

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

P9/C9*****CAR-RT LOT**R 008 A0001
 PERQUIMANS COUNTY LIBRARY
 514 S CHURCH ST
 HERTFORD NC 27944-1225



Flag retirement ceremony, 6

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, JUNE 6, 2018

75 cents



A truck is engulfed by flames during the Winslow Oil Company fire in 1978.

Program recalls historic fire

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

It's been 40 years, but the images of the 1978 Winslow Oil Company fire in Hertford have not faded for Ed Leicester.

He's 63-years-old now, but he was a young man back then. He'd been on the Hertford Fire Department for about seven or eight months when a spark apparently ignited fuel stored at the company at the foot of Covenant Garden. "I was young and I didn't know what to do except what people told me to do," he said.

Images from the blaze will be shown June 16 at 6 p.m. at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. The Perquimans Masonic Lodge is sponsoring the event. Leicester and Parker Newbern will be talking about the blaze.

"The alarm came in about 7:55 a.m. and I was home sick with the flu that day," Leicester said.

It was Jan. 10 and it was bitter cold. Leicester remembers he hadn't put something over his car windshield to prevent ice from forming, so he drove to the fire off Grubb Street with the driver's

side window of his car rolled down and his head sticking out.

The front-page story in the Perquimans Weekly that week said some 100,000 gallons of fuel oil, 50,000 gallons of kerosene and between 35,000 and 40,000 gallons of gasoline was being stored at the site. In all, nine of the 11 tanks there were destroyed.

Reid Oil next door was spared the destruction.

"They had a corrugated metal on their building and had it not

See FIRE, 2

Grant to help trailer cleanup

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Property owners with abandoned homes in Perquimans County may now get a little help with removing eyesores and having the metal recycled.

For the first time ever, Perquimans has been ruled as eligible for program through the N.C. Division of Environmental Quality that oversees the program.

Homes that are in mobile home parks and those damaged by fire are not eligible for the program, said Ernie Swanner, the code enforcement officer for Perquimans.

At most Perquimans can get \$10,000 this year. That will be divided up into 10 grants for property owners.

Swanner said there are plenty of vacant mobile homes in the county that need to be removed.

"There are at least 30 and I'm still gathering more information on others. There were 12 so far that are going to go, one way or another."

Swanner said not all old mobile homes are an issue. "If you're living in a trailer that is 50 years old and it's still livable, that's not bothering me."

But he mentioned one that had been vacant and people stripped the walls and other things off.

Swanner, who wrote the grant to get the state funds, said he has to get at least eight homes removed or the county won't be reimbursed for anything. There is a lot of paperwork.

The county has a contractor who has offered a price for cleanup, and they have to document how it was done and where the scrap went. The contractor can keep any money they get by

See TRAILER, 2



Members of the 2018 graduating class of Perquimans County High School got to walk the halls of Hertford Grammar School and the three other schools in the district last month. Graduation is this Friday.

PCHS to hold graduation

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

More than 120 students will walk across the stage Friday for Perquimans County High School graduation.

Twenty-nine of them had already completed their classwork early and graduated early, but they will still participate, said Principal Wayne Price. The ceremony starts at 7 p.m. on the school's football field.

It's Price's goal that next year some of the graduating class will walk across the stage at a community college after earning an Associate's degree before they ever walk across the stage in Hertford. The school is implementing a program that encourages students to be dual enrolled.

"It opens doors for kids and we have some very strong students," Price said.

"It's a good thing for students, and a great thing for parents. When you can graduate high school with 62 college credit hours, you can walk into a university as a junior."

It's great for parents because they don't have to pay for two years of the tuition at a more expensive university.

Graduates got a chance to don their caps and gowns last month and take a final walk through the local schools that help get them to



A teacher stands on a chair to get a good picture of seniors marching the halls at Hertford Grammar School last month.

this point in their educational career. They started the senior walk and Hertford Grammar School and went on to Perquimans Central and Perquimans County Middle Schools to show younger students what a graduate really looks like.

Price said it's an outstanding program, not just for the graduates and the younger students, but the teachers who get to see the fruits of their labor.

"I've spent almost all of my career at the elementary school level,

and I can tell you what it means to see teachers who might have taught them in Kindergarten and Pre-K see them walk it reaffirms to teachers how important what they do is."

Out of a graduating class of 122, this year there were 43 PCHS students taking college classes. Next year Price hopes to have 100 students doing that. That's 100 students out of pool of 237 juniors and seniors in the school next year.

See PCHS, 2

Donation to help deputies

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Perquimans County Sheriff Shelby White knew the value of having laptop computers in patrol cars even before he was appointed to the job more than a year ago.

But he also knew it would be expensive and he didn't have the money in his budget when he took office in early 2017.

The department has 15 patrol vehicles. White priced the cost of getting just four new computers and eight mounts for the eight road patrol deputies. The price tag from one vendor was \$24,000 and the price from another was \$25,000. The idea is once the mounts were in place, deputies could swap out the computer at the end of their shift so another deputy could use it.

But that way White figured it was a start if he could get it in the county budget this year.

Then the sheriff was speaking at a Ruritan Club meeting earlier this year and found out Elizabeth City was going to replace their police laptops with a new version, the GETACH. Elizabeth City is going with a new system and the old laptops wouldn't work.

So White contacted Elizabeth City Police Chief Eddie Buffaloe to see if he could buy some of their old computers to outfit the Perquimans Department.

The highway patrol has had computers in their cars for years.

"There was nothing wrong with them, they were just going to go with a different style," White said.

Buffaloe looked into it and in May brought it to the Elizabeth City Finance Committee. The city council agreed to contribute 15 Toughbook computers, mounts and some printers

See DONATION, 2

Memorial bricks help Veteran's Memorial continue to grow

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

More than 10 years after it was completed, the Perquimans County Veterans Memorial still truly isn't finished.

The walk leading up the monument on the Perquimans County Courthouse lawn still has room for more

engraved memorial bricks.

The bricks were originally a fundraiser to raise cash to build the monument. Now brick sales generate a few dollars to the fund to maintain and beautify it.

Ken Rominger, a member of Post 126, said the late County Commissioner Shirley Wiggins had been working on the idea for a while. Wiggins herself was a 20-year veteran of the U.S. Navy.

"She (Wiggins) bought a brick for every service member in her family," he said. "The idea was we'd sell

bricks to help pay for it. We had some seed money."

About 500 bricks have been sold, and the monument has long been paid off.

Now Rominger said any excess money from the sale of more bricks goes toward maintaining the monument, including changing out the flowers about four times a year.

Once the Perquimans County Commission signed off on the idea of a monument in 2007, work went quickly. The hitch was the county wasn't going to pay

for it, but it would agree to letting it be placed on the courthouse green.

A committee was appointed that February and held its first meeting on March 27. There was a second meeting a few weeks later and a public forum on April 19 and the design was approved.

By Veteran's Day that November, the monument was erected and a dedication was held.

Veteran memorial brick applications, for eligible

See BRICKS, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Perquimans County is still selling engraved bricks for the Veteran's Memorial. The cost is \$50 and any surplus is used for the upkeep of the memorial on the countryhouse lawn.

