

January 8, 2016



FREE TAX FILING SERVICES - ORANGE & CHATHAM COUNTIES



Orange County will once again sponsor the IRS VITA (Volunteer Income Tax Assistance) tax preparation program. The VITA service is available Monday - Saturday at several sites in Orange and Chatham counties.

This FREE service provides completion of federal and state tax returns with electronic filing. Individuals with low to moderate income, who cannot afford a paid preparer and/or find tax laws confusing, are encouraged to use VITA. Clients are not restricted by age or county residency, but must meet eligibility guidelines.

Beginning on Friday, January 18, either call one of the numbers below or go online www.orangecountync.gov/departments/aging/tax_assistance.php for specific dates, locations, eligibility requirements, what to bring, walk in information, and schedule appointments. [Read More](#)

VOLUNTARY AGRICULTURAL DISTRICTS GROWING STRONG

By Carla Banks, Orange County Public Affairs



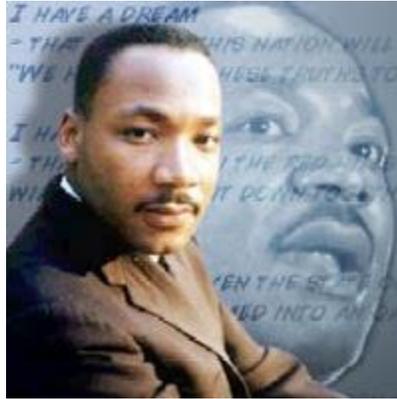
Voluntary Agricultural Districts demonstrate pride and commitment to agriculture, and celebrate the contribution of agriculture to the exceptional quality of life in Orange County. This commitment dates back to 1992, when Orange County adopted a Voluntary Farmland Preservation Program Ordinance, creating the Agricultural Preservation Board (APB) and procedures for establishing Voluntary Agricultural Districts.

To date, a total of 10,395 acres have enrolled in the Voluntary Agriculture District (8,536) and the Enhanced Voluntary Agriculture District (1,859).

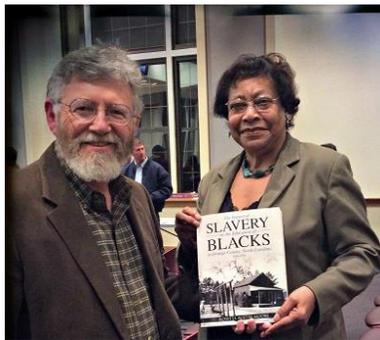
There are a host of benefits to having a farm categorized as a Voluntary Agricultural District. Signage will be placed along public roads at the property line of participating farms that identify the farm as an Orange County Voluntary Agricultural District. These signs will tell passersby the farm owner is committed to the preservation of the agricultural way of life in Orange County.

“Farmers in Orange County are interested in the voluntary agricultural district program because of their commitment to agriculture and protecting the natural resources on their farms,” said Gail Hughes, resource conservation coordinator with Orange County’s Soil and Water Conservation division. [Read More](#)

MARTIN LUTHER KING JR. CELEBRATION



Orange County Department on Aging invites the public to participate in a special celebration in honor and remembrance of “The Dream” inspired by Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.



On Friday, January 15, Rosetta Austin Moore, author of the newly published book “The Impact of Slavery on the Education of Blacks in Orange County, NC 1619-1970” will be the guest speaker.

The Central Orange Senior Center will set the backdrop for the morning celebration beginning at 10:30 a.m. and ending at 11:45 a.m.

A reception and book signing will follow the program.

[Read More](#)

Pictured left to right: Commissioner Barry Jacobs and Rosetta Austin Moore



FREE RADON KITS AVAILABLE

January is National Radon Action Month. The Orange County Health Department is doing its part to help people *Test, Fix, and Breathe* by partnering with the North Carolina Radon Program to provide free radon testing kits.

The kits are available to county residents, while supplies last. As it only takes one kit to determine the presence of radon, only one kit per household will be given.

The free kits are available at the Orange County Health Department’s Environmental

Health Office located at 131 W. Margaret Lane, Suite 100 in Hillsborough. Free kits can also be ordered directly from the North Carolina Radon Program, please visit www.ncradon.org



CONGRATULATIONS 2016 PROJECT ENGAGE GRADUATES



Project EngAGE is 13-week, senior leadership program, whose mission is to recruit and train Orange County older adults to become community resource leaders, and to ultimately make their communities ideal places to age. Project EngAGE graduated its third class of Senior Leaders on Thursday, January 7.

Project EngAGE seeks to meet the growing needs of Orange County older adults by tapping into their *existing talents and skills*.

Through an innovative, experiential learning program, consisting of five to six hour weekly sessions, each focusing on a different aging related topic, Project Engage focuses on relationship building between participants, and with local leaders, visits to local organizations and agencies, and learning from relevant guest speakers.

The ultimate ambition of Project EngAGE, is for Senior Leaders to (1) form self-directed Senior Resource Teams that address resource gaps with their own unique projects, and (2) to serve as resource experts, sharing information with other older adults in their individual communities. These teams play an integral role in helping achieve the Department on Aging's mission of making Orange County an ideal place to age well.

For more information about Project EngAGE, or to nominate a Senior Leader for the next class, please call Yvette Garcia Missri, J.D., MPH, Project EngAGE manager at 919.245.4241 or ymissri@orangecountync.gov

Human Relations Commission Forum

Sunday, January 31, 2016
3:00 p.m. – 5:00 p.m.
Whitted Human Services Building
300 W. Tryon Street in Hillsborough

*dis*ABILITIES MATTER: A Focus on Disability Awareness



Special Presentation by Alice Elliott

Ms. Elliott is an Academy Award nominee and Area Head of Documentary Studies at New York University's Tisch School of the Arts, and a media consultant for corporations and non-profits.

A 2012 Guggenheim Fellow award recipient, she is working on completing a trilogy of short films that, through compelling stories, change our perceptions of ability. Currently, Ms. Elliott is finishing a new training video for NY State's Office of People with Developmental Disabilities.

She directed the PBS Award-winning documentary *Body & Soul: Diana & Kathy*, as part of the trilogy. In 2013, she received a National Endowment for the Arts Grant. Alice tweets regularly on topical disability news. She is developing an app for Washington, DC visitors on the history of disability rights, and looking at empathy and disability through virtual reality.



Each year, the HRC hosts a Human Relations Month Forum as a springboard into Human Relations Month in February.

The purpose of the forum is to highlight and discuss historical or current issues of civil rights and/or social justice. The year 2015 marks the 25th Anniversary of the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA).

As such, this forum will focus on the achievements that emerged after the ADA, and the continuing barriers to equal access for persons with disabilities.

SAVE THE DATE: 18TH ANNUAL AGRICULTURAL SUMMIT



The Orange County Agricultural Summit has become an example of strong partnerships within the agriculture industry. The success of the summit has always been a by-product of side by side collaboration among Orange County elected officials, agriculture industry leaders, university research, teaching and extension.

The theme of this year' s summit is, "Growing Family Farms: Tools for Success."

Presentation Topics

NCSU-NCDA Food Processing and Initiatives

Orange County Initiatives

Production Tools and Trends

Food Systems

Specialty Crops

Rules and Trends

The summit will take place on **February 29**, from **9:00 a.m. – 4:30 p.m.** at the Whitted Building, 300 W. Tryon Street in Hillsborough.

Free - refreshments and lunch will be provided and a networking social will follow directly afterwards.

For more information or to register, please call Kay Evans at Orange County Cooperative Extension at 919.245.2059.

ARTS COMMISSION ANNOUNCES 2016 PIEDMONT LAUREATE



The Orange County Arts Commission announces Katy Munger, a Durham-based mystery fiction author, is the region's 2016 Piedmont Laureate.

She will be presented as the 2016 Piedmont Laureate on Wednesday, January 13. The event will take place at 4:00 p.m. at the State of Arts & Culture in Wake County at the North Carolina Museum of Art in Raleigh.

The Piedmont Laureate program is dedicated to building a literary bridge for residents to come together and celebrate the art of writing. Co-sponsored by the Orange County Arts Commission, City of Raleigh Arts Commission, Durham Arts Council, and United Arts Council of Raleigh & Wake County, the Piedmont Laureate program's mission is to "promote awareness and heighten appreciation for excellence in the literary arts throughout the Piedmont region."

The program focuses on a different literary form each year, including poetry, novels, creative non-fiction, drama/screenwriting, children's literature, short fiction, speculative fiction, and mystery fiction.

As Piedmont Laureate, Katy Munger will receive an honorarium and serve until December 31, 2016. Her duties will include creating at least one original activity to expand appreciation of mystery fiction, presenting public readings and workshops, and participating at select public functions throughout Wake, Durham and Orange counties. [Read More](#)

COUNTY SLOGAN CONTEST COMES TO AN END



Today, marks the end to the Orange County slogan contest, which launched on December 4.

WCHL Radio and Chapelboro.com have received more than 700 entries from residents interested in naming the new Interstate welcome sign.

The current slogan reads, "Orange County: You'll Be a Fan for Life."

The County Commissioners will review the top entries and they hope to announce a decision later this month and display the new sign in February.

"The program has accomplished what we hoped it would," said Mark Dorosin Vice Chair of the Board of County Commissioners. "I'm not sure that my favorite will win – "Orange You Glad We Didn't Say Banana" -- but I'm touched that so many residents and visitors have taken the time to write in, call, drop their suggestions at area ballot boxes and stop me on the street to offer their thanks for this opportunity."

[Read More](#)

Orange County Animal Services

Low-cost Rabies Vaccination Clinics 2016

Saturday, January 23, 9:00 am - 12:00pm

Orange County's Animal Services Center,
1601 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill
(1 year vaccinations only)

Thursday, February 18, 3:00 - 5:00pm

Orange County's Animal Services Center,
1601 Eubanks Road, Chapel Hill
(1 year vaccinations only; microchips
offered for an additional \$25)



For questions or further information please call 919-942-PETS (7387)

Additional clinic dates available at www.orangecountync.gov/animalservices

FINANCE STAFF IS JUST A CLICK AWAY

In an effort to ensure appropriate Finance Department coverage and customer service responsiveness, the office has added Finance group e-mails.

The e-mail addresses are specific to the following major Finance functional areas:

Accounts Payable: ALL_FINANCE_AP@orangecountync.gov

Budget: ALL_FINANCE_BUDGET@orangecountync.gov

General Finance: ALL_FINANCE_GENERAL@orangecountync.gov

Payroll: ALL_FINANCE_PAYROLL@orangecountync.gov

Purchasing: ALL_FINANCE_PURCHASING@orangecountync.gov



BOOK A LIBRARIAN - TRAINING

In addition to our employee-specific programs, the Orange County Public Library offers a Book a Librarian service that might be of interest to County employees trying to brush up on a particular skill who are unable to make one of our weekly Tech Tutor sessions.

Book a Librarian allows customers to schedule a one-hour appointment with an ATS staff member to go over a topic of their choosing. For more information and to access the registration form, please [click here](#)

COUNTY VOLUNTEER OPPORTUNITIES



One major way citizens can have a positive impact on the future of Orange County is to volunteer to serve on the various advisory boards and commissions.

The Orange County Board of Commissioners appoints representatives to fill two positions on the **CHAPEL HILL PLANNING COMMISSION**. These positions represent the **JOINT PLANNING AREA (JPA)** of Chapel Hill.

The Chapel Hill Planning Board develops a comprehensive plan for the orderly growth and development of Chapel Hill. It reviews all plans for buildings, projects and facilities

adoption and amendment of ordinances.

The Board of County Commissioners appoints representatives to the **ADULT CARE HOME COMMUNITY ADVISORY COMMITTEE**. This committee works to maintain the intent of the Adult Care Home Residents' Bill of Rights for those residing in licensed adult care homes. The members of this committee also promote community involvement and cooperation with these homes to ensure quality care for the elderly and disabled adults.

This board has an initial one-year training term with subsequent eligibility for three additional two-year terms. The County Commissioners are currently seeking applicants for At-Large positions. Applicants must reside in Orange County.

If interested, apply [online](#) or call Thom Freeman at 919.245.2125.



Orange County 2017 Revaluation

Learn all about the process by watching a series of [On-Demand Videos](#)

Soil and Water Conservation

Annual Environmental Contest
Grades 3 - 8 [Details](#)

Recreation Program Guides

The 2016 January - April program guide is now available. To view all winter and early spring classes, leagues, and special events [Click Here](#)

Co-Housing for Seniors

Thursday, January 14

6:00 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

Seymour Center

2551 Homestead Road in Chapel Hill [Details](#)

Stay Connected

Encourage others to stay connected with Orange County by subscribing to the News list, [click here](#) to join the mailing list or follow us on [Facebook](#) and like us on [Twitter](#) and watch us on [YouTube](#). Look for our monthly newspaper ads in the News of Orange and Chapel Hill News.

For more information, please contact the Public Affairs Office at 919.245.2302.