

# THE EXPRESS

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MERRY CHRISTMAS FELIZ NAVIDAD MELE KALIKIMAKA JOYEUX NOEL BUONE FESTE NATALIZIE

## Enjoy Letters to Santa from Anson County Children in this edition!

Santa's mailbox was filled with love this year - 1,118 letters! We couldn't fit them all in print, but every single wish made it online at our website.

Visit [www.theexpressnewspaper.com](http://www.theexpressnewspaper.com) to find your letter. MERRY CHRISTMAS!!!

## Fourth Suspect Taken into Custody in Wadesboro Homicide Investigation

A fourth individual, identified as a juvenile, has been taken into custody in connection with the ongoing investigation into the homicide of David Lewis Colston III, according to the Wadesboro Police Department.

The juvenile was taken into custody on Thursday, December 18 in Pageland as a result of continued investigative efforts by the Wadesboro Police Department's Criminal Investigations Division in partnership with the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation.

The investigation stems from the homicide of David Lewis Colston III, which occurred on October 14, 2025, on Orchard Street in Wadesboro. Authorities have not released additional details regarding the juvenile due to the individual's age.

Law enforcement officials stated that the investigation remains active and that the department remains committed to holding all individuals involved accountable.

The Wadesboro Police Department also emphasized that gun violence will not be tolerated in the community and reiterated its focus on protecting residents.

Officials extended thoughts and prayers to the family and loved ones of David Lewis Colston III, noting the lasting impact the loss has had on both the family and the community.

The department expressed appreciation to the Chesterfield County Sheriff's Office and the North Carolina State Bureau of Investigation for their continued assistance throughout the investigation.

Due to the involvement of a juvenile, no further information is being released at this time.

## Insurance Commissioner Calls Hearing On Proposed Dwelling Insurance Rate Increase

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey has scheduled a hearing for May 4, 2026, to address the North Carolina Rate Bureau's proposed 68.3 percent increase in dwelling insurance rates.

Commissioner Causey said the hearing follows the Rate Bureau's filing earlier this fall and is required under state law when the parties cannot agree on proposed rate changes. "We are not in agreement with the Rate Bureau's proposed increases filed earlier this fall," Causey said. "The next step, according to statute, is to set a hearing date. It is now necessary to schedule a hearing in order to work toward a resolution that will make the most financial sense for our residents and insurance companies."

The hearing will begin at 10:00 a.m. in the second-floor hearing room at the North Carolina Department of Insurance, located at 3200 Beechleaf Court in Raleigh.

The hearing will proceed unless the Department of Insurance and the North Carolina Rate Bureau are able to negotiate a settlement before that date. Under state law, the insurance commissioner has 45 days after the hearing concludes to issue an order. Once an order is issued, the Rate Bureau has the right to appeal the decision to the North Carolina Court of Appeals, and any ruling could subsequently be appealed to the North Carolina Supreme Court.

The Rate Bureau filed the proposed average 68.3% dwelling insurance rate increase on October 30. The filing applies to fire and extended coverage insurance, with rates varying by location across the state. If approved as filed, the increase would affect policyholders statewide, with most consumers experiencing double-digit increases.

The most recent dwelling rate filing occurred in July 2023, when the Rate Bureau requested an average statewide increase of 50.6 percent. That request was later resolved through negotiations, resulting in an average increase of 8 percent that took effect November 1, 2024.

Dwelling insurance policies differ from homeowners' insurance policies. Dwelling coverage applies to non-owner-occupied residences of no more than four units, including rental properties, investment properties, and other residences not occupied full time by the property owner.

## BRLC Offers the Community a Free Food Pantry Every Wednesday

Burnsville's Food Pantry volunteers are needed

Burnsville Recreation & Learning Center (BRLC) operates their free Food Pantry each and every Wednesday morning unless the weather is truly bad.

BRLC has made a few minor adjustments during the Emergency Food Pantry hours. Volunteers will start accepting client registration application at 8:30 a.m. and cut off at 10:00 a.m. They ask all neighbors, if you are able, to please come inside to register. Once you have registered please return back to your vehicle, or you may wait inside.

Neighbors will not be able to register for someone who has not arrived. Neighbors cannot hold a spot for someone else when registering.

All veterans are welcome, as well as anyone who may need assistance with food. Emergency Pantry neighbors will be given a number for service, including volunteers once they have registered. The number will determine what order you will be served. Due to the limited volunteers, waiting time for service can vary.

Volunteers are always needed. Please contact BRLC if you are looking for volunteer opportunities.

BRLC is located at 13349 Highway 742 North in Burnsville, across from the Fire Department. For more information you can call 704-826-8737, check their Facebook page, or email [burnsvillelc@gmail.com](mailto:burnsvillelc@gmail.com).



understand the human impact of the Holocaust beyond textbooks and timelines.

The Holocaust resulted in the systematic murder of six million Jewish people and millions of others, and as survivors age, opportunities to hear these personal stories are becoming increasingly rare. Preserving and sharing these accounts has become a critical part of historical education, ensuring that future generations remember the atrocities and understand the consequences of hatred and intolerance.

Through her project, Gracie highlighted the importance of listening to lived experiences and honoring the voices of those who endured history firsthand. School officials said her work reflects strong academic dedication, leadership, and empathy, and serves as a meaningful reminder of why Holocaust education remains essential.

Staff at Anson Middle School said, "Congratulations, Gracie! We are so proud of you!"

## NCDA&CS Launches Video Series to Help Farms Grow Agritourism

### Four-part series offers marketing strategies, planning tools, and AI tips

The North Carolina Department of Agriculture & Consumer Services has launched a new video series to help agritourism businesses expand their operations and deliver more memorable experiences to visitors.

#### The four-part series covers:

- Top 5 marketing strategies to grow your business
- Designing and executing an annual strategic plan
- Using artificial intelligence to market your farm
- Preparing your destination for visitors

"Agritourism activities introduce people to North Carolina's rich agricultural traditions while supporting family farms," said Erica Calderon, agritourism marketing specialist with NCDA&CS. "This series provides tools and strategies to help farms connect with potential guests."

The project is part of the Visit NC Farms initiative, which connects residents and visitors to farms, markets, wineries, tours, and agricultural events across the state. The videos are free to access online at [visitncfarms.com](http://visitncfarms.com) under Industry Resources.

For more information on Visit NC Farms and to explore agritourism opportunities, visit [www.visitncfarms.com](http://www.visitncfarms.com).

## Students Recognized As Christmas Card Design Winners

Three students at Anson County Early College High School are being recognized for their artistic talent after being named winners in a Christmas card design contest.

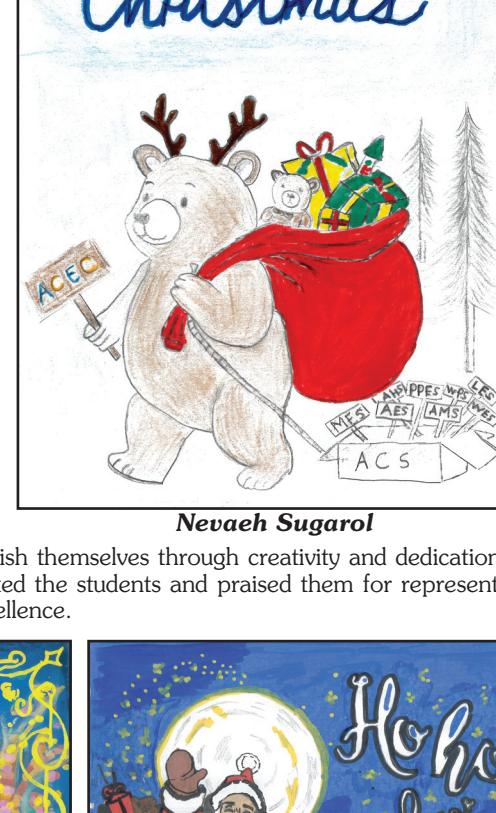
The winners, Nevaeh Sugarol, Danica Bilog, and Geea Syeira Crodúa, are all 10th-grade students whose designs were selected for their creativity, originality, and strong visual impact.

Each winning design showcased a distinct artistic style, ranging from bold colors and intricate details to more traditional holiday imagery that reflects the joy and spirit of the Christmas season. School officials noted that the students' work demonstrated both technical skill and creative expression.

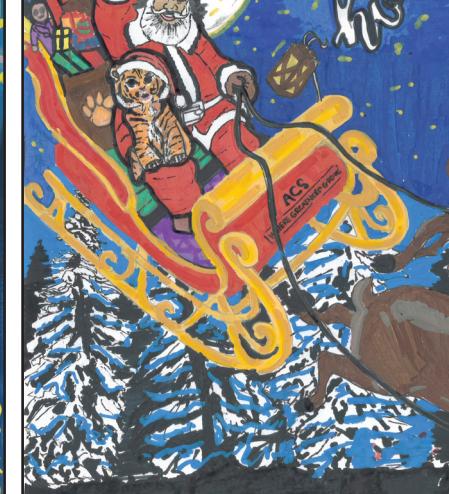
The recognition highlights the growing artistic talent within the Anson County School System, where students continue to distinguish themselves through creativity and dedication to the arts. School leaders congratulated the students and praised them for representing the district's student artists with excellence.



Danica Bilog



Nevaeh Sugarol



Geea Syeira Crodúa

## Outdoor NC Leave No Trace Tips for Making the Most of Your River Trip

North Carolina's rivers offer unforgettable opportunities for paddling, fishing, tubing and wildlife watching, but enjoying them responsibly ensures they remain healthy for generations to come. Outdoor NC encourages river users to follow these Leave No Trace tips when planning their next trip.

**1. Plan Ahead and Prepare** The better we plan, the less impact we'll have on the river. Pack enough trash bags to carry everything back out, and bring an extra bag to pick up litter along the way. Reserving campsites ahead of time helps ensure tents are pitched in established areas. Most importantly, packing the right gear, including safety equipment like PFDs and helmets, protects paddlers from the elements and reduces the likelihood of needing assistance on the river.

**2. Be Considerate of Others** Summer crowds are common on the water, and North Carolina's rivers welcome many types of users, from paddle boarders and fishermen to families tubing downstream. Help maintain the peace by respecting others' space. Keep noise levels low and give other boaters and anglers a wide berth to preserve their sense of solitude. And don't forget - a friendly wave goes a long way.

**3. Keep Wildlife Wild** Paddling offers unique opportunities to see wildlife, such as bald eagles along the French Broad River or the endangered looper in the Dan River. Use binoculars or a telephoto lens to observe from a safe distance without disturbing the animals. Anglers should follow catch-and-release regulations and use gear like barbless hooks to return fish quickly and safely to the water. Always pack out discarded fishing line, which can be harmful to fish and other wildlife.

By following Outdoor NC Leave No Trace principles, every river user can help protect the natural beauty and ecological health of the state's waterways while making the most of their time on the water.