



Updated: September 21, 2006 at 17:38 pm

It's Your Life. Read All About It.

[Front Page](#)

[Print this Page](#) | [Email to a friend](#) | [Email the News Editor](#)

[News](#)

WRAL Forum Examines Issues

[Community Calendar](#)

BY KATHERINE EVANS: SPECIAL TO THE PILOT

[Communities](#)

Commentary on this story on [Thursday's Headlines Podcast](#) .

[Columnists](#)

Raleigh-based television station WRAL will feature Moore County as part of its WRAListens series.

[Public Records](#)

[Business](#)

The news crew filmed a group discussion among nine community leaders at Sandhills Community College on Wednesday.

[Opinion](#)

[Story continues below](#)

[Sports](#)

advertisement

[Obituaries](#)

[Sandhills Scene](#)

[Extra](#)

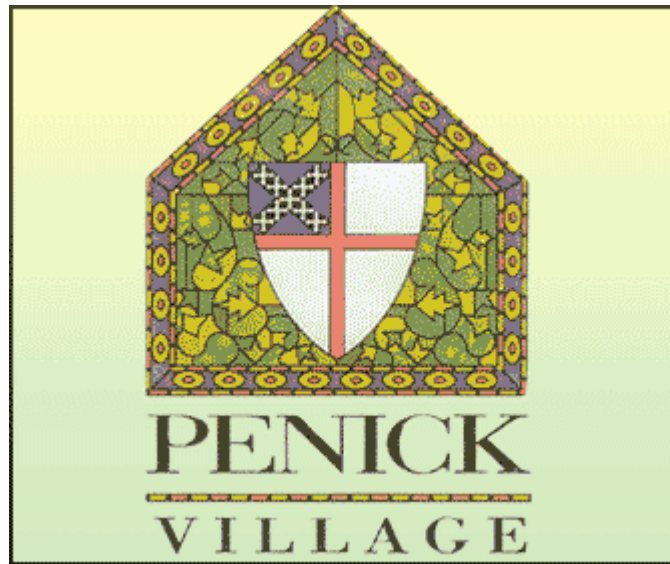
[Books](#)

[Blogs](#)

[Multimedia](#)

[Photo Gallery](#)

[Links](#)



[Sandhills Guide](#)

The program is set to air at 7 p.m. Wednesday, Oct. 18, on WRAL, Channel 5.

[Classifieds](#)

[Real Estate](#)

Charlie Gaddy, a former WRAL anchor and longtime reporter, hosted the discussion. He used questions and issues submitted to the station's Web site by Moore County viewers. More than 30 people posted submissions, he said.

[Business Directory](#)

"It gives us a sense of what the issues are," Gaddy said. "I just try to throw out

[Advertising](#)

some of the things that seem important to the people in Moore County."

[Rack Locations](#)

[Contact Us](#)

[About Us](#)

[Archives](#)

[Search](#)

Community leaders on the panel were Felton Capel, business and civic leader; Dr. John Dempsey, president of Sandhills Community College; Caroline Eddy, executive director of the Sandhills/Moore Coalition for Human Care; Charles Frock, CEO of FirstHealth of the Carolinas; the Rev. Rose Highland-Sharpe, pastor, educator, and media personality; the Rev. Marvin Lee of Trinity A.M.E Church; Kelly Miller, president of Pine Needles and Mid Pines golf clubs; Dr. Susan Purser, superintendent of the Moore County schools; and David Woronoff, publisher of The Pilot.

The series is part of the station's effort to bring the issues and concerns of smaller North Carolina counties to a broader viewing audience. Each program focuses on an individual county. Recent episodes have spotlighted Harnett, Wayne and Nash counties.

WRAListens has helped the station find out what's going on in the day-to-day life of small communities, said Loretta Harper-Arnold, community relations director for the station.

Sometimes, she said, the station covers only the breaking news in smaller counties -- not the nitty-gritty of local issues.

"This allows us to sit down and have meaningful conversations," she said.

Issues such as health care, public transportation, education, and public housing are common to most counties in the state, Gaddy said. But some of the topics discussed -- including the hospitality industry and the U.S. Open -- were very specific to Moore County.

"This is your program, not ours," Gaddy said to the panel before taping began.

Growth and development were hot topics. Panelists agreed that growth is good, but they cautioned that it must be monitored and planned.

"We know we're a great place to live," Frock said. "We need to channel growth to preserve it for the future generations that live here."

The discussion of the "two Moore counties" -- one rich, one impoverished -- was especially fraught. Most panelists said they disagree with the perception that Moore County is a community only for the wealthy.

"With the exception of hospitality and health care, this is an area that is hurting economically," Dempsey said.

But Woronoff said the income disparity in Moore County reflects a larger state problem.

"Moore County is a microcosm of North Carolina," he said. "North Carolina is two states."

Leaders offered ideas on how to start bridging the gap. Highland-Sharpe cited the need for some kind of public transportation in Moore County.

"We've got to get people on their feet working," she said. "Let's help them get to work."

Panelists were also quick to highlight the county's strengths. Most agreed that, despite socio-economic differences, residents of Moore County are overwhelmingly willing to band together.

"If there's an ethos in our community that stands out, it's partnership," Dempsey said.

Panelists said the success of volunteer organizations such as the Boys and Girls Club of the Sandhills reflect this.

As for the future of Moore County, many panelists focused on preservation and said they'd like to see the community remain as it is.

"What exists in our minds, we want to support it and preserve it as we grow," Purser said. "I believe we can do it."

And people will be watching. Gaddy said the program attracts a wide range of viewers.

"You'd be surprised," he said, "by the number of people who watch who aren't from the county."

Katherine Evans is an intern from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She can be reached at evans-ka@email.unc.edu or at 693-2484.

All contents © The Pilot LLC. Contents cannot be reproduced or used without express written consent of [News](#) | [Opinion](#) | [Sports](#) | [Scene](#) | [Extra](#) | [Books](#) | [Obituaries](#) | [Links](#) | [Multimedia](#) | [Classifieds](#) | [Real Estate](#) | [Business Directory](#) | [Subscribe](#) | [Advertising](#) | [About Us](#) | [Contact Us](#) | [Archive](#)