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Chamber's Mike Wagoner plans to retire in mid-June

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Mike Wagoner, President of the Carteret County Chamber of Commerce, announced February 29 that he will be retiring in mid-June, after serving 12 years as the Chamber's chief executive.

Wagoner, age 67, came to the Chamber here in June 14, 2004, when he was hired as the Chamber President. He had previously served as President of the Boone Area Chamber of Commerce (1999-2004).

"I thoroughly love chamber work and this Chamber in particular...so I have wrestled with this decision for several months, because our Chamber is like a family – a committed and talented staff, dedicated and visionary volunteer leaders and a magnificent collection of members who have been absolutely great to get to know and work with," Wagoner said.

"My heart and my head are telling me it's time – time to turn over the reins and time for me to embark on a new chapter. At this point in time, the Chamber is in a good place with a robust membership roster of about 915 active members and is on solid ground financially.

"My wife, Sandy, has been totally supportive throughout our entire time in Carteret County, and we are looking forward to enjoying our retirement together. We want to stay involved, contribute and

WELCOME NEW MEMBERS

Beaufort Yacht Basin
Joined Apr 13, 2016

Carteret Home Health & Hospice
Joined Apr 07, 2016

J P Jackson Contracting, LLC
Joined Apr 18, 2016

Realty World First Coast Realty - Lauren Roberts
Joined Apr 12, 2016

Santorini Mediterranean Grill Plus Pizza
Joined May 03, 2016

SPOTLIGHT



retirement years together. We want to stay involved, contribute and give back.

"We intend to continue to reside right here at the Crystal Coast and become Friends of the Chamber as individual members. We are fully invested in this community."

Bucky Oliver, Chair of the Chamber's Board of Directors, said: "We have the utmost admiration for Mike's integrity and his service to the organization, and we are proud of what has been accomplished here under his leadership. We accept his decision reluctantly, but offer nothing but best wishes...and sincere thanks.

"Mike has many positive attributes, of course, but I would like to emphasize his contributions in the area of government affairs. His work, largely behind-the-scenes, has enabled our local Chamber to truly be a force for positive change in the arena of public policy decisions and issues advocacy.

"Our Chamber's Legislative Agenda is not only comprehensive but brilliantly articulated," Oliver said. "Mike has been a master in balancing progress with preservation as it pertains to Chamber resolutions and position statements.

"The Chamber has opposed critical habitat designations, opposed wind turbines that present a threat to military operations and opposed uses at the port that would have presented risks to our water-based economy, especially the tourism and real estate sectors.

"The Chamber has opposed property insurance rate hikes, opposed offshore seismic blasting and drilling for oil and gas and opposed the redistribution of local sales tax revenues that would have penalized the county and its municipalities.

"The Chamber supported the design and construction of the Gallants Channel Bridge as a fixed-span bridge and recommended that the Coast Guard approve the plan, supported the US 70 Havelock Bypass and continues to support maintaining the existing school calendar law with its uniform school start date.

"Mike is a professional journalist, and his writing skills are impeccable. He has advanced the Chamber's communications program immeasurably," Oliver added.

"We will begin the search for Mike's successor immediately," he said. "The regular meeting of the Board of Directors is this Thursday (March 4), and we will certainly have some discussion about where we go from here.

"We will have Mike onboard for a few more months, so I am confident there will be a seamless transition to new leadership."



Calling all Superheros! Save the date: Saturday evening, August 20, at the Crystal Coast Civic Center in Morehead City. AND...The next meeting of the committee will be at 3:30 p.m. Monday, May 9, in the Chamber Conference Room, 801 Arendell St., Morehead City. If you would like to participate, contact Lana Collmann at 252-726-6350 or lane@nccoastchamber.com.

Refreshments are served at every Reverse Drawing Committee meeting.

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Oliver said. "We trust the staff will continue to perform with high precision."

During his tenure at the Chamber, Wagoner was instrumental in developing a new brand for the Chamber, capitalizing on the natural assets of the sea and the sun, while focusing on the iconic Cape Lookout Lighthouse design.

He said other highlights include the celebration of Founder's Day in 2009, which marked the Chamber's 50-year anniversary, and the launch in 2011 of the young business professionals group known as Connect Carteret – A Young Professionals Network.

"Perhaps my fondest memory will be the successful application of Carteret County to be named an official 'Coast Guard Community,' which came to full fruition last week (February 25), because of the joy of accomplishment we all saw on the face of retired Chief Ira Lewis (age 97) of Harkers Island," Wagoner said.

Wagoner has represented the Chamber as a member of the Board of Directors of Allies for Cherry Point's Tomorrow (ACT) and the Board of Directors of the Carteret County Public School Foundation. He is a member of the Beaufort Olde Towne Rotary Club.

The Wagoners are members of First United Methodist Church in Morehead City. The couple has two sons: Jeff of Lynchburg, Va.; and Scott of Greenville, N.C., (wife Ashleigh and daughter Avaleigh).

Wagoner earned his bachelor's degree from Michigan State University and is an Eagle Scout.

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801 Arendell Street,
Suite 1
Morehead City, NC
28557
Call (252) 726-6350