



**DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE**



**DEACS**

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# **ANNUAL REPORT**

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**2020**



# N.C. DIVISION OF ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE AND CUSTOMER SERVICE

Customer service through technical, compliance  
and financial assistance

## DIRECTOR'S MESSAGE

### Friends and Colleagues,

Thank you for reviewing DEACS' second annual report. I am so excited to share our successes throughout the last year. Fiscal Year 2019-20 has been a year like no other, and we have learned how to adapt to the challenges to improve and even extend our outreach. The pandemic identified new ways to partner and serve our customers, such as providing educational webinars on topics including demystifying environmental cleaning, cutting utility costs during shutdowns, keeping employees safe in solid waste and recycling operations, delivering hazardous waste trainings, and facilitating business peer-sharing safety strategies during COVID-19. During the pandemic, the N.C. Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) did not shut down and adjusted its "business as usual." This includes our seven regional offices that are managed and operated by the DEACS administrative team. The team continues to offer exceptional support.

Over the past year, DEACS has provided 77 webinars and trainings, created 129 customized permit lists, coordinated 47 compliance reviews for Commerce/EDPNC business projects, assisted 58,436 customers at the regional offices, awarded 47 recycling grants which spurred \$4 million in recycling investment, supported 194 Environmental Stewardship Initiative members, and conducted 140 virtual and on-site assessments which helped lead to \$7.78 million in reported annual savings by DEACS customers.

The lessons we have learned throughout the past year will make us a more adaptable and focused workforce going into the future. We are excited to continue serving North Carolina to protect the state's irreplaceable natural resources while enhancing and expanding the economy.

Thank you for allowing us to assist you.

Best Regards,

**Jamie Ragan, DEACS Director**

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# WHAT IS DEACS?

## NON-REGULATORY TECHNICAL, PERMITTING AND FINANCIAL ASSISTANCE

DEACS is a non-regulatory division in the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality (DEQ) which protects the state's natural resources for the health and prosperity of all North Carolinians. The division accomplishes these goals by encouraging sustainable practices, promoting recycling efforts and reduced waste generation and disposal, as well as by encouraging more efficient resources consumption. The division also strives to promote compliance and help navigate environmental permitting.

### PROGRAMS

#### TECHNICAL SUPPORT

DEQ Toll-free Hotline  
Small Business Environmental Assistance  
Permitting Guidance and Compliance Assistance

#### RECYCLING AND MATERIALS MANAGEMENT

Recycling Business Assistance  
Local Government Assistance  
Grant Programs

#### RESOURCE AND ENERGY EFFICIENCY

On-site Assessments  
Networking/Benchmarking Events  
Waste Reduction Partners

#### RECOGNITION AND LEADERSHIP PROGRAMS

Environmental Stewardship Initiative  
NC GreenTravel

#### OUTREACH PROGRAMS

RecycleRight NC  
DEQ Prosperity Zone Liaisons  
Webinar and In-person Training

#### DEQ REGIONAL OFFICES

Office Management  
Express and Scoping Meeting Facilitation  
Financial Management

## HELPING OUR CUSTOMERS

Navigate regulatory and permitting challenges.

Become more environmentally responsible and make the most of available resources.

Achieve and be recognized for environmental excellence.

Interact with and access DEQ programs through seven regional offices.

Contribute to economic growth.

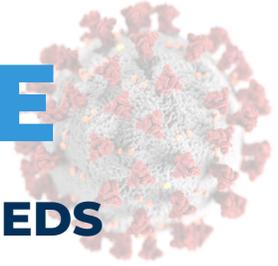
Understand how to address environmental problems.

Coordinate the State Environmental Protection Act (SEPA) process.

Experience customer service excellence.



# COVID-19 RESPONSE



## PARTNERING TO FULFILL CUSTOMER NEEDS

By early May, job losses in the United States reached 33 million due to mandated closures to address the Coronavirus outbreak at local, state and federal levels. With steep declines in revenues, many North Carolina businesses and organizations needed to immediately cut operating costs. The Division of Environmental Assistance and Customer Service (DEACS) recognized the need to facilitate information sharing to address ways to reduce utility costs during this unprecedented time.

DEACS launched a series of webinars providing real-time, peer-to-peer forums for North Carolina businesses and governmental leaders to share smart approaches to managing and controlling utility use and costs during the pandemic. Beginning in March, three statewide webinars were held on utility cost control strategies, which reached nearly 300 customers:

Approaches to Managing Energy during Facility Shutdowns (Public Facilities)

Energy Management Strategies during Curtailments and Shutdown (Industrial Sector)

Controlling Utility Costs during COVID-19 (Tourism and Hospitality Sectors)

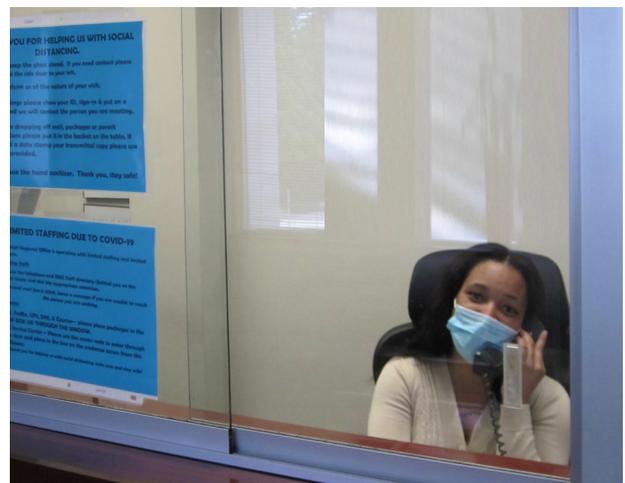
## RECYCLING INDUSTRY SAFETY DURING COVID-19: OUTREACH

With the onset of the pandemic outbreak, questions quickly arose from recyclers and local governments about how to continue collecting and sorting materials while keeping employees safe. DEACS partnered with counterparts from South Carolina, the Carolina Recycling Association and Resource Recycling Systems to host a webinar about recycling industry safety

during COVID-19, which was attended by more than 140 participants. The webinar assured industry leaders that by adjusting operations to protect workers, they could safely continue supplying recyclables to manufacturers to make important products like toilet paper, boxes and packaging for food, wellness and hospital supplies.

## Webinar Clarifies Proper Cleaning Practices

In response to many questions about proper environmental cleaning practices for the coronavirus, DEACS collaborated with experts across three state departments to present “Demystifying Cleaning in the Age of COVID-19” — a webinar for businesses with speakers from the North Carolina Departments of Labor, Environmental Quality, and Health and Human Services. Nearly 500 business and agency participants registered and DEACS created a factsheet to answer questions from the webinar.



Stephanie Aikens (Raleigh regional office) demonstrates social distancing behind glass doors and masked as she triages calls to regional staff and serves the public.

## REGIONAL OFFICES REMAIN OPEN TO SERVE

The regional offices are the local face of DEQ and they remain open to serve the public safely. This critical component embodies DEQ's customer service mission. Regional office managers and administrative staff maintained consistent daily operations throughout COVID-19, meeting customer needs by appointment, by phone and online to support DEQ's regulatory agencies and supporting to the permitting process.

The regional office administrative teams were on the front lines of the pandemic and quickly developed protocols and protections to support social distancing. The teams became creative problem solvers in determining operational guidelines and identifying areas in each office to safely support onsite deliveries and one-on-one customer interactions.

## DEACS STAFF PIVOTS TO MAINTAIN SERVICES

With in-person meetings, trainings and networking events coming to a halt during the coronavirus outbreak, all of DEACS' programs quickly adapted to provide virtual options to ensure the health and safety DEQ staff, stakeholders and the public. Some virtual events even out-performed the originally planned in-person event in regards to attendance. Examples of DEACS services that pivoted to virtual delivery include:

- Virtual Energy, Water and Solid Waste Assessments,
- Virtual Hazardous Waste Roundtable Quarterly Trainings,
- Virtual Audit Reviews for Functionally Equivalent,
- Environmental Management Systems,
- Virtual On-line ISO 14001 Training Modules,
- Virtual Technical Consultations,
- Virtual Express Permitting Meeting,
- Virtual mentoring of NCSU Dept. of Forestry Graduate Class project,
- Virtual ESI Member Sharing of Best Practices, Earth Day Events, and
- Virtual "Return to Work Plans" Discussion for ESI Members.



## Social Media Outreach on Personal Protective Equipment Disposal

DEACS staff quickly developed a series of social media posts to encourage proper disposal for suddenly commonplace items like masks, gloves and cleaning wipes. Shared by hundreds, the posts provide clear directions about what belongs in the recycling versus the trash.

## SMALL BUSINESS ASSISTANCE

The N.C. Small Business Environmental Assistance program (SBEAP) coordinated with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency Small Business ombudsman to lend assistance to North Carolina local distilleries that could ramp up production of hand sanitizer due to the national shortage. Fair Game Beverage Company located in Pittsboro is among the 30-plus North Carolina distilleries helping with this effort. Fair Game Beverage is also a member of the division's NC GreenTravel recognition program.



Fair Game Beverage.

# ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMPLIANCE ASSISTANCE

## NAVIGATING COMPLEX REGULATIONS AND PERMITTING REQUIREMENTS

### NON-REGULATORY LIAISON

DEACS' Environmental Assistance coordinators in the department's seven regional offices are located close to our customers and provide non-regulatory, on-site consultation and coordinated permit reviews for proposed projects. Their primary responsibility is to assist businesses, industries, local governments, other institutions, consultants and residents as they seek to identify, understand and comply with the state's environmental requirements.

### CUSTOMIZED PERMIT ASSISTANCE AND COORDINATION

Environmental Assistance coordinators provide permitting assistance that is tailored to individual customer needs. The coordinator also provides personalized guidance through each step of the permitting process. Regional environmental coordinators provided clients with at least 129 customized permit lists in FY 2019-20.



Scoping permitting meeting - Washington regional office, North Carolina. DEQ/DWR Archive.

### MULTI-AGENCY SCOPING MEETINGS

A scoping meeting provides an opportunity for customers to meet with coordinators and environmental regulatory agency staff to facilitate a more efficient permitting process and pathway. DEACS Environmental Assistance coordinators participated in 118 scoping meetings within FY 2019-20. A few examples of the multi-agency scoping meetings include:

Wysocking Bay oyster habitat restoration project in Hyde County,

Biochar Now project that will convert used railroad ties into a marketable biochar product in Union County,

IMC Metals, Inc. expansion of existing copper refinery in Cleveland County, and

D.R. Horton Americas expansion into the state to develop greenfield housing communities within western North Carolina.

## EXPRESS PERMITTING

Staff provides coordination and assistance to clients to facilitate expedited permitting decisions within the Express Permitting Program. The assistance acts as a key component, which can lead to more timely permitting decisions in relation to DEQ regulatory requirements. In FY 2019-20, Environmental Assistance coordinators took part in 201 Division of Energy, Mineral and Land Resources express permitting meetings.

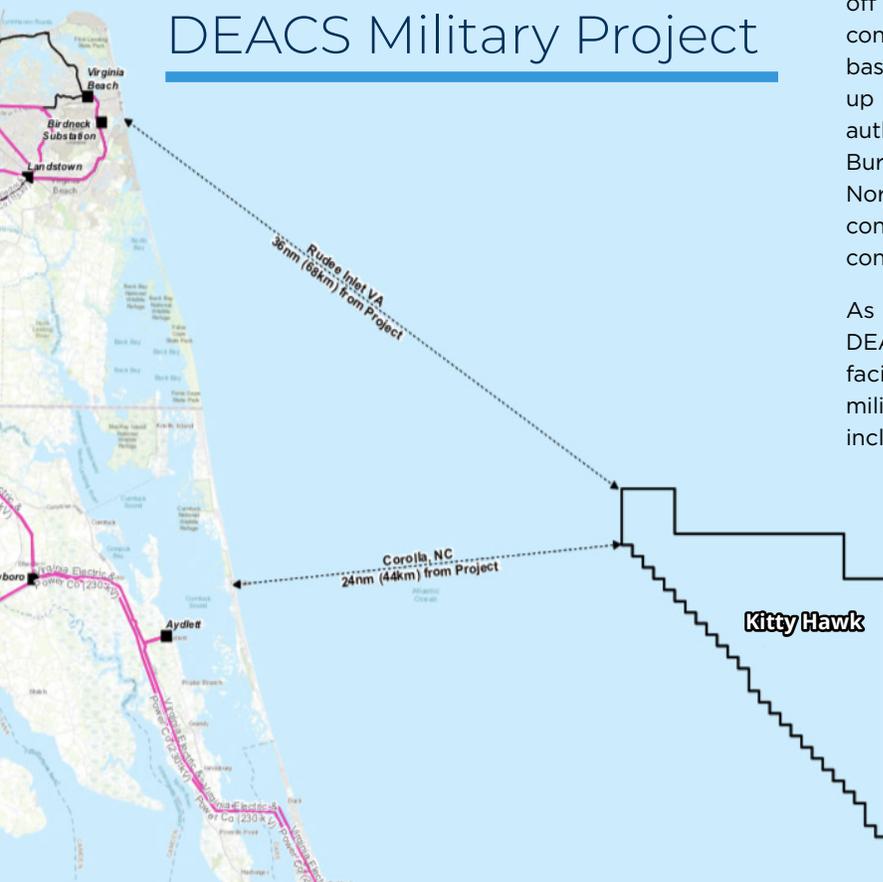
## DEQ PROSPERITY ZONE LIAISON

There are eight Prosperity Zone locations throughout the state in Sylva, Hickory, Albemarle, Lexington, Wilson, Fayetteville, Washington and Jacksonville. These offices are a single location where the regional Environmental Assistance coordinator can provide comprehensive assistance for development projects. These locations also give businesses and citizens a place to interact and collaborate with multiple state agencies. In FY 2019-20, staff assisted both national and international business clients through these offices.

## MILITARY PERMITTING AND FEE PAYMENTS

Payment for permits applied for at military installations in North Carolina can be a complex process because of multiple parties that must be involved and the necessary signatures that are needed for paper checks to be issued for inclusion into permit applications. Because of this, the Environmental Assistance coordinators in DEQ's Wilmington and Washington regional offices have worked with the DEQ's controller's office and several of the installations to provide a process for permit application and renewal fees to be electronically transferred. This reduces the amount of time and effort needed for permit applications to be processed, and allows work to continue at the installations without pause.

## Kitty Hawk Wind Farm: DEACS Military Project



The Kitty Hawk project will create a 2,500-megawatt (MW) wind farm on the Outer Continental Shelf, 24 miles off North Carolina's Outer Banks. The wind farm will be constructed and operated by Avangrid Renewables, LLC, based out of Portland, Oregon, and encompass an area up to 122,405 acres. Avangrid Renewables must obtain authorizations from the U.S. Department of the Interior Bureau of Ocean Energy Management and the State of North Carolina prior to commencing activities. Onshore construction is expected to begin in 2023, while offshore construction is scheduled to begin in 2024.

As the first project of its kind in North Carolina, the DEACS regional Environmental Assistance coordinator facilitated stakeholder scoping meetings between the military, private interests, and federal and state agencies, including (but not limited to):

- U.S. Marine Fisheries Service
- U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service
- Army, Navy, Air Force
- Marines, Coast Guard
- N.C. Dept. of Cultural Resources
- N.C. Dept. of Wildlife Resources Commission, and
- N.C. Dept. of Environmental Quality.

# REGIONAL OFFICE OPERATIONS

## THE FACE OF DEQ IN THE REGIONS

### CUSTOMER SERVICE OPERATIONS IN SEVEN REGIONAL OFFICES

DEQ operates seven regional offices that are strategically located throughout North Carolina. Regional office staff work directly with the regulatory divisions of DEQ. This year, Regional Office Operations and Administration was official recognized as a section within DEACS and Eula Alexander was appointed as its section chief.

Regional office managers facilitate, operate and manage these offices. This is accomplished by providing administrative services, operational logistics, and customer service support to the public, government agencies, municipalities, and DEQ divisions/programs in the regional offices. Staff also provide assistance and outreach to customers, and serve as the welcoming face and/or voice of customer service in the region. DEACS office management team handles and tracks incoming customer calls, welcomes and assists visitors, directs and coordinates incoming and outgoing correspondences, and coordinates daily budget and financial operations.



Customer service desk operations entail more than answering the telephone; Cheryl Richardson from the Raleigh regional office receives and enters permit payment fees into daily log.



Patricia Hay receiving the award present by DEQ Chief Deputy Secretary John Nicholson. DEACS Archive.

## DEQ's 2019 Distinguished Employee of the Year

Patricia Hay became the first regional office manager to be selected as DEQ's Distinguished Employee of the Year in 2019. She was nominated for her extraordinary quality of work and acknowledged for her above-and-beyond contribution to maintaining operations at the Wilmington regional office after Hurricane Florence. Patricia's leadership, actions and deeds are examples of the commitment and spirit of family found throughout the department. DEACS and its regional teams are proud of her well deserved honor.

### ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT FOR DEQ'S PERMITTING PROCESSES

DEACS administrative staff work directly with DEQ permit and inspection personnel to serve their assigned regions and counties by performing a wide variety of fiscal, data and communications management tasks. Key functions include:

- Provide administrative planning and coordination assistance to regulatory and permitting staff.
- Manage daily onsite processing and deposit of permit fees.
- Provide support with permit tracking databases.
- Manage and prepare regional office severe Weather Plans and Continuity of Operations Plans to guide regional supervisors and staff.
- Coordinate public interaction to fulfill Freedom of Information Act requests and conduct file reviews.
- Direct and coordinate daily onsite administrative and facilities operations.



During the pandemic, a separate area is used for hand deliveries, US Mail and commercial services delivery. Cindy Corbett (Wilmington regional office) is outside the safety glass bringing in deliveries for distribution, tracking and record keeping.

### REGIONAL OFFICE ASSISTANCE

 **8,821**  
Walk-ins

 **49,615**  
Customer Calls

### DEQ REGIONAL OFFICES

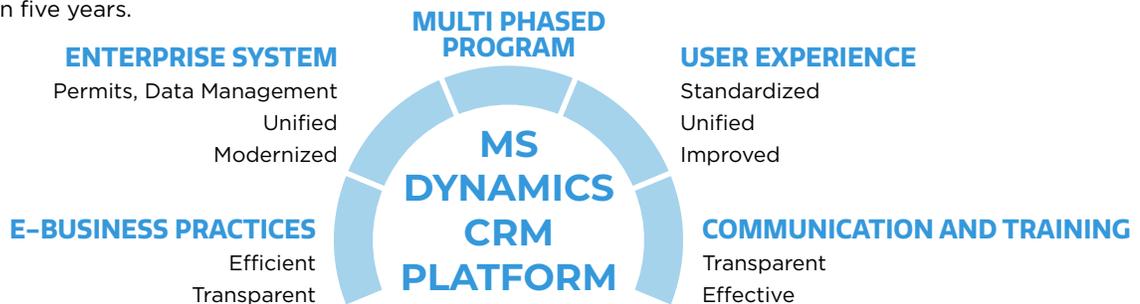


# PERMITTING TRANSFORMATION

## DEQ MOVING FORWARD ON A STRATEGIC GOAL

The Permitting Transformation Program (PTP) will move DEQ to an online enterprise system for permit applications, payments, inspections and enforcement actions, while also managing departmental data with a cohesive approach. A project of this magnitude needs structure, governance, transparency and most importantly a centralized, standardized, and unified approach.

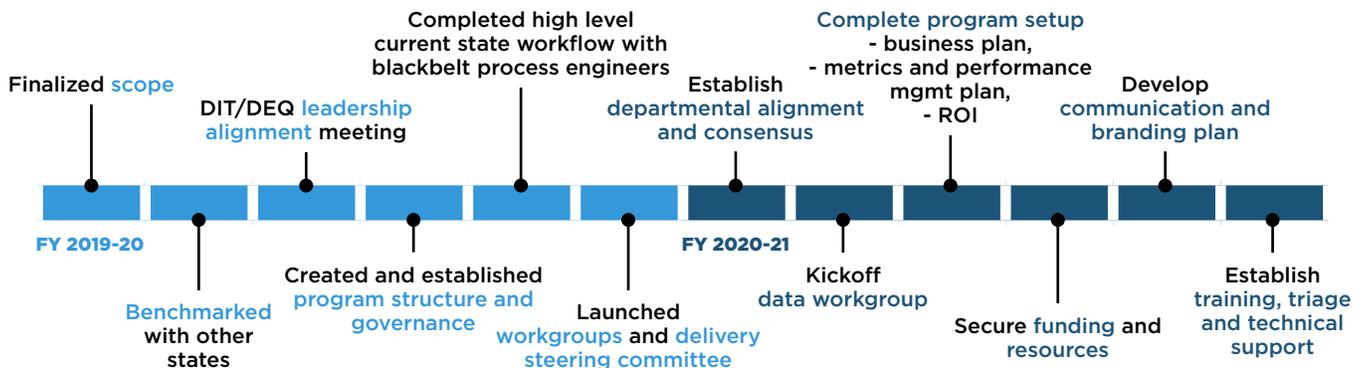
DEACS began leading the Permitting Transformation Program in 2017. A key component of the PTP is bringing the department’s permitting processes into the 21<sup>st</sup> century. This includes transitioning multiple processes and systems into one enterprise system, a Microsoft Dynamic Customer Relations Management Platform, that includes an online portal, which will allow DEQ’s customers to apply, submit, pay and track all their permits. In partnership with the N.C. Department of Information Technology, DEQ plans on achieving this through a multi-phased approach targeted for completion in five years.



A significant addition to the PTP team is Chinmoyee Deshpande who was hired in December 2019 as the PTP Business Delivery Lead. She brings with her 20-years of diverse experience in leading teams and has worked in several global technology companies. Chinmoyee holds a master’s degree in Computer Science, Six Sigma Black Belt certification, and is a Stanford University certified Program Manager. She has been instrumental in putting the program structure and governance into place.

*“The benefits of a DEQ enterprise system include improved organizational health and the ability to respond more quickly and cohesively to environmental issues faced by the Department.”*

– DEQ Secretary Regan



# CUSTOMER SERVICE BY THE NUMBERS

## FY 2019-20



**49,615**

Regional Office  
Customer Phone Calls



**8,821**

Regional Office Walk-ins



**118**  
Scoping  
Meetings

**201**  
Express  
Meetings



**326**

SEPA and Related Reviews



**\$7.78 million**

Client Cost Savings Reports



**7,614**

Toll-Free Hotline Calls



**264,917**

DEACS Content Page Views



**SITE VISITS**

**140**

Across 57 Counties



**PRESENTATIONS**

**64**

Across 37 Counties  
and 40 other states

Audience reached: **3,109**



**17**

Webinar training events

Registrants reached: **1,543**

**NORTH CAROLINA DEQ**

**TOLL-FREE NUMBER:**

**1-877-623-6748**

DEACS staff manages DEQ's toll-free hotline, fielding customer calls and leading the department's responsiveness to customer needs. Our technical expertise helps guide clients to the appropriate staff. Historically, 85 percent of received calls are handled through programs administered by DEQ. During FY19-20, 7,614 customer calls were fielded by the hotline.

# ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDSHIP INITIATIVE

## PEER-TO-PEER PROMOTION OF ENVIRONMENTAL EXCELLENCE



The Environmental Stewardship Initiative (ESI) is a voluntary environmental recognition program designed to promote superior environmental performance in North Carolina. Currently, 194 member sites benefit from trainings, technical services, coaching and networking events facilitated and hosted by DEACS staff and ESI members.

DEQ Secretary Michael S. Regan recognized Eaton-Arden and Pfizer-Sanford as 2019 Environmental Stewards – two of only 31 facilities in North Carolina to earn the coveted designation.

### ESI ENVIRONMENTAL STEWARDS



## ENVIRONMENTAL BENCHMARKING SERIES AND NETWORKING EVENTS

A valuable attribute of the ESI program is the peer-sharing of environmental best management practices. This year ESI Stewards hosted on-site trainings and tours to advance pollution prevention and environmental performance with help from the Division of Waste Management. Examples include:

April 2019 - Keihin Carolina System Technology hosted an ESI Environmental Benchmarking Series event in Tarboro that showcased their completed energy efficiency projects.

September 2019 - The NC Zoo hosted a hazardous waste roundtable on "Performing Due Diligence on Hazardous Waste Transporters and Vendors."

October 2019 - Advanced Energy-Raleigh partnered on a webinar titled, "ISO 50001 Ready: An Overview," which addressed free federal resources to pursue energy management systems.

December 2019 - Daimler Trucks North America-Cleveland hosted a training session on "Universal Waste, Used Oil & New Aerosol Can Rules."

### ESI MEMBER ACHIEVEMENTS\*

#### WATER SAVED:

Equivalent to  
 **95,084** swimming pools  
 (13 billion gallons)

#### SOLID WASTE REDUCTION:

Landfill waste avoided  
 **3,430,522** tons

#### ENERGY SAVED:

Equivalent to energy used by  
 **40,216** homes  
 (3,065,511 mmBtu)

#### COST SAVINGS:

 **\$6,717,739**

\*2018 report year.

## Steward Highlight: Pfizer-Sanford

Pfizer-Sanford has been an ESI member since 2008 and achieved the level of Steward in 2019. The company is committed to increasing workforce to strengthen efforts on the ISO 14001 Environmental Management System (EMS) to help control environmental impacts while at the same time driving economic development. Pfizer's waste reductions include waste generation resulting from gasification technology, implementing a robust composting program, quality control labs implementing recycling audits and education programs, and the recycling of bulk ethanol solvent.

*"Once again, thank you for a very thorough and complete FE (Functionally Equivalent) Audit of our EMS here at Pfizer-Sanford. We appreciate the opportunity to have a fresh set of eyes review our EMS and offer valuable opportunities for improvement and findings."*



— Charles Powell,  
Sr EHS Specialist,  
March 20, 2019

Photo on the left: Secretary Regan at the Pfizer Steward Ceremony (October 15, 2019).

# RECYCLE RIGHT NC



## TACKLING CONTAMINATION WITH COORDINATION

In the fall of 2019, DEACS partnered with hundreds of local governments to run a 10-week campaign to encourage residents to clean up the recycling stream statewide.

The *Recycle Right NC* campaign was designed to tackle a shared issue across jurisdictions: too much contamination, or non-recyclable items, placed in the recycling bin. DEACS developed free outreach toolkits for 225 participating local governments and colleges to distribute across a variety of platforms in a highly coordinated rollout that maximized visibility and impact.

### PREPARATION: MRF-SHED COORDINATION

DEACS staff worked with the 18 material recovery facilities (MRFs) that serve the state to determine the exact list of recyclables accepted by each. Staff then surveyed all 652 counties and municipalities to determine which communities feed recyclables to the same MRF.

Just as water from creeks and streams flow into a watershed, recyclables in a given region flow into a MRF-shed. Staff outlined these MRF-sheds on an interactive map and shared it publicly to help foster more regional collaboration. Within a MRF-shed, communities should be recycling the same materials and can use consistent messaging to reduce confusion about recycling rules.

DEACS created toolkits for each MRF-shed, including brochures, postcards, print ads and “oops” tags. The graphics were consistent statewide with subtle differences in the accepted materials. While each local government decided how to provide recycling outreach to its residents, the toolkit offered a coordinated message.

### PLANNING: BUILDING MOMENTUM

In August 2019, DEACS hosted a series of information sessions throughout the state in partnership with the Carolina Recycling Association. More than 150 local government representatives attended these meetings to preview the *Recycle Right NC* campaign, learn how to use the outreach materials and pledge to participate in at least one facet of the campaign.

Although all elements were designed to be ready to use, DEACS customized toolkits for 70 participants by adding branding and contact information. On launch day, Sept. 9, local news outlets picked up various press releases issued by participating governments accompanied by Recycle Right proclamations signed by locally elected officials. Each participating local government kicked off a coordinated, simultaneous social media campaign to maximize reach and impact.



**An interactive map displays the recycling MRF-sheds for all 652 LOCAL GOVERNMENTS, accompanied by print and online educational graphics.**

### ENGAGEMENT: SOCIAL MEDIA SURPRISE

DEACS staff had to quickly strategize when the first week of the social media campaign garnered more attention than anticipated. The second post informing residents to not bag their recyclables received more than 80,000 views and hundreds of comments on Facebook. DEACS staff answered the questions and comments from residents in the comment sections.

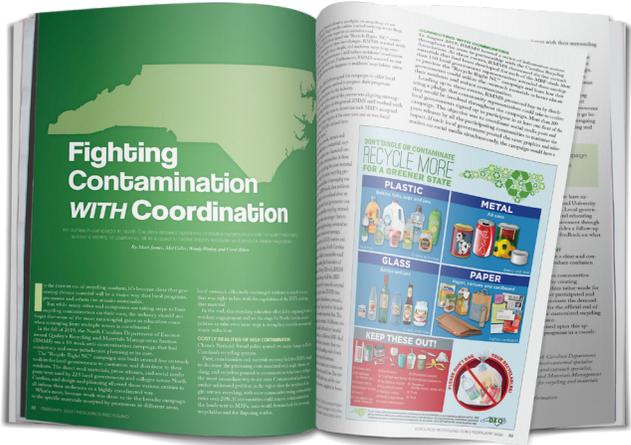
By the conclusion of the campaign on America Recycles Day (Nov. 15), the social media posts had reached one million people and accumulated 30,000 interactions.

***“The social media posts have received a phenomenal response. I would love to see these continue year-round. This has been a tremendous asset for our citizens and staff.”***

**— Rachel Johnson,  
Town of Beaufort**

### IMPACT: NATIONAL ATTENTION AND LOCAL APPRECIATION

The 225 participating local governments and thousands of social media comments illuminate the public’s demand for recycling education. The campaign won a Carolina Recycling Association award and was highlighted in the national Resource Recycling magazine, calling North Carolina a leader by “stepping up... to bring much-needed organization, funding and tools to local programs.”



DEACS took the momentum of the campaign to develop and share additional social media content around better recycling habits. The *Recycle Right NC* toolkits remain relevant, and DEACS staff still support dissemination by creating customized elements and funding educational grant projects.



# ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT GROWTH

## SUPPORTING RECRUITMENT AND NAVIGATING ENVIRONMENTAL REQUIREMENTS

### SYSTEMS SUNLIGHT S.A. COMING TO NORTH CAROLINA

Sunlight Batteries USA successfully applied for, and received, a \$100,000 grant through the OneNC Fund, which was matched by the City of Greensboro as part of their project to build an industrial battery assembly plant and distribution hub, within the city in Guilford County. DEACS worked jointly with the N.C. Department of Commerce, Economic Development Partnership of North Carolina (EDPNC) and multiple DEQ programs in the recruitment efforts.

During this collaboration, DEACS staff facilitated multiple scoping meetings. These meetings included representatives from Systems Sunlight S.A., consultants, EDPNC and local economic development agencies. The Environmental Assistance coordinator also held several one-on-one teleconferences with the lead consultant. During these interactions, DEACS staff provided detailed permitting information, guidance and permit tracking services.

The future facility is planned to cover more than 104,000 square feet and will be used initially to assemble and distribute industrial lead-acid batteries. During Phase I, the company plans to assemble 200,000 forklift batteries annually. The addition of lithium battery assembly will be incorporated during Phase II.

Sunlight Batteries USA is a subsidiary of Systems Sunlight S.A., which is headquartered in Athens, Greece, and was established in 1991 as a member of the “Greek Multi-National Group.” The company’s focus is to develop and produce batteries and energy storage systems. Prior to deciding to venture into the U.S. market, the company had existing facilities within Greece and Italy, and presently exports to more than 100 countries worldwide.



## AIRCRAFT SOLUTIONS USA

DEACS staff participated in recruitment discussions with N.C. Commerce for Aircraft Solutions USA, a commercial and military aircraft recycler that chose to site a new facility at the Global TransPark in Kinston. The company was interested in the business-to-business recycling connections fostered by DEACS staff. Since Aircraft Solutions announced the nearly \$100 million investment in North Carolina, DEACS staff have continued to work with the company to facilitate relationships with local military contacts and gain understanding of military contracts for decommissioning and recycling aircraft from nearby bases and operations.



N.C. Governor Roy Cooper welcomes Aircraft Solutions CEO Daniel Koechler to the N.C. Global TransPark where the company expects to create 475 jobs. Janet Sutton/Neuse News.

## GRIFOLS ANNOUNCES EXPANSION

Grifols Therapeutics announced in June 2020 that they will expand its North Carolina operations in Clayton, with a \$352 million capital investment, creating 300 additional jobs. DEACS staff performed the compliance check to assist N.C. Commerce in the award of a JDIG investment grant to support the project. Active in the ESI since 2006, Grifols achieved Steward status in 2017 and joined the program's Advisory Board in 2020. Grifols' environmental goals to reduce water and energy use, divert waste from the landfill and dedicate land for wildlife habitat while also expanding its operations highlight the environmental and economic impact.

# GRIFOLS

## ENVIRONMENTAL COMPLIANCE CHECKS

Environmental compliance reviews (ECRs) are performed when businesses apply for job development investment grants (JDIGs). These state grants are available for new and expanding companies to help offset expansion or locating costs and are based on N.C. Department of Commerce (N.C. Commerce) criteria for operation via the One North Carolina Fund (OneNC). The OneNC Fund is a discretionary cash-grant allowing for quick response to job creation projects. It is based on the number of jobs created, overall level of investment, location, and economic impact for the specified area or region.

DEACS staff handle ECR responsibilities and work closely with N.C. Commerce.

To complete an ECR, the regional Environmental Assistance coordinator (EAC) reviews the project information: i.e. project location, industrial processes, and whether the applicant is new to the state or expanding an established business. The EAC then creates a compliance report form for the project, and DEQ program staff are contacted for historical compliance information and potential permitting requirements. The coordinator conducts internal database searches (DWM Site Locator Tool/ UST Incidents), as well as querying the EPA Enforcement and Compliance History Online database. This information is compiled, summarized and added to the final ECR report, which is shared with the Secretary's Office for submission to N.C. Commerce.

**DEACS completed 47 ECRs in FY 2019–20. These projects led to creation of more than 7,400 jobs and total capital investments of at least 2.95 billion.**

# BUILDING THE CIRCULAR ECONOMY

## NEW JOBS AND INVESTMENT IN RECYCLING

### MANUFACTURERS AND RECYCLERS RALLY AROUND SHARED GOALS

DEACS partnered with ESI Steward, Grifols, to host manufacturing and recycling industry leaders for the first N.C. Recycling Markets Development Roundtable on November 21, 2019.

With national attention on ocean plastics and climate change, manufacturers are increasingly prioritizing sustainability and recyclability. To recognize and support these leaders, including many ESI members, DEACS invited DEQ leadership, the Economic Development Partnership of N.C. and the Governor's Office to join the conversation.

The roundtable allowed manufacturers to connect directly with recyclers to identify intersecting goals that could foster more collaboration. For example:

**Coca Cola** and **PepsiCo** announced corporate goals to use more recycled PET in drink bottles. Success will require working with recyclers like **Republic Services**, **Sonoco Recycling** and **Clear Path Recycling** who were all represented.

**Envision Plastics** described the process to clean, color-sort and prepare HDPE plastics for remanufacturing by companies in the room like **Unilever**, **Burt's Bees** and **POLYWOOD**.

The event concluded with 25 attendees signing a pledge to work together to collect more quality recyclables, use more recycled content in new products and packaging, and support a more sustainable circular economy that creates jobs and builds supply chain resilience in North Carolina.



The 25 N.C. Recycling Pledge signatories commit to building a more resilient circular economy through collaboration and partnership.

***"[We] have an opportunity to work together on sustainability initiatives that are mutually beneficial in protecting North Carolina's environment and stimulating economic growth."***

**— DEQ Chief Deputy Secretary, John Nicholson**

### A CIRCULAR GLASS INDUSTRY

In December 2019, DEACS hosted the Carolinas Glass Recycling Summit with the Carolina Recycling Association and Strategic Materials. The standing-room-only crowd learned about effective ways to collect glass bottles and jars for recycling and toured the Strategic Materials plant in Wilson. All 125 attendees saw firsthand how recycled glass is sorted, cleaned and prepared to make new glass bottles, fiberglass insulation, reflective beads and abrasives. Each end-user industry was represented at the event and emphasized their reliance on a steady supply of recycled glass to manufacture these products.

## RECYCLING GRANT FUNDS MOVE THE INDUSTRY FORWARD

### FAMILY-OWNED BUSINESS REBUILDS

North Davidson Garbage Service, an independent material recovery facility (MRF) near Lexington, experienced a devastating fire in August of 2018 causing the facility to shut down. Recyclables from the company's customers, including nine local governments, had to be diverted to other nearby MRFs, putting strain on the region's recycling capacity.

This loss, coupled with other recycling market stresses in the state, helped spark the creation of a new DEACS grant program for equipment or facilities that serve a group of communities spanning multiple counties.

North Davidson Garbage Service was the first recipient of the regional grant program, receiving \$80,000 for the MRF rebuild. With the extra financing, owners Brad and Brooke Everhart were able to invest in better equipment to recycle more tons than before. The grant helped fund a metering bin to evenly feed a continuous stream of mixed recyclables onto the sorting line, leading to higher quality end products and freeing up time for the loader operator.

*"The metering bin was something we didn't purchase in 2011 when we first began our MRF but knew that it could make our facility more efficient this time around."*

- Owner, Brooke Everhart

The company completed the project and reopened October 21, 2019 with an outpouring of support from the community, a workforce of 20 employees and quickly regained its original customer base.

### FY 2019-20 GRANT SUMMARY

**47**

grants to 18 private businesses and 29 local governments

**45**

new jobs created

**\$992,025**

total awarded grant funding

**\$3,718,083**

Matching investment from grantees

**8,083,237**

additional tons recycled

### LASTING IMPACT:



#### Increased recycling access for North Carolinians

3,365 recycling carts to households and public recycling opportunities for 25,000 people with bins at schools, parks and downtown areas



#### 8 million more tons of plastic recycled

with new and upgraded equipment at 10 facilities



#### Expanded compost infrastructure

to divert 55,000 tons of organic material from landfills



#### Improved operations at four MRFs

with upgraded equipment



#### 1.1 million better informed North Carolinians

thanks to recycling outreach materials distributed by 13 local governments

# CUTTING COSTS, REDUCING ENVIRONMENTAL FOOTPRINTS

## RETIRED ENGINEERS ADVISE ON SUSTAINABLE PRACTICES

### AG PLASTICS PROJECT WRAPS-UP

With funding from the North Carolina Tobacco Trust Fund Commission, DEACS' Waste Reduction Partners team concluded a three-year project to advance the cleaner, efficient collection of mulch films and improve the collection and recycling of plastic nursery pots, trays and film across the state.

The project successfully tested and demonstrated new ag film retrieval techniques for farmers that can save \$125 per acre in labor cost — while producing much cleaner, manageable rolls of film and drip tape at the

end of the growing season. In partnership with the NC Cooperative Extension, best management practices were produced and published in the 2020 Southeastern US Vegetable Crop Handbook along with a website and videos. The team also established novel equipment loaner programs with Cooperative Extension in the western and eastern regions of the state to continue advancing the adoption of clean and efficient agriculture film retrieval and management. The project team has set the stage for the expansion of film recycling processing capacity when market value rebound.

#### PROJECT ACCOMPLISHMENTS:

\$125/acre savings demonstrated in labor though new ag mulch retrieval techniques.

1,692 tons of ag plastic collected and recycled during the project term.

1,604 farmers received training to improve film management, representing 11,772 acres of NC farmland production.

\$1.18 million in value added sales were produced throughout this project.





## SUSTAINABLE SUCCESSES

Arcadia Beverage in Arden is a leading producer of non-carbonated beverages for private labels, proprietary and third-party brands. Waste Reduction Partners' water and solid waste teams worked with Arcadia Beverage during 2019 to identify waste reduction strategies for their plant. Arcadia formed a green team to address the list of recommendations and to identify their own. The benefits were both immediate and cumulative. Some highlights of Arcadia's progress since WRP's visit include:

More than 5,000 gallons of water per day saved thanks to water conservation and waste water reduction measures, such as new nozzles for bottle rinsers, more efficient tank cleaning and programming constant spray process to stop when conveyors stop.

Waste reduction measures in the shipping area leads to a savings of between \$58,000 and \$116,000 per year depending on product volumes.

Implementing a plastics recycling program for HDPE and PET containers, diverting about 25 percent of their waste from the landfill to recycling outlets.



Ryan Powell highlights newly implemented container recycling program at Arcadia Beverage with WRP Assessors Greg Goodman and Elaine Marten.

## WESTERN DATA CENTER - NCDIT

Data centers use large amounts of energy in their operations. To improve utility management and address Executive Order 80's energy efficiency goals, Waste Reduction Partner's energy team worked with Department of Information's Western Data Center (WDC) management to improved energy efficiency at the facility. The WRP team and WDC management identified the following strategies to reduce energy consumption, which are being implemented:

Replace all incandescent and fluorescent lighting with LEDs. The lighting upgrades are currently 21 percent complete with plans for full implementation. Annual savings will amount to \$9,820.

Increase the temperature setpoint in Server Room from 68° to 72°. Annual savings are expected to be \$10,730.

Running fewer cooling units in the Data Room, resulting in \$2,500 annual savings.

The cumulative annual savings amount to \$23,048, 1,064 MMBtu in energy use, and emission reductions of 315,805 pounds of CO<sub>2</sub>e.

## WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS' CLIENT PERFORMANCE FY 2019-20

CLIENT OUTCOMES	FISCAL 2019-20
Number of On-site Assessments	<b>98</b> in 39 counties
Total Utility Cost Savings	<b>\$1.07</b> million
Energy Reduced	<b>32,614</b> million Btu
Greenhouse Gas Reduction	<b>3,149</b> MTCO <sub>2</sub> e
Solid Waste Reduced	<b>3,207</b> tons
Water-use Conserved	<b>11,083,000</b> gallons
Technical Assistance Provided	<b>10,568</b> hours

# NC GREEN TRAVEL

## PROMOTING A SUSTAINABLE TOURISM INDUSTRY

The NC GreenTravel Initiative is North Carolina's sustainable tourism recognition program, created to help tourism-oriented businesses reap the benefits of "going green." It was launched in 2012 in partnership with Visit NC and East Carolina University's Center for Sustainable Energy and Environmental Engineering.

### RECOGNIZING AND PROMOTING GREEN BUSINESSES

Businesses apply for recognition as sustainable tourism destinations by documenting their commitments and achievements in environmental stewardship. Recognized businesses include hotels and lodging, dining, attractions, adult beverage businesses, parks, farms, and other tourism-oriented destinations. There is no cost involved with becoming a recognized NC GreenTravel business.

Recognized businesses receive a free listing on the NC GreenTravel website, making it easier for consumers to locate and patronize those tourism destinations that have implemented environmentally-conscious business practices. The program also provides a certificate of sustainability, door decals and features on the NC GreenTravel Facebook page.

### EXPANDING SERVICES TO NC BREWERIES

NC GreenTravel includes 13 member breweries; one of which, Tarboro Brewing Company, became the first brewery to join the ESI program in 2019. DEACS expanded its reach to the industry with a presentation about brewery sustainability and state services at the North Carolina Craft Brewer's Guild conference in Winston Salem in November 2019.

Looking ahead to 2020, several breweries in western North Carolina are teaming up with an area recycling company to establish the state's first brewery waste consolidation program. DEACS is assisting in the formation of the program and hopes to help identify grant funding for infrastructure needs.



## Member Spotlights



Owner Shelley Walsh with alpacas in front of the farm's solar array. Kelly Carver Photography.

**32** NC GreenTravel Members Added in FY 2019-20

There are 229 recognized sustainable businesses in the program. Good Karma Ranch is featured as one of the highest-scoring NC GreenTravel destinations. Located in Iron Station, the alpaca farm is run entirely on solar power and is a certified wildlife habitat. Owners Mike and Shelly Walsh provide tours and special events at their environmentally-friendly farm.

NC GreenTravel member, Bull City Burger and Brewery in Durham is the first brewpub in the world to attain B-Corp certification, meaning that their focus is, "People, Planet, and Profit." As such, they provide high-quality employment, positive environmental impact and a stronger economy through environmental sustainability. This brewpub recycles and composts food waste and has used repurposed wood for its dining tables and installed LED lighting.



# THE DEACS TEAM

## DEACS DIRECTOR

**JAMIE RAGAN**

## DEACS ADMINISTRATION AND BUDGET

**GWENDOLYN PALMER**

## PUBLIC INFORMATION OFFICER

**LAURA LEONARD**

## ENVIRONMENTAL ASSISTANCE SECTION

**MARCIA ALLOCCO**, Section Chief

**ANGELA BARGER**, Environmental Stewardship Initiative

**DON BURKE**, Environmental Stewardship Initiative

**RON PRIDGEON**, Technical Assistance

**KEYES MCGEE**, Technical Assistance

**SCOTT FISTER**, Technical Assistance

**TONY PENDOLA**, Small Business Assistance

**LISA SHANKLIN**, Technical Assistance

**PAUL E. WILLIAMS**, Environmental Assistance Coordinator, Mooresville and Winston Salem RO

**ALISON DAVIDSON**, Environmental Assistance Coordinator, Asheville RO

**DAVID LEE**, Environmental Assistance Coordinator, Raleigh and Fayetteville RO

**LYN HARDISON**, Environmental Assistance Coordinator, Washington RO, SEPA

**CAMERON WEAVER**, Environmental Assistance Coordinator, Wilmington RO



**Angela Barger, ESI Program manager, leads an internal auditor training program for Mecklenburg County Solid Waste Department in December 2019.**



**Keyes McGee, DEACS, with Hubert Hampton at Cramerton's wastewater treatment plant of the Two Rivers Utilities. Photo taken during an ESI program renewal visit.**

## RECYCLING AND MATERIALS MANAGEMENT SECTION

**WENDY WORLEY**, Section Chief

**SANDY SKOLOCHENKO**, Recycling Business Assistance

**MIKE GREENE**, Recycling Business Assistance

**MATT JAMES**, Recycling Business Assistance

**MEL GILLES**, Recycling Outreach

**EMILY BURNETT**, Community Technical Assistance

**DAVID HANCE**, Community Technical Assistance

**TOM RHODES**, Community Technical Assistance

**TARA NATTRESS**, Community Technical Assistance

**CAROL ABKEN**, Community Technical Assistance

**ALEXA CHUMPITAZ**, Graphic Design (T)

**KARINA IBARRA**, Graphic Design (T)

**COLIN STIFLER**, Research Assistance (T)



DEACS welcomes new employees this year to the central office: Tara Nattress, Carol Abken and Scott Fister.

## WASTE REDUCTION PARTNERS

**TERRY ALBRECHT**, Section Chief

**JAN FOSTER**, Land of Sky Regional Council

**RUSS JORDAN**, Land of Sky Regional Council

**TOM KIMMELL**, Land of Sky Regional Council

**DEE HANAK**, Land of Sky Regional Council

**35 WRP STATEWIDE FIELD ASSESSORS**



Waste Reductions Partners staff and volunteer field team at The Scrap Exchange in Durham.



Mel Gilles, recycling outreach coordinator, received the first DEACS Employee of the Year Award. Mel played a key leadership role in nationally recognized Recycle Right campaign.



Marshall Goers and Jack Noor with Waste Reduction Partners assisted Campbell's Snacks in Charlotte with Danii McLetchie, Sustainable Projects lead, and Gene Baird, Site Environmental coordinator.



Lisa Emmons and Rina Burd from WiRO filing documents with masks on.

## DEQ REGIONAL OFFICE (RO) OPERATIONS AND ADMINISTRATION

**EULA ALEXANDER**, Section Chief

### ASHEVILLE RO

**LINDA STAMEY**, Manager

**CARRIE EMRICK**

**STEPHANIE FRADY**

**SUSANNAH BEW**

### FAYETTEVILLE RO

**LEE COTTRELL**, Manager

**KIMBERLY MCKOY**

**WENDY MCNEIL**

**SARAH VANDEVER**

### MOORESVILLE RO

**ANGELA EDMONDS**, Manager

**CATHY SHIPP**

**DEBORAH LUCKMAN**

**SHERIAN BLACK**

**LISA ELLEDGE**

### RALEIGH RO

**JANENE CHILDS**, Manager

**STEPHANIE AIKENS**

**CHERYL RICHARDSON**

**SHANNON JOHNSON**

**BARBARA DUNN** (T)

### WASHINGTON RO

**KELLY BULLOCK**, Manager

**BEA DILLON**

**HEIDI SHASTEEN**

**MELANIE MCROY**

**KERI SPARKS**

**PAMELA CADE**

### WILMINGTON RO

**PATRICIA HAY**, Manager

**JAN DAVIS**

**TINA BURD**

**LISA EMMONS**

**CINDY CORBETT**

### WINSTON-SALEM RO

**SANDRA CASTLE**, Manager

**SHEILA MCINTOSH**

**STACIE MABE**

**JESSICA CARLSON**

**KENDRA JORDAN** (T)

(T) Temporary



As a community service project, DEACS staff helped deliver meals to Raleigh residents once a month through the Meals on Wheels program. DEACS staff Eula Alexander and Gwendolyn Palmer shown above.

## **CONTACT US**

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