From: Rose Williams, NC League of Municipalities
To: Rep. Mike Clampitt
Subject: League Bulletin, Jan. 22, 2021
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Legislative Bulletin

Jan. 22, 2021 | NCLM.org

The Weekly Recap

WHAT HAPPENED: The presidential inauguration and the essentially immediate raft of executive orders on subjects from foreclosure moratoria to counting undocumented residents in the 2020 Census were clearly the attention-getters, but there was plenty of homecourt news for cities and towns and their efforts together.

WHAT IT MEANS: Notably, North Carolina's municipalities have selected their shared advocacy goals for the 2021-22 session. Join us Jan. 27 for a special edition of Advancing

Advocacy, where we'll unveil these goals. How we collectively work to achieve them will be crucial when it comes to addressing so many of the issues that have faced our communities in 2020 and now in 2021. In related news, you'll find below in this Bulletin a save-the-date for our annual Town & State Social -- bringing municipal leaders and state legislators together for bread-breaking and discussion of issues -- coming to you in virtual fashion this time around.

ON TAP: The 2021 legislative session kicked off ceremoniously last week, but per a brief break lawmakers are now on (part of the routine for the start of the General Assembly in any odd-numbered-year), the substantive work isn't happening yet. That will change on Jan. 27, when the chambers are scheduled to reassemble.

THE SKINNY: 2021 is already in full swing, with a calendar of important happenings. Read on for the details as we embark on the work ahead as one.

Join Us For 'Advancing Advocacy,' Unveiling 2021-22 Municipal Advocacy Goals

Carl

2019 NCLM file photo by Ben Brown.

The past year has seen unprecedented challenges for North Carolina cities and towns. With a new year upon us and a new session of the North Carolina General Assembly ahead, many of those challenges remain.

League-member cities and towns should join us on Wednesday, Jan. 27 at 2 p.m. for the first *Advancing Advocacy* session of 2021 as we unveil the 2021-22 Municipal Advocacy Goals, as selected by you, the membership of the N.C. League of Municipalities. Register for this free, virtual information session.

These policy goals, and how we collectively work to achieve them, will be crucial when it comes to addressing so many of the issues that have faced us in 2020 and now in 2021. NCLM's Public & Government Affairs staff will discuss all of the new Municipal Advocacy Goals, the political realities surrounding each, and strategies for how we might achieve these goals. We also will answer your questions and discuss building grassroots support for municipal priorities.

Join in for this important session of *Advancing Advocacy*, all from the convenience of your office or home.

SAVE THE DATE: Virtual Town & State Social

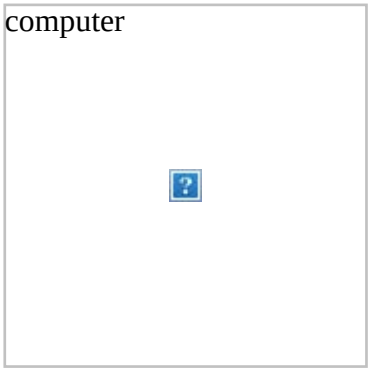
TSD

The 2019 Town & State Dinner was a packed success for municipalities and relationship-building. File photo by Ben Brown.

Join us for a special evening on **Wednesday, March 3 at 5 p.m.** to celebrate our annual Town & State Social, this time in a virtual format. Though we wish we could gather in person, the opportunity presented by the Town & State Social remains the same as previous in-person iterations of the event. This is a valuable chance for our local leaders and state legislators to meet, interact, and hear from one another regarding the pressing issues facing our cities and towns. We will also be exploring NCLM's Municipal Advocacy Goals, as adopted by you, and look at how they intersect with the challenges facing your city or town.

This won't be just another Zoom meeting. Be ready for an engaging and fun evening, full of entertaining and valuable segments that, by evening's end, will help us in "Working As One, Advancing All." Registration information will be provided shortly. For now, please save the date. We look forward to seeing you there!

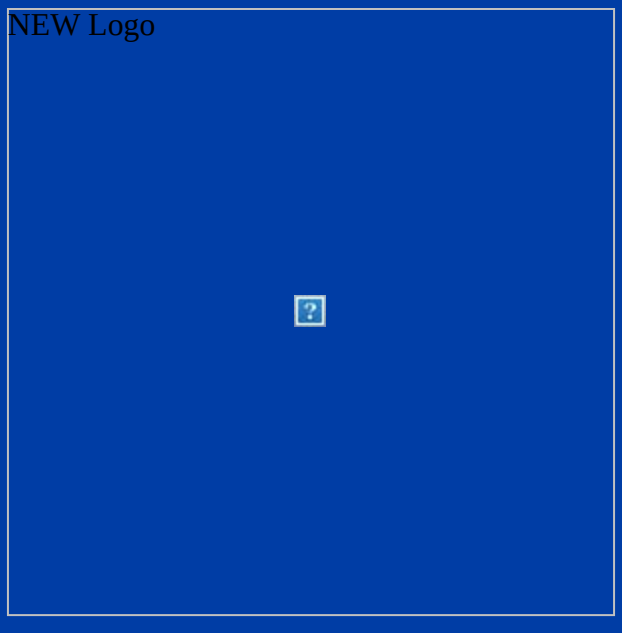
City Email Account Collects Complaints About Suddenlink Internet



As several communities report poor internet service from provider Suddenlink in a time when remote communications and web-based services are more important than ever, one local government has set up an email account specifically to collect the complaints of residents and businesses. “The number of complaints we have on register is overwhelming,” said Mayor Dana Outlaw of New Bern, whose government received praise from locals for launching the email account about the Suddenlink problems, according to WCTI News Channel 12. “It’s constantly shutting off and coming back on again, shutting off and coming back on,” one resident and business owner said of the Suddenlink service, adding: “Painful … it’s just pure hard to get them to do what I pay them to do which is have my service.”

New Bern is one of many communities reporting frustrations with Suddenlink for inadequate internet service, and they’ve taken the issue to State Attorney General Josh Stein requesting investigation. Winterville is the latest to join the efforts. A report in the local Standard newspaper listed the problems: “escalating cost, long and frequent outages, poor communications in response to outages, failure to keep equipment in good working condition, temporary fixes, poor customers service, lack of availability and lower-than-advertised internet speeds.” A letter from the town to the attorney general points out that COVID-19 “has exposed the broad scope of the problems” as reliable internet service becomes increasingly important.

Municipalities are unable to effectively resolve the issue themselves without enabling action from the General Assembly along the lines of the FIBER NC Act, which would allow them to partner with internet providers for reliable high-speed service.



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