

Child Neglect Investigation Results in Felony Charges

On July 29, the Anson County Sheriff’s Office received a referral from the Anson County Department of Social Services concerning allegations of child neglect involving a juvenile who had been hospitalized in an intensive care unit and was unresponsive following a diabetic emergency.

During the investigation, authorities determined that Ty Gardner and Paula Richardson were the juvenile’s parents and/or caretakers. According to the Sheriff’s Office, investigators identified significant gaps in the medical care provided to the juvenile that contributed to the diabetic emergency and resulted in the juvenile becoming unresponsive.

The juvenile remained hospitalized as of the date of the Sheriff’s release, and no release date had been determined.

On Aug. 17, Richardson and Gardner were each charged with felony child neglect inflicting serious bodily injury. Both were arrested Aug. 18 and each was placed under a \$10,000 secured bond.

The investigation remains ongoing. The Sheriff’s Office said no additional information about the juvenile’s medical condition will be released at this time in order to protect the juvenile’s privacy.



Anson Schools Celebrates a Joy Filled First Week

Students begin new school year learning, creating, exploring and building a sense of belonging

The first week of the new school year is in the books for Anson County Schools, and photographs from across the district show students doing much more than simply settling back into their classrooms.

Students spent the week laughing, creating, playing, building, reading, performing, competing, exploring and discovering as schools welcomed children back for another year of learning.

School officials say those experiences are all part of building a positive school culture, one in which students feel they belong and have opportunities to learn & grow.

That culture is created throughout the entire school experience, from classrooms and playgrounds to athletic fields, art and band rooms, laboratories and Career and Technical Education spaces. Relationships, creativity, teamwork, challenging work and high expectations all play a role.

Anson County Schools emphasizes that public education also gives students opportunities extending well beyond traditional academics. Athletics, arts, music, CTE programs, clubs, leadership opportunities, hands-on learning and college preparation are among the experiences available to students.

Perhaps most important to the district is that those opportunities are intended for every child, regardless of ability, interests or dreams.

“Come as you are! We want all the kids!” the school



Wadesboro Police Step Up Labor Day Traffic Enforcement

The Wadesboro Police Department is increasing traffic enforcement as part of North Carolina’s 2026 Labor Day “Booze It & Lose It” campaign, with officers focusing on impaired driving, speeding and other dangerous driving behaviors.

The department said the increased enforcement is part of its commitment to making Wadesboro-area roads safer for everyone in the community. The Labor Day holiday traditionally brings increased travel, and police are reminding motorists to make responsible choices before getting behind the wheel. Anyone planning to drink should arrange for a sober driver or another safe way home.

The department said the goal of the campaign is simple: prevent crashes, save lives & help everyone get home safely.

“Make the right call. Don’t drink and drive,” the department urged motorists in announcing the campaign.

Wadesboro Police are also reminding drivers that safe holiday travel involves more than avoiding impaired driving. Motorists should obey speed limits, remain attentive behind the wheel and avoid other dangerous driving behaviors.

The department’s message for Labor Day travelers is: “Enjoy the holiday. Drive responsibly. Arrive alive.”

Statewide Campaign As Labor Day approaches, law enforcement agencies and traffic safety professionals across North Carolina are reminding drivers to celebrate responsibly and plan for a safe ride home. The N.C. Governor’s Highway Safety Program announced the launch of the upcoming Labor Day Booze It & Lose It campaign.

The statewide enforcement initiative, which runs from Aug. 31 through Sep. 13, uses amplified outreach and enforcement efforts to keep impaired drivers off the road during one of the busiest and most dangerous travel times of the year.

The annual campaign brings awareness to the dangers associated with driving while impaired by drugs and alcohol, which plays a major role in vehicle-related deaths.

In 2025, 1,528 people were killed in crashes on North Carolina roadways, including 378 deaths in alcohol-related crashes. The goal of the Labor Day enforcement period is simple: prevent impaired driving and help everyone get home safely.

“We are urging everyone to plan ahead and choose a sober ride home from any celebration involving alcohol or other impairing substances,” said NCGHSP Director Mark Ezzell. “Our partners in law enforcement will be out in force to keep roads safe and stop those who put others at risk. Safety remains our number one priority.”

Drivers who plan to drink should arrange a sober ride before heading out. Options include designating a sober driver, using a rideshare service or taxi, taking public transportation, or staying overnight at a friend’s or family member’s home.

NCGHSP encourages all drivers to celebrate responsibly, buckle up, follow the speed limit & never drive while impaired.

system said in celebrating the first week.

After a week filled with activity, school officials said photographs of students across the district may tell the story better than words. The pictures are posted on the Anson County Schools Facebook page.

“This is learning. This is belonging. This is opportunity. This is public education!” the district said. “We are Anson Proud!”

The district noted that the work supports two areas of its 2026-2031 Strategic Plan: Priority 1, Student Learning & Success, and Priority 3, Safe & Supportive Environments - with an emphasis on students thriving when they are learning, engaged, supported and know they belong.

Information about the Anson Schools 2026-2031 Strategic Plan is available at linktr.ee/ansoncountyschools.

Anson County Agencies Help Put Food on Local Tables

Hunger Action Month highlights statewide need. Three local organizations provide regular food assistance.

September has been proclaimed Hunger Action Month in North Carolina, drawing attention to a problem that is very much present in communities across the state — including Anson County. More than 1.7 million North Carolinians face hunger each year, including more than 504,000 children.

Here at home, Anson Crisis Ministries, Feed My Lambs and the Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center are among the local organizations working week after week to make sure families, seniors and others in need have food on the table.

Anson Crisis Ministries distributes free food every Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday and Friday from 8 a.m. to 1 p.m. The ministry is located at 117 North Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro. For information call 704-694-2445.

Feed My Lambs also provides free food three days each week, with distribution held Tuesday, Thursday and Friday from 1 to 4 p.m. at 2290 U.S. Highway 74 West in Wadesboro. Feed My Lambs also operates a Senior Box Program beginning on the third Tuesday of each month for seniors. For information call 704-695-1820.

Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center in the Burnsville community operates a free food pantry every Wednesday from 9 to 11 a.m. For information call 704-826-8182.

The work of these local organizations reflects a much larger effort taking place across North Carolina. Gov. Josh Stein, in proclaiming September as Hunger Action Month, recognized the people and organizations helping residents put food on their tables.

“As grocery bills continue to rise, hunger affects more and more North Carolinians,” Stein said. “Hunger Action Month reminds us to continue our work to not let anyone go hungry and to commend the essential work of the people who help folks put food on the table in North Carolina.”

Food banks across the state are handling an enormous amount of need. The Feeding the Carolinas network of seven regional food banks reported distributing 250 million meals during the past year. In July, Stein signed a state budget providing more than \$9 million for food banks, with the funding also supporting North Carolina farmers.

Food insecurity is particularly serious for children. According to the Governor’s Office, one in five North Carolina children lives in a household without consistent access to food. The recently approved state budget also fully funds SUN Bucks for summer 2027, a program designed to help families buy groceries while children are out of school.

Nearly 1.25 million North Carolinians rely on Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program benefits, commonly known as SNAP. Those recipients include children, veterans, people with disabilities, older adults and working families.

While the statewide numbers illustrate the size of the problem, the work being done in Anson County brings the issue much closer to home. For people who need help with groceries, Anson Crisis Ministries, Feed My Lambs and the Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center provide regular opportunities to receive food right here in the county.

Anson County Unemployment Rate Rose to 4.7 Percent in July

Unemployment increased in all 100 North Carolina counties during July

Anson County’s unemployment rate rose to 4.7 percent in July, as all 100 North Carolina counties experienced an increase in unemployment, according to the latest figures released by the N.C. Department of Commerce.

Anson County had a labor force of 8,725 people in July, with 8,314 employed and 411 unemployed.

The statewide unemployment rate, not seasonally adjusted, was 3.7 percent in July. Edgecombe and Halifax counties recorded the state’s highest unemployment rates at 5.5 percent, while Currituck County had the lowest at 2.8 percent.

All 15 of North Carolina’s metropolitan areas experienced increases during July. Rocky Mount had the highest metro unemployment rate at 4.9 percent, while Raleigh had the lowest at 3.2 percent.

The increase was widespread enough that only 94 of the state’s 100 counties had unemployment rates of 5 percent or less in July, compared with 98 counties in June. Six counties had rates between 5 and 10 percent, and none had a rate of 10 percent or higher.

Despite the increases from June to July, the longer-term comparison was more encouraging. Compared with July 2025, unemployment rates decreased in 90 counties, increased in four and remained unchanged in six. Fourteen of the state’s 15 metro areas also recorded lower unemployment rates than a year earlier, while one was unchanged.

Statewide, the number of employed workers decreased by 44,910 during July to 5,007,249. The number of unemployed workers increased by 9,044 to 193,903.

Compared with July 2025, however, North Carolina had 110,239 fewer employed workers and 24,413 fewer unemployed workers.

Art with Heart Will Rally Community Around Joss Cook

Art with Heart is a special local art exhibition and fundraiser bringing together local artists, community members, and arts supporters to showcase regional creative talent while raising critical support for local resident, a little girl named Joss Cook who has leukemia. The event is also aimed to raise awareness for September which is Pediatric Cancer Awareness Month.

Ansonians are urged to “Go gold” for September because children are more precious than gold.

- **Event Name:** Art with Heart
- **Date:** Saturday, September 12
- **Location:** Ansonia Theatre & Arts Council Gallery in Wadesboro
- **Time:** 3pm
- **Highlights:** Local artwork exhibition, silent auction & donations, opportunities to meet local artists, and light refreshments.
- Free admission / Suggested donation at the door and silent auction

Free Financial Literacy Workshop

Rogers’ Heart will present a free One-Day Financial Literacy Workshop on Saturday, September 26, from noon to 2 p.m. at the HOLA! Center, located at 229 East Main Street in Morven.

Themed “Building Strong Financial Foundations,” the workshop is designed to help participants make informed financial decisions and build a stronger financial future.

Topics will include:

- Budgeting basics
- Saving and emergency funds
- Understanding credit
- Managing debt
- Financial goal setting
- Financial action planning

Participants will also receive practical resources, including a financial literacy workbook, budget worksheet, savings tracker, financial goal planner and community resource guide. A certificate of completion will also be provided.

The workshop is free. Organizers encourage area residents who want to strengthen their money-management skills to attend. For info call 704-475-6714.