

An aerial photograph of a coastal town, likely Oak Island, North Carolina. The image shows a wide, sandy beach on the left, with gentle waves lapping at the shore. To the right of the beach, a row of houses is built on a slight rise. Many of these houses have elevated wooden decks and stairs leading down to the sand. The houses are mostly light-colored, with some featuring blue roofs. The town extends into the distance along the coastline. The sky is a clear, pale blue.

THE CURRENT

Your guide to current news & events from the Town of Oak Island, NC

January 2021

IN THIS ISSUE: Welcome letter / Monthly Review (December, 2020) / News & Notices / Coming Events (January) / Department Feature / Photo Review

Welcome to 2021 (You Made It!)

WELCOME to the January 2021 edition of **THE CURRENT**; and by extension, welcome to 2021. With the often negative experiences and difficult adjustments felt by many throughout 2020, it almost feels as if "*congratulations - you made it!*" would be a more fitting greeting. The unique challenges presented by COVID-19, on both the municipal and individual level, have been unprecedented in our Town's history. Yet despite these challenges, Town Staff have remained steadfast to adapting with the ever-changing protocols, while at the same time striving to maintain consistency in the quality of service to our residents. A global pandemic notwithstanding, 2020 tested our resolve even further through the devastating impacts of Hurricane Isaias. The hard work of continual rebuilding efforts, compounded by the already tiring COVID-19 response, has truly challenged this community like never before. However, just like the sand currently being redistributed on the beach, one thing 2020 has taught us is that nothing looks the same forever; and that when challenges are overcome, they often provide opportunities for future growth. Oak Island, like much of our State and Nation as a whole, looks to the New Year with optimistic hope, to build upon and grow from the challenges faced in the previous year. With the same wishes of health and happiness for you and those you hold dear, welcome to 2021. Welcome to January. **Welcome to The Current.**



MONTH IN REVIEW

Update

MONTHLY REVIEW: DECEMBER

REMINDER: Information on all news items can be found on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.com/NEWS.

Making Molehills Out of Mountains

Since onsite operations for the **Sifting & Redistribution Project** began on December 1, a small convoy of heavy machinery has been steadily eroding away the mountainous pile of sand behind Middleton Park. In less than a month, while also accommodating holiday events at Middleton park, the main sand pile has been brought to near ground level. Additionally, several smaller piles from crossover streets throughout Town have been brought to this location and sifted as well. In total, nearly **1,000 truck loads** containing over **30,000 cubic yards** of sand have already been moved back onto the beach. Currently the project is on schedule for its original completion deadline of January 20, 2021.

Want to help make sure this project stays on schedule? There are a few ways you can help! Because of the equipment used and the multiple distribution points, work areas may not be clearly marked ahead of time. So if you see crews working in your area, or moving machinery, be sure to stay clear of all active operations; and do not interact with any inactive equipment or sand. Also, don't stop the workers onsite to ask questions. Any information needed can be found by calling the Public Works Department at 910-278-5024, or by visiting special **DUNES** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/DUNES.

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Frightful Weather Didn't Stop Festive Fun

Despite an initial rescheduling due to severe weather, the **2020 Oak Island Christmas Tree Lighting** was held on the seasonally chilly evening of Saturday, December 5th. The Lighting Ceremony capped off an entire day of holiday festivities in Town. Starting with the **6th Annual Holiday Craft Market** in Middleton Park, the afternoon saw the **2020 Christmas by the Sea Parade**; which due to consideration for COVID-19, was held for the first time as a reverse parade. Parade floats were set up as static displays along West Dolphin Drive, where attendees would "drive by" to view the entries.

The evening culminated in the Christmas Tree Lighting Ceremony, kicking off just before sunset. The event featured live music from the band "Common Ties" and decorations for the whole family to enjoy, along with a special appearance (***via boat!***) by Santa himself. For the first time ever, the Ceremony was livestreamed on the [Official Town of Oak Island Facebook Page](#), where it has since gone on to garner over **8,800 views**. If you missed the event, or just want to hold on to some holiday cheer a little longer, you can view the "OKI-TV version" online, complete with graphics and music information. Just visit the OKI-TV YouTube Channel at www.OakIslandNC.com/TV or click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO WATCH

COVID-19 Updates

On Friday, December 18, 2020, Brunswick County Health and Human Services released their most recent **COVID-19 Snapshot** for the County. According to a media release accompanying the infographic, the County saw 669 new cases of COVID-19 in the first two weeks of December, marking the second two-week period in a row to significantly break the record of new identifications in the County. Additionally, this timeframe also saw four more County residents pass away from deaths related to the virus. As of the end of December, totals for Brunswick County stand at 4,364 cases and 72 deaths, since tracking began.

To help keep Oak Island residents informed on the status of COVID-19 response from both the County and State level, a **Case Count Tracker** has been added to the **COVID-19 Information Page** of the Oak Island Website. To view this page and the current case count, just visit www.OakIslandNC.com/COVID or click the link below.

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COVID-19 Snapshot

9.1%

Percent of County's
tests that are positive
(data from NCDHHS)

669

New county cases
identified in first two
weeks of December

Substantial/Orange

Current status on
NC COVID-19 County
Alert System

4

Residents with deaths
related to COVID-19
in past week

3,871

Overall Positive
Resident Cases as of
Dec. 18

Positive Case Breakdown

- 3,040 recovered
- 751 isolating in 525 households
- 10 hospitalized
- 70 deaths

Type of Test

- Molecular Positive Cases: 3,486
- Antigen Positive Cases: 385

Key Points:





Walkovers Stepping Closer Towards Repair

While recently a large focus has been placed on the sand sifting & redistribution efforts, it's important to note that repairs to the Davis Canal Pedestrian Walkovers have not gone unattended. It can be hard to visualize progress without the rhythmic pounding of construction hammers in the distance, but a thorough and often behind the scenes preparation is key to building lasting infrastructure.

Going into December, the Town had obtained the services of Stature Engineering to direct the repairs to the walkovers at SE 20th (to 19th PL E) and SE 9th (to 9th PL E). Since gaining their services, all permits for the projects have been obtained, along with the any surveys and geotechnical work needed to complete the design, specs, and bid documents. Currently these projects are in the **bid process**, to identify contractors able to perform the needed repairs. The Town Council is expected to award the repair contract(s) at their regular meeting on **January 12**, with construction anticipated to begin in February. As always, updates on these and all other repair projects within the Town can be found on the special **PROJECTS** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS, or by clicking the link below.

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Reminder: Property Tax Time is Ticking

In the absolute friendliest way possible, reminder is provided that **Town Property Taxes** are due by **January 5, 2021**. Funds generated from property taxes are vital to ensuring the sustainability of projects and services such as beach renourishment, fire and police services, and public recreation. ***For your convenience, there are several options available for payment:***

MAIL: You can mail a check or money order to the **Town of Oak Island Tax Department, 4601 E Oak Island Dr., Oak Island, NC 28465**. Payments must be postmarked no later than January 5, 2021 to avoid a 2% penalty and monthly interest.

In-Person: You can come to Town Hall any time during regular business hours, **Monday -Friday, 8:00 AM - 4:30 PM** to pay with cash, check, money order or Visa/Master card.

Online: You can use [Official Payments](#) to pay online. Please note, there is a convenience fee associated with all online payments. Once there, simply enter the jurisdiction code **4386** (this will populate the Towns information), and select your payment method.

For further questions or information needs, please contact the Tax Department at 910-201-8009, visit www.OakIslandNC.com/TAX or by click on the link below.

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NEWS & NOTICES



NEWS & NOTICES: JANUARY

Council & Board Meetings

REMINDER: Information on all meetings can be found on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.com/CALENDAR.

TOWN COUNCIL will hold their regular meeting on **Tuesday, January 12, 2021** at **6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of **Town Hall**, at **4601 E Oak Island Drive**. **NOTE:** This meeting will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on www.OakIslandNC.com.

TOWN COUNCIL will hold their Council Retreat on Friday, January 22, 2021 beginning at 8:30 AM at **801 Ocean Event Center**, located at 801 Ocean Drive. **NOTE:** This retreat will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on www.OakIslandNC.com.

PLANNING BOARD will hold its regular meeting on **Thursday, January 21, 2021** at **10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of **Town Hall**, at **4601 E Oak Island Drive**. **NOTE:** This meeting will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on www.OakIslandNC.com.

ENVIRONMENTAL ACTION COMMITTEE will hold a regular called meeting on **Thursday, January 21, 2021** at **8:30 AM**, which will be conducted virtually via Zoom.

Closures & Holidays

JANUARY 1: Town offices will be closed in observance of **New Year's Day**.

JANUARY 18: Town offices will be closed in observance of **Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**.



This Is Only A Test: Sirens Scheduled for January 13

Duke Energy and county officials will conduct a **siren test** around the Brunswick Nuclear Plant for **5 - 30 seconds**, between **10:00 AM** and **11:00 AM** on **Wednesday, January 13**.

The 38 sirens within 10 miles of the Brunswick Nuclear Plant will sound for 5 - 30 seconds. To ensure they are functioning properly, it may be necessary to test some sirens more than once. Testing is performed in cooperation with emergency officials in Brunswick and New Hanover counties, who are responsible for sounding the sirens. This information is reflected in the 2021 Brunswick Nuclear Emergency Preparedness booklets sent to residents living within the 10-mile Brunswick Nuclear Plant Emergency Planning Zone.

Because this is a test, local broadcasting stations will not interrupt regular programming to broadcast Emergency Alert System (EAS) messages. If there were ever a real emergency at the plant requiring the sirens to be sounded, local radio and television stations would broadcast information and instructions to the public.

For more information about the outdoor warning sirens, visit the Duke Energy website at www.duke-energy.com/NuclearEP or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

2021 Recycling Collection Calendar Now Available


So, you missed recycling pickup day for the 125th straight week, huh? Hey, it happens! Sometimes remembering to do the simplest things, like rolling the collection bin the curb, can be the hardest tasks. Even knowing what Collection Zone you're in can be a challenge. That's why we've made this information easier than ever to access for 2021!

With the newly launched **COLLECTION** page of the Town website, you can find all of the information you need on Garbage & Recycling pickup in Oak Island. There is a full listing of the Collection Zones, along with days of the week for garbage collection, and a complete 2021 Recycling Collection Calendar. There's even an interactive map where you can find which of the 8 Collection Zones you live in. The only part left to remember, is rolling the bins back from the curb once collected!

Garbage & Recycling in Oak Island is divided into EIGHT Collection Zones. Depending on the zone, Garbage & Recycling bins are collected on either Mondays, Tuesdays, or Wednesdays, with some Saturday collection during the Summer season. To learn more about Garbage & Recycling Collection in Oak Island, visit the new **COLLECTION** page of our website at www.OakIslandNC.com/COLLECTION or click the link below

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE





COMING EVENTS

COMING EVENTS: JANUARY

REMINDER: Information on all special events, recreation programs, and educational activities can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS.



Mature Aerobics

WHEN: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Fridays • 7:30 AM - 8:30 AM

WHERE: Recreation Center (Outside) • 3003 East Oak Island Drive

WHO: Open to all

COST: \$2 Town Residents • \$3 Non-Residents

ABOUT: Join Debbie in this fun-filled, low-impact aerobics class, as you move and groove to some of the best oldies music around. No equipment needed to join. This exciting group provides a great way to shed those holiday pounds, or help maintain an active and healthy lifestyle, while also making good friends in a non-judgmental atmosphere.

For more information, call the Recreation Center at 910-278-5518.

Silver Sneakers Fitness

WHEN: Mondays, Wednesdays, & Thursdays • 9:00 AM - 10:00 AM

WHERE: Recreation Center (Outside) • 3003 East Oak Island Drive

WHO: Open to all

COST: \$4 Town Residents • \$5 Non-Residents (FREE with SilverSneakers Membership Card)

ABOUT: Join Jamie on **Mondays & Thursdays**, for this low-impact class which focuses on maintaining muscle mass as we age, balance, and strengthening the core. On **Wednesdays**, join Mary Beth for a SilverSneakers class which focuses on fall prevention, improving posture, and balance through low-impact moves. Both programs follow the proven and practical applications familiar to SilverSneakers members, which are known nationwide for their fitness programs designed specifically for seniors. No equipment is needed, and there are no additional costs when you present your SilverSneakers Membership Card.

For more information, call the Recreation Center at 910-278-5518.





Zumba Gold

WHEN: Mondays, Tuesdays, & Thursdays • 10:00 AM - 11:00 AM

WHERE: Recreation Center (Outside) • 3003 East Oak Island Drive

WHO: Open to all

COST: \$4 Town Residents • \$5 Non-Residents

ABOUT: Join Mary Ann for an upbeat dance party, while burning fat and learning new steps to improve your fitness. The most fun you will have in an hour! This program utilizes the rhythm-based, cardio-centric fitness program that combines Latin and international music with modern dance moves! No special equipment is needed, just come comfortable workout clothes and a desire to get moving!

For more information, call the Recreation Center at 910-278-5518.

Yoga

WHEN: Mondays • 11:00 AM - NOON

WHERE: Recreation Center (Outside) • 3003 East Oak Island Drive

WHO: Open to all

COST: \$5 Town Residents • \$7 Non-Residents

ABOUT: Join Mert for this relaxing and stress free yoga session, where all levels are welcome. Participants are reminded to dress in layers and bring their own yoga mat.

For more information, call the Recreation Center at 910-278-5518.



DEPARTMENT FEATURE



DEPARTMENT FEATURE: DEVELOPMENT SERVICES

The Development Services Department's purpose is to maintain and improve the quality of life for Oak Island residents, by providing guidance for economic development, housing, planning, zoning, and building safety code enforcement. The Department is responsible for ensuring that **all development**, including residential and nonresidential, complies with the State Building Codes, CAMA requirements, FEMA requirements, fire codes, zoning and all other local ordinances. Whether you're looking to build a new home, renovate an existing structure, start a new business, or just interested in the future of development throughout Town, Development Services is your first stop in the learning process. The Department is located on the first floor of the Town Hall, at 4601 East Oak Island Drive, and houses a Building Division, Planning & Zoning Division, building inspectors, Town Planner, and permitting specialists.



PROFILE: Development Services Director: A longtime resident, 5 generations deep on Oak Island, Steve Edwards has been serving the residents of Oak Island as Department Head / Development Services Director for the past 8 years. Prior to becoming Department Head in 2012, Steve had been with the Town since 2000, starting as a field inspector that same year.

"I've been other places, and served other communities, but this is home. All my life, construction and this area have been two constants" Edwards remarked about the familiarity that comes from serving your community. He leads the Department's staff in ensuring development throughout Oak Island is kept to a high standard, maintaining Level III certifications in multiple disciplines of construction, building codes, and commercial development.

PROFILE: Senior Code Enforcement: If you've ever needed to make sure your onsite construction was safe and up to current standards, you've probably interacted with E.C. "Brook" Russell. In providing code enforcement services for Oak Island, Russell is one of the final checkpoints before the signoff on any new building efforts.

After several years spent as a private construction contractor, Brook joined the Oak Island team before Oak Island was even a town ... being hired to the Town of Long Beach in 1995. Russell greatly enjoys living, working, and exercising in the Town he calls home, as most any day of the week you can find him commuting to work on his trusty bicycle. "It's old and a bit rusty, like me" Russel said, speaking of his bicycle with a grin "but it gets the job done pretty good, also like me!"

If you are ever in need of Brook Russell, or any of the team in Development Services, you can email him at brussell@ci.oak-island.nc.us or call 910-278-5024.



Administrative staff at the Department also include the Planner & Zoning Administrator, along with a Permit Specialist, Permit Specialist & CAMA Local Permitting Officer, Building Inspectors, and Zoning Technicians; with the majority of staff organized into either the **Building Division**, or **Zoning Division**. The **Building Division** deals with state building codes, which are regulations to provide minimum requirements to safeguard the public safety, health and general welfare. These requirements ensure things like structural integrity, electrical, plumbing and mechanical system safety are met; as well as energy efficiency. Building codes underpin the work of architects, engineers, builders, homeowners, and developers. The **Zoning Division** serves to regulate the use of land, including the use, placement, size, and yard requirements of buildings and other construction. Zoning laws are an important part of urban and community planning as they help to create a community that is a safe, logical, and comfortable place to live and work.

Additionally, the Department provides information on floodplains, stormwater management, the Coastal Area Management Act (CAMA), and the Town's [Comprehensive Land Use Plan](#). Staff within the Department report and serve as liaison to multiple Town Boards and Commissions, including the Planning Board, Board of Adjustment, Environmental Action Committee, and Town Council.

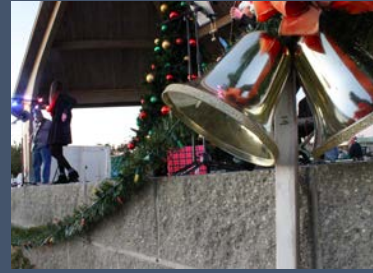
Whether in day to day operation, or long-term recovery efforts following devastating natural disasters, the entire team works to provide a seamless experience for the planning, development, and construction needs of all Oak Island residents and businesses. To learn more about the Development Services Department, and the wide array of work they do, you can visit them on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.com/DS, or just click the link below.

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MONTH IN PHOTOS



PHOTO REVIEW: DECEMBER 2020







PHOTOS COURTESY: Oak Island Communications Office (Mike Emory) / Oak Island Recreation Department (Rebecca Squires) / Patriot Drone Services, LLC (Shawn Barry)

THANK YOU FOR READING!



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