



## Asking the Hard Questions

While some legislators seem to be quibbling over tax increases proposed to finance the 12-year \$8.5 billion road building project, nobody seems to be asking serious questions about the basic wisdom of such an undertaking.

What, for example, will be the overall environmental impact of such a massive project? How many acres of arable farmlands will be removed from use? How many million more trees will be uprooted and destroyed? How will increased runoff affect droughts and flooding in the long run?

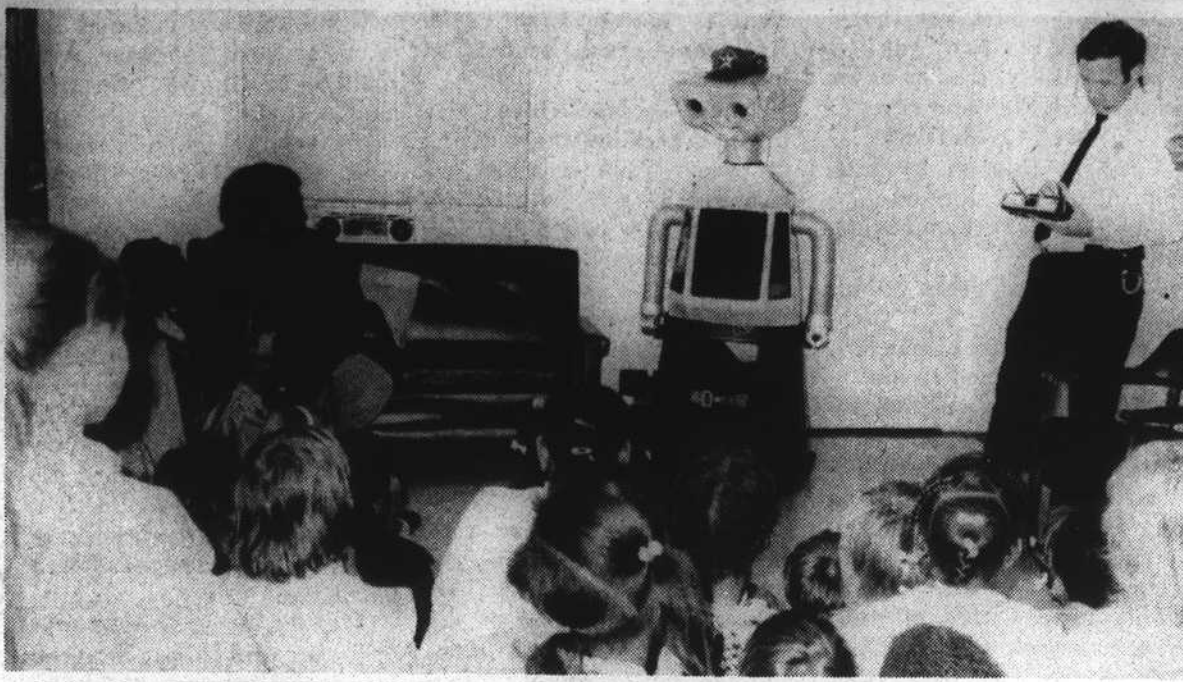
Do we really need several hundred more miles of four-lane highways? Will more inner loops simply call for more outer loops and more outer loops for perimeter loops? And how many people will be displaced in the process?

And, finally, could this \$8.5 billion -- or portions of it -- be put to better use? Should we be thinking more about putting every citizen within reach of a system of rapid mass transit rather than trying to build a four-lane highway to his door? Or should we be trying to develop renewable energy sources which would be more compatible with our environment?

Should individual projects envisioned in the \$8.5 billion program be spelled out in the statutes, together with starting dates and other particulars? This is an abrupt departure from past practice and raises questions about the economic as well as the political wisdom of doing it.

Some of the many intrastate projects contemplated in the \$8.5 billion program call for four-laning additional east-west routes. N.C. 158 would be four-laned from Winston-Salem across the state to Currituck Sound, which would be bridged, then down the Outer Banks to Whalebone just east of Manteo, a distance of some 300 miles.

Allowing a conservative  
Continued On Page 8



**ROBOT PERFORMS**--With Chowan Sheriff Fred Spruill at the controls, STAR, the robot performs to the delight of second grade students from D.F. Walker School. STAR also had a special message for the children.

## Robot Educates And Entertains STAR Has Rapt Audience

By JACK GROVE

At national, state and local levels, it has been recognized

## Visitors Invited

Town officials are urging area residents to attend the open house from 5:30 to 8 p.m. today at the new Edenton Town Hall at the corner of So. Broad and West King Streets.

The former People's Bank building, it was donated to the town by the bank and has been renovated to provide new municipal office space.

When the town received the building, its estimated worth was \$300,000. Renovation and decoration has cost an additional \$236,334.

Of the total cost for conversion to town use, the construction work totaled \$217,606; the architect's fee was \$2,200; \$1,750 went for cleaning the exterior; window decor was \$3,890, a telephone system cost \$2,115; and new furnishings totaled \$8,773.

The former municipal building will be occupied by the police department and the present police building may be used as a satellite facility for the recreation department.

that law enforcement efforts to neutralize the drug suppliers is not enough to solve the growing illegal drug menace in our communities. Education of young people is seen as a key to preventing drug use.

Chowan County Sheriff Fred Spruill has been active on the enforcement front and, with a new tool, is forging ahead on the education front.

Through federal grant money, administered by the N.C. Dept. of Crime Control and Public Safety, Spruill has obtained "STAR," a robot with many messages for children, including traffic safety and learning to "just say no."

The sheriff unveiled his new friend for second-graders from D.F. Walker School this week. What might have been just another dull lecture was transformed into an enthralling experience for the children.

After a tour of the jail, where the children could see the end result of drug use, they were introduced to STAR in the lobby. "He came here all the way from Texas to see ya'll," Spruill told the classes of Loretta Roberson and Paula Rineheart. He was referring to Mesquite, Tex., the location of the robot's manufacturer, Digitech Robotics Corp.

The many-talented robot has a video screen in his

chest, traffic lights on one side, signs that flash "walk" and "don't walk," blue flashing lights, a siren and a seat belt. ("Your car should not move unless you buckle up.")

Using a hand-held remote control, the sheriff moved STAR around the room, waved the robot's arms and opened and closed its hands. Another feature allows the controller to speak through the robot to an audience from concealment, using a wireless microphone.

A video camera in one eye panned across the children's faces allowing them to see themselves on the chest screen to giggles and excited chatter.

The students then were treated to a VCR cartoon with a message, courtesy of the robot. It depicted the popular Flintstone characters, as children, who are tempted to use drugs by neighborhood friends. They refused and the soon isolated friends saw the error of their ways and gave up drugs.

In a question and answer period ending the presentation, one girl observed of a character in the video who used marijuana, "He shouldn't have taken any at first."

A boy, who said that his dad had criticized color TV for jail prisoners, asked why they  
Continued On Page 8

## Expired Tags Net Citations

Some town residents who have not yet purchased their 1989 town tags for their cars are now wishing they had.

Acting Police Chief C.H. Williams said Tuesday that his officers had handed out over 50 citations over the weekend for this violation and seat belt violations.

Cars are also being ticketed downtown for parking over two hours on the street as well as unauthorized parking in handicapped spots marked by signs. Four new handicapped spaces were designated last week.

Expired town tags, a misdemeanor violation of a town ordinance could draw a \$50 fine or 30 days in jail. Being unbelted in a moving vehicle is an infraction under state law and is punishable by a flat \$25 penalty.

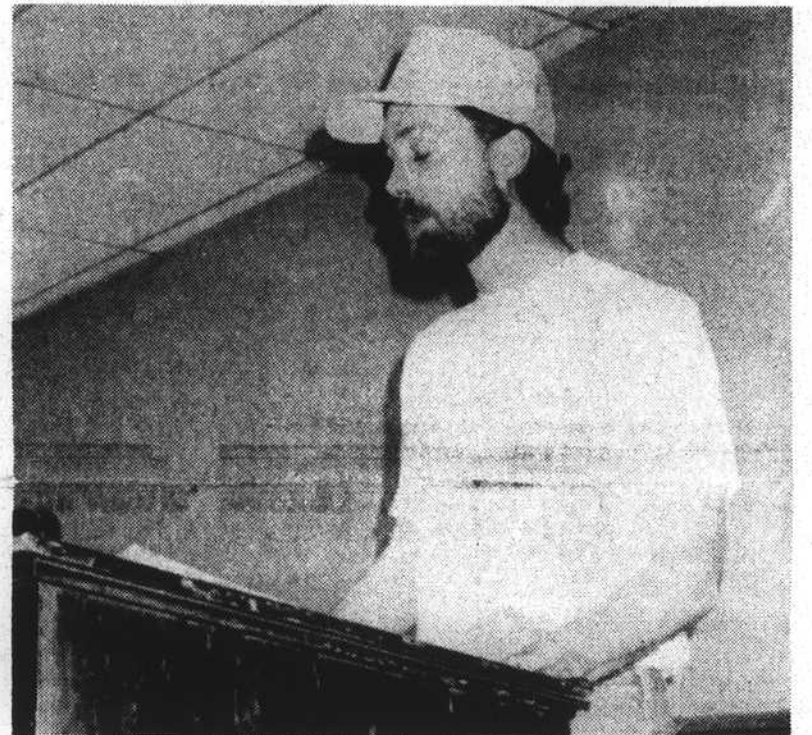
While an ordinary parking violation draws a \$5 penalty, unauthorized parking in a parking space designated

for the handicapped will net a \$25 penalty.

Williams explained that those parking in handicapped spaces must display a state issued handicapped plate. For those truly handicapped and without the plate, he said that a first offense would draw a warning and the second a citation.

Persons requiring a handicapped plate can go to the DMV office at the bus station and obtain a form to be filled out and signed by their doctor. The form is then sent to Raleigh along with the regular \$20 fee and the plate will be mailed to the applicant. This is for the permanently affixed plate on a car.

Another type of plate can be obtained directly from the local office for \$5 that can be placed on the dashboard and moved from car to car. A doctor's certification for this plate is also required.



**ASAP SPEAKER**--Rod Cross, president of Albemarle Sound Action Program, told an audience at a meeting Tuesday night of the horrors that could ensue if swift action isn't taken to wake up the public to what unchecked pollution is doing to our environment.

## Pollution Hazards Stressed By ASAP

The acronym, "ASAP," usually means "as soon as possible." Locally, it has another meaning, "Albemarle Sound Action Program," a local environmental group formed by Rod Cross, its first president. As far as Cross is concerned, the first definition also applies to his organization.

At a meeting at the Jaycee building Tuesday night, he told about 40 attendees that their presence indicated a commitment to cleaner waters and to an overall pristine environment. They were urged by Cross to take an active part in the organization, to write their state legislators urging stronger environmental protection and to bring in friends and neighbors to the effort.

He related the same message that he has carried to the town council and board of county commissioners, that a "substantial education program" needs to be created to inform the public of hazards to clean water. He cited the legislative ban on phosphorous laced laundry detergents in 1987 as an example of an environmental success story, even though "It was a dog fight," with the detergent industry.

He compared the struggle to protect the environment with the federal budget deficit. Cross maintained that "sacrifice" was needed in both

areas if success was to be achieved.

He spoke of coastal waters that "reek of the odor of rotting algae and dead fish. Our eyes can no longer view the wonders of God's creation without seeing syringes and other medical wastes on our beaches.

"Literally thousands of pieces of plastic and styrofoam in every square mile of our ocean, fish and crabs with open sores that seem to burn through their bodies like acid and, to quote Walter Cronkite,  
Continued On Page 8

## Officers Elected

Chowan Republicans held their biennial convention at the old courthouse on March 20 to elect officers and delegates to district and state conventions. All of those chosen were elected unanimously.

Special guests at the convention were Steven P. Rader and Shirley E. Perry, chairman and vice-chairman, respectively, of the First Congressional District.

New chairman is S. Paul O'Neal along with Ann Ellis as vice-chairman, Tom Harris, treasurer and Pamela Ezyk, secretary.

Continued On Page 8

## Hospital Receives Grant For Improvements

Chowan Hospital has been awarded a \$100,000 grant from the Duke Endowment to assist with a hospital construction program and replacement of vital critical care equipment.

Hospital Director Johnny

Bryan said that the grant will be utilized to assist with the construction of a 20 bed psychiatric unit on hospital grounds and updating of the intensive care unit's monitoring system.

During the past 20 years,

Chowan Hospital has received nearly \$1 million in grant funds from the Duke Endowment.

Areas of assistance include construction of the present acute care hospital with a later 10 bed addition; an ear-

lier renovation and subsequent replacement of the skilled nursing unit; educational annex addition; ancillary department renovation and expansion; development of full-time emergency room physician services; and reimbursement for charity care.

In announcing this most recent appropriation, Bryan stated "The Duke Endowment has been most generous in their support of Chowan Hospital when requests for funds have been made to meet the ever-increasing need for new or expanding services for the public we serve."

North and South Carolina hospitals may receive assistance from the Duke Endowment for construction and equipment, charity care and expansion of patient services.

The fund also assists children's homes in the Carolinas; four educational institutions, Duke, Johnson C. Smith and Furman Universities and Davidson College; rural United Methodist churches, retired United Methodist ministers and widows and dependent orphaned children of United Methodist ministers in North Carolina.

The Duke Endowment was established by James B. Duke in 1894



**DOWNTOWN MAYORS GATHER**--Edenton Mayor John Dowd (right) and former mayors (from left) John A. Mitchener, Jr. and George Alma Byrum gathered Friday to sign maintenance agreements for small flower gardens around trees in front of their downtown businesses. Standing, representing sponsors of "Blooming Business," are (l. to r.) Dee Phillips chairman of the Edenton Tree Committee and Carol Sieck and Suellen Bloom of the Garden Club. Mitchener served as mayor from June, 1959 to May, 1969 when Byrum succeeded him and served until November 1973. Dowd has served from November 1985 until the present. (See related story on page 10A.)