

PITT
COUNTY

AFRICAN
AMERICAN CAUCUS

NOVEMBER 25

NEWSLETTER

HAPPY HOLIDAYS!

As we gather in gratitude this Thanksgiving season, the Pitt County African American Caucus extends heartfelt appreciation to every volunteer, supporter, and community partner who helped make this year's municipal elections a success. This cycle demonstrated what is possible when unity and purpose come together. Our collective efforts uplifted voter engagement across Pitt County, contributing to a notable increase in Democratic turnout, proof that when we stand together, we move our community forward.

In this month's newsletter, you'll find:

- A Reflection on the 2025 Municipal Election
- Data and Insights on Voter Turnout
- Post-Election Next Steps
- Community Spotlights

As we look ahead, your involvement is more important than ever. We invite every reader to take the next step by becoming a member of the Pitt County African American Caucus. Membership strengthens our advocacy, expands our impact, and ensures that African American voices continue to shape policy, leadership, and opportunity across our county. If you believe in organizing, empowerment, and collective progress, this is your place.

This Thanksgiving, we are grateful not only for what we've achieved but for the community that makes this work possible. Together, we will continue to build, uplift, and ensure that every voice is heard.

Unity is our strength, and progress is our path forward.

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Unity is the Power in Community!

By: Shemeka Banks
Greenville, NC

“When we come together, we win together.” That phrase has never felt more true than after the recent Pitt County municipal elections. This year’s race demonstrated the power of collective action—and also reminded us of where our unity must grow.

A Surge in Participation

Across Pitt County, voter turnout soared in this election cycle. Nearly 8,000 people cast their ballots during early voting between October 16 and November 1, according to the Pitt County Board of Elections, a remarkable increase from only 4,397 early votes in the 2023 municipal election.

On Election Day itself, the numbers remained strong: by 4 p.m., 6,804 voters had already turned out—compared to 5,205 at that same time in 2023. By the end of the day, over 10,000 residents had voted, a significant boost from previous years.

Pitt County’s Board of Elections director, Dave Davis, commented on the improved turnout, noting both the early-voting surge and a steady flow of voters on Election Day. For many, the message was clear: local government matters—and people showed up.

The Greenville Mayoral Race

In Greenville, our caucus threw its full support behind Mildred Atkinson Council, a candidate we believe was the most qualified for mayor. Council is not just a candidate—she’s a deeply experienced public servant, having served on City Council from 1987 to 2009, as mayor pro tem multiple times, and on the Pitt County Board of Education.

Despite her impressive record and the grassroots energy behind her campaign, she was outvoted by incumbent P.J. Connelly, who won re-election by 1262 votes. It was a hard-fought race, and many in our community believed Council was the candidate best suited to lead Greenville forward. We share in the disappointment that she did not receive enough support to carry the victory.

We supported her because we believe in her vision for a Greenville where every voice is heard and leadership serves the entire community. Throughout the campaign, she spoke passionately about being “everybody’s mayor,” reflecting values that resonate across ages and races.

Her loss is disappointing, but it reminds us of the importance of turning unity into consistent action. While we hoped for a different outcome, we remain committed to building stronger connections, expanding engagement, and organizing more effectively for future victories.

A Meaningful Democratic Win Through Representation

Despite the mayor’s race outcome, this election delivered a significant Democratic achievement: a strengthened Democratic-led City Council. Thanks to increased voter turnout, Democrats now hold a working majority—an outcome that will shape policy, oversight, and progress in the years ahead.

Arjenae Jones (District 1), Tonya Foreman (District 2), Portia Willis (At-Large), Matthew Scully (District 4), and others on the Pitt County Democratic slate secured key wins. These victories ensure that leadership aligned with our community’s priorities has real influence, since the council—not the mayor—holds the power to vote on policy. This is more than winning seats; it’s positioning our community to drive meaningful change in infrastructure, equity, safety, and development.



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What This Means for The Caucus

The 11% rise in Democratic voter engagement was no accident. It was the result of grassroots work, door-knocking, phone-banking, and strong community leadership. The commitment of Mr. Tann, Mrs. Blackburn, Ms. Foreman, Ms. Jones, Ms. Willis, and Mrs. Council played a key role in energizing voters and driving turnout.

Still, the mayoral race reminds us that unity of effort must be matched by unity of support. Strong candidates like Mildred Council deserve consistent backing, and our goal must be to turn collective energy into collective wins!



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Why Local Engagement Matters

Local elections are the backbone of our communities. While national elections often get the spotlight, it's city councils, school boards, and other local offices that directly shape our daily lives, from public safety and infrastructure to education, economic development, and health services. Yet, many residents underestimate their importance.

The recent elections in Pitt County underscore a critical point: voter education and mobilization are essential. Many qualified and experienced candidates, like those running for City Council, rely on an informed electorate to secure victories. When residents don't fully understand how local government works or fail to participate the outcomes can mean that the most qualified leaders are not in office.

This is why civic education must extend beyond the classroom and into the community. It's not just about teaching children to be future voters; adults also need to understand how city council decisions, budget allocations, zoning laws, and local ordinances impact their neighborhoods, schools, and quality of life. Knowing your candidates, understanding their platforms, and engaging in discussions about issues are crucial steps to ensure that leadership reflects the community's needs.

In short, local engagement matters at every level. It empowers individuals, strengthens communities, and builds a future where informed, active citizens drive meaningful change. By educating ourselves and others, registering and mobilizing voters, and understanding the candidates and issues, we can ensure that Pitt County thrives under leaders who are prepared, qualified, and committed to serving ALL residents.

SPOTLIGHT



Celebrating Our Local Leaders

This month, we shine a light on our local leaders, past, present, and future, champions of civic engagement and community service.

Our leaders have gone above and beyond, from organizing voter outreach to fostering collaboration across neighborhoods to meet the needs of the people. They remind us that real change happens when individuals bring their skills and dedication to a shared mission.

We encourage every member to reach out, learn from their experiences, and continue the work of building a stronger, more unified Pitt County.

IN ALL
Things
GIVE
Thanks

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A Word from the President: Unity Produces Progress – Now Let's Build on It

The recent increase in voter turnout for Democrats in Pitt County is a powerful reminder of what happens when unity meets purpose. I am deeply grateful for the leadership and collaboration of Mr. Tann, Mrs. Blackburn, Ms. Foreman, Ms. Jones, Ms. Willis, and Mrs. Council. Because of their dedication and teamwork, voter participation rose by 11%, proving that when we come together, we truly win together.

At the same time, the recent Greenville mayoral race highlighted the challenges we still face. Our city had one of the most qualified candidates for mayor in recent memory, yet we fell short—not due to a lack of potential, but because consistent unity was missing. Despite this, Greenville continues to benefit from a Democratic-led City Council, which ensures that our community's priorities remain at the forefront.

Now is the time for us, as Democrats, to move from the idea of unity to the action of unity. It's not enough to talk about working together; we must organize, support, and stand behind our candidates. Let's build on this momentum, strengthen our partnerships, and ensure Pitt County continues to shine as a beacon of Democratic excellence.

I am grateful for every individual who made calls, knocked on doors, and kept the vision alive. Together, let us carry this energy forward and achieve the greatness that Pitt County Democrats are capable of.

– William C. Shiver
President, Pitt County African-American Caucus

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