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

Jeffery Willoughby and Michael Christian Charged with Murder

An investigation by the Anson County Sheriff's Office, with the assistance of the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation, has led to the arrest of Jeffery Willoughby and Michael Christian for the July 12, 2024 murder that took place in Mineral Springs Mobile Home Park in Morven. Both have been charged with Felony Murder and are currently in the custody of Anson County Jail under no bond. They have an initial court date of August 12, 2024.



Jeffery Willoughby



Michael Christian

This is still an ongoing investigation, and anyone with information should contact the Anson County Sheriff's Office at (704) 694-4188.

Christopher Little Charged with Armed Robbery of Wadesboro Store

On Tuesday, July 30 the Wadesboro Police Department's Criminal Investigative Division charged Christopher Little, DOB 02/08/2004, for the Armed Robbery that occurred on Monday, June 3, 2024 at Wadesboro Discount Grocery, located at 702 Salisbury Street. Little is currently being held in the Anson County Jail on this and unrelated charges. He was given a secured bond of \$10,000 for Robbery with a Dangerous Weapon.



Christopher Little

Adrian Parker Charged with Possession of Firearms by a Felon

The weapons were untraceable "ghost guns"

On Tuesday, July 30 the Wadesboro Police Department's Criminal Investigative Division charged Adrian Parker, DOB 05/12/1985, with Possession of a Firearm by Felon. The two firearms located were determined to be "ghost guns." Ghost guns are defined as unregistered and untraceable privately made firearms that can be made with a 3D printer or from components of other firearms. These types of weapons have no serial number attached to them. The firearms were located by Federal Probation Officers while conducting a warrantless search at Parker's residence. Parker is currently in the Anson County Jail for this crime and two unrelated misdemeanors. He was given a secured bond of \$6,000.



Adrian Parker

Patrick Taylor Sentenced to Prison for Possession of Stolen Firearm by Felon

U.S. Attorney Dena J. King announced that Patrick Taylor, 26, of Wadesboro, N.C., was sentenced to 10 years in prison, followed by three years of supervised release for possession of a stolen firearm by a felon, announced Dena J. King, U.S. Attorney for the Western District of North Carolina. This sentence will be served in conjunction with related offenses for which Taylor is currently serving state terms of imprisonment.

Bennie Mims, Special Agent in Charge of the U.S. Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, Firearms and Explosives (ATF), Charlotte Field Division, and Chief J. Bryan Gilliard of the Monroe Police Department (MPD), join U.S. Attorney King in making the announcement.

According to court documents and the sentencing hearing, on June 6, 2022 MPD officers received information that Taylor was driving a stolen vehicle in the Monroe area. MPD officers located the vehicle and attempted to conduct a vehicle stop. Court documents show that the vehicle failed to stop and instead increased its speed, driving around other vehicles and through a median. Eventually, the vehicle drove through a grassy area before crashing. When the vehicle came to a stop, Taylor jumped out and fled into a wooded area. MPD officers pursued on foot until they lost sight of Taylor.

According to court records, law enforcement located Taylor in a nearby field and the defendant was subsequently arrested. Once Taylor was apprehended, court documents show that law enforcement located a firearm near where Taylor had been located. During the investigation, law enforcement determined that Taylor had stolen the firearm from another individual a few days prior, and that the firearm had been reported stolen.

On December 20, 2023, Taylor pleaded guilty to possession of a stolen firearm. Taylor will remain in federal custody until he is transferred to the custody of the federal Bureau of Prisons upon designation of a federal facility.

In making the announcement, U.S. Attorney King commended ATF and the Monroe Police Department for their investigation of the case and thanked the Union County Sheriff's Office for their invaluable assistance.

In July 2022, the U.S. Attorney's Office launched Think Again, an informational campaign to educate the public on how to prevent illegal firearms from getting into the wrong hands. The U.S. Attorney's Office has partnered with the ATF in this initiative, in an effort to reduce gun-induced violence and to increase reporting of illegal firearms. The campaign encourages the public to submit an anonymous tip about illegal firearms and other criminal activity to the ATF by calling 1-888-ATF-TIPS (1-888-283-8477), via text at 63975, or online at www.atf.gov/atf-tips.

For additional information about the Think Again initiative, visit justice.gov/usao-wdnc/think-again. You can view the Think Again Public Service Announcements at YouTube, search "USAO think again."

Volunteers Needed for Meals on Wheels

Grace Senior Center is recruiting volunteers to help with their Meals on Wheels by delivering meals. If you are interested in helping Anson County's shut-in and elderly citizens with this important program, please contact Cynthia Miles at 704-694-6616.



SUPER Fun! Kids Immunization Character Party at the Health Department.

Kids ages 0-17 were invited to the Anson County Health Department for their immunization party on Friday, July 19. Participants enjoyed breakfast or lunch with their favorite super hero, along with music, treats, gifts, giveaways, pictures with the characters...and more! Of course the kids received important immunizations too!

The Health Department said, "Thanks to everyone who supported our Kids Immunization Character Party and the volunteers who donated time! We had a "SUPER" day!"

Anson County's June Unemployment Rate

Anson County Anson County's unemployment rate for June was 4.0%. Anson County ranked #79 of the 100 counties statewide (low to high). The May rate was 4.0%.

Anson's total labor force in June was 10,217, with 9,732 employed and 485 unemployed. In May the total labor force was 10,349, with 9,938 employed and 411 unemployed.

Statewide Statewide the unemployment rate for June was 4.1%. In May it was 3.5%. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) increased in 98 of North Carolina's counties in June 2024 and remained unchanged in two. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 7.0 percent while Buncombe County had the lowest at 3.2%.

All fifteen of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount had the highest rate at 5.5 percent while Asheville had the lowest at 3.3 percent. The not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 4.1 percent.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 97 counties and decreased in three. All fifteen metro areas experienced rate increases over the year.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in June by 25,712 to 5,075,390, while those unemployed increased by 29,658 to 215,106. Since June 2023, the number of workers employed statewide increased 1,805, while those unemployed increased 26,148.

It is important to note that employment estimates are subject to large seasonal patterns; therefore, it is advisable to focus on over-the-year changes in the not seasonally adjusted estimates.

North Carolina's Medical Debt Relief Incentive Program

Millions of low- and middle- income North Carolinians are one step closer to medical debt relief. The U.S. Centers for Medicare and Medicaid Services (CMS) approved on Friday, July 26 Governor Roy Cooper and the NC Department of Health and Human Services' plan to use the state's Medicaid program to incentivize hospitals to relieve more than a decade of existing medical debt for eligible North Carolinians and prevent accumulation of new debt going forward.

NCDHHS will now begin working with hospitals to implement the program, which has the potential to relieve a potential \$4 billion in existing medical debt for people and families across the state.

"Unlike most other debts, medical debt is not intentional because people don't choose to get seriously ill or have an accident," said North Carolina Governor Roy Cooper. "Medical debts are often beyond people's ability to pay, ruining their credit, keeping them from getting credit cards, loans and jobs and sometimes driving them into bankruptcy. That's why we're working with hospitals and federal partners to help relieve the burden of medical debt for North Carolina families."

"Many people struggle with the burden of medical debt, which can cause them to hold off on getting the essential health care and services they need," said NC Health and Human Services Secretary Kody H. Kinsley. "This debt relief program is another step toward improving the health and well-being of North Carolinians while supporting financial sustainability of our hospitals."

Each hospital in North Carolina can elect whether to participate in the program. Hospitals that choose to meet the eligibility conditions, including medical debt relief, will receive a higher level of Medicaid reimbursement under the Healthcare Access and Stabilization Program (HASP). Hospitals that choose not to implement the policies are eligible for base HASP payments.

Hospitals that opt in must implement the following policies as a condition of eligibility for enhanced HASP payments:

- Relieve all medical debt deemed uncollectible dating back to Jan. 1, 2014, for any individuals not enrolled in Medicaid with incomes at or below at least 350% of the federal poverty level (FPL) or for whom total debt exceeds 5% of annual income.
- Relieve all unpaid medical debt dating back to Jan. 1, 2014, for individuals who are enrolled in Medicaid.
- Provide discounts on medical bills of between 50-100% for patients with incomes at or below 300% FPL, with the amount of the discount varying based on the patient's income.
- Automatically enroll people into financial assistance, known as charity care, by implementing a policy for presumptively determining individuals eligible for financial assistance through a streamlined screening and income validation approach.
- Not sell any medical debt for consumers with incomes at or below 300% FPL to debt collectors.
- Not report a patient's debt covered by these policies to a credit reporting agency.

Participating hospitals will relieve all outstanding debt owed by current Medicaid enrollees, dating back to Jan. 1, 2014. Other individuals who are not enrolled in Medicaid but have incomes less than or equal to 350% of the FPL, currently \$90,370 for a family of three, may also qualify for medical debt relief. Patients of participating hospitals will not need to take any actions to benefit from medical debt relief. The goal of the program is for eligible North Carolinians to begin to see relief for existing medical debt over the next two years.

NCDHHS has partnered with Undue Medical Debt (unduemedicaldebt.org) to support participating hospitals and help them identify medical debt that is eligible for relief. Additional information is available in the Frequently Asked Questions on North Carolina medical debt relief at ncdhhs.gov/debt.

Anson County Board of Commissioners Meets August 6

The Anson County Board of Commissioners will meet on Tuesday, August 6 at 6:00 p.m.

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 and search for Anson Commissioners.

The Compassionate Friends Meet on August 8

The Compassionate Friends, a support group for parents, grandparents and siblings who have lost a child of any age, welcomes you to attend their monthly meetings. They meet on the second Thursday each month, at 7 p.m. at First Baptist Church on Lee Avenue in Wadesboro. "We need not walk alone."

The next meeting will be held on Thursday, August 8.

For more information call Ken Calder at 704-694-2524.

Women of the Bible Program

The Greater St. Mark Church of Deliverance Missionary Department invites you to their Women of the Bible Program. It will be held on Sunday, Aug. 25 at 3:00 p.m. Guest speaker will be Elder Cindy Wiggins, Pastor of House of Faith Outreach Ministries in Wadesboro. All women are asked to wear caftans, African attire...or just come as you are!

Greater St. Mark is located at 1003 North Main Street in Wadesboro.

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