

THE EXPRESS

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Wadesboro Police Join Statewide “Booze It & Lose It” Campaign

St. Patrick’s Day was Tuesday, and the Wadesboro Police Department is reminding drivers that while luck may be part of the holiday, safe driving is not left to chance.

Local officers will increase traffic enforcement during the St. Patrick’s Day travel period through Sunday, March 22, joining law enforcement agencies across North Carolina in the statewide “Booze It & Lose It” campaign aimed at reducing impaired driving. Officers will conduct additional patrols and focus on traffic violations to help ensure residents and visitors travel safely through town. The N.C. Governor’s Highway Safety Program is also supporting the effort with public outreach to reinforce safe driving habits.

The message from law enforcement is clear - prevent crashes, protect lives and keep the community safe - no four-leaf clover required.

“With St. Patrick’s Day celebrations often involving alcohol, drivers should plan ahead for a sober ride home,” officials said. “If you plan to drink, plan accordingly or face serious consequences.”

Statewide statistics highlight the importance of the campaign. During last year’s St. Patrick’s Day enforcement period, officers issued 738 DWI citations. In 2025, North Carolina recorded 343 alcohol-related fatalities and 91 drug-related fatalities. Early data for 2026 already shows alcohol-involved crash deaths, reinforcing the need for continued vigilance.

Drivers are encouraged to obey traffic laws, avoid impaired driving and stay alert. Officials remind motorists that mixing alcohol and driving is a quick way to turn holiday fun into lasting consequences.

So whether you’re heading out for corned beef, green decorations or just a normal trip across town, remember to celebrate responsibly - because the only thing that should be spinning this week is a fiddle tune, not your vehicle.

Fire Department to Conduct Live Fire Training on Maple Lane on Saturday

If you see smoke rising or fire trucks lining the street in the Maple Lane area this Saturday, don’t panic - it’s all part of a planned training exercise. The Wadesboro Fire Department will conduct a live-fire training exercise on Saturday, March 21, as firefighters sharpen their skills in a controlled environment. Residents may notice smoke, emergency vehicles and personnel working in the area throughout the exercise.

Officials stress that this is a scheduled training event and there is no cause for alarm - even if it looks like a scene straight out of a movie.

Live-fire training allows firefighters to practice real-world scenarios, helping ensure they are fully prepared to respond when actual emergencies arise. It’s serious business, even if the flames are intentional this time.

So if you happen to see flashing lights or smell a little smoke, rest assured it’s just your local firefighters getting even better at what they do - and not a reason to grab the garden hose or call every neighbor on the block.

Kindergarten Transition Meeting

Families of rising kindergarten students are invited to attend an upcoming Kindergarten Transition Meeting designed to help prepare children and parents for the 2026–2027 school year in Anson County Schools.

The event will take place on Thursday, April 16, at 6:00 p.m. in the gymnasium at Wadesboro Elementary School. The meeting is open to all families with children who will be entering kindergarten in the upcoming school year.

Organizers say the evening will provide a valuable opportunity for parents and students to become familiar with the school environment and expectations before the first day of class. Attendees will have the chance to meet kindergarten teachers, ask questions, and learn more about what students can expect as they begin their educational journey.

In addition to helpful information, the event will include free gift bags for rising kindergarteners and a complimentary hot dog meal for all who attend. Spanish-language assistance will also be available to ensure all families can fully participate.

The Kindergarten Transition Meeting is part of a broader effort to support families and ensure students start school with confidence, preparation, and excitement.

For more information, families may contact the Anson County Partnership for Children at 704-694-4036.



Anson High CTE Students Explore Healthcare Careers At Atrium Fair

In Anson Schools, learning doesn’t stop at the classroom door - and sometimes, it even comes with a bowl of candy. Students in the Anson High School Career and Technical Education (CTE) Health Science program recently explored healthcare careers at the Atrium Health Union Career Fair, gaining hands-on experience and a closer look at how their classroom learning connects to real-world opportunities.

During the event, students interacted with healthcare professionals, asked questions and examined medical tools and equipment, getting a firsthand glimpse into the fast-paced world of healthcare. The experience helped bring classroom concepts to life and gave students a better understanding of potential career paths.

And while the focus was on learning, the bowls of candy on the tables may have also played a small role in keeping everyone engaged - proving that sometimes education can be both informative and a little sweet.

Opportunities like this highlight the strong partnerships between Anson County Schools and regional organizations, helping students gain valuable exposure to careers while still in school.

With programs like CTE continuing to grow, Anson High students are discovering that their futures are full of possibilities - and that real-world experience is just as important as what’s learned in the classroom.

Missing Juvenile Aliyeh Smith Located Safe After Community-Wide Search

After days of concern and an intensive search effort, 19-year-old Aliyeh Smith has been safely located, bringing relief to her family, law enforcement and the many community members who followed the case closely.

Last week, authorities launched a large-scale search after Smith was reported missing from her caretaker’s residence at 506 South Leak Street in Morven. She was last seen on March 10 at approximately 9:45 a.m. Deputies, along with the Sheriff’s Office Bloodhound Tracking Team, searched the area for several hours but were unable to locate her.

The case quickly drew a significant response, with approximately 60 to 70 officers from multiple agencies assisting local authorities. The community rallied in support and shared information in hopes of a safe outcome. That outcome came late Friday night, March 13, when Smith contacted deputies with the Anson County Sheriff’s Office around 11:30 p.m. to report that she was safe and unharmed.

During the initial conversation, Smith advised deputies she was with a friend in Mississippi. However, detectives later determined she was actually in Burlington, North Carolina. After further communication, Smith confirmed her location and provided an address where she was staying. The Burlington Police Department responded to the address and successfully located Smith, confirming she was safe and without harm.

Sheriff Howell expressed gratitude for the community’s overwhelming support throughout the search, noting the many prayers, tips and shared information that helped bring the case to a safe resolution. He also asked that the public continue to keep Smith and her family in their thoughts.

The Sheriff’s Office reminded residents that law enforcement agencies often manage multiple investigations simultaneously, and that ongoing operations do not take away from active cases. Officials also noted that certain details cannot always be released during an investigation in order to protect its integrity.

As this case comes to a close, authorities emphasized that their commitment remains the same - to pursue every case diligently until it reaches a safe resolution.

Operation “No Sanctuary” Nets Multiple Arrests

A coordinated early morning operation led by the Anson County Sheriff’s Office resulted in multiple arrests and the execution of several searches across the county on Friday, March 13. Sheriff Scott Howell announced that the initiative, known as “Operation No Sanctuary,” targeted individuals suspected of various criminal activities. Deputies conducted searches at multiple residences and took several suspects into custody on a range of charges.

All individuals arrested during the operation have been processed and transported to detention facilities outside of Anson County.

Sheriff Howell expressed appreciation for the strong interagency cooperation that made the operation possible. Assisting agencies included the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation and the Union County Sheriff’s Office. Additional support was provided by the Alexander County Sheriff’s Office and Detention Center, as well as the Richmond County Sheriff’s Office and its detention staff, who assisted with transportation.

Officials confirmed that no injuries occurred during the operation and that there was no threat to public safety at any time.

Sheriff Howell emphasized that efforts to combat crime in Anson County will continue. “This is just the beginning,” Howell stated, noting that violence and illegal drug activity will be addressed swiftly and firmly.

Additional details regarding the investigation and charges are expected to be released as they become available.

Investigation Underway Following Death at Cornerstone Facility in Wadesboro

Authorities are investigating a death following an incident reported Sunday, March 15, at the Cornerstone Treatment Facility on Wallace Road. According to a press release from the Wadesboro Police Department, officers responded to the facility, located at 129 Wallace Road, in reference to a death investigation. Upon arrival, officers located a deceased female juvenile inside the facility.

The Wadesboro Police Department’s Criminal Investigations Division is actively investigating the case with assistance from the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, the Anson County Department of Child Protective Services and the North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services.

Due to the ongoing nature of the investigation and the age of the individual involved, officials stated that additional details are not being released at this time.

Chief Michael Childers and members of the Wadesboro Police Department expressed their condolences to the family during this difficult time.

Grant Expands Women’s Health Services In Anson County

Good news for local residents. The Anson County Health Department has received a grant aimed at improving access to critical women’s health services for uninsured individuals across the community.

Through funding provided by the James R. Braswell and Bronnie L. Braswell Trust, the department will assist 17 uninsured residents in receiving colposcopy exams and 50 uninsured residents in obtaining Pap smear and HPV screenings. The initiative is designed to help detect potential health concerns early - when they are most treatable.

Women who need a colposcopy will be scheduled with a provider, though patients will remain financially responsible for services associated with the procedure. Those seeking Pap smear and HPV screening will be scheduled for a physical through the Health Department’s Well Women or Family Planning programs, with screening costs covered by the grant while other services associated with the physical remain the patient’s responsibility.

Residents needing a colposcopy must have a referral from their physician, including a current history and physical, as well as pap history. If a previous Pap smear showed abnormal results, those records must be provided by the physician or brought by the patient at the time of the visit.

Health officials emphasize the importance of regular screenings, noting that early detection can significantly improve outcomes. Cervical cancer, while serious, is often highly treatable when identified early through routine exams.

Anyone in need of these services is encouraged to contact the Anson County Health Department at 704-694-5188 and ask to speak with Public Health Nurse Lori Ross.

For those who may have been putting off an exam, this program offers a timely reminder - and a helpful opportunity - to take an important step toward better health.

Supporting Children Early Simulation Aims to Build Understanding and Strengthen Community Support

Community members are invited to take part in a hands-on experience designed to build empathy and awareness for families navigating early childhood challenges. The Supporting Children Early Simulation, presented by Trillium Health Resources in partnership with Anson County Partnership for Children, will take place Tuesday, April 14 at South Piedmont Community College’s Lockhart-Taylor Center.

Participants will step into the shoes of families with young children, including those with disabilities, as they move through a series of mock service stations representing real-world resources and obstacles. The interactive format offers a firsthand look at the challenges many families face when seeking support.

Organizers say the goal is simple but powerful: to help the community better understand the barriers families encounter and to highlight the importance of early detection, access to services and ongoing support. By walking through these scenarios, participants can gain insight into how systems work - and sometimes don’t - for those who rely on them.

The event will begin with check-in at 8:30 a.m., followed by the simulation from 9:00 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. at the college’s campus located at 514 North Washington Street in Wadesboro. Light refreshments will be provided.

To ensure accessibility, ASL interpretation will be available for those who register by March 23.

This free event is open to individuals, organizations and anyone interested in making a difference for children and families in the community.

For more information or to register, visit: registration.socio.events/e/ansonsces2026.