

New Splash Pad at Wadesboro City Park is Close to Opening

This is a release from the Town of Wadesboro: Great things take time and our new splash pad at Wadesboro City Park is almost ready! A water leak was discovered during final preparations, which means we'll need just a little more time before we can safely open it.

We're thrilled about the excitement this new attraction is generating, and we can't wait to see families enjoying it soon. While we had hoped to open sooner, we're committed to making sure everything is safe and working properly.

Stay tuned as we will announce a new opening date as soon as the repairs and inspections are complete.

We appreciate your patience.

Peach Season Arrives Ahead of Schedule

Warm weather accelerates harvest, bringing fresh local peaches to market early

North Carolina's peach season is arriving a bit earlier than expected this year, with growers across the state beginning to harvest a bumper crop of high-quality fruit. A stretch of warmer-than-average temperatures has advanced the growing timeline, sofresh peaches available to consumers ahead of their normal mid-July peak.

"This run of hot days means peaches are ripening ahead of schedule, and we're seeing a strong, sweet crop," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "The early varieties are coming in with excellent color, size and sweetness, and consumers can expect a strong, extended season if conditions remain stable."

The main reason peaches are ahead of schedule this year is because of spring's short bloom season. "Bloom season on any average year can be from mid-late February or early March into April before we approach shuck-off (shedding of the blooms and the emerging of young fruit). This past spring, we had maybe 10 days of bloom before shuck-off happened," said Christine Parsons, vice president of the N.C. Peach Growers Society. "Peaches should be available through Labor Day weekend this year. Some seasons will go into the later part of September, but not all growers have later-season peaches."

Peaches are typically in peak supply during July, but several farms and markets are now offering early-season varieties, with more to follow in the coming weeks.

"The peach season is well underway, and we have a full crop. It's been a great year so far," said Jan Williams of Kalawi Farm. "The heat does cause peaches to ripen faster, so if people want these juicy, sweet peaches, don't wait. Visit your local N.C. peach growers soon."

The early arrival is expected to boost customer turnout at roadside stands, pick-your-own orchards and farmers markets statewide.

In addition to fresh peaches, many markets will feature a variety of peach-inspired offerings, including baked goods, preserves, salsas and beverages. The early season is also anticipated to provide a boost to agritourism and community-based food systems.

Consumers are encouraged to:

- Visit local markets early for the best selection. In Anson County Pee Dee Orchards is located at 11279 US-74 W, Lilesville, just before the Pee Dee River bridge.
- Speak with growers about ripeness and variety recommendations.
- Follow proper storage practices - allow peaches to ripen at room temperature before refrigerating.

"We are proud to support N.C. growers and help connect consumers with the freshest, most flavorful peaches possible," added Khaila Daye, NCDA&CS peach marketing specialist. "This early harvest is a welcome surprise and a great reason to shop local this summer."

For more information on peach season availability, events and where to buy N.C. peaches, please visit: ncpeachgrowers.com.

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!

Be sure to check the Express Events Calendar for even more activities at Grace Senior Center.

Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, on the left just past IGA.

For information call 704-694-6616.

Claris Companion Tablet Classes on Tuesdays, July 8 & 22 at Grace Senior Center, 11am-12 noon. Once training is completed participants can check out the tablets for one or two weeks.

- **Tuesdays & Thursdays** Exercise Class 10-11am
- ****No class July 3. July 10 class at 1pm.**
- **Thursday, July 3** Book Club 10am-12noon
- **Monday, July 7** Chocolate Day (drop in) 2-4pm. Enjoy delicious treats dipped in milk chocolate.
- **Wednesday, July 9** Peace in Puzzling 1-2pm. Relax your mind while putting together puzzles.
- **Friday, July 11** Karaoke 1-3pm. Let's sing and have fun!
- **Monday, July 14** Word Search 1-3pm. Seeking words to strengthen our minds.
- **Wednesday, July 16** Color Me Calm 2-3pm. Color sheets for relaxation.
- **Thursday, July 17** Chair Pickle Ball 1-2pm. A friendly competition to keep us active.
- **Friday, July 18** Day Trip to Peaches n' Cream 2-4pm. Shop for fresh fruit & veggies...and enjoy ice cream too!
- **Monday, July 21** National Ice Cream Day 1-3pm. Drop by for free ice cream!
- **Wednesday, July 23** Cornhole Day 2-3pm. See if you're the best! Win prizes!
- **Friday, July 25** UNO & Spades Card Games 2-3pm
- **Monday, July 28** Chair Volleyball, 2-3pm
- **Tuesday, July 29** National Hot Dog Day 10am-12 noon. Join us for a free hot dog with all the trimmings while supplies last.
- **Wednesday, July 30** Anson Arts Council / Ansonia Theatre Visit 1-3pm. Come and learn more about the arts.
- **Thursday, July 31** Visit by Anson Animal Shelter 12-2pm. Pet care and education.



Pictured above, from left, are Wadesboro Postmaster George Ross, J. B. Watson, Jr., Hunk Edwards, Wells Ross and Earl Gilmore. Mr. Ross was Postmaster from 1949 until 1972.

Stride with Pride Shoe Drive is Back Again this Year!

Parents, please contact organizers with your needs.

Donors asked to help area students.

This is a release from Patti Poulnott of Judy's Tax Service: We want the community to know Stride with Pride is now collecting new tennis shoes and money for the kids in Anson county. With students returning to school in August, these kids need shoes to wear.

This is our 15th annual season of collecting and distributing new tennis shoes to the underprivileged youth of all diversities in Anson County. Stride with Pride is being done in memory of the late Sheriff Landric Reid, co-founder of Stride with Pride along with Patti Poulnott. We will offer all sizes, male and female, from kindergarten to 12th grade. Please contact us as soon as possible so we can get the sizes right.

Message to parents Instead of having a large gathering to distribute the shoes as we have done in the past, we plan to give out the shoes door to door. With that in mind, we need to stress the **importance of parents contacting us in the next few weeks** so that we can buy the shoe sizes that are needed. The quicker you can contact us, the quicker we can get the shoes to the kids.

As a reminder, we need you to either email or text Patti Poulnott with the shoe sizes (10-13 childrens and 1-12 youth/adult), ages, male or female shoe style, names of each child, along with your current address and contact phone number. That way we will have all the information to make the purchases and deliveries. If you do not contact us we will not know who needs new shoes.

We are collecting shoes and donations until August 14. Shoes will be handed out before the new school year starts.

- Patti Poulnott - Email: ppoulnott@carolina.rr.com or text: 704-694-8386

Message to donors We do this because we care about our kids here in our county, and hope that our donors will join with us and help uscontinue to help our youth. If you would like to make a donation please mail it to:

Shaundasia T Smith Foundation, Stride with Pride Shoe Drive
c/o Judy's Tax Service, 102 S Rutherford Street, Wadesboro NC 28170.

We continue this charitable effort in memory of Sheriff Landric Reid.

If you have any questions please contact Patti Poulnott.

- Patti Poulnott - Email: ppoulnott@carolina.rr.com or text: 704-694-8386.

Patti Poulnott said, "We hope that you will consider joining us so that we can help our youth 'Stride With Pride' their way to success. Thank you to all the donors for your participation."

Wildlife Law Enforcement Enhance Efforts to Reduce Impaired Boating During the Busy July 4 Holiday

In efforts to ensure a safer July 4 holiday experience on the water, the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) Law Enforcement Division officers will participate i n Operation Dry Water, a national campaign being observed July 4-6, developed through the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA) and the U.S. Coast Guard.

The focus of the campaign is to heighten enforcement and awareness about the dangers of boating while impaired. The heightened public presence on the water during this holiday weekend often leads to an increase in boating incidents and fatalities. Alcohol use is the leading known contributing factor in recreational boater deaths. Wildlife officers will be increasing water patrols, providing boaters with information on the dangers of impaired boating and enforcing state laws.

"Boating under the influence continues to be a serious and preventable problem," said Lt. Forrest Orr. "Our goal is to create a safer environment for all recreational boaters, paddlers, and waterway users. That's why NCWRC is joining agencies across the country through Operation Dry Water to prevent incidents, injuries, and fatalities caused by impaired boating."

It is unlawful to operate a recreational vessel with an alcohol concentration of .08 or higher, or while being appreciably impaired by alcohol, drugs or other impairing substances. During last year's campaign, NCWRC law enforcement officers deployed 153 officers and removed 37 people from the water who were boating while impaired. So far this year, 39 boating incidents have occurred in North Carolina, three were fatal. Last year in North Carolina, boating incidents resulted in 15 fatalities. NCWRC Law Enforcement reminds boaters to always boat sober and to wear a life jacket when on or around the water.

Additional support for Operation Dry Water and The Governor's Highway Safety Program's Operation Firecracker Booze It & Lose It campaign includes North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement and the North Carolina Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch.

Learn more at NCWRC's boating safety webpage, ncwildlife.gov/campaigns.

NC Drivers Reminded of Auto Insurance Policy Changes

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey is reminding residents to be aware of changes to automobile insurance policies that took effect on Tuesday, July 1. The changes, which are the result of recently enacted legislation, may impact insurance premiums for policyholders, including for both experienced and inexperienced drivers.

Among key updates are increases to minimum liability limits for insurance policies and surcharges for new drivers, as well as changes to points for convictions of moving violations.

"It's important for consumers to understand how these changes could affect them," said Commissioner Causey. "Our goal is to make sure the public has all the information they need to make informed decisions about their policies. We want them to be able to navigate these adjustments smoothly."

NCDOI has a fact sheet on its website explaining each of the changes in detail. Visit ncdoi.gov/changes.

Consumers with more questions can contact NCDOI at 855-408-1212.

Chair Exercise Classes at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting chair exercise classes every Thursday in July. Class begins at 10:00 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room. Everyone is welcome. Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

South Piedmont Offers "Working Smart" Course to Equip Job Seekers with Essential Soft Skills

South Piedmont Community College is offering a valuable opportunity for individuals looking to strengthen their soft skills and enhance their workplace readiness through the "Working Smart: Soft Skills for Workplace Success" course, beginning July 8.

This course is tuition-waived for individuals who are unemployed or underemployed.

Delivered through a five-module, 16-lesson curriculum taught over a minimum of 24 hours, the course provides practical, career-building strategies. This class will be held July 8 through July 17, on Tuesdays, Wednesdays, and Thursdays from 9 a.m. to 1 p.m. at the Tyson Family Center for Technology, located at 3509 Old Charlotte Hwy, Monroe, NC 28110.

Participants who successfully complete the course will receive a Working Smart certificate, a credential that demonstrates to employers that the individual possesses key professional and interpersonal skills. Individuals who successfully complete the course will be guaranteed a job interview.

"Employers are looking for more than just technical skills, they want employees who can communicate, solve problems, and demonstrate accountability," said Kristi Phifer, Director of Human Resources Development. "Working Smart equips participants with essential tools to not only land a job, but to thrive in it."

The course begins with self-awareness and self-management, then moves into practical workplace topics such as:

- Employer expectations
- Workplace ethics and accountability
- Effective communication
- Teamwork and problem-solving

To register or learn more, contact Kristi Phifer at kphifer@spcc.edu or call 704-290-5216.

Farmers Market is Open Every Saturday

The Anson County Farmers Market is open for the season, and will be open each Saturday, from 8 a .m. to 12:00 noon with fresh and local produce, meats, eggs, baked goods, jewelry, soaps, candles, textiles and more from local artisans!

It's located at 1736 Hwy 52 South in Wadesboro.