

WWAY Quarterly Programs and Issues

1st Qtr 2024

Programs:

- Good Morning Carolina, M-F, 5:30-7 a.m.
- WWAY News at Noon, M-F, 12-1p.m.
- WWAY NewsChannel 3, M-F 5-6:30 p.m.
News, traffic information, health, and weather
- WWAY NewsChannel 3, M-F, 7-8 p.m.
- WWAY NewsChannel 3, M-F, 11-11:30 p.m.
- WWAY NewsChannel 3 Weekends, Sun, 6 & 11 p.m.

Issues of Concern

- Education
- Crime
- Health
- Housing
- Transportation
- Economic

Education

- **Education**

New Hanover Newcomer Schools Debate

Aired: January 23, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

CONVERSATIONS ABOUT THE SO-CALLED “NEWCOMER SCHOOLS” ARE ON THE TABLE IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY THIS WEEK. WWAY’S EMILY ANDREWS HAS MORE ON WHAT THESE SCHOOL *ARE*... AND WHY SOME PEOPLE DON’T WANT THEM.

(PKG SCRIPT)

A newcomer school is an umbrella term for a school for foreign-born students who have recently arrived in the United States.

There are newcomer schools in several parts of the country, and it’s being considered in New Hanover County.

It's only on the table right now but if followed through, it's expected to take the place of the Career Readiness Academy at Mosley.

"I want the public to be aware that this is under consideration, and I want the school administration to immediately say 'we are backing off of this, we are not going to explore this concept,'" New Hanover County Commissioner Dane Scalise said.

The Career Readiness Academy at Mosley is a public alternative school in New Hanover County.

In late 2023, it was announced the school would close at the end of this academic year. One idea is to reopen the school as a newcomer's school.

Chief Academic Officer Patrice Faison gave a presentation on a newcomer's school at a school board agenda review meeting in November.

New Hanover County Commissioner Dane Scalise said he is not in support of adopting this program. He says it is not a good fit for the county because of all the extra resources it would require.

"This is not fear mongering, this is not me saying that this might be something good, this might be something bad. This is something bad," Scalise said. "It's not because I don't love people who are in hard times. But New Hanover County is a small county with limited resources. We can't take care of the eight billion people that are in the world. We have to look out for the people that are in here in our county right now."

Scalise said he is "going to fight every single step of the way in stopping this concept from happening in New Hanover County."

He referenced other parts of the state that have introduced this program. Greensboro was the originator of the newcomer's school concept in North Carolina.

"It was so successful that they became a destination for refugees, they become a destination for immigrants. It was so popular that they just opened another one," Scalise said.

Commissioner Scalise said if New Hanover County had the flexibility to help everyone in the world, he'd like to. But he said realistically, it is not possible, and his priority is the county's current residents.

(ON CAM TAG)

WE REACHED OUT TO NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS... AND ARE WORKING TO GET MORE INFORMATION.

WE ALSO REACHED OUT TO SCHOOL BOARD MEMBERS.... HUGH MCMANUS RESPONDED. HE SAID HE DIDN'T KNOW ENOUGH ABOUT IT AT THIS TIME.

- Education

Columbus County Schools Grants

Aired: February 5, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

A MULTI-MILLION DOLLAR GRANT IS BEING AWARDED TO COLUMBUS COUNTY SCHOOLS... AND IT IS HELPING THE SCHOOL DISTRICT TAKE ON A MAJOR PROJECT. WWAY'S EMILY ANDREWS HAS THE DETAILS...

(PKG SCRIPT)

WWAY attended a news conference Monday morning at the Columbus County Courthouse Annex.

The conference revealed that Columbus County Schools would be receiving \$52 million to build a new K-8 school in the eastern side of the county.

Roughly 100 counties applied for the state needs-based grant that will pay 95% of the cost of a new school campus.

"There were so many reasons that Columbus County's application shown through," Public Instruction State Superintendent Catherine Truitt said. "But the fact that the county was willing to consolidate and close schools in order to make way for a new school, really made their application stand out."

That school consolidated campus will host Acme Delco Elementary and Hallsboro Artesia Elementary pre-K to sixth grade students, along with seventh and eighth grade students that currently attend East Columbus Jr.-Sr. High.

Columbus County Schools Superintendent Dr. Deanne Meadows said this news came as a surprise to many.

"Really it's hard to even tell in words how great it is for our students," Meadows said. "They deserve to be able to have a really conducive learning environment. So, that's what this grant money is going to do for our students."

Meadows said Columbus County Schools has prioritized giving students more opportunities to grow in their educational journey over the past several years. She said it's great to see that same effort coming from the state level. State Representative Brenden Jones shared why he advocated for Columbus County Schools to receive what he said are these "much needed" funds.

"Getting new schools is very very important to us." We've done some on the south end and the west end. So, the east end was our next target," Jones said. "We are building this county; we are shining now. There is no reason that folks wouldn't want to move to Columbus County because we've now got some of the best schools and we will have the best schools in the region."

(ON CAM TAG)

IT IS NOT YET DECIDED WHERE EXACTLY THE SCHOOL WILL BE LOCATED. BUT MEADOWS SAID CONVERSATIONS ARE TAKING PLACE AND IT SHOULDN'T BE LONG BEFORE TAKING THE NEXT STEP THAT ALLOWS THEM TO MOVE FORWARD IN THE PROJECT.

- **Education**

Proposed New Hanover County Schools Budget

Aired: February 19, 2024

Segment Length: 1:55

(ON CAM)

NEW HANOVER COUNTY COMMISSIONERS HELD THEIR FIRST BUDGET REVIEW MEETING MONDAY AFTERNOON... AS THEY BEGAN WORKING ON THE BUDGET FOR FISCAL YEAR 2024-25.

AND CUTS *MAY* BE PART OF THAT BUDGET. WWAY'S CONOR DOHERTY HAS THE DETAILS.

(PKG SCRIPT)

New Hanover County Commissioners held its first budget review meeting Monday afternoon as they began working on the budget for Fiscal Year 2024-25.

And at this point, they're facing a \$20 million shortfall.

Around \$10 million of that shortfall is from a loss of federal COVID relief funds, while another \$10 million is from salary increases and benefits.

The shortfall could result in hundreds of jobs being cut, from teachers and social workers to nurses and mental health therapists.

County Commissioner Jonathan Barfield said he's confident education will continue to be an important part of the county's funding.

"The county has traditionally and always funded above and beyond what the state says," Barfield said. "Again, roughly 700 plus positions beyond what the state mandates, we have in our school system. Which means we have definitely invested in public education. But looking at what's been predicted as a shortfall, we don't know what the numbers are. The school board has not, number 1, finalized their numbers nor have they come to our board of commissioners to make their request."

Funding for the school district takes up the largest portion of the county's yearly budget, accounting for nearly 1/3 last year.

"We don't have any numbers from the school board yet in terms of what their needs are. And once we get those numbers, we can have a real conversation about how do we fund the school board's needs."

In addition to positions, funds from the American Rescue COVID Stimulus Plan are ending this year, which will cause several programs to come to an end unless the county includes funding in its budget.

Those programs include school mental health expansion, pre-K expansion, and “Too Good for Violence,” a bullying prevention program.

The funding will end on June 30th, and would cost just over \$3 million to fund until December 31st, 2024.

School board member Hugh McManus said it’s important to include the schools themselves in the process.

“We’ve got to prioritize,” McManus said. “But I think we need to involve the administration in each school to help us prioritize. So it’s not just the board that says school x or school z is going to lose whatever. We need to involve them at some point.”

(ON CAM TAG)

NEW HANOVER COUNTY SCHOOLS BOARD OF EDUCATION WILL TAKE UP THE BUDGET AT ITS REGULAR MEETING ON MARCH 12 AT 5 P.M.

Crime

- **Crime**

MLK Day Shootings

Aired: January 16, 2024

Segment Length: 1:15

(ON CAM)

CHALLENGES AMID CELEBRATION... AS WILMINGTON POLICE INVESTIGATE 3 SHOOTINGS FOLLOWING MLK DAY PARADE. WWAY’S CONOR DOHERTY IS TAKING A CLOSER LOOK... AND HAS MORE.

(PKG)

As people celebrated the life, legacy, and messages of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr, Wilmington police investigated three separate shootings.

All three shootings happened after the MLK Day parade was held in downtown Wilmington. No one was killed in any of the shootings with 3 victims taken to Novant Health New Hanover Regional Medical Center with non-life-threatening injuries.

Greg Willett is a lieutenant with the Wilmington police department.

He said its unfortunate but not surprising for shootings to happen on a holiday.

“I think sometimes people in the world are very selfish and sometimes folks have low impulse control and end up doing things like this, regardless of if its a holiday celebrating Martin Luther King Jr, a very humanitarian holiday,” Willett said. “It still happens.”

Martin Luther King Day is also known as the MLK National Day of Service.

Wilmington Mayor Pro Tem and pastor Clifford Barnett said while Monday's shootings were sad to hear about, they also show that more needs to be done to further spread King's messages through other actions than just violence.

"It's that I have to put my faith into actions, in my shoes," Barnett said. "So I have to become a better neighbor, I got to become, having these hard conversations around the dinner table, around the picnic pool. I'm just making sure that we let everybody know that there are other ways to handle conflict."

(ON CAM TAG)

Lieutenant Willett said there are leads in each shooting and that the shootings are not related.

- **Crime**

Port City Porch Pirates

Aired: February 19, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

WHILE CHRISTMAS HAS BEEN GONE FOR NEARLY TWO MONTHS, IT APPEARS THERE ARE STILL PLENTY OF GRINCHES AROUND... STEALING DELIVERED PACKAGES IN SEVERAL NEIGHBORHOODS. WWAY'S EMILY ANDREWS HAS MORE ON THE INCREASE IN SO-CALLED "PORCH PIRATE" THEFTS IN THE AREA.

(PKG)

It feels great to "add to cart" from the comfort of your couch.

But something so popular has the potential to lure in some unwanted guests—porch pirates.

Porch pirates steal packages off your front porch, and it seems to be happening more often to folks in the Cape Fear community.

"I noticed that someone had come on our porch at about two o'clock in the morning and had stolen a bunch of items off of the porch and out of my mailbox," City of Wilmington Councilman Luke Waddell said.

Residents of Mallory Creek in Brunswick County were issued a "mail theft alert" by the U.S. Postal Inspection Service.

But it seems the issue extends beyond the Cape Fear River.

City of Wilmington Councilman, Luke Waddell, took to Facebook with his recent porch pirate encounter over the weekend.

Packages stolen from Waddell's porch contained items for his child's first birthday party. He said he is thankful his family is safe, but he is still uneasy about the situation that occurred

“It’s certainly unsettling to have something like that happen at your home while your family is sleeping in your home. So, I immediately filed a police report,” Waddell said.

WWAY spoke with Wilmington Police Department about porch pirates.

Lt. Greg Willett said it may be a good time to get to know your neighbors and look out for each other when you’re away from home. Willett even recommended choosing a delivery location that’s not your home.

“You can set up a delivery at other locations. I know Amazon has something like that. It’s not as convenient as having it delivered to your front porch. But that’s one way to do it,” Willett said.

Willett said ultimately, you need to file a police report if you are a victim of a porch pirate. He said it’ll do more than keep you and your packages safe.

“It will help out your neighbors, it will help out your community, it lets us know what’s going on in certain areas by reporting,” Willett said.

Waddell said it took him about 20 minutes to file the police report, something he said was worth the time.

“For reporting purposes, for the police department, but also for elected leaders to be able to see what’s happening in real time in our community and make the right changes to fix it,” Waddell said.

(ON CAM TAG)

Willett said Wilmington P.D. is continuing to monitor areas reporting porch pirates. He said if your items can’t be returned, it’ll at least aid in their investigation to stop this from happening.

- **Crime**

Chadbourn Deadly Shooting

Aired: March 18, 2024

Segment Length: 1:00

(ON CAM)

IN COLUMBUS COUNTY... A SHOOTING OVER THE WEEKEND AT A CHADBOURN HOME... HAS A SCHOOL MOURNING THE LOSS OF A 7-YEAR-OLD STUDENT.

W-W-A-Y'S EMILY ANDREWS EXPLAINS HOW THE SECOND GRADER IS BEING REMEMBERED.

(PKG SCRIPT)

THE REPORT STATES THE SHOOTING INVOLVED SIX PEOPLE... INCLUDING A SEVEN-YEAR-OLD... AND A THREE-YEAR-OLD.

ACCORDING TO CHADBOURN ELEMENTARY SCHOOL... THE 7-YEAR-OLD DIED IN THE SHOOTING... AND IS A BOY WHO ATTENDED THE SCHOOL.

CHADBOURN ELEMENTARY PRINCIPAL... HERMAN BLAND... PROVIDED A BRIEF STATEMENT ON THE BOY'S DEATH.

Herman Bland, Chadbourn Elementary School

"It's felt deeply. This loss is truly heartfelt here at our school."

BLAND SAYS SCHOOL STAFF ARE DOING WHAT THEY CAN TO HELP COMFORT STUDENTS DURING THIS TIME.

THERE ARE WHITE RIBBONS HUNG OUTSIDE OF CHADBOURN ELEMENTARY IN REMEMBRANCE OF THE BOY.

IN COLUMBUS COUNTY... EMILY ANDREWS... WWAY NEWS. >

(ON CAM TAG)

W-W-A-Y REACHED OUT TO THE COLUMBUS COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE *MULTIPLE TIMES.

THEY DECLINED TO OFFER ADDITIONAL INFORMATION ON THE INVESTIGATION -- AND THE VICTIMS INVOLVED IN THE SHOOTING -- AT THIS TIME.

WE WILL CONTINUE TO KEEP YOU UPDATED AS MORE DETAILS BECOME AVAILABLE.

Health

- **Health**

Partial Heart Transplant Successful

Aired: January 3, 2024

Segment Length: 2:05

(ON CAM)

AN UPDATE NOW ON A STORY WE TOLD YOU ABOUT MORE THAN A YEAR AGO. A LELAND INFANT WHO UNDERWENT THE WORLD'S FIRST PARTIAL HEART TRANSPLANT... IS SURVIVING AND THRIVING... AND ABOUT TO CELEBRATE HIS SECOND BIRTHDAY. WWAY'S EMILY ANDREWS CAUGHT UP WITH HIS FAMILY... AND HAS THE VERY LATEST.

(PKG SCRIPT)

Researchers have spent more than a year following the progress of the world's first partial heart transplant of an infant at Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center.

The patient is a boy from Leland and this pioneering procedure is making medical history.

Owen Monroe was only 17 days old when he had open heart surgery after being diagnosed with Truncus Arteriosus.

It's a disease that causes only one heart valve to form instead of two.

"I joke that Owen's best quality and trait is that he is truly just happy to be alive," Owen's Mom, Tayler Monroe, said.

Previously children born with Truncus Arteriosus would need multiple surgeries throughout their life. But little Owen Monroe's parents decided to put their son's life into the hands of a team from Duke Children's Hospital and Health Center.

Before Owen, partial heart transplant surgery had not been attempted on a human.

"They asked me if I had ever done one before and I said, 'well our team has done five in piglets,'" Chief of Pediatric Cardiac Surgery Joseph Turek said.

Owen's parents, Tayler and Nick Monroe said they took a leap of faith when deciding to move forward with the procedure.

"I think sometimes trusting the unknown is hard and scary, but the rewards are well worth it in the end," Tayler said.

Most children think of their parents as superheroes, but in Owen's case, Tayler and Nick said it's the opposite. Owen is their hero.

"The greatest outcome would be that this would be a one and done thing and it looks like that's what it's ending up being," Nick said.

The doctor who led the lifesaving surgery said Owen has made history.

"So, it was really a leap of faith by the Monroe family, and a leap that's going to help thousands of children in the future," Turek said.

Turek said that same leap of faith paved the way for a domino heart transplant. This procedure is named that because of the domino effect it has, which is the ability to save two lives at once.

"Sometimes we've had situations where hearts were donated and maybe a child only needed one of the two valves and we were able to split those valves and says this child's going to get one valve and this child's going to get another," Turek said.

(ON CAM TAG)

From taking 14 medications, to now two pills a day, Owen's parents said he is a happy and healthy child who is hitting all his milestones and even surpassing them.

- **Health**

Columbus Healthcare Worker Shortage

Aired: January 26, 2024

Segment Length: 1:45

(ON CAM)

MANY COUNTIES DEALING WITH A SHORTAGE OF HEALTHCARE WORKERS... BUT FOR COLUMBUS COUNTY, THAT SHORTAGE IS ESPECIALLY LARGE... WHICH IS HAS COUNTY OFFICIALS LOOKING FOR WAYS TO DRAW MORE HEALTHCARE WORKERS TO THE AREA. WWAY'S EMILY ANDREWS HAS THE DETAILS.

(PKG SCRIPT)

There appears to be a shortage of health care workers in Columbus County and they're workshopping ways to make up for it.

The demand is high and job listing sites are showing it.

The people WWAY spoke with said it's important they fill these roles to continue giving adequate care to the community.

"Really, most anything you can think of in the health care field – there is a need," Southeastern Community College Nursing Program Director Jessica Hill said.

Kim Smith is Columbus County's Health Director. She said hospitals and medical offices must get creative to fill shoes.

She said utilizing travel nurses is more common than not in the past few years. She also noted that many places are taking on students still in their programs to get some extra help. This, in turn, helps students get clinical hours needed to graduate.

Smith said she recently attended a statewide health director conference where she learned that Columbus County may not be alone.

"It's not just the small rural hospitals that are affected by this. It's the large metropolitan hospitals and health departments," Smith said.

Smith said the bright side is that in terms of public health, like the Columbus County Health Department, they are looking good with medical staffing and just need more administrative employees.

Jessica Hill is Southeastern Community College's Nursing Program Director. She said the college is working to recruit more students – to help combat the problem.

She even encourages current Columbus County residents looking to pursue a career in nursing to do so at home and later give back, by working here at home too.

“We have a really well, established program and some longtime good results of Southeastern graduates,” Hill said. “A lot of benefit both here at school in the classroom, in the lab, and in the local facilities we go to do clinical.”

(ON CAM TAG)

Both Smith and Hill said to be good patients and be patient with your health care workers as they navigate this tough time.

- Health

Pollen and Allergy Season Early

Aired: February 26, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

SPRING MIGHT BE JUST UNDER A MONTH AWAY, BUT THERE'S A SURE SIGN OF IT... COVERING CARS... AND CAUSING LOTS OF SNEEZING AND COUGHING.

(PKG SCRIPT)

Allergy season is coming, or possibly, already here. With flowers blooming and bees returning, many people are seeking out allergy medication to overcome the pollen.

But as Dr. Austin Sherman explains, in many cases it could just be the common cold.

“I think there is a little higher incidence of allergies,” Sherman said. “You know, we're also seeing a lot more kind of common cold, flu this time of year.”

For those who are experiencing worse than normal seasonal allergies, Dr. Sherman recommends seeing a specialist to determine the cause.

“People who deal with more than routine seasonal allergies we'd probably consider getting them to a specialist,” Sherman said. “There are definitely some allergists in town; and what allergists can do is actually test different things that you could be specifically allergic to.”

Cape Fear Community College Horticulture Instructor Ken Wells says pollen in February is not abnormal for the cape fear.

“A lot of plants that you see blooming right now have gotten a little cold rest, so when we have these warm days, they start popping,” Wells explained. That’s not that unusual to see that all over the place.”

But although some folks may be sneezing more than normal now, Wells warns that the worst of the pollen is yet to come.

“Right about now the Red Maples are blooming,” Well said. “I don’t think the pine trees have come out yet because we’re not having that huge shed of pollen. But the red maples and some of the oaks are probably coming on right now.”

(ON CAM TAG)

The level of pollen in the air should increase in the coming days as the weather warms before dropping later in the week, peak pollen season typically runs from April to May.

Housing

- Housing

Eden Village God Pods

Aired: November 13, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

AN ORGANIZATION KNOWN FOR HELPING PEOPLE WITHOUT A PLACE TO STAY... IS “THINKING SMALL” IN ITS NEXT PLAN TO HELP THE HOMELESS. WWAY’S EMILY ANDREWS HAS THE DETAILS.

(PKG SCRIPT)

A pod-style campground for homeless individuals could be coming to Wilmington.

It’s the idea of a local doctor and founder of the Eden Village tiny home community.

Eden Village has brought in what they’re calling “God Pods.” Now, they’re on the lookout for where these mini homes should be set up.

“We’re looking to our city officials. If they would help us with that, that’d be great. If not, we’re still looking for land for it,” Eden Village Director Shawn Hayes said.

Similar to the homes already offered at Eden Village, these pods are designed to help get folks back on their feet while they’re looking for a place to live.

The pods fit a bed, a heating and cooling system, and can charge electronics.

“It’s a very safe place for them to sleep. It’ll be a fenced in and gated campground setting. We’ll have security out there. So, our folks can be safe out there at night,” Hayes said.

Eden Village’s Director Shawn Hayes said the community has been supportive in helping to find land needed for the pods—making it safe for people in and around the area.

“We look forward to partnering with other organizations. We look forward to working with everybody so we can collectively, as a City of Wilmington, make this a place where no one sleeps outside,” Hayes said.

He said this small addition to the community has the potential to make a big difference.

One of Eden Villages Resident’s talks about the difference it’s made in his life. Six month resident of Eden Village, John Porter, said Eden Village has proven itself to be successful. He said this is just another way they’ve chosen to be someone’s helping hand.

“It’s a building block for success. Becoming independent, reengaging back into society, ya know, it’s the start. It’s the jumping off point,” Porter said.

(ON CAM TAG)

Hayes said once a location is locked in, it should take about six months to get the campground running to both house and help individuals.

- Housing

Habitat for Humanity Brunswick Co. Subdivision

Aired: January 30, 2024

Segment Length: 2:10

(ON CAM)

A FIRST FOR BRUNSWICK COUNTY HABITAT FOR HUMANITY. THE AGENCY IS BUILDING ITS FIRST SUBDIVISION... RIGHT HERE IN LELAND. WWAY’S SYDNEY BOUCHELLE WENT TO HAVE A CLOSER LOOK... AND SPEAK WITH ORGANIZERS. SHE HAS MORE....

(PKG SCIPT)

A new neighborhood is coming soon to Leland.

Habitat for Humanity is building its first subdivision in Brunswick County on Highland Hills Drive.

The subdivision is called Fuller Court. It will include 10 homes as well as a park, a half court basketball court that can be turned into a pickleball court, and potential access to walking trails. In addition to being the first Habitat subdivision in Brunswick County, the neighborhood will feature Habitat's first "apostle build" which is an event where 12 or more churches volunteer to sponsor and build a Habitat home.

The neighborhood is in the infrastructure phase right now, with a goal of beginning to build the homes this summer.

Carlo Montagano, executive director for Brunswick County Habitat for Humanity, says increasing land prices and decreasing availability is pushing the non-profit to build subdivisions rather than singular homes.

"The number of homes that are available in the price point that we build is shrinking dramatically," said Montagano. "People that want what we call a starter home, a place where they can raise a family, or a home where they can retire and age in place, are the types of homes that we build and they just don't exist in this county."

Only three of the 10 homes have been spoken for so far. One of the people that will call Fuller Court home is Karen Pearson.

"I've actually been displaced for the past eight years, maybe a little more," said Pearson. "There have been times where I've had no home and good friends have taken me in."

After living in New Hampshire for more than 30 years, Pearson followed her daughter's family to North Carolina in 2020. She living with them now in what used to be her son-in-law's office.

"If you've been in your own home for five, 10, 20 and beyond years, you don't realize...how incredible it is to have an organization tell you that they're going to build you a home," said Pearson.

As an avid gardener, Pearson says she looks forward to growing her own vegetables and flowers. Most of all, she looks forward to having her own space that she's hoped for for a decade.

"It's an answer to a ten year prayer and a lifelong dream for me. I am just beside myself with excitement. I just can't really even believe it," said Pearson.

(ON CAM)

FOR MORE INFORMATION ON HOW TO APPLY FOR A HABITAT HOME, YOU CAN HEAD TO OUR, WEBSITE, WWW.TV3DOTCOM.COM.

- **Housing**

Wilmington/New Hanover County Homeless Solutions

Aired: March 18, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

EARLIER TODAY AT WILMINGTON CITY COUNCIL'S AGENDA BRIEFING ... THERE WAS A DISCUSSION ABOUT A STRATEGIC PLAN BETWEEN THE CITY AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY TO ADDRESS THE AREA'S HOMELESS POPULATION. W-W-A-Y'S NATE MAULDIN EXPLAINS WHAT SOME OFFICIALS ARE CALLING FOR TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE.

(PKG SCRIPT)

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THE CITY OF WILMINGTON AND NEW HANOVER COUNTY ARE WORKING ON A PLAN TO SUPPORT THE AREA'S HOMELESS POPULATION.

DURING MONDAY'S CITY COUNCIL AGENDA BRIEFING... COUNCIL RECEIVED AN UPDATE ON THE JOINT INITIATIVE.

COUNCILWOMAN SALETTE ANDREWS SAYS ONE OF THE CHALLENGES IS UNDERSTANDING WHY SOME OF THE AREA'S HOMELESS AREN'T SEEKING OUT LOCAL SERVICES.

Salette Andrews, Council Member

"I wanted to make sure that the people who aren't taking advantage of the services that we find out why that is. Is there a different kind of service that we need to be providing to make sure that we get our unsheltered population into shelter if that's what they want."

MAYOR BILL SAFFO ASKED WHETHER ENOUGH IS BEING DONE TO ADDRESS THEIR MENTAL HEALTH.

Bill Saffo, Wilmington Mayor

"One of the things that I continue to hear from our police department that rolls up when there's an incident or a situation is the behavioral needs, which are tremendous."

SAFFO ALSO POINTED OUT THAT THE NUMBER OF BEDS FOR BEHAVIORAL HEALTH TREATMENT IN THE AREA ARE GREATLY LACKING... CALLING ON HEALTHCARE PROVIDER TRILLIUM TO DO MORE.

Bill Saffo, Wilmington Mayor

"To have the limited amount of beds that we have for behavioral health, not only for Wilmington and New Hanover County, but for this region, I think is appalling. And I just think we need to have a much more robust conversation with Trillium about why they're not putting more beds in this community."

SIMILAR SENTIMENTS WERE ECHOED BY ANDREWS... WHO ADDED IT'S A NATIONWIDE PROBLEM.

Salette Andrews, Council Member

"but we're really feeling it here because of the growth in Wilmington. But it's really a nationwide problem, we need to put more emphasis on mental and behavioral health."

IN WILMINGTON... NATE MAULDIN... W-W-A-Y NEWS.

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(ON CAM TAG)

DURING THE LAST COUNT OF HOMELESS POPULATIONS IN NEW HANOVER... PENDER... AND BRUNSWICK COUNTIES... THERE WERE MORE THAN 550 HOMELESS PEOPLE IN THE AREA. THAT NUMBER WAS UP BY MORE THAN 200-PEOPLE FROM THE PREVIOUS YEAR.

Transportation

- Transportation

Cape Fear Memorial Bridge Work Reaction

Aired: January 11, 2024

Segment Length: 1:45

(ON CAM)

WE'VE BEEN KEEPING AN EYE ON PREPARATIONS FOR CLOSURE OF THE EASTBOUND LANES OF THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE. WE'VE TALKED ABOUT HOW THE CLOSURE WILL AFFECT DRIVERS... BUT WHAT ABOUT BUSINESSES ALONG THE DETOUR ROUTE? WWAY'S CONOR DOHERTY SPOKE WITH A FEW... AND HAS THEIR REACTION.

(PKG)

While repair work on the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge begins Thursday night, businesses in downtown Wilmington are also preparing for the potential ways they'll be affected by the work. Terry Espy is the president of MoMentum Companies and said the Downtown Business Alliance and Wilmington Downtown Incorporated have met to discuss ways to bring people downtown while the repair work is going on.

"You know, they're loyal to individual owners more so than to corporate," Espy said. "We're going to see them downtown. It's gonna be a little more complicated but we have faith that what we've got to offer over here is going to continue luring people across that bridge."

While crews work overnight for the next two weeks, one lane will remain open on the bridge. but once this preliminary work is finished, both eastbound lanes into Wilmington will be closed starting on January 28th and will not reopen until the end of March.

The Bryand Gallery's production manager, Ian Leatherwood, said the timing of the repairs couldn't be better for businesses.

"Fortunately it is in the slower part of the season for a lot of the businesses here downtown," Leatherwood said. "I mean, its the January, February, March dipoff. So hopefully that if they get everything done on time, the businesses won't be affected for an extended amount of period." But once the eastbound lanes are finished, the bridge will be fully open for the North Carolina Azalea Festival.

Work on the westbound lanes heading out of Wilmington will then start in April and be finished by May.

As for the preliminary work, one lane in each direction will be closed starting at 7 o'clock each night.

The lanes will reopen to traffic by 5 a.m. the next day.

(ON CAM TAG)

THE DOT PLANS TO HOLD A NEWS CONFERENCE LATER THIS MONTH BEFORE THE EASTBOUND LANES SHUT DOWN.

- **Transportation**

No More Off Season Paid Parking in Carolina Beach

Aired: January 10, 2024

Segment Length: 1:45

(ON CAM)

CAROLINA BEACH CHANGING COURSE WHEN IT COMES TO PAID PARKING IN THE OFF SEASON... AND PUBLIC INPUT MAY BE THE REASON. WWAY'S SYDNEY BOUCHELLE HAS THE DETAILS.

(PKG SCRIPT)

Soon there will be fewer months of the year where you have to pay to park in Carolina Beach. Town council voted unanimously on Wednesday night to make changes to the parking program. This decision comes after staff sought input from the public on the current parking program last month.

Town-owned lots and on-street parking will now charge for parking March through October from 9 am to 8 pm. Previously, parking fees were also applicable in November and December.

Hourly rates in town-owned lots will increase to \$6, while the daily rate remains at \$25. On-street parking will be charged at \$5 per hour with no daily rate.

Parking tickets will also be reduced from \$100 to \$60.

noted the council had voted against this numerous times already.

Katie Urti is a Carolina Beach Resident. She said she attended Wednesday's council meeting.

"I think certainly in the off season, having one less barrier to overcome, is essential for a business owner," Urti said.

Urti works at 'Nest Realty' near Carolina Beach Boardwalk. She said she looks forward to seeing what difference this change can make.

Another Carolina Beach Resident WWAY spoke with said that many people travel during the off season because it's less expensive.

"When you come during times of years where it's a little less expensive, I think it's more feasible," Abigail Spawn said.

Town staff is also looking into designating premium lots, which could cost \$7 per hour and \$35 per day.

(ON CAM TAG)

LYNN BARBEE, THE MAYOR OF CAROLINA BEACH, DID ACKNOWLEDGE THE CONTINUED REQUEST TO MAKE PARKING PASSES AVAILABLE TO NON-RESIDENTS. HE NOTED THE COUNCIL HAD VOTED AGAINST THIS NUMEROUS TIMES ALREADY.

- **Transportation**

Bridge/Cargo Ship Safety

Aired: March 26, 2024

Segment Length: 2:00

(ON CAM)

HERE IN THE CAPE FEAR... MANY WHO GREW UP OR HAVE LIVED IN MARYLAND -
- ARE FEELING SHOCK OVER THE NEWS ABOUT THE COLLAPSE OF THE FRANCIS
SCOTT KEY BRIDGE.... WHILE OFFICIALS ARE KEEPING A CLOSE WATCH ON THE
ON-GOING SITUATION.

W-W-A-Y'S CONOR DOHERTY HAS MORE.

(PKG SCRIPT)

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"Ah, ah, well you feel for the people that might have been on the bridge and driving along the bridge."

FOR PEOPLE WHO LIVED IN AND AROUND BALTIMORE...THE KEY BRIDGE WAS AN EVERY DAY PART OF LIFE...MUCH LIKE THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE IS FOR WILMINGTON AND LELAND AREA RESIDENTS.
JAYNE DONOHOE GREW UP JUST NORTH OF BALTIMORE.
SHE SAYS THE IMPACT OF THE BRIDGE COLLAPSE WILL BE FELT THROUGHOUT THE CITY AND ALONG THE EAST COAST.

"Then you feel for the whole city. It's a big port and things can't get in and out and it's people's livelihood and its people's jobs. And you just, you were devastated, you felt bad for the city of Baltimore."

MIKE MCGILL LIVES IN HAMPSTEAD...BUT LIVED FOR MANY YEARS IN AND AROUND THE BALTIMORE AREA.
HE OFTEN TRAVELED OVER THE BRIDGE... AND PUTS THE IMPACT OF IT'S COLLAPSE INTO PERSPECTIVE.

"Imagine if the Cape Fear Memorial Bridge was south of the port, was, had completely collapsed, blocking entry into the port and you lose that major way in and around the city. Imagine what that would do here. You know, we talked about the Key Bridge growing as the freeway around Baltimore."

I REACHED OUT TO THE NORTH CAROLINA DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION AND THE NORTH CAROLINA STATE PORTS TO ASK ABOUT SAFETY AROUND OUR PORT AND BRIDGES. THE NCDOT SAID IN PART...

"WE WILL BE CLOSELY MONITORING AS THIS UNFOLDS AND WILL APPLY THE LESSONS LEARNED APPROPRIATELY IN NORTH CAROLINA TO ENSURE THAT OUR CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES CONTINUE TO HAVE SAFE ROUTES TO TRAVEL. IN NORTH CAROLINA, LARGE CARGO VESSELS DO NOT NAVIGATE UNDER BRIDGES TO ACCESS EITHER OF OUR PORTS."

STATE PORT EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR, BRIAN CLARK, ADDED...

"WE... ARE COMMITTED TO CONTINUALLY EVALUATING THE SAFE MOVEMENT OF GOODS AND VESSELS IN AND OUT OF OUR FACILITIES. CUSTOMERS ARE NOW EVALUATING THEIR SUPPLY CHAIN OPTIONS AND NC PORTS STANDS READY TO ASSIST AND SUPPORT THE LARGER SUPPLY CHAIN NETWORK AS NEEDED."

IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY...CONOR DOHERTY WWAY NEWS.

>

(ON CAM TAG)

WE'RE ASKING YOU TONIGHT.

ON A SCALE OF 1 TO 5 -- WITH 5 MEANING "VERY SAFE"... HOW SAFE DO YOU FEEL RIDING OVER MAJOR BRIDGES IN OUR AREA... LIKE THE CAPE FEAR MEMORIAL BRIDGE?

Economic

- Economic

Proposed Insurance Increase

Aired: January 9, 2024

Segment Length: 2:15

(ON CAM)

HOMEOWNERS ALREADY EXPRESSING CONCERNS OVER A PROPOSED INSURANCE RATE INCREASE.... WHICH *COULD* RAISE RATES BY MORE THAN 40-PERCENT. WWAY'S TANNER BLUE HAS DETAILS... AND REACTION.

(PKG SCRIPT)

Proposed homeowners insurance for North Carolinian's could rise more than 42%, but some parts of the Cape Fear may see more than double that rate.

The North Carolina Rate Bureau has filed a request with the North Carolina Department of Insurance to raise homeowners insurance rates by 42.2%.

Brett Lascara, an insurance agent with The Huneycutt Group said there are various reasons this is happening.

“Probably the biggest factors would be inflation, insurance companies are feeling the full brunt of that. We’re seeing all these different weather catastrophes that are hitting across the country and we’re impacted here by those catastrophes,” Lascara said.

If approved, some of the biggest increases would be in the Cape Fear.

The Rate Bureau is requesting a 99% increase for home insurance in the beach areas of Brunswick, New Hanover, and Pender counties. A 71% increase for the eastern coastal areas of those counties. Columbus County and Bladen County would also be above the average rate increase.

Department of Insurance Commissioner Mike Causey will be the one who decides what the exact rate will be and explained how the process works.

“When companies feel like they need to raise their automobile insurance rates or homeowners insurance rates, they’re required by state law to issue a request and they have to justify what they’re asking for,” Causey said.

According to Brett Lascara, the best thing for homeowners to do right now is to sit tight.

“You’ve got to stay patient. You’ve got to reach out to your agent when you get your renewal. Often times we’ll have a lot of different options that we can shop the markets and find you a policy that may not have fit last year, but it does fit better for you this year.”

Commissioner Causey said a very similar situation happened in November of 2020.

“The insurance industry can come back and talk about it and in every case we had entered into negotiation, and reached a favorable settlement for consumers. Which was in most cases was less than a third to a quarter of what the industry had originally asked for.”

(ON CAM TAG)

FOR THOSE WHO WOULD LIKE TO HAVE INPUT, A PUBLIC COMMENT FORUM WILL BE HELD ON JANUARY 22ND IN RALEIGH; AS WELL AS A VIRTUAL PUBLIC COMMENT FORUM THAT WILL HAPPEN SIMULTANEOUSLY.

- Economic

Aerospace Company Bringing Aircraft Manufacturing to Bladen County

Aired: February 7, 2024

Segment Length: 2:05

(ON CAM)

IN BLADEN COUNTY... A NEW BUSINESS COMING TO ELIZABETHTOWN... THAT WILL BRING MORE THAN 30 NEW JOBS TO THE AREA. WWAY’S EMILY ANDREWS HAS THE DETAILS.

(PKG SCRIPT)

An aviation management company is bringing an aircraft manufacturing plant to Bladen County, creating 33 new jobs in the process.

The news was announced Wednesday, with Sovereign Aerospace planning to invest \$4.15 million to manufacture, sell, and service personal aircraft in Elizabethtown.

“North Carolina continues to garner national attention as a leading state for aerospace manufacturing,” said Governor Cooper. “With dynamic veteran-owned companies like Sovereign Aerospace expanding in Bladen County, our state has great potential to be a leader in aviation worldwide.”

Founded by retired Airforce Veteran Phillip “Slim” Thompson, Sovereign Aerospace was established in 2021 to provide pilot training, consulting services, aircraft brokering, and general aviation maintenance. While the company supports clients and entrepreneurial aviators through a wide-range of services, at its core, Sovereign Aerospace strives to help veterans find community, learn new skills, and transition to civilian life, according to a press release.

New positions created by Sovereign Aerospace will include inspectors, mechanics, technicians, and administrative staff. Salaries will vary by position; however, the average annual wage is \$56,061, exceeding the Bladen County average of \$41,913. These new jobs could potentially create an annual payroll impact of more than \$1.85 million for the region.

Kenny Flowers is the Assistant Secretary for Rural Economic Development at the North Carolina Department of Commerce. He said, “33 new jobs, \$25 million in investments. So, you just get real excited when you know that will impact the people here and give them the opportunity to grow economically.”

Elizabethtown Mayor Sylvia Campbell said she’s on cloud nine. She called Wednesday “history is in the making.”

“They’re only four other manufacturing for general aviation aircraft makes in the United States and we’re happy to be number five.”

Campbell explained what the process will look like along with her hopes for the future.

“Parts will be made in Italy, but they will bring it here for assembly and then hopefully they will, maybe in two years, start manufacturing the airplane here.”

IN BLADEN COUNTY, EMILY ANDREWS WWAY NEWS.

- **Economic**

Brewery Bubble Bursting

Aired: March 14, 2024

Segment Length: 2:10

(ON CAM)

A POPULAR DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON BREWERY WILL BE CLOSING ITS DOORS SOON... MAKING IT ONE OF *SEVERAL* CAPE FEAR BREWERIES SHUTTING DOWN OVER THE LAST SEVERAL WEEKS.

WWAY'S EMILY ANDREWS SPOKE WITH AN AREA ECONOMIST TODAY (THURS)... TO SEE IF THE CLOSURES ARE A SIGN OF TROUBLE BREWING FOR THAT INDUSTRY IN OUR AREA.

(PKG SCRIPT)

< Mouhcine Guettabi, UNCW's Associate Professor of Economics and Regional Economist

"Clearly the "boom," if we want to call it that, that we experienced for two or three years, is now starting to slow down a little bit."

"NEW ANTHEM BEER PROJECT"... ON DOCK STREET IN DOWNTOWN WILMINGTON... POSTED ON WEDNESDAY THAT IT WILL BE EXPERIENCING AN "INDEFINITE CLOSURE."

WHILE A REASON FOR THE CLOSURE WAS NOT GIVEN... MANY AREA BREWERIES... LIKE "CATAWBA BREWING"... HAVE MADE THAT SAME CHOICE.

WWAY REACHED OUT TO A UNCW ECONOMIST... TO SEE IF THERE'S A CORRELATION BETWEEN THE ECONOMY... AND THESE BREWERIES CLOSING. HE SAYS THE CONFLICT IS NOT SPECIFICALLY TARGETING *JUST* BREWERIES... BUT BUSINESSES IN GENERAL.

Mouhcine Guettabi, UNCW's Associate Professor of Economics and Regional Economist

"Whenever an area grows really fast, there are businesses that pop up all over the place. Now, one thing that sometimes tends to happen, is that you may overshoot how much growth an area potentially receives."

GUETTABI SAYS INFLATION IS LIKELY TO BLAME FOR MANY BUSINESSES STRUGGLING. LOTS OF PEOPLE ARE LIMITING THEIR LEISURE ACTIVITIES TO ACCOMMODATE WHAT THEY CAN AFFORD...

Mouhcine Guettabi, UNCW's Associate Professor of Economics and Regional Economist

"Rather than having two beers, you may be only having one, maybe you're just staying closer to home. Maybe, you're just not splurging as much. Those are all potentially things that could be going on under the surface. But clearly, business closures are a case-by-case situation."

I REACHED OUT TO THE NC CRAFT BREWERS GUILD ABOUT CLOSURES... THEY RESPONDED WITH A STATEMENT SAYING...

"In comparison, North Carolina now has approximately 420 permitted breweries in operation at the start of 2024, generating an estimated annual economic impact of \$2.8 billion and supporting over 18,000 jobs. While the number of openings has slowed since 2017, we are still seeing more openings than closings overall. In 2023, we saw 34 brewery openings and 17 closures statewide."

IN NEW HANOVER COUNTY... EMILY ANDREWS... WWAY NEWS. >

(ON CAM TAG)

GUETTABI SAYS SOUTHEASTERN NORTH CAROLINA ALSO HAS BECOME A HOT-SPOT FOR THOSE RETIRING.

HE SAYS IN THAT CASE...STRUGGLING BUSINESSES MAY NOT HAVE TARGETED THE AREA'S CURRENT DEMOGRAPHIC.
TO READ MORE FROM THE CRAFT BREWERS GUILD... VISIT OUR WEBSITE--
WWAYTV3.COM