

# CHOWAN HERALD

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Wednesday, December 7, 2016



Community group forms to stand against violence - 6B

50¢

## Center Hill-Crossroads Rural VFD earns improved rating

From staff reports

North Carolina Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Wayne Goodwin announced last week that the Center Hill-Crossroads has improved its fire protection rating.

The department now has a 5/9E rating, which takes effect March 1, 2017.

The improved rating is the result of an inspection, conducted

by officials with the Department of Insurance Office of State Fire Marshal, that is required on a regular basis as part of the North Carolina Response Rating System.

"I'd like to congratulate Chief (Mike) Hamilton for the department's performance and for the hard work of all the department members," Goodwin said. Residents of the district "should rest easy knowing they have a fine group of firefighters protecting

them and their property in case of an emergency."

Among other things, the routine inspections look for proper staffing levels, sufficient equipment, proper maintenance of equipment, communications capabilities and availability of a water source.

The NCRRS rating system ranges from one (highest) to 10 (not recognized as a certified fire department by the state), with most rural departments falling into the

9S category.

While lower ratings do not necessarily indicate poor service, a higher rating does suggest that a department is overall better equipped to respond to fires in its district.

Higher ratings can also significantly lower homeowners insurance rates in that fire district.

State law requires OSFM officials to inspect departments serving districts of 100,000 people or

less, which makes up all but six of the state's fire districts.

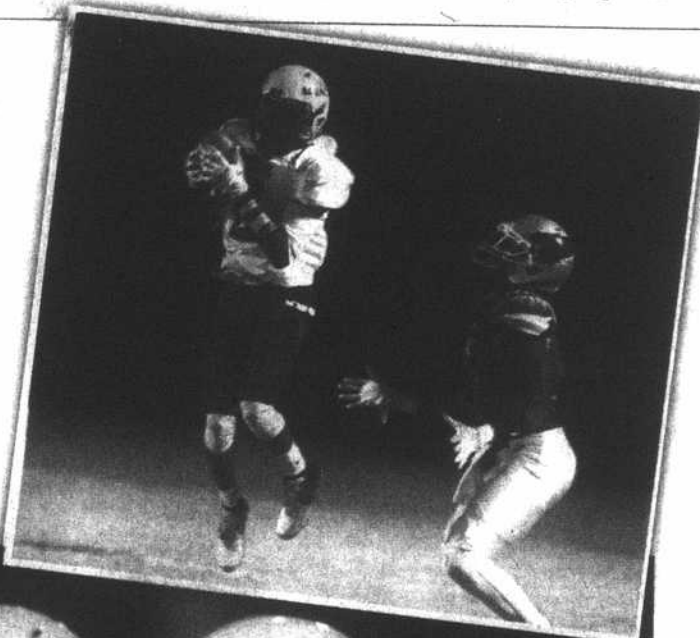
Goodwin also wrote a letter to Hamilton congratulating the department on its achievement.

"I commend you and your department for your dedication and commitment to making your community a safer place to live," Goodwin wrote in the letter.

Goodwin added: "It was the

See FIRE, 4A

## ACES WIN IN EC



STAFF PHOTOS BY THOMAS J. TURNEY

(Above) Edenton players celebrate their win over Northeastern. (Top right) Khalil Blount intercepts the ball at the end of Friday's game. The Aces play in Tabor City Friday for the East Regional championship. The team plans to leave Friday around noon and supporters are urged to line Broad Street between the school and Queen Street for a big send-off. See story inside on 7A.

## Mold delays airport lease

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

Negotiations between the town and state officials over a new lease for the space occupied by DOT offices at Edenton's Northeastern Regional Airport have been temporarily halted by a report of excessive mold at the site.

The mold report is part of a workman's compensation claim filed by someone who works in the building, according to Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton.

Knighton said that late last week she received a copy of a report prepared by a N.C. Department of Transportation safety inspector who was asked to conduct sampling for the presence of mold in response to the claim.

"(The) report said there were higher than normal mold spore counts present," Knighton said. "The report

See MOLD, 4A

## Guard, Wright depart board



GUARD WRIGHT  
BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

For two veteran members of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education, John Guard and Kay Wright, last night marked their final meeting as members of the board.

Both were on hand to see new board members Joan White and Paul Clifton sworn in. A new chair and vice chair for the board were also due to be selected.

Guard, who served 14 years on the board and most recently has served as its chair since 2012, said that leaving the board would be a bittersweet experience. A former educator, Guard served as a teacher, principal and human resources director before his retirement.

See BOARD, 2A

## Nixon, Kehayes, Winborne depart county board

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

Chowan County Commissioners Keith Nixon, Alex Kehayes and Emmett Winborne completed their service as commissioners Monday night.

Kehayes served one term on the board.

Both Nixon and Winborne took office in 2008 as the county began to double down on dealing with a fiscal crisis.

Nixon said that the financial crisis was the biggest challenge he faced as a county commissioner.

"The county was \$450,000 in the hole the day I took office," Nixon recalled this week. He said he hadn't known about the county's financial problems until after the Primary and didn't realize the full extent of the problem until he

See COUNTY, 4A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Outgoing Chowan County Commissioners (l-r) Emmett Winborne, Keith Nixon and Alex Kehayes enjoy a lighthearted moment just prior to the board's meeting Monday night.

## Smith elected as chairman for third year

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

Jeff Smith was elected chairman of the Chowan



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County Board of Commissioners for a third consecutive year at the board's organizational meeting Monday night.

Smith's election was noteworthy in that a commissioner typically serves only two consecutive years as the board's chairman. The board elects a chairman every year but

the general practice is for the chairman to serve two consecutive years in that capacity.

The election of Smith, a farmer who represents District 1, was unanimous.

The board also was unanimous in electing Commissioner Greg Bonner as vice-chairman. Bonner, a former chief of the Edenton Police

Department who represents District 3, and Smith are both Democrats.

The organizational meeting also included the administration of the oath of office to three new commissioners: Democrat Don Faircloth and Republicans Patti Kersey and Ron Cummings.

Faircloth was elected

to the at-large seat while Kersey holds a District 2 seat and Cummings a District 1 seat.

Cummings defeated Democrat James "Jill" White in the Nov. 8 General Election. White had defeated incumbent Commissioner Emmett Winborne in the

See CHAIRMAN, 4A

DRIVE THRU CHRISTMAS PANORAMA  
The Greatest Gift

DECEMBER  
16<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup> & 18<sup>th</sup>  
6 PM - 8 PM

