

Chamber's Captain's Choice Golf Tournament

On Friday, April 20th the Anson County Chamber of Commerce will host their twelfth "Captain's Choice" Golf Tournament at Twin Valley Country Club. There will be 44 teams playing, 22 in the morning and 22 in the afternoon. Prizes will be awarded for both groups of golfers, there will be goody bags, and a delicious lunch will be served.

All golfers are invited to come out and join in the fun. You may win one of the many prizes, such as split the pot, closest to the pin, longest putt, longest drive, hole-in-one...and lots of door prizes.

Registration forms will be mailed out soon, and they are available at the Chamber office if you are not on the mailing list. Register early to confirm your tee time. Afternoon golfers will eat at 11:30 a.m. and morning golfers will eat at 1 p.m.

Sponsorship packages are still available. The levels are: Corporate \$1,000; Platinum \$500; Gold \$320; Silver \$150. For detailed information on playing or sponsorships, please call the Chamber at 704-694-4181.

If you would love to have a great day of golfing, chances to win some prizes, and enjoy a great lunch with nice people, then this premier golf event is for you!

4,000+ Extension Master Gardeners Help Make NC a Greener Place

With spring on its way, Extension Master Gardeners across the state are working in full gear, helping fellow gardeners – beginners and experts, young and old – enhance their landscapes, grow their own fruits and vegetables and learn about the science behind gardening. Master Gardeners are specially trained by Cooperative Extension and, in return for the training, they volunteer to help the organization's horticulture and agriculture agents meet a tremendous demand for sound gardening advice and information.

In North Carolina, more than 4,000 Extension Master Gardener volunteers are at work in 80 of the state's 100 counties. The services they provide vary from county to county, depending on local needs and on the volunteers' interests and skills. In 2007 – the last time Extension surveyed Master Gardeners across the state about their activities – they made more than 1.3 million educational contacts by answering phone calls, examining plant samples, helping with educational displays, delivering workshops and lectures to community groups and schools and developing demonstration and school gardens.

- Among the Master Gardeners' recent accomplishments:
- In Durham County, Master Gardener volunteers began working with Cooperative Extension educators to train elementary school teachers to deliver hands-on science lessons that connect the students to the world of soils and plants.
 - In Clay County, Master Gardeners helped turn a vacant county lot into an inviting park with benches, plantings, pergolas and a mural designed and painted by local high school students.
 - In Buncombe County, Master Gardeners logged enough volunteer hours to equal that of 4.5 full-time educators.
 - In Alexander County, they built raised beds to help lower-income residents in Taylorsville grow their own food.
 - And in Pitt County, Master Gardeners donated to a local food bank hundreds of pounds of produce they grew in a demonstration garden they use to educate the public on how to grow food in small places.

While Master Gardeners perform wide-ranging tasks, the volunteers tend to have at least three things in common: They are enthusiastic and knowledgeable gardeners are committed to giving back to their communities and are advocates of safe, environmentally friendly gardening practices.

Dr. Lucy Bradley, an assistant professor and Extension specialist with N.C. State University's Department of Horticultural Science, coordinates the statewide Master Gardener program. She says that these volunteers' are a powerful asset for Cooperative Extension, multiplying its ability to reach people and to get information out quickly. But even more significantly, she says, Master Gardeners are assets for their communities.

"They are incredibly generous with their time, with their knowledge and with their experience, and they are teaching people to take care of their land in environmentally responsible ways," Bradley says. "So in addition to all the people they reach directly by teaching them how to take care of their plants, they are also helping all of us through improving water quality by teaching people how to minimize their use of pesticides and fertilizers, to lessen stormwater runoff and to reduce green waste by composting on site converting it into an asset rather than something the city has to haul away. So in myriad ways," she adds, "they are making the world a better place."

Some examples of the ways Master Gardeners have helped communities are available at www.cals.ncsu.edu. To learn more about the Master Gardener program, visit www.ces.ncsu.edu/depts/hort/consumer/masgar or call the North Carolina Cooperative Extension center at 704-694-2915.

Anson County does not have an Extension Master Gardener Program. You can contact our local Extension Office at 704-694-2915 for information.

Homeowners Warned to Watch Out for Storm Chasers, Shoddy Contractors

The recent storms damaged homes throughout the Southern Piedmont area. According to the Better Business Bureau, the home improvement industry is consistently in the top five types of businesses that receive the most consumer complaints each year. Locally, 96 home improvement contractors have an F rating from the BBB.

If you are planning to hire a home improvement contractor, the BBB has advice for you. Consumers should be wary of contractors who promise a variety of services at cut-rate prices. They may show up at your door, advertise in local newspapers, or put fliers in your mailbox.

"All it takes is a business card, a cell phone, some photocopied flyers and a hammer for someone to run their own contracting business," said BBB President Tom Bartholomy. "The contractor who shows up may actually be a 'storm chaser' who is based out-of-state and is using his pickup truck as an office. Homeowners should hire a local contractor with a good track record," said Bartholomy. "There are thousands of reputable contractors who will deliver quality work, on time and within budget."

10 Tips for Hiring a Home Improvement Contractor:

1. Track record - Check out a company's BBB rating and complaint history at www.bbb.org. It's fast, easy and free. You can also call the BBB at 877-317-7236, toll-free in NC and SC. Customer service staff are available, Monday through Friday, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. (excluding 12-1 p.m. for lunch).
 2. Cost comparisons - Get at least three bids in writing and be sure you compare the bids based on the same warranty, specifications, labor and time.
 3. Licensing - Check to see if the company you plan to hire has the proper licensing. In NC contractors must be licensed if the total job exceeds \$30,000. In SC contractors must be licensed if the total job cost exceeds \$5,000.
 - NC General Contractors Licensing Board (www.nclbnc.org), click on Licensee Search
 - SC Contractors Licensing Board (www.llr.state.sc.us/pol/contractors), click on Licensee Lookup
 4. Insurance - Verify the company's liability insurance to protect you against damage. You can also check with the department of insurance in your state.
 - NC Dept. of Insurance - 1-800-546-5664
 - SC Dept. of Insurance - 803-737-6180
 5. References - Ask for references from the company's last three jobs and check them out before you sign a contract. Do not hire someone who is driving through your neighborhood, or who puts a flyer in your mailbox and claims to be doing work with your neighbors. The contractor could be from out of state, using his truck as his office.
 6. Written contract - Do not permit work to start without a signed, written contract that includes start and completion dates, exact costs, specific work to be done, and warranty information. Be sure to read the fine print carefully.
 7. Deposit required and payment - Do not pay more than 25 to 33 percent of the total job cost as a deposit. Final payment should not be due until the job is completed. Do not pay in cash; pay by check or credit card.
 8. Warranty - Get warranty information in writing on products and installation. Be sure to read the fine print carefully.
 9. Bonding - Be sure all workers are bonded to protect you against theft and damage.
 10. Criminal history - Check out anyone you allow into your home to see if they have a criminal history.
 - NC online offender search - webapps6.doc.state.nc.us
 - SC Dept. of Corrections - www.doc.sc.gov
- For more information, please visit www.bbb.org.

Parks and Rec Registrations

Registration runs through March 28 for Parks and Recreation Micro Soccer (3 & 4 years old), Youth Soccer (K to 12th grade), Tee Ball (4 to 6 years old), and Coach Pitch (7 to 10 years old). The cost is \$25 for each program.

You may come to Little Park to register Monday through Friday, from 8:30 a.m. until 5 p.m. or come to area schools on these dates:

- Monday, March 26, 3 to 5 p.m. at Wadesboro Elementary School Gym and Wadesboro Primary School
- Tuesday, March 27, 3 to 5 p.m. at Peachland and Ansonville Elementary Schools
- Wednesday, March 28, 3 to 5 p.m. at Lilesville Elementary School Baseball Field and Morven Elementary School

The deadline to register is Wednesday, March 28. For information contact Wanda Chappell at 704-694-5868 or Wendell Small at 704 694-5751.

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