

Local officials continue to work on noise problem

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Managing Editor

Despite a number of delays, local officials remain optimistic that a solution to the problem of excessive noise due to a high volume of truck traffic is on the horizon. That solution is expected to come in the form of an alternate route that would take the trucks away from the historic district and the downtown area.

According to Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton, the closest the town has come to resolving the issue was in the fall of 2001 when a proposed extension of Soundside Road

was the route of choice. However, that route did not win the approval of one of the required permitting agencies, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers which expressed concerns over potential wetlands-related issues. The Corps, Knighton noted, expressed a preference instead for another route that it said could be developed along Old Hertford Road. Local officials believing that option was not the best one, spent one and a half years fighting it.

"Finally, last year, we were able to convince the Corps that the Old Hertford Road option was not a good idea," Knighton

said, "and it was taken off the table."

Instead, the Corps, at the urging of Knighton and Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland, agreed to move forward with three design alternatives. "Since then," Knighton said, "DOT has been working on designs for those three alternatives."

By November 2004, she said, DOT should have the designs finished. Environmental impact studies will then be undertaken.

Knighton said that a meeting to review those designs is scheduled for January 2005. "Hopefully, at that point,

there'll be a decision made on which is the best of the three," she said. Once the decision is made, there will be another meeting scheduled like the one held in 2001 to receive input from local citizens. Provided those comments are positive, the project can begin to move forward. Land acquisitions would then begin with all the land scheduled to be acquired by 2007. The current timetable calls for preparation of bid specifications and design criteria to follow with construction tentatively set to begin in the spring of 2009.

"This has really been a lengthy process," Knighton

acknowledged. "This was one of the first projects I began working on when I came to Edenton as Town Manager in 1988. Over the years, Cliff (Copeland) and I have both put a tremendous amount of time and effort into making sure this project stayed before the DOT, that they did not forget about us. We are both committed to seeing this project through to completion," she said.

Still, Knighton said she could certainly understand the frustration of those who live in neighborhoods most impacted by the noise of the passing trucks. Homeowner George

Bradham, who lives on Granville Street, said that everyone living on one of the major streets in town (Queen, Broad, Church and Granville) can, in his words, "attest to the constant and growing number of trucks, and their impact on the quality of life of the citizens, both day and night."

Bradham, who is a Libertarian Party candidate for Chowan County Commissioner, said that he feels strongly it is time for more decisive action to be taken. If the town and county are unable to move the project forward on their own,

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Arrest follows chase

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

A Gates County man was arrested May 14 after leading local law enforcement on a high-speed chase through two counties.

Nicholas F. Ellis, 19, of 201-35 Hazelton Road, was slapped with four charges in both Chowan and Gates counties after the 30-minute chase that reached speeds of 100 mph.

"His license was revoked and he didn't have any insurance," Edenton Police Chief Greg Bonner said of Ellis' attempt to elude arrest, "and he did not want to be detained by law enforcement."

Ellis was jailed at the Chowan County Detention Facility under a \$34,000 bond. His next court date in Chowan County is June 22. He is set to appear in a Gates County courtroom May 24. Bonner said the eight charges could all be heard in Chowan since the chase began in Edenton.

Ellis had been travelling north on North Broad Street when Officer Joseph Felton

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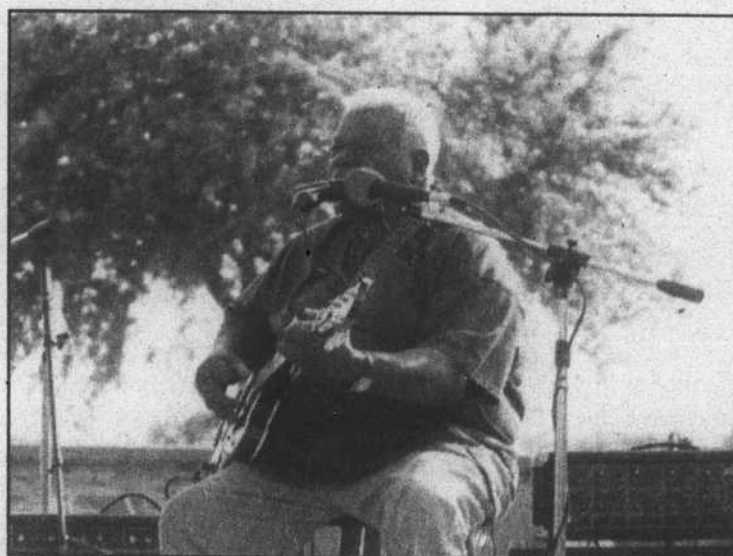
Community Music and Water Festival planned at Edenton Waterfront Park

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Managing Editor

A lively day filled with sports and musical entertainment awaits local residents on June 19 at a free Community Music and Water Festival. That Saturday, from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. the Edenton Waterfront Park will be filled with locals and visitors enjoying a wide range of events.

Kicking off the day's activities will be the East Coast Flat Water Canoe and Kayak Races. Registration begins at 8:30 a.m. with the races getting underway at the waterfront at 10 a.m. Beginning at 11 a.m. there will be paddling demonstrations, followed by guided paddle tours starting at 1 p.m. At noon, music provided by DJ Eugene Byrum will fill the park. That afternoon at 3 p.m. Sunfish races will start. And, from 3 p.m. until 9 p.m. live musical performances will delight the crowd.

Robbie Laughton, director of Parks and Recreation, said that the event represents about six months' worth of planning and organizing on behalf of the steering committee for the festival, of



Musician Fred Hill will be among the performers at this year's Community Music and Water Festival in June.

which he is a member. Other agencies involved include the Chowan Arts Council, Chowan County Tourism Development Authority (TDA), Sunfish Sailing Club, NC Division of Parks and Recreation, Albemarle RC&D, Boy Scout Troop 164, Eastern NC 4-H Environmental Education Center, Trestle House Inn, and Peter Boehling.

Laughton noted that the festival "offers something for everyone, for people of all ages and skill levels that they can enjoy."

Headlining the musical portion of the festival will be special guest Meghaph Carey. Chowan Arts Council Executive Director Sue Clark said she was "overjoyed" to have an artist of Carey's caliber join with local musicians to bring music of all kinds to the park that day. "She is just amazing," said Clark. "Those who've heard her perform know she has a unique, original quality that makes her something really special to listen to."

Other featured musicians

are scheduled to include:

- Luke Whisnant - Blues/Blues
- Andy Faircloth - Pop
- Peter Boehling - Original Compositions
- Edenton Men's Chorus - Gospel
- John Francis - Finger pickin' guitar
- Chamblee Simonsen - Original Compositions
- Mike Malloy - Classic Rock
- Fred Hill - Old Time Rock 'n Roll
- Paul Platts - Gospel String Band
- Anita and Glen Anderson -

Classic Rock

- Mark Sclafani - 40's Classics
- Albemarle Area Youth Choir - Gospel.

"We've had a great time planning this together," said Clark of the steering committee putting together the festival. "We encourage everybody to come to the park, bring a lawn chair or blanket, and enjoy themselves."

Food and drinks will be available from local Scout Troops and the Yeopim

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Janet Chesson was among those enjoying the canoeing and kayaking portion of last year's festival.

Board of Education agrees JA Holmes will remain

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

At a special board meeting Monday night the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education voted 7 to 1 to renovate John A. Holmes at its current site. The three options laid before the board were to build a new school at a new site, renovate and add to the current site, or rebuild at the current site. The approximate cost of the renovations and expansion is \$17.8

million, without taking into consideration the inflation of costs within the next few years.

Randy G. White was the first to share his thoughts on the options. "Originally I wanted a new site. But listening to the speakers and looking seriously at the situation I have changed my mind and decided that renovating and expanding is the better choice. For one thing it would be less costly to renovate and it would mean more

to the community," White said.

What to do with the old site if abandoned was a major concern for Gil Burroughs. "Everything fell into place (when D. F. Walker was moved and COA took over the site). We couldn't foresee what was happening - an extremely significant set of events. It is a hard thing putting a price tag on what can come from the current COA, Recreation Department and John A. Holmes proximity. If Holmes were

abandoned I can't figure out a reasonable alternative, whether it be commercial, residential or industrial, to place at the site. I vote for renovation and expansion," Burroughs said.

Kay Wright held to her vote for a new site. "There is not enough land to expand what we wanted to do with the high school. I think we should look at options," Wright expressed.

"I consider this project to be a community effort," said Tom

Abbott. "We want to recreate the high school into a community building and teach school there as well. I am so excited about the new media center with all it could do. We are making the best choice by renovating. Recreate Holmes into something better," Abbott said.

"The foundation of our community is on old buildings," Ricky Browder said. "The heart of Broad Street is that land on which sits Holmes, the

ball field and the athletic complex. It is encouraging to me that the old Walker site is still being used for educational purposes, but I don't foresee that happening to the high school. It would be a travesty to ride by Holmes and see the paint fade and the weeds grow. I vote to renovate the current site and give it a second life," Browder said.

John Guard suggested that

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OLF: What will it ultimately cost region?

Third in a series

BY NITA HILLIARD SMITH
Cox NC Publications

One of the main arguments both for and against a proposed Navy Outlying Landing Field (OLF) in Eastern North Carolina is over money.

And depending on the outcome of this battle, it could cost either the federal, state or local government millions.

The Navy is arguing that it needs the additional OLF to provide training for pilots landing on aircraft carriers. Eight squadrons of the Navy's

multi-million dollar Super Hornets are planned to be located at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., and two are headed for Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in North Carolina.

The pilots of these planes need a place to practice landing on an aircraft carrier. Because of the dangers of practicing at sea, Navy officials say they must have a remote land area away from towns or even lights to practice.

The Navy's earlier model F-14 (Tomcats) and F/A-18 C/D (Hornets) have been practicing on the East Coast at Virginia's



Photo by Nita Hilliard Smith/Cox NC Publications

This sign on N.C. 32/45 alludes to the potential collision of birds at the nearby refuge with Super Hornet jets if the proposed OLF is located in Washington County.

Fentress Auxiliary Landing Field, a OLF that was built in 1940 in what was then a remote area. But because of urban encroachment, this area is no longer remote. People attracted by the availability of jobs and a good quality of life have built closer and closer to both Fentress and Oceana.

Cost to federal government

But now that the Navy is bringing in bigger and louder aircraft, the people have begun to protest. The Virginia Beach government wants to keep the

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