Chowan County joins AREA, waits to see about NCNG action

BY SEAN JACKSON Staff Writer

Whether North Carolina Natural Gas will seek to provide natural gas services to Chowan and surrounding counties remains to be seen, said Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland on Monday.

After more than three decades of holding exclusive fran-. chise rights to natural gas service in northeast North Carolina, NCNG has yet to make a move to provide gas to the region, he said.

"In 35 years, they (NCNG) have done nothing to bring natural gas into our area," Copeland

In the meantime, Chowan County has banded together with other counties and municipalities in northeast North Carolina to ensure that the region receives natural gas ser-

Chowan County Board of Commissioners, the commissioners adopted a resolution for the county to join the Albemarle Regional Energy Authority (AREA).

The authority is comprised of representatives from Chowan, Camden, Currituck, Pasquotank, Perquimans counties, as well as Edenton, Elizabeth City, Hertford, and Win-

When NCNG's deadline for using natural gas service franchise rights expired on July 1, doors were opened to other natural gas providers to render service to the northeast. Regarding "Use It or Lose It" legislation introduced by state Rep. Bill Owens, a Pasquotank County Democrat, NCNG had until June 30 to move forward with providing gas service to

A State Utilities Commission

lar monthly meeting of the that NCNG has not officially Jimmie Dixon, is that we need lost its exclusive franchise rights to the northeast. A "complicated" process in which the State Utilities Commission determines whether or not NCNG adequately served the area prior to July 1 must be completed before NCNG loses its exclusive franchise rights, said Giselle Rankin.

> Although the July 1 deadline has come and gone, NCNG could still be awarded exclusive franchise rights by the Utilities Commission, she said. Those decisions will most likely be made in upcoming months, she said.

> In an effort to speed up the delivery process, AREA was formed to collaborate with state Sen. President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight's office to bring gas services to the northeast.

"The bottom line is, and I have discussed this with (Pasquotank County Commissioner and AREA's board chairman)

to move ahead to develop (natural gas service in) this district," Copeland said. "This authority can do any of those things that they (NCNG) could do, including providing gas service and pipeline construction. The authority's mission is to provide natural gas to the north-

Last week, NCNG's vice president of government relations, Stuart Dixon, said that the company is close to laying the groundwork for a natural gas line from Virginia to Elizabeth City. The project, which calls for a natural gas line along U.S. 17's right of way from the Virginia border to Elizabeth City, would be funded entirely by NCNG, he said.

According to Dixon, NCNG officials have met with State Utilities Commission staff in Raleigh to discuss his company's ongoing proposal to bring natural gas to Elizabeth

NCNG has yet to file any documents with the State Utilities Commission.

"I really think this is the latest ploy by them. It's nothing other than them wanting to convince the Utilities Commission that they want to keep their franchise rights," said Copeland of NCNG's latest proposal.

If voters pass a \$950 million bond referendum in November, \$150 million would be appropriated for the expansion of gas services into the 22 counties currently without natural gas service. The bond, spearheaded by Basnight, would help pay for construction costs to bring gas lines into the state's non-served counties.

"That \$150 million would offset the construction and deliverv costs in those areas," a member of Bashight's Raleigh office, Julia White, said last

Boating enthusiasts are en-

couraged to make a trip down

to the Edenton waterfront this

weekend to view the racing

action. The Sunfish, Moth and

open classes will race on a

course fairly close to shore, said

Elliott, while the Thistle and

Tanzer boats will race further

For more information or to

register, call Elliott at 482-2121,

or Nancy Nicholls at the

Edenton-Chowan Chamber of

Commerce at 482-3400.

Elizabeth City campus.

of 1999," said Elliott.

out in the bay.

The bond bill has already been passed in the state Senate; White said.

"There seems to be some willingness in the House to pass the water and gas bonds (for the November ballot)," she said.

Copeland said that if the bond wins approval, the local authority will seek state funding for the construction of gas lines which would bring natural gas service to the northeast.

Forum

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to be affected by the proposed Wal-Mart store. The coalition said the one-hour tour, scheduled to begin at 3 p.m., is expected to get broad coverage by area television stations.

Tourists

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low-impact industry that brings travelers in to sample our natu-

ral scenic beauty and our heritage. Tourism is economic development in its purest form." The North Carolina Department of Commerce Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development has released its 1997

county-by-county tourism economic impact results. The annual study, prepared by the Travel Industry Association of America (TIA), tracks tourism expenditures, payroll, employment, and state and local tax receipts for each of North Carolina's 100 counties.

Foundation makes \$10,000 gift to the MOA campaign

Officials from the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City have announced that Kannapolis-based Cannon Foundation, Inc. has made a \$10,000 commitment to the Museum's capital campaign.

With this new gift, the campaign has now passed the \$1.5 million mark, organizers said.

Races

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tion.

Registration will begin early Saturday morning and Saturday's racing will begin at noon. Sunday's racing, to include just Thistle and Tanzer classes, will begin at 9 a.m.

Saturday's Sunfish class will

"We want to encourage all

of the Albemarle will offer free

Unlocking Test Taking

Skills will be held Monday

classes in July and August.

the kids who would like to race, to come out this weekend," said Jim Elliott, one of several coordinators involved in bringing the races to Edenton. Each entrant will receive a dinner ticket, Elliott said.

Registration costs are as follows: Thistle, \$50; Tanzer, \$40; all other classes, \$15.

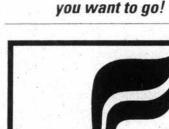
"One reason we're having this regatta is that it will be an opportunity for the Thistle sailors to come to Edenton and see the area before the town hosts the Thistle Nationals in August

a.m. in room B-209 at COA's

HRD classes are free for all participants. For more information or to register for any of these classes, contact the Human Resources Development program at College of the

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tion and brightness of a traffic light rather than its color. There is also promising work

being done with colored filters to improve the ability to distinguish colors. For example, red tinted contact lenses are being used in some cases to aid persons with certain color deficiencies; and there is the promise of breakthrough to come.

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include divisions for both senior and junior participants.

classes set for this summer

· Transition to College Reading and English will be held Monday through Friday, Aug.

through Thursday from July 6-24 through Dec. 4, from 8-8:50

Read the Herald weekly and stay informed!

The Human Resources De- 16 from 8-10 a.m. in room B-209

velopment program at College at COA's Elizabeth City cam-

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Office Locations

301 East Main Street PO Box 220 Elizabeth City, NC 27907 Telephone: 252-335-0871 Facsimile: 252-335-4223

2502 South Croatan Hwy. PO Box 310 Nags Head, NC 27959 Telephone: 252-441-0871 Facsimile: 252-441-8822

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