

THE EXPRESS

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

Primary Election Set for March 3 in Anson County

Early Voting Begins February 12

Anson County voters will head to the polls on Tuesday, March 3 for North Carolina's Primary Election, which will determine party nominees for federal, state, and local offices. Polls will be open on Election Day from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. at each voter's regular precinct.

Early Voting will take place at the Anson County Board of Elections office, 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro, beginning Thursday, February 12, and continuing through Saturday, February 28. Saturday Early Voting dates are February 14, February 21, and February 28, 8:00 a.m. until 3:00 p.m. The only Sunday Early Voting day will be Sunday, February 22, from noon until 6:00 p.m. The weekday Early Voting hours run from 8:00 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. **REPUBLICAN VOTERS** will select nominees in these races:

- **U.S. Senate** Margot Dupre, Richard Dansie, Donald M. (Don) Brown, Michael Whatley, Elizabeth A. Temple, Michele Morrow & Thomas Johnson
- **Court of Appeals Judge, Seat 1** Michael C. Byrne and Matt Smith

- **N.C. House of Representatives District 55** Clancy Baucom, John Powell, and Richard T. Miller.
- **Anson County Board of Commissioners District 2** William (Boogie) Short and Charles Holley

DEMOCRATIC VOTERS will select nominees in these races:

- **U.S. Senate** Roy Cooper, Daryl Farrow, Justin E. Dues, Robert Colon, Marcus W. Williams & Orrick Quick
- **U.S. House of Representatives District 8** Kevin Clark, Colby Watson & Jesse Oppenheim

- **Court of Appeals Judge, Seat 3** James Weldon Whalen and Christine Marie Walczyk
- **District Attorney District 21** Jamie Adams and Herman Little

- **Anson County Board of Education At-Large** Glenn Caulder, Ida Cason, Marilynn Bennett, Lorri Burns Bennett, William (Bug) Polk & Tracy Harrington
- **Anson County Sheriff** Gerald Cannon, Sr., Tim Watkins & Davara Ponds

Voters are encouraged to review sample ballots and official election information in advance. The most up-to-date information is available at www.ncsbe.gov, or by contacting the Anson County Board of Elections at 704-994-3223.

Anson County's December Unemployment Information

Anson County Reports 4.0 Percent Jobless Rate

North Carolina's unemployment picture improved in December 2025, with jobless rates decreasing in 99 of the state's 100 counties. Only one county saw an increase. The not seasonally adjusted statewide unemployment rate was 3.4 percent.

In Anson County, the labor force totaled 8,966 in December, with 363 individuals unemployed, resulting in an unemployment rate of 4.0 percent.

Statewide, 97 counties posted unemployment rates of 5% or below in December, compared to 84 counties in November. Three counties reported rates between 5% and 10%, and no county had a rate above 10%.

Edgecombe County recorded the highest unemployment rate in December at 5.4 percent, while Stanly County had the lowest at 2.6 percent.

All fifteen of North Carolina's metropolitan areas experienced rate decreases during the month. Rocky Mount reported the highest metro rate at 4.8 percent, while Raleigh had the lowest at 3.0 percent.

Compared to December 2024, unemployment rates increased in 65 counties, decreased in 24 and remained unchanged in 11. Thirteen metro areas saw rate increases over the year, while two experienced declines.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in December by 36,570 to 5,108,591. The number of unemployed individuals decreased by 39,163 to 181,301. Compared to December 2024, the number of workers employed statewide increased by 41,381, while the number unemployed rose slightly by 3,101.

Union County Reports Measles Case

Public Health Officials Urge Residents to Review Vaccination Status

Union County Public Health, in coordination with the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services, has notified the community of a confirmed measles case involving a school-aged child who does not attend school in Union County. Officials stated this is the only known measles case in Union County at this time.

The child associated with the case visited an urgent care facility where testing was collected. Because measles spreads easily through the air and can remain airborne for up to two hours after an infected person leaves, individuals who visited AFC Urgent Care, located at 14001 E. Independence Blvd., Suite C, in Indian Trail, on Tuesday, February 3, 2026, between 5:20 p.m. and 8:15 p.m., may have been exposed.

Public health officials report there is no known connection between this case and previously reported measles exposures in the county. Individuals who have received the recommended measles, mumps and rubella (MMR) vaccine doses are considered well protected against measles.

Residents are encouraged to review their vaccination status and to contact their healthcare provider before seeking in-person medical care if symptoms consistent with measles develop, a step that can help reduce the risk of further spread.

For additional information, residents may contact the Anson County Health Department at 704-694-5188. The notice was shared locally by Dana Thomas, RN, Nursing Supervisor with the Anson County Health Department.

Chair Exercise Classes at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting chair exercise classes every Thursday. Class begins at 10:00 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room. Everyone is welcome.

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.



Las Amigas Honors Dr. King Through Youth Essay Initiative

Students Recognized For Inspiring Reflections on Service And Unity

The Morven Chapter of Las Amigas proudly honored the legacy of Martin Luther King Jr. by uplifting student voices through its annual youth essay initiative. The program encouraged young scholars to reflect on Dr. King's message of service, leadership and unity, while sharing their perspectives with the broader community.

Students submitted thoughtful essays capturing the spirit of Dr. King's dream and its continued relevance today. After careful review, Sa'Miya Willoughby was selected as the first-place winner. She was given the honor of presenting her winning essay during the County of Anson's Martin Luther King Jr. celebration, where her words resonated with attendees and demonstrated the strength and promise of youth leadership.

Mia Martinez earned second place, and Kayden Morgan received third place. Both students were recognized for their outstanding submissions and commitment to excellence.

The Morven Chapter of Las Amigas remains dedicated to empowering youth, promoting educational achievement and honoring Dr. King's legacy by creating meaningful opportunities for young voices to be heard. Through initiatives like this, the chapter continues its mission of service, scholarship and community impact.

Local Author Ann Hyatt Poplin to Visit the Library

Poet and Southern fiction writer will share inspiration behind *Broken Waters*

The Hampton B. Allen Library will welcome local author Ann Hyatt Poplin for a special author event on February 16 at 10:30 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room.

Poplin brings an impressive blend of science and storytelling to the table. She holds a Master of Science degree from Duke University and works as a Family Nurse Practitioner, all while crafting poetry and Southern fiction that explores the emotional landscapes of life in the South.

During the program, Poplin will discuss her book *Broken Waters*, sharing the inspiration behind the story and offering insight into her creative process. Attendees will have the opportunity to hear firsthand about her writing journey - from professional healthcare to the poetic and fictional worlds she builds on the page.

Books will be available for purchase, and guests are invited to stay, chat and get their copies signed. Readers, writers and anyone who enjoys a good story are encouraged to attend this engaging morning with one of the area's own literary voices.

BBQ with a Purpose Returns February 27

If you love great barbecue and hate missing out, mark your calendar now. The Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition will fire up its annual BBQ Fundraiser on Friday, February 27, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. - or until everything is gone. (Get there early!)

The fundraiser will be held at Calvary Episcopal Church, located at 304 East Wade Street in Wadesboro. This popular event is take-out and delivery only, making it easy to grab lunch for yourself, your coworkers, or the entire office without missing a beat.

Delivery is available for local businesses and organizations with a minimum of five orders, courtesy of the always-helpful Anson County Sheriff's Office.

Here's the part that gets people lining up early: barbecue sandwiches are just \$5, pints are \$14, quarts are \$22, and hearty plates are \$12. Each plate includes delicious chopped BBQ, slaw, baked beans, a roll, and dessert - basically everything you wish lunch always came with.

Call-in and faxed orders are strongly encouraged, mostly because this event has a habit of selling out while people are still saying, "I'll order later." To make sure you don't miss out, call 704-694-4499 or fax your order to 704-694-4515.

Proceeds benefit the Anson County Domestic Violence & Rape Crisis Center, a nonprofit organization funded entirely through grants and fundraisers. Every order helps support vital services while also spreading awareness about domestic violence and sexual assault.

Come hungry, order early, and don't be the one hearing coworkers talk about how good the BBQ was after it's all gone. Your taste buds and the community will thank you.

'Got to Be NC Festival' Calls

All Vendors, Farmers and Tractor Lovers

Application Deadlines Approaching For May Celebration In Raleigh

Applications are officially open and the clock is ticking for vendors, concessionaires, Got to Be NC members and farm equipment enthusiasts who want to be part of the all-ways-lively Got to Be NC Festival, set for May 15-17 at the NC State Fairgrounds.

Got to Be NC members have until February 27 to apply for space in the popular Got to Be NC Pavilion inside the Agri Supply Exposition Center. The pavilion is reserved exclusively for program members and features North Carolina-made products, beverages and food samples - essentially a one-stop shop for state pride and good taste.

Independent festival vendors, concessionaires and suppliers have a slightly longer runway, with a March 1 deadline. These vendors will be located in the Graham Building and the outdoor food area, where visitors traditionally arrive hungry and leave happy.

Organizers are also rolling out the welcome mat for collectors of antique tractors and farm equipment to join a display featuring more than 1,000 pieces of vintage machinery. Tractors that are still in working condition can even take part in the daily tractor parade through the fairgrounds, proving that old iron still has some horsepower left. Participation is free, but pre-registration is required.

Vendor applications and registration forms for commercial vendors, concessions and the Got to Be NC Pavilion are available online at: ncagr.gov/divisions/nc-state-fair/got-be-nc-festival/vendorsfood.

The festival promises three days of family-friendly fun, from strolling through rows of antique farm equipment to sampling and purchasing locally made products in the Got to Be NC Pavilion. Visitors can browse exhibitor booths in the Graham Building, grab a bite from food vendors scattered across the grounds, enjoy carnival rides and unwind with live music on an outdoor stage.

The Got to Be NC Festival is an annual celebration of North Carolina agriculture, food and heritage, hosted by the North Carolina Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. The event showcases the people, products and traditions that make North Carolina agriculture thrive, offering hands-on experiences, local flavors and entertainment.

Mobile Food Market Rolls in February 19

Fresh Produce, Friendly Faces and Free Health Checks

Mark your calendar and grab your reusable bags because the next Anson Mobile Food Market will roll into town on Thursday, February 19, starting at 4:00 p.m. at Wadesboro Elementary School, located at 321 Camden Road in Wadesboro. Attendees are asked to allow time for set up - good things take just a few minutes.

Food will be distributed as long as supplies last, including fresh vegetables, fruit and bread (when available). In other words, if it grows in the ground or pairs well with peanut butter, there's a good chance it might be there.

Nothing is required for you to receive produce, just come.

But this event is more than just produce. Free blood pressure and blood sugar checks will be available, along information on healthy living. It's like a farmers market and a wellness fair decided to team up for a really good cause.

Help with produce bags will be provided for elderly or disabled attendees, because everyone deserves a little extra support ... especially when carrying a bag full of sweet potatoes.

This free initiative provides Anson County residents with six to eight different types of fresh produce each month. There are no requirements, no paperwork and no hoops to jump through. Just come. Seriously. That's it.

The event is sponsored by Anson County Extension and its partners as part of an effort to address limited access to fresh, healthy food in the county. It also supports the county health assessment's focus on reducing tobacco use and hypertension, with agencies on site offering helpful resources and information.

So come for the produce, stay for the health tips, and leave with a bag full of goodness. It's fresh food, friendly neighbors and community care all in one stop.