

## George Bower Receives Rotary's Hometown Heroes Award

The Wadesboro Rotary Club honored George Bower with the Hometown Heroes Award for outstanding service to the Wadesboro Rotary Club Planetarium and Science Center.

"Over the last 13 years, his calls at the end of the summer were always like Santa Claus asking you 'Now what would you like for Christmas!' It was such an honor to be able to create a wish list for the Planetarium," said Wendy Efid, Planetarium Director.

The generosity of George Bower and the Braswell Trust created a planetarium to make the entire county proud. Bower helped fund projects such as a computerized planetarium system and almost every single full-dome video in the dome library, the teacher demonstration station and student workstations, microscopes, fossil displays, washer, dryer, and dishwasher all to create a hands-on learning environment for our elementary students.

These resources are used for science camps throughout the school year and summer. Special donations have been given throughout the years to support summer camp, such as an entire set of Vex Robotics.

However, the resources have not just benefited students; most residents would only have enjoyed the 2017 solar eclipse with the glasses funded by George and the Braswell Trust.

The generosity of George Bower and the Braswell trust reaches far beyond the walls of the Planetarium. Over the years Bower has supported educational and community initiatives for the Monroe Science Center, Anson County Schools, South Piedmont Community College, Anson County Partnership for Children, local fire departments, and more.

"Mr. George Bower is truly mine and the Rotary Club's Hometown Hero for making Dr. Don Altier's and my dream of creating a science center for our students in Anson County come to life," said Efid.

The Wadesboro Rotary Science Center and Henry H. "Punky" Morton Planetarium were established through a cooperative effort of the Anson County School System and the Wadesboro Rotary Club. The Center offers a wide range of hands-on exhibits, interactive programs, and creative displays. Available to students of all ages – explicitly targeting grades K-6. Activities are planned according to each grade level's standard course of study.

Hometown Hero awards will be given monthly to deserving community members who embody the values of Rotary International's motto, "Service Above Self." Rotary International celebrates the individual contributions and selflessness of giving time and talent. Together, we see a world where people unite and take action to create lasting change — across the globe, in our communities, and in ourselves is Rotary's vision.

The Wadesboro Rotary Club gives approximately \$40,000 annually to support community-driven initiatives and work with other nonprofit organizations.

With more than 1.4 million members in 46,000 clubs worldwide, Rotary Club members are volunteers who work locally, regionally, and internationally to combat hunger, improve health and sanitation, provide education and job training, promote peace, and eradicate polio under the motto Service Above Self.

Wadesboro Rotary Club usually meets the second Thursday of the month from noon to 1 p.m. at the Twin Valley Golf Club. The club welcomes guests interested in community service and professional and personal development.

For up-to-date information on meetings, speakers, community service projects, etc., visit the Wadesboro Rotary Club Facebook page.



Pictured above are Wendy Efid and George Bower.

## Energy Efficiency Tip of the Month



Did you know fall is the perfect time to schedule a tune-up for your heating system? Home heating accounts for a large portion of winter energy bills, and no matter what kind of system you have, you can save energy and money by regularly maintaining your equipment.

Combining proper equipment maintenance and upgrades with recommended insulation, air sealing and thermostat settings can save about 30% on your energy bills.

Source: energy.gov

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## Group Meeting With Information About NC State Health Plan Open Enrollment at Grace Senior Center

TUESDAY, OCTOBER 3 10AM - 12 NOON

Grace Senior Center will be providing a group meeting to help with information about the NC State Health Plan Open Enrollment for the 2024 benefit year, which runs October 9-27, 2023.

Retirees who are enrolled with the North Carolina State Health Plan are welcome to attend to ask questions about their health plan.

Join Joanne Clark, Tomasina Spencer and Brenda Bennett, who are Grace Senior Center Senior Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) Counselors, on Tuesday, October 3. They will be available from 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon at Grace Senior Center.

Please call (704) 694-6616 to register.

Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro, on the left just past IGA. For information call 704-694-6616.

GRACE SENIOR CENTER • 199 HIGHWAY 742 SOUTH IN WADESBORO  
704-694-6616

## Governor Cooper Takes Action to Help Address School Bus Driver Shortage with \$1 Million Investment in Training

Funding will help to hire more trainers, purchase training buses and provide retention bonuses to trainers

On August 29 Governor Roy Cooper announced an investment to help tackle North Carolina's school bus driver shortage crisis by allocating \$1 million in federal funding to the Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) in the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) to enhance school bus driver training capacity. The shortage of school bus drivers is a serious concern for school districts, causes problems for families, and impacts student well-being and learning. Governor Cooper made the announcement at a Charlotte-Mecklenburg Schools' bus lot where he toured the facility, spoke with bus drivers and education leaders and called on the legislature to pass a budget that invests in public schools.

"North Carolina desperately needs more school bus drivers and the way to get them is to pay them more and train them faster," said Governor Cooper. "If Legislative Republicans would do their jobs and pass a strong public education budget now, we could better attack this challenge. Until then these funds are important to help get our children to and from school reliably and safely."

One of the primary challenges identified by both school districts and the North Carolina Division of Motor Vehicles (DMV) is the extended time it takes to train newly hired bus drivers due to trainer staffing shortages and an increased number of trainees. In response, Governor Cooper has taken decisive actions to address this issue and bolster the state's school bus driver workforce.

Earlier this year, Governor Cooper proposed almost \$1 million in recurring funding in his FY 2023-25 budget to employ 10 additional school bus driver trainers within the DMV. In addition, he proposed a 9.5% salary increase across two years for bus drivers and an 8% increase for school bus driver trainers at DMV. The Governor's budget also included a \$1,500 retention bonus for school bus drivers and school bus driver trainers making less than \$75,000 and a \$1,000 bonus if they make more than \$75,000. Faced with the continued failure of Republican legislators to pass a budget and address the school bus driver shortage, Governor Cooper is empowering the DMV to expand its training capacity, with the goal of putting more well-trained school bus drivers on North Carolina's roads.

The plan includes hiring up to seven temporary trainers, one for each NCDOT region, to accelerate the training process. This investment will be utilized to employ former school bus driver trainers who have expressed interest in helping expedite training of new bus drivers.

This investment will also provide retention bonuses of up to \$3,000 to current school bus driver training employees. This incentive seeks to recognize their dedication and support in staying with the state, ultimately enhancing the training capacity.

In addition to hiring trainers and providing retention bonuses, funds will be used to purchase two dedicated training buses. This will enable DMV to conduct training sessions more efficiently and without constraints on borrowing buses from school districts, which are sometimes unavailable, thus improving the overall training process.

These initiatives are part of Governor Cooper's unwavering commitment to the education and safety of North Carolina's students. By addressing one of the root causes of the school bus driver shortage, this investment aims to create a more robust and reliable public school transportation network for students across the state.

Funding for this initiative is from federal Emergency Assistance for Non-Public Schools (EANS) funds that have reverted to the Governor's Emergency Education Relief (GEER) fund.

Read Governor Cooper's budget proposal here:  
[www.osbm.nc.gov/budget/governors-budget-recommendations](http://www.osbm.nc.gov/budget/governors-budget-recommendations)

Read about Governor Cooper's declaration of a state of emergency for public schools here: [governor.nc.gov/public-education-crisis](http://governor.nc.gov/public-education-crisis).

## Marshville Museum & Cultural Center September Calendar

- September 11 Docent Meeting 10:00 a.m.
- September 12 Quilting 10:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
- September 16 Randy Travis Music Festival
- September 30 Fall Plant Exchange 9:00 a.m. to 12:00 noon
- October 3 - Knitting 1:00 to 3:00 p.m.

The Marshville Museum is located at 201 North Elm Street. It is open for visits Fridays and Saturdays 10 to 4 p.m. and other times by appointments and at special events. They are closed on all national holidays.

Scheduled events are sent by email and also available on Facebook or the website [www.mmcc1893.com](http://www.mmcc1893.com).

For information email Sarah Horne at [shorne@windstream.net](mailto:shorne@windstream.net).

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