

Free Fireworks Display and Family-Friendly Event at the N.C. Transportation Museum

This is a release from the NC Transportation Museum: Kick-off your Independence Day celebrations with the N.C. Transportation Museum on Saturday, June 29! Beginning at 5:30 p.m. enjoy an evening of family fun with our Fireworks Over Historic Spencer Shops! Activities include fireworks, food vendors, children's craft area, balloon twister artist, bubble show, DJ music, inflatables, as well as corn hole and other lawn games. On display will be the Ride of Pride trucks from Daimler Trucks North America's Cleveland, NC plant. Food vendors will be available on site. The spectacular firework show will begin at 9:15 p.m. The main fireworks viewing area will be in front of the Bob Julian Roundhouse. In the event of severe weather, fireworks show timing may be adjusted.

For a small fee, guests are invited to take a ride in a WWII era Dodge Weapons Carrier, as well as a ride on our turntable, the centerpiece of railroad operations at the largest remaining roundhouse in North America. All other activities are free. Visitors are encouraged to bring lawn chairs or blankets. While registered service animals are allowed on museum property, please leave pets at home. Coolers are permitted, but this is an alcohol-free event.

During the day, join us for our Moving the Military Guided Tour. This tour will highlight military vehicles and equipment in the museum's collection. Travel back in time as you learn the importance of the artifacts and the role they played in military history. Tour times are 10:30 a.m., 12:30 p.m., and 2:30 p.m. This walking tour lasts approximately 60 minutes and is included in general admission.

Fireworks over Historic Spencer Shops is sponsored by F&M Bank, Town of Spencer, Miller Davis, Atlantic Emergency Solutions, Holmes Iron & Metal, Inc., Trinity Oaks, Brent H. Parks CPA, P.A., Carter Law Group, Central Carolina Insurance Agency, New Pointe Realty, and Rob Nance Construction. Event support is provided by volunteers from the Rowan Young Professionals organization.

For more information about the event call the N.C. Transportation Museum at 704-636-2889 go to www.nctransportationmuseum.org/fireworks-over-spencer-shops.

You Decide: Should We Worry About the Declining Birth Rate?

One of the benefits of aging is that you often see problems completely turn around. In the 1990s there were worries about the declining national debt - yes, I said declining debt. Now, of course, the surging national debt is a major issue. Also, in the early 2000s, prices were falling - yes, falling - and economists worried about the implications for worker wages and business investment.

Today, there's been another turnaround in a major factor. For most of the post-World War II period there have been worries about overpopulation. Indeed, in the 1970s there were proposals to limit the number of births per family. To add some humor to the issue, I'm reminded of former New York Gov. Nelson Rockefeller's response to a constituent's suggestion that families be limited to two births. Rockefeller replied, "I was the third child!" But now the concern for many countries is depopulation.

What has created this worry? It's the dramatic drop in the birth rate. In both the nation as well as in North Carolina, birth rates have fallen below replacement levels - meaning there are not enough births to replace deaths. Without other changes, such as immigration, longer life spans or, at the state level, in-migration of people from other states, both the population and labor force will decline.

Globally, the population is not yet falling, but it is projected to begin retreating in 2080. However, several European countries, Japan and China are already losing population. Demographers predict population reductions could start in the U.S. in 2080, but due to the importance of immigration, there is uncertainty about this forecast.

What is behind the big drop in birth rates? Because the reasons can vary from country to country, I'll focus on possible answers proposed for the U.S. Beware that some of the offered answers can be considered controversial, so use your judgment. One answer is a perceived increase in individualism, particularly among young people. The notion is that many young people have made their career and personal satisfaction top priorities, hence reducing their interest in having and raising children.

On a more practical note, the rising cost of raising children can be a deterrent to having children. The federal government annually estimates the cost of raising a child to age 17, and the current amount is \$233,000. With life spans increasing, some young families may perceive a tradeoff between devoting time and money to raising children, or using those resources to care for aging parents. If they can't do both, then a choice has to be made.

Last is an answer I frequently hear from my young friends. It is that young people are fearful of the future, and consequently they question if they should bring children into the world.

Being trained as an economist, I look at issues from a benefit and cost perspective. So what are the benefits and what are the costs to a lower birth rate that could ultimately mean a reduced population? Benefits could be less of many things we don't like: pollution, climate change, waste, traffic congestion and numerous others. There's even the possibility of some lower prices. For example, one of the reasons costs for shelter have risen so fast is that we have more people competing for good locations to live. Land at preferred locations is fixed in supply. With a slower-growing population, but especially with a population that is declining, price pressures on land and housing would lessen. There would also be less conversion of farmland to housing developments, thereby preserving land for growing and producing food. But what would be the costs - or downsides - of slower population growth, or even negative growth? A big one would be higher dependency ratios, meaning more older and retired people compared to younger and working people. This would mean relatively more money spent on medical care and retirement support, especially from publicly funded programs such as Medicare and Social Security. These systems rely on working individuals to contribute to the support of older people. Indeed, the major reason Social Security is facing a solvency problem in the next decade is because of a rising dependency ratio. In summary, there could be a shortage of workers to support the older generation.

Also, since saving is typically done by younger people, some economists think stagnant or declining population growth would lead to lower savings, and hence higher interest rates for borrowers.

There's also the viewpoint that the young inject creativity and vitality into the economy, often because they look at the world differently and are willing to take more risks than older individuals. Hence, in a no-population growth country, would we have less innovation?

These are weighty topics and questions to consider. It's also important to note there are many moving parts to the question of population growth. Birth rates are one, but so too are immigration, worker productivity and technology. New workers can come from foreign countries, existing workers can be trained to produce more output, and advances in technology can be tapped to fill worker shortfalls. AI (artificial intelligence) is a good example of the latter.

The argument can be made that everything in a society begins with population and population growth. Population is fundamental. Will we have a future of fewer people? If so, should we consider it a plus or a minus? This could be one of the most important "You Decide" questions ever!

Mike Walden is a William Neal Reynolds Distinguished Professor Emeritus at North Carolina State University.

Church

JUNE 23 & 26 - 28

Holy Convocation

At Victory Temple Miracle Center, 1685 Morgan Sellers Rd in Wadesboro. Theme is "Above all else, pursue love!" Sun-Musical at 3:30pm. Wed-Fri nightly services 7:30pm. Come celebrate with us!

JUNE 26 - 28

Vacation Bible School

at Divine Unity H.O.R.M. located at 6090 Hwy 109 S in Wadesboro, 6-8pm. Theme is: How God May the Impossible, Possible!

JUNE 29

Community Family & Friends Day

at First Baptist Church, Sikes Avenue in Wadesboro, 12-3pm. Lots of food, fun & health screenings. Brings your kids! Fun for all ages! All are welcome!

JUNE 30

5th Sunday Service

At House of Prayer Missionary Baptist Church, 600 Camden Road in Wadesboro, at 3pm with Dr. Louis Blakney, Jr. For info contact Pastor J. Van Clyburn or Co-Pastor Fannie Clyburn at 704-475-4643.

JULY 21 - 24

Homecoming & Revival

At Henry Grove Baptist Church. Homecoming Sun with Rev. Jeff Adams of Chambers Grove MBC in Marshville at 11am & Rev. Carol Turner of Sneed Grove AME Zion Church in Ellerbe at 2:30pm. Revival Mon-Wed 7:30pm with Rev. Tobias Wall of Saron Baptist Church in Polkton. All are invited.

JULY 28

10th Appreciation Service

for Elder Gary Gaddy at Johnson Chapel Holiness Church, 3:30pm with Apostle Marvin Leak of Sound Doctrine Fellowship in Rockingham. All are invited.

JULY 28 - 31

Homecoming & Revival

At Rock Hill Missionary Baptist Church. Begins Sun with Pastor Horne, dinner served. Mon-Rev. Patricia Russell; Tue-Rev. Joletha Dockery; Wed-Rev. John Kirkpatrick, all at 7pm.

Events

JULY 16

Board of Commissioners Meet 6pm in Board Room, Suite 209, in Government Center, 101 S Greene St in uptown Wadesboro. Meetings are available online at

youtube.com, search for Anson Commissioners. To appear, sign up prior to meeting. Info 704-994-3201.

ONGOING EVENTS

Lions Club Welcomes New Members The Wadesboro Lions Club meets at Papa Joes Restaurant the 2nd & 4th Thursday each month at 6:30pm For more info or to purchase a broom please call Jim Chandler 910-571-1448

Popcorn & a Movie

4th Thursday each month, 1-3pm at Grace Senior Center, 199 Highway 742 South, Wadesboro, just past IGA. Info 704-694-6616.

Compassionate Friends Meet on the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7pm, at the Training Room at First Baptist Church, Lee Avenue in Wadesboro. Bereaved parents, family and friends who have lost a child of any age are invited. Info 704-694-2425

Direct and Counter Cyclical Program Sign-ups Call the Farm Service Agency Office at 704-694-3516 ext. 2 to complete eligibility forms

Senior Box

Program at Feed My Lambs starts the third Tuesday each month for seniors only. Located at 2290 Hwy 74 West, Wadesboro. 704-695-1820

Food Pantry Free food every Wed, 9-11am at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Ctr. 704-826-8182

Book Club

1st Thursday each month, 10am-12 noon at Grace Senior Center, 199 Highway 742 South, Wadesboro, just past IGA. Info 704-694-6616.

Craft & Workshops

3rd Thursday each month, 12-2pm at Grace Senior Center, 199 Highway 742 South, Wadesboro, just past IGA. Info 704-694-6616.

Chair (seated) Exercise

Every Tuesday & Thursday, 10-11am at Grace Senior Center, 199 Highway 742 South, Wadesboro, just past IGA. Info 704-694-6616.

Anson County Government Offices Closed July 4 & 5

Anson County Government Offices will be closed Thursday, July 4 and Friday, July 5 in observance of the July 4th Holiday. Emergency Services and Law Enforcement will be in regular operation. The NC License Plate Agency for Anson County will be open on Friday, July 5 during normal business hours.

Open Gym Free for All School Aged Children

The Wadesboro Elementary School Gym will be open every Monday and Wednesday, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. for all school aged children. This program began June 4 and runs until Wednesday, July 17. It is free, and all kids are welcome.

Register online at anson.recdesk.com. For information call Anson County Parks and Recreation at 704-994-3025.

Grace Senior Center Has It Going On In July!

Grace Senior Center is an excellent resource for Anson County's senior citizens. They provide programs, services, activities and fellowship that are beneficial...ALL FREE...AND ALL FUN & INFORMATIVE! Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, on the left just past IGA. For information call 704-694-6616.

July Events

- **Tuesday, July 9** Chair exercise class, 10:00-11:00am
- **Tuesday, July 9** BINGO! 11:15am-12:30pm
- **Wednesday, July 10** Claris Companion Tablet Workshop, 10:30-11:00am (Morven site)
- **Thursday, July 11** Chair exercise class, 10:00-11:00am
- **Tuesday, July 16** Food Demo & Information with nutritionist Noelia Chumtiaz from the Anson Health Dept. 10:00am-12 noon
- **Wednesday, July 17** Claris Companion Tablet Workshop, 10:30-11:00am (Peachland site)
- **Thursday, July 18** Stress Presentation by Sheila Raye 10:00-11:00am
- **Tuesday, July 23** Chair exercise class, 10:00-11:00am
- **Wednesday, July 24** Claris Companion Tablet Workshop, 10:30-11:00am (Wadesboro site)
- **Thursday, July 25** Operation Medication Drop-Off, drive thru 10:00am-12 noon at Grace Senior Center
- **Tuesday, July 30** American Red Cross Presentation for Seniors, 10:00-11:30am

Crisis Ministries Provides Free Food Tuesday - Friday

Anson Crisis Ministries distributes free food items to over 1,000 families each month. This adds up to an estimated 50,000 people a year in Anson and surrounding counties. They serve families Tuesday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.

Anson Crisis Ministries is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-2445.

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