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Anson County's February Unemployment Rate the Lowest Seen Locally Since April 2008's 7 Percent

Six years, that's a long time. It was April 2008 when Anson County had an unemployment rate of 7.0%. February 2014's unemployment rate in Anson County was 7.5%, the lowest percentage since that April, six years ago.

Anson County's unemployment rate for January was 8.6%. February marked the sixth straight month of single digit unemployment rates locally.

In February 2013 the rate in Anson County was 11.5%.

Anson's total labor force in February was 10,413. Of that number 9,632 were employed and 781 were unemployed. In January the total labor force was 10,565, with 9,653 employed and 912 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 95 of North Carolina's counties in February, increased in four and remained the same in one. All 14 of the State's metro areas experienced rate decreases.

Graham County had the highest unemployment rate at 13.8 percent while Orange County had the lowest at 4.4 percent. Among the Metro areas, Rocky Mount at 9.6 percent experienced the highest rate and Durham-Chapel Hill at 5.0 percent had the lowest. The February not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 6.6 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in all 100 counties. All 14 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in February by 9,847 to 4,307,683, while those unemployed decreased 18,862 to 304,755. Since February 2013, the number of workers employed statewide increased 43,250, while those unemployed decreased 120,869.



Cute Car, Cuter Cargo!

It's not often you find such a cute car carrying even cuter cargo! These adorable girls were cruising around the neighborhood, listening to a few tunes and having a few laughs together while they enjoyed a beautiful spring day.

Five-year old Peyton Peters is driving this little Volkswagen Beetle while her eight-year old sister Madison tags along for the ride. What a perfect picture of sweet sisterly love.

Photo by Melanie Lyon

Three More Arrested in Connection with Drug Roundup

Sheriff Tommy Allen released information about three more people who were arrested in association with the large drug roundup that commenced on March 27. Law enforcement is also still looking for four others. The eight month long undercover operation has resulted in close to 200 charges against 29 individuals.

Arrested since our initial article on the large drug bust (in our April 2 edition) were Christopher T. Robinson, a black male, 28; Connie Joe Baker, a black female, 43; and Antonio Lee Thompson, a black male, 25.

Robinson was charged with 2 counts of Felony Possession of Cocaine, 2 counts of Possession with Intent to Sell or Distribute Cocaine, Possession of Stolen Firearm, Sell of Cocaine, and Deliver of Cocaine. His bond was set at \$100,000. Baker was charged with Maintaining a Dwelling for the Purposes of Manufacturing, Storing and Selling Controlled Substance (marijuana), Possession with Intent to Sell or Distribute Marijuana, Sell Marijuana, Deliver Marijuana. Her bond was set at \$50,000. Thompson was charged with 3 counts of Felony Possession of Cocaine, 3 counts of Possession with Intent to Sell or Distribute Cocaine, 2 counts of Sell Cocaine, 2 counts of Deliver Cocaine, 2 counts of Possession with Intent to Sell or Distribute Marijuana, and Misdemeanor Possession of Pills. His bond was set at \$100,000.

Sheriff Allen said law enforcement is looking for four men who are still at large. They are:

- Kelvin D. Dunlap, a black male, 44, for crack dealing charges
- Martin Luther Bennett, a black male, 37, for cocaine dealing charges
- Tadarrell Durell Lee, a black male, 36, for cocaine dealing charges
- Marcus Dunlap, a black male, 30, for cocaine dealing charges

Anyone with any information regarding the whereabouts of these four individuals as asked to call the Anson County Sheriff's Office at 704-694-4188.



Kevin Dunlap, Marcus Dunlap, Martin Luther Bennett, Tadarrell Durell Lee

Pee Dee Electric Celebrates National Lineman Appreciation Day

Pee Dee Electric and the National Rural Electric Cooperative Association (NRECA) are recognizing April 18 as National Lineman Appreciation Day to honor the hardworking men and women who often work in challenging conditions to keep the power on.

"We are recognizing all electric linemen for the services they perform around the clock in dangerous conditions to keep the power on and protect the public's safety," said Donnie Spivey, CEO & Executive Vice President for Pee Dee Electric. "Electric linemen do not often receive the recognition they deserve. They work all hours of the day, often in hazardous conditions and sometimes far from their families, going above and beyond to restore power to their communities. Our linemen, as well as linemen from all across the nation, truly deserve this special day of recognition."

Collectively North Carolina's 26 electric cooperatives employ approximately 1,400 linemen. Of those, Pee Dee Electric employs 32 linemen in both Anson and Richmond counties. In honor of National Lineman Appreciation Day, Pee Dee Electric asks its members to thank their local linemen they see. "Linemen put their lives on the line every day without ever expecting any recognition from the community," stated Mark Rhyne, director of engineering & operations for Pee Dee Electric. "Let's give them the recognition they deserve for their hard work and commitment to keeping the power on."

Pee Dee Electric is a not-for-profit organization whose goal is to provide reliable, dependable electric service for its members at the lowest possible cost. As a member-owned cooperative, Pee Dee Electric serves over 20,000 members throughout their service territory which includes Anson, Richmond, Union, Stanly, Montgomery, Moore, and Scotland counties. For more information about Pee Dee Electric, please visit www.pdemc.com; [facebook.com/PeeDeeElectric.NorthCarolina](https://www.facebook.com/PeeDeeElectric.NorthCarolina); or twitter.com/PeeDeeElectric.

Easter Bunny Will be at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center

On Friday, April 18 the Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center will feature She She the Easter Bunny from 4 to 6 p.m. Children and parents are welcome to come and enjoy many activities for all the children, including an egg hunt. Parents are asked to bring hot dogs, buns, sodas, candies for the eggs, water, ice, chili and slaw. Children can have pictures made with She She for a small donation.

BRLC is located on Highway 742 North in Burnsville, across from the Burnsville Fire Department. The telephone number is 704-826-8182.

Writer's Club Open Mic Event

The Anson County Writers' Club will hold an Open Mic on Sunday, April 27 at 3 p.m. at the Chamber of Commerce. The public is welcome. For more information call Sandy Bruney at 704-694-5211.

Board of Education Monthly Meeting is April 28

The Anson County Board of Education will hold their regular board meeting on Monday, April 28 at 5:30 p.m. in the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center. Open Session to the public will begin at 6:30 p.m.

Special Olympics Scheduled for April 29

The Anson County Special Olympics are scheduled to be held on Tuesday, April 29 at Anson High School in the football stadium. Opening ceremonies begin at 9:30 a.m. The rain date is Thursday, May 1. For more information about the Games, including community volunteer interest, please contact Sylvia Tillman, Coordinator, at 704-694-4417.

Meet & Greet the Candidates April 20

A "Meet & Greet" the candidates event, presented by the Democratic Party, will be held on Sunday, April 20 at the Hampton B. Allen Library at 3 p.m. All elected officials and candidates are invited. Citizens will be given opportunity to ask questions. For more information contact Garletha Pratt 704-848-4619.

Animal Shelter Appoints Board Members

The Anson County Health Department is pleased to report that the newly formed board of the Friends of the Anson County Animal Shelter, Inc. held its organizational meeting on Tuesday, April 8. This is a volunteer group whose mission is to support the operation of the new animal shelter in Anson County. The nonprofit will manage fundraising and ongoing donations for the shelter.

The seven-member volunteer board includes Sheriff Tommy Allen, County Manager Lawrence Gatewood, Interim Health Department Director Wayne Raynor, Animal Services Director Becky Wilson, and three at-large members from the community, Jeremy Burr, Rufus Getzen and Gloria Overcash. The group elected Getzen as president, Burr as vice-president, Overcash as treasurer and Bonnie Huntley, Clerk to the Board of Commissioners, was designated to serve as secretary.

"Our initial fund raising goal is \$25,000 per year to provide the animals in the shelter with food and medical care," Getzen said. "\$25,000 may seem like a lot of money, but it works out to about \$1 per Anson County resident per year, and a goal I believe we'll exceed. Our overall goal is to raise awareness in the community of the needs of the animal shelter and coordinate fundraising campaigns to support the funds already committed by Anson County and the towns. I'm excited and honored to be selected to lead this much-needed initiative."

Getzen expressed that Ansonians are thrilled that the county commissioners have made the animal shelter a priority by purchasing the former Brown Creek Animal Hospital facility and staffing it with experienced and capable animal care and animal control workers.

Sheriff Allen stated that this is a group of individuals from diverse backgrounds, all sharing a common interest and love for pets. "The old shelter, known as the dog pound, was built in the early 1980's and has become obsolete in size and functionality, and the location is not convenient," Allen said.

"The new shelter is a game-changer. It is attractive, functional, conveniently located and large enough to meet our needs for decades to come," Raynor said. He also stated that the new focus will be on getting more animals spayed and neutered and adopted by caring homes and families.

The animal shelter is scheduled to open on Monday, April 28, and the dedication and open house is set for Saturday, May 17, from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Those wishing to donate to the animal shelter should send checks or money orders to: Anson County Animal Shelter, 101 S. Greene Street, Suite 205, Wadesboro, NC 28170.

Be Cautious When Burning Debris

Spring is the time for cleaning up our yards and in doing so many people will burn yard debris. However, the N.C. Forest Service wants to remind you that the number one cause of wildfires in the state is careless debris burning. There are many factors to consider before burning any debris, especially due to the current spring fire season, which typically lasts from mid-March until mid-May. Forest rangers can offer technical advice and explain the best options to help maximize the safety to people, property and the forest.

For people who choose to burn debris, the N.C. Forest Service advises adhering to the following tips to protect property and prevent wildfires:

- Obtain a burning permit at any N.C. Forest Service office, a county-approved burning permit agent or online at ncforests.gov.
- Check with your county fire marshal's office for local laws on burning debris. Some communities allow burning only during specified hours; others forbid it entirely.
- Check the weather. Don't burn if conditions are dry or windy.
- Consider alternatives to burning. Some yard debris such as leaves and grass may be more valuable if composted.
- Burn only natural vegetation. Burning household trash or any other man-made materials is illegal. Trash should be hauled away to a convenience center.
- Plan burning for the late afternoon when conditions are typically less windy and more humid.
- If you must burn, be prepared. Use a shovel or hoe to clear a perimeter around the area around where you plan to burn.
- Keep fire tools ready. To control the fire, you will need a hose, bucket, a steel rake and a shovel for tossing dirt on the fire.
- Never use flammable liquids such as kerosene, gasoline or diesel fuel to speed debris burning.
- Stay with your fire until it is completely out. In North Carolina, human carelessness leads to more wildfires than any other cause. In fact, debris burning is the No. 1 cause of wildfires in the state.
- Burning agriculture residue and forestland: In addition to the rules above, a fire line should be plowed around the area to be burned. Large fields should be separated into small plots for burning one at a time. Before doing any burning in a wooded area, contact your county ranger, who will weigh all factors, explain them and offer technical advice.

Board of Education Budget Workshop

The Anson County Board of Education will hold a Budget Workshop on Tuesday, April 22 at 3:30 p.m. in the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center.

Godspell Tickets Now Available

Tickets for *Godspell*, the musical based on the Gospel according to St. Matthew, are now available. This is the final community play for the 2013 - 2014 season at the Ansonia Theatre. Performances will be Friday and Saturday nights, May 2, 3, 9, and 10 at 7:30 p.m. and Sunday matinees on May 4 and 11 at 3 p.m.

Tickets are \$12 and can be purchased at the Anson County Arts Council and Lacy's in Wadesboro. Tickets can also be purchased online via Paypal at www.ansoniateatre.com. This is reserved seating so get those tickets early.

Cooperative Extension Celebrates 100 Years of Service

In North Carolina and across the country, 2014 marks the 100th anniversary of Cooperative Extension programs. Extension's centennial is linked to the signing of the federal Smith-Lever Act, signed by Woodrow Wilson on May 8, 1914, that provided funds for the organization of Cooperative Extension at county, state and federal levels.

Today, Cooperative Extension programs are based in all the state's 100 counties and on the Qualla Boundary of the Eastern Band of the Cherokee Indians. These programs draw on research-based knowledge from the state's land-grant universities - N.C. State and N.C. A&T - to provide education to citizens.

Anson County Cooperative Extension will hold a birthday party on Thursday, May 8 to celebrate this milestone. Guests are invited to the Extension Center at 2 p.m. for cake and punch. Old photos will be on display, along with some history about Cooperative Extension, and opportunities for the future. Please call the Extension Center at 694-2915 to RSVP no later than Friday, April 25.

Throughout the past 100 years and earlier, Extension has helped farmers overcome pests like the boll weevil and learn ways to increase crop yields, educated rural families and helped bring electricity to the state, assisted during times of war and disaster, helped families to provide safe, healthy meals and encouraged youth to develop skills that made them better citizens.

Even before the Smith-Lever Act, agricultural Extension work had begun in Anson County. In 1908 Dr. W.J. McLendon was hired by the Anson County Commissioners as the first County Agent. In 1911 the county hired Mr. J. W. Cameron who would lead the county's Extension program for the next few decades, along with Mrs. Rosalind Redfearn in 1913, the county's first female agent.

Today Cooperative Extension continues this important role, serving communities and families, supporting agriculture and empowering youth to be leaders. To help tell that story, NC Cooperative Extension has developed a centennial website. Visit ncce100years.ces.ncsu.edu to see a timeline of Extension milestones, historic photos, examples of Extension programs "Then and Now," the history of the Smith-Lever Act and much more.

Then plan to celebrate with the Extension staff on May 8, the history of this 100-year old organization. A centennial is a good reason to have a birthday party!