

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Students ride to wins in roller coaster building contest - 7

"News from Next Door"

JULY 2, 2014 - JULY 8, 2014

50 cents

Weather could dampen fireworks

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A fireworks display over the Perquimans River is scheduled for Saturday night, but organizers say it could be pushed back a day if it rains either Friday or Saturday.

An area of low pressure drifting off the Florida east coast Monday could turn into a tropical troublemaker for Independence Day along the Carolinas coast according to weather officials.

The same technicians putting on the fireworks in Edenton on Friday will be doing the Hertford-Winfall display the next day. If Edenton is forced to postpone the Friday event, the Chowan County display will be on Saturday and the Perquimans County fireworks will be moved to Sunday.

Diane Stallings, one of the organizers of the Perquimans event, said the group had no plans as of Monday for what will happen if it rains all three days.

"We could do it that Monday (July 7) or we could just cancel it," she said. "We haven't crossed that bridge yet."

By using the same crew as the Edenton event and holding it on another day, Stallings said Perquimans County gets a discount. The Chowan event is larger, costing \$20,000, so it will dictate what happens. The cost of the Perquimans event is \$7,000.

Using the same crew for both events is beneficial

See FIREWORKS, 4

PLANTATION PLEASED WITH TOURNEY



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A crowd gathers at the clubhouse for the presentation of the winning check to Ken Looper, Sunday.

Saunders: Classic was 'off the charts'

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Despite a small field of golfers, Albemarle Plantation officials seem more than pleased with their first-ever professional golf tournament.

"It was off the charts," said Kenny Saunders, the catalyst for bringing the NGA tournament to Perquimans County and the resident golf pro at The Sound Links. "Our residents enjoyed every minute of it. I didn't know what to expect."

The Biggs Cadillac-Buick-GMC Classic wrapped up Sunday. Ken Looper, a 25-year-old from Louisiana, came away with the win and a \$5,000 check. Earlier in the tournament Thomas Hay set a new course record with a score of 64.

Going into the tournament, Plantation officials expected 30 or 40 young pros would attend. Saunders got the bad news on Monday.

"They told me they had 11 golfers and asked me if I

See CLASSIC, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Kenny Saunders, the golf pro at Albemarle Plantation, raises his arms after sinking a long putt on the ninth hole Saturday during the Biggs Classic NGA tournament.

Final OK on bridge plan on hold: DOT

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The N.C. Department of Transportation officials will hold off seeking final approval on a plan to replace the S-Bridge in Hertford until they can meet with downtown residents this month.

DOT had hoped to meet with all the permitting agencies like the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers in June. That's on hold until after the July 14 meeting in Hertford.

DOT is favoring a plan that would build a new bridge extending off Church Street and wind up at a point in Winfall near Larry's Drive In. Instead of a swing bridge, the new structure would be fixed and as tall as the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge nearby.

Some downtown residents are now concerned about that and formed a group called Citizens for the Preservation and Growth of Hertford (CPGH).

One member of the group is Nancy Theodore, a Phelps Street resident who stands to lose her home based on the route of the new bridge.

"We hope to let them (DOT) know a lot of people in town are unhappy," Theodore said last week. "A lot of people didn't understand the design of the bridge given the perspectives they showed us. A lot of people feel misled. People want to see what exactly this is going to do."

That's what DOT hopes

See BRIDGE PLAN, 5

Banks steps down after seven years leading commission

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

After seven years, Bert Banks stepped down Monday as the executive director of the Hertford-based Albemarle Commission.

At 64, Banks is retiring from the 10-county agency that administers more than \$6 million a year in state and federal funds.

"I think the work we did was important, we made a difference and it was fulfilling work," Banks said last week. "We did things that really effected people."

Banks made the retirement announcement earlier this year. Bob Woodard, the chairman of the commission board, said a permanent replacement for Banks could be in place by September.

For now Darleen Harrell will serve as interim director. Harrell

recently retired from the senior program run by the commission. The new executive director will need to fill that position as well as the one that oversees workforce programs. Natalie Rountree also stepped down on Monday to take a job as county manager in Gates County.

Dave Whitmire will be the interim director for workforce development and Laura Alvarico is the interim director for the Area Agency on Aging.

Also retiring was Ruth Mengel, the office manager who has been there 30 years. She has agreed to stay on until a new director can be hired, Woodard said.

The Albemarle Commission administers state and federal senior and workforce programs for Cam-



BANKS

den, Chowan, Currituck, Perquimans and Pasquotank counties along with five others in the northeast. It has a staff of about 35 people.

The agency had an annual budget about \$4 million when Banks was hired and \$6 million based on the 2012-13 financial report. Federal and state appropriations provided about 81 percent of the money. The current budget is closer to \$6.8 million.

The Area Agency on Aging gets about 46 percent of the total and another 38 percent goes toward workforce development. Economic development efforts and general government makes up the rest.

The departure of Banks comes early in Bob Woodard's tenure

as chairman of the commission board. Woodard is also a Dare County commissioner.

"He (Banks) has been a huge asset to our commission for these last seven years. He's very well respected throughout the community. I hate seeing him leave just as I become chairman. That's a challenge."

Woodard said the advertised salary range for the director job is \$85,000 to \$128,000.

For now Banks is returning to Raleigh. He rented an apartment in Hertford for his tenure at the commission and kept a home in Raleigh. His wife teaches school there and Banks has commuted back to Raleigh on weekends.

He said the northeast region has a unique set of issues and challenges. He is a native of Washington, N.C.

"We have the have and the have-nots and we have it in the same counties," he said.

Dare is often held out as the richest county in the region, but in Dare there is poverty as well.

"Perquimans County has some wonderful natural assets, but some of our counties don't have natural assets, they don't have economic assets."

Banks said he's proud of what the commission has been able to accomplish. He also wishes more could be done to improve the economic conditions in the region, but economic development is not in a major core mission of the commission.

"When I came the commission was in decline. We had probably 20 staff members. We've been able to

See BANKS, 4

Artist wants new mural

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Kelly Reynolds grew up with a mural and she wants one back.

Reynolds spent her early years in Hertford and graduated from Perquimans County High School in 2003. She and her husband moved away for 10 years, but have been back for the past two.

Specifically Reynolds would like to see a mural back on the wall of Hertford Hardware on

Church and Grubb streets. The mural painted there in the early 1980s had to be removed because it had deteriorated to the point it was damaging the building.

"Right now I'm just seeing how many people would be interested in helping," Reynolds said. "We're in the very beginning stages. I've talked with a few local artists about coming up with a design."

Reynolds isn't talking about recreating what was there



REYNOLDS

See NEW MURAL, 4

Hunter safety shooters rise to the top

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

State championships eluded the traditional sports at Perquimans County High School last year, but not Nicolas Forbes and Drew Baccus.

Forbes earned the state high school individual rifle champion and Baccus won the state individual hunter skills/orienting championship.

Perquimans County High School finished third place overall among the top 30 teams that qualified at the state tournament in Ellerbe.

For Forbes, it meant hit-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Drew Baccus and Nick Forbes took home state championships in Hunter Safety this year.

See HUNTER, 2



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