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State Temporarily Lifts Open Burning Ban

Gov. Mike Easley announced that N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources has temporarily lifted the ban on open burning for all 100 counties in North Carolina. Recent rains across the state, while not ending the drought, are sufficient to make carefully tended open burning safe to reduce the amount of dry forest debris and cut the potential for larger, more intense and harder-to-control fires later in the year, especially during the spring fire season.

The Department of Environment and Natural Resources and its Division of Forest Resources will continue weekly monitoring of conditions to determine if the burn ban needs to be reinstated. The ban on open burning could be reinstated if the potential for wildfire activity increases because the state continues to receive below normal rainfall coupled with above average temperatures and increased wildfire activity. During the last several days, statewide rainfall totals ranged from about a quarter of an inch in a few coastal areas to as much as 3 inches in the Piedmont and foothills, according to the National Weather Service.

The ban on open burning was imposed October 15 because of dry weather and depleted water resources across the state. The decision to lift the ban comes at the recommendation of the N.C. Division of Forest Resources, which fights wildfires and regularly measures the factors such as weather and available fuels that play an important role in the likelihood of experiencing dangerous wildfires. DENR Secretary Ross and state forestry officials determined that the state had received adequate rainfall to significantly reduce the danger of wildfires. In addition, lifting the burn ban will enable people to conduct burning under controlled conditions as a way to reduce the buildup of vegetation that can fuel future wildfires.

Ross recommended temporarily lifting the ban to:

- Reduce built-up fuel loads. Unless those are reduced, there is a potential of larger, more intense, harder-to-control fires later in the year, especially during the spring fire season.
- Allow the personnel of the state Division of Forest Resources or local firefighters to focus on other important responsibilities when the risk, as it is now, is low for wildfires. During a burn ban, these officials must respond to every smoke report.
- Allow those around the state who need to do open burning for research and other permitted purposes to do so. State forestry officials say that if people burn leaves and other vegetative materials they should take the same precautions they would have if it had not rained because fires can easily escape and become dangerous.

Some important rules to follow if you burn include: Open burning may include burning leaves, branches and other plant material. It is illegal to burn trash, lumber, tires, newspapers, plastics or other non-vegetative materials. Outdoor burning is prohibited in areas covered by Code Orange or Code Red air quality forecasts.

Make sure you have a valid burning permit. You can obtain a burning permit at any NCDNR office or permitting agent or online at www.dfr.state.nc.us. Follow local laws on debris burning. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours; others forbid it entirely. Check the weather. Don't burn on dry, windy days. Be prepared before burning. Keep fire tools available. To control a fire, you will need a garden hose, a bucket, a steel rake and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire. Never use kerosene, gasoline, diesel fuel or other flammable liquids to speed burning. Always stay with the fire until it has been extinguished.

Anson Unemployment Rate at 6.4% in November

Anson County saw the unemployment rate at 6.4% in November, down from October's 6.8% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate for November was 4.7%, according to statistics released by the state's Employment Security Commission.

Anson's total labor force in November was 11,281. Of that number 10,559 were employed and 722 were unemployed. In October the total labor force was 11,360, with 10,589 employed and 771 unemployed.

Unemployment rates in most of North Carolina's 100 counties declined or had no change in November. Rates declined in 40 counties and remained the same in 21.

"A good portion of the state's counties experienced a decrease in unemployment in November," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne, Jr. "Employment has been strong all year throughout North Carolina. Since January 2007, 89 counties have lower unemployment rates, and employment has increased by 77,562 workers. We hope that this tremendous growth will continue into 2008."

Supplanting Currituck County, Orange County had the state's lowest unemployment rate, at 3% in November, and Scotland County continued with the highest rate at 9.6%.

The five counties receiving the highest amount in unemployment insurance benefits in November were: Mecklenburg-\$7.4 million, Wake-\$4.6 million, Guilford-\$3.4 million, Forsyth-\$2.5 million, and Rowan-\$2.4 million. \$77.2 million in benefits was paid to 87,668 individuals statewide, compared with \$77.2 million to 83,235 individuals in October.

Compassionate Friends to Meet

The Compassionate Friends will meet on Thursday, January 10 at 7:00 p.m. at the Pee Dee Electric Training Room on Highway 52 South in Wadesboro. Parents, grandparents and siblings of children who have died at any age from any cause are invited to this grief support group.

For more information call 704-694-8774.

Garbage Collection for MLK Holiday

There will be no garbage pickup in Wadesboro on Monday, January 21 due to the Martin Luther King holiday. All areas will be serviced on Tuesday, January 22.

Italian Bike Club Rides to Wadesboro for Founding Member



Pictured in the parking lot of La Fagota restaurant, eighteen Italian motorcycle enthusiasts assembled on Sunday afternoon after traveling from Waxhaw to Anson County during a meandering ride over the backroads of Anson County. This assemblage honored Mr. Jim Calandro (in sidecar), an Italian motorcycle enthusiast suffering from lymphoma. Ansonian Allen Lyon is in front, second from left.

Emerging from the backroads surrounding Anson County, around the twists and turns of White Store Road and into the streets of Wadesboro, seventeen motorcycles trekked on Sunday afternoon. It was an event honoring Mr. Jim Calandro, Italian motorcycle enthusiast, former racer, and founder of USDESMO, a national Ducati motorcycle owners club. Calandro, diagnosed with high level lymphoma, has already undergone months of chemotherapy. Soon he will go to Chapel Hill to undergo five additional weeks of bone marrow treatments. This Sunday afternoon ride was to honor his courage, his infectious optimism, positive spirit and great wit.

A vintage BMW motorcycle (the only non-Italian bike on the ride) with a sidecar attached was Jim's mount for the ride through the beautiful Anson County countryside. Alongside him were a group of friends, all riding Italian motorcycles,

one of Jim's greatest passions. The sight (and sounds!) of the exotic motorcycles was quite spectacular.

Jim said, "I did not anticipate how much fun the "chair" would be. Almost as much wind in your face as riding a bike. I still cannot get used to not leaning into the corners!"

It was a beautiful day and a fitting sendoff for Calandro, who has spoken of plans to relocate from Waxhaw to Anson County. He and his wife Ann both love the area and enjoy taking advantage of the wonderful roads offering great rides right here in our area.

Longtime friend and USDESMO club member Allen Lyon said, smiling, "Jim is a great friend. He is a master of the art of conversation, and always a lot of fun to be around. We all wish him well. We were very happy to participate in this fitting sendoff for Jim to a full and speedy recovery." Photo and story by Melanie Morse

Freddie Paxton, Acie Gainey and Pat McCoy Earn Officer of the Year Awards

Sheriff Tommy Allen has announced the names of the officers receiving the 2007 Deputy Sheriff and Detention Officer of the Year Awards. The presentations were made at the Sheriff's Office annual family Christmas gathering in December. The criteria for receiving the awards was based on the officer's presence and demeanor with their fellow employees; their work ethics and experience; and generally how well they did their job, and how they got along with both the public and the other employees.

Two officers received the Detention Officer of the Year Award for 2007. They were Sgt. Acie Gainey and Sgt. Pat McCoy. Sgt. Gainey has been employed by the Sheriff's Office for eight years and has been assigned

to the Jail during that time. Sgt. McCoy has been employed by the Sheriff's Office for nine years, beginning as a dispatcher then moving to the Jail operations during that first year. Sheriff Allen said, "Both Sgt.'s Gainey and McCoy are dedicated and loyal employees, well respected by their peers and most deserving of this recognition."

Receiving the Deputy Sheriff of the Year Award for 2007 was Lt. Freddie Paxton. Lt. Paxton has been with the Sheriff's Office for 11 years. Lt. Paxton has worked as a dispatcher, shift supervisor, school resource officer and has served as the DARE officer for the past six years. A little over a year ago, Lt. Paxton was appointed to oversee the Jail Operations. Sheriff Allen said, "I am fortunate to have someone of his caliber in this organization. When I appointed him Jail Administrator, he wanted to continue his relationship with the schools and continue to teach the DARE program as well. In addition, he successfully completed the state Basic Detention Officer Training program this fall."

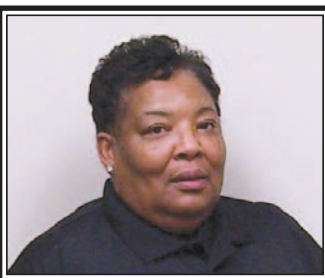
All three officers received an engraved plaque defining their recognition.



Sgt. Acie Gainey



Lt. Freddie Paxton



Sgt. Pat McCoy

Anson Adds Veteran Service Officer

Larry Crandall, Department of Social Services Director, announces the new Anson County Veteran Services Officer, Rev. Randy Davenport. Randy is a graduate of Western Carolina University with a Bachelor of Science in Business Administration and Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary with a Masters of Christian Education. He comes from a long line of military veterans.

"My immediate family has served in every conflict since WWII. My ancestors served in the Civil War and WWI. Every branch, excluding the Coast Guard, is represented by different members of my family. I am delighted to help those who have served our nation and this is my way of serving our nation as well," Randy said.

Randy is currently training as a VA Service Officer and will provide personal counseling and claim filing assistance for veterans free of charge. He is an advocate for the veterans and their dependents regarding benefits established by federal, state, and local regulations.

The new Veterans Service Office is located in the basement of the Courthouse (the old tax office). Entry is through the Law Enforcement parking lot. The office will be open Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday. For more information or to schedule an appointment, contact Randy at 704-694-4418. "I would love to share a cup of coffee and swap war stories. Come see me anytime."

College Financial Aid Workshop Jan. 14

A financial aid workshop for high school seniors will be held on Monday, January 14 at 6:00 p.m. on the campus of Anson High School in the Media Center. Students should never rule out any institution solely because of its cost. Many colleges determine the amount of aid a student can receive by estimating their financial need. Therefore a student may be offered a larger amount of financial aid at a more expensive college.

Representatives from a post-secondary institution and the College Foundation of North Carolina will conduct the workshop.

The workshop will focus on completing the Free Application for Federal Aid (FAFSA), as well as college loans and work-study. All students should apply for financial aid regardless of their parents' income. Priority of eligible funds will be distributed to students applying by March 1, 2008.

It is strongly recommended that parents and students complete the 2007 Federal Income Tax Returns before completing the FAFSA. Estimating is discouraged. File free online at www.fafsa.ed.gov. This is the fastest and easiest way to apply for financial aid.

Mobile Health Screening Clinic Schedule

Free health screenings, which include blood pressure, heart rate, cholesterol and blood sugar for anyone over the age of 18, will be offered by the Healthy Ansonians Mobile Health Screening Clinic. The schedule for the remainder of January is as follows:

- Wednesday, January 9, at Morven Senior Meal Site, 9:30 a.m. until noon.
- Wednesday, January 9, at Morven UMC, 3:00 until 6:00 p.m.
- Thursday, January 10, at Wal-Mart, noon until 4:00 p.m.
- Tuesday, January 15, at Burnsville VFD, 1:00 until 4:00 p.m.
- Wednesday, January 16, Anson Station (Old Wal-Mart), 9:00 a.m. until noon.
- Thursday, January 17, Peachland Center, 9:00 a.m. until noon.

The Mobile Clinic does not operate on days that Anson County Schools are delayed or closed due to inclement weather. For more information, contact Linda Griffin, RN, BSN at 704-695-3488 or 704-694-5131.

50+ Club Meeting Features Templeton Musicians

The Hampton B. Allen Library has announced the monthly meeting of the 50+ Club on Monday, January 14 at 10:30 a.m. in the Pritchett Room. The meeting will feature a musical program presented by Lillie, Seth and Elijah Templeton.

The public is invited to attend. Any questions, please call 704-694-5177.

Look inside for these special inserts

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