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Serving Anson County and the Municipalities of Ansonville, Lilesville, McFarlan, Morven, Peachland, Polkton and Wadesboro.

1,524 Reported Cases of COVID-19 in Anson County

As of Monday, January 4 the Anson County Health Department posted that Anson County had 1,524 reported cases of COVID-19. 147 of those cases were active. At that point they had discharged 1,377 cases, 1,349 to baseline health and 28 deaths.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported statewide as of Monday, January 4 there were 570, 111 total cases of COVID-19, with 6,941 deaths, 7,119,201 completed tests and 3,192 hospitalized.

Statewide, as of Monday, December 7 there were 404,032 total cases of COVID-19, with 5,605 deaths, 5,678,794 completed tests and 2,373 hospitalized. On November 2 there were 278,028 total cases of COVID-19, with 4,390 deaths, 4,116,019 completed tests and 1,146 hospitalized. On October 5 there were 219,754 total cases of COVID-19, with 3,637 deaths, 3,188,371 completed tests and 971 hospitalized.

Recent history in Anson County: March 31 - 1 case; April 28 - 23 cases; May 26 - 62 cases; June 22 - 107 cases; July 27 - 285 cases; August 3 - 306 cases; August 26 - 408 cases; September 4 - 461 cases; September 28 - 605 cases; October 5 - 649 cases; October 26 - 720 cases; November 2 - 738 cases; November 30 - 937 cases; December 7 - 1,029 cases; December 31 - 1,444 cases.

Anson County's Unemployment Rate Steady at 7.2% in November

Anson County's unemployment rate for November was 7.2%, the same as October's 7.2% rate. The September rate was 8.5%, the August rate was 8%, the July rate was 10%, the June rate was 7.9%, May's rate was 10.1% and April's rate was 8.2%. In March the unemployment rate in Anson County was 4.9%.

Statewide the November unemployment rate also remained the same as October at 6.1%. In September the rate was 7%. In August the rate was 6.8%. In July the unemployment rate was 8.9%.

In November 2019 the unemployment rate in Anson County was 4.1%, and statewide the rate was 3.4%. Anson's total labor force in November was 10,774. Of that number 10,003 were employed and 771 were unemployed. In October the total labor force was 10,820, with 10,039 employed and 781 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) increased in 76 of North Carolina's counties in November, decreased in six, and remained unchanged in 18. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 10.5 percent, while Watauga County had the lowest at 4.2 percent.

Ten of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases, one decreased, and four remained unchanged. Among the metro areas, Fayetteville had the highest rate at 8.4 percent while Durham-Chapel Hill had the lowest at 5.2 percent. The November not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 6.1 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 99 counties and decreased in one. All 15 of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases over the year.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in November by 8,578 to 4,665,264, while those unemployed increased by 4,704 to 301,765. Since November 2019, the number of workers employed statewide decreased 257,673, while those unemployed increased 123,934.

Next South Piedmont Community College Leadership Academy Starts in February

South Piedmont Community College (SPCC) is launching its new Leadership Academy in February to assist local businesses and industries with their growing need to continually train their employees for success.

The new SPCC Leadership Academy is the result of a year-long think-tank process that included an advisory team of representatives from Union and Anson County businesses including Berry Global, CEM, Charlotte Pipe, Collins Aerospace, Harris Teeter Distribution, Loba-Wakol, and Omnova working with representatives from South Piedmont, Anson County Chamber of Commerce, and the Monroe-Union County Economic Development Commission. The input and insights from the local businesses helped SPCC develop a curriculum covering the fundamental skills that span multiple business and industry sectors as well as unique coursework specific to a particular business as a separate track.

"It was an exciting process to engage with our business partners in such a deep and productive way so that we could ensure that we developed the right kind of programs for building a stronger workforce in our communities," said Jeff Groves, director of economic and workforce development at SPCC.

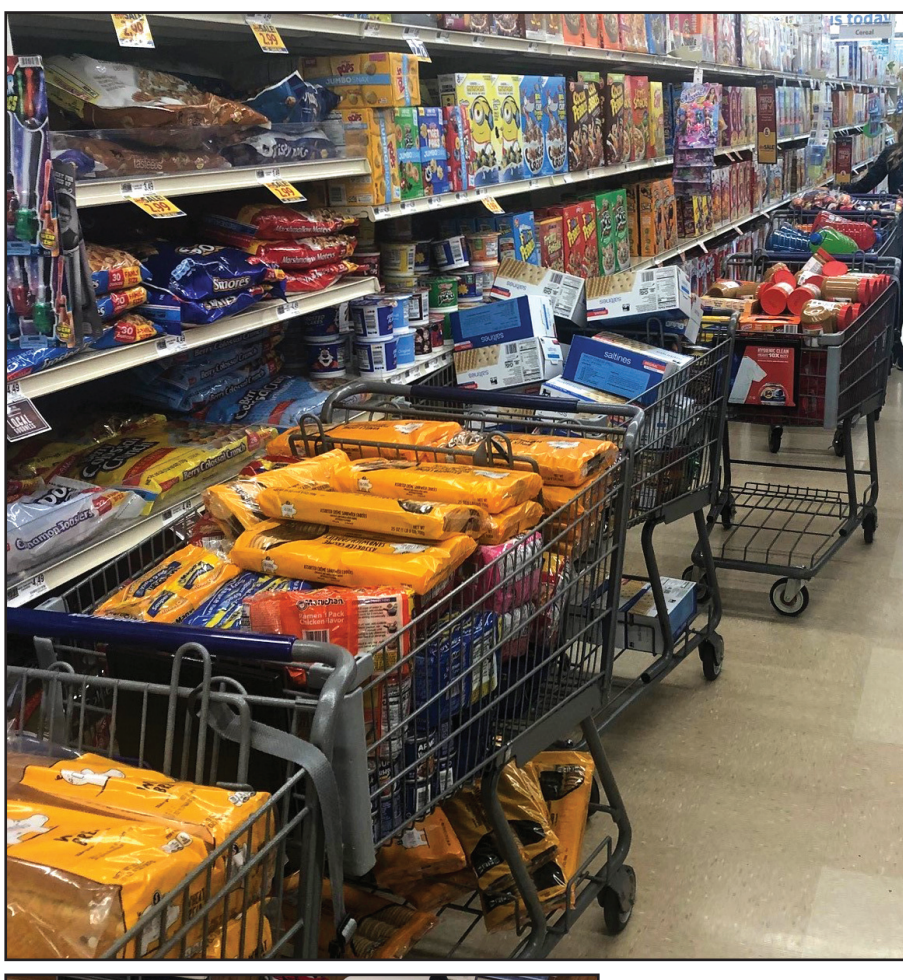
"This Academy will allow us to provide opportunities that support the business as a whole and the individual employee as a person seeking growth opportunities," said Kelly Stegall, dean of college and career readiness at SPCC. "Our goal is to connect the two through training that makes individuals more employable and ready for good-paying jobs that are in demand."

The Leadership Academy's customizable curriculum allows companies to address competencies that are tailored to their needs. Employees at all levels can gain relevant skills that translate into a stronger workforce for the participating business.

"Training at all levels is exactly what we need to grow the skill sets of our associates as well as our managers," said Ashley Carter of Loba-Wakol.

As the economy continues to evolve and jobs become more complex, the Leadership Academy at South Piedmont Community College can assist businesses with the ever-changing landscape by providing the most relevant training to ensure employee and business success.

To get your business involved in the Leadership Academy, contact *Jeff Groves* at jgroves@spcc.edu or 704-290-5836.



Anson County Schools Gives Thanks for Community Support

Employees of Anson County Schools' Central Office, First Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro, Jon G's Barbecue in Peachland, Loba-Wakol in Wadesboro, numerous community members and anonymous business donors recently provided Christmas gifts and groceries to around 75 children and their families in Anson County Schools through the Anson County Schools' Christmas Giving Angel Tree Project.

Additionally, a generous monetary donation from Jon G's Barbecue, including a van full of unwrapped toys, allowed us to provide food and groceries to all 30+ families this year. We were blown away by the generous donation from the campaign Jon G's organized when their owners (Kelly and Garren) had a vision to raise money for groceries/food for needy children and their families in our schools. They had an overwhelming response to their campaign from across North Carolina, to even Texas. On Monday, December 21 Kelly and Garren gave First Presbyterian Church several Food Lion Gift Cards and a check for over \$1,700 to go toward the purchase of groceries for each family. First Presbyterian Church had previously set aside \$500. With both Jon G's donation and the church's contribution, over 15 buggies full of groceries were purchased to serve needy families. Let it be known that we have the best Food Lion employees in Wadesboro; there was a team of cashiers, baggers and managers checking out the 15+ buggies. Everyone worked as a team to help fill vehicles full of groceries. It was a heart-warming sight!

The Food Lion gift cards that were donated have been used in a separate project to purchase food for 25 additional children in our school system. The Blessing Bag Project (initiated by the children of First Presbyterian Church in Wadesboro several years ago), provides enough food each week for 25 children to take home during the weekend. The grocery bags are filled with food and placed in their bookbags or (when in virtual learning) picked up or delivered to their home.

We were humbled by the generosity of the local community, people throughout North Carolina and beyond in making sure our children and their families had a wonderful Christmas this year. And, we were endlessly blessed to see the precious smiles from youngsters and see the tears and hear words of thankfulness from their mothers, grandmothers and fathers as families received their gifts.

It was equally moving to hear excitement of the employees and citizens who contributed toward this project. Each person and business gave so willingly while knowing very little about the child - beyond his or her gender and age - for whom they had purchased gifts or donated money toward feeding. It's much more wonderful to give than to receive, and a lot of people made 2020 a great Christmas for so many children.

And, another BIG THANK YOU goes to the school guidance counselors, social workers, nurses and principals for helping make this project a success through their amazing teamwork. It all wouldn't have been possible without your willingness to provide gift information for the project. *Article and pictures submitted by Anne Trexler Hyatt, Public Information Officer, Clerk to the Board of Education, Administrative Assistant to the Superintendent, Anson County Schools*

and hear words of thankfulness from their mothers, grandmothers and fathers as families received their gifts.

Health Department Has Begun COVID-19 Vaccinations

Currently vaccinations are available for Phase 1a recipients - Health care workers fighting COVID-19 and long-term care staff and residents.

This is a release from the Anson County Health Department: Since the beginning of the pandemic, local health departments have been tracking, completing case investigations, and contact tracing in relation to COVID-19 along with providing routine clinical services. Now, we are implementing COVID-19 vaccine administration for Anson County.

The guidance just changed last week so please note the new phases for vaccine administration in the article on page 2 of this edition of The Express entitled "NCDHHS Shares Updated Rollout Plan for COVID-19 Vaccinations." Also, there is a guide on page 4.

The Anson County Health Department is are happy to announce that we are providing Phase 1a vaccinations starting January 4. We hope to start providing Phase 1b, Group 1 vaccinations very soon.

As we transition to more phases, we will release how to schedule appointments via news releases, social media, website, etc. We really appreciate your patience as we expand our response to COVID-19. Thank You!

- **You cannot get COVID-19 from the vaccine.** You may have temporary reactions like a sore arm, headache or feeling tired and achy for a day or two after receiving the vaccine.
- **You Have a Spot to Take Your Shot.** A vaccine will be available to all who want it, but supplies will be limited at first. Independent state and federal public health advisory groups have determined that the best way to fight COVID-19 is to start first with vaccinations for those most at-risk, then reach more people as the vaccine supply increases throughout 2021. **Rest assured: you have a spot to take your shot.**
- **Finding Your Spot.** Vaccines will be available first in hospitals, local health departments and long-term care facilities, and then in a variety of settings like clinics, pharmacies and vaccination events in prioritized settings and in the community. You can find out where you can take your shot at YourSpotYourShot.nc.gov.
- **Take your shot at no cost.** The COVID-19 vaccine will be available to everyone for free, whether or not you have health insurance.
- **You'll need two shots to build up your immunity.** After a person gets a first dose, they will need to come back 3 to 4 weeks later for a second dose. You will get a printed card and email reminder of when to get your second dose.
- **Continue to practice the 3 Ws until everyone has their shot at fighting COVID-19.** 1) Wear a mask. 2) Wait 6 feet apart. 3) Wash your hands. That's the best way to protect each other until everyone gets their shot.

Anson County Board of Commissioners Meets January 5

Meeting not open to the public, will be live-streamed on YouTube.

The next regular meeting of the Anson County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, January 5 at 6 p.m. This meeting will be live-streamed from the Boardroom.

In adherence to Federal, State, and Anson County Health Department guidelines, citizens are restricted from attending this meeting to reduce the spread of COVID-19, but are strongly encouraged to view the meeting online.

Citizens may participate with questions and/or concerns by sending an email to this email address: questions@co.anson.nc.us.

The Commissioners' board meetings are live streamed on their YouTube channel. Also, the videos are archived so they can be viewed at any time. Visit youtube.com and search for: "Anson Commissioners."

Give the Gift of Warmth

The Anson County Partnership for Children (ACPC) is conducting a coat drive. They are collecting coats for all ages, sizes and genders until January 18. If you can make a contribution, please bring it to the Anson County Chamber of Commerce, located at 114 West Wade Street in Wadesboro, Monday through Friday, 7:30 a.m. to 4 p.m. For more information contact the ACPC at 704-694-4036.

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