

## Anson Ranked in State's Top 5 Counties for Tractor Trailer Collisions in 2011

Rural counties were the killing grounds for traffic deaths in North Carolina last year with the top five counties combining for 61 fatal crashes — 5.4 percent of the state's total — despite carrying only 2 percent of the state's vehicle miles traveled. It was the third straight year rural counties were the most dangerous roads in the state based on the number of traffic deaths in AAA Carolinas. Topping the state list for 2011 traffic deaths per mile traveled were Clay, Graham, Hyde, Robeson and Hertford.

Nationally, two-thirds of fatal crashes occur along rural roads. "Rural counties have roads that are generally narrower, with more curves, lower shoulders, faded or non-existent road markings and less police presence than major highways," said David E. Parsons, president and CEO of AAA Carolinas. "These roads are notorious for single-vehicle accidents involving speeding, drinking and younger drivers."

AAA Carolinas bases its annual ranking of the most dangerous counties on the likelihood of a certain type of crash based on total vehicle miles driven. Clay County handled less than 0.1 percent of North Carolina's total vehicle miles traveled — nearly five times more than the state average of 1.11 fatal crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled.

The counties with the highest chance of being in any kind of collision were Pitt, New Hanover, Person, Watauga and Cumberland counties. All five also appeared on the list in 2010. Pitt has topped the list of the most dangerous counties for being in a collision for the past four years.

For a crash in which someone was injured, the counties of Graham, New Hanover, Pitt, Wayne and Cumberland counties were the top five.

Graham County, located in the North Carolina Mountains on the Tennessee border, continued to be the most dangerous county for motorcyc collisions, topping the list for most dangerous and fatal crashes. The sparsely populated county is home to "the tail of the dragon," a scenic mountain road popular with motorcyclists that includes 11 miles of 318 curves.

The other counties ranked most dangerous for fatal motorcycle accidents were Alleghany, Clay, Pamlico and Pender. Swain County, also in the North Carolina Mountains, was in AAA's top five safest counties for any kind of vehicle

collision or injurious crash. However, Swain proved to be extremely dangerous for motorcycles, ranking fifth most dangerous for motorcycle collisions and fourth for injurious motorcycle crashes (see chart).

North Carolina's most dangerous counties for tractor-trailer collisions in 2011 were Anson, Bladen, Polk, Lee and Wayne counties. With the exception of Polk County, all are located in the central-eastern part of the state, which has a high concentration of tractor-trailer traffic.

The top counties for fatal crashes with tractor-trailers are Hyde, Richmond, Yadkin, Ashe and Northampton.

Swain County was ranked as the safest county for not being in a collision and not being in a crash with injuries, and Yancey County offered the best chance of not being in a fatal crash. Yancey and Camden counties both had 0 fatalities in 2011, but the ranking was based on total vehicle miles traveled, which was higher in Yancey County.

The safest counties in 2011 for all motorists, with the smallest percentage of accidents per vehicle miles traveled were:

- Total crashes: Swain, Haywood, Currituck, Camden and Cherokee.
- Injury crashes: Swain, Camden, Polk, Hyde and Washington.
- Fatal crashes: Yancey, Camden, Swain, Durham and Scotland.

The deadliest county for the highest number of fatal crashes was Mecklenburg, with 67 fatal crashes in 2011, up from 46 in 2010. The total number of traffic fatalities in North Carolina dropped 8 percent from 1,328 in 2010 to 1,217 last year. This number has been dropping steadily over the past few years (1,344 in 2009; 1,452 in 2008) and is attributed to more targeted traffic enforcement on crash-prone roads by local and state law enforcement officers, a decline in miles traveled and more safety features in new cars, such as traction control.

"It is gratifying to see the decrease in fatalities but dismaying to note that more than three people still die every day on North Carolina roads," said Parsons.

For all vehicles in North Carolina, the total number of crashes in 2011 was 208,545, down from 213,739 in 2010. Although vehicle miles traveled was also down from 2010, the relative number of crashes dropped from 208.9 crashes

per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2010 to 205.7 crashes per 100 million vehicle miles traveled in 2011.

AAA Carolinas' annual Dangerous County analysis, inaugurated in 1995, is one of several ways to look at North Carolina traffic crash data and done to remind motorists of the need for safe and defensive driving, especially in counties with above-average traffic crashes, injuries and deaths.

AAA Carolinas receives state traffic statistics from the North Carolina Department of Transportation and performs its own analysis to determine the most dangerous counties based on vehicle miles traveled.

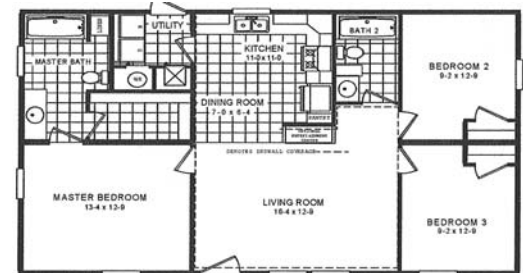
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### Concert Features Band the Explorers Club

Summer doesn't end at Labor Day! The Cheraw Arts Commission presents Endless Summer...Forever Young Concert featuring Charleston based the Explorers Club band on Friday, September 28 at the Theatre on the Green in Cheraw, from 7 to 8:30 p.m.

The pop rock band performs both original and classic pop/rock songs. Their original music is almost entirely influenced by the vocal harmony stylings of the Beach Boys and the Association, with arrangements reminiscent of Phil Spector, Chuck Berry, the Beatles, the Zombies and the Byrds. The Explorers Club's music has been featured on TV shows that include The O.C., How I Met Your Mother, and Bored to Death. Most recently, the group has shared the stage with Mark Lindsay of Paul Revere & the Raiders fame. Head Explorer Jason Brewer describes the goal of the music "is to bring joy, reflect images and most of all, entertain."

Single Tickets are \$10, with 2 tickets at \$18. Advance tickets are available at the Cheraw Community Center, located at 200 Powe Street in Cheraw. For information contact the Cheraw Arts Commission at 843-537-8420 x12.

So, put on your huarache sandals and tropical beach attire and join us at the Theatre on the Green on September 28. The Cheraw Arts Commission is supported by the United Way of Chesterfield County and the SC Arts Commission which receives funding from the National Endowment for the Arts.

More about the band: The Explorers Club was formed in Charleston, South Carolina in 2005. The group signed with indie record label Dead Oceans in June 2007 and released their debut album in 2008. Their first single, "Do You Love Me?" was released in April of that year. Several members of the Explorers Club were previously in a band called 1984. To promote the February 2012 release of Grand Hotel, the band released three free EPs called "suites," each containing a cover and two rough mixes of tracks set to appear on the album. The final mixes for the album were done by Mark Linett, who is known for his work with The Beach Boys.

### Tree Stand Safety Just as Important Before Season Opens

The NC Wildlife Resources Commission's Home From The Hunt safety campaign is reminding hunters to be cautious when setting up tree stands prior to deer season. "Every year someone is injured in a tree stand-related incident before deer season opens," said Travis Casper, state hunter education coordinator. "We need hunters to practice tree stand safety at all times, not just during hunting season."

If you are scouting a location or trimming shooting lanes and putting up your tree stand, even on a trial basis, use the same precautions you would during hunting season:

- Use a full body safety harness.
- Maintain three points of contact when climbing.
- Follow manufacturer instructions.
- Have an emergency signal.
- Tell someone where and when you plan to go.

Use a lineman-style belt in addition to a full body harness when first putting a tree stand in place. This minimizes the chance of falls and potential injury.

As with any piece of equipment, tree stands need inspection before use. Long-term placement, such as leaving your tree stand up from one season to the next, has some inherent problems that outweigh any convenience. Exposure to the elements will damage straps, ropes and attachment cords, and potentially lead to breakage and failure. Also, trees are living, growing things and change over time, affecting stability.

"If you have a tree stand that has been in place for an extended length of time, take it down," Casper said. "Inspect it. Replace rusted bolts, frayed straps or, if needed, buy a new tree stand. Your life could depend on it."

In North Carolina, all first-time hunting license buyers must successfully complete a Hunter Education Course, available for free across the state. Go to [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org) to consult the online version of the 2012-2013 NC Inland Fishing, Hunting and Trapping Regulations Digest or call 919-707-0031 for more information.

### Dove Hunting Requires Firearms Safety and Hunter Responsibility

The Home From The Hunt safety campaign of the NC Wildlife Resources Commission reminds everyone enjoying dove hunting to think before they pull the trigger this hunting season. The 2012-13 season for mourning and white-winged dove is September 1 through October 6; November 19 through 24; and December 15 through January 11. The daily bag limit is 15 and possession limit is 30. Shooting hours are from a half hour before sunrise until sunset, including opening day.

"Before you pull the trigger, positively identify your target and what is beyond it," said Travis Casper, the state hunter education coordinator. "Know your zone of fire and be cautious. Don't pepper people, buildings or vehicles with falling shot."

Home From The Hunt recommendations include:

#### Be Safe

- When hunting in a group, know where others are and communicate.
- Never shoot at low-flying birds, and alert others when a bird is too low to safely allow a shot.
- Wear shooting glasses and hearing protection.
- Handle firearms properly at all times, not just while hunting.

#### Be Responsible

- Never place decoys on utility lines, which is trespassing and risks electrical shock.
- Don't combine game bags, which is a hunting regulations violation.
- Share the heritage and consider taking youth or a new hunter with you.
- Take time prior to hunting to walk the field and inspect the area for bait.

It is an individual hunter's responsibility to know the area being hunted. Don't hunt over baited fields. According to state regulations, the placing, exposing, depositing, distributing or scattering of salt, grain or other feed that could serve as a lure for migratory game can constitute a baited area. Because birds often return to a feeding area even after the food source is exhausted, hunting within 10 days after complete disappearance of feed from a baited area is illegal.

All first-time hunting license buyers must successfully complete a Hunter Education Course, offered free across the state. Go to [www.ncwildlife.org](http://www.ncwildlife.org) or call 919-707-0031 for more information.



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