

# THE EXPRESS

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



## Prescribed Burn Planned for Morrow Mountain State Park in Stanly County, Wednesday, March 19

A 530-acre prescribed burn is planned for Morrow Mountain State Park in Stanly County on Wednesday, March 19. Personnel with the N.C. Forest Service (NCFS), N.C. State Parks, and Conservation Corps NC will carry out the prescribed fire operation with an NCFS helicopter also assigned to the burn.

The burn objective is to reduce hazardous fuels, as previous wildfires in the park have been difficult to contain due to steep and rugged terrain.

Smoke is expected to drift toward Raleigh, impacting areas between Pittsboro and Sanford. Smoke may be visible on the day of the burn with the smell of smoke possibly present for days following the burn.

## Prescribed Burning on State Forest Lands: A Two-Part Series.

Did you know that the N.C. Forest Service uses prescribed burning on the forested lands they manage across the state? This first video installment of their two-part series, called "Prescribed Burning on State Forest Lands," features a recently burned tract of pine timber at Clemmons Educational State Forest in Clayton. Forest Supervisor Kevin Pittman walks us through the process of planning and carrying out a type of prescribed burn called a hazard reduction burn and the benefits of using prescribed fire as a tool for managing a forest.

**Now the second video is available.** It features assistant forest supervisor Mike Santucci of DuPont State Recreational Forest, located in Cedar Mountain. Santucci, a N.C. Forest Service qualified burn boss, discusses the ecological benefits of utilizing prescribed fire on forested lands in the state's southern Appalachian area and how low intensity, planned burns promote increased biodiversity in a unique landscape. Prescribed fire is a carefully planned, controlled burn conducted using a written prescription under ideal weather and fuel conditions. At DuPont State Recreational Forest, those ideal conditions are most prevalent in the early spring and fall. Santucci was a co-recipient of the State Forester's Prescribed Burning Award in 2024.

Find the videos on YouTube by searching "Prescribed Burning Clemmons" and "Prescribed Burning DuPont"

## North Carolina's January Employment Figures Released

North Carolina's seasonally adjusted January 2025 unemployment rate was 3.7 percent, unchanged from December's revised rate. The national rate decreased 0.1 of a percentage point to 4.0 percent.

North Carolina's unemployment rate increased 0.2 of a percentage point from a year ago. The number of people employed increased 5,845 over the month to 5,095,312 and increased 672 over the year. The number of people unemployed increased 1,247 over the month to 197,455 and increased 10,836 over the year.

Seasonally adjusted Total Nonfarm employment, as gathered through the monthly establishment survey, increased 7,700 to 5,052,000 in January. Major industries experiencing increases were Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 3,200; Education & Health Services, 2,600; Professional & Business Services, 1,800; Other Services, 1,400; Financial Activities, 1,100; Construction, 1,000; Government, 400; and Information, 100. Major industries experiencing decreases were Leisure & Hospitality Services, 3,800; and Mining & Logging, 100.

Manufacturing employment remained unchanged.

### Unemployment Rates since January 2024

	Jan 2024	Feb 2024	Mar 2024	Apr 2024	May 2024	June 2024	July 2024	Aug 2024	Sep 2024	Oct 2024	Nov 2024	Dec 2024	Jan 2025
N.C.	3.5	3.5	3.5	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.6	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7	3.7
U.S.	3.7	3.9	3.9	3.9	4.0	4.1	4.2	4.2	4.1	4.1	4.2	4.1	4.0

Since January 2024, Total Nonfarm jobs increased 60,500 with the Total Private sector increasing by 41,200 and Government increasing by 19,300. Major industries experiencing increases were Education & Health Services, 23,700; Government, 19,300; Professional & Business Services, 9,700; Construction, 6,600; Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 3,900; Financial Activities, 2,900; and Other Services, 2,700.

Major industries experiencing decreases over the year were Manufacturing, 7,000; Information, 1,000; Leisure & Hospitality Services, 200; and Mining & Logging, 100.

## Update on New Middle School Construction

Here's a bird's eye view of the new Anson Middle School jobsite. This new 135,000 square foot state-of-the-art facility will provide a modern learning environment for Anson County students. The new middle school will also feature a media center with 3-D printing capabilities and a robotics lab.

The new school is located on Anson High School Road in Wadesboro, near the National Guard Armory.

## Anson and Union County Railroad Crossing Closures

Southern Commercial Development, LLC. works with CSX Transportation, providing traffic control and detour signage for railroad crossing closures which require necessary maintenance and/or emergency repairs. CSX Transportation has announced that they will be having two different tie teams starting in Anson County on Monday, March 31 and one team starting in Union County also on March 31. The project is scheduled to end on Sunday, April 13.

This will require a total closure of the railroad crossings. A total closure meaning no traffic will be allowed across the track until the work is complete.

A google map showing every crossing that will be getting ties is available on The Express website, [www.theexpressnewspaper.com](http://www.theexpressnewspaper.com). By clicking on each location you will see the expected closing date. Once a crossing is closed you can expect the closure to last at least 3 days, up to 5 days. On the crossings that are one-way in/out with residents behind them, CSX will try and get these worked and completed in 12 hours.

The crossing indicated with black circles are for tie team 1 and the purple are tie team 2.

### Here are some specific crossings that CSX has addressed questions about:

#### Anson County

- Stanback Ferry Ice Plant Road: There are two crossings. Both of these will NOT be closed at the same time. CSX will work the first one, once it is completed, then the second crossing will close.

- Williams Street will close on/around April 10; opened on April 12 by 9am.
- Freedom Road will close on/around April 14; opened on April 16 early am.
- Ross Wright Road will close once Freedom Road is opened on April 16.
- Pulpwood Yard Road will remain open while both Caudle Road and Clonnie Strawn Road are closed on/around April 1.

#### Union County

- Olive Branch Road will remain open while Stegall Road, Unarco Road, Cross Street and Elm Street are closed on/around April 7.

- Camden Street will stay open until Main Street is completed.
- Stewart Street will remain open until Main Street is completed.
- Edgewood Drive will remain open until Bivens is completed.
- Seacrest Avenue will remain open until Bivens is completed.

The crossings work will necessitate rerouting traffic. Signage will be in place marking detour routes. Please note the expected closure date(s). There will be updates with changes in the schedule as they occur, as they are highly likely in this field of work. Please note that any/all dates are subject to change due to weather and/or other unforeseen conditions. Motorists should anticipate extended travel times and delays. Please avoid closure areas if at all possible.

## Terry Jordan Invitational Golf Tournament is Friday, April 4

The 10th Annual Terry Jordan Invitational Golf Tournament, sponsored by Gum Springs Baptist Church Youth, will be held on Friday, April 4. The event will take place at Twin Valley Golf Course with an 8 a.m. shotgun start.

This is a two man Captains Choice with 1 A player per team. The cost is \$65 per person which includes golf, a cart and lunch. Mulligans will be sold. There will be a split the pot on hole 14. Cash prizes will be awarded for 1st, 2nd & 3rd Places. There's also a Closest to the Pin Award and a Longest Drive Award.

For registration and sign up sheets contact Twin Valley at 704-694-2336, or you can call Lynn Whitlock at 704-695-2200. A sign up sheet is available at Twin Valley.

**Sponsorships are available.** Call for more information: Stephanie Austin 704-694-8788, Evan Currie 704-690-1307 or Lynn Whitlock 704-695-2200.

## Carol Smith and Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center Honored

On February 16 Members of the Alpha Pi Chi National Sorority paid tribute to Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center Organization and its Director, Mrs. Carol B. Smith. Mrs. Smith has served as Director of BRCL for 30 plus years.

Members of the Sorority recaptured in mind and spirit when BRCL, a pillar in the Burnsville Community, was birthed in the hearts of concern citizens in the Burnsville Community. This was a special moment for Mrs. Smith, as well as supporters who traveled with her to accept such an honored and prestigious award. The great event was held in Morven at the Community Fellowship Center of the Church of God Prophecy under the leadership of Pastor Iris Tillman.

During the great occasion special music selections were presented by local recording artist Mrs. Brenda W. Pratt. Rev. Stanly Webster presented uplifting words. The fabulous dinner menu consisted turkey with dressing and all the fixings, yams, green beans, desserts and beverages.

Mrs. Donna McNair, a member of the Alpha ETA National Sorority Chapter and presently Pastor of the Fairview Church of God located in the Burnsville Community, gave the introduction of Mrs. Smith. Sorority President Sharon Knotte awarded Mrs. Smith with a certificate and a contribution. As Knotte presented the award on behalf of the sorority, her words of gratitude, admiration and inspiration were greatly received by Mrs. Smith.

This special event happens annually under the guidance of this sorority chapter during the month of February in recognition to African American or Black History Month. Anson County is blessed to have such an outstanding group of educators who happen to be African Americans.



Carol Smith

## Chair Exercise Classes

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

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

## Bluegrass Music Jam

The Hampton B. Allen Library will host a bluegrass acoustic music jam on Thursday, March 27, 6:30 until 8:30 p.m. in the Little Theater. Musicians, singers and spectators are welcome. Jam sessions are open to all age levels and skill levels. Children age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult.

If you have any questions please contact Dianne or Caroline at the library, 704-694-5177. You may also contact event volunteer Randy Collins at 336-430-6318 (call or text) or at [vaguitar@msn.com](mailto:vaguitar@msn.com).

## Craft Class at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library will have a craft class on Monday, March 24 at 10:30 a.m. in the Pritchett Room. Arvon Edwards will be the instructor. Materials are provided, but you will need to bring scissors. The crafts will be related to Easter.

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

## Touch A Truck Event on April 5

On Saturday, April 5 Anson County Partnership for Children is partnering with South Piedmont Community College to host a Touch A Truck event, from 10 a.m. until 2 p.m. at the L.L. Polk Campus on Highway 74 in Polkton. Get ready for lights and sirens between 11:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. A special sensory friendly hour will be between 10:00 and 11:00 a.m.

This event will also include 2025-2026 NC Pre-K fair to apply for NC Pre-K, a Raising a Reader Workshop, and Week of the Young Child celebration.

For questions or more information you can contact the Partnership for Children at 704-694-4036.