

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Four-County Community Services, Inc.'s New Executive Director and Board Chairman Release Statements on State Audit Findings

Laurinburg, NC – Four County Community Services, Inc.'s Executive Director, Ericka J. Whitaker, and Board Chairman, Jason King, issued the following statements in response to the Office of the State Auditor's Financial Related Audit and Investigative Report released on Thursday, February 6, 2014.

Statement by Ericka J. Whitaker, Executive Director

"With just three weeks in as Four-County's new Executive Director, I have thoroughly read the State Auditor's Financial Related Audit on Four-County and have already begun to mitigate practices to make the Agency even better. Many changes were made before I arrived to establish checks and balances, and I have made it clear that we will implement additional checks and balances where necessary so Four-County will operate efficiently in implementing its important mission. After reading this report, these findings do not sit well with me and I accept full responsibility to ensure the organization is compliant in every regard moving forward. Now that Four-County is under my leadership, you can expect a more transparent organization. I am working closely with the Board of Directors to build a strong management team with stringent financial controls; enforce policies and procedures; ensure staff are well-trained and understand state and Federal program guidelines and regulations, as well as hold them fully accountable on all levels as it relates to their assigned duties. Four-County has remained committed to serving thousands of children promoting school readiness and providing healthy learning environments under the Head Start program, and continues to empower families to rise above poverty by helping them to become more self-sufficient through other programs."

Whitaker brings close to 20 years of successful leadership and executive management experience to Four County, including serving in positions at *The American College of Obstetricians and Gynecologists* and *The National Association of Student Financial Aid Administrators* in Washington, DC. Most recently, Whitaker served as the Executive in Residence and Management Lecturer in the School of Business at the University of North Carolina at Pembroke (UNCP). Prior to starting her tenure at UNCP, Whitaker served as the Foundation Director at Robeson Community College where she led the Capital & Naming Rights Campaign managing the operating budget and endowments of the organization. Whitaker is currently a doctoral candidate at Fayetteville State University. She received a Master of Science in Administration (M.S.A.) with a focus on Nonprofit Management from Trinity University in Washington, DC and a Bachelor of Arts (B.A.) in Business Communications from The University of Maryland, University College in College Park, MD.

Statement by Jason King, Board Chairman

“After months of investigation, we are glad to have the final audit report. We can now move forward correcting the identified issues, but I must note that many of the findings in the report have already been corrected. As Board Chair, I am continuing to enforce a zero tolerance policy regarding any hint of the misuse or mismanagement of taxpayer funds. Every dollar in and out is now accountable. All expenditures of Four-County are under supervision. Since I became Chairman a few months ago, I have recommended we restructure the Board’s financial advisory team and propose conducting routine internal audits. Every recommendation that I have made, the Board has agreed to implement. I am confident that the Board is committed to putting even more safeguards in place, in addition to the newly revised policies to provide the most stringent safeguarding of funds. The Board hired Mrs. Whitaker, the new Executive Director to provide new inspiration and energy, and a fresh perspective to the organization, and she has done exactly that.

In addition to serving as Board Chairman for Four-County Community Services, Inc., Jason King serves as Assistant County Manager for Robeson County where he assists the County Manager in developing policies and procedures pertaining to personnel, capital improvement, fiscal control, construction projects and public relations issues, and; serves as member of County Manager's management team, participating in meetings and discussions to formulate and develop planning on various issues pertaining to operations of County government. Prior to Robeson County, King served as the Management Control Administrator for the U.S. Department of Defense/Department of the Army, and as a Senior Operations Auditor for State Employees Credit Union. King received a Master of Science in Public Administration from the University of North Carolina at Pembroke in Pembroke, NC and a Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in Wilmington, NC. King also has 16 semester hours in Accounting from Fayetteville Technical Community College.

About Four-County Community Services, Inc.

Four-County Community Services, Inc. is a federally funded nonprofit organization located in Laurinburg, North Carolina serving low income residents in seven neighboring counties for nearly 50 years. The organization has over 200 employees and an approximate annual budget of \$13 million utilized to operate and manage 16 Head Start schools, a weatherization program, section 8 housing, and other programs involving workforce readiness, economic development, and self-sufficiency.

To learn more about Four-County you may visit <http://www.4ccs.org/>.

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