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

# **Unofficial Municipal Election Results**

The results are in for the 2025 municipal elections across Anson County held on Tuesday, November 4, with voters turning out to select mayors and town

commissioners/council members in several local races. With such a low number of votes, several results could be changed by provisional votes. The Express emailed the Anson County Board of Elections requesting information about provisional votes, but did not receive a response.

Town of Lilesville (Mayoral race & 5 commissioner **seats available)** In the race for mayor, Bernice Bennett won overwhelmingly with 46 votes (97.87%), defeating one write-in challenger who received 1 vote (2.13%).

In the race for town commissioner, voters selected five members to the board. John Montgomery led the field with 39 votes (25.66%), followed by Christopher Harrington with 33 (21.71%), Charles "Chuck" Cook with 25 (16.45%), Gaye Harrington with 24 (15.79%), and Jason Clarke with 22 (14.47%).

There were 9 write-in votes (5.92%) cast.

Town of Morven (3 council seats available) For council member, Rhonda Johnson Liles received the most support with 19 votes (35.19%), followed closely by Marjorie Cole with 18 (33.33%) and Alvis "Al" Snow with 14 (25.93%). There were 3 write-in votes (5.56%).

Town of Peachland (3 council seats available) Peachland voters chose three council members from a competitive field. Mary Sturdivant Burns topped the results with 56 votes (28.87%), followed by James Hamilton with 48 (24.74%) and Stephen D. Marsh with 36 (18.56%). Lori Rowell earned 30 (15.46%), Leigh Michele Taylor received 23 (11.86%), and there was 1 write-in vote (0.52%). Town of Polkton (Mayoral race & 5 commissioner seats available) In the race for mayor, Cynthia Williams secured victory with 60 votes (61.22%), while Myra Thomas Dalgleish received 38 (38.78%).

For town commissioner, the top five vote-getters were Johnny Faulk with 52 votes (22.32%), Sissy Stegall with 48 (20.60%), W. Clifton Martin III with 47 (20.17%), Jimmy Hildreth with 45 (19.31%), and Russell Goodwin with 36 (15.45%). Write-in candidates received 5 votes (2.15%).

Town of Wadesboro (3 council seats available) In Wadesboro's crowded field for council member, the top three finishers were Tamara Garris with 351 votes (14.94%), Donald Sellers with 314 (13.36%), and Stephen Greene with 293 (12.47%). Close behind were Ida Cason and John Liles, each with 291 votes (12.38%). Other candidates included Kevin Adams (205), Jerel Miller (204), Lawrence Parsons (121), Michael Livingston (113), Alexandria Smith (48), Rebecca King (22), Jason Rigsby (11), Chandra Waller (10), and Steve Harris (4).

There were 2 write-in votes (0.09%).

# **Honoring Our Heroes this Veterans Day**

#### A time to reflect, remember, and give thanks

Each year on November 11, communities across America pause to honor the brave men and women who have served in the United States Armed Forces. Veterans Day is more than a date on the calendar, it's a heartfelt tribute to those who stood in defense of freedom at home and abroad.

Originally known as Armistice Day, the holiday was first observed in 1919 to mark the end of World War I. It later became Veterans Day, expanding to recognize all who have worn the nation's uniform - from the battlefields of the past to those still serving today.

Across Anson County and beyond, schools, civic groups, and local organizations will hold ceremonies and parades to show gratitude for those who sacrificed so much. Whether through a handshake, a flag display, or a simple "thank you," each gesture reminds our veterans that their service will never be forgotten.

This Veterans Day, take a moment to reach out to a veteran in your life. Listen to their stories, thank them for their courage, and remember that freedom isn't free, it's protected every day by those willing to serve.

# **Grace Senior Center Hosts** Veterans Day Breakfast November 10

Grace Senior Center will honor those who served with its annual Veterans Day Breakfast on Monday, November 10, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m. at the center, located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, just past IGA on the left.

All area veterans and their spouses are invited to attend and enjoy a morning of appreciation, warm food, and friendly fellowship. The event is free and open to veterans of all branches of the U.S. Armed Forces.

Grace Senior Center staff and volunteers will serve a hearty breakfast and take time to recognize and thank veterans for their service and dedication to the nation.

For more information about the Veterans Day Breakfast or other upcoming events, call Grace Senior Center at (704) 694-6616.

### North Carolina Ranks #2 in the Nation for Workplace Safety

North Carolina has officially become one of the safest places in America to earn a paycheck - coming in at an 17 percentage points, from 35% to 53%. impressive #2 in the nation for workplace safety, according to a new study by WalletHub. That's right: we're not just keeping our sweet tea balanced, we're keeping our workers upright.

The ranking comes thanks to the hard work of the North Carolina Department of Labor (NCDOL), employers, and employees who apparently know better than to run with scissors or text while on forklifts. Labor Commissioner

Luke Farley credited the accomplishment to "a culture of safety," though some say it might also have something to do with that handy invention called common sense. WalletHub's study looked at workplace injuries, illnesses, and even emergency preparedness, meaning that Tar Heel

(or a misfired nail gun) throws their wav. Coming in second may sting for those competitive types, but NCDOL assures us they'll keep pushing toward

that coveted #1 spot - without tripping on any extension cords along the way. To view the full WalletHub report, visit:

wallethub.com/edu/safest-states-to-live-in/4566.



South Piedmont Community College staff members and students turned out in full Halloween spirit for the annual Trunk or Treat event at the Polkton campus, offering candy and fun for local families

# Trunk or Treat Rolls Into Polkton Campus with Sweet Success

SPCC staff turn vehicles into candy-filled masterpieces for community fun

South Piedmont Community College brought back its annual Trunk or Treat event at the L.L. Polk Campus in Polkton, delighting families with candy, costumes, and creativity. Staff transformed their vehicles into colorful, kid-approved candy stations with the precision of a pit crew and the energy of a marching band on a sugar rush. Dressed in an array of fun and festive costumes, they added to the lively Halloween atmosphere that filled the campus. The free community event ran from 6:00 to 8:00 p.m. on Thursday, October 30, with organizers delivering on their promise of thousands of pounds of candy and plenty of smiles.



Families and children from across Anson County packed the South Piedmont Community College Polkton campus for Irunk or Ireat, enjoying candy, costumes, and a night of festive fun

# **SPCC Named Among Nation's Top 200**

# College eligible for \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence

The Aspen Institute has named South Piedmont Community College as one of the 200 institutions eligible to compete for the \$1 million Aspen Prize for Community College Excellence, the nation's highest recognition of achievement and performance among two-year colleges. The 200 colleges were selected based on student outcomes data, including retention, completion, transfer, and bachelor's attainment rates.

Started in 2010, this is the ninth cycle of the Aspen Prize and the first time South Piedmont Community College has been named a top-200 college.

"We are thrilled to be recognized among the Aspen Institute's top 200 colleges. This honor belongs to every faculty and staff member whose passion and dedication make South Piedmont a place where students thrive. Our faculty and staff work tirelessly for what matters most: empowering students to reach their full potential. This honor reflects our dedication to that shared mission," said President Dr. Stacy Waters-Bailey.

The 200 colleges represent the breadth and diversity of the community college sector, located in urban, rural, and suburban areas across the country. Some focus primarily on workforce programs, while others emphasize transfer and bachelor's attainment, or a combination of the two.

"The Aspen Prize rewards colleges that achieve the kind of outcomes that actually matter to students — completing college degree programs that, in turn, lead to lifelong success," said Josh Wyner, executive director of the Aspen Institute College Excellence Program. "Aspen Prize winners offer a powerful message: Community colleges can deliver the kind of life-changing education that makes the American Dream real.' Community colleges educate nearly six million students nationwide, yet outcomes often

lag in both graduation rates and post-graduation success. The Aspen Prize process identifies and celebrates those institutions that demonstrate stronger results, providing a roadmap for others to follow. Among the data points contributing to South Piedmont's selection:

Between fall 2017 and fall 2021, the College's graduation rate increased by

- Graduation rates for underrepresented students rose 17 points to 43%, and for low-income students rose 8 points to 39%.
- The number of students earning associate degrees increased by 53% between 2020-2021
- First-year retention rose four points overall and six points among part-time students

and 2024-2025, with degrees earned by underrepresented students increasing by 70%. between fall 2019 and fall 2023. The 200 eligible colleges will now submit applications and undergo a rigorous review

process leading to the selection of the Aspen Prize winner in spring 2027. Over the next 20 months, finalists will be evaluated based on student outcomes, including completion,

transfer, employment, and post-graduation wages, as well as on the institutional practices driving those results. 'Among these 200 colleges are some really special places that deliver strong and workers aren't just safe - they're ready for whatever life improving outcomes for students across the board," Wyner said. "Our job over the

coming 20 months is to gather more data and work with a deep bench of experts to sess which of these 200 stand out so we can not only honor them with a monetary award, but also draw attention to practices other colleges can replicate.' This marks the first time since the Aspen Prize's inception that 200 colleges are eligible to apply, expanded from 150. In addition to federal data, more than 600 colleges

authorized the use of National Student Clearinghouse data on degree completion, transfer, and bachelor's attainment rates for full- and part-time students. The full list of eligible institutions can be found at www.aspeninstitute.org.

# Pluckin', Strummin' and Slightly Off-Key: **Bluegrass Night** Returns to the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library will once again host its famous (or at least locally legendary) Bluegrass Acoustic Set on Wednesday, November 13, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the library's Little Theater. That's right - the same place where silence is golden by day will echo with fiddles, banjos, and the occasional "Wait, what key are we in?" by night.

All musicians, singers, and brave spectators are welcome, no matter your age or skill level. If you can hum, strum, or at least clap mostly on beat, you'll fit right in. Children 12 and under must bring an adult preferably one who can hold a tune or at least hold their ears.

These sessions are a celebration of raw talent, neighborly spirit, and the noble art of playing three chords and calling it a concert. So, dust off that mandolin, tune your guitar (close enough is fine), and come make joyful noise with fellow music lovers who still believe every song sounds better with a banjo.

Questions? Call 704-694-5177 — but don't expect them to explain what key "bluegrass" is actually in.