

Anson DSS Opens Heating Assistance Applications for Eligible Households

Applications for Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) now being accepted

The Anson County Department of Social Services (DSS) invites qualifying residents to apply for the Low-Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) to help with heating costs this winter. Due to the federal government shutdown, there was a delay in accepting applications, but the program is now fully underway.

Automated LIEAP payments were distributed at the end of November for households with a person who met one or more of the following criteria:

- 60 years of age or older,
- A person with a disability receiving services through the NCDHHS Division of Aging,
- Currently receives Food and Nutrition Services (SNAP),
- Or received a LIEAP payment during the 2024-2025 season.

Households that meet these criteria but did not receive the automated payment may apply online starting Dec. 10, 2025, at epass.nc.gov. Additionally, residents can contact Anson DSS for assistance with applications by phone, in person, or by printing a paper application from epass.nc.gov to mail, fax, or drop off at the agency.

For all other eligible households, applications will open on January 2, 2026. Applications will be accepted until March 31, 2026, or until funds are exhausted.

To be eligible for LIEAP, a household must meet the following criteria:

- At least one U.S. citizen or qualifying non-citizen in the household,
- Income at or below 130% of the federal poverty level,
- Responsible for heating costs.

For more information, residents can visit the Anson County DSS office at 118 North Washington Street in Wadesboro or call the agency for assistance.

Clock Is Ticking: Candidate Filing Nears Dec. 19 Deadline for 2026 Election

Candidate filing for the 2026 statewide general election is underway, with the filing period set to end on this Friday, December 19, 2025, at 12:00 p.m. Individuals interested in running for office are reminded that no filings will be accepted after the noon deadline.

Filing for the 2026 election opened Monday, December 1, 2025, at noon. The deadline to withdraw a notice of candidacy has already passed on Tuesday, December 16, leaving December 19 as the final opportunity for candidates to officially enter the race.

Several local offices are on the ballot in Anson County for the 2026 election. Available seats include Anson County Board of Commissioners Districts 2, 4, and 5; Anson County Board of Education Districts 2, 4, and 5; two at-large seats on the Anson County Board of Education; Anson County Clerk of Court; Anson County Sheriff; and North Carolina House of Representatives District 55.

Countywide voting for Commisisoners Beginning in 2026, an important change will affect county elections. All Anson County Board of Commissioner seats will be elected through countywide voting, rather than district-only voting.

Candidates are also reminded that filing fees apply. Fees include \$159.77 for Anson County Commissioner, \$48.25 for Anson County Board of Education, \$1,117.26 for Anson County Clerk of Court, fee of \$1,366.36 for Anson County Sheriff, and \$140.00 for House of Representatives District 55.

With the filing deadline fast approaching, prospective candidates are encouraged to act promptly to ensure their paperwork is completed before the Dec. 19 noon cutoff.

The Board of Elections is located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro. Telephone number is 704-994-3223.

Forget the Mall, Your Christmas List is Growing in a Local Pasture

Local farms offer stress-free holiday gifts with fewer crowds and better snacks

December arrives with twinkling lights, holiday cheer, and the sudden realization that you have absolutely no idea what to buy certain people. While gift shopping can feel stressful, rushed, and slightly overwhelming, there is good news - you don't have to battle traffic, parking, or mall music to find meaningful gifts this season.

Agriculture is a vital part of our county, and local ag businesses are ready to help you check names off your list with gifts that are fresh, unique, and guaranteed not to be re-gifted (unless someone really hates cheese). Supporting local farms and ag businesses keeps dollars in the community and strengthens the local economy, and it tastes a whole lot better, too.

From meats and honey to flowers and wine, these local producers would love for you to shop close to home and share their products with family and loved ones this Christmas. Below is a list of some local ag businesses and what they currently have available. There are many more farms in the county, but these are items ready to go right now - and they might just save your sanity.

- Brown Creek Creamery - Cheese curds
- Mills Bottom Farms - Pork and candles (dinner and ambiance, handled)
- Vang Flowers - Fresh flowers that beat another candle every time
- Harvest to Home Farms - Chicken, beef, pork, and eggs (aka groceries that feel like gifts)
- Carpenter Family Farms - Beef, sourdough, and beef tallow (for the foodie or the homesteader in your life)
- Vineyard at the Old Place - Wine (because it's December)
- Taylor Boy Outdoors - Honey (sweet & local)

So before you stress over shipping deadlines or wander aimlessly through big-box stores, consider thinking local this Christmas. You might just find the perfect gift - and maybe dinner - while supporting the farmers and ag businesses that keep our community thriving.



Twenty-One Years Of Christmas Cheer: Harvest Blesses The Community

Annual Community Christmas Blessing brings gifts, toys, and joy to Wadesboro families

Sunday, December 14 Harvest Ministries was the place to be as hundreds of children and their families gathered for the church's annual Community Christmas Blessing, celebrating its 21st year of spreading holiday joy throughout Anson County. Before the giveaways and prizes began, those in attendance enjoyed a festive Christmas program presented by Harvest Ministries, featuring Christmas carols, dances, and special visits from Santa Claus. A meaningful Christmas message was also shared, focusing on the greatest gift of all - eternal life through Jesus - setting the tone for the afternoon's celebration.

The event featured an exciting lineup of giveaways including bicycles, earbuds, scooters, remote-control cars, gift cards, and more than \$500 in cash. Several lucky children and adults spun the prize wheel and walked away with special prizes, including front-row tickets to a Monster Truck Show in Charlotte next month and a \$250 cash prize. The highlight of the day came as every child in attendance received three brand-new toys for Christmas.

Harvest founding pastor Tim Adams reflected on the significance of the event, saying, "This event, which is one of our favorite of the many large outreaches God has graced us to provide, is the true meaning of this season - giving and blessing hundreds. It is incredible."

Harvest Ministries expressed heartfelt gratitude to the many businesses, sponsors, and donors who make the event possible year after year. Lead Pastor Steve Adams added, "Individuals, businesses, organizations, and others who support this every year - and some for over 20 years - show the love, compassion, and spirit of generosity that Anson County is all about. It's truly humbling, and we are grateful to play a small part."

A special thanks was extended to the many sponsors and community partners who helped make the 21st annual Community Christmas Blessing a success, including:

- Platinum Sponsor - Fred Poisson and Poisson Law
- Gold Sponsors - Melanie & Allen Lyon and The Express Newspaper; Darling Ingredients
- Bronze Sponsor - Harold Smith, Evadne Smith, and Smith Funeral Home
- Lamar Liles - Anson County Toys for Tots
- Anson County Sheriff Scott Howell
- Lady Bug Restaurant
- Harvest Ministries Outreach Center Partners
- The many community partners who donated toys, items, or financial support



Pictured above are, from left, Pastor Tim Adams, Lamar Liles and Pastor Steve Adams.

Anson Middle School Spellers Go the Distance in Epic Bee

Aaliyah Bennett and Juaraji Bennett were co-champions after 37 rounds of spelling excellence

Anson Middle School held its School-Wide Spelling Bee on December 11, and the event proved to be giftedness at its best and pure amazement as students showcased focus, preparation, and confidence on stage.

After an impressive 37 rounds of competition, the spelling bee concluded with two co-champions. Aaliyah Bennett and Juaraji Bennett were declared winners and will advance to represent Anson Middle School at the District Spelling Bee.

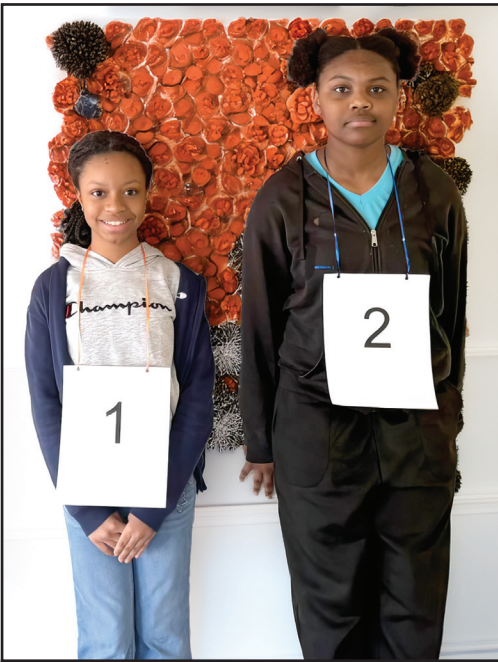
AMS also congratulates all students who qualified for and participated in the school-wide spelling bee. Seventh-grade spellers included Emmanuel Clark, Caleb Randall, Aaliyah Bennett, Juaraji Bennett, Bryson Howell, Javen Campos-Zelaya, Chyna Blakney, Allison Helms, Gracelyn Henry, Aaliyah Leak, and Joseph Liles.

Eighth-grade spellers included Pakhou Yang, Jamarion Ratliff, Hayden Lee, Ayden Wilcox, Calhoun Metcalf, Faye Ricketts, Aliyah Lee, Kayla Clark, Ceven Pickett, and Cuban Watson.

Congratulations were extended to all of the outstanding spellers for their hard work, preparation, and confidence during the competition. Each participant represented Anson Middle School with pride.

The District Spelling Bee will be held on January 15 at 4:00 p.m. at the Anson County Schools Staff Development Center.

A heartfelt thank-you was also extended to the judges for supporting the students and the event. Judges included Sgt. Jacky King, Mrs. Kristen Mims, Mrs. Veronica Smith, and Ms. Chatia Lilly.



AMS Spelling Bee Winners Aaliyah Bennett and Juaraji Bennett.

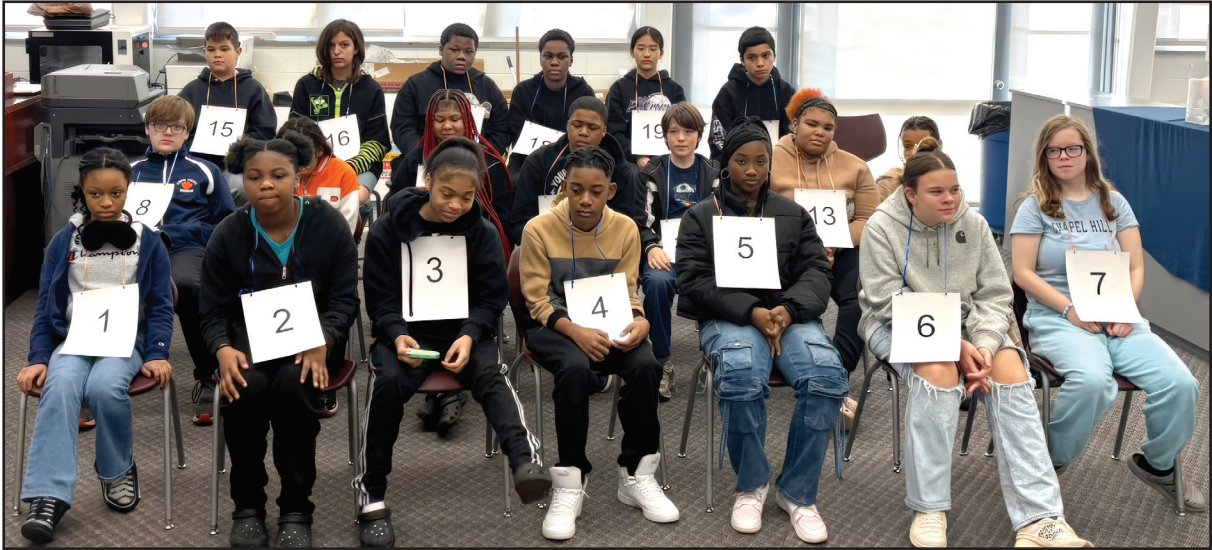
Library Hosts Holiday Film Favorite Next Monday

The Hampton B. Allen Library is inviting the community to slow down, sip some Christmas cheer, and enjoy a timeless holiday favorite when it hosts a showing of *It's A Wonderful Life* on Monday, Dec.22, at 10 a.m.

This beloved Christmas classic will be shown in the library's Pritchett Room, turning the space into a cozy winter movie house - minus the ticket price and long concession lines.

Everyone is invited to attend and share in the spirit of the season as George Bailey's heartwarming story reminds viewers what really matters during the holidays. Whether it's your first time watching or your annual tradition, the library promises a warm welcome and a joyful way to celebrate the Christmas season.

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



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