

# THE CHOWAN HERALD

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## Cuts to affect Chowan Schools

Superintendent labels funding shortage 'major'

From Staff Reports

During its July meeting of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education Superintendent, Dr. Allan Smith warned the board of the likelihood of cuts in funding for the next fiscal year.



Smith Dr. Smith informed

the board that Edenton-Chowan schools recently received the allotment from the county for 2005-2006; the state budget remains in committee. Smith told of a 5% increase, \$175,000 for technology and \$200,000 for capital outlay operations, yet a deficit of \$215,000 remains from the request from the county. "We may be looking at further cuts to balance the budget," Smith said. "Looking at the state budget, under either plan, the House or the Senate, we are likely looking at major cuts in funding."

The board voted unanimously to approve the interim budget resolution pending passage of a budget by the General Assembly. Berry also presented the School Board Report, a record of expenditures and receipts for the system for the year. The local current expense fund, the state public school fund, the federal grant fund, the capital outlay fund and the food service fund all required budget amendments to close out the year, which the board unanimously approved.

Stemming from last month's meeting, the board was presented with a short history of the educational foundation, its mission and its year-end balance. Board members Tom Abbott and John Guard had previously addressed their concerns about the lack of initiative taken by the foundation and the need for it to assume a dominant role in fund recruitment. A board subcommittee agreed to meet with Glenda

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## OLF now back to the drawing board

Area counties mobilize in response to Navy's latest maneuver, Oceana now questioned

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

Thousands flock to downtown waterfront to view annual spectacle, related attractions

### Lighting up the sky



Daily Advance photo by Justin Falls

An estimated 14,000 people gathered at the waterfront Monday night to celebrate Independence Day 2005. An afternoon of music, food and kid's games was topped off with a brilliant fireworks display courtesy of the Chowan-Edenton Optimist Club.

## Parton settles on Halifax County for entertainment venue

Edenton based Northeast Partnership was instrumental in bringing project to the 'Inner Banks'

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

After nearly a year of speculation, Randy Parton, brother of megastar Dolly Parton, announced in Roanoke Rapids last week that he's bringing his country music theater project to Halifax County.

In a packed City Hall conference room, Parton and government and economic development officials unveiled the preliminary plans for the 700-acre project. Officials with the Northeast Partnership — an Edenton-based agency with ties to the state Department of Commerce — praised Parton's decision to locate the entertainment venue in northeast North Carolina.

Rick Watson, president and CEO of the Northeast Partnership, said his agency was relieved to have made the announcement, but that the hard work is just beginning.

"It was a good day (the June 30 press conference with the Partons)," Watson said Tuesday, "but it's going



Staff photo by Sean Jackson

Roanoke Rapids Mayor Drewery Beale, left, sits alongside Randy Parton and his wife Deb during a press conference following an official announcement of the new site.

to be a long day (ahead) ... The real work has just begun."

Watson hopes the project — which is slated to contain several theaters, hotels and restaurants among other things — will slow down visitors along the I-95 corridor who spend the night in a hotel in North Carolina then venture on. Getting travelers to spend three to four days in northeast North Carolina would funnel more tourism dollars into the region Watson refers to as the "Inner Banks", which includes

Edenton, Elizabeth City, and Williamston.

"I think it would make us a destination attraction," he said of the Parton project.

Watson also said striking the deal with the Parton family is a huge accomplishment. "Never in my wildest dreams," he added, "would I have ever thought of being able to do that."

Officials also touted the roles that both public and pri-

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After nearly two years of inactivity, area government officials have regrouped to fend off the U.S. Navy's recently announced plans to revisit placing a fighter jet landing field in Bertie and Perquimans counties.

In September of 2003, the Navy announced plans to build an outlying landing field in Washington and Beaufort counties on 30,000 acres of farmland. Opponents of that plan have battled the Navy in state and federal courts. Late last month, the Navy announced its plans to revisit previously rejected sites, which include Bertie and Perquimans.

On June 29, about 15 representatives from Bertie, Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank and Washington counties met in Edenton to discuss strategy for the group in the wake of the Navy's latest announcement. The group agreed to restate its support for an OLF to be built in Craven County, since the Super Hornets would be based at Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in that county. Craven officials have supported the OLF coming to their county. Area officials have maintained that the county receiving the economic benefits from the two Super Hornet squadrons to be sited at Cherry Point should also have the OLF.

"I was never clear on why the parallel runway (for an OLF in Craven County) was never given clear consideration," by the Navy, Perquimans County Commissioner Ben Hobbs said.

"It's politics," Edenton Town Councilman Jerry Parks said of the Navy's latest maneuver, "not logistics."

Group members noted that former U.S. Sen. Jesse Helms, R-N.C., stated that the county that gets the assets should be home to the OLF. But current Sens. Elizabeth Dole and Richard Burr, also North Carolina Republicans, have not voiced clear opposition to having an OLF in northeastern North Carolina.

"We need to support (the OLF going to) the county that gets the assets," Pasquotank County Manager Randy Keaton said.

Local officials have also expressed confusion about the Navy's reversal, since the Navy had already begun buying land in Beaufort and Washington counties before U.S. District Court Judge Terrence slapped an injunction against such land-buying last year.

"Be careful of the mixed signals," Reuben Clayton, a regional district director for U.S. Rep. G.K. Butterfield, said. The Navy could have its own agenda, Clayton told local officials during the hour-long meeting at Edenton's Municipal Building.

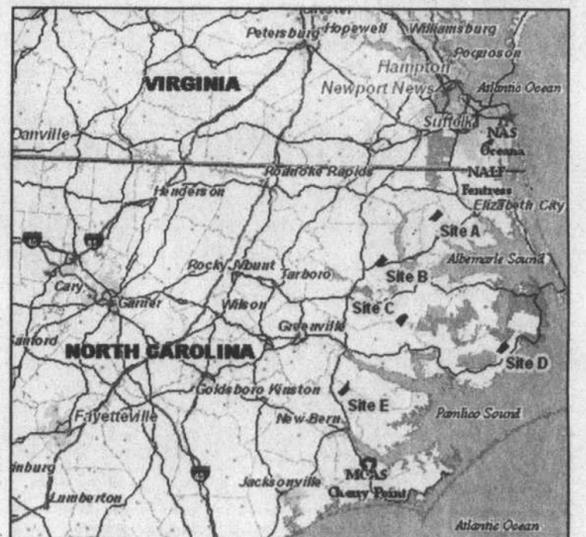
He urged the group to remain united and consistent in its approach.

Bertie County Manager Zee Lamb said the Navy may hope

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Super Hornet



This OLF map shows the various sites considered: (A) Perquimans; (B) Bertie; (C) Washington/Beaufort; (D) Hyde County; (E) Craven County.

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Local kids kick it at football camp

## Accountant's future at risk with town

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

Citing a history of late submissions, at least two Edenton officials debated Monday night whether or not to renew a contract with the Elizabeth City-based accountant who has done the town's audits for more than a decade.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton told council's Finance Committee earlier this month that she had to receive figures from Sonja Hibbard's audit over the phone. Knighton used those figures to draft her proposed 2005-06 budget.

"We have a history of being (given the audit findings) late," Mayor Roland Vaughan said.

Knighton said the fiscal-year audits are typically submitted to towns by Oct. 31, after the June 30 end of the previous fiscal year. She said other firms she has contacted recently about their possible interest in contracting with the town have indicated they have already begun work on other municipal

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## Post Office reverts to old traffic pattern

From staff reports

A number of complaints and near misses have caused the Edenton Post Office on Broad Street to revert to their original parking plan. But in the short term at least, the reversal could cause more confusion.

Last July, the Edenton Post Office changed the parking lot configuration to place the entrance away from the building and to remove a 'blind' entrance.

Entrances and exits to the small and busy parking lot have now been reversed to their original configuration, with the entrance now closest to the Church St. intersection and the exit is closest to the Visitor's Center (north).

Jackie Kretzner, Acting Supervisor at the Edenton Post Office, cautions customers to be mindful of pedestrians on the crosswalk while entering or exiting the facility.

