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New Worthless Check Program for Anson County

District Attorney Michael Parker has announced the launching of a new worthless check program in Anson County. The program is designed to allow merchants who are the victims of worthless check writers to collect the restitution in a more efficient manner by avoiding court appearances until necessary. Parker said, "I have been trying to get this program in our district for more than two years. I am proud to announce that it has finally arrived."

Legislation was first passed in 1997 by the North Carolina General Assembly to establish a worthless check pilot program in three counties. By 1999 it was apparent that these programs were successful and popular in those counties. Now the worthless check program is in twenty-nine counties. In 2005 the program revenue, including merchant restitution fees and state fees, was \$3,872,223 on 58,309 worthless checks. The average number of cases per year is 37,300.

Parker said, "These statistics are on the checks reported to the worthless check program in the counties currently using the program. However there are many victims who simply do not report these crimes because of the burden of coming to court to prosecute them is not justified by the amount they can recover. We hope this new program will make it easier for our local merchants to collect on bad checks."

"This program will benefit the merchants, the check passers and the courts," said Parker. "The merchants will be able to bring the checks and the information we need to our office at their convenience, and my worthless check Coordinator will attempt to collect on the check. If the check passer does not pay within 30 days, then a warrant will be issued and we can prosecute them. The program benefits the passer by allowing them to avoid a criminal record if they participate in the program. If the check is paid, there will be no prosecution. The passer can also save money by participating in the program. The administrative fee for the program is only \$60, less than \$150 court cost and any fine associated with conviction. The court system will benefit as well. If we can remove these worthless checks from the system it will help with the overcrowding we are experiencing in court, and will allow our prosecutors and judges to focus on the other pending cases that need prosecution."

The program will start in Anson County on January 1, 2008.

Here's how the program operates:

- The check taker first attempts to collect for the check by sending a certified letter to the check passer/writer, giving them ten days to respond.
- If, after fifteen days, the check passer/writer has failed to respond, the matter may be referred to the Worthless Check Program.
- If the check is eligible for collection the District Attorney will send a letter to the check passer/writer that explains the program and how to participate. The check passer/writer is given thirty days to respond.
- If the check passer/writer chooses to take advantage of the opportunity they must bring or mail the full restitution amount, the program fee and the payment form to the Clerk of Superior Court's office by the due date.
- The Clerk's office receipts the restitution and the program fee. The restitution is then mailed to the victim within seven days. The program fee is placed in the Collection for Worthless Checks fund to be forwarded to the Administrative Office of the Courts. This program fee is used to continue funding the program.
- If no response is received, criminal process may be issued.
- Once criminal process has been issued it will not be necessary for the victim to appear in District Court unless notified by the District Attorney's office.
- After a victim refers a check to the program the victim may not accept restitution directly from the check passer/writer. The check passer/writer must be referred directly to the District Attorney's office.
- Merchant packets containing the Worthless Check Program forms and complete information are available at the Anson County Magistrate's office, the District Attorney's office and the Clerk of Superior Court's office.

Checks not eligible for collection with this program include:

- Checks that are pre-dated or post-dated, or where an agreement was made to hold the check for later payment
- Checks without a driver's license or other identification number
- Checks not written or passed in Anson County
- Checks involving extensions of credit
- Third party checks
- Checks presented for collection by a party other than the payee
- Checks that are altered or are suspected of being forgeries

School's Out for Thanksgiving

Anson County Schools will be on holiday for Thanksgiving. Thanksgiving break begins on Wednesday, November 21.

Anson High School, New Tech School, Early College and Anson Middle School get out at 1:30 p.m. on Wednesday. All elementary and primary schools get out at 1:00 p.m. on Wednesday.

Schools will be back in session on Tuesday, November 27.

Harvest Men's Shelter Program Community Project Assistance

To develop work ethic, responsibility and discipline the House of Hope Transitional Housing Program of Harvest Ministries Outreach Center is now offering free volunteer labor to civic groups, community agencies, shut-in's, elderly and more who have projects or repairs needing completion.

Projects include, grass cutting, painting, clean-up, etc. This assistance will be offered free of charge. (Donations appreciated.)

For more information or to request assistance, please contact Steve Adams at 704-695-1655 or 704-695-2879.

Thank you for your help in building the lives of others.

Anson JROTC Scores 99.25% in Inspection



Cadet Major Kenneth Crawford, Battalion Executive Officer, reports to the Inspecting Officer.

On Friday, November 16, the Anson High School JROTC program received it's triannual formal inspection from the United States Army Cadet Command's Fourth Brigade headquarters, located at Fort Bragg, NC. At the end of the day when the score was tabulated...99.25%. While this score firmly places the Anson program among the best units in the nation, it does not set the record. The record score was a score of 99.6%, set in 2004, by the Anson JROTC program!

The day started with an inbriefing by the cadet staff to the Inspecting Officers, Dr Fern, Superintendent of Anson County Schools, and Dr Boothby, AHS Principal. Cadets actually manage the day to day operations of the program and they briefed on how they performed their duties. Cadet Lieutenant Colonel Maricues Collins, the serving Cadet Battalion Commander started the brief and was followed by Cadet Lieutenant Ashley Connor (Bn S-1), Cadet Captain Latrice Daniels (Bn S-3), Cadet Sergeant Felicia Maske (Bn S-4 NCO), and Cadet Sergeant Olivia Turner (Bn S-5 NCO). The inbriefing received a perfect score of 100%.

An extremely detailed inspection of Administration, Operations and Training, Logistics, and Public Affairs all received scores of 100%. An in ranks inspection of every cadet in the battalion was conducted; cadets questioned on curriculum and their uniform and appearance graded. The score was a 98%. Selected cadets were questioned in depth about curriculum taught in JROTC, citizenship skills, and

application of leadership skills - the score was a 97%. The Color Guard and Drill Team performed with the Drill Team obtaining a perfect score and the Color Guard a score of 95%. Cadet Attendance and participation received a score of 99%.

After lunch with the Superintendent and members of the cadet corps, the inspectors presented their out briefing. The Color Guard and Drill Team performance went so well that inspectors requested the Anson teams make a DVD which can be presented at the Instructor Seminar at Myrtle Beach in January 2008. Cadets were lauded for their efforts within their school and community. Their dedication and efforts were noted and then cadets were questioned about what they had learned about themselves and their unit in preparing for the inspection. The Cadet Battalion Commander noted a great pride and sense of accomplishment among those that put forth effort and helped the unit attain the scores. He talked about the challenges of leadership and being able to motivate cadets to work towards the goals.

When the score was given, there were smiles and tears all around. Success has a feeling like no other feeling, just knowing how hard you worked - how hard others worked, the pride that swells up in your chest and seems to Then you feel self conscious like maybe you're the only one. So you peek right and then left. Nope! They're all feeling it too. You can tell from the smiles and the tears in their eyes. What a great day.

Sharing Traditional Movies and TV Shows Make Holidays Happier

Holiday traditions are part of what makes a more thankful Thanksgiving, a merrier Christmas and a happier New Year. Families create their own special montage customary for each occasion and repeat them traditionally year after year. Why? It is with hopes of spreading good cheer and creating memories dear for time-honored family delight.

According to a poll conducted by MSN Encarta, holiday movies are one of Americans favorite traditions, and the top vote getters include: A Christmas Story, Miracle on 34th Street, Nightmare Before Christmas, Holiday Inn, Dr. Seuss' How the Grinch Stole Christmas, 29th Street,



One of America's favorite holiday films, "It's a Wonderful Life", is one of my favorites too.

It's A Wonderful, Life, Trading Places, A Christmas Carol, Planes, Trains and Automobiles, The Bishop's Wife, Home for the Holidays and Home Alone.

Looking over the list, I found some of my personal favorites among the thirteen. How the Grinch Stole Christmas, (the television version), has traditionally been my ideal way to kick off the holidays. It's A Wonderful Life is also among my top picks. Clarence, the Angel, is a noble character. And when the bells ring as the Angels receive their wings, it just puts a little jingle in my heart, which led me to ponder the question, "What is your favorite holiday film or show?" So I set out on my typical journey through the community in a quest to find the answers, all the while knowing you would come away with fond memories renewed, smiles on your faces and gladness in your hearts. For I know you well my friends, and I share your entertaining, heart-warming recounts with our readers.

Misty Harris told me her favorite holiday movie is The Christmas Story. "I always watched this at my grandparent's house. So every time I see it today, I think back to spending the holidays when I was a child with my grandparents."

Dale Rivers said, "Home Alone because I laugh just as hard now as I did the first time I saw it. It's one of those movies that allow you to forget all your troubles and just enjoy watching something hysterical." Connie Beam agreed. "Home Alone and Home Alone 2 make me think of when I was younger. I think they are a trip!"

Anne Hyatt emphatically said, "Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer because it always brings back wonderful memories of when me and my siblings sat on the floor in front of the fire place as children and watched it, anxiously awaiting the arrival of Santa, and now my children will be able to make

memories just like those."

Lynn Edwards has several favorites. "My family grew up watching Rudolph the Red-Nosed Reindeer, Frosty the Snow Man and Santa Claus is Coming to Town. I still love those because they take me back to Christmases from my childhood. My children, who are grown now, also grew up with these classics. I have purchased the movies so I will always have them to show to my grandchildren someday." Lynn went on to say, "This has been enjoyable for me to stop for a moment as I remember the magical time of a childhood Christmas."

"I always have a hard time choosing favorites," said Deana Lawhon, I would have to say, It's a Wonderful Life. It has such a good message that I need to be reminded of each year. It's one of the few movies that I own."

Every Christmas, TBS plays a 24-hour marathon of the movie, A Christmas Story, and Brandon, my husband, absolutely loves it," said Brandis Chewning. "So, we watch it at least once together each year, and laugh at all the same parts. The movie brings back memories of Christmas past and of our new Christmases together."

Wade Wallace remembered his favorite, National Lampoon's Christmas Vacation with a smiling face. "I love the humor and enjoy watching it every year. It's very comical."

Allison Covington answered, "Scrooged with Bill Murray. It is hilarious and I usually watch it with my brother. It makes me laugh." Terry Ponds said, "A Charlie Brown Christmas. The music is great and I enjoy watching that ratty old tree come to life," and Chris Polk agreed completely.

Alan Myers admitted, "The Nightmare Before Christmas is my favorite because it is so creative and different. Tim Burton, the creator, is a genius."

Of course there are hundreds of other traditions. This is just an assortment of good holiday fun from the big screen (or small) whichever you prefer. Maybe another's holiday treasure will become one of your new traditional favorites.

Everyone was so stirred by their recollections I'm heading out to rent a couple. And just think, a warm and cozy fire in the fireplace, a hot cup of cocoa, a fuzzy soft blanket and the one(s) you love sitting next to you as you watch an old or a new traditional holiday film. Now that's festive entertainment at its best guys and gals. Thanks for sharing with me your personal favorites, your smiles and your laughter. Have a cup of cheer and think of me during your viewing pleasure, and have a happy, heavenly holiday season Anson County! By Melanie Morse

State play-offs against North Gaston right here at home at 7:30 on Friday. I predict a toss up. *Lightnin'*

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