

Local Food Systems And Economic Development: A Few Answers, Lots Of Questions

I spent some time this morning filling out a questionnaire from the University of North Carolina School of Government on local food systems. The school is trying to develop an understanding of how "local food" is integrated into economic development efforts across the state. As a suburban homesteader who teaches gardening classes and sells at local farmers' markets, it was an interesting exercise for me, and some of the questions got me thinking about the role of local food in Anson County and how we might be able to better leverage our strong agricultural heritage to provide additional opportunities for our residents.

When we discuss agriculture in terms of economic development, we typically think in terms of agricultural exports and value-added agriculture, Big Ag, but generally tend to gloss over local food systems and their impact on our economy. Local food systems are defined as the process by which locally-produced agricultural products are distributed, marketed and sold to local residents. Farmers' markets, CSAs and roadside stands are visible examples, but the process includes everything from backyard chickens and public policy to farm co-ops and farm-to-fork restaurants.

The question that really provoked thought on my part was in regard to how local food systems are used to provide opportunities for social and economic mobility and equality. In our capitalist economy, it can be difficult for the financially disadvantaged find ways to fend for themselves, but anyone with access to, literally, dirt can engage in the local food economy, at least to the extent of providing some percentage of their own nutritional requirements. My family maintained a large garden, and it wasn't entirely because my father enjoyed digging in the dirt (although he certainly did). Growing our own tomatoes, beans, peppers, carrots, beets, potatoes and lettuce made a significant impact in our food budget.

The question is, are we doing enough as government and community leaders to support the local food economy, and if not what more should we be doing? We have two farmers' markets, but participation is spotty. We have local sources for dairy, pork, beef fruit and vegetable products, but do we take full advantage of them? At the government level, are our rules and policies farmer-friendly? Do we encourage food security by promoting homegrown efforts? What role do faith-based organizations have in promoting the local food economy?

These are all questions that we, as a community, need to explore over the coming months.
Courtesy of John Marek, Director of AnsonEDP

Jeremy Taylor Promoted to Broker-in-Charge of Plank Road Realty



This is a release from Plank Road Realty: Plank Road Realty is pleased to announce that Jeremy Taylor has been selected as Broker-in-Charge of the company. Broker associate with Plank Road Realty since 2012, Jeremy has been the top selling realtor in Anson County for several years. Don Scarborough will continue at Plank Road Realty as a Broker associate and owner of the company. Don says, "Jeremy has proven to be ready to direct the daily brokerage activities of Plank Road Realty. He possesses unique abilities as a skilled people person and problem solver as well as excellent technical skills in social media, a computer, photography and drone activity. No one is more successful at presenting a client's property to potential buyers. I am proud to pass Plank Road Realty's Broker-in-Charge torch to Jeremy Taylor."

Plank Road Realty Inc. is the oldest real estate office in Anson County, dating back to 1984. The company serves Anson County and seven other counties in North Carolina.

Governor Cooper Announces Paid Parental Leave Policy

Eligible state Employees to receive paid parental leave to support family health, stronger economy

To support healthy families and strengthen our economy, Governor Roy Cooper issued Executive Order No. 95, extending paid parental leave to state employees in cabinet agencies. "This new paid parental leave policy will give state employees more time to recover from childbirth and give their newborns the care and attention they need," Gov. Cooper said. "It will help reduce gender inequality in our workplaces, and it will help our state attract and retain a strong workforce."

Effective September 1, 2019, state employees of any North Carolina department, agency, board or commission under the oversight of the governor will receive eight weeks of paid parental leave after giving birth or four weeks of paid parental leave after a partner gives birth or to bond with and care for a child in the event of adoption, foster care or other legal placement of a child. Parents will receive 100 percent of their regular pay while on parental leave.

Full-time permanent, probationary or time-limited employees in the Cabinet agencies who have been continuously employed by the State of North Carolina for at least twelve months prior to their leave and are eligible for Family and Medical Leave can qualify for paid parental leave. Part-time employees are eligible to receive paid parental leave on a prorated basis. According to the North Carolina Office of State Human Resources, about 56,000 state employees will be eligible for paid parental leave under the new policy.

Paid parental leave under the policies wellness by providing time parents need to recover from childbirth and bond with a new baby, to attend regular medical checkups and to manage family caregiving responsibilities. Research suggests children whose parents have access to paid parental leave are more likely to attend regular medical checkups and have fewer health problems. When paid parental leave is available, women who give birth are less likely to experience postpartum depression and men are more likely to be involved fathers.

Paid parental leave is also good for the economy and fiscally responsible. Paid parental leave can help families care for children without risking financial insecurity and can reduce the demand on the social safety net by reducing the likelihood that working parents must apply for taxpayer-funded benefits. Private sector employers have found that paid parental leave can improve employee retention, productivity and morale.

Grace Senior Center Trip to Fuller BBQ in Pembroke

Grace Senior Center is offering a trip to Pembroke, NC for a delicious lunch at Fullers BBQ on Thursday, June 13. Fullers is a buffet that offers a variety of foods including barbecue, steak, chicken, seafood and homemade desserts.

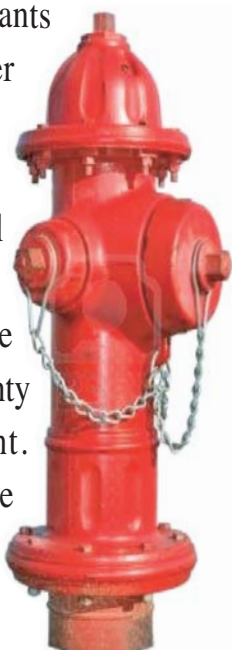
Participants will meet in the parking lot at Walmart for a 9 a.m. departure, returning by 4 p.m. The cost of the trip is \$32.18, which includes lunch and transportation. If you would like to go, the deadline to register is Wednesday, June 5. Call Mary Jones at 704-694-6616.

Unauthorized Hydrant Use

The use of Anson County Water Department fire hydrants for obtaining water for agricultural or any other purpose without written consent of the Water Department is a violation of state and federal law. Hydrants are for use by written-permitted users, water company or fire department personnel only.

The Anson County Water Department will take legal action against any individual or business that unlawfully obtains water from the Anson County water system. Please report suspicious activity to the Anson County Sheriff's Office or the Water Department.

Hydrant use permit information is available from the Anson County Water Department. Information is available at 704-694-5208.



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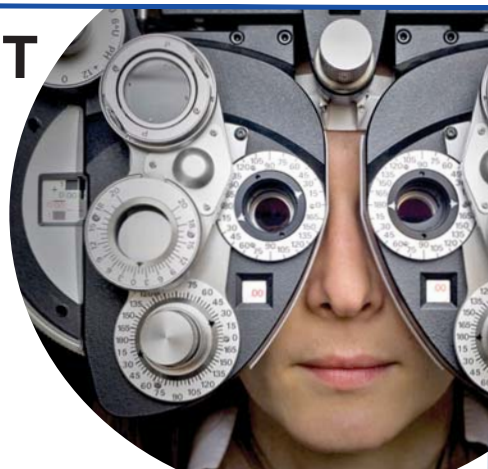
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*Class is based on these models: Polaris Ranger XP900, John Deere X300 and Kawasaki Mule PRO-FXR. The handling comparison was performed on the FSAE SKIDPAD course in gravel conditions. © Kubota Tractor Corporation 2019. 2.99% A.P.R., 0% down, financing for 72 months on purchases of a new Sidekick model from participating dealers. In-stock inventory is available to qualified purchasers through Kubota Credit Corporation USA, subject to credit approval. Example: 72 monthly payments of \$15.19 per \$1,000 financed. Example amount based on sales price of \$12,049. Each dealer sets own price. Prices and payments may vary. Offer expires 6/30/19. This material is for descriptive purposes only. Kubota disclaims all representations and warranties, express or implied, or any liability from the use of this material. For complete warranty, safety and product information, consult your local Kubota dealer. For the complete disclaimer, go to KubotaUSA.com/consumers and see the product disclaimer.

