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STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Little remains of a house on River Cove Lane that was destroyed by a fire Friday in New Hope.

Fire destroys New Hope home

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Crews from four volunteer fire departments battled a house fire Friday night in heavy winds that spread embers up to a mile away.

No injuries were reported, but the home on River Cove Lane and a carport were destroyed. A truck parked near

the home was also heavily damaged but another large truck was spared.

Durants Neck Fire Department Chief Robert Eure estimated the winds off the Little River were steady at between 30 and 35 miles per hour.

"The wind was a big factor," Chief Eure said Saturday. "It was sending embers flying up to a mile away and

catching the forest on fire."

While fire crews from Durants Neck, Inter-County, Winfall and Hertford were fighting the structure fire, members from the N.C. Forest Services were fighting the fires in the woods.

Eure said when fire crews arrived shortly after 9 p.m. the home was fully involved in flame.

"At that point we went

on defense (to prevent the fire from spreading)," Eure said.

Nobody was in the home. In all three fire engines, five tankers and the two forest service brush trucks were involved. Most firefighters were still on site at 2 a.m. Saturday.

Sheriff Shelby White said

See FIRES, 2

Adults talk safety, prayer

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County High School Principal Wayne Price and two area ministers met with students last week, two weeks after the shooting in Parkland, Fla.

The talk Wednesday morning with Chuck Hartman of Up River Friends Meeting and Gwayland McCleney of All For His Glory Christian Ministries was to reassure students that there are people who want to listen if they want to talk. It was billed as a "prayer around the flagpole" event.

Price also said there are ways students can alert adults of a problem without actually talking with anybody if they don't want to.

On the school system's website, PQschools.org, under the "quick links" tab, there is a form for anonymous incident/bullying reports.

While it might have been designed with bullying in mind at first, Price said students can and should use it if they hear of a threat.

If the slider button is set to PCHS, the button sends the message to Price, School Resource Officer Sgt. David Murray and Assistant Superintendent James Bunch at the same time.

There are other things students can do to secure their school that are far easier, Price said.

"You don't have to be so nice."

He told students just as a test, he went around to the back of the school and knocked on one of the solid metal doors.

Sure enough, a student heard the knocking and opened the door without having any idea of who was on the other side.

Price also cautioned students about using their words wisely.

"Your words have impact," he said. He said students should find a way to express their feelings that don't hurt them or others.

"Think about your actions because they can control

See SAFETY, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Students bow their heads for a prayer during an event before class at Perquimans County High School last week.

Lawmen, schools to hold drill

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Lawmen and Perquimans County school officials are planning training between now and June to deal with an armed intruder in the schools.

The large drill would likely be held once students are out for the year but before teachers leave for the summer.

Students would not be participating in the event. Instead school employees would be given the opportunity to play the role of students.

Perquimans County Emergency Services will also play a role.

Perquimans Sheriff Shelby White said law enforcement and school officials held a tabletop drill in 2014 at Hertford Grammar School. It's unclear how the new drill will differ from that.

"Training will focus on a review of existing response plans and the function of each agency in an incident of this type," the joint news release said. "The collaboration between school personnel and public safety officials will ensure a unified response in the event of an armed intruder."

White said the sheriff's office staff, local police and the N.C.

"Training will focus on a review of existing response plans and the function of each agency in an incident of this type. The collaboration between school personnel and public safety officials will ensure a unified response in the event of an armed intruder."

From news release

referring to armed intruder training

Highway Patrol will participate in the drill. Parole and probation staff will also participate.

White said he's not waiting for the drill to make sure his deputies are totally familiar with the inside of each school. He said he's instructed his deputies to visit schools when they have any spare time and get familiar with the layout of all four.

Since the shooting at Sandy Hook Elementary, Perquimans schools spend tens of thousands of dollars to "harden" each of the four schools. That included creating a single point of entry for people visiting once class is in session. Each visitor must be buzzed in using an electronic door lock.

Last year the Perquimans County Commission made additional protection available in the form of

a third armed School Resource Officer. The school system had two up until then.

The school system will likely make the pitch again for a fourth SRO during budget time this year, White said. He supports the addition.

The last tabletop exercise in 2014 involved Perquimans County Schools, Perquimans Sheriff's Office, Hertford Police Department, Winfall Police Department, Perquimans EMS and Rescue Squad, Belvidere Fire Department, Bethel Fire Department, Durants Neck Fire Department, Hertford Fire Department, Inter-County Fire Department, Winfall Fire Department, Perquimans Communications, NC Highway Patrol, Sam's Safety Consultant (SSC), and Perquimans Emergency Management.

Hunter enters House race

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Candice Hunter will challenge Eddy Goodwin of Chowan County in May for the Republican nomination for NC House District 1.

Hunter, a Perquimans County resident, filed last week.

Ron Wesson, a Democrat and Bertie County Commissioner has also filed and will appear on the ballot in November.

William Alexander, an unaffiliated candidate of Tyrell County, filed too according to the Daily Advance, but the Perquimans Weekly was unable to confirm his candidacy with the Tyrell Board of Elections.

Hunter describes herself as a "Christian, conservative, small business owner" and ninth generation North Carolinian.

She said she waited to file until the last week so her mother, who is currently battling cancer, could make it down from Richmond, Va. for the event.

Hunter vows to help area schools, improve broadband access, and bring back jobs.

"Our superintendents do more with less than any other part of the state. Our students are struggling with nutrition and the lack of Internet access to complete necessary homework. We must address these inadequacies at the state level and provide our Superintendents with the flexibility they need. Every child must have the resources to achieve their full potential.

"Recently I asked a county manager to share some of his biggest challenges. He immediately responded, 'managing disappointment.' We should not be in the business of managing disappointment anymore. In the future, I want our leaders to say their biggest challenge is managing growth and planning for the future."

Hunter believes that creating jobs, sound infrastructure, and great schools must be a top priority to entice young people to return home, saying "74% of our population is 41 year of age and older. We must provide the opportunity for our young people to return home — if they choose — and we must attract 30-somethings and young families. We already own the market on quality of life and affordable living as a retirement destination, which provides us tourism dollars."



HUNTER

Races fill out for Senate District 1 seat

BY JON HAWLEY
The Daily Advance

There will be a Democratic primary for the newly drawn Senate District 1 that includes all area counties.

Washington County Commissioner D. Cole Phelps, 29, filed for the seat on Wednesday, the last day of filing. Phelps' entry into the



PHELPS

race follows the filing of Hertford County businessman Richard "Steve" James on Tuesday.

Phelps could not immediately be reached for comment, but gave several statements in a press release issued by the N.C. Senate Democratic

Peeler to seek seat on school board

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Former Perquimans County Commissioner Matthew Peeler threw his hat into the ring Wednesday for a race for the county school board.

School board incumbent Anne White also filed on Wednesday, the last day. Chairman Amy Spough had filed previously.

That means there are three candidates for three seats.

Ralph Hollowell, who had won election in 2010 and 2014 opted not to run again.

Peeler served four years on the county commission, but decided not to run again two years ago.

Peeler, settled in Perquimans



PEELER

County after retiring from the Navy.

Peeler said he's a strong believer in the school system and wants to help as best as he can.

"Even though I'm a single guy, I don't have any children, I believe in what Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman is doing and I want to support him," Peeler said. "I've always believed that if you want to make a change, you have to step up and run for office."

Peeler said he's also been a strong supporter for the new athletic complex. The first phase is supposed to be complete by August.

"It's a pride related issue. People who visit (the complex) will remember Perquimans County for the rest of their lives and the school system should be proud of it. It's important kids have pride in their school."

In the race for three seats on the Perquimans County Commissioner were incumbents Wallace Nelson and Fondella Leigh and challenger Alan Lennon. Lennon ran two years ago as a Republican and lost. This time he's running as a Libertarian.

Because there aren't two or more people of the same party running, the commission race will be decided in November when a write-in candidate might stand a chance of winning a

See PEELER, 2



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See SENATE, 2