



The Village Record

The Newsletter of
Village of Flat Rock
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Flat Rock, North Carolina
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From The Mayor's Desk

Ray E. Shaw, Jr.

The tax bills have been mailed so you should have had yours for about a month. These bills replace the taxes formally billed by Henderson County for fire protection. For almost 60% of Flat Rock citizens a slight decrease of about 1 cent per \$100 of evaluation occurred while the remaining 40% saw a slight increase of 1/2 to 1 cent per \$100 of evaluation. Henderson County will continue to bill Flat Rock residents for automobiles as required by North Carolina State Law.

The Village has held public hearings on the cable franchise and an upcoming annexation. The Village is preparing to annex approximately 112 acres of land including the Highland Lake Golf Villas, the golf course, Pinecrest Presbyterian Church, a small parcel at the entrance of Dunroy and several individual parcels on Rutledge Road. All of the annexations are voluntary and have been requested of the Village. In conjunction with this, the annexation agreement between the Village and the City of Hendersonville is being modified to reflect a slightly different boundary and an extended tenure of the agreement.

Remember that November 8th is Election Day. Flat Rock citizens have three (3) council seats to fill. Your vote and support is very important. Show that you care by going to the polls and casting your vote.

Village Hall Meeting Facilities Available to Flat Rock Citizens

The new Village Hall has two meeting rooms that are proving to be very popular with the community. The larger room, the Village Council Chambers, will seat up to 60 people while the smaller, Highlander Conference Room, will seat 8-10 people.

The Village permits use of the facilities at no charge to Flat Rock residents or organizations. We do not allow the meeting rooms to be used for commercial purposes. In addition, there are other minor restrictions but generally speaking, the citizens of Flat Rock are encouraged to use these facilities.

The Village Hall is open from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. Monday through Friday and use of meeting rooms during these hours is encouraged. Arrangements can be made for use outside of those hours.

A form is available at the reception area and this must be completed in advance of the date on which use is needed.

The using person or organization is asked to police the facilities used and to restore them to the same configuration as they found them (or better!) prior to their meeting.

If you have any questions, feel free to call Michelle Hill or Rowena Sweezy, at the Village Hall. The telephone number is 697-8100.

Local Artwork and Artists on Display in the Village Office *The Decorating Committee*

The next time you visit the Village offices, take a few minutes to notice the display on the wall as you enter the Assembly Room.

Currently, there are aerial photographs of early Kenmure, taken from a helicopter by Ben Wright. Last month, there was a wonderful, colorful wall hanging by Georgia Bonesteel. In August, there was an original nature scene on loan to the Village from the Roger Bansemer Gallery and in July, an original painting of a river scene, also on loan from a local resident.

On the walls throughout the building are framed photographs and sketches of historic buildings and homes. In the Assembly Room itself are some beautiful color photographs donated by Connemara and the Flat Rock Playhouse.

The decorating committee has chosen to change the display on the entry wall to the Assembly Room approximately every month. Some artwork will be donated, the Village will purchase some and some will be on loan from local residents or galleries.

We hope you will enjoy the displays and that they will remind you of the spectacular beauty of our area.

The Village Hall Is Now The Flat Rock Polling Place

The Henderson County Board of Elections has selected the Flat Rock Village Hall as the polling place for local, state and federal elections starting with the general election to be held on November 8, 2005.

In the past, the polling places have been at either the Parish Hall at St. John in the Wilderness Church or occasionally at the Flat Rock Middle School.

If you have voted at these polling places in the past, you should now plan to vote at the new Village Hall instead. Watch the newspaper for more details on the election, the hours the polls will be open and other information.

Property Taxes Begin in Flat Rock

On July 1st, the Village of Flat Rock formally levied a tax on real, personal, and business property tax within the Village. The initial bills for property taxes should have reached each property owner in Flat Rock by early October.

A post card notice has been used for this initial billing. While some may be concerned that property values are shown on the bill, this information is a matter of public record and available to anyone who wants it through records readily available. We hope there is minimal sensitivity on this issue.

The tax being levied is not a new tax but is instead merely the collection by the Village for taxes to provide fire protection. In prior

years, this tax was collected by Henderson County.

The tax rate, a uniform one levied throughout the Village, is 8.5 cents per \$100 of property value. The Henderson County Tax Assessor determines the assessed value of the property being taxed. Because the Village is served by three separate fire departments (Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue, Valley Hill Fire Department and Green River Fire District) and due to the fact that the tax rate must be uniform, some residents will see slightly different tax rates from that previously paid. For example, the rate for those in the Blue Ridge Fire and Rescue area last year was 9.5 cents per \$100 of property value. The Valley Hill rate was 8 cents per \$100 of value while the Green River rate was 7.5 cents.

Here are a number of questions that have been asked about the tax with a short response. If you need greater information, feel free to call the Village Office and talk with our Village Clerk and Tax Collector, Rowena Sweezy, at 697-8100.

Why is the Village collecting a property tax?

The Village is doing this in order to participate in the distribution of sales tax revenues intended for distribution to municipalities in the likely event the Henderson County Commissioners change the current method of allocating those revenues. Sales tax revenues make up the largest component of the revenue flow to the Village. The law permits the County to determine how to distribute these revenues. The method currently in use is based on population in each municipality. Two years ago, the County indicated it would likely move to the other alternate method called the ad valorem tax method. Under this method, sales tax revenues are distributed to municipalities based on the amount of ad valorem taxes collected in the

previous fiscal year. So, in order to protect this revenue source, the Village imposed the property tax effective July 1, 2005.

What will the Village do with the revenues from the property tax?

The Village will provide fire protection to properties within the Village. Formal agreements have been reached between the Village and each of the Fire Departments serving our citizens. The Village will use the proceeds from the property tax to pay for these services.

Is this a new tax on my property?

No, the Village is now collecting a tax for fire protection rather than the County collecting the tax. On your current year property tax bill from Henderson County, you will notice there is no provision for taxes for fire protection as there was in the past.

Did tax rates go up as a result of this move?

The tax rates are very similar to what they would have been had the Village not become the tax collector. For those in the Blue Ridge Fire District, taxes decreased slightly. For those in Valley Hill or Green River Fire Districts, there was a slight increase.

I live in Blue Ridge Fire District. How much did my taxes decline?

The tax rate declined from 9.5 cents per \$100 of property value. For a \$250,000 property value, taxes declined from \$237.50 to \$212.50 or \$25.00 for the current year.

I live in Valley Hill. What is the effect on my tax due?

The tax rate for this area increased by 0.5 cents per \$100 of property value. For a

\$250,000 property value, taxes increased from \$200.00 to \$212.50 or \$12.50 for the current year.

I am in the Green River Fire District. What will happen to my tax bill?

The tax rate for this area increased by 1.0 cent per \$100 of property value. For a \$250,000 property value, taxes increased by \$25.00 for the current year.

Will the Village collect taxes on vehicles?

No, the law mandates that the County collect vehicle taxes and you will continue to receive your Vehicle Tax Notice from Henderson County. The tax collected that covers fire protection for vehicles will be paid to the Village by Henderson County. What will change is that effective in October 2005 all Vehicle Tax Notices will reflect the Village as the provider of fire protection and taxes collected will flow to the Village from the County.

I just paid my Vehicle Tax bill in September and notice that the fire protection tax showed the Fire Department in which I live.

This will change on your next vehicle tax bill. Again, the change took place beginning in October 2005.

I sold my home early this year and no longer live there. I still received a tax bill.

The law states that the property owner on record as of January 1 is responsible for taxes on the property for the fiscal year that begins in July. At the property sale closing, the attorney pro rates the taxes due between the parties. If the new owner received your pro rata share, you should convey the tax bill to the new owner. For properties sold after July, many attorneys contact the Village of-

vice to determine taxes due and actually makes the payment. Suggest you look at your closing statement to determine who should pay. If in doubt, contact the attorney who handled the closing of the property.

The name or the address shown in my tax bill is wrong. What should I do?

Contact the Henderson County Tax Assessor's office and advise them of the corrected information. The telephone number is 697-4870.

I have a boat I keep on a lake in South Carolina. Why is it taxed in Henderson County?

Property is taxed based on the domicile of the owner.

I have an airplane but did not receive a tax bill for it. What should I do?

Contact the Henderson County Tax Assessor's office (697-4870).

My mortgage company escrows funds to pay property taxes. I received the tax bill. What should I do?

Inform your mortgage company of the amount of the bill and that it should be paid to the Village of Flat Rock. As the Village receives payments, the tax account will be annotated so show that the mortgage company should be billed in the future.

I am confused about when the taxes are actually due. One place on the bill shows September 1 while another place shows January 5, 2006. Which is correct?

Taxes are due on September 1 for the fiscal year that started on July 1st. Payments may be made at any time up through January 5,

2006 without any penalty. Beginning on January 6, 2006 a 2% penalty will be applied to the bill with interest assessed at $\frac{3}{4}$ of 1% of the balance on the first of each month thereafter.

On the bill, there is a figure of 2.00 under Penalty/Interest. What is this?

This is intended to show the 2% penalty on the account on January 6, 2006. We feel this is confusing and it will not appear on future bills.

Can I pay a portion of my bill now and the balance later?

Yes, but to avoid penalties and interest, the full amount must be paid on or before January 5, 2006.

**Village Center Trail Expansion
Provides Opportunities to
Purchase Personal Pavers**

The Greenway Committee

Two additional sections of the Village Center Trail have been completed in the last few months and final bidding will be done on one segment.

The one completed section is around three sides of the Old Post Office, with an extension northward to meet the second completed section from the Village Office entrance. Where these two meet, a pedestrian crossing will be marked on 225, which will link up with the new segment, from 225 along Little River Road to the entrance of Connemara.

Close to fifty personal pavers will be installed soon in front of and on the south side of the Old Post Office, but there is still room for a few more. However you can also order pavers for the new path from the Village Hall

and of course for the Little River Road segment. Incidentally many pavers have already been ordered for that segment and some people have waited for several years. We appreciate your patience...it is going to happen now.

(Two new segments are still in the planning stage; one along the front of the Singleton Centre, and one along the front of the Preserve. A final segment, in front of the Post Office is planned but some time off.)

This is a great chance for all to order pavers and in that way support our efforts. The cost per paver is \$60, or three or more for \$50 each. Order forms are available at the Village Hall. If you like to see how people have used them, just walk along the first section of the Trail, from the Flat Rock Inn to Blue Ridge Road. Please join them by adding yours. Thank you!

Ladies Aid Society of Flat Rock

Ivy Cowell, Manager

As of October 2005 the Ladies Aid Society of Saint John in the Wilderness became the Ladies Aid Society of Flat Rock, a non-profit organization that operates the Book Exchange (its main source of revenue) from the Old Post Office. All workers are volunteers and the money raised helps support many of the local charities.

The Ladies Aid Society was formed over a hundred years ago by a group of Flat Rock ladies who helped needy local families. If you are interested in donating books or becoming a volunteer at the Book Exchange, please call Ivy Cowell at 696-9149.

Schedule of Meetings

All monthly **Council Meetings** are scheduled for the **second Thursday** of each month at 9:30 AM.

Agenda Workshops are scheduled to start at 9:30 AM on the **Monday** 10 days prior to the Council Meeting, unless that Monday falls on a holiday.

The Planning Board meets the **first Tuesday** of each month from 9:15 AM until 11:30 AM.

The Board of Adjustment meets the **first Tuesday** of each month at 3:00 PM, if there are Agenda items.

The **Village of Flat Rock** office hours are 9:00 AM—4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The Zoning Administration office hours are from 2:00 PM-4:00 PM, Monday through Friday.

The deadline for articles to be included in the Winter issue of "The Village Record" is December 8th.

**Village of Flat Rock
P.O. Box 1288
Flat Rock, NC 28731-1288**

Address Service Requested

Village Directory

Mayor:
Ray E. Shaw, Jr. 698-2449

Council Members:
District 1
Robert V. Staton 696-4020
Nick Weedman 693-5300

District 2
Judy M. Boleman, Vice Mayor 698-8912
David Bucher 696-3269

District 3
Terry A. Hicks 697-9022
Donald E. Roark 697-2068

Village Clerk:
Rowena M. Sweezy 697-8100

Administrative Assistant:
Michelle Hill 697-8100

E-Mail Address: vofr@bellsouth.net
Website: www.villageofflatrock.org

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