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

Grace Senior Center's May Activities

Full month of fitness, crafts and fun planned

The Grace Senior Center in Wadesboro has released its schedule of activities for May, offering a wide range of programs designed to keep participants active, creative and engaged.

Regular weekly offerings will continue throughout the month, including chair exercises on Tuesdays and Thursdays from 10 to 11 a.m., featuring aerobics, yoga, Pilates, Tai Chi and walking. (On the first Thursday of the month, exercise will be held from 1 to 2 p.m.)

Other ongoing activities include line dancing every Thursday from 3:30 to 4:30 p.m., along with special programs and workshops scheduled throughout the month.

Highlights for May include:

- May 1 – Q-Tip painting workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 4 – Audiobook Club featuring Judge Stone by James Patterson, 1-3 p.m.
- May 6 – Designing Fans workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 8 – Puzzle time, 1-3 p.m.
- May 11 – Friendship Bracelets workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 12 – BINGO!, 11:15 a.m.
- May 13 – Finger Painting Sunflowers workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 14 – Claris Companion Tablet session, 11 a.m.-12 p.m.
- May 15 – Cake Liner Flowers workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 18 – Shadow Drawings workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 19 – Funzbo Beads workshop, 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.
- May 20 – Garden Paper Pots workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 21 – Movie Day featuring *Otherhood*, 11:15am-1:15pm
- May 26 – Pre-drawn Canvas Painting workshop, 11:15 a.m.-1 p.m.
- May 27 – Shutter Art workshop, 1-3 p.m.
- May 29 – Claris Companion Tablet session, 1-2 p.m.

The center will be closed Monday, May 25. Organizers say the schedule reflects the center's mission of "helping those that have a master's degree in life," offering opportunities for social connection, wellness and creative expression throughout the month.

Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, just past IGA on the left. The telephone number is 704-694-6616.

Governor Stein Criticizes Duke Energy Plan to Increase Fuel Cost Charges

North Carolina Gov. Josh Stein is pushing back against a proposal by Duke Energy to recover an additional \$800 million in fuel costs from customers, calling the move another burden on already strained household budgets.

Duke Energy recently announced its intent to seek approval from the state Utilities Commission to pass along the added costs, a move that comes on top of a previously proposed 15% rate increase.

"On top of a proposed 15% rate hike, Duke Energy is now asking North Carolinians to foot the bill for an additional \$800 million in increased fuel costs," Stein said in a statement. "We must do everything we can to make life more affordable for families, not more expensive."

Stein pointed to his earlier veto of Senate Bill 266, arguing the legislation would expose ratepayers to fluctuating fuel costs and shift more of the financial burden onto residential customers rather than large industrial users.

Despite the veto, lawmakers overrode the governor's decision and the bill became law last year.

According to research from North Carolina State University and Duke University, the measure could increase costs to North Carolina ratepayers by an estimated \$23 billion in the coming years due to rising fuel expenses.

Stein urged the Utilities Commission to carefully consider the request, emphasizing the need to protect consumers while maintaining a stable and affordable energy system.

For more information, visit www.nc.gov.

Recent Rains Not Enough to Ease Drought, Burn Ban Remains

The statewide burn ban remains in effect across North Carolina despite rainfall in some areas over the weekend, as ongoing drought conditions and months of below-average precipitation continue to fuel wildfire risk.

State officials say most of North Carolina is still facing significant rainfall deficits, with many areas needing 10 inches of rain or more to recover.

"While the rainfall we received over the weekend was a welcome sight, it offered little to no relief from widespread drought conditions while being nowhere near enough to reduce our wildfire risk," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "Even the areas that received the heaviest amount of rain will quickly dry out from the sunshine and warmer temperatures. Until we get some additional rain and see more green-up in our forests, holding the burn ban in place statewide is the best option right now."

Although seasonal green-up is progressing at a normal pace, low soil moisture, dry vegetation and persistent low humidity continue to drive wildfire activity. In western parts of the state, excess forest debris from Hurricane Helene has increased fire fuel, while coastal areas are experiencing intense ground fires due to low water levels. The Piedmont alone saw 87 new wildfire starts over the weekend.

Since the burn ban was enacted March 28, the N.C. Forest Service has responded to more than 1,200 wildfires, burning nearly 3,500 acres. Only five of those fires were caused by lightning. During that same time, 287 citations have been issued for illegal burning, with additional cases still under investigation.

Officials are urging residents to strictly follow the burn ban and exercise caution with anything that could spark a fire, including equipment, vehicles on dry grass and smoking materials. While some of these activities are not classified as open burning, they remain a major source of wildfire starts.

Fire crews continue to balance wildfire response with enforcement of the burn ban, making it critical to limit new fire ignitions. State officials say reducing fire starts helps ensure resources remain available for extended firefighting efforts.

Residents are encouraged to stay informed by checking the state's fire danger map and fire danger statements online at ncforestservice.gov and to sign up for updates and alerts at ncforestservice.gov/news-and-alerts.



(pictured above on the right) and Treasurer Hannah Dunlap (above left), who returned with new insights, renewed energy and plenty of ideas to help strengthen local 4-H programs.

4-H participation is open to all youth regardless of sex, race, religion or national origin. For more information about 4-H in Anson County, contact Samuel Cole, Jr., 4-H Agent, at 704-694-2915.

Local 4-H leaders Attend Conference Held in Greensboro

They returned with fresh ideas and inspiration

Recently 4-H volunteers from across North Carolina gathered in Greensboro for the Annual Volunteer Leaders Conference, an energizing weekend focused on learning, connection and celebration. The event brought together volunteers dedicated to shaping young lives, proving once again that a little teamwork - and a lot of coffee - can go a long way.

Participants took part in engaging workshops, shared ideas with fellow volunteers from across the state and were recognized for the important role they play in their communities. The conference provided an opportunity not only to learn new strategies, but also to celebrate the impact volunteers make through their continued service to youth.

There to represent Anson County were 4-H Volunteers, Association President Betty Garris

Suspect Wanted in Anson County Fraud Case

Authorities seek public's help locating Lilesville man

Deputies with the Anson County Sheriff's Office are investigating two reported fraud cases and are asking for the public's help in locating a suspect.

On April 21, 2026, deputies received reports from two separate victims regarding fraud incidents within the county. The cases were assigned to a detective for further investigation.

Investigators determined that Stanley Wayne Griffin, of the Hinson Road area in Lilesville, allegedly obtained money from both victims for services that were never started or completed. Authorities say Griffin also failed to return the money or provide property he claimed to have purchased on their behalf.

As a result of the investigation, detectives secured two felony warrants charging Griffin with Obtaining Property by False Pretenses. He has been entered into the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) database as a wanted person and is also wanted by multiple law enforcement agencies in at least five other states.

Sheriff Howell is asking anyone with information on Griffin's whereabouts to contact the Sheriff's Office at 704-694-4188.



Stanley Griffin

Two Arrested in Concord Church Road Theft Case

Deputies recover stolen items, use K-9 and drone in search

Two individuals were arrested April 17 following a larceny in progress call on Concord Church Road in the Ansonville area of Anson County.

Deputies with the Anson County Sheriff's Office responded after receiving reports that a white male was removing items from several vehicles parked at a residence.

Upon arrival, deputies located a gray Ford F-150 parked in front of the home, occupied by Samantha Drake, who was seated in the driver's seat. She was detained as deputies began their investigation. The homeowner advised that the male suspect had fled the scene on foot.

The Sheriff's Office Bloodhound Team and a drone unit were deployed to assist in locating the suspect, with additional support from the Polkton Police Department.

Bloodhound "Landi," along with handler Captain Williams and the tracking team, began following a trail through a wooded area. During the search, the drone operator observed a white male exiting the woods across from the residence. The individual was identified as John Dunbar and was taken into custody.

Investigators determined that Dunbar had been dropped off at the residence by Drake. Authorities say Dunbar used a sawzall to remove catalytic converters from several vehicles on the property.

Deputies recovered the stolen items at the scene, along with the sawzall and a 2-ton floor jack used in the theft.

Dunbar and Drake were both charged with felony larceny of vehicle parts, felony possession of stolen goods, felony criminal conspiracy and misdemeanor second-degree trespassing.



Samantha Drake



John Dunbar

Two Arrested After Shots Fired Into Wadesboro Home

No injuries reported; investigation ongoing

Two individuals were arrested Monday evening following a shots fired incident on Barrington Street in Wadesboro.

Officers with the Wadesboro Police Department responded around 6:46 p.m. on Monday, April 27 to the 1200 block of Barrington Street after receiving reports of gunfire. Upon arrival, officers learned that multiple people were inside a residence when gunfire was directed toward the home. Several rounds struck the residence and nearby vehicles, with at least one projectile traveling through multiple rooms, including a child's bedroom. No injuries were reported.

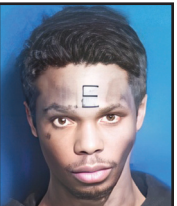
Witnesses told officers that multiple suspects fled the area on foot. Officers quickly located individuals matching the descriptions and attempted to make contact, but the suspects fled, leading to a foot pursuit through a wooded area.

During the pursuit, officers apprehended Jaylan Smith, 25, and Jaheim Leak, 19. Authorities say a loaded handgun was recovered from Smith, who was also found to have an outstanding warrant for absconding post release out of Richmond County.

Both individuals were charged with multiple felony offenses, including discharging a firearm into occupied property, firearm possession and resisting a public officer. They were placed in the Anson County Jail under no bond.

The Wadesboro Police Department was assisted by the Anson County Sheriff's Office & the Polkton Police Department.

Officials say the case remains under active investigation. Anyone with information is asked to contact the Wadesboro Police Department tip line at 704-694-2160.



Man Arrested on Drug, Firearm Charges After Suspicious Vehicle Call

Multiple weapons, narcotics recovered during investigation

A Wadesboro man was arrested April 26 following a report of a suspicious vehicle at a local business.

Officers with the Wadesboro Police Department responded after receiving reports of a vehicle loitering on the property. Upon arrival, officers made contact with the driver, identified as Taurus Watkins, 30.

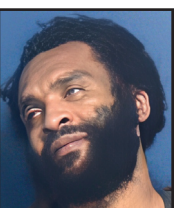
During the encounter, officers observed a firearm in plain view inside the vehicle, prompting further investigation. With assistance from deputies with the Anson County Sheriff's Office, officers conducted a search and recovered multiple firearms, including rifles and handguns.

Authorities also seized illegal narcotics, including marijuana, methamphetamine and approximately 198 dosage units of oxycodone, along with drug paraphernalia consistent with distribution.

Watkins was taken into custody and charged with possession with intent to sell or deliver a Schedule II controlled substance, possession of methamphetamine, trafficking of opium or heroin, possession of a stolen firearm, possession of marijuana, carrying a concealed weapon, possession of drug paraphernalia and resisting a public officer.

He was placed in the Anson County Jail under a secured \$150,000 bond.

Officials say the Wadesboro Police Department will continue proactive enforcement efforts targeting illegal drugs and unlawful possession of firearms in the community.



Taurus Watkins