



Town Hall

THE CURRENT

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

November 2021

IN THIS ISSUE: Welcome / Monthly Review / News & Notices / Coming Events / Department Feature / Photo Review

Welcome to November

WELCOME to the **NOVEMBER** edition of the **THE CURRENT**. Thanks. Giving. Two separate, yet equally powerful words. One is a simple expression of gratitude for things received, the other a free transfer of things owned. Set apart, these two words seem almost an opposite for each other. However, when combined they become so much more than the sum of their parts. Thanksgiving is not just a holiday celebrated with turkey and dressing, but rather an action we can take to change our perspective. It is quite literally, the free offering of our most closely guarded emotion ... our *gratitude*. And as many longtime or even new residents can attest, there is always something to be grateful for, when the beauty of Oak Island knocks at your front door. Whether you're thankful for a big family dinner or quiet walk on the sand, chances are it doesn't take much to find something worth of your gratitude. While an unorthodox autumn on the coast may involve more crab dip than cranberry sauce, it doesn't mean the spirit of thankfulness - and the many benefits that returns - can't still apply! So tie on a napkin and grab your favorite ladle, 'cause we're about to serve a heapin' helpin' of good news in the **NOVEMBER** edition of **THE CURRENT**.

MONTHLY REVIEW



PRIOR REVIEW: OCTOBER 2021

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



Council Recap

At their OCTOBER 12 REGULAR MEETING, the Council was presented with an End of Season Report from the Beach Ambassadors Program, and then a presentation on recent Planning Board activities from the Board Chair, Dara Royal. Immediately following these presentations, the Council gave a special recognition to Police Chief, W.I. "Speedy" Ingram, III, who used the opportunity to announce his retirement on December 1 of this year. The Council then took a brief recess following the presentation to Speedy, for a brief reception.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORTS: Town Manager David Kelly introduced three new employees to the Council, before transitioning to a report from the Public Works Director, Scott Thornall. Among his items, Thornall noted 74 work orders related to stormwater management had been completed. This included 4,500 linear feet of ditch work, along with pipe repair and replacement. In addition, the first phase of the Ocean Drive stormwater management has been initiated. Thornall was followed by Finance Director, David Hatten who provided a quarterly report on tax and fee revenues, before noting that the Town had hired a new tax collector. Town Attorney, Brian Edes then reported on the potential \$22.7B settlement of a national opioid class action lawsuit, filed by several states. North Carolina is projected to receive \$750M from this suit, and while Oak Island is not a named recipient, could indirectly benefit from funds provided at the County level.

OLD BUSINESS: (1) Council approved the order authorizing the special obligation bonds for the FEMA Grant Project, and its associated issuance resolutions. (2) Council directed staff to issue and advertise a Request for Qualifications (RFQ) for design work on the new Skate Park.

NEW BUSINESS: (1) Council adopted a resolution awarding to retiring Police Chief Ingram his badge and service weapon. (2) Council approved the adoption of a new Town Logo, and an associated Town Logo & Seal Usage Guide. (3) Council approved moving forward with a transition of the Oak Island Website to a "dotgov" domain. (4) Council approved the lease for golf course maintenance equipment, dependent upon the Town Attorney's final review.

To view the video, agenda, or minutes from any Town Council meeting, just visit the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/MEETINGS, or click the link below.

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COVID Update

On Wednesday, November 3, 2021 the Town transitioned the current **mandatory** Mask & Facial Coverings policy for Town facilities, to a **voluntary** policy. This update to the policy aligned recent revisions by both Brunswick County and several surrounding communities.

The change reflects positive trends in the declining numbers of new cases, as well as increased vaccination percentages within the community; acknowledging that Brunswick County maintains one of the higher vaccination rates in both the region and state.

This revision applies to all facilities previously noted when the mandatory policy was enacted on August 27, which includes Town employees, contracted service providers, and any public visitors.

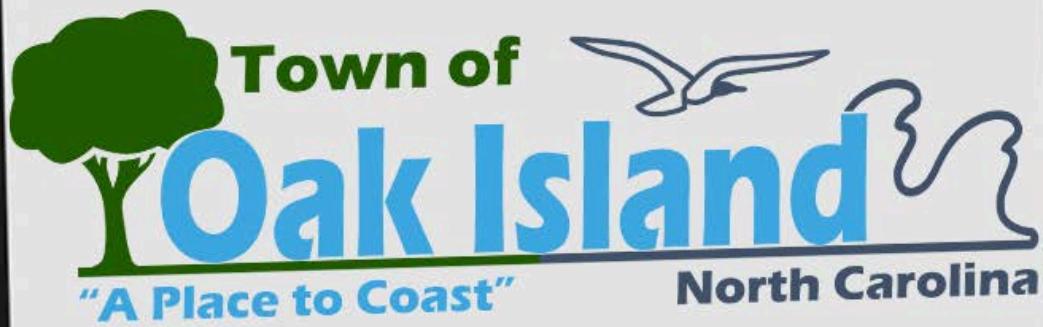
As with the previous measures, this policy addresses mask-wearing only, and does not further modify current room capacity or crowd size practices. The now voluntary Mask & Facial Coverings policy retains a focus on the personal responsibility of visitors and staff to affect their own safety. The use of individual caution and preventative measures in addition to mask-wearing, such as social distancing and vaccination, is strongly encouraged.

As a reminder to those still needing to distance out of necessity or caution, the Town of Oak Island offers many options for conducting business virtually. This includes phone and email correspondence, as well as payments via 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 also be made through the appropriate **Contact Us** form on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/CONTACT.

As a reminder, all updates regarding COVID response efforts from the Town, County, and State level can be found on the Coronavirus Response Information page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/COVID, or by clicking the link below.

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New Face

As noted in the **COUNCIL RECAP** above, the October 12 Town Council meeting brought several new and exciting changes to the way Oak Island interacts with the public. Among the New Business items approved by the Council were the adoption of a new Town Logo, along with approval of a new Town Logo & Seal Usage Guide.

Historically, the Town of Oak Island has used its seal for all promotional, legislative, and administrative materials produced. While this has served the purpose for most activities, the need for a simple, yet unique way to visually represent the town has steadily become more apparent over time. While they equally represent the organization they serve, a seal and a logo are two distinct properties, with two very specific purposes. A town's seal is an intricate, ornate design that tells the history of your town, and is useful for all legal documentation such as resolutions, ordinances, and proclamations. A logo on the other hand provides a simple, yet well thought out design which allows your town to be immediately recognizable on promotional media such as apparel, vehicle branding, and signage.

The logo approved by the Town Council (pictured), nicknamed the "tree to sea" design, strives to encapsulate the aspects that define the Town of Oak Island. It uses a color scheme derived from the Town Seal, and prominently displays the Town name, surrounded by a live oak tree on the left, and gentle waves on the right. All watched over faithfully by the ever-in-flight seagull above. Below, it features the state name, to further distinguish the Town from some other more "cursed" oak islands, along with an updated version of the Town slogan "A Place to Coast."

Along with the new logo, a "Style & Usage Guide" was adopted as well. This provides vendors and partner organizations with exact details on color and sizing requirements, to ensure the logo is always correctly displayed.

While already featured as the HOME button in the top left-hand corner of the Town Website, expect to see more of the new logo in the coming weeks as it is slowly rolled out on stationary, signage, and vehicles. This will include slight variations for each of the Town's departments, divisions, and special activities such as the Live & Local series. To learn more about the Town Logo & Seal, and their respective roles, just visit the Communications Office page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/LOGO or click the link below.

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New Place

In addition to approving a new logo, the Council also took steps to modernize the Town's online presence.

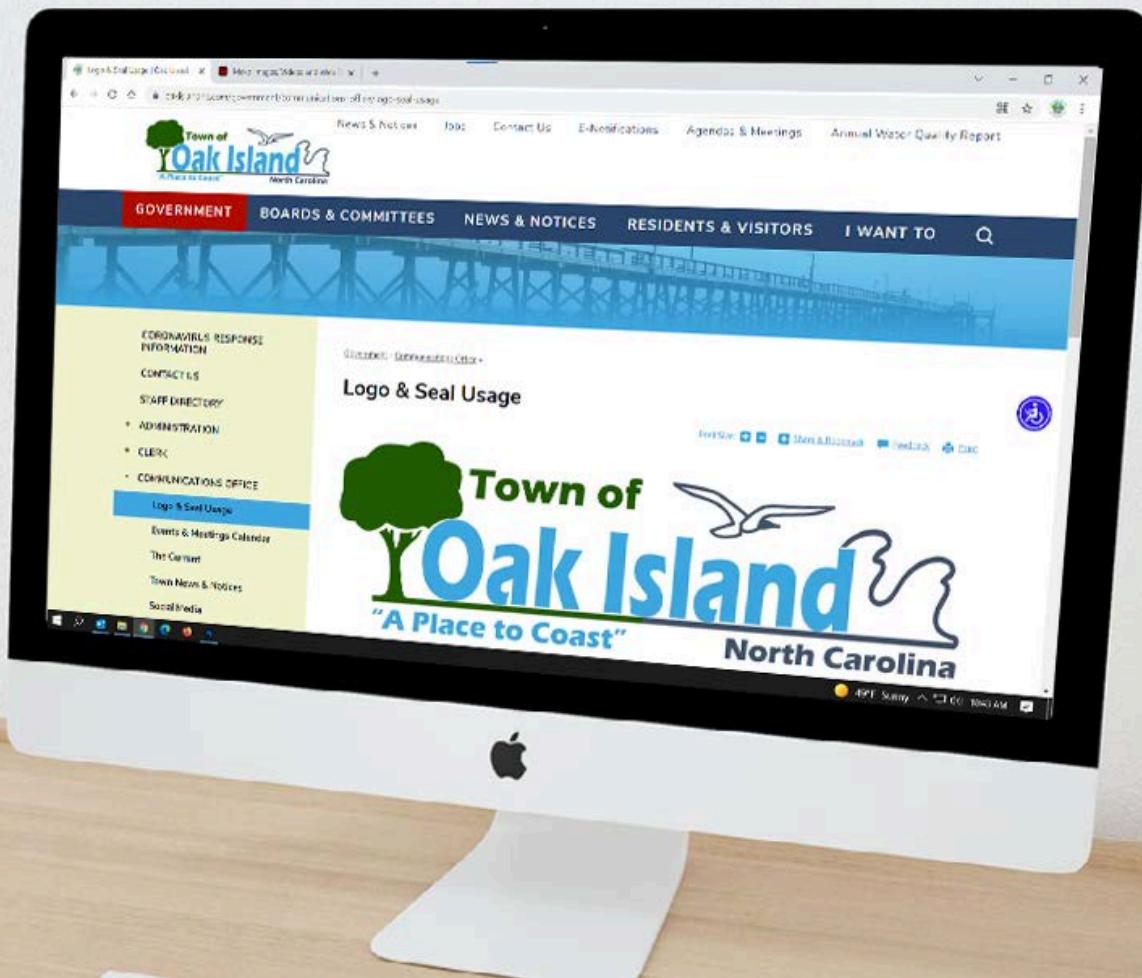
On the road map of the World Wide Web the suffix of any website address, called it's "top level domain," provides information on the type of site visited. Typically, the ".com" domains are used by for-profit businesses, while domains like ".org" and ".edu" are used by non-profits and educational institutions, respectively. While all of these are relatively easy to obtain by any individual or business, the ".gov" domains are reserved exclusively for government organizations.

Having a .gov domain is important to local governments, as it provides visitors with assurances that they are using a verified government site. As part of their actions, the Council sent a formal letter to the federal DotGov Registrars office, requesting the Town be given rights to the "www.OakIslandNC.gov" domain.

Initial approval from the Registrars Office has been given, and the Communications Office is currently working to transfer the Town's Website to the new .gov domain. As part of this transition, the old "www.OakIslandNC.com" domain will remain active, and simply redirect all visitors to the new site. The goal of this transition is to distinguish the Town from other similarly named ".com" websites, and provide those assurances to users, that they are visiting and interacting directly with the Town.

Once the new site has been fully obtained and tested, media releases will be published announcing the transition. As a reminder, you can sign up for email notifications from the Town at www.OakIslandNC.com/NOTIFY or simply click the link below. (NOTE: Current subscribers will carry over to the new .gov website, and you will NOT have to re-subscribe).

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Godspeed, Speedy

As previously mentioned, during the October meeting of the Town Council, a special presentation and announcement regarding Police Chief, W.L. "Speedy" Ingram, III was made. Initially the Council recognized Speedy for his dedicated service to the Town, and his remarkable recovery from the devastating toll a COVID-19 infection in late December had taken on his health.

In a true show of community solidarity, much of the Town's Police Department, administrative staff, and residents rallied around Speedy as he battled through a long and hard-fought recovery throughout much of 2021. At one point even popularizing the **#SpeedyStrong** hashtag on local social media outlets.

In his address to the Council, Chief Ingram first thanked all of those in the community for their support; then in true Speedy fashion, admonished those who would have counted him out early! While happy to be back in uniform and playing up to a live, eager audience, the conversation soon took a serious, if somber turn. Chief Ingram then took the opportunity to formally announce his retirement, effective December 1. Despite having an obvious passion for the community that could drive him for several more decades, it was clear Speedy was making the choice he felt best for himself, the Department, and the Town.

A career law enforcement veteran, with over four (4) decades of experience, Chief Ingram has faithfully served the Town of Oak Island as Police Chief on **TWO** (2) separate occasions. First, from 2002 - 2004, and again most recently from 2018 - present. He leaves behind a legacy of dedication, service, and care both for the officers under his watch, and the community they protect.

The search for a new Chief is currently underway, and the department will be commanded in the interim by recently appointed Assistant Chief, Frankie Cooke.

"From all of the officers, staff, friends and family at the Town of Oak Island, we sincerely wish you well in your retirement, and humbly say ... GODSPEED, SPEEDY!"

Sun Sets on Sea Turtle Season

Throughout the summer months, Oak Island receives thousands of visitors. From standard tourists, to part-time residents, the usual crowds seem to use their time for rest and relaxation. However for one demographic, their time spent on our beaches is all business; and that business is having babies!

Speaking of course about sea turtles, who are a regular and welcomed visitor to Oak Island's shore. Following the recent hatching of the last known nest, the Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program (OISTPP) released its initial season review at the end of October.

In total, the 2021 season saw 80 nests with 5,602 hatchings. Of those, 5,228 hatchlings emerged from the nests, contributing to an overall "Nest Success Rate" of 87.5%. Although currently incomplete, an analysis showed 28 unique females, with an instance of two (2) sea turtles laying four (4) nests each!

Nest locations slightly favored the western half of the Island, with 59% compared to just 41% on the eastern half.

OISTPP is an all-volunteer nonprofit organization whose mission is to monitor and protect the sea turtle population that visits the Oak Island beach strand. The Program was founded in 1989 and is authorized by the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) to conduct its activities to monitor and protect sea turtles. The coordinators work closely with biologists from the NCWRC to ensure that the Commission's guidelines and regulations are followed.

If you would like to learn more about the Oak Island Sea Turtle Protection Program, including how to volunteer or donate resources, simply visit their website at www.okiseaturtle.org or click the link below.

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NEWS & NOTICES



NEWS & NOTICES: NOVEMBER

Council & Board Meetings

REMINDER: All televised public meetings listed below will be broadcast live on OKI-TV (Spectrum Cable channel 8), as well as livestreamed on the Town Website. Meeting agendas, minutes, and any livestream or on-demand video available can be found on the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/MEETINGS.

TOWN COUNCIL (*televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Tuesday, November 9, 2021** at **6:00 PM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

PLANNING BOARD (*televised*) will hold a regular meeting on **Tuesday, November 16, 2021** at **10:30 AM** in the Council Chambers, located on the second floor of Town Hall at 4601 E Oak Island Drive.

Closures & Holidays

VETERANS DAY: Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be **CLOSED** on **Thursday, November 11, 2021** in observance of **Veterans Day**. As always, Police, Fire, and other emergency services will be available by calling 911. Announcements on further schedule modifications to Town departments and services will be posted on the Town Website as available.

The **OAK ISLAND PIER** will offer **FREE** one day fishing passes to all veterans for Thursday, November 11, Veterans Day, in recognition of their service to our Nation. The Pier will be open from 7:00 AM - 7:00 PM, and offers bait, tackle, and refreshments available for purchase in the Pier House, along with rod rentals if needed. For more information, contact the Pier House at 910-933-6161.

THANKSGIVING: Administrative Offices for the Town of Oak Island will be CLOSED on Thursday, November 26, and Friday, November 26, in observance of Thanksgiving. As always, Police, Fire, and other emergency services will be available by calling 911. Announcements on further schedule modifications to Town departments and services will be posted on the Town Website as available.

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



The Times, They Are A Changin'

While some may say "the dark ages" is a cynical way to describe the end of Daylight Savings Time, the affect it has on the amount of afternoon sunlight is not up for debate.

To accommodate the seasonal darkness of shifting time measurement, several Town facilities have modified their schedules moving forward.

PAR 3 GOLF: Beginning on Monday, November 8, Oak Island Par 3 Golf will transition its seasonal hours of operation to **8:00 AM - 5:00 PM daily**. As always, the Oak Island Par 3 will continue to provide one of the most enjoyable experiences for golfers of all skill levels, year round. For more details on hours of operation, facilities and amenities provided, or any general information related to Oak Island Par 3 Golf, simply contact the Pro Shop at 910-454-0905 or visit www.OakIslandNC.com/PAR3.

PIER: The Oak Island Pier is open year round, however hours of operation must vary depending on the season, with longer hours in the spring and summer months, and shorter hours in the fall and winter months. The Pier is now currently operating from **7:00 AM - 7:00 PM daily**. As always, the Pier staff and attendants will continue to provide the level of service that has made it a favorite destination among residents and visitors alike for over 65 years. For more details on the Pier itself, or the amenities it provides, simply stop by at **705 Ocean Drive**, or visit www.OakIslandNC.com/PIER.

Scheduled Convenience

Speaking of changing schedules for favorite destinations, some holiday schedule changes are coming to the Oak Island Garbage & Recycling Convenience Site as well.

The Convenience Site, which is located at 4110 Airport Road, will be **CLOSED** on Friday, November 26. The site will re-open regular hours the following week.

While the day after Thanksgiving (aka "Black Friday") is a day when many are more focused on tagging the best deal instead of tossing the leftovers, there will still be availability for those needing disposal options. The Brunswick County Landfill and Convenience Sites will all be closed on Thanksgiving; but the landfill will reopen on Friday, November 26, with the Convenience Sites following on Saturday, November 27.

Garbage & Recycling Collection schedules for the Town will not be affected by the Thanksgiving holiday; however, pick up the following week may take longer than normal due to higher volume. For full information on Garbage & Recycling Collection Schedules and Collections Zones, visit www.OakIslandNC.com/COLLECTION or click the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)





Toys For Tots

For many, the thought of Christmas decorating or celebrations prior to the Thanksgiving holiday is near equal to sacrilege. However, it's safe to say that for one longstanding organization, even the "grinch-iest" of hearts can give a little.

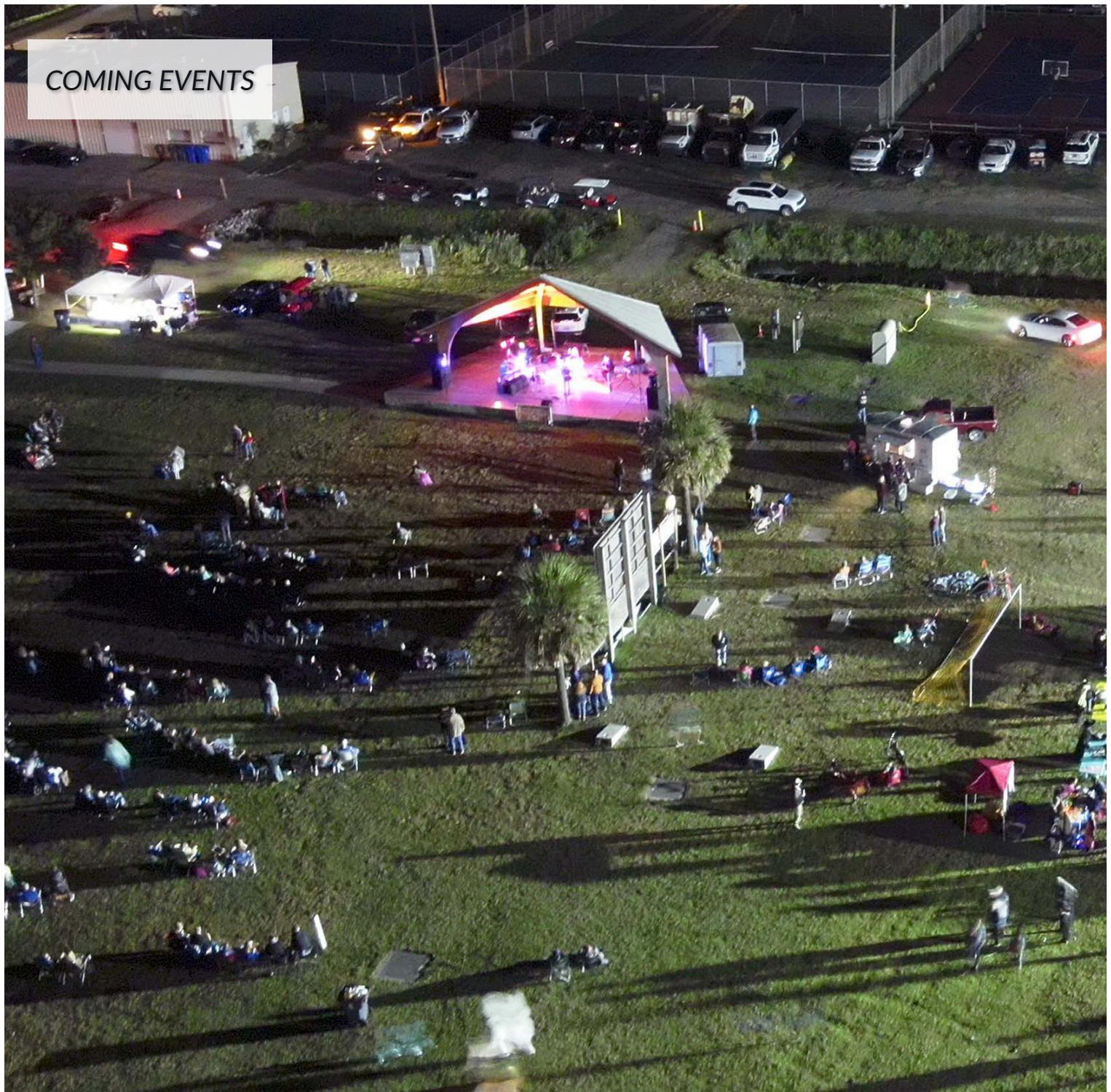
In fact, giving a little is just what the **Toys For Tots** campaign is all about. Now you can help further that campaign, all from the convenience of Town Hall! Going on through the end of November, Toys For Tots collection bins have been placed in the lobbies of both the Town Hall and Police Station. Donations can be dropped off anonymously, any time during regular business hours of **8:00 AM - 4:30 PM, Monday - Friday**.

Although there is no official "wish list" the campaign does remind you to please bring new, un-wrapped toys that are preferably around the \$10 or above price range. Homemade toys are also accepted, and books are also needed (children receive 2 toys each and 3 books count as ONE gift!). Toys For Tots prefers not to accept realistic looking weapons or gifts with food.

Since 1947, the US Marine Corps and Toys for Tots have been working together to provide toys for children in need during the Christmas holiday season. They remain a top rated charity, with over 97% of donations going directly to the mission of providing toys, books, and other gifts to less fortunate children. The 3% spent on support, principally covers fundraising expenses. Not one donated dollar goes to salaries or any other manpower costs. To learn more about the campaign, just visit their website at www.toysfortots.org or click the link below.

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COMING EVENTS



COMING EVENTS & PROGRAMS

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

Christmas By The Sea Parade

[Contributed by Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce] The **Christmas by the Sea Parade on Oak Island** showcases coastal living during the holiday season with its elaborately decorated floats, most with a coastal theme and jovial atmosphere.

The Christmas by the Sea Parade begins at **2:00 PM** on **Saturday, December 4, 2021** in front of the Oak Island Town Hall, 4601 E. Oak Island Drive and continues to the intersection of Oak Island Drive and McGlamery Street. While enjoying the parade expect to see beautifully decorated floats, fire trucks, marching bands, and more. Rumor has it we can even expect an appearance from Santa & Mrs. Claus! Bring your family to the parade for an exciting start to the holiday season.

A float decorating contest will be held prior to the start of the parade. Recognition will be given to 1st and 2nd place in two categories: Group/Club/Non-Profit and Commercial Businesses. An Overall Judges Award will also be awarded. Floats will be judged on Spirit of the Holidays, Personalization, and Coastal Element (this is our community, what does it mean to you?).

The Christmas by the Sea Parade is an event of the Southport-Oak Island Area Chamber of Commerce. It is one of two events organized by the Chamber during the holiday season which includes the Shop Small Southport-Oak Island. For more information about the parade or other holiday events or to enter the parade please call the chamber at 910-457-6964 or go to the Chamber's website by visiting www.southport-oakisland.com, or simply click on the link below.

[CLICK HERE TO LEARN MORE](#)





Holiday Bingo Night

WHEN: November 15 • 5:00 - 7:00 PM

WHERE: Oak Island Recreation Center • 3003 E Oak Island Drive

WHO: Ages 5 - 14 (Youth Category) / Ages 15+ (Adult Category)

COST: \$3 in advance / \$5 at the door

ABOUT: Celebrate your favorite holidays with friends, family, and your social circle while competing for seasonal goodies at the Recreation Center. Featuring prizes for both youth and adult categories, it's the perfect way to make memories with your loved ones this holiday season. Spaces are limited, so secure seats in advance by contacting the Recreation Department at 910-278-5518 (dotters will not be provided).

Pocosin Lakes NWF Black Bear Adventure

WHEN: November 19 - 20, 2021 • 5:00 AM (leave time)

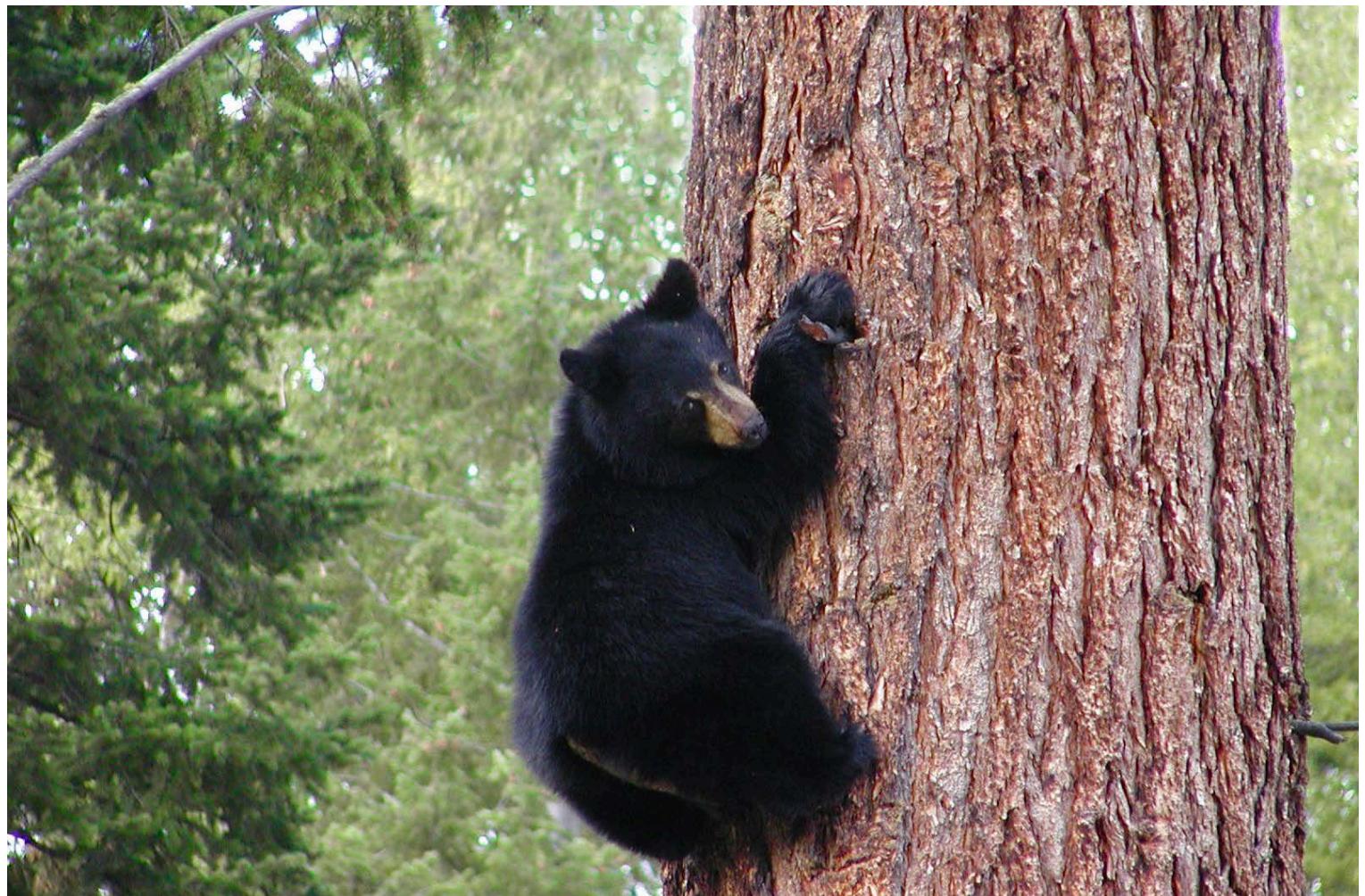
WHERE: Meet at Oak Island Recreation Center • 3003 E Oak Island Drive

WHO: Adults

COST: \$120 per person - price includes round trip van transportation and lodging at Hampton Inn, Washington, NC

ABOUT: Come join us for a "Very Beary" overnight trip with Becky Skiba of the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, as we explore the Albemarle Sound in an exciting guided birding and black bear viewing opportunity.

Preregistration is required. For more information, contact the Recreation Department at 910-278-5518, or email Eric Falkenhagen at efalkenhagen@oakislandnc.com.





Oak Island Christmas tree Lighting 2021

Celebrate with the Town of Oak Island at its Annual Tree Lighting Ceremony! Live entertainment, music, crafts, a letter to Santa station and a special visit from Santa himself are all on the agenda for this yearly anticipated event!

- Friday, December 3, 2021
- Live Entertainment begins at 5:00 PM
- Tree Lighting starts at 6:00 PM

PLEASE NOTE: There are **MANY** fun, educational, and exciting events and programs planned for the month ahead (way too many to list here)! For a complete list of upcoming activities, visit the **EVENTS** page of the Town Website at www.OakIslandNC.com/EVENTS or click the link below.

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DIVISION FEATURE

222
HUMAN
RESOURCES

DIVISION FEATURE: HUMAN RESOURCES

The fall season is a time when many children the world over, start selecting the toys they want to enjoy in the coming year. For many working adults however, the fall brings equally tough, but not nearly as fun choices. While kids may be hearing phrases like "order now" and "batteries sold separately" - adults are treated to the grown-up versions, with statements like "open enrollment" and "terms and conditions apply." From healthcare and benefits packages, to helping mitigate co-worker disputes, no successful organization is complete without good Human Resources (HR).

Under the Administrative Department for Oak Island Government, the Human Resources Office consists of just one employee; and serves Town employees by developing, interpreting, and administering the personnel programs and policies. More than just simply "hiring and benefits" this office provides a wide array of services, including payroll administration, employee recruitment, personnel records management, employee relations, and development of personnel policies.



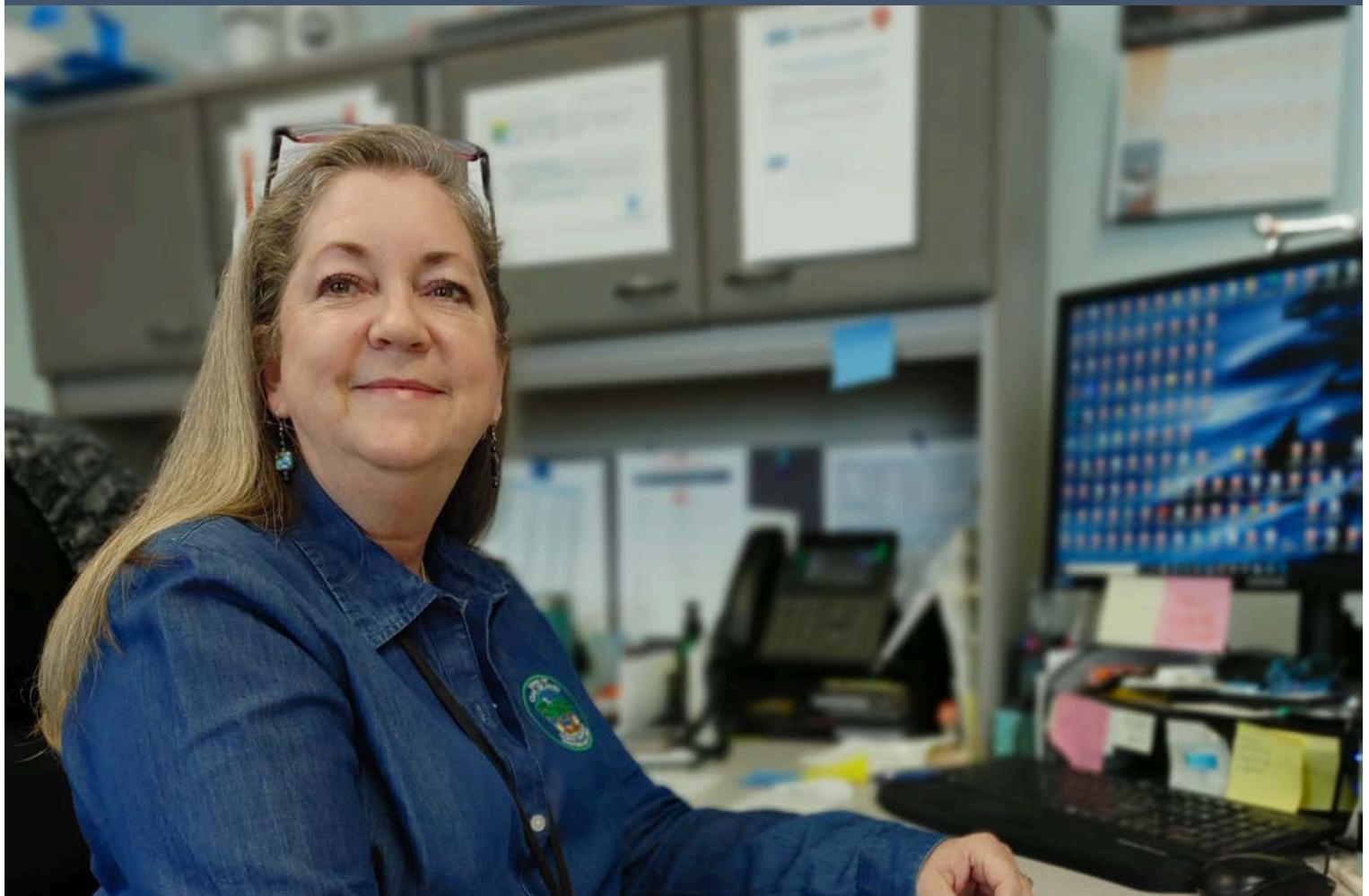
PROFILE: Human Resources Officer: Debbie Lasek has owned property on Oak Island since 1998, and had always planned to eventually leave her native Greensboro to retire here. Then in 2014, a random email from a friend looking to buy a home in her neighborhood sparked an interest in moving that timeline up a bit. Within a month, her Greensboro home had sold and she and her husband were settling into full-time life in OKI. Shortly after, she joined the Oak Island team at the Customer Service Desk in the Finance Department, then moving from there to Admin Assistant, before eventually achieving her current position in 2017.

Debbie majored in Business Administration and Personnel Management at UNC Greensboro, and worked much of her career in payroll and human resources for corporate offices of an industrial garment manufacturer. She stepped away for a time to successfully tackle the world's hardest job, that of a full time mother, before coming back to the profession in full force. *"I've always loved the idea of working in the Human Resources field because of the impact it has on employees"* Lasek said about her motivations *"I'm a 'people person' and really enjoy working with employees and management to keep compliant with the ever-evolving employment laws while giving the best service possible to the employees."*

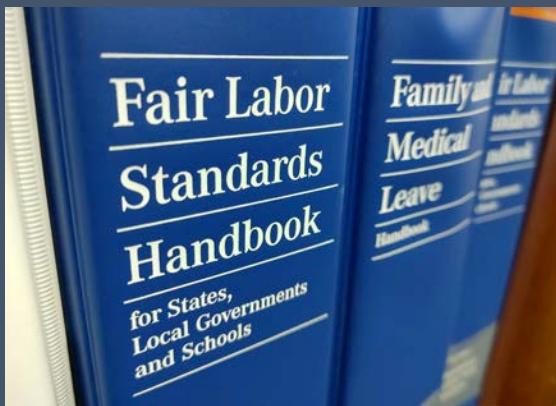
When "paper pusher" is a compliment! The computer. These days, everything about benefits, retirement, employment law, peer advice, or salary studies is all done online. With the onset of a global pandemic in 2020, COVID pushed that virtual workflow to an even higher level of usage. Suddenly, HR officers such as Debbie Lasek found their services not only in demand, but critical to helping employees find ways to maintain services while ensuring their own personal safety.

"It's definitely been a challenge," said Debbie "but I feel like I've helped the employees that needed it and made it a successful experience for all involved."

On almost any given day, there's usually at least one or more employees in her office, seeking out guidance to navigate the often complex world of insurance benefits or retirement accounts. Time and again, her naturally talkative personality and easy disposition, help calm the nerves and ease the frustrations of those looking for simple answers.



As evidenced in the work of the HR Office, the Town of Oak Island greatly values its employees and offers a comprehensive benefits packages whenever available. The primary role of the Human Resources Officer is to understand, present, and manage these benefits, which often includes medical, dental, and vision coverage. In addition to the immediate need of health insurance, the division also helps guide employees on more long-term goals, such as life insurance, 401K, contribution to the Local Government Retirement System, and tuition reimbursement.





Because the HR Office is just one person, there is always a flurry of activity, as the Officer works to address the concerns of the more than 140 Town Employees. A fluid, well-working relationship with other departments and divisions is vital to providing the needed services in a timely and accurate fashion. By working closely and remaining accessible to the Town Manager, Administrative Support Specialist, and supervisory staff, the HR Officer is able to stay informed on the needs and issues faced by employees.

Recruitment is another one of the staple services provided by any good human resources office. The Town is always looking for talented and skilled additions to the team, which means the HR Division is always kept busy with the advertising and hiring of newly opened positions as well. As with the other complications brought on by the COVID pandemic mentioned earlier, staffing new employees has also taken a hard hit industry-wide. Whether it's from increased competition by other organizations, or just a general apprehension of workers to relocate in uncertain times, the old adage of "finding good help is hard these days" applies now more than ever. That's why the HR Office works hard to identify, develop, and employ aggressive recruitment strategies. These efforts help ensure the Town of Oak Island, and the residents and visitors it serves, can secure and retain the best possible candidates for our community.

Although an internal division with not much public facing promotion, the Human Resources Office is still available to answer any questions or concerns regarding how the Town provides for its employees. You can find the Office's information and contact form on its dedicated page of the Town website at www.OakIslandNC.com/HR. If you or anyone you know is interested in joining the Oak Island team, currently available job opportunities are always listed online at www.OakIslandNC.com/JOBS.

MONTH IN PHOTOS



PHOTO REVIEW: OCTOBER 2021







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