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A final farewell

Remembering influential people who died in 2025

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The Fayetteville Observer

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Mayor Mitch Colvin said his hopes for 2026 include for community collaboration that benefits Fayetteville.

PHOTOS BY ANDREW CRAFT/ THE FAYETTEVILLE OBSERVER

U.S. HOUSE DISTRICT 9 RACE

4 Dems in primary to face Hudson

Joseph Pierre
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Four Democrats are vying in the March primary for a chance to face longtime incumbent Rep. Richard Hudson in November in North Carolina's 9th Congressional District race.

Loren Bibler of Raleigh; Nigel W. Bristow of Hamlet; Lent C. Carr of Raeford; and Richard N. Ojeda II of Aberdeen will face off in the March 3 Democratic primary. The 9th District, which includes part of Cumberland County, has been represented by Hudson since 2013, when it was the Eighth District.

A Democrat has not represented District 9 in the U.S. House of Representatives since Hugh Quincy Alexander, who served from 1953 to 1963.

Here's a look at the Democratic candidates.

Loren Bibler

Bibler, a 30-year-old agricultural specialist who lives in Raleigh, said Dec. 31 that he believes his ability to adapt and his youthful energy will draw voters away from multi-year incumbent Hudson.

"Bringing this youth and energy to Congress and to Washington, I think, could really show the country that we are still alive and we're still trying to progress for a more perfect union," he said.

Bibler, who resides in North Carolina's Second Congressional District, which is represented by Democratic Rep. Deborah Ross, said that he decided to run for Congress in another district because he identifies with the community.

He said that in his field of work and as a golf enthusiast, he has spent a lot of time in Pinehurst, which is also located in the Ninth District, and the northwestern Fayetteville area. Bibler works at the Lonnie Pool Golf Course at North Carolina State University.

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What Cumberland County leaders expect for 2026

Rachael Riley
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

Actions local government leaders took in 2025 have laid the groundwork for projects and initiatives in 2026.

As 2026 begins, Fayetteville's mayor and the chairman of the Cumberland County Commissioners say those plans will become a reality and reshape the community this year.

Leaders have bold predictions, hopes and fears for the new year, which include solutions for the unhoused population, consideration of an aquatic center and finally seeing the Stadium View Apartments Complex complete.

Cumberland County Board of Commissioners' Chair Kirk deViere said the board took bold moves in 2025 that it will build upon in 2026.

"When we walk about bold moves,

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Commissioners' Chair Kirk deViere said the Cumberland County Board of Commissioners made bold moves in 2025 that it will build on in 2026.

Check out these 20 hidden gems on the Fayetteville food scene

Joseph Pierre
Fayetteville Observer
USA TODAY NETWORK

The Fayetteville area has no shortage of popular restaurants that draw large crowds, but it is also home to less familiar spots that many diners consider hidden gems.

The Fayetteville Observer asked readers to share their favorite lesser-known but equally delicious restaurants in the areas and received more than 300 responses.

Many of the places mentioned are often reviewed on the Observer's Fayetteville Foodies page.

While well-known spots such as Dogslingers and Kusinera Filipino Cuisine (which was voted the area's No. 1 restaurant by readers in April) drew the most comments and are no longer considered "hidden," the following restaurants and food trucks earned praise and deserve just as much attention.

Here are 20 area restaurants selected by readers as hidden gems.

2 Rim Khong

2 Rim Khong Restaurant, which first opened in 2017, serves Thai, Laotian and

Chinese cuisine. The menu is filled with curries, fried rice, noodle dishes and soups.

One person who nominated them as a hidden gem said everything was great. "Especially the Pad Thai (any variation), Pad See Ew, and the Tom Kha."

Address: 6451 Yadkin Road #C in Fayetteville.

Online: facebook.com/2RimKhong.

Big Erv BBQ & 910 Sweets

Big Erv BBQ & 910 Sweets is a family-owned mobile restaurant offering barbecue turkey, pulled pork, smoked ribs

wings, brisket chili and a "BBQ Sundae" — a 16-ounce cup filled with macaroni and cheese, baked beans, pulled pork and cole slaw, topped with barbecue sauce. First on the scene in 2021, the food truck serves, "good portions reasonably priced," one of the nominations said.

Address: 670 N. Reilly Road in Fayetteville.

Online: facebook.com/p/Big-Erv-BBQ-910-Sweets-The-Neighborhood-Pit-Stop-LLC.

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