



Nutrition · Education · Connection

General Newsletter

“Food for Thought”

March 2026



Message from the Executive Director

Our THEME for 2026: Adventure, Curious, Present - Stay curious about the present and you will find yourself on an ADVENTURE!

One of our big projects for January was to create and deliver a comprehensive Annual Report for 2025 highlighting all those who make this mission possible. [2025 Annual Report](#).

After completing a 3-year project bringing Leadership Jones ...Grassroots Leadership Academy, we are hosting the Spring Grassroots Leadership Jones Conference March 19-20. All are welcome to attend. [REGISTER TODAY](#)

January was the kickoff for the Phytochemicals Pilot Project with N.C. Cooperative Extension led by Sarah Ware. 8 participants attended a 3-day session to learn more about how foods heal the body.

The Food Pantry continues to assist in meeting needs here in Jones County. Each week we are serving residents from Pollocksville, Trenton, Maysville, Comfort, Long Point and a few from surrounding counties. Partner agencies such as Jones County DSS, Jones County Schools and Coastal Women's Shelter make referrals to bridge gaps for clients. A recent data report shows only 6-8% of all households visit each time the food pantry is open and 35% of households visit once a month.

In February, Charley Jones, Board Member and myself attended the Institute of Emerging Issues Forum hosted by N.C. State University on the topic of WATER. We connected with many folks throughout the state of NC. [Click here for a recap of the strategies discussed: Strategies](#)

February was Heart Health Month highlighting our partnership with the American Heart Association. We hosted a MidDay Mingle for the New Bern Chamber of Commerce and over 40 people were in attendance. We are grateful to partner with N.C. Cooperative Extension, Food Bank and LifePlus to deliver nutrition education. For more information on LifePlus, visit: <https://www.lifeplusfoundation.org/>

“Bridging Communities” makes us stronger. We are ONLY 2 months away from the Neuse River Bridge Run which helps The Filling Station keep “running”. Over 718 runners have already registered and sponsorships are up 75% from last year. We are excited that Jones County Parks and Recreation is working with the students to get involved for their health and give back to local nonprofits. Thank you, David Mallard, Director of Jones County Recreation. [Click here to register to run or volunteer.](#)

To book a tour or speaking engagement, please email: fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com Thank you for the talent, time and treasure you sew into this mission of assisting in filling unmet needs here in Jones County. You make a difference.

Mary Ann LeRay
Executive Director since 2021

Mary Ann LeRay

Executive Director The Filling Station, Inc.

"Nutrition, Education and Connection"

fillingstation1075.com 252-224-1127 To

book a tour or speaking engagement,

please

email: fsdirector@fillingstation1075.com



Continued on p.2



Upcoming Events



Leadership Jones Conference

March 19 -20, 2026

Jones County Civic Center

SIGN UP → Click [here](#) to register



Restore Women's Conference

April 18, 2026

Triune Holiness Church, Maysville

SIGN UP → Click [here](#) to register.

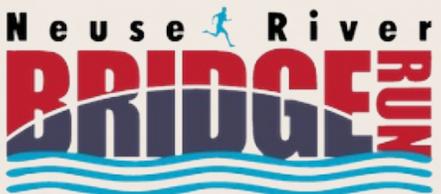


Veteran Coffee & Connections

April 14, 2026 10 am

The Filling Station, Pollocksville

SIGN UP → No registration needed



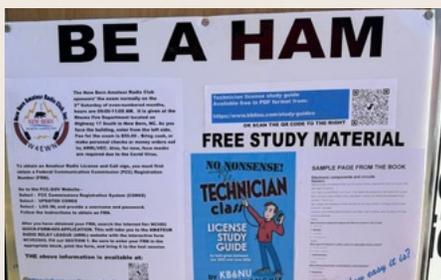
Neuse River Bridge Run



May 1 & 2, 2026

Riverfront Convention Center, New Bern

SIGN UP → Click [here](#) to register.
Sponsorships available



Be A Ham



Every Tuesday evening at 7 pm

All Ham Radio operators are invited

to connect by using their radio on frequency 146.610 PL 100.0

New Bern Amateur Radio Club Repeater: W4EWN



Leave a Legacy Campaign 2026

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

SIGN UP → Click [here](#) for more info.



Volunteer Training

Our commitment is to provide training and orientation for all volunteers here at The Filling Station.

Thank you Sheron Bender for leading the monthly training and offering a tour of the campus.



What those who attended our Orientation/Training in January had to say:

Q: What did you like most about orientation?

- A: *"All of it. Very professional, polished and well done. I found the history of the inception to be very interesting and inspiring! Psalm 107? 1075? Address 107? Come on NOW!"*
- A: *"Very impressive facility!"*

Q: What did you learn?

- A: *"I had no idea about the summer camp and leadership academy. The importance of tracking volunteer hours and how it impacts grant writing."*

Other comments:

"Newcomer to Eastern NC after 32 years in Austin, TX. I reside in Minnesott Beach. So impressed with this organization. The drive here is so trivial. So happy to help such a stellar organization that gives me hope for humanity!"

"Growing up in Jones County gives you a true sense of community. What a privilege to volunteer with a group of people who love the community."



Nutrition · Education · Connection



A Look Back



Jenkins Gas and Oil Company opened in 1967 at 221 Main St. Pollocksville, NC.

After many years of serving Eastern NC, the company was sold.

In January 2026, Bob and Carol Mattocks hosted a luncheon for Jenkins Gas and Oil employees and introduce them to The Filling Station mission.

Fun to reconnect, share stories and see how the 1075 propane business has been repurposed to fill unmet needs in Jones County NC based on Psalm 107:5.

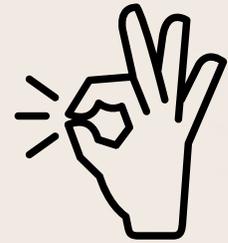


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A Perfect 10



Remember the Perfect 10 Raffle?

It was for a chance to win a 5-course prime rib dinner for you and 9 friends. The winner was Pollocksville Mayor, Jay Bender!



Mayor Bender has lots of friends, family, colleagues, or elected officials that he could have invited.

He instead asked the **TOP 10 Filling Station** volunteers who served the most hours in 1 year to dine with him. Each volunteer who attended the dinner serves over 200 hours or more a year.



Bobby Darden, board chair, and wife Betsy Garber Church provided the flower arrangement and beautiful salad.

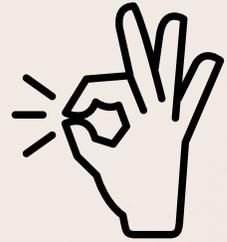


BIG thank you to Jeremy LeRay New Bern Web Design, LLC for all the photos





A Perfect 10



The Board of Directors along with the Perfect 10 Committee planned, cooked, and served this special meal. “What a treat to plan this beautiful event to “Serve those who serve others”.



Colby Jordan, chair of marketing committee, and restaurant owner Jordan's Smokehouse & Seafood prepared the shrimp and grits.



Greg Thornburg, P10 Chair and facilities chair from Solid Rock Global Methodist Church prepared appetizers of ahi tuna and secured a donation of pimento cheese dip from Cypress Hall Restaurant.



Thank you to Barbara Fraley from Pollockville Methodist Church who baked the yummy homemade bread.



Johnny Jernigan Blue Cross NC cooked the prime rib.



Karen Plaster, past board member and P10 co-chair, made sure her homegrown asparagus was part of the meal.

Additional Board Members serving:

Emily Andrews Cypress Creek Methodist Church

Ella McDaniel Shady Grove Church

Sheron Bender Pollockville Presbyterian Church

Estelle Surles Pollockville Baptist Church

Sheila Meadows Triune Holiness Church



Kenneth Spivey from Christian Faith Assembly shared a beautiful invocation.



The Power of Partnerships



Great to welcome Omar Gonzales from The Rotary Club of New Bern to present a check to The Filling Station.



Institute for Emerging Issues 2026 Carteret Community College Topic this year: WATER



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Great to see our friend Schumata Brown Town of Maysville sharing all the great things happening. Charley Jones, Board Member The Filling Station and P.J. Connelly Governor Josh Stein's office
Great to see Town of Pollocksville highlighted by Andy Fox, Coastal Dynamic Labs/NCSU in the keynote message.



The Power of Partnerships



“Bridging Communities Sponsors Reception”

What a great evening Tryon Riverfront Inn New Bern, Tapestry Collection by Hilton honoring sponsors for the 2026 Neuse River Bridge Run

Thank you Hearnes Jewelers and AlphaGraphics for co-hosting the reception.

Thank you City of New Bern, NC Government Jones County NC for your continued partnership in bringing this historic event to eastern NC Visit New Bern, North Carolina

Five organizations TWIN RIVERS YMCA

Mediation Center of Eastern Carolina

Craven Community College Foundation

Duffyfield Phoenix Project and The Filling Station working together to raise awareness and funds to bridge the gaps in our communities.

Save the Date May 1-2, 2026 New Bern-Craven County Convention & Visitors Center

Want to sponsor, create a team, volunteer?

Visit bridgerun.org to register



Photo credit New Bern Web Design, LLC



The Power of Partnerships



Snow of 2026 ❄️📡👷

Thank you to our friend and partner Darrell Bell Bell's Station, for capturing this photo to share with our followers.

For all the HAM radio operators out there, we house a local repeater using the 100 foot tower you see on campus.

New Bern Amateur Radio Club Repeater: W4EWN

Frequency 146.610 PL 100.0

Great resource we have built with the support of Duke Energy and partnership Jones County Emergency Services as a backup communication.

N.C. Commission on Volunteerism and Community Service



What an amazing day **Pollocksville Elementary School!** Community leaders were invited to hear more about how the Leader in Me program/ Franklin Covey is transforming the children, parents, and families. The Filling Station has been partnering with Jones County Public Schools providing a tutoring program and service opportunities.



The Power of Partnerships



New Bern Area Chamber of Commerce February Mid-Day Mingle



Thanks to all the chamber members and county leadership who attended.



Great to hear all that is happening with chamber members and their businesses and upcoming events.



Highlighting our partnership with American Heart Association - North Carolina Thank you Margaret Sharp



Thank you, Ed Jekel, for the amazing lunch.



Great to hear from Tharesa Lee on the upcoming Leadership Conference Register today.



The Power of Partnerships



Lee works to uplift the community

By Caramia Valentin
The Sun Journal
Feb 13, 2026

Tharesa Lee, a Jones County native, has lived in eastern North Carolina her entire life, where she works as an advocate and social entrepreneur.

With her consulting agency, Lee facilitates meetings, organizes board retreats, assists with strategic planning and provides leadership training.

Although Lee works with various entrepreneurs and businesses through her consulting agency, nonprofit work is her passion.

In an effort to instill passion for social entrepreneurship and community engagement in others, Lee has led various grassroots leadership academies, including Leadership Jones. Leadership Jones is a leadership academy comprised of four essential elements: community voices, generational leadership, social leadership and civic leadership.

The academy aims to assist upcoming and established leaders in honing their skills, gaining a deeper understanding of the community they serve, and working with local government and other organizations to create a more cohesive and stronger community. Leadership Jones is hosted at The Filling Station, with Lee working as a content creator and facilitator for the academy.

Since its inception in 2022, 43 people have graduated from the program among various cohorts.

“It was an honor to go back to Jones County,” Lee said. “That’s been my dream to go back and help in the place that helped me.”



Read the whole article here



The Power of Partnerships

How do you stay armed up for flu season? Thanks to Lifeply, one of our great partners, supporting us with Nutrition Education, we have the tools and knowledge on how to response and protected during this season.



Flu Season Immune products Video

This product training education video focuses specifically on immune support for flu/virus season.



All about Phytochemicals

Pilot Project from NC Cooperative Extension/Jones County



A Community Health Initiative

Resources available in English and Spanish.

Sarah Ware led a 3-day class on the importance of a PhytoFocus - a deep dive into understanding the colors of our food and the impact it delivers to healing our bodies.

More information: [Click here](#)



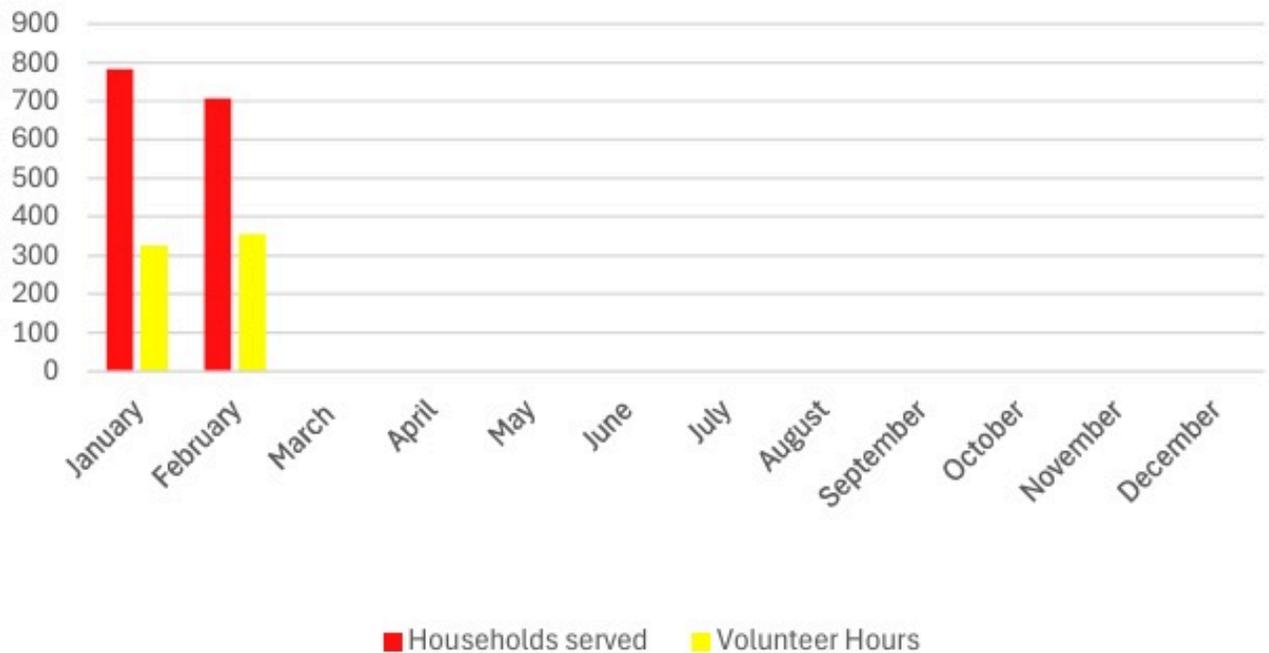
Food Pantry



A Filling Station
Supporter
presented this
RED hat to
our
Executive Director
to entertain the staff
and clients at the
Food Pantry.



January - December 2026



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 #23: Sheri Smith

Mary Ann LeRay welcomes Sheri Smith from Triune Holiness Church for a warm conversation about faith, service, and community partnership. Sheri reflects on her six-year tenure as a charter board member and two-term board secretary. She describes board service as one of the most meaningful experiences of her life—“like college without tests and homework”—because of the learning, leadership growth, and relationships formed along the way.



Episode #24: Ken Spivey

Mary Ann LeRay sits down with Kenneth Spivey, a board member of The Filling Station and a lifelong servant-leader whose story reflects the quiet power of commitment, humility, and community impact. Kenneth shares his journey from 20 years in the United States Marine Corps to a 24-year career with the Craven County Department of Social Services, where he worked closely with individuals and families in need, including mentoring people with disabilities. Though his roles have changed over time, his purpose has remained the same: to serve others.



Episode #25: Pollocksville Elementary Lighthouse Team

Mary Ann LeRay welcomes two special guests from Pollocksville Elementary School: Easton Cook, a fifth-grade student and member of the student Lighthouse team, and Megan Matticola, a first-year teacher and the school’s Lighthouse coordinator. Together, they share how the Lighthouse program is empowering students to discover their voice, develop leadership skills, and take meaningful ownership of their school community. Rooted in the Leader in Me framework and inspired by The Seven Habits of Highly Effective People, the program helps students apply timeless principles like responsibility, teamwork, and service in real, tangible ways.



Episode #25: David Mallard

Mary Ann LeRay sits down with David Mallard of Jones County Recreation to talk about health, wellness, and the power of community-wide events to create lasting impact. The conversation centers on the upcoming Neuse River Bridge Run, now in its sixth year, a signature community event that brings together local schools, families, volunteers, and businesses. David explains how elementary schools participate through run teams, how parents and chaperones support young runners, and how funds raised from the event come full circle—supporting initiatives like the annual back-to-school bash and other community needs.



Save The Date

LEADERSHIP JONES

...A GRASSROOTS LEADERSHIP ACADEMY



REGISTRATION NOW LIVE



Interactive workshops -Panel discussions -Practical skill-building, Cross-sector networking, etc.

Who Should Attend

Grassroots Leadership alumni, faith leaders, local government partners, nonprofit professionals, and emerging changemakers.

Register: \$50

<https://fillingstation1075.com/2026-spring-grassroots-leadership-academy-conference/>

REGISTRATION DEADLINE: March 10th - Lunch & snacks provided.

Spring Grassroots Leadership Academy Conference

**March 19- 8:30am -4:00pm
March 20- 8:30am- Noon**

**Jones County Civic Center
832 NC- 58, Trenton NC**

**FMI: THARESA LEE @252-349-6212 OR
MARYANN LERAY @252-224-1127**

SPONSORED BY:



IN PARTNERSHIP WITH



Save The Date

Tax Assistance here in Jones County NC

Dates: March 21 and April 11

Call for an appointment: 252-224-1127

Leave your name, number and preferred date for appt.

Thank you, New Bern VITA for your continued partnership.



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

Valid Photo ID for taxpayer & spouse.

All 2025 W-2 forms from employers

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.newbernvita.com





Save The Date



Looking for a place to connect with fellow veterans?

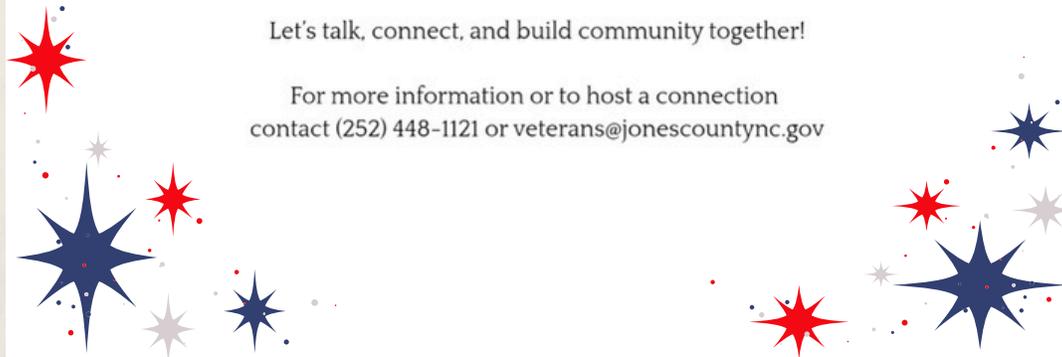
Come join us for Coffee and Connections where veterans can share their experiences, connect with others who understand, and learn how we can offer support. Whether you are seeking camaraderie, resources, or just a great cup of coffee, we've got a seat for you!

**The Filling Station
221 Main Street
Pollocksville
April 14th
10:00 am - 11:00 am**

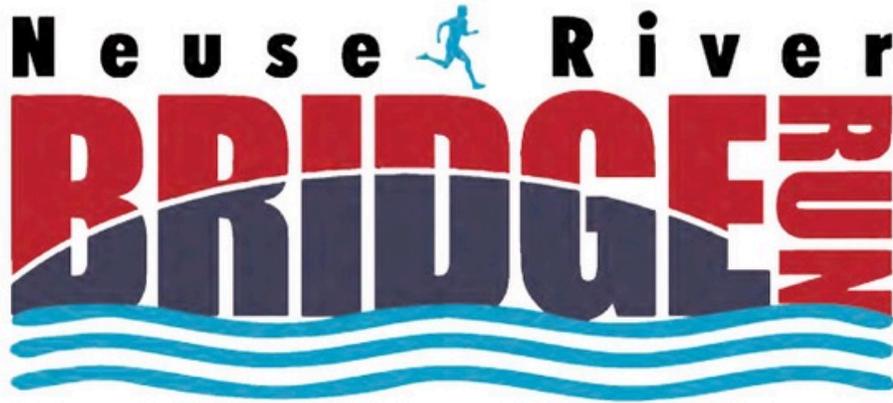
Alternate locations may arise. Notification will be posted on our Facebook page and the Jones County website.

Let's talk, connect, and build community together!

For more information or to host a connection contact (252) 448-1121 or veterans@jonescountync.gov



Save The Date



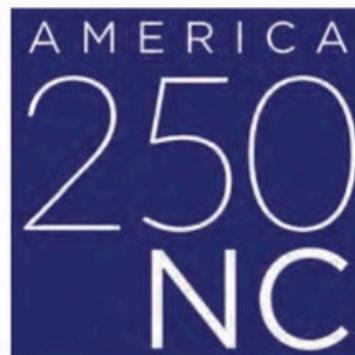
May 1-2, 2026

SuperKids Fun Run

5 K - 10 K

1/2 Marathon

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



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





Amateur Radio License Class



The General License Class is full for Spring 2026!

Thank you to Pete Wene, instructor for Ham Radio Education. This education is possible by partnering with New Bern Amateur Radio Club and Jones County Emergency Services.

HAM RADIO...
 ...Getting the Message Through
 for your Family & Community!

When your Cell Phones Won't Work... Our Radio's Will!

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.

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 Lioen, 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:





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

-
- Mary Ann LeRay, Executive Director
 - Marcy Hoffman, Administrative Coordinator
 - Ed Jekel, Facilities Manager
 - Jimmy Bender, Food Pantry Director
 - Geraldine Eubanks, Volunteer Coordinator

-
- Carol Mattocks, Board Advisor
 - Theresa Lee, Consultant
 - Holly Ladner, Editor

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

Email: 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.



FILLING STATION

church partners

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



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.

