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

## 2,220 Reported Cases of COVID-19 in Anson County

As of Monday, February 15 the Anson County Health Department posted that Anson County had 2,220 reported cases of COVID-19. 79 of those cases were active. At that point they had discharged 2,141 cases, 2,089 to baseline health and 52 deaths.

Please note that for more specific information regarding county/state statistics, refer to [www.ncdhhs.gov](http://www.ncdhhs.gov).

The NC Department of Health and Human Services (NCDHHS) reported statewide as of Monday, February 15 there were 824,352 total cases of COVID-19, with 10,501 deaths, 9,660,088 completed tests and 1,941 hospitalized.

Statewide, as of Monday, February 1 there were 761,302 total cases of COVID-19, with 9,342 deaths, 8,908,258 completed tests and 2,781 hospitalized.

January 25 - 723,445 cases of COVID-19, 8,720 deaths, 8,500,479 completed tests and 3,287 hospitalized.

January 4 - 570,111 cases of COVID-19, 6,941 deaths, 7,119,201 completed tests and 3,192 hospitalized.

December 7 - 404,032 cases of COVID-19, 5,605 deaths, 5,678,794 completed tests and 2,373 hospitalized.

November 2 - 278,028 cases of COVID-19, 4,390 deaths, 4,116,019 completed tests and 1,146 hospitalized.

October 5 - 219,754 cases of COVID-19, 3,637 deaths, 3,188,371 completed tests and 971 hospitalized.

**Recent history in Anson County:** March 31 - 1 case; April 28 - 23 cases (no deaths); May 26 - 62 cases (1 death); June 22 - 107 cases (2 deaths); July 27 - 285 cases (2 deaths); August 3 - 306 cases (2 deaths); August 31 - 440 cases (4 deaths); September 4 - 461 cases (4 deaths); September 28 - 605 cases (4 deaths); October 5 - 649 cases (6 deaths); October 26 - 720 cases (9 deaths); November 2 - 738 cases (11 deaths); November 30 - 937 cases (14 deaths); December 7 - 1,029 cases (18 deaths); December 31 - 1,444 cases; (28 deaths) January 4 - 1,524 cases (28 deaths); January 25 - 1,957 cases (42 deaths); February 1 - 2,056 cases (45 deaths).

## Those 65 and Over Need to Get Their COVID-19 Vaccine Shot before Feb. 24

This is a release from Fred Thompson, PhD, Health Director at the Anson County Health Department: It is important and the Health Department is requesting that all Ansonians 65 and over who want to get the COVID-19 vaccine shot do so before February 24, when we will open up to Group 3 - the frontline essential workers. Group 3 is a very large group, and it will take weeks, if not months, to work through that Group 3. While we will still take appointments for Groups 1 and 2 after February 24, they will be competing with everyone in Group 3 for the vaccine. Right now, up to February 24, the 65 and over essentially have a monopoly on appointments for the vaccine.

To speed up the registration process for both the Health Department and those 65 and over, we are asking people to fill out a registration/health questionnaire and return the form to us. The county has set up a direct link to the form on the county government home page, [www.co.anson.nc.us](http://www.co.anson.nc.us). You can also request the form via email at [covidregistration@co.anson.nc.us](mailto:covidregistration@co.anson.nc.us) or by calling the Health Department at 704-694-5188. Once completed, the form can be emailed to the same address: [covidregistration@co.anson.nc.us](mailto:covidregistration@co.anson.nc.us) or placed in the drop box located at the front entrance of the Health Department, located at 110 Ashe Street in Wadesboro.

Once we get the registration form, we will call the individual and get them scheduled.

Some people may not have internet or, if they do, they may not have an email account set up. This is especially true for people 65 and over. For those who do not have internet, or an email account set up, they can simply call us at (704) 694-5188 and press 1 and we will take their information over the phone and get them scheduled.

We have both appointment slots and vaccine available for those 65 and over right now. The Moderna vaccine is both safe and effective, and I encourage anyone 65 and over, and who want to get vaccinated, to do so before February 24 when we will open up to Group 3. *Thanks so much.*

## North Carolinians Urged to Take Advantage of the Special Enrollment Period for Healthcare Insurance

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey urges North Carolinians who don't have health insurance to sign up for coverage during the Special Enrollment Period (SEP) for the Health Insurance Marketplace, which begins today and runs through May 15.

"I am pleased about this opportunity to help families who don't have insurance due to the loss of a job or the economic situation surrounding the COVID-19 pandemic," said Commissioner Causey. "Making sure you and your family's medical needs are covered is always important, and the coronavirus pandemic underscores that critical importance."

Earlier this year, President Joe Biden signed an executive order establishing the SEP, citing "exceptional circumstances caused by the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic."

Consumers who are uninsured will be able to sign up for coverage without having to wait until the regular open enrollment period at the end of the year. No qualifying event is necessary to be eligible. Consumers can take this opportunity to look for coverage and find out if they qualify for financial assistance to help pay their insurance premiums. Currently, nine out of 10 consumers enrolled in coverage through [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) receive some sort of financial help, with 75% of consumers purchasing a plan for \$50 or less per month after receiving assistance.

All of the plans at [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) cover certain essential health benefits, such as primary care visits and many preventative care services.

Consumers who want to take advantage of the special enrollment period may visit [HealthCare.gov](http://HealthCare.gov) or [CuidadoDeSalud.gov](http://CuidadoDeSalud.gov) to view plans and prices and enroll in plans.

Consumers may also call the Marketplace Call Center at 1-800-318-2596. TTY users should call 1-855-889-4325.

In addition, consumers with any type of insurance question, may call the Department of Insurance's Consumer Services Division to speak to an expert at 855-408-1212.



5.8 acres of land in Polkton. Built in 1830, the house was the birthplace of Leonidas Lafayette Polk (1837-1892). This is PMI's first project in Anson County and its first outside of Mecklenburg County. PMI intends to buy this country home in order to keep the life of Leonidas Polk instructive to future generations.

Polk was a major political figure in North Carolina. Polkton is named for him. Leonidas Polk laid out the lots for the town of Polkton in 1870. The railroad arrived in 1874. "I have chosen what I hope is my life's work," said Polk. "With me it is a labor of love."

Dan L. Morrill, Preserve Mecklenburg Administrator said, "L. L. Polk is important to all of North Carolina, not just to Anson County."

Polk labored tirelessly to improve the life circumstances of Tar Heel farmers. He focused his attention on the "little people," not upon the rich, the powerful and the economically privileged. He became the first head of the North Carolina Agricultural Commission in 1877. Polk founded *The Progressive Farmer* in 1886, a magazine that gave practical advice to farm families. It is still in print. Polk was president of the National Farmers Alliance from 1889 until his death. He was a founder of North Carolina State University, and was a leader in convincing the Baptist State Convention to establish Meredith College. Polk was a national leader of the People's Party, and might have been its candidate for President had he lived.

Preserve Mecklenburg is proud to work to preserve the birthplace of Leonidas Lafayette Polk. Would that there were more people who made such major contributions to the public good.

Morrill added, "Preserve Mecklenburg would have been powerless without the hope of the owners that the Polk House will be saved. We want to do more than just preserve the Polk House. We want to make the Polk House a vibrant and vital place for the future of Anson County."

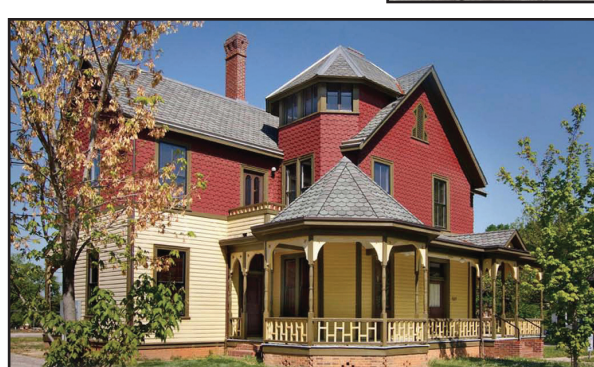
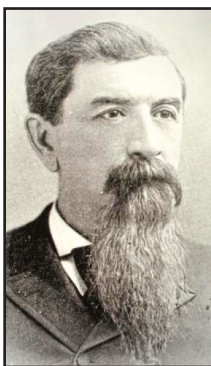
Morrill concluded, "I think the best chance for the Polk House to survive is to use it as a commercial center. My dream is to make the property the site for a farmers market. L. L. Polk spent his life helping farmers. Making the Polk House the centerpiece of a farmers market would be a fitting tribute to Polk's legacy."

The Polk House is located at 7453 Old US Highway 74, Polkton.

Preserve Mecklenburg hopes to become an important component of the preservation movement in the Southern Piedmont. As a private, nonprofit agency, PMI can move quickly to close on property. It can also acquire any property which it deems to have cultural and historical significance. With support from the communities of the Southern Piedmont, it can have a bright future. Secure online donations can be made at [preservemeck.org/donate](http://preservemeck.org/donate).

## Preserve Mecklenburg Considers First Project in Anson County: the Purchase of the Leonidas Lafayette Polk House In Polkton

Preserve Mecklenburg (PMI), a private, nonprofit, real-estate-active preservation agency, is under contract to purchase the Leonidas Lafayette Polk House and



Leonidas L. Polk (top). Pictured above is the restored Polk House that is located in Raleigh. The Polk family has returned many of the original furnishings to the house, and the home is now open for visits by appointment. Call (919) 285-1537 and leave a voicemail, or email [llpolkhouse@gmail.com](mailto:llpolkhouse@gmail.com) for an appointment.

## NC Disability Organizations Host COVID-19 Vaccine Presentation

The North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities (NCCDD) and the North Carolina Down Syndrome Alliance (NCDSA) will host a presentation today, Wednesday, February 17 at 7 p.m. on Zoom on the COVID-19 vaccine rollout plans, how it affects people with developmental disabilities and answer any concerns or questions people with Down syndrome, their families and caregivers may have.

The presentation will be led by Talley Wells, Executive Director, North Carolina Council on Developmental Disabilities and Christina Reaves, Executive Director, North Carolina Down Syndrome Alliance.

The presentation is free to attend, but registration is required. Registration is at: [bit.ly/COVID19FebPresentation](http://bit.ly/COVID19FebPresentation).

## Gov. Cooper Outlines Timeline on Group 3 COVID-19 Vaccine Prioritization

Educators, school personnel and child care workers will be eligible for COVID-19 vaccine beginning Feb. 24; North Carolina has administered more than 1 million first doses of vaccine

Governor Roy Cooper and North Carolina Department of Health and Human Services Secretary Mandy K. Cohen, M.D. have outlined a timeline for Group 3 frontline workers becoming eligible to receive the Covid-19 vaccine, beginning with anyone working in child care or in PreK - 12 schools on February 24.

"I am grateful to all of our educators and school personnel for going above and beyond in this pandemic to care for children and help them continue to learn," said Governor Cooper. "Starting with a smaller number of Group 3 frontline essential workers helps providers streamline vaccine distribution effectively and efficiently."

Because vaccine supply continues to be limited and the Group 3 population of frontline essential workers is so large, the state needs to move to the next group gradually. Those working in child care and schools, such as teachers, bus and van drivers, custodial and maintenance staff, and food service workers, will be eligible first. This includes staff in child care centers and homes, Head Start programs, Preschool and PreK programs, traditional public schools, charter schools and private schools. (See [Deeper Dive at governor.nc.gov](http://Deeper Dive at governor.nc.gov) for additional detail.)

States must vaccinate people in groups due to limited supply. North Carolina is currently vaccinating people in Groups 1 and 2, which include health care workers, long-term care staff and residents and people 65 and older. In the coming weeks, providers will continue to vaccinate these groups. More than 40 percent of North Carolina's residents 65 and older have been vaccinated.

Under the timeline outlined today, the state plans to move to additional frontline workers on March 10th.

"Vaccine supply limitations continue to impact how fast we can get all North Carolinians vaccinated," said Secretary Cohen. "Keep doing the 3Ws. Wear a mask, wait 6 feet apart, and wash your hands often. And be sure to visit [YourShotYourSpot.nc.gov](http://YourShotYourSpot.nc.gov) for accurate information."

NCDHHS is working with partners to develop operational guidance to support child care and school staff in accessing vaccines. However, current prevention measures will not change. Schools can and should be providing in-person instruction. Under robust safety measures, all students can be in classrooms, with middle and high school students also following six-feet social distancing protocols.

North Carolina has administered more than 1 million first doses of vaccine and more than 1.5 million total doses.

North Carolina is expected to receive more doses of vaccine over the coming weeks heading into March. This increase and certainty of advance knowledge into the supply chain several weeks out has allowed the state to plan to open vaccinations to Group 3. As state officials receive more supply information, additional operational guidance will continue to be provided.

Detailed information about each vaccine group is online at [YourShotYourSpot.nc.gov](http://YourShotYourSpot.nc.gov) (English) or [vacunate.nc.gov](http://vacunate.nc.gov) (Spanish).

## School Board Meeting for February 22 to be Live Streamed on YouTube

The Anson County Board of Education will hold their regular meeting on Monday, February 22. Closed Session will begin immediately after the opening of the meeting at 4:00 p.m. Open Session to the public will begin at 5:30 p.m.

The meeting will be live streamed on the Anson County Schools' YouTube channel for the public to view. To find the channel you can search YouTube for "Anson County Schools."

The meeting will be conducted virtually with some board members participating in-person, through video and audio, or audio-only, due to health and safety concerns arising from the COVID-19 pandemic and pursuant to Board Policy. The meeting will be held in the Anson County Schools' Administrative Board Room located at 320 Camden Road, Wadesboro, NC.

Governors' Orders on large gatherings will be enforced. Social distancing requirements will be enforced, and masks will be required.

If the public wishes to sign up for public comment, they can go to the public comment link on the school system website: [www.ansonschools.org](http://www.ansonschools.org) to sign up. Public comment sign up will be from 4:45 to 5:15 p.m. on February 22.

The Express is on the web at [www.TheExpressNewspaper.com](http://www.TheExpressNewspaper.com)