

THE CHOWAN HERALD

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Town Council will try to pare down tax hike

From Staff Reports

The Edenton Town Council is considering a move to cut a proposed 2.5-cent tax hike by more than half.

Council's finance committee has met twice to discuss the 2004/05 fiscal year proposed budget drafted by Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton. They have tentatively recommended a 1-cent property tax increase. The current tax rate is 42 cents per \$100 of a property's value.

Last week, committee

chairman Jerry Parks admitted council found little room to decrease funding requests.

"The (town's) department heads have really held the line on spending," Parks said at the June 8 meeting. "The police chief suggested buying used highway patrol cars instead of new cars, saving us \$26,000. The fire department staff will repaint the station (themselves), saving \$10,000 in labor."

Instead of cutting spending, the committee — which

includes the entire council — said it would not endorse Knighton's recommendation to cut a cash transfer from the Electric Fund to the General Fund by \$35,000.

"The Hurricane put a strain on everyone's budget," Parks said. "the town's, taxpayers alike, by holding the line on the transfer, we can avoid (an additional) 1.5 cent tax rate hike" to the 1-cent increase being considered.

The finance panel also said it would recommend using some of the town's

electric rate stabilization fund to offset a planned 1.2-percent electric rate increase.

"By tapping into the Rate Stabilization Fund," Parks said, "we can put off a rate increase for our electric customers during the cold months of the year."

Instead of raising rates in November, the Council will tap into the stabilization fund to cover the wholesale rate increase. Retail rate increase would become effective in March 2005. Councilman Steve Biggs

said the purpose of the fund was to help offset rate increases, even if just for a few months.

"When we set up the fund, we had this type of situation in mind," Biggs said.

Councilman Willis Privott noted that customers have more challenges trying to control consumptions during the winter months. "It's easier to save on electric consumption during warmer months than it is in the winter, I am all in favor of using the Rate Stabilization Fund to

help our customers get through the winter," Privott said.

Council also conducted a public hearing on the proposed budget. Edenton pharmacist John Mitchener asked Council to impose an additional 4-cent tax raise to begin saving for placing electric lines underground. Council is expected to vote on the budget at its June 28 meeting.

Council approved a 2.5-cent tax increase last year for the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

Chowan Regional Hospital changes status, not service

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Managing Editor

"The bottom line is, it's all about the bottom line."

With that simple sentence, Chowan Hospital Public Relations Director Mary Kay Ohanese summed up in an interview last Thursday the hospital's decision to convert from a community hospital to a critical access care facility. It is a decision that more small, rural hospitals are making in order to continue to operate in a cost-effective manner.

The changeover, which became official May 25, was not one that Chowan Hospital made without careful thought and consideration. After all, Ohanese said, while the new designation means that the hospital will be able to receive federal reimbursement from a higher level, patient care remains an important consideration.

Chowan Hospital President Jeff Sackrison said that patients entering the hospital for

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Chowan Hospital is now a critical access care facility.

SUMMER FUN ON THE WATER



Chowan Herald file photo

Edenton's Waterfront Park will be the place to be this Saturday, June 19 for the Community Music and Water Festival. Whether you like racing for the competitive spirit or require instructions for the beginner, there is something for all ages beginning at 10 a.m. Canoes and kayaks will be available for use during the morning and early afternoon hours. Children under age 18 need a parent's permission to be on the water. Come check out all the action, vendors and food; then end the day with the free music concert. Festival hours are from 10 a.m. until 9 p.m. (See related story on page 7-A)

Seniors Out to Lunch

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education met in regular session Monday, June 7 to discuss the possibility of off-campus lunch and the John A. Holmes summer renovation update.

Tanner Bloom, rising senior and member of the Student Government Association at John A. Holmes presented to the board an excellent argument for granting off-campus lunch to seniors. The seniors who meet the eligibility requirements (maintaining a 2.0 GPA, buying a pass, acquiring a parent's permission) will have the opportunity to leave campus for lunch one day a week. Seventy-four percent of the senior class makes grades at Holmes rendering them eligible for the lunch. Bloom argued that the lunch would

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Twister touches down in Chowan County

BY CHRIS WHIPPLE
Cox NC Publications

The severe storms that passed through the eastern and central parts of the state Friday touched off a tornado in Chowan County, officials determined Monday.

Doug Belch, emergency services director for Chowan County, said that the tornado caused damage in the Rocky Hock, Valhalla and Paradise Road sections of the county, causing property damage but no injuries.

Belch said the National Weather

Special Message to County Residents...

Since Friday night's storm (June 11, 2004) it has come to the attention of the North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) that numerous property owners are bringing the debris to the state's right of way for removal by other parties.

NCDOT representatives and Chowan County officials would like to remind everyone that there will be no FEMA pickup or NCDOT pickup of this debris.

Landowners are responsible for the removal of their own storm debris.

Service launched straight into a tornado warning for the county at 9:43 p.m., Friday, indicating an imminent threat. A watch is just below a warning, meaning that the danger is likely but not certain.

The bulk of destruction occurred shortly thereafter, between 10 p.m. and 10:30 p.m., Belch said.

Belch was touring the damaged areas with Tony Seiberts, station manager of the Wakefield, VA office of the National Weather Service Monday. The Wakefield station is where warnings and watches for the

northeast corner of the state originate.

Seiberts was in Chowan County to examine the damage and determine whether or not a tornado passed through the area. Seiberts determined the damage was caused by what is termed an "intermittent tornado," one that stays mostly above the tree tops and touches down sporadically if at all.

Belch said the tornado knocked down power lines and that the Macedonia section of the county was without power

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Talking politics

Paul Cox, a representative from the Erskine Bowles senate campaign, was among the special guests at Saturday's meeting of the Chowan County Democratic Women in Edenton. District Chair Mary Swartz was the featured speaker. (See inside today's edition for more campaign news)



Gun used in fall murder recovered

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

A man already facing murder charges has been arrested for possession of the gun allegedly used in the November slaying.

Sharif Kiplin Byrd, 28, of 1204 Vann St., Edenton, was charged with weapons, drug and traffic charges after being stopped by police Det. Mike

Davidson just after midnight June 5, police Chief Greg Bonner said.

Davidson had stopped Byrd for a routine traffic violation, Bonner said.

"Upon further investigation," he said, "the weapon was identified as the weapon that was there (at the scene) on the night of the murder of Jamel

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STOP THIEF!

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Thank You



The Chowan Herald Photo Contest Winners Announced ...see page 5-C

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MUSIC, BOAT DEMONSTRATIONS, BOAT RACES & MORE!
WATERFRONT DOWNTOWN EDENTON