



Visits with County Managers

Author : Mike Smith

Categories : [Food](#), [Local Government](#), [Meetings with Managers](#)

Date : June 12, 2011



Haywood County Courthouse

Over the last six weeks I have travelled to their communities and met with several county managers. They have been generous with their time and it has been helpful to hear firsthand about their needs and challenges. Of course I have thanked them for paying their membership dues and otherwise supporting the School.

- Mickey Duvall, Graham County Manager in Robbinsville.
- Randy Wiggins, Cherokee County Manager, in Murphy.
- Marty Stamey, Haywood County Manager, in Waynesville
- Richard Wells, Randolph County Manager, in Asheboro
- Craig Honeycutt, Alamance County Manager, in Burlington

Not surprisingly, their annual budgets and the economy have dominated our conversations. Many are dipping into their fund balances, eliminating positions, and ordering furloughs. None have given merit raises for the last three years. It is tough. Graham County has a 16% unemployment rate, for example, and it is hard to get economic traction when 75% of all county land is owned by the federal government. I was impressed by the overall optimism of these managers in the face of



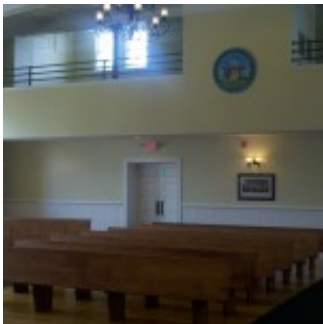
daunting financial challenges. They are figuring out how to continue serving their citizens because they are dedicated public servants.

All of them expressed great appreciation for the School. They value and depend on the various kinds of support they receive from our faculty and staff. They talk about how much they appreciate our responsiveness, our professionalism, and our knowledge. They also talk about how budget cuts have required them to rely on the School more than ever before. Many thanks to all of you for stepping up to meet their needs.

One specific message came through loud and clear, and it was volunteered by all of the managers. Webinars, webinars, webinars. They love our webinars and they want more of them. In addition to getting helpful information, they value the convenience and low cost. To the greatest extent possible, I encourage you to continue offering webinars in your area of expertise. They will never be a substitute for face-to-face teaching, but webinars are especially important at a time when travel and training budgets are under enormous pressure. We need to continue our momentum in using different kinds of instructional technologies to reach public officials.

One advantage of meeting with county managers is the opportunity to check out their courthouses. I've included some photos of the recent renovations in Haywood and Randolph. They are absolutely beautiful. Cherokee has a renovation in progress. As you travel throughout North Carolina, I encourage you to check out some of our courthouses. You can enlarge any picture by clicking on it.

Another advantage of these meetings is the food. Mickey Duvall included a couple of his colleagues in our morning meeting, and he brought two dozen doughnuts from the local *ingles* grocery store. Out of an abiding sense of duty, I managed to eat two (okay, maybe three) doughnuts. The burdens of leadership.

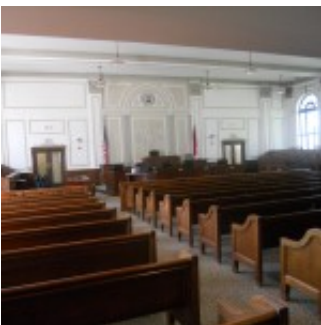




Randolph County Courthouse



Haywood County Courthouse



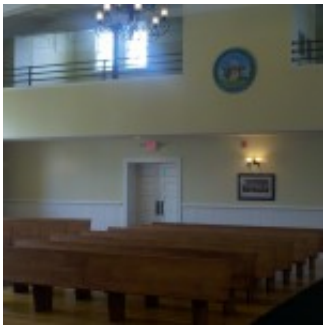
Haywood County Courthouse (Ten Commandments behind Judge's Bench)



Haywood County Courthouse



Ten Commandments in Haywood County Courthouse



Randolph County Courthouse

