



**Nutrition · Education · Connection**

General Newsletter

## **“Food for Thought”**

January 2026

.....

### **Message from the Executive Director**

*We hope you and your families had a wonderful holiday season and kickoff to a New Year. 2026 marks the beginning of the 9th year of dreaming, planning and working on fueling The Filling Station mission. Every year I choose 3 new words as a filter for the mission outlined in our Strategic Plan. 2026 WORDS: Adventure, Curious, Present*

*As the Filling Station develops, we must stay curious about ways to be present on the 2026 adventure. So much to look forward to this New Year! Before we say goodbye to 2025, let's CELEBRATE all great work in the last 2 months. 2025 3 Words: Celebrate, Laugh, Rest. We encountered lots of challenges completing a major building project which reminded us to laugh and rest along the way.*

#### **What happened in November and December?**

- Served over 1658 households from the Food Pantry
- 956 Volunteer hours (food pantry, admin and facilities)
  - Leadership Jones - 14 Graduates
- Ham Radio Course - 25 new licensed technicians
- Sponsored Angels with the Salvation Army and Operation Christmas Child
- Nutrition Education Classes held with N.C Cooperative Extension
- Partnership with Pollocksville Elementary School - Lighthouse Leadership Project
- Participated in Giving Tuesday Event with New Bern Chamber of Commerce
- Christmas on Main Event serving cocoa, coffee and letters to Santa
  - Awarded a grant from International Paper \$6000
  - Awarded a grant from Bate Foundation \$20,000
  - Awarded a grant from Weyerhaeuser \$3000
- Achieved our goal to raise \$70,000 during “A Perfect 10” event - thank you Anonymous Trust for challenging us each year.



*What is the magic that allows an organization to thrive? I often get this question when I talk with people about the mission at The Filling Station. Miracles are often misinterpreted as “magic”. 2025 has been a year of miracles. Miracles comes from a mindset of “service above self”. Our most valuable asset is our volunteer family. They bring heart, joy and love as we connect and serve. It seems as if the energy is endless. And, then I am reminded of our logo which features a flame. When we find a need and fill it for our neighbors, we tap into the fuel that keeps the flame going. The Board of Directors and I are deeply grateful for the privilege to carry out this great work. Thank you for the continued love, prayer and support in this county wide mission.*

**Mary Ann LeRay**  
Executive Director since 2021

#### **Mary Ann LeRay**

Executive Director  
The Filling Station, Inc.  
"Nutrition, Education and Connection"  
[fillingstation1075.com](http://fillingstation1075.com)  
252-224-1127

To book a tour or speaking engagement, please  
email: [fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com](mailto:fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com)



**Continued on p.2**



**Save the DATES and IMPACT**

***Spring Leadership Jones Conference***

March 19 & 20, 2026

Jones County Civic Center

Registration begins late January - Visit [fillingstation1075.com](https://fillingstation1075.com) to register and have the opportunity to sponsor this conference.

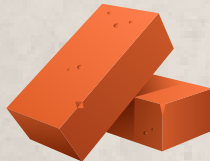
***Neuse River Bridge Run***

May 1 & 2, 2026

Riverfront Convention Center

Register today: [bridgerun.org](https://bridgerun.org)

Sponsorships available



***Leave a Legacy Campaign 2026***

<https://www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/fillingstation1075>

***Testimonial from a client at the Food Pantry***

"Everyone I know who received food from The Filling Station commented on how much help the food was for Christmas cooking. The huge baking hen and delicious ham was wonderful plus stuffing and veggies was great. A great big Christmas thank you and please enjoy the New Year".

***Testimonial from a graduate of Leadership Jones***

"My pastor recommended I get involved in serving at The Filling Station. I accepted the opportunity to be part of Leadership Jones, now I serve on the Board of Directors".

We love hearing stories of IMPACT.

***Nutrition, Education and Connection for the residents of Jones County.***

***Christ Focused  
Equip  
Empower  
Encourage  
Educate***

*(2022-2025 Strategic Plan)*



**Nutrition · Education · Connection**



## A Perfect 10 Event

*Raising awareness and funds for the mission*

**Thank you to all the sponsors, volunteers, and partners who made this a great event. A special thank you to Karen Plaster for your vision of "Jones County A Perfect 10" 5 years ago. Over \$248,000 has been raised over the last 5 years.**





# A Perfect 10 Event

*Raising awareness and funds for the mission*



**Nutrition · Education · Connection**





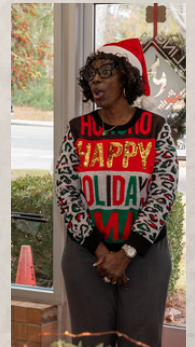


# Volunteer Appreciation



Thank you Posh Nosh Catering

All volunteers who have served The Filling Station 25 hours or more in 2025 were invited to a Volunteer Appreciation Christmas party in December. Such a treat to honor those who serve 48 weeks out of the year...many of them serving over 200 hours in 2025.



Bonita Simmons with TRIED BY FIRE INC. singing the most heartfelt Christmas message.



*Thank you!*



Great to welcome Amy Beros, President/CEO of Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina for a tour and to be able to share her thanks for our work in Jones County NC.



Pictured left to right: Johnny Jernigan, BCBS, Sheron Bender, Vice Chair of the Board, Amy Beros, CEO of Food Bank of CENC Mary Ann LeRay, ED of The Filling Station



Jimmy Bender, Food Pantry Director served over 500 hours this year.



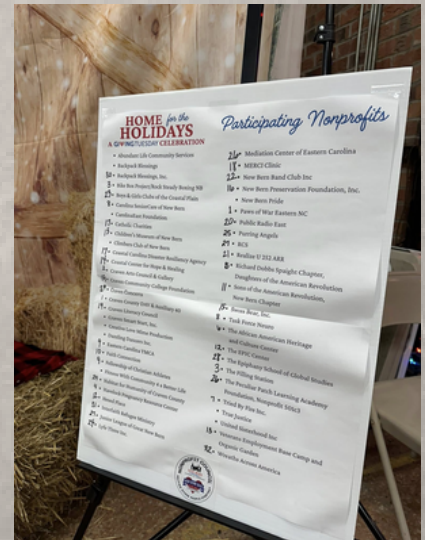


# Giving Tuesday

## GIVING TUESDAY



Over 50  
nonprofits  
gathered to  
celebrate  
Giving Tuesday  
at the New Bern  
Farmers Market.





## Leadership Jones - Cohort 6



*Congratulations*

Pictured left to right: Chad Day, Veterans Services, Sheila Garner, Board of Elections, Kristy Kulberg, CCDRA, Sheila Meadows, Board Member Representative, Lauren Wargo, Duke Energy, Kenneth Dillihunt, community member



Thank you Town of Pollocksville and Mayor Jay Bender for your continued partnership.



*Empowering, equipping, & encouraging those who desire to live with excellence and invest their work in Jones County NC. A 3 year project that began in 2022 with a goal of 30 graduates.*

*With the leadership of Theresa Lee, we have had 50 graduates to successfully complete this grassroots leadership program!*



Want to be a part of **Leadership Jones**?

Click [here](#) for details.





## The Power of Partnerships



The Filling Station has partnered with Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina since 2017 and together, we are impacting Jones County NC.



Thank you Governor Josh Stein and Lt. Governor Rachel Hunt for the investment.



Thank you Frogley Chiropractic for "Cans for Care" benefiting the Food Pantry at The Filling Station. Great to partner with organizations of excellence who strive to educate the community on the power of chiropractic care.

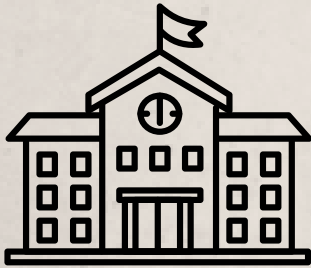


The Filling Station Shines Green for Veterans!





## The Power of Partnerships



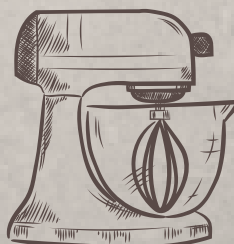
Pollocksville Elementary  
School  
Lighthouse Leadership  
Team



Partnering with Pollocksville Elementary -  
Lighthouse Leadership Team  
Baking Christmas goodies in the  
Teaching Kitchen with Sarah Ware, NC  
Cooperative Extension, to deliver to  
homebound neighbors.



Thank you to NC Cooperative  
Extension for partnering to  
bring great nutrition education  
to the teaching kitchen.





## Christmas on Main

Pollocksville Rotary Club did an awesome job bringing another amazing event to the Town of Pollocksville  
Rain stopped just in time for the parade! Santa visited with lots of folks at The Filling Station and  
throughout Main Street.



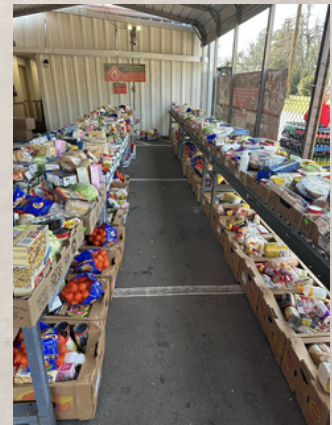




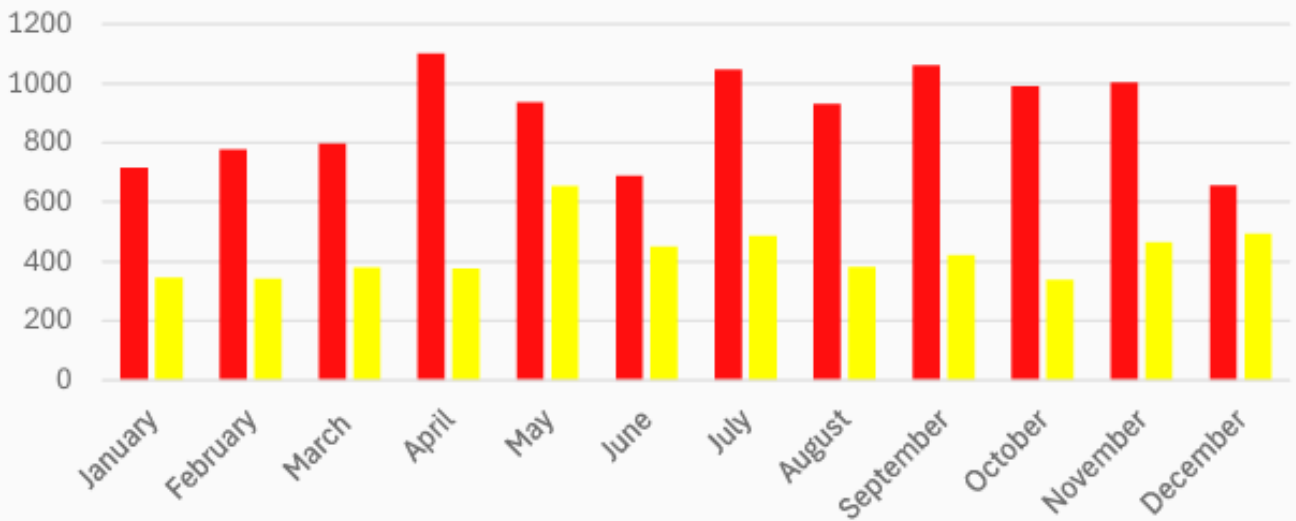
# Food Pantry

PANTRY

OPEN



January - December 2025



Food Pantry was closed for 2 weeks in December for Christmas

■ Households served ■ Volunteer Hours



## Inside the Recording Studio



Check out the  
**NEW Filling Station**  
**podcasts.**



In our in-house Recording Studio, we interview partners, supporters and volunteers who are part of building The Filling Station.

Visit the Filling Station [website](#) to view all the episodes.



### Episode #19: Community Updates with Mary Ann



What's New at The Filling Station: In this special update episode of The Filling Station Podcast, host Mary Ann LeRay shares the latest happenings, events, and initiatives taking place at The Filling Station in Jones County. From a new Blue Cross Blue Shield-funded check-in system at the food pantry to major upcoming events like Jones County: A Perfect 10, the Veterans Luncheon, and Leadership Jones Cohort 6 Graduation, Mary Ann walks listeners through a season filled with gratitude, celebration, and community connection.

### Episode #20: Jeff Mallard

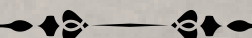


Mary Ann LeRay sits down with Jeff Mallard, President of the Pollocksville Rotary Club, to talk about community, service, and the magic of small-town Christmas. Jeff shares his journey from growing up in Pollocksville to a career that took him across the South, overseas to Greece, Macedonia, Bulgaria, and Turkey—before eventually bringing him right back home to Pollocksville. Now retired, he's investing his time and energy into Rotary and the town that shaped him.

### Episode #21: Jones County Veteran Services



Mary Ann LeRay sits down with Nicole Jenkins, Veteran Service Officer, and Chad Day, Veteran Services Driver, to explore the vital work happening through Jones County Veteran Services. With roughly 10% of Jones County's population being veterans—and even more when you include their families, spouses, and caretakers—this office serves as a critical bridge between our local heroes and the resources they've earned. Nicole and Chad shine a light on what makes Jones County's approach unique, particularly in our rural setting.





## Leave a Legacy Campaign



<https://www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/fillingstation1075>

**"Leave a Legacy"** by purchasing a brick along the sidewalk leading to the front doors of The Filling Station

This sidewalk represents the many footsteps of volunteers, donors, clients, partners, pastors and elected officials.

During this special campaign, you have the opportunity to honor those who have made this mission possible.

**4x8 Brick is \$100 & 8x8 Brick is \$225.00**

<https://www.bricksrus.com/donorsite/fillingstation1075>

For more information: please call 252-224-1127 or email: [fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com](mailto:fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com)



**Save The Date**

# LEADERSHIP JONES

...A GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY

## SAVE THE DATES.....

**Spring Leadership Conference**  
**March 19, 20, 2026**  
**Jones County Civic Center**



**Fall Leadership Jones**  
**September 2026**  
**Cohort 7**

Registration opens late January  
[www.fillingstation1075.com](http://www.fillingstation1075.com)





# Amateur Radio License Class



## AMATEUR RADIO LICENSE CLASS

The Filling Station is in partnership with the New Bern Amateur Radio Club and Jones County Emergency Management will be holding a Ham Radio Licensing Class for the General Class License. It is recommended that students hold a current Technician Class License. The Class is open to all ages and will prepare the students for the FCC Elements 3 exam, General Class.

As with all current FCC Amateur Radio License there is NO Morse Code required. The course covers regulations, operating practices, electronic theory and safety. The class is FREE but the student should purchase the ARRL Ham Radio License Manual 10th Edition Study Guide for the General Class license. The Study Guide can be purchased from Amazon or the ARRL book store at [www.arrl.org](http://www.arrl.org).

### February 7th

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 1. Chapter 1: Introduction  
Chapter 2: Procedures & Practices

### February 14th

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 2. Chapter 3: Rules & Regulations and  
Chapter 4: Components & Circuits Parts 4-1

### February 21st

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 3. Chapter 4: Components & Circuits  
Parts 4-2 and 4-3

### February 28th

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 4. Chapter 5: Radio Signals & Equipment

### March 7th

Instructor: Albert Lioon, N4ZFG  
Session 5. Chapter 6: Digital Mode

### March 14th

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 6. Chapter 7: Antennas  
Session 7. Chapter 8: Propagation

### March 21st

Instructor: Pete Wene, WA5T  
Session 8. Chapter 9: Electrical & RF Safety

### March 21st (Saturday)

#### Test Session

~ 11 to 11:30 am, Testing Location TBD

FCC Sanctioned Testing

\$15 for the test – Dictated by the ARRL

No money due to the FCC for an upgrade to General.



Please scan this QR Code or go to this link to Pre-Register for the Course:





STRETCH IT, STORE IT, SAVE IT SERIES

# FREEZER CLASS

SAVE TIME AND MONEY BY LEARNING HOW TO PREPARE HEALTHY MEALS IN ADVANCE!



## ON SLOW:

JAN 15TH, 2026 | 10 AM - 1 PM  
234 NW CORRIDOR BLVD, JACKSONVILLE NC

## JONES:

JAN 22ND, 2026 | 10 AM - 1 PM  
221 MAIN STREET, POLLOCKSVILLE, NC

## QUESTIONS?

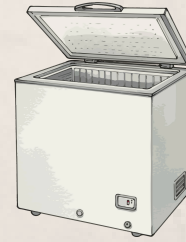
EMAIL SARAH\_WARE@NCSU.EDU  
OR CALL 910-455-5873

## REGISTER HERE:

GO.NCSU.EDU/STRETCHSAVESTORE



N.C. Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity provider. In compliance with the Americans with Disabilities Act, N.C. Cooperative Extension will honor requests for reasonable accommodations made by individuals with disabilities. Please direct accommodation requests to: sarah\_ware@ncsu.edu or 910-455-5873. Requests can be served more effectively if notice is provided at least 10 days before the event.



"Stretch It, Store It, Save It" continues this January with our "Freezer Meals" class!

Join us to learn how to save time and money by prepping healthy meals in advance!

[Click here to register](https://go.ncsu.edu/stretchsavestore) → [go.ncsu.edu/stretchsavestore](https://go.ncsu.edu/stretchsavestore)

- January 22nd from 10 am - 1 pm
- Cost \$15 (exact change or check ONLY)
- 221 Main Street, Pollocksville, NC 28573

Questions? Email [sarah\\_ware@ncsu.edu](mailto:sarah_ware@ncsu.edu) or call 910-455-5873



## Free Income Tax Prep & Filing



### Volunteer Income Tax Assistance FREE Income Tax Prep and Filing

#### NEW BERN

VITA site

Christ Episcopal Harrison Center, 311 Middle St. (next to Bank of the Arts)  
Phone: 252-772-5245 HOURS: 9AM - 3PM  
OPEN: Mondays & Tuesdays - February 2 - April 15 (except Feb 17)  
NO APPOINTMENTS: WALK-IN & DROPOFFS ONLY

#### PAMLICO

VITA site

Pamlico County Senior Center, 800 Main St. Alliance  
Phone: 252-745-3488 HOURS: 9AM - 3PM (Wed)  
9AM - 1PM (Sat)  
OPEN: Wednesdays & Saturdays - February 4 - April 15  
NO APPOINTMENTS: WALK-IN & DROPOFFS ONLY

#### JONES CO.

VITA site

The Filling Station, 221 Main Street, Pollocksville  
Phone: 252-224-1127 HOURS: 9AM - 3PM (Sat)  
OPEN: February 21, March 21, and April 11 ONLY  
CALL FOR AN APPOINTMENT



You MUST bring all of the following that apply:

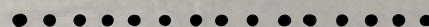
2024 Federal & NC Returns  
All 2025 W-2 forms from employers  
Valid Photo ID for taxpayer & spouse.  
Social Security Cards for EVERYONE on the return

1099 Forms for Social Security, retirement, unemployment, interest, dividends, gambling winnings. Form 1095A if receiving subsidized healthcare.

Receipts for mortgage interest, charitable donations, taxes, tuition, medical expenses

If you want direct deposit for your refund, you MUST bring a blank check for routing & account number verification. Deposit slips are UNACCEPTABLE.

More Info: [www.newbern vita.com](http://www.newbern vita.com)



May 1-2, 2026

SuperKids Fun Run  
5 K - 10 K  
1/2 Marathon

New Bern, NC  
Union Point Park and  
Riverfront Convention  
Center of Craven County







*Our mission is to assist with  
filling the unmet needs in the  
areas of nutrition, education and connection  
serving the residents of Jones County.*

**- Board Members -**

Chair: Bobby Darden  
Vice-Chair: Sheron Bender  
Treasurer: Estelle Surles  
Secretary: Emily Andrews

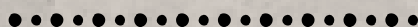
Ellis Banks  
Charley Jones  
Colby Jordan  
Ella McDaniel  
Michael Pretty  
Christopher Rogerson  
Kenneth Spivey  
Willie Smith  
Greg Thornburg  
Sheila Meadows  
Jeff Reynolds  
Alicia Gouge



Carol Mattocks, Board Advisor  
Theresa Lee, Consultant  
Mary Ann LeRay, Executive Director  
Holly Ladner, Editor

PO Box 222 221 Main Street  
Pollocksville, NC 28573  
252-224-1127

Email: [info@fillingstation1075.com](mailto:info@fillingstation1075.com)  
Website: <https://fillingstation1075.com>  
Facebook: [Facebook.com/FS1075](https://www.facebook.com/FS1075)



*The Filling Station is supported through Time, Talent  
and Treasure from our church partners.*



*church partners*

902 Church	Pollocksville
Christ Episcopal Church	Presbyterian Church
Christian Faith Assembly	Remnant Believers Church
Clinton Memorial	Shady Grove
Chapel AME Zion	Methodist Church
Coastal Carolina Church	Solid Rock Global
	Methodist Church
Cypress Creek	St. James AME Zion
Methodist Church	
Friendship Church	St. Matthews Church
	AME Zion
Garber Methodist Church	St. Pauls Catholic Church
Kinston First Pentecostal	St. Phillips Missionary
Holiness Church	Baptist Church
Lee's Chapel United	The Living Word
Methodist Church	Worship Center
Pollocksville Baptist Church	Triune Holiness Church
Pollocksville	Jacob's Well
Methodist Church	Christian Church

*Thank you for partnering!*

If you would like to be part of making difference,  
we invite you to scan the QR Code or visit:

[fillingstation1075.com/donate](https://fillingstation1075.com/donate)



The Filling Station, a dream born out of a long vacant, propane company building, opened its doors on August 28, 2017. Why the Filling Station name? During a walk-through of the building, someone noticed a red hazardous material warning sign with a flame and the number 1075, the DOT classification for propane. The group discovered that Psalm 107:5 read: "They were hungry and thirsty; their lives were slipping away." A new mission was launched and it was called "The Filling Station" to refer to the building's prior use as well as to its new purpose. Our mission is to assist with filling unmet needs in the areas of Nutrition, Education, and Connection serving the residents of Jones County.

