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

Covid Cases Surging in Anson

The latest information posted by the Anson County Health Department on Tuesday, January 18 showed 5,362 total Covid-19 cases, with 668 active and 88 deaths. Last Tuesday, January 11 showed 4,743 Covid-19 cases, with 452 active. There were 322 active cases reported on January 4. On December 28 there were 123 active cases.

Vaccines are available for everyone 5 years old and older, including walk-in clinics. (Children 5-11 by appointment only.) Vaccine boosters are available. They are free, and all you have to do is call the Health Department at 704-694-5188 for more information. Walk-in clinics are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m.

Covid Testing Free testing is available Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 6 p.m. without an appointment. Testing takes place in the old hospital parking lot at 500 Morven Road in Wadesboro. No appointment is needed and there is no charge for the Covid test. Results will be called or emailed directly to the person tested or, in the case of children, to their parent or adult caregiver, in 2-3 days. They will test anyone over the age of 1.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported that statewide as of Tuesday, January 18 there were 31,902 new cases of Covid, with 20,000 total deaths and 4,630 hospitalized. Last Tuesday, January 11 there were 17,705 new cases, with 19,706 total deaths and 3,991 hospitalized. Vaccination rates were 74% adults with one dose, 70% with two doses both weeks. On Tuesday, January 4 there were 10,276 newly reported cases (up from 4,889 new cases on December 27).

Virtual Barn Blast is January 27

The Anson County Partnership for Children is pleased to announce Barn Blast 2022 will be hosted virtually on Thursday, January 27, 2022, from 7:00 until 8:00 p.m. The fun of Barn Blast continues with interactive games and prizes, despite being a virtual event.

This event will be open to the public. Executive Director Caroline Goins said, "We look forward to you seeing you there!"

Sponsorship and donation opportunities are available. Check out the Partnership's Facebook page for updates about Barn Blast. For more information on being a 2022 Barn Blast sponsor call 704-694-4036 or visit the Partnership's website at www.ansonchildren.org.

Free Vaccination Clinic at the Anson Animal Shelter on February 12

The public is invited to bring their cats and dogs to the Anson Animal Shelter on Saturday, February 12 for free vaccinations. The event will take place in the parking lot from 9 a.m. to 12 noon.

For more information or questions you can call Shelter Director Maureen Lett at 704-994-2738 or email mlett@ansoncountync.gov.

How to be Safe While Driving in Winter Weather

With winter weather in the forecast, now is the time to prepare. To remain safe during this time, the best thing you can do is not drive on the roads, but if you must, plan ahead and review how to operate your vehicle in winter weather.

Prepare Your Vehicle Before you hit the road, it's a good rule of thumb to prepare your vehicle ahead of time. The lower temperatures can cause tire pressure and battery power to drop and may cause moisture to freeze the gas lines. Check your tire pressure, test your battery and keep your gas tank at least half full.

Make sure your wiper fluid is rated for minus 30 degrees and replace wiper blades, if needed. Your tires should have a tread of 2/32" or more. If the tread is less than that, the tires should be replaced. And remember, your emergency kit should be stocked.

Defrost Before shifting into gear, defrost your windows. You should be able to see mirrors and through all windows before driving on the roads – even if you are driving a short distance.

Also, remove dirt, ice and snow from sensors that work with assistive-driving features, such as automatic braking and forward collision warning.

Increase Traction on the Road Driving in a lower gear will keep you from accelerating quickly and therefore losing traction with the road and losing control of the vehicle. Be careful driving up and down hills too. If you apply too much gas, your tires can spin too much and lose traction with the road.

Increase Following Distance While driving in winter weather, increase your following distance to five to six seconds. This will allow you more time if you need to stop.

Do Not Use Cruise Control Your cruise control is an asset driving long distances, but DO NOT use it when driving in winter conditions. During the conditions, your vehicle is more likely to hydroplane because it is trying to maintain a constant speed.

Skidding: What to Do? If your car happens to skid while driving on snow or ice, do not panic. Remove your foot from the accelerator and avoid slamming on the brakes. Steer your vehicle into the direction of the skid to correct its orientation. That means steer into the same side the rear end of the vehicle is sliding toward. Be careful not to oversteer as this could cause your vehicle to move into more of skid.

The best way to be safe is to stay off the roads during winter weather. If you must drive, follow these winter weather driving tips to keep yourself and others safe. Remember, you can contact State Highway Patrol by calling *HP or *47 in the event of an emergency.

Countywide Zoning Ordinance Development is Now Posted Online

A draft proposed county zoning ordinance has been posted online at the Anson County government website, www.co.anson.nc.us. The public is welcome to go to the site and view the ordinance.



House in July 2021 in fear that otherwise it would not survive. PMI believes that the birthplace of L.L. Polk is too important to the history of North Carolina to let it be lost. Sarah Gaddy Polk was also from a prominent Anson County family. Her legacy is significant too.

Austin and Maegan are still undecided about the ultimate use of the Polk House. But, they want the public to share in their delight in bringing this special historic site back to life. This is a great victory for historic preservation, Austin and Maegan Kirkland, and Preserve Mecklenburg!

Special thanks to the Anson County Historical Society and the L. L. Polk Foundation for their support of the project. PMI also appreciates the many individuals who contributed to the campaign to preserve the Polk House.

The Restoration Of The Leonidas Lafayette And Sarah Gaddy Polk House Has Begun

On Wednesday, January 12 Maegan Kirkland and Austin Kirkland of Peachland became the owners of the Leonidas Lafayette Polk and Sarah Gaddy Polk House in Polkton. Austin is a skilled craftsman who is an expert in timber frame construction. He will be working on the Polk House in the upcoming weeks and months. The first step will be to repair the foundation and level the floors.

Anson County historians and others have expressed the need to save the Polk House for at least 50 years. Now it is finally going to happen. The Federal style home was built by Andrew Polk, L. L. Polk's father, between 1823 and 1827. Plans are to nominate the Polk House for listing in the National Register of Historic Places.

Preserve Mecklenburg (PMI) placed preservation covenants in the deed that will assure that the house will be here for generations to come. PMI will also have authority to control alterations to the exterior of the house and the 1.2 acre lot that goes with it. PMI bought the Polk



Maegan and Austin Kirkland are new owners of the L.L. Polk House on Old 74 in Polkton.

Governor Cooper and NCDHHS Secretary Kinsley Stress Importance of Vaccines and Boosters to Combat Omicron Variant

With cases rising, state officials encourage people to get tested, vaccinated and boosted

With cases of COVID-19 reaching record highs and hospitalizations increasing, Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley called on all North Carolinians to get vaccinated and get a booster as soon as they are eligible to protect themselves from severe illness from the highly contagious Omicron variant of COVID-19.

"For people who have been vaccinated and especially for those who have gotten boosters, the new Omicron variant has been less severe than previous surges," said Governor Roy Cooper. "With these vaccines and boosters we have an amazing tool to save people's lives and beat this pandemic – and we'll keep our foot on the gas when it comes to getting more shots and more boosters administered."

Early studies show that boosters greatly increase someone's immune response and provide greater protection against the Omicron variant than no vaccine. The booster is especially important for those over 65 or in other populations at higher risk for severe illness from COVID-19.

The Governor and Secretary also urged the use of well-fitting, multi-layer masks as another layer of protection against spread of the virus. If possible, wear a surgical or procedure mask, a KN95, or an N95. NCDHHS is making some higher-grade masks available for adults at no cost in more places that need them, such as long-term care facilities and federally qualified health centers, and for schools staff and populations like migrant farm workers which at higher risk of exposure or severe illness. These organizations and those that provide essential services can request these masks online at covid19.ncdhhs.gov/RequestMasks, and requests will be prioritized.

"Testing and wearing a mask are essential tools in slowing the spread of COVID-19," Secretary Kinsley said. "But the bottom line is that vaccines and boosters are the number one thing you can do to protect your health."

Governor Cooper also announced plans to extend Executive Order 224, which aims to curb COVID-19 by requiring vaccines or testing of state employees in cabinet agencies. That Order defined fully vaccinated as having two shots of the Moderna or Pfizer vaccine or one shot of the Johnson & Johnson vaccine and directed the Office of State Human Resources to issue the policy to enforce this requirement. Under the new Order, OSHR will be given the authority to include boosters in the definition of fully vaccinated when appropriate.

To date, North Carolina has administered over 14.8 million doses of the COVID-19 vaccine, with 69 percent of the adult population fully vaccinated. About 74 percent of adults have received at least one dose of the vaccine, including 95 percent of North Carolinians 65 and over. About 44 percent of eligible adults have received their booster shot.

Vaccines are available for those ages 5 and older, and boosters are available for those 16 and older. Monday the Food and Drug Administration authorized boosters for children 12 through 15 years old, but the CDC must take action before they are available. Today the CDC accepted the FDA recommendation to shorten the time for a Pfizer booster to five months after the second shot. The CDC also recommended a third dose after 28 days for immunocompromised children ages 5-11.

Information on testing locations, free tests and home tests is available at ncdhhs.gov/gettested. North Carolinians can learn more about the COVID-19 vaccines at myspot.nc.gov (English) or Vacunate.nc.gov (Spanish). Use NCDHHS' online tool Find a Vaccine Location to find a nearby vaccination site. The North Carolina Vaccine Help Center at 888-675-4567 can also help you make an appointment. It is open 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. on weekdays and 8 a.m. to 4 p.m. on weekends.

Location/Site	Quarantined Students	Quarantined Employees	Positive Cases Students	Positive Cases Employees
Anson Early College High School	15	4	8	0
Anson High School	70	8	17	4
Anson Middle School	53	6	10	3
Ansonville Elementary	11	3	3	1
Lilesville Elementary	24	5	7	4
Morven Elementary	5	2	0	1
Peachland-Polkton Elementary	36	4	8	2
Wadesboro Elementary	18	3	0	2
Wadesboro Primary	29	4	0	3
District Office	N/A	1	N/A	0
Transportation	N/A	0	N/A	1
Maintenance	N/A	1	N/A	0
Child Nutrition/Cafeteria Employees	N/A	1	N/A	1
Total	261	42	53	22
Total Students + Employees	303		75	

*Student Enrollment as of 01/14/22 2,954
*Enrollment changes daily
of Employees 513
% of Employees Positive 4.29%

A link to the dashboard is on the Anson County Schools Facebook page.

Prevent Lung Cancer - Test for Radon

January 2022 is National Radon Action Month

January is National Radon Action Month. Each year upwards to 22,000 people die from radon-induced lung cancer. Roughly 54 percent of those diagnosed with early-stage lung cancer are expected to live no more than five years after diagnosis.

Radon is the leading cause of lung cancer for nonsmokers in the United States. Radon is a natural, colorless, odorless and tasteless gas that comes from the natural decay of Uranium. The effects upon the families it touches can be just as devastating as lung cancer caused by smoking tobacco.

Measuring your home's radon level is recommended for any home in any location throughout the year. But, January is when the Environmental Protection Agency and other organizations join efforts to increase awareness across the National about this easily preventable source of lung cancer.

The NC Radon Program will be making 6,000 free short-term radon test kits available beginning in January 2022. The short-term radon test kits will only be available by ordering through the North Carolina Radon Program website at www.ncradon.org. There is no charge for these kits; both postage and analysis costs are paid.

The North Carolina Radon Program of the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services educates families and homeowners about radon gas, how to test for radon gas and how to lower the radon levels within a home. Lowering the radon levels in a home lower the risk of lung cancer.

As a reminder, radon test kits can be purchased at most local hardware stores for under \$20. The cost of lowering radon levels in a home averages to about \$1,500.

Lung cancer can strike anyone, even a nonsmoker. Test your home for radon and lower your family's risk of lung cancer. For more information visit www.ncradon.org.

By Roshunda Terry, County Extension Director