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Property owners can expect average 25% increase

BY CLIFF CLARK
News Editor

Chowan County's revaluation of taxable property is nearly complete and early estimates are there will be an average 25 percent increase in values of homes and property.

"Some homes and property will increase only a few percentage points and others will see an increase of up to 35 percent," said Robert Ezzell, a revaluation expert for Pearson Appraisals, the firm hired by Chowan County for the property revaluation which takes

place every eight years.

He said the 25 percent figure represented the average increase of homes and property.

"Increases in value does not necessarily mean taxes will increase. Likewise, decreases in values does not mean there will be a decrease in taxes," said Linda Hendrix, Chowan County's tax administrator.

While most home and property owners understand, and prepare for each revaluation, a new tax on agricultural commodities will be considered by the Chowan County Board of Commissioners during its

meeting in June to adopt the new tax schedules.

Peanut and tobacco allotments, if adopted by the county commissioners, will be taxed. The proposed tax on the two commodities allotments will be \$.38 per pound for peanuts and \$2.03 per pound for tobacco.

During a meeting to examine the schedule held recently, Commissioner Pete Dail expressed concern about the tax and its effects on farmers. He was concerned, on tobacco for example, that the tax was higher than what the producer was getting for the commodity

at the market.

However, said Hendrix, the tax levied is established by the state.

"We didn't just pull this out of our hats. The (tax price per pound) was based on the 1998 land-use value schedule for the Tidewater region," she said. In fact, said Ezzell, during the rate schedule hearings, Chowan County was one of the last counties in the state that didn't levy a tax on peanut and tobacco allotments.

If, however, allotments were eventually phased out, said Hendrix, the taxes could be

eliminated from producers' tax files "in minutes."

Revaluation is the review of all real property to assure its value reflects current market prices. It assures that taxation of real property is fair and equitable, said Hendrix.

"Values of different types change at different rates; some appreciate faster than others while some can decrease. Over a period this could cause some to carry a disproportionate share of taxes. Revaluations correct this as all property is at current market prices," said Hendrix.

In essence, said tax revaluation expert Ezzell, "All we're trying to do is assure that the tax value of the real property would reflect the market price."

Hendrix said the commissioners would be presented the new schedules during their June board meeting. If the schedules were adopted, the new valuations of county property would be available for inspection during the month of June. During the July meeting of the county commission, a public hearing will be held, Hendrix said.

Undercover operation nets three

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Associate Editor

A joint investigation by the Chowan County Sheriff's Department and the State Bureau of Investigation has resulted in three recent arrests on drug-related charges.

On May 6 authorities stopped a 1989 Nissan being driven by Faye Elizabeth Dotson, 42, of Rt. 2, Hertford.

Dotson was arrested on North Broad Street Extended, Edenton, and charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver approximately one ounce of powdered cocaine and maintaining a vehicle for the sale of controlled substances, and the sale and delivery of cocaine.

"After an undercover operation by our office and the SBI, we were able to make this arrest," said Sheriff Fred Spruill. "This is just one more example of how having the good working relationship we have

See ARRESTS On Page 5-A



GERMAN ORCHESTRA TO PERFORM HERE

The Ulmer Knabenmusik, an all-male German orchestra, will perform at Swain Auditorium on Thursday evening, May 22, at 8 p.m. A reception will follow. On Wednesday evening, the public is invited to attend a soccer game and hot dog picnic at the Edenton Methodist Church grounds in which the musicians will participate. Tickets for the concert can be obtained by calling the Chowan Arts Council at 482-8005. (Submitted photo)

Aviation Day planned here

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Associate Editor

The Northeastern Regional Airport in Edenton will soon be showing off the results of its extensive renovations.

The airport is extending an invitation to the entire community to attend "Memorial Day at the Airport" on May 26 between 10 a.m. and 4 p.m.

Airport Manager Tom Sprouse said the purpose of the event is twofold.

"We want to honor aviators who have gone before us," he said. "And, we want to invite everyone to come out and see our new facilities."

Sprouse said the facelift to the facility has included such things as runway expansion, a new weather forecasting system, and applying crack and seal on the runway.

The airport also has planes for sale or rent and is organizing a flight training school and an air charter service.

He said attending "Memorial Day at the Airport" will not only give visitors a chance to see the improvements that have been made, but also to enjoy looking at some experimental and antique aircraft that will be on hand especially for this event.

There will be tours of the terminal building as well as tours of Edenton aboard the new trolley car, Sprouse said.

He added that there will also

See AVIATION On Page 5-A

Council reverses vote against truck traffic

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Associate Editor

Members of the Edenton Town Council have reversed an earlier decision to divert truck traffic away from downtown and are now leaning toward designating a preferred truck route and reinstating US 17 Business.

Their original action to divert the trucks was taken after complaints of excessive noise and property damage were received from residents of West Queen Street, which is part of US 17 Business.

"I've heard from several business people and people who live on Broad Street," said Councilman Steve Biggs. "They are concerned that we've taken the truck traffic off of West Queen and put it on Broad Street."

"I think when we took away the US 17 Business route, I

think we have probably made a mistake. I've seen a lot of towns recently that have a preferred truck route, like Suffolk. I think most truckers will follow it and that's what they look for in truck route signs," he said. "I believe we should rescind our previous action and start over."

Ruel Schappel, who owns a bed and breakfast on West Queen Street, said he thought council's original decision was correct and that they should stand by it. He said that he could see no reason to cater to what he termed "the arrogance of truckers."

"Let's not go back to square one," he said. "You've got an excellent proposal already. Let's use it. These trucks are not stopping in Edenton; they have no business here."

Several West Queen Street residents at the council meeting mentioned excessive speed by

See COUNCIL On Page 5-A

Memorial service set at Vets' Memorial

Chowan County's fifth annual Memorial Day Service will be held at the Veterans Memorial in Edenton on Monday, May 26, at 8 a.m.

The American flag will be lowered to half mast and there will be a wreath laying by private citizens and organizations to honor loved ones.

American Legion Unit 40 Chaplain Jean Halsey will give the invocation and the benediction will be offered by Jean Halsey.

Keynote speaker will be Tim Dannelly of Edenton.

Anyone having questions about the ceremony can contact George Stokes at 482-8572.

County adds surveillance cameras in its building

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Associate Editor

Chowan County has a message for would-be troublemakers: we'll be watching you.

Following a series of communitywide meetings to address the crime problem

here, county officials decided to upgrade security in the county office building by installing surveillance cameras and monitors in the front and back hallways as well as the offices of social services and the tax department. Plans call for expanding the service to other areas of the building as well.

"Obviously, this is something that we think is needed," said County Maintenance Supervisor Don Evans. "We also want to encourage local businesses to follow suit and upgrade their security systems or at least install burglar alarms."

Evans said the installation of the cameras and monitors in the building is "just the start.

We've got a lot of other things in mind."

The security system inside the county office building also includes a "panic button" set up in each office that is connected to the 911 emergency headquarters.

"We hope this is something

'We're urging other businesses...to install some kind of surveillance or alarm system. We hope we will never have to use it, but you can't be too careful these days.'

Don Evans
County Maintenance Supervisor

that won't ever have to be used, but at least in case of an emergency situation, it will be in place if it is needed," Evans said. The "panic button" will alert local police in case a situation arises where employees in the building are unable to summon help any

other way.

Evans said that everyone coming in or going out of the county office building will be recorded on the building's video surveillance system and that the tapes will be saved in case they are needed in court.

He added that everyone who works in the building is also being cautioned to pay particular attention to anyone who is acting in a suspicious manner and to make a note of the exact time they see the person in the building. Evans said this information may be helpful in identifying the person on the surveillance tapes if the need should arise.

Evans said the county is paying for the surveillance system. One unit with a color monitor costs \$1,400. Additional cameras cost about \$250 each and he said the county system can accommodate as many as 10 cameras.

"There is a lot of flexibility

See CAMERAS On Page 5-A



Don Evans inspects a new county surveillance camera

CHOWAN HOSPITAL HEALTH EXPO

Thursday, May 22 • 4-7 p.m.

Virginia Road • Edenton • 482-6283 for more information

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Great Food!

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