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

## Anson Veterans Receive Over \$19.5 Million in Benefits in 2022

The National Center for Veterans Analysis and Statistics has released their annual information about veterans and veteran benefits, called the Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX).

Each Fiscal Year, the Department of Veterans Affairs' (VA's) Office of Enterprise Integration publishes the Geographic Distribution of VA Expenditures (GDX) report. This report provides the estimated dollar expenditures for major VA programs at the state, county, and Congressional District levels. Expenditure data are grouped by the following categories: Compensation and Pension, Education and Vocational Rehabilitation and Employment, Insurance and Indemnities, Construction, General Operating Expenses, Loan Guaranty, and Medical Care. Veteran population estimates at the state, county and Congressional District level and the number of unique patients who used VA healthcare services are also included in the report.

The GDX chart shows the work of the Anson County Veteran Services Office through federal dollars coming into Anson County, by way of earned VA benefits. In 2022 the Veteran Services Office assisted Anson County veterans in applying for and receiving over \$19,514,000 federal dollars, which is a 1-year increase of \$3,210,000 - the largest increase in federal dollars coming into Anson County ever.

Anson County VA Officer Andrea Lamonds said, "I'm very proud of the work being accomplished for our veterans who are so very deserving of these benefits."

According to the 2022 GDX Anson County has 1,452 veterans. Here is how the \$19,514,000 federal dollars in Anson County was distributed:

- \$11,257,000 Compensation & pension
  - \$163,000 Education & vocational rehabilitation/employment
  - \$32,000 Insurance & indemnities
  - \$8,063,000 Medical care
  - \$498,000 Unique patients. (Patients who received treatment at a VA health care facility.)
- Statewide, North Carolina has 687,364 veterans. They received \$11,187,658,000 in federal dollars for VA benefits. Here is how those funds were distributed:
- \$6,749,660,000 Compensation & pension
  - \$19,161,000 Construction
  - \$443,523,000 Education & vocational rehabilitation and employment
  - \$91,086,000 General operating expenses
  - \$30,261,000 Insurance & indemnities
  - \$3,853,967 Medical care
  - \$258,645,000 Unique patients.

## Anson County's March Unemployment Rate

**Anson County** Anson County's unemployment rate for February was 3.9%.

Here are other past rates in Anson County: **2023:** February 4%; January 4.3%. **2022:** December 4.0%; November 4.6%; October 4.9%; September 4.2%; August 4.9%; July 4.7%; June 5.3%; May 4.7%; April 4.6%; March 4.9%; February 5.1%; January 5.1%. **2021:** December 4.4%; November 4.7%; October 5.2%; September 4.9%; August 5.8%; July 6.5%; June 6.1%; May 5.5%; April 5.4%; March 5.9%; February 7.5%; January 7.7%. The **2020** rates were: December 7.1%; November 7.2%; October 7.2%; September 8.5%; August 8%; July 10%; June 7.9%; May 10.1%; and April 8.2%.

In March 2020 the unemployment rate in Anson County was 4.9%, just before it was affected by the pandemic.

**Statewide** Statewide the unemployment rate for March was 3.5%.

Here are other statewide past rates: **2023:** February 3.6%; January 3.7%. **2022:** December 3.2%; November 3.8%; October 3.9%; September 3.3%; August 3.9%; July 3.7%; June 4.1%; May 3.6%; April 3.4%; March 3.6%; February 3.7%; January 3.8%. **2021:** December 3.2%; November 3.4%; October 3.6%; September 3.8%; August 4.4%; July 4.6%; June 4.9%; May 4.5%; April 4.4%; March 4.6%; February 5.6%; January 6%. **2020:** December 6%; November and October 6.1%; September 7%; August 6.8%; July 8.9%.

Anson's total labor force in March was 10,424, with 10,015 employed and 409 unemployed. In February the total labor force was 10,289, with 9,877 employed and 412 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 61 of North Carolina's counties in March 2023, increased in 12, and remained unchanged in 27. Hyde County had the highest unemployment rate at 8.8 percent while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.8 percent.

Eight of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases, two increased, and five remained unchanged. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount had the highest rate at 5.2 percent while Asheville had the lowest at 2.9%. The March not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.5%.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 49 counties, decreased in 30, and remained unchanged in 21. Eleven of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases over the year and four remained unchanged.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in March by 63,142 to 5,042,647, while those unemployed increased by 41 to 185,569. Since March 2022, the number of workers employed statewide increased 47,119, while those unemployed increased 7,055.

It is important to note that employment estimates are subject to large seasonal patterns; therefore, it is advisable to focus on over-the-year changes in the not seasonally adjusted estimates.

## Beekeepers Field Day is Saturday

Are you interested in learning about beekeeping? Would you like to see beehives and beekeepers in action?

Come to the Anson County Beekeepers field trip this Saturday, May 6 at 9 a.m. and enjoy seeing this important and interesting hobby. You will learn how to take care of honey bees. Bring your bee suit and hive tools if you have them. Also, bring a yard chair, drinks and snacks.

Check the Anson County Beekeepers Association's Facebook page for more information, including the location of the field trip.



## Bearcat Pride 5k Run & Walk Draws a Large Field

This is a release from Anne Hyatt and the Anson Middle School PTO: Thank you for your partnership and support of the Bearcat Pride 5k Run/Walk! The event was held this past Saturday, April 29.

The 2023 Bearcat Pride 5k Run/Walk wouldn't have been successful without our volunteers, participants, sponsors, Pleasant Grove Baptist Church for providing snow cones, The Express Newspaper, OnClock Timing Team, emergency services and fire department personnel, the Town of Wadesboro as well as First Presbyterian Church for providing the location for the race. With your support, events like this only make our schools and community stronger!

The event had 90 total registered participants; that number is typically unheard of in a small community like Anson. The community spirit and pride was evident during the race event as everyone gathered together to support each other!

Anson Schools Superintendent Howard McLean said, "Thank you Anson Middle School PTO for putting on this wonderful event which is one way we can continue moving toward positive changes in our district. One of our school district's core values is teamwork and your support of the AMS Bearcat Pride 5k is a great example of that teamwork and the encouraging impact made on our school system. Additionally, strong collaborative partnerships which includes our schools, family, students and community can only happen when we all work together to make a positive difference."

As we begin looking ahead to planning the 2024 Bearcat Pride 5k, we look forward to continuing our partnership with each of you for years to come! A sincere and heartfelt thank you to everyone who volunteered, participated and sponsored the Bearcat Pride 5k Run/Walk.

Special congratulations to Caleb Laney and Abby Isaacs for being the overall male and female winners for the race. Caleb finished in 24:27 minutes and Abby finished in 26:31 minutes. Way to go! Stay tuned for our 2024 Bearcat Pride 5k Run/Walk date!



Caleb Laney and Abby Isaacs



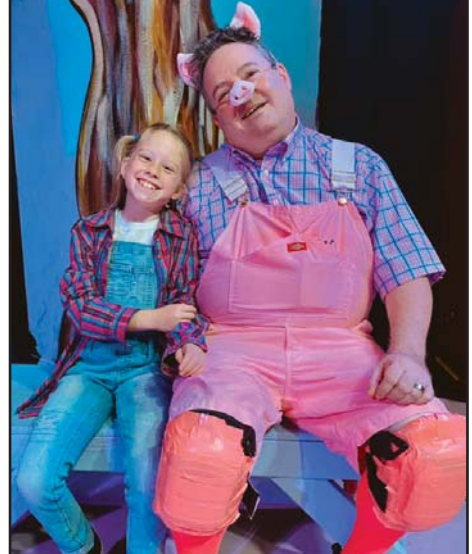
## Charlotte's Web Play Debuts this Weekend at the Ansonia

The Ansonia Theatre in Wadesboro is putting the final touches on its production of *Charlotte's Web*. Written by E. B. White in 1952, it tells the story of a friendship between a farmyard pig named Wilbur and a spider named Charlotte. Wilbur is a spring pig, and he is distressed to learn that he is being fattened for slaughter in the fall. Charlotte resolves to save Wilbur. Through the friendship between Charlotte and Wilbur, White explores themes of death, loyalty and friendship.

Director Tommy Wooten has assembled a cast of 30 to bring this beautiful show to life. Cleve Baxley stars as Wilbur, Paige Mercer as Charlotte, Rebekah Forsyth as Fern, Chipper Long as Templeton, Robert Graves and Karen Johnston as Goose and Gander, Ayla Perkins and Jeremiah Forsyth as Sheep and Lamb. The rest of the cast includes Gracilee Bricker, Lela Chaney, Abbey Moree, Drew Forsyth, Regina Forsyth Hawk Forsyth, Glenn Caulder, Ann Crescitelli, Jacob Moree, Ashley Gathings, Donnie Lewis Katrina Hilson, Landon Keziah, Escher Tallman, Eden Tallman, Allie Smith, Malachi Forsyth, Harper Helms, Surely Hilson, Stella Howell, Johnnie Powell, Landon Scarborough, Ava Sleeper and Georgia Tolley.

The show runs May 5-14. Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m. Tickets are available at [ansoniateatre.com](http://ansoniateatre.com). You can call 704-694-4950 for more information.

Don't miss this wonderful show!



## Haywood Wayne Freeman Arrested in Shooting, Charged with Assault with a Deadly Weapon Intent to Kill

On Monday, April 24 officers from the Anson County Sheriff's Office responded to the old Exxon service station in Morven where they discovered a shooting victim. The victim, later identified as Joshua Nettles, suffered multiple gunshot wounds.

An investigation was started, and based on eyewitness statements, a suspect was identified. Hayward Wayne Freeman was identified as the shooter. Freeman was interviewed and arrested later that night.

Freeman was charged with Assault with a Deadly Weapon Intent to Kill Inflicting Serious Injury and placed in the Anson County Jail under a \$100,000.00 secured bond.

Anson County Sheriff Scott Howell said, "We would like to thank the community for their assistance with this matter which led to a quick arrest. The Anson County Sheriff's Office would also like to thank the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office for their assistance with this matter."



Haywood Wayne Freeman

## Fish Plates and Fish Sandwiches!

Pleasant Hill AME Zion Church is holding a fish plate and fish sandwich sale this Saturday, May 6 starting at 11 a.m. Everyone is invited to come out and enjoy a delicious meal!

The \$12 fish plate includes fish, baked beans, cole slaw, hush puppies or bread and a dessert. The fish sandwich is \$5.

Pleasant Hill AME Zion is located at 378 Pleasant Hill Church Road (off Highway 109 South), Wadesboro.

## Yard Sale & Bake Sale Saturday

The Burnsville Ladies Auxiliary will hold a Yard Sale and Bake Sale starting at 7 a.m. this Saturday, May 6 at the Burnsville Fire Department.

Donations for the sale are appreciated. Someone will be at the Fire Department on May 5, from 5 to 7 p.m. to accept the donations. For more information contact Suzanne Yates at 704-826-8949.

## Morven Cemetery Meeting Monday

The annual general membership meeting for Morven Cemetery, Inc. will be held on Monday, May 8 at 7:30 p.m. at Morven Baptist Church, located at 318 East Main Street.