

THE EXPRESS

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

Mobile Food Market Rolls in on Thursday

Fresh produce, health checks, and helpful hands offered free

The Anson Mobile Food Market is back this Thursday, October 16, at 4:00 p.m. sharp, setting up at Wadesboro Primary School, 1542 US 52 South. Think of it as a rolling farmers’ market that delivers the goods - literally. Shoppers can expect bags filled with fresh vegetables, fruit, and bread (when available). And this market isn’t just about filling your pantry - it’s about boosting your health. Free blood pressure and blood sugar checks will be offered, along with booths covering healthy living tips and resources. Elderly or disabled attendees don’t have to worry about juggling heavy bags - volunteers will be on hand to help. Everyone in Anson County is welcome, and no paperwork or proof of income is required. Just show up, smile, and get ready to head home with six to eight different types of produce. **Nothing is required to receive food, just come.** The Mobile Food Market, sponsored by the Anson County Extension and its partners, is more than a grocery stop. It’s an educational event targeting two top health concerns in Anson County: tobacco use and hypertension. Local agencies will be set up with information, services, and encouragement. So mark your calendar for October 16 - it’s free, it’s fresh, and it’s one market you don’t want to miss.

Governor Stein, NCDHHS Announce More Than \$6.5 Billion in Medical Debt Erased in North Carolina

More than 2.5 million residents see life-changing financial relief through state program

More than 2.5 million North Carolinians are breathing easier after learning that a combined \$6.5 billion in medical debt has been erased through North Carolina’s Medical Debt Relief Program, Governor Josh Stein and NC Health and Human Services Secretary Dev Sangvai announced this week. The milestone marks one of the largest medical debt relief efforts in U.S. history, the result of collaboration between NCDHHS, 99 North Carolina hospitals, and Undue Medical Debt, a nonprofit that purchases and forgives debt at scale. “Medical debt is a tremendous weight keeping so many families from financial security, and, unlike most other forms of debt, it’s not a choice,” said Governor Stein. “Today’s announcement will free people from financial stress so they can focus on getting healthy. I thank Governor Roy Cooper, DHHS Secretary Kody Kinsley, and the hospitals that partnered with the State of North Carolina to make this life-changing news possible. I urge the General Assembly to keep this momentum going by coming back to the table and fully funding Medicaid.” Secretary Sangvai echoed the governor’s remarks, emphasizing that relieving debt is a “pivotal step forward” in improving access to care and emotional well-being for residents struggling with medical costs. Allison Sesso, CEO of Undue Medical Debt, praised North Carolina’s “innovative approach,” saying it both wipes out existing debt and incentivizes long-term, pro-patient policies that prevent future medical debt from accumulating. “We’re thrilled that all 99 hospitals have signed on to this initiative,” she said. “We hope this collaboration serves as a model for other states.” The program—approved in July 2024 and made possible without using state funds—was built into the state’s Healthcare Access and Stabilization Program (HASP), which launched alongside Medicaid expansion. To qualify for enhanced HASP payments, hospitals were required to forgive medical debt for low- and middle-income patients, expand charity care, streamline eligibility processes, and stop reporting medical debt to credit agencies. North Carolinians eligible for relief do not need to take any action. Letters confirming debt forgiveness are being sent directly to affected individuals by hospitals and Undue Medical Debt - more than 255,000 letters this week alone, with more to follow. Unlike most forms of debt, medical debt is rarely voluntary and can severely damage credit, block access to housing, and discourage people from seeking care. This initiative is designed not only to erase past debt but also to safeguard families from falling into new cycles of medical hardship. Governor Stein called the program “a model for how government and healthcare partners can work together to improve lives,” reaffirming the administration’s commitment to long-term investments in preventive care, access, and health equity across the state. For details about eligibility and the Medical Debt Relief Program, visit the NCDHHS website or the Frequently Asked Questions page at ncdhhs.gov.

Library’s Masquerade Book Bash is Friday!

Get ready to trade your library card for a masquerade mask - Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting its first-ever Masquerade Book Bash this Friday, October 17, at 6:00 p.m. at the Lockhart Taylor Center. It’s part fundraiser, part party, and all-around literary fun (with slightly fewer shushing librarians than usual). The evening will feature music, food, and entertainment - perfect for anyone who enjoys a good plot twist with their dinner roll. Guests are invited to don their finest mystery masks while mingling, laughing, and perhaps pretending they just finished reading War and Peace. Tickets are \$50 each, or you can splurge on an 8-seat table for \$400 and feel like the head of your own book club dynasty. All proceeds help the library purchase up-to-date equipment, furniture, and supplies for year-round programs serving children, teens, young adults, and seniors. “It’s a fun way to support the library while having a little mystery in your evening,” said one volunteer. “And yes, you can absolutely check out the punch bowl without a library card.” For more information - or to reserve your seat at the literary event of the season - contact Hampton B. Allen Library at 704-694-5177.



5 p.m.; train rides 10 a.m., 11 a.m., 1 p.m., 2 p.m.; costume contests 11:45 a.m. and 2:45 p.m. Sun., Oct. 19: Hours 12 p.m.–5 p.m.; train rides 1 p.m., 2 p.m., 3 p.m.; costume contest 2:45 p.m. **• Tickets** (Combination = event + train ride) Combo tickets: \$18.50–\$22.75 including fees, plus tax; kids under 3 ride free (which makes sense—they’re already fun-size). Event-only admission: \$9.75–\$12 including fees, plus tax; under 3 free. Members ride free all day, which is the best kind of phantom fare. Before or after your ride, stroll the grounds for the Scarecrow Stroll (Oct. 11–26)—a harvest runway show starring scarecrows created by local businesses, civic groups, community organizations, and talented neighbors. Vote for your favorite; the winner gets bragging rights and eternal straw-quality fame. The museum is located at 1 Samuel Spencer Dr., Spencer, NC 28159 (mailing: 411 Salisbury Ave., Spencer, NC 28159). Regular hours are 9 a.m.–5 p.m. Tuesday–Saturday and 12–5 p.m. Sunday (closed Monday), though event days have their own delightful schedule. Reserve your spot—and your best “boo!”—at www.nctransportationmuseum.org/halloween-train.

Wildfires Are No Joke

Prepare, prevent, and stay smoke-ready this fall

Fall in North Carolina brings cooler weather, pumpkin spice, and unfortunately, more wildfires. The N.C. Forest Service is reminding everyone that while lightning strikes and powerlines sometimes spark flames, human activity is still responsible for more than 99% of wildfires. In other words, if your campfire escapes, that’s probably on you. From July 1, 2024, through June 30, 2025, firefighters responded to nearly 5,600 wildfires that burned more than 34,000 acres. Backyard debris burning, vehicle use, and good old-fashioned carelessness continue to be common culprits. Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler noted that with Western North Carolina still littered with hurricane debris - more than 800,000 acres of damaged forestland from Hurricane Helene - keeping flames at bay is more important than ever. The Forest Service wants homeowners to treat their properties like contestants in the “Least Flammable Yard Contest.” Some tips: **•** Clear pine needles, leaves, and anything else burnable from your roof, gutters, and fence lines. **•** Store cushions, mats, plants, and decorations away from decks and porches, as these can turn into ember magnets. **•** Screen windows and seal vents so your home doesn’t burn from the inside out. **•** Rake mulch and leaves at least five feet away from your house. **•** Trim shrubs or branches within five feet and cut back overhanging limbs. **•** Move woodpiles, spare lumber, vehicles, and boats at least 30 feet away...yes, even Uncle Joe’s “project car.” **•** If evacuation is ordered, close doors, windows...even pet doors. Embers love easy entryways. **And if you insist on burning, remember:** **•** Get a valid permit at any N.C. Forest Service office or at apps.ncagr.gov/burnpermits. **•** Don’t burn on dry, windy days. **•** Keep your fire small, not skyscraper tall. **•** Have a hose, bucket, rake, and shovel ready - and keep your phone nearby. **•** Skip the kerosene and gasoline unless you like explosive surprises. **•** Drown charcoal and campfires until embers are cold enough to touch. No water? Use dirt or sand. **•** Never leave your fire unattended. Babysit it until bedtime. Where there’s fire, there’s smoke. Residents in high-risk areas should prepare for wildfire smoke, especially sensitive groups like kids, older adults, and people with heart or lung conditions. Stay tuned to real-time air quality information at: 1) ncair.org, 2) airquality.climate.ncsu.edu, and 3) airnow.gov. So before you light a match this fall, think twice. After all, marshmallows belong on a stick, not on the evening news. To learn more about preventing wildfires, visit preventwildfire.nc.org.

Community Night • CTE Fall Fest • Meet at the 50

Friday, October 24 at Anson High School Stadium

Anson County Schools and Anson High School invite everyone to a night full of Bearcat pride as they celebrate Community Night, CTE Fall Fest, and the beloved “Meet at the 50” tradition - all in one exciting evening. This special event honors K–6 students, middle school football and cheer teams, and Parks & Recreation football players for their dedication, teamwork, and school spirit. Families, friends, and fans are encouraged to fill the stands in orange, blue, and white to support our students and schools! **Event Schedule:** **• 4:30–6:00 p.m. – CTE Fall Fest:** Enjoy food, fun, and hands-on activities hosted by South Piedmont’s Career & Technical Education programs. **• 6:10 p.m. – Student Lineup:** Students report to the track near the scoreboard. **• 6:25 p.m. – Community Night Track Walk:** Students walk the track with their schools to show their Bearcat pride. One adult may accompany each elementary student. **• 6:40 p.m. – Meet at the 50:** Kindergarten students and senior fall athletes, senior cheerleaders, and senior band members meet at midfield to pass down the Bearcat Spirit. **• 6:50 p.m. – National Anthem** performed by the Anson High Band. **• 6:55 p.m. – Coin Toss** with team captains. **• 7:00 p.m. – Kickoff:** The Bearcats face off against the Forest Hills Yellow Jackets as the band plays the Fight Song and the team charges the field. **Admission Information:** **•** Elementary Students – Receive one free admission ticket through their school. **•** Middle School Football & Cheer – Admitted free when wearing their uniform or jersey. **•** Parks & Recreation Players – Receive free admission if enrolled in an Anson County elementary school and wearing their jersey. ******* All students must be accompanied by an adult (21 or older). **Adult Tickets:** **•** Regular admission applies. **•** Cash is not accepted. **•** Tickets may be purchased at the gate using Tap and Pay (credit/debit) or online at ansonschools.org → Athletics → More → Tickets (online tickets include a small fee). Families are encouraged to arrive early to avoid long lines and to take part in the CTE Fall Fest before kickoff. Come celebrate our students, cheer for the Bearcats, and be part of a growing Anson County tradition!

Chair Exercise Classes at the Library

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

Halloween Train Rolls Into Spencer with Boo-tiful Rides, Candy, And Costume Glory

All aboard the spook-express! The N.C. Transportation Museum is steaming into Halloween with a family-friendly Halloween Train that delivers more thrills than a surprise squeaky floorboard. Bring your little monsters (and your well-behaved grown-ups) on Oct. 18, 19, and 25 for themed train rides, hayrides, games, temporary tattoos, music, candy stops, a kids’ costume contest, a scavenger hunt, and the kind of photo ops your relatives will text back with eleven pumpkin emojis. Costumes are encouraged - just keep them family-friendly. If your outfit can’t fit through a railcar doorway, it’s probably a museum exhibit. **• When It’s Happening** Sat., Oct. 18 & Sat., Oct. 25: Hours 9 a.m. to

The Anson County NAACP Meets October 27

All are welcome
“Each one reach one”

The Anson County Branch of the NAACP will meet on Monday, October 27, at 6:30 p.m. at Ebenezer Baptist Church, 612 Salisbury Street, Wadesboro. Come hear what’s happening, add your voice, and bring a friend. Meetings are open to the community and held on the fourth Monday of each month. For details contact Branch President Sinic Marsh at mrrshs6@yahoo.com.

Anson County Board of Commissioners Meet October 21

The second October meeting of the Anson County Board of Commissioners takes place on Tuesday, October 21 at 6 p.m. Meetings take place in the Board Room, Suite 209, of the Anson County Government Center which is located at 101 South Greene Street in uptown Wadesboro. To schedule an appearance at a board meeting, please sign up prior to the meeting. Information is available at 704-994-3201. The Commissioners’ board meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel. Also, the videos are archived so they can be viewed at any time. Visit youtube.com and search for Anson Commissioners.

Crisis Ministries Provides Free Food Tuesday Through Friday

Anson Crisis Ministries distributes free food items to over 1,000 families each month. This adds up to an estimated 50,000 people a year in Anson and surrounding counties. They serve families Tuesday through Friday, from 8:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. Anson Crisis Ministries is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-2445.

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