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The Story of North Carolina Counties

County **QUARTERLY**

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Bridging Generations Builds Strong Communities:

A Burke County Facility to Cover the Span From Youth to Seniors

By Ben Christoph | Creative Communications Coordinator

The doors of opportunity were opened to both young and senior citizens of Burke County this summer to celebrate the opening of a newly constructed building where the C.B. Hildebran Public Library and East Burke Senior Center are now co-located.

The facility, located in the town of Hildebran, provides 16,500 square feet to combine a library branch that has been housed in multiple locations since it opened in 1991, and a senior center that previously functioned in the basement of the town hall. Equipped with computer labs, recreation equipment, a children's area, study rooms, and a full kitchen, the new center will serve as a centerpiece for the community.

"It's a facility we've been looking forward to for many years, and one that I think you're going to be proud of for many years to come," said Burke County Board of Commissioners Chair Jeffrey Brittain. "It's a facility that will serve the youngest to the oldest. That's all of us, isn't it?"

According to Burke County Manager Bryan Steen, the facility is the first new library the county has built in 40 years. Steen and the Burke County Board of Commissioners are also extremely proud of the fact that the facility is completely

paid off—a reflection of the county's diligent planning for this site, which began with the purchase of the land back in 2015.

Based on the attendance for the ribbon cutting ceremony alone, the facility will certainly draw big crowds from the community.

"We were expecting 100 to 150 people, and we got well above that. We had to set up a live stream to another room at the last second," said Steve Bennett, Director of Information Technology for the county.

In attendance were U.S. Representative Mark Meadows and NC Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey, as well as an overflowing crowd of excited Burke County citizens.

"This just shows how badly this area needs this. I'm beyond happy about this," said Judy Cannon, a Burke County resident who attended the ceremony and was overjoyed at the size of the crowd in attendance to celebrate the new facility.

The combined library and senior center exhibits great promise to be a focal point for county residents, and foster a unique setting in which the youth and senior citizen populations in the region can interact with, learn from, and inspire one another. ■

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Pictured left to right at the Burke County Public Library & Senior Center ribbon-cutting, "Burke County Board of Commissioners Chair Jeffrey Brittain, U.S. Representative Mark Meadows, NC Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey, Burke County Commissioner Scott Mulwee, Burke County Board of Commissioner Vice Chairman Johnnie Carswell, Senior Center Representative, Burke County Commissioner Wayne Abele Sr. and Burke County Commissioner Maynard Taylor.

