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Winn-Dixie checking out of Edenton market

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

The days of having a Winn-Dixie supermarket in Edenton are nearing an end.

JoAnne Gates, spokeswoman for the Jacksonville, Fla.-based grocery chain, confirmed Monday that Edenton's store would be closed or sold within a year. The store is part of a Hampton Roads, Va. market that Winn-Dixie is eliminating in order to improve its financial outlook.

Gates said that Winn-Dixie hopes to find buyers for "most, if not all" of the sites targeted for closing.

The Edenton store has roughly 60 employees.

Richard Bunch, executive director of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, said Friday that he hopes a new supermarket will replace Winn-Dixie. Several major grocery chains have reportedly already expressed interest. "This is certainly a high priority for us," Bunch said. "We stand ready to help in any way we can (to bring in a new chain), and we have expressed that to them."



Staff photo by Earline White

The Winn-Dixie store in Edenton is among those currently up for sale. A corporate spokeswoman said Tuesday morning that the grocery chain will spend the next year attempting to find a buyer for the Edenton site and others slated for closing. Those that are not sold will be closed after that time, she said.

In late April the company announced it would cut 10,000 jobs and close or sell 156 stores and other operations over the next year.

The company has suffered financial woes in recent months.

"While sales continued to decline, this quarter's breakeven results are an improvement from last quarter, largely due to an increase in margins," Frank Lazaran, Winn-Dixie's president and chief executive officer, said in an April 30 press release. "We also made meaningful progress with our strategic initiatives, most notably the completion of our comprehensive review of Winn-Dixie's markets to identify which are core and non-core to the Company. We are making and implementing the tough decisions we believe are necessary to streamline the Company and return it to consistent profitability."

Michael Nagle, manager of Edenton's Winn-Dixie, could not be reached for comment.

The company will reportedly close 111 stores in 16 non-core markets in the Midwest, Virginia and certain areas of

North Carolina and South Carolina. The North Carolina areas that will have closings are: Greenville-New Bern and Wilmington. Closings are also planned in Portsmouth, Va., Norfolk, Va., and Newport News, Va. — the market the Edenton store is assigned to.

Winn-Dixie has also said it would shut down distribution centers in Raleigh, Sarasota, Fla., and Louisville, Ky.

Winn-Dixie Media Director Kathy Lussier said last week that the Charlotte distribution center would ship freight to the Edenton store once the Raleigh location closes.

Bunch said he deeply regrets that Winn-Dixie is pulling out of town.

"The local team here at Winn-Dixie have been very good neighbors to this community," Bunch said.

Winn-Dixie reported a 5.5-percent sales dip for the quarter ending March 31 compared to the same period in 2003. The company also reported a \$77.7 million net loss for a 40-week period ending March 31.

(Chowan Herald Managing Editor Rebecca Bunch contributed to this story)

Pruden to run for commission

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Dossey Pruden may not have any challengers for the July 20 primaries, but the Edenton Democrat will face a Republican challenger Nov. 2.



Dossey Pruden

Pruden has a first-things-first attitude about his initial foray into Chowan County politics. He just wants to get his name out for the county Board of Commissioners district seat he's vying for.

County Democratic party chairman Derrick Wadsworth doesn't think that'll be a difficult thing for Pruden to do.

"His family name has been in the county for years," Wadsworth said Saturday.

Pruden, 52, and Bill Gardner Jr. are the only two candidates for the District 2 commissioners' seat being vacated by George Jones, who has held the job for 26 years. A 1970 graduate of John A. Holmes High School, Pruden wants to continue his family's service to Chowan County. Funneling new jobs into the county is his chief campaign goal. "We need to bring in new jobs," he said, "and then keep the ones already here from moving."

Controlled growth, education and environmental issues also top the Cape Colony resident's agenda. "The future will bring many challenges and concerns," he said. "I will try to make the best choices, if elected."

Pruden, a Merchant Marine captain, is also a 1972 graduate of Cape Fear Technical Institute in Wilmington, where he earned an associate's degree in Marine Technology in 1972.

He is a member of the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library Board of Trustees; co-chairman of the Northeast Regional Advisory Committee of the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission.



Seeking County Commission seats

Libertarians George Bradham, Robin Sams and John Sams filed May 7 as candidates for election as Chowan County Commissioners in the November election. Bradham is running for the District 3 seat (Edenton); Robin Sams filed for the county at-large seat; and John Sams is contesting the District 1 seat (Rocky Hock and northern Chowan County). Libertarians, they noted, champion self-responsibility and individual liberty, values which have made America great. The three are seen here at the Edenton Teapot, which commemorates one of the first political protests of the American Revolution.

BOE unveils tentative budget

From staff reports

The Edenton - Chowan Schools Board of Education at its May meeting approved unanimously the 2004-2005 lo-

cal budget request. The request now goes to the Chowan County Commissioners for approval. The total school system budget is made up of local, state and federal funds.

The lion's share of the school system's expansion request is for its Current Expense Fund, in personnel costs

See BUDGET On Page 5-A

Operation leads to 13 arrests

A joint community policing effort to arrest and document probation and parole violators in Chowan County on April 30 resulted in the arrests of 13 people, including two absconders from probation, and the confiscation of significant amounts of cocaine, marijuana and cash.

Probation/parole officers from the Division of Community Corrections organized the operation. Along with local law enforcement officers, probation officers searched the homes of probationers and manned traffic checkpoints. Officers from Tyrrell Prison Work Farm and the Chowan County Sheriff's Department provided manpower; a van and canines to assist in the searches and traffic checkpoints.

Officers arrested two probation violators, issued numerous traffic violations, seized one vehicle, a half-pound of marijuana, several rocks of crack cocaine and several hundred dollars in cash.

"People in Chowan County now know that we can and will

See ARRESTS On Page 5-A

U.S. Navy appeals ruling

BY BETH HALL
The Enterprise

RALEIGH - The Navy ended its two-week silence in regards to an injunction prohibiting further work on a proposed outlying landing field in Washington County.

A motion filed Tuesday, May 3, requests the court reconsider the injunction or-

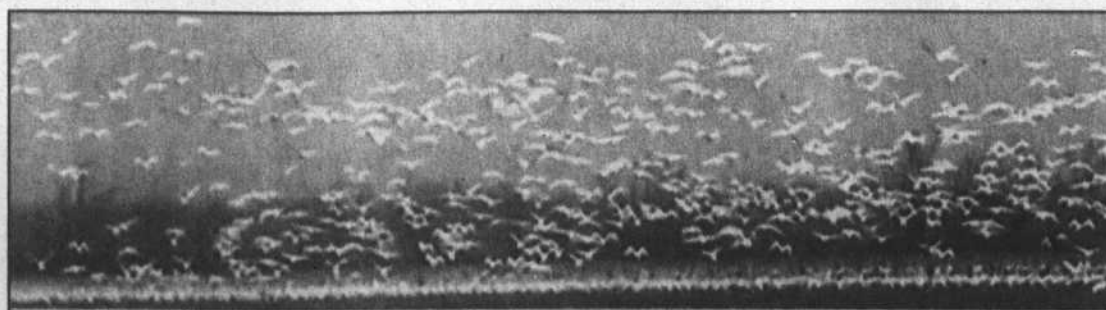
See RULING On Page 3-A

OLF: Noise level to impact region

BY EARLINE WHITE,
FRAN ARRINGTON,
CHARLES HARRIS
Cox NC Publications

Second in a series

A few weeks ago, Carolyn Hess of Hertford and some of her friends were meeting for their regular discussion group in Edenton when one of the U.S. Navy's new Super Hornets



Birds, like these flying free across Pocosin Wildlife Refuge in Washington County, won't be the only ones startled by the loud jet engines of the Super Hornets scheduled to use the proposed OLF site. Humans living in adjacent counties are likely to experience the noise firsthand too. (Chowan Herald file photo by Angela Perez)

jets flew overhead. The noise from the plane grew so loud that they could no

longer hear one another. They were forced to stop their discussion until the plane had

passed on and was no longer audible.

See OLF On Page 3-A

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Jordan signs book on Saturday 7-C



Center Hill Cross Roads Fire Department
ANNIVERSARY SUPPER

FIRE HOUSE CHICKEN

SATURDAY, MAY 15, 2004 FROM 4 PM - 7 PM \$6.00 per plate