



*City of Reidsville Press Release – Release Date November 21, 2017*

# City of Reidsville Among Finalists for Triad’s ‘Healthiest Employers’

The City of Reidsville was recognized November 16 as a finalist among those vying for the title of one of the Triad’s “Healthiest Employers”.

The Triad Business Journal, which spearheads the competition sponsored by United Healthcare and the benefits firm, Hill, Chesson & Woody, recognized the finalists and the ultimate winners Thursday night in Winston-Salem. This is the seventh year of the contest.

Applications were narrowed down to five finalists, including Reidsville, in the Small Employers category for those with between 2-250 employees. The category was won by Randolph Electric.

While Reidsville didn’t win the coveted distinction, City officials believe that this is one instance where it truly is great just to be nominated because it shows the City is on the right wellness track.

“We do feel like winners because our employees are improving their health,” said Reidsville Mayor Jay Donecker. “Our employees are very important to us. The ultimate payoff for our investment in the wellness program is creating a healthier, happier and more productive workforce.”

The City of Reidsville started its wellness initiative around five years ago and would soon hire a part-time on-staff health coach. Earlier this year, Reidsville’s Economic Development Director Jeff Garstka decided to apply for the award. With the help of the City’s health coach Krishna Patharkar and members of the City’s Wellness Committee, the application was prepared.

Reidsville’s application told the story of Assistant Fire Chief Jay Harris, who learned from one of the City’s routine health screenings that he had gone into the full-blown type 2 diabetic range and didn’t even know it. He had no symptoms, no family history, and as he said it, “no clue.”



**FINALISTS** for the Triad’s Healthiest Employers are pictured above. At right, City of Reidsville health coach Krishna Patharkar, second from right, holds the City’s certificate.



Now, a year later, Harris has lost 50 pounds and six inches off his waist. He has his diabetes under control with diet and exercise alone and has lowered his A1C from an 8 to a 5.

“Had I not been provided blood screenings and chosen to participate in those programs, I would still be oblivious and compromising my health and life span,” Harris said.

Accepting the Finalist award on behalf of the City were Garstka, Patharkar, and Wellness Committee members Michelle Smith and Denise Toms.

The City of Reidsville encourages its employees and participating retirees to focus on their health by providing more than just the annual screenings. They can also take part in various activities throughout the year that stress nutrition, including healthy recipes, as well as wellness challenges and Lunch-n-Learns on related topics.

City Manager Preston Mitchell, who came to Reidsville a little over two years ago, has started a “Walk & Chat” with employees. The employees can get wellness points by walking with the Manager during these monthly sessions held at the Reidsville Parks & Recreation gym.

Employees on the City’s health insurance can buy down their deductible by participating in such activities and getting points on their wellness credit form. The City also offers free diabetic supplies and medications for individuals who complete the wellness credit form and meet at least twice with the health coach during the calendar year. Reidsville employees also get free use of the City fitness centers. The City also provides paid time off for employees to complete their wellness physicals, which are now required annually for employees.

The end result has been the City of Reidsville seeing better management of chronic conditions and the identification of health issues among its workforce, and of course, being named a finalist among Triad’s Healthiest Employers.

The Triad Business Journal also recognized winners and finalists in the Midsize, Large and Extra-Large employer categories.