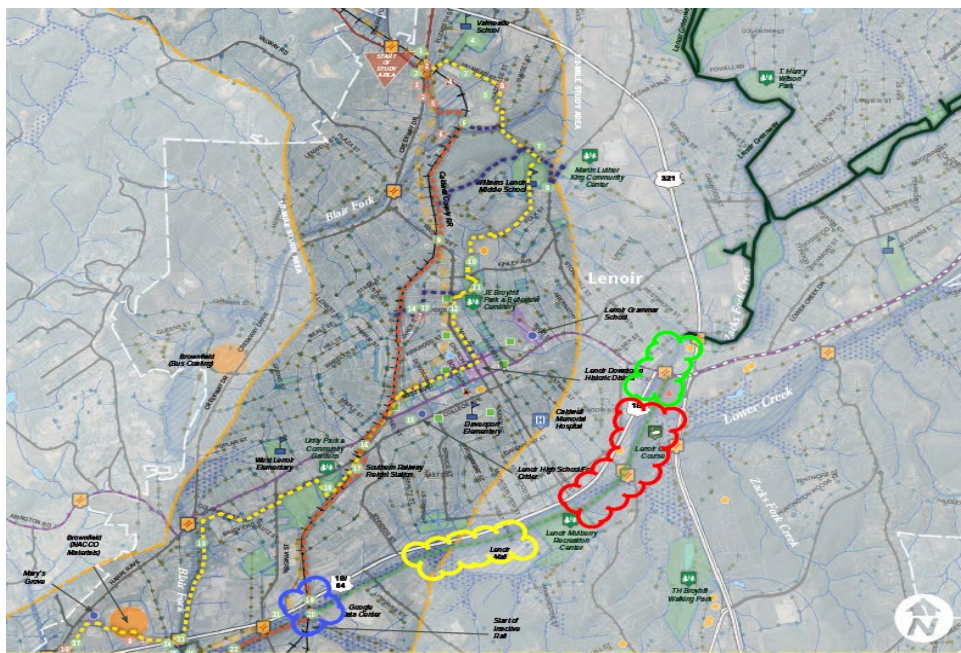
Capital Improvement Projects- City Wide

- **Hospital Avenue Sidewalk Project (1 Mile of 5' sidewalk connection Harper Avenue to US 321):** The project was let for bid in November of 2024. Due to receiving no bids, the project was then rebid in February of 2025 where we received one bid from Neill Grading and Construction for \$2,350,000.00. Council awarded the bid to Neill Grading and Construction Co., Inc. Mattern and Craig Engineers were selected and approved to provide Construction Engineering Inspection (CEI) services for the project. The Notice to Proceed was signed on 1/19/2026 officially kicking off the start of the project. The contract is 1 year (365 days) for completion.
- **Harper/West Avenue Two-Way Street Conversion:** This project continues to be a future priority for the City, but is highly dependent on funding. Transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig, has completed preliminary work on signalization design. We anticipate the project to be completed in phases, with 1A (Steel Street closure) already completed. Remaining phases include the following: 1B – Harper/West Avenue intersection improvements; 2 – Harper Avenue conversion; and 3 – West Avenue conversion (if deemed necessary). 2023 Project is still on hold at this time. DLR Master Plan could spark some movement on this project. 2024 Mattern & Craig is scheduled to begin a Traffic Signal Analysis on all 13-city traffic signals in the downtown. This could aid in the Two-Way conversion. **No change in Two-Way Conversion. However, we did complete our first Signal Warrant Analysis and Signal Removal at College Ave & Mulberry Street the summer/fall of 2025.**
- **RTP Trail Grant:** The City was awarded grant funding to complete trail crossings of Harper Avenue, Light Street, and College Avenue (near the Blue Bell project), in December of 2020. Transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig, assisted with the funding application and is currently working on project design. A final design, bidding, and construction schedule should be available in Q2, 2022. Have continued to work with Mattern and Craig on this project. Have provided CAD files for design and encroachment agreements. 2023 The RTP Grant was extended for 1 year. Mattern & Craig has completed preliminary design work for these Greenway sections. **2025 Preliminary design was approved in May of 2025. To date M&C has 50% complete construction plans, currently they are working on the drainage portion of the design. This project involves the realignment of West Avenue and Exela's driveway. This will require some minor ROW acquisition from Lenoir Building Supply. We have had some initial discussion but ED Evans with M&C will be overseeing the negotiations.**
- **College Avenue Infrastructure Improvements:** The City pledged to perform roadway improvements within the right-of-way of College Avenue and Underdown Avenue to address traffic patterns around the recently completed Blue Bell mill project. The site contractor for the mill project completed these improvements, which included drainage and curb and gutter installation, in 2021. City staff will complete removal of an existing traffic island, and final asphalt overlay, in spring, 2022. Traffic island and final asphalt work have not been completed. **2025 Mattern & Craig has completed the striping and signage plan for this Greenway connector. This portion of the project will be bid along with the Google Connector Trail due to the minimal amount of work and cost involved. Plan to bid spring of 2025.**
- **Parkview Estates Improvements:** Due to this subdivision being targeted for in-fill development, and the construction of several new homes being completed, the City initiated a greenway connection and roadway improvements to improve access and visibility for the neighborhood. The greenway connection to the Zack's Fork Road main trail network was completed in 2021. This included construction of a small trailhead and parking area near the intersection of Ebel Place and Sassafras Court. The roadway improvements to Ebel Place, which will include minor widening and asphalt resurfacing, may be completed in Q2, 2022, if funding allows. Improvements to Ebel Place have not been completed to date. In 2023 a restructure of the Ebel Place and Powell Rd, intersection was

completed. Signage was added as well as thermo pavement markings. 2024 Street & Solid Waste Division has Ebel Place widening on schedule for this year. **No Change in 2025.**

- Greenway Expansion – Gaps and Connections:** The City continued its expansion of the greenway trail network in 2021 with the completion of new trail sections serving the Parkview Estates subdivision, and asphalt surfacing of existing trails sections at the Mulberry Recreation Center and north of Sherlee Street. We also continue to work with transportation consultant, Mattern and Craig, for design development of the RTP connection between Harper Avenue and College Avenue, and the Highway 18 OVNHT/greenway crossing. Additionally, in 2021, the City received a greenway easement from Waterlife Church for construction of a trail through their parcel (former mall property). This trail section will tie in to the recently paved section at Mulberry Recreation Center, and will serve as a starting point to transverse the remainder of the former mall property. During the next fiscal year, we expect to continue identification of trail network gaps, and with adequate funding, continue with construction in key areas. These focus areas include the Highway 18 crossing (noted above), a connection from the Pennton Avenue terminus that will cross Harper Avenue, Lenoir Golf Course property, and additional easement(s) through the former mall property.

2023 Mattern & Craig has completed design for Greenway connections at Waterlife, Cube Smart, Quest and Google. The Planning Department is working with property owners at these locations to obtain the needed easement documents. The engineering report package for the Highway 18 OVNHT crossing has been submitted to NCDOT. We hope to have those recommendations and approvals back in February, a spring bid for this crossing is the goal. The Greenway extension at Harper along the golf course property has been submitted to the EBS portal for project assignment in the STIPP. Once that is approved and RFP will be created for this project. **To date the “Old Lenoir Mall” Connector, which consists of Waterlife Church, Cubed Storage the Quest and UNC Health is currently stalled due to easement acquisition with the property owner of the Quest. Design of the Google loop was completed in 2024 that will connect to the Morganton Blvd. crossing, which was held up by NCDOT approval of a mid-block crossing. Mattern and Craig Engineers are working to design the crossing to hopefully meet NCDOT standards and be approved and constructed in the summer of 2026. This will ultimately connect to the RTP portion of the Greenway. BL-0065 the Morganton Blvd Connector that is a LAP funded project (Locally Administered Project) schedule was pushed due to NCDOT funding. The project has been updated in the STIP (State Transportation Improvement Plan) with the current schedule of PE/Design — FFY 26, ROW — FFY 27, UTILITY — FFY 27 and CONST — FFY 28.**



OVNHT Master Plan Excerpt

- Arrowood Street Bridge Replacement:** Previously noted, this prioritized project was included in a funding application to FEMA in January 2022. Public Works staff worked with Mattern and Craig to develop the application, and successful recipients will be notified of award in July 2022. Bridge inspections (performed by NCDOT consultants) in 2016, 2018, and 2020 categorized the structure as poor, and in need of significant repair or replacement. The asphalt wear surface continues to fail, and in 2021, City staff attempted a chip seal repair as a temporary solution, to offer a consistent roadway surface. This repair has begun failing due to continuous movement of the timber decking. This project was not selected for FEMA grant funding in 2022. However, the grant application was revised and resubmitted (Mattern and Craig) through another funding source. We have not been notified of possible award at this time. Paving maintenance has been performed in 2022 but continues to fail. 2023 We did not receive funding through FEMA grant. 2023 Arrowood Bridge continues to be an issue with holding asphalt. Mattern and Craig is scheduled to complete an updated bridge inspection within the next two weeks. They are also exploring funding sources specific to bridge replacements. 2024 M&C continues to look for funding sources for this bridge replacement. We were contacted by NCDOT (06/2024) due to findings during their annual inspection. M&C reviewed the inspection report as well. We are still working to secure funding to replace this structure. **No Change in 2025, we are still exploring funding sources.**
- Blue Ridge Memorial Park Expansion:** A *Master Plan* for the remaining approximate 15 acres of City-owned property at Blue Ridge Memorial Park has been included in the CIP for several years. In 2019, cemetery staff contracted with a surveyor to lay off the last remaining vacant section of the existing park, and since that, time sales and burials have continually increased. If these trends continue, remaining capacity will be exhausted in 3-4 calendar years. In 2023 a new section of cemetery was opened “Serenity Cove” with 500 single grave plots. Given our current numbers that should get us through at least 3.5 years. RFP’s were sent out in June of 2023 for the Blue Ridge Memorial Park Master Plan. McGill and Associates was awarded the contract to design a buildable Master Plan. The project kickoff meeting was held on Friday 1/19. The goal is to have the Master Plan complete by summer 2024. 2024 Conceptual plans were completed and the late summer/fall and presented to the Committee of The Whole. Next step is full construction design. **No change in 2025**
- LFD – Headquarters Sinkhole:** Following heavy rain events in 2021, a sinkhole was discovered in the northeastern lawn of the LFD – Headquarters property near the Harper Avenue and Ridge Street intersection. After investigation, it was determined that the large (48”), corrugated metal culvert that runs through the property was compromised. A video camera inspection of the pipe showed significant rust and erosion of the pipe invert (bottom flow-line), as well as metal deformation and debris collection. The pipe also appears to be undersized for the drainage area, as frequent surcharging of upstream manholes has been observed by LFD staff on numerous occasions. The pipe is 25’-30’ in this location, and its proximity to the fire department building makes an excavated repair nearly impossible to complete. We have engaged *Catawba Valley Engineering & Testing* to lead the geotechnical and civil engineering efforts to design a suitable system replacement in this area. This firm previously installed crack monitoring devices in the building to monitor and measure any foundational movement after concerns arose (~2019). This project is ongoing, and construction estimates are only preliminary. Project costs may exceed \$500,000. Work has continued with Catawba Valley Engineering & Testing as well as WK Dickson & Co, Inc. Four (4) civil options have been designed for pipe repair and replacement. Due to the depth of the pipe, proximity to the structure, existing utilities and the void created by the partial collapse the construction estimates range from two million to three point six million dollars (\$2,000,000 - \$ 3,500,000). Once option is selected, we will put project out for bid. 2023 WK Dickson was awarded the contract for Engineering Services, design and construction admin for this project. One concept was selected which involves abandoning the current pipe and installing new pipe more shallow

and further away from LFD Station #1. Currently all permitting and 60% plans have been submitted. We have also applied for Golden Leaf funding for this project and are awaiting the February notice of award. Project schedule has project being let in February with a construction start in March. Construction estimates still remain relatively the same at two and a half million dollars to three and a half million dollars (\$2,500,000-\$3,500,000). 2024 WK Dickson completed design and LET project. Unfortunately, no bids were received. We decided to go back to the drawing board and re-design the utilities relocation in order to get them out of the footprint of the storm pipe replacement. Currently McGill is completing the utility design and hopes to get that out to bid soon. We will also bid the storm pipe replacement. **2025 This project was modified with the utility relocation portion being bid separately. This work was completed in December of 2025. WK Dickson (Ardurra) is adjusting Stormwater repair/replacement designs currently. The goal is to rebid the stormwater and building stabilization project in February with construction following in March/April.**

- **LPD/Williams Produce- Sinkhole:** A possible sinkhole was identified in the rear parking lot of the old Williams produce. The large retaining wall between this property and the LPD rear parking has shown signs of significant settling. This project is only in the beginning stages as we have contracted with Western Carolina Surveyors to survey the property to identify ownership and parties to be involved in this project. Our next step will be to meet with Catawba Valley Engineering to evaluate the storm water system in that to determine the issue. **No change in 2025.**
- **Finley/Greenhaven Sidewalk Rehabilitation:** In 2021, several concerns were raised by community members and elected officials about the condition of the sidewalk that parallels Finley Avenue between North Main Street and the newer sidewalk installed on the northern end of Greenhaven Drive. The existing sidewalk is narrow (approximately 3' in width), and is in poor condition. We also have frequent complaints with vegetation overgrowth preventing safe travel on the sidewalk. With the existing width not compliant with ADA standards, this sidewalk section has been identified as a priority for replacement. Cost estimates for the project have not been developed to date, and right-of-way/street lane widths have not been investigated to determine if sufficient area exists for replacement without the need for additional right-of-way from neighboring property owners. **No change in 2025.**
- **Circle Drive Repairs:** A Public Works Department memorandum was presented to Council in 2020 highlighting issues with Circle Drive in the Lower Creek neighborhood. The curb, gutter, and asphalt in a 200' section of northern Circle Drive appeared to be failing due to subgrade issues. The memorandum suggested a repair method using soil undercutting and replacement with stone to create a firm subgrade, then replacement of failing concrete curb and gutter and asphalt. The initial cost estimate for the project, anticipating self-performance of the work by Street Division staff, was \$30,000. This funding would have been taken from the division's general operating budget, therefore the project has not been completed to date. **2023 No change at this time (funding). 2024 We were able to acquire one quote from Shotcrete Contractors to repair this bank and street. The quote was \$4,500 for sealed drawings and \$185,000 for construction. No change in 2025, we have spoken with multiple contractors but have not received any quotes. The next step would be to have an engineered design completed have the project let out to bid.**
- **Downtown Beautification 2025:** Downtown Beautification continues as the Parks & Public Properties Division continues updating landscapes throughout the downtown. Sixteen (16) new self-watering planters were installed along Harper Ave and throughout the downtown in order to tie the gateway to downtown. This includes adding perennial shrubs and annuals to the planters, removing dead or unsightly shrubs; pruning trees and mulching as well as turf maintenance (see horticulture report).
- **Harper Avenue Streetscape:** The city contracted with Freese and Nichols in March of 2025 to design a full scale Streetscape Conceptual Design for Harper Ave. from Morganton Blvd to Ridge Street. This

design consisted of a complete reimagining of the corridor to include landscaping, hardscaping, lighting, sidewalk improvements, traffic safety and calming, access management and stormwater improvements. Throughout the project two public meetings were held, one to discuss initial concerns of the direct stakeholders and the second to share the conceptual plans and renderings that were completed in December of 2025. The next step is to present to council for support in utilizing funding sources for Phase II: Construction Design.

- **Wayfinding (53 Major and Minor wayfinding signs installed):** This has been an ongoing project with Destination by Design, Rite Lite Signs Inc. and NCDOT. After multiple setbacks with receiving approval for sign design and ROW encroachment we were finally able to move forward with sign production during the summer of 2025. Production was completed in late November of 2025 and installation began mid-December of 2025. To date we have roughly 13 signs installed. The remaining signs will require hydro digging to install concrete footers due to underground utilities within the location site. Currently awaiting an updated quote for design.
 - **Phase II Gateways:** This project addresses the remaining four gateway signs on both the N and S ends of Hickory/Blowing Rock Blvd and both the East and West ends of Morganton/Wilkesboro Blvd. Conceptual designs were completed and approved in early spring of 2025. Construction design was complete in summer of 2025 and NCDOT ROW encroachments approved in fall of 2025. The project was let for bid in December of 2025, receiving three bids. The lowest, responsive, responsible bidder was Rite Lite Signs Inc., for a lump sum of \$414,772.00. Council approved the bid as submitted at the January 6 city council meeting. Currently we are wrapping up contract documents.
 - **Clock Tower “Time Well Spent”:** To date the Clock itself has been repaired and painted and is currently housed at the Public Works facility. Steel for the tower build was delivered to Cajah’s Mountain Machinery in August of 2025. Steel was then processed, cut and the tower was erected in order to create the footprint for the concrete footers. The steel is currently at the WNC Sculpture Center where the Public Art tiles are being attached. Next step in concrete work then a spring installation.
 - **Street Resurfacing FY24/25:** The two-year Street Resurfacing Contract was bid out and approved for a July 1, 2024 start. The bid was awarded to J.T. Russell & Sons, Inc. for a sum of \$ 441,200.00 or 4,000 tons of asphalt placed at \$ 110.30 per ton. To date, ten city streets (see Street Division Report) have been paved with more scheduled for spring. Street Resurfacing will be up for rebid this year FY26/27.
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Submitted by:

Jonathan Hogan

Jonathan Hogan
Public Works Director

2025

Public Service Annual Report

GRANTS AND PROJECTS UPDATE

Brownfields/EPA Assessment Grant #2

The city was awarded a second EPA Brownfield Assessment Grant in April of 2022 in the amount of \$500,000.00. Site work began in October 2022 and will continue over the four year term of the grant with Greg Icenhour, our consultant with Mid Atlantic Engineering and Environmental Solutions, conducting Phase I and Phase II environmental assessments on identified sites. The Phase 2 environmental assessment was completed on the Old Broyhill site located at the corner of Virginia Street and College Avenue. An application has been submitted to the State Brownfield office seeking addition of the site into the State Brownfield Program and securing a Brownfield Agreement. This process could take 18 to 24 months to get the final Brownfield Agreement in place. The final Brownfield Agreement is expected to be in place within the next several months. Assessment work has been completed on the old American Efrid property in 2024 along with the gymnasium and auditorium in the Campus project. We have also continued to assist the redevelopment of the properties in the old depot area to help maintain momentum in the redevelopment of those properties. The City has also been worked to develop a stronger partnership with the EDC to determine where the EDC's target properties may overlap with the target properties in the grant program to maximize the benefits of the grant funds wherever possible.

The purpose of the Brownfield funding is to conduct environmental assessments on locations that were once manufacturing facilities or properties such as the former dry cleaning service location. The grant will enhance the city's ability to market and reuse some of the existing properties located in Lenoir. This funding is also a key strategy to the implementation of the Fairfield South small area plan. In an effort to continue the success of this program, the City will be working with our environmental consultants to complete and submit an application for another scattered site Brownfield Assessment Grant (\$500,000) and also a Brownfield Cleanup Grant (\$500,000). The Brownfield Cleanup Grant is planned to be used to complete the cleanup of the Old Broyhill site located at the corner of Virginia Street and College Avenue. The grant applications are due on January 28, 2026.

Special Projects

2025 Accomplishments

Executive Summary

In May of 2025 Jared Wright the former Special Projects Director resigned and his duties were reassigned to David Coffey the Risk Manager/Purchasing Agent for the city. This past year staff completed and continued moving forward with capital improvements that strengthened community assets and advanced long-term municipal goals. These accomplishments include approving and awarding bids for the Campus Project, which will revamp one of the city's historic properties. Land acquisition for the OVT Pavilion to alleviate the cost of an underground retention pond to control the storm water. Renovations to the MLK Center enhanced accessibility, functionality, and the overall experience for residents. The city also expanded recreational opportunities by installing new playgrounds at both West End Park and the Mulberry Recreation Center, reinforcing the city's commitment to youth engagement and community wellness. Additional infrastructure improvements included replacing the roof and adding an exterior gutter system with stormwater controls to prevent future damage to the facility including the new gym floor. Significant progress was also made on the renovation project at the Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center, modernizing the recreational facility to better serve residents and support long-term operational sustainability. Collectively, these accomplishments reflect the city's dedication to delivering high-impact projects that enhance quality of life, support community growth, and ensure the city's infrastructure remains strong and future-ready. The Special Projects Department would like to thank all the departments within the city that assisted with projects throughout the year. The willingness of the departments to assist with labor and equipment allowed these projects to be successful with an estimated cost savings of \$272,000.00 on these projects alone.

Campus

Council approved the GMP with J.M. Cope Construction Co. for Phase one of the Campus project in December 2025. The project is planned to start in February 2026. City staff and the design team are finalizing the updated design of the OVT Pavilion site plan; J.M. Cope plans to go out to bid in early spring 2026 for this project.

Land acquisition

The City acquired .24 acres adjacent to the old LEOS property from Lenoir Building Supply to assist with the design of the OVT Pavilion site. With the acquisition of this property and

the site design changes the design team have been able to make will create a significant cost savings in the estimated amount of \$400,000.00.



Easement acquisition

The City acquired a stormwater easement from Mr. Hernandez and his wife to allow the city to repair the damaged storm drain that runs along the property line of the OVT Pavilion site.



Martin Luther King Center

Renovations to the MLK Center in 2025 were paid for with a grant from the State Infrastructure Capital Fund and represents a comprehensive investment in both the building's structural integrity and the quality of services offered to the community. Exterior

improvements included removing and replacing deteriorated wood elements, pressure washing the entire building, repainting all wood and metal trim, and installing new guttering and downspouts. All exterior doors and frames were replaced, and significant accessibility upgrades were completed, including the removal of existing sidewalk and asphalt sections to construct new ADA-compliant ramps and walkways from the parking lot to the main entrance. An additional ADA-compliant sidewalk and new gate were added at the tennis court entrance. Interior renovations were equally extensive, with the removal of all existing floor tile and installation of new LVP throughout the facility, along with rubber fitness flooring in the weight room. This work included approximately 7,000 square feet of LVP, 800 square feet of rubber flooring, and 1,200 linear feet of new base molding. The center also received new functional workout equipment, updated tables and chairs—including ten new 60-inch round tables and sixty padded folding chairs—and newly installed toilets in the restrooms. To improve climate control and energy efficiency, two mini-split HVAC systems were added to serve the small multi-purpose room, kitchen, and administrative offices. The outdoor basketball court also underwent a refresh, including pressure washing, repainting court lines, adding pickleball court lines, repainting six basketball goal structures and backboards, and replacing old benches with new seating. Collectively, these upgrades significantly enhanced the MLK Center’s safety, accessibility, functionality, and overall user experience, ensuring it remains an inviting and well-maintained community asset.



Mulberry Recreation Center

Playground

City staff removed the aging playground set, which had exceeded its useful life, to make space for a new, safer play structure that better meets current safety standards. As part of the site preparation, staff cleared out the old compacted mulch. Once the site was properly prepared, Barrs Recreation installed the new playground set. City staff including Building Maintenance Department, Street Department, Parks and Public Properties Department, Water Distribution Department, and Risk Management/Special Projects Department installed new gravel, geotextile fabric, and fresh mulch, creating a fully updated fall-protection system across the entire play area completing an upgrade that significantly improves safety for the community's children. This project was funded from the regular operating budget.



Building

After extensive research by Risk Management/Special Projects Department, Building Maintenance Department, Water Distribution Department, and assistance of the Fire Department it was determined the degradation of the interior under-slab gutter drains caused water to backup inside the building, ultimately damaging the gym floor. In response, the Risk Management/Special Projects Department designed a new gutter system and contracted with Barger-Ashe to complete the installation, with Building Maintenance

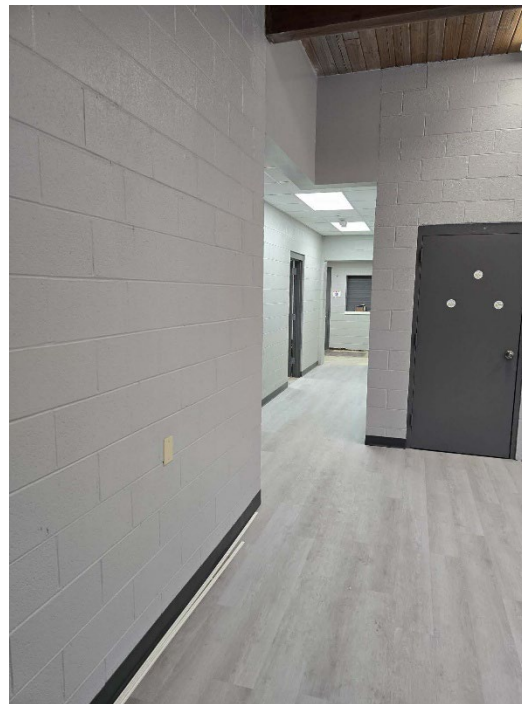
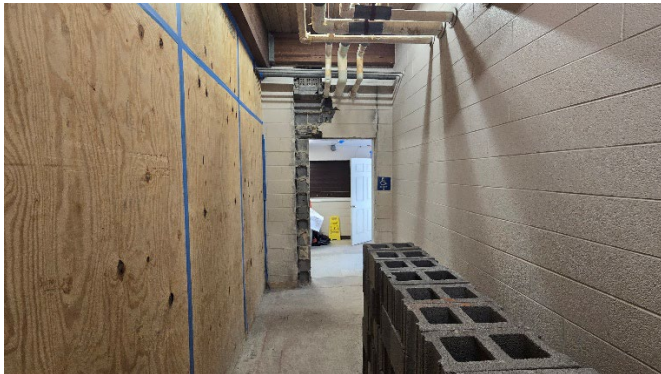
providing additional support throughout the process. The outdoor underground piping was also found to be in poor condition and required full replacement. To address this, city personnel—including the Water Distribution Department—installed the new piping, while the Street Department repaved affected asphalt areas and poured new concrete to complete the necessary sidewalk repairs. This coordinated effort restored proper drainage, protecting the facility from future water damage, and ensuring the infrastructure was fully rehabilitated.



Lenoir Aquatic & Fitness Center

In 2022 the city was awarded a PARTF grant in the amount of \$500,000. PARTF grants cover 50% of the project with the balance being funded through matching city funds. The LAFC renovations were included in the grant along with the Splash Pad and Picnic Shelter that were constructed at the Zack's Fork Soccer Complex. The City contracted with J.M. Cope Construction Co. to complete the renovations at LAFC through the design build method. The design work was completed in August 2025 and construction contracts were approved by council in September 2025. J.M. Cope started the construction renovations in September 2025 and are on schedule to be complete by March 2026. City staff along with the J.M. Cope team worked diligently to keep the facility open and minimize the amount of disruption to the operations of the facility during the construction. Renovations to the facility include new flooring, ceilings, lights, and paint throughout the main floor of the building. New showers, lockers, toilet partitions, ceilings, lights, and paint in the locker

rooms. New doors to access the racket ball courts. The third locker room was converted to an ADA family locker room. A new break room for staff was added where the old hot tub room was located. A new hot tub was installed on the indoor pool deck. And the outdoor slide received a new layer of gelcoat to rehabilitate the worn slide surface.





West End Park

Through evaluation of existing features at the West End Park, it was determined that a new playground set was needed. The location of the playground was determined to be placed near the picnic shelter to provide easier access and to promote more use by the community. With the assistance of the Building Maintenance Department, Street Department, Grounds Department, Water Distribution Department, and Risk management/Special Project Department; city staff was able to self-perform the labor to clear trees, brush, and debris from the site of the new playground installation. Once the site was prepared, Barrs Recreation installed the new playground set. Staff then installed the gravel, geotextile fabric, and mulch in the playground area and chain link fence creating a fall-protection system across the entire play area that provides a safe play area for the community's children.

