

# THE CHOWAN HERALD

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## Anticipating deregulation, town seeks tax increase

Expected electric deregulation cited as part of decision

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Editor

Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton announced Monday afternoon that she will request a four cent tax increase in the proposed budget for fiscal year 2000-2001. Knighton said she made the decision reluctantly, but believing that it was necessary.

In her annual budget message to the mayor and members of the town council, Knighton cited sev-

eral reasons for asking that the tax rate be raised to 39.5 cents.

"This four cent tax increase is the first increase recommended since 1996," she said. "There are two reasons for this recommendation. One, with deregulation certain to come to our state either in 2004 or 2005, we must increase our efforts to reduce and ultimately eliminate the General Fund's dependence on the subsidy from the Electric Fund. Over the past seven years, we have been reducing the amount of the transfer by the value of one and one-half cents on the tax rate. If we do not accelerate the reduction, by the year 2004 the General Fund will have to absorb almost \$63,000 in one year in order to have the zero transfer by those dates. I recommend we accelerate

the reduction on the tax rate to 2 cents."

Knighton said that there is still considerable discussion and debate as to exactly when deregulation will take place. The state Study Commission recommends 2004, and Electricities is negotiating for 2005. "My projections," she said, "are based on the assumption that we will not have the ability to transfer funds in January, 2005."

She said that the second reason for the recommended tax increase is to help reduce the amount of money the town appropriates from reserves to balance the budget. "The Local Government Commission has repeatedly expressed concern that we use reserve funds to balance the budget," Knighton said. "When we appropriate re-

serves, that reduces our fund balance (rainy day fund). While we never, ever spend all or even half of the appropriated reserve, from the LGC's perspective the reserve is not as high as it should be."

She also noted that no rate increase was requested in the water and sewer fund, or the electric fund, as outlined in the proposed budget.

With regard to the water and sewer fund, Knighton said, "The capital improvement plan continues for the ongoing upgrade of the Beaver Hill Water Treatment Plant. A state loan will pay for the initial capital outlay of this project; we have budgeted the first year's debt service, approximately \$48,000.

"In the electric fund, we include

expenditures to cover the cost of extending overhead lines to service Edenton Bay Phase II and Colonial Village Subdivision off of Coke Avenue. The developers are responsible for installing underground service; we provide the cost of going overhead."

Knighton added that the proposed budget does not include funding for any new staff positions, however, there are funds included that would give all town employees a cost of living salary increase in the amount of 2.5 percent.

One of the most significant areas of interest in the new budget can be found in its recommendation pertaining to funding of the Recreation Department.

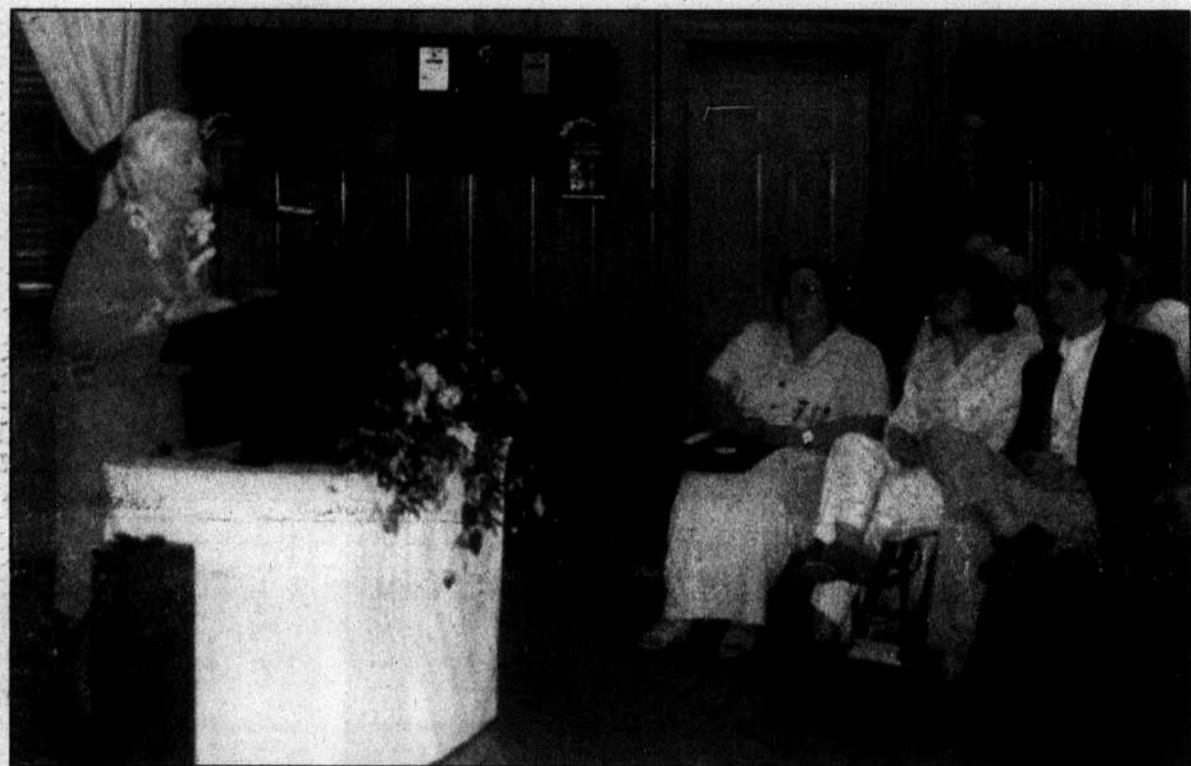
"Over the last five years, we have been working with Chowan

County, constantly looking at ways to improve our joint agreements," Knighton said. "One area that has long concerned the town has been the double taxation issue with the Recreation Department. We have identified this as truly the last double taxation issue we are facing."

"Since the county contributes to the department, town taxpayers are paying twice for this service," she added. "As you know, approximately 35 percent of the county's tax base comes from town taxpayers. The tentative agreement is for the county to take over the funding of the Recreation Department. The proposal is to phase out the town's financial contributions

See TAX On Page 3-A

### Sharing history



Elizabeth Vann Moore speaks before a capacity crowd on the topic "Digging Up the Past" during the first program in the Elizabeth Vann Moore Biennial Series for Preservation Studies, named in her honor, on May 27 at the Masonic Lodge on the Edenton waterfront. Other speakers included: Peggy L. Cornett, director of the Thomas Jefferson Center for Historic Plants, Monticello; and, Dr. Julian D. Hudson, director of Prestwoud Plantation. Moore's neighbor and friend, Edenton Town Councilman Sambo Dixon, welcomed the crowd and Linda Jordan Eure, site manager for the Historic Edenton Visitor Center, introduced special guests. (Staff photo by Rebecca Bunch)

### County commission views DOT proposal

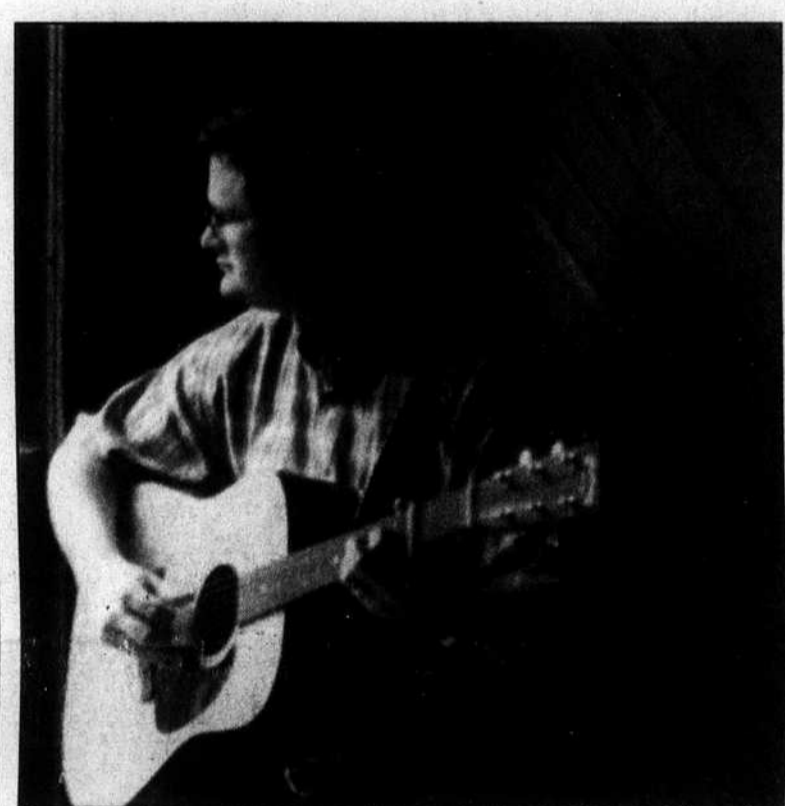
BY DERRICK ARMSTEAD  
Staff Writer

EDENTON—Department of Transportation (DOT) officials made a return visit to Edenton to attend Monday evening's County Commissioners meeting to discuss a revised DOT road improvement plan.

"We made a mistake at the last meeting," said DOT representative Don Conner. "...therefore we requested to come back."

Conner went on to state that the DOT has made the necessary corrections that includes paving a smaller segment of Bear Swamp Road, which DOT officials believe will enough room to complete the two roads ahead of Holly Grove—Tootsie and Blanchard.

See DOT On Page 3-A



### Music man

Guitarist Paul Boaz, whose musical influences include James Taylor, Gordon Lightfoot and John Denver, will be among those performing at the free Community Music Festival in the Edenton waterfront park this Saturday from 4-7:30 p.m. The event, sponsored by the Chowan Arts Council, will also feature a wide range of musical styles from blues to rock and reggae. There will also be Gospel and Contemporary Christian music. Everyone is welcome.

### Sheriff's Dept. will be part of program

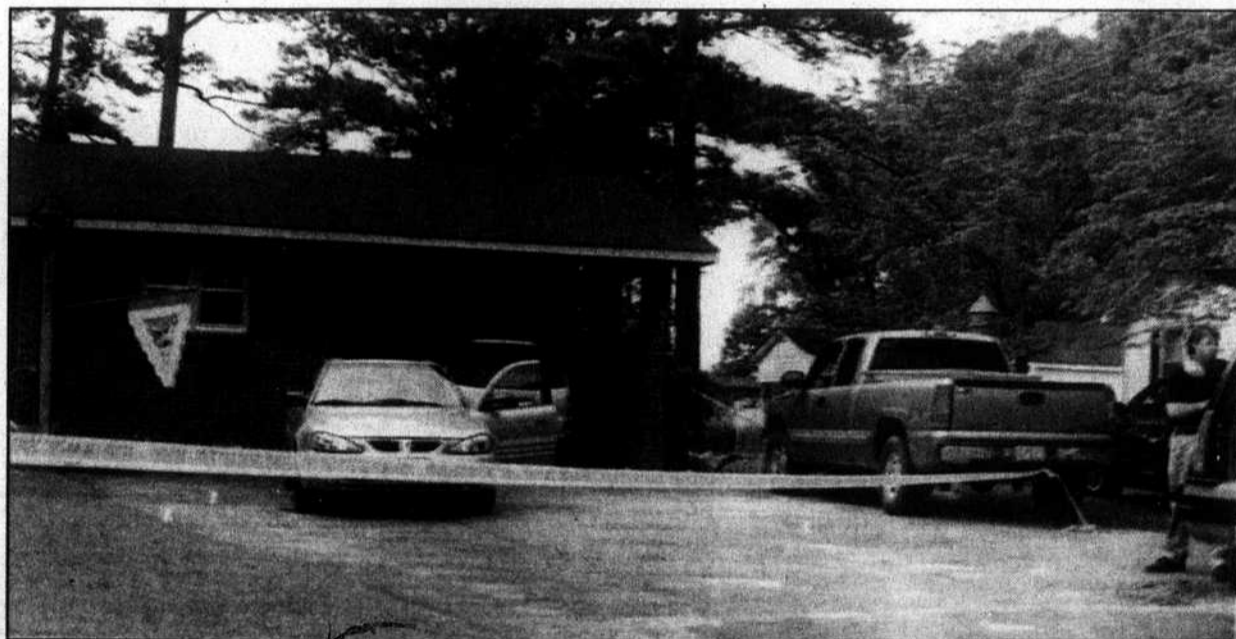
BY DERRICK ARMSTEAD  
Staff Writer

Chowan County has been designated as one of 77 drop-off points in the recently created "Call to Protect" program, which was introduced by State Senate President Pro Tempore Marc Basnight (D-Dare) to assist domestic violence victims.

In addition, the surrounding northeastern counties of Bertie, Martin, Gates, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, Currituck, and Dare have also been selected for participation in the project.

"I think this is a great program," said Sheriff Fred Spruill of Chowan County. "They can dial 911 on any cell phone, and help will be on its way. Having these phones available will be a good thing for the public. I look forward to working with people on it."

See SHERIFF On Page 3-A



The silver Pontiac being driven by Paula Davenport Sutton at the time of her death is shown, door open, still sitting in the driveway of her parents' home in Merry Hill. Sutton ran from the car after being shot by her estranged husband. She was chased under the carport, where she was killed and her husband committed suicide. Stray gunfire also struck her parents' van. (Cox NC Publications Photo by Jeanette White)

### Slain woman's love for life recalled

BY JEANETTE WHITE  
Cox NC Publications

MERRY HILL, NC - Paula Davenport Sutton was a person who loved the outdoors, a character trait which runs in her family.

She loved to play golf with her father, to dip a hook in the Chowan River, and she really enjoyed work-

ing in the yard.

"She had some of the prettiest flower beds you ever saw," said her father, Marvin Davenport.

Paula loved to play softball. When she and her sister, Penny, were younger, Paula's pitching and Penny's catching helped their teams win championships.

After Paula graduated from

Bertie High School, she earned a bachelor's degree in industrial technology at East Carolina University. Last winter she began work at ECU to earn a master's degree.

Paula worked for Greenville's Rivers and Associates, Inc., Engi-

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### Having a getaway plan is essential

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Editor

According to Pat Youngblood, director of Albemarle Hopeline, deaths like that of Paula Davenport Sutton serve to point up the grim reality that women who are victims of domestic violence don't always make it out alive.

In fact, she said, many victims are at greatest risk of losing their lives after they escape because the person abusing them has lost the sense of control that the batterer considers absolutely essential in his own life.

Therefore, it is of vital importance for the person being abused, typically a woman, to have a good getaway plan in place for herself and/or her children.

She said that Hopeline, which counsels and shelters battered women and their children, recommends taking the following steps:

- Have quick access to a hidden set of car keys
- Have a hidden emergency cash fund
- Have suitcase with a couple of changes of clothes for yourself and

See HARM On Page 3-A

### Abuse is present if:

- You are afraid of your partner
- You cannot express your opinions or feelings without fearing your partner's reaction
- You always ask your partner for permission to see family or friends, to spend money, or to buy anything
- You constantly make your children, your environment and yourself into what your partner wants in order to avoid confrontation

See MORE SIGNS OF ABUSE ON PAGE 3-A

THE CHOWAN ARTS COUNCIL PRESENTS MUSIC featuring a variety of local talent Edenton Waterfront Park FREE COMMUNITY FESTIVAL Saturday June 10th 4:00 - 7:30 pm