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Military Base Realignment Could Benefit Anson County

Upcoming changes in Fayetteville could well affect economic development in Anson County.

With the signing of the BRAC (Base Realignment and Closure) Act in 2005, Fayetteville's Fort Bragg can expect an impact of some 20,000 military personnel and their families as other forts, such as Fort McPherson in Atlanta, Ga., close and their personnel reassigned. Along with these newcomers will be vendors and contractors, swelling the expected numbers to 40,000.

Greta Lint, owner of a tourism writing and consulting service (www.gretalint.com), told members of the Anson County Tourism Development Authority (ACTDA) at its Aug. 13 meeting that the 11-county area surrounding Fort Bragg has been identified by the U.S. Department of Defense as a region targeted for restructuring.

Lint said that already 1,500 houses are being built on just one site near Fayetteville.

"The generals are already purchasing \$1 million- and \$2-million-dollar homes," Lint said. "Two golf courses have been built in anticipation -- these people like outdoor recreation."

Existing organizations in the 11-county area are working with the BRAC Regional Task Force to provide a unified approach to planning for the projected growth and how it will affect schools, housing, medical, transportation, services and infrastructure.

Anson County abuts Richmond County and touches Montgomery County, which are included in the 11-county fringe area.

Lint pointed out that not all of the incoming military and support personnel will choose to live in or around Fayetteville. Some people may want to live in Greensboro near its colleges and universities, she said, or in other nearby communities.

Wadesboro is situated between two of the state's largest airports (Charlotte and Raleigh-Durham). And, it lies between Fort Bragg and Charlotte.

"Anson will see an increase in traffic, gas station and restaurant use," Lint predicted. "Your challenge is to attract these folks off the highway."

Further, "these people are used to 1 1/2-hour commutes," Lint said, and might consider relocating in Anson County. She suggested local real estate companies begin targeting people coming from Fort McPherson. "They will be looking for second homes and retirement homes," she said.

"Anything you can do to tout yourself as rest and relaxation, recreation -- do," she said. One effective tool would be a blog with videos and photos of the area. She added that Anson also could promote itself to European businesses, citing the weak dollar, buildings available for retrofit, an available workforce and a comfortable culture. "Add 'European Union' to your keywords," she advised.

Lint added that dollars are coming into the region that Anson County could tap into. Grants are available through the Department of Defense Regional Task Force, the N.C. Rural Center and the Golden Leaf Foundation. She urged that Anson County "get on the e-mail distribution list of meetings for grant opportunities. Go to the sessions and apply for grants." Both non-profit and for-profit entities may apply, she said. "I encourage you to get as much information as you can."

Lint said that the N.C. Rural Center last year awarded \$13 million to local governments for projects.

Anna Baucom, Chair of the Anson Board of County Commissioners, said that she saw a lot of potential for Anson County tourism. "Don't Army people like to hunt?" she asked. "I see all kinds of possibilities for businesses coming here," *Courtesy www.ansonbiz-zine.biz*

Homecoming Parade Oct. 3

After much popularity last year, an Anson County tradition will once again return to the streets of historic uptown Wadesboro. The Homecoming Parade, sponsored by H. W. Little and Co. Hardware, is slated to begin on Friday, October 3 at 5 p.m. Working in collaboration with the Anson County schools, the parade will be followed with tailgating at Anson High School in anticipation of the evening's Homecoming Football Game.

"Our goal for the 2008 Homecoming Parade is to have the majority of the participants to ride on hand-made floats" stated parade organizer Misty Harris. "In fact, we will be limiting the number of car and truck participants. During last year's parade, the community pulled together to make the event a huge success, and it is the hope that this sense of community pride will flow into this year's parade as well."

Homemade floats can be as elaborate as flatbed trucks, or as simple as a small utility trailer that you haul lawn mowers on.

Trophies will be given in a variety of categories, including most creative and most spirited entry. A \$500 cash award will be given to the overall best entry, a \$200 cash prize will be given to second place, and a \$50 cash prize will be given to the third place winner.

Any community member, business, or organization can participate in the parade. All schools are urged to show their school pride and come up with a creative entry.

If you would like to be a part of this year's parade, please contact Misty Harris at 704-475-0742 or e-mail misty.harris@gmail.com. Parade applications can also be downloaded from www.cityofwadesboro.org.

Uptown "Night Out" is Sat.

As a farewell to summer, Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. has planned a family friendly "night out" for Saturday, August 23 in the streets of uptown Wadesboro. The event will take place on East Wade Street in front of Plank Road Realty from 6 to 10:30 p.m. Enjoy a night full of fun, including live music, great food, children's activities, and good fellowship.

The Richmond County band Loaded Dice will be entertaining the crowd with a variety of music ranging from classic rock, country, beach, oldies, and top 40s. The Wadesboro Civitans will be selling their famous hotdogs. There will also be a moon bounce and face painting booth set up for the kids.

The concert is free and community members are encouraged to bring their lawn chairs or blanket to this celebration. For more information, please contact Carly Little at 704-694-2213.

Just Hangin' Out with Neighbors and Friends



Pictured from left: Ms. Lou Tyson, Mr. Dewitt McNair and Mr. Billy Crawford enjoy their daily time together just shooting the breeze and hanging out with their neighbors and friends. The three allowed me into the mix for a bit of banter which I found to be neighborly, friendly and especially fun. Later, I found myself smiling as I recalled the stories they told. Photo and story by Melanie Morse

On most any given day at most any given hour, you may find a few local friends gathering and socializing at IGA. Noticing the fine folks pictured here as I found myself in the neighborhood, I realized how nice it would be to stop and strike up a conversation. And strike up one I did.

What a charming chat we had between the four of us. Ms. Lou Tyson told me, "I just drop in and out whenever the feeling hits me. Some days I come by and some days I don't. I don't set a schedule." Mr. Dewitt McNair (center) explained, "I have been coming here for about six years or so. I come around lunch time and I stay for several hours. We just hang out because we don't have anything better to do," he added. But it was Mr. Billy Crawford who wins the award for the longest meeting and greeting time from his seat just outside the double doors. "I've been meeting with friends on this bench for about 11 years. I come early, eat breakfast and lunch, and put in a full seven to eight hour shift," said Crawford with a grin. "Do you really stay that long? What if it's really hot or extra cold outside," I inquired. "When it gets too hot outside I just go inside, and the same for the cold" he explained.

It was a nice afternoon of interesting conversation with these three locals who didn't seem to mind at all that I was invading their territory. Nope, in fact they seemed to like the fact that I, as a newcomer to the group, had joined in with some new facts to interject into the everyday chatter. They asked about my work, who I was, wanted to hear about my family, and even thought they knew a few.

I would like to include that they all read The Express, and even mentioned Mr. Ed McBride and his weekly Remembering column. "Mr. McBride is one of my best neighbors. He's a great one," said Crawford.

Which is what this little piece boils down to, we're all neighbors in a way and it gave me a neighborly feeling when I perched next to these talkative, interesting, witty, humorous, smiling, happy people who shared their time and their stories with me. They didn't have to and I didn't ask if it were ok. I just pulled right up and struck up a conversation, and without hesitation we hit it off just like neighbors.

Thanks for the interesting rap session. Maybe one day we'll pick up where we left off. Again, just like a neighborly tête-à-tête.

Enrolling for Free More-At-Four Pre-K

Slots are available now for free child care for four year olds in Anson County this school year. The Anson County Partnership for Children is now receiving applications for children who qualify for the More at Four Pre-K Program.

The More at Four Pre-K Program offers free high quality child care and early education in Four and Five Star child care centers. Children in the More at Four Pre-K Program have opportunities to learn and play by engaging in activities such as art, books, drama, dance, music, math and science. The Anson County Partnership for Children is currently able to serve 210 children in the More at Four Pre-K Program for the 2008-2009 school year.

Qualifying factors for enrolling children in the More at Four Pre-K Program include: income that is at or below 75% of the State Median Income level, limited English proficiency, identified disabilities, chronic health conditions, developmental or educational needs, and children of active duty military families.

More at Four classrooms are located at six sites throughout the county. These sites include Anson Children's Center, Ansonville Elementary, Central Center for Children and Families, Faison Center, Morven Elementary, and Open Doors (First United Methodist Church of Wadesboro). Space is limited at each location; therefore, early enrollment is necessary. If you would like more information regarding the More at Four Pre-K Program or register your child, please contact Holly Hammonds at 704-694-4036.

25th Anniversary of People Fest To Feature a Wild Game Cook-off

Celebrating 25 years of family fun, the 2008 People Fest will have a diverse mixture of activities that promises to please everyone. This year's festival will start at 9 a.m. on Saturday, October 11, giving festival participants the opportunity to immerse themselves in three different stages offering live music, and visit over 100 vendor booths selling an array of items, including handmade crafts. Delicious food vendors will be on hand the entire day to serve up festival favorites including fried oreos, funnel cakes, blooming onions, turkey legs, and dippin' dots ice cream, just to name a few.

There will be a children's area set up on the Greene Street that will feature The Scrap Exchange out of Durham, NC. The Scrap Exchange will have tables set up where kids can do hands-on activities, such as making hats, rockets, puppets, and even handbags. There will also be dog trick shows throughout the day. The children's area will also include old favorites, including the train, face painting, henna tattoos, and moon bounces.

The classic car show is back by popular demand as well. A cash prize will be awarded to the winner. To download a car show application, please go to www.cityofwadesboro.org.

This year's festival will also feature a Wild Game Cook-off. This competition is open to the public, and is an excellent opportunity for backyard chefs, sportsmen, lady chefs, and outdoor enthusiasts to showcase their culinary skills. The grand prize winner of this competition will take home a \$500 cash prize. For a complete list of rules, as well as an entry form, please go to www.cityofwadesboro.org.

For more information about People Fest, please contact festival director Misty Harris at 704-475-0742.

Canoes and Kayaks Not Exempt From Life Vest Law

In North Carolina, having a life vest for everyone onboard a canoe or kayak is smart, potentially lifesaving - and the law. Wildlife Officers with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission will work to inform paddlers about an update to state regulations and begin enforcement on waterways. General Statute 15 NCAC 10F .0201 now requires that vessels be equipped with personal flotation devices.

The regulation previously stated "motorboat" and not "vessel," which excluded canoes, kayaks and rowboats. All vessels are required to have at least one PFD (Type I, II or III) for each person onboard. If the vessel is over 16 feet in length, it is also required to have a throwable flotation device (Type IV PFD). The regulation update brings state law in line with existing federal regulations.

Any child younger than 13 is required to wear an appropriate life vest whenever they are on a recreational vessel that is underway. The life vest must be of proper size and have a U.S. Coast Guard approved label.

Important recreational boating information is available online at www.ncwildlife.org, including the Vessel Operator's Guide, a safe boating checklist and how to enroll in a free boating education course, or by calling (919) 707-0031.

Scouts Kick Off Supper Thursday

The Anson County District of Boy Scouts will hold a county-wide "Kick-Off Supper" for all active scouts and leaders on Thursday, August 21 at the Wadesboro City Pond at 5:30 p.m. Feel free to join them if you are interested in joining scouts. Registration forms will be available that night. Any questions, please contact Susan B. Poe at 704-848-4352. Feel free to leave a message. Hope to see you there!

School Board Meeting Monday, August 25

The Anson County School Board will hold its regularly scheduled monthly meeting on Monday, August 25 at the Charles Riddle Staff Development Center located on White Store Road in Wadesboro.

The meeting will begin at 5:30 p.m. with a closed session. Open session begins at 6:30 p.m. and the public is invited to participate.

Remember,
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