

THE CHOWAN HERALD

Vol. LXIX, No. 32

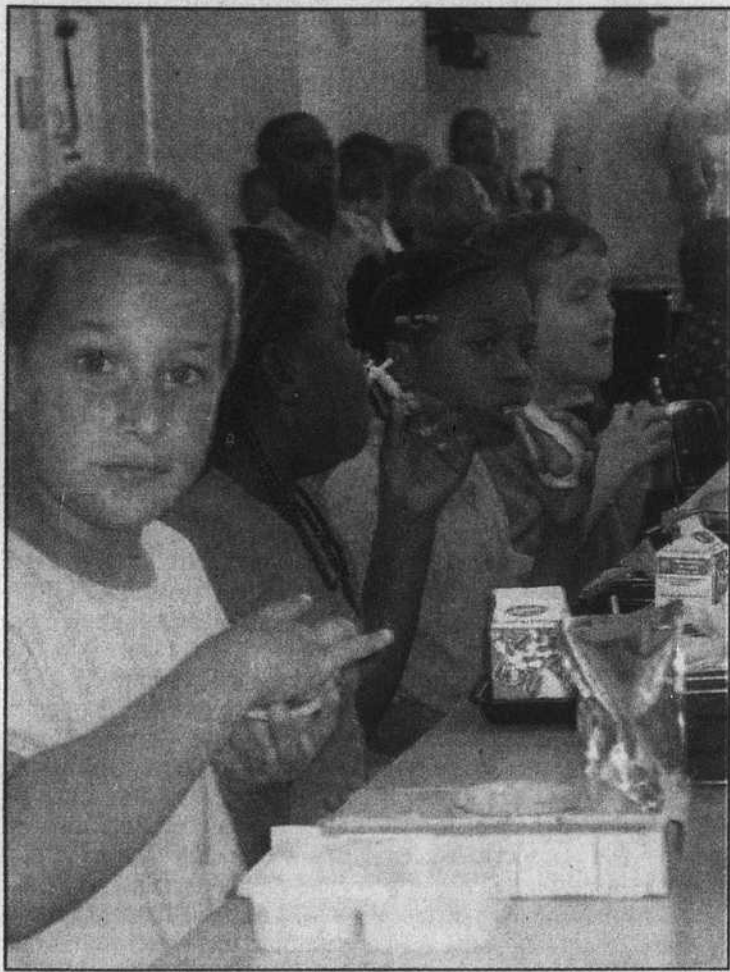
Published in historic Edenton . . . The South's prettiest town.

Single Copies 50¢

TEE-LOK changes are set . . . 5-B

Little League tourney held in Edenton . . . 1-B

Enjoying the sounds of silence on a summer day . . . 5-B



First day back

D.F. Walker elementary school students enjoy the first school lunch of the 2002-2003 school year Tuesday morning. (Glenda Jakubowski photo, Edenton-Chowan Schools)

United Piece Dye Works closes soft economy, imports are cited

BY S. BRADY CALHOUN
Cox NC Publications

One of Chowan County's largest employers closed its doors for good Monday, citing a losing battle against textile imports, a faltering economy and a shrinking customer base.

In a message to the 90 workers who lost their jobs, United Piece Dye Works co-owner Jim Landry described the decision to shut the 120-year-old textile dye-and-finishing plant as one beyond management's control.

"The decision we must take today is the result of economic conditions that are dictated by global sourcing decisions made by retailers and our customers that neither you nor management can control," he said. "Like each of you we are all devastated and saddened by the decision."

Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland said the loss of 90 jobs would have an impact

on the county's economy.

"There is an impact," he said. "Is it a devastating impact? No. Is it a major impact? Yes."

United Piece Dye Works "had fought valiantly," Landry said, to overcome the impact of "an increasing wave of imported garments . . . that have flooded the shores and heartland of our country."

Over the past four years, the company had worked with financing sources, Landry said, to make itself more efficient, lower production costs and branch into fabrics that are less import sensitive. But ultimately, the battle was unwinnable.

"In the end the tragedy of 9/11 and the resulting abrupt contraction of consumer spending, the abrupt closure of JPS Textiles, the contraction in other U.S. weaving capacity and the continuing erosion of the U.S. apparel textile industry caused by imported

garments resulted in a market contraction too severe for our company to overcome," Landry's letter reads.

Despite adding new customers in recent months, Landry said the fabrics United Piece Dye had been dyeing and finishing were much smaller in volume than apparel fabrics. As a result, "the demand for our services by the marketplace has declined 15 percent or more each year over the past four years."

Ultimately, the decision to close came down to an inability to gain more capitalization. Although successful obtaining financing in the past, United Piece Dye Works could no longer convince lenders to provide it with funding, Landry said.

"Cash has been constrained and we were unsuccessful in obtaining cooperation of the bank syndicate in providing

See CLOSE On Page 6-A

Job Fair to help workers

The Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce will host a Job Fair next Tuesday specifically for the employees of United Piece Dye Works who are losing their jobs due to the plant's closing.

The Job Fair will be held Aug. 13 at 10 a.m. at the Northern Chowan Community Center on Hwy. 32.

Chamber Director Richard Bunch would like to hear from any employers who would be willing to come and talk with these workers about possible jobs.

For more information, call (252) 482-3400.

After decades of struggle, gas pipeline is a reality

BY SABINE HIRSCHAUER
Cox NC Publications

With 120 miles of pipeline already laid in Pasquotank, Perquimans, Camden, Chowan, Currituck and Gates counties, natural gas service will finally be available to many northeastern residents and businesses starting this week.

"After decades of hard work, natural gas finally becomes available to northeastern North Carolina," said James Hughes, president of Eastern North Carolina Natural Gas, which will be responsible for the service. "And it will provide great opportunities for economic expansion for the entire region."

The gas project began 2 1/2 years ago after officials from 14 northeastern North Carolina counties formed a nonprofit

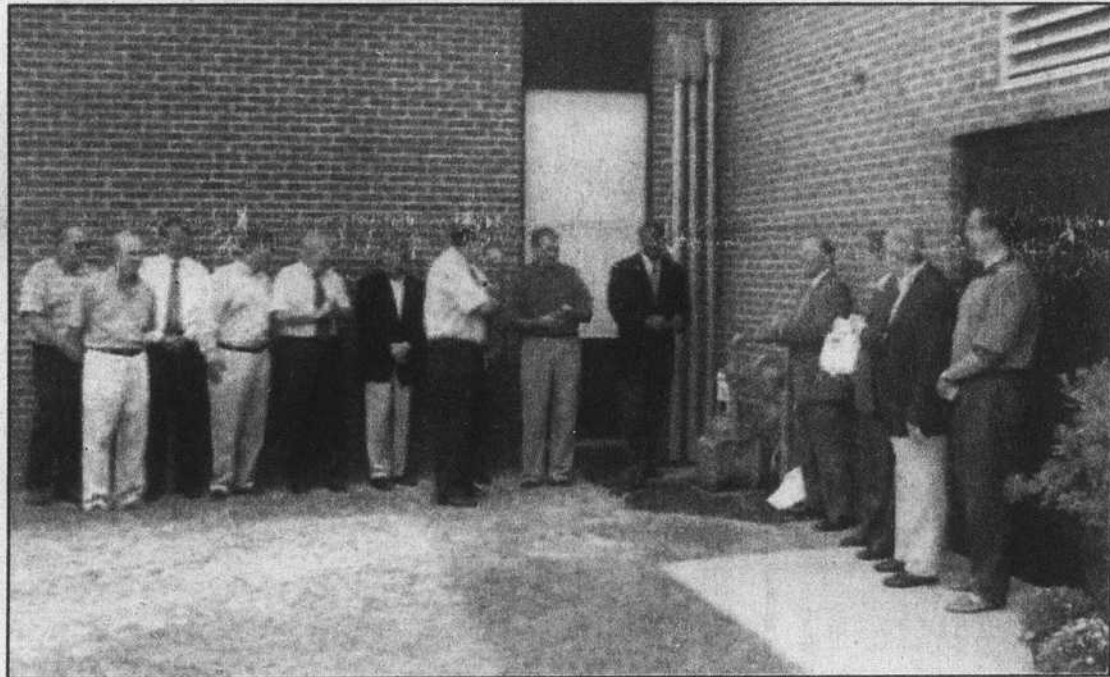
organization called Albemarle-Pamlico Economic Development Corporation, aiming to bring natural gas to unserved counties.

"APEC was created to represent the public's interest to get natural gas to every county and industrial park," Hughes said.

Formation of the group was preceded by state legislation and a \$200 million natural gas bond referendum passed in 1998, supported by Sen. Marc Basnight, D-NC and Rep. Bill Owens, D-Pasquotank.

"Fifty-one percent of the residents of North Carolina voted for 4 percent of us to get this money," Owens said.

Partnering with the Raleigh-based energy and utility company Progress Energy, Eastern NC owns the transmission and distribution system and operates as a public utility



Eastern North Carolina Natural Gas is now in business in northeastern NC. Above, state, regional, and local officials, including a group from Chowan County, unveil the first natural gas meter which was installed at College of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City.

regulated by NC Utilities Commission. The project includes 850 miles of natural gas pipeline, running from Moyock to Wilmington. Completion of the project is scheduled for 2004.

The Utilities Commission provided Eastern NC with \$188-million in bond funds and Progress Energy added \$22 million to the venture.

If customers commit to convert at least one of their appliances to natural gas, Eastern NC will install the service, meters and regulators for free. Cost for piping and equipment changes, however, are the home or business owner's responsibility.

From April 1 to Nov. 1, natural gas will cost residents 79 cents per therm, which is the unit of measure for natural

See PIPELINE On Page 6-A

Program tribute to Sept. 11 slated

A program is currently being planned as a memorial tribute to those who lost their lives in the terrorist attacks on America last Sept. 11.

Organizers are interested in hearing from any individual or groups who may wish to participate in the program.

Anyone interested in becoming involved in this Sept. 11 tribute in memory of those who died is encouraged to contact Ron Green at 221-2144 or Dr. Paul Pridgen, pastor of the Edenton Baptist Church, at 482-3217 for more information.

OLF Steering Committee concerned about decision

BY HELEN K. OUTLAND
Staff Writer

The Navy released a Draft EIS (Environmental Impact Study) earlier last week designating Washington County as one of the two sites for siting an outlying landing field, bringing little satisfaction to any of the counties represented on the committee.

"The Navy's selection of Washington County as a possible site for the new Outlying Landing Field will bring noise, with few if any economic benefits, to the area according to a group representing several Albemarle local governments," says a press release from Chairman of the OLF Steering Committee, Ben Hobbs. "Jet noise in the middle of the night will be little consolation to area residents, especially if the Navy does not provide any corresponding benefits."

The release goes on to say the group's comments were prompted by the Navy's announcement last Thursday of two alternatives under study for the deployment of 164 F/A-18 Super Hornet fighters, including the siting of a new OLF.

Under Alternative 1, the Navy would base eight of the 12-plane operational squadrons, plus the 48-plane Fleet Replacement Squadron at NAS

Oceana, with two squadrons being based at MCAS Cherry Point, NC. Under Alternative 2, the Navy would base six operational squadrons plus the FRS at NAS Oceana, with four squadrons being based at MCAS Cherry Point.

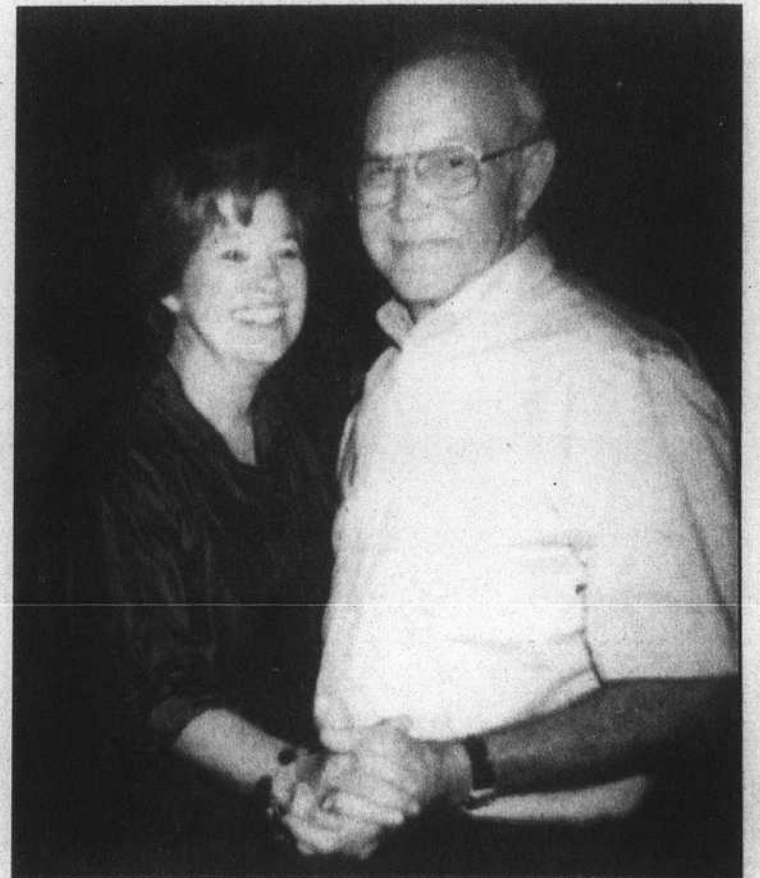
To reduce noise near OLF Fentress in Virginia, the Navy is proposing to build a new OLF either southeast of Ply-

See OLF On Page 6-A

Area OLF meeting set

The Perquimans County No OLF group will sponsor a public meeting on the Navy's Proposed Outlying Landing Fields. The meeting will be held at the Perquimans County High School on Tuesday, Aug. 13, at 7 p.m. All residents of the Albemarle area are invited to attend.

Speakers will present the issues and dangers surrounding these proposals and will invite your comments and questions. The high school is located on Hwy. 17 south of Hertford. Come and find out how your voice can be heard.



Sharing a dance

Chowan Hospital Administrator Barbara Cale enjoys a dance with her husband, Doug, during last weekend's hospital fundraiser. See details on Page 1-C. (Linda Tiller photo)



NOW ENROLLING 3 & 4 year olds!

Weekday Early Education (W.E.E.)
Christian Preschool at Edenton Baptist Church
Call 482-3217 to learn more and obtain application

Classes Start September 3rd