

On Saturday, December 18 at 12 noon Leavitt Funeral Home and Anson Community Hospice will be helping Anson Memorial Park to Remember and Honor our veterans by laying Remembrance wreaths on the graves of our country's fallen heroes.

For information about sponsoring a wreath and/or volunteering on Wreaths Day, visit www.wreathscrossamerica.org/pages/162012. Also, you can contact Ken Caulder at ken@leavittfh.com or 704-694-2524. \$5 of every wreath sponsored will be donated to Anson Community Hospice.

The Ansonia Theatre Proudly Presents

Dec. 10-19

AN ENCHANTED BOOKSHOP CHRISTMAS

by Todd Wallinger

Directed by **Tommy WOOTEN**

Tickets & Info 704-694-4950 or ansoniatheatre.com

New RURAL PROJECT **HOLLA!**

FREE Moderna & Pfizer COVID-19 Vaccine

Please wear your mask

For questions about the vaccine, call Atrium Health at (704) 468-8886.

When	Where
Saturday, December 18 10 a.m. to 1 p.m.	HOLLA! Center 229 E. Main St. Morven, NC 28119

The Pfizer vaccine will be given by Atrium to people ages 12 and older
The Moderna vaccine will be given by Atrium to people ages 18 and older

Hot chocolate & refreshments will be available

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VISIT OUR SLEEP SHOP

EZ TO APPLY OWN IT NOW!

This is a release from Anson County Economic Development Partnership (AnsonEDP) Director John Marek: The 2021-2022 North Carolina budget sets aside \$8 million for AnsonEDP to establish a revolving loan fund for the design and construction of speculative or "spec" industrial buildings in the county. This has been hailed as a game-changing development, but what is a spec building and why is it so important to the future of Anson County?

A spec building is an industrial or warehouse space that is built by a local government, economic development agency, or private development firm for the purpose of attracting a tenant who will bring jobs and investment to the community. Some relate spec buildings to model homes, and there are definitely similarities, but the purpose of a model home is to give potential buyers an idea of the type of home they can build in that neighborhood, not necessarily to sell that particular dwelling. While it can occasionally work like that with spec buildings, far more commonly the end goal is to sell the building itself.

While spec buildings are sometimes designed to target a specific industry sector, they are generally built to attract as wide a market as possible, with the understanding that the buyer will likely need to customize it to their specific purpose. As an example, some spec buildings do not have floors, so that the tenant can pour one to their exact specifications. These floorless examples are often referred to as "shell" buildings, although shell and spec can also be used interchangeably. There is much debate in professional economic development circles about floors, with very good economic developers insisting spec buildings should not have floors and equally capable developers maintaining they should. The two spec buildings I was involved with in Statesville both had floors. Our development partner, The Keith Corporation, was adamant they would not put up a building without a floor, noting that a 6-inch reinforced concrete floor was acceptable for 90% of industrial applications, and in those cases where a more substantial pad is required, it is relatively easy to cut out and repour that section of flooring.

Spec buildings range in size from 10,000 square feet to a million square feet or more, depending on the market and the type of industry the community is targeting. Most general manufacturing buildings tend to be in the 35,000 to 100,000 square foot range, with ceiling heights of at least 28 feet. The building we have planned for Wadesboro Industrial Park will be approximately 50,000 square feet, which will typically support 40-60 jobs and a \$3-\$5 million investment. The second planned spec building, at Atlantic Gateway, will be a larger building designed for warehouse and distribution operations.

In some high-growth urban and suburban areas, private developers literally line up for the opportunity to build spec buildings, while in moderate growth areas (like Statesville when I was there) private developers seek to partner with local governments or agencies to share the costs. Typically, these developers will receive free or highly discounted land, fee waivers, or other incentives to build, but the primary construction costs are still carried by the private firm.

Private industrial development companies, however, generally have minimal interest in investing in rural areas like Anson County. They see these projects as riskier and offering lower returns. And at a construction cost of \$3 to \$4 million per building, local economic development agencies are usually hard-pressed to come up with the funds to finance one independently. As a result, the vast majority of industrial spec buildings are located in fast-growing metro areas. While there are certainly businesses that for one reason or another need to be located in large metros, many companies locate there simply because that's where the available buildings are. Without an inventory of available industrial buildings, places like Anson County are at an impossible disadvantage.

Twenty or thirty years ago, companies looking to open a new facility usually had a 2-3 year development horizon, which afforded time to select a piece of land, work through the various zoning, permitting, and regulatory issues and put up a new building. Most businesses now have 12-18 month windows, and it is not uncommon for a business to suggest they want to be up and running in as little as six months. Obviously, that does not allow time for construction, let alone the development of raw land, so 75% of the companies we engage in relocation discussions are looking for a building that is more or less ready to go. If you cannot show them an existing building that day, it is the end of the conversation. The last two viable industrial buildings of more than 50,000 square feet here in Anson County each sold in about a year, and each received multiple offers. It is not difficult to extrapolate from those experiences that a 50,000 square foot spec building would sell in a similar timeframe. Anson County has NOT had difficulty recruiting industry into available buildings at market prices, we simply do not have enough buildings.

So, where do we go from here? We anticipate the loan fund will be available for us to tap sometime in the first quarter of 2022. We are currently engaging local design/build firms in Anson County and the Charlotte Region and hope to select a construction partner by the end of January. The Town of Wadesboro is securing one last easement for utility construction at the Wadesboro Industrial Park and hopes to begin work on that phase of the project by March or April. If everything goes to plan, we expect to break ground on the building in early summer 2022 and complete construction in early to mid-2023. From that point, we are likely 10-12 months from great new jobs and an expanding tax base here in Anson County!

How To Manage Holiday Stress

The following information comes from the Eat Smart, Move More Holiday Challenge Newsletter. To find out more about the challenge or to sign up for free, go to: esmmweighless.com/holidaychallenge.

Stress can be a powerful and often unnoticed force in your life. It can influence weight, mental health, quality of sleep, and have effects on blood pressure, heart rate, and the immune system. When chronic stress is present, a hormone called cortisol is released which increases glucose in the bloodstream. This increase in glucose is the reason you are more likely to reach for a doughnut or cookie during stressful times. There is typically no shortage of stressful situations (and sweets) during the holiday season. But the good news is, you can manage it. Take away the effect that stress has on your life with these strategies:

- Ensure you are getting 7-8 hours of sleep at night. You can tackle almost anything life throws your way after a good night's sleep.
- Take a few moments for yourself. Clear your mind by listening to your favorite song or podcast or read a few pages of a good book.
- Exercise. All types of exercise have been shown to reduce stress. Stretching and meditating exercises such as yoga or Tai Chi are excellent ways to distance yourself from the stress and refocus your mind. Cardio exercises release endorphins which can create positive feelings.
- Breathe. Take a few deep breaths in through your nose and out through your mouth. See our tips on mindful breathing. More information on mindful breathing can be found at this link: esmmweighless.com/mindful-breathing-for-stress-relief.

Take some time out of your day right now to pause and do a quick activity that will relieve stress. Some ideas for quick stress relievers are read a book, magazine or blog; take a walk, meditate or tap a nap.

Bonus tip: During times of stress, eating a healthy, balanced diet is perhaps even more important to support your body's needs. Here at Eat Smart, Move More, Weigh Less, we love to eat the Med way! A Mediterranean-style eating pattern is an evidence-based approach to a lifestyle of healthy eating. Learn more about Med Instead of Meds by going to medinsteadofmeds.com.

By Roshunda Terry, County Extension Director

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