

THE PERQUIMANS COUNTY WEEKLY



Christmas parade photos, 7

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 13, 2017

50 cents

County green lights athletic complex

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County Commission gave the green light last week for the school system to use lottery construction money to pay for part of a new football field.

The vote was 3-2. Commissioners Joe Hoffer, Charles Woodard and Wal-

lace Nelson supported the expenditure. Commissioners Kyle Jones and Fondella Leigh opposed the move. Commissioner Ed Muzzulin was absent on Monday.

Jones opposed spending lottery funds for a football field because the school system might face other pressing capital expenses.

In North Carolina, counties are responsible for

building and maintaining school buildings. The state provides much of the money for teachers.

The school system gets about \$125,000 a year in money from the lottery that must be spent on capital expenses. Monday's request was to use \$274,000 from the account to pay for bleachers and a press box. The school system has about \$389,000

in the account right now.

On Tuesday Jones said he spoke his mind and voted his conscience, and is now ready to move forward.

"Respectful dissent is a sign of a healthy democratic Republic. Our board has spoken. I'll do whatever I can to support our school board's direction on the complex."

Superintendent Matthew

Cheeseman said he understands there may have been some concern over the lottery money.

"I recognize why they voted no, but I think there may have been some misunderstanding that we were going to blow the whole thing on the athletic field," Cheeseman said.

The school board already has \$600,000 for the field

that was left in the will of the late Charles Ward. An anonymous donor has already agreed to pay \$250,000 for the field house.

Plus the lottery fund is constantly getting a quarterly infusion of cash, Cheeseman said.

"We get about \$125,000 a year in installments and

See COMPLEX, 5

Nelson named new chair

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County Commission has a new chairman.

Every year, during the first meeting in December, the board votes on officers for the coming year.

On Dec. 4 Commissioner Kyle Jones, who was chairman, nominated Wallace Nelson to serve in 2018. The vote was unanimous in favor with one member, Ed Muzzulin, absent.

Fondella Leigh, who served as vice chair for the past year, will remain in that post by unanimous vote.

"When I became chairman, I told them I'd only do it for a year," Jones said. "It was a privilege to nominate Wallace. I've known him since I was 15, and we're fortunate to have him and Fondella leading us."

The previous chairman before Jones was Janice Cole. She held the post for a number of years before she decided not to run again.

Jones reflected on the past year.

"Our accomplishments are built on the good decision-making of prior boards of this county. So I'm conscious of the fact that our decision-making will influence future boards, which is a big part of the reason why I'm so adamant about keeping spending low."

"When I campaigned in 2016, I made it clear that our older-adult and senior population were priorities for me, and I think our budget reflected that. All the data we have suggests we're going to get older as a county in the next few decades, so I'm going to do my best to see that area continue to be a budget priority."

"Back in my old 'seat,' I

See NELSON, 5

SCHOOL CHRISTMAS CARDS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The winning Christmas card entry from Perquimans County High School was created by Jessica Brown. The winning verse: 'May your Christmas sparkle with moments of love and laughter. May the year ahead be full of happiness and bliss' was also written by Brown.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The winning Christmas card entry from Perquimans County Middle School was created by MacKenzie Davenport. The winning verse: 'The gift of love, the gift of peace, the gift of happiness, may all these be yours at Christmas' was written by Macon Winslow.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The winning Christmas card entry from Hertford Grammar School was created by Madilyn Young. The winning verse: 'May all your holiday wishes come true. Have a happy holiday' was written by Khila Smith.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The winning Christmas card entry from Perquimans Central School was created by Amarila Donovan. The winning verse: 'Christmas is a bright star shining in your heart' was written by Kailey Henard.

Sheriff talks about church safety

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Church members looking for a single solution to secure their sanctuary, they found out there may not be one.

Sheriff Shelby White presented a program last week to a group of about 100 people at Perquimans County High School.

The meeting was prompted in part because of a shooting in Texas in November that left 26 people dead and 20 people injured.

There was another one in 2015 in South Carolina that left nine people dead.

The circumstances of both of those were different. In the South Carolina case, the shooter came and worshipped with members of the 201-year-old Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church before he pulled a gun and shot church members.

In the Texas case, the gunman burst in on a service already in progress and killed his victims.

White said he scheduled the meeting in hopes he can help churches that are thinking about security.

"I think it went well," White said of the meeting in the PCHS auditorium. He said some of those who attended were from Camden and Pasquotank counties. That might be because Pasquotank County didn't hold a similar meeting until Dec. 12.

"I have an open invitation to people if they wanted me to come and take a look at their church for ideas," White said.

One of the questions White has had involves members of the congregation wearing shirts that say "Security."

"I don't recommend it," White said. "That's just my opinion."

In one instance, he thinks of this.

"If you're a bank robber going to rob a bank, who would you shoot first? The person in 'security.'"

One thing churches can look at revolves around doors.

Do you lock them? How old is the church? How many doors?

White said you have to go on a church-by-church basis.

"You have to think about the fire code," he said.

See SHERIFF, 3

Families file lawsuit in fatal Belvidere helicopter crash

From Staff Reports

The families of two people killed in a Duke Life Flight crash in September have filed a lawsuit, claiming the helicopter's manufacturer knew there was a risk of en-

gine fires and that the pilot was at fault for not following emergency procedures, The News and Observer reported this week.

The helicopter, which was based at Johnston Regional Airport in Smithfield, was en route

from Elizabeth City to Duke University Hospital on Sept. 8 when it went down in a field in Perquimans County.

Nurses Kris Harrison and Crystal Sollinger, pilot Jeff Burke and patient Mary Susan White Bartlett

were all killed in the crash.

The lawsuit filed Monday by Bartlett's husband and Harrison's wife claims the cause of the crash was a failure of the No. 2 engine and that witnesses to the crash reported seeing smoke trailing be-

hind the helicopter before it went down.

"All evidence points to a blocked engine drain line," said Gary Robb, the attorney representing the

See CRASH, 5

Town fined \$4,000 over sewer incident

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Town of Hertford has been fined \$4,067 because the contractor it uses to haul and spread sewer

sludge incorrectly applied it on a farmer's field.

The action was in violation of the town's Department of Environmental Quality permit. The sludge is what's left over after the treatment of wastewater. It can be spread on agriculture fields as a fertilizer after it is tested to make sure it's safe.

Town Manager Brandon Shoaf acknowledged the

town violated the permit. He said it was the first time the town applied solids since the permit was issued in October 2016. "The short of it is, our contractor that hauls and land applies sludge for us, spread the sludge on an unpermitted field, too close to property lines and buffers without our permission," Shoaf said.

The sludge was sprayed

too near a ditch and a residential property line. An official of DEQ said the field is located on the north side of Snug Harbor Road about a mile and a half south of Bethel.

The town self-reported the violation as soon as town officials realized the proper notification wasn't given and immediately had

See SEWER, 2

Man dies in US 17 wreck

From Staff Reports

A 21-year-old Currituck was killed in a one-car accident early Thursday morning on U.S. 17.

Chandler Davenport was northbound about one tenth of a mile south of the Perquimans-Pasquotank County line when the 2007 Mazda right off the right side of the road at a slow speed and came

to rest in a large ditch. The N.C. Highway Patrol reported there was minor damage to the vehicle. The wreck happened shortly after midnight.

A 23-year-old passenger was injured and taken to a hospital but was not in serious condition, according to the report.

Troopers are waiting for an autopsy and toxicology reports.



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