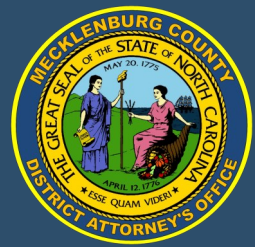




FROM THE DESK OF DA MERRIWEATHER

The District Attorney's Office is responsible for the prosecution of criminal offenses in Mecklenburg County. Each month, this newsletter provides information about court happenings, initiatives being used to combat crime, the DA's work in the community, and more.



Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office

PUSHING AHEAD

DA's Office works to tackle case backlogs

This month marks a step forward as we continue to combat the case backlogs caused by more than a year of COVID court closures. Since 2020, DA Merriweather has been taking action and working with court partners to address the backlog. [Shifting resources to violent crimes](#), he reorganized his prosecution teams and implemented a policy of referring most simple drug possession cases with no nexus to violence or weapons outside of the court system to recovery agencies. Last year, our Misdemeanor Team led a 14-week court session dedicated to [DWI cases](#). Meanwhile, DA Merriweather continued to push for the safe reopening of our courtrooms. We now have more courtrooms operating than before the pandemic. Although docket sizes are not yet at full capacity, the courts are making solid strides toward improved functionality. Later this month, judicial officials will open a fourth Superior Court trial courtroom, allowing prosecutors to call even more felony cases for trial. In District Court, where traffic citations and misdemeanors are handled, we have worked since 2020 to review cases and make certain we are focusing on priority cases. The recent increase in vehicular homicides comes at a time when, due to court closures, there are more than 10,000 pending cases in which drivers are charged with speeding 25 mph or more over the speed limit, as well as more than 1,000 pending cases in which drivers are charged with driving at speeds of 100 mph or more. DA Merriweather identifies those cases as prosecution priorities. As a result, the DA's Office will not proceed in many minor traffic citations and some low-level misdemeanors, allowing us to focus on higher priority cases, such as high speeds, misdemeanor assaults, DWIs, and domestic violence. Without action, it would take years to resolve currently pending cases, which would then delay all future District Court proceedings, creating a cycle of delays in priority cases and for victims for years to come. The backlogs caused by COVID court closures remain significant, but so is your Mecklenburg County District Attorney's Office's drive to secure swift and just resolution for both victims and defendants.

COMMUNITY

On Aug. 2, DA Merriweather and members of your DA's Office hit the streets for National Night Out! We attended block parties, meetings, potlucks, and more across Mecklenburg County as neighborhoods celebrated this annual community building and crime prevention event. Find more photos [here](#), and click [here](#) to request that a representative from the DA's Office attend your next community event!



SAFETY TIPS

Students across Mecklenburg County are heading back to school this month, and it's a great time to start talking about safety with your children. If your child walks to or from school, instruct them to use sidewalks and cross streets at crosswalks. Walk the route with them and call attention to any potentially dangerous areas, such as alleyways, recommends Charlotte-Mecklenburg police. Teach children what to do if they are approached or followed by a stranger. If they're a bus rider, instruct them to always stay in view of the driver and never walk behind the bus. As a community, safety within schools is a top priority. Have a conversation with young people about what they should do if they hear threats at school or see something concerning on social media, and make sure they know how to report information about a potential weapon on campus.

FAQ: Do I have to come to court if I'm subpoenaed?

Yes. In criminal cases, a subpoena is a court order issued to victims or witnesses, requiring them to appear in court on a particular date. If you don't come to court when subpoenaed, a judge has the authority to issue an order for your arrest and an order for you to show cause as to why you did not appear as directed by the court. Failure to abide by a subpoena could result in a judge finding you in contempt of court, which could then result in penalties such as fines or even time in custody. If you are a victim or witness and have a conflict that would prevent you from appearing in court on the date listed in a subpoena, contact the District Attorney's Office for guidance as soon as possible.

Visit www.charmeckda.com for the latest news, information about the courts, and more. Follow @charmeckda on Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram.

