



# THEN & NOW



2024 / envision  
**VANCE**



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## THEN & NOW

### COVER PHOTO CREDITS:

*This black and white photo of downtown was taken by an unknown photographer in May 1950.*

*The color photo was taken by Dispatch Editor Gary Band.*

envision  
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# WELCOME

from Margier

It is my great honor and privilege to serve as the 2024 Board of Directors Chairperson of our esteemed Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce. I am filled with a sense of gratitude for the opportunity to serve within this great organization, and a deep appreciation for the collective strength and resilience of our business community. I believe that a thriving business sector is the foundation for a vibrant and prosperous community as a whole.

Our Chamber stands as a beacon of unity, collaboration, and progress. Since its inception, the mission has been clear: to represent the interests of the business community in matters that affect the ability of local business to connect, grow, and prosper, and the ability of Henderson and Vance County to attract new businesses.

This prominent organization has launched impactful initiatives, organized successful events, and forged valuable partnerships that have propelled our community forward. From promoting entrepreneurship to advocating for small businesses our Chamber has been at the forefront of driving positive progress.

Having witnessed the positive impact that the Chamber of Commerce has had on our local businesses, I am eager to contribute my skills, experience, and passion to further enhance its mission and objectives and I am confident that my dedication and enthusiasm will enable me to make a meaningful impact in this role.

As we embark on this new year, we do so with renewed enthusiasm and determination. 2024 is the year of engagement. Actively participating in the life of the community and its vitality by getting involved in activities, events, and initiatives in a campaign for our collective wellbeing, economic strength, social cohesion and public safety.



As we embark on this new year, we do so with renewed enthusiasm and determination. 2024 is the year of engagement. Actively participating in the life of the community and its vitality by getting involved in activities, events, and initiatives in a campaign for our collective wellbeing, economic strength, social cohesion and public safety.

As a small business owner and active member of our community, engagement has always been top priority. Since the inception of my agency, Margier White State Farm Insurance in 2015, being engaged in our local community was a great way to grow as an entrepreneur, create strong relationships with potential customers and partners, connect with them on a deeper level, and foster goodwill within the local business sector.

As Chairperson, I endeavor to promote an environment where synergy, mutual support, and engagement thrive. Being a citizen of this vibrant county for many years, I have a deep-rooted commitment to our community's well-being and sustainable development. Engaging with the population has

allowed for a better understanding of its needs, concerns, and priorities.

I believe engagement empowers citizens and community partners by giving them a voice and involves them in shaping

# Leadership Vance offers a master class in community development

their municipality. When people feel heard and valued, they are more likely to actively participate, contribute, and take ownership of community initiatives.

By actively involving community partners in decision-making processes, organizations can ensure that their efforts align with the community's requirements and goals, leading to more effective and impactful solutions.

Our Chamber of Commerce is that bridge connecting businesses and partners creating a sense of unity and shared purpose so that we all have a heard voice. Overall, engagement is essential for creating a thriving, inclusive, and resilient town, where individuals feel connected, valued, and empowered to shape their own futures.

Our Chamber relies on the active participation and engagement of all our members to continue the work of propelling our county forward. I encourage you to take full advantage of the resources, networking opportunities, and educational programs that the Chamber offers. Be actively engaged. Whether it's attending events, volunteering your time, or advocating for our shared interests, your participation is crucial to our continued growth and success.

Together, we can overcome any challenge, seize every opportunity, and build a prosperous future for our businesses and our community.

— Margier

Now in its 33rd year, Leadership-Vance is a structured program designed to create a corps of informed and dedicated emerging leaders in the community.

This seven-month program informs, challenges and educates the chosen participants on the opportunities and needs of the community. Participants strengthen their leadership skills while learning about the social, economic and political dynamics that shape this community.

The 2024 Leadership-Vance Class consists of 17 individuals who were chosen from several applicants. Starting in March, this group of leaders will explore and learn

about nonprofits, schools, public service, local government, tourism, healthcare, agriculture and business and economic development prior to graduating in September.

Many chambers throughout the country offer these leadership programs in their communities. The Henderson-Vance County Chamber of Commerce strives to promote businesses and encourages positivity, collaboration, community and engagement by introducing the participants to local business leaders and to promote the positive assets in the community.

Dedicated 2024 class participants include:



- Susan Abbott — Chamber Ambassador
- Gary Band — The Daily Dispatch
- Alicia Campbell — Vance County Government
- Richard Davis — A.R. Perry Corporation
- Susann Elliott — M.R. Williams, Inc.
- Bobby Orr — Charles Boyd Chevrolet, Cadillac, GMC
- David Figueroa — Benchmark Community Bank
- Krystal Foxx — Vance-Granville Community College
- Xavier Hargrove — Hargrove Appraisals, Inc.
- Kimberly Lewis — Henderson Police Department
- Cindy Norwood — City of Henderson
- Tanya Wilson — Henderson-Vance County Chamber of Commerce
- Laura Pendergrass — Century 21
- Lance Stallings — Vance Charter School
- Luke Stark — William L. Stark and Company
- Elizabeth Townsend — Duke Energy
- Tim Twisdale — Henderson Fire Department

**H**ENDERSON – In 2023, Henderson elected a new mayor after Eddie Ellington announced he would no longer seek re-election, describing himself as a believer in term limits.

Melissa Elliott, the city's first Black female mayor, gave a glimpse into some of the city's accomplishments since then and what the future might hold.

**Q: HOW HAVE YOU BEEN SETTLING INTO OFFICE?**

**A:** Settling in my office has been wonderful. Becoming the first African-American female mayor has many challenges in our wonderful city — good challenges that will help me to be a greater leader. I take my office and oath very seriously in an effort to bring change to our city — that will be a phenomenal part of my legacy.

I don't just want to be the first to win, I want to be the first to change the trajectory of the city and create a better place to live, work and play for all citizens.

**Q: WHAT ARE THE CITY'S ASSETS AND HOW CAN THE CITY BEST USE THEM?**

**A:** The city has many great things on the horizon as well as many manifestations that have already taken place. Several new businesses have come into our beautiful city and two in the downtown district — Flex Desk 360 and Hubzone are both assets to our community.

Flex Desk allows residents as well as visitors to have office space, podcast rooms and many other amenities while Hubzone provides churches, schools, nonprofits and justice-involved individuals and others access to digital technology by distributing free laptops.

Henderson's greatest assets are the people who live here, the resiliency they have shown and the community spirit in challenging times. Others include our workforce, our business communities, the Vance County public school system and our water.

# Q&A with Henderson's new mayor

By Tyler Davis



**WHAT CHALLENGES DO YOU SEE AND HOW CAN THE CITY SURPASS THEM?**

**A:** Henderson has challenges just as many other rural cities in North Carolina. The beauty of Henderson is the resiliency it has shown and with the new leadership that has vision as well as building on the blocks already laid, the foundation of our community is strong and will continue the momentum of change. We have new houses to build that have already been approved by the council. It's very exciting to see new developments erected in our city.

As the mayor, I will build landlord and tenant relationships through education. The city will not tolerate slumlords taking advantage of citizens in our community. That day is over.

**Q: YOU MENTIONED WANTING TO CREATE A CITY THAT SERVES ALL OF ITS INHABITANTS – WHY IS THAT IMPORTANT? WHAT DOES THAT LOOK LIKE IN PRACTICE AND HOW DO YOU PLAN ON ACCOMPLISHING THAT?**

**A:** I have created many committees to the mayor's office that will also be beneficial to assist me with challenges and opportunities in our great city — to name a few, the Health and Wellness Committee, LGBTQ+ Committee and Latinx Committee. Our Recreation and Parks Director Kendrick Vann is also assisting me with putting together the first youth council to the mayor's office to give our youth a voice.

**Q: WHAT ARE YOU MOST EXCITED FOR IN THE COMING YEARS?**

**A:** Henderson is preparing to build our new emergency tower. Great thanks to Congressman Don Davis for bringing a \$2.1 million check to our city to make sure our first responders and citizens get what they need in a timely and safe manner. Everyone is excited about the S-Line running through our downtown district, which will be a true game-changer for our community as a whole. Many great things are happening in the city and many more to come.

**Q: OVERALL THOUGHTS**

Being the Mayor will give me the opportunity to create a tangible change in our city by building relationships in the community with stakeholders and faith-based communities — all the while giving our citizens a voice to share their concerns, challenges and opportunities they see moving forward.

Creating initiatives, building people, encouraging economic development, promoting a health and wellness campaign and cleaning our city up will make it a safer place to live, work and play.

I will build relationships across political lines as well as with other countries, like Rwanda — building meaningful partnerships will make a great difference. I am up for the assignment as a leader in this great community.

# Exercises in Engagement

By Gary Band



To be alive is to engage — to participate and involve ourselves in some way with others and the world around us — whether at school, work and church, recreation and entertainment, social and personal life, politics and government.

The nature of these engagements largely determines the degree to which components of a community function effectively in order to advance individual and collective missions — ultimately to be the best possible version of our ourselves, our institutions and our greater community.

Like physical exercise benefits the body — allowing us better walk or run, hike or cycle without injury — the more local citizens engage with the community by voting, attending meetings, making calls or writing letters to community leaders at all levels of government — thus exercising our individual and collective right and ability to form a more perfect union — the better for body politic.

In recognition of Henderson's sesquicentennial anniversary in 1991, James J. Dutra, the Dispatch editor at the time, started his column on Roads to Tomorrow with a tribute to the city's founding fathers going back to 1841. Men such as D.Y. Cooper, W.H.S. Burgwyn, T.T. Hicks, F.C. Topleman, P.H. and George Rose and R.J. Corbitt, "infused with an entrepreneurial spirit that had captured a nation, brought progress and prosperity to the Gateway City," Dutra wrote.

"As we stand poised on the threshold of another new century, we would do well to recapture the vision these men possessed," he continued. "It does not take courage to maintain the status quo, merely complacency. In time, such a static community cannot help but regress."

Today, some of Henderson's leading citizens such as Tommy Hester, Tommy Roberson, Ruxton Bobbitt, Dennis Tharrington, Archie Taylor, Abdul Rasheed, Jason Stewardson,

Greg Etheridge, Daniel White, Mark Hopper and Margier White have made and continue to make countless contributions to the community.

Meanwhile, many other informed and dedicated professional people are making a difference in ways great and small every day as well — making connections, building relationships and talking about ways to improve the city and tri-county community.

Two such people are Michelle Walker of Huff Consulting and Kenia Gomez-Jimenez, formerly of the Kerr-Tarr COG, who recently began working as the new director of Oxford Downtown Development. Kenia found the article written by James Dutra, passed it on to Michelle who passed it on to me, just as I was searching for the inspiration to write this reflection.

Stated then and still true today 33 years later, Dutra wrote, "While Henderson has taken several strides forward in recent years to build a better place for its people to live and work, we nonetheless face many challenges in the coming years."

Indeed, the past three decades have seen considerable decline in the once busy Downtown — with businesses in and around the center of the city moving further out and once prosperous operations shutting down — as crime and violence and poverty continue to plague parts of the city.


"We need to create a climate and atmosphere that not only will attract new businesses and industries to our community but one that will also help our established enterprises expand and flourish," Dutra wrote.

Since that time, new schools and housing developments have been built, and big businesses such as Walmart, Lowes, Petco, Bridges on Parkview — along with a few others reportedly ready to open by the fourth quarter of 2024 in the old Henderson Pointe Mall — have come to town.

Together with hundreds of small businesses opening in the past few years, a Chamber ribbon cutting practically every week, and plans for the Dabney Drive and Corbitt Road project firmly starting next year, the City of Henderson stands poised to move forward and create greater opportunities for many who have struggled for too long.

We must continue to encourage and invest in reducing the number of blighted buildings in and around Downtown — making them ready for potential businesses to open in these valuable spaces. The same goes for encouraging larger industries to do business in Vance County — potentially including renewable energy manufacturing such as solar, wind and electric batteries — along with an increase in the production and manufacture of industrial hemp fiber — that can replace the jobs once offered by Harriet and Henderson, J.P. Taylor and many other longstanding operations no longer with us.

Only by increasing our level of engagement — by showing up and participating at the places where decisions are made — by having respectful and informed discussions and debates around important issues of the day — contributing ideas and information that will provide long-term benefits for more Vance County residents — can we hope to create a community we're all proud to call home.



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# Local drive-in theater is keeping the tradition alive

By Tyler Davis

**H**ENDERSON — Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre will celebrate its 75th anniversary this July. Mark and Jennifer Frank bought the theater back in 2011.

Around a decade and a half ago, the pair owned a drive-in in Virginia before giving up the lease and moving to Henderson to focus on Raleigh Road.

“I knew the previous owner,” said Mark as to why he chose Henderson, “and I never thought he would have sold it. But, he did decide to sell it and the opportunity came along for us to purchase it with the knowledge we already had from another drive-in. I was very familiar with it already, as a customer and also kind of behind-the-scenes with the previous owner as I was good friends with him.”

Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre originally opened in 1949, during the heyday of drive-ins, as the Moon-Glo Outdoor Theater. The first film to grace its silver screen was “Ali Baba and the Forty Thieves.” Some 30 years later, the theater rebranded as Raleigh Road Outdoor Theatre.

“We’re set up very similar to what it was in 1949,” said Mark.

It’s one of around six in the state that can be considered “old-school,” said Mark. There are only about 300 drive-ins total in the country nowadays, down from 4,000 in the late 1950s.

“It’s a part of Americana, it’s history, it’s keeping history alive,” said Mark. “It survived several wars, survived a lot of different ups and downs in the movie industry, whether it be the advent of streaming, the advent of VHS or DVD, the advent of cable television. It’s still a night out — dinner and a movie.

Outdoor theaters offer something over conventional theaters, said Mark: atmosphere!



“You get the ambience of the outdoors, whether it be good weather or bad weather,” said Mark. “You get to sit outside, and, especially days in the summertime, once the sun goes down, it’s actually not too hot outside — you can sit outside in your chair and watch a movie.

“You can bring your kids. If you have misbehaving kids, they’re not disturbing other people in a closed, confined area, seat to seat.”

Since it serves people aged “1 to 101,” per their website, the theater shows two movies at a time: one rated PG first; then, when the kids fall asleep, the parents can watch something rated PG-13 or R. It’s a good way to have a full night out without the need for a babysitter, said Mark.

Spend five hours with us, eat dinner and watch two movies... and kind of go back in time, a little bit, as the theater is really set up like it was in 1949. It’s kind of a nice, nostalgic night out.”

The place is a regional draw as well, pulling in customers in a 90-mile radius, said Mark. Mark is passionate about movies.

“I could sit here for an hour and name off my favorite movies,” he said when asked if he had a favorite.

“Ghostbusters,” is his number one. It’s near and dear to his heart, being the first movie he remembers going to. “Terminator 2” was the first he saw at a drive-in. Two classics. “We enjoy playing the classics, personally, at our theater,” said Mark. “Top Gun,” “Grease,” “Ghostbusters” and “True Grit,” for example. Though, they don’t shy away from newer films, like “Barbie.”

Movies are a communal experience, Mark said. He recalled playing the 1980 film “Airplane” a few years ago.

“You already know the laughs on that one because you’ve seen it a bunch of times, most people have,” said Mark. “But it’s just fun to hear the whole audience laugh at certain parts, or gasp at certain parts, depending on what style of movie it is, whether it be a horror, a comedy, a drama. So you get the community feel with it, which is definitely something that is welcomed and a little bit more rare than it used to be.”

# Ed Woodlief named 2023 Citizen of the Year

By Tyler Davis

**H**ENDERSON — The Vance-Granville Community College Civic Center was a bustling who's-who on the night of March 7 when the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce held its annual membership banquet attended by some 300 prominent citizens.

Networking and socializing quieted down when 2022 Citizen of the Year Jack Richardson took the stage to present the next name in the award's line.

Richardson said earning the award was an honor he'll take with him through the rest of his life.

"Let me just say," he began, "our honoree this evening is the personification of the model citizen of Vance County. This individual would give you the shirt off his back, then go get more shirts if they were needed." The awardee is motivated by selfless acts, Richardson described. Raised on a farm, the awardee learned that hard work is the key to the door to success.

He's a choir director, an eight-year veteran of the U.S. Army and National Guard, an active member of Crime Stoppers, a yearly participant in Night Out Against Crime and chicken plate sales, a Kittrell Neighborhood Watchman and a prolific ticket salesman for the American Legion, the Optimist Club and more.

For the legion's chicken plate sale, he sold 500 of the 1,200 total plates sold. He took it upon himself to raise money for a cancer patient who lacked income and insurance. For the latter, he raised over \$4,000. He founded a club that gave teens academic scholarships and tended to the Kittrell Cemetery. The club is gone, but he mows the grass, trims trees, places American flags at the graves of veterans during holidays and collects litter — all at the "seasoned age of 86."

All that, and he's an animal lover — when not assisting people, he's grooming dogs with his wife at their kennel business.



That's right — "he" is Ed Woodlief. "I do appreciate this," said the awardee. "It is overwhelming. It's been a pleasure doing all the things he may have mentioned."

Woodlief said he's proud to be in the American Legion and belong to Crime Stoppers. He praised the leadership in both organizations and their goals.

In keeping with his character and record, one of the first things Woodlief said was that Crime Stoppers was holding a chicken plate sale.

"I left out one person," he said, tearing up. "My wife."

Married for 11 years, "She continues to tell me how to drive," Woodlief joked. When McKinley Perkinson, a fellow Crime Stoppers member, would bring them a flyer, Woodlief would ask his wife to touch it up, saying "it still doesn't look quite right."

"When I said that, I woke up about three days later," he joked.

Getting more serious, he continued. The county is an "outstanding place" composed of nice folks. He thanked them for accepting

him and for the honor.

Rep. Frank Sossamon took the stage next to present Woodlief with another award — The Order of the Long Leaf Pine — the highest honor the governor's office can present to a citizen.

"It would be easier for me to tell you what he has not been involved in than to tell you what he has been involved in," said Sossamon. "He has not been involved, as I understand, in the Junior Women's Club or the Garden Club. At least, I think he hadn't been involved."

Woodlief was "called to sell tickets," the representative joked.

"You always know, when you see Ed coming, he's got either barbeque, chicken, fish, stew or possum tickets that he wants to sell you," Sossamon joked. "Edward is a good man, a man of faith, a man who loves Vance County."

With that, he presented Woodlief the ceremonial plaque and read the Tarheel Toast. "I want to thank God for giving me a heart filled with love," said Woodlief. "That goes to all you people the same way."

# A look-see at Henderson's legacy businesses

By Tyler Davis

It's no secret that the city and county have lost some big employers over the years — the Harriett and Henderson cotton mills and Americal, famously. But some are still kicking, and they have been for the better part of a century. The Dispatch got up with a few for a look into how that happened.

## A.R. PERRY

Down at 220 Old Epsom Road, A.R. Perry Glass and Henderson Oxygen have been peddling window replacement, storefront glass services and oxygen supply for around 54 years. The current owner is Richard Davis. He first joined the family business in 1983 as a fulltime employee.

A.R. Perry, Davis' grandfather, opened the business in 1970 as a metal recycling company. Oxygen was needed to cut the metal apart, so they later morphed into an oxygen distributor.

When it comes to longevity, adaptation is key, said Davis.

For example — the company used to offer aluminum goods like storm windows. However, the advent of insulated glass essentially killed that whole market.

So, A.R. Perry became one of the first manufacturers of insulated glass and the first in

our local area, Davis recounted. Insulated glass represents the bulk of glass nowadays. Later on, the COVID-19 pandemic quite suddenly created a need for glass partitions and sneeze guards — services A.R. Perry was happy to provide, said Davis.

## HOLLAND INDUSTRIAL

Since 1952, Holland Industrial has been working behind the scenes to keep motors spinning.

It's our local electrical motor repair shop, but it services everything within three hours of town, said Vice-President and Sales Manager Bobby Powell. They also repair pumps, gearboxes and sell electrical drives and fire transmission supplies.

Usually, customers send in whatever they need repaired, though the company also makes house calls on occasion, said Powell. On April 30, the shop was filled with stators — the stationary part of a rotary system. It's a metal cylinder with tons of interlinked wires. The process begins by baking off the resin coating over eight hours in an oven, uncapping the stator and seeing what's inside. From there they offer a quote and get to work.

It's precise work, too — as motors are precise machines. Stators haven't changed much design-wise, though — a photo from the 50s hanging alongside the company's many accolades and awards shows as much. Larry Holland Sr. opened the company back in 1952 at its current location at 518 West Montgomery Street. Prior to that, he repaired motors in his backyard.

A few years later, Powell was born and raised at the Oxford Orphanage, nowadays called the Masonic Home for Children. He found out he had a knack for electrical repair at the orphanage's workshop. The supervisor there knew Holland and hooked Powell up with a job in 1980.



A. R. Perry



Holland Industrial

The rest is history.

Those businesses include hospitals and wastewater treatment plants. The company usually repairs 10-15 per day. Doing the math, that's 3650 per year at least. When they can't repair, they replace — Baldor Engines, an American company, provides on that front.

"We work behind the scenes — few people know what we do," said Powell, "though the

employees are some of the most dedicated that a company could ever want to have." The company's employees bought it from his two sons, Larry and Charles, in 2005 — all 37 workers own shares.

Larry Sr. started the business with a "strong principle of quality workmanship and service," said Powell. Larry Jr. and Charles continued with that same philosophy. Now the employees do the same.

"It's our bedrock," said Powell, "and it's important for us to deliver the very best service as we possibly can. We serve lots of critical businesses so we're on call 24/7/365. It's our job to get them up and running."

**M.R. WILLIAMS**

Vice-President Chris Dennis credits M.R. Williams' longevity to the family that owns it.

Mike Williams bought up Watkins-Sydnor Wholesale Distributor in 1976 and renamed it M.R. Williams three years later. Intuition is his key to success, said Dennis — peddling frozen goods right before they exploded in popularity and setting up online orders before they did the same.

If you've been to a gas station on the East Coast, chances are you've seen goods delivered by M.R. Williams. Some 330 workers pack up varieties of food items into little blue boxes and ship those out to clients.

The company covers a veritable swathe of town over around 150,000 square feet worth of facilities, so the tour is a long one.

The company is adding in a new employee break room, wellness room and corporat office space inside one of its warehouses. The idea there is to ensure everybody in the



M.R. WILLIAMS

*Continued on p 14*



Roses

*Legacy continued from p 13*

company is working in the same place and on the same page.

In the same building as its old offices, the company is working on yet another expansion — this one a commissary in which M.R. Williams will package its own line of premade food, Scratch Made, items they bill as being around half the average retail price of competitors.

Dennis offered some advice to other business owners — “You genuinely have to care about people.”

If you don’t, you’ll lose valuable stakeholders, he said. The guiding principle, then, is to “offer something of value” — predict customer’s desires and keep employees safe.

**ROSES**

Founded in Henderson in 1915 by Paul Howard Rose and originally known as Rose’s 5¢ 10¢ 25¢ Stores, there are now more than 400 in 17 states, including 88 locations in North Carolina.

In Henderson, there’s just the one on North Garnett Road. There used to be another on Dabney Drive but it closed down last year. “There was no drop off in business and we are sad to see the store close,” said Jeff King, VP of sales and marketing for Variety Wholesalers — which dates back to the 1932 opening of Pope’s 5 & 10 cent stores in Fuquay-Varina and Angier — and bought the 106 Roses stores in business at the time in 1997.

No matter the name, the business has had a singular focus on delivering products at the best prices, said King. They’ve adapted over time to best carry out that goal.

More recently, the company has been making forays into the youth market via social media — Facebook and TikTok — “to spread the word and the deals and everything that we have.” “You can chase that shiny object,” King said,



Vance Furniture

“but if you focus singularly on serving the customer, you’ll be successful.”

### VANCE FURNITURE

Last but not least is Henderson’s own furniture market.

If you’ve ever taken a trot down South Garnett Street, you’ve seen Vance Furniture. It’s the only building of its height downtown and one of the oldest.

Grover Kester, something of a furniture mogul, moved over from Roanoke Rapids and opened the five-story facility alongside Hayden Bailey in 1941. Back in the day, the store shared the building with Industrial Bank.

Nowadays, Craig Bailey is the owner. His longtime business partner Sam Harper sadly passed away this year.

Adaptation is the name of the game for Vance Furniture.

“You need a willingness to adapt to customers’ preferences,” Bailey said. Furniture is aesthetic and is therefore subject to change over time. Gray is all the rage nowadays, said Zac Salazar, who has taken the reins on setting up those aforementioned displays.

Offering onsite services certainly helps. A room on the bottom floor is covered, wall to wall, with hundreds of upholstery samples so customers can get a feel — quite literally — of their preferred styles. When it comes time to sell, workers aren’t going to pressure customers into anything, said Bailey.

It’s an old building, complete with an old elevator — analog, in a word. The operator needs to push that button and line it up just right with the floor. The employees are experts in the trade by now — like one Glen Gupton, a salesman.

Riding in it is part of the experience. Each floor has different items and displays, little visions of living rooms in a variety of styles.



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# Play on: Charter and private schools expand facilities

By Graham Noble

Three local high schools have some big expansion projects in the works. Vance Charter, Henderson Collegiate and Crossroads Christian School all plan on significantly expanding their facilities to include additional extracurricular opportunities for their students in the coming months and years.

## VANCE CHARTER

The Knights' spring sports teams have been traveling to Granville Athletic Park and the Diamonds at Oxford for nearly every practice and home game this season, but Vance Charter plans to construct their own baseball and softball diamonds as well as a new stadium for soccer and lacrosse.

"We have a plan in place and a direction," said principal Dr. Brian Mathis. Despite not having a true home-field advantage, the Vance Charter softball team has gone 12-3 this season and claimed second place in the 1A Triangle North Conference.

Other teams have played well too despite essentially playing every game on the road. The lacrosse team — which plays at Vance County Middle School — finished as runners-up in the conference and they are currently preparing for a run in the State Playoffs.

According to Mathis, the initial plan is for the soccer/lacrosse stadium to be built first, but they are in preliminary stages and there is no definitive timeline at this point. Additionally, the possibility of a new eight-lane track in the stadium could mean the founding of a Vance Charter T&F team and a new location in Vance County to hold conference meets.

Architects and engineers are still studying the topography of the area, and the school is currently waiting for estimates. Vance Charter plans on using their savings and annual budget to finance the construction of athletic fields on campus.

Mathis hopes to receive reports next month from BW Architecture — a firm based out of Greenville tasked with mapping out the "massive undertaking."

This firm has a lot to consider — from uneven elevation and water mitigation to the dense forest where they plan to build the new fields. The construction hasn't begun yet, but when it does Mathis doesn't anticipate the project will interfere too much with the day-to-day activities on campus due to the site's location.

Mathis believes having their own athletic fields will enhance school spirit despite the number of unknown variables.

"It's going to bring a whole new dynamic to the culture and education experience for all students," said Mathis. "This can be used for P.E., but also for students to attend home games on campus. I think it will build a great sense of pride within the community."





## HENDERSON COLLEGIATE

With 1,330 K-12 students, Henderson Collegiate will finally have somewhere for all the Prides to congregate together: a new multi-purpose facility with room for 1,500.

Much like Vance Charter, Henderson Collegiate athletics have taken place off-campus. Now with the implementation of a new gymnasium, the Pride can look forward to hosting home basketball games next season.

The general contracting company hired for the \$11.8 million project is Cooper Tacica based in Raleigh, and a local company — Killian Engineering — currently oversees all the mechanical work. As a charter school, Henderson Collegiate doesn't receive state or federal funding for new facilities; they plan on using grants, loans and self-funding to offset project costs.

"It's going to be a game-changer," said Director of Development Alicia Hawk. "Right now, so many of our programs are dispersed."

Although the school places a strong emphasis on academics — they have had a

100% college acceptance rate in their last six senior classes — Henderson Collegiate is becoming a hub for athletics as well. The new building will feature two full-length basketball courts and a brand-new weight room.

"It's going to be awesome, we definitely have the talent," said basketball coach Lamont Whittaker Sr. "I am really excited about our team — the gym is going to be electric."

Senior Adrian Mayes was one of the first few basketball players out of Collegiate to earn a college scholarship. Next year, the varsity team will include incoming freshman Carmello Whittaker, who will replace Mayes at the center position. Other players to watch include Nazir Shaw and Deion Lemay, who played both JV and varsity last year.

The Pride played its last several basketball and volleyball seasons at Aycock Recreation Center on a court marked with jumbled lines for multiple different sports.

And although they were grateful for the opportunity to use that facility, with their name and logo soon to be plastered on center court and around their new gymnasium, the Pride

will finally have a place to call home. "It's the little things," said Whittaker, "First Pride to have a school gym." And it's not just a gymnasium — the multipurpose facility will include a performing arts center as well.

Hawk acknowledges how the new enrichment opportunities on campus will help students blow off steam after a rigorous schedule of honors and AP classes. Whether it's sports, music or theater, the ability

*continued on page 18*



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Play on, continued from p 17

for students to express their passions at school is vital to improving what for many can be a stressful high school experience. "The joy of learning means you have to take a break from learning and have fun," said Hawk.

Henderson Collegiate's Parent Pride Night and Senior Signing Day — formerly hosted at McGregor Hall downtown -- will now take place on campus.

"These are big events for us," said Hawk.

According to Hawk, the need for new athletic facilities became apparent after COVID. With Henderson Collegiate housing a mostly underserved student population, Hawk said they wanted to bridge the equity gap — starting with the disparity between their facilities and other schools in the area.

### CROSSROADS CHRISTIAN

Crossroads Christian School is building a new art and music department, middle school wing, practice gym and "state-of-the-art" weight room.

"If you compare Crossroads as a 1A NCISAA school, we're one of the largest with our on-campus facilities," said Athletic Director Scottie Richardson.

The practice gym will be a full-sized, 84-foot basketball gym facing the baseball field with six basketball goals. Classrooms adjacent to the new gym will connect the new wing to the rest of the school. Outside will sit a brand-new, two-story press box behind home plate with a concession stand on the bottom.

Richardson expects the construction to be finished by the end of December. As one can imagine, an active construction site in the center of the school's campus has been a bit of a nuisance. Sitting right behind home plate the construction workers and their vehicles are constantly peppered by foul balls. Richardson said normally they spend \$400 on baseballs in a single season, but this year that number was more than tripled.

The new gym will be mainly for P.E. classes — a multi-purpose practice court will keep the main gym strictly for buckets as well

as allow multiple teams to practice at one time. Right now, Richardson says practices can run late into the evening. The increased flexibility will lessen the burden on student-athletes — many of whom travel a long way to attend Crossroads.

"It's going to be an enhancer, for sure," said Richardson.

The current art room outside concessions in the main gym will be converted into a new weight room, and Richardson says the next phase on campus is to enlarge the home gymnasium to accommodate more fans. Other additions include new carpool lines and the formation of a JV softball team to grow into a full-on softball program.

"We're growing, and that's a great thing," said Richardson.



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# Kevin Wade Named 2023 Ambassador of the Year

Kevin Wade was recognized as the 2023 Ambassador of the Year on February 15 at the Chamber Board of Directors monthly meeting. The Ambassador of the Year is selected based on attendance at events, positivity, engagement and commitment to the Chamber and the community.

Kevin joined the Chamber of Commerce in 2023 as a North Carolina Farm Bureau Agent and applied to become a Chamber Ambassador. Kevin is a 2023 Leadership-Vance Graduate. Kevin's involvement in Leadership-Vance quickly showed leadership quality. He engaged with business leaders and strived to learn more about our

community while at the same time keeping the class and business leaders laughing.

Kevin has been such a supporter of the Chamber. He rarely misses a chamber ribbon-cutting or event and he always stays until the end so he can help the staff clean up.

Kevin attends Clearview Church where he and his family are very active. He is married to Shannon and they have three children, Ava, Sophie and Eli.



# When Henderson saw a golden age

By David Irvine

There was a time when the storefronts on Garnett Street were filled. When downtown Henderson had three movie theaters. When bands from Henderson High School and Henderson Institute paraded down the main thoroughfare on the afternoon before a football game. When trains made passenger stops at the downtown depot.

When was this period when downtown Henderson was the hub of the region's economic and social life? To put a time frame on it, think the two decades following World War II. There may have been other periods as prosperous and as promising as those years. After all, several businesses dated back to the early 1900s. But this period — roughly, the 1950s — can pass as well as any as “Henderson's Heyday.”

Downtown Henderson was busy in those years. Garnett Street was home to stores such as Davis', Roth Stewart's, Leggett's, JC Penny's, Western Auto, Alfords, The Glamour Shoppe, Charles Store, Roses and Woolworth's.

Over on Chestnut Street, Maria Parham Hospital served the medical needs of the community. A few years later it would move to its current location on Ruin Creek Road. But the Chestnut Street building did not lie idle. It became the first home of Vance-Granville Community College, which later followed the trend away from downtown and moved to its present site between Henderson and Oxford.

But still the Chestnut Street building would continue to serve the community, eventually housing apartments for seniors. The Henderson business community also included several statewide or multi-state corporations. Roses Stores were located throughout the state as well as in Henderson. But Henderson was also home for corporate headquarters.

“

Henderson had other claims to being an entertainment center. It had its own circus act. Well, not really. But the Flying Castellos were a circus act that was big during another heyday — the heyday of the circus in the first half of the 20th century. When not performing under their stage name, the Castellos were the Loughlins

The Henderson tobacco market served eastern North Carolina, bringing in buyers from across the region, who leafed their way through the thick layers of tobacco to assess the quality before bidding on it.

Harriet and Henderson yarns were woven in Henderson, although a brutal labor battle between the union and the company mars the heyday for the mill scene.

Another company, the Perfect Pack Pickle plant, was a major employer and important contributor to the local economy. Some businesses with family connections had a long history in Henderson. Rose Oil, owned by the Rose family, went back to the early part of the 20th century and would become a major impetus for the development of the Embassy Cultural Center and McGregor Hall Performing Arts Center.



Corbitt Trucks were manufactured in Henderson through the first half of the 20th century, supplying trucks to the military in both World War I and World War II, as well as making school buses and farm equipment in peacetime.

There were three movie theaters in town, plus the Moonlight Drive-In Theater on Raleigh Road, Embassy Theater, Stevenson Theater and (somewhat earlier) the Riggan Theater.

Two high schools served the educational needs of the children of the community. Henderson High School and Henderson Institute operated in the segregated education system of the time. The town turned out when the bands from the two schools marched through the underpass, turned on Garnett Street and paraded before crowds of



onlookers for the length of the street. Shoppers as well as shop clerks left the stores to watch the spectacle.

Led by high-stepping drum majors and the majorette corps, the bands strutted their stuff to the enjoyment of all. The majorettes were so athletic that they came under the aegis of the physical education departments of the schools.

The bands also marched in the Christmas parade each year. The setting was quite different from the football marching parades. The Christmas parade took place at night. Garnett Street was lit up with illuminated decorations strung on poles and stretched across the street. The parades were entertainment. But they also fostered school spirit and town spirit.

Henderson had other claims to being an entertainment center. It had its own circus act. Well, not really. But the Flying Castellos were a circus act that was big during another heyday — the heyday of the circus in the first half of the 20th century. When not performing under their stage name, the Castellos were the Loughlins.

They selected Henderson as home when they were not on the road. But they were not content to just live in Henderson. They became part of the Henderson business community. They operated several businesses in downtown Henderson, including Loughlin-Goodwin Jewelry Shop, a hardware store, the Smoke Shop and Edith's Diner.

So let's call that period Henderson's Heyday. But let us not forget what we have today:

- A full-service medical facility in Maria Parham Health, supported by a host of medical specialists
- Vance-Granville Community College
- McGregor Hall Performing Arts Center, the venue for local productions by Henderson Rec Players as well as traveling shows of national stature
- Perry Memorial Library
- An energetic business community supported by the Henderson-Vance Chamber of Commerce
- Education options in the public school system, charter schools and private schools
- The Regional Farmers Market where residents can find fresh locally produced farm products and baked goods.
- Kerr Lake and a state park nearby

Maybe we're living in a new Henderson Heyday. But we probably won't realize it until a few decades down the road when we take a wistful look back on this period.



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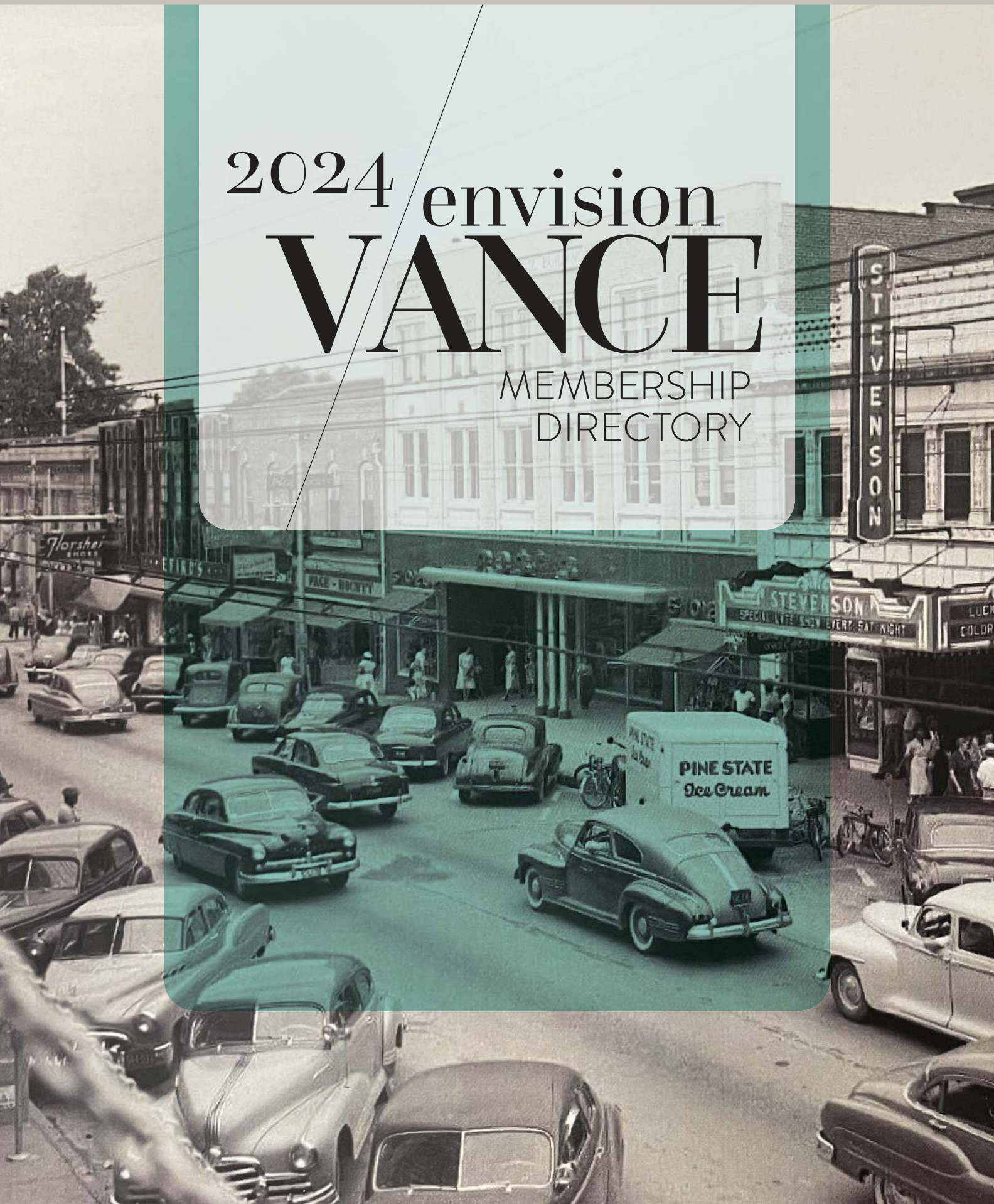
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**LEARN** new skills that  
benefit your future.



Earn your **high school diploma** or the equivalent



Take **community college classes** while living on center



Meet with **career counselors**



Participate in **work-based learning** experiences

**LIVE** on campus  
and be independent.



Look around the Kittrell Job Corps Center's campus, classrooms, dorms and more at [kittrell.jobcorps.gov](http://kittrell.jobcorps.gov).

Join student-run campus organizations.

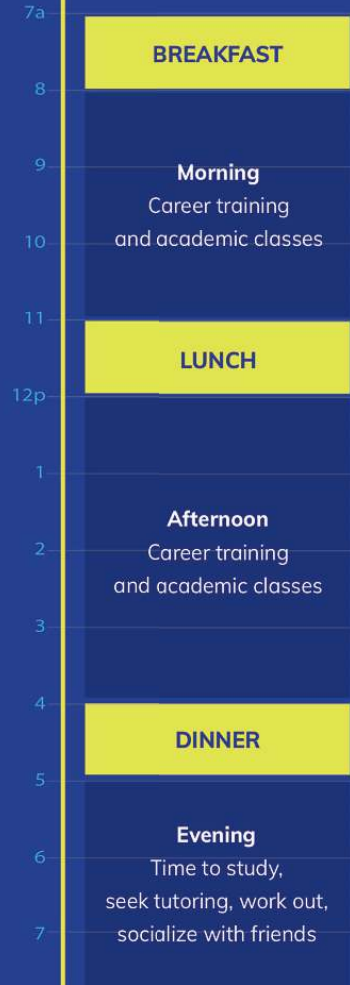
Get involved with community projects.

Make friends who will support you along the way.



### TYPICAL WEEKDAY DAILY SCHEDULE

Exact times will vary from center to center



## KITTRELL JOB CORPS CENTER CAMPUS INFO

### 2 Dormitories

1 male dorm

1 female dorm

Full-service **cafeteria**

**Health services** for basic medical needs

**Lounges** with TVs

**Computer labs**

**Student store** with snacks and other essentials

**Weight room and fitness room**

**A SAFE ENVIRONMENT:** Job Corps has a strict **Student Conduct Policy**. Violence and drug use are strictly prohibited to ensure all students can train and learn in a safe environment.

**CONNECT** with the right people and resources.



Develop **leadership skills** and learn conflict resolution best practices



Build **professional and social development** skills



**Network** with local employers and organizations

**jobcorps.gov** 800-733-JOBS (5627)



Job Corps is a U.S. Department of Labor Equal Opportunity Employer Program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. TDD/TTY telephone number is (877) 889-5627.



doljobcorps

**CHURCHES**

**Clearview Church**

Abidan Shah  
3485 Highway 158 Business  
Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 438-8433  
www.clearviewbc.org

**First Baptist Church**

Ron Cava  
205 W. Winder Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-3172  
www.fbchenderson.net/



**First United Methodist Church**  
114 Church Street  
252.438.8791  
www.fumchendersonnc.org




Sunday School 9:45 a.m.  
Sunday Worship 11:00 a.m.  
Sunday Kitchen Light Breakfast 9:15 a.m.

*All are welcome here.*

We are a working, giving, caring church.

*Making disciples of Christ for the transformation of the world*

Sunday service live-streamed!  
firstumcofhenderson



**Acts of Vance County**

**In Partnership To End Hunger in Our Community**

**201 S. William Street  
PO Box 25  
Henderson N.C. 27536**




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HENDERSON FAMILY YMCA (252)438-2144



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George Loveland  
114 Church Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-8791  
www.fumchendersonnc.org

**Kingdom Work Ministries International  
Community Church Campus #2**

Leticia Perry  
HendersonNC 27536  
(864) 337-3923

**Narrow Way Christian Fellowship, Inc.**

David Ware  
3585 Hwy 39 S  
Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 572-2552

**New Life Baptist Church**

Joel Beckham  
2174 Vicksboro Rd.  
Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 430-8757  
newlifebaptisthenderson.com

**The Church of the Holy Innocents**

Marsha Lougee  
210 South Chestnut Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 492-0904  
www.churchoftheholyninocents.org

**CIVIC/COMMUNITY/NON-PROFITS**

**Abria's Chase Foundation**

Ayana Lewis  
205 Dabney Drive  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 430-9913  
www.abriaschasefoundation.org

**ACTS**

Lee Anne Peoples  
201 South William Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 492-8231

**American Legion Post 60**

Hartwell Wright  
110 E Spring St  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(919) 218-0617

**Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central NC  
- Vance Unit**

Jacqueline Robinson  
105 West Street  
Oxford, NC 27565  
(919) 690-0036  
www.bgcncc.com

**Carolina United for Change**

Joseph Brodie  
PO Box 3053  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 762-3364

**Centre for Homeownership  
& Economic Development**

James Stroud  
109 S. Elm St.  
Creedmoor Business Center  
Creedmoor, NC 27522  
(919) 241-4718

**Community Partners of Hope**

George Loveland  
903 N. Garnett Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 820-0701  
cp-hope.org

**Eckerd Connects  
(Girls Residential Academy at Kerr Lake)**

Lorena Marquez  
633 Shephards Way Lane  
Manson, NC 27553  
(252) 366-9380  
www.eckerd.org

**Edmonds Tennis and Education Foundation**

Jerry Edmonds  
127 Willow Creek Run  
Henderson, NC 27537  
(414) 588-1327  
www.edmondstenniseducationfoundation.org/

**Families Living Violence Free**

Peggy Roark  
125 Oxford Outer Loop  
Oxford, NC 27565  
(919) 693-3579  
www.flvf.org

**Gateway CDC**

Heather Kenney  
314 S. Garnett St  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 492-6298  
thegatewaycdc.org

**Girl Scouts - North Carolina Coastal Pines**

Ashley Bean  
6901 Pinecrest Road  
Raleigh, NC 27613  
(919) 782-3021  
www.nccoastalpin.es.org

**Green Rural Redevelopment Organization (GRRO)**

Henry Crews  
421 S. Garnett Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 430-7999  
www.grronc.org

**Henderson Family YMCA**

Paul Ross  
380 Ruin Creek Road  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-2144  
www.hendersonymca.org

**Henderson Institute Museum and H.I. Graduates & Former Students Association, Inc.**

629 W Rockspring St  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 430-0616

**Henderson Vance Crime Stoppers**

Frankie Nobles  
P.O. Box 1348  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 432-5757

**Henderson-Vance Downtown Development Commission**

Tracy Madigan  
207 North Garnett  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 425-0844  
www.hendersonnctdowntown.org

**HUBZone Technology Initiative (HTI)**

Mark Williams  
501 S. Chestnut Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 572-2086  
hubzonetech.org

**Kiwanis Club of Henderson**

Michael Brafford  
PO Box 1359  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-8154

**Northeast Piedmont Chorale**

Cynthia Edwards  
224 Willowood Drive  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 213-8220  
npchorale.org

**Optimist Club of Henderson**

Tommy Farmer  
P.O. Box 936  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 432-4912

**Rebuilding Hope Inc.**

Randolph Wilson  
414 Raleigh Road  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-5132  
www.rebuildinghopeinc.org

**Rotary Club of Henderson**

Greg Etheridge  
P.O. Box 2630  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-7819

**S.a.M. Child Advocacy Center**

Cara Gill  
704 S Garnett St.  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 572-4112  
samchildadvocacycenter.com

**Salvation Army, The**

Joshua Keaton  
2292 Ross Mill Road  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 438-7107  
www.salvationarmycarolinas.org/henderson

**The Corbitt Preservation Association**

Charles Powell  
8033 Hicksboro Rd  
Oxford, NC 27565  
(252) 767-2247  
www.corbitttrucks.com

**The Mary Emma Evans Foundation**

Phyllis Evans  
901 Dorsey Ave  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 278-1708

**Triangle North Healthcare Foundation**

Carolyn Powell  
208 N Garnett Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 430-8532  
www.tnhfoundation.org

**Tri-County Shrine Club**

William (Billy) Currin  
210 Industry Drive  
Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 432-7286

**Turning Point Community Development Corporation**

Chalis Henderson  
2495 US 1/158 Hwy  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 621-5190  
turningpointcdc.org

**United Way of Vance County**

Jane Haithcock  
715 South Garnett Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 492-8392  
www.unitedwayvance.org

**Vance County Arts Council**

Alice Clark-Sallins  
110 Young Street  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 767-4579  
www.vancecountyarts.com

**Vance County Community Foundation**

Wendy Meyer-Goodwin  
3737 Glenwood Ave., Suite 460  
Raleigh, NC 27612  
(919) 256-6914  
www.nccommunityfoundation.org/vance

**Vance County Historical Society, Inc.**

Tem Blackburn  
PO Box 1850  
Henderson, NC 27536

**Vance County Public School Foundation**

Aarika Sandlin  
1724 Graham Avenue  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 492-2127  
www.vcs.k12.nc.us/departments/vance\_county\_public\_school\_foundation

**Vance Granville Home Builders Association**

Amy Williams  
P.O. Box 803  
Oxford, NC 27565  
(919) 603-5081  
www.vancegranvillehba.com

**Visions Educational Learning and Tutoring Services, Inc.**

Tina Crews  
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Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 572-2734  
www.visionseducation.weebly.com

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Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 433-0005  
www.servprofranklinvancegranvillecounties.com/

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www.getzwizzy.com

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www.vulcanmaterials.com

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(252) 492-5200

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Henderson, NC 27537  
(252) 438-6955  
www.vcs.k12.nc.us

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vcsclarke.sharpschool.net/home

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**(252) 438-3433**  
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www.gvdhd.org

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Vance County Courthouse  
Henderson, NC 27536  
(252) 430-5121  
www.volunteerforgal.org

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- 5500+ students (PreK-13) | 800+ Staff
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- BETA Club National District of Distinction



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## Future Focused



Vance County Schools

- 11 CTE Pathways
  - 20 industry-recognized credentials
  - Culinary Arts Pathway: a school-based enterprise with a cafe, food unit, and catering services
- State of Art Center For Innovation
  - Interactive Career Simulation Labs
  - zSpace 3D labs throughout the district
- 2022-2023: 824 high school scholars enrolled in CTE
- 2022-2023: 672 middle school scholars enrolled in CTE
- CTE Clubs:
  - Family, Career, and Community Leaders of America (FCCLA)
  - National FFA Organization (FFA)
  - North Carolina FFA Association (FFA)
- Robotic teams throughout the district



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Economic Development Commission

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# ADVANCE

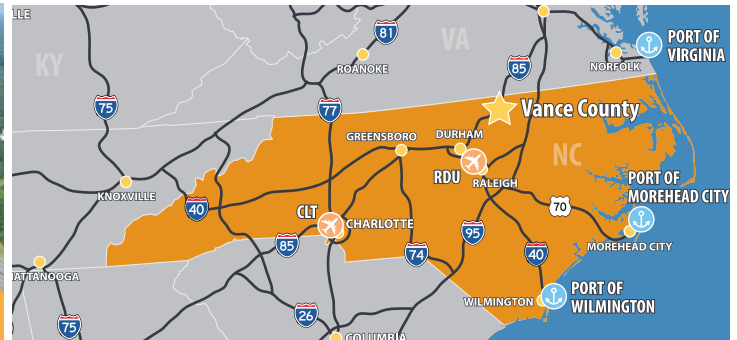
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**McKinley Perkinson – Director**

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**Henderson-Vance County**

[www.vancecountyedc.com](http://www.vancecountyedc.com)

Economic Development Commission

326 South Garnett Street

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