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Data Center Proposed for Lilesville

The latest Anson County Chamber of Commerce email newsletter included a letter from Drew Nations, CEO of North Carolina-based Engineered Land Solutions (ELS). The letter introduces Project Catalyst, a proposed data center campus that would be located at 1448 Clark Mountain Road in Lilesville, adjacent to the NCEMC Anson Plant.

The company is seeking to rezone property for the development, which would be constructed in phases over several years if approved. Nations outlines the company's projections for employment and tax revenue, along with proposed safeguards involving water consumption, electricity costs, noise and landscaping.

The developer estimates that the project could create 100 to 150 jobs with average annual salaries of $75,000 and generate more than $7 million in annual property tax revenue at half buildout. These figures are company projections, and the development remains subject to approval.

The following is Nations' letter as distributed through the Anson County Chamber of Commerce newsletter:

<< (*Beginning of the letter.*) Hey Everybody,

I've met some of you already and hope to meet all of you in person soon. My name is Drew Nations, and I'm the CEO of North Carolina-based Engineered Land Solutions ("ELS"), a real estate development company focused on data centers.

We are looking to rezone land in Anson County for a data center campus, called Project Catalyst. I wanted to introduce myself personally, share some information about the project, and offer to speak whenever it's convenient for you.

If you'd like to sit down for coffee or lunch or just have a phone conversation, please reach out to me personally by email at drew@engineeredlandsolutions.com or by phone - my cell is 704.989.0331.

Project Catalyst is expected to create 100-150 good-paying, local jobs with average salaries of $75,000. We are already coordinated with South Piedmont Community College on a workforce training program so local residents can work in the local jobs that Project Catalyst will create.

The project is estimated to deliver more than $7 million in annual property tax revenue to Anson County at half buildout. That means more revenue that county commissioners could use to increase school funding, invest in local infrastructure, lower property taxes, and more.

You can take a quick look at who we are and how we work by viewing the video at:

vimeo.com/1237313699?fl=pl&fe=sh

Project Catalyst will be located at 1448 Clark Mountain Road and adjacent to the NCEMC Anson Plant. It will include best-in-class facilities that house computer servers and network equipment used to store, process, and manage information. If approved, the project would be built in phases over several years

Here are a few important facts about what Project Catalyst would mean for Anson County:

• Responsible Water Usage: Project Catalyst will not use cooling systems that are open loop and use millions of gallons per day. Additionally, the Project will be prohibited from drawing water directly from wells, streams, ponds, or groundwater. Project Catalyst minimizes water needs by using a modern, efficient cooling system designed for responsible water usage and is committed to funding 100% of the water infrastructure improvements required to serve it, ensuring that those costs are not passed on to Anson County taxpayers or existing utility customers.

• Pay for our Power: Project Catalyst will pay for energy upgrades and electricity costs, so residents and businesses don't foot the bill.

• Noise Limits: Project Catalyst is designed to be a quiet neighbor. That's why we are proposing enforceable daytime and nighttime noise limits specific to our project, and independent monitoring requirements to make sure those limits are met.

• Buffers/External Aesthetics: Project Catalyst's buildings will sit well away from the property line and be screened from neighboring properties by vegetative buffers that include a combination of trees, landscaping, and berms.

• Local Jobs + Job Training: We want to make sure the jobs created by Project Catalyst go to people who live here. South Piedmont Community College is aware of our plans and stands ready to begin curriculum planning and program development to prepare local residents for careers at Project Catalyst in data center operations, electrical systems, fiber optics, facilities maintenance, and other skilled trades.

• Our Playbook for Development - Transparency: We have no NDAs with Anson County, and we are not asking the County for any tax incentives. We want Project Catalyst to be a good neighbor by operating quietly behind well-buffered landscaping, creating local jobs, and paying taxes like everybody else.

Hopefully that list is a breath of fresh air. We want to do development right, and I am personally committed to that goal - that's why I started this company. We'll be moving through Anson County's rezoning process in the near future, and I'd love your partnership during that journey.

In the meantime, anyone can sign up for emails on the Project Catalyst website (*www.projectcatalystnc.com*) to receive regular updates from me and the team on the project. We're excited for this process and look forward to meeting. -Drew >> *(This is the end of the letter.)*

Polkton Police Department Issues 85 Citations During Multi-Agency Patrol

Six law enforcement agencies join forces to target traffic violations, drugs and firearms offenses

The Polkton Police Department joined forces with five other law enforcement agencies on Wednesday, November 18 for a saturation patrol targeting motor vehicle violations and other violations of state law within the town. The coordinated enforcement effort resulted in 85 motor vehicle citations, along with several drug cases and firearm charges.

Assisting the Polkton Police Department were the Monroe Police Department, Norwood Police Department, Oakboro Police Department, Stanly County Sheriff's Office and Anson County Sheriff's Office.

A saturation patrol involves concentrating additional law enforcement officers in a designated area to increase enforcement and address violations.

The Polkton Police Department expressed appreciation to all participating agencies for their assistance and thanked Steve Teeter for catering the event.



Supervisor Carla Graham, instructor Inez Williamson, and students Michelle Giddings, Vinnie Daniel (from a previous class), Angela Ledbetter and Susie McSwain.

BRLC Students Gain Computer Skills Through SPCC Classes

Partnership helps build confidence and improve workplace technology skills

Learning new computer skills can open doors to employment opportunities, improve productivity and make everyday tasks a little easier. Thanks to a partnership between Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center (BRLC) and South Piedmont Community College (SPCC), local residents are getting the opportunity to strengthen their technology skills close to home.

The Essential Software Skills for the Workplace classes offered at BRLC provide students with valuable computer instruction designed to help them become more comfortable and capable using technology. Whether preparing for employment, improving existing skills or simply trying to keep up with a world that seems to invent a new computer program every other Tuesday, participants are gaining knowledge they can put to good use.

South Piedmont Community College has played an important role in making these educational opportunities available. Students completing the recent class received 2.8 continuing education hours through SPCC.

BRLC appreciates the college's continued support and the dedication of the instructors and students who make these programs successful. The classes are another example of how community partnerships can bring valuable educational resources directly to Anson County residents.

For more information about computer classes and other educational opportunities at BRLC, call 704-826-8737. South Piedmont Community College may also be contacted at 704-272-5300.

Anson County's Stuart Metcalf Hits the Road with Neil Diamond Musical

Metcalf stars in national touring production of *A Beautiful Noise*, coming to Charlotte this weekend



From Ansonville to the national stage, Stuart Metcalf is making some beautiful noise! The Anson County resident is performing in the national touring production of *A Beautiful Noise: The Neil Diamond Musical*, which will make a stop at Charlotte's Blumenthal Arts Center for five performances November 27 through 29.

Metcalf, who lives in Ansonville with his wife, Lied, and their children, Ari, 17, and Calhoun, 14, portrays "Neil Now," the older Neil Diamond reflecting on his remarkable life and musical career.

The opportunity came as quite a surprise. Metcalf received an unexpected call from the show's casting team, which had kept his name on file from a previous audition. With help from his supportive children, he recorded an audition tape, sent it to New York City and landed the role.

Accepting the job wasn't an easy decision. The national tour requires a yearlong commitment away from home, but Metcalf said his family encouraged him to take the opportunity.

Although Metcalf has an impressive theatrical background, he had stepped away from acting for years to spend more time with his family. His previous credits include the European tour of *Jesus Christ Superstar* and the national touring production of Andrew Lloyd Webber's *Whistle Down the Wind*.

More recently, he worked as a freelance production manager for off-Broadway productions. His return to acting began last summer with *The Burnt Part Boys* in Highlands, North Carolina, his first acting job since 2008.

A Beautiful Noise tells the story of Neil Diamond through his legendary music, but it's much more than a collection of familiar hits. The musical centers on conversations between the older Diamond, portrayed by Metcalf, and his therapist. Through those sessions, Diamond revisits the triumphs and disappointments of his life, including failed marriages, his rise to fame and the devastating realization that Parkinson's disease has ended his ability to perform live.

As the older Diamond reflects on his memories, the younger "Neil Then," portrayed by Jesse LeBelle, brings those moments to life through music and scenes depicting the singer's extraordinary career.

Audiences can expect a parade of Neil Diamond favorites, including "Sweet Caroline," "Cracklin' Rosie," "Song Sung Blue," "Solitary Man," "Kentucky Woman," "Hello Again," "I Am, I Said," "I'm a Believer" and "You Don't Bring Me Flowers."

"The music of Neil Diamond is difficult to top," Metcalf said. "It touches something in all of us."

While the younger Diamond performs many of the show's musical numbers, Metcalf's role carries much of the production's emotional weight. He also gets opportunities to sing, but portraying the legendary entertainer's personal struggles has presented a particularly rewarding acting challenge.

For local theatergoers, the Charlotte engagement offers a special opportunity to see one of Anson County's own performing in a major national production. And with "Sweet Caroline" among the show's biggest crowd-pleasers, there's a pretty good chance the audience will be singing along. After all, who can resist shouting "So good! So good! So good!" *Information & photo courtesy of Nancy Roberts Zeman, Publisher Emeritus, The Prairie Press*

Anson County Offices Closed for Thanksgiving Holiday

Anson County government offices will be closed on Thursday and Friday, November 26 and 27, in observance of the Thanksgiving holiday.

While county offices take a break for the holiday, all emergency services and law enforcement agencies will remain in full operation, ensuring that public safety services continue without interruption.

County officials wish everyone a safe and happy Thanksgiving!

Medicare Open Enrollment Underway: Citizens Urged to Review Coverage

Open Enrollment ends December 7. North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey is urging Medicare recipients to carefully review their health and prescription drug coverage for 2027, warning that some plans could see significant price increases in the coming year. Anson County residents can receive free, unbiased assistance through the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at Grace Senior Center by calling 704-694-6616.

Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period continues through December 7. Any changes made during this period will take effect January 1, 2027.

"Many plans have indicated that they intend to have increases, some significantly," Causey said. "This is not the year to simply say, 'I'm happy with what I have,' without exploring your options."

Even beneficiaries who are satisfied with their current Medicare Advantage or prescription drug plans may discover that another plan offers comparable or better coverage at a lower cost. Changes in premiums, deductibles, prescription drug coverage and participating healthcare providers can make a significant difference in annual expenses.

SHIIP, a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, provides free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare Advantage, prescription drug coverage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance matters. Counselors can also help determine whether beneficiaries qualify for programs that reduce Medicare expenses.

SHIIP counselors do not sell insurance or endorse particular companies or plans. Their purpose is to help Medicare recipients understand their options and make informed decisions.

Anson County residents are encouraged to contact Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616 for local SHIIP assistance. Statewide assistance is also available at 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Medicare recipients can compare plans online at *www.medicare.gov*, review their Medicare & You 2027 handbook or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), available 24 hours a day.

Additional information about SHIIP is available at *www.ncshiip.com*.

With the December 7 deadline approaching, Causey's advice is simple: Don't assume the plan that worked well this year will necessarily be the best choice next year. A little comparison shopping now could prevent some unpleasant surprises when the bills arrive in January.

SPCC Offers Opportunity to Earn Two-Year Degree in Just One Year

South Piedmont Community College (SPCC) is offering students an opportunity to earn a two-year college degree in just one year through its Associate in Arts in a Year program. The accelerated program is designed for individuals who want to complete their education more quickly while keeping costs affordable and maintaining the flexibility to study from home. Students can complete the entire program online, eliminating the need to travel to campus for classes. This makes the program particularly attractive to working adults, parents and others who need to balance their education with everyday responsibilities.

For eligible North Carolina residents, out-of-pocket costs are capped at $1,500, making the program an affordable option for those seeking to begin or continue their college education.

An Associate in Arts degree can provide a foundation for students planning to transfer to a four-year college or university to pursue a bachelor's degree. With its combination of accelerated coursework, online convenience and reduced costs for qualifying students, the program offers Anson County residents an opportunity to advance their education without committing to a traditional two-year schedule.

For more information about the Associate in Arts in a Year program, visit South Piedmont Community College's website at *www.spcc.edu*.