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

## Anson County High Schools Held Graduation Ceremony on Saturday

Graduation was held on Saturday, May 22 in the Anson High School stadium. Graduates from Anson High School and Anson County Early College received their diplomas in this return to the traditional ceremony. The Express Newspaper's annual graduation special edition will come out next Wednesday, June 2. It will feature senior pictures and lots of photos from the graduation ceremony. Congratulations to Anson graduates!

## 2,599 Reported Cases of COVID-19 in Anson County

Ansonians urged to get vaccinated.

On Monday, May 24 the Anson County Health Department posted that Anson County had 2,599 reported cases of COVID-19, only 18 more cases than reported on May 13. 16 of those cases were active and there are 56 deaths. The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported that statewide as of Monday, May 24 there were 581 new cases of COVID-19, with 12,987 deaths and 680 hospitalized. Statewide, as of Monday, May 3 there were 1,126 new cases of COVID-19, with 12,691 deaths and 1,007 hospitalized. April 5 there were 1,054 new cases of COVID-19, with 12,173 deaths and 907 hospitalized. March 1 there were 862,170 cases of COVID-19, 11,254 deaths and 1,219 hospitalized. February 1: 761,302 cases, 9,342 deaths and 2,781 hospitalized. January 4: 570,111 cases, 6,941 deaths and 3,192 hospitalized. December 7: 404,032 cases, 5,605 deaths and 2,373 hospitalized. November 2: 278,028 cases, 4,390 deaths and 1,146 hospitalized. October 5: 219,754 cases, 3,637 deaths and 971 hospitalized.

**Recent history in Anson County:** March 31, 2020: 1 case; April 28 - 23 cases (no deaths); May 26: 62 cases (1 death); June 22: 107 cases (2 deaths); July 27: 285 cases (2 deaths); August 31: 440 cases (4 deaths); September 28: 605 cases (4 deaths); October 26: 720 cases (9 deaths); November 30: 937 cases (14 deaths); December 31: 1,444 cases; (28 deaths); January 25: 1,957 cases (42 deaths); February 22: 2,258 cases (53 deaths); March 29: 2,414 cases (56 deaths); April 30: 2,527 cases (56 deaths).

Please note that for more information regarding county/state statistics, refer to [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov).

## Burn Ban Issued for Anson County

Due to increased fire risk, the N.C. Forest Service has issued a ban on all open burning and has canceled all burning permits for the following North Carolina counties: Anson, Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Greene, Harnett, Hoke, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Pamlico, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland and Wayne.

The burning ban went into effect at noon on Monday, May 24, and will remain in effect until further notice.

Under North Carolina law, the ban prohibits all open burning in the affected counties, regardless of whether a permit was previously issued. The issuance of any new permits has also been suspended until the ban is lifted. Anyone violating the burn ban faces a \$100 fine plus \$183 court costs. Any person responsible for setting a fire may be liable for any expenses related to extinguishing the fire.

Local fire departments and law enforcement officers are assisting the N.C. Forest Service in enforcing the burn ban. The N.C. Forest Service will continue to monitor conditions. Residents with questions regarding a specific county can contact their N.C. Forest Service county ranger or their county fire marshal's office.

### Answers to frequently asked questions

- Q:** What is open burning? **A:** Open burning includes burning leaves, branches or other plant material. In all cases, burning trash, lumber, tires, newspapers, plastics or other nonvegetative material is illegal.
- Q:** May I still use my grill or barbecue? **A:** Yes, if no other local ordinances prohibit their use.
- Q:** How should I report a wildfire? **A:** Call 911 to report a wildfire.
- Q:** How should I report a person who intentionally starts a wildfire? **A:** Call 911 to report a wildfire.
- Q:** My local fire marshal has also issued a burn ban for my county. What does this mean? **A:** The burn ban issued by the N.C. Forest Service does not apply to a fire within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. Local government agencies have jurisdiction over open burning within 100 feet of an occupied dwelling. The N.C. Forest Service has advised county fire marshals of the burning ban and has asked for their consideration of also implementing a burning ban. If a fire within a 100-foot area of a dwelling escapes containment, a North Carolina forest ranger may take reasonable steps to extinguish or control it. The person responsible for setting the fire may be liable for any expenses related to extinguishing the fire.
- Q:** Are there other instances which impact open burning? **A:** Local ordinances and air quality regulations may impact open burning. For instance, outdoor burning is prohibited in areas covered by Code Orange or Code Red air quality forecasts. Learn more about air quality forecasts at [deq.nc.gov](http://deq.nc.gov)
- Q:** Can I have a campfire when I go camping? **A:** Campfires would be considered open burning and are not exempt from the burn ban. During a burn ban, portable gas stoves or grills are alternate methods for cooking food while camping.
- Q:** What can I do to protect my house against the risk of wildfire? **A:** Learn about wildfire risk assessments and preparedness and prevention plans on the N.C. Forest Service website at [www.ncforests-service.gov](http://www.ncforests-service.gov) or [www.resistwildfire.org](http://www.resistwildfire.org).



## Anson County Schools 2021 Junior Marshals

Congratulations to the 2021 Junior Marshals from Anson High School and Anson County Early College. The Anson County Early College Junior Marshals are: Ava Loren Hill, Manav Sanjay Kumar Patel, Emma Bland Streater, An Phuong Tonnu and Hannah Marie Turner. The Anson High School Junior Marshals are: MacKay Elizabeth Burr, Case Edward Carpenter, Noah Ryland Carpenter, Claudia Faith Hill, Rebecca Dawn Huntley, Conner Thomas Hyatt, Mason Bron Hyatt, John Alden Kendall, Erin Nicole Lookabill, William Rocky Moore, Mallory Brooke Sikes, Emma Katherine Steagall, Gracie Elizabeth Stinson and Lane Garrett Thomas.

## Memorial Day Click It or Ticket Campaign Kicks Off

As the busy summer traveling season nears, state transportation officials are reminding people to wear their seat belts to reduce the risk of being seriously injured or killed. More than 500 people who were not wearing seat belts or buckled into child safety seats died in vehicle crashes on North Carolina roadways last year.

"Seat belts and child safety seats save lives," said Eric Boyette, secretary of the N.C. Department of Transportation. "We know that not wearing a seat belt can be the worst decision you'll ever make."

Boyette spoke during a virtual news conference to kick off the Memorial Day Click It or Ticket enforcement and education campaign.

The statewide seat belt usage rate has fallen the past two years – from 91.3% in 2018 to 87.1% last year. The details about the seat belt survey can be found in the 2020 report. "We have seen significant drops in our seat belt usage rate all across the state, so we have a lot of work to do to get the participation rate back up again," said Mark Ezzell, director of the N.C. Governor's Highway Safety Program (GHSP). "We are ramping up those education efforts now."

The state will survey seat belt usage again in June.

The State Highway Patrol and other law enforcement agencies have checkpoints at various locations around the state, starting May 24 and lasting through June 6. The Governor's Highway Safety Program, which is an arm of the NCDOT, provides grants to law enforcement agencies for various traffic safety initiatives, including campaigns such as this.

Col. Freddy L. Johnson Jr., commander of the N.C. State Highway Patrol, and Grady Hunt, a member of the N.C. Board of Transportation and the chairman of the Robeson County Vision Zero task force, joined Boyette and Ezzell in the virtual news conference.

When North Carolina launched the Click It or Ticket initiative in 1993, only 64 percent of North Carolinians used their seat belts.

This month, the GHSP began a seat belt public awareness campaign with television ads airing in Robeson and Columbus counties, as well as in the Charlotte market, where seat belt usage rates have fallen in the past few years. The campaign features "local heroes" – members of law enforcement agencies in North Carolina – carrying out seat belt laws to protect the community. The two videos can be found at the top of the GHSP YouTube playlist.

North Carolina law requires all passengers in a vehicle to be properly restrained and violations are punishable by fines of up to \$180. Children younger than 8 years and under 80 pounds must be properly restrained in an approved child safety seat or booster seat. If a passenger under 16 is not properly restrained, the driver faces a \$266 fine.

## Regular Road Tests Resumes for 15-to-17-Year-Olds

The N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles has resumed regular road tests for some drivers – thanks to improving health conditions in North Carolina. This ends the contactless road test program that had been required for 15-to-17-year-old drivers seeking their Level 3 Full Provisional license and a select group of other drivers who could not qualify for a road test waiver.

Drivers who had scheduled a contactless road test should proceed with that appointment but be aware they will instead be taking a road test in regular traffic conditions, instead of in parking lots where the contactless road tests were being conducted. Other 15-to-17-year-old drivers can make a test appointment online at [www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-license-appointments](http://www.ncdot.gov/dmv/license-id/driver-license-appointments). Drivers 18 and over will continue to pursue their license through the road test waiver program, with that information also online at the same site.

Other 15-17 year old drivers who have had their Level 2 Limited License for at least six months can schedule an appointment at [skiptheline.ncdot.gov](http://skiptheline.ncdot.gov), selecting Teen Level 3 as the process.

Other drivers who would have required a CRT appointment, including those who previously failed a road test, are governed by lawful and or legal presence status (not a permanent resident), or whose driving privileges were suspended when their previous license expired, should select Driver License – First Time for their appointment process.

By returning to regular road testing, the DMV is going from 28 locations that were hosting the contact-less tests to about 100 offices across the state that will do regular road tests.

For health safety reasons, all drivers will be required to wear a mask, as will the examiner, and all testing drivers will have their temperature checked before beginning the road test.

## Commissioners Meet June 1

The next regular meeting of the Anson County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, June 1 at 6 p.m. This meeting will be live-streamed from the Boardroom.

In adherence to Federal, State, and Anson County Health Department guidelines, citizens are restricted from attending this meeting to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but are strongly encouraged to view the meeting online.

Citizens may participate with questions and/or concerns by sending an email to: [questions@co.anson.nc.us](mailto:questions@co.anson.nc.us).

The Commissioners' board meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel. Also, the videos are archived so they can be viewed at any time. Visit [youtube.com](http://youtube.com) and search for Anson Commissioners.

## Bearcat Boys Basketball Meeting is Today, May 26

Any rising ninth grade through rising twelfth grade boy who is interested in playing basketball this summer, and coming out for the team next season should plan on attending an interest and informational meeting that will be held on Wednesday, May 26. It will take place in the Anson High School Gym at 6:30 p.m.

There will be a discussion about the summer workout schedule, the team camps participants will play in, and other important items.

For questions, contact Head Basketball Coach Randy Jordan at 704-694-9301 ext 6825 or email: [jordan.randy@anson.k12.nc.us](mailto:jordan.randy@anson.k12.nc.us)