

STIMULATING TIMES

OCTOBER 2009



CHARLOTTE.



*Pictured: Jonathan Henry,
2009 CMPD Recruit Graduate*

Lander University in Greenwood, S.C., he served an internship as an officer in the Greenwood County Jail. That awakened his interest in law enforcement - especially the idea of "being part of an organization that makes a difference, makes a community safer."

But he chose the Army first. Henry ended up serving four years in the Fort Bragg-based 82nd Airborne Division, including a 15-month tour in Iraq. He was discharged in August and learned CMPD was hiring. He jumped at the chance.

Three weeks into training, he said he particularly enjoyed the sense of esprit de corps he found at the academy - which he said surpassed even the Army's. Of course, he allowed, it's easier to build camaraderie in a smaller organization.

Even so, the 53-member class is "the largest class in the last couple of years," said Officer Susan Manassah, one of the academy's training liaisons. "We were excited about having that number."

It's something City officials are happy about, too. The extra officers fit into Police Chief Rodney Monroe's patrol-heavy, community-based policing philosophy. In August, when City Council formally accepted the COPS grant, they also designated \$3.9 million from Public Safety reserve and street resurfacing funds to pay for another 75 new officers, bringing the total number of new officers to 125.

The timing couldn't have been better for Henry. He said he hopes his training will mark the beginning of a long and fulfilling career with CMPD: "I can see myself doing this for 30 years, easy."



More Police Officers Will Hit Charlotte's Streets

In September, a class of 53 new recruits entered the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department Training Academy on Shopton Road for training. It was a larger class than usual, and funds from the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA) are the main reason why.

In late July, CMPD learned that it had received \$8.55 million through the COPS Hiring Recovery Program, designed to help police departments nationwide hire new officers, hire back laid-off ones and keep officers targeted for layoffs.

In CMPD's case, the money will pay for 50 new officers, at least some of whom are part of the new training class. The grant doesn't pay for uniforms or training but will cover the first three years of salary and benefits for the new officers.

CMPD might have accepted Johnathan Henry into its training class even without the stimulus money. But the grant certainly improved his chances. It's worked out well for the 26 year-old Army veteran.

"It's a great environment to be in," Henry said recently, at the end of the training session's third week. "When I first started, I was not sure how it was going to be, but I like it more and more every day."

Henry is a self-described "military brat" who grew up mainly in Clemson, S.C., although he has relatives in Charlotte. As a senior majoring in sociology and criminal justice at



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Stimulus Funds Encourage Creativity

Federal stimulus funds are giving Charlotte Area Transit System (CATS) a chance to perform a much-needed renovation to its bus maintenance buildings - and enhance a partnership with local artists as well.



CATS is using \$20.7 million in federal Transit Capital Investment money to bring the buildings on its primary maintenance campus, at East 12th and East Davidson streets, up to modern standards. The project will upgrade the Bus Maintenance Facility and administration building and move Special Transportation Services into the maintenance building.

It's a badly needed project, since the City has been able to do only minor renovations on the buildings since the campus opened in 1981, said Monifa A. Hendrickson, the project manager for CATS.

"Thirty years is a long time when you're talking about major building systems," Hendrickson said. Without the stimulus money, CATS likely would have had to shut the campus down and relocate operations elsewhere within the decade.

The project also will replace the buildings' exterior skin system, replace the archaic electrical, mechanical, plumbing and ventilation systems and make everything more energy-efficient. The City Council has approved a contract with Clancy & Theys, which will start work soon and take 12 to 18 months to finish.

Until they do, they'll have to erect a plywood construction barrier around the site. These barriers are common, and commonly eyesores. This one will be different.

CATS has an established relationship with the McColl Center for Visual Art, going back to artwork the center did to enhance the LYNX Blue Line when it opened in 2007. When the agency won the federal grant, officials started thinking of ways it could make the construction site, on a prominent intersection, a bit more pleasing to the eye.

So they offered an arrangement to the center: "We have 330 linear feet of plywood for the barrier. Can you get one of your artists-in-residence to create a mural so it's not simply 10 yards of bare plywood just off Interstate 277?"

The McColl Center accepted, assigning one of its artists, Darren Goins, to take on the project. Last month, the center invited volunteers to help paint the mural as part of the center's annual Community Day. On a drizzly Saturday, dozens of people took up brushes in the center's basement and went to work on about 40 four-by-eight-foot panels, roughly half of the total. Goins will do half of the rest himself, and Clancy & Theys will paint the remainder.

Volunteers at the McColl Center didn't have to follow too specific a plan. Goins sketched out a general framework on the panels, then handed out the brushes and paint and told the volunteers to go to town.

"My work really is very intuitive. I just start, and then whatever happens happens," said Goins, a 2008 UNC Charlotte graduate. "I want the community to participate and add whatever they want to it."



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Stimulus Funds To Help Shape City's Energy Strategy-Public Input Plays Key Role

Christine Covington, a Charlotte newcomer, believes the City should focus its environmental efforts on getting people out of their cars to promote clean air. Nathan Roberts, a native Charlottean, says that helping residents retrofit their homes to make greener neighborhoods should be a priority in the development of the City's Energy Strategy.



While Covington and Roberts have different goals in mind, both agreed that the recent public meeting on strategy development was an effective way to seek public input and measure local support for suggested projects. "I'm really impressed with the public input process," Covington said. "It's important that they ask the community what the priorities and projects should be."

As part of the Energy Efficiency & Conservation Block Grant program run by the Department of Energy (DOE), the City has a short window of time to develop an energy efficiency and conservation strategy (Energy Strategy). And the clock is ticking. The City has a total of 120 days to complete the strategy development process and submit it to DOE to become eligible to receive the first half of the grant funding, allocated from the \$787 billion stimulus bill.

Attendees at the September 29th meeting had the opportunity to see presentations detailing results of the greenhouse gas inventory on City facilities, along with information on the energy strategy plan criteria and process. Residents and business owners were also able to learn about existing ideas under consideration, add their own energy efficiency and conservation ideas, and provide input about Charlotte's energy priorities.

Public input has been a key to strategy development during the short time frame. Commenting on the public input process, Nathan Roberts added, "I like the process of going to the community. Residents have an appetite for change." Several options were made available to encourage public input. In addition to the public meeting, a special web site was established to educate the community about the grant program and give them the opportunity to share ideas, suggestions and opinions through a survey and project idea form. While the website remains live and is updated regularly, the online survey closed October 5th.

Suggestions received via the public meeting process and online, along with ideas and information from recent greenhouse gas inventories, are being used to develop the Strategy, which will be presented in November to both the City Council and the public. The Energy Strategy, which includes both City operations and the community at-large, will encompass a range of projects from building energy audits to retrofits, transportation alternatives, and the use of renewable energy resources. The final document will be sent to DOE for review. If approved, Charlotte's grant would come in two lump sums of over \$3 million a piece.

To get the latest information on the development of the City's Energy Strategy, visit www.charlottenc.gov and click on City Energy Strategy.



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Get A Preview Of Charlotte's Energy Future

Energy Strategy Draft Plan Public Presentation

Thursday, November 12
6:30 pm
Charlotte-Mecklenburg
Government Center
Council Chambers



EECBG Eligible Activities

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Local Stimulus Impact

City of Charlotte ARRA At A Glance

Stimulus Projects

- Hiring of 50 police officers
- Justice Assistance grants for crime analysts, case technology and youth programs
- Housing rehabilitation
- Lead based paint removal program
- Homelessness prevention
- Job training for adults
- Youth summer jobs
- Watershed restoration at Muddy Creek/Campbell Creek
- Revolution Park water reuse
- Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant
- Diesel emissions grant to retrofit airport shuttle buses
- Computerized traffic signal improvements
- Shasta Lane sidewalk
- North Davidson Street Bus Garage renovation

- # of jobs created/retained: **674.73**
- \$ awarded to date: **\$56.6 million**
- Adult workers trained: **264**
- Youth placed in work experience: **382**
- Youth participating in training: **81**
- # of energy audits performed: **12** City facilities
- # of homes/units lead program: **17** homes completed and cleared
- 200** units tested

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Stimulus Funds Enrich Kids Lives

For more than 40 years, the Police Athletic League (PAL) in Charlotte ran sports teams to help young people in underserved neighborhoods.

This year, PAL decided to expand their mission to provide academic enrichment through after-school programs as well. It recently opened its second of three such programs with the help of federal stimulus money - an effort that matches its name change to the Police Activities League.

"The major emphasis in the past has been on the athletic side in our interaction and engagement with youth," said Jeff Hood, PAL's executive director. "We've done some academic enrichment in the past, but not on a large scale like now."

PAL received \$200,000 in stimulus money, part of \$777,820 in Byrne Justice Assistance Grant (JAG) funds the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Police Department was awarded in June. The money is designated for use in law enforcement; CMPD plans to use the rest of the money to pay for overtime for patrol officers and to fund the Police Cadet Program, in which college students can work for the department before applying to become officers.

PAL is using its share to support its Structured Educational After-School Enrichment Program, which runs weekdays and teacher workdays to help reduce the likelihood of young people pursuing gang or other dangerous activities after school.

The idea is for staff to provide "latchkey" kids and students with truancy or suspension issues with a supervised environment in which PAL staff can keep them engaged with activities that can help boost their grades.

"That may sound like a minor thing, but it's a huge thing," Hood said, "because for many of these kids from low-income communities, their best meal of the day may come from school."

The first Enrichment Program opened at Greenville Recreation Center this year; the second opened at Bette Rae Thomas Recreation Center in early October, and the league aims to open a third at Revolution Recreation Center early next year. PAL also wants to expand the program into the summer months, where it would serve an additional 250 kids on top of the 250 in the school-year program.

The JAG grant was essential to getting the programs started, Hood said. The \$200,000 grant constitutes about 20 percent of the league's budget this year.

"Without it, we wouldn't have been able to operate these after-school programs," he said. "It's that significant."

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Funds Are Now Flowing To Reduce Overflow and Erosion

When it rains hard, as it does often in Charlotte, Glassy Creek can overflow where it crosses Barringer Road near Interstate 77, threatening traffic and nearby homes. And that's far from the only problem: excess storm water erodes the stream bank and introduces pollutants into the water.

Last year, Charlotte's Storm Water Services Division and the Mecklenburg County Park and Recreation Department came up with a plan they thought could solve the flooding and environmental problems: a 2.3-acre detention pond to catch excess storm water at nearby Revolution Park.

It would, officials thought, reduce overflow and erosion along the creek. It'd also slowly filter pollutants out of the water before its discharge back into the creek and provide a store of water for the county to use to irrigate the park.

But they didn't have a way to pay for it until this past summer, when the City learned it had received \$577,555 for the project through the Clean Water State Revolving Fund that administers water quality projects under the American Recovery and Reinvestment Act (ARRA).

The money for the Revolution Park project was part of a \$5.3 million package Charlotte-Mecklenburg Storm Water Services received from the state fund.

The agency also received \$2.6 million to restore one of its tributaries in Huntersville, and \$2.2 million to restore Muddy Creek and one of its tributaries in Charlotte.

"The pond project is the smallest of the three, but it could make a big difference for the area surrounding Revolution Park," said Daryl Hammock, the division's water quality and environmental permitting manager. Since last year, though, Park and Rec hadn't been able to come up with enough money to contribute to the project, in effect putting it on indefinite hold.

"We would not have started this project without the stimulus funds," Hammock said. "Or at least not in the foreseeable future."

The City will have to repay the state half of the project cost, but over 20 years and at no interest. The project's contractor, Pineville-based 8 Star Construction, began work in July and is expected to finish in December.

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Editor Kim A. McMillan, Corporate Communications Director

Writers Catherine Bonfiglio, Greg Lacour

Design Debbie Fincher

Contributors Jean Leier, Brian Cunningham, Carol Jennings, Justin Amos, Kelly Smith

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