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

## Wadesboro Fire District Receives Upgraded Rating

**New rating could result in lower insurance premiums - check with your agent**

Residents and businesses located in the Wadesboro Fire and Rural Fire Districts could see a decrease in their future property insurance premiums because of an improved fire insurance classification. State Insurance Commissioner and Fire Marshal Wayne Goodwin announced that the Wadesboro Fire District and Rural Fire District completed its routine inspection and received an upgraded 5/9E rating, effective June 1, 2016.

"I'd like to congratulate Wadesboro Fire Chief Marc Sessions for his department's performance and for the hard work of all the department members," said Commissioner Goodwin. "The Citizens in the Wadesboro Rural Fire District should rest easy knowing they have a fine group of firefighters protecting them and their property in case of an emergency."

The inspection is required on a regular basis as part of the North Carolina Response Rating System. Among other things, the routine inspections look for proper staffing levels, sufficient equipment, proper maintenance of equipment, communications capabilities and availability of a water source.

"This accomplishment represents the dedication of Wadesboro's firefighters and Town Council to providing a safe community," said Chief Sessions.

Wadesboro Mayor Bill Thacker stated, "This upgraded fire rating is a testament to the hard work and sacrifice of our awesome firefighters and Chief Sessions. The Town Council is so proud of our fire department's efforts to keep our citizens safe, and possibly even save them some money too."

The Wadesboro Fire Department and Town Council will continue working to further decrease our rating to make day to day living easier for our citizens. These ratings have a direct financial correlation on prospective homeowners or businesses considering relocating to Wadesboro.

## Accepting Nominations for 2016 Champion for Children

**Partnership for Children seeks nominations for 2016 Champion for Children Award**

*This is a release from Partnership for Children:* Do you know someone who helped make Anson County a better place to be a child and to raise a child? Nominate them to be the 2016 Champion for Children. All nominees will be recognized and the award will be presented at a reception on Thursday, April 28 at First United Methodist Church, Wadesboro, 6:30 pm.

Presented by Anson County Partnership for Children, this award recognizes individuals who:

- Champion the well-being of children in Anson County.
- Demonstrate commitment to providing a better future for children in Anson County.
- Work with others to raise awareness about children's issues.
- Believe in building strong families.
- Demonstrate leadership on behalf of children in Anson County.

The Anson County Partnership for Children welcomes nominations from all facets of the community including professional and community leaders such as educators, doctors, police officers, ministers, tutors, coaches, or community volunteers.

Previous Anson County Champion for Children award winners are: Vancine Sturdivant - 2013; Margaret Goins - 2014; Gail and Charles Litaker - 2015. Each of these Champions have tirelessly advocated for children in Anson County for many years. Help the Partnership recognize others who have helped make Anson County a better place to be a child and to raise a child.

Nomination forms are available on [www.ansonchildren.org](http://www.ansonchildren.org), on the Partnership's Facebook page or at the Partnership, 117 South Greene Street, Wadesboro, NC. All nomination forms must be submitted to the Anson County Partnership for Children no later than Friday, March 11, 5:00 pm.

## Ansonia Theatre Photo Last Week Generated Many Correct Responses

In last week's Express we presented an old photograph of the Ansonia Theatre. We asked the community what was going on in the picture. Many people contacted us - some already knew about what was happening, and others figured it out.

The photograph was taken during World War II. It shows soldiers who were in the area on maneuvers attending a Mass on Sunday morning. There was no Catholic Church in Wadesboro at that time. During WWII a large proportion of US soldiers were Catholic.

In 1925 Lemuel Lanier Drake created the Ansonia Amusement Company and built the Ansonia Theatre, a vaudeville theatre. The Ansonia Theatre was one of the first theatres to show reels. The Ansonia operated until the early 1980's. It, along with the West 74 Drive-In provided Ansonians with big screen entertainment. The Ansonia featured live shows too, such as Fred Kirby and horror shows. Today after extensive restoration the Ansonia Theatre stands as a beautiful state-of-the-art live performance theatre.

## How to Get Free Photo ID

What documents must I take to the DMV to get a free Photo ID card for voting purposes? The DMV requires that certain documents be presented before it will issue a photo ID. The requirements include:

- 1) Two documents that prove your age and identity. Examples: a birth certificate, court documents, or tax forms.
- 2) A valid social security number. A voter's Social Security card is not required unless the DMV is unable to verify the number provided by the voter.
- 3) One document to prove your North Carolina residency. Examples: a lease, voter registration card, or utility bill. If you do not have one of these documents, you may be able to complete an affidavit of residency at the DMV.

Visit [www.ncdot.gov](http://www.ncdot.gov) to see a list of required documents or contact the State Board of Elections' Voter Outreach Team for assistance at [VoterOutreach.sboe@ncsbe.gov](mailto:VoterOutreach.sboe@ncsbe.gov).



## The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee Opens at Ansonia Theatre

The Ansonia Theatre in Wadesboro is proud to present the Tony Award winning Broadway musical *The 25th Annual Putnam County Spelling Bee*, running March 4 -13. This hilarious tale chronicles six adolescent outsiders vying for the spelling championship of a lifetime. This show celebrates the unlikely of heroes, a quirky yet charming cast of outsiders for whom a spelling bee is the one place where they can fit in and stand out at the same time. This show is a roller coaster of fun!

The cast includes Emily Litaker Privette, Matthew Bailey, Jodi Davis, Gage Tarlton, Tommy Wooten, Connie Thomas, Gina Clarke, Steve Lear and Mike Railton. The show is directed by Tommy Wooten and Gail Litaker.

Tickets are only \$15 and can be purchased at the Anson County Arts Council at 704-694-4950 or at [www.ansoniatheatre.com](http://www.ansoniatheatre.com).

## Anson County's First Black Movie Projector Operator

In the early part of 1956 Robert Brand, the operator of the Ansonia Theatre, hired teenager Joe Liles to work at the theatre as a movie projector operator. Joe was employed there from 1956 to 1958 while he was attending high school.

"I worked with Bill Cash and Dude Hubbard," says Joe. "The Ansonia was segregated at that time. Blacks were allowed only in the balcony with a separate entrance. White people entered the theatre's main lobby and sat in the lower section."

In 1958 a man called 'Little Jimmy' who was a friend of Joe asked a favor of him. "He needed someone to work in his place at the Highway 52 South Drive-In Theater in Wadesboro," said Joe. "This gave me the opportunity to be the first black man to operate the movie projector at a drive-in theater."

Joe Liles graduated from Henry Grove High School in Lilesville in 1958. Based on his experience and talent, he was given the opportunity to work at another theatre after moving to Winston-Salem. Joe still lives in Winston-Salem with his wife Georgianna Ellerbe Liles. They have one son, a daughter and a grandson. Joe was the eldest child of the late Joe Edmond Liles, Sr. and the late Ruth Hubbard Liles. He had six brothers and two sisters.



Joe Liles

## Preparing for the Primary - You Can Vote!

*By Brent Ducharme, Attorney-Fellow with the UNC Center for Civil Rights:* As the March 15 primary approaches, recent changes in state voting law are adding an extra layer of confusion for North Carolinians navigating the path to the polls. It is vital for voters to be prepared for the election on March 15. Voters with questions or concerns can call the national Election Protection hotline at 888-OUR-VOTE (888-687-8683). The hotline is available during early voting and will be staffed by volunteer attorneys and trained UNC Law students on Election Day.

Under North Carolina law, the last day to register for the March 15 primary was February 19. If you failed to register last week, you can still vote during the early voting period, which is scheduled to last from March 3 to March 12. During early voting, you can go to an early voting site, register, and vote in one stop. There is no same-day registration on Election Day (March 15). During the early voting period, registered voters can cast a ballot at any of the designated early voting sites in their county. Check with your local county Board of Elections for information on where early voting sites are located and when they will be open.

If you plan to vote on March 15, you must vote at your assigned precinct. You can check your registration and find your polling place at the NC State Board of Elections website: [https://enr.ncsbe.gov/voter\\_search\\_public/](https://enr.ncsbe.gov/voter_search_public/). On Election Day (March 15), the polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. - 7:30 p.m.

All voters will be asked to present a photo ID. Acceptable photo IDs include a North Carolina driver's license or other DMV-issued photo ID, a U.S. passport, a U.S. military ID card, or a tribal enrollment card. The address listed on the photo ID does not need to match the address on a voter's registration. However, school-issued student IDs will not be accepted. Voters who arrive to the polls without an acceptable ID can still cast a provisional ballot. Provisional ballots, and accompanying declaration forms that explain why a voter does not have a photo ID, will be available at all voting sites. Voters casting provisional ballots must also either: (1) provide their birthdate and the last four digits of their Social Security Number on the declaration form; or (2) present a voter registration card, bank statement, utility bill, or government document with their name and address on it.

If you encounter or observe any problems while trying to vote, call the national Election Protection hotline at 888-OUR-VOTE (888-687-8683).

Remember these important points and exercise your constitutional right to vote: 1) if you didn't register before February 19 and you want to vote, you must vote during the early voting period, from March 3 to March 12; 2) vote early if possible at any early voting location in your county, but on Election Day go your assigned polling place; and 3) bring your photo ID, but even if you don't have one, you can still vote!

## Important Board of Election Dates

- **Saturday, February 27** Early Voting observer list due from political parties by 10 a.m.
- **Tuesday, March 1** Absentee meeting 5 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 3** Early Voting begins
- **Tuesday, March 8** Absentee meeting 5 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 8** Last day to request absentee by mail 5 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 10** Election day observer list due by 10 a.m.
- **Saturday, March 12** Early Voting ends 1 p.m.
- **Monday, March 14** Absentee meeting (pre-election day) 5 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 15** Primary Election day. Polls open 6:30 a.m. & close 7:30 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 15** Deadline for civilian absentee ballot return 5 p.m.
- **Friday, March 18** Sample hand to eye / provisional county 12 p.m.
- **Tuesday, March 22** County canvass of Primary Election 11 a.m.
- **Thursday, March 24** Deadline to request 2nd Primary by 12 p.m.
- **Thursday, March 24** Deadline to file election protest by 5 p.m.
- **Friday, March 25** Good Friday, county offices closed

## Graphics for Your Social Media Workshop

The Anson County Writers' Club will host a workshop on "Quick and Easy Graphics for Your Social Media" at 3 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce in Wadesboro. This workshop is free and open to the public. Bring your laptop.

The Express is on the web at [www.TheExpressNewspaper.com](http://www.TheExpressNewspaper.com)