



Community Calendar

2-9
Benson Parks & Rec
Senior Valentine's Social
6pm - 7:30pm

2-10
Daddy-Daughter Dance
at Benson Parks & Rec
7pm - 9pm

2-12
Pajama Story Time
at Library
6:30pm

2-13
Town Board
Benson Conference
Center
7pm

2-21
Pre-School Story Time
at Library
10am

2-25
Black History Month
Open House at Museum
2pm

BENSON MUSEUM SELECTS FRED NELSON AS BLACK HISTORY HONOREE

The votes have been tallied! The Board of Directors of the Benson Museum of Local History has selected the 2018 Black History Month honoree — former Benson commissioner Frederick D. Nelson, Jr.

A native of New York, Mr. Nelson moved to Benson in 1989 and married Hazel Peacock. He served as a Town of Benson commissioner from 1997 till 2017 — a large portion of those years, from 2007, he acted as Benson's Mayor Pro-Tem. Mr. Nelson is also a Deacon at St. Marks Christian Church in Dunn.

He was quite shocked to find out he had been chosen.

"He said he couldn't believe it," said Cultural Arts Director Terry Hobgood. "But he happily accepted the nomination. We are thrilled to honor Fred and look forward to seeing a packed house at the museum in February."

After announcing he would not seek re-election as a Benson commissioner, Mr. Nelson was honored with an official town proclamation in October for his two decades of dedication to Benson and its residents.

An excerpt from that proclamation exemplifies why the Museum Board sought to honor Mr. Nelson at the upcoming Black History celebration.

"(Mr. Nelson) bears part of the responsibility for the progress that has been made in Benson over the past two decades. He has served as a faithful servant for the citizens of Benson. Always present, always prepared and always engaged," it reads.

"Slow to anger but quick to address issues that affect the people of Benson, particularly those who may be overlooked and their concerns not represented. He is a man whom God has blessed with wisdom."

The Benson Museum of Local History's Seventh Annual Black History Month Celebration will be held on February 25, 2018 from 2pm to 4pm. Guest are encouraged to bring historical items to share.

Benson's museum is located at 102 West Main Street. For more information contact (919) 894-1266 or email thobgood@townofbenison.com.



Fred Nelson with his dog Ruby.

Mayor's Message

I hope you and your families stayed safe and warm during the snowfall recently.

Although it was a beautiful sight, it reminded us of how important it is to have heat and electricity during the harshest times of the year.

I want to applaud the Electric Department, who worked around the clock to ensure the lights stayed on!

Last month, I mentioned to you that I would be providing information on how to save money on your electric bills. One program that the Town offers is Load Management — and I want to encourage you to enroll in this program.

There are 1,826 electric customers in Benson, and 923 of those have Load Management switches. These customers are saving \$180 per year and helping to keep Benson's power rates low.

The Town saved \$380,000 last year by being able to reduce electric demand through the Load Management program.

The Town also has a Home and Business Energy Audit program. Professionals from Electricities will do the audit free of charge and give you a report on how you can reduce your energy bill.

Please call Erika Simoni at (919) 894-3553 to get more information about Load Management and the Energy Audit programs.

—Jerry

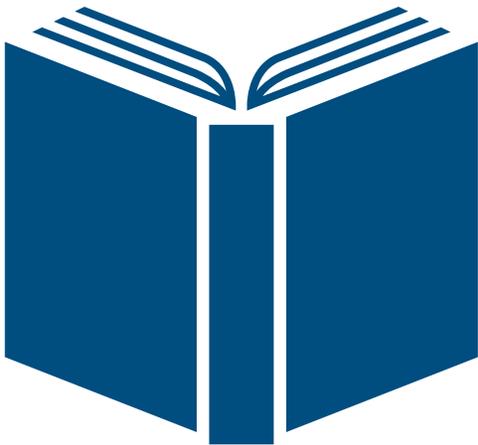
PARKS & RECREATION



Registration for Spring Tee-Ball (ages 3-4), Wee-Ball (ages 5-6), baseball (ages 8-17), and softball (ages 7-15) is underway!

Deadline to sign up is **February 23**. Call Benson Parks and Recreation for more information at (919) 894-5117.

LIBRARY



The Mary Duncan Public Library would like to invite everyone to **Pajama Story Time** this month on February 12th at 6:30pm.

Come join them in your best pajamas as we read some of our favorite stories together!

Pre-School Story Time will be on Wednesday February 21st at 10am for all of our younger citizens who aren't quite ready for school!

MUSEUM



Museum Coffee Hour 1st Friday of every month (February 2nd and March 2nd) at 10am.

The Benson Museum of Local History's **digital photo and yearbook** collection can be found on the Digital NC website.

More than 1,000 photos - <http://www.digitalnc.org/institutions/benson-museum-of-local-history/>

BENSON “CUTS THE CORD” TO CELEBRATE DOWNTOWN WIFI

Benson celebrated its recent installation of downtown WiFi on Jan. 23rd with a “cord cutting” ceremony held at the Benson Museum of Local History.

The Museum’s conference room was filled with town staff, area business owners, and residents as Town Manager Matt Zapp welcomed the crowd.

“So much has changed in Benson — we have so many folks helping us do amazing things. Like today, we’re here to celebrate our downtown WiFi,” he said, referring to numerous people in the room including NC House Rep. Larry Strickland, Don Belk with the NC Department of Commerce, George Collier with the NC Broadband Infrastructure Office, and Andy Goethals with Create Connections, among many others.



Rep. Strickland helped Benson secure the \$20,000 Downtown Revitalization grant to make the project possible. He also addressed the room.

“This is all about building relationships — serving my district — and I am so happy I was able to get this grant and do whatever I can for Benson and the entirety of Johnston County,” he said.

Mr. Collier also spoke, praising Benson’s downtown project as a true “public/private partnership.” As did Benson Chamber President Loretta Byrd, calling the new hot spot “great for business and something to help Benson grow.”

Likewise, Mayor Jerry Medlin said Benson was fortunate to have Rep. Strickland and a town administration that was always thinking forward.

“I want to thank all the people that made this happen,” he said. “This is a great example of what small towns can do!”

Stretching from US 301 at Main Street to the Singing Grove, Benson’s downtown WiFi acts as another source of convenience for the town’s residents, visitors and shoppers. In a similar fashion to a coffee shop or a restaurant, logging on to Benson’s community hotspot is simple. With your device of choice — laptop, tablet, or phone — open your WiFi Networks menu and select “Benson WiFi.” You will be greeted with a screen prompting you to agree with the terms of use. Click agree and that’s it. You’re on!

To conclude the ceremony, Rep. Strickland cut an outstretched ethernet cable with some garden shears to symbolize the completion of Benson’s latest project.

The Benson Museum of Local History’s Seventh Annual Black History Month Celebration

Honoring Fred Nelson

SUNDAY FEB. 25 at 2pm
102 WEST MAIN STREET

Jerry M. Medlin
Mayor
919-894-3511

Cassandra P. Stack
Mayor Pro-Tem
919-820-0909

Dean McLamb
Commissioner
919-820-4646

Dr. R. Max Raynor Jr.
Commissioner
919-894-3753

Maxine Holley
Commissioner
919-894-2832

Jim Johnson
Commissioner
919-868-6902

William Neighbors
Commissioner
919-701-2854

Matt Zapp
Town Manager
919-894-1606

Terry Hobgood
Town Clerk/Cultural Arts
919-894-3724

Braston Newton
Assistant Town Manager
919-894-3553

Kim Pickett
Finance Director
919-894-3553

Matt Smith
Parks and Recreation Director
919-894-5117

Chief Kenneth Edwards
Police Chief
919-894-2091

Chief Alan Johnson
Fire Chief
919-894-8990

The Town of Benson
303 East Church Street
PO Box 69 Benson, NC 27504
Phone: 919-894-3553
Fax: 919-894-1283

BENSON'S DOG PARK IS NOW OPEN!



Plenty of Benson's four-legged residents were present on Jan. 30th for the town's official opening of its new dog park, situated just east of Interstate 95, near the intersection of East Main Street and South Walton Drive (Highway 242).

The crowd, in their winter coats and collars, gathered first at the nearby Char-Grill restaurant to cut the ribbon inside, then made the short walk over to the park with their furry family members in tow.

"Today is a great day for the local businesses that exist at Exit 79 and the visitors that frequent our exit," said Mayor Jerry Medlin, addressing the crowd inside Char-Grill. "As we open the Benson Dog Park, many people and pets will be impacted by this improvement."

"We anticipate 200 to 400 visitors a day to stop by the Benson Dog Park. This park will serve as an economic driver for the entire interchange," he explained.

Mayor Medlin thanked the many people and organizations that collaborated to make Benson's dog park possible.

NCDOT for the 3.5 acre lease, Donna Bailey-Taylor and the team at the Johnston County Visitors Bureau — a major portion of the \$35,000 park was funded with a JCVB grant, Brenda Daniels and the ElectriCities Economic Development Office from which Benson received a \$4,000 economic development grant to complete the project, Tim Robbins and Benson's Public Works team for guiding and performing the construction, and Jamie Guerrero with Morris & Ritchie Associates of NC for the park's design.

A second ribbon cutting featuring the stars of the morning — the dogs — was held at the main entrance to the park's two sections — a 1.49-acre play area for larger dogs and a .44-acre swath for small dogs.

"Today is a great day," said Benson Town Manager Matt Zapp, watching a few dogs from the crowd disperse into the fenced play areas. "Since we announced this, I've been getting at least one question a day about when it would open."

"It's nice to see everyone out here this morning with their animals," added Benson Mayor Jerry Medlin. "We know this is something the people were excited about and we're thrilled to be able to provide it for them."

Light refreshments were on hand for the morning, including cookies in the shape of bones from Jenny's Sweet Creations, and, of course, plenty of dog treats.

Constructed alongside the Hampton Inn, Benson's new dog park is sure to be a hit with residents and travelers alike, said Mr. Zapp. Signs along Interstate 95 are already up, informing motorists and their furry sidekicks of the park on their route.

Benson's Dog Park is located at 308 South Walton Drive, next to the Hampton Inn. The hotel is projected to open this spring.