SEPTEMBER 16, 2026 • VOLUME 38, ISSUE NO. 1940

1940

THE EXPRESS

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

Postal Customer

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.

2026 Anson Ag Expo & Fair is Sat.

The Anson Ag Expo & Fair will return to the Anson County Cooperative Extension Center in Wadesboro on Saturday, September 19. The Ag Fair will be open to the public from noon until 2:00 p.m. It is located at 501 McLaurin Street in Wadesboro, and the telephone number is 704-694-2915.

Organizers invite everyone to come out, enjoy the festivities and help celebrate the importance of agriculture in Anson County.

Chamber Oyster Roast Brings Food, Fun and Community Together

It's almost oyster roast time in Anson, and the Anson County Chamber of Commerce is inviting the community to come hungry and enjoy an evening of food, fellowship and fun on Friday, September 25, at Flake Haven.

The menu will feature Chamber on the Half Shell oysters along with chicken fingers, macaroni and cheese and more. But Chamber officials say the annual gathering is about more than what's on the plate - it's an opportunity for local residents, business owners and Chamber members to spend time together and strengthen community connections.

"These events are what the Chamber is all about - bringing our business community together, supporting one another and creating opportunities to connect," the Chamber said. Whether you're a longtime Chamber member, a local business owner or simply someone who loves oysters, everyone is encouraged to join the fun.

Tickets are on sale now and may be purchased online at *ansoncountychamber.org* or at the Chamber office, located at 107-C East Wade Street, Suite I in Wadesboro.

Raffle tickets are also available at Plank Road Realty and the ABC Store in Wadesboro.

Sponsorship opportunities are still available. Businesses and individuals interested in becoming a sponsor can call the Anson County Chamber of Commerce at 704-310-8948 or email Chamber Director Sandy Cox at: *scox@ansoncountychamber.org*.

The Chamber thanked the community for its continued support and encourages everyone to come out September 25 for good food, good company and a chance to connect with some of the people who make Anson County a special place to call home.

And for anyone who has never mastered the art of eating an oyster, this might be the perfect evening to learn. Just remember: slurping is considerably more acceptable at an oyster roast than it is at most Chamber functions.

State Health Plan Meeting for Retirees Set for September 22

Grace Senior Center program will explain 2027 health plan options and answer questions

Retired state employees and Medicare-eligible members who participate in the North Carolina State Health Plan are invited to a special informational meeting at Grace Senior Center on Tuesday, September 22.

The 2027 State Health Plan for Retirees Meeting will be held from 11 a.m. to 12 p.m. and will provide an opportunity for participants to discuss changes for 2027, learn about their health plan choices and have questions answered.

For 2027, the State Health Plan will offer retirees two Preferred Provider Plan options: the Standard PPO Plan and the Plus PPO Plan. The Standard PPO Plan offers a strong network of providers, comprehensive coverage and value, while the Plus PPO Plan offers enhanced benefits and additional coverage options.

All members will be automatically enrolled in the Standard PPO Plan. Those who want to enroll in the Plus PPO Plan or make changes to dependents will need to take action during Open Enrollment.

Open Enrollment will be held October 12 through October 30, 2026.

The Sepember 22 meeting is designed to help retirees review their options before Open Enrollment begins and choose the coverage that best fits their healthcare needs.

Everyone who may benefit from the information is invited to attend. To register for the meeting, call Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616. Grace Senior Center is located at 199 Highway 742 South in Wadesboro.

People Fest Returns to Wadesboro!

Food, music, family fun and fireworks October 10

After years away, one of Wadesboro's hometown traditions is returning. People Fest will be held Saturday, October 10, in uptown Wadesboro, bringing back a community celebration that began in 1983.

The festival will run from 9 a.m. to 5 p.m. and feature food trucks, live music, games, children's activities and plenty of family fun - the important necessities: something to eat, something to listen to and something to keep the youngsters occupied while the grown-ups talk (and eat!).

But don't head home at 5 p.m. Fireworks are scheduled for 9 p.m., providing a big finale to People Fest's return.

Vendor Applications are available at Town Hall and at *www.wadesboronc.gov* through September 30.

So mark October 10 on the calendar. People Fest is coming back to uptown Wadesboro - and apparently it isn't planning a quiet return.

Bluegrass Is Back - Pickers, Grinners and Toe-Tappers Welcome!

The Hampton B. Allen Library will once again prove that libraries aren't always quiet places when its ongoing Bluegrass Acoustic Set returns Thursday, September 24, from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. in the library's Little Theater.

Musicians, singers and spectators are all invited. Whether you can pick a banjo at lightning speed, make a fiddle sing, strum three chords on a guitar or simply tap your foot without losing your balance, there's a place for you.

Don't play an instrument? No problem. Spectators are an important part of Bluegrass, too.

Children age 12 and under must be accompanied by an adult. Adults are not required to be accompanied by children.

The Ansonia Theatre Brings Broadway's Modern Horror Masterpiece to the Stage

Following its acclaimed Broadway run, the chilling and darkly funny psychological thriller "Grey House" is coming to the Historic Ansonia Theatre in Wadesboro. Artistic Director Tommy Wooten leads this landmark production, taking the Ansonia into bold, unsettling and immersive new territory.

The story follows Max and Raleigh, a couple who seek shelter in an isolated cabin following a car accident. Inside, they encounter a mysterious group of young residents and the woman who watches over them. As the night unfolds, unsettling questions begin to surface, hidden truths emerge and the couple discovers that leaving may not be as simple as walking back out the door.

Although "Grey House" is firmly rooted in psychological horror, the play is also surprisingly funny. Moments of sharp wit, strange behavior and dark humor give audiences opportunities to laugh - sometimes comfortably and sometimes nervously - before the story pulls them back into its increasingly disturbing world. That unpredictable movement between humor and terror is part of what makes the play such a unique theatrical experience.

Gina Clarke stars as Max, with Shawn Parlor as Raleigh and Logan Tallman as Henry. Elizabeth Sleeper appears as the Ancient, the enigmatic figure at the center of the unusual household.

The production's young ensemble features Taylor Pate, Paige Mercer, Gracilee Bricker, Ava Sleeper, Maddox Currie and Eden Tallman. Together, the cast creates the strange family at the heart of the story, balancing moments of playfulness and humor with an ever-growing sense that something inside the house is deeply wrong.

Under Wooten's direction, the cast must navigate the play's rapid shifts in tone, moving from comedy and seemingly ordinary conversation to emotional confrontation, physical danger and outright terror. The horror does not depend solely on blood or startling effects. It grows from the relationships among the characters, the secrets they carry and the questions the play raises about grief, survival and the things people are willing to do to escape their pain.

The production will also feature practical effects performed live onstage. Tallman, who has experience as an actor and effects designer, previously worked with independent horror production company Toetag Pictures and was mentored by filmmakers Fred Vogel and Jeremi Cruise. His background contributes to the production's live effects, which unfold in real time as part of the actors' performances. No edits. No cuts. No second takes.

Audiences will see the action unfold in one continuous performance without cinematic tricks. The immediacy of live theatre places viewers inside the world of the play, where the humor, tension and horror happen only feet away.

The production's creative team includes set designer Tyler Baucom; stage manager and props designer Ruth Ann Harris; sound designer Joe Blocker; and lighting designer Rachel Kostelnik. Together, the technical team creates the atmosphere, visual surprises and carefully timed shifts that allow the production to move between laughter, dread and full-scale horror.

Wadesboro itself holds a special place in horror history as a primary filming location for Sam Raimi's cult classic "Evil Dead II." Fans of the genre can visit the community where a landmark horror film was created and then enter the century-old - and reportedly haunted - Ansonia Theatre for a new experience in live theatrical terror.

"Grey House" is rated M for mature audiences because of adult language and content. The production also contains intense psychological horror, disturbing themes, frightening imagery and realistic live special effects. Viewer discretion is advised.

Performances run September 25 through October 4 at the Historic Ansonia Theatre. Tickets are available through the Ansonia Theatre at *ansoniatheatre.com*.

Due to the intimate nature of the production and limited seating, audiences are encouraged to reserve their seats early.

Wadesboro Selected for New Electric Vehicle Charging Station

Anson County EV registrations continue to grow as NCDOT expands charging network

Wadesboro has been selected as one of 14 North Carolina locations to receive a new electric vehicle charging station through the latest round of the N.C. Department of Transportation's National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure Program.

The announcement comes as electric and hybrid vehicles are becoming increasingly common in Anson County. NCDOT registration data show that the county had 40 fully electric vehicles, 17 plug-in hybrids and 305 conventional hybrids as of June 2026.

That represents substantial growth from just a few years ago. In December 2018, Anson County had only one fully electric vehicle and one plug-in hybrid, along with 86 conventional hybrids. By December 2023, the numbers had risen to 12 electric vehicles, five plug-in hybrids and 145 conventional hybrids. A year later, the county had 22 electric vehicles, eight plug-in hybrids and 197 conventional hybrids.

Growth has continued. By December 2025, Anson County had 31 electric vehicles and 11 plug-in hybrids. Just six months later, in June 2026, those figures had climbed to 40 electric vehicles and 17 plug-in hybrids. Together, the number of locally registered vehicles capable of plugging in for electric power has grown from two in 2018 to 57 in 2026.

NCDOT announced that $14.4 million in federal funding has been awarded to eight businesses that will construct and operate charging stations in 14 locations, including Wadesboro, Asheboro, Columbus, High Point, Kinston, Raleigh and Weaverville.

The new Wadesboro station will be part of a growing statewide network intended to make long-distance travel more practical for electric vehicle drivers. Its location should serve not only Anson County EV owners but also electric vehicle drivers traveling through Wadesboro along the region's major highways.

"The number of electric vehicles registered in North Carolina continues to increase," said NCDOT State Initiatives Manager Heather Hildebrandt. "By expanding our electric vehicle charging network, we're making it easier for everyone to travel confidently across the state, while supporting a cleaner, more modern transportation economy."

North Carolina received $109 million through the federal National Electric Vehicle Infrastructure, or NEVI, program to partner with businesses to deploy and operate charging stations along interstates, highways and in communities. The federal money reimburses participating businesses for project costs including procurement, installation and operation of the stations.

The 14 locations announced in the latest round will join five electric vehicle charging stations funded through the NEVI program in 2024. The full network funded through the program is expected to be completed within three years, with a later phase focusing on additional chargers in communities and rural areas with greater needs.

Anson County Voters Prepare for November 3 General Election

Early voting begins October 15
Voter registration deadline is October 9

Anson County voters will head to the polls Tuesday, November 3, for the 2026 General Election, with federal, state and local contests on the ballot. The Anson County Board of Elections has released information voters should know as Election Day approaches.

- **Photo ID:** Voters will be asked to show photo identification when voting. All voters will be allowed to vote with or without ID. Those who do not have an acceptable ID can obtain one free from the county board of elections. More information is available at ncsbe.gov/voter-id.
- **Election Day:** Polls will be open from 6:30 a.m. until 7:30 p.m. Tuesday, November 3.
- **Early Voting:** One-stop early voting will be held at the Anson County Board of Elections Office, 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro, from Thursday, October 15, through Saturday, October 31. Hours are 8:30 a.m. to 5:30 p.m. Monday through Friday, with voting from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m. on Saturday, October 31.
- **Absentee Voting:** Absentee ballots are being mailed to voters who have requested them. Completed ballots must be received by the county board of elections no later than 7:30 p.m. on Election Day. The deadline to request an absentee ballot is 5 p.m. October 20. Requests can be made at votebymail.ncsbe.gov or by submitting a request form to the Anson County Board of Elections.
- **What's on the Ballot:** Voters will decide contests for U.S. Senate and U.S. House, N.C. Supreme Court Associate Justice, N.C. Court of Appeals Judge, Superior and District Court judges, N.C. House and Senate, and countywide offices including County Commissioner and School Board. A statewide referendum proposing amendments to the N.C. Constitution will also appear on the ballot.
- **Voter Registration:** The registration deadline is 5 p.m. Friday, October 9. Eligible residents who miss the deadline may register and vote at an early voting site during the early voting period. Those registering during early voting must provide current documentation showing their residence, such as a government ID or other government document, paycheck, bank statement or utility bill.
- **Voter Assistance:** Voters who need assistance may receive help from an election official or, when assistance is needed because of disability or illiteracy, a qualified person of their choice. Voting sites are accessible, and curbside voting is available to voters who cannot enter a voting location without physical assistance because of age or physical disability.
- **Questions:** For additional information, contact the Anson County Board of Elections Office at 704-994-3223 or *boe@ansoncountync.gov*.

Scholarship Opportunity for North Carolina Students!

North Carolina students from households making $80,000 or less could have their tuition and fees fully covered thanks to the Next NC Scholarship! The scholarship is for community colleges and public universities in North Carolina. This is money that doesn't have to be repaid!

Applying is very simple, you just submit your FAFSA form… and that's it! If you're eligible, you will receive the Next NC Scholarship. There are no additional forms to fill out. The scholarship could fully cover the cost to attend South Piedmont Community College, for example.

Check out the information video on YouTube to learn more - just search for "NextNCScholarship."

Visit *cfnc.org* and search for Next NC Scholarship.