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Anson County Covid-19 Update - Vaccines for Kids 5 and Older

Booster doses are available.
Ansonians are urged to get vaccinated.
Flu shots are available at the Health Department.

The latest information posted by the Anson County Health Department on Monday, November 15 showed 4,005 total Covid-19 cases (51 more than 11/8), with 111 active. There was an additional death from Covid-19 in the last week, bringing the total deaths to 84.

Vaccines are available for everyone 5 years old and older, including walk-in clinics. (Children 5-11 by appointment only.) Vaccine boosters are available. They are free, and all you have to do is call the Health Department at 704-694-5188 for more information. Walk-in clinics are on Tuesdays and Thursdays, 8:30 to 11:00 a.m. and 1 to 3:30 p.m.

NOTE: This Thursday, November 18 the Health Department will not offer booster shots because of a mandatory training day. The Health Department is located at 110 West Ashe Street in Wadesboro. The telephone number is 704-694-5188.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported that statewide as of Monday, November 15 there were 1,361 new cases, with 18,437 deaths and 1,039 hospitalized. 72% of adults in NC had at least one dose of vaccine, 68% were fully vaccinated. As of October 25 there were 1,183 new cases.

AnsonEDP Director John Marek: "Next two weeks will be critical."

AnsonEDP Executive Director John Marek is mincing no words about the importance of the upcoming State budget vote to Anson County. "The next two weeks will be critical to the future of the Anson economy. The two line items in the proposed budget directly impacting product development in Anson, as well as the funding for regional product development through NCSE, are game-changers. But only if the budget is passed."

The line items Marek speaks of are funding for a sewer project connecting the recently opened Atlantic Gateway Logistics Park into the main county sewer system, and a revolving loan fund to facilitate the development and construction of speculative industrial buildings in the county. They are in the current budget proposal at \$4 million and \$8 million, respectively, but Marek expects the final numbers in the conference budget which will be voted on to be somewhat lower. "As long as we get a substantial portion of the funds requested we can move forward and make up the difference from other funding sources."

Marek worked with State Representative Mark Brody and State Senator Tom McInnis to get the line items in the House and Senate budgets, and they survived reconciliation, which was a big first step. The General Assembly is expected to put the conference budget up for a vote next week, and it is widely expected to pass. It will then be sent to the governor who has the option of signing it within 10 days, vetoing it, or allowing it to pass without his signature.

The governor has rejected the last two budgets because they did not include Medicaid expansion and a handful of his other social priorities. The current budget does not include the expansion but does compromise in some other areas. Raleigh pundits think there may be enough in there to prompt the Governor to allow the budget to become law without his signature. Rep. Jason Saine, a Lincolnton Republican and head budget writer in the House, believes there is a one-in-three chance the governor will sign the conference budget or allow it to become law.

If the governor vetoes the conference budget it may not be dead, though. Republican lawmakers have worked closely with moderate Democrats on the budget and believe they may have the three-fifths majority needed to override the veto.

Funding for product development is critical because Anson County currently has very limited options for a company seeking an industrial site and almost no options for a company that is looking for a building. According to Marek, about 75% of the inquiries he receives from companies looking to relocate specify a building. "Right now, the two best buildings we have available are both under 25,000 square feet and have relatively low ceiling heights. The majority of requests we get are for buildings of at least 50,000 square feet and 25 to 30-foot ceilings. There's nothing in our current inventory that meets those requirements."

In 2019 AnsonEDP entered into an agreement with a private-sector developer to build a 50,000 square foot speculative building at the Wadesboro Industrial Park. The town secured a \$1.7 million grant for infrastructure improvements and the project was scheduled to break ground in the spring of 2020. When COVID hit, the developer understandably put the project on hold, and subsequent financial issues have put their participation in doubt. "We would still like to collaborate with them on future projects, but if the revolving loan fund is approved, we are moving ahead without them at WIP."

Similarly, the sewer project is crucial for the full development of the Atlantic Gateway Logistics Park. The first tenant, Pee Dee Electric Cooperative, recently opened their new HQ building with a septic system, but a sanitary sewer hook-up is a requirement for most of the light industrial, warehousing, and logistics operations AnsonEDP hopes to draw to the park. It would also open up other development opportunities for the thousands of acres of property surrounding the park.

Marek will be keeping a close eye on Raleigh between now and Thanksgiving, hoping that the holidays hold unprecedented new opportunities for Anson County.

Addiction Recovery Support Group Meets Online on Wednesdays

The Virtual Addiction Recovery Support Group has resumed meetings, and they are now conducted online. The meetings are available to anyone who is interested each Wednesday, from 5 to 6 p.m.

For information on how to participate contact Kelly Kirk, NC Certified Peer Support Specialist, Registered Certified Alcohol & Drug Counselor, Certified Recovery Coach at the Richmond County DHHS Peer Support Program. Her office number is 910-997-8424, email is Kelly.kirk@richmondnc.com.



TD Burns Awarded Order of the Long Leaf Pine

Thomas David (TD) Burns, formerly of Wadesboro, was awarded the prestigious Order of the Long Leaf Pine on November 3 at his home in Charlotte. This award is the highest civilian honor that can be bestowed by the State of NC and was signed by Governor Roy Cooper.

Mr. Burns is a longtime science and hobby business owner, inventor, author, mineralogist and historian. He has contributed many rocks and minerals, fossils, collections and paintings to the Wadesboro Rotary Planetarium and Science Center. Mr. Burns has been a major donor to the Anson County Historical Society where there is a special TD Burns section for visitors to view, and can be used to conduct research.

Burns was born and raised in Wadesboro, served in the US Navy in World War II, and after the war he returned to his hometown of Wadesboro working in various businesses. He met the love of his life, Jean, when she came home with her college roommate on a visit to Anson County.

TD and Jean opened the first true science and hobby store in the United States, Science Hobbies in Charlotte, and continued to operate that and two other related business for over fifty years.

Both TD and Jean have strived to help thousands of school children develop a love for science through all of their businesses.

Over the years TD has published a novel, numerous science and historical articles, papers, pamphlets, and periodicals. At age 95 he continues to write about history in Anson County and play a major role by providing learning experiences for our Anson County science students.

Tommy Allen said on behalf of the Anson County Historical Society, "The Anson County Historical Society salutes TD Burns for this award and his many lifetime achievements."

Dallas Devon Leak is Sentenced to More than Eight Years for Federal Firearms Offense



Acting U.S. Attorney William T. Stetzer announced today that Dallas Devon Leak, 28, of Wadesboro, N.C. was sentenced to 100 months in prison and two years of supervised release for a federal firearms offense.

Vincent C. Palozzi, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Charlotte Field Division, and Chief Thedis Spencer of the Wadesboro Police Department (Wadesboro PD) join Acting U.S. Attorney Stetzer in making today's announcement.

According to court documents and today's sentencing hearing, on April 8, 2020, at approximately 10:17 p.m., the Wadesboro Police Department received a 911 call regarding a burglary and shooting at a residence in Anson County. The officers who responded to the scene found a male victim inside the residence with an apparent gunshot wound to his leg. Officers located Leak during a subsequent search of a wooded area behind the victim's home. When the officers found Leak, he was lying face down on top of a firearm, which was loaded with a large capacity magazine and one round in the chamber. Over the course of the investigation, law enforcement determined that Leak's firearm had previously been reported stolen.

On January 13, 2021, Leak pleaded guilty to possession of a firearm by a convicted felon. He is currently in federal custody and will be transferred to custody of the federal Bureau of Prisons upon designation of a federal facility. In making today's announcement, Acting U.S. Attorney Stetzer thanked the ATF and the Wadesboro Police Department for their investigation of the case.

Assistant United States Attorney Regina Pack, of the U.S. Attorney's Office in Charlotte, prosecuted the case. This case is being prosecuted as part of the joint federal, state, and local Project Safe Neighborhoods (PSN) Program, the centerpiece of the Department of Justice's violent crime reduction efforts. Through PSN, a broad spectrum of stakeholders work together to identify the most pressing violent crime problems in the community and develop comprehensive solutions to address them. As part of this strategy, PSN focuses enforcement efforts on the most violent offenders and partners with locally based prevention and reentry programs for lasting reductions in crime.

Open Enrollment for HealthCare.gov Health Insurance

Four out of five enrollees will pay less than \$10 a month for quality health coverage

Officials with the N.C. Department of Insurance remind residents that Open Enrollment for the 2022 Federal Health Insurance Exchange has begun for coverage to start Jan. 1, 2022.

Consumers enrolling in a plan on HealthCare.gov are guaranteed to receive comprehensive coverage, with no pre-existing condition exclusions or markups. All health plans on the Marketplace must cover doctor's visits, pre-existing conditions, hospitalizations, mental health care, maternity care, prescription drugs, laboratory services, and more. In addition, consumers receive free preventive care services, such as immunizations and health screenings. Testing and treatment of COVID-19 are considered essential health benefits and are covered by all HealthCare.gov plans.

"Open enrollment is an opportunity for residents to choose the best insurance plan to meet their needs if they do not have health insurance through their employer or through private means," said Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey. "This year, consumers may be able to tap into subsidy enhancements to provide tax credits that may be larger than last year to offset premiums. There is also no income cap for subsidy eligibility."

President Biden said, "This year, thanks to the American Rescue Plan, coverage is more affordable and accessible than ever. Americans purchasing coverage through the Affordable Care Act have seen their premiums decrease to historic lows — a drop of \$67 a month on average, saving families over \$800 annually. In fact, four in five customers can find quality coverage for less than \$10 a month. If you don't receive insurance through your employer, there are a range of quality, affordable coverage options available to you."

Eligibility for Advanced Premium Tax Credit Subsidies or APTCS is determined through the enrollment process at www.healthcare.gov.

Residents are guaranteed to be insurable and are encouraged to sign up for health insurance if they meet one of the following conditions:

- They have current qualifying ACA coverage but may want to change their plan for 2022.
- They don't have health insurance through their employer or their spouse's employer.
- They don't have government coverage (such as veterans, Medicare and Medicaid).
- They are older than age 26 and can no longer be on a parent's health insurance.

To enroll in or change ACA health insurance policies for 2022, consumers may visit www.healthcare.gov. Information is available at ncnavigator.net or 1-855-733-3711.

Also, consumer specialists within the N.C. Department of Insurance are available to answer any questions about health insurance by calling 1-855-408-1212.

ACA Open Enrollment for 2022 runs Nov. 1 through Dec. 15, 2021.

Anson County Schools Covid Dashboard Updated 11-12-2021

Location/Site	Quarantined Students	Quarantined Employees	Positive Cases Students	Positive Cases Employees
Anson Early College High School	1	0	1	0
Anson High School	24	0	7	0
Anson Middle School	12	0	5	0
Ansonville Elementary	10	0	5	0
Lilesville Elementary	2	0	2	0
Morven Elementary	0	0	0	0
Peachland-Polkton Elementary	1	0	1	1
Wadesboro Elementary	2	0	0	0
Wadesboro Primary	2	0	4	0
District Office	N/A	1	N/A	1
Transportation	N/A	0	N/A	0
Maintenance	N/A	0	N/A	0
Child Nutrition/Cafeteria Employees	N/A	0	N/A	0
Total	54	1	25	2

*Student Enrollment as of 11/10/21 2,954 # of Employees 513
*Enrollment changes daily % of Employees Positive 0.39%
% of Students Positive 0.85%

A link to the dashboard is on the Anson County Schools Facebook page.

Eastview Cemetery Clean-Up Day is Saturday

The Friends of Eastview Cemetery will have a clean-up day this Saturday, November 20, beginning at 8:30 a.m. This is an endeavor to do some much needed maintenance work to remove debris and faded, out-of-season flowers, trim shrubbery and trees, and other things that need work.

The group plans to do these clean ups several times throughout the year in hopes of making Eastview Cemetery the beautiful and sacred place it should be. Families with loved ones buried there are encouraged to participate by bringing yard tools and garbage bags, and of course, a friend to help with the work.

More information may be found on the Friends of Eastview Cemetery Facebook page. Thank you in advance for any and all assistance with this worthwhile project.

Anson County Schools Thanksgiving Holiday Dates

- Tuesday, November 23 is Early Release Day
 - Elementary schools dismiss at 12:30 p.m.
 - Middle & high schools dismiss at 1:30 p.m.
- Wednesday, November 24 is optional teacher workday and non-student day
- Thursday & Friday, November 25 & 26 Thanksgiving holiday

Wadesboro Christmas Parade Entry Forms Due by November 24

Entry forms for the Uptown Wadesboro Christmas Parade are due by Wednesday, November 24. The parade is scheduled for Thursday, December 2, starting at 4:00 p.m. (rain or shine).

Participant entry forms are available at the uptown REV Center, located at 114 West Wade Street.

The deadline for professional float rentals is this Friday, November 19.

Vendors must obtain permits from the Town of Wadesboro in order to participate.

For more information or to request an entry form, contact Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. at (704) 694-4181 ext.3 or email: uptownwadesboro@windstream.net.

The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com