

# Local Growers Apply For Charter Cotton Cooperative Is Sought

Chowan County cotton farmers have applied for a charter for a cooperative to be established in the county. The purpose of the cooperative is to gin cotton. The reason that these farmers feel the need for the cotton gin is because the nearest gin is about 40 miles away. Cotton or corn is needed in a peanut rotation and on some of the sandier soils here in Chowan County corn yields have been so low and the cost of production has been so high that cotton is a natural substitute on this type of soil, according to Pete Thompson, county extension chairman.

The group of farmers met on Friday morning and had a report of the feasibility study. The study showed that a gin was feasible if those that had signed up for cotton would produce for this gin.

After the feasibility study report they elected a board of directors and asked for a firm commitment from the farmers to grow cotton. Serving on the board are Carroll Bass, Fahey Byrum, Thurman Ashley, Clarence Leary, Jr., David Ober, and George Jordan.

Each farmer was also asked to buy one share of common stock for \$50 so that some money would be available to pick up incidental expenses that will be occurring. Each farmer producing cotton is asked to buy one \$50 stock for each acre of cotton that they will be producing in 1980. This money will be used as equity in the gin so that the balance of money necessary can be borrowed for the gin construction.

It is the feeling that in order to have the gin in place this fall,

there is only a period of two to three weeks from now to make a commitment for the cotton production. Cotton would be planted on corn land. Corn planting time is over generally before cotton is planted and the decision of whether to plant cotton or corn has to be made soon. If a person should choose not to grow cotton, it will be too late for him to plant corn.

Those farmers who are undecided and will not plant cotton without a gin will have planted corn and this means that the gin will miss that many acres of cotton in 1980.

If you have not been contacted but are interested in producing cotton, please check with any of the cotton cooperative board of

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FARMERS FORM COOPERATIVE — The board of directors of Albemarle Cotton Cooperative are pictured here during a meeting Friday at Edenton Municipal Building. Left to right are: Fahey Byrum, Thurman Ashley, J. Clarence Leary, Jr., David Ober, and George Jordan. Not pictured is Carroll Bass. The cooperative plans to purchase a cotton gin for operation in Chowan County. (Staff Photo by Luke Amburn.)

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## School Board Faces Shortage Of Funds

A shortage of current expense funds could result in a cash flow problem in the Edenton-Chowan Schools unless the Board of Education revises the budget, warned J. P. Timberlake, certified public accountant, during an audit review, Tuesday night. He said the budget resolution adopted for 1979-80 included a fund balance appropriation which was about \$39,600 greater than the fund balance available on June 30, 1979.

Timberlake told the school board the oversight resulted when certain receivables were carried over from the previous year and placed in current expenses. He said the budget should be amended to reflect the difference in fund balance available.

The auditor recommended approaching the county commissioners concerning a trade-out of funds from the capital outlay budget which has \$25,664 available and a possible shift of funds from the food service budget where there are about \$73,000 available.

In responding to question from

board member Dr. J. H. Horton, Timberlake commented, "It is a common misconception, but receivables are not part of the statutory fund balance. It is difficult to know at the end of June, just how much money you really have."

Dr. John Dunn, superintendent, said that in the past, billing for reimbursable expenses was done at the first of June, and that the income was appropriated in an effort to stretch the budget to a maximum.

Timberlake suggested not budgeting those funds in the future, but using them as a cushion for unanticipated expenses.

The overall increase in spending from 1978-79 to 1979-80 amounted to \$737,028 or 19 per cent, and the overall increase in per pupil expenditure was up 28 per cent. Federal grant funds coming into the schools increased 43 per cent, Timberlake reported.

It was recommended that efforts be continued to compile the

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## Public Parade

### 'Horrendous' Charge

The following appeared in the ElectriCities' report to members dated February 29:

"The monthly wholesale fuel charge that Virginia Electric and Power Company levies on its municipal customers zoomed from \$13.12 per 1,000 kilowatt hours in December to \$17 per 1,000 kwh in January, a level that strains belief.

"At ElectriCities' request, our consulting engineers sent an accountant to Richmond for two days to run an audit on the charge. The period checked was April, 1979, through January, 1980. The findings are that the fuel charge seemed to be in compliance with FERC regulations. Which is not to say that better company management could not have prevented it from reaching its present levels.

"Vepco says it will have its nuclear plants running and some oil-fired units converted to coal in the near future. If so, the fuel

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James E. Taylor

## Taylor Candidate For School Board

James E. Taylor, an Edenton resident and financial aid officer at ECSU, has announced he will seek election to the first township seat on the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education. That seat is currently held by Mrs. Emily G. Amburn who will not seek re-election.

The announcement of his candidacy will result in a three-way race in the non-partisan contest. Also seeking the post is John A. Mitchener, III and Mrs. Patricia Downum.

In a statement, Taylor said excellence in education must be the primary academic goal and that consolidation on the junior and senior high school levels is a step in the right direction.

He said the attributes of his candidacy are teamwork, accountability, youthfulness, leadership, optimism and

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## Farm Alcohol Production Is Discussed

While alcohol production on farms may cut some diesel and gasoline fuel expenses, it will not be as cheap as many farmers have been led to believe, said Dr. Everette Nichols, an economist with the NCSU Agricultural Extension Service.

Speaking to farmers at a meeting Tuesday afternoon, Dr. Nichols said there will be no 40 cent per gallon alcohol as has been advertised by some companies including Mother Earth News. An experimental still built at NCSU will yield alcohol made from corn at a price of \$1.75 per gallon for the first year of operation. According to his figures, the cost per gallon without computing fuel, labor, operating or equipment costs comes to 86 cents. That figure includes a corn by-product credit of 33 cents or one-third of the cost of raw materials.

Figuring corn at \$2.80 per

bushel, it would come to \$1.04 per gallon before subtracting the by-product credit. The corn by-product, rich in protein, fat and fiber, can be fed to cattle and swine straight from the still without drying.

Other raw materials such as wheat, barley, Irish potatoes, sweet potatoes and sugar beets do not produce a usable by-producer.

He said it would cost about \$800 to build and put into service a still capable of producing one gallon per hour. A 25 gal. per hour device would cost from \$90,000 to \$250,000 to build.

Among the factors to be considered in setting up a distillery are raw materials, ingredient costs, fuel such as wood, labor, operating costs, and ownership costs.

On a national basis, diversion of surpluses from export to alcohol production, while cutting

petroleum fuel costs, could adversely effect the balance of payments and weaken the American dollar, Dr. Nichols said.

Price increases of up to \$2.00 per

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EXPERIMENTAL STILL — Farmers attending seminar on alcohol production for farm use regarded with interest an experimental still built at NCSU. John Glover, an agricultural

## Vepco Spokesman Addresses Chamber Of Commerce

A Vepco spokesman said here Thursday morning that the firm has "turned the corner" in a fight to reduce electric rates in Northeastern North Carolina. Speaking at the 7:30 A.M. meeting of Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, Randy McIver of Roanoke Rapids admitted that this has not been a good year for the company.

As he was talking, the word was coming from Vepco corporate office in Richmond, Va., that downed nuclear plants would not be returned to operation for another month or more. McIver explained to the Edenton group that when nuclear units are down the supply has to come from higher priced oil-fired generators.

Vepco was hit with yet another blow Friday when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission ordered a "private" investigation of the utility company.

The study of Vepco's management could take as much as eight months and the findings will not be made public. North Carolina officials are critical of the federal commission's decision.

The commission ordered the study following a petition last December from Operation Overcharge, a citizen organization in 22 counties of Eastern North Carolina. The group was successful earlier in the year to get the N.C. Utilities Commission to conduct a study. The state's findings are on appeal.

McIver told his Edenton audience that while Vepco is not the most popular firm in the state right now, efforts are being taken

to correct past mistakes and predicted that by 1985 Vepco will be competitive with other utilities operating in the state.

The company has 70,000 retail customers while another 94,000 are served by various groups who purchase power wholesale. He put the blame for the conversion from coal to oil on federal regulatory agencies. Since 1974 the company has been getting off oil and back to coal although federal regulations are tough.

McIver said it would take from three to five years for Vepco to accomplish what is necessary to perfect conversions and get nuclear plants back on line. He said any move must be proven to be cost effective.

The Southern Regional vice president said nuclear units were doing well before being crippled by federal agencies following the Three Mile Island incident. An example is a \$1-billion unit that is ready to be put on line but is being held up because the permit has been withheld. While units are down it costs Vepco some \$10 to \$12-million per month.

While Gov. James B. Hunt has stated that Vepco's rates have hurt industrial prospects from coming into the service area, McIver said: "We have not seen the first customer move out because of our rates."

## Hearing Location Protest Slated

Issuance of a discharge permit to CF Industries in Tunis will be discussed at a public hearing in Raleigh, April 3. According to reports, a tentative agreement between the state and the industry has already been reached.

The meeting is scheduled to begin at 10 A.M. in hearing room 6X of the Archdale Building on Salisbury St.

The tentative agreement calls for a three year permit, to end January 31, 1982. The Tunis plant is currently operating on an 18-month permit that would have expired in November, 1979, but because of the industry contesting it, it remains in effect.

Also to be discussed will be the limitation on discharge of suspended solids. Asst. Atty. Gen. Van Oakley said the state has no statutory or regulatory authority to include such a limitation.

CF Industries originally was seeking a five year permit, while the state was asking for issuance of an 18-month permit because of the nutrient sensitivity of the Chowan River. CF Industries has taken the position they are entitled to the same length of permit as other industries.

Capt. A. M. Howard, chairman of the Water Resources Board of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce and a member of the Arrowhead Beach Property Owners Association, said both groups are sending letters protesting the hearing site and time, charging it prevents in-

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## Electric Bills Budget Problem

Chowan County and Edenton-Chowan Schools face a budget problem with the line item for electricity. The question now before administrators is where money will be found for budget overruns.

Cliff Copeland, county manager, said Monday that the county has already exceeded the budget for 1979-80 by some \$6,000. There are still three months remaining in the fiscal year.

The manager said it is becoming increasingly difficult to find funds in an already slim budget. "We have a problem," he said.

There is also a major problem with Edenton-Chowan Schools. Mrs. Pauline Travis said there is a total of \$11,771 left in the electricity account with four payments due through June 30.

The charges have averaged \$4,983 per month during the period from July 1, 1979 to February 20, 1980. If the charges remain near this figure the schools could be nearly \$8,000 over the budget for electricity.

W. B. Gardner, Edenton town administrator, said the fuel charge from Vepco which is passed on to the consumer has played havoc with all budgets. He said there is no indication of much reduction at this time.