

Local Plant Employees Will Vote Next Week On Joining Union

By JEANETTE WHITE
The controversy over unionizing workers at Atlantic Forest Products is getting hotter as union officials fight to enter and AFP officials fight to keep the doors closed.

The International Union of Electronic, Electrical, Salaried, Machine and Furniture Workers, AFL-CIO, more commonly called IUE, is the group leading the union effort.

IUE representative Frank Rothweiler of Portsmouth, Va., said a 1981 vote defeating prior unionization was overturned by the National Labor Relations Board, which judged AFP ac-

tivities prior to the vote to be in violation of labor laws.

Richard Dixon, manager of AFP, said the vote defeated the union bid two-to-one and "they protested".

In a telephone interview last week, Dixon said he did not know the name of the union attempting to get into the plant, nor had he spoken with a union official.

Rothweiler produced a registered letter Wednesday which he received from Dixon in May with a full name and address of the union.

The New York based union leading the 1980-81 effort has now joined IUE, which Rothweiler

said has 3,000 members in this state through seven local chapters.

The representative said IUE had cards signed by more than half the 100 hourly workers at AFP requesting another vote.

Rothweiler said one of the main complaints from workers is wages, which have not been raised in four years. Dixon said his workers had received raises.

IUE said AFP is owned by McMillan-Bloedel Inc. of Canada and 80 percent of that corporation's employees are union members receiving from \$2 to \$10 per hour more than those in Edenton.

Dixon said that comparison is like matching oranges and apples, because it compares local salaries with those in Canada and urban areas.

"They are throwing out a lot of numbers and statistics, comparing papermills and sawmills," Dixon said.

Another issue is workers who say AFP does not honor seniority, Rothweiler said, and that a pension plan started after the 1981 bid was not retroactive for workers prior to that year.

The union rep classified jobs at AFP as "hard, dangerous, with a lot of accidents" and 80 percent of

the workers receive \$5 to \$7 per hour for "breathing sawdust all day" in a building with no air conditioning.

Dixon has said wood supplies for AFP are diminishing, but Rothweiler said the union had talked with truck drivers, who deliver raw products to the plant, and drivers say the supply is plentiful.

Rothweiler said other companies in the county are supporting AFP because if wages and working conditions are improved at that site, other businesses may be forced to follow suit.

"We're into improving employees' pay and in the long run

that will improve the community. Workers will have more spending power," he said.

Dixon said raises and salaries are based on economic conditions and that his company is "fighting for survival. We don't need a union causing more problems".

The union representative said he is concerned with the amount of pressure under which AFP workers are laboring until the issue is determined.

When AFP employees vote July 2 it will take a majority, which could be just one vote, to bring IUE into the plant.



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The Public Parade

A Timely Decision

May we here at the Chowan Herald join others along the Public Parade in congratulating the board of county commissioners on their decision to take the initiative in redistricting the county so as to give blacks a better chance at the polls.

As chairman of the Congressional Redistricting Committee in the house in 1981, we learned that, under existing federal law, large blocs of blacks cannot be ignored when voting districts are being considered. Some members were hard to convince and it took three separate plans and two trips to the Department of Justice to convince them.

Then, as the General Assembly began drawing new voting district lines for the election of its own members, it found it necessary to divide county lines - something the state constitution prohibited - in order not to submerge concentrations of black citizens in still larger concentrations of whites.

This was strong medicine for a group of lawmakers who had come to regard gerrymandering as a bad thing; but they took it with as good grace as could have been expected.

Now, a county with as large a number of blacks as Chowan and with a history of having elected no black to the board of county commissioners in modern times obviously does not meet the requirements of the new federal standards; and for the appropriate officials to recognize

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Town And County Taxes Held At Previous Levels

Residents in Edenton and Chowan will not have to dig deeper into their pocket after governing bodies this week adopted budgets calling for no tax increase.

Monday, county commissioners approved a \$4.6 million general fund budget, followed Tuesday by adoption of a town budget of \$12,898,719.

The town had a five-cent tax increase last year but Chowan com-

missioners were the first in the area to take the heat from voters after a 12-cent tax hike.

Loss of federal revenue sharing funds left holes in the county's income and local commissioners said last year other counties would eventually be forced to follow their lead.

Their prediction is coming true after surrounding counties are looking at sizeable increases this year.

The biggest item in the town's new budget is \$7,097,052 for electrical service, followed by \$2,685,768 for capital projects.

Those projects include wastewater treatment plant construction, armory renovations for senior citizens' use, an industrial development study, peak generation construction at the power plant and extension of water and sewer lines on N.C. 32.

Next line item is \$2,018,623 for the general fund. Those funds include \$497,141 for the police department, \$342,802 for administrative services, \$231,473 for the street department, \$229,540 for fire protection, \$219,816 for sanitation, \$195,412 for recreation, \$136,919 for garage services, \$31,146 for cemetery services, \$41,731 for inspection and zoning, \$28,400 for the town's governing

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Shootings Are Probed

Two 18-year-old white males are suspects in an investigation into random shootings in the county Friday night.

Chowan Sheriff Fred Spruill said buildings and cars victimized by the shootings appeared to have no connection.

A .22-caliber rifle was used to shoot a window at Holmes Cafeteria, a window and wall at the county ASCS office, a pillar and door at the farm bureau office and six bullets through two plate glass windows at Virginia Fork Service Station.

Two shots fired into a car owned by Leroy Alexander on N.C. 32 and one shot each into two vehicles owned by Rob Boyce on Route 1.

Spruill said the Boyce family heard the shots, but were not aware the sounds were gunfire.

Spruill said when warrants are issued, six charges of damage to personal property will be filed.

Investigating officer is Deputy James White.

Damage Estimate Is Made

Steel has been ordered to repair damaged Chowan River Bridge, but it may be several months before actual restoration begins.

Meanwhile, an engineer with the N.C. Dept. of Transportation said examination proves the bridge is safe for both road and river traffic.

The bridge was damaged June 5 when a large piece of logging

equipment struck overhead beams in the draw section of the span.

R.L. Spence of Williamston, bridge maintenance superintendent, said even though materials have been ordered, it could take up to 90 days for the steel to be customized to fit repair needs.

Spence said no official estimate had been placed on the amount of damage to the bridge, but a "ballpark figure" would be

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Closings Noted

The Edenton Municipal Building will be closed on Friday, July 3, in observance of the Independence Day holiday.

Trash collection for the week of June 29 through July 3 will be carried out as follows: East Side - Monday and Wednesday; West Side - Tuesday and Thursday.

Chowan County offices will also be closed Friday, July 3. Other area closings will include the following:

Shepard-Pruden Library in Edenton will be closed on Friday, July 3 and Saturday, July 4.

The Edenton Post Office will be open on Friday, July 3, but will be closed on Saturday, July 4.

Local banks will be open all day Friday, July 3, to handle Social Security checks and other bank transactions, but will be closed on Monday, July 6 in observance of the holiday.



NEW CLUB—Members of the newly formed Yeopim Ruritan Club received their charter on June 16. Holding the charter are president Steve Biggs and vice-president Larry Johnson. Shown along with other members are Sam Walker, Ruritan District Governor (left) and Cotton McClenney (right) a national director. Other officers are J.D. Griffin, secretary, Jim Ward, treasurer and board members Jimmy Allgood, Pete Ward and Bryant Griffin. The club meets at Bob and Sharon's Barbeque on the third Tuesday of each month at 7:30 p.m.

Election Filing Is Opening On July 3

Three seats on Edenton Town Council and the mayor's post are up for grabs in the November municipal election and it appears likely that Mayor John Dowd will face opposition.

Former mayor Roy Harrell, who ran unsuccessfully against

Dowd in the last election, said, "I'm leaning very heavily toward filing again."

Mayor Dowd has announced his intention to seek reelection and said, "We have started several good projects that we couldn't complete in just two years."

Dowd said he would like to see completion of the 911 emergency telephone service and the town's waste water treatment plant. He indicated a desire to keep "the spirit of cooperation between the town and county going".

Marina Crummey, incumbent for one of the town's at-large council seats, said she plans to seek reelection.

Herbert Hollowell, incumbent from the first ward, said he was not sure if he would seek reelection but expected to make a decision soon.

Hollowell has served on town

council for 19 years.

Steve Hampton, councilman from the second ward, said "I haven't made up my mind" concerning plans to seek reelection.

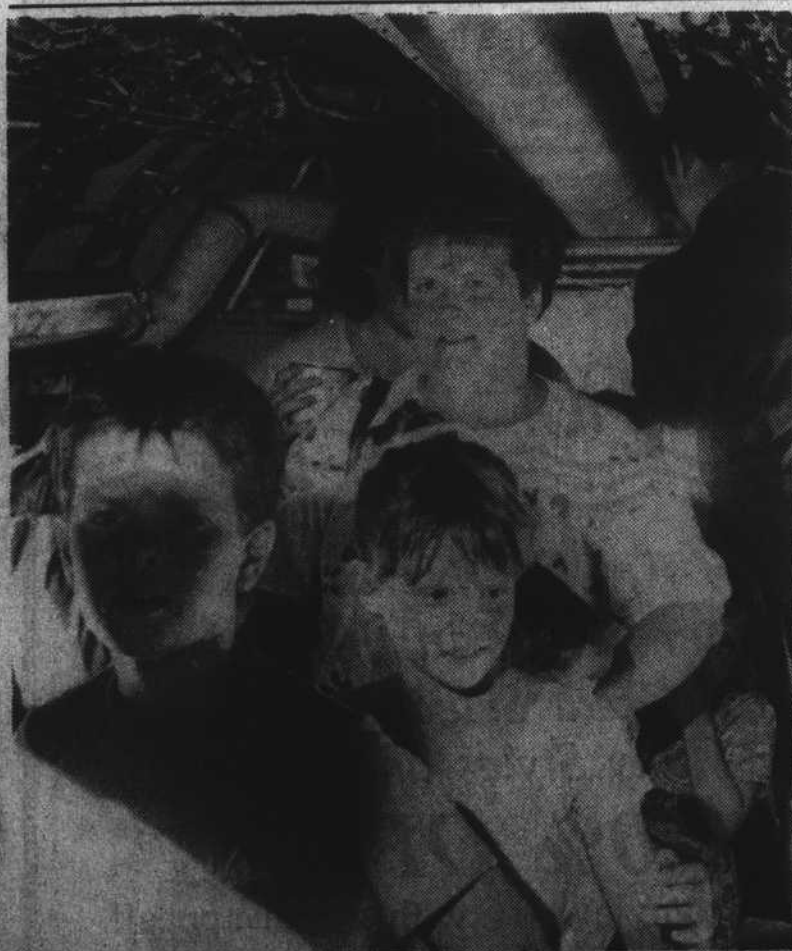
Friday, July 3 at noon is the first day prospective candidates may file to run for office.

According to Marie W. Akins, supervisor of elections, the filing period will be from noon July 3 until August 7 at noon. There is a \$5 filing fee for the mayor's seat, first and second ward councilpersons' seats and the at-large councilperson's seat.

To be a candidate for mayor or town council, a candidate must reside in Edenton and be a registered voter.

Prospective candidates may file a notice of candidacy with Mrs. Opal Kehayes, board of elections chairman, or Mrs. Akins.

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HELICOPTER VISIT—Students enrolled in the summer reading program at Rocky Hock Community Center had opportunity to tour a Coast Guard HH-3F Pelican helicopter after it touched down on the ballfield around 2:30 p.m. Tuesday. Edenton Fire Dept. had a pumper truck available at the site as Rocky Hock resident Betty Bass followed youngsters through the big chopper.



BRILLIANT DISPLAY—A bright array of fireworks will explode over the Edenton Bay during the "Fabulous Fourth of July Festival" sponsored by the Chowan-Edenton Optimist Club. A variety of activities will take place at the Waterfront Park in downtown Edenton including music, games and crafts. (Related story on Page 4-A)