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

Special Enrollment Period for Anson Medicare Recipients Affected by Hurricane Florence

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey today announced that Medicare beneficiaries impacted by Hurricane Florence have been granted an extended Special Enrollment Period (SEP) to sign up for 2019 benefits. This extended period gives beneficiaries an extra month to enroll in a Medicare health or prescription drug plan due to the unforeseen circumstances that accompany a natural disaster. The 2019 Medicare Open Enrollment period runs October 15 to December 7, with coverage to take effect January 1, 2019. This SEP allows those affected by the storm to enroll through January 7, 2019, with coverage to begin February 1. The SEP is in effect for the 34 North Carolina counties declared major disaster areas as a result of Hurricane Florence: Anson, Beaufort, Bladen, Brunswick, Carteret, Chatham, Columbus, Craven, Cumberland, Duplin, Durham, Greene, Guilford, Harnett, Hoke, Hyde, Johnston, Jones, Lee, Lenoir, Moore, New Hanover, Onslow, Orange, Pamlico, Pender, Pitt, Richmond, Robeson, Sampson, Scotland, Union, Wayne and Wilson.

The extension applies to two sets of residents:
1) Those who live in the disaster zones, as well as 2) others outside the 34 counties who assist the storm victims.
About SHIIP The Seniors' Health Insurance Information Program (SHIIP) is a free N.C. Department of Insurance health benefits counseling service for Medicare beneficiaries and their families or caregivers. SHIIP's mission is to educate, advocate, counsel and empower people to make informed decisions about Medicare or their prescription drug plan. For more information call 855-408-1212. Locally you can call Grace Senior Center at 704-694-6616.

Anson County's October Unemployment Rate Was 4.1%

Anson County's unemployment rate for October was 4.1%, up a little from September's 3.8% rate. Statewide the unemployment rate was 3.4% in October, slightly higher than September's 3.1% rate. Anson's total labor force in October was 10,399. Of that number 9,968 were employed and 431 were unemployed. In September the total labor force was 10,237 with 9,845 employed and 392 unemployed. The unemployment rate was higher in October than September, but actually 123 more Ansonians were working in October. The labor force increased by 162 during October and that drove the unemployment percentage higher. Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) increased in all 100 of North Carolina's counties in October. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 6.6 percent, while Buncombe County had the lowest at 2.6%. All 15 of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases. Among the metro areas, Rocky Mount at 4.8% had the highest rate and Asheville had the lowest rate at 2.8 percent. The October not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 3.4 percent. When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates decreased in 99 counties and increased in one. All 15 metro areas experienced rate decreases over the year. The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in October by 37,944 to 4,842,983, while those unemployed increased 18,694 to 170,887. Since October 2017, the number of workers employed statewide increased 82,496, while those unemployed decreased 40,647.

Veterans Dinner is Friday

The Anson County Veterans Council invites all veterans and spouses to their annual Christmas dinner this Friday, December 7 at 6 p.m. It will take place at the Woodmen of the World Lodge which is located on Highway 74 West in Wadesboro, near the hospital. This down home Christmas dinner will feature a mouth-watering menu of pork tenderloin, green beans, slaw and potato salad. And, get ready to enjoy Ms. Joyce McIntyre's chicken n' dumplings! The entertainers will make their debut in Anson County at this event - you will not want to miss them! There will be a drawing for the raffle and door prizes. And, Santa will make an appearance too! The Veterans Council hopes to see you there. For more information call 704-694-6770.

Farmers Have Until Dec. 10 to Sign Up for Agricultural Disaster Assistance

Farmers with damage from Tropical Storm Michael may be eligible for disaster assistance from the Hurricane Florence Agricultural Disaster Program of 2018. The \$240 million bill approved today by the N.C. General Assembly would help farmers with storm damage and agricultural losses from both Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael. The program will directly assist farmers who suffered losses to commodities planted but not harvested before Sept. 13, 2018 and livestock. The N.C. Department of Agriculture and Consumer Services will administer the program. "With only two weeks left in the sign-up period, farmers cannot afford to wait to sign up for assistance," said Agriculture Commissioner Steve Troxler. "The application process takes about 30 minutes per farm and assistance is available through N.C. Cooperative Extension and the NCDA&CS disaster hotline at 1-866-6459403."

The seven additional counties pending a federal disaster declaration include: Avery, Vance, Wake, Warren, Washington, Watauga and Yadkin counties. With this addition, 61 of the state's 100 counties would have received either a primary Presidential or Secretarial-disaster declaration. "Both Hurricane Florence and Tropical Storm Michael had significant impacts to agriculture," said Troxler. "Without this immediate assistance, it will be difficult for many farmers to continue operations." Initial estimates for crop damage and livestock losses to North Carolina's agriculture industry from Hurricane Florence are estimated at \$1.1 billion. To be eligible for assistance, farmers must sign up online by the December 10 deadline. For more information, visit www.ncagr.gov/agriculturaldisasterprogram.



Harvest Ministries & Community Partners Give Away 150 Turkeys for Thanksgiving

Harvest Ministries annual "Great Turkey Give" campaign started in late October with a goal to distribute as many Thanksgiving turkeys to families across Anson County. As a result, on Sunday November 18 Harvest Ministries pastors and volunteers visited various neighborhoods in Anson County delivering a Thanksgiving blessing to 150 families! Founder/Senior Pastor of Harvest Tim Adams stated, "The greatest blessing we can get is when we become a blessing to someone else." Harvest Lead Pastor Steve Adams added, "When you knock on a person's door, and simply say, 'we just want to bless you today' and to see the reaction of thankful people, it reminds us what Thanksgiving is all about."

Pastor Steve shared that this year's giveaway could not have been possible without the generous donation of so many people through Facebook, GoFundMe, and others. Many local community leaders and residents dropped off donations, purchased turkeys, and simply gave knowing that a life would be blessed. Adams wanted to say a special thanks to Miss Gloria Howard of Charlotte, who donated 50 turkeys for this year's blessing, Elizabeth Presson, Randy Jackson, Renee Kifer, Pastor Mark Perko, Minister Rachel Melton and every person who gave online. "Your investment made this possible! And lastly, thanks the faithful folks of Harvest Ministries Outreach Center for their love, compassion and desire to 'be the blessing,'" Adams said. "Special thanks to Deaconess Lisa Smith and Marty Palange for coordinating turkey purchases and pickups." Pastor Steve added that now Harvest is focused on the 19th annual Community Christmas Blessing event which will be held at Harvest on Sunday, December 16 at 10:30 a.m. At this event every child will receive a Christmas toy as well as many other prizes and opportunities for families to receive a Christmas blessing. For more information or to donate to this cause, Adams can be reached at 704-695-2879.



The Drake Gallery Offers Local Arts & Crafts for Christmas

The Drake Gallery & Gifts has beautiful art from local, talented artists - as well as unique pottery, classic art-themed painted vintage furniture, jewelry, wood work, snowman and Santa Claus gourds, Rae Dunn pottery and more! Pick up a gift certificate from the Ansonia or the Drake! Everyone is invited to come visit and shop for the holidays! The Drake Gallery is located in the Anson County Arts Council office, at 110 South Rutherford Street in uptown Wadesboro, next door to the Ansonia Theatre. The telephone number is 704-694-4950. The holiday hours are: Tuesday-Saturday, 10 a.m. to 6 p.m. They are closed on Sundays and Mondays.

Christmas Miracle Meal 2018 for Families in Need

\$40 donation provides a family of five a Christmas dinner plus leftovers
The Anson Crisis Ministry, working with Wadesboro IGA and First Baptist Church, is preparing for this year's Christmas Miracle Meal project. Other churches and individuals in the county are invited to participate. A Christmas Miracle Meal is a box of food that will feed a family of five a Christmas dinner, plus enough for leftovers. These boxed meals will be handed out to 100 needy families in the county. For a \$40 donation, you can supply a box that includes a 12-14 pound turkey, dressing, potatoes, yams, cranberry sauce, green beans, rolls, sugar, brown sugar, butter, eggs, cornbread, gravy, onions, bread and more. Families receiving food have been identified through the Anson Crisis Ministry. However, any church in the area can also refer families to be added to this list. Please contact Margot Barnes at the Anson Crisis Ministry at 704-694-2445 to refer families. Churches are encouraged to partner in this project by referring families, donating funds, and even helping with the packing and distribution. Boxes will be packed with non-perishable food items on Thursday, December 20 and again on Saturday, December 22 with perishable items. Boxes will then be available for pick-up by identified families at First Baptist Church on Lee Avenue, from 8:30 a.m. until 5:00 p.m. that Saturday. Volunteers are needed for both packing days and distribution. If you would like to help feed a Christmas meal to a needy family, checks can be made payable to First Baptist Church and delivered to the church office at P.O. Box 423 or 309 Lee Avenue in Wadesboro. The 2018 goal is \$4,000. If more funds are received, more meals can be purchased for more families. Christmas is coming. Consider sharing blessings with an Anson County family in need this year.

Breakfast with Santa Event is Saturday

Uptown Wadesboro, Inc. (UWI) is hosting a Breakfast with Santa event this Saturday, December 8, from 8 to 10 a.m. at the new Wadesboro Fire Station, located at 205 East Morgan Street. Children, family and friends are all invited to come and enjoy a pancake breakfast and a visit with Santa. Little ones will be able to share their Christmas wish list with the jolly man in red! The menu will include a choice of plain pancakes or chocolate chip pancakes, maple syrup, bacon, orange juice and coffee. The cost will be \$6 for adults and \$4 for children 12 and under, cash or check. Tickets will be available at the door. For information contact UWI at 704-695-1644.

Blood Drive on Saturday

Give blood and help save lives! There will be a Blood Drive at Kesler Chapel AME Zion Church on Saturday, December 8, from 10 a.m. to 12 p.m. Anson citizens are urged to contribute - it is a fast and easy process. Kesler Chapel is located at 708 Salisbury Street in Wadesboro. This Blood Drive is sponsored by the Community Blood Center of the Carolinas (CBCC). To donate blood with CBCC call 1-888-59-BLOOD or visit www.cbcc.us to make an appointment at any location.

Do You Need a Coat or Blanket? Would You Like to Donate?

The Faith-Based Center of Hope continues their "Warm Coats, Warm Hearts" program. They distribute coats to those in need as well as to schools in Anson County. Blankets for the elderly are also available. Gumbys on Highway 74 in Lilesville is a drop off site for donations, or a pick up point for those who need a coat. Just call to schedule it. To donate coats and blankets or to request help, please contact Vancine Sturdivant at 704-848-4412.