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Loftis earns scholarship, 4

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 3, 2018

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Library to feature high tech

(EDITOR'S NOTE: This is the second of a two-part series on the new Perquimans County Library.)

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Books still play a vital role in a modern library, but technology is also making a big difference.

The new Perquimans County library will have both.

Judi Bugnizet serves as regional director of the Pettigrew Regional Library system. Perquimans is one of four in the system.

She started as the Perquimans librarian in 2010.

The foundation for the new library was laid when then librarian Jeri Oltman got a grant to review the library's future needs, Bugnizet said.

"When I was hired, they were already working on that," Bugnizet said.

It was not a quick process. At one point, Bugnizet was asked about her thoughts of just remodeling the old one.

Bugnizet and board members were willing to wait for a new one.

"I knew what the flooring was like in the old library," she said.

It wasn't built to be a library. Instead it was built as a lunchroom for a school. And the sheer weight of tons of books was causing the concrete flooring to crack.

"You could hear the crunching when you

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STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

A car travels down U.S. 17 in Hertford last Wednesday morning through a flurry of snow. While the snow fell, it wasn't sticking to road surfaces.

Bitter weather coming

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

The region was bracing for even colder weather and snow this week.

A coastal low is expected to bring accumulating snow and gusty winds this afternoon into Thursday.

As of Tuesday morning, three to five inches of snow was expected across the lower Eastern Shore south into Hampton Roads and interior northeast North Carolina from Wednesday afternoon into Thursday morning. Lesser amounts of up to one inch are expected along the I-95 corridor, with

little to no accumulating snow across the Piedmont.

So far area utilities have been able to handle the demand for electricity.

Chris Powell, a spokesman for Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, said the utility has not suffered major cold-related outages during the past few days.

Hertford Town Manager Brandon Shoaf said no records have been set in terms of demand. He said last winter had equally nasty weather.

"Just last year, roughly

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NATIONAL WEATHER SERVICE

Areas of eastern North Carolina and Virginia can expect three to five inches of snow today into Thursday.



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Beverly Gregory (left) has been named the new coordinator of the Perquimans County Senior Center. Penny Trueblood, (right) has been named the new assistant coordinator. Delphine Madre, the former director, retired on Dec. 31 after 24 years of service. Faye Myers also retired after 18 years.

Gregory, Trueblood to lead senior center

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

The Perquimans County Senior Center will have a new face as director.

However for anybody who has ever visited the county's tax office, it won't be an unfamiliar face.

Beverly Gregory has assumed the position left vacant with the retirement of Delphine Madre. Madre officially stepped down on Dec. 31 after 34 years of service.

Also new will be Penny Trueblood. She will serve as assistant coordinator. That

position was held by Faye Myers, who also retired last month.

Gregory is making the move over from the county's tax office. She's been working there since 2005.

Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said Gregory will be a perfect fit in the senior center job.

Heath said Gregory has an "excellent personality" when it comes to dealing with the public.

"She's also got a great worth ethic and she is so friendly and caring about people."

Gregory said she was encouraged to apply for the senior center job by friends.

"They knew how much I care about other people."

Any Perquimans resident age 55 and older can join the senior center. There is no fee. To participate in the senior nutrition program you have to be age 60 and over. The center is located at 1072 Harvey Point Road.

Gregory is 58-years-old.

"There are so many opportunities here and a lot of people don't even know about us," Gregory said. "It's such a great place. Every-

body takes care of everybody else."

"I have so much to learn," she said and then joked, "but people say I'm 'trainable.'"

After graduating Perquimans County High School in 1977 Gregory went through a period when she worked with the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools doing data and finance. She also worked for attorney Elvin Small.

Before working at the senior center, Trueblood worked for the Perquimans County School nutrition program.

Watson named honor graduate from BLE

From Staff Reports

Brian Watson was named the honor graduate among the 12 people graduating from the Basic Law Enforcement class at College of The Albemarle in December.

Watson is joining the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office as a school resource officer.

"He's done a good job," said Sheriff Shelby White.

Watson started with the Perquimans office as a part-time animal control officer.

At the graduation, Dr. Robert Wynegar, president of COA, welcomed graduates, family, local law en-



WATSON

Pasquotank Sheriff's Office provided the keynote address for the event.

During the 16 weeks of training, the students finished 641 contact hours, 36 distinct blocks of instruction with 36 topical tests and multiple practical exams to include firearms, driving, traffic crash, patrol techniques, domestic violence, criminal investigation, CPR/first responders, rapid deployment, explo-

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County again ranked Tier 1

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

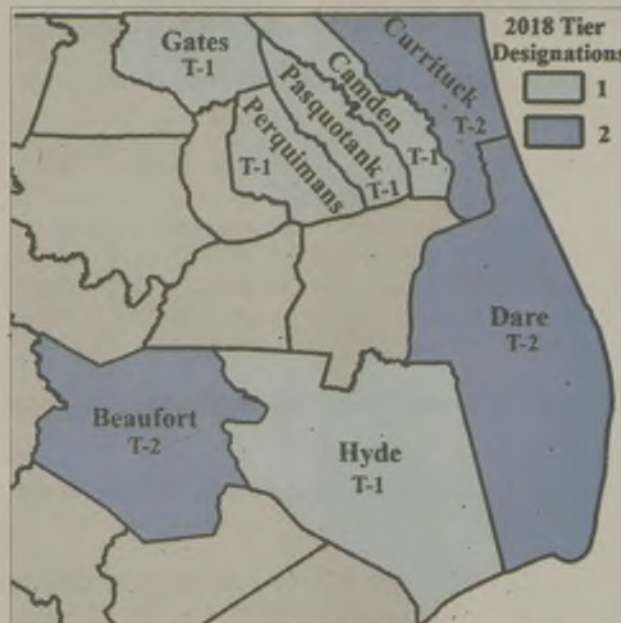
Perquimans County is once again considered Tier 1, one of the most economically distressed counties in North Carolina.

In years past, a Tier 1 designation meant there were plenty of economic incentives available to bring in new jobs and investment. That was then and this is now.

The only reason Perquimans was upgraded to Tier 2 status in 2017 was because of a tiny drop in the county's poverty rate. Counties with fewer than 50,000 people with a poverty rate of 19 percent can automatically qualify as a Tier 1.

Last year Perquimans County's rate was .015 of a percentage point lower than 19 percent.

Perquimans County man-



NC DEPARTMENT OF COMMERCE

Perquimans is again in a cluster of Tier 1 counties that includes Gates, Pasquotank and Camden.

ager Frank Heath said the county has thus far missed out on the economic incentives that Tier 1 is supposed

to attract. "I don't know how much it really matters unless we did happen to land a big

company," Heath said.

Among the 10 economic development announcements made in the final days of 2017, many of them were for counties that were considered the least economically distressed. The Dec. 22 announcement was for 140 jobs, a \$40 million investment in Cumberland County, a Tier 2 county. The day before the announcement was for projects in Gaston (Tier 2), Iredell (Tier 3), and Burke, (Tier 2). Those projects involved 639 jobs and a \$72 million investment.

The way the system works, counties get a check mark if they have a population under 50,000. They get another check mark if the population is under 12,000 people. The second one means Camden will automatically be consid-

See TIER, 2

