

Conservative Chronicles

ASHE CO, NC

5 January 2026



Welcome to the inaugural issue of Conservative Chronicles.

In an era where political conversation is often reduced to headlines and soundbites, this newsletter was created with a different purpose in mind: clarity.

Conservative Chronicles provides thoughtful conservative commentary on government, policy, and culture. Grounded in respect for people, the Constitution, limited government, individual liberty, and accountability. These principles are not abstract ideals. They influence real decisions that affect our daily lives, from small rural communities like Ashe County, North Carolina, to the broader national stage. Each month, this newsletter will examine current issues at the local, state, and national levels, helping readers understand not only what is happening, but why it matters.

This publication is also an invitation, a call to stay informed, think critically, and engage responsibly in the civic process.

Meaningful participation begins with knowledge, and strong, accountable government depends on an informed citizenry. Thank you for reading and supporting Conservative Chronicles. My hope is that this newsletter becomes a trusted resource for those who value principled conservatism and thoughtful civic engagement—here in Ashe County and beyond.

Paige Roten

Editor, Conservative Chronicles

In this newsletter you can expect:

Local, State, and
National
Government
Coverage

Policy
Breakdowns
That Matter

Conservative
Commentary &
Constitutional
Perspective

Civic
Engagement &
Community
Awareness

Upcoming
Events &
Community
Meetings

Local Government Watch - Ashe County Highlights

For the FY 2025–26 budget, the Board of Commissioners adopted a \$166.58 million spending plan and held the county property tax rate at 44 cents per \$100 of assessed value, affecting services, infrastructure, and community programs.

Regular meetings of the Board of Commissioners are held on the first and third Monday of each month at 9:00 a.m. at the Ashe County Courthouse, and residents are encouraged to attend and participate.

The Ashe County Sheriff's Office, led by Sheriff B. Phil Howell, continues a major multi-agency investigation dubbed "Operation Crystal Ball" targeting drug trafficking in the county.

Economic development continues to be a local priority: GE Aerospace announced a major expansion in West Jefferson, with an investment of over \$52.9 million and the creation of nearly 44 new jobs in Ashe County, highlighting collaboration between county officials and state partners.

Participation Opportunities

Ashe County Board of Commissioners:
1st & 3rd Mondays, 9:00 AM,
Courthouse, Jefferson *

Planning Board: 3rd Thursday, 5:30 PM,
Agricultural Services Building

Juvenile Crime Prevention Council: 4th
Tuesday, 12:00 PM, Ag Services
Building

Agricultural Facility Board: 2nd & 4th
Tuesdays, 7:00 PM, Schools Annex

Ashe County Board of Education:
Monthly Meetings, Central Services
Annex, 6:00 PM *

Ashe County GOP
January 20th 6:00pm
Sweet & Savory, 6 S Jefferson Ave,
West Jefferson (right across from
Town Hall)

*Board of Commissioners and Board of
Education can be live streamed*

What's New in the News

Trump and Venezuela: U.S. Actions
and Implications

This month's spotlight focuses on recent U.S. involvement in Venezuela. In early January 2026, the U.S. reportedly carried out military operations that led to the capture of Venezuelan President Nicolás Maduro. Former President Trump has stated the U.S. will oversee Venezuela's transition to stable governance.

Key Points:

- The operation was framed as targeting drug trafficking and authoritarian rule.
- Questions remain about Congressional authority and international law.
- Regional stability and U.S. credibility are key concerns, alongside domestic debate over intervention.

Conservative Perspective:

- Prioritize national security and American interests.



Changes in 2026

Taxes:

- North Carolina's individual income tax drops from 4.25% to 3.99%, giving residents more take-home pay.

Schools & Students:

- The state officially recognizes only biological male and female sexes.
- Parents can restrict library books for their children, giving families more control over what students read.
- Students must use sleeping quarters according to sex at birth on school trips and overnight activities.
- School boards are required to adopt internet safety policies, protecting student data and online activity.

Elections & Politics:

- Local candidates must complete mandatory training before running for office.
- Political Action Committees (PACs) now face stricter registration and reporting requirements, increasing transparency.

Healthcare & Workers:

- Employers must implement violence prevention plans, investigate incidents, and report them to the state.
- Protections expanded for domestic and sexual violence victims as well as hate crime victims.
- Clinical Pharmacist Practitioners now have expanded authority under physician agreements.
- Healthcare workers can waive unpaid meal breaks in writing, ensuring pay for long shifts.
- Public Safety: Certain private school staff may carry weapons on campus if permitted and approved by the school.

Transportation & Finance:

- Vehicle owners now have more flexibility for registration renewal timing.
- A new NC Investment Authority manages state investments, including teacher and public employee retirement funds.
- Access to Care: North Carolina joins an interstate medical licensure compact, speeding up doctor licensing and improving access to healthcare, especially in rural areas.

This Month in History

National Highlights:

- January 20, 1981: Ronald Reagan is inaugurated as the 40th President of the United States, marking a shift in American political and economic policy.
- January 1, 1863: President Abraham Lincoln issues the Emancipation Proclamation, freeing enslaved people in Confederate states.

Ashe County Highlights:

- January 1915: The Ashe County Courthouse in Jefferson opens, becoming the center of local government and civic life.

Civic Corner

Engage Online and Stay Informed:

- Review meeting agendas and minutes online at Ashe County Government or Ashe County Schools.
- Track local ordinances, public hearings, and budget updates to know what issues affect you.

Get Involved Directly:

- Volunteer for local boards or committees. Ashe County offers opportunities on advisory boards covering planning, recreation, schools, and public safety.
- Attend public hearings and provide feedback during comment periods.
- Encourage family, friends, and neighbors to stay informed and participate.

Elections Matter:

- With primaries and midterms approaching, pay attention to candidate filings, voter registration deadlines, and upcoming ballots. Every vote shapes Ashe County's future.
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Closing & Call to Action

Thank you for taking the time to read Conservative Chronicles. Staying informed and engaged is the foundation of a strong, accountable government. Whether it's attending Ashe County Board meetings, reviewing local policies, or participating in community forums, your involvement makes a real difference in shaping the future of our county.

With primaries and midterms around the corner, now is the time to pay attention to local and state elections that impact your schools, public safety, taxes, and community programs. Be on the lookout for upcoming voter guides, candidate information, and opportunities to get involved in the democratic process. Encourage your family, friends, and neighbors to stay informed and participate responsibly—because every voice matters.

Let Conservative Chronicles be your guide to understanding local, state, and national developments, helping you make informed decisions and take meaningful action in your community.

Until next time,

Thank you for reading!

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