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Landric Reid Sworn in as Sheriff on Monday

This is a letter from Pastor Tony Barr: On Monday, December 1, 2014, Anson County swore in its first African-American sheriff. This was a day of celebration because it showed the modernization of an area that has grown beyond its past limitations, and has moved progressively on a new trajectory. Transcendence happens when people collectively grow in their individual thoughts, feelings, beliefs and emotions. The swearing in of Sheriff Landric Reid is an example that our community has transcended.

A new sheriff brings new hopes, dreams and vision for our area. The Office of Sheriff is recognized as the highest local elected official. But, our sheriff is only one man. To be an effective sheriff he needs an effective staff and deputies. The staff and deputies also need an active and engaged community. As a community, we must stay engaged with those whom we elect. This includes the Sheriff, City Councils, County Commissioners and all other state and local representatives. We do ourselves a disservice when we engage in the election process and disengage in the daily functions of our elected officials.

December 1, 2014, was a momentous day. The word momentous is related to the word momentum, which bears the thought of movement. Sheriff Tommy Allen has left the office of sheriff with momentum. Sheriff Allen has served and provided exemplary service to the citizens of Anson County. His service over the last two decades has provided in itself a huge push forward for our county and the office of Sheriff. As a community, town, and county, let's take this momentum and move forward.

I speak by charge to those of us who profess a love and obedience relationship with God; to move forward in our prayers and cooperation that our county might be transformed for the glory of God.

Sincerely, Pastor Tony W. Barr, Sr.

New Law Allows Anson County Kids Under 12 to Use BB Guns Unsupervised

North Carolina laws that took effect Monday, December 1 will add protections for Venus flytraps, let children in eight counties shoot BB guns unsupervised and allow criminal defendants statewide to have their case decided by a judge instead of a jury.

- Anson County is one of 8 counties in North Carolina that now allow children under 12 years old to possess and use BB guns, air pistols and air rifles without adult supervision. Most counties in NC already allowed this. The counties that do not are Caldwell, Durham, Forsyth, Gaston, Haywood, Mecklenburg, Stokes, Union and Vance Counties.

- A constitutional amendment that gives criminal defendants the right to decline a jury trial and have a judge decide their case instead is now law. Defendants have this option in 49 other states and in the federal criminal justice system, but North Carolina defendants previously couldn't waive the jury trial. Now, the judge would have to agree to allow a bench trial, and the option wouldn't be available in a death penalty case.

In a report, the UNC School of Government said bench trials tend to be shorter and less expensive than jury trials, but changing the system could concentrate power with judges and reduce citizen participation in the justice system.

- Under new law, the penalty for giving or selling a cellphone to an inmate is increased from a misdemeanor to a felony. It also makes it a felony for an inmate to possess a cellphone. Gov. Pat McCrory and other leaders pushed for stiffer penalties after the father of a Wake County prosecutor was kidnapped in a plot authorities say was directed by an inmate using a contraband cell phone. The kidnapped man was rescued by the FBI.

- Under legislation to change criminal laws, people caught multiple times carrying a concealed firearm without a permit will face felony charges for the second and subsequent offenses. The first such offense remains a misdemeanor.

- A provision of the Regulatory Reform Act increases the penalty for stealing a Venus Flytrap from a misdemeanor to a felony. Conservation groups asked for the stiffer charge after recent thefts of the plants in eastern North Carolina, which is one of the few native areas of the plant.

Lanesboro Correctional Officer Seriously Injured in Attack

An inmate at Lanesboro Correctional Institution attacked an officer with a bladed weapon on Monday, November 24 which resulted in a cut to the officer's face requiring more than 40 stitches. The officer, Edwin Faulkner had released the prisoner, Marcus Alston, 37, from restraints to give him recreational time.

Alston faces charges in the attack and is segregated from other prisoners.

Alston, who is serving a 35 year sentence for rape, has been cited for 169 prison infractions since his 2001 conviction. He has threatened to harm prison staff on numerous occasions.

The Polkton Police Department and state prison officials are investigating the incident.

Conceal Carry Permits Now Available Online

As of December 1 individuals wanting to apply for a Concealed Carry Permit or renew a Conceal Carry Permit will now go online to do so. This feature has been available to the public since the first of October, and for the past two months they had the option of either doing online or paper applications. Now the Sheriff will only accept online applications. Individuals who do not have access to a computer may still come by the Sheriff's Office and use a computer in the Sheriff's lobby. The Sheriff's Office will also have someone available to assist those who are not comfortable using a computer.

Outgoing Sheriff Tommy Allen said that this is similar to what the Sheriff's Office started doing with Handgun Permits a year ago. He said this streamlines the process, saves a lot of paperwork and will eliminate a lot of waiting and standing in line. Applicants will be able to schedule their own appointments on Thursdays to be fingerprinted. "Our goal is to continue to serve the public better and more efficiently," Allen said.



Harvest Ministries Provides Great Turkey Giveaway

On Saturday, November 22 Harvest Ministries Outreach Center provided 75 turkeys to families throughout Anson County to help them this Thanksgiving season. Lead Pastor Steve Adams of HMOC shared, "Through donations of this congregation and many individuals throughout the county we are able to bless these families today."

Adams and members of the Harvest congregation simply went to neighborhoods, knocked on doors and presented a free Thanksgiving turkey to the families, with no expectations of anything in return.

Adams added, "Christ, in the Good Book teaches us ... When you bless others, you are blessing Him. Today is just another way we can show our thankfulness, by giving to others."

Harvest is now gearing up for the 11th annual Community Christmas Blessing event. Donations of toys, gifts, and money are now being received to provide hundreds of toys and gifts to families on Sunday December 21st. For more details or to be a part of this event contact 704-695-2879.



2014 Sheriff's Officers of the Year

Anson County Sheriff Tommy Allen announced the names of the 2014 Officers of the Year. The awards were given to:

- Recognized in the Sheriff's Office: Brian Jenkins
- Recognized in the Jail: Julius Nivens
- Recognized in the 911 Center: Ginger Phillips

"These individuals were recognized for their dedication, hard work and going over and above what is often required," Sheriff Tommy Allen said. "I honored and proud to have employees of this high caliber working for this office and the people of Anson County."

Pictured below are, from left, Ginger Phillips, Brian Jenkins and Julius Nivens.



Senior Citizen Luncheon is Thursday

Anson County's Annual Senior Christmas Luncheon will be held on Thursday, December 4 at the Lockhart-Taylor Center. Because of limited seating capacity there will be two servings, one at 11 a.m. and one at 1 p.m.

If you are interested in attending please call the Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616 to register and to receive a designated time to attend.

Anson County Schools Release Early Thursday

Anson County schools will release early this Thursday, December 4. The Christmas Parade in Wadesboro is at 4 p.m.

- Elementary schools will release at 12:30 p.m.
- All middle and high schools will release at 1:30 p.m.

Toys for Tots Application Deadline is Dec. 5

Anson County Toys for Tots has announced that the deadline for applications is Friday, December 5. Applicants can obtain applications from the following sites:

- Grace Senior Center - Dr. Bernice Bennett
- Department of Social Services - Priscilla Little
- Anson County Child Support - Jennifer Tarlton
- Anson County Health Department

Christmas Parade is Thursday

Plans are underway for the 2014 Wadesboro Christmas Parade. It is scheduled for 4 p.m. on Thursday, December 4. The uptown parade route will remain the same as in previous years - starting on Morven Road for the line-up, and concluding at the Ray Shelton Ball Field for breakdown. The parade will move down Washington, Martin and Greene Streets.

For more information contact the Anson County Chamber of Commerce at 704-694-4181 or ansonchamber@windstream.net.

School Community Forum Next Monday

Anson County Schools will be hosting a Community Forum on Monday, December 8 at 6:30 p.m. at Lockhart-Taylor Center in the Ingram Room. Current updates pertaining to the school system will be provided.

Anson Singers to Present Christmas Concert December 7

The Anson Singers, a community choir conducted by Emily Privette, will present their annual Christmas Concert on Sunday, December 7 at 3 p.m. in the First United Methodist Church of Wadesboro. The concert is in conjunction with the Christmas Tour of Homes.

The concert is free and the public is cordially invited to attend. Come for a delightful afternoons of decorations and music as you begin your Christmas season!