

The Chowan Herald

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Subdivision permit wins Council nod

BY LAURIE HUFFORD
Staff Writer

At the Town Council's most recent meeting, no public comment was made on the proposed budget, and the FY 1999/2000 Budget for the Town of Edenton passed unanimously.

Application for rezoning and granting of a Conditional Use Permit for a major subdivision, Edenton Lake and Harbor, was unanimously approved.

For a Conditional Use Permit to be granted, the Council must consider four things: if the change endangers public health or safety; if the change injures the value of adjacent or abutting properties; if the change is in harmony with the area in which it is located; and if it is in conformity with the land use plan, or other such plans.

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EDENTON BAY CHALLENGE RETURNS

The 1999 Edenton Bay Challenge Regatta will be held this Saturday. There will be two separate race courses - the first, the North Carolina Tanzer 16 State Championship with Windmills and Thistles participating. The second group will consist of Sunfish, Lazer and Moth boats. The first race will begin at noon. A dinner (for all participants) and trophy presentations for the winning Sunfish, Lazers and Moth boats will be held Saturday evening. Sunday's events begin at 9 a.m. with a luncheon and awards ceremony for the Tanzers and Windmills set to follow at 1 p.m.

County budget will fund technology in local school system

BY LAURIE HUFFORD
Staff Writer

Chowan County Commissioners unanimously approved the county's 1999-2000 Budget after a public hearing June 21. No public comment was made, but a letter from John Sams was entered into the record.

The proposed budget, presented to the Board June 7, was unchanged since that time. Prepared by the Finance Committee and Staff, this budget holds back tax increases, yet addresses County education, public safety and facility needs.

The tax rate of 69¢ per \$100 value remains intact, with budgeted tax revenues of \$160,000 (an increase in the tax base of about \$22 million).

Highlights of the budget include the appropriation of \$1,250,000 (money generated from the lease of the Chowan Hospital) to the Edenton-Chowan Schools for the implementation of their Five-Year School Technology Plan. \$250,000 per year, for five years, will upgrade technology at the schools, and "enhance the educational standards in our community."

There will be four additional EMS positions, and money from Health Care Reserve 1 and Reserve 2 funds is budgeted in accordance with resolutions previously adopted.

There is a cost of living increase of 3% for all employees, with a larger adjustment

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TORCH RUN CEREMONY HELD

A 1999 Special Olympics World Games Torch Run ceremony was held outside the Barker House in downtown Edenton Monday morning. Following a welcome by Sandy Davis and the singing of the national anthem by Kirby Johnson, local dignitaries were introduced to Sgt. Richard Allsbrook of the Greenville Police Department, who is serving as coordinator of this final leg of the Torch Run, and Randall Boehm of Missouri, a member of one of two teams participating in the final leg of the Torch Run. The '99 Special Olympics World Games, the world's largest sporting event scheduled this year, will take place June 26 through July 4 in Raleigh, Durham, Chapel Hill, and Cary, NC. (Staff photo by Rebecca Bunch)

County's cable rates rise as channels added

Knighton says town, county cannot intervene

News that local cable rates will soon be going up has some local residents upset even though additional channels will be added along with the increase in rates. Among them is George Bradham of Edenton. In a letter to The Chowan Herald protesting the rate increase, Bradham wrote, in part: "On March 31, 1999 the Federal Communications Commission announced that they would no longer be able to act upon cable television rate increases effective that date. Essentially, they open(ed) the door for cable companies to raise rates to whatever level they chose."

"Mediacom is taking advantage of a situation over which local customers have no control. We cannot choose to go to another cable provider. With this as an example, what will rates be in the future?"

The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is an

independent government agency whose mission it is to encourage competition in all communications markets and to protect public interests. The FCC develops and implements policy regarding interstate and international communications by radio, TV, wire, satellite, and cable, as directed by Congress.

After March 31, 1999, the FCC, as Bradham points out in his letter, could no longer receive or act upon consumer complaints about cable TV service. However, according to the FCC, Office of Public Affairs, Public Service Division, local communities still have authority to regulate rates on the basic service tier. (Congress' reasoning in ending the FCC's rate regulation authority was that competition would keep prices reasonable.)

In the 1992 Cable Act, cable equipment and basic tier cable rates are subject to regulation by state and municipal governments in areas where effective competition is absent. Basic tier service includes broadcast signals, local public, educational, and government access channels and other services the system operator

chooses to include in the same package with these channels. Usually, it is the lowest priced tier of service that subscribers can receive. It is all of the other cable programming, distributed over the system, and not on the basic tier, that is no longer subject to regulation after March 31, 1999.

For more information, access www.fcc.gov or write to Cable Services Bureau, 445 12th St., SW, Room 3-C830, Washington, DC 20554. Phone: (202) 418-7200

In discussing extension of the franchise with the Town Council in March, a rate increase was mentioned by Mediacom, at about the amount that has occurred. Improvements in service, including the addition of a number of new channels to the cable lineup, have already been explained with notification of the increase to customers.

In the county's contract, a section on rates and charges says that the "Grantor reserves the right to regulate such rates and charges to the extent permitted by any present or future regulatory law." A schedule of the (soon-to-be old) rates was attached to the contract.

On Tuesday morning, Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton issued the following statement on the rate increase.

"The town and county only have regulatory authority over the very basic service tier, the \$9.65 tier," she said. "Only if the cable company exceeds the formula for this rate can we step in. Kathy Rea advises that her company has not (exceeded cap on the basic tier)."

FCC Chairman William E. Kennard has launched a campaign for a Cable Consumer Bill of Rights. Its purpose is to inform consumers that they still have rights regarding cable service.

During the time that the FCC did receive complaints, it resolved almost 18,000 complaints involving 5,700 cable communities. About \$100 million in consumer refunds was ordered, to 40 million cable subscribers. Cable consumers were saved about three to five billion dollars over the past six years.

Kennard has launched a consumer education program to notify consumers of their options in the deregulated market.

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Center's responsibilities outlined

(Questions from Chowan Herald readers concerning the duties and responsibilities of the staff at county-located trash/recycling have prompted us to offer this explanation of how the center is supposed to be operated.)

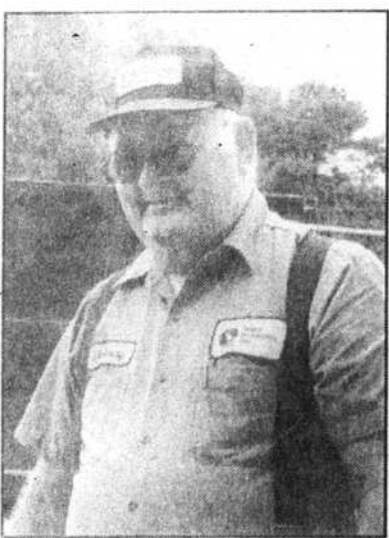
BY LAURIE HUFFORD
Staff Writer

Albemarle Regional Solid Waste Management Authority is ultimately in charge of the trash/recycling units along Hwy. 32, although Waste Industries is a primary subcontractor. Questions/problems should be directed to the Albemarle Solid Waste Management Authority; PO Box 189; Elizabeth City, NC 27909; Phone: 338-4485.

For questions about recycling, call Perquimans, Chowan, Gates (PCG) Solid Waste Facility: (252) 297-3300. Also from this number, a speaker is available for group presentations, on topics such as recycling, waste reduction, composting, or household hazardous waste.

There are 13 solid waste/recycling centers in three counties; four are in Chowan.

According to Jerry Parks, Executive Director of PCG Solid Waste Management, at-



Johnny Copeland of the Hwy. 32 Recycling Center

tendants at these centers should be knowledgeable as to answering questions and enabling patrons to recycle items (put this part here, that part there, etc.) because "it is not mandatory that people recycle."

Attendants are required to keep sites clean, to avert vandalism, and to be alert to needs as they arise. They should be able to tell people where to take items, and what is and is not accepted at that site. If an item is unacceptable at the site, the worker should be able to direct

the patron to a site that will accept the item, if applicable. (Most items are acceptable somewhere.)

Employees are not required to assist the public in unloading material. Many do help, and enjoy the interaction, but their jobs are only to direct people and to answer questions.

"Anything above and beyond that is a courtesy of that worker," says Jerry Parks.

There also seems to be some confusion as to what is acceptable at the recycling places.

Washers, stoves, air conditioners, water heaters, refrigerators, and other "white goods" are acceptable. Bulky items should be put into containers.

Lead acid batteries should be returned to parts stores or service stations. (Call PCG for other recycling programs.)

Hard cover and paper back books are accepted. Computer paper, copy paper, mail, envelopes, stationery, and other business papers are also accepted. (Call PCG to join an office program.)

Properly rinsed pesticide containers are accepted at the PCG Solid Waste Facility and at special collections. (Call the

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Jackie McGuire, Clothes Closet employee (third from left), with volunteers Marie Harris, Laura Fagan, and Andrea Miller. (Staff photo by Laurie Hufford)

Clothes Closet, Food Pantry to move

The Clothes Closet and the Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry will soon be sharing quarters at a new location, 1370 North Broad Street. The move is scheduled to come during July.

"This move is made possible by the generous support of the community," said Clothes

Closet employee Jackie McGuire.

McGuire noted that the thrill of the hunt and the search for that special discount motivate many to seek out thrift stores, hoping to find a bargain they can brag about to friends. The popularity of the "Retro" look

among young people is another

But, she added, "The bargains are not the real reason the Clothes Closet is in business. We provide a service to the community. The money from sales goes back into the com-

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