

THE EXPRESS

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

South Piedmont to Host Free FAFSA Day on October 17

Students and families can receive one-on-one help with financial aid applications... and there's free pizza, too

South Piedmont Community College will host a free FAFSA Day on Saturday, October 17, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. at the college's Old Charlotte Highway Campus in Monroe.

The event is designed to help students and families complete the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and better understand the financial assistance that may be available for college. Financial aid experts will provide one-on-one help and answer questions about grants, scholarships, work-study programs and student loans.

"Completing the FAFSA is an important step for students who want to understand their financial aid options," said Financial Aid Specialist Garren Janes. "FAFSA Day gives students and families an opportunity to get their questions answered and receive personalized support as they navigate the process."

FAFSA Day is free and open to anyone planning to attend a college or university. Participants do not have to be planning to attend South Piedmont to receive assistance. Computers will be available for completing the FAFSA, and organizers are making the day a little easier for families by providing free pizza and activities for younger children. Because filling out financial aid paperwork is considerably more pleasant when pizza is involved.

Students considering South Piedmont will also have an opportunity to meet faculty and staff and learn about academic programs, student services and the overall college experience.

Registration is encouraged. Information and registration are available at: events.spcc.edu/event/spcc.events.1955454?utm_source=chatgpt.com.

For more information, contact South Piedmont's Financial Aid Office at finaid@spcc.edu or 704-993-2443.

Two Arrested in Investigation of More Than \$300,000 in Morven Fire Department Funds

Sheriff's Office says investigation is ongoing and additional charges may be forthcoming

The Anson County Sheriff's Office is continuing its investigation into the alleged embezzlement of more than \$300,000 in fire tax funds designated for the Morven Volunteer Fire Department. Two individuals have been arrested and charged in connection with the investigation.

According to a news release issued Monday, October 12, by Sheriff Scott Howell's office, investigators allege that more than \$300,000 in department funds were used for personal purposes between August 2022 and April 2026.

Mark Christopher Holloway was arrested on September 28, 2026, and charged with embezzlement greater than \$300,000 and criminal conspiracy.

A second arrest followed on September 30, when William Nakia Stubbs was taken into custody and charged with embezzlement greater than \$300,000 and criminal conspiracy.

The Sheriff's Office reports that the investigation remains active as detectives continue reviewing financial records and examining whether additional transactions or individuals may have been involved. Investigators indicated that additional charges may be forthcoming as the investigation progresses.

The Sheriff's Office emphasized that all defendants are presumed innocent unless and until proven guilty in a court of law.

Sheriff Howell's office stated that investigators remain committed to following the evidence and conducting a thorough investigation into the alleged misuse of funds intended for the Morven Volunteer Fire Department.



Mark Holloway



William Stubbs

Anson County Democrats to Select Replacement School Board Candidate

October 27 meeting follows death of Board of Education Chairman Dr. George Truman

The Anson County Democratic Party has scheduled a County Executive Committee (CEC) meeting for Tuesday, October 27, to select a replacement nominee for the Anson County Board of Education following the death of School Board Chairman Dr. George Truman.

The party expressed condolences to Truman's family, friends and colleagues and announced that it would begin the process of selecting a new candidate for the November 3 general election.

According to the party's announcement, North Carolina law allows the County Executive Committee to select a replacement nominee when a vacancy occurs on the ballot. Although ballots have already been printed, the party advises that votes cast for the deceased candidate will count toward the replacement nominee.

Only County Executive Committee members who reside in the school board district where the vacancy occurred will be eligible to vote on the replacement.

The meeting will begin at 6 p.m., with doors opening and registration beginning at 5:30 p.m. All party meetings are open to the public.

Individuals interested in seeking the nomination are asked to complete an interest form and submit a résumé, biography or curriculum vitae in advance of the meeting. Friday, October 23 is the submission deadline.

Nominations will also be accepted from the floor during the meeting, with three opportunities for nominations. Each individual seeking the position will be allowed five minutes to address committee members. Candidates will speak in alphabetical order by last name.

Those interested in obtaining an application or additional information may text 704-694-832 or email danniemontgomery@hotmail.com.

Rain Delayed People Fest, but the Fun is Still Coming to Wadesboro Saturday!

Popular community celebration rescheduled for this Saturday, October 17, with food, entertainment and fireworks

Apparently Mother Nature wasn't quite ready for the return of People Fest to uptown Wadesboro. After years of waiting for the popular community celebration to make its comeback, residents will have to wait just one more week.

Originally scheduled for Saturday, October 10, People Fest was postponed because of inclement weather. Organizers made the decision out of concern for the safety of attendees, vendors, performers and the community.

But there's good news! People Fest has been rescheduled for this coming Saturday, October 17, and the festivities are still expected to bring plenty of food, music, games and family entertainment to uptown Wadesboro.

Visitors can look forward to delicious offerings from food trucks, games and activities for children, and opportunities to enjoy a day of community fellowship. After all, a little rain may delay the festivities, but it certainly can't dampen Wadesboro's appetite for good food and a good time.

The MBM Twirly Girls School of Baton students are scheduled to perform on Greene Street at 9:30 a.m., bringing plenty of spinning batons, flying tosses and youthful energy to get People Fest off to a lively start.

The musical lineup will keep things going throughout the day. Will Ellis & His Blues Duo will perform from 10 a.m. until 1 p.m., followed by Bigg Shugge & The East Coast Shockers from 1 to 5 p.m.

And don't forget the fireworks! The spectacular nighttime display is still scheduled for 9 p.m., providing a colorful conclusion to the celebration.

People Fest has long been a favorite Wadesboro tradition, bringing residents together for a day of entertainment, visiting with neighbors and enjoying the community's hometown atmosphere.

So mark your calendars, rearrange your weekend plans and get ready to celebrate on October 17. With any luck, Mother Nature has finished making her own plans for the festival and will allow everyone else to enjoy theirs.

And if you happen to see a suspicious-looking rain cloud hovering over uptown Wadesboro, please don't invite it to stay.

10 Things North Carolina Voters Should Know About Early Voting

Early voting begins October 15 and continues through October 31, offering convenient opportunities to cast ballots before Election Day

North Carolina voters who would rather avoid the Election Day rush can get a head start beginning Thursday, October 15, when in-person early voting opens for the November 3 general election. Early voting will continue through Saturday, October 31, ending at 3 p.m. that day. A total of 370 early voting sites will operate across North Carolina, giving voters the opportunity to cast their ballots before Election Day.

Early voting has become increasingly popular. In the 2024 general election, approximately 74 percent of North Carolina voters cast their ballots during the early voting period, compared with 53 percent in 2022.

"We look forward to a smooth and successful early voting period," said Sam Hayes, executive director of the State Board of Elections. "I would like to thank our county election administrators and the thousands of poll workers who will ensure that voters can cast their ballots securely, and efficiently."

For Anson County residents preparing to vote, the State Board of Elections offers 10 important reminders:

- 1. Know Where to Vote.** During early voting, eligible voters may cast their ballots at any early voting location within their county. They are not required to use their assigned Election Day precinct. In Anson County there is only one site, the Board of Elections office located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro. The first day and final days of early voting are often the busiest.
- 2. Review Your Sample Ballot.** Voters can look up their registration information and view a sample ballot at vt.ncsbe.gov/RegLkup. Reviewing candidates and ballot choices beforehand can make the voting process quicker and easier.
- Information about candidates for the North Carolina Supreme Court and Court of Appeals is available at ncsbe.gov/voting/upcoming-election/judicial-voter-guide-2026-general-election.
- 3. Missed the Registration Deadline? You Can Still Register.** Although the regular voter registration deadline was October 9, eligible individuals may register and vote on the same day during early voting. They must provide proof of residence, such as a driver's license, government document, paycheck, utility bill or bank statement showing their current name and address. Details are available at: ncsbe.gov/registering/how-register/register-person-during-early-voting.
- 4. Update Your Registration.** Voters who have changed their name or moved within the same county may update their registration information when checking in at an early voting site.
- 5. Bring a Photo ID.** North Carolina voters will be asked to present an acceptable photo ID when voting. Most people use their driver's license, but other forms of identification are accepted. Those who forget their ID may return with it or cast a provisional ballot and provide acceptable identification to their county elections office by noon Tuesday, November 10.
- Voters unable to present photo identification may complete a Photo ID Exception Form and cast a provisional ballot. Additional information is available at www.bringitnc.gov.
- 6. Free Voter Photo IDs Are Available.** Registered voters who need identification can obtain a free voter photo ID from their county board of elections through the end of early voting. Information is available at: ncsbe.gov/voting/voter-id/get-free-voter-photo-id.
- 7. Assistance Is Available.** Voters who need help because of a disability or other qualifying circumstances may receive assistance from an eligible person or election officials. Curbside voting is available for individuals who cannot enter a polling location without physical assistance because of age or physical disability. Details are available at: ncsbe.gov/voting/help-voters-disabilities/accessible-voting-sites/curbside-voting.
- 8. Leave the Ballot Photography to Someone Else.** North Carolina law prohibits photographing or recording a completed ballot. Voters may use electronic devices inside the voting booth to review candidate information, but they cannot use those devices to communicate with others or photograph their voted ballot. In other words, your ballot is one thing that doesn't need a selfie.
- 9. Keep the Peace at the Polls.** Voters are expected to respect one another and allow everyone to exercise their right to vote without interference.

Voter intimidation is a crime, and anyone who experiences harassment or intimidation should immediately notify an election official.

- 10. Absentee Ballots Can Be Returned During Early Voting.** Voters who received absentee ballots may return them by mail, deliver them to their county board of elections or hand them to an election official at an early voting site in their county. Additional instructions are available at: ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-mail/detailed-instructions-vote-mail.
- Election officials encourage residents to plan ahead, check their registration information, review their ballots and bring the appropriate identification before heading to the polls.
- Early voting offers flexibility for people with busy schedules, transportation challenges or other commitments that might make voting on November 3 difficult.
- And for those who enjoy avoiding lines, voting early might be the easiest way to accomplish something important without spending half the day waiting for their turn.
- For complete information about early voting in North Carolina, visit ncsbe.gov/voting/vote-early-person.

Railroad Crossing on Clinton Avenue in Peachland to Close for Repairs

Complete road closure scheduled October 26-29 for installation of new railroad tracks

Motorists traveling through Peachland should prepare for a temporary road closure later this month as railroad crews install new rail at the Clinton Avenue crossing. The crossing is scheduled to close completely beginning Monday, October 26, at 4 a.m. and is expected to reopen on or around Thursday, October 29, by 9 a.m.

During the closure, no vehicles will be permitted to cross the railroad tracks at Clinton Avenue. The roadway will remain closed to all traffic until the work is completed.

Detour signs will be posted to direct motorists around the construction area. Drivers are encouraged to plan alternate routes, allow additional travel time and avoid the crossing whenever possible.

Officials caution that the construction schedule is subject to change because of weather conditions or unforeseen circumstances. Railroad work can be unpredictable, and reopening times may be adjusted as the project progresses.

Motorists are encouraged to pay attention to posted detour signs and anticipate possible traffic delays throughout the construction period.

Candlelight Vigil Will Remember Victims of Domestic Violence

October 29 gathering at Anson County Courthouse will also show support for victims and survivors

The Anson County Domestic Violence Coalition will hold its 2026 Annual Candlelight Vigil on Thursday, October 29, at 6 p.m. at the Anson County Courthouse in Wadesboro.

The annual gathering will honor and remember those whose lives have been lost to domestic violence while also standing in support and solidarity with victims and survivors of abuse.

October is Domestic Violence Awareness Month, and the candlelight vigil offers Anson County residents an opportunity to come together as a community to remember those who have died and recognize those whose lives continue to be affected by domestic violence.

"Join us as we gather in remembrance of those we have lost to domestic violence and in solidarity with survivors whose stories continue to shape our community," the coalition stated in announcing the event.

The vigil will begin at 6 p.m. Thursday, October 29, at the Anson County Courthouse. The community is invited to attend.