

Bulk Rate
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit # 149
Wadesboro, NC
28170

Postal
Customer

THE EXPRESS

205 West Morgan Street • Wadesboro, NC 28170 • 704-694-2480 • TheExpressNews@gmail.com • www.TheExpressNewspaper.com

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

Employee Killed by Explosion at Darling Ingredients Plant

Joseph Mauldin was tragically killed in an explosion while at work at Darling Ingredients in Wadesboro just after 9 p.m. on Thursday, June 22. He was 37 years old. Darling Ingredients, located just off Highway 52 North near the Anson County Airport, was formerly called Valley Proteins. **Anson County Emergency Services issued this release about the incident** (Release was dated June 23): "At 9:14 p.m. on Thursday, June 22 the Anson County 911 Center received a call for a chemical explosion at 656 Little Duncan Road in Wadesboro, which is the Darling Ingredients Plant. The first arriving fire units reported a plume cloud that was rising from the rear main building. Firefighters were staged in a safe area until the chemical was determined to be Aluminum Chloride Solution. Firefighters then entered the hot zone to search for occupants and fire conditions. During search operations, firefighters found no fire and one victim was obviously deceased. Identification of the victim is pending notification of family members. The county Medical Examiner will determine the cause of death.

The NC Regional Response Team 7 was requested, as this was a hazardous materials incident, and they have more specialized equipment and training for this type of incident. Air monitoring and chemical monitoring was completed by NC RRT 7 to deem the area safe. Also, requested were Structural Engineer's from NC Emergency Management's USAR Team. These engineers arrived on-scene and deemed the structure was structurally sound for firefighters to enter the structure for victim removal and investigation.

The explosion investigation was completed by Anson County Fire Marshal's Office, Wadesboro Fire Department, Anson County Sheriff's Office and ATF. The explosion is still under investigation at this time.

There were no emergency responders injured in this incident. We are deeply saddened at the death of one of our citizens. Our hearts and prayers are with the family, friends and coworkers of the victim."

Darling Ingredients issued this release on June 23:

"On June 22, an incident occurred at an ancillary building at our Wadesboro, NC facility. One employee was fatally injured. The plant has been shut down and an investigation is underway.

We are deeply saddened by the loss of one of our employees. Our hearts and prayers go to the family, friends and coworkers of our team member. Signed Suann Guthrie, SVP, Investor Relations, Sustainability and Global Communications"

According to reporting by WSOC TV, Darling Ingredients makes food for animals. The company claims safety is its first ingredient, but this is not the first time one of Darling Ingredients' plants exploded. In 2020 the company faced a \$75,000 fine after two workers died in an explosion in Mississippi, according to an OSHA inspection report.

According to reporting by WCNC TV, in recent years, multiple Valley Proteins plants have experienced dangerous incidents. In 2020, NBC affiliate WITN reported five people were injured after an explosion at the Duplin County, North Carolina plant.

In 2021, NBC affiliate WRAL reported two people died at the Fayetteville plant after being found unresponsive. In 2022, WCNC Charlotte's content partner WLTX reported a fire caused significant damage at the Saluda County, South Carolina plant.

Numerous spills on Anson County roadways

Locally, Anson County citizens have put up with numerous spills of noxious materials such as animal byproducts on the roadways by Darling Ingredients trucks. The most recent spill took place just last week on Highway 74 in front of Anson High School, causing traffic delays and a lingering bad odor.

Wildlife Law Enforcement Promotes Safe Boating During July 4 Holiday

Operation Dry Water aims to prevent alcohol and drug related boating incidents

In efforts to ensure a safer July 4 holiday experience on the water, law enforcement officers with the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission (NCWRC) will participate in Operation Dry Water, a national campaign being observed July 1 to 3 through the National Association of State Boating Law Administrators (NASBLA). The focus of the campaign is to heighten enforcement and awareness about the dangers of boating while impaired.

According to the U.S. Coast Guard, alcohol continues to be the leading contributing factor in recreational boating deaths and a major factor in incidents on the water. Wildlife officers will be increasing water patrols and providing boaters with information on the dangers of impaired boating, in addition to enforcing state laws.

"This is one of the busiest weekends for boaters every year. The presence of law enforcement officers in North Carolina is a key factor in preventing incidents from occurring or escalating," said Lt. Nathan Green, N.C. Wildlife Law Enforcement Division. "The Operation Dry Water campaign is an effective resource in providing safer boating opportunities, keeping boating safety at the forefront of holiday activities."

Last year, the N.C. Wildlife Law Enforcement Division was recognized with the Top Agency Award by NASBLA.

It is unlawful to operate a recreational vessel with an alcohol concentration of .08 or higher, or while being appreciably impaired by alcohol, drugs, or other impairing substances. During last year's campaign, NCWRC law enforcement officers deployed 153 officers and removed 65 people from the water who were boating while impaired.

Officials also stress the importance of other boating safety practices while on the water. So far this year, 28 boating incidents have occurred in North Carolina; five were fatal. Wildlife officers urge boaters to boat responsibly. Last year in North Carolina, boating incidents resulted in 20 fatalities. Of those, 16 were not wearing a life jacket.

Additional support for Operation Dry Water and The Governor's Highway Safety Program's Operation Firecracker Booze it & Lose It campaign includes North Carolina State Highway Patrol, the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement and the North Carolina Forensic Tests for Alcohol Branch.



City Reach Community Center Hosts "Meet & Greet" with Pro Athletes from Anson County

On Saturday, June 17 a large crowd of children, youth, local political figures, educators, and their families filled the City Reach Community Center in Wadesboro for a special "Homecoming" Meet and Greet with professional athletes who starred at Anson High - then went on to the pros.

Dionde Pratt, a star 3 sport athlete at Anson High was in attendance. "Dre" a Johnson C. Smith University graduate and basketball star went on to play professionally in both Saudi Arabia and Boliva.

Bunyon "BJ" Tyson, another 3 sport star in Anson, attended and graduated from East Carolina University while becoming the 5th all time leading scorer in ECU mens college basketball history. After his time in Greenville BJ headed over seas to play for the "BC Tarvas" Basketball team in the country of Estonia.

Stephone Anthony played 3 sports at Anson High, but excelled in football, being ranked as one of the top 3 Linebackers in North Carolina in 2010. Anthony attended, starred, and graduated from Clemson University. He was drafted in the 1st round of the 2015 NFL Drafts with the 31st overall pick by the New Orleans Saints and spent 5 seasons in the NFL.

Everyone in attendance enjoyed a free cookout provided by City Reach Community Center staff, and cooked by Anson County Commissioner Robert Mims. Local DJ Kenwyn "DJ FINESSE" Gatewood was on hand to keep the energy going! Every person left with a free t-shirt provided by many local businesses and sponsors.

To wrap up the event -the pros took part in a question and answer session moderated by another local Ansonian Samuel Cole, allowing them to share their story; their work ethic, their struggles, what motivates them, and to encourage the crowd and community to have a relationship with Christ, "keep going," never forget where you came from, and stay focused no matter what is happening around you.

Pratt, Tyson and Anthony are still part of the "sports" they love - with Pratt and BJ playing in Semi Pro leagues, and Stephone is a line backer coach at Clemson. All 3 Anson greats have college degrees and career paths, families, and success. Anthony is currently finishing his masters degree.

City Reach Director Steve Adams shared, "Sitting here, I see Anson. I see great men. And, I also see what many of you in this room can be. In front of you are Anson boys - now grown men who defied the odds, avoided the street life, and have and are becoming greater than ever before."

Adams would like to thank every sponsor who made the free event possible: T-shirt donors: Robbie Hill Four A Loader, Smith Funeral Home, Jay Ayers - Millions for Missions, Derek Bowens, Michael Covington - Morven Community Store, Lara Preslar, Harvest Ministries, and City Reach Center. A special thanks to the City Reach staff and volunteers, Commissioner Robert Mims, Sam Cole, Teyon Williams, and the Sandhills Voter Initiative. And, of course, every person who attended this monumental event.

For more information on City Reach Community Center- events, facility usage, or how to become a partner - contact Steve Adams at 704-695-2879.



Free Fans Offered to Seniors in Need

The Anson County Council on Aging/Grace Senior Center is offering free fans to senior citizens in need. The supply is limited, so contact them as soon as possible. This summer program is intended to provide a more comfortable living environment and reduce heat-related illnesses by giving free fans to those in need.

The eligibility criteria: Must live in Anson County • Must be an adult: 60 years of age or older or with a disability • Must have a home situation where a threat to health and well-being exists

Please call Grace Senior Center at (704) 694-6616.

Fish for Free in North Carolina's Public Waters on July 4

On July 4, anyone in North Carolina, regardless of age, can enjoy one of the state's best outdoor activities for free.

Free Fishing Day, which runs from 12 a.m. until 11:59 p.m., offers residents and out-of-state visitors the opportunity to fish without having to purchase a license; however, all other fishing regulations apply, such as length and daily possession limits, as well as bait and tackle restrictions.

Authorized by the N.C. General Assembly in 1994 and sponsored by the N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission, North Carolina's annual free fishing day, which always falls on July 4, was created to promote the sport of fishing.

"Free Fishing Day is a great opportunity for families to enjoy some quality time together on the water," said Christian Waters, Chief of the Inland Fisheries Division. "Fishing is relatively inexpensive activity that anyone, no matter what their age or skill level, can enjoy."

To give anglers a better chance of catching fish, the Commission stocks a variety of fish in waters across the state - including trout and channel catfish. The agency also provides access to fishing sites across the state, including public fishing areas and boating access areas. The interactive fishing and boating maps on the Commission's website (www.ncwildlife.org) list more than 500 fishing and boating areas, many of which are free, that are open to the public.

Many of the boating areas likely will be crowded over the busy holiday weekend, so the Commission urges boaters to be patient, courteous and follow these boating etiquette tips:

- Be patient and remain calm until an open parking space is available.
- Wait your turn in the launch line. Get in line without blocking or cutting off others.
- Park your vehicle and trailer while someone moves the boat away from the ramp.
- Recruit someone to move the boat away from the ramp while you retrieve your vehicle and trailer.
- Observe no-wake zones and be cautious.

While anyone can fish for free on July 4, a fishing license is required for people ages 16 and older on all other days of the year for both inland and coastal waters in North Carolina. Purchasing a license online is quick and easy. Other ways to purchase a license are:

- Call the Commission at 888-248-6834. Current hours of operation are 8 a.m.-5 p.m.
- Visit a local Wildlife Service Agent.

For more information on fishing in public, inland waters, visit the Fishing page, www.ncwildlife.org/Fishing/Fishing-in-North-Carolina.

July Fourth Celebration & Parade in Lilesville is this Saturday, July 1

The Town of Lilesville is once again hosting their 4th of July Parade! It will take place on Saturday, July 1, beginning at 11 a.m. The parade route starts at the intersection of Camden and Wall Streets and ends at South Railroad Street by the old T.W. Bennett School.

Would you like to be in the parade? They welcome floats, vehicles, tractors, motorcycles, horses & more.

The Town of Lilesville invites vendors to participate. Vendors can sell crafts, cups, wreaths, jewelry, apparel or other items to add to the celebration and fun. The vendor fees are \$20. Vendor setup begins at 8 a.m. and needs to be finished by 10 a.m.

Also, walking vendors are welcome.

For information about participating in the parade or being a vendor, please contact Lilesville Town Hall at 704-848-4711.

The Express is on the web at www.TheExpressNewspaper.com