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New Bern, North Carolina

## City of New Bern Three Centuries of North Carolina Heritage

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Toussaint E. Summers, Jr.  
Chief of Police

### **NEW BERN POLICE DISCOURAGE CELEBRATORY GUNFIRE**

Traditional firing of weapons is unlawful and unsafe

DECEMBER 30, 2011 – New Bern Police are encouraging families to have fun and stay safe this holiday weekend. The safety message includes a warning not to fire weapons as part of the New Year celebration.

“There is a tradition in many communities across the country to fire a weapon into the air to celebrate the start of a new year,” said Chief of Police Toussaint Summers, Jr. “But it is just not smart. First, it is unsafe and could harm or kill someone, and secondly, it’s against the law.” Chief Summers cited a case last year in DeKalb County, Georgia. A four year-old child was killed on New Year’s Eve while sitting beside his mother in church, when someone outside fired a bullet into the air and it fell through the sanctuary and struck him. “These kinds of tragedies affect the entire community and they are completely avoidable.”

City of New Bern ordinances state:

#### *Section 46-2 Discharge of firearms or pellet guns*

- (a) It shall be unlawful for any person to discharge any firearm, or pellet gun, of any type within the city.....

There are no exceptions in the ordinances that pertain to celebratory gunfire.

New Bern Police Department officers will be on patrol throughout the city on New Year’s Eve and New Year’s Day, promoting safety within our communities while families ring in 2012. Celebratory gunfire will not be tolerated, whether bullets or blanks are fired. The New Bern Police Department encourages the public to abandon this tradition, for the safety and security of our residents.