

THE EXPRESS

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

Anson County's January Unemployment Rate Still Low at 8.6%

Anson County's unemployment rate for January was 8.6%. This was the fifth straight month of single digit unemployment rates locally. In January 2013 the rate in Anson County was 12.8%. Anson's total labor force in January was 10,565. Of that number 9,653 were employed and 912 were unemployed. In December 2013 the total labor force was 10,717, with 9,893 employed and 824 unemployed. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in two of North Carolina's counties in January, increased in 96 and remained the same in two. All 14 of the State's metro areas experienced rate increases. Dare County had the highest unemployment rate at 14.5 percent while Orange County had the lowest at 4.6 percent. Among the Metro areas, Rocky Mount at 10.3 percent experienced the highest rate and Durham-Chapel Hill at 5.3 percent had the lowest. The January not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 7.0 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in all 100 counties. All 14 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in January by 2,817 to 4,318,640, while those unemployed increased 19,728 to 325,555. Since January 2013, the number of workers employed statewide increased 69,113, while those unemployed decreased 122,254.

Dr. Fred Thompson Appointed Anson County Health Department Director

The Anson County Board of Health announced on March 20 that its search for a full time Health Director has been completed. Chairman of the Board, John Ballard stated that following an exhaustive search over the past several months the board is very pleased to announce that Dr. Fred Thompson has been appointed to the health director position. Dr. Thompson will assume his duties on Monday, July 7, 2014, following his retirement as President of Anson Community Hospital. Ballard stated, "With both a PhD in Health Services and an MBA, combined with almost twenty years of experience in providing a variety of health care services to the citizens of Anson County, I believe Dr. Thompson can offer Anson County, and the Board of Health, a unique combination of education and experience." Anson Community Hospital is affiliated with Charlotte based Carolinas HealthCare System, Inc., the second largest, public, non-profit hospital system in the US with revenues of over \$7 billion. Dr. Thompson has worked very closely with the Health Department during his tenure at the hospital. He served as Chairman of the Healthy Ansonians, a certified Healthy Carolinians Task Force, which received the Vera S. Robinson Longevity Award in 2011 in recognition of being certified for 15 consecutive years. He also developed one of the largest Parish Nurse programs in North Carolina with over 50 churches participating. Some of Dr. Thompson's other accomplishments include: his involvement in the construction of a replacement hospital facility to be completed in June 2014; Anson Community Hospital was recognized as a top performing hospital by the Joint Commission in 2013; he established a Provider Based Primary Care Clinic that employs three physicians and a mid level provider; he implemented a Mobile Health Screening Clinic with ten sites around the county. Dr. Thompson's professional affiliations and community involvement include being a member of the American College of Healthcare Executives, South Piedmont Community College Board of Directors, Wadesboro Rotary Club, Anson County United Way Board of Directors, Anson County Partnership for Children, and he was the recipient of the 2011 Henry W. Little Community Leadership Award. Dr. Thompson is married with one child and has three grandchildren. The Board of Health asked, and interim health director Wayne Raynor agreed to remain as health director until Dr. Thompson begins in July. "We as a board are very excited to be able to bring stability to the health director position and look forward to Dr. Thompson and Mr. Raynor working together for a smooth transition in leadership at the department," Ballard concluded.

Wadesboro Watch Report

Wadesboro Watch is an email based information service to aid communication between Wadesboro citizens and the Police Department. To learn more or to join, send an email to WadesboroWatch@yahoo.com. **Wadesboro Watch report:** We've received word from Chief Spencer of the Wadesboro Police Department that they are positioning an officer on the south side of town. If you hear gunshots, please call and let Wadesboro Police Department know. You can call 911 or the WPD office at 704-694-2167 (pressing 1 during office hours will get you to Dispatch/Front Desk, at night Dispatch should pick up). They will ask for your name but the Chief has advised that you do not have to provide your name. Your location would be helpful obviously so they can try and track down where the shots are coming from. Please know that WPD has received phony calls and is doing its part to verify that calls are legitimate.

Would You Like to Help Support the Anson County Animal Shelter?

Anson County's new Animal Shelter is on track to open in April. This facility will be a terrific service to all Ansonians, and will offer a humane opportunity for disadvantaged dogs and cats to be adopted into loving homes. The Animal Shelter will depend on the support of volunteers to help the staff there, and importantly, monetary donations to help cover the expenses involved in day to day operations. Everyone involved with the project, and the animals, will benefit greatly from any support you can offer. Anson County Finance Officer, Ms. Tiffany Randall, CPA, has set up a separate line item in the Animal Shelter budget for monetary donations to the shelter. In addition, Board Clerk, Ms. Bonnie Huntley, is recording donations and sending out thank you letters to each donor. • Donations should be sent to: Anson County Animal Shelter, 101 S. Greene Street, Suite 205, Wadesboro, NC 28170. Anson County Manager Lawrence Gatewood, who organized this project, said, "Several sizable donations have been made to the Animal Shelter. We have received a number of questions on where donations should be sent, and this information is now available."



Preston Burns' 100th Birthday Celebration with Wadesboro Rotary Club

In 1939, FDR was in his second of four terms in the White House, Hitler triggered World War II with his invasion of Poland, and 26-year-old Preston Burns joined the Wadesboro Rotary Club. On February 27, 2014, the Wadesboro club honored Mr. Burns for his 74 years as a Rotarian and to celebrate his 100th birthday, which fell on February 16. "Preston's 74 years as a member of this club is astounding in itself," said Wesley Horne, president of the Wadesboro Rotary Club. "But even more importantly, we celebrated his commitment to Rotary and this community. Nobody epitomizes the Rotary motto 'Service Above Self' like Preston." Mr. Burns is pictured above, surrounded by friends. He is holding the sign. Mr. Burns is a Rotary Paul Harris Fellow and a past president of the Wadesboro club. He was named the club's Distinguished Rotarian in 1994, the second year the award was presented. He was founder and long-time owner and operator of Wadesboro Auto Supply, and worked diligently for decades as a volunteer with the Anson County Chamber of Commerce. The conference room at the Chamber is named in his honor. He was also instrumental in economic development in Anson County, assisting with the start-up of such companies as Hornwood, Inc. and Wade Manufacturing Company. Mr. Burns served for nearly 50 years as a member of the Board of Directors of Anson Bank & Trust Company (now Uwharrie Bank), including terms as chairman. He is a member of the First United Church of Wadesboro. In honor of his then 70 years as a Rotarian, the Anson County Board of Commissioners declared July 22, 2010 as Preston Burns Day in Anson County. Mr. Burns was married for 66 years to Mary Watkins Burns until her death in 2005. They have three children, Allen Burns (pictured beside his Dad above), Julia B. Schnitker and Katherine B. Griffin.

WPD Chief Thedis Spencer Addresses Dog Pack Sightings

In a release from Wadesboro Police Chief Thedis Spencer: The Wadesboro Police Department has recently received several citizen complaints and reports about packs of dogs traveling the streets and neighborhoods of Wadesboro. Officers have located these packs on several occasions, and have attempted to track where they are traveling. Currently our department's resources to effectively handle this situation are limited, however, through cooperation with the new animal shelter being opened in Anson County, and with the citizens, we are developing new strategies to combat this problem both efficiently and humanely. There are several steps that the citizens of Wadesboro can take now that can help make an initial impact. The main goal of a pack is normally to seek out and locate sources of food. These sources of food are often located in our household waste. We encourage citizens to ensure that any food waste is properly bagged with other trash. Additionally, we recommend not taking your trash to the side of the road until the evening before your scheduled day for pick-up services. Secondly, a pack of dogs may be in search of female mates. If you own a dog that may be in heat, try to take preventative steps in protecting your pet and property by placing your animal in a shelter or fence that prevents the pet from getting out, or any other animal from getting in. If you have a wireless or underground fence keeping your pet retained to your property, remember that this does not prevent other animals from coming in. We also encourage pet owners to spay or neuter their pets if you do not have any intentions of professionally breeding them. Spaying and neutering can help prevent an increase in stray animals that can become malnourished or a nuisance. There are several veterinary hospitals in our area that can provide these services. Spaying and neutering is not an expensive procedure and has tremendously positive effects on helping protect the welfare and health of animals. The ASPCA keeps a database on their website that can assist you in finding a low-cost spay & neuter program at www.aspc.org/pet-care/spayneuter. Lastly, it is believed that some of these packs of dogs are actual pets and not just wild stray animals. The Town of Wadesboro has a leash law in effect that requires all animals to be under the constant control of their owners and property. If an animal is able to leave your property due to a lack of control by the owner or a lack of restriction devices, you are in violation of this ordinance. These fines begin at \$25 for the first violation, and can increase for subsequent occurrences. Also, in North Carolina a town ordinance is considered to be a misdemeanor violation. In some circumstances it is possible that you could be arrested for a consistent violation of this ordinance. More importantly, unrestricted animals can attack people and their pets. Animal owners can be held both criminally and civilly liable for these attacks. We would like to remind our fellow citizens that a pack of dogs are not normally dangerous, however in some situations they can be, and if at all possible should be avoided. Small children and the elderly are especially vulnerable to an animal attack. If you see a pack of dogs frequenting your area or neighborhood we encourage you to call and report it to us at 704-694-2167. For an emergency Dial 911. By providing us with as much information as possible we can more effectively deal with the situation. Information such as the number of dogs, their individual size, their color and markings, direction of travel and behavior. The frequency in your area, such as time of day and the number of times each week, is helpful to our officers in locating the packs. I want to let the citizens of Wadesboro know that we take your complaints seriously, and are working hard to find solutions to this situation. With a new animal shelter opening in the county, we will soon have more resources at our disposal. I encourage citizens to follow the recommendations in this press release so that together we can find a humane and efficient solution to this problem. Thank you, Chief Thedis L. Spencer.

NCDMV Renews License Plate Agency Contract with County

The NC Division of Motor Vehicles has renewed the contract with Anson County to operate the license plate agency (LPA) in Wadesboro. The previous contract was set to expire this summer. The Division has renewed the contract for three years with options for two 1 year extensions. The license plate agency is located at 101 South Greene Street in the Anson County Government Building. The agency will maintain the same hours, opening Monday-Friday, 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. The phone number is (704) 994-3292. The policy of the Division is to open applications to operate a license plate agency whenever a contract expires or ends. Anson County applied during this process to continue operating the agency. LPAs offer vehicle registration services and title transactions, as well as vehicle license plate renewals, replacement tags and duplicate registrations. Currently about 120 license plate agencies operate across North Carolina.

Job Seekers Can Connect with Employers at SPCC's Ready to Work Expo this Coming Tuesday, April 1

Job seekers in Anson County will have a great opportunity to meet local employers and gain an edge in their job search at next week's Ready to Work Expo - Anson. The event will be from 9 a.m. until noon on Tuesday, April 1 at South Piedmont Community College's Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro. In addition to area employers, the Ready to Work Expo will include informative seminars and opportunities to explore SPCC programs. Job seekers are encouraged to dress for success and bring resumes and cover letters to share with prospective employers. For more information, visit www.spccevents.com.

Ansonville Historical Society Spaghetti Supper

Everyone is invited to enjoy the delicious spaghetti supper on Saturday, April 26 at the Ansonville Fire Department, from 5 to 8 p.m. This event is sponsored by the Ansonville Historical Society. Plates are \$7.

Rotary Hosting Sporting Event for Youth this Saturday

The Wadesboro Rotary Club is seeking to raise scholarship money for Anson County students through its exciting Sporting Clays Competition which will be held this Saturday, March 29th at Buchanan Shoals Lodge in Morven. Lunch will begin at noon followed by competition beginning at 1 p.m. "People are encouraged to come out, eat a wonderful lunch, and watch the competition while enjoying the beautiful surroundings of Buchanan Shoals," said Rotary Club President Wesley Horne. Ticket prices are \$20, and 100% of the proceeds will go to funding scholarships for students from Anson County to continue their education. Anyone interested should contact Wesley Horne at whorne@hornwoodinc.com or 704-848-4121 in advance so an adequate amount of food can be prepared.

Morven Volunteer Fire Department BBQ is Saturday

Come ONE! Come ALL! Bring the WHOLE family! Yes, it is time for some of the best barbecue you will ever enjoy...at the Morven Volunteer Fire Department this Saturday. They will be serving pork and chicken plates for \$9 and sandwiches for \$4. Bulk barbecue is also available for \$9. It all starts at 11 a.m., and you had better not wait until too late...or it might all be gone!

Board of Education Meets March 31

The Anson County Board of Education will meet in regular session on Monday, March 31. Closed Session will begin immediately after the opening of the meeting at 5:30 p.m. Open Session to the public will begin at 6:30 p.m. The meeting will be held in the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center located at 320 Camden Road in Wadesboro.

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