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

Anson County's December Unemployment Rate at a Low 4.9%

Anson County's unemployment rate for December dropped slightly to 4.9% from November's 5.1% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate was 4.4% in December. Anson's total labor force in December was 10,312. Of that number 9,802 were employed and 510 were unemployed. In November the total labor force was 10,486 with 9,946 employed and 540 unemployed. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 56 of North Carolina's counties in December, increased in 20, and remained unchanged in 24. Hyde County had the highest unemployment rate at 10.6 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 3.4 percent. Eleven of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases and four remained unchanged. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount at 6.3 percent had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 3.6 percent. The December not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 4.4%. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 98 counties and remained unchanged in two. All 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in December by 37,295 to 4,684,502, while those unemployed decreased 6,047 to 215,792. Since December 2016, the number of workers employed statewide increased 34,669, while those unemployed decreased 22,548.



JROTC Rifle Team Finished in Top Ten After Three Year Hiatus

Congratulations to Anson High School JROTC Bearcat Battalion Rifle Team who competed in its first rifle match in over 3 years at Butler High School (BHS). Due to administrative challenges, which included safety testing, logistics, inclement weather and school closure issues, the team practice time was limited to just three sessions. With just three practices completed, the team traveled to BHS, competed and finished among the top 10 teams. Pictured here from left are SFC Shane Zelker (Retired), Cadet PV2 Bianca Liles, Cadet Staff Sergeant Joshua Jones, Cadet Staff Sergeant Bryce Wilson, Cadet Sergeant Major Ahleah Smith and Cadet PV2 John Williamson.

Governor Cooper Launches "Hometown Strong" to Support North Carolina's Rural Communities

Led by Pryor Gibson, team to form partnerships, leverage resources to strengthen rural communities

On February 1 North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper announced Hometown Strong, a new initiative to partner with local governments to support local economies, improve infrastructure, and strengthen rural communities. "Small communities like the one I grew up in have a special character and so much to offer. They deserve a real partner in state government and a chance to thrive," Gov. Cooper said. "That's Hometown Strong." Hometown Strong will work with local leaders to stimulate economies and help businesses thrive in North Carolina's rural communities by focusing on projects such as infrastructure improvements, broadband access, and workforce training.

Through existing and new partnerships with local leaders from government, business, non-profit organizations, the philanthropic community and others, Hometown Strong will seek to leverage state and local resources to help complete local development projects, convene conversations between state and local agencies, and identify long-term projects that can encourage prosperity in rural communities.

"Helping rural North Carolina thrive is one of my top priorities," Gov. Cooper said. "Families in rural communities aren't looking for mandates from Raleigh - they want state government to listen and help when asked. We'll listen to local leaders to make sure they're getting the support they need to help their communities prosper."

Gov. Cooper has appointed Pryor Gibson and Mary Penny Kelley to lead Hometown Strong. Initial partnerships between rural counties and Hometown Strong will be announced this spring.

Pryor Gibson, a Wadesboro native, is a former member of the North Carolina General Assembly who represented House District 96, which includes Anson, Montgomery, and Union counties. He also served as executive vice president of the North Carolina Forestry Association and as senior adviser for governmental affairs for Governor Bev Perdue.

Mary Penny Kelley formerly served as senior advisor for policy and innovation at the North Carolina Department of Environmental Quality, where she had also served as an executive attorney for nearly a decade. Additionally, she served as an Assistant Attorney General within the North Carolina Department of Justice and as an attorney in private practice. Kelley is a resident of Spring Hope.

"When you face a challenge in small towns like mine, you solve it by bringing everyone around the table. That's an idea that state government could use more of," said Gibson. "There is so much to be excited about in North Carolina's rural communities and Governor Cooper has made it clear that they should have a real partner in Raleigh. I look forward to getting to work."

Johnny Lee Robinson Charged with Attempted First Degree Murder

The Wadesboro Police Department arrested Johnny Lee Robinson, 52, on Friday, February 2 and charged him with Attempted First Degree Murder stemming from an incident that took place last week. One of the victims was seriously injured.

According to police, Robinson approached Ricky Gerald Hough, Sr., a 51 year old white male, and April Little Hough, a 37 year old black female, at the Stop-n-Shop store in Wadesboro, and fired at least eight shots. Ricky Hough was struck in the neck and twice in the arm. April Hough was not injured. Ricky Hough was taken to CMC Main and reported to be in stable condition. Warrants were obtained for the arrest of Robinson, and after a manhunt he was arrested.

Robinson was charged with Attempted First Degree Murder, Assault with a Deadly Weapon with Intent to Kill Inflicting Serious Injury, and Possession of a Firearm by a Felon. He is being held in the Anson County Jail under a \$500,000 bond. His first court date was set for February 6. Robinson has a prior arrest record.

What's Going on at the Ansonia

Annie the Musical is coming to the Ansonia. It will run for two weekends, February 16-18 and 23-25. Shows are 7:30 p.m. on Fridays and Saturdays, 3 p.m. on Sundays. Tickets are on sale now.

Artist Hooper Turner's artwork will hang in the Drake Gallery next door to the Ansonia until January 31.

The next reception at the Drake Gallery is for artist Elizabeth Schafer on Sunday, March 18. This reception is open to the public. Mark your calendars now!

For more information about these happenings or anything else call the Anson County Arts Council at 704-694-4950. They are on social Facebook, Twitter, Instagram and Snapchat. Please feel free to share your photos with them.

Pre-Kindergarten Registration

Pre-Kindergarten Registration will be held this year at the Elementary School in the attendance area where the child lives. Please check the dates and times below for the school your child will be attending. You must register in your residing district. All locations will be held 9 to 11 a.m.

- Wadesboro Primary School Thursday March 22
- Ansonville Elementary School Friday March 23
- Lilesville Elementary School Thursday March 29
- Morven Elementary School Thursday March 29
- Peachland-Polkton Elementary School Friday, April 20

To attend Kindergarten, your child has to be 5 on or before August 31, 2018. North Carolina Law requires a certified birth certificate (hospital/mother's copy birth certificates will not be accepted). Prior to the Pre-kindergarten registration clinics, forms can be picked up at the elementary school or on the Anson County Schools website (ansonschools.org) under the Parent and Student Resources link.

Anson County also requires at least 2 proofs of residence (911 address on Driver's License, address on a bill, etc.) to place the child in the proper attendance area.

- Do not forget to bring:
- 1) Certified birth certificate for your child
 - 2) Shot record
 - 3) Social Security card for the student
 - 4) Health assessment (if already completed)
 - 5) At least two (2) proofs of residence showing your 911 address
- If you have questions please call the school in your attendance area and speak to the school nurse.

East Polkton School Alumni Taste of Soul Dinner Program

The East Polkton School Alumni will celebrate Black History Month with its 'Taste of Soul' food dinner program on Saturday, February 24. Their Black History Month theme is 'African Americans at Times of War.' This event will take place at Anson High School, from 4 to 8 p.m.

Great, great food, fun, entertainment, knowledge, fellowship, art, and a very positive experience await everyone who attends! Plan a family evening out, meeting old friends and making new ones. You will likely join friends and acquaintances you may not have seen for many years!

Ticket prices are \$15 in advance and \$20 at the door. Tickets are available from East Polkton School Alumni, and you can call 704-272-7622.

Open House Reception at Hampton B. Allen Library

The Friends of the Hampton B. Allen Library are hosting an Open House Reception at the library on Sunday, February 18, from 2 to 4 p.m. Everyone is welcome to enjoy light refreshments and learn more about the library, its impact on the community, and how they can help.

The reception will also include the dedication of the memorial for Joyce R. Liles. Joyce was a valued member of the library staff and an officer of the Friends of the Library for more than seven years. The Friends have planted rose bushes and placed a plaque in her memory.

You are invited to come and remember Joyce's contributions to the library and the community, and to learn more about the Friends of the Library! For more information call 704-694-5177.

Mrs. Wright Celebrates 103rd Birthday

Mrs. Gladys Jones Wright turned 103 years old on Saturday, February 3, and the family celebrated her birthday at her home in Peachland. Mrs. Wright has lived her entire life as a resident of Peachland, and has been a member of Deep Springs Baptist Church where she continues to attend.

Mrs. Wright was married to the late Frank Wright. She has two daughters, Rebecca Nance and Sybil Ferree, two sons, Bobby and Sheppard, 13 grandchildren, 26 great-grandchildren, and two great-great-grandchildren.



50+ Club Meeting to Feature Local Musicians

The Hampton B. Allen Library announces the 50+ Club meeting for Monday, February 12 at 10:30 a.m. in the Little Theatre with Stan Harward, Joe Dutton and friends. These talented musicians and singers will be presenting a program of country and gospel music. Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the program featuring these local artists. Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

Anson Women's League Soup Luncheon is February 13

On Tuesday, February 13 the Anson Women's League (AWL) will be hosting its annual soup luncheon. For \$7 you get wonderful, yummy homemade vegetable-beef soup, a toasted cheese sandwich, a drink, and your choice of a wonderful homemade dessert (eat-ins only). The event takes place at First Baptist Church in Wadesboro. You can dine in or come pick up a take-out order for lunch.

This traditional, fun event is one of the AWL's major fundraisers for many of their charitable donations, which includes the annual AWL scholarships for graduating Anson County high school seniors. Your enjoyment will help support other many worthy causes here in Anson County as well. Tickets are available from any AWL member or contact Bonnie Morgan at (704) 695-5373 or bonnie.morgan@windstream.net to purchase tickets in advance or for more information.

They cannot deliver, but can prepare bulk orders for take-out if you let them know in advance how many orders and at what time you will pick them up. Be sure to contact Bonnie Morgan about bulk order requests no later than Monday, February 12 so they can be prepared on time. Lunch will be served from 11 a.m. until 1:30 p.m. Plan to come and enjoy a delicious meal in great company!

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