

# Weekly News Summary for Sunday, January 12, 2025.

**The Dare Community Housing Task Force** has been selected as one of 22 counties across North Carolina to participate in the “Our State, Our Homes” program led by the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill’s Carolina Across 100 Initiative. The program brings together experts, resources and community leaders to tackle the growing challenge of affordable housing across the state, states a media release from Dare County.

This comprehensive 18-month initiative will connect participating communities with expert coaching, technical assistance, and a network of national and state housing experts

Housing continues to be a critical issue in Dare County. According to the Dare Community Housing Task Force’s 2024 report, titled “Housing for Now and Future Generations,” nearly one-third of Dare County households (4,568) are considered cost-burdened, spending more than 30 percent of gross income on housing expenses, such as mortgage or rent, and taxes and insurance.

For more information about the task force’s involvement in the “Our State, Our Homes” program, contact Dare Community Housing Task Force Chair Donna Creef at [dvcreef@gmail.com](mailto:dvcreef@gmail.com).

For more information about the Dare Community Housing Task Force—including a list of current members, upcoming meetings and meeting minutes, as well as to view the task force’s 2024 report, visit [DareNC.gov/Housing](https://DareNC.gov/Housing).

**Dare County’s Fiscal Year 2024 independent auditor** provided a clean, unmodified opinion of the financial affairs of the county.

On page 12 of the Annual Comprehensive Financial Report, the auditor’s letter from Potter & Company, P.A., states: “the financial statements ... present fairly, in all material respects, the respective financial position of the governmental activities... as of June 30, 2024...in accordance with accounting principles generally accepted in the United States of America.”

The firm’s auditor Dan Morrow told the commissioners that is “the highest level of assurance” that auditors can give that the financial statements are materially correct.

Morrow praised the staff to the Board of Commissioners. “Your staff is going a good job.”

**On Monday, Jan. 6, 2025**, Dare County Board of Commissioners increased the compensation for the county’s Board of Education members. By letter dated Dec. 17, 2024, Dare County Superintendent of Schools Steve Basnight requested that the commissioners increase Board of Education members’ compensation from \$2,400 to \$13,000 and the Board of Education Chairman from \$5,400 to \$14,200.

Basnight wrote: “the last increase in the BOE compensation was more than 25 years ago.”

The increase in compensation will start July 1, 2025, as requested by Basnight.

**The Buxton Civic Association** held its first annual meeting January 8 at the old Buxton Fire Station, reports the Island Free Press. The association was formed in April 2024 to tackle the problems at the former U.S. Navy Base on the beach in Buxton.

No agency was agreeing to deal with petroleum washing into the ocean. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers finally launched a 60-day immediate response action at the site in September and removed petroleum impacted soils and water and debris.

The group also championed the setting up of a Restoration Advisory Committee, a group of residents and officials to keep track of what’s happening at the site.

Additionally, the association turned its efforts to installing Christmas lights in Buxton. The group asked for donations and received \$10,000 to purchase lights.

On February 3, the group will deliver a presentation to the Dare County Board of Commissioners, which was originally made at the North Carolina Beach, Inlet and Waterway Association

The association is planning a fundraising event on Saturday, February 22 at the Inn on Pamlico Sound. More details are coming.

Members elected to positions are Heather Jennette, president; Brian Hatteras and Jeff Dawson, co-vice presidents and Wendi Munden, secretary. Brett Barley was added as a new board member.

**Work will soon begin on a replacement** for the Alligator River Bridge on U.S. 64 in Tyrrell and Dare counties, under a contract approved Wednesday, Jan. 8, 2025, by the N.C. Board of Transportation.

The \$450 million contract, awarded to Skanska USA, will replace the 65-year-old swing-span bridge with a modern, two-lane fixed-span bridge just north of the current one, reported a media release from NCDOT.

Workers will begin driving bridge pilings in the next several weeks, weather permitting. Under the terms of the contract, the new bridge will open to traffic in the fall of 2029, with demolition of the current bridge to begin in the spring of 2030.

The current bridge, completed in 1960, is the main route to access the Outer Banks from the west, and is a critical hurricane evacuation route.

**Outer Banks Forever**, the official nonprofit partner of Cape Hatteras National Seashore, Fort Raleigh National Historic Site and Wright Brothers National Memorial, is seeking its next director.

Outer Banks Forever is a philanthropic branch of [Eastern National](#) (EN), a 501(c)3 not-for-profit organization that promotes the public's understanding and support of America's national parks and other public trust partners by providing quality educational experiences, products and services. Eastern National is leading the Director search. Jessica Barnes has served as the first director of Outer Banks Forever for six years. Nicole Erickson, Development Manager at Outer Banks Forever, is serving as Outer Banks Forever's Interim Director during the Director search. For additional information about the job opening, go to the Island Free Press.

You may direct inquiries related to Outer Banks Forever's Director search to Kimberly Snyder, Human Resources Manager at Eastern National at kim.snyder@easternnational.org.

**At the Dare County Board of Commissioners** meeting January 6, Chairman Bob Woodard announced the new board and committee appointments for each of the Dare County commissioners. Commissioner Mary Ellon Ballance from Hatteras Island was appointed to the following committees: the 5 on 5 Committee, which involves five members from the county and five members from the Dare Board of Education; Children & Youth Partnership for Dare County Board of Directors; Dare County Waterways Commission; Working Watermen Commission; the Buxton Woods Advisory Board and the Fessenden Center Advisory Board. We wish her well!

**Three events for the week are:**

**Program on Human Trafficking set for Monday, January 13** at 6:30 to learn about Human Trafficking, an important issue in the Dare community. Steve Vanover of Outer Banks Hotline and Detective Varnell of the Dare County Sheriff's Office will talk about human trafficking impacts in Dare County.

The event will be held at the RWS Community Building, 23646 NC Hwy 12 in Rodanthe. The presenters will also discuss how to recognize human trafficking and help others.

The event is the first in the 2025 speaker series sponsored by the Rodanthe-Waves-Salvo Civic Association.

**Hatteras Pop-Up Library at the Fessenden Center Annex happens this week.** On Thursday afternoon, January 16 from 2 to 4:30, a popup library will be open at the Fessenden Center Annex, 47013 Buxton Back Road.

Children's librarian Ms. Tammy will host an all-ages children's program from 2 to 2:30.

The Outer Banks Community Foundation will present information about its scholarship program from 3:30 to 4:30. For more information, contact Michelle Lord, Hatteras Library branch manager, at 986-2385.

**A Free Community Dinner at St. John United Methodist Church will take place Thursday evening**, in Avon at the church, located at 40336 McMullen Road. Serving starts at 5 o'clock and goes to 6:15. Come out, break bread and enjoy a home-cooked meal!

**Stay safe out there. This is Radio Hatteras.**