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

## Anson County Covid Update

The latest information posted by the Anson County Health Department on Tuesday, February 22 there were 6,484 total Covid-19 cases, with 229 active and 97 deaths. The previous Tuesday, February 15 there were 6,406 cases, with 225 active and 95 deaths.

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 US government has set up a website ([www.covidtests.gov](http://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 22 there were 1,716 new cases of Covid, with 22,296 deaths and 2,215 hospitalized. Cases have continued to drop from 31,902 new cases reported on January 18. On February 23, 75% of adults in NC had one dose of vaccine, 71% had both doses.



Percy Talbot, played by Kimberly Smith of Marshville, has just been released from a five-year prison sentence for manslaughter and looks to make a fresh start in the small town of Gilead, Wisconsin, a place she found on a page in an old travel book. She finds a job working for Hannah, played by Terra Medlock of Marshville, at the Spitfire Grill. Like most small towns, folks take a minute to warm up to the new girl but soon she starts to take root and both she and the town are forced to come to grips with their pasts.

Jennifer Gilmore, Matthew Thompson, Amanda Traywick and Lance Barber of Richmond County, and newcomer David Strong, all round the cast out and help bring this beautiful folk/country score to life. The live orchestra is led by Musical Director Catherine Taylor-Wyatt, with Larry Moree, Reagan Thomas and Glenn Fox. The show is directed by Tommy Wooten.

Tickets can be purchased online at [ansoniatheatre.com](http://ansoniatheatre.com) or call 704-694-4950. Don't miss this wonderful show! The Ansonia Theatre is located at 112 South Rutherford Street in Wadesboro. The show runs Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

## Upcoming Play at the Ansonia Theatre is *The Spitfire Grill*

"Have you ever dreamed of a town so small, they roll the sidewalk up? The waitress spills the gossip as she fills your coffee cup. Where the post office and the barber shop are in the general store, and the only street is Main Street, and it runs past your front door?" These are lyrics that run at the heart of *The Spitfire Grill*, opening at the Ansonia Theatre on Friday, March 4 and running through Sunday, March 13. *The Spitfire Grill* is the heartwarming and inspirational musical tale of redemption, perseverance and finding family.

## 4-H Trip to Charlotte Hornets Game Set for Saturday, March 19

Anson County 4-H is hosting a trip to a Charlotte Hornet's game on Saturday, March 19. There are a limited number of spots available for eligible attendees. Eligibility for attending will depend on meeting certain requirements such as being enrolled in 4-H online and actively participating in Anson County 4-H programs and events. Please reach out to your local 4-H agent to see what the full list of requirements to attend the game are.

N.C. Cooperative Extension is an equal opportunity provider. Read more at: [evaluation.ces.ncsu.edu/statements](http://evaluation.ces.ncsu.edu/statements).

Reach out to your Anson County 4-H Agent Sam Cole if you have any questions. (704)-694-2915

## Anson County 4-H Online Auction Has Begun, Runs Until March 31

Anson County 4-H's fundraiser and auction is in full swing! The fundraiser and auction will both run until Thursday, March 31.

Sam Cole, 4-H Agent with Anson County Cooperative Extension said, "The goal is to raise \$10,000 and we thank you in advance for your support!"

Check out the link below to see for bid items: [sites.google.com/ncsu.edu/ansoncounty4-h-4hyouthpromisea/home](https://sites.google.com/ncsu.edu/ansoncounty4-h-4hyouthpromisea/home)

## Governor Cooper and State Health Officials Update Mask Recommendations

On Thursday, February 17 Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley provided an update on the state's COVID-19 metrics and trends. As North Carolina's COVID-19 metrics continue to move in the right direction and with vaccines widely available, Governor Cooper encouraged schools and local governments to end their mask mandates.

"We are taking a positive step on mask requirements to help us move safely toward a more normal day to day life," said Governor Cooper. "It's time to focus on getting our children a good education and improving our schools, no matter how you feel about masks."

As entities decide how to move forward, people and businesses should continue to make the best decisions for themselves, their employees and their customers. There are still some places, such as health care, long-term care and transportation like airplanes, where a mask will be required because of the setting or federal regulations.

As it has throughout the pandemic, North Carolina is adapting its response based on the data and for the current stage of the pandemic. Vaccines and boosters are widely available and have protected millions of people against severe illness, hospitalization, and death. Treatment is available for those at higher risk of severe disease. And the state's COVID-19 trends are decreasing, lowering the risk of infection, and improving hospital capacity.

"NCDHHS has always been committed to using the right tools at the right time to combat COVID-19 and chart a course for us all to get back to the people, experiences, and places we love," said Secretary Kinsley. "At this time, the most effective tools are vaccines and boosters. Everyone five and older should get a COVID-19 vaccine and everyone 12 and older should get a booster as soon as they are eligible. It's not too late to vaccinate."

To date, North Carolina has administered over 15.7 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with 71 percent of the adult population fully vaccinated. About 75 percent of adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine, including 96 percent of North Carolinians 65 and over. About 51 percent of eligible adults have received their booster shot.

North Carolinians can learn more about the state's vaccine distribution at [myspot.nc.gov](http://myspot.nc.gov) (English) or [Vacunate.nc.gov](http://Vacunate.nc.gov) (Spanish). Find a nearby vaccine provider using NCDHHS' online tool, Find a Vaccine Location. The state's COVID-19 vaccine hotline number is 888-675-4567.

## Winter Home Repairs Keep the Cold, and Also Keep Unwanted Wildlife, Out

Officials with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission say this is an excellent time of year to examine the outside of your home for openings, loose siding, gaps and other crevices that active wild animals may enter as the weather warms.

"The past few weeks have been all about keeping the cold out. Winter weather gives us a good incentive to hunker down, plug up any drafts and turn up the heat," said Falyn Owens, extension biologist with the Wildlife Commission. "But those drafts will have another potential consequence when spring arrives – they can welcome wild critters looking for shelter to come inside."

If not properly sealed, openings for air vents, pipes and wires can become thoroughfares into your home for small rodents and the animals that prey on them, like snakes. Snakes prefer to not live inside occupied buildings, but if they are looking for a meal, they will follow scent trails left by mice and rats. Once inside, snakes may be unable to make their way back out. Rat snakes, in particular, are common around homes and are excellent climbers. Be sure to inspect the outside of your home for small gaps above ground level (e.g. eaves, chimney, vents). Seal any holes or gaps you find, and for holes that need to be left open (e.g., vents), install vent covers and screens designed to allow air flow but keep wild animals out.

Blocking off access points that lead under your home is also important. Pregnant foxes and skunks are attracted to the readymade shelter that crawlspaces provide. One of the most common complaints received by the staff at the NC Wildlife Helpline ([ncwildlife.org/Have-A-Problem](http://ncwildlife.org/Have-A-Problem)) each spring is about foxes denning under porches, sheds and barns.

"By the time we get the call, usually someone is seeing a fox with its pups running around in the yard and they want the animals relocated," Owens said. "Laws designed to prevent the spread of diseases such as rabies make relocating foxes and skunks illegal. We usually recommend alternatives like waiting a few weeks for the animals to leave on their own, or approved tactics that convince the animals to speed up that process. However, it would be great if these conflicts could be prevented in the first place."

For climbing species, attics can be convenient shelter for raising young. Raccoons and squirrels will jump from overhanging tree limbs onto roofs, and if they find damaged shingles or siding, they may try to get inside. Winter is an excellent time to trim limbs and branches to no closer than six feet of any buildings. This will keep most climbing species in the trees and can also reduce potential building damage from falling or scratching branches.

Owens adds, "Wild animals looking for a safe place to get out of the rain, heat, or cold can make a mess if they get inside. A thorough inspection of your home's exterior and making any necessary repairs before springtime goes a long way to help wildlife find more natural places to raise their young."

If you have questions about wildlife conflicts or experience a wildlife problem, the Commission's NC Wildlife Helpline webpage ([ncwildlife.org/Have-A-Problem](http://ncwildlife.org/Have-A-Problem)) is a valuable resource.

## Christmas in November is Cancelled

The Anson County Arts Council's annual Christmas in November Art & Crafts Sale scheduled for Saturday, November 13 has been cancelled due to concerns about Covid-19. Although this is disappointing to both vendors and shoppers, safety is the number one priority.

Shoppers will have the opportunity to see and buy unique gifts at the Drake Gallery, located next door to Wadesboro's Ansonia Theatre, in October and November when several area craftsmen will exhibit their wares. The Drake is open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday from 1 to 4 p.m. Saturday hours may be added if the Covid situation allows.

Look for Christmas in November to return next year on Saturday, November 12, 2023.

Location/Site	Quarantined Students	Quarantined Employees	Positive Cases Students	Positive Cases Employees
Anson Early College High School	2	0	3	0
Anson High School	8	0	4	0
Anson Middle School	2	1	0	0
Ansonville Elementary	1	2	0	1
Lilesville Elementary	8	0	0	0
Morven Elementary	0	0	0	0
Peachland-Polkton Elementary	3	0	1	0
Wadesboro Elementary	0	0	0	0
Wadesboro Primary	0	0	0	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
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>Total Students + Employees</b>	<b>31</b>		<b>12</b>	
*Student Enrollment as of 02/18/22	<b>2,948</b>		# of Employees	<b>513</b>
*Enrollment changes daily			% of Employees Positive	<b>0.78%</b>
% of Students Positive	<b>0.27%</b>		A link to the dashboard is on the Anson County Schools Facebook page.	

## Free Museum Admission to Discovery Place in Rockingham on Saturday

Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham will celebrate its ninth birthday this Saturday, February 26 with free admission to the public! In addition to free admission, there are special sports-themed activities planned during the Museum's regular operating hours, including:

- Rockingham "Wall of Fame," where guests can write the names of their favorite athletes from Richmond County
- Sports + Science - activities that explore the science of why balls bounce, balance, reaction time and more!

**Date:** Saturday, February 26  
**Time:** 10:30 a.m. - 4:30 p.m.  
**Location:** Discovery Place Kids - Rockingham | 223 East Washington Street, Rockingham, NC 28379

## Anson Youth Leadership Forum is February 28

In honor of black history month, the fifth installment of the Anson Youth Leadership Forum series will be on Monday, February 28 at 6:30 p.m. This forum will focus on Dr. Martin Luther King's "I have a dream speech." Participants will discuss how we are living the dream in Anson County. Participants will also discuss potential areas where we can improve to better achieve Dr. King's dream. "Let's discuss!"

The guest panelists will include Leon Gatewood, CEO of HOLLA! and Reverend Heather McIntyre.

This is a virtual event. Register for this at: [eventbrite.com/e/anson-youth-leadership-forum-pt-5-registration-262709008717](https://eventbrite.com/e/anson-youth-leadership-forum-pt-5-registration-262709008717) (include all the dashes).

For more information on how to participate visit [facebook.com/anson4h](https://facebook.com/anson4h) or call Sam Cole at 704-694-2915.

This event is sponsored by Anson County 4-H, Hampton B. Allen Library, HOLLA! and WellCare.

The Express is on the web at [www.TheExpressNewspaper.com](http://www.TheExpressNewspaper.com)