

Column by Patrick Woodie, President of the NC Rural Center: If you are like me, your email has been flooded with stories about COVID-19 lately. Most articles use faceless data like unemployment figures, infection rates, and economic losses to paint a sobering picture of an unpredictable global health crisis with an uncertain outcome. One story, however, had a face. It was an article about a Lenoir County high school student travelling three miles every day to access WiFi so he could complete online assignments because he did not have broadband at home.

That story stuck with me because it is an experience known too well by our rural communities, long before COVID-19 brought the importance of broadband access into our larger public dialogue.

At the NC Rural Center, we've been actively advocating for broadband expansion for the past five years, and we applaud the significant, bipartisan measures that seek to better connect all corners of North Carolina. Policy measures like the Growing Rural Economies with Access to Technology (GREAT) program, an effort passed by the NC General Assembly and administered by the State Broadband Infrastructure Office, which provides grants to help deploy broadband service to unserved areas.

State-level policies like GREAT are a significant step in the right direction, but as COVID-19 continues to impact our state, it's clear that now is the time to act on this issue at an even higher order of magnitude.

Flattening the curve and keeping North Carolinians healthy during this time gets easier when people can visit their doctors through telehealth services and students and teachers can access online learning platforms at home. And as we at the Rural Center are seeing firsthand, broadband is a lifeline, keeping many businesses and nonprofits running during these times of social distancing and sheltering-in-place.

And it's not just COVID-19 that is raising greater awareness about the importance of broadband access. For the first time, the decennial census is available online, with the goal to make completing the census as easy as possible. But without broadband, the very mechanism intended to ensure an accurate count in places already at risk for an undercount, is rendered ineffective.

Our efforts to expand broadband to all of North Carolina cannot end when this pandemic ends or when the last person is counted in the census. While some small, rural broadband providers have stepped up during this time to provide free hotspots for rural students, they alone cannot shoulder the costs of expanding this essential service.

Expanding broadband access and affordability will require a significant, increased fiscal allocation, public-private partnerships that leverage existing assets, and a commitment from every sector to not stop advocating until every household is connected, down to the last mile.

Our rural communities know all too well that broadband is a necessity, not a luxury—for education, healthcare, and economic development. Broadband is an infrastructure no less important for a community's economic future than the electricity that runs to their homes. Broadband is a necessity today as we navigate an unprecedented global pandemic, and it will be a necessity for tomorrow as we reignite our economy after COVID-19.

### Akela Martin, Nkaujhnub Vue and Thomas Buckingham Awarded Scholarships from Pee Dee Electric

Pee Dee Electric Awareness Committee recently awarded \$8,000 in college scholarships to eight students across its service area who are seeking to further their academic goals. Scholarships are awarded to students who demonstrate academic excellence and live in a home served by Pee Dee Electric.

Three recipients are from Anson County. They are:

- Akela Martin of Wadesboro. Akela plans to attend the University of Tennessee - Knoxville.
- Nkaujhnub Vue of Wadesboro. Nkaujhnub plans to attend NC State University.
- Thomas Buckingham of Polkton. Thomas plans to attend Appalachian State University.

The Pee Dee Electric Awareness Committee is comprised of cooperative members who raise funds every year through a raffle and a golf tournament to provide these opportunities to students in the Pee Dee service area.

Pee Dee Electric is a not-for-profit cooperative whose goal is to provide reliable, dependable electric service for its members while focusing on value, quality customer service, and enhancing life in the communities we serve. Pee Dee's service area consists of Anson, Montgomery, Richmond, Scotland, and Stanly counties.

For more information about Pee Dee Electric, please visit [www.pdemc.com](http://www.pdemc.com).

### Navigate Counseling Offers Free Telehealth Services

Navigate Counseling Clinic is expanding their service so that they can provide all of their services through telehealth. They are a no-cost counseling clinic located on East Carolina University's College of Allied Health Science campus.

You can contact Navigate Counseling Clinic to schedule an appointment or to learn more about their services. The telephone number is 252-744-0328 or [em@navigate@ecu.edu](mailto:em@navigate@ecu.edu).

# Church News

\* All events are subject to change because of the COVID-19 situation. You may want to seek confirmation of events.

**JUNE 27**  
**Community Outreach**  
Free household items & paper products by Lamb of God Church, 11am at 118 West Wade St in Wadesboro. 1st come, 1st served. Info 843-623-3777

## Events

**JUNE 17**  
**Bach's Lunch**  
Takeout only, 11am-1pm at the Drake Gallery, 108 South Rutherford St in Wadesboro (next to the Ansonia Theatre). Menu is chicken salad lunch with sides, dessert & drink. Please call now (704-694-4950) & leave your name, number & how many plates you want as this will help with planning. Walk-up plates will also be available

**JUNE 25**  
**Board of Education Regular Meeting** held virtually at 3:30pm. The public is invited to dial in, (646) 749-3122. The access code is 825-610-685

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**Community Outreach**  
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**ONGOING EVENTS**  
**Food Commodities**  
**Food Distributed Free** every Wednesday at 9am & 2nd Saturday of each month at 9am at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr, Hwy 742N across from Burnsville Fire Dept. Info 704-826-8182

**Food Pantry**  
Free food every Wed, 9-11am at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr. 704-826-8182

**Free Food Distributed by Anson Crisis Ministries**  
Every Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday & Friday, 8am-1pm. It is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. Telephone is 704-694-2445

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**ESTATE AUCTION**  
**SATURDAY, JUNE 13<sup>TH</sup> 10AM**  
**CONLEY WILLIAMS ESTATE**

**3118 AUSTIN CHANEY ROAD IN MONROE**  
FROM WINGATE, TURN NORTH OFF HWY 74 AT McDONALDS, STAY ON SAME ROAD AND CROSS BYPASS. CONTINUE UNTIL YOU SEE THE SIGN - APPROXIMATELY 5.5 MILES

**ITEMS FOR AUCTION:** HOME FURNISHINGS  
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Details & Pictures at [www.auctionzip.com](http://www.auctionzip.com)

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**Town of Polkton**  
**NOTICE OF PUBLIC HEARING**

The public is hereby advised that per N.C.G.S. 159-12, the Town Clerk has submitted the proposed budget for the Town of Polkton for Fiscal Year 2020-2021 to the Town Board of Commissioners. A public hearing on the proposed budget will be held on Monday, June 22, 2020, at 5:30 p.m. or as soon thereafter as may be heard in the Polkton Fire Department, located at 61 West Polk Street, Polkton, NC 28135.

Copies of the proposed budget are available at Polkton Town Hall for public inspection during normal business hours until the budget is adopted.

All persons interested and wishing to be heard should contact Jerricka Napier at 704-272-7463 in order that their opinion may be a matter of record.

**Jerricka B. Napier**  
Clerk to the Board  
Finance Officer

**ANSON PEDIATRICS**

**PROVIDING QUALITY PEDIATRIC CARE IN ANSON COUNTY**

**WE ARE CONTINUING TO SEE PATIENTS WHO NEED CARE, WHILE STAYING WITHIN THE GUIDELINES BEING ISSUED BY THE CDC AND STATE AUTHORITIES**

**For Our Patients:** All are prescreened for symptoms of COVID-19.

- All patients are required to be in a mask while they are in our office.
- All visitors are requested to wait in their cars.
- Social distancing guidelines are maintained in our waiting rooms.
- Telehealth visits are available daily for patients who are unable to come in.
- Exam rooms, furniture, surfaces and equipment are cleaned according to CDC guidelines at least hourly and after contact with patients and staff.


**For our providers and staff:**

- We screen all staff members for symptoms of COVID-19 daily.
- All staff members and providers have access to, and are using PPE, (face masks, gloves, hand sanitizer) in accordance with CDC regulations.
- All exams, testing and procedures are carried out following the CDC guidelines regarding social distancing and PPE recommendations for providers and staff.


**PLEASE REACH US IF YOU HAVE ANY QUESTIONS BY PHONE, PATIENT PORTAL & EMAIL**

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