

THE CHOWAN HERALD

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Students compete in Math Fair .. 9-A



Knights help area kids, adults 4-B



Boat builder celebrates new location 8-A



Local citizens huddle under brightly colored umbrellas as they listen to Peter Rascoe (center), director of the Edenton-Chowan Special Projects Office during a reconsecration ceremony held at the site of sixty 18th and 19th century African-American graves. (Staff photo by Helen Kerr Outland)

Reconsecration of graves is held here

BY HELEN KERR OUTLAND
Staff Writer

EDENTON — Icy rain splashed off the multi-colored umbrellas of those gathered for the reconsecration of sixty 18th and 19th century African-American graves Thursday morning. Despite the cold wind and rain many had come to pay their respects and honor those whose final resting place had been all but forgotten.

The graves were rediscovered last year as part of a restoration effort taking place on the Filbert's Creek Preserve. The revitalization came as part of a North Carolina Clean Water Management Trust Fund

Grant. Under the guidance of the Edenton-Chowan Special Projects Office and Director Peter Rascoe the gravesites were located and preservation work was begun.

"Even with a few visible headstones, as we entered the area we immediately recognized many depressions in the ground," Peter Rascoe said. "Wayne Blair, Madison Phillips, and myself went in on our knees and began clearing the site by hand. Our fear was that any equipment would damage the already fragile graves."

In clearing the site it was discovered that some of the graves had been lined with

brick. A few were marked with headstones, a sign of the prosperity of the family, but most were marked only by small boulders. Some were not marked at all.

"The clearing effort reached a scale that inmates were brought in to help," said Rascoe. In an effort to locate all of the graves Loretta Lautzenheiser of Carolina Coastal Research in Tarboro was brought to the cemetery. With high tech thermal imaging equipment Lautzenheiser was able to find some 60 graves. The earliest marker found dates back to 1816. Another reads:

"In Memory of Mary Matilda,

daughter of Asa Barnswell. Born 10th, June 1797. Died 14th Jan. 1817."

The Reverend Jerald I. Perry, Sr. officiated at Thursday's reconsecration, reminding those in attendance of the fragility of life.

"I will not die but live, and will proclaim what the Lord has done," he read from Psalm 118.

As people hurried to their cars to escape the cold the words from the Reconsecration Prayer lingered in the air above the graves. ".... and that this place be purged from all pollution, and that it may be restored and sanctified as a hallowed place of rest."

Dept. heads asked to trim their budgets

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

While some North Carolina counties are crying foul and shutting down local programs left and right, Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland says it is not time to panic over the county budget just yet.

In an interview last Friday, Copeland said that while it is true the county will lose some funding from the state because of emergency budget measures established by Gov. Mike Easley, he feels the situation is far from dire.

Copeland said that to make up the expected \$116,000 shortfall, he has asked the heads of departments that would be affected by the shortage to voluntarily make cuts in their budgets. The lost funds, which are part of a state inventory reimbursement tax, represent two cents on the property tax rate.

He said that areas that would be most likely to be cut would include such things as all non-essential travel and possibly not filling job vacancies, but instead having staff double up their duties to help the county save money.

"I have not issued any hard and fast guidelines," he said. "I am relying on the discretion and common sense of our department heads in county government to decide how they can best deal with this situation within their own departments."

Copeland said that while a

great impact would not be felt in the community should those funds remain unavailable through the end of this year, the long term impact could be much stronger.

"I think the real issue is not so much what's going to happen right now," he said, "but whether state government is going to decide to withhold those funds from us next year, and even beyond that. If that happens, it could have a very strong impact."

And, Copeland added, "As we all know, the state is in a serious financial crunch. I think the likelihood is there that it could happen."

One factor that could also adversely affect the fiscal stability of county governments across North Carolina is an expected rise in the amount each county will have to pay to fund Medicaid, which helps provide medical services for the poor. Already, the state is estimating that its costs for Medicaid will rise by an additional \$150 million, with counties being expected to pay about \$22.5 million more to help fund the program. Experts say this represents a 19 percent increase from last year, eight percent of which was unbudgeted. The costs borne by each state and county across the country are tied directly to the federal share of funds for the program. If the federal share drops, state and local governments will generally have to make up the difference.



A visitor to last year's Historic Antiques Show and Sale looks at some fine linens. In a break with tradition, this year's show will take place under tents adjacent to the Barker House in downtown Edenton. (Chowan Herald file photo by Rebecca Bunch)

This year, show to be held under tents

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

Historic Edenton's traditional antiques show and sale will be presented Saturday, March 17, from 10 a.m. until 6 p.m. and Sunday, March 18, from noon until 5 p.m. with an interesting new twist this year - as an antiques fair.

"We thought this would be a fun way to present this event," said co-chairman Betsy Hunt. "The entire thing will be held under tents provided by Party Rentals of Edenton. Chris Elliott, the owner, has graciously agreed to furnish us with two 40 by 60 ft. tents plus a

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Ag Center officially opens with special ceremonies



County Manager Cliff Copeland, Chowan County Commissioners and local citizens gather with the County Extension staff to celebrate the opening of the new Agriculture Center here.

BY HELEN KERR OUTLAND
Staff Writer

EDENTON—There were very few good things left unsaid after Monday evening's Dedication/Open House for the Chowan County Agricultural Center. Following the opening ceremony attending county leaders and dignitaries toured the new multi-functional facility at 730 North Granville Street. The words "wonderful" and "great" were heard often. The center has been wanted

and needed for a long time. The new building reflects the culmination of years of planning, and the collaboration of many, to make it functional for not only for the departments housed within its walls but meeting the needs of the public too.

"This center was designed with a number of considerations all directed at those who be working in the facility and the public who would be visiting the offices," says Architect Lou Jurkowski of Brown

Jurkowski Architectural Collaborative of Raleigh. "I guess you could say we started with the psychological aspects of the working atmosphere of the building occupying the building. So many needs had to be met." Jurkowski goes on to elaborate on the structural and esthetic concepts of the structure. "This room," she says indicating the banquet/conference room, "is centrally located within the building. "For events such as

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'Looping' looked at

Chowan Middle School offers a program called "looping" to students in the sixth grade. This program is an opportunity for students and teachers to remain together for a two-year period and thus share in individual development and growth in all areas from academic to social development.

Informational meetings on looping are scheduled at the White Oak Elementary School cafeteria on Tuesday, March 6, at 7 p.m. and in the D.F. Walker Elementary School media center on Monday, March 12 at 7 p.m.

At these meetings parents will be able to hear about the effects of the present program and what is available for the upcoming school year. Principals from the schools and teachers from Chowan Middle School who are involved in the program will be on hand to answer all questions that pertain to looping.

Parents of upcoming sixth graders for the year 2001-2002 need to attend one of the meetings to understand the options available to students at the middle school.

American Legion
Back Building

SPECIAL BINGO FOR "RELAY FOR LIFE"
FRIDAY, MARCH 2 @ 7:30 P.M.

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Family Relay For
Life Team