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### **Region 9 CTG Project Strengthens Relationships in the Northeast**

Communities in Region 9 have been transforming notably since the inception of the Community Transformation Grant Project in the northeastern section of the state. Over \$417,000 has been received by local government and not-for-profit organizations through the funding proposal process that is administered by the CTG-Project regional coordinators and the local health directors, ultimately reaching the over 321,000 people of Region 9. Through the expertise of the contracted strategic planning consultant, the contracted planning consultant, and three communication leads, Region 9 has maintained its direction. The fiscal acumen of the Strategic Leadership Team with input from the Fiscal Lead has been valued at every turn in the grant award cycles, resulting in solid commitments from our partners.

Fifteen counties strong, Region 9 boasts one new tobacco-free policy for Northampton County and one new tobacco-free policy for the municipality of Ahoskie, one new tobacco-free parks policy for Hertford County, as well as one new indoor smoke-free policy for ten public places known as the The Wash House Laundromats in the east. Five church grounds have become tobacco-free as well as the grounds of the Edgecombe County Human Services Department since 2012. Headway has been evidenced in achieving 100% tobacco-free status in governmental buildings throughout Region 9.

The northeastern counties have established two farmers markets in Hertford and Northampton counties, while two additional farmers markets and roadside stands are in development in Edgecombe and Pasquotank, with one enhanced Community-Supported Agriculture program in Pasquotank, and seven enhanced farmers markets and roadside stands. In addition to farmers markets, roadside stands, and CSA enhancements, Region 9 has also supported "Footprints to the Farmers' Market," a program in Edgecombe County that brought together the Edgecombe County Health Department, the town of Tarboro, NC Cooperative Extension, local government partners and the community to stencil 'footprints' in downtown Tarboro leading to the Tarboro-Edgecombe Farmers Market.

Communities and neighborhoods will be the benefactors of the three new and/or revised joint use agreements in Gates, Washington, and Hyde counties and the two new joint use agreements in Dare and Edgecombe counties that are being developed. Martin County celebrated their new comprehensive land use plan with health considerations (elements) with its communities as the process was shared with all Martin municipalities in an open forum. Recently, six counties were awarded funding for land use and allied plans with health elements. *The Guidebook on Local Planning for Healthy Communities*, a joint partnership through Region 9 funding, the Northeastern Regional Office of the Division of Community Assistance, NC Department of Commerce, and East Carolina University's Urban and Regional Planning program, will have practical application in our rural communities across the state.

Making the healthier choice the easier choice is the mantra of Region 9 as we collaborate with Eastern AHEC and Area L along with Region 10 CTG Project staff to increase the number of healthcare providers implementing Quality Improvement systems in the management of high blood pressure and high cholesterol, as well as tobacco use screening, referral, and treatment as existing community resources are aligned with the individual patient's needs in the referral process. The Clinical Preventive Services regional team continues to communicate with regard to these strategies and interventions.

Partnerships abound and existing relationships are being strengthened as new ones are formed. Region 9 welcomes the opportunity to work with our communities to improve the health behavior of all ages by empowering people to make informed health-related decisions.