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Transformer only spark in primary

State, local races yield few surprises

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

An election-morning power outage didn't close the polls in Edenton or Chowan County Tuesday.

Only a small percentage of the county's registered voters went to the polls for the primary elections.

Only four precincts and absentee ballots had been counted at

press time — Center Hill, Wardville, Rocky Hock, and Yeopim. East and West Edenton had not.

Chowan's lever voting machines don't use electricity, elections official Mildred Vanterpool said Tuesday, shortly after power was restored. Voting continued on schedule, Vanterpool said.

Incumbent county commissioners Ralph Cole, Harry Lee Winslow, and Jerry Downum were all unchallenged in the primary.

Republican Bill Gardner Jr. and Democrat Dossey Pruden also were unchallenged in the District 2 com-

missioners race for the seat being vacated by George Jones.

Libertarians John Sams (District 1), Robin Sams (at-large) and George Bradham (District 3) were also all unchallenged.

Also in Chowan County, U.S. House candidate G.K. Butterfield outpaced four Democrats in his bid to replace former 1st District Rep. Frank Ballance, who stepped down in June before completing a 2-year term. Former Pasquotank County Commissioner Sam Davis III picked up less than a third of the votes cast to finish second.

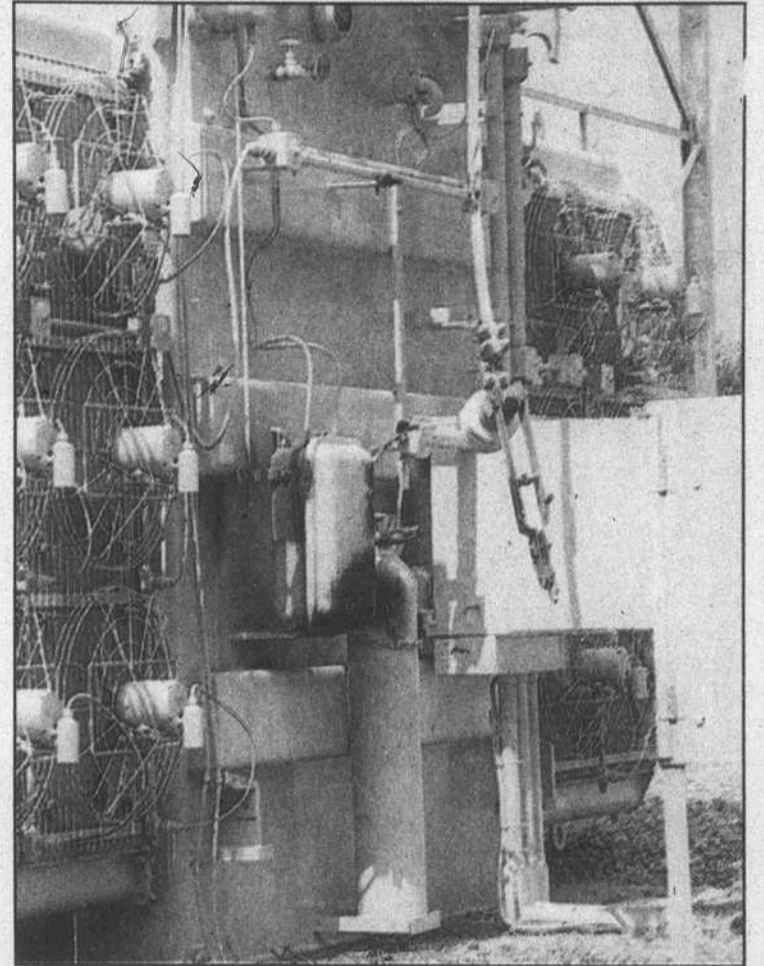
Greg Dority, one of two Re-

publicans seeking to win Ballance's seat, appeared to easily defeat fellow challenger Jerry Williford with a 6-1 margin of precincts reporting.

Dority and Butterfield were also on the ballot for a chance to fill the vacant U.S. House post until January, when the newly elected congressman is sworn in. Butterfield held a 50-vote margin at press time.

Finally, in the District 4 state Senate race, incumbent Robert Holloman held a 60-vote lead over his nearest challenger, Patricia Ferguson, a former Bertie County commissioner.

Results will be official July 27.



Staff photo by Sean Jackson

A blown transformer was responsible for Tuesday morning's power outage which left homes and businesses across Chowan County without electricity for about one and a half hours. Voting machines in Chowan County, which are not powered by electricity, were not affected.

Power outage vexes county

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Edenton residents and businesses were without power for more than an hour Tuesday morning after a VEPCO transformer blew.

Town Manager Anne-Marie

Knighton said workers from the Virginia-based power company were working on the East Freeman Street transformer when it went down. The town receives its power through VEPCO's system, she said.

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New supervisor braced for election

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Imagine sitting down at your desk, first day on the job, and you've got three weeks to prepare for a year's worth of toil.

It's what Rennie Harrington has been living since becoming Chowan County Board of Elections Director July 1. Harrington, 22, replaced former elections chief Rebecca Lowe, who took a job with the Wake County elections board in June.

Harrington says it's a baptism by fire. But the Lewiston-Woodville native isn't new to voting days. She was a precinct worker for four years in Bertie County.

"Since I was seven," she said Monday, "politics and the political process have been fascinating to me."

Fascinating enough for her to graduate from UNC-Pembroke with a degree in political science. Less than 24 hours before her first election, Harrington appeared ready to



Photo for The Chowan Herald by Bud Weagly

Rennie Harrington, new Board of Elections Supervisor

experiment with a day of ballots and nervous calls from candidate's camps.

The rush-up to July 20 was almost over.

"It's been very hectic," she said. "The people in Chowan County have helped me to

learn quickly."

Harrington wasn't sure if North Carolina Sen. John Edwards' presence on the presidential ballot (he is presidential hopeful John Kerry's vice-president nominee) would create record turnout.

The primary elections were originally scheduled for May. The date was pushed back to mid-summer, a fact Harrington said could slow turnout. Many voters could be out of town on vacation, she said.

Still, Edwards could spark added interest, she said Monday.

A U.S. Senate race — to fill the seat Edwards is vacating — and special election to fill the seat vacated by Rep. Frank Ballance in June was also part of the process. Republican Greg Dority and Democrat G.K. Butterfield squared off to temporarily fill that seat. Both were also in the primary race, seeking to face off again in the Nov. 2 general election.

Harrington said she and other elections officials could rest later in the week. The fine-tuning was about complete late Monday afternoon.

"We've worked out all the problems," she said. "Everything is set to go."

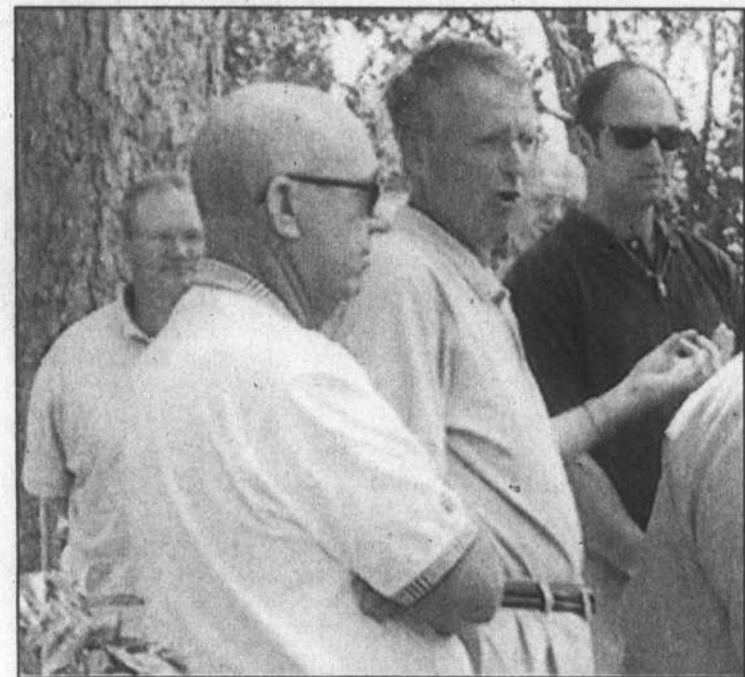


Photo for The Chowan Herald by Bud Weagly

County Manager Cliff Copeland (center) talks with County Commissioner George Jones, Social Services Director Ben Rose and Building Inspector Holly Colombo during a 25th anniversary get-together honoring him late last week.

Copeland celebrates 25 years on the job as Chowan Co. manager

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

One of the first projects Cliff Copeland supervised as Chowan County manager was repairing the roof at the old courthouse on East King Street.

A quarter century later, Copeland is again supervising work at the 237-year-old colonial landmark.

"It's turned out to be a 25-year project," Copeland joked Tuesday, nearly a week after celebrating his 25th anniversary as the county's head administrator.

The Duke University gradu-

ate declined to take credit for the county's reemergence as a cornerstone of northeast North Carolina. He cited county department heads — including Phyllis Cranford and Gail Forehand — and county clerk Nancy Morgan when he referred to Chowan's growth in recent years.

"They deserve the credit," he said, "not me."

He also gave credit to the boards of county commissioners he has worked with since 1979.

"They have allowed management to oversee the day-to-day operations of the county," he said.

Then there's the cooperative spirit between the county, Town of Edenton, and state government. Specifically, Copeland said Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton has helped foster a town-county union.

"Anne-Marie has really been a major asset to me over the years," he said.

Knighton, too, said her government counterpart has been good to deal with.

"I just feel blessed to have had the opportunity to work with him all these years," she said. "He's just such a seasoned manager and he has taught me so much in how to

learn the pulse of a community. That kind of stuff you don't learn in a textbook."

Copeland didn't have any complaints about his career Tuesday.

"It's been 25 good years," he said.

But will he hang around another decade or more?

"I don't have as many projects and goals ahead of me as I have behind me," he said.

Future goals do include seeing that the proposed Hayes and Sandy Point subdivisions "get started in the right way."

He also wants to stick around long enough to see

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Edenton Post Office planning renovations

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

The Edenton Post Office will be redirecting traffic and relocating the collection boxes in the parking lot during the week of July 20. Because of the safety issues involved with both auto and pedestrians, these revisions are essential to the current lot's smooth operation.

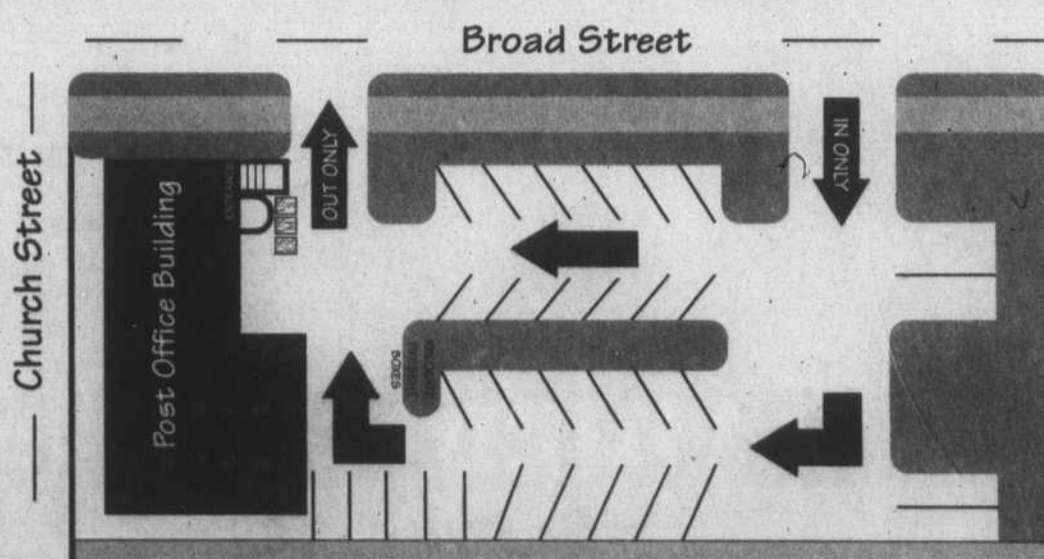
Rather than enter beside the post office building, drivers will go into the lot by way of the driveway closer to the Edenton Visitor's Center. Collection boxes will be located closer to the building for quick drop off as one ex-

its. The new exit will be the path nearest the post office.

"We have had so many close calls," said Jackie Kretzer, Acting Supervisor at the Edenton Post Office. "Cars come in so quickly causing people to rush up the curb rather than be struck. During times of high traffic there are often cars backed up into the road. This renovation is more for the safety of the citizens than anything," Kretzer said.

Postal Funds will provide money for labor in which to complete the project. Maintenance people from the Field Maintenance

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