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

Board of Education Meeting Scheduled for March 30

The Anson County Board of Education will hold its next meeting on Monday, March 30 in the Administrative Office Board Meeting Room, located at 320 Camden Road in Wadesboro. The meeting will begin at 4:30 p.m. with Closed Session immediately following the opening of the meeting. Open Session should begin at about 5:30 p.m.

Free Groceries for Families in Need Planned for April 1

The Mobil Food Pantry is uncertain as of press time. Call 704-694-2445 for confirmation next Monday or Tuesday.

For families in need, free groceries will be available. The Atrium Health Bus will be onsite too. The Anson and East Union Mission Network, Anson Crisis Assistance Second Harvest Food Bank Mobile Food Pantry will be at Peachland United Methodist Church, 19 Allen Street in Peachland, on Wednesday, April 1.

Please arrive and register between 8 and 10 a.m. The food distribution begins upon the truck arrival, usually between 9 to 9:30 a.m.

• Be sure to bring your own bags, boxes or carts to carry your food. • Arrive between 8 to 10:30 a.m. to be sure you can receive food. • If it is raining the day of or before the delivery, contact Anson Crisis Ministry for a recorded message to know if it is cancelled: 704-694-2445. • You can only pick up food for yourself and one other registered household.

Interested in volunteering for the Mobile Food Pantry? Email tschumpert@unccumc.net. The goal of the Mobile Food Pantry is to feed the hungry and serve those in need.

If you are in need before or after the distribution of food date, please contact Anson Crisis Ministry at (704) 694-2445 or Union County Crisis Assistance at (704) 225-0440.

COVID-19 Information Services

To stay up to date on COVID-19 in North Carolina, visit ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus or text COVIDNC to 898211. Call 2-1-1 (or 888-892-1162) for general questions or for help finding human services resources in your community.

For a national perspective, visit the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention website at www.cdc.gov.

For a world-wide perspective, visit the World Health Organization website at www.who.int.

Town of Wadesboro Release Concerning COVID-19

As the nation, state, and our community continues to deal with the wide-ranging effects of dealing with COVID-19, the Town of Wadesboro is actively seeking to enact measures to ensure the continued delivery of service at the highest level while protecting our employees and the community. On March 16, we announced several measures being implemented to help with that, and effective immediately the following is a comprehensive list of actions being taken:

- Town Hall will be limited to a drive-thru only operation until further notice. All transactions can be accomplished through either using the drive-thru, the night drop box, or calling Town Hall for payment via phone at (704) 694-5171.
 - Public entrances to the Police and Fire Stations will be closed until further notice. Please call (704) 694-2167 for information on how to access police reports, accident reports, etc. These services will be pickup only and should arranged in advance via phone.
 - Garbage collection will remain on normal operation, no schedule changes are anticipated at this time. However, limb, leaf, and furniture pickup will be suspended until further notice.
 - All Town parks will continue to remain open and available at this time.
 - Cut-off for nonpayment of utility bills is suspended until further notice. Please note – all usage will still be billed and due as normal, and cut-off will resume at some point in the near future. At that time to be determined by Council the full balance due will be required to avoid cut-off.
 - Town Council meetings will continue as scheduled, but we are working on a solution to allow the public to view and participate (for public comment) electronically.
 - The Mayor officially declared a State of Emergency this morning (March 20), which includes a provision prohibiting mass gatherings of more than 50 people in a single room or space. Exceptions to this include grocery stores, office environments, factories, and other retail establishments. The full declaration can be found on the Town's website (townofwadesboro.org).
 - Any further changes to Town services or operating conditions will be communicated via the Town's website (townofwadesboro.org) and our Facebook page.
- Thank you, David Edwards, Town Manager

NC Utilities Commission to Suspend Disconnections During State of Emergency

North Carolina Attorney General Josh Stein released the following statement in response to the North Carolina Utilities Commission's order to suspend disconnections during the state of emergency:

"I commend the Utilities Commission's quick action during these unprecedented and unsettling times. People who are struggling with their health, have been laid off from a job, or have seen their tips or commissions dwindle should not lose access to the water, power, or gas they need. I'm pleased that the order waives late fees, prevents reconnection fees, and requires utilities to work with customers on payment plans once the state of emergency is over.

"I had planned to petition the Utilities Commission today to ask them to pass an order like this – I even announced those plans yesterday during my virtual Town Hall. I'm pleased to see that the Utilities Commission is taking this action on its own accord. This is a great example of government working as it should."



Organization Donates Scarves to the American Cancer Society

Zion Missionary Baptist Association Moderator Rev. J. Van Clyburn of Wadesboro and the president of the Woman's Home and Foreign Missionary Auxiliary collected many beautiful scarves from missionaries of the three counties the organization serves, Anson, Stanly and Union.

On Tuesday, February 18 these beautiful scarves, along with a picture album and a monetary donation were presented to the American Cancer Society.

Commissioner Ross Streater, Mayor Bill Thacker Write Letter to Walmart Addressing Abrupt Store Closure

This is a letter to Walmart dated March 13, 2020, from Chairman of the Anson County Commissioners Ross Streater and Wadesboro Mayor Bill Thacker:

To: Walmart Inc., Travis Cutshaw, Market Manager
702 SW 8th St., Bentonville, AR 72716

Dear Mr. Cutshaw:

Anson County and the Town of Wadesboro would like to request your assistance in answering several questions regarding the recently announced closure of store #1127 located in Wadesboro, NC. For more than 30 years the citizens of this County and Town have enjoyed a partnership in commerce that benefits all involved, so we were shocked to learn that such a long-standing partnership would be dissolved in a matter of minutes through a single phone call and the letter that followed. We are discouraged and disappointed that we were not given an opportunity to engage in this process and seek alternatives to shuttering this anchor of the community after more than three decades.

Our community takes pride in the rich history of rural life centered around agriculture, entrepreneurship, textiles, and the resilient nature of our people to respond to adversity. But this decision to pull out of a community that depends so heavily on the jobs provided, the access to goods and medicine, and the convenience of your store feels like a slap in the face by your corporation. Which leads us to the questions that we would like to have answered by Walmart in the face of this decision-

- Why were the local government and economic development partners not given an opportunity to work with you to overcome the obstacles that you claim plagued the store?
- Why did no one come in person to this community to explain the challenges being faced and ask for assistance in reaching solutions?
- How does your corporation balance the desire to maintain an image of community caring alongside this decision to terminate the livelihood of more than 200 employees and their families?
- Is this decision absolutely final, and if not, what are the next steps that we can come together and discuss?

We feel very strongly, as a community and as local government officials, that this decision was made rashly and with little consideration for the true impacts that will occur to the community. Our main concern is for the people who depended on your presence here for access to job opportunities, their families, and the people with little or no access otherwise to the medications that they depend on for their survival. Our community is resilient and we believe strongly that we will recover from this.

A response, preferably in person, is requested from your organization as soon as is possible. We realize that we may not be able to sway or change your decision, but we feel very strongly that this community deserves an answer after having been close partners with your organization for such a long period of time. You may direct any response to either of the addresses or phone numbers listed above. Thank you, Ross Streater, Bill Thacker

Governor Cooper Extends School Closure Date To May; Orders Group Limit To 50 People

On Monday, March 23 Governor Roy Cooper ordered tighter limits on gatherings and extended school closures statewide to May 15, 2020. The order also closed some businesses that require close social interaction and limited visitors to long-term care centers.

The Executive Order's effective date is Wednesday, March 25.

"Each and every choice we are making is intended to flatten the curve and provide our health care system the ability to treat the sickest patients in the coming months. This is what we need to do to slow the spread of this illness and protect the health and safety of North Carolinians," Governor Cooper said.

Also Monday, the Governor's request for a major disaster declaration for North Carolina was received by FEMA. This specifically requested Individual Assistance, Crisis Counseling Program, Disaster Unemployment Assistance, Small Business Administration Disaster Assistance and more.

50-Plus member gatherings banned, close contact businesses closed Monday's announcement prioritized social distancing by lowering the threshold on large gatherings to ban crowds of more than 50 people. To stay consistent with this number, it will require certain businesses to close, including: Bingo Parlors, including Bingo sites operated by charitable organizations; Bowling Alleys; Indoor Exercise Facilities (e.g. gyms, yoga studios, martial arts facilities, indoor trampoline and rock-climbing facilities); Health Clubs; Indoor Pools; Live Performance Venues; Movie Theaters; Skating Rinks; Spas; Sweepstakes Lounges; Video game arcades; Barber Shops; Beauty Salons (including waxing and hair removal centers); Hair Salons; Nail Salons/Manicure/Pedicure Providers; Massage Parlors; Tattoo Parlors.

Grocery stores and restaurants providing takeout and delivery will remain open. Additionally, Governor Cooper reminded North Carolinians to show restraint in buying groceries and supplies.

"I know today's orders cause hardship for a lot of people. I do not treat these decisions lightly," added Governor Cooper. "We have made them in the interest of health and safety."

School deadline extended, education leadership to build plan for education

The May 15 school closure date is based on current guidance from the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention. As the situation in North Carolina evolves, more may be needed. Governor Cooper has asked the State Board to collaborate with the Department of Public Instruction and legislators to:

- develop a plan to ensure access to a quality education for students through the remainder of the school year.
- provide students with remote learning while school buildings are closed.
- ensure that all school employees – including janitors, bus drivers, teaching assistants and cafeteria workers – will work in safe environments and be paid.

Medical volunteer and supplies needed Also Monday, Cooper highlighted the need for medical and health care workers and urged qualified, available professionals to volunteer by signing up at ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus. Already more than 300 people have volunteered.

Specifically, the Governor highlighted the need for doctors and nurses, pharmacy, imaging and respiratory care, and facility maintenance and administrative support workers. Critical supplies and equipment like masks, gloves, and gowns are low. Governor Cooper is convening North Carolina's top manufacturers to explore transitioning production lines to start making these critical supplies.

Make sure the information you are getting about COVID-19 is coming directly from reliable sources like the CDC and NCDHHS. For more information, visit the CDC's website at www.cdc.gov/coronavirus and NCDHHS' website at www.ncdhhs.gov/coronavirus, which includes daily updates on positive COVID-19 test results in North Carolina.

Ribbon Cutting for Drake Gallery Addition Canceled

The Anson County Arts Council and the Anson County Chamber of Commerce have canceled the celebration and ribbon cutting for the opening of the new addition to the Drake Gallery and the Drake Gallery Studio.

The event was scheduled to take place on Thursday, April 2 at 5:30 p.m.

Agricultural Events & Programs Canceled or Postponed Until Further Notice

Cooperative Extension Office is closed to the public, but staff there to answer any calls, emails

The Anson County Cooperative Extension Office is closed for COVID-19 precautions. While the office is closed to the public, the staff is available by phone (704-694-2415) and email. The website is anson.ces.ncsu.edu.

Here are canceled programs as of March 23:

- Fence School (March 25) – Postponed
- Spring Advisory Meeting (March 26) – Postponed
- Anson Youth Leadership Academy: State of Anson Agriculture & Field Trip (March 28) – Postponed
- Program at Glenny Bennett (March 30) – Canceled
- Livestock 4-H Meeting (March 31) – Canceled
- 2nd Grad School Enrichment (March 30-April 3) – Canceled
- Small Ruminant Workshop (April 1) – Canceled
- Census Program at Grace Center (April 1) – Canceled
- 4-H Outing to Charlotte Hornets Basketball Game (April 5) – Canceled

Passenger Rail Service Reduced

Beginning Monday, March 23, the N.C. Department of Transportation's passenger rail service, NC By Train, is reducing its number of daily trips in response to the COVID-19 outbreak.

Piedmont trains 73, 74, 77 and 78 will not operate until further notice. Piedmont trains 75 and 76, plus Carolinian trains 79 and 80, will continue operating on normal schedules.

Amtrak is waiving change fees on all existing or new reservations made before April 30. Passengers can modify their trip on Amtrak.com, or find their reservation on the home screen in the Amtrak app. To cancel a reservation with no fee, passengers must call 800-BY-TRAIN and speak with an agent (not available via Amtrak.com or the app).