

## Transformation defines 2003 across community

BY TAMIKA SPRUILL  
Staff Writer

Transformation is defined as "to change the condition, character or function of" something. It's also a word that clearly defines the past year in this community. Throughout 2003 Chowan County has weathered tough issues such as devastation from Hurricane Isabel, the new OLF site being at our back door, issues of drug selling and shootings, and the passing of a prominent Edentonian.

But the end result of 2003's changes is the fact that our community has grown closer and more connected with all of its citizens — and that despite Hurricane Isabel, Edenton continues to be "the South's prettiest little town."

The New Year began traditionally with the addition of a new citizen. Carlos and Spring Byrum of Windsor were parents of the first baby born here. Dakota Byrum was deliv-

ered at Chowan County Hospital on Jan. 1 at 10:34 p.m. Dakota was born just in time to see several changes. Longtime Edenton Police Officer, Wayne Forehand, retired from the force after fifteen years of service. Congresswoman Eva Clayton also said goodbye to Congress and was succeeded by Frank Ballance. While those public officials said goodbye Chowan Hospital welcomed a new president. Jeff Sackrisson was chosen to become President of the hospital a position left empty by Barbara Cale's resignation.

Chowan County was blasted with freezing weather and a blanket of snow during a snowstorm that hit near the end of the month.

Sadly as one family celebrated a new life at the beginning of January another Chowan County family mourned the loss of a loved one. Former Chowan County Commissioner and School Board member James Taylor

passed away at January's close.

February came in with robberies, shootings and a lawsuit! Gateway bank was robbed when a black male wearing camouflage entered the bank and requested money with a handwritten note that indicated he had a gun. This was the first in a wave of gun violence that shook Edenton. Chowan County resident, Thomas Leary, was arrested and charged with intent assault with a dangerous weapon with intent to kill after shooting an Elizabeth City resident in the arm and back.

Northeast Partnership was accused by DFI (a Raleigh based computer Software Company) of trying to put the company out of business. The Partnership said the charges were unfounded. In a final act of gun violence for the month of February, a brawl at Chowan Courts housing development leaves two local men with gunshot wounds.

March brought in a pledge by town officials to curb gun violence with the use of all available community resources. Town Manager, Anne-Marie Knighton and Police Chief Bonner appealed to the public to "help identify people who are in possession of illegal handguns and other weapons." In other March news Emmrich Theater welcomed its 500th visitor and Edenton entered the Main Street Program.

In April the Chowan County School Board adopted a 100% tobacco free policy. This policy prohibited smoking on school grounds. Longtime Britthaven administrator, Craig Miller announced his retirement this month after nearly two decades of service. The Edenton Business and Professional Women's Club named Glorious Elliott Chowan County Woman of the Year. Elliott is an intensive probation officer for Chowan County and a former School Board Chairman. On a

more serious note Bridgette Roulac and her brother Leon Roulac were charged in connection with the shooting death of Bridgette's ex-boyfriend 24-year-old Lorenzo Keith Pulliam.

May and June also brought changes for Edenton. A big hailstorm came in early May and damaged homes, vehicles and crops of many area residents. Bob Lowney was named the new College of the Albemarle head for the Chowan County campus. Willie Koonce was named the new principal at Chowan Middle School. George Stokes headed his last Veteran's Day Ceremony for Chowan County's American Legion. Stokes and his wife decided to travel the country in a motor home.

June brought celebratory news for Edenton with the town's selection as a participant in the Main Street Program. The Historic Edenton Visitor Center also celebrated its 35-year anniversary. An-

other shooting incident plagued Edenton in June. Edenton resident Tyrone Mooring was standing in front of 123 West Carteret Street when a car rode by and its passengers started shooting at him. In what appeared to be a misunderstanding DFI apologized to the Northeast Partnership and dropped plans to file a lawsuit. After months of rumors of its closing Family Foods IGA closes its door for good. A Dollar General store would be opening in its place.

Neighboring Washington County was picked to be the best site by an Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Navy's controversial OLF in July. Brenda Washlesky was chosen as Edenton's Main Street Program Director. Washlesky had previous experience with Perquimans County's Main Street Program. Mayor Roland Vaughan announced his intention to

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## Knighton reviews '04 goals

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton has been dealing with Hurricane Isabel since late summer.

The storm will linger in her workload for months to come. Knighton says ongoing recovery efforts are her chief priority for 2004.

The town suffered approximately \$2.75 million in damages and clean-up expenses, Knighton said. She wants the Federal Emergency Management Agency to pay its full share of those costs.

"My goal," Knighton said last week, "is to get 100 percent reimbursement for the expenses the town incurred, in good faith, I might add, that FEMA has paid for in other storms."

Since Sept. 18, Knighton,

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This post-hurricane shot of Gale Street captured what would become a familiar scene in our community in the days and weeks following Isabel's visit — crews working diligently to remove fallen tree limbs and other debris from local streets and roads. (Contributed photo by Blair Currie)

## Copeland looks to future

BY ANGELA PEREZ  
Staff Writer

Hurricane Isabel isn't going away with the ringing in of 2004 on New Year's Eve, says Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland. "Chowan County is well on the way to recovery," says Copeland, "but from the county government side we still have a lot of issues to deal with for 2004."

One of those major issues is going to be convincing FEMA to reimburse 100% of the county's claims for storm-related damage. Peter Rascoe, Special Projects Director for Edenton and Chowan County, stresses that it is proving extremely difficult to convince FEMA that many of the county's expenses listed on the claims were for the benefit of the community's health and safety. FEMA will reimburse only the claims that they have determined meet their current eligibility requirements; requirements which Rascoe believes are much stricter and narrow in scope than those used to reimburse local governments during Hurricane Floyd.

A second Isabel-related project for 2004 will be completing the mitigation phase - identifying ways to lessen the impact and stress of future storms. "Parts of that process," says Copeland, "will be getting generators for water plants, improving communica-

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## Dye plant explosion studied

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

An explosion at a Rocky Hock textile dye plant in December resulted in no injuries and is being investigated internally, company officials said Tuesday.

The Dec. 16 explosion of a hydrogen peroxide tank at Edenton Dyeing and Finishing occurred during second shift between 8:30 and 9 p.m. None of the 25 to 30 employees on that shift were hurt. The explosion reportedly could be heard several miles from the plant located on the Chowan River north of Edenton.

"It was an explosion that had some potential to be a real problem," Tom Gilreath, vice president of finance for the company, said. "We were fortunate that there were no injuries involved... We breathed a sigh

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## Chamber's optimism is strong despite showers at celebration

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

KILL DEVIL HILLS — Even before sunrise, rain pellets fell from low clouds.

Forecasters called for breaks in the showers, and all aboard the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce tour bus cheered with optimism. A reenactment of Orville Wright's takeoff into aviation history was set for 10:35 that morning.

A spirited crowd overflowing from the Wright Brothers National Memorial and around the muddy airfield wouldn't see the feat redone.

The Wright Flyer bumped around in the muck, but didn't get any air. Blame went to the fickle weather.

"We didn't know (then) it was going to rain," Bunch said. "Sorry about that."

The bus was reserved in May. The celebration had been in the works for years. But few seemed to mind the washout. Many went into display tents

and marveled at NASA's concepts for future flying machines.

Others did a little last-minute Christmas shopping.

A Wright Flyer toy model kit sold for \$79.99, without tax. Adult T-shirts went for \$15.95. For \$26.95 you could own a "Conquest of the Air" tie. A 2-inch gold wing-pin was a bargain at \$2. And you could write to family and friends about the whole shebang on First Flight stationary — though it would cost you \$14.95 to do so.

Apparently, the experience itself was priceless.

School kids from D.F. Walker Elementary School saw President Bush commend the Wright brothers and American ingenuity. Long-time pilot and actor John Travolta flashed his smile across the jumbotrons throughout the park. Famed test pilot Chuck Yeager told how the first time he flew, at 18, he puked.

An estimated 118,000 during the six-day event, including

hundreds of Chowan County school children for the Dec. 17 centennial-day celebration. The students, some of who have been studying the Wrights' achievements, were treated to a 15-minute speech by Bush.

"By our skill and daring, we

will continue to lead the world in flight," he said. "This day, however, is one for recalling a heroic event in the history of our nation and in the story of mankind. Here at the Wright Brothers National Memorial,

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Chamber members and others from Chowan Co. battled rain and mud at the celebration. (Sean Jackson photo)

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