

THE CHOWAN HERALD

Vol. LXXII, No. 36

Wednesday, September 14, 2005

Single Copies 50¢

Crime rates drop for '04

Chowan neighbors not so fortunate

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Following the trend across much of North Carolina, Chowan County's crime rate dropped in 2004, mirroring the state's 3-percent drop in crime last year.

Chowan's overall crime rate fell by 5.2 percent in 2004, with 433 crimes reported, down from 536 in 2003, to a rate of 3,014 per 100,000 Chowan residents, compared to a 2003 rate of 3,747.

The county's violent crime rate also dipped, to a rate of 278.4 in 2004, down from 384.5 in 2003. The property crime rate saw a similar decrease.

Edenton Police Chief Greg Bonner has said that bringing his force to capacity by hiring new officers has stepped up patrols and put more criminals behind bars. In addition, a new detectives division formed in 2004 has targeted felony crimes — including drug activity — over the past year.

"Their tenacity certainly has attributed to crime reduction in this community," the chief said recently of his detectives and patrol officers. "They're very dedicated to what they're doing and they enjoy what they are doing."

Chowan County Sheriff Fred Spruill also said a fully-staffed department aids in curbing crime.

"I feel last year's reduction is due to the retention rate of the members of the sheriff's office," Spruill said Tuesday, "and the increase in manpower authorized by the Board of Commissioners which allows for the continuous visibility of the patrol units, along with a detective unit and the use of outside state and federal agencies, that can aggressively and effectively deal with the cases that do happen have led to this reduction."

Across the region, not all area counties saw a similar drop in crime last year. Pasquotank County's crimes rose from 1,602 in 2003, to 1,720 in 2004, or 118 more reported incidents.

In Camden, one of the state's smallest counties, the reported crimes nearly doubled, rising from nearly 587 crimes per 100,000 residents in 2003 to slightly more than 1,211 last

See RATES On Page A3

INSIDE

- Calendar C2
- Church C5
- Classifieds D1-4
- Editorials A6
- Obituaries C6
- Society C3
- Sports B1-4
- Football Contest B4

On C-1 . . .

High School Football takes center stage: Friday Night Lights

Ophelia lurks offshore, eyes coast

Tropical storm may intensify over the gulf stream, regain Category 1 status



Photo by Nimi Reiheld

Volunteers load supplies from St. Paul's Episcopal and St. Anne's Catholic Church in Edenton to be sent to Mississippi as part of local Katrina relief efforts.



Photo courtesy of The Coastland Times, Manteo NC



AccuWeather.com graphic

This map shows the projected path of Ophelia as of Tuesday afternoon. Coastal North Carolina residents were preparing for it to make landfall late Wednesday.

Chowan helps with Katrina aid

From Staff Reports

By the time the water began to recede, the people of Chowan County were already busy thinking of ways to help those affected by Hurricane Katrina. Colony Tire donated \$50,000 to the cause (\$25,000 to both the Salvation Army and the American Red Cross), Immanuel Baptist Church began collecting (and continues to collect) basic survival items to ship to the victims of the category 5 storm.

Each day, civic groups, businesses, churches and individuals around the county are pulling together to help their fellow citizens who lost everything in what has become known as the worst natural disaster in American history. And though thousands of dollars pour in, it will take much more to rebuild, replace and reform what was lost. And with any situation, local efforts, no matter how small, make all the difference to those in need.

The Chowan County Interfaith Disaster Relief Effort will host a community meeting on Wednesday, Sept. 14 at 3:30 PM at Edenton Baptist Fellowship Hall to bring groups together who are undertaking relief efforts for the Gulf Coast citizens.

"Interfaith has heard from a number of churches, civic clubs, non-profits and even school children interested in organizing relief efforts," said Interfaith President Jerald I. Perry, Sr. "This meeting will be an opportunity for us to inventory the numerous relief efforts and help publicize them to the community," Perry

See AID On Page A3

Overwash at Rodanthe

Overwash at the Rodanthe pier caused by strong northeast winds occurred as Ophelia approached the Outer Banks of North Carolina. In preparation for the tropical storm, Gov. Mike Easley declared a state of emergency on Saturday and moved 200 National Guardsmen to staging areas in eastern North Carolina. By Tuesday morning, mandatory evacuations had been ordered for Ocracoke and Hatteras.

County officials shore up preparedness guidelines

Steps taken to help avoid logistical problems that plagued the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

With the threat of another hurricane headed for the east coast, County Manager Cliff Copeland, during the September meeting of the County Commissioners, addressed the anxiety by explaining that "the county will take aggressive and coordinated actions in the event of a hurricane or serious incident." This statement came in direct response to a letter addressed to Director of Emergency Services, Doug Belch, in which the lack of government agency coordination in response to Hurricane Katrina likely caused additional deaths, damage. Emergency Management Coordinator, Patty Madry, assured the Commissioners that all county agencies were preparing for the event, if it should happen and that officers, personnel that were to deploy to the affected Gulf Coast area would remain in the immediate area to help with recovery. "We will do our very best to show the nation and the state that we will take care of our people," Chairman Wayne Goodwin said.

Belch and Madry proposed

the resolution whereby the county would establish the National Incident Management System as the standard for management of routine and catastrophic emergencies. "This means that all levels of the government; EMS, health dept., social services, Sheriff's Office, etc. would have the same line of training," Madry said. The passage of the resolution allowed eligibility for the county to receive funding for such training.



Madry

Other items discussed at the County Commissioners meeting included

Training for a career is the goal of the new boat building facility at COA in Edenton. Chamber Director, Richard Bunch, and COA President, Lynn Winslow, presented information to the Commissioners about the boatbuilding curriculum at the local community college. Bunch went on to say that the boat building

classes are a "vital part of our workforce development" and provide real life experience. Approximately one-fourth of the latest graduating class is currently employed in the local boat building industry, Winslow said.

Wildlife Officer, Mark Rich presented Patty Madry with a plaque, for her years of dedicated assistance to the officers of the NC Wildlife Law Enforcement District 1.

Finance Officer, Lisa Jones, presented the purchase bids for the new EMS rescue boat. The bid from BB&T for \$44,100 was accepted.

DSS Director Ben Rose presented a reorganization of the Social Services Department that will eliminate 2 positions and save an estimated \$40,000 per year. The positions will be restructured upon those already employed and will eliminate no personnel.

Recreation Dept. Director Robbie Laughton presented a contract with the ECU Dept. of Recreation and Leisure Studies to update the county-wide recreation plan. The plan is a comprehensive one designed

See GUIDELINES On A3

Workers on 'high alert'

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

After nearly a week of meandering along the southeastern U.S. seaboard, Tropical Storm Ophelia made a turn for coastal North Carolina on Tuesday.

Having been through a couple of strength changes, and looping in the Atlantic twice, the storm slowly took a northward track early Tuesday, prompting local officials to begin preparing for Ophelia. Forecasters have said the storm could dump up to six inches of rain across the region, as well as deliver gale-force winds for up to 24 hours.

In Edenton, workers were gearing up in advance of the storm, Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said.

"The Town departments are all on high alert," Knighton said Monday. "We are doing our normal preparedness, testing generators, chainsaws and other emergency equipment. We are much better prepared this go-around, thanks to some important lessons we learned from Hurricane Isabel (in September 2003)."

According to Chowan County Emergency Services acting public information officer Doug Belch, Ophelia could produce sustained winds of 39 mph, with gusts to 50 mph, from midnight Wednesday to mid-afternoon Thursday. In addition, a storm surge of up to three feet could be seen along the Albemarle Sound and Chowan River, officials said Tuesday.

At press time, the storm had sustained winds of 70 mph and was 125 miles south of Wilmington.

Since Sunday, forecasters had called for Ophelia to

See ALERT On Page A3



Staff photo by Earline White

Patrick Gresham, Patrick Major, Ryan Hazari and Johelen Hazari (along with Nicolas Hazari, not pictured) fled New Orleans six days after the Hurricane Katrina hit.

No place like home

Displaced evacuees long for the day when they return

BY EARLINE WHITE AND DAVID SINGLETON
The Chowan Herald

For Johelen Hazari, home is New Orleans. For now at least, Edenton is going to have to do.

Hazari was born here, but has lived most of her life in the French Quarter, where she's made a living in the hospitality

business as a bartender at the Gazebo Café and also a waitress.

It was in New Orleans that she met Patrick Major, and with him, his son Patrick Gresham and with two sons of her own (Nicholas, 5 and Ryan, 2) began to forge a life together.

Ironic as it is obvious, New Orleans isn't feeling all that hospitable these days. The storm, the

flooding, the crime, the panic and the fury that was the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina changed all that forever. For the days leading up to all this, things didn't seem all that out of the ordinary.

"We didn't think anything about it," Hazari said of the warnings, who like many others,

See HOME On Page A2


Saturday, Sept. 17, 2005
CENTER HILL CROSS ROADS FIRE DEPARTMENT ANNIVERSARY SUPPER
From 4 pm - 7 pm


FIRE HOUSE CHICKEN

\$6.00 per plate