

# THE EXPRESS

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

## Anson County's Unemployment Rate at Low 7.1% Level in October

Anson County's unemployment rate for October dropped to 7.1 percent. In September it was 7.6 percent. In August the rate was 8.7 percent. Statewide the unemployment rate for October was 5.5 percent.

In October 2013 the unemployment rate in Anson County was 8.9%. In October 2012 it was 11.2%, in October 2011 it was 12.2%, and in October 2010 it was 11.1%.

Anson's total labor force in October was 10,663. Of that number 9,906 were employed and 757 were unemployed. In September the total labor force was 10,540, with 9,744 employed and 796 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 98 of North Carolina's counties in October and increased in two.

Graham County had the highest unemployment rate at 11.2 percent while Chatham County had the lowest at 3.8 percent. All of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the Metro areas, Rocky Mount at 8.1 percent experienced the highest rate and Asheville at 4.1 percent had the lowest. The October not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 5.5 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 99 counties and remained the same in one. All 14 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in October by 48,712 to 4,421,890, while those unemployed decreased 25,861 to 256,897. Since October 2013, the number of workers employed statewide increased 76,544, while those unemployed decreased 82,505.

## Ansonville Man Killed in Auto Accident

Ernest S. King, 72 years old, of Ansonville died from injuries he received in an automobile accident on Thursday afternoon, December 4. It was a single-car crash on Highway 52 South near Albemarle. The NC Highway Patrol stated that King was driving while impaired.

Witnesses had reported to the Highway Patrol that they observed King driving in an erratic manner, traveling south on Highway 52 at 65 miles per hour. He lost control of his 1993 Honda Accord, crossed the centerline, and struck a culvert on Bowers Road which caused his car to overturn and come to a stop in a wooded area on the northbound side of Highway 52. The accident took place between Norwood and the Porter Community. Emergency personnel cut King from the wreckage.

According to the Highway Patrol King was charged with driving while impaired before going being airlifted to Carolinas Medical Center in Charlotte, where he later died.

## Inmate Pleads Guilty in Death of Inmate at Lanesboro

Gregorio Cortez Vazquez pleaded guilty on Wednesday, December 3 to second-degree murder in court in Wadesboro and was sentenced to up to 16 years in prison. Investigators said Wesley Turner was stabbed to death on September 28, 2012, during a disturbance at the Lanesboro Correctional Institution.

Another inmate, Joel Corto Ortiz, pleaded guilty to felony assault with a deadly weapon for stabbing another inmate who was seriously hurt in the fight. Ortiz was sentenced to up to five years in prison. A third inmate, Julio Alberto Zelaya-Sorto, pleaded guilty last month and was sentenced to up to four years in prison.

Lanesboro has come under scrutiny by several agencies for ongoing problems, including violent attacks, drug use by inmates and possession of contraband by inmates such as cell phones.

Recently the State Bureau of Investigation has been reviewing prison operations. SBI agent Audria Bridges led the investigation and said she was troubled that inmates at the prison "roamed freely in areas they should not have been in." Bridges said she reviewed hours of surveillance video and saw that inmates frequently visited the office of an assistant prison manager - a practice that she thinks posed a danger to officers. "It was shocking to see the place wasn't being supervised with more of the restrictions that you'd expect in a prison," she said.

## Auditions for Ansonia's Wizard of Oz

The Ansonia Theatre will be holding auditions for *The Wizard of Oz* on Monday and Tuesday, December 29 and 30, from 6 to 9 p.m. at the theatre, located at 112 South Rutherford Street in Wadesboro. All roles are open. Please prepare a one minute monologue and be prepared to sing.

Those auditioning for Dorothy will be singing *Over the Rainbow*. You are only required to attend one of the audition dates. The show will be directed by Tommy Wooten and runs March 20 to 29.

## Harvest Ministries Outreach Center Community Christmas Blessing Event is December 21

On Sunday, December 21 Harvest Ministries Outreach Center (HMOC) will hold their annual Community Christmas Blessing event. This free event runs from 10:30 a.m. until 3 p.m. at HMOC, taking place after area church services. They will be giving away hundreds of toys, prizes, bicycles, goodie bags for every family, and much more! And, they have partnered with Toys for Tots this year to reach more children and families.

One lucky person will leave with a new television, \$200 in cash or a "special prize!"

Buses will be picking up those who need a ride between 9:30 and 10:30 that morning. If you need a ride call 704-695-2879.

If you would like to donate gifts or money to help Anson County's less fortunate and make lots of kids very happy, please call 704-695-2879. HMOC is located on Caswell Street (Highway 74) behind Pizza Hut.



## Wadesboro Christmas Parade Kicks Off The Season

On Thursday, December 4, the Chamber of Commerce held the annual Christmas Parade in uptown Wadesboro, which officially kicks off the holiday season. Serving as Grand Marshall for this year's event was retired Sheriff Tommy Allen.

A crowd of onlookers lined the parade route and conveyed glad tidings to the dignitaries, bands, floats, dancers, gymnasts, twirlers, beauty queens, clowns, local teams and even Santa Claus as each unit expressly paraded by those in attendance.

It was an early release for Anson County Schools so all students were exceptionally happy to both watch and participate in the happy, holiday affair. A good time was had by all.

By Melanie Lyon

## Holiday Program at Planetarium called *Season of Light*

In a release from Wendy Efird of the Rotary Planetarium and Science Center: This month the Rotary Planetarium and Science Center will present a special program called *Season of Light* that combines astronomy and holiday traditions. It's an elegant and sophisticated program about the coldest and darkest of seasons - a time which holds some of the warmest and brightest celebrations of the year.

This presentation traces the history and development of many of the world's most endearing holiday customs, all of which involve lighting up the winter season - from the burning yule log, sparkling Christmas tree lights and candles in windows, to the lighting of luminaries in the American Southwest and the traditional ritual of the Hanukkah Menorah.

The show also recounts the historical religious and cultural rituals practiced during the time of winter solstice - not only Christian and Jewish, but also Celtic, Nordic, Roman, Irish, Mexican and Hopi. It also takes a look at some of our more light-hearted seasonal traditions, from gift-giving and kissing under the mistletoe to songs about lords-a-leaping and ladies dancing, and the custom of decking the halls with greenery and candles. St. Nicholas, Sinterklaas, Kris Kringle, Father Christmas and Santa Claus all drop by as well.

Naturally there is some astronomy in *Season of Light*. Audiences learn a selection of northern hemisphere winter constellations, and find out why we even have seasons, as we demonstrate the sun's path across the sky throughout the year and the earth's tilt and orbit around the sun. And of course the program explores the possible astronomical explanations for a "Star over Bethlehem" in the last quarter of the show: comets, meteors, novae and supernovae, and planetary conjunctions.

Audiences will also have a chance to experience the planetarium's new full dome projection system. Seasonal stargazing as well as a trip through the solar system's planets will also be discussed. The *Season of Light* show will last approximately 35 minutes and is designed for all ages. The cost of the show and visiting the animal room at the Science Center is \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. All proceeds from admissions will help finance the purchase of future full dome digital movies. Seats are limited in the dome to 30. Reservations are preferred by calling the Rotary Planetarium and Science Center at 704-694-4417 ext. 01005 and leaving a message.

The show schedule is: Thursday, December 11 at 6 p.m.; Monday, December 15 at 10 a.m. & 2 p.m.; Sunday, December 21 at 4 p.m.; and Monday, December 22 at 6:30 p.m.

## Rob Nance and the Lost Souls at the Ansonia

Rob Nance and the Lost Souls will perform at the Ansonia Theatre on Saturday, December 20. Growing up on a steady diet of musical influences in North Carolina that ranged from Doc Watson to Neil Young, Rob Nance now writes songs that echo the traditions of southern and contemporary folk music to create a unique brand of roots rock.

His debut release, *Lost Souls and Locked Doors*, winds its way between heartfelt folk songs and rock numbers that make up a sound both familiar and new. This group has ties to Anson County and the Brown Creek area.

The show starts at 7:30 p.m. and tickets are \$10 for general seating. For information call 704-695-4950.

## Dinner for Homeless on December 20

Faith-Based Center of Hope will host their annual Christmas Dinner for the Homeless on Saturday, December 20 beginning 11 a.m. at the Toys for Tots Center, 302 Salisbury Street in Wadesboro.

"We are asking the community leaders, officials, churches and businesses to please come together and donate to tis great cause," said Vancine Sturdivant. "Faith-Based Center of Hope is passing out blankets and clothes now from the Center. When we bless or do for the least of them, we are doing for the Lord."

To make a donation, or if you need blankets and coats, please contact Vancine Sturdivant (704 848-4412 or Ester Lindsey (704) 848-8452.

## Cameron Lockhart is ACS Christmas Card Design Contest Winner

Each year the Anson County School system holds a Christmas card design contest. There are many, many submissions for entry into the contest, with three winners chosen from grades K-12. Winners include Cameron Lockhart, Victoria Hunter and Kaitlyn Bunce.

The top winning design, which is featured on the Christmas card mailed out for Anson County Schools, is Cameron Lockhart's design. Cameron, pictured with ACS Superintendent Michael Freeman, is a sixth grade student at Peachland-Polkton School and is the son of Charlie and Nicki Lockhart of Peachland.



## Healthy Living and Eating Seminar December 21

Pathway to Peace Ministries presents ANEWSTART, healthy living seminar and cooking class on Sunday, December 21, from 3 to 5 p.m. Learn how to cook plant-based foods that will heal you. Learn how to lose weight, have more energy, reduce cholesterol, reverse diabetes, lower blood pressure, and much more.

Interested? Come! Seminar and cooking class is FREE! It will be held at 11775 Highway 109 South in Peachland. For more information call 704-695-1441.

## Veterans Christmas Party is this Friday

A Christmas party will be held for veterans on Friday, December 12 at 6 p.m. at the National Guard Armory, located on Anson High School Road in Wadesboro. All veterans and spouses are invited.

Special recognition will be given to our oldest war veterans, those from World War II.

## Compassionate Friends Candlelight Service is Sunday

The Compassionate Friends, a support group for anyone who has lost a child of any age, will hold their annual Worldwide Candlelight Service at Calvary Episcopal Church on Sunday, December 14 at 7 p.m. This service is to honor children who have died from any cause.

For more information please contact Irvin Thompson at 704-694-8774.

## Come Meet New Administrator & Medical Director at Ambassador Health & Rehab

You are invited to come to Ambassador Health and Rehab on Thursday, December 18 to meet their new Administrator and Medical Director. This event will run from 5 until 7 p.m.

Ambassador is located at 2051 Country Club Road in Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-4106.

## Are You the Best Outdoor Christmas Decorator?

In the December 24 edition of *The Express Newspaper* we will unveil the winner of the "Best Outdoor Christmas Decorations Award." Wouldn't you love to see your home pictured in all its Christmas glory? If you win, that is exactly what you will receive, full recognition in our Christmas Eve special edition.

A panel of judges will be looking for the most beautiful décor throughout the county - in search of creativity and beauty as their chief criteria for winning. If you or someone you know would like to be considered, please contact *The Express* at 704-694-2480 by the deadline on Monday, December 22.

Good luck decorators!