

Interview with County Manager, Franky Howard
Wednesday, July 25, 2012
Trenton, North Carolina

I didn't know what to expect going into my interview. I had seen Mr. Howard throughout the county, at board meetings, but this was only in passing. I was somewhat nervous, I had all of my questions written out, but I forgot the simplest question of all. What is your job as the County Manager? I guess I will just have to google the answer to that question for myself.

My interview did not seem as much as an interview as it did a normal conversation between acquaintances. Maybe it was the connection we had since we grew up in the same county? Maybe it was just because his experiences at being a County Manager makes him easy to talk to. Whichever it may be, the County Manager in Jones County seems to be in touch with the time. This is what we all need

Where are you originally from?

"I was born and raised a few miles from here, in Comfort."

What made you decide to become a County Manager?

"About five years ago i worked for cooperative extension. While working for them I attended a lot of board meetings and came in contact with the current County Manager. I guess it was just the experience that attracted me to the job."

As a child, what were some of the major problems in Jones County, that you can remember?

"Most of the problems are similar but there are not terrorist type things. We didn't have such a need for emergency management."

What about now? What are some of the biggest problems in Jones County now?

"Some of the biggest problems in the county are the low tax rate which causes a high tax rate. So I guess you know that doesn't fit so well with the residents."

Are there any things being done to prevent or fix these problems?

"We have started hazard education projects. Also to make Jones County more attractive to visitors and relocation we have started a more enhanced 911 communication with Onslow County. This provides

more enhanced instructors that could talk to caller through an emergency situatuon and give instructions that can save someones life.

What do you want to see of out Jones County? What are your dreams?

"I want to see smart growth job attraction and relocation of companies here. The highway 17 expansion should attract economic development."

Have to you seen any growth towards this dream?

"Yes, the Crop Produccion Services out of Onslow has relocated to Jones County.

Are majority of these jobs based off agriculture because of the setting of this county?

"No, many of these jobs are military related jobs, manufacturing, communication, but as you know, there is always agriculture."

Are you seeing improvement in accomplishing this dream in all aspects of the county?

"Yes, it's slow but steady. You have to have the proper approvals form the right people, everyone has to be on the same page."

Does that seem to be the harderst part, getting everyone on the same page?

"Yes it is. You have to educate people on why it's important in the long term, not just the short term."