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meals" she would prepare for her family. She always enjoyed the times shared with her children and grandchildren, or her "babies" as she called them all. An avid rummy player, she was champion of any game she played and she also enjoyed playing bingo.

Those left to cherish her memory are her children, Susan Beachum (Terry) of Ansonville, Barbara Ratliffe (Rodney) and Doug Hanna, all of Wadesboro; her grandchildren, Jason Beachum (Chrissy) of Norwood and Amy Yarborough (Davis) of Ruby, SC; her great-grandchildren, Nicholas Beachum and Elizabeth Beachum, both of Norwood and Caleb Yarborough of Ruby; her brother and sister, Buster Lawhon of Lilesville and Leigh Boulden of Burlington; and her nieces and nephews and their families.

In addition to her parents and the Tuckers, she was preceded in death by her sister and brother, Mary Dean Myers and Ellis Lawhon.

Thelma's family is most grateful to the staff of Anson Health and Rehab for all the love and care they gave her while she was a resident there. She made many special friendships with the staff and residents who became like family. Most recently the staff of Tillery Compassionate Care Hospice made a difference in Thelma's last days and her family is very thankful to them.

In lieu of flowers, memorials may be made to Tillery compassionate Care Hospice, 960 N 1st St, Albemarle, NC 28001.

The arrangements were in care of Leavitt Funeral Home and online condolences may be made at [www.leavittfh.com](http://www.leavittfh.com).

## Mrs. Thelma Lawhon Hanna

On Thursday, April 4, 2024, Mrs. Thelma Lawhon Hanna, 82, beloved mother, grandmother and sister, passed away peacefully at Anson Health and Rehab in Wadesboro.

Funeral services were held on Tuesday, April 9, 2024, in the Chapel of Leavitt Funeral Home. Interment followed in Bethlehem Cemetery in Ansonville. The family greeted friends one hour prior to the service Tuesday at the funeral home.

Thelma was born July 25, 1941, in Anson County, and was a daughter of the late Edward "Huss" Lawhon and the late Elizabeth Ponds Lawhon. When Thelma was nine years old her mother passed away and she and her younger brother Ellis were taken into the home of Leroy and Dallie Tucker, close family friends.

She worked for many years in textiles in and around Anson County, last having worked at Anson Shirt Factory, but she is most remembered for being a waitress at the Lighthouse Restaurant in Ansonville.

Thelma enjoyed fishing and once caught a 40-pound catfish and was made to reel it in on her own. She was well-known for cake decorating and her famous "granny

## BBB Investigation:

### Virtual vehicle vendor scam reports rose in 2023

In 2023, virtual vehicle vendor scam reports to the Better Business Bureau (BBB) increased as fraudsters targeted high-end classic car buyers and exploited vehicle history reports to steal money and information.

Since 2020, reports to Better Business Bureau have shown that scammers used the COVID-19 pandemic to list non-existent vehicles of all kinds on real online marketplaces. In more recent reports, they are increasingly turning to fake websites modeled after licensed sellers. These look-a-like websites use stolen photos, contact information and even vehicle identification numbers (VIN) to fool consumers.

In "Virtual vehicle vendor scams and related fraud persist post-pandemic," Better Business Bureau examines the patterns of reports, reviews the amount of money lost and learns from those caught up in the scams to protect the public through education.

#### Key findings

- Online vehicle vendor scam reports to BBB Scam Tracker declined in 2022 but increased to new highs in 2023.
- Buyers 45 and older accounted for more than three-quarters of all reports on virtual vehicle vendor scams filed with BBB Scam Tracker.
- Scammers increasingly rely on fake websites, often stealing pictures and listing information from licensed and legitimate sellers.
- Classic car buyers were targeted with low prices and promises to deliver rare cars across the country.
- Fake vehicle history reports rose over the last three years. While median losses are smaller, consumers reported personal data theft as a part of these scams.

#### Statistics (reported to BBB from 2021-2023)

- Close to 700 BBB Scam Tracker reports on fraudulent vehicle sales, escrow scams and fake vehicle reports
- \$12,600 median loss in fraudulent vehicle sale and escrow scams
- \$45 median loss in fake vehicle report scams

BBB has examined virtual vehicle vendor scams in-depth since 2020. But scammers continue to change their tactics. The losses in these scams can be enormous.

#### BBB tips for those looking to buy a car online

- Do not purchase a vehicle report on your own vehicle for an interested buyer
  - View a vehicle in-person if possible, or send someone you trust
  - Be wary of too-good-to-be-true prices
  - Opt for vehicle pick up over delivery whenever possible
  - Resist high-pressure sales tactics urging quick action
  - Use only approved Vehicle Identification Number (VIN) lookup websites
- Visit [BBB.org](http://BBB.org) to check out a business or register a complaint, BBB Scam Tracker to report a scam and [bbb.org/scamstudies](http://bbb.org/scamstudies) for more on this and other scams.

## History of Aprons

I don't think our kids know what an apron is. The principal use of Grandma's apron was to protect the dress underneath because she only had a few. It was also because it was easier to wash aprons than dresses and aprons used less material. But along with that, it served as a potholder for removing hot pans from the oven.

It was wonderful for drying children's tears, and on occasion was even used for cleaning out dirty ears.

From the chicken coop, the apron was used for carrying eggs, fussy chicks, and sometimes half-hatched eggs to be finished in the warming oven.

When company came, those aprons were ideal hiding places for shy kids.

And when the weather was cold, Grandma wrapped it around her arms.

Those big old aprons wiped many a perspiring brow, bent over the hot wood stove.

Chips and kindling wood were brought into the kitchen in that apron.

From the garden, it carried all sorts of vegetables. After the peas had been shelled, it carried out the hulls.

In the fall, the apron was used to bring in apples that had fallen from the trees.

When unexpected company drove up the road, it was surprising how much furniture that old apron could dust in a matter of seconds.

When dinner was ready, Grandma walked out onto the porch, waved her apron, and the men folk knew it was time to come in from the fields to dinner.

It will be a long time before someone invents something that will replace that 'old-time apron' that served so many purposes.

Send this to those who would know (and love) the story about Grandma's aprons.

**Remember** Grandma used to set her hot baked apple pies on the windowsill to cool. Her granddaughters set theirs on the windowsill to thaw. They would go crazy now trying to figure out how many germs were on that apron. I don't think I ever caught anything from an apron - but love... *Courtesy of Marshville Museum and Cultural Center*

## The Month of April

*April cold with dripping rain, Willows and lilacs brings again, The whistle of returning birds, And trumpet-louing of the herds. -Ralph Waldo Emerson (1803-82)*

#### April Calendar

- April 1 April Fools' Day
- April 22 is Earth Day.
- April 23 full Pink Moon
- April 28 is National Arbor Day.

**April Birthstone** Diamond comes from the Greek word, adamas, meaning invincible or unbreakable.

**April Birth Flowers** are the daisy and the sweet pea. The daisy stands for innocence, purity, and true love, while the sweet pea is a way to say goodbye, send good wishes, or merely convey a thank you.

## You Decide: What's the Future of Small Business?

I am now a small business owner. Since retiring from North Carolina State University, I have operated a one-person business offering speaker services as well as economic studies and analysis on a variety of issues. I have no employees. While at first glance that may appear odd, it's actually the case for most small businesses. Indeed, the latest national data show 80% of small businesses have no employees.

I think there's a general feeling that small businesses are the backbone of the economy, and there's good reason for this attitude. Using the definition that a small business has no more than 1,000 employees and \$40 million of annual gross receipts, there are over 1 million small businesses in North Carolina employing 1.8 million people - close to half of all workers. The highest concentration of small businesses in the state are in the professional, construction, administrative, real estate and retail trade sectors.

There are advantages to small businesses, and a big one is their ties to the community. Because they are small and often operate in a limited geographic area, small businesses usually have good knowledge of their customers. Often, owners of small businesses live in the same neighborhoods as their customers. Because the owners are on site, small businesses can often be more flexible than larger ones. As a personal example, a local "Mom and Pop" hardware store I use has done numerous special orders for me that a large national chain store wouldn't do.

There are also broader societal benefits from small businesses. Because earnings usually go to a local owner rather than to shareholders spread across the nation, a larger percentage of funds spent at a small business stays in the community.

Because small businesses are so numerous and can be started relatively easily - especially in North Carolina - they contribute to competition. Most economists agree that more competition between alternative firms helps keep prices lower and also motivates businesses to continuously provide what their customers want. Small businesses may be better able to innovate because they have less bureaucracy and fewer decision-makers who must agree to new products or services.

Although there are numerous advantages from small businesses, there are also large challenges. A big challenge is the failure rate. The latest data show 50% of small businesses fail in their first five years. There are many reasons for this high rate. Numerous small businesses begin with a new idea for a product or service, which, although it looks good on paper, may not be good in reality. Financing can also be harder for small businesses.

Small businesses have a greater reliance on labor. Labor costs account for 70% of small business total costs, much higher than the labor share for larger businesses. This means small businesses worry more about finding qualified workers and paying enough so they stay. Larger businesses are able to use their deeper financial pockets to add more technology and machinery to their operations. Technology and machinery can often perform tasks more efficiently, and, of course, technology and machinery will never leave for a better paying job!

Will the future be easier or harder for small businesses? There are several parts to the answer. With the drop in the national birth rate, many futurists expect the issue of labor shortages to continue and perhaps increase. With their greater reliance on labor, this trend may be particularly harmful for small businesses.

Our country appears to have become more "homogenized." By this I mean the dramatic improvements in communication and travel have made us more alike and less different. When I was a youngster in the 1950s and 1960s, visits to relatives in other cities or states exposed me to different types of foods, restaurants, stores and entertainment. Today with the internet, streaming, cell phones and national advertising, it can be easier for big businesses to establish a national presence with stores and brands everyone knows. This makes it difficult for small businesses to breakthrough and create a unique identity.

The increase in international competition and trade has also had a large adverse impact on many small businesses. Not only do small businesses have to compete with big firms in their backyard, but now they must compete against even larger competitors from foreign countries.

Of course, advances in technology are constantly occurring, and they can be harmful or helpful to small businesses. Technological improvements that allow larger businesses to run more efficiently and less costly can increase their cost advantage over small businesses.

But for technological advances applied to tasks that vary little between the size of a business, such as keeping inventories, ordering supplies or analyzing sales trends, then the benefits can be significant for small businesses. For example, examining trends in sales based on different types of buyers is very important for any business. But in the days before computers and easily applied analytical programs such as those developed by the firm SAS in North Carolina, small businesses couldn't afford to do this kind of helpful work. Now they can.

A big question is how AI - artificial intelligence - will be applied in the battle between small and large businesses. My guess is the initial winner will be larger firms, but over time, the benefits will be more even.

I think we'll always have small businesses. For many, a small business represents hopes and dreams, but also some tears. While many small businesses will fail, it can be argued we collectively still win from those that try and certainly those that persevere. But, you decide.

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.

### Anson County Emergency Food and Shelter Program Notice

The Anson County Emergency Food and Shelter Program has been awarded crucial funds made available through the Department of Homeland Security (DHS)/Federal Emergency Management Agency under the Emergency Food and Shelter Board Program. The Anson County Emergency Food and Shelter Program has been chosen to receive \$9236.00 for Phase 41, and no tentative amount will be allocated because no administrative expenses are anticipated. These funds, which play a vital role in our community, will be used to supplement emergency food and shelter programs in Anson County.

The selection was made by a National Board that is chaired by the U. S. Department of Homeland Security's Federal Emergency Management Agency and consists of representatives from American Red Cross; Catholic Charities, USA; National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA; The Jewish Federations of North America, The Salvation Army; and, United Way Worldwide. The Phase 41 EFSP Local Board, a key entity in this process, is charged with distributing funds appropriated by Congress to help expand the capacity of food and shelter programs in high-need areas around the country. The Anson County Local Board, consisting of representatives from various local organizations, will play a crucial role in determining how funds awarded to the Anson County Emergency Food and Shelter Program will be distributed among the emergency food and shelter programs run by local service agencies in the area.

The Local Board is responsible for recommending agencies to receive these funds and any additional funds made available under this program phase.

Under the terms of the grant from the National Board, local agencies chosen to receive funds must: 1) be private voluntary nonprofits or units of government, 2) be eligible to receive Federal funds, 3) have an accounting system, 4) practice nondiscrimination, 5) demonstrate the capability to deliver emergency food and/or shelter programs, and 6) if they are a private voluntary organization, they must have a voluntary board of directors. Qualifying agencies are urged to apply.

The Anson County Emergency Food and Shelter Program has distributed Emergency Food and Shelter funds previously to Feed My Lambs, Ebenezer Baptist Church, and Anson Crisis Ministry. These agencies provide food and hot meals to the residents of Anson County.

Qualifying public or private voluntary agencies interested in applying for Emergency Food and Shelter Program funds are encouraged to contact Local Board Chair Chipper Long using one of the following contact methods: [ansonhomesofhope@gmail.com](mailto:ansonhomesofhope@gmail.com), 308 East Wade Street, or PO Box 205, Wadesboro, NC, 28170, 704-668-4952, or 704-435-2437 for an application. Applications may be emailed or mailed. The deadline for applications to be received is May 31, 2024.

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