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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.



## Christmas Peanuts Characters on the Square Damaged and Stolen

Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. (UWI) reports that their iconic Christmas display of Peanuts characters was vandalized between Monday, December 31 and Wednesday morning, January 2. The plywood characters were removed from the Town Square stage causing damage to some, and a large piano with Snoopy on top is missing. UWI hopes the individuals responsible will return the missing items so that we may continue this Christmas display for the holiday enjoyment of our residents. The telephone number for UWI is 704-695-1644.

## Anson County's November Unemployment Rate Steady at 4.1%

Anson County's unemployment rate for November was 4.1%, the same as October's rate. Statewide the unemployment rate was 3.5% in November, basically unchanged from October's 3.4% rate. Anson's total labor force in November was 10,336. Of that number 9,908 were employed and 428 were unemployed. In October the total labor force was 10,399 with 9,968 employed and 431 unemployed. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) increased in 56 of North Carolina's counties in November, decreased in 14, and remained unchanged in 30. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 6.6 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.7 percent. Five of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases, three decreased, and seven remained unchanged. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount at 4.8 percent had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 2.8 percent. The November not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.5 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 99 counties and remained unchanged in one. All 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in November by 19,851 to 4,821,673, while those unemployed increased 1,022 to 172,384. Since November 2017, the number of workers employed statewide increased 77,582, while those unemployed decreased 49,918.

## Anson County Gets Serious About Workforce Development with "Career In A Year" Initiative

From AnsonEDP Director John Marek: As a rule, when all is said and done about workforce development, more is generally said than done. Communities understand that the key to future growth and prosperity is having a skilled and ready workforce, but the path to achieving that goal can be elusive. Too often, we hear that training programs are inconvenient and expensive or that nobody knows about them. Well, those excuses went out the window this week as South Piedmont Community College announced a workforce development program for the new year with a postcard mailed to EVERY residence in the county. Called the Career in a Year Anson Advantage, this new initiative offers FREE tuition and fees for Anson County residents in more than a dozen in-demand career training classes ranging in length from just four weeks to ten months. And most of the classes will be offered during convenient evening hours at the L.L. Polk Campus in Polkton, less than a 30 minute drive from virtually every corner of the county. Career options include Office Administration, Bookkeeping, Healthcare, Truck Driving, Welding, Advanced Manufacturing, CNC, Real Estate and Auto Body Repair. These skill sets are among the most requested by existing businesses in Anson County and across the region, and positions in these fields generally start at or above the county average wage of \$15.67. More information can be found at [spcc.edu/Career1Yr](http://spcc.edu/Career1Yr) or call 704-290-5255 to speak directly with a college representative.

## No Anson County Board of Elections Meeting in January

Anson County Board of Elections Director Steve Adams issued a release stating that due to no sitting State Board of Elections members, county boards also do not have active board members. Therefore there will not be a January Board of Elections meeting.

## Historic Bowman Senior High School Class of 1968 Celebrates 50th Reunion

On Saturday, December 15 more than one hundred Bowman Senior High School graduates in the class of 1968, along with their guests, celebrated their 50th high school reunion. During the reunion celebration these historic graduates reflected on events occurring during the year of their birth -1950, and the years of their senior year - 1967-68, as the first graduates of Bowman Senior High School and the Anson County Schools Consolidated School System. In their semi-formal attire they also reflected on their senior year when the senior prom and many other social events were prohibited. Now, some fifty years later, they celebrate their historic legacy as trailblazers in a prom-like fashion with the theme Promenading Learning, Life and Legacy. After a welcome by Dr. Josephine L. Harris, Chair of the 50th Reunion Planning Committee, and greetings by Anson County Board of Commissioner member Lawrence Gatewood, a member of this historic class; and Mrs. Deborah Flowers Davis, Director of Secondary Instruction, representing the Anson County Schools and the Anson County Board of Education, class members paid tribute to their deceased classmates in a memorable candlelight ceremony. Following dinner classmates continued to reflect on their journey as the first graduates of the Anson County Consolidated School System. They reminisced about their graduation day on Friday, June 7, 1968, where more than four hundred classmates marched into the gymnasium at Bowman High School and into the archives of history as the first graduates of Anson County Schools Consolidated School System. After a year of cultural acculturation and challenges as a merged school district, students, teachers, staff, administration, parents and the entire community of Anson County witnessed the dawning of a near era in Anson County with this first graduating class of Bowman Senior High School, which was named after long-time superintendent J. O. Bowman. To many, during the 50th reunion celebration, they felt like it was only yesterday that they marched into the gymnasium at Bowman to the tune of "Pomp and Circumstance" by Elgar, as students from former schools throughout Anson County - Anson High School, East Polkton, Faison, Henry Grove, McCrae High, Morven High, Wadesboro High, West Ansonville and West Deep Creek - joined together as one graduating class, with full honors in recognition of their academic progression over the years. Although their senior year at Bowman High School was not what they had perceived it would be, it was a year of character building, learning new routines and classmates, participating in schooling in a way they had not in their previous school settings, and yes, preparing for their future plans. Their reflections moved them to remember Jack H. Heisler as Principal and Bill E. Thacker as the Assistant Principal. It seemed these brave young men and women, during their senior year, grew academically and progressed exponentially in to a greater understanding of the societal impacts that were life-changing. Even the time from August of 1967, when they entered the doors of Bowman High School, to June 7, 1968, as they marched in step to graduate, the progression of times was both at slow pace, with day-to-day interactions of challenge; yet; fast at times as the year neared an end. Not only did this historic class of 1968 face challenges in their school, they also witnessed historical changes at the local, state and national levels in 1967 and 68:

- August 30, 1967 - Thurgood Marshall is confirmed as the first African American Justice of the United States Supreme Court.
- October 2, 1967 - Tens of thousands of Vietnam War protesters marched in Washington, D. C.
- April 4, 1968 - Martin Luther King, Jr. fatally shot at the Lorraine Motel in Memphis while working and meeting with local leaders on plans for his Poor People's March on Washington, D.C.
- June 5, 1968 - U.S. presidential candidate Robert F. Kennedy fatally wounded by assassin following primary victory speech.

Even with all of these events occurring during the 1967-68 school year, this historic class of Bowman Senior High School still managed to establish the first school organizations consisting of The Bearcat Tracks, The Bearcat Beat, National Honor Society, Library Club, Junior Classical League, Future Farmers of America, Distributive Education Club, Future Homemakers of America, Band, and a student government. This brave and determined class of 1968 also helped establish the athletic program at Bowman Senior High with football, basketball, cheerleading squad and wrestling. Demographically the organizations did not reflect the student population, yet it was a beginning. This historic class remembered that the initial plans for Bowman Senior High School did not reflect the composition of students who marched into history on June 7, 1968. It was initially built as a segregated school. Later in April 1967, the new Anson County Board of Education met on Tuesday, April 26, 1967, at Bowman High School to discuss the options for the school which included: **1)** Bowman High School to open as an integrated high school for all girls in grades 9 through 12; **2)** Anson High School to operate as an integrated high school for all boys grades 10 to 12; **3)** Wadesboro High School to house all upcoming ninth grade boys from the following schools: Ansonville, Lilesville, Peachland, Polkton, Morven and Wadesboro; **4)** J. R. Faison School to house all upcoming ninth grade boys from the following schools: East Polkton, Henry Grove, West Ansonville, West Deep Creek, McCrae and J. R. Faison; and **5)** All grades 1 through 8 will operate as in the past except where students have requested another school through freedom of choice. In other words, freedom of choice will prevail in the elementary schools. None of these options proved to reach fruition; when in August 1967, these four hundred plus brave young men and women paved the way for others to follow in the new Anson County Consolidated School System, with the first day of school opening without incident. From one reflective thought to another the 50th celebration brought back memories of them marching together in their recessional to the tune of "Largo" by Handel, with their degrees conferred as graduates and their tassels turned to the next legacy-making juncture, they faced their future endeavors with a life changing senior year. They walked out of the doors of Bowman Senior High School, claiming a history no other class could claim, and that of being the first graduating class of Bowman Senior High School - some four hundred strong. Now, some fifty years later, as the 50th reunion celebration neared an end around 11:00 p.m. with hugs and good-byes, decorations being dismantled, last minute signing of 50 year-old yearbooks, telephone numbers entered into cell phones, souvenir booklets and reunion paraphernalia being held tightly, last pictures taken and the lingering need to cherish every moment of this magical, historical, and euphoric celebration; these graduates exited the doors of Bowman with a great sense of renewal, healing, and excitement about continuing to honor their legacy as the first graduates of Anson County Schools Consolidated School System. For many this 50th celebration is only the beginning of more to come.

Photo courtesy of Ronnie Bennett Photography Studio 704-695-7799

## Wildlife Commission to Hold Public Hearing in Albemarle on Thursday

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will conduct a public hearing in Albemarle on Jan. 10 at 7 p.m. to take comments on proposed changes to agency regulations related to enforcement, wildlife management, inland fisheries and game lands for the 2019-2020 seasons. The public hearing will be held at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center, located at 26032-B Newt Rd. in Albemarle. The comment period for the proposed regulations will run through Feb. 1, 2019. More information on all of the proposed regulations for the 2019-20 seasons can be found in the 2019-2020 Public Hearing Booklet, available at [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org). Comments on the proposed changes may be submitted online at [www.ncpaws.org](http://www.ncpaws.org), at the public hearing, emailed (including full name and address) to [regulations@ncwildlife.org](mailto:regulations@ncwildlife.org) or mailed to: Rules Coordinator, N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, 1701 Mail Service Center, Raleigh, NC 27699-1700. After collecting and considering all public comments, the wildlife commissioners will meet in February to decide whether to adopt the proposals. Approved proposals will take effect Aug. 1, 2019.

## Storytime Every Tuesday at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library features Storytime for children every Tuesday at 10 a.m. This program is free and an enjoyable learning experience for children. For more information call 704-694-5177.

## Bluegrass and Country Music at Next 50+ Club Meeting

The Hampton B. Allen Library announces the 50+ Club meeting on Monday, January 14 at 10:30 a.m. in the Little Theatre. The guest will be the band Knights at the Museum. The band includes Stan Harward, Jimmy Rushing, Scott Drye, Joe Dutton and Tim Knopp. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy a program of bluegrass and country music. Any questions please call 704-694-5177.