

Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month

Replace standard power strips with advanced power strips to save energy. Advanced power strips look like ordinary power strips, but they have built-in features that are designed to reduce the amount of energy used by standby electronics that consume energy even when they're not in use (also known as phantom load).

The National Renewable Energy Laboratory (NREL) estimates that the average home loses \$200 annually to energy wasted by phantom load.

Pee Dee Electric

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Source: nrel.gov

Free Webinar on Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Nutrition and Exercise

The Physical and Mental Health Benefits of Nutrition and Exercise webinar will be held on Thursday, January 21, from 1:00 to 2:00 p.m. via WebEx. Miranda Sanders, Life Coach, IFBB Pro, CPT, CSN will be the presenter.

Contact Suzanne Maness at (910) 627-1769, toll free (877) 211-5995 or by email at connectionsfsp@gmail.com for more information and to register. Registration deadline is January 18, 2021.

Remembering.....

By Ed McBride



Anson Music Company

Now this one also goes back awhile - Earl Chewning had a furniture store at Lilesville, but also had juke boxes in 1941 and 1942 catering to the younger generation and World War II maneuvers. The juke boxes played 78 rpm records - you see there were no 45 rpm records or CD's! He did have some pinball machines too.

John T. Wall purchased the Anson Music Company from Earl Chewning in the early 1940's - all this was in the early part of World War II. He hired Ben Carter to look after the juke boxes, etc. When John Edward Bacon was fresh out of the military in 1953 he worked in the apple orchards for his Uncle John T. - soon, however, he and Ben together were "in the business" - having routes with new pick-up trucks - can you believe they served the Anson area - also Union, Stanly, Moore, Richmond,

Chesterfield counties and more.

The above picture was of Ben's new truck. You will notice the 45 rpm records on the door signs - this was making the 78 rpm record very obsolete - fast! Note that they also were advertising "bumper pool" on the doors. Another "note"...you can tell this was not "just yesterday" - the phone numbers were 3431 and 3312 - which were numbers of Lilesville Telephone Company. Later, "Creeper" Clark sold Lilesville Telephone Company to the then North Carolina Telephone Company - now ALLETEL.

After John T. died, Ben and John Edward were equal partners in the Anson Music Company until Ben retired in 1985, selling his half to John, who himself retired in 1996 - and has been "resting" since!!

Still Standing:

A Year of Extreme Challenges Draws to a Close

This is a release from the Anson County Economic Development Partnership (AnsonEDP): Over the nearly 20 years I have been writing these annual wrap-ups in one economic development capacity or another, my reports have been overwhelmingly upbeat and positive. Even during the most challenging years of the Great Recession, it was easy to find a silver lining. 2020 was a difficult year for Anson County, and while there were a few positives to be found, it would come across as tone-deaf not to acknowledge that fact.

In addition to the COVID-19 pandemic, which has driven many of our businesses to the brink, our Walmart's shuttering was an unexpected blow to our local economy. Whether you are a proponent of the Walmart way of doing things or not, anything that decreases the retail options for Anson County is negative.

Early in the pandemic, the county seemed to be faring better than the surrounding area. Our case count was relatively low; our industries were not announcing the massive layoffs occurring elsewhere; subsequently, our unemployment rate did not spike to nearly the extent seen in neighboring counties. However, as COVID-19 has worn on, we have "caught up" in all three areas, becoming one of the last counties in the state to be categorized as "critical" in mid-December.

Although none of our largest employers have shut down for an extended period, they are all struggling to various extents, with reports of business being down by anywhere from 15% to 40%. At least one has suggested that they would likely have suffered significant layoffs over the summer without PPP assistance.

Beyond the financial toll, the human toll of the pandemic in Anson County has been devastating. Some of the county's best and brightest people have been incapacitated for lengthy periods or lost. As of this writing, more than 1,500 have been sickened, and 31 have died. The impact on their families and the community will be felt for years to come.

In terms of economic development, our office's business activity is down about 25% from previous years. Although the number of inquires and active projects is off some, the real impact has come in prospect visits. We typically host two or three prospects each month but have had only a half-dozen visits, total, since March, and most of those have been companies from the Charlotte region out "kicking tires." International visits, which have been a significant factor in our industrial growth over the past four years, have been zero due to travel restrictions.

On the positive side, the Pee Dee Electric Cooperative announcement was the highlight of the year. In addition to the \$20 million headquarters project, the cooperative is partnering with AnsonEDP and NCSE to develop the land around their new campus as a logistics park, which will bring hundreds of jobs and tens of millions of dollars investment to the eastern side of the county over the next 20 years.

Another positive, at least so far, has been sales tax revenue. When the Walmart closed, there was concern among county leaders that our sales tax revenue, which is used to fund everything from education to economic development, would be substantially decreased. Some estimated we could lose as much as 15 to 20 percent. Sales tax revenues are actually UP slightly for the year. It appears residents have mostly continued spending their money here in the county. Anecdotally, businesses like H.W. Little, Parson's Drugs, Roses, TSC, Food Lion, IGA, and others have taken up much of the slack. That trend, however, may have been influenced by people's reluctance to travel during the pandemic, as well as the stimulus checks, so it is still a concern that bears monitoring, long-term.

Looking ahead, the future of the Walmart building is one of our most critical issues for 2021. We have been very active in marketing that property and have had interest from a variety of different companies for a variety of different uses. The best-case scenario would be another large retail operation, but a distribution center or manufacturing facility would similarly benefit the community. We will also be focussing on development in the Peachland-Polkton corridor and ramping up marketing efforts for Atlantic Gateway.

In lieu of face-to-face meetings and prospect visits, AnsonEDP is investing additional effort in our online and virtual presence. We have already upgraded the site and building search capability on our website, and will be rolling out a general "freshening" of the look and feel of that website over the next month.

As COVID-19 vaccines are made available across the country, we see some light at the end of the tunnel. Realistically, it will probably be June or July before any semblance of normalcy returns to economic development. Until then, AnsonEDP will continue fighting the good fight, in whatever ways we can, for Anson County citizens.

Ansonia Theatre Play is Postponed

The Ansonia Theatre has announced that the next scheduled play, *The Spitfire Grill The Musical*, has been postponed until next season because of the Covid 19 pandemic. Dates are not yet confirmed.

Prelude to a Kiss is still scheduled for May.

You Can Support Area Children Via the Partnership for Children Barn Blast

Make supporting the children of Anson County a goal for 2021. There is still time to participate in the Anson County Partnership for Children Barn Blast 2021 Fundraiser. Visit www.ansonchildren.org/purchase-tickets or call 704-694-4036 for more information!



Do you see a rabbit or a duck?

If you see a rabbit, you should have regular eye care.

If you see a duck, you should have regular eye care.

If you see both, then you should have regular eye care.



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