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"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 4, 2018

75 cents

## Plan developed to protect, grow agriculture

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

A group has developed a six-point plan to protect agriculture in Perquimans County and help it grow.

The document developed with a grant from the North Carolina Agricultural Development and Farmland Preservation Trust Fund, sets down timelines and what agencies need to be involved for each of the

six items.

Stan Dixon, one of the consultants who developed the plan, said most of the challenges Perquimans faces are not unique.

One of those deals with "transition planning" for when farmers are too old to continue on.

The average Perquimans farmer was about 54 years old when a survey was done in 2012.

Dixon said according to the farmers surveyed for his report,

none have formal farm transition plans.

"Additionally, interviews with farm lending authorities showed the lack of farm transition planning as a leading concern about the future of agriculture in the area."

"In every county there has been an issue of family not coming back to the farm, and a way to deal with it is estate planning," Dixon said.

The report calls for a series of

workshops that use a variety of specialists and agencies to provide information on farm transition and estate planning.

The study recommends the Perquimans County Agricultural Advisory Board, Perquimans County Extension, Perquimans County Farm Bureau, Ag Carolina/Farm Credit, University of Mount Olive, local attorneys and agricultural economic specialists play a role in dealing with estate planning is-

sues.

The other topics include:

■ Support measures to protect and promote forest and farmland in Perquimans County.

"Though residents largely support agriculture, added education and understanding is needed," the report said.

■ Promote and increase enrollment in the Voluntary Agriculture

See PLAN, 2

## State selects election boards

From Staff Reports

The new N.C. State Board of Elections and Ethics Enforcement filled the ranks of all 100 counties' boards of elections last week.

In Perquimans County, Republicans John McGowan and Jacqueline Hobbs and Democrats Marjorie Dufek and Mary Boone will make up the board. McGowan previously served on the board. Leaving the board is Democrat Vera Murrill.

All county board members were selected based on recommendations of the Republican and Democratic parties, as has been past practice.

A new change in the selection process is that boards are now evenly split between Republicans and Democrats.

Republican lawmakers reconfigured county boards and the state board itself following the election of Democratic Gov. Roy Cooper in 2016. Cooper has challenged the changes in court, leading to delays in filling the SBE and county offices.

SBE Executive Director Kim Strach said all newly appointed county board members would serve until July 2019.

Returning to the Pasquotank County Board of Elections is Bonnie Godfrey, a Republican who's chaired the board since 2013. Joining her is a new appointee from Republicans, Lynn Childs, and Democratic appointees Jacquelyn Brown and Michele Aydlett. Aydlett has previously served on the board, and chaired it prior to Godfrey. Stepping down from the board are Jimmy Ownley, a Republican, and William Skinner, a Democrat.

In Chowan the board will consist of Republicans Robert Reiheld and Linda Tiller, and Democrats Stella Brothers and Jerald Perry Sr.

## EASTER EGG HUNT



STAFF PHOTOS BY PETER WILLIAMS

Top, Brenda Atkins smiles at grandson Austin Atkins on Monday after he put his Easter basket on his head before the start of an Easter egg hunt at the new Perquimans County Library. Right, Graysen Byrum, 5, checks out one of the eggs he found during an Easter egg hunt Monday at the Perquimans County Library.



## Current election system questioned

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

Is there a better way to elect county commissioners in Perquimans?

One commissioner thinks so, but he admits he doesn't know the answer.

Kyle Jones raised the issue at a recent board retreat.

The current system was adopted in 1993 and took effect with elections in 1994. It was a home-grown solution to a national problem — minorities weren't given a chance to win an election. For decades white men dominated the board. Had the county not acted, the Justice Department would have imposed changes.

"It was probably needed at the time, and it has worked," Jones said. "For the past couple decades, Perquimans County has had the most diverse board in this corner of the state."

However the system means if three people are running for office voters only get to cast they vote for one. Jones called the system "absurdly-convoluted" and outdated.

Jones wants a system with some members voted by those in their district and others voted at-large by everybody in the county.

"In fairness, the system that was put into place was largely done in order to help ensure minorities could get elected to the Board, which I am proud of."

Now he says it does not serve all the citizens of the county.

"I have recently been thinking more about whether or not it would be advantageous for the county to go to a district system of voting, like most other area counties (and for that matter, like most places in general).

To make the plan work the districts would have to be created and using current precincts as a model

See ELECTION, 2

## Ground penetrating radar to be used in search for old home

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

In late April, experts will be using ground-penetrating radar to try and find the location of the original home of Joseph Scott.

Scott owned the property where the Newbold White House now stands and died in 1685. The house was

standing at that time.

Abraham Sanders acquired the property in 1726 and Sanders built the house that still stands today.

Scott's home was wood and didn't last. It's Scott's house that John Ernest is looking for. Ernest is a member of the Perquimans County Restoration Association and he is heading up this month's project.

"We're hoping to find traces of it," Ernest said. "It would be wonderful to build a replica of the house, maybe not the exact house, but a replica of a house from

that period."

Unlike the brick home, Sanders home was simple. Ernest said it likely started with four posts erected at the corners with panels erected for the walls. Ernest hopes they will be able to find the hearth because that will provide even more clues.

Ernest said it's possible it had a dirt floor.

Ground penetrating radar can be used to detect and map subsurface archaeological artifacts, features,

See RADAR, 2

## Historic house to reopen this week

From Staff Reports

The Newbold-White House, a 1730-era Quaker homestead in Hertford, will reopen for the season on Thursday.

The Visitor Center and historic homestead are open from early April until the end of October from Thursday through Saturday from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Besides the oldest brick house in North Carolina, the site contains a visitor's center with exhibits, a film, gift shop, the Periauger workboat, colonial garden and smoke house and recreational trail.

This year the 1730 Quaker Homestead is involved in the celebration of the grand "350th Anniversary of Old Albemarle" and the original Carolina Charter. Perquimans is one of the original four Precincts carved out of the larger 1665 Albemarle County.

Special Perquimans County Passports will soon be available at various locations (including the Newbold-White House Visitors Center) on which residents and out of town visitors can receive a special

See HOUSE, 2

