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Homeowners may get help to raise their houses

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Homeowners in Edenton and Chowan County who want to elevate their hurricane-damaged homes may be getting a little financial help from state and federal governments to do so.

Elizabeth Bryant, planning director for Edenton and Chowan County, told the Town Council Nov. 24 that two types of grants are available through the Federal Emergency Management Agency.

"There have already been a couple of places that qualified," Bryant told town officials.

cial.

FEMA fully-funds the Increased Cost of Compliance coverage (up to \$30,000). FEMA funds 75 percent of the Hazard Mitigation Grant Program, with the state paying the remaining portion of those grants.

Since the town participates in the National Flood Insurance Program, owners of homes damaged by flooding from Hurricane Isabel can qualify for Increased Cost of Compliance insurance coverage. ICC coverage is only available to a homeowner who had flood insurance, whose house is located in the town-pre-

scribed flood plain, and whose house sustained damages valued at 50 percent or more of its market value.

Bryant said many of the flood-ravaged homes on Queen Anne Circle and Blount and Water streets had such a high market value that their damages did not exceed the 50-percent threshold. Pembroke Circle has the highest number of homes that could be eligible, she added.

Edenton-Chowan building inspectors use a FEMA-specified formula to determine the amount of flood damage to houses entered into the grant-application process, Bryant

said. From there, all determinations regarding distribution and approval will be made by FEMA, she said.

ICC funding requires a house to be raised to a 10-foot base height. For example, a house already four feet above that height would need to be elevated an additional six feet, Bryant said. The town has already been requiring newly constructed homes to be at the 10-foot level.

"It's been in effect since 1985," Bryant said of the elevation requirement, which is part of the town's flood ordinance.

The grants won't pay for

any needed repairs to homes. All repairs to flood-damaged homes must be completed prior to elevating them, Bryant said.

Not all homeowners may choose to return their houses into compliance with town and county building codes, Bryant said. Such cases can apply to the HMGP's acquisition program. Once a property is acquired it becomes public land, Bryant said.

Local homeowners have shown more interest in preserving their property rather than selling it to the government, Bryant added.

"It's hard for them to give up

that spot," on the waterfront, she said.

During the Nov. 24 meeting, Councilman Sambo Dixon asked Bryant if any public buildings could apply for either of the grants. He said there has been interest in possibly raising the Barker House.

"Public projects will take a back-burner," to residential projects, Bryant said.

The Planning Department has set an unofficial Dec. 19 deadline for applications.

For more information, call 482-5618 or visit the Planning Department at 108 E. King St., Edenton.

Wassail, Groaning Board part of Christmas Candlelight Tour

BY MARGE SOPER
Contributing Writer

The holiday season is here and along with the excitement is the eternal love of "tradition" for many Edentonians. This love of tradition is borne out by a Wassail Bowl and a Groaning Board shared with the locals and visitors during the annual Christmas Candlelight Tour. This year's tour will be held Friday, Dec. 12 and Saturday, Dec. 13.

A Wassail Bowl according to Webster's Dictionary is "an early English toast to someone's health; a liquor formerly drunk in England on festive occasions (as at Christmas) and made of ale or wine with spice..." The tradition is carried on by the Cupola House whose volunteers and board members, true to the old English custom, warm the hearts and tummies of all who visit them during the holiday season.

Not only are visitors treated to the Wassail Bowl but to the delicious home-



A number of special events are planned in Edenton this weekend in conjunction with the Christmas Candlelight Tour, set for this Friday and Saturday. Tour hours are 4-8 p.m. each day. Companion events include the Wassail Bowl and Groaning Board, which will take place from 1-5 p.m. both days of the tour. There will be Caroling on the Courthouse Green Friday evening at 6 p.m. and the Chowan County Christmas Parade will be Saturday morning at 11 a.m. (Chowan Herald file photo)

made cookies made by the volunteers and members of the board. Some of the delicious

cookie recipes are lovingly shared and printed out for cookie lovers to take with

them. The Wassail Bowl in See TOUR On Page 3-A



The Division of Coastal Management found major changes and inconsistencies in the Navy's Final Environmental Impact Statement. Of major significance, the DCM found that the Navy proposed the introduction of "surge operations" which means increased flight operations by the F/A 18 Super Hornets (like the one pictured above), causing noise and environmental impacts that will prove to be much more severe than earlier believed.

DCM still waits for Navy's reply

BY ANGELA PEREZ
Staff Writer

As of presstime Tuesday afternoon, the Office of Navy Secretary Gordon England still had no response on when or how the Navy would respond to North Carolina's requests for reviews of the Final Environmental Impact Statement regarding the proposed outlying landing field in Washington County. The Navy's response will be crucial in how

the fight against the site will proceed.

On Friday, Nov. 21, Governor Mike Easley's office in alliance with the N.C. Division of Coastal Management (DCM), in an 11th hour attempt, sent a letter to England's office that reversed North Carolina's earlier position that the proposed OLF site was in compliance with state coastal land use plans. The Friday deadline for

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Lowney excited about future plans for COA

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Since being named interim director of College of The Albemarle's Chowan County campus, Bob Lowney has seen some things from a different point of view than his predecessor.

For starters, Lowney's not in the same office that Lynn Hurdle-Winslow occupied. In fact, no one at the Chowan Center is where they used to be before Hurricane Isabel. They've all moved into new digs at the old D.F. Walker El-



Lowney

ementary School, sharing buildings with the local recreation department and public school staffers. "We're doing great here," Lowney, who oversaw the campus' culinary technology program prior to settling into his new role Nov. 1, said Monday.

Plans are to return students and staff to the Edenton Vil-

lage Shopping Center location by March or April.

"We don't have a firm date yet," Lowney said.

In the meantime, adult students sit in front of computers where youngsters once learned their ABCs. Administrators slog through tasks in temporary quarters. But Lowney is glad county officials provided classrooms and office space to allow the fall semester to continue — with only a 10-day interruption in classes.

"Everybody helped a lot getting us moved here," he said, "and adjusted being in here."

Most of the terminals in the computer labs at the shopping center site were moved before the hurricane blew through Edenton. That strategy spared precious equipment from rain damage after the building's roof caved in during the Sept. 18 storm. But a lot of furniture and other classroom items were destroyed.

"It was pretty grim," Lowney said of the damage at the center.

But he's looking forward to the growth that was in store for the campus — which includes both the Chowan Center site

and the old D.F. Walker school — prior to the Isabel. Planned program shifts from the main COA campus in Elizabeth City to Chowan include bringing the electrician courses to D.F. Walker in January and locating HVAC classes in Edenton beginning in the fall semester in 2004.

"Slowly but surely," Lowney said, "it looks like (the Chowan campus) is becoming the center for the vocational stuff."

The Walker-based culinary program will also expand over

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Caroling on Green is Friday

"Caroling on the Green" will be held on Friday, Dec. 12, beginning at 6 p.m. on the Old Chowan County Courthouse Green during the Christmas Candlelight Tour.

The public is invited to join local choirs in a sing-along of popular Christmas carols. For more info, call 482-2637.

County farmers still recovering from hurricane

BY TAMIKA SPRUILL
Staff Writer

Although it was three months ago many local farmers are still hurting from Hurricane Isabel's aftermath. Many area farmers have been making their way to the Farm Services Agency to apply for Emergency Conservation Pro-

gram (ECP) funding. ECP provides emergency funding for farmers and ranchers to repair farmland damaged by wind erosion, floods, hurricanes and other natural disasters.

About 70 applications have been received for the Emergency Conservation Program

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An old-fashioned Christmas

Area residents had the chance Saturday to do some holiday shopping for the creative soul on their gift-giving list at the Old-Fashioned Christmas Store held at the Ryland Community Center in Tyner. (Staff photo by Bud Weagly)

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