

Economic Services Updates - October 2021

Outreach:

Piney Ridge Baptist Church invited Economic Services to present to their congregation via Zoom on October 12. Supervisor Sharon Messer presented the Energy Programs, Supervisor Vicki Hardin presented Adult Medicaid, Supervisor Cheryl Heatherly presented Food and Nutrition, and Supervisor Pam Henson presented Family and Children's Medicaid. Ed McIntyre called Mrs. Bridges October 13 and bragged about how well our Supervisor's presentations were and how informative it was. He said many people from his church has commented how helpful it was to them.

LIHWAP (Low Income Household Water Assistance Program):

LIHWAP is a federally funded program that provides emergency assistance to low-income households. This is a temporary program implemented with funding from the Consolidated Appropriations Act, 2021 (CAA) and the American Rescue Plan Act of 2021 (ARPA). This is a water and wastewater assistance program. This is a temporary program where funds must be spent by September 30, 2023. This is not a permanent authorization for LIHWAP. A work group has been established and they are currently working on a plan and policy. Policy will be very similar to our current Energy Programs mirroring the same income limits. Anyone who receives Food and Nutrition and Work First Family Assistance will automatically qualify for this program (categorically eligible). The State is partnering with the UNC School of Government to reach out to 500 water and wastewater vendors in North Carolina. The lack of interest from vendors is troubling for the State and they are taking extra efforts including asking the Counties to reach out to their local vendors and explain the benefits of the Program. We have four vendors in Rutherford County: Town of Forest City, Town of Lake Lure, Town of Bostic, and Broad River Water Authority. This program is targeted to begin December 1. The State has been awarded \$38 million for this Program. The State has not yet conveyed the individual Counties' allocations. There will be three different Priority Groups. Priority Group 1 will have to be served and consists of households whose water and/or wastewater is disconnected. Group 2 consists of all households whose water and/or wastewater is subject to disconnection. Group 3 consists of all households who have a current bill. Groups 1 & 2 need to be processed within a 10 business day time frame. Currently, the State is anticipating all the funds to be spent for priority Groups 1 & 2.