

Postal workers pick up food for hungry

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Postal carriers collected more than 240,000 pounds of food from doorsteps across central and eastern North Carolina on Saturday as part of the nation's largest single-day food drive.

Locally, the 16th annual Stamp Out Hunger Drive, organized by the United States Postal Service, benefited the Food Bank of Central & Eastern North Carolina, which has warehouses in Raleigh, Durham, Southern Pines, Greenville and Wilmington.

Food bank officials said the donated food will provide more than 200,000 meals.

"Hunger continues to be a vital issue in this country," William H. Young, president of the National Association of Letter Carriers, said in a news release.

"Many Americans may miss the faces of hunger, but we see it daily out on our routes," Young continued. "The problem is hunger can strike anyone – the elderly, the working class and even innocent children."

Overall, local donations increased by 13,000 pounds, said food-bank officials.

Raleigh lead the way with 167,000 pounds donated, while Durham came in second with 32,000 pounds.

Postal workers collected nearly 19,000 pounds in Wilmington, more than 11,00 in the Sandhills and close to 10,000 in Greenville.

The national food drive took place in more than 10,000 communities. In 2007, it raised more than 71 million pounds of food.

In 2007, the food bank distributed more than 32.6 million pounds of food through 870 partner agencies.

Food bank officials said nearly 450,000 people do not have access to adequate food resources in the 34-county area it serves, according to the U.S. Census Bureau's 2006 estimates. That number is up from around 400,000 in the U.S. Census' 2003 estimates.

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