

It's official: Edenton enters Main Street program

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

A crowd of civic leaders, business people, and local and state officials stood on South Broad Street Tuesday morning to celebrate the future of downtown Edenton.

Although a September hurricane mowed down awnings and stripped trees bare, the town entered the state's downtown revitalization program in a spirit of renewal and progress.

"We need the Main Street Program now more than ever," Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton told the group of about 60 on hand for the event.

The town was approved for the program in the summer, and state Secretary of Commerce Jim Fain and N.C. Main Street Director Rodney Swink delivered a welcome and plaque to town leaders. Under bright, chilly skies, Fain applauded the town's swift recovery from Hurricane Isabel.

"Things do look a lot differ-

ent from when I was here on Sept. 26th," Fain said. State officials "stand in awe" of the town's near-complete return to its pre-hurricane activity and appearance.

Fain said Edenton has a long history of having a vibrant downtown. And its overall history was another plus in the application approval process.

"Edenton has a long, outstanding record of historic preservation activity," he said. "Edenton is a natural fit for this program."

Town officials appeared humbled by the honor, which aims to boost downtown commerce and create jobs.

"We are very fortunate and blessed," Mayor Roland Vaughan said, "to become a recipient of a Main Street award."

Vaughan said the forebears of current town leaders deserve credit for setting the stage for Edenton's involvement in the statewide program. Knighton agreed town's

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At left, N.C. Secretary of Commerce Jim Fain, center, presents a plaque to Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton, left, and Mayor Roland Vaughan during Monday morning's announcement of the town's entry into the state's Main Street Program. At right, Secretary Fain addresses the crowd on hand for the event. (Staff photo by Sean Jackson)

Streetlights could be fixed in a few weeks

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

A contractor charged with restoring the town's streetlights and power system to pre-Hurricane Isabel standards could have the job done by mid-December.

During its Monday night meeting, the Edenton Town Council chose Lee Construction to mend sagging lines, leaning power poles, and darkened streetlights. All were damaged by the Sept. 18 hurricane.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said Lee officials have indicated their crews can start work next Monday. The work could be completed within two to two-and-a-half weeks, Knighton added.

Knighton said the town has received "lots of calls" from residents who were concerned about faulty streetlights and security lights. Those concerns have increased since the Oct. 27 start of Eastern Standard Time and the earlier arrival of sunset.

"People are getting anxious and they want this work done," Knighton said.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency will reimburse the town for the cost of the repairs, she said. Town and FEMA officials had estimated the repairs would cost \$150,000. Lee will be paid approximately that amount for the repairs, Knighton said.

The town was required by FEMA to bid out the project. Councilman Willis Privott asked Knighton if the repair work would return the town's electric system "back to normal." Trees felled by the hurricane slashed through power lines and utility poles were snapped by 100 mph winds.

Knighton said FEMA conducted a "detailed inventory" of the town's system after the storm. But she didn't rule out a few glitches even after Lee completes the repair work.

"It wouldn't surprise me if we found some more things," she said.

Privott also asked if power interruptions would occur during the repairs. Knighton said minimal outages of "just a few hours" could be needed for the work to be done. She said any affected residents and businesses would be notified in advance of any necessary power interruptions.

Chowan would leave 1st Senate District under new Assembly plan

From Staff Reports

State Rep. Bill Culpepper would have Perquimans County removed from his district under new redistricting plans unveiled Monday in Raleigh.

Culpepper, a Chowan County Democrat, would hold onto Chowan, Dare, and Hyde coun-

ties, while gaining a portion of Washington County he currently does not represent in the House 2nd District.

State lawmakers began a special session Monday hoping to pass new House and Senate districts that would win court approval. In the House redistricting plan, Perquimans

would become part of the 5th House District, joining Bertie, Gates, and Hertford counties. Rep. Howard Hunter currently represents the 5th District.

According to a new Senate map, Chowan and Perquimans counties would be removed from current Senate Pro Tem Marc Basnight's district.

Chowan and Perquimans would be removed from the Dare County Democrat's 1st Senate District and be placed into the 4th District, joining Bertie, Gates, Hertford, Halifax, and Northampton counties. Sen. Robert Holloman, D-

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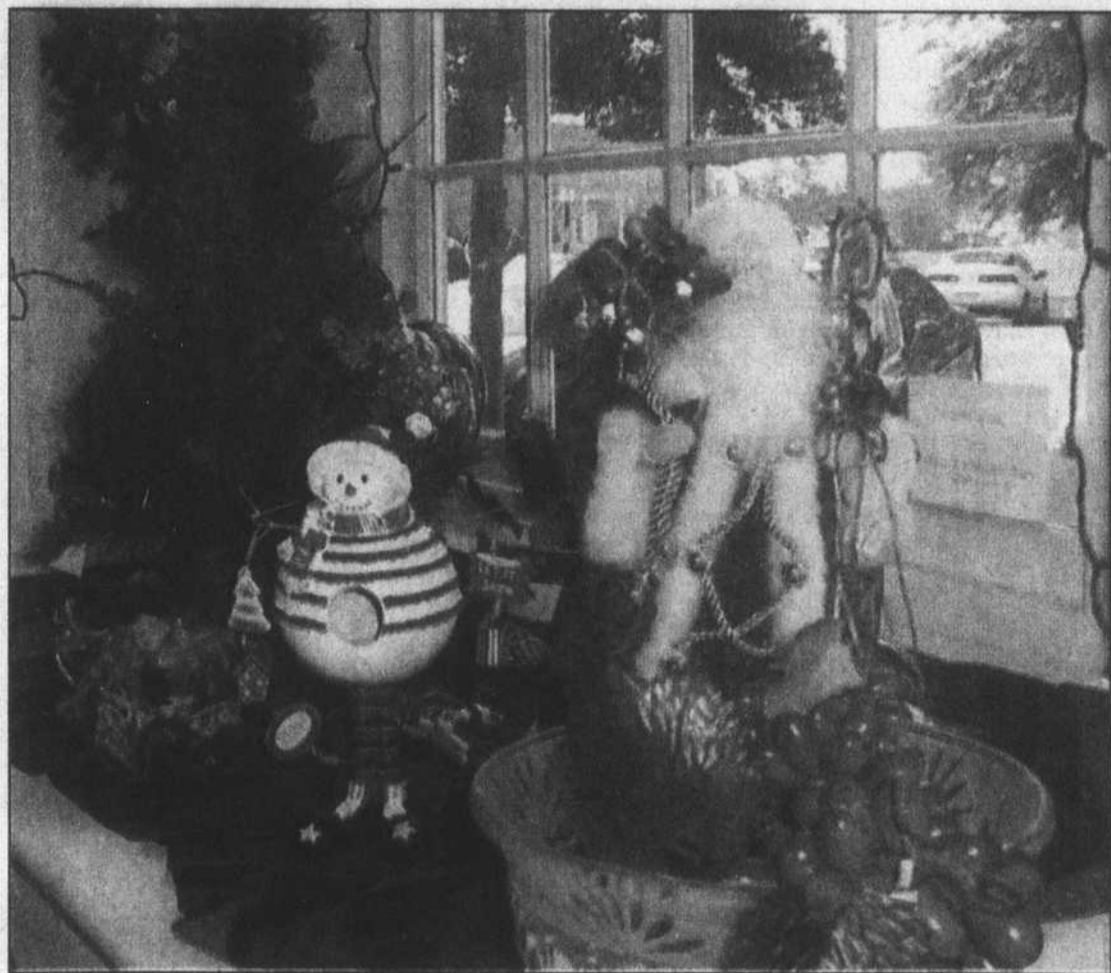
Christmas at Market is Dec. 6th

BY TAMIKA SPRUILL
Staff Writer

The Christmas season officially starts in Edenton on Saturday, December 6 with Christmas at the Market - a holiday extravaganza sponsored by the Marketplace Guild of historic Edenton.

The arrival of Santa Claus at 10:00 a.m. ceremoniously starts the day. Parents can take their children to the newly constructed Santa's House located at the corner of S. Broad and Water Street. Local elves built the new stopping point for Saint Nick and supplies to finish the job were donated by Byrum's Hardware, Sherwin Williams Paint Store and MG Brown Building Supply. Santa won't be here for long. He'll

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Downtown businesses will officially kick off the holiday shopping season with Christmas at the Market on Saturday, Dec. 6. Above, the Perfect Gift shop looks lovely.

Most local restaurants are now smoke-free

BY TAMIKA SPRUILL
Staff Writer

Customer complaints, along with smoke-filled air and smelly clothes — all reasons why many restaurants and eateries in Chowan County are adopting a new "non-smoking" policy. Burger King, Dairy Queen, Mario's, Snookers, That Fancy Café, Nixon's Catering, Shun Xing and The Club Room are just a few who've made the switch.

"We are a family restaurant and people wouldn't come as much when it was smoke-filled," says Mario's co-owner Ashley Misseri on why Mario's is non-smoking. "Before Mario's expan-



Patrons still enjoy a good smoke at Mamasita's Restaurant. Mamasita's is one of the few restaurants in Chowan County that has not switched to a non-smoking policy. (Staff photo by Angela Perez)

sion we went to nonsmoking and business increased."

Jean Bunch RN, Tobacco Prevention Coordinator for Chowan

Regional Healthcare Foundation, cites many reasons why restaurants are adopting the policy.

"Seventy percent of North Carolinians prefer a smoke free place to dine," Bunch states. "Besides that restaurant owners lose over \$4600.00 a year from costs related to smoking employees. These things include employee absenteeism, smoke breaks, and increased health insurance."

Not all restaurants in Chowan County are falling in line with the nonsmoking trend, however. Mamasita's is one of the few eateries that still allows its patrons to enjoy a good smoke — something that many Mamasita's customers appreciate.

"I don't understand how a bar/restaurant could stay in business while being nonsmoking," says long time patron Larry Williams. "If you go in a bar/eating place you know people are going to smoke."

Owner Gejardo Ojeda agrees and while he understands growing health concerns about smoking, his customers' preferences are his first priority.

"Mamasita's has fifty percent smoking and fifty percent nonsmoking customers," he says. "I don't want to alienate one group of customers over the other. Since I opened in 2000 I've only had three or four people to complain about the smoke."

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