

## Changing Lives and Changing Minds

By John Marek, Executive Director, Anson Economic Development Partnership (AnsonEDP): Shortly after the first of the year, every household in Anson County received a postcard from South Piedmont Community College announcing a program that has the potential to positively change the lives of thousands of Ansonians while simultaneously helping us to build the workforce we need to compete for economic development projects down the road. Called the Anson Advantage, this program offers free tuition and fees to any Anson County resident in one of more than 30 practical work skill programs the college offers. Offerings include such in-demand fields as HVAC, Culinary Arts, Electrical Systems, Industrial Maintenance and Welding, and range in duration from 10 weeks to 10 months.

Different communities have gone about bridging the workforce gap in different ways. In Iredell County, I was involved in the development of a very good, but very elaborate, program called the North Carolina Manufacturing Institute. The idea behind the NCMI was that companies would join the organization, paying \$1,000 per year for the privilege, and that money would go to provide scholarships to area students who would enroll in a year-long course which would offer the basic education necessary for a career in advanced manufacturing, as determined by the companies. At the end of the year, the graduates of the program would participate in a reverse job fair with the member companies. It was a very successful program. There were more than 20 member companies and dozens of graduates, 90% of whom accepted a position with one of those companies upon graduation.

It was also a very difficult program to administer, requiring a full-time staff member, and the relative lack of flexibility of the class schedule meant that many qualified individuals could not participate.

When we set about bringing that same general concept to Anson County, we realized that a couple of things simply would not "translate." We knew we needed to create a simpler, more readily accessible program that met the requirements of the business community while offering a level of flexibility that would allow the currently employed and underemployed to participate. A steering committee was formed that included representatives from business, industry, government and nonprofits. As part of that committee, I know a great deal of emphasis was placed on offering classes which addressed the skill sets most desired by industry. All things being equal, there should be a good job waiting for anyone who completes one of the "Career In A Year" tracks. We also emphasized flexible schedules that offered both day and evening classes.

The funding for the program is provided by the college's share of the state sales tax overhaul of 2015 which provided rural counties such as Anson a bigger share of sales taxes with the stipulation that those funds be used for education and economic development. There could be no better use for these funds than the Anson Advantage, as it achieves both.

It is also worth noting that the Anson Advantage is unique to SPCC, and we are not aware of any other program in the state that works in exactly the same way. That's a huge competitive advantage for us in recruiting new business, and potentially something that motivated workers looking for a place to settle might consider.

Perhaps an even bigger advantage, however, is a brand-new program called Gateway to Wingate. While not exclusive to Anson County, it is available to Anson County residents who graduate from SPCC with an associate's degree. SPCC graduates with qualifying degrees will be able to earn their bachelor's degree from Wingate, a private liberal arts college located just a few miles over the county line, for \$2,500 per year. Combined with early college programs the college already offers, it would be possible for a student to earn a four-year degree from Wingate at age 20 and a tuition cost of just \$5,000. Even when books, materials and other ancillary expenses are considered, the total cost of the degree would be somewhere around \$10,000.

If that's not a competitive advantage for Anson County, I don't know what is.

### Severe Weather Safety in Mobile Homes or RVs

If a severe weather event is expected in your area, and you live in a mobile home or recreation vehicle, take precautions.

- Stay informed about current conditions.
- Listen to local officials and evacuation orders.
- Leave mobile homes, RVs and other non-permanent structures when evacuation orders are issued.
- When possible, shelter in permanent structures.
- [Ready.gov/severe-weather](#) and [ReadyNC.org](#) provide helpful information on how to plan.

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# Church News

### SEPTEMBER 1 & 4-5 Revival

At Piney Grove Holiness Church, Hwy 109 N. Sun service. Revival Wed & Thu with Dr. Johnny McLendon from Fisherhill Community Baptist Church of Cheraw

### SEPTEMBER 6 & 7 Fundraiser Plate Sale

At House of Faith Outreach Ministries

### SEPTEMBER 7 Graduation

Of TCIF Bible College at New Parkers Grove MBC, 3pm with Elder Charles Ellerbe

### SEPTEMBER 8 Pack the Pew Program

At New Beginning Baptist Church, 416 McLeod Rd, 2:30pm with Min Ivan Ledbetter

### SEPTEMBER 8 - 11 Revival

At Harmony Community Church, 1984 Pulpwood Yard Rd, Peachland. Pastor Adrian Despres at 7pm nightly

### SEPTEMBER 8 - 12 Homecoming & Revival

At Fairview COG. Homecoming Sun with Dr Eugene Sturdivant 11am & Pastor Nathaniel Floyd 3pm. Revival Mon-Pastor Anthony Hall, Tue-Pastor Robert Morrison, Wed-Pastor Ildris Strange, Thu-Pastor Cornelius Atkinson, all at 7pm

### SEPTEMBER 12 - 15 Women's Conference

At Johnson Chapel Holiness Church. Thu-Pastor Joletha Dockery of Bessie Chapel AME & Fri-Elder Kalissia Parker of Empowering Word Ministries, both at 7:30pm. Sat-Brunch 11am with Mrs. Nia Broadway, Sun-Elder Gary Gaddy, 11:45am. All are invited

### SEPTEMBER 14 Rainbow Tea

At House of Faith Outreach Ministries, 3pm with Pastor Christopher Chance of Word of Faith

### SEPTEMBER 15 Pastor Appreciation

For Robert Morrison & Charlene Morrison at Henderson Grove MBC, 2:30pm with Pastor Aaron Kilgo. All are welcome

### Building Fund Program

at Morning Star Redeemed COG in Lilesville, 2:30pm with Rev Harvey Marsh

### Pack a Pew Rally

At Forestville AME Zion, 723 Clark Mtn Rd, Lilesville, 3pm with Rev Jonathan Spencer of Snow Hill AME Zion, Mt Gilead

### Appreciation Service

For Associate Ministers at West Rocky Ford Baptist Church, 3pm with Rev Eddie Lee of Saron MBC

**84th Anniversary Of Senior Choir** at Cedar Creek MBC, 3pm with Rev Freddie Little. All are welcome

### SEPTEMBER 15 - 18 Homecoming & Revival

At First Baptist Church, Sikes Ave in Wadesboro. Homecoming Sun morning with Rev Asa Bell, Jr

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### SEPTEMBER 22 One Day Revival

At Henderson Grove MBC, 2:30pm with Rev J.N. Coble. All are welcome

### 12 Tribes Program

At House of Faith Outreach Ministries, 3pm. All are invited

### SEPTEMBER 28 Women's Conference

At Christ Chapel of Truth, Hwy 52 South in Wadesboro, 11am with Rev Amanda Zinnerman & Rev Tangula Diggs

### OCTOBER 12 Autumn Handbag Sale

at Harris Chapel AME Zion in Morven, 9am-12 noon

### OCTOBER 13 - 15 Special Free Conference

at North Wadesboro Baptist Church, 1211 N Greene St, Wadesboro, entitled "Jesus in the Old Testament." Featured speaker: James Jacob Prasch of Moriel Ministries. Sun-10am & 11am, Mon & Tue-7pm

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## Events

### SEPTEMBER 4 Free Groceries

For families in need Mobile Food Pantry & CHS Mobile Health Unit at First Baptist Church, 309 Lee Ave in Wadesboro. Register 8-10am. Call for details 704-694-2445

### SEPTEMBER 8 Griffin Reunion

Descendants of Milt Griffin at the homeplace, Hwy 218 in Polkton, 1pm. Info Jeff Griffin 704-695-2700

### Meet & Greet Book Signing

by local author Sandy Bruney, with her new book entitled "Morven." 2-4pm in the Drake Gallery next door to Ansonia Theatre, 110 S Rutherford St in Wadesboro. All are invited, refreshments served. Info 704-694-4950

### SEPTEMBER 9 50+ Club Meets

10:30am at Hampton B. Allen Library with country & gospel music program by the Harvard Street Band. Everyone is invited. Info 704-694-5177

### SEPTEMBER 10 Board of Commissioners Meet

6pm in Board Room, Suite 209, in Government Center, 101 S Greene St in uptown Wadesboro. Public Hearing regarding the proposed FY 2019-2020 Budget. To appear, sign up prior to meeting. Info 704-994-3201

### SEPTEMBER 13 Carnival in the Park

Hosted by Grace Senior Center at Little Park. Enjoy lunch, fun & games...all free! Info & register (by 9/6) 704-694-6616

### SEPTEMBER 13 & 14 Fundraiser Plate Sale

For Top Ladies of Distinction (TLOD) at Lilesville Star Lodge No.603 in Lilesville,

11:am-6pm. Donation \$. Info 704-695-2205

### SEPTEMBER 19 Party Meeting

Anson County Democratic Party, 6pm at party office, located next door to La Fogata in Wadesboro

### SEPTEMBER 21 Motorcycle Ride

Sponsored by the Wadesboro Police Dept to raise money for Shop with a Cop, the program that provides Christmas gifts to less fortunate Anson youth. Lunch provided. Donation \$20 per motorcycle. Registration 10am followed by the ride. Meet at Police Dept location, 212 S Rutherford St. Info 704-475-2695

### ONGOING EVENTS

**Direct and Counter Cyclical Program Sign-ups**

Call the Farm Service Agency Office at 704-694-3516 ext. 2 to complete eligibility forms

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By Ed McBride

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