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

Anson County's Unemployment Rate 5.4% in March, Down Half a Percent

Anson County's unemployment rate for March was 5.4%, half a percentage point lower than February's 5.9%. Statewide the unemployment rate in March was 4.7%. Anson's total labor force in March was 10,771. Of that number 10,186 were employed and 585 were unemployed. In February the total labor force was 10,934, with 10,290 employed and 644 unemployed. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 98 of North Carolina's counties in March, increased in one, and remained unchanged in one. Hyde County had the highest unemployment rate at 12.3 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 3.7 percent. All fifteen of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount at 6.6 percent had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 3.9 percent. The March not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 4.7 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 97 counties, increased in one, and remained unchanged in two. All 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in March by 43,695 to 4,712,676, while those unemployed decreased 14,771 to 231,828. Since March 2016, the number of workers employed statewide increased 86,539, while those unemployed decreased 13,393.

No 2017 Tax Free Weekend in NC

North Carolina no longer offers a tax-free weekend
Sales tax holidays are designated periods when selected products are exempt from state (and sometimes local) sales taxes. The state of North Carolina repealed its tax-free weekend event when Governor Pat McCrory signed legislation in 2013 that also reduced corporate and personal income taxes. As a result, the state held no tax-free events during 2014, 2015 and 2016. The move was unpopular with businesses and shoppers, and a bill calling for its return was introduced in April 2016, but it did not pass. This means that there will be no sales tax-free shopping in the state in 2017. As a result, some businesses in North Carolina began hosting a weekend of additional savings during the first week of August to draw shoppers to their stores. These nearby states all have tax-exempt weekends scheduled for 2017: Alabama, Florida, Georgia, South Carolina and Tennessee.

History of Sales Tax Holidays New York was the first state to hold a sales tax holiday in 1997 in an attempt to limit "border" shopping, where New York residents traveled to nearby states to shop to take advantage of those states' sales tax rates, which were much lower than New York's rates. New York has since abandoned the tax-free holiday. In 2017 seventeen states have sales tax holidays planned. In most cases they are timed to coincide with back-to-school shopping, with many clothing and footwear products exempt from sales tax for a weekend or week. Some states include savings on energy efficient appliances and severe weather preparedness supplies in their tax-free weekends. States that have withdrawn from tax holidays and states that have not participated claim the sales tax holidays do not promote economic growth or increase consumer purchases; they just shift the timing of the purchases, while putting a financial strain on the state's income. Although tax holidays are popular with businesses, politicians and shoppers, statistics argue they do little to help the low income shoppers who need the tax relief the most.

Gum Springs Church's Terry Jordan Invitational Golf Tournament is Sat.

The 4th Annual Terry Jordan Invitational Golf Tournament, sponsored by Gum Springs Baptist Church Youth, will be held on Saturday, May 20. The event will take place at Twin Valley Country Club with a 2 p.m. shotgun start. This is a 2 man Captains Choice with 1 A player per team. The cost is \$40 per person which includes golf and a cart. Mulligans will be sold. There will be a split the pot on hole 14. Sign up sheets are available at Twin Valley, or you can call Lynn Whitlock at 704-695-2200 or Johnny Goodwin at 704-475-1304. Sponsorships are available. There are four levels of sponsorship:
• Gold Sponsor - name on a large sign in gold, hole sign & fees paid for 2 teams. \$500
• Silver Sponsor - name on large sign in silver, hold sign & fees paid for 1 team. \$250
• Bronze Sponsor - name on large sign in bronze & hole sign. \$175
• Hold Sponsor - \$100
Sponsor payments are due by Monday, May 1. Please make payment to Gum Springs Baptist Church, PO Box 514, Lilesville NC 28091. You can call Lynn Whitlock for more information at 704-695-2200.

HOLLA! 5K is this Saturday, May 20

The Annual HOLLA! 5k Walk/Run Into The Freedom of Literacy is scheduled for Saturday, May 20 in Morven. The event will begin at 8:00 a.m. with the warm-up and literacy rally at the park in Morven. Supporters who have not pre-registered will be able to do so at this time. The race begins at 9:00 a.m. and will be professionally timed by Finishwell Timing. Organizers stress that it is a family event. You can walk or run, but prizes will be awarded in various age categories to the fastest to complete the 3.1 mile trek through Morven. Individual registration is \$20. Registration is \$150 per team of 10 members. You can register online at www.racesonline.com or by calling 704-851-3144. Proceeds from the HOLLA! 5k are used to fund HOLLA!'s mission to be an agent of positive change in the community, with an emphasis on literacy. Donations can be sent to HOLLA!, P.O. Box 88, Wadesboro, NC 28170.



Pre-Kindergarten Program Available for the 2017-18 School Year. Apply Today!

Anson County Partnership for Children is accepting applications for NC Pre-K, a kindergarten readiness initiative that is proven to help four-year-olds gain basic skills needed for success in elementary school. Children who are four years of age before August 31, 2017, are eligible to apply for this high-quality program, which is free to qualifying families. A high priority is placed on serving children who meet the following criteria: child's family is at or below 75% of the state median income level; a disability has been identified; limited English proficiency, developmental differences, chronic health conditions, or a parent who is active military service personnel. NC Pre-K classes operate on a regular school calendar and are designed to address emotional and social development, physical health, language development, and cognitive functioning. Through the incorporation of indoor and outdoor learning environments, students participate in active learning experiences to foster a lifetime love of learning. There are currently four centers operating NC Pre-K classes in Anson County. These classes are located at Anson Children's Center, Central Center for Children and Families, Morven Elementary School, and Open Doors Center for Children. "Availability in this program is limited," said Caroline Goins, Executive Director of the Anson County Partnership for Children. "If parents are interested in enrolling a child in the NC Pre-K program, I encourage them to act quickly." An article published by Princeton University, stated that "... early childhood programs can produce large short-term benefits for children on intelligence quotient (IQ) and sizeable long-term effects on school achievement, grade retention, placement in special education, and social adjustment." Parents or guardians interested in learning more about the NC Pre-K program should contact Karen Gerald at 704-694-4036 (Ext. 105) or karen.gerald@ansonchildren.org. Applications are available in the Partnership's Early Childhood Resource Center, located at 117 South Greene Street in Wadesboro, from 1 to 5 p.m. or online at www.ansonchildren.org.

Memorial Day Event to be Held Friday, May 26 at the Courthouse

Memorial Day, which is observed on the last Monday of May, commemorates the men and women who died while in the military service. In observance of the holiday, many people visit cemeteries and memorials, and volunteers often place American flags on each gravesite at national cemeteries. A national moment of remembrance takes place at 3:00 p.m. local time. You are invited to be a part of a Laying of the Wreath in honor of our fallen heroes on Friday, May 26 at 11 a.m. in front of the Anson County Courthouse. There will be no Memorial Day events in Wadesboro on Monday, May 29.

Book Sale Fundraiser for Hampton B. Allen Library

The community is invited to a Book Sale hosted by the Hampton B. Allen Library on Saturday, June 3 in the Wadesboro IGA parking lot. There will be lots of 'special finds' so don't miss this sale. All funds raised will go to help support the library and its many programs that benefit Anson County. The sale runs from 9 a.m. to 12 noon. Come find that special book for your home, and enjoy the fun and fellowship.

Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center Yard Sale is Saturday

The Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center (BRLC) is holding a big yard sale this Saturday, May 20. There are too many items to list, so there will be something there for everybody! Remember to arrive early for the best selection. The yard sale begins at 8 a.m. and runs until 12 noon. BRLC is located at 13349 Highway 742 North in Burnsville, across from the Fire Department. The telephone number is 704-826-8737.

Connections Family Support Meeting is Thursday

For those people serving children with emotional, learning or behavioral challenges
The Connections Family Support Program holds a group meeting for parents, grandparents and foster parents serving children with emotional, learning or behavioral challenges on the third Thursday of each month at Ebenezer Missionary Baptist Church, located at 612 Salisbury Street in Wadesboro, from 12 noon to 1:30 p.m. Lunch and resources are provided free. Contact Suzanne Maness at (910) 627-1769, toll free (877) 211-5995, or by email at connectionsfspp@gmail.com for more information.

Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District Meeting

The Brown Creek Soil & Water Conservation District monthly board meeting will be held on Tuesday, May 23 at 10:00 a.m. at the BC-SWCD office, located at 1758 Morven Road in Wadesboro. For more information call 704-694-3516.

May is Mental Health Awareness Month

It is simple to identify children's physical needs: nutritious food, clothing, adequate sleep and a safe home. A child's mental health and emotional needs are often less obvious. According to the National Institute of Mental Health:

Mental Health Facts

CHILDREN & TEENS

Fact: 1 in 5 children ages 13-18 have, or will have a serious mental illness.¹

20%

20% of youth ages 13-18 live with a mental health condition.¹

11%

11% of youth have a mood disorder.¹

10%

10% of youth have a behavior or conduct disorder.¹

8%

8% of youth have an anxiety disorder.¹

Impact

- 50%** 50% of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and 75% by age 24.¹
- 10 yrs** The average delay between onset of symptoms and intervention is 8-10 years.¹
- 37%** 37% of students with a mental health condition age 14 and older drop out of school—the highest dropout rate of any disability group.¹
- 70%** 70% of youth in state and local juvenile justice systems have a mental illness.¹

Suicide

- 3rd** Suicide is the 3rd leading cause of death in youth ages 10 - 24.¹
- 90%** 90% of those who died by suicide had an underlying mental illness.¹

Warning Signs

- ⚠ Feeling very sad or withdrawn for more than 2 weeks (e.g., crying regularly, feeling fatigued, feeling unmotivated).
- ⚠ Trying to harm or kill oneself or making plans to do so.
- ⚠ Out-of-control, risk-taking behaviors that can cause harm to self or others.
- ⚠ Sudden overwhelming fear for no reason, sometimes with a racing heart, physical discomfort or fast breathing.
- ⚠ Not eating, throwing up or using laxatives to lose weight; significant weight loss or gain.

- ⚠ Severe mood swings that cause problems in relationships.
- ⚠ Repeated use of drugs or alcohol.
- ⚠ Drastic changes in behavior, personality or sleeping habits (e.g., waking up early and acting agitated).
- ⚠ Extreme difficulty in concentrating or staying still that can lead to failure in school.
- ⚠ Intense worries or fears that get in the way of daily activities like hanging out with friends or going to classes.

4 Things Parents Can Do

⚠ Talk with your pediatrician

⚠ Get a referral to a mental health specialist

⚠ Work with the school

⚠ Connect with other families

• Half of all lifetime cases of mental illness begin by age 14 and three quarters by age 24. Early identification and intervention improve outcomes for children, before these conditions become far more serious, more costly and difficult to treat.
• 13% of youth aged 8-15 live with mental illness severe enough to cause significant impairment in their day-to-day lives. This figure jumps to 21% in youth aged 13-18.
If left untreated, mental illness can lead to school failure, substance abuse, or even suicide. Join Sandhills Center Family Support Program and NAMI-NC in promoting Mental Health Awareness Month in May. Their goal is to raise community awareness that childhood mental illness is real, serious, and treatable. By knowing the signs and symptoms, we can help North Carolina's children access treatment and have a brighter future.
For immediate help, call Sandhills Center at 1-800-256-2452 or NAMI-NC at 1-800-451-9682.