

*****SPAM*** Latest Updates from the NCGA**



From Sen. Natasha Marcus <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
To <sjohnston@tuesdayforumcharlotte.org>
Reply-To <natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov>
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NC Senate District 41 Newsletter

August 19, 2022

The General Assembly did not convene for session over the past 2 weeks. So there are no votes or committee meetings to report.

NC Board of Science Tour



Last week I joined the [NC Department of Commerce](#) and other state legislators for the [NC Board of Science, Technology, and Innovation](#) quarterly meeting. The NCBSTI plays a key role in fulfilling the directives of Governor Cooper's [Executive Order 80](#), NC's Commitment to Address Climate Change and Transition to a Clean Economy, and the bipartisan HB951, which the GA passed last year. **By encouraging innovation, the Board keeps NC on the cutting edge of new climate change reduction technology**, so that NC will continue to be a player in the nation's team effort to address the seemingly insurmountable challenge of climate change. **I gave remarks in support of clean energy innovation across North Carolina** and the Board's and Governor Cooper's leadership.

I also learned more about the [One North Carolina Small Business Program](#) and heard a presentation from one of the grantees. If you are starting an innovative small business in NC, I encourage you to apply for a grant from the One North Carolina Small Business Program.

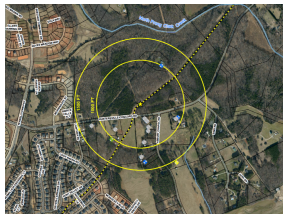
Breaking News on Abortion Rights in NC



This week brought bad news for people who expect the courts to protect constitutional rights. A federal district judge reopened a NC case, even though neither party asked him to, and lifted a permanent injunction on Wednesday. **This immediately changes NC abortion law**, which had protected abortion access up to the point of fetal viability per *Roe*. These changes mean abortion is banned after 20 weeks regardless of the circumstances, except in very limited cases that qualify as a medical emergency.

My bill, [SB888](#), would codify the protections of *Roe* into NC law so arbitrary bans like this would be blocked. You can read more about the decision [here](#).

Colonial Pipeline Spill, 2 Years Later



[This piece](#) ran last weekend on Queen City News, noting that it's been two years since the Colonial Pipeline leak was discovered in Huntersville. It's an overview of the current status of the clean-up efforts, including interviews with Senator Marcus and the teens who discovered the leak.

I keep in regular contact with Colonial Pipeline and DEQ staff to stay up to date on clean-up efforts. My office has an email listserv where I send out regular updates on the status of the clean-up efforts. If you would like to be added to the listserv please send me an email at natasha.marcus@ncleg.gov.

BarVeCue Tour: Local Plant-Based Meat Company



Last week I was treated to a tour of the [Barvecue](#) facility in Cornelius. It included a tasting of their **wood-smoked, plant-based meat**, which was delicious. It is exciting to see a local company grow so successfully, especially when their mission includes caring about "people, animals and our planet." I'll be looking for Barvecue on the shelves at grocery stores and at restaurants like [Davidson Ice House!](#)

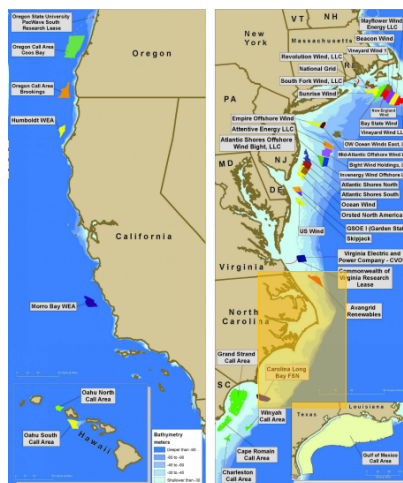
Veterans Services Open House



Mecklenburg County Veterans Services is hosting an open house tomorrow with **programming designed to help veterans and their families navigate the many services available to them.**

The open house will be tomorrow, Saturday, August 20, from 9AM to 2PM at Friendship Missionary Baptist Church at 3400 Beatties Ford Road, Charlotte. More information on the event can be found [here](#).

Progress on Offshore Wind Energy



Yesterday I met with Jennifer Mundt, Assistant Secretary of Clean Energy Economic Development with the [Department of Commerce](#), to discuss wind energy projects off the coast of North Carolina. I was heartened to hear about the Biden Administration's progress on new leases for wind projects up and down the East coast. Did you know that due to the geographic nature of our coastline, North Carolina is one of the most optimal states in the country for offshore wind energy projects? Even though my district is far from the coast, these projects do affect our area. [Southwire](#) is a leading manufacturer of wires and cables used for various clean energy projects and their facility is in Huntersville. And, of course, energy sources from renewable is better for everyone's health and for our planet.

Fostering Cats in Davidson



A little bit of personal news: I'd like to introduce everyone to my foster cat, Riley! When the General Assembly is not in session, I volunteer as a foster home with [Cats of Davidson](#). Riley was saved from a life on the streets of Cornelius, just in time for her to give birth to seven healthy kittens at my house. They will all be available for adoption in a few months. If you are interested in adopting, send an email to catsofdavidson@gmail.com to apply.

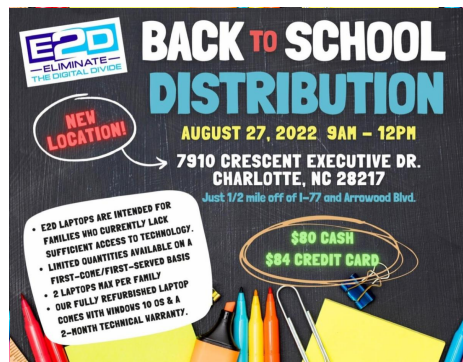
Extracurricular and Volunteer Opportunities for Teens at Charlotte-Mecklenburg Library



The Charlotte Mecklenburg Library system has plenty to offer teens. In addition to their usual services like free Wi-Fi and study areas, the Library offers engaging and meaningful [teen programs](#) throughout the year that range from book clubs to STEAM projects to gaming. It's an easy way to get a head start on career planning to earn community service hours. Teens can also sign up to participate in various events and become a [VolunTeen](#) to earn community service hours.

Programs like Community Service Project and Teen Advisory Council, offer community service hours for teens who participate. Teens seeking community service hours (up to 20 hours) can also contribute content for the libraries by [writing a review](#) of a book, movie, or other resource the library offers. These reviews can be filmed for the chance to be added to the Library's teen Instagram account as well. There's also an opportunity for teens to [create more content](#) to be featured on [@cmlibraryteens](#) with eight projects to choose from.

Back to School Event: Laptop Distribution



E2D, a local non-profit working to eliminate the digital divide, is hosting a low-cost laptop distribution event on August 27th from 9am to 12pm. Be sure to get there early; they anticipate selling out and devices are available on a first-come-first-served basis. The event is will be held at 7910 Creslent Executive Drive, Charlotte NC 28217.

I toured their spiffy new E2D EY Lab earlier this week, where I met several of their student employees, who do the refurbishing work. It's a win-win-win arrangement as good quality laptops stay out of the landfills, students learn valuable computer skills while they earn good pay, and low-income families get excellent quality, fully supported laptops. Thanks to Ernst & Young for donating space to E2D in Charlotte's South End.

Attend the distribution event next Saturday if your family can benefit from E2Ds work and help spread the word to others too.

State Funding for Electric Buses in Mecklenburg County



NC DEQ announced the Transit and Shuttle Bus Program grant recipients this week. These grants, funded with \$13.5 million from the N.C. Volkswagen Settlement and \$6.3 million in additional transportation funds, will help communities across the state reduce nitrogen oxides emissions by replacing older buses with cleaner, low-emission buses.

In Mecklenburg County, the grants provided \$4,385,164 to convert seven diesel CATS buses to electric. That means cleaner air for Mecklenburg County.

NC Firefighter Cancer Coverage Program



A \$15 million state fund for firefighters who have developed cancer while on the job has begun making payments. Firefighters with a new diagnoses qualify for a \$25,000 payment, followed by up to \$12,000 in reimbursements to cover out-of-pocket medical expenses. I am happy to see these important changes being implemented and am proud to have supported efforts to ensure firefighters receive this coverage they need and deserve. I am happy to be recognized as a "Firefighter's Friend" by the NC State Firefighter's Association earlier this year. You can read more about the state fund [here](#).

Golden LEAF Foundation SITE Program Applications



The next round of the [SITE Program with The Golden LEAF Foundation](#) is open. This program is available to governmental entities and 501(c)(3) nonprofits for funding to support identification, due diligence, and development of sites to attract new businesses and create opportunities for existing businesses to expand. If potential applicants have questions about the program contact SITE@GoldenLEAF.org.

Applications are due on September 19 at noon for consideration by the Golden LEAF Board in December 2022. They will announce another round later this year for consideration in June 2023.

CVS Health Offering Free Screenings in Mecklenburg County

8/18/2022	Thursday	August	5100 Beatties Ford Rd.	Charlotte	NC	28216
8/19/2022	Friday	August	2115 Beatties Ford Rd.	Charlotte	NC	28216
8/20/2022	Saturday	August	6110 The Plaza	Charlotte	NC	28215
8/21/2022	Sunday	August	6110 The Plaza	Charlotte	NC	28215
8/25/2022	Thursday	August	2325 Village Lake Dr.	Charlotte	NC	28212
8/26/2022	Friday	August	2325 Village Lake Dr.	Charlotte	NC	28212
8/27/2022	Saturday	August	9805 Rocky River Rd.	Charlotte	NC	28215
8/28/2022	Sunday	August	9805 Rocky River Rd.	Charlotte	NC	28215

Free Project Health events from CVS are happening in and around the district this week, **offering free wellness screenings, comprehensive health risk assessments, information on weight management, diabetes resources, smoking cessation programs & more.** Learn more and find a location near you at [this link](#). The dates/locations are also in the photo above.

HOMES Program



Home ownership is the single most important investment that many people make. One effect of a robust real estate market is that affordable housing becomes scarce and the rising costs to retain residences can outpace income growth. The county has established the **HOMES Program**, a grant program designed to assist qualified residential homeowners with low to moderate income within Mecklenburg County to retain their homes by reducing their financial burden. Please view the **FAQs** for additional information. **Applications are due on November 18, 2022.**

City of Charlotte Honored for Inclusivity Efforts



The City of Charlotte recently became a **Certified Welcoming place**. Welcoming America, a national nonprofit organization, bestows this recognition to local jurisdictions that have demonstrated their commitment to immigrant inclusion through their policies and programs. **The City of Charlotte is the first city in North Carolina and in the southeastern U.S. region to receive this designation.**

According to the 2020 U.S. census, 17.2 percent of Charlotte’s residents were born outside of the United States. As Charlotte-Mecklenburg’s immigrant population has grown over the last three decades, it is critical for inclusion to be a priority in our community. While the work of equity and inclusion never ends, achieving the Welcoming Place certification highlights the City of Charlotte’s commitment in this ongoing pursuit.

In order to become **#CertifiedWelcoming**, communities must meet rigorous requirements around matters including education, government leadership, safety, civic engagement, equitable access and more.

Need Assistance with a Health Insurance Claim?



Have you or someone you know had a health claim denied? Or do you have questions or complaints about your insurance company? Contact the NCDOI Smart NC team to learn about their services and how they can help you. To get started, call them at 855-408-1212, or visit [this website](#).

Free Pre-K for Eligible Mecklenburg County Kids

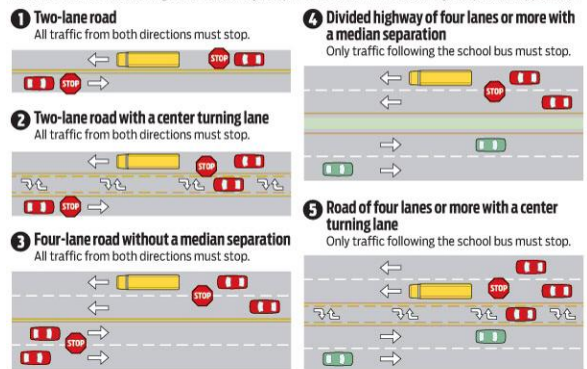


Do you have a child who will be 4 years old on or before August 31? If so and you live in Mecklenburg County, you are eligible to apply for Meck Pre-K. **It's a high-quality, free pre-K education based on research that proves the importance of providing a strong foundation for children before they start Kindergarten.** Pre-K students get social and emotional skills, language and literacy abilities, mathematical and scientific thinking, and the joy of learning. Get details and apply at [this link](#).

NC Laws for School Buses

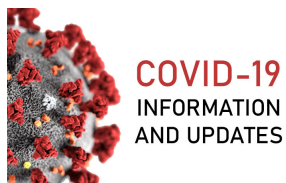
North Carolina's law on stopping for a school bus

All traffic must stop for a stopped bus, unless it is on a road of four or more lanes with a median or center turning lane. In those instances, oncoming traffic does not have to stop because children will not be crossing the road to reach the bus. Traffic following a bus must always stop with the bus. If in doubt, always stop for a stopped bus.



Take a moment to review North Carolina's laws on stopping for a school bus to ensure kids' safety as they go back to class this month.

COVID-19 & Monkeypox Updates



COVID-19 Updates:

The [DHHS COVID-19 Dashboard](#), which is updated weekly every Wednesday, shows the following data points:

- Wastewater testing has shown an **increase** to 28.2m particles, compared to 26.1m last week.
- COVID-like illness in hospital emergency departments **have decreased**, at 6.3% this week compared to 7.3% last week.
- COVID-19 reported cases for the week **decreased**, from 30,475 to 26,094.
- COVID-19 hospital admissions of COVID-19 patients this week **decreased** to 1,317, compared to last week which was at 1,354.
- Booster rates are 60% for the total population. We have 77% of adults with at least one dose and 30% of children and teens ages 5-17 with at least one dose.
- The Omicron variant continues to represent the vast majority of COVID diagnoses. BA.5 represents 73% of cases, BA.4 17%, BA.1.1.529 6%, BA.2.12.1 3%, and BA.2 less than 1%.

For more information about how vaccines for children work and where you can find a vaccination appointment nearby, visit [MySpot.nc.gov](#). Project ACT is also providing free COVID-19 at-home tests for certain zip codes in SD41, you can check if your home zip code is eligible [here](#). You can also place an order for free vaccines via USPS [here](#).

Monkeypox Updates:

Last week I attended a briefing from DHHS Secretary Kinsley after he visited a monkeypox vaccine clinic in Mecklenburg County. Some of the important information Secretary Kinsley and his team provided at the meeting:

- There are **important differences between monkeypox and COVID**. Monkeypox doesn't spread as easily and is rarely fatal. Unlike the early phases of COVID, with monkeypox, we have plenty of testing capacity and we already have a safe and effective vaccine. Unfortunately, access to the vaccine is still constrained as we are dependent on Denmark for supplies.
- **Anyone can get monkeypox**. It most commonly **spreads through close, prolonged skin-to-skin contact, often directly with a sore or lesion**. That could happen during sex, but also during cuddling, sharing a bed, or sharing linens with someone. The risk through brief touches: shaking hands, hugging, bumping into someone, or sharing space with someone in a public place is very low.
- **The main message is "if you have an unexplained rash, get tested as soon as possible."**
- Right now, **nearly all cases are among men who have sex with men**, but we will likely see cases spread to other communities. Viruses often take root in one group or community before spreading to others. Responding quickly and prioritizing the impacted community helps them immediately and helps everyone over time. So DHHS is focusing their outreach to the impacted community, including those at higher risk such as people who are on PrEP.

DHHS has established a [monkeypox website](#), which serves as an informational resource hub. Updates are made to this site frequently, included case counts and demographic data.

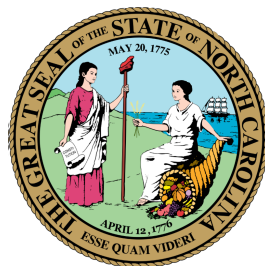
Monkeypox vaccines are free and available in Mecklenburg County, but currently in limited quantities. If you are experiencing symptoms or believe you have been exposed, contact your doctor or local health department to get tested. In Mecklenburg, that number is 980-314-9400.

Contact Our Office

Phone: (919) 715-3050

Email:
Natasha.Marcus@ncleg.gov
Jessica.Bolin@ncleg.gov

Mailing Address:
 300 N. Salisbury Street,
 Rm. 519
 Raleigh, NC 27603



How can we help you? Let us know and [reach out](#) to our office! We want to hear from you.

Senator Natasha Marcus | [Website](#)



Sen. Natasha Marcus, District 41 | 300 N. Salisbury Street, Raleigh, NC 27603

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