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

Naji Mario El Kobersy Awarded Advanced Deputy Professional Law Enforcement Certificate

On March 24 Naji Mario El Kobersy of the Anson County Sheriff's Office was awarded the Advanced Deputy Professional Law Enforcement Certificate by the North Carolina Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission. The purpose of the Advanced Deputy Professional Law Enforcement Certificate is to recognize the level of competence of sheriffs and deputy sheriffs serving North Carolina sheriff offices, as well as to foster increased interest in college education and professional law enforcement training, and to attract highly qualified individuals into a law enforcement career. This certificate is the highest Professional Certificate awarded to sheriffs and deputy sheriffs in North Carolina. To qualify for the Advanced Deputy Professional Law Enforcement Certificate sheriffs and deputy sheriffs must complete a combination of professional training and relevant education, as well as, meet minimum experience requirements. The North Carolina Sheriff's Education and Training Standards Commission was established in September 1983. The purpose was to upgrade the capabilities, competence and proficiency of sheriffs' departmental personnel through programs, standards and procedures involving employment, improvement, career development and retention of the sheriffs' office personnel. The Commission currently maintains certification files on over 25,000 deputy sheriffs, detention officers and telecommunicators.

North Carolina's April Employment

The state's seasonally adjusted April 2023 unemployment rate was 3.4 percent, decreasing 0.1 of a percentage point from March's revised rate. The national rate decreased 0.1 of a percentage point to 3.4 percent. North Carolina's unemployment rate increased 0.1 of a percentage point from a year ago. The number of people employed increased 16,200 over the month to 5,012,688 and increased 24,183 over the year. The number of people unemployed decreased 4,221 over the month to 178,853 and increased 6,517 over the year. Seasonally adjusted Total Nonfarm employment, as gathered through the monthly establishment survey, increased 3,600 to 4,891,300 in April. Major industries experiencing increases were Education & Health Services, 3,000; Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 3,000; Financial Activities, 1,200; Other Services, 700; and Construction, 300. Major industries experiencing decreases were Professional & Business Services, 1,800; Leisure & Hospitality Services, 1,400; Manufacturing, 1,100; Information, 200; and Government, 100. Mining & Logging employment remained unchanged. Since April 2022, Total Nonfarm jobs increased 117,100 with the Total Private sector increasing by 110,600 and Government increasing by 6,500. Major industries experiencing increases were Leisure & Hospitality Services, 29,200; Education & Health Services, 27,700; Professional & Business Services, 17,100; Other Services, 9,400; Construction, 8,000; Trade, Transportation & Utilities, 6,700; Government, 6,500; Financial Activities, 6,100; Manufacturing, 3,400; and Information, 3,100. The only major industry experiencing a decrease over the year was Mining & Logging, 100.

AnsonEDC Relocating Offices June 1

On Thursday, June 1 the Anson Economic Development Corporation will be relocating its offices from the current REV Uptown facility at 114 West Wade Street to the Townhouse Office Building, located at 202 East Wade Street in Wadesboro. The larger office suite will better accommodate the recently increased staff, and also provide a better overall experience for clients and visitors, with improved access to Wadesboro Town Hall, the town's new public parking lot, real estate and law offices, and SPCC's Lockhart-Taylor Center.

Got an innovative business idea? Pitch it in 53 seconds, try for \$10,000!

Exciting news from the Small Business Center at South Piedmont Community College! 53 Ideas pitch competition is calling all entrepreneurs to take a shot at winning \$10,000! Do you have an innovative business idea? Pitch it in just 53 seconds and get a chance to turn your dream into a reality. The search is on for the next big idea. Take a chance on yourself and enter for a shot to move forward in the competition to secure a check for \$10,000! **Here's how it works.**

- Visit **53ideas.com** before **May 31** to record your 53-second pitch and enter the competition if you meet eligibility requirements.
- Judges will then select the top 53 ideas to move forward in the competition. Those moving forward will prepare a 3-minute pitch. Don't worry, we have training to help you get ready for the next round.
- The top 53 will pitch in the second round during the week of July 10th. That pitch will be virtual via WebEx where the judges will determine the top 10.
- If your idea is selected as one of the top 10, you'll get \$250 and can take advantage of coaching to help you perfect your pitch for the final round.
- Pitch as a top 10 contestant in the final round to compete for \$10,000, \$5,000 and \$2,500. The final pitch round will be in-person before judges and broadcast to an online audience.
- If you have questions please reach out to sbc@spcc.edu or 704.993.2424

First Round Pitch Tips: Judging of the initial video idea submissions will focus on your idea. In your 53-second video entry be sure to:

- tell them who you are.
- clearly define the problem and how your idea solves it.
- identify your target customers and the impact your solution will make.
- share what is unique about your solution; why is it better than options that may currently exist?
- communicate the potential to make it happen given financial resources.

Learn more and enter at: 53ideas.com.



Laila Hammond



Tydrequis Roberts

Pee Dee Electric Awards Sports Camp Scholarships to Local Students

Two local students have earned Touchstone Energy Sports Camp Scholarships from Pee Dee Electric to attend summer basketball camps at two of the state's largest college campuses. Congratulations to Laila Hammond of Ansonville Elementary, who will attend the Wolfpack Women's Basketball Camp at N.C. State University, and Tydrequis Roberts of Morven Elementary, who will attend the Carolina Basketball School at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, both on full scholarships from Pee Dee Electric. The scholarships cover all expenses at the overnight camps, which provide a glimpse into life on a college campus. Campers stay overnight in dorms, learn fundamental skills that will help them excel on and off the court, and receive individual and group instruction from Division 1 coaches to enhance their basketball and team-building abilities. "These scholarships are a fantastic way to provide a one-of-a-kind educational and athletic opportunity," said Megan Shaw, Communications Specialist at Pee Dee Electric. "We're proud to reward local student-athletes with the opportunity to have fun, make new friends, and develop skills to help them excel on and off the court." Touchstone Energy Sports Camp scholarships are part of Pee Dee Electric ongoing commitment to supporting youth and education. To learn more about Pee Dee Electric's youth programs and other community outreach efforts, visit pdemc.com/community-involvement.

Economic Impact of NC Agriculture and Agribusiness Reaches Record \$103.2 Billion

Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler has announced that for the first time the economic impact of North Carolina's agriculture and agribusiness industry has topped \$100 billion, reaching a new record of \$103.2 billion. Troxler shared the new economic impact numbers from N.C. State economist and professor emeritus and Express Newspaper columnist Dr. Mike Walden. Walden's numbers reflect the economic value of growing, processing and delivering food, natural fiber and forestry products and is calculated using the latest USDA statistics. "When I took office in 2005, the economic impact of agriculture and agribusiness was \$59 billion and \$100 billion seemed like a good goal to work toward. In 2016, I made a prediction that North Carolina's agriculture and agribusiness industry would soon reach \$100 billion," Troxler said. "I'm proud to say that we've reached that goal and surpassed last year's economic impact by more than 11 percent. Reaching this milestone is a big accomplishment for everyone in agriculture and agribusiness and proves how much we can accomplish when we are all pulling together." Agriculture is North Carolina's No. 1 industry, employing about one fifth of the state's workforce. Last year's economic impact figure was \$92.9 billion. "We are blessed to have a strong, resilient, and engaged agriculture community that includes farmers, agribusiness owners, commodity associations, agricultural associations and effective leadership in the North Carolina General Assembly," Troxler said. "I can assure you we will set new goals and keep North Carolina agriculture growing."

Wildlife Commission Reminds Boaters to be Safe

Don't Drink and Boat. Don't Drink and Drive.

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, S.C. Department of Natural Resources, N.C. Highway Patrol and Mothers Against Drunk Driving will kick off the annual "On the Road, On the Water, Don't Drink and Drive" campaign with community events and safety check points throughout the state in advance of and on Memorial Day weekend. The multi-agency safety initiative works to reduce alcohol-related incidents on the state's roadways and waterways, both which see increased traffic during summer months. "Fatalities that could be avoided with more responsible behavior are always difficult to process," said Lieutenant Nathan Green of the Wildlife Commission. "It's imperative to designate a sober driver whether you're in a vehicle or on a boat. Boaters can reduce the risk of alcohol related incidents by designating a sober operator." During the campaign, law enforcement officers will be conducting sobriety checkpoints and promoting public awareness to deter impaired operation of cars and boats on various highways and bodies of water. In North Carolina, a driver or vessel operator with a blood-alcohol concentration that meets or exceeds .08 or is substantially impaired by alcohol and/or drugs, is subject to arrest.

National Safe Boating Week - May 20-26 The On the Road, On the Water campaign kicks off at the culmination of National Safe Boating Week, which started on Saturday and runs through this Friday. During National Safe Boating Week, as proclaimed by Gov. Roy Cooper on May 17, Wildlife Enforcement Officers are reminding people that safety should be a top priority when recreating on the water. "We cannot stress enough how important it is for you to wear a personal flotation device, or PFD, while boating, whether it be recreating, swimming or fishing," said Capt. Branden Jones with the Wildlife Commission. "In 2022, 20 people lost their lives on North Carolina waters; 16 of them were not wearing a life vest. PFDs save lives, but they won't work if you don't wear them." Boaters are urged to take the following precautions to ensure friends and family remain safe on the water:

- **Appoint a designated driver for the boat.** Operating a boat under the influence of alcohol or drugs is illegal and is just as dangerous as driving a car impaired.
- **Assign an adult "Water Watcher"** (safekids.org/other-resource/water-watcher-card). To actively supervise children in or around the water at all times. Young children and people who are not strong swimmers should always be kept within arm's reach.
- **Swim only in designated areas.** You are less visible to boaters and more vulnerable to accidents. Avoid diving in unfamiliar areas, as there may be hidden structures.
- **Wear a life jacket or Coast Guard-approved personal flotation device (PFD) at all times.** Put your life jacket on prior to entering the boat and make sure its snug, yet comfortable, and will not move above the chin or ears when lifted at the shoulders.
- **Throw, don't go.** Be prepared to throw a flotation device or use a pole or tree branch to reach someone struggling in the water. Never jump in to save someone because you could go under too.
- **Attend a boater safety course.** The Wildlife Commission offers an array of boating education classes. If you were born on or after Jan. 1, 1988, you must complete an approved course before operating any vessel propelled by a motor of 10 HP or greater.

For more information on boating safety and regulations, visit ncwildlife.org/boating or call 919-707-0031.

Memorial Day Service on May 29

Everyone is invited to come to Wadesboro Park on Monday, May 29 at 10 a.m. for a Memorial Day Service. The ceremony will honor Anson County veterans who died in foreign wars. If it is raining the event will be cancelled. Wadesboro Park is located at the corner of Center and Gatewood Streets, just off Morven Road, in Wadesboro.

Bluegrass in Albemarle with the Southern Express

Albemarle Parks and Recreation hopes you'll join them for Thursdays at the Station this Thursday, May 25 for a performance by Southern Exposure Bluegrass at 7:30 p.m. at Market Station. Southern Exposure Bluegrass is comprised of expert musicians whose entertaining concerts are professional and beautifully crafted. The concert is free! All you need to do is bring a comfortable chair and enjoy the show. The Market Station is located at 501 West Main Street in Albemarle. Refreshments are available.

ABC Referendum Meeting is May 25

Now that the ABC referendum passed in Anson County, alcohol can be sold throughout the county. If you are interested in or thinking about obtaining an ABC permit but aren't sure what to do next, please plan to attend an informational meeting on Thursday, May 25 at the REV-Uptown to hear Pat Preslar from the NC ABC Commission talk about next steps and answer any questions you may have. The meeting will take place from 5:30 to 7 p.m. REV Uptown is located at 114 West Wade Street in Wadesboro.

The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com