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

## John Gravitte Arrested, Charged with Kidnapping, Assault

**Female victim suffered injuries all over her body. Evidence indicated weeks of domestic violence.**

On Sunday, April 17 officers with the Wadesboro Police Department responded to a 911 hang-up at a residence in Wadesboro. When officers arrived they found a female victim with injuries all over her body. Officers investigated this incident and found that it was a case of domestic violence. During the investigation officers were able to determine this domestic violence had been occurring for several weeks. Officers obtained warrants for the arrest of John Gravitte, 51, charging him with First Degree Kidnapping, Assault Inflicting Serious Injury, Communicating Threats, and Injury to Personal Property.

On Wednesday, April 20 Gravitte was arrested for the above listed offenses, given no bond as is required in domestic violence cases, and placed in the Anson County Jail. Gravitte was also served with a 50B Domestic Violence Protective Order banning him from having any contact with the victim. While in the Anson County Jail, Gravitte called the victim in violation of the aforementioned 50B Domestic Violence Protective Order. An additional charge of Domestic Violence Protective Order Violation was obtained by officers.

On Friday, April 22 Gravitte was given his first appearance in Anson County District Court where District Court Judge S. Crawford set his bond at \$1,000,000 secured. Gravitte remains in the Anson County Jail awaiting trial.

## Cormelius Antonio Smith Busted for Distributing Meth, in Federal Custody

On Wednesday, April, 20 officers with the Wadesboro Police Department, working in conjunction with the Drug Enforcement Administration (DEA), the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), the Anson County Sheriff's Office, and the Richmond County Sheriff's Office arrested Cormelius Antonio Smith, 31, of Wadesboro. This arrest is the result of a multi-year investigation by the above listed partnering agencies into the illegal distribution of methamphetamine.

Smith was arrested on a three count indictment issued on April 19, 2022, in the United States District Court for the Western District of North Carolina. He was taken into federal custody and is currently being held without bond awaiting his court appearance.

**Charges** Count one: Conspiracy to distribute and possession with the intent to distribute methamphetamine. Counts two and three: Distribute methamphetamine.

## Kevin Gathings and Mark Hildreth Win in NCDOT "Equipment Rodeo"

### NCDOT announces Division 10 "Equipment Rodeo" winners

The N.C. Department of Transportation held its annual "Equipment Rodeo" at the Stanly County Agri-Civic Center in Albemarle on Tuesday, April 19, giving employees an opportunity to take part in a friendly competition of skill and accuracy. Employees from Anson, Cabarrus, Mecklenburg, Stanly, Union counties maneuvered heavy equipment through several obstacle courses requiring precision, such as safely parallel parking a dump truck, or using the bucket of a backhoe to accurately drop a golf ball into cylinders of various sizes.

The overall goals of the Rodeo include helping NCDOT employees advance their skills with emphasis on safety when operating these machines. The competition also fosters team spirit, recognizing employees who excel at their jobs.

The winners from each event will represent Division 10 at the State Rodeo in Raleigh on June 21:

- **Single Axle Truck Exercise:** Kevin Gathings, Anson Maintenance
- **Boom Truck Exercise:** Mark Hildreth, Anson Bridge
- **Lowboy Truck Exercise:** Jeff Foreman
- **Motor Grader Truck Exercise:** Josh Eudy, Union Maintenance
- **Tractor-Mower Exercise:** Ryan Bowers, Roadside Environmental
- **Backhoe Exercise:** Cody Stegall, Cabarrus Maintenance
- **Tandem Axle Truck Exercise:** Will Davidson, Union Bridge

## Anson Middle School PTO Bearcat Pride 5K is this Saturday

**Where:** Uptown Wadesboro  
**When:** Saturday, April 30 at 9:00 a.m.  
**Course Information:** The 5k Run/Walk will begin and end in front of Wadesboro Police Department, located on South Rutherford Street.  
The Bearcat Pride 5k run/walk will help support the AMS PTO by raising funds to support students and staff. The AMS PTO gives parents and teachers the opportunity to work together to supplement and enrich the educational experience. The PTO builds an effective partnership of home and school. It provides financial assistance where needs are identified within the school, it fosters a community atmosphere, and supports the mission and vision of the school and school district.  
• There's a special registration price of \$10 for students ages 5-18.  
(Special pricing will show once you check out.)  
• Online Registration Deadline ended Tuesday, April 26, at 11:59 p.m. Race Day Registration will be \$25.  
More information can be found online at: [runsignup.com/Race/NC/Wadesboro/BearcatPride5kRunWalk](http://runsignup.com/Race/NC/Wadesboro/BearcatPride5kRunWalk).  
The course map can be found at: [mapmyrun.com/routes/view/4905431194](http://mapmyrun.com/routes/view/4905431194)



Pictured above are, from left, Edward Little, Marion Kersey, Beulah Pratt, Nelson Bennett, Tim Watkins and Reco Johnson. Pictured at right is Quatavis Liles.

## Las Amigas Honor Distinguished Man of the Year

On Saturday, April 9 the Morven Chapter of Las Amigas (MCLA) hosted their first annual "Distinguished Man of the Year" program. The speaker, Mr. Jimmy Chambers, spoke on the characteristics of a "Distinguished Man," such as character, integrity, respect and honesty.

The following contenders were recognized: Rev. Quatavis Liles, Mr. Edwards Little, Mr. Kenneth Simon, Mr. Nelson Bennett, Rev. Reco Johnson, Mr. Marion Kersey and Mr. Tim Watkins. Rev. Quatavis D. Liles was named MCLA's Distinguished Man of the Year. He was sponsored by Sis. Beulah Pratt. The first runner up was Mr. Marion Kersey, sponsored by Sis. Elizabeth Kersey. The second runner up was Mr. Nelson Bennett, sponsored by Sis. Winnie Bennett.



## Primary Election Early Voting Begins Thursday

The Primary Election will be held on Tuesday, May 17, but One Stop Early Voting will begin this Thursday, April 28 and run until Saturday, May 14.

All Anson County voters can vote early at the Board of Elections Office, located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro.

**Candidates** For a list of the candidates and detailed information, please see the Board of Elections notice that is on page 5 of this edition of The Express.

- Early Voting hours:**
- Monday through Friday, 8 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.
  - Saturdays (April 30, May 7 & 14), 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.
  - Sunday, May 8, 12 p.m. to 6 p.m.

**Registration to Vote** Anson County citizens who did not register to vote by the April 22 deadline can still register and vote during One Stop Early Voting, and will be required to provide documentation of their identity and residence.

**Absentee by Mail Voting** is available upon request by the voter, a near relative, or legal guardian. The deadline to apply for an Absentee by Mail ballot is 5 p.m. on May 10. Details about Absentee by Mail Voting is available in the Board of Elections notice that is on page 5 of this edition of The Express.

- Election Day Polling Places - Hours are 6:30 a.m. to 7:30 p.m.**
- Ansonville Fire-Rescue, 9145 US Highway 52 North, Ansonville
  - Burnsville Fire-Rescue, 33 Rescue Road, Polkton
  - Gullidge Fire Department, 34 Chewning Road, Wadesboro
  - Lilesville Fire Department, 202 West Wall Street, Lilesville
  - Morven-McFarlan Fire Department, 242 East Main Street, Morven
  - Peachland Fire Department, 35 Passaic Street, Peachland
  - Polkton Fire Department, 61 West Polk Street, Polkton
  - Wadesboro - All Wadesboro voters vote at SPCC Lockhart-Taylor Center, 514 North Washington Street, Wadesboro
  - White Store Community Building, 5672 Union Church Road, Peachland

**On Election Day, May 17, no voting takes place at the Board of Elections Office.** For more election information you can call the Anson County Board of Elections at 704-994-3223.

## Wildlife Commission Seeks Public Comment on 2015 Wildlife Action Plan Addendum

**Plants will be added to Species of Greatest Conservation Need**

The N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission is seeking public comments through May 20 on a major revision to the 2015 Wildlife Action Plan that will add plants to the list of North Carolina's Species of Greatest Conservation Need (SGCN). The addendum documents and comment portal are available online at [www.research.net/r/WAP22](http://www.research.net/r/WAP22).

Addendum 2 to the Plan will add plant SGCN as a component of the state's natural communities, add a new natural community description for Piedmont and Coastal Plain Oak Forests, and provide habitat associations between plant SGCN and the natural communities described in the Plan.

The addendum is in preparation for the anticipated passage of the Recovering America's Wildlife Act (RAWA), proposed federal legislation with wide bi-partisan support, which will include provisions for plant conservation. As currently proposed, RAWA will provide a new source of federal matching grant funds to states that include plants as SGCN in their Wildlife Action Plans. The Wildlife Commission will join 15 other state wildlife agencies that already include plants in their Wildlife Action Plans. Details at [ncwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act](http://ncwildlife.org/Conserving/Programs/Recovering-Americas-Wildlife-Act).

"Conservation is critical to preserve genetic diversity and seed sources, especially for rare plants limited to small, isolated or fragmented populations," said Cindy Simpson, the Wildlife Commission's Wildlife Action Plan coordinator. "In comparison to wildlife species that are able to move across the landscape, plants are at greater risk to direct impacts from threats because they are rooted within their landscape position."

The Wildlife Commission developed Addendum 2 through collaboration with the N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services, Plant Conservation Program and the N.C. Department of Natural and Cultural Resources, National Heritage Program.

"Plant species represent a very large proportion of our state's total biodiversity," said Lesley Starke, program administrator for the NC Plant Conservation Program at the Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services. "Adding plants into the Wildlife Action Plan will expand the scope and impact of this conservation strategy. By identifying conservation needs and enacting conservation programs earlier for at-risk species, we hope to reduce the need to list species."

"Adding plants to the list of SGCN will help promote wider recognition of the role of native plants in wildlife habitats and will help increase federal funding for plant conservation in North Carolina," said Misty Buchanan, deputy director for Natural Heritage Program. "This habitat-based approach will benefit native plants, wildlife, and the habitat that supports them."

The N.C. Plant Conservation Program manages plant conservation in the state, including adopting a state list of protected plant species, adopting and enforcing regulations that protect, conserve and enhance those listed species, and developing conservation programs for the benefit of listed species. The Plant Conservation Program is also responsible for managing more than 14,500 acres of conservation preserve properties across the state which provide critical conservation for listed plant species in North Carolina.

The N.C. Natural Heritage Program maintains a statewide inventory of native plant species that are rare, in decline, believed to have been extirpated or presumed extinct. The Natural Heritage Program works with the Plant Conservation Program to maintain inventory information on plant species that are listed as Endangered, Threatened, Special Concern or Significantly Rare. The inventory is maintained with current data and an updated Rare Plant List is published every two years. It is located at [ncnhp.org/publications/nhp-publications/rare-plant-list](http://ncnhp.org/publications/nhp-publications/rare-plant-list).

## Anson Board of Commissioners Meets May 3

The next meeting of the Anson County Board of Commissioners is scheduled for Tuesday, May 3 at 6 p.m.

The meetings take place in the Board Room, Suite 209, of the Anson County Government Center which is located at 101 South Greene Street in uptown Wadesboro.

To schedule an appearance at a board meeting, please sign up prior to the meeting. Information is available at 704-994-3201.

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](http://youtube.com) and search for Anson Commissioners.

## Anson Beekeepers Meet on Thursday

Anson County Beekeepers members are reminded of the monthly meetings, held on the fourth Thursday. The upcoming meeting will be this Thursday, April 28 at Welika Fish House Restaurant in Lilesville. If you would like to eat come at 6 p.m. The meeting begins at 7 p.m.

Anson County Beekeepers meetings are open to everyone who is interested in beekeeping and pollination. For more information call 704-272-7154 or email [hcarpenterll@yahoo.com](mailto:hcarpenterll@yahoo.com).

## Special Olympics are Friday

After a two-year hiatus, Special Olympics Anson County is excited to host Spring Games with limited athlete participation this Friday, April 29 at Anson High School Stadium. Opening Ceremonies will begin at 9:45 a.m.

Athletes will compete in track and field events at their various ability levels. All athletes will have student buddies at the event.

The Return to Activities Protocol issued by Special Olympics North Carolina gives guidance whereas everyone (with the exception of spectators in the stands) must complete a Communicable Disease Waiver Form. This Form should be requested and completed prior to the Games on April 29 by contacting Sylvia Tillman, Local Coordinator, at (704) 694-4417.

In the event of rain, the Games will be held on Wednesday, May 4.