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

Anson County's May Unemployment Rate at 7.9%

Anson County's unemployment rate for May was 7.9 percent. In April the rate was 6.9 percent. Statewide the unemployment rate for May was 6.6%, In May 2013 the unemployment rate in Anson County was 9.7%. Anson's total labor force in May was 10,658. Of that number 9,821 were employed and 837 were unemployed. In April the total labor force was 10,455, with 9,731 employed and 724 unemployed. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) increased in 92 of North Carolina's counties in May, decreased in seven, and remained unchanged in one. All 14 of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 12.7 percent while Currituck County had the lowest at 4.6 percent. Among the Metro areas, Rocky Mount at 9.8 percent experienced the highest rate and Asheville at 5.1 percent had the lowest. The May not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 6.6 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in all 100 counties. All 14 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in May by 33,207 to 4,414,534, while those unemployed increased 29,237 to 312,061. Since May 2013, the number of workers employed statewide increased 72,777, while those unemployed decreased 77,813.

Fiscal Year 2014-2015 Anson County Budget Approved

The Anson County Board of Commissioners met the evening of Thursday, June 26 and approved a \$28.8 million budget for the coming year. The budget for fiscal 2014-2015 includes:

- No change in the property tax rate of 76.7 cents per \$100 valuation
- A minimum of \$5 million in unrestricted fund balance, which is healthy and sufficient to keep Anson County in good standings with the NC Local Government Commission.
- \$4,376,511 in total funding for Anson County Schools, which includes current expenses, capital outlay and the requested increase in teacher supplement
- \$793,879 for South Piedmont Community College to help fund current expenses and capital improvements at the Polkton Campus and Lockhart-Taylor Center
- \$10,000 for Head Start
- Capital funding for the following projects:
 - \$157,500 to begin design work on the proposed Agri-Civic Center
 - \$110,000 for repairs at the former landfill in Lilesville
 - \$125,000 for the final payment on the animal shelter facility
 - \$75,000 for GrowGreen capital commitment
 - \$20,000 for DSS and Human Services facilities plan
 - \$7,500 for ACTS facilities plan.

Anson County Manager Lawrence Gatewood said, "I want to express my deep appreciation to Board Clerk Bonnie Huntley, IT Director Rita James, Finance Officer Tiffany Randall, and all department heads for their hard work on the budget and for supporting the rigorous review process. I would also like to sincerely thank our Board of Commissioners - Anna H. Baucom (Chair), Bobby Sikes, Dr. Jim Sims, Ross Streater (Vice Chair), Harold C. Smith, Vancine Sturdivant and Jarvis Woodburn - for their excellent support of education, taxpayers and county employees." Gatewood concluded, "As I've said many times in the last several months, the budget will be very, very tight - but I'm also confident it will prove manageable."

Lanesboro Correctional Institution Undergoes Investigation by SBI, FBI, Other Agencies



In the early hours of Wednesday, June 25 Lanesboro Correctional Institution in Polkton was locked down and agents from the FBI, SBI, State Prison Emergency Response Team and State Highway Patrol began a thorough investigation into gang activity, contraband, corruption and other problems at the high-security prison.

Pamela Walker of the NC Department of Public Safety said the agency requested that the FBI participate in the investigation, referring to it as a security procedure. Investigators, including K-9 officers, swept through the prison looking for weapons and drugs, with particular interest in finding contraband cellphones. Police say there have been reports of staff members and their families receiving threats from inmates via cellphones. "An officer was chased by a vehicle that he said he knew was a gang member of an inmate who was inside the prison," said an official. Walker has said, "Naturally there is a concern with people bringing cellphones into prison. That is a national challenge to every prison across the country." The search concluded on Thursday. It turned up one cellphone. In a statement to the press Walker added, "I'm sure there are some that are afraid. You are dealing with the criminal element. Obviously we're doing all we can to assure the safety of the staff, inmates, and the general public. We just want to ensure, assess, and figure out what is indeed going on here." The SBI had conducted an investigation into corruption at the prison in December after receiving accusations of official misconduct. Some of the accusations stemmed from the September 2012 murder of inmate Wesley Turner by three fellow inmates. The December investigation led to SBI agents finding shanks - homemade knives - stashed in the office ceiling of a former unit manager. On June 5 a 27 year old officer at Lanesboro Correctional was killed in Charlotte. Police have determined that Bias Wes Easley's death was not connected to his job, but resulted from an argument in Charlotte. Lanesboro Correctional is a high security prison with a staff of approximately 500 and an inmate population of approximately 800. The prison is designed to hold up to 1,400 inmates.

Anson County Part of Bill to Allow Unsupervised Use of BB Guns, Air Rifles and Air Pistols by Children Under 12

Anson County is one of five North Carolina counties that are affected by a weapons amendment that was approved by the NC House of Representatives on Tuesday, June 24. The amendment, called House Bill 1250, would allow the use of BB guns, air pistols and air rifles by children under 12 years old without adult supervision. The bill is now being considered by a judiciary committee in the Senate. The other counties affected by Bill 1250 are Cleveland, Harnett, Stanly and Surry Counties. Currently Anson County is one of 17 counties in North Carolina where BB guns, air rifles and air pistols are considered "dangerous firearms" under state law. That means children under the age of 12 cannot use the guns without adult supervision. The original law passed in 1963 after legislators were told BB guns caused many cases of blindness. There is no information as to why the law only affects 17 counties. Rep. David Lewis of Harnett County introduced Bill 1250. It is co-sponsored by Republican Rep. Justin Burr who represents Montgomery and Stanly Counties. Sen. Gene McLaurin has not stated his position on the bill. Caswell, Forsyth and Stokes Counties appear on the bill, expressing their wish to have the guns remain classified as dangerous weapons. If made law, Bill 1250 would become effective December 1, 2014, just in time for Christmas. Some of the more powerful air rifles that would become accessible to unsupervised children are said to be capable of shooting projectiles at speeds of up to 1,500 feet per second. Gun dealers claim that such air rifles are equivalent to a .22 rifle and are capable of killing large animals such as hogs and possibly deer. While Bill 1250 was being discussed in the House of Representatives, Rep. Pricey Harrison of Guilford County was the only legislator who spoke out against it. She was quoted as saying, "I did some research on the issue and discovered there are around 20,000 air, BB and pellet gun-related injuries a year in the United States. Three-quarters of them are children. I know some countries and states classify them as dangerous weapons." Harrison said she would prefer there to be a statewide policy on the issue.

Free Movie is Journey 2, The Mysterious Island

A free movie, *Journey 2, The Mysterious Island*, will be presented in the Little Theatre at Hampton B. Allen Library on Monday, July 28 at 10 a.m. It stars Dwayne Johnson, Michael Caine and Josh Hutcherson, and is suitable for all audiences. For more information call the library at 704-694-5177.



Anson Cowgirls Win All Star Tournament

The Anson Cowgirls fast pitch softball team defeated Rockingham to win the Dixie Darlings Region IV All-Star Tournament held June 17-23 in Troy, NC. This accomplishment advances them to the Dixie Darlings State Tournament which will be held July 4-9 in Eden, NC. These dedicated players and coaches have worked extremely hard all during the regular and tournament seasons. Let's cheer them on to victory - Go Cowgirls! Pictured here are, from left, kneeling: Cierra Lear, Brooklyn Lear, Jada Harrington, Susan Harrington and Laney Hill. Middle row: Natalie Hicks, Audrey Hyatt, Camryn Martin, Blair Threadgill and Lauren Dutton. Back row: Coaches - Bryan Threadgill, Rusty Hyatt, Jason Martin, Dwight Hill and Erin Martin.

Statement from Senator Gene McLaurin on Coal Ash Clean-up Legislation

From Sen. Gene McLaurin: Since the February 2014 coal ash spill on the Dan River we have learned a lot about coal ash ponds in our state and the dangers of coal ash spilling or seeping into groundwater. On Tuesday and Wednesday of last week we debated Senate Bill 729 - a bill that makes a good faith first step toward cleaning up coal ash in our state. I offered an amendment to prioritize clean-up of the 3 Buck Plant coal ash ponds located in Rowan County on the Yadkin-Pee Dee River. This river supplies drinking water to a majority of citizens in my district. I have talked personally to families living nearby the Buck Plant who have experienced higher than acceptable levels of hexavalent chromium and other metals in their well water. They deserve clean water. While the amendment failed, I am confident this bill takes the right initial steps toward a comprehensive clean up of coal ash. For me, this is not about politics. This is about protecting clean drinking water for families in Anson, Richmond, Stanly, Scotland and Rowan Counties. I remain committed to protecting our families and ensuring that the cost of this clean-up does not fall on the backs of hard-working people.

Would You Like to Help Support the Anson County Animal Shelter?

Anson County's new Animal Shelter is a terrific service to all Ansonians, offering a humane opportunity for disadvantaged dogs and cats to be adopted into loving homes. The Animal Shelter depends on the support of volunteers to help the staff there, and importantly, monetary donations to help cover the expenses involved in day to day operations. Everyone involved with the project, and the animals, will benefit greatly from any support you can offer. Anson County Board Clerk, Ms. Bonnie Huntley, is recording donations and sending out thank you letters to each donor. • Donations should be sent to: Anson County Animal Shelter, 101 S. Greene Street, Suite 205, Wadesboro, NC 28170. For more information contact Becky Wilson, Anson County Animal Shelter Director, at 704-994-2738.

Susan Sikes Love Arrested for Shoplifting, Leads to Drug Charges

On Wednesday, June 25 officers of the Wadesboro Police Department responded to Wal-Mart to investigate a shoplifting case. During the investigation officers arrested Susan Sikes Love, 43, for shoplifting clothing items from the store. After a more thorough investigation officers seized methamphetamines and drug paraphernalia from Love's personal belongings. Love was arrested and transported to the magistrate's office where she received a bond and court date.



Love was charged with Possession with Intent to Manufacture, Sell/Deliver Methamphetamine (Felony); Possession of Drug Paraphernalia (Misdemeanor); Larceny (Misdemeanor); Shoplifting Concealment of Goods (Misdemeanor); and Resisting a Public Officer (Misdemeanor). Her bond was set at \$7,500 secured and her court date was set for July 8, 2014.

Children's Musical Show Big Bang Boom is Coming to the Ansonia

It's July, and the kids are starting to get bored. No problem. Parent-friendly children's music is coming to the Ansonia Theatre! On Saturday, July 19 at 3 p.m. *Big Bang Boom*, consisting of talented artists and long-time musicians Chuck Folds, Steve Willard and Eddie Walker, will perform songs that children and parents can relate to. After twenty years of touring these dynamic dads decided to expand their horizons and play for parents (like themselves) who want more from children's music. They write songs with a pop sensibility by cleverly mixing alternative, pop, country, hip-hop and other genres to create music that parents can enjoy with their kids. Set to release their third cd, *Big Bang Boom* is blowing up the kid music world. Along with playing the prestigious Kidzapalooza stage at Lollapalooza, the Lake Eden Arts Festival (LEAF), the Tosco Music Party, Musikfest, Hangout Festival, and the NASCAR Coca Cola 600 Speed Street Festival, *Big Bang Boom* has made numerous morning television appearances and played countless North Carolina libraries, schools, and other events around the southeast. And, in their "spare time" (in between the 30+ monthly shows), you can find *Big Bang Boom* sharing their expertise at the Rock Star Summer Camp for kids in several North Carolina children's museums. Next time your kids say "There's nothing to do," flash your tickets to *Big Bang Boom!* Tickets are \$5 for children and \$7 for age 12 and up, on sale now at Lacy's and the Anson County Arts Council (704-694-4950). Get yours today!



Free Criminal Record Expunction Clinic in Wadesboro next Thursday

The Rockingham office of Legal Aid of North Carolina, a statewide nonprofit law firm that provides free legal help to low-income people, is holding a free criminal record expunction clinic on Thursday, July 10 at the Hampton B. Allen Library. The clinic is for low-income residents of Richmond and Anson counties who have been denied essential needs, like employment or housing, due to their criminal records. In some cases Legal Aid attorneys can remove marks on a person's criminal record in accordance with North Carolina law, a process known as expunction. Appointments are required to attend the clinic. Interested persons must call Legal Aid at 910-817-7670 or 1-800-672-5834 (toll-free) to see if they qualify for help and to schedule an appointment. To learn more about criminal record expunctions in North Carolina, visit the website of the NC Second Chance Alliance at www.ncjustice.org. The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com