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

Covid Cases Continue to Drop

The latest information posted by the Anson County Health Department on Tuesday, February 15 there were 6,406 total Covid-19 cases, with 225 active and 95 deaths. The number of active cases continues to drop. On February 8 there were 408 active cases.

Covid Vaccines are available for everyone 5 years old and older, including walk-in clinics. (Children 5-11 by appointment only.) Vaccine boosters are available. They are free, and all you have to do is call the Health Department at 704-694-5188 for more information. Walk-in clinics are held on Thursdays, 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m.

The Health Department is located at 110 West Ashe Street in Wadesboro.

Covid Testing Free testing is available Monday through Friday, 9:30 a.m. to 5 p.m. without an appointment. They are closed for lunch 12 noon to 1 p.m. Testing takes place in the old hospital parking lot at 500 Morven Road in Wadesboro. No appointment is needed and there is no charge for the Covid test. Results will be called or emailed directly to the person tested or, in the case of children, to their parent or adult caregiver, in 2-3 days. They will test anyone over the age of 1.

Free home Covid tests are available by mail. The government has set up a website (www.covidtests.gov) or call 1-800-232-0233.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported that statewide as of Tuesday, February 15 there were 2,888 new cases of Covid, with 21,835 deaths and 3,042 hospitalized. The new cases are down considerably from February 8 when there were 4,648 new cases. Cases have continued to drop from 31,902 new cases reported on January 18. On February 15, 75% of adults in NC had one dose of vaccine, 71% had both doses.

Adult Literacy Program Moving to South Piedmont Community College

Free community service accepting new students & volunteer tutors

Common Heart's adult literacy program is on the move - to South Piedmont Community College! The college, which has supported the program since its launch in late 2019, will now house this free community service in the School of College & Career Readiness.

The move will give students more opportunities and a larger reach for the program to help more families in our community. The program's current 19 students and 7 tutors will now have access to additional resources and can use the college's campus as a meeting place if they'd like. RJ Lightsey, Common Heart's literacy program manager, will oversee the program at SPCC.

As Common Heart focuses on its expanding food pantry network and economic empowerment programs, adult literacy needed a new home and reaching out to SPCC was top of mind, Common Heart Executive Director Keith Adams said. SPCC has supported the program with free testing services since Common Heart took the lead in reviving adult literacy in Union County after the sudden closure of the Union County Literacy Council in the summer of 2019.

"I can't imagine a better place for this program to land," he said. "SPCC's dedication and resources will allow the program not only to continue, but to grow and thrive. I'm really excited to see how many more lives will be changed by adding adult literacy services to their already robust offerings for adult learners."

Kelly Stegall, dean of the School of College & Career Readiness, said SPCC is excited about the potential for this program not only for new students but students currently enrolled in SPCC who could benefit from the supplemental support - at no charge. Stegall said it was important to keep this program as a free service for the community. Students do not have to live in Union County to receive help and the program will be offered at campuses in both Union & Anson counties.

"We see this as our charge," she said. "We just want to give back and help people in our communities increase their English language skills or their literacy levels. We know that people with higher levels of literacy are able to secure the credentials necessary to move up as far as their economic mobility goes. Once we're able to help support students in increasing that level of literacy or increasing that English language skill, the doors are wide open for them."

Most of the students who come for help now have never been to college and it's a chance to encourage that excitement and zest for learning, Lightsey said. At SPCC, tutors will be able to meet with students in the evenings on campus which is something Common Heart didn't have available. Lightsey said he's heard from a long-time tutor that several students are eager to continue lessons because evening tutoring sessions will be available.

"Just to be on the grounds and look around and see what's there could be a different experience for them, it could be more exciting," he said.

If you'd like to volunteer as a tutor or enroll as a student for FREE help, email rlightsey@spcc.edu or call 704-290-5261.

About Common Heart Founded in 2006, Common Heart works to create a "small revolution of kindness" in our community to eradicate food insecurity and eliminate generational poverty. Common Heart's programs are designed to engage community volunteer action in 2 areas: food pantries & economic empowerment.

The 501(c)3 nonprofit with locations in Indian Trail and Marshville, serves under-resourced families and individuals who live in Union County and the surrounding area through 10 food pantry outreaches serving an average 3,000 individuals each month. Our Economic Empowerment programs provide focus groups and resource building programs to move under-resourced families into stability.

Donations and volunteers are always welcome and appreciated. Find more information about Common Heart online at www.CommonHeart.org.



BRLC's Volunteers Provided Supper for Burnsville's First Responders

On the first Monday of each month at 6:30 p.m. the Burnsville Fire Department holds their monthly meeting and training Sessions. On February 6 Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center volunteers provided supper for the fire department first responders.

The supper consisted of barbecue, slaw, chips, cake and assorted beverages. The opening consisted of welcome and prayer by attendee Gary Sikes. Supper was served to all in attendance. BRLC's after school children presented a short program to give thanks to Burnsville Fire First Responders for their years of hard work. Most people are very shy when asked to stand and speak before strangers, and the children showed everyone exactly how to do it.

In their presentations students spoke softly as they stood before the Fire Department group. Some even had to have a seat as they said their remarks. They expressed to Burnsville first responders how appreciative they were to have them in this community. The young students recited the names of individuals they knew personally who were served or rescued in some way by the Burnsville VFD team.

Students also presented a moment in Black History in which each read or recited information on an African American of their choice. This brief information was based on the contributions of African Americans to this country. The Kids Café students read important information they themselves hope to see accomplished in society. Each piece of information the students shared dealt with the economy, fuel, electric cars and how important it is for individuals to learning to work together.

Treamenda Caple, Cathy Howard, Brenda Benton and Deloris Hammond are volunteers who work weekly with BRLC after school students. Several community citizens were on hand in support of this special moment. They were Mr. and Mrs. Rayvon Horne, former Kids Café after school participants, Mrs. Christine Rose who currently serves in an administrative role at Porter Ridge Schools in Union County and Mr. Victor Medley who is currently serving in the US Army as a Drone specialist.

BRLC Director Carol Smith said, "What would the Burnsville Community be without this great fire department? The volunteer firemen and medical team make themselves available to serve in times of need or emergencies. The Fire Department is made up of special men and women willing to be trained and serve. To the Burnsville Volunteer Fire & Rescue past and present, this community is grateful for your service and training. We extend our gratitude to each of you."

2021 Was the Deadliest Year in Two Decades on NC Roads

Following a nationwide trend, more people were killed in traffic fatalities in North Carolina last year than in any other year in the past two decades. The 1,755 people killed in traffic crashes in 2021 exceeded the state's previous record of 1,704 traffic fatalities in 2007, according to preliminary data from the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program. Last year's numbers also represented a slight tick upward of 5% over the traffic fatalities recorded in 2020.

"Sadly, we have seen traffic fatalities moving in the wrong direction for a couple years in North Carolina and across the country," said Mark Ezzell, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program. "People are dying in record numbers on our roads, and it's going to take an all-hands on deck approach from communities, organizations and individual drivers to reverse this trend."

The 2021 data showed a decrease in some types of crashes compared to 2020 data. For instance, North Carolina saw a decrease in traffic fatalities related to pedestrians, cyclists and work zones. However, the state saw an increase in other types of fatalities attributed to speeding, unbuckled occupants and distracted driving. Also, over the past five years, almost all categories have shown a year-over-year increase in fatal crash totals.

NCDOT's Safety and Mobility Unit provides detailed county-by-county information on traffic crashes, although there is some lag time in when updated data is made available. The site is: www.ncdot.gov/initiatives-policies/safety/traffic-safety/Pages/safety-data-maps.aspx.

"We'll continue to encourage collaboration and innovative, holistic approaches to improving safety on our roadways," said Kevin Lacy, state traffic engineer with the N.C. Department of Transportation. "But in the meantime, we know everyone can play a part by slowing down, driving defensively, never driving distracted or impaired, and always buckling up in every seat of a vehicle."

In 2021, the NCGHSP awarded more than \$18 million in grants to nearly 100 organizations across North Carolina for a variety of initiatives targeting key traffic safety areas. Grant recipients include local and state law enforcement agencies, nonprofit organizations, courts and state departments.

North Carolina's data mirrors a disturbing national trend. The 31,720 people killed in the first nine months of 2021 represented more deaths on the nation's roads than the first nine months of any year since 2006, according to data from the National Highway Traffic Safety Administration.

Space Heater Tips

Portable electric space heaters can be a convenient source of supplemental heat for your home in cold weather. Unfortunately, they can pose significant fire and electric shock hazards if not used properly.

Safety should always be a top consideration when using space heaters. Here are some tips for keeping your home safe and warm:

- Make sure your space heater has the label showing that it is listed by a recognized testing laboratory.
- Before using any space heater, read the manufacturer's instructions and the warning labels carefully.
- Inspect heaters for cracked or broken plugs or loose connections before each use. If frayed, worn or damaged, do not use the heater.
- Never leave a space heater unattended. Turn it off when you're leaving a room or going to sleep, and don't let pets or children play too close to a space heater.
- Space heaters are only meant to provide supplemental heat and should never be used to warm bedding, cook food, dry clothing or thaw pipes.
- Install smoke alarms on every floor of your home and outside all sleeping areas and test them once a month.
- Proper placement of space heaters is critical. Heaters must be kept at least three feet away from anything that can burn, including papers, clothing and rugs.
- Locate space heaters out of high traffic areas and doorways where they may pose a tripping hazard.
- Plug space heaters directly into a wall outlet. Do not use an extension cord or power strip, which could overheat and result in a fire. Do not plug any other electrical devices into the same outlet as the heater.
- Place space heaters on level, flat surfaces. Never place heaters on cabinets, tables, furniture, or carpet, which can overheat and start a fire.
- Always unplug and safely store the heater when it is not in use.

Location/Site	Quarantined Students	Quarantined Employees	Positive Cases Students	Positive Cases Employees
Anson Early College High School	2	0	1	0
Anson High School	11	1	3	0
Anson Middle School	9	1	4	0
Ansonville Elementary	2	0	2	0
Lilesville Elementary	2	0	2	0
Morven Elementary	0	0	0	0
Peachland-Polkton Elementary	6	0	8	1
Wadesboro Elementary	2	0	0	0
Wadesboro Primary	1	0	1	0
District Office	N/A	4	N/A	3
Transportation	N/A	0	N/A	0
Maintenance	N/A	0	N/A	0
Child Nutrition/Cafeteria Employees	N/A	0	N/A	0
Total	35	6	21	4
Total Students + Employees	41		25	
*Student Enrollment as of 02/11/22	2,944	# of Employees	513	
*Enrollment changes daily		% of Employees Positive	0.78%	
% of Students Positive	0.71%		A link to the dashboard is on the Anson County Schools Facebook page.	