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

1,029 Reported Cases of COVID-19 in Anson County

As of Monday, December 7 the Anson County Health Department posted that Anson County had 1,029 reported cases of COVID-19. 128 of those cases were active. At that point they had discharged 901 cases, 883 to baseline health and eighteen deaths.

In a release the Health Department stated, "With the number of cases rising in our state, we would like to encourage people to take a part in protecting themselves and others. Remember to wear a mask, keep distance from others, wash your hands often, and download the SLOWCOVID app. Learn more about the free SlowCOVID Exposure Notification app at covid19.ncdhs.gov/SlowCOVIDNC. #StayStrongNC.

The NC Department of Health and Human Services reported statewide as of Monday, December 7 there were 404,032 total cases of COVID-19, with 5,605 deaths, 5,678,794 completed tests and 2,373 hospitalized.

On November 2 there were 278,028 total cases of COVID-19, with 4,390 deaths, 4,116,019 completed tests and 1,146 hospitalized. On October 5 there were 219,754 total cases of COVID-19, with 3,637 deaths, 3,188,371 completed tests and 971 hospitalized.

Recent history in Anson County: March 31 - 1 case; April 28 - 23 cases; May 26 - 62 cases; June 22 - 107 cases; July 27 - 285 cases; August 3 - 306 cases; August 26 - 408 cases; September 4 - 461 cases; September 28 - 605 cases; October 5 - 649 cases; October 26 - 720 cases; November 2 - 738 cases; November 30 - 937 cases.

School Board Meeting for December 14 Will be Live Streamed on YouTube

The Anson County Board of Education will hold their regular board meeting on Monday, December 14. The meeting will begin at 3:30 p.m. with Closed Session, and Open Session to the public will begin at 4:30 p.m. The meeting will be live streamed through YouTube. The public is invited to watch the meeting by following the Anson County Schools Youtube Channel beginning at 4:30 p.m. To find the channel you can search YouTube for "Anson County Schools."

Due to live streaming the meeting, if the public wishes to sign up for public comment they can go to the public comment link on the schools website at www.ansoncountyschools.org to sign up. Public comment sign up will be from 3:45 p.m. to 4:15 p.m. on December 14. Open Session to the public begins at 4:30 p.m.

The Anson County Board of Education welcomes comments from parents, students, and the community.

The public comment period is open for members of the public to voice compliments, concerns, or complaints about matters of public concern, the performance of school personnel, implementation of board policy, the quality of the education program or school facilities, or other matters. The Public Comment portion of the meeting is for the Board to hear matters of interest or concern from the public; however, obscene or vulgar statements, personal attacks and statements reasonably perceived to be disruptive or imminently threatening to the orderly operation of the meeting shall not be permitted. Comments are limited to three minutes per submission, and a maximum of 30 minutes will be devoted to the public comment portion of the agenda.

Coronavirus Press Release from the Anson County Health Department

Coronavirus infections soared this week to record levels and have continued throughout the state including here in Anson County. Hospitalizations are up and deaths are on the rise. Anson County is currently at 937 total COVID-19 cases with 104 of those being active.

The CDC has stated that its best estimate for the infection fatality rate is 0.65 percent, meaning that for every 10,000 people who get the virus, 65 will die. The mortality is expected to rise steadily with age, and the disease is far more likely to be fatal in the elderly population. Other factors increasing risk involve underlying chronic conditions, including obesity, heart disease and diabetes.

Some demographic groups have increased more than others in deaths pertaining to the virus. In the United States, African Americans account for 1 in 5 deaths, exceeding their proportion of the population. Hispanics, for example, have much higher infection rates than Whites.

When infections rise, hospitalizations tend to increase a few weeks later. Some hospitalized patients end up in intensive care units, and some are placed on ventilators. This can take weeks to unfold. This sometimes results in death from the infection in which began weeks earlier.

Experts said they believe the virus is spreading primarily in small, indoor gatherings, including inside bars and restaurants. Colder weather and the return of students to college campuses are also likely factors. The best way to prevent illness is to avoid being exposed to this virus.

To help prevent the spread of COVID-19, everyone should:

- Clean your hands often, either with soap and water for 20 seconds or a hand sanitizer that contains at least 60% alcohol.
- Avoid close contact with people who are sick.
- Put distance between yourself and other people (at least 6 feet).
- Cover your mouth and nose with a mask when around others.
- Cover your cough or sneeze with a tissue, then throw the tissue in the trash.
- Clean and disinfect frequently touched objects and surfaces daily.
- CDC recommends that people wear masks in public settings and when around people outside of their household, especially when other social distancing measures are difficult to maintain.
- Masks may help prevent people who have COVID-19 from spreading the virus to others.

For covid-19 testing, please call (704) 694-5188 to schedule an appointment at the Anson County Health Department.

CVS in Wadesboro is also testing for COVID-19, please visit their website at cvs.com for more information.

Drive-Thru Turkey and Grocery Box Giveaway at Harvest Ministries



Harvest shared, "It really is amazing what can be done when people come together to meet needs in our communities and for our families. The Caraway Foundation's ability to partner with USDA has blessed thousands of individuals over the last few months - and it was a quick 'yes' answer when Angela Caraway contacted us to bring these blessings together."

Not only were many people able to receive the giveaways, but churches and other nonprofits came through and picked up boxes of groceries to take to their communities and neighborhoods to offer help to those in need.

Pastor Steve summed up the day, "Thanksgiving is simple - being thankful to God for what we have - and in turn using what we have (resources) to be a blessing to others in need."

Adams thanked the Caraway Foundation, Angela Caraway and Sara Burns, the many volunteers who helped to unload and distribute the boxes of groceries and turkeys, including Anson County Commissioner Elect Robert Mims and J.D. Bricken, as well as Danny Pearson of Pearson Truck Service in Wadesboro, the congregation of Harvest



This is a release from Harvest Ministries: Wednesday, November 25, Harvest Ministries of Wadesboro and the Caraway Foundation came together in the parking lot of the ministries campus to bless hundreds of individuals for Thanksgiving. Harvest, with the generosity of many who donated online and/or sent in donations, was able to distribute 178 turkeys to families in need. In addition, through a partnership with USDA, the Caraway Foundation reached out to Harvest to partner and distribute 1,200 boxes of groceries the day before Thanksgiving.

Beginning at 9:00 a.m. that morning, cars began lining up to receive the great blessings being shared. Lead Pastor Steve Adams of

Ministries, and every person who sent in donations and purchased a turkey. Lives were made better because of the generosity of many.

The Caraway Foundation was back in the parking lot of Harvest Wednesday and Thursday last week with over 3,000 more boxes of USDA groceries to give away.

Harvest is now gearing up to host the annual Community Christmas Blessing event. This year it will be a drive-thru toy distribution event on Saturday, December 19, from 12 to 2 p.m. Contact Pastor Steve at 704-695-2879 for more information.

Donors are invited to help make Christmas special for families in need during these trying times.

Ansonia Play *Fruitcakes* Opens this Friday

The Ansonia Theatre's Christmas play *Fruitcakes* opens this Friday, December 11 and runs through Sunday, December 20. Performances will be on Fridays and Saturdays at 7:30 p.m. and Sundays at 3 p.m.

Mix together a batch of fruitcakes, three dozen Christmas trees, 10,000 outdoor Christmas lights, a chicken pox epidemic, two Southern spinsters, an estranged old man, a lost cat named Tutti Frutti and a Christmas hog named Buster and you've got the recipe for a fun-filled and touching evening of holiday cheer. Into this world comes Jamie, a kid who has run away from home and come as far as his money will take him. At first, he thinks this town's inhabitants are "nuttier than fruitcakes," but soon he comes to admire, appreciate and adore this nutty little town.

The play will run as scheduled with Covid precautions in place. The theatre has increased space between rows in Ansonia seating, and families and friends in the same "Covid pods" are encouraged to sit together. Face coverings/masks are required. The theatre has been professionally cleaned, and they will have hand sanitizer stations and encourage frequent handwashing.

If you are sick or do not feel well please do not come to the theatre. The staff expects patrons to use common sense while attending the theatre.

Director Tommy Wooten said, "We want to spread Christmas cheer, not germs!"

Tickets are available now. For information and tickets call 704-694-4950 or visit the Ansonia Theatre website at ansoniatheatre.com.



Open Enrollment for 2021 Health Insurance Marketplace (Affordable Care Act) Ends December 15

Apply online for Obamacare tax subsidies to offset health insurance premium cost

Officials with the N.C. Department of Insurance remind residents that Open Enrollment for the 2021 Federal Health Insurance Exchange aka the Affordable Care Act (ACA) ends Tuesday, Dec. 15, 2020, for coverage to start Jan. 1, 2021.

You can enroll in or change 2021 Marketplace health insurance right now.

Eligibility for Advanced Premium Tax Credit Subsidies or APTCS is determined through the enrollment process at www.healthcare.gov.

Residents are guaranteed to be insurable and are encouraged to sign up for health insurance if they meet one of the following conditions:

- They have current qualifying ACA coverage but may want to change their plan for 2021.
- They don't have health insurance through their employer or their spouse's employer.
- They don't have government coverage (such as veterans, Medicare and Medicaid).
- They are older than age 26 and can no longer be on a parent's health insurance.

Five Tips about the Health Insurance Marketplace

1. Deadlines for 2021 coverage - Enroll by Tuesday, December 15 for coverage starting January 1, 2021. Apply now.

2. Who is eligible to use the Marketplace? To be eligible to enroll in Marketplace health coverage, you must live in the United States, be a U.S. citizen or national (or be lawfully present), and not be incarcerated. Learn more at healthcare.gov/quick-guide/eligibility.

3. Two kinds of coverage. Depending on income, you may qualify for an insurance plan with tax credits or for Medicaid/the Children's Health Insurance Program (CHIP - healthcare.gov/medicaid-chip).

See where your income falls at healthcare.gov/lower-costs.

4. What plans cover - All plans cover essential health benefits, pre-existing conditions, and preventive services.

5. Plans & costs - You can preview available plans and estimated prices based on income before logging in at healthcare.gov/see-plans.

If you do not enroll during the Open Enrollment period of Nov. 1 to Dec. 15 - North Carolinians who want to buy health insurance from the ACA after December 15 can only enroll in an insurance plan if they qualify for a special enrollment period because of life events, such as having or adopting a child, losing health coverage or moving to a different service area.

To enroll in or change ACA health insurance policies for 2021, consumers may visit www.healthcare.gov.

Also, consumer specialists within the N.C. Department of Insurance are available to answer any questions about health insurance by calling 1-855-408-1212.

Anson County's Unemployment Rate Dropped to 7.2% in October

Anson County's unemployment rate for October was 7.2%. That was down from September's 8.5% rate. The August rate was 8%, the July rate was 10%, the June rate was 7.9%, May's rate was 10.1% and April's rate was 8.2%.

In March the unemployment rate in Anson County was 4.9%.

Statewide the unemployment rate was 6.1% in October, down from September's 7% rate. In August the rate was 6.8%. In July's the unemployment rate was 8.9%.

In October 2019 the unemployment rate in Anson County was 4.2%, and statewide the rate was 3.6%.

Anson's total labor force in October was 10,820. Of that number 10,039 were employed and 781 were unemployed. In September the total labor force was 10,720, with 9,807 employed and 913 unemployed.

Unemployment rates (not seasonally adjusted) decreased in all 100 of North Carolina's counties in October. Scotland County had the highest unemployment rate at 10.5 percent while Watauga County had the lowest at 4.1 percent.

All 15 of the state's metro areas experienced rate decreases. Among the metro areas, Fayetteville had the highest rate at 8.3% while Raleigh and Durham-Chapel Hill each had the lowest at 5.3 percent. The October not seasonally adjusted statewide rate was 6.1%.

When compared to the same month last year, not seasonally adjusted unemployment rates increased in 99 counties and decreased in one. All 15 of the state's metro areas experienced rate increases over the year.

The number of workers employed statewide (not seasonally adjusted) increased in October by 99,091 to 4,655,614, while those unemployed decreased by 37,449 to 302,413.

Since October 2019, the number of workers employed statewide decreased 287,403, while those unemployed increased 122,332.