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

Anson Unemployment Rate at 7.6% in February

Anson County saw the unemployment rate at 7.6% in February, essentially the same as January's 7.5% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate for February was 5.4%, according to statistics released by the state's Employment Security Commission.

Anson's total labor force in February was 10,711. Of that number 9,896 were employed and 815 were unemployed. In January the total labor force was 10,703, with 9,898 employed and 805 unemployed.

Nearly three quarters (72) of North Carolina's 100 counties experienced unemployment rate increases in February. Rates decreased in 19 counties and remained the same in nine.

"Due to seasonal factors we tend to experience rate increases this time of year," said ESC Chairman Harry E. Payne, Jr. "In February 58 of the 72 counties that experienced an increase was by three-tenths of a percentage point or less. These increases are likely due in part to seasonal fluctuations and the current economic situation."

Over the month eleven metropolitan statistical areas experienced an increase in unemployment, while three remained the same. Forty counties were at or below the state's unemployment rate of 5.4%. Total county employment decreased in February by 17,698 workers, from 4,272,980 to 4,255,282. Unemployment statewide increased by 5,030 workers. The unemployment total in February was 244,542, compared to 239,512 in January.

Once again Orange County had the state's lowest unemployment rate, at 3.6%, and Hyde County continued with the highest rate at 11.7%.

The five counties receiving the highest amount in unemployment insurance benefits in February were: Mecklenburg-\$8.8 million, Wake-\$5.4 million, Guilford-\$4.1 million, Forsyth-\$3 million, and Gaston-\$2.6 million. \$89.4 million in benefits was paid to 105,178 individuals statewide, compared with \$99.4 million to 117,820 individuals in January.

Anson Hires Economic Development Director



Anson County had to look no further than its own borders to find a new Economic Development Director. Misty Harris of Wadesboro will begin the job effective April 20. The appointment was announced by County Manager Andy Lucas after being approved by the County Board of Commissioners during the April 1 meeting. Lucas said that her "organizational skills, energy, demonstrated commitment to excellence and passion for creating economic opportunity for all Anson County citizens made her the preferred candidate for the position."

Harris is the daughter of Jeff and Wanda Harris of Wadesboro and a 2000 graduate of Anson High School. She earned a Bachelor of Science degree at the University of North Carolina at Wilmington in 2004, with a major in criminal justice and a minor in public administration. She is currently employed by Anson County as pre-treatment coordinator for the Anson County Waste Water Treatment Plant. She recently received statewide recognition for her work there.

"I like a challenge," Harris said. "If I succeed, I feel that the whole county succeeds. Being from here gives me a passion. I am vested in this community."

Harris said that in the past few years she became interested in event planning and marketing. "I didn't know you could get a degree in that or I would have done it," she said. She was Anson County Relay for Life chairman in 2007; assistant director of People Fest in 2006 and is already working on People Fest 2008, which she will chair.

Harris coordinated the Homecoming and Christmas parades in 2006 and 2007; and most recently co-chaired the Wadesboro Easter Egg Hunt with Carly Little of H.W. Little Hardware.

"Misty's enthusiasm, marketing experience, willingness and ability to learn and apply new concepts, and demonstrated organizational skills provide the necessary skill set to become an effective Economic Development Director," said Lucas. "We are excited about this hiring and look forward to outstanding results."

Harris will attend a two-day Essentials of Economic Development course at the Institute of Government in Chapel Hill April 8-9. "I also will visit with Economic Development Directors in the surrounding counties to get familiar with the ins and outs of the position," Harris said.

She sees her goals as twofold: bringing in businesses to provide jobs and providing skilled employees for these jobs. "It's a kind of catch-22," she said. "You can't ask businesses to come here if you can't provide the employees to work there." Harris said it is important to break the cycle of work ethic. "People whose parents don't work don't see the importance of preparing for a job," she said. "It won't be done overnight. It will have to be a grassroots effort."

Harris has been working for change through two Anson County organizations: HOLLA! (Helping Our Loved Ones Learn and Achieve) and the Anson County Partnership for Children (ACPC). With the backing of Holla and ACPC, Harris and Mary Little of Coffing Hoists promote Diva Days twice monthly for girls in the 11th and 12th grades. The students learn life skills such as job interviewing and money management from successful Anson County women. Paula Tice of Hornwood and Williesenia Ingram of Anson Bank and Trust were past presenters.

If the girls attend every Diva Day class, have no discipline referrals and stay in school, they are rewarded with an incentive - help to attend the Prom. This includes tickets, a gown, shoes, hair and nail styling, dinner and transportation. Harris said ten girls have earned the incentive this spring. All the perks will be donated by Anson County businesses and individuals. The students may see more than their dream of attending their Prom in style coming true. Harris sees ten young women who have attained the skills necessary to become successful employees. *Courtesy www.ansonbiz-zine.biz*

Lilesville Boy Scouts Clean Historical Cemetery



Lilesville Boy Scout Troop #555 spent their spring break camping, fishing and cleaning. The boys spent an afternoon of fishing at the Dean estate in Lilesville, and later set up camp. The next morning after breakfast Ken Dean rode the scouts in on a timber trail as far as he could, parked the vehicle, and the boys hiked approximately a mile into the woods. They arrived at the James and Mary Smith Cemetery, dated 1777-1859, located off Stanback Ferry Road near Olivet Methodist Church, and began a cleanup. This cemetery is registered with the Anson County Historical Society.

The scouts lifted ornate fences, replacing them to their proper settings. They also removed dead trees and raked the grounds.

Each scout has chosen a camping area and project to work on. This particular campsite and project was chosen by Brandon Rowell. The troop gives special thanks to Ken Dean for assisting Brandon with this project.

Pictured here at the cemetery are, from left, Brandon Rowell, Brandon Freeman, Andrew Poe, Lucas Clark, Ken Dean and Logan Clark.

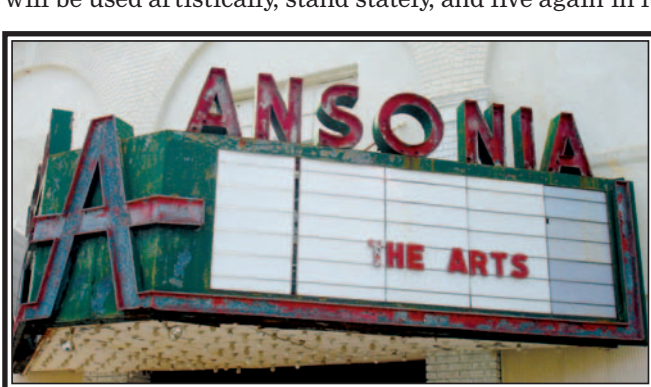
Arts Council Helps Ansonia Theatre Become Grand Once Again

Art Gala and Silent Auction Tomorrow, tickets still available

My first big screen experience was at the Ansonia Theatre located at 112 South Rutherford Street right here in Wadesboro. It would probably be safe to assume the Ansonia is where you saw your first film as well. In those days it was just a hop, skip and a jump from wherever you lived within our community, and making it there on a Saturday afternoon or evening was done with pretty much ease.

The movie "Gone With the Wind" was absolutely spellbinding. The vivid colors and exquisite costuming, not to mention the intense storyline and wonderful acting were just a few of the things I recall. Vivien Leigh as Scarlett O'Hara was as perplexing as any woman I had ever encountered. And, Clark Gable as Rhett Butler seemed larger than life. The movie won ten Academy Awards and is still considered one of the best films of all times. I certainly concur. But even a movie of that caliber would not have been a special event if I had seen it anywhere else. The Ansonia Theatre is part of what made the experience so grandiose.

With that thought in mind, it gives me great pleasure to hear that the old theater is now being restored, revived, revitalized, renewed, renovated! One day soon it will be used artistically, stand stately, and live again in luster, as it did in its prime.



Left for dead as a vacant building for years, it has often disturbed me to see the once grand building, built in 1925, deteriorate into its present, lifeless state. Several local clubs and organizations have made some strides towards its rejuvenation, and today the Anson County Arts Council leads the way toward making that

dream come true. Let's give them a round of applause for having the staying power and will to bring this wonderful old building back to life as part of a revitalization project in historic uptown Wadesboro.

According to their website, "For 20 years, Anson County community leaders have recognized and discussed the need for an auditorium facility where quality theatrical productions, concerts, dance productions and other live performances could be offered. The dream is to develop a facility where the talents of local performers could be showcased and the understanding and appreciation of quality arts could be extended to all people. They appointed a task force of local business, arts and other community leaders to study, plan, design and secure funding for the conversion. This group has worked diligently with architects and theater consultants to plan and design the renovations for the theater, striving to protect the architectural and historical significance of the building as much as possible, while adding appropriate restroom facilities, handicapped access and safety systems and additional stage performance area. A three-year fundraising campaign is in progress and has raised over \$600,000. Previous owners of the theater and adjoining office building supported this dream by donating the two buildings to the Anson County Arts Council."

If you would like to see this special building in its original grandeur once again, please make a tax-deductible contribution to the Ansonia Theatre Renovation Project, Anson County Arts Council. Or come out to the Fourth Annual Art Gala and Silent Auction scheduled for tomorrow, April 10, at the Twin Valley Country Club. Along with the auction there will be plenty of hors d'oeuvres and live music to make it a festive occasion. Tickets are available from the Arts Council. Contact Nancy Willingham at 704-694-4950 for further details.

The Arts Council refers to this renovation as a "dream," and, like me, many of you are dreaming of the day when the beauty is restored and the special occasions this building can house will take center stage. I hope to be front and center when that curtain is pulled and the Ansonia Theatre shows its grandeur once again. Until then, keep those contributions coming citizens of Anson County! *By Melanie Morse*

Pre-Kindergarten Registration

Pre-kindergarten (four year old) registration will be held this year at Morven and Ansonville Elementary Schools at the same time as Kindergarten registration. Pre-k registration will take place at Morven Elementary School on April 18 at 8:30 a.m., and at Ansonville Elementary School on April 25 at 9:00 a.m.

To attend pre-kindergarten your child has to be four years old on or before August 31, 2007. NC law requires a certified birth certificate, a shot record and a physical exam. Hospital birth certificates will not be accepted.

Anson County also requires at least two proofs of residence to place the child in the proper attendance area. Examples of proofs are 911 address on Driver's License, address on a bill, etc.

Pre-kindergarten enrollment is an easy process for parents. School administrators look forward to seeing you there. If you have any questions, please call the school in your attendance area and speak to the pre-k teacher.

Children and Youth Night Out at BRLC

The Burnsville Recreation and Learning Center would like to invite your children and youth to a very special time that they have set aside just for their enjoyment. This event will be held every Friday night, from 8 until 11 p.m. There will be DJ music, physical activity, games, comedy, and if the weather permits, a 3-point shoot out contest. The entry fee for the contest will be \$1. The winner will receive half of the proceeds from the contest.

Refreshments will be sold. They will be giving away door prizes every half hour beginning at 8:30 p.m. There will be adult chaperones on site.

These events are for children and youth ages 4 through 17, and it only costs \$5 to attend. All proceeds will be used in the operation of the Center.

The volunteers at BRLC thank you for your support.

Pinewood Derby is Sat.



The Anson County Cub Scouts will hold their annual Pinewood Derby race this Saturday, April 12 in the showroom of Huntley Chevrolet. The races will begin at 9 a.m.

Participants are urged to arrive early to register and get their cars weighed in.

A special "thank you" goes out to Bill Huntley for being active with the Anson County District of Scouts and for sponsoring this event.

Kenny Brower will be the "Derby Master" for the event. He puts lots of time and effort into making this yearly event exciting for the scouts. If you have any questions feel free to contact Kenny at 704-694-6174.

Look inside for these special inserts • IGA