



THE CURRENT

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

March 2021

IN THIS ISSUE: Welcome letter / Monthly Review (February, 2021) / News & Notices / Coming Events / Department Feature / Photo Review

Welcome to March

WELCOME to the **FOURTH** edition of **THE CURRENT**. March. The gamble. The "roll of the dice". Will it be warm, sunny days of Spring? Or will cold, dreary Winter linger on in its final weeks? Historically speaking, the answer is most likely an even "**YES**" to both outcomes! Regardless of what nature has to offer, the activity around Town is certainly heating up! Both construction and major beach nourishment projects are currently underway, and the return of concerts, festivals, and open-air markets are already on the calendar. It seems there's a growing desire to shake off the quiet and cozy, indoor-bound lifestyle that defined our Winter (*and much of 2020*), in exchange for the excitement and new opportunities Spring has to offer. Oak Island is working hard to match that desire with equally ambitious opportunities. Albeit safe, sanitized, and socially distanced opportunities, of course. So rain or shine, warmth or winter, grab your coats, flip flops, umbrellas, mittens and swimsuits . . . and say welcome to March. **Welcome to *THE CURRENT*.**

MONTH IN REVIEW



Update

MONTHLY REVIEW: FEBRUARY

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



Tear it Down, Build it up, Walk all over it

Despite the near historically wet January and February, progress has been proceeding on the Davis Canal Pedestrian Walkover projects. To review, Town Council awarded the contract(s) for the repairs to the Walkovers at 20th and 9th during their regular meeting on January 12. The builder awarded the contracts, S&C Construction out of Wilmington, NC, performed some initial clean up and site prep, and delivered materials to the site by the end of January. Despite the minor delays due to previously mentioned wet weather, construction was underway by the week of February 15.

Construction is proceeding from the southern ends of the walkways, at 9th PL E and 19th PL E, respectively. So if you are observing from SE 9th or SE 20th Streets, you may not be able to see the crews in action. As stipulated in the contract, crews have approximately 135 calendar days to completion. Provided there are no unavoidable weather or personnel delays, all nails should be hammered and boards laid by late spring.

Updates on the walkovers continue to be a top priority for the Communications Office. Information on their progress, as well as all other ongoing repair projects can be found on the special PROJECTS page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/PROJECTS, or by clicking the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

COVID-19 Response Updates

LOCAL: On Friday, February 26, 2021, the Town of Oak Island announced the March 1 reinstatement of walk-in access for the Town Hall, Public Services Building, Police Station, and all Fire Stations. This reopening comes after several weeks of restricted access to these facilities, due to increased COVID-positive case numbers among staff. As part of the reopening, ***properly worn face coverings will be mandated*** while inside the facilities, along with ***adequate social distancing practices***. Those who are unable or choosing not to wear a mask, may still conduct business with the Town of Oak Island via phone, email, or through use of the Town Dropbox, located on SE 47th Street (in the gravel parking lot by the basketball court). Contact with any department or staff member can be made online through the contact forms of the **CONTACT US** page of the Town website at www.OakIslandNC.com/CONTACT.

STATE: On **Wednesday, February 24**, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order 195, which lifts the ***Modified Stay at Home Order*** and eases certain restrictions on businesses and gatherings. This Executive Order went into effect on February 26, 2021, at 5:00 PM, and will remain in effect through 5:00 PM on March 26, 2021 unless repealed, replaced, or rescinded.

COUNTY: Also on **Friday, February 26**, Brunswick County Health Services (BCHS) released their most recent COVID-19 Snapshot (pictured). Prior to the release, BCHS also provided updated information regarding vaccine distribution and scheduling. *For full details on the vaccination phases and appointment scheduling, [CLICK HERE](#).*

A reminder, all information related to Town, County, and State response to COVID-19 can be accessed from the **Coronavirus Information Page** of the Town Website. To view this page, visit www.OakIslandNC.com/COVID or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)



COVID-19 Snapshot

8,005
Overall Positive
Resident Cases as of
Feb. 26

7.4%

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

26,979

First vaccine doses
administered in county
(data from NCDHHS)



brunswickcountync.gov/coronavirus

Substantial/Orange

Current status on
NC COVID-19 County
Alert System

Groups 1, 2, & 3*

Eligible for vaccines
*anyone working in child
care or in PreK - 12 schools

135

Deaths among
residents related to
COVID-19

Key Points:



Dredging! Can You Dig It?

As most Town residents are now aware, there are currently TWO (2) beach nourishment projects underway in Oak Island. They are the **Lockwood Folly Inlet Widener Project**, and the *2020 / 2021 Renourishment Project*. The Lockwood Folly project will benefit beach areas starting from the west end of the Island (The Point) to approximately Kings Lynn Drive; while the 2020/21 Project will distribute sand from the SE 63rd Street Access west to Middleton Ave. *NOTE: areas are subject to change depending on final dredged volume and beach conditions at the time.*

By the end of February, dredging equipment for both projects had been secured, with pipelines to deliver the dredged sand placed along the beach. Sand distribution operations are still scheduled to be active throughout March and well into April. During operations, about 1,000ft. of beach will be closed off, for roughly 2-3 days at a time, as distribution moves along the beach.

To ensure public safety and efficient workflow, please **do not** approach any equipment, whether in operation or unattended; or try to talk with any crews onsite. Dredging crews will not be able to provide project updates, or give information on their operations. For all questions or concerns with these projects, please refer to the Town Website, or contact or contact the communications office at 910-201-8067.

One positive note, is that if your favorite beach access is temporarily impacted, Oak Island still offers 65 public access locations throughout the Town (more than any other coastal town in the Carolinas!). You can view an interactive map of all access locations, along with amenities provided at each, on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/ACCESS.

As a reminder, general information, progress updates, and interactive work area maps for all Beach Nourishment Projects can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/SAND, or by clicking the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)

They Splash, You Shade

Since opening in 2019, the Oak Island Splashpad has undeniably been one of the biggest attractions of Middleton Park, if not the whole Town! Soon after construction however, parents began to notice something was missing. While the cool, refreshing waterworks were great for the kids, it was a real hot item with the parents ... or rather, a hot item *FOR* the parents! For onlooking parents having to sit in the summer sun, it didn't take long to realize the benefits of a shade structure as part of the Splashpad facility.

In 2020, the Oak Island Friends of Parks Foundation agreed, launching their appropriately named "Made in the Shade" fundraiser. With the \$20,000 collected through the effort, the Foundation is funding the construction of a 12ft. x 24ft. shade structure, located adjacent to the Splashpad itself. Those driving near the park during the last few weeks may have noticed the delivered materials, waiting on fair weather for construction to begin. As of the last week in February, the main supports (pictured) have been erected, and building efforts are underway. Completion is expected within a few weeks time, after which the Foundation will then gift the shade structure to the Town.

This was the group's first fundraising project, however its success has inspired others to come after; including the currently planned *Water Fountain at Veterans Park*, *Beach Wheelchairs Replacement*, *Park Benches & Swings Replacement*, and more! The Oak Island Friends of Parks Foundation is a 501c(3) non-profit formed in 2019. The Foundation is not affiliated with the Town of Oak Island, but works with Town leaders to accept donations for special projects that will enhance Town parks. For more information the Foundation, or to help them achieve their goals, visit their website at www.okifriendsofparks.org, or click the link below.

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NEWS & NOTICES



NEWS & NOTICES: MARCH

Council & Board Meetings

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

TOWN COUNCIL will hold their regular meeting on **Tuesday, March 9, 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/MEETINGS.

TOWN COUNCIL will hold a special called meeting on **Tuesday, March 16, 2021** beginning at **10:00 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/MEETINGS.

TOWN COUNCIL will hold a special called meeting on **Tuesday, March 23, 2021** beginning 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/MEETINGS.

ENVIRONMENTAL ADVISORY COMMITTEE will hold a regular called meeting on **Thursday, March 18, 2021** at **8:30 AM**, which will be conducted virtually via Zoom.

PLANNING BOARD will hold its regular meeting on **Thursday, March 18, 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/MEETINGS.

Closures & Holidays

Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Friday, April 2, 2021** in observance of **Good Friday**.

REMINDER: the full *Holiday Closure Calendar* can be found on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.com/HOLIDAY.



"Honey, I'm Home ... for Good!"

On Friday, February 26, after 14 years with the Town of Oak Island Public Utilities Department, Mr. Ronnie Shannon clocked out for the last time, and set sail for the open waters of "Retirement".

A native of Oak Island, Shannon's former home used to be just a couple blocks from the current Town Hall. After years spent climbing in and out of ships for his job at the State Port in Wilmington, Ronnie happily transitioned to more "ground level" work with the Wastewater Division of the Public Utilities Department (*more on them later!*). For the past decade and a half, Ronnie Shannon has been present for the installation and upkeep of the Town's wastewater collection system.

"It's an unfortunate milestone today" Wastewater Superintendent, Mark Moore noted of the retirement, "it's like we're losing a walking library." Amid the well-wishes and questions of future plans, Shannon stayed consistent on *where* he'd spend his golden years, "I told my son that I was going to 'sell it all' and just park an RV in his driveway" Shannon joked "but seriously, this is home, and I'm just going to stay right here and enjoy it for a while."

Congratulations to Ronnie Shannon on his retirement, and 'Thank You' for your many years of service, which have benefitted the residents and visitors of Oak Island!

Beach Ambassador Recruitment Now Underway

It's been said that "*the protection of our beach is the concern of everyone on Oak Island*" and few groups take that to heart more than the Oak Island Beach Ambassadors. A program of the Oak Island Beach Preservation Society, the Beach Ambassadors are volunteers trained to serve as visible advocates for beach safety and protection. The volunteers also monitor and observe beach conditions, reporting safety issues to Town staff.

Even if you're not familiar with the Ambassadors program, you've probably seen their reflective safety vest-clad members at work, traveling their assigned 18-block sections of the beach. Patrols occur both on weekends and during the week, with additional patrols during holidays. Ambassadors talk to visitors, take photos, encourage positive beach activities, and remind visitors of beach rules.

If promoting beach safety and helping your community sounds like a worthwhile venture, you're in luck; because ***the Beach Ambassador Program is currently recruiting!*** Volunteers must commit to at least 20 hours of service from mid-May through Labor Day, with weekend hours expected for at least a portion of that time. Volunteers must be at least 21 years old, submit to a background check, have personal stamina and mobility, and assume all liability for their personal injury, illness or accidents.

To join the Beach Ambassadors, simply email Program Coordinator, Skip Cox at Skipncsu@gmail.com to receive an application.

The Oak Island Beach Preservation Society, Inc. (BPSI), is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit corporation, dedicated to education and community engagement to enhance the Oak Island beach experience. For full details on the Beach Ambassador program, visit the BPSI website at <https://beachoki.org/beach-ambassadors>, or click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE



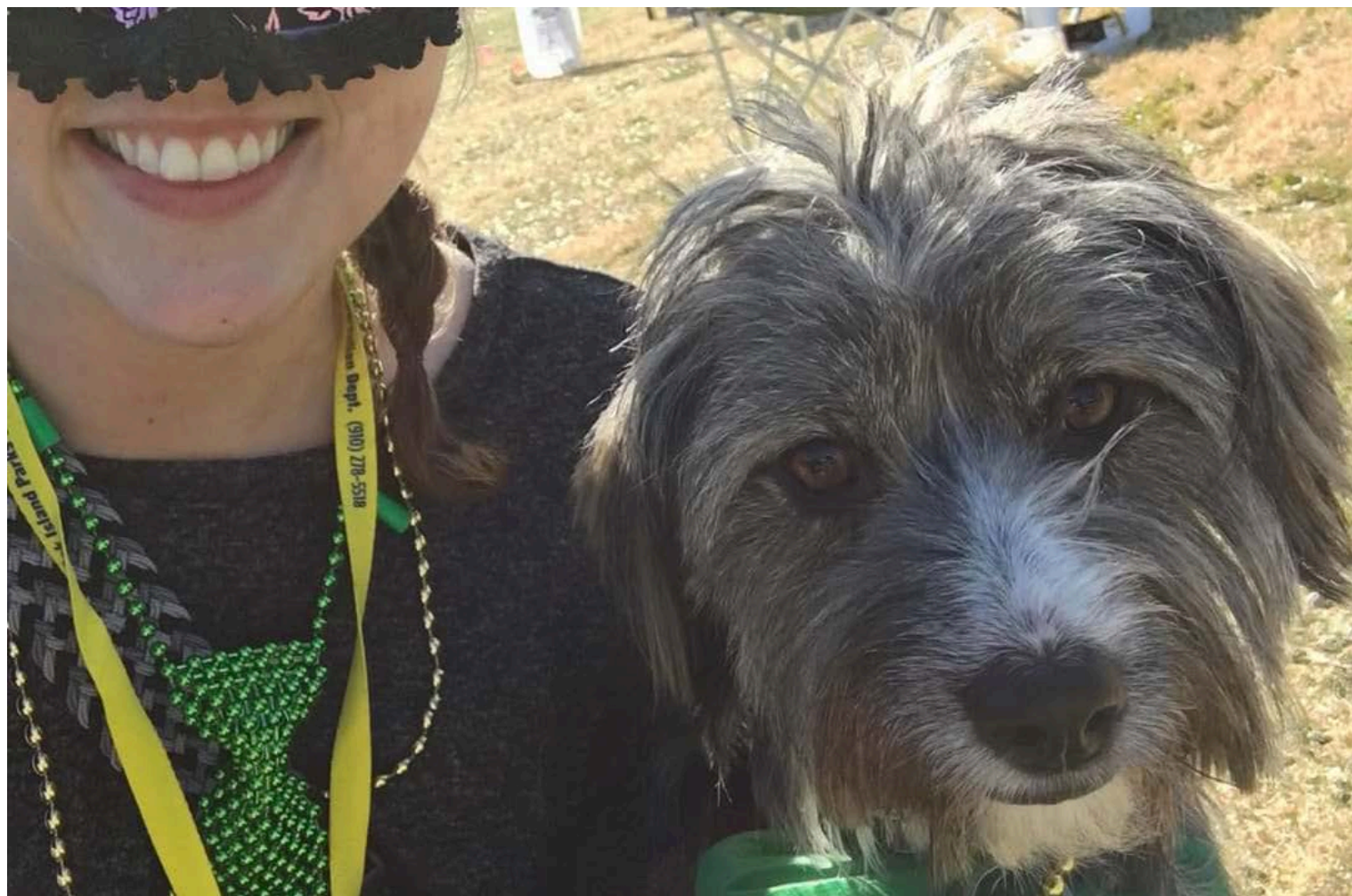
COMING EVENTS



COMING EVENTS

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

SAFETY NOTICE: COVID response protocols will be in place for all listed activities, including but not limited to: hand sanitizing stations, one-way traffic at the market, one person per vendor booth, social distancing marking and signage, and mask wearing encouraged by all.



OKI Mardi Gras Parade, Market, & Music

WHEN: Saturday, March 13 • 10:00 AM - 4:00 PM

WHERE: Middleton Park (Behind Town Hall) • 4610 E Dolphin Drive

WHO: Open to all

COST: FREE to attend

ABOUT: (PARADE) This year's OKI Mardi Gras will feature a "Reverse Parade" along East Dolphin Drive. Beginning at the intersection of Middleton Ave and East Dolphin Drive, participant floats will be stationary along East Dolphin Drive as spectators in vehicles drive past them to ensure social distancing. Participants and spectators alike are encouraged to wear their best Mardi Gras outfit! **(MUSIC & MARKET)** Beginning at 2:00 PM, the Mardi Gras vibes continue at Middleton Park with a festive Spring Craft Market. The Market will be filled with up to 50 approved local vendors from Brunswick County, all socially distanced on the softball field. The Middleton Amphitheater will feature a musical mix of blues and soul from the band Johnny and the Flipside, while spectators listen from socially distanced spacing marked on the grass

NOTE: ALL VENDOR SPACES HAVE BEEN FILLED - Vendor applications for this market date are no longer being received at this time.

The Great Oak Island Egg Dash

WHEN: Deliveries: March 30, 31, & April 1 • 4:00 PM – 6:00 PM daily

WHO: Ages 2-10

COST: \$5 per person (register online by March 2 - limited to 20 registrations per day)

ABOUT: The Easter Bunny is delivering crafts and Easter eggs to Oak Island front yards this year! One-time registration is available for each child to have candy filled eggs delivered to their yard, by a socially distanced Peter Rabbit & Crew! This program is designed for children ages 2-10, and spaces are limited. Registrants must ensure yards are safe for staff to visit (if safety is in question a location may be skipped at the discretion of staff - no animals, etc.). Participants will be entered in age group drawings for holiday prizes, to be awarded following on April 1





Drive-By Bunny

WHEN: March 31 & April 1 • 10:00 AM – NOON

WHO: All Ages

COST: Free with registration (deadline March 24 - limited to 30 streets per day)

ABOUT: Experience the thrill of the Easter Bunny, no matter your age! Sign up your street or individual house for a drive-by from the Easter Bunny & Friends on specially dates selected. The Bunny & Friends will drive down your street, socially distanced, to wave at your family and friends!

The Great Easter Scavenger Hunt on Oak Island

WHEN: Packet Pickup: April 1 • 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM, Scavenger Hunt: April 3 • 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM

WHERE: (Semi-virtual program) Sites to be utilized include Middleton Park, Bill Smith Park, Veterans Park, Templeton Park, Oak Island Recreation Center Grounds, Heron Lookout, May Moore Park, Oak Island Park 3, Register Park, Nature Center

WHO: All Ages

COST: Free

ABOUT: The Great Easter Scavenger Hunt will take place from 9:00 AM – 1:00 PM on Saturday, April 3, and utilize TEN (10) different locations throughout Oak Island. Startup packets for each participating family or group will be available outside the Recreation Center on Thursday, April 1, from 9:00 AM – 6:00 PM. The startup packet will include a list of the rules and Stamp Sheet and the first clue. Additional clues will be found at each following site visited. The clues will be laminated and affixed at each site and monitored by an attendant to make sure they are not taken; and that each group completes their challenge before seeing the next clue. Group will then have their Stamp Sheet marked with a special stamp. All challenges will be creative and COVID-safe. Once finished with the scavenger hunt, groups will turn in Stamp Sheets at the Recreation Center and receive a completion certificate, along with candy bag or eggs.



DEPARTMENT FEATURE



DEPARTMENT FEATURE: PUBLIC UTILITIES / WASTEWATER DIVISION

It's by far the largest network of infrastructure in the Town; it even ranks as the second largest of its kind in the entire eastern United States ... *and it's right under your feet!* It may be hard to image this scale of operation for Oak Island's Wastewater Management System, but each day thousands of Town residents and visitors are benefitted by it.

The purpose of the **Wastewater Division** is to provide services for the Town by collecting, containing, treating, and disposing of the community's wastewater. A division of the Town's Public Utilities, it is made up of 10 hard-working employees, who maintain the impressive amount of infrastructure that makes up the system. That infrastructure includes 36 gravity lift stations, 9 vacuum stations, 2 wastewater treatment plants, and a disposal site. If that isn't impressive enough, the Division also maintains the Bill Smith Park, as it provides irrigation for the Park through treated water from the nearby treat plant.

PROFILE: *Wastewater Superintendent:* Mark Moore has come a long way since his time serving in the US Coast Guard, in the frigid waters of Alaska; but in fact, it was the Coast Guard that first brought him to Oak Island. When first stationed at Oak Island, he didn't know that it would eventually be the place he would call home for good. He just knew that "it wasn't Alaska"! However, soon Mark and his family realized that this was the place to stay. It wasn't long after, Mark transitioned from the Coast Guard to the Oak Island team.

Starting over 21 years ago as a "Meter Reader" (modernly referred to as Meter Technician), Moore has since performed most every role within the Wastewater Division. "Everyday it's something different" Moore said, speaking of the many systems they maintain, "nothing is repetitive, and I'm appreciative of that." Despite his extensive knowledge and leadership responsibilities, he's equally at home out in the field, guiding newer employees, as he is behind a desk, operating the SCADA System Management software.





PROFILE: *Collection Systems Operator:* Jared McAndrews is the type of employee you hope you never have to see, but are grateful for when you do. As a Collection Systems Operator, McAndrews inspects, maintains, and repairs the wastewater systems that keeps clean and dirty water both in their respective places. From vacuum pits and individual services, to pipes and pump stations, his work carries him all over Town.

Jared prefers it that way. To him, driving to a new part of Town everyday is preferable to his first career of late nights and bustling crowds. "My family is in the restaurant business, which means so was I" McAndrews recalled with a grin, "but I didn't care for the late nights and lots of people, I actually wanted a 'day job' that got me home at a regular hour." Although he still helps with the family business on occasion, Jared has been proudly serving the residents and visitors of Oak Island for over four years now.

While the vast majority of Oak Island's Wastewater Management System is underground, there's a good chance you've passed by the above ground portions and never knew it. For instance, the cleverly designed **Satellite Water Reclamation Facility** (*pictured below*), would at a passing glance seem almost "residential" in appearance. In fact, most all of the above ground facilities are purposefully built to blend in to architectural tastes of their surroundings. Like any finely tuned machine, you are least aware of their presence when things are working properly.



Just as "all roads lead to Rome," so do the lines from the Caswell and former Yaupon Beach areas lead to the main treatment facility, located on the mainland off Fish Factory Road (*pictured below*). Everyday, anywhere from 65,000, up to 400,000 gallons of wastewater are transferred to the facility, through pipes running beneath the Intracoastal Waterway (ICW). Although the daily average varies greatly, based on the time of year and amount of system users, the staff onsite keep a watchful eye on dozens of system variables, to maintain the optimal conditions needed for proper wastewater treatment.



PICTURED: Plant Operator, Kenny Von Voigt inspects and services the treatment tanks at the Wastewater Treatment Facility daily.

A good-natured and lighthearted crew, most all of the staff within the Wastewater Division share a commitment to the importance of their work; while also pragmatic, in realizing the *less than glamorous* nature of that work. To many it would seem there's an overuse of the phrase "unsung heroes" in today's culture, but for anyone who's ever seen the full scope of work performed by Wastewater Division staff, they might be inclined to apply the term.

If you ever find yourself in need of the Division's services, feel free to call them at 910-201-8007, or message them through the **CONTACT US** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/CONTACT. To learn more about the Public Utilities Department, and both the Water and Wastewater Divisions, visit the Department's page on the Town Website at: www.OakIslandNC.com/PU, or just click the link below.

CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE

MONTH IN PHOTOS



PHOTO REVIEW: FEBRUARY 2021





PHOTOS COURTESY: Oak Island Communications Office (Mike Emory) / Oak Island Recreation Department (Rebecca Squires) / Oak Island Beach Preservation Society

THANK YOU FOR READING!



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