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

Board of Elections Regular Board Meeting Scheduled for January 14

The Anson County Board of Elections will hold the regular monthly board meeting on Tuesday, January 14 at 5 p.m. The meeting will be held at the Board of Elections Office, located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro.

- Here is the agenda:
- Call to order/invocation at 5 p.m.
 - Approval of minutes, if applicable
 - Filing updates/approval
 - Unaffiliated petition by J. D. Bricken for County Commissioner District 1
 - Photo ID update
 - Early Voting staff schedule, review, approval of election day staff schedule, review, approval
 - Restroom resolution for Early Voting site and election day precincts - review, approve
 - Wadesboro precinct merge information - approval received December 18, 2019 - next step
 - Questions, comments and other matters

To appear on a meeting agenda you must provide notice in writing by 5 p.m. on the Thursday before the next meeting. During all board meetings, those in attendance are asked to refrain from comments and questions to the board unless they are called upon by the board. At the end of each meeting the board will open the floor for comments and questions.

For more information call 704-994-3223.

Upcoming Dates

- Tuesday, January 14** Regular Board of Elections meeting, 5 p.m.
- Monday, January 20** Office closed for MLK holiday
- PRECINCT TRAINING DATES FOR MARCH PRIMARY** (Held at Board of Elections Office)
 - **Monday, February 3** Ansonville, Burnsville, Gullede & White Store, 6pm
 - **Wednesday, February 5** Lilesville, Morven, McFarlan, Peachland, Polkton, 6pm
 - **Thursday, February 6** Wadesboro Precinct, 6pm
 - Thursday, February 6** Logic and accuracy machine testing for March 3, 2020 Primary Election, 11am
 - Monday, February 10** Early Voting training, 6pm

Activities to Commemorate the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Birthday

Members of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Committee are developing and preparing activities to commemorate the birthday of the late, slain civil rights leader, Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.

The activities begin on Thursday, January 16 at area churches. Building on last year's "Mountaintop Fellowship" sessions held at local churches, ministers and their congregations will be encouraged to hold Community Table Talk discussions to foster difficult conversations among community residents. These community table talks, held in church fellowship halls, will focus on the following topic: "How Do We Keep Moving Towards Unity?" The following churches have been confirmed and individuals can attend any church's session: West Deep Creek Baptist Church (Deep Creek), Parson Grove Baptist Church (Lilesville), Church of God of Prophecy (Morven), New Grove Baptist Church (Polkton), Fairview Church of God (Burnsville), Meltonville Missionary Baptist Church (Peachland), Calvary Episcopal Church (Wadesboro). All sessions begin at 6:00 p.m.

The annual Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Community Prayer Breakfast will be held on Saturday, January 18 at the Lockhart-Taylor Center in Wadesboro. The community breakfast will address themes of Love, Unity, Equality, Civil Rights and Social Justice. Community groups can reserve a table at costs of \$50, \$100, \$200 or \$300. Individuals can donate \$10 to attend. All funds received will be used to defray costs of the event. Make checks payable to: MLK Committee, c/o Rev. Dr. Bernice Bennett, PO Box 6, Lilesville, NC 28091 or call any member of the Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Planning Committee.

On Sunday, January 19 all local churches are encouraged to sponsor an event at your church commemorating the birthday of Dr. King. A particular focus could be on fostering civil discourse in divided times. The annual march and program are scheduled for Monday, January 20. The march will commence at 8:00 a.m. at the Anson County Courthouse and will end at the Lockhart-Taylor Center where the day's events will be held. The program will begin at 9:00 a.m. The theme for this year's program is: "Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.: Who is this Man?" Keynote speakers will be Rev. LeGrant Maye and Rev. Michael McLeod. Summation by Rev. Alban Burney. All events are open to the public. Contact Winnie Bennett (704-851-9269) for more information.

Anson County's Unemployment Rate was 4.1% in November

Anson County's unemployment rate for November was 4.1%, close to October's 4.2% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate was 3.4% in November, also similar to October's 3.6% rate.

Anson's total labor force in November was 10,585. Of that number 10,156 were employed and 429 were unemployed. In October the total labor force was 10,611 with 10,170 employed and 441 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in 92 of North Carolina's counties in November, increased in four, and remained the same in four. Hyde County had the highest unemployment rate at 9.8 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.5 percent.

All of the state's 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount and Fayetteville at 4.6 percent had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 2.6 percent. The November not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.4 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 11 counties, decreased in 76, and remained the same in 13. All of the state's 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in November by 32,434 to 4,935,767, while those unemployed decreased by 11,654 to 173,571. Since November 2018, the number of workers employed statewide increased 124,001, while those unemployed decreased 6,679.



Anson Academy Spreads Christmas Cheer to Senior Citizens

Jingle Bells rang all the way from Anson Academy to Anson Health and Rehabilitation Center on the afternoon of Thursday, December 19. Anson Academy faculty, staff and students took part in their Second Annual Christmas Mission Project. The staff and students donated various items to be gifted for the residents that will assist in personal care, mental stimulation, and treats to have on hand in their rooms that are easily accessible.

The students always look forward to this project and getting to hear actual accounts of Anson County's history from a personal perspective. The residents are also excited to share their stories with others.

Dr. Fannie Ratliff, Principal of Anson Academy, facilitated with the 100% participation from both students and staff.

Looking Back on a Successful 2019

For AnsonEDP and Anson County in general, 2019 was a year of growth and change. Personnel-wise, the organization said goodbye to its existing industry coordinator who left to take a position with North Carolinas Southeast, our regional economic development organization. Rather than replace her, we contracted with the Chamber of Commerce to provide the front-end for those services going forward, a natural fit that will ultimately benefit both organizations.

The impact of the Monroe Expressway, which opened in late 2018, was felt throughout the year in the form of increased interest in residential and commercial development, especially in the western part of the county. One of the major stumbling blocks for the Anson economy has been the perceived distance from the county to crucial business locations such as Uptown Charlotte and Charlotte Douglas Airport. The Expressway cuts travel time from Peachland to these destinations to about 45 minutes, and from Wadesboro to just under an hour.

Two projects announced in 2018 opened their doors in 2019. VEIT, A Czech-based manufacturer of poultry transport systems, opened their manufacturing facility in Peachland, and The Vineyard at the Old Place opened their new event center and tasting room near White Store.

On the retail side, Roses Stores announced that they would be coming to Wadesboro, opening a Roses Express at Anson Station, next to Tractor Supply, and the existing Wendy's in Wadesboro underwent a major remodel. The new Bojangles at the intersection of U.S. 74 and U.S. 52, which began construction in 2018, was completed and opened, replacing an older unit that was demolished to provide additional parking.

In Uptown Wadesboro, the innovative REV Uptown facility consolidated the offices of AnsonEDP, the Chamber, and Uptown Wadesboro with a visitors center hosted by the Tourism Development Authority, Speckled Paw Coffee, co-working space and a business incubator. The development acted as a catalyst for the west side of Uptown, prompting the announcement of a new deli/sandwich shop and a barbers school which both will be opening in the coming year.

Two very significant FDI (Foreign Direct Investment) projects were announced in 2019. Loba-Wakol, a German manufacturer and distributor of adhesives and finishes, purchased the former JJ Haines campus and will be moving their North American headquarters there from Charlotte. Sweden-based Borgstena North America opened a sales and engineering office at the REV Uptown incubator in anticipation of building a U.S. manufacturing facility in the future.

To round out the year, AnsonEDP executive director John Marek was honored with the Henry W. Little III Community Leadership Award for his ongoing efforts to revitalize the Anson economy.

Article courtesy of AnsonEDP

All Wadesboro Voting Precincts Merged into One Location

At a recent board meeting the Anson County Board of Elections by unanimous resolution approved the merging of the three voting precincts (voting sites) in Wadesboro into one voting site. Upon approval of this resolution the board petitioned North Carolina State Board of Elections Director Karen Bell to make this change official and permanent. The merger was approved on December 18, 2019.

Wadesboro voters who reside in Wadesboro Voting Districts 5, 6 & 7 will not vote at the Lockhart-Taylor Center (Ingram Room), located at 514 North Washington Street in Wadesboro. This change is permanent for all elections - municipal and general - effective January 2020.

This change means that if you previously voted at the AA Building on Country Club Road or the Anson County Board of Education on Camden Road, those sites will no longer be used, and you will vote at the Lockhart-Taylor Center.

Board of Elections Chair James Paxton stated, "Voters in Wadesboro Districts/Precincts expressed the desire to have one central location to cast their ballots, and this board met, discussed, and agreed that one location would make voting easier. Our board exists to serve the voters in Anson County, and this precinct merge allows voters to be served in a better capacity."

Elections Director Steve Adams agreed with Chairman Paxton that the Board of Elections works to provide voters with the best voting options available - and this one precinct in Wadesboro is best for the voters.

Adams shared, "This merging of precincts gives voters in the Wadesboro Districts a centralized voting area. In addition, it makes parking easier, curbside voting easier, and limits confusion for voters. Our staff and precinct officials will be able to serve the voters of Wadesboro in a more efficient and centralized precinct. We believe this one precinct will prove to make the elections process better in many ways, including parking, curbside voting access, and for campaigners and candidates."

Adams also wants voters to know that they still have the option to vote during Early Voting at the Anson County Board of Elections Office, located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro. In addition, Absentee by Mail Voting is available for voters.

Director Adams concluded, "All voters impacted by this precinct location change will be informed of this change via newspaper media circulation, social media notification, and voter cards being sent to highlight the new location.

For more information contact the Anson County Board of Elections at 704-994-3223.

Do You Need a Coat or Blanket? Would You Like to Donate?

The Faith-Based Center of Hope continues their "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" program. They distribute coats to those in need as well as to schools in Anson County. Blankets for the elderly are also available.

Gumbys on Highway 74 in Lilesville is a drop off site for donations, or a pick up point for those who need a coat. Just call to schedule it.

To donate coats and blankets or to request help, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.

Foster Parent and Caregiver Support Group

A Foster Parent and Caregiver Support Group meeting will be held on Monday, January 13 at the Anson County Department of Social Services, located at 118 North Washington Street in Wadesboro, from 6 to 7:30 p.m. Resources and refreshments will be provided free.

Contact Suzanne Maness at (910) 627-1769 or by email at connections-fsp@gmail.com to register.

Knights at the Museum to Perform for the 50+ Club

The Hampton B. Allen Library announces the 50+ Club meeting Monday, January 13 at 10:30 a.m. in the Little Theatre. The guest will be Knights at the Museum. Band members are Stan Harward, Joe Dutton, Scott Drye, Jimmy Russell and Tim Knopp.

Everyone is invited to come and enjoy the music of this talented band.

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

LIEAP Funds Not Currently Available

The Anson County Department of Social Services does not currently have Low Income Energy Assistance Program (LIEAP) funds available. The Express will publish an article when these funds do become available. The program ends March 31 unless funds are exhausted prior to that.

The Low Income Energy Assistance Program gives families a one-time vendor payment to help pay their heating bills. Families must meet all of the following: an income test, be responsible for its heating bills and include a U.S. citizen or an eligible alien.

For more information, contact the Anson County Department of Social Services at 704-694-9351.

Chair Yoga Offered at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library offers free chair yoga every Wednesday, from 10 to 11 a.m. You don't have to preregister, just come and have fun!

For more information call 704-694-5177.