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

Animal Shelter Shares Guidelines for Animal-Related 911 Calls

Anson County citizens are reminded that not every animal-related situation requires a 911 call.

Officials recently shared information outlining when residents should - and should not - contact emergency dispatchers regarding animal situations.

According to guidelines, residents should call 911 if:

- An animal is actively attacking a person
- An animal poses an immediate danger to people
- Someone has been bitten, needs urgent medical attention
- An animal is being actively abused or attacked

Officials say these situations require an immediate emergency response because human safety or an animal's life may be in danger.

However, residents are asked NOT to call 911 for:

- Loose or stray dogs • Barking dogs • Lost or found pets
- Non-life-threatening animal neglect concerns
- Requests for animal pickup

Instead, residents are encouraged to contact Anson County Animal Control during business hours at 704-994-2738. Animal Control hours are daily from 8 to 6:30.

After hours, non-emergency concerns can be reported through a message to the appropriate department.

Officials emphasized that keeping 911 lines open for true emergencies helps first responders react more quickly when lives - human or animal - are truly at risk.

Anson Musician Ari Metcalf to Present Mother's Day Concert

Teen cellist will perform a wide-ranging program

An Anson County teenager will present a free cello recital at 3 p.m. on Mother's Day, May 10, in the chapel of First United Methodist Church, 118 East Morgan Street in Wadesboro.

Ari Metcalf

Ari Metcalf, a junior at Anson County Early College in Polkton, will perform a wide selection of music ranging from classical pieces to familiar hymns and musical theater. She will be joined for portions of the program by her mother Lied and her brother Calhoun.

The concert will feature selections including "Be Thou My Vision," "Summertime" from the opera Porgy and Bess and a piece from The Beatles catalog. Classical works will include "The Hunter's Chorus," "Sonata in C Major" by Breval, along with compositions by George Philipp Telemann and George Frideric Handel.

Metcalf began studying cello at age five using the Suzuki method and has attended string camps in Minnesota and Missouri. She currently studies under Liz Burns in Charlotte. Her musical roots run deep - her grandparents were longtime string and orchestra teachers in St. Cloud, Minnesota, and she will perform on her grandfather's cello.

She has performed at various events at First United Methodist Church of Wadesboro, where she is a member, as well as at Red Hill Baptist Church. Metcalf has participated in the Youth Orchestras of Charlotte for four years and has also played with the Trinity Music Academy orchestra. Her recent performances include participation in The Messiah in Stanly County and pit orchestra roles for productions such as Guys and Dolls, The Music Man, Beauty and the Beast and Once Upon a Mattress with the Uwharrie Players.

Metcalf will travel with the Youth Orchestra of Charlotte to Austria in June to perform as part of the American Celebration of Music in Salzburg and Vienna.

An informal reception with light refreshments will follow the recital. The concert is free, but a freewill offering will be accepted to help support the orchestra's upcoming trip.

South Piedmont Announces Guaranteed Admission Partnership with Western Carolina University

South Piedmont Community College has expanded its transfer opportunities through a new guaranteed admission partnership with Western Carolina University's WCU Connect program.

The agreement creates a direct pathway for South Piedmont students to continue their education at Western Carolina after completing an associate degree, helping streamline the transition from community college to a four-year university.

"At South Piedmont, we are unrelenting in our pursuit of pathways for students to advance academically, professionally and personally. WCU Connect provides a direct route for students to continue their studies while preparing for their future careers," said President Stacy Waters-Bailey.

To participate, students must be enrolled in a transfer program and maintain a minimum 2.5 GPA. After graduating, they may apply to Western Carolina University and enroll within one academic year.

In addition to guaranteed admission, students in the program receive access to a major-specific advisor, an admissions counselor, select campus resources and events, and priority orientation — giving them a head start before they even arrive on campus.

Students who achieve a GPA of 3.5 or higher may also be invited to join WCU's Brinson Honors College, offering additional academic opportunities.

With this new partnership, South Piedmont now offers a dozen guaranteed admission agreements with universities across North Carolina, continuing its effort to build clear and affordable pathways to higher education.

For more information, visit *spcc.edu*.

Food Lion Surprises Wadesboro Elementary During Teacher Appreciation Week

Teachers, staff and students at Wadesboro Elementary School received an unexpected boost of appreciation this week as Food Lion rolled in with snacks, supplies and plenty of gratitude during a special Teacher Appreciation Week celebration. On May 5, Food Lion marked the occasion with a "Carts of Kindness" surprise event at the school, supported by Food Lion Feeds, the company's hunger-relief platform.

During the visit, Food Lion associates delivered a Food Lion To Go cart filled with healthy snacks and drinks for teachers, staff and students. Educators also received Pantry Pack meal kits featuring Food Lion brand ingredients and recipes, along with thank-you notes, coupons and gift cards in recognition of their work supporting students and families. Associates also helped restock the school's food pantry with shelf-stable Food Lion products to help support students outside school hours.

"Supporting Wadesboro Elementary School's food pantry is an important way for us to invest in the community we serve," said Susan Freeman, assistant store manager for Food Lion. "When students have reliable access to food outside of school hours, they're better able to focus, learn and succeed. Partnerships like this reflect our values and our commitment to caring for local families and making a meaningful difference where we live and work."

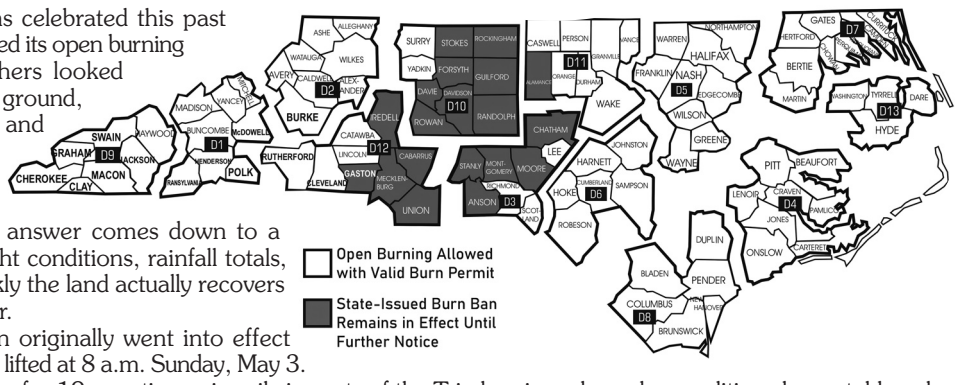
The event also highlighted Food Lion's ongoing partnership with Wadesboro Elementary School and its broader commitment to helping address food insecurity in the communities it serves.

"See a hurt, heal it; see a need, fill it," said Renee Peguese, community school coordinator at Wadesboro Elementary School. "Thanks to Food Lion for everything – I reached out and they responded within an hour. We appreciate all they have done for our school and staff." Peguese also praised the company's support during the school's grand opening activities, saying Food Lion associates arrived with food and encouragement that made a lasting impression.

The Wadesboro event was one of six large-scale "Carts of Kindness" surprise celebrations taking place this week across Food Lion's 10-state operating area. In addition, the grocery retailer is recognizing educators at more than 170 schools throughout the communities it serves.

Why North Carolina Lifted Burn Bans in 81 Counties - But Not Anson

Many North Carolinians celebrated this past weekend when the state lifted its open burning ban for 81 counties. Others looked around at the rain-soaked ground, scratched their heads and asked, "Wait… why are we still under a burn ban?" According to the N.C. Forest Service, the answer comes down to a complicated mix of drought conditions, rainfall totals, wildfire risk and how quickly the land actually recovers after weeks of dry weather.



The statewide burn ban originally went into effect March 28 and was partially lifted at 8 a.m. Sunday, May 3. Restrictions remain in place for 19 counties, primarily in parts of the Triad region where dry conditions have stubbornly lingered. Forestry officials say decisions about burn bans are not based on one rainy afternoon or whether somebody's yard puddled up enough to swallow a flip-flop. Instead, the N.C. Forest Service looks at several factors including:

- Weather forecasts • Fire danger levels • Dry vegetation and fuel conditions • Current wildfire activity
- Difficulty controlling fires • Availability of firefighting resources

Officials explained that drought conditions developed over a long period of time and recovery also takes time.

The U.S. Drought Monitor, which many people check online, is not a forecast but rather a "snapshot" of conditions from the previous week. For example, the drought monitor released Thursday, April 30 reflected conditions between April 21 and April 28 - meaning the rainfall received in early May was not yet included.

That also means residents may not see the full impact of recent rains reflected on drought maps until later this month.

The N.C. Forest Service also uses tools such as the Fire Weather Intelligence Portal to evaluate rainfall trends and fire danger statewide.

Officials noted that one or two inches of rain spread across seven to 10 days is far more beneficial than a single heavy thunderstorm dumping water in a few hours. Slow soaking rains help vegetation and soil recover, while quick downpours often create runoff and localized flooding without significantly lowering wildfire danger.

Rainfall totals between April 25 and May 2 showed much of North Carolina received nearly an inch or more of rain. However, one "doughnut hole" of drier conditions remained in the Triad area - one of the major reasons the burn ban continues in those counties. The recent rainfall, higher humidity and cooler overnight conditions were enough to reduce wildfire danger in much of the state, allowing restrictions to be lifted elsewhere.

Still, forestry officials warn the drought is not over and residents should continue using caution with outdoor burning.

More information about wildfire danger, drought conditions and burning restrictions is available at *ncforestservice.gov* and *droughtmonitor.unl.edu*.

Got to Be NC Festival Returns to Raleigh May 15-17

Food, farm animals, tractors, carnival rides and enough barbecue aromas to test anyone's willpower are all part of the annual Got to Be NC Festival returning to the N.C. State Fairgrounds in Raleigh May 15-17.

The three-day festival celebrates North Carolina agriculture with live entertainment, exhibits, food vendors, children's activities and family-friendly fun spread across the fairgrounds.

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler said, "I invite you to join us for the Got to Be NC Festival as we celebrate the people, products and traditions that make North Carolina agriculture so strong. From our farmers and food producers to the families who support them, this festival is a chance to experience the very best our state has to offer."

Inside the Got to Be NC Pavilion at the Agri Supply Expo Center, visitors will find more than 100 North Carolina food companies, wineries and breweries, including several first-time vendors. The massive marketplace features North Carolina-made sauces, meats, snacks, spices, beverages and sweets. Admission to the marketplace is $3.

Festivalgoers can also enjoy large displays of farm equipment and vintage tractors, along with the popular daily tractor parade scheduled for 1 p.m.

Children's activities will once again be a major attraction. The Kids Corral inside the Jim Graham Building will feature crafts, educational exhibits, corn hole games, Lil Ducky Water Races, baby pigs, hatching chicks and other live animal exhibits. Educational attractions will include exhibits from the N.C. Forest Service and the Southwest Dairy Farmers Mobile Classroom.

Visitors can also catch Storytime with Smokey Bear on May 16 at 3:30pm & 6pm, and May 17 at 10am & 3pm.

This year's festival also adds several new entertainment acts, including The Comedy Farm Magic Review, the Pirates of the Colombian Caribbean Aerial Highwire Thrill Show and "The Big Bee," a bright yellow Chevy Camaro that transforms into a towering 15-foot robot. Returning favorite Lauryn Zepeda and her horse Gringo will also perform multiple daily shows after recently setting a Guinness World Record for horse tricks performed in three minutes.

Saturday's special events include the popular Carolina Pig Jig barbecue fundraiser beginning at 11 a.m. Teams from 26 Masonic lodges from North Carolina and Delaware will compete for top honors while serving slow-cooked pork to the public. Tickets are $20 for adults, $10 for children ages 5-10 and free for children under 5.

Other Saturday events include a Kids' Pedal Tractor Pull at 1 p.m., the Antique Tractor Pull from 2 to 8 p.m. and the Dinah Gore 4-H Healthy Food Challenge cooking competition. Sunday's activities include "Action Alley," where children can explore construction vehicles, utility trucks and other large equipment up close from 10 a.m. to 3 p.m.

Unlimited carnival ride wristbands will be available Friday and Sunday. Friday wristbands cost $30 and are valid from noon to 9 p.m. Sunday wristbands cost $35 and are valid from 10 a.m. to 7 p.m.

Admission and parking for the festival are free, although rides, games, food and some exhibits require tickets or purchases.

Festival hours are noon to 10 p.m. Friday, 10 a.m. to 10 p.m. Saturday and 10 a.m. to 8 p.m. Sunday.

More information is available at *www.gottobencfestival.com*.