

## Chowan County's population continues to climb

*Unlike others in area, county adds citizens*

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

The steady outflow of Eastern North Carolina residents hasn't robbed Chowan County of its population base, though the county lagged behind the state's average growth mark in the last census.

The state's population grew by 21.4 percent from 1990 to 2000, according to the U.S. Census Bureau. Chowan gained 520 residents, pushing its

population to an estimated 14,526 — a 7.6-percent increase in the 1990s.

County Manager Cliff Copeland said Chowan is fortunate to have several factors that caused it to grow, not lose residents in the '90s. Good schools, economic development programs, leadership, and medical care. Then there are the natural attractions: More than half the county is bordered by either the Chowan River or the Albemarle Sound.

A good quality of life doesn't hurt growth, either, Copeland added.

"I think our population will continue to grow," Copeland said, noting that new planned residential developments could make that happen.

But Edenton didn't follow the county's trend. According to the N.C. State Data Center, the town lost .2-per-

cent of its population from the spring of 2000 to July 2002, losing 10 residents for a 5,018 total.

The 1990 census estimated that 5,268 Chowan residents lived in Edenton.

Edenton's population loss wasn't the only in the region. Ahoskie, Hertford County's largest town, fell by 1.9 percent over the two years ending in July 2002, losing 87 residents.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said the census numbers are likely flawed. Town officials had considered appealing the 2000 numbers until they learned that the appeal would be more costly than revenue gained by upping the population tally.

"We were successful and got some back," Knighton said of wrangling

with the Census Bureau, "but it's still lower than we think it is."

"I don't think (Edenton's census-related population loss is due to) the fact that we (actually) lost numbers," she added. "I think it's the way the census was done."

Other ups and downs included:

- Windsor lost 13 of its residents over that same period, a .6-percent drop for a 2,311 total.

- Gatesville decreased by .4 percent, losing one resident for a 280 total.

- Hertford gained 10 residents, a .5-percent increase, for a 2,080 total.

- Elizabeth City grew by 247 people, a 1.4-percent rise to 17,940 residents.

- Columbia increased by 3.9 percent, with 32 new residents, 851 total.

Chowan is the state's smallest county, with only 172 square miles

within its borders. Chowan's rural nature also results in its population-per-square-mile rate at 84.1, nearly half of the 165.2 statewide average.

By comparison, Tyrrell was the state's least-populated county with 4,115 residents — up from 3,856 in 1990.

Neighboring counties both lost and gained population during the '90s. To the north, Perquimans County gained 956 residents, to 11,403, while Gates jumped to 10,511 with 1,206 newcomers.

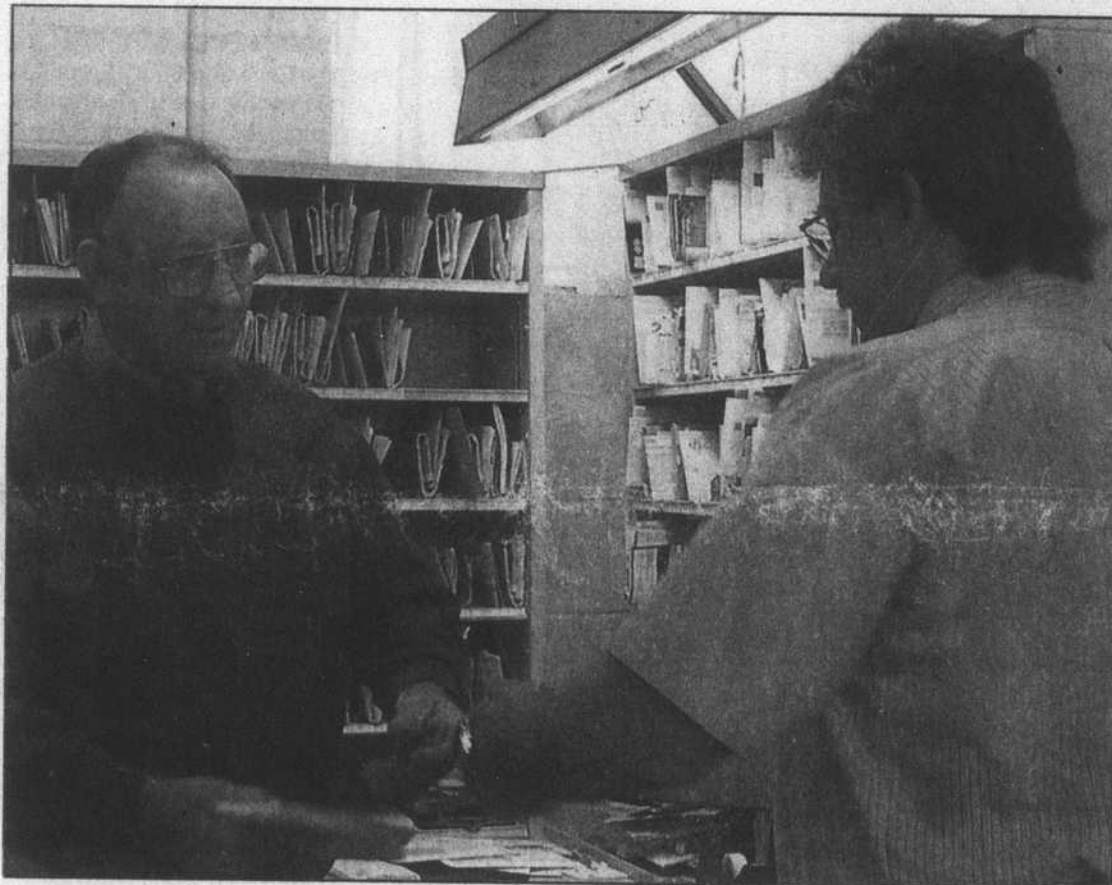
On the losing end were Bertie and Washington counties, with Bertie losing 598 residents (down to 19,790), Washington dropping to 13,699 with a 702-resident drop.

## Tyner mail carrier celebrates 25 years of serving community...rain or shine

BY EARLINE WHITE  
Staff Writer

April 7, 2004 celebrated Jimmy Ward's 25 years of service with the US Postal Service in Tyner. "When I started the route I had about 450 boxes, now I fill about 770 — that's how much the area has grown. I didn't even realize it has been 25 years. I have enjoyed my time as a rural carrier. I have enjoyed working with these great Post Masters, clerks and substitutes. It's been a quick 25 years," said Ward.

Ward was awarded a pin and a letter from the District Manager, David Fields, Sr. Millard Bond, Postmaster at the Tyner post office said, "The Postal Service has been through a lot of changes since Jimmy has been here. But he has taken everything in stride and changed with the times. Jimmy's never had an accident. He's done a good job and took care of the mail and the people in the community. The people look forward to Jimmy coming around. He serves about 2500



Staff photo by Earline White

Tyner mail carrier Jimmy Ward, left, accepts a pin and a letter from District Postal Manager David Fields Sr. presented to him April 7 by Tyner Postmaster Millard Bond (right). That day marked Ward's 25th year of carrying mail in the community.

people on his route and does a great job," Bond said. "Jimmy always starts the day by saying 'It's a beautiful day' whether it's rain, shine, hurricane, whatever," said Bond.

"There's only been three days that I've missed carrying the mail; all because of snow," Ward said. Ward was even working during Isabel. It was his daughter who called that dreadful day and insisted that Ward go back home.

"With all the changes, \$11 route changes included, Jimmy has adjusted well," said Postmaster Millard Bond. "My wish is that people would call the phone company to have their addresses changed. People use the phone book to address invitations and unless the phone has been installed in the past few years, the old rural address is used. Updating the address would help the post office tremendously."

Jimmy Ward was very sur-

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Linda Mathias

## Principal named for White Oak

The Edenton - Chowan Schools Board of Education voted unanimously Monday to approve the choice of Linda Mathias as the new principal for White Oak School.

Mathias, currently the assistant principal at White Oak, will take the reins from Mary Nixon, who retires this year.

"Linda knows the school and the staff and students," said superintendent Allan T. Smith. "She has been a part of the White Oak success story under the leadership of Mary Nixon, and she will continue the school's success as its new leader."

Mathias has been with Edenton-Chowan Schools since 1998, when she became White Oak's assistant principal. Before that, she was director of personnel for Camden County Schools after teaching math there for four years. Mathias received her bachelor's degree in math and science from Elizabeth City State University and her master's degree in education administration from East

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## Response to drive not good

The Edward G. Bond American Legion Post 40 family has been sponsoring a public drive to help our troops being sent overseas and our veterans in NC VA Hospitals and a NC State Veteran's Home in Fayetteville. So far the donations have been scarce, according to Susan Campbell of the Legion Ladies Auxiliary.

"We are hoping for an abundance of generosity from our community and would greatly appreciate donations to send to our troops," she said.

"I have been really disappointed," added Campbell, who is serving as contact person for the drive. "We have gotten a few things but there are so many things that they need we haven't

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## Suspects sought after police chase

BY SEAN JACKSON  
Staff Writer

Edenton police arrested one man and are looking for two others who all allegedly dumped handguns at a town park on Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue late Friday while being chased by police.

Chief Greg Bonner said Monday that Franklin Shuron Jones, 24, of 103-B E. Carteret St., Edenton, was arrested April 9 and charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver cocaine, possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana, and maintaining a vehicle for the storage of a controlled substance, a felony. He was also charged with resisting a public officer, simple assault, and carrying a concealed weapon. Police found a .380-caliber handgun in Jones' possession, Bonner said.

Jones was jailed under a \$44,000 bond but has since been bailed out, Bonner added. He was to appear at a probable cause hearing Tuesday, Bonner said. His next date in a



Police have arrested one man and are seeking two others who allegedly dumped handguns in a town park late Friday. Drugs and a bulletproof vest have also been recovered as the investigation continues.

Chowan County courtroom is June 8, according to an arrest warrant.

Police are looking for Jan Maurice Bonner, 23, of 129 Thick Neck Road, and Kenny Demetrius Wilder, 16, of 33 Davis Place, both of Edenton.

Warrants have been issued charging Bonner with possession of a stolen firearm, felony possession of a concealed weapon, possession of cocaine, resisting a public officer, and assault on a government official. Police seized a .44-caliber

Magnum that allegedly belonged to Bonner.

Police also found a bulletproof vest that reportedly belonged to Bonner, the chief added.

In addition, warrants are pending that would charge Wilder with possession of a .22-caliber handgun, the chief said.

Town Council recently agreed to push the park's closing hours back to 9 p.m. Although police have made recent arrests at the park, residents still complained about hearing gunshots there, Bonner said. Around midnight Friday, police were tipped that guns and drugs were again on park grounds, the chief added.

"When police approached these individuals," Bonner said, "(the suspects) began to dump and throw guns and drugs on the ground."

In addition to the three handguns, police found eight "rocks" of crack cocaine and three bags of marijuana, the

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**FISH FRY** **SATURDAY, APRIL 17, 2004**  
 SERVING 11 AM - 1 PM & 5 PM - 7 PM  
**RESCUE SQUAD BUILDING, ROCKY HOCK**  
 Sponsored by Rocky Hock Baptist Church Youth

\$6.00 per plate Eat-In or Take