

THE EXPRESS

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

Domestic Violence Coalition BBQ Event is this Friday!

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. (Best to 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.

Free 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 & 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. 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.

Anson County Health Dept. Reminds Residents: "We're Here for You"

Wide Range of Clinical Services
Available for Individuals and Families

Anson County residents are being reminded that their local Health Department stands ready to serve individuals and families with a broad range of clinical care services designed to promote better health and well-being.

As highlighted in a recent community notice, the Anson County Health Department provides essential services aimed at helping every county resident achieve improved health outcomes.

Available services include acute care and sick visits, annual physicals, PAP smears and counseling for individuals age 21 and older, reproductive health services, college physicals and sports physicals for those age 12 and up. Immunizations for both children and adults are offered, along with laboratory testing and communicable disease screening and treatment. The department also administers the WIC (Women, Infants and Children) program, providing vital nutritional support for eligible families.

The Health Department accepts a wide range of insurance plans, including Blue Cross Blue Shield, CIGNA, United Health Care, Medcost, Aetna, NC Medicaid Pre-paid Health Plans and Tailored Health Plans, Traditional Medicaid, Multiplan, Ambetter, Medicare Traditional, Wellcare Medicare and Amerihealth Next.

Residents are encouraged to call 704-694-5188 to schedule an appointment and take advantage of the services available close to home. The address is 110 East Ashe Street in Wadesboro.

Beekeepers Meet Thursday. No Meal, But Plenty of Buzz.

If you've ever wondered what all the buzz is about, here's your chance to find out. The Anson County Beekeepers Association will hold a "no meal" meeting on Thursday, February 26, at 7 p.m. at the Anson Extension Office, 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro.

Now, before anyone shows up expecting fried chicken - organizers are clear: this is a no-meal meeting. But what it lacks in supper, it makes up for in sweet conversation, practical knowledge and a hive full of helpful information.

Chelsea Autry, ACBA Vice President, will lead a timely discussion on the invasive yellow-legged hornet recently identified in the Southeast. This aggressive species poses a threat to honeybee colonies, and local beekeepers are encouraged to learn how to identify and respond to it. Protecting pollinators isn't just a hobby - it's an important part of safeguarding agriculture, backyard gardens and the broader food supply.

Beekeeping continues to grow in popularity across Anson County, and for good reason. Honeybees play a vital role in pollinating crops, supporting biodiversity and helping local farms thrive. Plus, there's nothing quite like harvesting your own jar of golden honey. It's one hobby that truly pays dividends - sometimes in pounds.

The meeting will also feature a 50-50 drawing, and members are encouraged to bring door prizes for additional drawings. After all, nothing says "community" quite like a chance to win something useful - or at least something bee-related.

Whether you're a seasoned beekeeper, thinking about starting a hive, or simply curious about the importance of pollinators, this meeting promises information, fellowship and plenty of buzz-worthy discussion.

Save a Rim, Report a Pothole

If your morning commute feels more like an obstacle course, there's good news: reporting a pothole in North Carolina is easier than dodging one. Type ncdot.gov into your web browser, and the NC Department of Transportation makes it simple to pinpoint the exact location of that tire-rattling crater. No carrier pigeon required.

The online form allows drivers to mark where the pothole is causing trouble so road crews can respond more quickly. The more precise the report, the better - your shocks and struts will thank you.

Reporting potholes doesn't just help your own vehicle. It helps your neighbors, school buses, delivery drivers and anyone else trying to keep all four wheels intact. So the next time you meet a pothole that feels personal, take a moment to report it. It's faster than buying new tires, and much cheaper.



Writing Contest winners are, from left, front row: Daniel Felix and Jiya Shah. Back row: Mary H. Jordan, Samantha Kastler, George Kastler and Mario Kersey.

Mario Kersey Sweeps Top Adult Honors in ACWC 2025 Writing Contests

Mario Kersey, an Anson County native now residing in Raleigh, claimed first place in both the Adult Prose and Adult Poetry categories in the 2025 contests sponsored by the Anson County Writers' Club. Kersey received double certificates during the annual Awards Ceremony held February 22 in the fellowship hall of First Presbyterian Church.

No stranger to the winner's circle, Kersey has a long history of success in the club's competitions. He previously earned first place in poetry in 2003, first in prose in 2004, and first in poetry again in 2007, 2009, 2015, and 2022. He also placed third in Adult Poetry in 2019 and 2021, making this year's dual victory another highlight in an already distinguished record.

Kaye Ratliff, President of the Anson County Writers' Club, welcomed attendees and congratulated all contest winners during the ceremony. She shared the organization's purpose with gathered friends and family members, noting, "The ACWC strives to encourage the talents to be found in Anson County through support, awareness, and recognition of all writers."

In the Youth Prose division for grades seven through eight, Jiya Shah captured first place for "Into the Unknown Waters," while Daniel Felix earned second place for "Fi-Ops." Shah continues to build an impressive résumé of her own, having placed first in 2023, third in 2024, and first again in 2025.

In Adult Prose, Kersey won first place for "A Funeral." Mary H. Jordan received second place for "Life is no Rose Garden, But!" and George Kastler placed third for "Law Enforcement."

In Adult Poetry, Kersey earned first place for "Metosis," while Samantha Kastler received second place for "Coming Out of My Shell."

Following the awards presentation, winners and guests joined club members for light refreshments and fellowship.

Caution Urged as Spring Wildfire Season Approaches

Drought Conditions Increase Risk Across North Carolina

As North Carolina enters the heart of spring wildfire season amid moderate to severe drought conditions, the N.C. Forest Service is calling on residents to use common sense and follow best practices when burning outdoors, particularly when disposing of yard debris.

Despite recent rainfall and multiple winter storms earlier this year, much of the state remains extremely dry. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler warned that gradual drought conditions will make wildfires easier to ignite, more intense and quicker to spread. "Our state's gradual descent into drought and prolonged dry conditions are going to lead to wildfires igniting more easily, burning more intensely and spreading quicker," Troxler said. "The best defense against wildfires will always be to prevent them from starting."

Escaped yard debris burns continue to be the leading cause of wildfires statewide, accounting for nearly half of all reported fires. Overall, human activity is responsible for 99 percent of wildfires in North Carolina. As warmer spring weather draws people outdoors for yard work, many turn to burning leaves and limbs, increasing the risk.

"A fire can escape in a matter of seconds, especially on warm days when winds are gusty," Troxler added. "This means you never leave a fire unattended until it is completely out and cold."

Other common causes of human-started wildfires include machine and vehicle use, dragging tow chains, arson and unattended campfires. In western North Carolina, counties impacted by Hurricane Helene remain particularly vulnerable due to dead and damaged timber creating excessive fuel loads.

Before starting any outdoor fire, residents are encouraged to contact their local N.C. Forest Service county ranger's office. The Forest Service also recommends the following safety measures:

- Check local burning laws, as some communities restrict or prohibit open burning.
- Obtain a valid burn permit at any N.C. Forest Service office, authorized permitting agent, or online at www.ncforestservice.gov/burnpermit.
- Avoid burning on dry or windy days.
- Place debris in a cleared area and contain it in a screened receptacle away from overhead branches and wires.
- Have proper tools ready, including a hose, bucket, steel rake and shovel, and keep a phone nearby.
- Never use gasoline, diesel fuel, kerosene or other flammable liquids to accelerate burning.
- Stay with the fire until it is completely extinguished and cold to the touch.

These precautions also apply to campfires and grills. Burning charcoal or campfire embers should be thoroughly doused with water, stirred and soaked again until completely cool. If water is unavailable, mix dirt or sand with the embers to extinguish them, taking care not to bury live coals. Hot ashes should never be dumped into wooded areas.

Officials also remind the public not to fly drones near wildfires. Firefighting aircraft operate at low altitudes, and drones pose a serious safety threat to pilots and ground crews. Disruptions to air operations can put firefighters, residents and property at greater risk.

In addition to fire safety, residents are encouraged to prepare for wildfire smoke. Smoke can present health risks, especially for children, older adults, active individuals and those with heart or lung conditions such as asthma. Monitoring air quality through resources such as www.ncair.org, airquality.climate.ncsu.edu and www.airnow.gov can help individuals stay informed.

For more info on preventing and preparing for wildfires, visit preventwildfirenc.org.

Tax Time Made Easier: Free Help Returns to Grace Senior Center

Tax season is back - but so is free, friendly help at Grace Senior Center. Anson County residents age 60 and older, individuals with disabilities, and those with low- or moderate-income can once again receive free income tax preparation assistance through a partnership between AARP and Grace Senior Center.

Trained volunteer counselors, working in cooperation with the Internal Revenue Service, will be available on Wednesday, March 4, and Wednesday, April 1, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:00 p.m. Assistance will be provided for federal Forms 1040EZ, 1040A and 1040, as well as North Carolina state returns.

Participants should bring a picture ID, this year's tax package, W-2 forms, 1099 forms, a copy of last year's tax return and any other relevant income or expense documents. Organizers recommend gathering all necessary paperwork in advance to ensure a smooth appointment.

Individuals with appointments must pick up a tax package at Grace Senior Center before their scheduled visit and bring the completed paperwork with them.

Electronic filing will be available for added convenience.

Appointments are required. To schedule a time or obtain additional information, call Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616.

Commissioners Meet March 3

The first March meeting of the Anson County Board of Commissioners takes place on Tuesday, March 3 at 6 p.m. The second March meeting takes place on Tuesday, March 17 at 6 p.m.

Meetings take place in the Board Room, Suite 209, of the Anson County Government Center, located at 101 South Greene Street in uptown Wadesboro.

To schedule an appearance at a board meeting, please sign up prior to the meeting. Information is available at 704-994-3201.

The Commissioners' board meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel. Also, the videos are archived so they can be viewed at any time. Visit youtube.com and search for Anson Commissioners.

Spring Clean Community Yard Sale is March 28

Ready to declutter, discover treasures and support a great cause all at once? The Friends of the Hampton B. Allen Library are inviting the community to take part in a lively Spring Clean Community Yard Sale on Saturday, March 28, from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m.

The event will be held at the Library, 120 S. Greene Street in Wadesboro, and promises a day full of bargains, browsing, and neighborly fellowship. Shoppers can expect everything from household goods and décor to handmade items and unique finds - all while supporting local efforts.

Yard sale vendors, small businesses and community support stations are all welcome to participate. It's a perfect opportunity to clear out closets, showcase products or connect with the community in a fun, high-traffic setting.

Spaces are available now, but they won't last long. Call 704-694-5177 or email circleft@gmail.com now to reserve your spot.

Sell, shop or simply stop by to say hello! This event is a wonderful way to celebrate community spirit.