

THE EXPRESS

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

Mobile Food Market is January 16

The next Anson Mobile Food Market will be held on Thursday, January 16, starting at 10:00 a.m. on the Square in uptown Wadesboro, the corner of Wade and Greene Streets.

Food will be given away, including fresh vegetables, fruit and bread (if available). There will be blood pressure and blood sugar checks, along with other healthy living topics and booths.

This free event offers citizens of Anson County six to eight different types of fresh produce monthly. This is a free initiative, so please come and get some produce. **Nothing is required to receive produce, just come.**

The event is sponsored by the Anson County Extension and its partners.

This event is to assist in the scarcity of fresh, healthy food in the county. It will also serve as an educational event to offer education on the two targeted areas of the county health assessment which are tobacco use and hypertension. Agencies will be set up offering services and information in those two targeted areas.



Josh Stein Sworn in as North Carolina's 76th Governor

On Wednesday, January 1 in the Old Senate Chambers at the historic Capitol in downtown Raleigh, Josh Stein took the oath of office to become North Carolina's 76th Governor. Joined by his wife Anna and family, Stein swore to support the Constitution and laws of the United States and North Carolina and to faithfully perform the duties of the office of governor.

Governor Roy Cooper offered words of welcome. Secretary of State Elaine Marshall presided over the ceremony for the transfer of the Great Seal of the State and witnessed the Oath of Office. North Carolina Supreme Court Chief Justice Paul Newby administered the oath of office while Stein placed his hand on a historic Tanakh. Pastor James Gailliard and Rabbi Judith Schindler offered prayers and words of wisdom.

"As I take this oath of office, I am profoundly aware of the solemn responsibility before me: to uphold the Constitution of the State of North Carolina and to serve our people," said Governor Josh Stein. "The work ahead of us is significant, but the time is now to build a safer, stronger North Carolina, where our economy continues to grow and works for everyone, where our public schools are excellent and our teachers are well-paid, and where our neighborhoods are safe and our personal freedoms are protected. And of course, we must act with urgency to help the people of western North Carolina recover from Hurricane Helene. And we will."

Public inauguration events will take place on January 11th and 12th in Raleigh.

North Carolinians Urged to Prepare for Cold, Wintry Weather

With cold temperatures already affecting the state and the possibility of wintry weather this weekend, Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey is reminding North Carolinians to prioritize fire safety when using portable heaters and take precautions when traveling on icy or snow-covered roads.

Last year, there were 119 home fire deaths in North Carolina, many related to home heating. According to the National Fire Protection Association (NFPA), heating equipment is the second leading cause of home fires in the U.S., with nearly 90% of fire deaths involving space heaters.

"Space heaters are a common cause of home fires, but they are also one of the easiest risks to avoid," said Commissioner Causey. "Remember to follow safety guidelines, never leave heaters unattended, and keep them away from anything that can burn."

Heating Safety Tips:

- Place space heaters on a hard, level surface. Never put them on a table or other elevated surface.
- Maintain a 3-foot zone around the heater free of children, pets, and any combustible materials such as furniture, bedding, or curtains.
- Never leave a space heater running when you leave the room or go to bed.

• Make sure your home has working smoke alarms installed on every level and in each bedroom. Test them monthly to ensure they're functioning properly.

Commissioner Causey also reminds drivers to be cautious, as parts of North Carolina - particularly in the western regions - could see a mix of wintry weather later this week, leading to hazardous road conditions.

"Snow, ice, and freezing rain can make roads slippery and dangerous," said Causey. "Drive slowly, leave extra space between vehicles, and be prepared for sudden changes in weather and road conditions."

Travel Safety Tips:

- Slow down. It takes longer to stop or control your vehicle on snow or ice-covered roads. Increase your following distance to give yourself more time to react.
- Before driving, always clear ice or snow from your windshield, windows, mirrors, and lights.
- Keep an emergency preparedness kit in your car, including items such as blankets, bottled water, non-perishable snacks, a flashlight, and a first-aid kit.
- Always wear your seatbelt and ensure all passengers are properly buckled up. For children, make sure car seats are properly installed and avoid bulky coats that can interfere with safety straps.

For more information on winter weather preparedness, visit: www.ncdoi.gov/are-you-prepared-winter-weather.



AHS Boy's Basketball Delivers Thrilling Wins in Back-to-Back Special Nights

The Anson High School boy's basketball team kicked off the new year with two incredible victories on January 2 and 3, bringing their record to 9-4 overall and 1-1 in conference play. The games featured standout performances, special guests, and a celebration of Bearcat basketball tradition.

• **January 2: AHS vs. Western Port Steelers (Australia)** On Thursday, January 2, the Bearcats hosted the Western Port Steelers, an Australian team touring the United States. In a game dubbed "From the Outback to Bearcat Country," Anson showcased their skills, defeating the Steelers 86-68.

Jayden Little led the team with 39 points, six rebounds, two assists, and four steals. Taviane Robinson and Graham Davis dominated the boards, combining for 25 rebounds, with Robinson adding 16 points and four blocked shots and Davis adding 10 points and two blocked shots. Amari Ingram also contributed with eight points, three rebounds, three assists and three steals for Ingram and Tasean Harris added eight points, three rebounds, one assist and two steals. The Bearcats' defense excelled, keeping turnovers low and shutting down the Steelers with a solid effort from every player.

This special night was made possible through the support of Woodmen of the World, who provided a Southern-style BBQ dinner for both teams and custom t-shirts for players and coaches. Fans packed the gym, celebrating an evening of international competition and camaraderie.

• **January 3: AHS vs. CATA (Conference Game)** The excitement continued on Friday, January 3, as AHS hosted CATA for their second conference matchup and celebrated Basketball Alumni Night. The Bearcats dominated the court, earning a resounding 91-40 victory.

Jayden "Chubby" Little delivered a historic performance with 53 points, just two points shy of the school's single-game record set by Lanyc Schuler in the 2020-21 season. Anson's defense was relentless, forcing 34 turnovers and converting them into transition points. Contributions came from all players, with Amari Ingram adding 10 points, five rebounds, two assists and two steals. Tasean Harris added nine points, one assist and two steals while Slade Winfield contributed with four points, four rebounds, two assists and two steals.

Basketball Alumni Night brought together former men's and women's players from across Anson County. Before the game, the Anson Outreach Network provided a meal, and Woodmen of the World contributed a 60-foot American flag for a patriotic pregame ceremony. Alumni, students, parents, and players from both teams participated, making it a memorable event. The alumni players are pictured above.

In addition, a moment of silence was held in memory of Caleb Goodman, an Anson Middle School first-year teacher, Anson High School Football Coach and Anson Middle School Wrestling Coach, who unexpectedly passed away on January 2. The tribute allowed the school community to come together in remembrance of a beloved educator.

With momentum on their side, the Bearcats aim to continue their winning streak. Thanks to all the fans, alumni, and sponsors for their support in making these two nights unforgettable. Let's go, Bearcats!

Looking Ahead The Bearcats have two critical conference matchups this week: Tuesday, January 7 at Parkwood and Friday, January 10 at Monroe (JV at 4:30pm, Varsity at 7:30pm).

Seniors Reminded to Review, Make Changes to Medicare Advantage Plans by March 31

Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey and SHIIP, the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program, remind seniors who have Medicare Advantage plans to review their coverage and make changes to their plans during the Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period in North Carolina, which runs from Jan. 1, 2025, to March 31, 2025.

"Our health can change significantly in a very short period of time," Commissioner Causey said. "If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan, now is the right time to make sure you have the plan that best meets your needs."

If you're unhappy with your Medicare Advantage Plan (Medicare Part C), you have options. Each year, there is a Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period from Jan. 1 to March 31. During this time, if you're in a Medicare Advantage Plan and want to change your health plan, you can do one of these:

- Switch to a different Medicare Advantage Plan with or without drug coverage.

- Go back to Original Medicare and, if needed, also join a Medicare Prescription Drug Plan.

If you switch Medicare Advantage Plans or go back to Original Medicare with or without a Medicare drug plan, your new coverage will start the first day of the month after your new plan gets your request for coverage. Keep in mind, if you go back to Original Medicare now, you may not be able to buy a Medicare Supplement Insurance (Medigap) policy.

For assistance with Medicare questions, contact SHIIP in Anson County at Grace Senior Center, 704-694-6616. Or you can call 1-855-408-1212 Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. to speak to a SHIIP counselor. The Medicare Plan Finder can also help you find, compare and enroll in a new Medicare Advantage Plan or a Medicare drug plan in your area. You can also call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227) for help. TTY users can call 1-877-486-2048.

The Medicare Advantage Open Enrollment Period is only for people who are currently enrolled in a Medicare Advantage Plan. If you have a Medicare Advantage Plan and want to change your plan, check out your options today. Remember, the Medicare Advantage Plan Open Enrollment Period ends March 31.

For more information about SHIIP and the Medicare Open Enrollment Period, call 1-855-408-1212 or visit www.ncshiip.com.

Chair Exercise Classes at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library is hosting a chair exercise class each Thursday in January. Class begins at 10:00 a.m. in the library's Pritchett Room.

Everyone is welcome.

Any questions please call 704-694-5177.

HUGE Yard Sale is this Saturday

Faith-Based Center of Hope is hosting a HUGE yard sale on Saturday, January 11 in the parking lot across from Papa Joe's Pizzeria, beginning at 9 a.m. All proceeds from the sale will go to help our less fortunate brothers and sisters.

Contributions and/or donations are appreciated.

For more information please contact Vancine Sturdvant, CEO, at 704 294-0480 or Executive Board Members James Sturdvant at 704 294-8073; Linda Richardson at 704 465-0243; or Carol Leak at 704 441-5771.

The address for the sale is 911 East Caswell Street in Wadesboro.

Harvard Street Band Concert at the Library

The Hampton B. Allen Library will present a concert featuring the Harvard Street Band on Monday, January 13 at 10:30 a.m. This will be in the library's Little Theater. Everyone is invited to come, bring a friend and enjoy some country and gospel music by some of the finest musicians and singers.

Any questions please call 707-694-5177.

South Piedmont Offering Free Digital Literacy Classes Beginning in January

South Piedmont Community College is offering a new round of free Digital Literacy classes designed to provide participants with fundamental computer skills. The Digital Literacy classes will cover basic skills in common computer programs, including Excel, Google Docs, Microsoft Word, and PowerPoint. All classes are offered for free, and computers are provided for use during class. Additionally, students who successfully complete the Digital Literacy class will receive a \$250 voucher to continue their education at South Piedmont.

The upcoming class schedule is as follows:

- **Anson County** Jan. 21, 2025-May 15, 2025, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:15 to 8:15 p.m. Lockhart-Taylor Center, 514 N. Washington St., Wadesboro

- **Union County**

- Jan. 21, 2025-May 15, 2025, Tuesdays, Wednesdays & Thursdays, 12:30-2:30 p.m. OCH Campus-Building A, 4209 Old Charlotte Highway, Monroe

- Jan. 21, 2025-May 15, 2025, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. OCH Campus-Main Building

- Feb. 18, 2025-May 9, 2025, Tuesdays, Thursdays & Fridays, 9 a.m.-12 p.m. OCH Campus-Building A

- **Class offered in Spanish** Jan. 21, 2025-May 15, 2025, Tuesdays & Thursdays, 5:30-8:30 p.m. OCH Campus-Building A, 4209 Old Charlotte Highway, Monroe

To reserve a spot in these classes, contact Kristi Phifer at 704-290-5216 or kphifer@spcc.edu.

The classes are being offered thanks to Digital Champion funding provided by the North Carolina Department of Information Technology's Office of Digital Equity and Literacy. South Piedmont is using the Digital Champion funding to study students' internet access, connect students with community resources to access the internet, provide enhanced internal resources, and promote and remove financial barriers to students seeking to gain digital literacy skills.