

CHOWAN HERALD

482-4418

50¢

Wednesday, July 20, 2016



UPCOMING HOME GAMES

GAME STARTS AT 7PM AT HISTORIC HICKS FIELD

Gates open at 6:00 pm

July 20 vs Petersburg Generals (Wayback Wednesday: Salute to Prince, Pepsi Night)

July 22 vs Peninsula Pilots
(Kids Run the Bases, Post Game Fireworks, Gates County Night)

July 23 vs Wilmington Sharks
(Kids Run the Bases, Princesses on a Mission Night/Childhood Cancer Fundraiser)

July 25 Morehead City Marlins (50¢ Hot Dogs)

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Survey brings concerns of leadership, student conduct

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Nearly a third of teachers surveyed recently at John A. Holmes High School did not regard the school as safe.

While only 68 percent of teachers rated the high school as safe,

the same survey showed 100 percent of teachers surveyed felt that the elementary schools and the middle school were safe facilities.

"We want to ensure that our faculty and staff and students are safe when they're on that campus," Superintendent Rob Jackson told the Edenton-Chowan Board of Educa-

tion at its July 12 meeting.

Jackson added that the school system would continue to work with the Edenton Police Department, Chowan County Sheriff's Office and Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton on ways to improve campus security.

"Certainly this is an area for us

to work on," Jackson said.

The information was part of Jackson's review of highlights of the 2016 North Carolina Teacher Working Conditions Survey.

Results of this portion of the survey focused only on responses by teachers in the Edenton-Chowan Schools. A comparison

survey comparing their responses to others across the state will be released in a couple of months, Jackson said.

Jackson noted that initial results show teachers in the local schools expressed a high rate of

See SURVEY, 4A

Music By the Bay



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Look Homeward was the featured band at Sunday afternoon's concert on the lawn of the Penelope Barker House Welcome Center on the downtown waterfront. The concert was presented as part of the annual Music By the Bay series.

County backs return to earlier catfish inspections system

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Chowan County officials have gone on record in opposition to a federal regulatory change that a local businessman says threatens the livelihood of area fishermen and other workers in the seafood industry.

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously at its July 5 meeting to send to the congressional delegation a letter supporting Senate Resolution 28, which would move catfish inspections from the U.S. Depart-

ment of Agriculture back to the Food and Drug Administration.

"The current inspection program costs \$700,000 annually; however, the USDA inspection program would cost approximately \$30 million to be established and another \$14 million for annual operations," the board's letter states. "The proposed regulations were designed to give protections on imported catfish; however, native catfish are also being affected. Catfishing in Northeast North Carolina provides the livelihood of over 600 families. Because of the potential for detrimental impact

on local economies, we ask for our consideration and support of Senate Resolution 28."

Ricky Nixon of Murray L. Nixon Fishery in Rocky Hock said this week that in order to comply with the USDA inspections process he would have to build a new facility to process catfish. That would not be cost-effective for his operation, he said.

"With FDA we haven't ever had a problem," Nixon said.

The FDA process has not failed to protect public health and safety, so the move to USDA is unwarranted, he said.

Nixon said there had never been any health-related problems with the area's wild catfish industry under the FDA inspections system.

"We have been cutting catfish for 50 years and never had a problem," Nixon said.

Nixon said if the change becomes permanent it probably would cause him to cut his workforce in half, "because I would have to get out of the catfish business."

That in turn would put commercial fishermen in the area out of the catfish business as well, he said, because those commercial

fishermen catch catfish would no longer have access to a processor.

"We're the only wild catfish processor in the state," Nixon said. He said his facility processes catfish caught by companies such as Quality Seafood in Elizabeth City and Frog Island in Weeksville, as well as a number of fishermen in Virginia.

"We have been fighting this thing hard," Nixon said, adding "it's a waste of money for the taxpayers."

Nixon said Rep. Walter Jones,

See CATFISH, 2A

Perquimans wind project to be reviewed County sets meetings on Timbermill Wind Project

BY PETER WILLIAMS
The Perquimans Weekly

The Perquimans Planning Board reviewed plans for a \$300 million wind power project on July 12 but decided it wanted more time to consider some of the information.

The next meeting is set for Aug. 2.

Apex Clean Energy is seeking a Conditional Use Permit (CUP) for the project known as Timbermill. About 17,000 acres of Perquimans and Chowan land

would be leased, most of it owned by Weyerhaeuser.

The county allows wind power projects, but considers them in a special category, hence the CUP process.

In February the Perquimans County Commission made changes to its wind rules. An outside consultant reviewed the Apex CUP document and concluded it satisfied the Perquimans ordinance.

However Clarion Associates, a Chapel Hill firm, suggested commissioners should consider

adding some conditions if it decides to approve the project.

Opponents of the Apex project maintain the Clarion report is not an independent study of the project, but simply a review of the data that Apex provided.

Chad W. Essick, a partner in the Raleigh law firm Poyner Spruill, raised a number of questions that he feels need to be answered. Among them are health issues and the potential that property values will fall if the wind

turbines are allowed.

The applicant has failed "thus far to meet its burden of showing there will be no adverse impact on public health or safety and that the proposed project will not substantially injure adjoining or abutting property values," Essick said in an e-mail response.

"A critique by a licensed appraiser submitted on Tuesday night showed that data from the study they submitted demon-

See PERQUIMANS, 4A

County sets meetings on Timbermill Wind Project

From staff reports

month.

The Chowan County Planning Board will meet next week to review the conditional use permit application for the Timbermill Wind Project.

The review by the planning board is advisory. The actual decision on the permit application by Charlottesville, Va.-based Apex Clean Energy Inc. will be made by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners following a quasi-judicial hearing - probably late next

The planning board meeting will be July 26 at 7 p.m. in the Chowan County Office Building on Freemason Street.

Apex has proposed a utility-scale wind energy facility in the Bear Swamp and Center Hill areas of Chowan and Perquimans counties.

The planning board meeting will include a staff report, which will introduce the project and the application, and also will

See PROJECT, 4A

School board backs switch to Chrome Books for students

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education voted



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unanimously July 12 to replace iPads with less costly Chrome Books for students.

"The Chrome Book is now less than half the cost of an iPad," Superintendent Rob Jackson said in recommending the change to Chrome Books.

The plan as approved would also provide for a

decrease to \$50,000 annually - or 50 percent of the school system's current contribution - for funding the devices. It would also cut student fees by 50 percent, making them more affordable for students to take home with them to do their homework.

The plan, which Jackson characterized to the board

as "sustainable," would also provide funding for device repair.

By voting to approve Jackson's request the school board authorized the superintendent to purchase 600 Chrome Books for up to \$125,000, to authorize a required annual student fee of \$25 rather than the current optional fee which is double

that amount, and to place \$50,000 in the Sustainability Fund each school year.

Jackson said that the required fee would ensure that "everybody has skin in the game" when it came to using and being responsible for the new devices.

School board chair John Guard said before the vote that he hated having to re-

quire that students pay a fee to use the device but saw no way around it if the school system was going to meet its goal of providing all students with learning devices in the future.

"I hate that we're having to nickel and dime families," Guard said, "but we don't

See BOARD, 4A