

COLUMBIA - COMMUNITY INFORMATION

History

“Columbia—the town I’ve imagined in my dreams but never believed existed.” So wrote Cora Barksdale during the early part of the 20th century, after she moved to Columbia to become the editor of *The Tyrrell Times* newspaper. Her unabashed adoration for the town shone through in her writing, as she greeted the townsfolk in her inaugural address, writing, “I wish for once that I still believed in fairies, and could meet one who could touch her magic wand and transform me into a gifted writer so that I could tell all the world what my impressions of this lovely little town are.”

Situated along the eastern shore of the Scuppernong River estuary, Columbia (originally known as Elizabeth Town) was chartered by the North Carolina General Assembly in 1793. In 1799 the town was selected as the seat of Tyrrell County, which was established in 1729 as a precinct of Albemarle County. The name of the town was changed to Columbia in 1810, to avoid confusion with another Elizabethtown in North Carolina. The 1870 Federal census suggests a population of slightly over a hundred people, who subsisted on livelihoods such as commerce, milling, county administration and maritime occupations including fishing, sailing and boat building. Columbia’s postbellum population increase was largely the result of the expansion of the local lumber industry. Approximately 900 residents now call Columbia home.

Columbia’s proximity to the Outer Banks makes it a popular stopping-off place for tourists looking for a chance to stretch their legs after a long ride along Highway 64. What better way to spend a morning or afternoon than walking along the tree-lined streets of the Historic District as the gentle breeze of the Scuppernong River transports you back to the days of horse-drawn carriages and ladies with parasols, nickel soda pop and penny candy.

The Columbia Historic District was formally listed on the National Register of Historic Places in March of 1994. The District consists of a collection of buildings dating from the 19th century to World War II. Residential dwellings and commercial buildings comprise the 35-acre district, and construction details such as Victorian sawn and turned ornament and decorative brickwork blend distinctiveness to the historic building stock. Architecture styles range from Victorian to Craftsman, Tudor Revival to Romanesque. There’s something of interest for everyone in Columbia on the Scuppernong.

Population

Tyrrell County – 4149; Columbia - 820

Government

Columbia is the county seat with Tyrrell County having Chairman/commissioners, and an administrative form of government.

Taxes

\$.74 per \$100 valuation, Tyrrell County

\$.50 per \$100 valuation, Town of Columbia.

Utilities/Services

County Water available throughout most of county.
Electricity – Dominion NC Power.
Garbage pick-up throughout county
Telephone service – Sprint Telephone.
Water, Sewage, Garbage disposal – Town limits.

Education

Columbia has a high school (grades 9-12), middle school (grades 6-8) located on Main Street; and Tyrrell County Elementary School (grades pre-K – 5) located on Keiser Road.

Library

The Tyrrell County Library is located in Columbia on Main Street with 20,000 books; 33 journals; 10 newspapers, Internet access, audiovisual material, genealogical section, meeting room, computerized card catalog, and a certified public librarian on duty at all times.

Religion

There are approximately 33 churches in the Tyrrell County area. (32 Protestant churches and 1 Catholic Church).

Media

Newspaper:

Scuppernong Reminder – Weekly
The Coastland Times – Three times weekly (Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday).

Radio: 105.7 FM.

Television: Local reception – ABC, CBS, NBC, PBS and Cable TV.

Medical

Columbia Medical Center, Tyrrell County Health Department, Tideland Mental Health Center and a Dentist.

Industry

Agri-business, aqua-business, forestry, and tourism.

Banks

BB&T – Main Street
Cash Points – Hwy 64 By-Pass
The East Carolina Bank, also features an (ATM) – Scuppernong Drive

Recreation/Entertainment

A community recreation program operates for ages 6-18 in softball and baseball. Columbia water access provides excellent advantages including canoeing, kayaking, fishing, hunting, swimming, sailing and skiing.

Civic Organizations/Clubs

American Legion, Cooperative Extension Homemakers, Eastern Star, 4-H Clubs, Historical and Genealogical Society, Lions, Masonic Order, Rotary, and Tyrrellinean Club, Veterans of Foreign War, Master Gardeners.

Attractions

Columbia on the Scuppernong Walking Tour	796-2781
Scuppernong River Interpretive Boardwalk	796-3004
Pocosin Art Gallery	796-2787
Columbia Theater Cultural Resources Center	766-0200
Veterans Park & Tyrrell County Courthouse	796-6281
Tyrrell County Visitor's Center	796-0723
Eastern 4-H Environmental Education Conference Center	797-4800
Palmetto Peartree Preserve	919-967-2223
Walter B. Jones Center for the Sounds	796-3198

Annual Events & Festivals

- January** – Martin Luther King March
Pocosin Arts Craft Retreat I
- February** – Pocosin Arts Crafts Retreat II
- April** – Tyrrell County 4-H Livestock Show
- June** – Columbia Theater Cultural Resources Center & Partnership for the Sounds
Wildlife Field Day
Columbia Theater Cultural Resources Center & Partnership for the Sounds
Annual Potato Cooking Contest
- September** – Pocosin Arts, Art Auction & Crab Red to Blue Dinner
- October** – Scuppernong River Festival
- November** – Columbia Theater Cultural Resources Center & Partnership for the Sounds “Soul Food Celebration”
- December** – River Town Christmas

For further information contact:

Greater Tyrrell County Chamber of Commerce, PO Box 170, Columbia, NC 27925
phone and fax 252-796-1996 or Tyrrell County Visitor's Center, PO Box 55, 203 S.
Ludington Drive, Columbia, NC 27925 phone 252-796-0723, fax 252-796-0303, E-mail
visitrtc@beachlink

Emergency Assistance

Columbia Medical Center	796-0689
Columbia Pharmacy	796-2421
Fire Department – Columbia	796-2251
(if no answer dial)	796-2531
Poison Control Center	1-800-848-6946
Rescue Squad	796-2251
Sheriff's Office	796-2251

Hospitals

Albemarle Hospital	335-0531	Elizabeth City
Beaufort Count Hospital	975-4100	Washington
Chowan County Hospital	482-8451	Edenton
Pitt Memorial Hospital	816-4100	Greenville
Washington County Hospital	793-4135	Plymouth

Human Services

Adapt Center – Mental Health	796-1999
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Animal Control	796-1667
Cooperative Extension	796-1581
Focal Point for Aging (Senior Center)	796-0365
Food Stamp Office	796-3421
Health Department, Home Care, and Hospice	1-888-388-9208
Options to Domestic Violence	766-0188
Tyrrell Community Development	796-1991
Tyrrell County Board of Education	796-1121
Tyrrell County Board of Election	796-0775
Tyrrell County Public Library	796-3771
Tyrrell County Social Services	796-3421
Tyrrell County Work Farm	796-1085
Tyrrell County Visitor's Center	796-0723

Government

Clerk of Superior Court	796-6281
Magistrate	796-6841
Register of Deeds	796-2901
Town of Columbia (Town Manager)	796-2781
Tyrrell County (County Administrator)	796-1371

Information

Chamber of Commerce	796-1996
Tyrrell County Visitor's Center	796-0723

Schools

Columbia High School	796-8161
Columbia Middle School	796-0369
Tyrrell Elementary School	796-3881
Smart Start	766-0221