

# THE CHOWAN HERALD

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## Schools won't apply for \$1.25 million in funds

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

Calling it a grant with confusing guidelines and "schizoid" in theory, teachers from D.F. Walker and White Oak elementary schools pleaded against a \$1.25 million grant Monday night.

And they gained support from the Board of Education to reject applying for a federal grant aimed at improving reading among young students.

"We don't want to be a research lab," Christime Flem-

ing, a 32-year teaching veteran, told the school board during the hour-long discussion of the Reading First Grant. The grant is offered through the federal No Child Left Behind Act.

Ninety-four percent of the White Oak and D.F. Walker teachers who returned surveys about the grant were opposed to it. All 38 White Oak teachers were against applying for the instructional changes the grant would require. Only three of 12 D.F. Walker teachers approved of the idea.

"Why fix something if it's

not broken?" Anne Ziemba, a first and second grade teacher at White Oak, said. "And that's what we feel is happening here," with the grant's instructional requirements.

"We couldn't tailor it to our own philosophy of reading," instruction, Sarah McLaughlin, a third grade teacher at D.F. Walker said.

About 50 opponents of the grant were at Monday night's school board meeting.

Teachers and administrators from the schools agreed they could use added federal

funding for their reading programs. But they don't like how the grant binds them to prescribed instructional methods. The grant dictates exactly how kindergarten through third-grade students' reading skills would be assessed and potentially improved throughout the school year.

"I've never seen one this restrictive," Superintendent Dr. Allan Smith said of the grant's constraints.

The grant seeks to address the classroom needs of at-risk students, in addition to im-

proving other students' reading skills.

"We have about everything you can think of to help at-risk students do better," Ziemba said. The number of elementary school students not scoring at least a 3 out of a possible score of 4 on end-of-grade reading tests dropped by a quarter from 2002 to 2003, according to statistics presented by Ziemba.

"We're showing very positive results," Smith said of improvements in reading scores at D.F. Walker and White Oak.

Under the grant's guide-

lines, students would be assessed regularly to determine their reading levels. And that assessing would be excessive, teachers said.

"I don't want to be a part of it," board member Gil Burroughs said.

Board member Kay Wright was opposed to teachers signing letters of commitment as required by the grant.

Smith said Tuesday the school board will not request him to apply for the grant. The grant would pay the school system \$250,000 annually for five years.

## Town's electric rates could rise

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

Edenton residents could see their electric rates go up this year, a possibility town officials want to avoid.

During the Town Council's Jan. 26 meeting, Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said the cost the town pays for electricity has gone up.

"Hopefully we can come up with something so we won't have to do this," she said of a potential passing-along of the rate hike.

Knighton said ElectriCities, the body which manages the town's electric supply, has plans to up its wholesale rates. The 1.2 percent increase became effective Oct. 1.

Knighton said increasing fees could negate the need to increase customers' monthly power bills. Such increases could offset the higher cost paid to the electric supplier.

"I'm hoping, if we go along with these (increased fees), we won't have to raise rates," she said.

Knighton named several rate-increase suggestions posed by a recent rate and util-

ity fee study conducted by ElectriCities. Those include:

- After-hours reconnection fees to be raised from \$40 to \$75
- Increase meter-testing fees from \$5 to \$10
- Raise temporary construction service charge from \$30 to \$40
- Increase underground installation from \$150 to \$350 per linear foot

The proposed fee increases are comparable with what other ElectriCities' towns similar to Edenton charge.

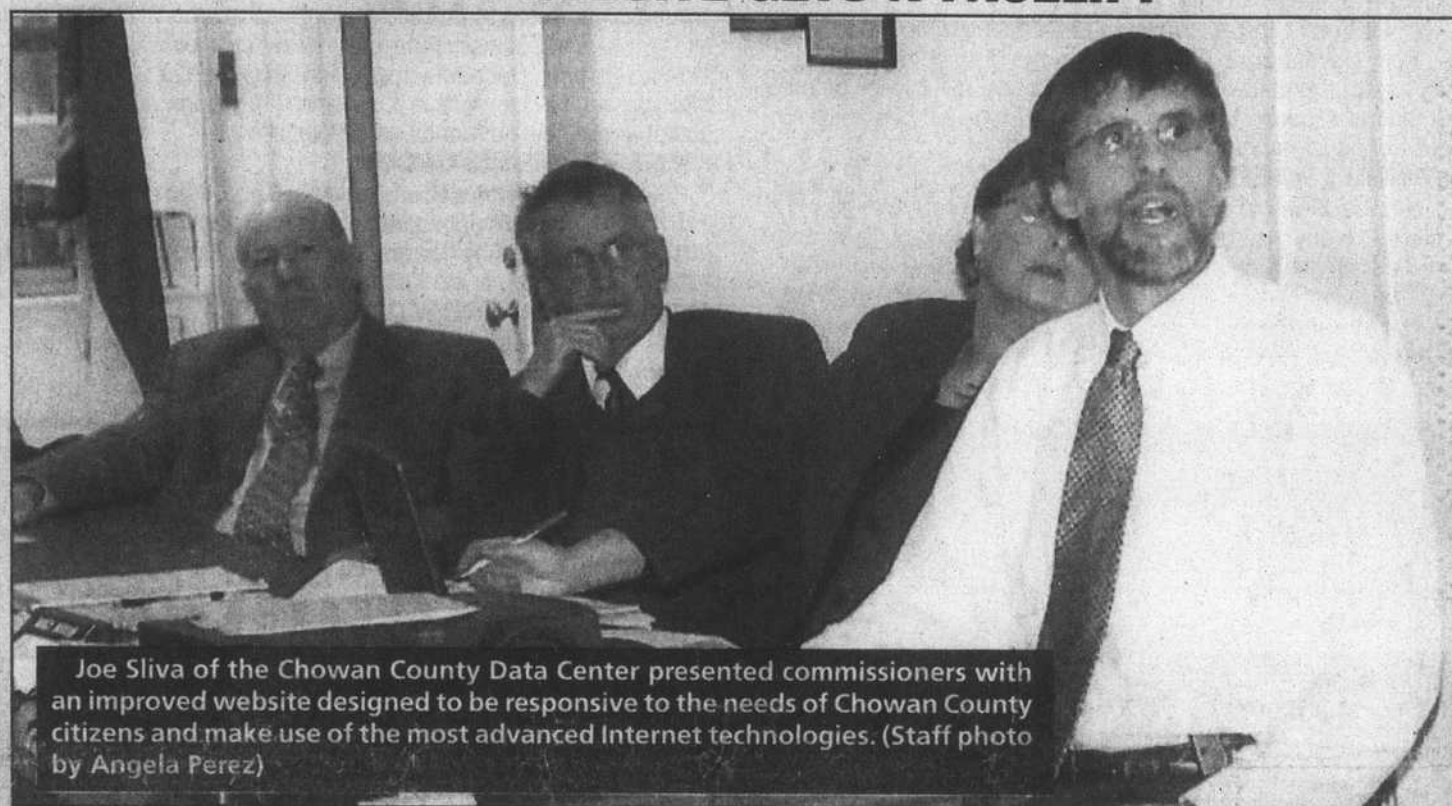
The town currently has the third lowest rates of municipalities of comparable size which belong to ElectriCities, Knighton said.

Knighton plans to present additional data and information to council at its Feb. 10 meeting.

Although ranked near the bottom of ElectriCities' rates schedule, Edenton residents' power bills run about 15 percent higher than residential customers pay with N.C. Power and Albemarle EMC.

Knighton is expected to present more options and information during council's Feb. 23 committee meeting.

## COUNTY WEBSITE GETS A FACELIFT



Joe Sliva of the Chowan County Data Center presented commissioners with an improved website designed to be responsive to the needs of Chowan County citizens and make use of the most advanced Internet technologies. (Staff photo by Angela Perez)

BY ANGELA PEREZ  
Staff Writer

Highlighting Monday evening's monthly County Commissioners meeting was a presentation by Chowan County Data Center employee, Joe Sliva. Sliva introduced a new and vastly improved Chowan County Government Website, made possible by a grant from the e-NC

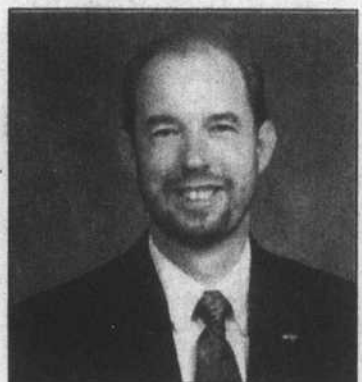
authority, a grassroots initiative linking North Carolinians to the Internet. The site, officially launched on January 15, 2004, now offers expanded service information, online forms allowing users to request services, offer comments, and register for information. On-line users will be able to sign up for email newsletters that will offer updated county information, including important

Chowan County Government meetings and events. Each administrative department has its own separate page detailing services, missions, projects, goals, and responsibilities. Downloadable and printable documents such as minutes from commissioners meetings, Recreation Department schedules, Board of Elections information (including past election results), and tax adminis-

tration will be available to the public.

Of particular interest is a web-page by the Animal Control Department that displays pictures and descriptions of pets available for adoption and also allows users to join an Animal Shelter Email update list that sends notifications of when

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Randy White

## White part of NC board excursion

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Managing Editor

At presstime, Edenton-Chowan Board of Education member Randy White was on his way to take part in an effort to bring greater awareness of the needs of local school districts to those in a position to help - our nation's legislators.

White is part of a 45-member delegation of North Carolina school board members making the trip to Washington, DC this week. White said he was honored to receive the invitation from Ed Dunlevy, executive director of the North Carolina School Board Association. He said that, to be best of his knowledge, he was the first member from the Edenton-Chowan board invited to go,

See WHITE On Page 3-A

## CMS groundhogs shadow area professionals

BY GLENDA JAKUBOWSKI  
Edenton-Chowan Schools

Nearly 50 Chowan Middle School seventh graders teamed with area professionals to learn more about careers and the education needed to pursue them as part of the seventh annual National Groundhog Job Shadow Day.

The middle school students shadowed doctors, veterinarians, restaurateurs, police and sheriff officers, boat builders, educators, dentists, attorneys, allied health professionals, animal control officers, newspaper reporters, accountants, realtors, bankers and entrepreneurs to learn about a typical day in the professions.

As in previous years, the student response was overwhelmingly enthusiastic.

"It was the absolute most fun thing I have ever done related to school," said Chowan student Maria Rojas, who shadowed Elizabeth Mumm, of Chowan Hospital. "I had the best time!"

Groundhog Job Shadow Day is part of Edenton-Chowan Schools' Career-



John A. Holmes High School math teacher Ruth Bass shares her day with Groundhog Job Shadow Day participants Dominique Leary (left) and Katashee Parks (right), both Chowan Middle School students. Nearly 50 area professionals teamed with students who used the opportunity to learn more about the work world.

Technical Education Program. The program teaches employability skills to students in kindergarten through high school, emphasizing responsibility, speaking skills and workplace writing. The annual Business Expo, Workers and their Vehicles Day, and a strong partnership with the College of the Albemarle also are part of the Career-Technical Education Program.

The Chowan students wrote essays, resumes and provided references as part of their applications to participate in the program. The students also interviewed their guides to the work world about the education levels, specific skills and talents required for the various jobs.

"I am so grateful to the businesses who volunteered to participate in this year's Groundhog Job Shadow Day," said Chowan Middle School guidance counselor Julie Perry. "Their dedication to the future well being of our youth is evident through the sacrifices they made to par-

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## Wins award

Chowan Herald staff writer Angela Perez has received a third place award for sports feature writing from the NC Press Association. The award was presented last Thursday evening at a ceremony held at the Friday Center in Chapel Hill, NC.

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