APPENDIX I

TRAVEL POLICY

Current

Rutherford County
Travel Policy

I. Purpose - It is the intent of this policy to provide County departments and agencies a comprehensive reference for uniform interpretation of payment or reimbursement for travel expenses pertaining to official travel and subsistence.

Applicability of Travel Policy - All employees defined as employees subject to the Rutherford County Personnel Policy, and appointed officials of the County are subject to this policy.

II. Employee Responsibility - An employee or appointed official traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. A valid North Carolina Drivers' License is required to operate a county or privately owned vehicle while on county business. Willful violations of this policy may result in dismissal from County employment or other disciplinary action.

III. Definitions and General Guidelines -

A. Authorizing Party - An individual authorized by this policy to approve or disapprove requests for travel, cash advances, travel reimbursements, etc.

B. Employee's Duty Station - "Duty station" is defined as the job location at which the employee spends the majority of his or her working hours.

C. Emergency Travel - For use in case of sudden necessity which may include items such as Social Services' responsibilities for runaway children, medical treatment for a child, child placement, etc.

D. Non-County Employees - Non-County employees traveling on official business whose expenses are paid by the County are subject to these regulations, including subsistence allowances, to the same extent as County employees. Travel expenses for members of a non-employee's family are not eligible to be paid by the County.

E. Prospective Professional Employees - The Personnel Director with the concurrence of the Department Head is authorized to approve reimbursement of transportation expenses of individuals visiting for employment interviews. These expenses are limited to transportation and subsistence for one day.

F. Registration Fees - The County allows registration fees for County employees. They may be paid by the employee and then reimbursed or paid by the department. These fees are charged to "training or travel expense." The department must require itemization and documentation of expenses.

G. Reimbursements - All reimbursement requests shall be filed for approval and payment within 30 days after the travel period ends for which the reimbursement is being requested. Travel during the month of June must be filed by June 30 to be reimbursed in the current fiscal year. Exceptions to the 30-day filing time frame must be approved by the Finance Director.

H. Requesting party - The person who will be reimbursed for travel costs incurred while conducting county business.

I. Subsistence (Meals and Lodging) - Subsistence is an allowance related to lodging, meal costs, and gratuities thereon.

J. Transportation - Transportation expenses include personal automobile, taxi, bus, train, airplane, motor pool charges, auto rentals, tolls, and parking fees. All travel expenses must be incurred by and for employees or other eligible travelers while conducting official County business.

K. Travel - Authorization of travel requests will be based upon need and cost\benefit of travel as determined by the authorizing party. The department head (in conjunction with the finance officer) is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the department travel budget to reimburse all expected costs of travel. Airline tickets, hotels, and registrations may be billed to the County. All other costs will be paid directly to the requesting party. In many cases, it is customary for airline tickets and registrations to be paid directly by the unit either in advance or billed to the unit by invoice later. The requesting party is encouraged to use travel agents and reserve transportation and lodging in advance when possible. The requesting party also is encouraged to travel with other employees and officials of the County and representatives of other government units when possible. The requesting party will be reimbursed for actual costs incurred only, subject to the limitations established in this policy. In the absence of a department head, a contact person within his/her department must be identified on travel request form. No department should be left unmanned except in extreme circumstances.

1. In-State-Travel - For all in-State travel, under routine conditions, a travel authorization form will be submitted by the requesting party to the department head for authorization of travel at least five working days prior to the date upon which travel will commence. Emergencies will be considered on a case by case basis. If the department head is the requesting party, the form should be submitted to the County Manager.

2. Out-of-State Travel - Out-of-State travel will only be approved if the need cannot be met in the state. Out-of-State travel status begins when the employee leaves the state and remains in effect until the employee returns to the state. Out-of-State travel requests by employees and department heads will be approved by the County Manager in addition to the department head. The travel authorization form will be submitted to the County Manager no later than five working days prior to the date travel will commence.

3. Travel by the County Manager and Fulltime Elected Officials - Travel of these individuals outside the employee's normal job location is approved to carry out their official duties. Mileage, at the rate as tabulated in the annual budget ordinance, will be paid for any travel outside as seventy-five mile radius. For example, if a trip to Raleigh is required, reimbursement will be paid for the round trip mileage less 150 miles.

4. Short Distance Travel - Employee travel within a 75 mile radius of the employee's normal job location not involving subsistence does not require written approval of the authorizing party. Department Heads should be notified of the travel plans or have a procedure for such plans, and should give verbal approval of the plans. Failure to notify the authorizing party of the travel plans will result in the requesting party receiving no reimbursement for travel costs. Department Head's travel is approved up to 75 miles. However, an itinerary must be left with a department subordinate.

5. Travel Advances - Travel advances will be issued at the discretion of the Department Heads. Advances will be submitted with the travel request to the authorizing party no later than 5 working days prior to the date travel will commence. The amount of the travel advance may not exceed the estimated travel cost. Excess travel advances will be repaid no later than five working days after the completion of the approved travel. The Finance Officer will not issue a travel advance unless it has been approved.

   The Finance Officer will receive a copy of each approved travel request. The Finance officer is responsible for determining that an unencumbered appropriation sufficient to cover the estimated cost of the approved travel remains in the appropriate expenditure item. If a sufficient balance remains in the expenditure item, the estimated travel cost will be encumbered. If the remaining balance in the expenditure item is insufficient to cover the estimated cost of travel and other moneys are not yet available, the authorizing party will be notified by the Finance Officer. The authorizing party should receive a response from the Finance Officer before notifying an employee that he/she may travel.

IV. Specific Guidelines Relating to Transportation, Subsistence, and Other Costs -

A. Transportation -

1. Common Carrier - Actual coach fare (substantiated by receipt) will be reimbursed. First class travel should be used only in extraordinary circumstances. penalties and charges resulting from the cancellation of airline reservations (or other travel reservations) shall be the County's obligation if the employee's travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of and for the convenience of the County. If the cancellation or change is made for the personal benefit of the employee, it shall be the employee's obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, serious illness or death within the employee's immediate family, or other critical circumstances beyond the control of the employee, the County will be obligated to pay the penalties and charges.

   Super Saver Rates - When traveling by common carrier to conduct official County business, employees traveling to their destination earlier than necessary and/or delaying their return to avail the County of reduced transportation rates may be reimbursed subsistence for additional travel days if, in the opinion of the department head, the amount saved in transportation costs due to the early and/or delayed travel is greater than the amount expended in salary and additional subsistence. Prior written approval of the department head is required.

2. Personal Vehicle - A requesting party may use his/her personal vehicle for travel and be reimbursed only if one of the following conditions is met:

   a. No county vehicle is available or use of a county vehicle is not practical.

   b. Travel mileage is less than 75 miles in total.

   c. The requesting party needs a specially equipped vehicle.

   The mileage rate as set in the Budget Ordinance will be paid to an employee who uses his/her personal vehicle.

   Actual mileage is reimbursable mileage, measured from the duty station to the destination (and return).

Parking fees, tolls, and storage fees are reimbursable with receipts. Reimbursement of expense for airport parking is limited to ninety-six hours, with a receipt required. Airport parking expenses in excess of 96 hours may be reimbursed in extraordinary circumstances if advance approval is obtained from the department head.

3. Rental Vehicle - A receipt is necessary for reimbursement. Rental vehicles are to be used as a last resort. Use of a rental vehicle must be approved in advance.

4. Commuting -

   a. No reimbursement shall be made for the use of a personal vehicle in commuting from an employee's home to his/her duty station. Commuting is defined as one round trip from an employee's home to duty station per day. If a second trip is necessary, mileage may be paid.

   b. Travel to/from airport: at employee's duty station - Reimbursement for travel between the employee's or board member's duty station and the nearest airline terminal and for appropriate parking may be made under the following circumstances. For travel by:

      - Airport limousine - one round trip limousine fare;
      - Taxi - limited to reimbursement rate for use of private vehicle;
      - Private vehicle - The Budget Ordinance rate per mile for a maximum of two round trips with parking charges for a maximum of ninety-six hours. Receipts are required for airport parking claims.

   c. Travel to/from airport: at employee's or board member's destination - Reimbursement for travel to and from the airline terminal at the employee's or board member's destination may be made where available as listed below:

      - Airport limousine - one round trip limousine fare;
      - Bus - one round trip bus fare;
      - Taxi - when limousine service is not available, actual fare to and from airline terminal;
      - Rental vehicles - may be used as a last resort (receipt required).
      - Receipts are required.

   d. Taxis and limousines other than trips to and from the airport - The actual cost of taxi and limousine fares is reimbursable when required for travel on official County business, Taxi fares are not reimbursable except in emergencies or when a less expensive mode of transportation is not available within a reasonable period.

5. Unit Vehicles - County vehicles may be used for any authorized travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated. The vehicle will be used in conducting County business only. A de minimis amount of personal use, such as driving the vehicle to and from dinner, may be allowed. Non-County employees may accompany County employees if they have a business interest in the travel. Spouses and children of County employees may accompany them in County-owned vehicles if space is available and the trip is strictly for official County business. Use of a County vehicle will be approved in the travel request.

B. Subsistence - Reasonable costs for three meals a day will be reimbursed. Receipts are required.

1. Alcoholic beverages will not be reimbursed.

2. Laundry and drycleaning will not be reimbursed for trips of less than ten days.

3. Lodging:

a. Authorization - An approved travel request must be obtained in order to qualify for reimbursement for overnight stays.

b. Reimbursement - Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. Specific dates of lodging must be listed on the reimbursement request, and substantiated by a receipt from a commercial lodging establishment. Other entertainment expenses, such as the cost of movies, that are included with the bill for lodging will not be reimbursed.

4. Meals

a. Reimbursement - Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. Each meal must be listed on the reimbursement request. Time of departure and arrival must be listed on the reimbursement request.

i. Daily Travel (Overnight) - Employees and board members may receive allowances for meals for partial days of travel when the partial day is the day of departure or the day of return:

Breakfast - Depart duty station prior to 7:30 a.m.

Lunch - Depart duty station prior to 11:00 a.m. (day of departure). Return to duty station after 2:00 p.m. (day of return).

Dinner - Return to duty station after 7:00 p.m. If stopping for dinner would cause the employee to return after 7:00 p.m., when he/she would otherwise have returned before 7:00 p.m., dinner will not be reimbursed.

ii. Daily Travel (Not Overnight) - Allowances shall be paid to employees for lunches if travel forces them to be outside the county between 11:00 A.M. and 1:00 P.M.

Breakfast - depart duty station prior to 7:30 a.m.

Dinner - return to duty station after 7:00 p.m..

b. Reimbursement for Meals - Required Employee Attendance

i. A County employee may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the job requires his/her attendance at the meeting of a board, commission, committee, or council in his/her official capacity and the meal is preplanned as part of the meeting for the entire board, commission, committee, or council.

ii. A County employee may be reimbursed for meals, including lunches, when the meal is included as an integral part of a congress, conference, assembly, or convocation. Such congress must involve the active participation of persons other than the employees of the County; the employee's attendance is required for the performance of his/her duties, but must not be part of the employee's normal day-to-day business activities; the congress must be planned in advance with a formal agenda; and the congress must provide written notice or an invitation to participants.

iii. Department Heads and the County Manager may host and be reimbursed for meals purchased for visiting officials when conducting official county business.

C. Other Costs

1. Conventions and Conferences

Limitations - Attendance at conventions and conferences will be limited to two individuals unless the conference provides training rquired by more than two employees. Employees directly involved in the convention or conference program will not be counted toward this limitation.

2. Telephone Calls

a. Long distance - Employees are allowed one long distance phone calls per overnight stay not to exceed $3.00 per call.

b. Reimbursement - Official phone calls are reimbursable under "other expenses." Individual calls over $3.00 must be identified as to point of origin and destination.

c. Emergency calls - Employees may be reimbursed for a personal long distance call if such a call is of an emergency nature as determined by the department. An example may be a call made when an employee calls home to inform someone that the travel period has been extended beyond original plans due to unforeseen reasons.

V. Authorization for Reimbursement Procedures -

A. Submitting expense reports -

1. A requesting party will complete a reimbursement form and attach receipts for expenses requiring them, and submit it to the authorizing party no later than five working days after returning from travel. Advances will be deducted from reimbursable costs.

2. A requesting party submitting a falsified reimbursement form will be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution. An authorizing party or Finance Officer who approves a falsified reimbursement form that they know to be false will be subject to disciplinary action or criminal prosecution.

   Violations of the County's travel policy may result in dismissal from County employment.

B. Approval and processing of reimbursement requests -

1. Reimbursement requests will be submitted to the authorizing party for approval. After approval by the authorizing party, the form should be forwarded to the County Finance officer.

2. The Finance Officer will determine that the reimbursement form has been properly approved, that it is mathematically correct, and that requested reimbursements agree to submitted receipts and are within the limits set by this policy. If an error in the reimbursement request is found, the requesting party will be informed and the error will be corrected before payment is made.

3. Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance officer will determine that an amount sufficient to pay the request has been encumbered for payment, or that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure item. The Finance Officer will immediately inform the authorizing party and requesting party if payment cannot be made.

3 Attachments

1) Travel Request
2) Travel Advance Request
3) Travel Reimbursement

Rutherford County

Proposed Travel Policy

To Be Effective July 1, 2011

Purpose – The intent of this policy is to make uniform provisions for reimbursement of necessary expenses of county employees, commissioners, other designated board members and officials who are required to travel within or outside the county boundaries in the performance of their duties and in the interest of county affairs. Necessary expenses include those related to travel, lodging and meals while transacting County business.

Policy Administration - The respective Department Heads are responsible for the administration of the provisions of this policy and authorized to approve travel reimbursements contingent upon the availability of funds in the department budget and subject to review by the County Finance Officer and/or the County Manager except where otherwise stated. Reimbursement will be for actual expense up to the limitation contained in this policy, except for the mileage allowance.

Departmental Travel Policies – It is understood that some departments, due to the nature of their duties, may have a more restrictive policy. For example, public safety departments have more restrictive policies on who may ride in those vehicles. In this case, the policy that is more restrictive will take precedent as long as the restriction is for just cause.

Applicability of Travel Policy – All employees defined as employees subject to the Rutherford County Personnel Policy and appointed officials of the County are subject to this policy.

Employee Responsibility – An employee or appointed official traveling on official business is expected to exercise the same care in incurring expenses that a prudent person would exercise if traveling on personal business and expending personal funds. Excess costs, circuitous routes, luxury accommodations, and services unnecessary or unjustified in the performance of official business are not acceptable under this standard. Employees will be responsible for unauthorized costs and any additional expenses incurred for personal preference or convenience. A valid North Carolina Drivers' License is required to operate a county or privately owned vehicle while on county business. Willful violations of this policy may result in dismissal from County employment or other disciplinary action.

I. Definitions and General Guidelines –

A. Authorizing Party – An individual authorized by this policy to approve or disapprove requests for travel, cash advances, travel reimbursements, etc.

B. Duty Station – "Duty station" is defined as the job location at which the employee spends the majority of his or her working hours.

C. Emergency Travel – For use in case of sudden necessity which may include items such as Social Services' responsibilities for runaway children, medical treatment for a child, child placement, etc.

D. Non-County Employees – Non-County employees traveling on official business whose expenses are paid by the County are subject to these regulations to the same extent as County employees.

E. Prospective Professional Employees – The Human Resources Director with the concurrence of the Department Head is authorized to approve reimbursement of transportation expenses of individuals visiting for employment interviews. These expenses are limited to transportation and meals and lodging for one day.

F. Registration Fees – The County allows registration fees for County employees. They may be paid by the employee and then reimbursed or paid by the department. These fees are charged to "training expense." Documentation of these expenses is required.

G. Reimbursements – All reimbursement requests shall be filed for approval and payment within 30 days after the travel period ends for which the reimbursement is being requested. Travel during the month of June must be filed by June 30 to be reimbursed in the current fiscal year. Exceptions to the 30-day filing time frame must be approved by the Finance Director.

H. Requesting Party – The person who will be reimbursed for travel costs incurred while conducting county business.

I. Transportation – Transportation expenses include personal automobile, taxi, bus, train, airplane, motor pool charges, auto rentals, tolls, and parking fees. All travel expenses must be incurred by and for employees or other eligible travelers while conducting official County business.

J. Travel – Authorization of travel requests will be based upon need and cost\benefit of travel as determined by the authorizing party. The department head (in conjunction with the finance officer) is responsible for determining that a sufficient unexpended appropriation remains in the department travel budget to reimburse all expected costs of travel. Airline tickets, hotels, and registrations may be billed to the County. All other costs will be paid directly to the requesting party. In many cases, it is customary for airline tickets and registrations to be paid directly by the unit either in advance or billed to the unit by invoice later. The requesting party is encouraged to use travel agents and reserve transportation and lodging in advance when possible. The requesting party also is encouraged to travel with other employees and officials of the County and representatives of other government units when possible. The requesting party will be reimbursed for actual costs incurred only, subject to the limitations established in this policy. In the absence of a department head, a contact person within his/her department

must be identified on travel request from. No department should be left unmanned except in extreme circumstances and an itinerary must be left with a department subordinate.

1. In-State-Travel – For all in-State travel not requiring a travel advance (see instructions for requesting a travel advance below), under routine conditions, a written request will be submitted by the requesting party to the department head for authorization of travel at least five working days prior to the date upon which travel will commence. Emergencies will be considered on a case by case basis. If the department head is the requesting party, the form should be submitted to the County Manager.
2. Out-of State Travel – Out-of-State travel will only be approved if the need cannot be met in the state. Out-of-State travel status begins when the employee leaves the state and remains in effect until the employee returns to the state. Out-of-State travel requests by employees and department heads will be approved by the County Manager in addition to the Department Head. The travel request will be submitted to the County Manager no later than ten working days prior to the date travel will commence. If sporadic out-of-state travel is necessary as a result of an employee's job duties, the employee must notify, at a minimum, their immediate supervisor.
3. Travel by the County Manager and Fulltime Elected Officials who receive travel allowances – Travel of these individuals outside the employee's normal job location is approved to carry out their official duties. Mileage, at the rate established by the Internal Revenue Service, will be paid for any travel outside a seventy-five mile radius. For example, if a trip to Raleigh is required, reimbursement will be paid for the round trip mileage less 150 miles.
4. Short Distance Travel – Employee travel within a 75 mile radius of the employee's normal job location not involving meals or lodging does not require written approval of the authorizing party. Department Heads should be notified of the travel plans or have a procedure for such plans, and should give verbal approval of the plans. Failure to notify the authorizing party of the travel plans will result in the requesting party receiving no reimbursement for travel costs. Department Head's travel is approved up to 75 miles. However,
5. Travel Advances – Travel advances will be requested at the discretion of the Department Head after the Department Head has determined that a sufficient balance remains in the department's travel budget for the travel to occur. The Finance Office will not issue a travel advance unless it has been approved by the Department Head. Advance requests will be submitted to the Finance Office no later than 10 working days prior to the date travel will commence. The amount of the travel advance may not exceed the estimated travel cost. Excess travel advances will be repaid to the County no later than five working days after the completion of the approved travel. The County may deduct un-reconciled travel advances from the employee's salary if a completed Travel Report is not submitted within a 5 day period.

II. Specific Guidelines –

A. Transportation –

1. Common Carrier – Actual coach class fare (substantiated by receipt) will be reimbursed. First class travel should be used only in extraordinary circumstances. Penalties and charges resulting from the cancellation of airline reservations (or other travel reservations) shall be the County's obligation if the employee's travel has been approved in advance and the cancellation or change is made at the direction of and for the convenience of the County. If the cancellation or change is made for the personal benefit of the employee, it shall be the employee's obligation to pay the penalties and charges. However, in the event of accidents, serious illness or death within the employee's immediate family, or other critical circumstances at the discretion of the County Manager, beyond the control of the employee, the County will be obligated to pay the penalties and charges. If the airline charges a fee for the first checked baggage, it will be paid by the County. Any fees beyond the first checked baggage will not be reimbursed. The County will not reimburse costs associated with red cap service or baggage delivery.

   Super Saver Rates – When traveling by common carrier to conduct official County business, employees traveling to their destination earlier than necessary and/or delaying their return to benefit the County with reduced transportation rates may be reimbursed subsistence for additional travel days if, in the opinion of the department head, the amount saved in transportation costs due to the early and/or delayed travel is greater than the amount expended in salary and additional subsistence. Prior written approval of the department head is required.

2. Personal Vehicle – A requesting party may use his/her personal vehicle for travel and be reimbursed only if one of the following conditions is met:

   a. No county vehicle is available or use of a county vehicle is not practical.
   b. Travel mileage is less than 75 miles in total.
   c. The requesting party needs a specially equipped vehicle.

   The mileage reimbursement rate as set by the Internal Revenue Service will be paid to an employee who uses his/her personal vehicle if one of the above conditions occurs. The mileage that is reimbursable is measured from the duty station to the destination (and return). An employee may use their personal vehicle at any time but if one of the above conditions is not met, reimbursement will not occur.

3. Rental Vehicle – A receipt is necessary for reimbursement. Rental vehicles are to be used as a last resort. Use of a rental vehicle must be approved in advance.

4. Commuting –

a. No reimbursement shall be made for the use of a personal vehicle in commuting from an employee's home to his/her duty station. Commuting is defined as one round trip from an employee's home to duty station per day. If a second trip is necessary, mileage may be paid.

b. Travel to/from airport and employee's duty station – Reimbursement for travel between the employee's or board member's duty station and the nearest airline terminal and for appropriate parking may be made under the following circumstances. For travel by:

- Airport shuttle – one round trip shuttle fare;
- Taxi – limited to reimbursement rate for use of private vehicle;
- Private vehicle – The IRS reimbursement rate per mile for a maximum of two round trips with parking charges for a maximum of ninety-six hours.
- Receipts are required.

c. Travel to/from airport and employee's or board member's destination – Reimbursement for travel to and from the airline terminal at the employee's or board member's destination may be made where available as listed below:

- Airport shuttle – one round trip shuttle fare;
- Bus – one round trip bus fare;
- Taxi – when shuttle service is not available, actual fare to and from airline terminal;
- Rental vehicles – may be used as a last resort.
- Receipts are required.

5. Unit Vehicles - County vehicles may be used for any authorized travel. The requesting party must obey all laws of the jurisdiction in which the vehicle is being operated. The vehicle will be used in conducting County business only. A de minimis amount of personal use, such as driving the vehicle to and from dinner, may be allowed. Non-County employees may accompany County employees if they have a business interest in the travel. Spouses and children of County employees may accompany them in County-owned vehicles if space is available and the trip is strictly for official County business.

6. Parking fees, tolls, and storage fees are reimbursable with receipts. Reimbursement of expense for airport parking is limited to ninety-six hours, with a receipt required. Airport parking expenses in excess of 96 hours may be reimbursed in extraordinary circumstances if advance approval is obtained from the department head.

B. Lodging:

a. Authorization – The requesting party must obtain written authorization from an authorizing person in order to qualify for reimbursement for overnight stays.

b. Reimbursement – Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for reimbursement. Specific dates of lodging must be listed on the reimbursement request, and substantiated by a receipt from a commercial lodging establishment. Any services provided by the hotel that are in addition to those covered under the "room rate" will not be paid by the County and will be the responsibility of the person using the service. This includes but is not limited to internet charges, pay per view cable, room service, laundry service, and wet bars. These charges, if used, must be borne by the user at the time of service.

C. Meals:

a. Reimbursement – Each employee is responsible for his or her own request for meal reimbursement which must be approved by the authorizing party.

b. Travel (Overnight) – Actual costs for up to three meals a day, including tips, will be reimbursed if overnight stay is required related to official County business not to exceed the per diem rates set forth below. According to IRS guidelines, in order for travel meal reimbursements to be excludable from taxable wages, employees must be traveling away from their tax home on their employer's business. Traveling away from home means that the employee must be traveling away from the general tax home area substantially longer than an ordinary day's work and the employee needs to obtain substantial sleep or rest to meet the demands of the work while away from home.

If overnight travel does occur, on days of travel meals will be reimbursed based upon the time of departure from and the time of return to duty station for each meal based on the following:

i. Time of Day Restriction

1. Breakfast – Will be reimbursed if depart duty station prior to 7:00 a.m.

2. Lunch – Will be reimbursed if depart duty station prior to 11:00 a.m. (day of departure) or return to duty station after 2:00 p.m. (day of return).

3. Dinner – Will be reimbursed if return to duty station after 7:00 p.m. If stopping for dinner would cause the employee to return after 7:00 p.m., when he/she would otherwise have returned before 7:00 p.m., dinner will not be reimbursed.

Time of departure and arrival on days of travel must be listed on the reimbursement request.

ii. Restrictions on Amounts to be Reimbursed

1. Receipts are required for reimbursement. Tips are reimbursable based on the actual tip not to exceed 15% of the meal cost. Reimbursement will not exceed the per meal rates set forth below which includes the tip. These rates are per meal, not per day. In other words, if you spend $10 for breakfast but only $8 for lunch, you cannot borrow funds from one meal to offset the overage for the other.
The rates below are the rates currently in place for the Rutherfordton zip code as established by the General Services Administration for federal travel. These rates are updated October 1 of each year (the beginning of the federal fiscal year). These rates are used by various cities and counties throughout North Carolina.

Breakfast	$7
Lunch	$11
Dinner	$23

c. Travel (Not Overnight) - Reimbursements shall not be paid to employees for meals if travel does not involve an overnight stay as described above except as noted below.

d. Reimbursement for Meals – Required Employee Attendance

i. A County employee may be reimbursed for meals when the job requires his/her attendance at the meeting of a board, commission, committee, or council in his/her official capacity and the meal is preplanned as part of the meeting.

ii. Departments Heads and the County Manager may host and be reimbursed for meals purchased for visiting officials when conducting official county business.

e. Non-reimbursable meal expenses shall include, but not be limited to:
   i. Alcoholic beverages
   ii. Snacks
   iii. Groceries
   iv. Room Service
   v. Wet Bars
   vi. Any cost not due to official County business

D. Other Costs

1. Conventions and Conferences

Limitations – Attendance at conventions and conferences will be limited to two individuals unless the conference provides training required by more than two employees. Employees directly involved in the convention or conference program will not be counted toward this limitation. Efforts should be made to reduce costs when at all possible by travelling together or sharing lodging accommodations.

2. Telephone Calls

a. Safe Arrival Call –Employees are allowed one safe arrival long distance phone call per overnight stay not to exceed $3.00.

b. Reimbursement – Official phone calls are reimbursable under "other expenses." Individual calls over $3.00 must be identified as to subject, point of origin and destination.

c. Emergency calls – Employees may be reimbursed for a personal long distance call if such a call is of an emergency nature as determined by the department head. For example, a call made when an employee calls home to inform someone that the travel period has been extended beyond original plans due to unforeseen reasons.

d. Cell Phones – County issued cell phones should be used to make the above allowed calls assuming that the cell phone plan has a minute allowance included in the monthly charge and those minutes have not been exceeded.

III. Authorization for Reimbursement Procedures –

A. Submitting expense reports –

1. If a travel advance has been obtained, the requesting party will complete the reimbursement form given to them with the advance check and attach receipts for expenses requiring them and submit it to the authorizing party no later than five working days after returning from travel. Advances will be deducted from reimbursable costs.

2. A requesting party submitting a falsified reimbursement form will be subject to disciplinary action and criminal prosecution. An authorizing party or Finance Officer who approves a falsified reimbursement form that they know to be false will be subject to disciplinary action or criminal prosecution. Violations of the County's travel policy may result in dismissal from County employment.

B. Approval and processing of reimbursement requests -

1. Reimbursement requests will be submitted to the authorizing party for approval. After approval by the authorizing party, the form should be forwarded to the County Finance Office.

2. The Finance Office will determine that the reimbursement form has been properly approved, that is mathematically correct, and that requested reimbursements agree to submitted receipts and are within the limits set by this policy. If an error in the reimbursement request is found, the requesting party will be informed and the error will be corrected before payment is made.

Before the reimbursement is made, the Finance Office will determine that there is a sufficient unexpended appropriation in the expenditure item. The Finance Officer will immediately inform the authorizing party and requesting party if payment cannot be made.