

THE EXPRESS

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

Anson Mobile Food Market is July 16

The next Anson Mobile Food Market will be held on Thursday, July 16, starting at 10:00 a.m. It will be held at HOLLA!, located at 229 Main Street in Morven. Attendees are asked to please allow time for set up.

Food will be given away as long as supply lasts, including fresh vegetables, fruit and bread (if available). There will be blood pressure and blood sugar checks, along with other healthy living topics and booths.

Help with produce bags will be provided for elderly or disabled attendees.

This free event offers citizens of Anson County six to eight different types of fresh produce monthly. This is a free initiative, so please come and get some produce. **Nothing is required to receive produce, just come.**

The event is sponsored by the Anson County Extension and its partners.

This event is to assist in the scarcity of fresh, healthy food in the county. It will also serve as an educational event to offer education on the two targeted areas of the county health assessment which are tobacco use and hypertension. Agencies will be set up offering services and information in those two targeted areas.

Popsicles at the Splash Pad July 24

Families invited for free summertime fun

The Wadesboro Police Department is inviting families to cool off and enjoy an afternoon of community fun during its "Popsicles at the Splash Pad" event on Friday, July 24.

The free event will be held from 12:30 until 2:00 p.m. at the splash pad in Wadesboro Park. Police officers will be on hand to hand out free popsicles, visit with children and families, and spend time getting to know members of the community in a relaxed, fun setting.

Organizers say the event is all about building stronger connections between the police department and the community while giving everyone a chance to enjoy a summer afternoon together.

Children and their families are encouraged to stop by, cool off at the splash pad, enjoy a free frozen treat and meet the officers who proudly serve the Town of Wadesboro.

The Wadesboro Police Department looks forward to seeing everyone on July 24 for an afternoon of smiles, conversation and summertime fun.

Wadesboro Park is located at the corner of Gatewood and Center Streets, just off Morven Road.

Christmas in July Event Offers Vaccines, Physicals and Family Fun

Anson County Health Department combines back-to-school needs with a festive twist

The Anson County Health Department is bringing a little holiday cheer to the middle of summer with its upcoming "Christmas in July" Immunization Party, offering back-to-school vaccines, sports physicals and family-friendly activities all in one stop.

The event is scheduled for Thursday, July 16, from 1:00 to 5:00 p.m. at the health department, located at 110 Ashe Street in Wadesboro.

Designed with both health and convenience in mind, the event aims to ensure children receive required and recommended immunizations before the school year begins - helping families avoid the last-minute scramble (and those dreaded "you can't start school yet" surprises).

Students and families can take care of important back-to-school requirements, including vaccinations and sports physicals, which will be offered for \$25. Walk-ins are welcome, and organizers promise fast and easy service.

In addition to medical services, the event will feature free school supplies, refreshments, educational resources and even photos with Santa - who appears to be swapping snow boots for flip-flops, at least for the day.

Health officials say the goal is not only to keep children healthy, but also to create a welcoming environment that connects families with valuable community resources.

To help make the event a success, the health department is reaching out to local businesses and community partners for support. Donations will be used to provide school supplies, snacks, goody bags and educational materials for families attending the event. Officials say contributions of any kind are welcome and will directly benefit children across the county.

Those interested in supporting the initiative or seeking more information can contact Claretta Little, Immunization Nurse, at 704-694-5188. Monetary donations may be made to the Anson County Health Department at 110 East Ashe Street in Wadesboro, while donated supplies can be delivered to the department's attention.

Health Director Brian Ellerby expressed appreciation for the community's continued support, noting that efforts like this help ensure every child begins the school year healthy, prepared and ready to succeed.

Youth Football Registration

Anson County Parks and Recreation is accepting registrations for its 2026 Youth Football program, giving local children an opportunity to learn the game, develop teamwork skills, and enjoy a season of competition and fun.

The program includes Flag Football divisions for ages 4-6 and 7-8, as well as Tackle Football divisions for ages 9-10 and 11-12. The registration fee is \$40 per participant.

Registration is open through August 10. Parents or guardians must provide a copy of the child's birth certificate and a current physical at the time of registration.

County recreation officials encourage families to register early to ensure all paperwork is completed before practices and games begin.

For additional information, contact the Parks and Rec office. Questions may be directed to Rabon Bowers at 704-475-0715 or James Buchanan at 704-475-0718.

Online registration is available at *anson.recdesk.com* or you can use the QR code.

Whether they're carrying the football, pulling a flag, or making a game-saving tackle, young athletes across Anson County are invited to lace up their cleats and get ready for another exciting football season.



many of them had settled. Around 1845, they began worshipping in a plank-sided meeting house known as Rocky River Missionary Church of Christ, built on land across the road from the present church.

During the 1760s, Baptists along Rocky River were strongly influenced by the Sandy Creek Baptists, who built log meeting houses in what is now Liberty in Randolph County. Sandy Creek became a great evangelistic center and is widely recognized as the mother of Southern Baptists. Traveling preachers were sent from Sandy Creek to spread the Gospel to worshippers in surrounding counties, including Anson.

From its earliest days, Rocky River Baptist was served by devoted and influential ministers who helped establish and strengthen the young church. Among the earliest were Elder Edmund Lilly, Rev. John Culpeper Sr., Rev. Ralph Freeman, who was enslaved but later freed to preach, Rev. Samuel Morton and Rev. G. O. Wilhoit, under whose leadership the current church was constructed. Since that time, 37 pastors have served the congregation, including current pastor Rev. Dennis Stegall, who has led the church since 1992.

The July 26 anniversary celebration will begin with Sunday School at 9:30 a.m., followed by the worship service at 10:30 a.m. Rev. Donald Thompson, who grew up in the church and whose family has been lifelong members, will deliver the morning message. A covered dish luncheon will follow the service. All are invited to attend and are encouraged to wear period clothing.

Before the present sanctuary was built, many outstanding preachers drew large crowds to revivals held under the church's brush arbor, which stood atop the hill where the current building now stands. The arbor served the congregation for about 100 years before it was removed to make way for the present church. Members have now replicated the historic brush arbor, and at 1:30 p.m. there will be gospel singing and other special events beneath the new structure.

The fourth edition of "History of Rocky River Baptist Church," a comprehensive history recently published by Harriet M. Forbis, will also be available for purchase, with all proceeds benefiting the church. *Courtesy of Harriet Forbis*

Jordan's Way Fundraiser Set to Bring Fun, Laughter & Hope to Local Shelter

The Anson community is invited to watch and support homeless animals during live July 13 broadcast

Friends of Anson County Animal Shelter is counting down to a special evening on Monday, July 13, when Jordan's Way, the nationally recognized animal advocacy and fundraising tour founded by Kris Rotonda, will broadcast live from Anson County. The event will take place from 6 to 9 p.m., raising both funds and awareness for homeless animals waiting for loving homes.

Jordan's Way has become a nationwide sensation since launching its live fundraising tour in 2021, helping shelters and rescue organizations raise more than \$15 million. Now it's Anson County's turn, and organizers are encouraging everyone to tune in, join the fun and support the local shelter. Every donation, regardless of the amount, will stay local and help Friends of Anson County Animal Shelter care for the animals it serves.

The live Facebook event will feature the entertaining challenges Jordan's Way has become famous for. Viewers can expect plenty of laughs as Rotonda and participants take on games such as egg roulette, pie-in-the-face contests, slime buckets, dunk tanks and other lighthearted antics designed to inspire donations for a great cause.

While the fun keeps viewers watching, the mission remains focused on helping homeless pets. Throughout the broadcast, shelter animals will be introduced to the online audience, giving them added exposure while raising money for food, veterinary care, transportation, shelter improvements and other essential needs.

Jordan's Way was founded in memory of Jordan, a shelter dog adopted by Rotonda after spending years waiting for a family. Jordan's story inspired a nationwide effort to support overcrowded and underfunded animal shelters while helping more pets find permanent homes.

The community is encouraged to watch the live broadcast, share it on social media and invite friends and family to join in. Organizers say every donation makes a difference and brings local shelter animals one step closer to a brighter future.

As the Jordan's Way motto reminds supporters, "Laugh a little. Give a little. Change a life."



Governor Stein Signs State Budget Into Law

Measure includes teacher raises, law enforcement pay increases and funding for key services

North Carolina has its first full state budget in more than two years after Governor Josh Stein signed Senate Bill 257 into law, approving a spending plan that includes significant pay raises for teachers and law enforcement officers, along with investments in education, health care, public safety and infrastructure.

Governor Stein said the budget delivers the largest starting teacher pay raise in nearly 50 years and the largest overall teacher pay increase in 15 years. The budget also provides historic salary increases for public safety officers, fully funds Medicaid for the fiscal year and continues support for the recovery of western North Carolina following recent natural disasters.

Other highlights include funding for community colleges, improvements at the Division of Motor Vehicles, child care initiatives, cybersecurity, a new veterans home, clean drinking water projects and summer food programs for children. The budget also eliminates tax exemptions on electricity used by data centers.

While praising the bipartisan effort that led to the budget's passage, Stein also voiced concerns about several provisions included in the legislation. He criticized lawmakers for eliminating more than 1,000 state government positions, saying the reductions could make it more difficult for agencies to protect public health and public safety.

The governor also objected to provisions he described as unconstitutional or harmful, including measures that shift authority away from the executive branch and others that affect local governments, particularly Charlotte.

Despite those concerns, Stein said the budget demonstrates that state leaders can work together to address important issues. "North Carolinians expect their elected officials to come together across our differences to deliver for people," Stein said. "As today's budget proves, we can work together to get things done."

Stein added that he hopes to continue working with the General Assembly to make additional investments in public safety, education and other essential services to keep North Carolina competitive and strengthen opportunities for residents across the state.

Heat Raises Wildfire Risk Across North Carolina

Forest Service urges residents to prevent sparks and practice fire safety

With record temperatures expected during the upcoming holiday, the North Carolina Forest Service is urging residents to use extra caution with outdoor fires and equipment that could produce sparks.

Even a single spark can ignite a wildfire under hot, dry conditions. Officials encourage residents to check the fire danger in their area before burning, monitor weather and wind conditions, properly dispose of cigarettes and other smoking materials, and use extra care when operating lawn mowers, farm equipment and other machinery outdoors.

Before using tractors, combines and other equipment, operators should inspect for potential fire hazards. Crop residue should be removed from around engines, exhaust systems, belts and chains. Damaged exhaust components, frayed drive belts, exposed wiring, leaking fuel or oil, and worn moving parts should be repaired before operation. Gasoline-powered portable equipment should also be equipped with a properly functioning spark arrester.

Although wildfire conditions are not as severe as they were earlier this spring, the Forest Service says drought continues to stress vegetation, allowing fires to burn longer, hotter and more intensely. Officials recommend avoiding outdoor burning when vegetation is dry, humidity is low, temperatures are high and winds are strong, since even small fires can spread rapidly under those conditions.

Anyone with questions about fire safety, open burning or current burning conditions is encouraged to contact the Anson County office of the North Carolina Forest Service. County Ranger Gary McLendon and his staff are located at 1313 West Wall Street in Lilesville and can provide guidance on safe outdoor burning and wildfire prevention. The office can be reached at 704-848-4705 or by email at *Anson.ncfs@ncagr.gov*.

Open burning permits are available online at *apps.ncagr.gov/burnpermits* or in person through local burn permitting agents.

Forest Service officials say if conditions appear unfavorable for burning, it is best to postpone the project until a safer day. As they remind North Carolinians, no one wants to be remembered as the neighbor who accidentally burned down the neighborhood.