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Candlelight Tour attendance tops
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Hotel project groundbreaking likely in 2017

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

With the thorny matter of financing nearly resolved, the developer of a hotel planned for the former Hotel Hinton building on East King Street should be able to break ground on the major renovation project about a year from now.

That was the message that Bob Howsare of SAGA Construction and Development Inc. brought to Edenton Monday afternoon when he presented an update on the ho-

tel project to the Edenton Preservation Commission.

SAGA has negotiated a non-binding agreement with a Wilmington-based lender that should pave the way for the renovation project to move forward, according to Howsare.

The building, which is located next to the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse and backs up to the Gaslight Square parking lot, most recently housed Chowan County Government offices. It was built in the early 1990s as the Hotel Hinton on the site of the previous

Bayview Hotel.

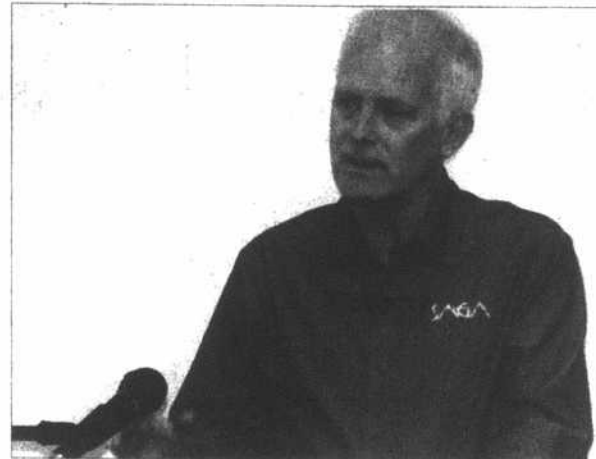
The property has been home to hotels and inns going back to the Colonial era.

Howsare told the commission he was glad to be back in Edenton and said the hotel project had been his number one passion for more than two years.

For more than a year and a half, he said, he has been working on financing for the project.

An especially complex part of the financing is the role of new

See HOTEL, 3A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER
Bob Howsare of SAGA Construction and Development addresses the Edenton Preservation Commission Monday.

BOUND FOR THE CHAMPIONSHIP GAME

STAFF PHOTOS BY MALCOLM SHIELDS

Edenton celebrates the 2A East Regional Final championship after defeating South Columbus 50-14, Friday. (Below) The Edenton entrance made its way to Tabor City, Friday. The Aces travel to Winston-Salem Saturday to face Reidsville for the 2A State Championship. The team will leave the high school around 10:45 a.m. Saturday and the public is invited to cheer the squad on from Broad Street and West Queen Street as the buses leave.



MORE INSIDE

See more stories and photos from the 2A East Regional Final championship inside on 4A, 6A and 7A.

Time short for SBA loan apps

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

A spokesman for the federal Small Business Administration told the Chowan County Board of Commissioners last week that county residents with damage related to Hurricane Matthew need to apply for assistance within the next few weeks.

The deadline to apply for SBA loans for repairs related to Hurricane Matthew is Jan. 9, according to SBA spokesman Tanim Choudhury.

Businesses eligible for economic injury loans related to the hurricane have until July to apply for those loans, Choudhury said.

Economic injury loans differ from loans for remediation of property damage because they focus on ways other than property damage that the storm has affected a business, such as damage to the homes or businesses of customers, Choudhury explained.

Choudhury told the county commissioners that if they know of anyone with damages from Hurricane Matthew they should have them register immediately with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA). FEMA makes grants for those who are eligible and the SBA makes loans, but FEMA registration is a requirement for SBA disaster assistance loans.

Those who apply for a FEMA grant should also apply for an SBA loan, Choudhury said.

The interest rate can be as



CHOUDHURY



Jordan named school board chairman

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Leadership of the school board has passed into the hands of two veteran members.

At the board's Dec. 6 monthly meeting Gene Jordan was sworn in as chairman of the board while Jean Bunch was named vice-chair.

Both said they considered it an honor to serve in those roles during the coming year.

"It's always an honor when your colleagues put their confidence in you," Jordan, who has once before chaired the board, said.

Jordan, who has served for 18 years on the school board, said one goal that is very important to him is to emphasize to his fellow board members that he wants each of them to feel

they have a voice and to encourage them to speak out concerning issues confronting the board. It is by hearing different opinions, he said, that the board can experience truly hearing the voice of the people through the voices of those who



JORDAN



BUNCH

represent them.

Jordan said he felt the board was in a good place right now in its efforts to focus on providing what it will take to make each student in the school system successful under the leadership of Superintendent Rob Jackson.

Jordan said that the continued rise in the number of those graduating from high school in the Edenton-Chowan Schools now is proof that Jackson's philosophy works.

"I think that is an achievement we can be proud of," Jordan said.

Jordan said that while his youngest child graduated from Holmes last spring, he had learned from having children in the school system the value of taking the time to listen to students and hear their concerns firsthand.

"I think it gave me a different perspective," Jordan said, adding that he would like to continue hearing from students in the future.

Jordan added that the school system also needs to make sure that

See BOARD, 3A

Area added to Va. port's foreign trade zone

BY JON HAWLEY
Daily Advance Staff Writer

Area officials say inclusion of northeastern North Carolina counties in the



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Port of Virginia's Foreign Trade Zone is one more reason for manufacturers with international supply chains to locate in the region.

The U.S. Department of Commerce has approved seven counties in North Carolina to join the FTZ, the port announced last week. The counties include Pasquotank, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford and Perquimans.

Among other benefits, companies participating in an FTZ save money on duties paid to U.S. Customs and Border Protection, which helps their goods remain globally competitive while using American labor.

State Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, called the FTZ expansion a victory for the region - a victory long in the making. He said some lawmakers opposed expanding

the Port of Virginia's trade zone. They wanted more commerce to flow to North Carolina ports, he said, despite northeastern North Carolina's close ties to the growing port. He noted the Port of Virginia can handle larger cargo ships than North Carolina's ports can.

"That was a bear getting through," Steinburg said of legislation he proposed, which ultimately had to be

attached to an unrelated agricultural bill to pass.

Asked about Virginia's delay in expanding the FTZ, Steinburg said he didn't know the details of that. However, he noted Virginia changed governors, from Bob McDonnell to Terry McAuliffe, several months after the bill passed. McAuliffe didn't oppose the FTZ expansion, Steinburg said, but the change in administration meant many people

had to be brought up to speed on the process.

Steinburg said county managers and economic developers he's spoken with are "ecstatic" about the FTZ expansion. Coupled with road improvements and state reforms to taxes and regulations, he said the region should be very attractive now to new companies. The

See TRADE, 2A

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