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STORM TURNS THINGS UPSIDE DOWN

A winter ice storm late Sunday night hit Chowan County leaving close to three inches of snow and ice behind, making driving conditions treacherous for motorists. According to preliminary reports by the State Highway Patrol, the driver of this vehicle lost control after hitting a patch of ice on Hwy. 32 near the Albemarle Sound Bridge. Officials said the driver escaped unharmed. Attempts to obtain additional information as of presstime were unsuccessful. (Staff photo by Angela Perez)

Town receives a clean audit

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

A recent audit for the Town of Edenton places its bookkeeping in line with state-prescribed standards.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said the town's Fund Balance cash reserves are at 9.5 percent. An 8-percent level is required under state law, Knighton added.

The Town Council approved accepting the audit during a Feb. 10 meeting.

Sonja Hibbard again performed the audit for the town.

During a Jan. 26 meeting, Knighton told council that the town's General Fund has remained stable over the past 10 years. The amount of dollars transferred from the town-owned electric system to use for spending has decreased significantly over the past seven years, Knighton added.

Council has suggested placing an additional \$25,000 annu-

ally into the General Fund for 10 years to boost cash reserves by \$250,000.

The town's cash reserves have taken hits on at least two fronts over the past couple of years. In 2002 the state withheld tax reimbursements that had historically been passed along to municipalities. Knighton said town Finance Director Janet Hines has estimated Edenton lost as much as \$273,000 in withheld tax reimbursements.

More recently, a September hurricane resulted in unexpected spending to repair damaged infrastructure. Knighton said the federal government may not reimburse the town for money spent on repairs due to Hurricane Isabel.

The lost tax reimbursements alone would have pushed the town's cash reserves to a 17 or 18 percent level, Knighton told council in January.

One-on-One Program still helps youth

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Over the past eight years, Mildred Vanterpool has seen more than 100 at-risk youths enter the Governor's One-on-One Program in Chowan County.

Some arrived with negative outlooks, troubled histories, dour attitudes. Yet many went away roused to follow a trouble-free path, Vanterpool said last week. Vanterpool, the county's program director, said One-on-One pairs volunteer mentors with youths age six to 19. Typically, the program targets at-risk youths 14 and under, she added.

It's all a case of giving back, she said.

"I think all of us owe something to our community," Vanterpool said during an interview earlier this month. "To me, there's no greater purpose than to make the lives of others better."

The long-term benefits are substantial, she said. Detaching kids from the court system, or keeping them out of legal trouble altogether, has a huge societal impact, she

said. And then there's the vast financial savings of keeping youths out of lockup. A year in training school costs taxpayers \$47,000 per youth inmate.

send for them," she added.

Program graduates have gone off to college and graduated. They've gone to bootcamp and become military men and women. They've achieved

One, Vanterpool said.

Then there are the volunteers, the 20 adults who sacrifice their time. There are currently 11 youths matched with mentors. Men and women, people of all races, are all needed to volunteer.

"We're always on the lookout for good people who are committed to mentoring children," Vanterpool said. "And that's what you have to be (as a One-on-One mentor), committed."

Finally, there's the board that helps Vanterpool and program assistant Jennifer Harris keep the program running smoothly.

Stella Brothers was recently named chairman of the county program's board of directors. Brothers has been involved with the program for more than eight years.

"We feel very privileged to have her on the board," Vanterpool said.

For more about the program or how you can volunteer, call 482-6585. After being screened, all volunteers receive training. Volunteers must be at least 18 years old and personal transportation is preferred, Vanterpool said.



At right, front row, Chris Bean passes the torch to Stella Brothers, left front, the new chairman of the Governor's One-on-One program in Chowan County. Also pictured are other board members and volunteers. (Contributed photo)

"We're helping to make a change," she said, "instead of (joining those who) criticize what children do wrong."

Statistics show that kids in mentoring programs avoid drugs and crime more than youths that don't take advantage of such offerings. Parents rave about the One-on-One program, Vanterpool said.

"Some have said it's a god-

things they previously either didn't want, or didn't know could happen for them, Vanterpool said.

"We do have quite a few success stories," she said. And that success is made possible with the help of local organizations such as the Chowan Arts Council and Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library, which both lend their services to One-on-



Chowan Arts Council staff members Sue Clark and Brenda Debona display some of the items up for bid at the upcoming Pasta and Pottery Fundraiser. Shown is an Alvin Head punch bowl, a Barbara Sant painting, and a Fanny Clark scarf. (Additional photo and story on 3A.)

OLF controversy attracting national media attention

BY ANGELA PEREZ
Staff Writer

Last Thursday, writers and photographers from two nationally recognized newspapers visited Washington County to cover the ongoing controversy surrounding the Navy's proposed outlying landing field site (OLF). Felicity Barringer (writer) and Jim Wilson (photographer) with the New York Times and Charles Seabrook, an environmental writer, with the Atlanta Journal-Constitution have written feature stories on the thorny issue. Seabrook's story



F/A-18 Super Hornet Jet

broke last Sunday and was distributed via email to regional newspapers owned by the Constitution's parent company, Cox Newspapers. At press time, The New York Times piece had not been published. "The N.C. Natural Resource Group is excited about the national exposure being given this irresponsible and

dangerous decision made by the U.S. Navy," said Joe Albea, of the N.C. Natural Resource Group, in a recent press release. "It is our belief that once citizens across the country understand what is at stake and that there are alternatives - a better site can emerge."

One alternative offered by Sen. Marc Basnight was that the Navy build an offshore floating platform to practice its carrier landings for the F/A-18 Super Hornet jets instead of in Washington County. Basnight and his staff researched such possibilities saying that such structures have been built and

successfully used in both Europe and Asia. They Navy's response, however, was that an offshore platform simply could not be developed within a reasonable time frame for use by the Navy, according to Ted Brown, spokesman for the Navy's Fleet Forces Command.

With the Navy's refusal to entertain alternate sites or proposals, Washington and Beaufort counties, along with the National Audubon Society, North Carolina Wildlife Federation, and Defenders of Wildlife, filed a joint motion in federal court last week for a preliminary injunction ag-

ainst the Navy to halt its purchase of land in Washington County.

The motion alleges that the Navy failed to "comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) and related federal regulations in the preparation of the Final Environmental Impact Statement", according to Kennedy Covington Attorneys at Law. The law firm stated the Navy failed to take a "hard look" not only at environmental impacts on the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge, but also at alternative sites to constructing an OLF elsewhere.

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