

# DURHAM COUNTY GOVERNMENT



*at a glance...*



# Durham County Board Of Commissioners

A five-member Board of Commissioners governs Durham County. The board members are elected at-large, on a partisan basis by a countywide vote. Commissioners serve four-year terms and elections are held in November of presidential election years. The board takes office at its first meeting in December following the November election, and at that time, elects a chairman and vice chairman.

The primary duties of the board include formulating policy, adopting an annual budget, establishing the annual property tax rate, appointing various officials, planning for county needs and enacting local ordinances. Additionally, the board has the authority to call bond referendums, authorize the county manager to enter into contracts and establish new programs and departments.

The board holds a work session on the first Monday of each month at 9 a.m. and convenes its regular session meetings at 7 p.m. on the second and fourth Mondays of each month. All meetings are open to the public and conducted in the Commissioners' Chambers, located on the second floor of the Durham County Administrative Complex, 200 E. Main Street, Durham. Regular session meetings are broadcast live on local cable channel 8, and can be viewed on the county's website at [www.durhamcountync.gov](http://www.durhamcountync.gov).



**Chairman  
Michael Page**



**Vice Chairman  
Ellen Reckhow**



**Joe Bowser**



**Becky Heron**



**Brenda Howerton**

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# Durham County History



As early as colonial days, the area known as Durham County was important to North Carolina history. The English, Scottish and Irish settled along the waterways of the present Northeast corner of the county on land given to the Earl of Granville by the British Crown. As a result of the hard work of those early settlers, the area soon became a prosperous section of the state.

The City of Durham, named for Dr. Bartlett Durham, began as a railroad station and settlement. While Durham's official birth date is April 26, 1853 (the date that the U.S. Post Office was established), the town was not incorporated by the General Assembly until April 10, 1869. The tobacco manufacturing industry focused worldwide attention on the area after the Civil War. As a result of that thriving business, Durham County grew and prospered tremendously.

In 1881, Durham officials sought to become an autonomous political subdivision and decided it was time to separate from Orange County. Durham County was formed on April 17, 1881 from portions of land transferred from neighboring Wake and Orange counties. In 1911, an additional portion of land was added from Wake County.

The first Durham County Board of Commissioners convened its initial meeting May 2, 1881. Durham County operated under the commission form of government with the chairman serving as chief administrator, until 1930 when it adopted the county manager form of government. Since that time there have been six county managers.

## DURHAM COUNTY PROFILE

**Date Established:** April 17, 1881

**Population:** 267,587

**Registered Voters:** 183,931

**Location:** North Central North Carolina, equidistant from Philadelphia and Atlanta

**Land Area:** 299 square miles

**County Seat:** Durham

**Townships:** Durham, Carr, Oak Grove, Mangum, Lebanon and Triangle

**Location of General County Offices:** Historic County Courthouse  
200 East Main St. Durham, NC 27701

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# Durham County Administration



The County Manager is hired by the County Commissioners to serve as the chief administrative officer of county government. He also supervises and coordinates the daily activities of departments for the Board by seeing that all orders, policies, and federal or state mandates are carried out. The county manager recommends an annual budget, makes recommendations on appropriate matters of business and represents the county in dealing with other agencies.



**County Manager  
Michael M. Ruffin**





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# Durham County Today



Durham County has evolved from an agricultural and manufacturing economy to attain world-class status in the areas of medicine and high technology. In the process, it has become one of the country's most desirable places to live. The internationally known Research Triangle Park is home to more than 170 major research and development organizations including IBM, GlaxoSmithKline, BASF, CREE, Cisco, RTI International and Sumitomo Electric Lightwave. These companies and others in the park employ approximately 42,000 people. Other major research and development organizations, including BD, Boromed, Cormetech, Organon Technika, Freudenberg Nonwovens and AW North Carolina are located in the northern section of the county.



PHOTOS: Brightleaf Square: Heather Jacks and Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; Meridian Business Park (Sculpture): Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; Duke Homestead: Bruce R. Feeley and Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; GlaxoSmithKline: Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau

# Durham Public Schools



Durham Public Schools has 54 schools with an enrollment of approximately 32,500 students. A seven member Board of Education, elected every four years on a nonpartisan basis, governs the unit.

## Hospitals and Healthcare

Durham is the chief medical center south of Baltimore. Duke University Hospital is internationally known for its significant contributions to the study of cancer, heart disease and organ transplantation. Duke University Health System operates Durham Regional Hospital through a sublease with Durham County Hospital Corporation, a non-profit corporation. The facility specializes in pediatrics, obstetrics, gynecology, orthopedics as well as general medicine and surgery. The Veterans Administration Hospital provides general medicine and surgery. Lincoln Community Health Center houses primary health programs, but provides no in-patient care.



PHOTOS: Duke Chapel in Spring; Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; Duke University Medical Center Exterior; Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; NCCU School of Education; Bruce R. Feeley and Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau; Wool E. Bull, the Durham Bulls Mascot; Durham Bulls & Durham Convention & Visitors Bureau

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## Major Business



Durham County has an expanding, diversified economy with a strong foundation in telecommunications, financial services, healthcare, medical related industries, manufacturing, pharmacological research and development, a growing life sciences cluster, service industries, general manufacturing, and education.

## Noted Colleges and Universities

Duke University, North Carolina Central University and Durham Technical Community College.



## Points of Interest

American Tobacco Complex, Bennett Place, Carolina Theatre, Black Wall Street/Historic Parrish Street, Durham Performing Arts Center, Duke Chapel, Duke University's Nasher Museum of Art, Duke Homestead and Tobacco Museum, Streets at Southpoint, Sara P. Duke Memorial Gardens, Durham Bull's Ballpark, Eno River State Park, Hayti Heritage Center, North Carolina Museum of Life and Science, North Carolina Central University Art Museum, North Carolina Mutual Life Insurance Company, Stagville, and West Point on the Eno.



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## DIRECTORY of COUNTY SERVICES

DEPARTMENT	CONTACT
Animal Control	560-0630
Budget and Management Services	560-0004
City/County Inspections	560-4144
City/County Planning	560-4137
Clerk to the Board	560-0025
Cooperative Extension	560-0525
County Attorney	560-0705
County Manager	560-0000
Criminal Justice Resource Center	560-0500
Elections	560-0660
Emergency Medical Services	560-8285
Engineering and Environmental Services	560-0735
Finance	560-0035
Fire Marshal/Emergency Management	560-0660
General Services	560-0430
Human Resources	560-7900
Information Technology	560-7000
Library	560-0100
Public Health	560-7600
Public Information	560-0000
Register of Deeds	560-0480
SAP Shared Services	560-7090
Sheriff	560-0897
Social Services	560-8000
Soil and Water Conservation District	560-0558
Tax Administrator	560-0300
The Durham Center (Mental Health)	560-7200
Veterans Services	560-7960
Youth Home	560-0840

*Durham County is an Equal Employment/Affirmative Action Employer.  
This publication was prepared by the Public Information Office, Durham County  
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**[www.durhamcountync.gov](http://www.durhamcountync.gov)**