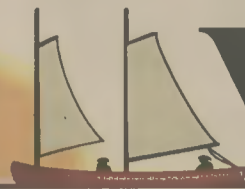


THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Scholarship winners, 6-7

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 25, 2018

75 cents

Superintendent passed over for N.D. job

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans Schools Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman was one of two men named as finalists for a similar job in North Dakota, but last week he was passed over in favor of someone with more experience as a superintendent.

The process in Dickinson started in January when the current superintendent announced he would be retiring at the end of the school



CHEESEMAN

year. At the start, the Dickinson Public Schools had 39 applicants for the job, and then narrowed it to four semi-final candidates. The names were not released earlier in the process because of a new North Dakota law that prohibits it until the list is narrowed to two or

three final choices, according to the Dickinson Press, a daily newspaper there.

But it wasn't until April 12 that the two names were released.

Cheeseman could not be reached for comment, but Lisa Lane, the spokeswoman for the school district, shared some of the text he sent back to staff in the schools.

"I think you for your full and understanding as my family and I investigated this opportunity. I

look forward to being back and work Monday and beside you as we continue to move Perquimans County forward."

Amy Spough, the chairman of the Perquimans School Board, said she became aware Cheeseman was in the running on April 2. But at the time, it was far from a done deal. Spough said a recruiter sought out Cheeseman for the position and he is not actively looking to leave.

The advertised salary for the

North Dakota job is \$210,000. Cheeseman makes \$127,000 thanks to a \$7,000 raise last year. At that time the Perquimans School Board also extended his contract to June 2021. His original contract would have expired at the end of the 2019 school year.

Dr. Shon Hocker, the man who got the job, is the current superintendent in the Big Horn School District in Crowley, Wyo. He has

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RIVERBASH COMING THIS WEEKEND

(EDITOR'S NOTE: For a schedule of Riverbash events, please see page 7.)

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Indian Summer Festival may be gone, but Perquimans County has a new event this year — Riverbash.

The two-day event starts Friday and runs through Saturday. Sharon Smith, the county's tourism director, came up with the idea of Riverbash after meeting with local groups.

She stressed that Riverbash is not a replacement for the Indian Summer Festival. Historic Hertford Inc. still has the rights to the Indian Summer Festival name and officials with HHI have not ruled out bringing it back in some fashion. The last one was in 2016.

For the most part, Riverbash is not a fundraiser for one group, she said.

"It's also not really a county-sponsored event," Smith said. "It's a template of how the community can run a festival."

"The one thing we all know is that smaller areas are known for their festivals. When I got here I heard people were missing the fact that the Indian Summer Festival had been put on pause for now or gone entirely.

"I thought about how could we start a new event. But there were some concerns that people were burnt out, that putting on a festival would put too much responsibility on one group and



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Top, Sara Winslow (center) and Murielle Harmon (right) of Citizens for the Preservation and Growth of Hertford, talk to volunteers Saturday before a cleanup campaign at the Hertford Town Docks. The effort was timed so the town could look nice for the upcoming Riverbash this weekend.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Left, as part of Riverbash, the Chrome To The Bone Challenge will feature remote-controlled monster truck racing at the tennis courts on Grubb Street Saturday from 11 a.m. until 4 p.m.

See RIVERBASH, 2

Early votes trickle in

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

As of the close of business Monday, 66 Perquimans County voters had cast an early ballot for the May primary race.

That is a tiny fraction of the 9,700 voters in the county, but the largest slice of them — 4,000 are Democrats and the only thing on the May ballot they can vote for is a school board race with no challengers.

Unaffiliated voters come in second with 3,100 and Republicans total about 2,600. There were only 31 libertarians registered as of March 7.

One-stop early voting runs until on May 5. The hours are: April 19-May 2, 8 a.m. until 5 p.m., May 3-4, 8 a.m. until 7 p.m. and May 5, 9 a.m. until 1 p.m.

One-stop early voting will be held at the Perquimans County Board of Elections office 601 S. Edenton Road St. in Hertford.

The only local race that will be decided in May is for Perquimans County School Board. But in that case, there are three people running for three seats, so unless there are a large number of write-in ballots, they stand a good chance of winning.

Running this year are incumbents Anne White and Amy Spough and challenger Matt Peeler. Peeler has served on the Perquimans County Commission before, but opted not to run again when his term expired two years ago. This is his first try running for the school board. While there are three people and three seats, voters can only cast a ballot for one of them.

Also a three-way race for U.S. Congress will be decided in May because there is no Democrat challenging them.

Republican Congressman Walter Jones is being challenged by Republicans Phil Law and Scott Dacey for the District 3 Seat.

Incumbent Commissioners Wallace Nelson, a Republican, and Fondella Leigh, a Democrat, filed, as did Alan Lennon, who's running in November as a Libertarian. Like the school board race, there are three people running for three seats so short of a huge write-in vote, all three should win in November.

See VOTES, 2

Serious assaults on prison workers continue

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — North Carolina's understaffed prisons remain a dangerous place for employees six months after the bloodiest escape attempt in state history left four workers dead, according to agency data and separate case reports.

About three dozen workers at the state's correctional facilities have been assaulted so badly that they have lost work time, prison officials said in response to a public records request from The Associated Press. Leading

"Our department has gotten extremely dangerous in recent years."

Deborah Ezuma

Correctional officer, Polk Correctional Institution

the official list of assaults is the Pasquotank Correctional Institution in Elizabeth City, where eight workers have been badly harmed since the fatal breakout attempt there on Oct. 12.

The list provided to the AP, which covered 34 assaults

through March 27, did not include an attack at a Morganton prison that hospitalized a worker with stab or slash wounds. Officials from the state Department of Public Safety did not say why when asked Monday or during the previous two weeks.

On March 28, three more workers were assaulted in two attacks at Maury Correctional Institution in Greene County. It's not clear whether any of them were injured badly enough to miss work.

Correctional Officer Deborah Ezuma said the frequency of inmates assaulting workers has grown more common in the past two or three years than at any time in her 20-year prisons career.

"Our department has gotten

See PRISONS, 2

Swim program wraps up eighth year

From Staff Reports

Eight years and 1,250 students ago, The Perquimans County Schools Foundation sought out to provide two weeks of swim lessons to all kindergarten students attending Perquimans County schools.

The Water Turtles program has now served stu-

dents in grades K-7. This year it was sponsored by the Vidant Health/Chowan Hospital Foundation, Avangrid Foundation and North Carolina Community Foundation's Women Giver's of Northeast North Carolina.

Each year, sponsors provide funding to ensure the water safety program is available to all kindergarten students in the county.

"Perhaps with the exception of wearing seatbelts or checking smoke alarms, one of the most important things we could ever do for a child in terms of their

safety is to teach them how to swim," said Perquimans County Schools Foundation Executive Director Brenda Lassiter. "I am so thankful for the continued sponsorships to the School Foundation for the past eight years. We will never know the true impact this program has had for the 1,250 students who have already completed the course.

"Parents probably recognize that teaching their children to swim is of great importance but due to time and/or financial restraints, it may not be realistic for ev-

eryone." According to statistics, drowning is the nation's second leading cause of accidental death for children under 14 years of age. According to the U.S. Consumer Product Safety Commission, in summer 2012, there were 137 child drowning deaths in the United States. In 2009, the American Academy of Pediatrics found that children enrolled in formal swimming lessons had an 88 percent reduced risk of drowning.

See SWIM, 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Thad Woodard and Caryss White work hard to make the swim across the pool with the assistance of a YMCA instructor as part of the Water Turtles program this year.



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