

THE EXPRESS

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

Wadesboro Police Seize Cash and Firearm During Raid at Vegas Vapes

The Wadesboro Police Department, working with the North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement (ALE) Special Operations Unit, executed a search warrant at Vegas Vapes, located at 500 East Caswell Street in Wadesboro, on Thursday, October 15, following a months-long undercover investigation into suspected illegal activity.

According to Police Chief Michael Childers, investigators developed information indicating that the business was allegedly operating gaming machines that provided illegal cash payouts to customers. As the investigation progressed, officers also began receiving reports of assaults and firearms on or around the property.

Childers said the reports raised serious safety concerns and prompted officers to act quickly to prevent a potentially deadly incident.

The search warrant, which was reviewed and signed by a Superior Court judge, was executed at approximately 2 p.m. Officers seized several thousand dollars in cash and a firearm as part of the ongoing investigation.

The registered owner of Vegas Vapes was not present when officers conducted the search. Police anticipate seeking additional warrants as the investigation and necessary legal procedures continue.

Childers issued a strong warning to businesses operating illegally within the town. “We will not tolerate illegal activity that threatens the safety and security of our community,” he stated. “If you are operating illegally, this will be your only warning: shut it down! Otherwise, you will be the next business we investigate.”

The chief emphasized that no business is above the law and that the department will continue investigating suspected illegal operations and taking enforcement action when warranted.

Childers also encouraged residents to report suspected illegal business activity, emphasizing the importance of information provided by citizens in helping law enforcement protect the community.

He thanked North Carolina Alcohol Law Enforcement, state and local law enforcement partners, and residents for their assistance and continued support.

The investigation remains ongoing.

Masquerade Book Bash Rescheduled

The Friends of the Hampton B. Allen Library have announced that their Masquerade Book Bash, originally scheduled for Friday, October 23, at Flake Haven, has been postponed until Friday, February 19, 2027.

The rescheduling gives everyone a little more time to prepare for an evening of literary fun, fellowship and masquerade festivities. After all, finding the perfect mask can take time, especially if you're trying to disguise yourself from someone whose favorite book you borrowed and never returned!

Organizers will announce additional details about the rescheduled event as the new date approaches.

If you have already bought tickets, staff will be reaching out to you. Tickets are still available. Give them a call to purchase or get more information at 704-694-5177.

Major Expansion Planned for Anson County Power Plant Near Lilesville

Anson County could soon be home to a significantly larger power generation facility. North Carolina Electric Membership Corporation (NCEMC) announced October 15 that it plans to expand its existing Anson Power Plant near Lilesville, adding 860 megawatts of generating capacity to help meet growing electricity demands across the state.

The proposed expansion represents a substantial increase in the plant's ability to generate electricity during periods of high demand, particularly during extreme weather conditions when reliable power becomes especially important.

NCEMC has initiated the regulatory and public review process by filing a notice with the North Carolina Utilities Commission. The additional generating capacity is intended to serve the growing electricity needs of 21 of North Carolina's electric cooperatives.

The Anson Power Plant uses natural gas to generate electricity when demand is highest or when other energy sources are unavailable. These facilities, commonly known as peaking power plants, can be brought online relatively quickly to help maintain reliable service during periods of heavy electricity consumption.

According to NCEMC, the proposed expansion will complement its existing mix of electricity generation resources, which includes nuclear power, renewable energy and battery storage systems.

The cooperative says the expansion is expected to have minimal impact on the surrounding community. The existing plant property is large enough to accommodate the additional facilities while maintaining buffer areas between the plant and neighboring properties.

Environmental studies and permitting reviews will be required as part of the state and federal approval process. These evaluations will examine the proposed project's potential environmental effects and compliance with applicable regulations.

The October 15 filing represents only the first step in the approval process. NCEMC expects to submit a full application for a Certificate of Public Convenience and Necessity in early 2027. That application will provide additional details about the proposed expansion and allow state regulators to evaluate the project before determining whether it should proceed.

Although the announcement outlines a major increase in generating capacity, NCEMC has not yet provided details about the project's estimated construction cost, anticipated employment opportunities or construction schedule. Additional information is expected to become available through future regulatory filings.

The expansion would further establish Anson County as an important location in North Carolina's electricity generation network, with the Lilesville facility helping provide dependable power to cooperative members throughout the state.

North Carolina's Electric Cooperatives supports 26 community-based electric cooperatives that collectively serve more than 2.8 million residents. NCEMC serves as the generation and transmission cooperative within that network. Project updates and additional information at www.ncelectriccooperatives.com/anson.



BRLC’s God’s Glorious Charity Ride Supports Kids Café

The roar of motorcycle engines, a delicious homemade breakfast and plenty of fellowship marked another successful God's Glorious Charity Ride at Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center (BRLC). The annual event brought together motorcycle enthusiasts and community supporters to raise funds for BRLC's Kids Café after-school program.

The Burnsville Motorcycle Leisure Riders welcomed returning participants and newcomers for a morning of breakfast, gospel music provided by William Barrett and other performers, and visits with friends before hitting the road.

The nearly 90-mile ride offered participants an opportunity to enjoy the fall scenery and fresh air. Experienced riders provided safety instructions before departure, and BRLC expressed appreciation to the Anson County Sheriff's Office for its assistance.

Following the ride, participants returned to BRLC for lunch, activities and more fellowship. After all, a motorcycle ride is even better when there's good food waiting at the finish line!

BRLC recognized committee members Jewel Brewer, James Brewer, Nelson Jackson, Michael Kane, Bobby Sturdivant, Malerie Smith and Solen Christian for their hard work. The organization also thanked the volunteers, musicians, riders and supporters who helped make the fundraiser successful.

Anyone interested in joining the motorcycle group or helping with next year's ride can contact BRLC at 704-826-8737 and ask for Ms. Daniel.

Anson County Voters Prepare for November 3 General Election

Early voting is already underway in Anson County for the Tuesday, November 3 general election. Voters may cast their ballots early at the Anson County Board of Elections, located at 402 Morven Road in Wadesboro. The election includes federal, state and local races, along with three proposed amendments to the North Carolina Constitution.

Although most races are the same throughout Anson County, not every voter will receive an identical ballot. Some precincts have additional Board of Education contests, depending on the district in which voters reside.

The following guide lists the candidates appearing on nine sample ballots for Ansonville, Burnsville, Gulledge, Lilesville, Morven-McFarlan, Peachland, Polkton, Wadesboro and White Store. Information on write-in candidates was not available at press time. Candidates are identified by political party where applicable. Races common to all nine ballots are listed first, followed by contests specific to certain precincts.

Federal Races

- U.S. Senate: Roy Cooper (Democrat), Michael Whatley (Republican), Shannon Bray (Libertarian) and Michael Dublin (Green).
- U.S. House of Representatives, District 8: Colby Watson (Democrat), Mark Harris (Republican) and Bo Whitehead (Green).

State Legislative Races

- N.C. Senate, District 29: Judy Little (Democrat) and Dave Craven (Republican).
- N.C. House of Representatives, District 55: John J. Kirkpatrick IV (Democrat) and Clancy Baucom (Republican).

Judicial Races

- N.C. Supreme Court, Associate Justice, Seat 1: Anita Earls (Democrat) and Sarah Stevens (Republican).
- N.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 1: John S. Arrowood (Democrat) and Michael C. Byrne (Republican).
- N.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 2: Tobias (Toby) Hampson (Democrat) and George Cooper Bell (Republican).
- N.C. Court of Appeals, Seat 3: Christine Marie Walczyk (Democrat) and Craig Collins (Republican).
- N.C. District Court Judge, District 21, Seat 1: Chris Rhue (Democrat), unopposed.
- N.C. District Court Judge, District 21, Seat 3: Chevonne Wallace (Democrat), unopposed.
- District Attorney, District 21: Jamie Adams (Democrat) and Todd G. Scott (Republican).

Anson County Races Appearing on All Nine Sample Ballots

- Board of Commissioners, District 2: Priscilla Little-Reid (Democrat) and William (Boogie) Short (Republican).
- Board of Commissioners, District 4: Jamie Caudle (Republican), unopposed.
- Board of Commissioners, District 5: Robbie Hill (Republican) and Kevin Adams (Unaffiliated).
- Board of Education, At-Large: Ida Cason (Democrat), Lorri Burns Bennett (Democrat) and Brandon Smith (Republican). Voters may select one candidate.
- Clerk of Superior Court: Thedis Spencer (Democrat) and Katie Scarborough (Unaffiliated).
- Sheriff: Tim Watkins (Democrat) and Scott Howell (Unaffiliated).

Nonpartisan Election

- Brown Creek Soil and Water Conservation District Supervisor: Nichole Hatley Carpenter and Jesse Campbell. Voters may select two candidates, and two write-in spaces are provided. Political party affiliations are not listed for this contest.

Races That Vary by Precinct

The principal differences among the nine sample ballots involve the Anson County Board of Education district seats. These contests do not appear on every ballot.

- Board of Education, District 2: Bobbie Little (Democrat), the only listed candidate, with a write-in option. This race appears on the Lilesville precinct sample ballot.
- Board of Education, District 4: Lisa G. Davis (Democrat), the only listed candidate. This race appears on the Peachland, Polkton and White Store precinct sample ballots.

The sample ballots for Ansonville, Burnsville, Gulledge, Morven-McFarlan and Wadesboro do not include either of these district-specific Board of Education contests. However, voters in those precincts will still see the Board of Education At-Large race.

Three Constitutional Amendments on the Ballot

In addition to selecting candidates, voters will be asked to vote for or against three proposed amendments to the North Carolina Constitution. All nine sample ballots contain the same three questions.

- Photo Identification: Constitutional amendment to require all voters, not just those presenting to vote in person, to present photo identification before voting.
- State Income Tax: Constitutional amendment to keep the state income tax rate from being raised higher than three and one-half percent (3.5%).
- Property Taxes: Constitutional amendment requiring limits on property tax increases by local governments.

Voters may select “For” or “Against” on each proposed amendment.

Check Your Ballot Before Voting

Because ballot styles vary by precinct and district, voters are encouraged to review their own sample ballot before Election Day. Doing so provides an opportunity to become familiar with the candidates, the offices being contested and the constitutional amendments.

This guide is based on the nine sample ballots provided for review. Voters should consult their own ballot style to confirm which district-specific races apply to them.

Election Day is Tuesday, November 3. Voters should carefully review both sides of their ballot to make sure they have considered every contest and amendment before submitting it.

Medicare Open Enrollment Underway: Anson Citizens Urged to Review Coverage

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey is urging Medicare recipients to carefully review their health and prescription drug coverage for 2027, warning that some plans could see significant price increases in the coming year. Anson County residents can receive free, unbiased assistance through the Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) at Grace Senior Center by calling 704-694-6616.

Medicare's annual Open Enrollment Period began October 15 and continues through December 7. Any changes made during this period will take effect January 1, 2027.

“Many plans have indicated that they intend to have increases, some significantly,” Causey said. “This is not the year to simply say, ‘I’m happy with what I have,’ without exploring your options.”

Even beneficiaries who are satisfied with their current Medicare Advantage or prescription drug plans may discover that another plan offers comparable or better coverage at a lower cost. Changes in premiums, deductibles, prescription drug coverage and participating healthcare providers can make a significant difference in annual expenses.

SHIIP, a division of the North Carolina Department of Insurance, provides free, unbiased information about Medicare, Medicare Advantage, prescription drug coverage, long-term care insurance and other health insurance matters. Counselors can also help determine whether beneficiaries qualify for programs that reduce Medicare expenses.

SHIIP counselors do not sell insurance or endorse particular companies or plans. Their purpose is to help Medicare recipients understand their options and make informed decisions.

Anson County residents are encouraged to contact Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616 for local SHIIP assistance. Statewide assistance is also available at 1-855-408-1212, Monday through Friday, from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m.

Medicare recipients can compare plans online at www.medicare.gov, review their Medicare & You 2027 handbook or call 1-800-MEDICARE (1-800-633-4227), available 24 hours a day.

Additional information about SHIIP is available at www.ncshiip.com.

With the December 7 deadline approaching, Causey's advice is simple: Don't assume the plan that worked well this year will necessarily be the best choice next year. A little comparison shopping now could prevent some unpleasant surprises when the bills arrive in January.