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Special session set for Monday

Superior Court has backlog of pending cases

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Roughly 40 defendants are scheduled to appear in a special session of Chowan County Superior Court on Monday in a move prosecutors have said could free up a backlog of pending cases.

According to the state Administrative Office of the Courts Web site, Superior Court Judge Jerry Tillett will preside over the cases, which range from drug possession to attempted first-degree murder charges.

Earlier this month, District Attorney Frank Parrish said officials scheduled the special session with hopes of also easing overcrowding at the Chowan County Detention Facility where defendants awaiting trial were being housed.

"That's why we got," the special session docketed, Parrish told a discussion group in Edenton on Nov. 7.

This summer, prosecutor Mike Johnson said a special session was likely. With a number of potential capital murder trials also pending in Chowan — none of those defendants are on the Nov. 28 docket, officials have said the special session could allow for expected jury trials that are often time-consuming.

"I don't think we could have jury trials with," the other pending cases, Parrish said Nov. 7.

According to the AOC Web site, proceedings are set to begin at 2 p.m. Monday.

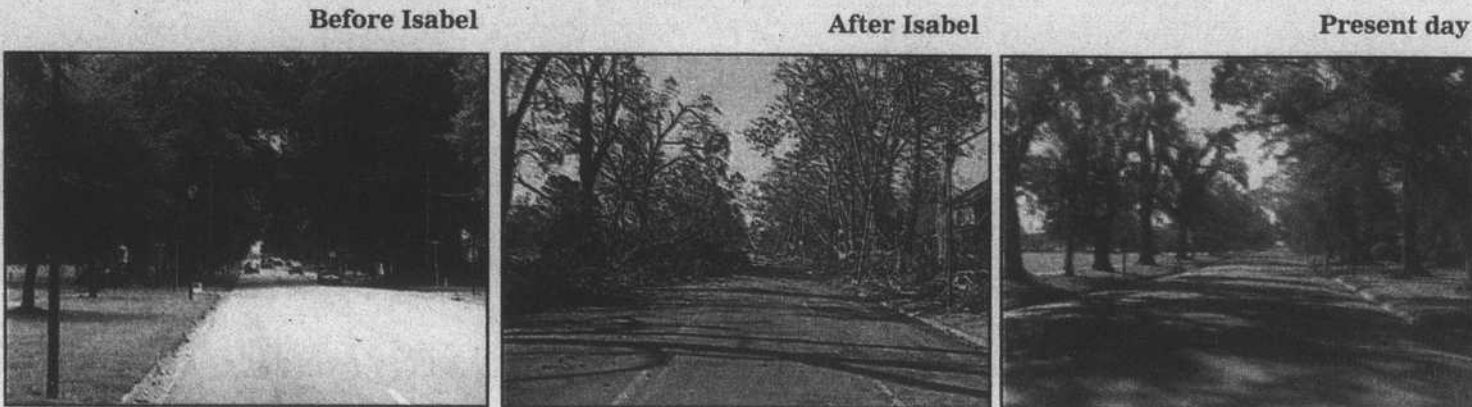


Our office will be closed on Thursday, November 24

INSIDE

- Calendar C2
- Church C5
- Classifieds D1-4
- Editorials A6
- Obituaries C6
- Society C2
- Sports B1-4

Fewer pecan pies in our future?



Trees making comeback after Isabel

Stately Pecans, Oaks replaced by more durable species

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Like many other coastal, Colonial-era towns, Edenton enjoyed a wealth of tree-lined streets, allowing visitors to seek plentiful summer shade as they perused historic routes.

Hurricane Isabel put a dent in the town's lush canopy in September 2003. But efforts to return the towns sprawling tree population have been largely successful, according to Mike Williams, director of Chowan County's State Cooperative Extension Service.

On the one hand, the town's tree-planting efforts have healed the scars brought by Isabel's battering wind. On the other hand, folks are simply getting used to the changes - new trees in new places, none growing in formerly familiar locales.

"I think we've adjusted to how it looks now," Williams said this week.

Large, mature oaks took the hardest beating during the storm, Williams said. While Oaks have been replanted, the town has used 20 types of trees - including a new addition, the Chinese Pistache - to rejuvenate Edenton's tree numbers. Plums and bald Cypress are also in the newly planted ranks.

"I've seen a lot more (bald cypresses) go up than before," Williams said of the tree that grows from 50 to 75 feet when fully mature.

Pecans are not not the replanting list. So, can the town recover its shady past?

"It is just a matter of time," Williams said, adding it could take 20 years or more for some of the new trees to mature.

The town has also made efforts to avoid planting trees near utility poles and busy intersections, both of which were victims of downed trees during Isabel.

"We're planting the right tree in the right spot (now)," Williams said.

The planting schedule - in spring and fall - was implemented by the town long before the storm ripped through more than two years ago, Williams added.

Above, Hurricane Isabel's effect on Broad Street foliage by Mike Williams

Growth spurs water plan

County officials pitch plan to handle long-term supply

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

An estimated \$9.2 million question may be on the county's hands within the next 5 to 10 years due to the unprecedented rate of growth the county is experiencing, Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland told the Chowan County Board of Commissioners at their November meeting.

Finished water mains in Chowan County currently total over 300 miles and provide substantial excess capacity at this point, meeting the county's short term needs, but not the long-term needs for the proposed developments in the near future, like Sandy Point for example.

Therefore the county is proposing a fee of approximately \$2,500 at the point that a tap is requested. This fee would include the \$1,000 required for tapping into the water system; the remainder would be put into a special reserve fund for utilization and future upgrades to the system itself.

"The county's existing water treatment facility can produce 2.1 million gallons of treated water per day," a letter from Copeland to the Finance Committee said. "Our maximum day demand averages between 1.1 and 1.2 million gallons... Given this capacity, we feel we need to plan to have additional capacity on line in approximately four to five years."

County Engineer Bill Diehl has suggested several upgrades to the system in order to handle the future need. Among those upgrades includes one million gallon/day treatment plant for the south end of the county (\$4,000,000), a backwash treatment plant to handle the filtering system (\$1,000,000), 2 wells with raw water main (\$800,000) and an overhead tank (\$500,000).

Fees similar to the one Copeland is proposing occur throughout eastern NC including nearby Camden County, Peter Rascoe Chowan County Special Projects Officer explained to the Commissioners.

"Camden County is an example of an area facing unprecedented development growth," Rascoe explained. "Camden has instituted a water development fee to cover the costs of necessary system expansion. Officials have incorporated its tap-on costs and development fee into a single fee that the developer of a lot, including an owner building his own house, will pay a fee of \$4,500 before a single 1-inch residential water tap can be installed."

"In order for Chowan County to handle the type of growth we are anticipating, we

See WATER On Page A2

New opportunities await area students

Major grant announced for use of very successful Oregon program



Gateway to College National Replication Manager Laurel Dukehart and College of the Albemarle President Lynne Bunch unveil a map depicting program sites.

Area educators from across northeastern North Carolina packed a conference room at College of The Albemarle's (COA's) Elizabeth City Campus to celebrate the announcement that the College is the newest Gateway to College site. Funded by a \$300,000 grant from Portland Community College, the program will provide a second chance for recent high school dropouts and those on the brink of dropping out.

Dr. Allan Smith, Superintendent of Edenton-Chowan Schools said that news of the grant "is wonderful news for the young people in this service area" noting that many dropouts are bright young people who need more flexibility (than a traditional comprehensive high school). This program is a viable option for those on the brink, or those who drop out of school.

"Everyone likes a second chance," he said.

See GRANT On Page A1

Counties join forces in Chamber-sponsored Expo at NCCC



Lin Dale directs the Chowan Middle School band on opening night at the Expo. The Perquimans band and the chorus from Chowan Middle School also performed.

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Seeking to help businesses get good employees, and help future workers choose proper careers, the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, and the Perquimans County Chamber, opened the doors to the annual Business Expo here for two days last week.

The event, held at the Northern Chowan Community Center, drew scores of business people on Nov. 15 for

a Business After Hours event — both giving and receiving information. The next morning, young students packed the gymnasium for a Job Fair. The students, 10th-graders from John A. Holmes and Perquimans County high schools, wielded notebooks as they took part in question-and-answer sessions with the businesses.

Win Dale, president of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber, See EXPO On Page A2

New tower to aid rescue, emergency efforts

Chowan Sheriff helped obtain funding from Department of Homeland Security

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

As recent circumstances across our country have proven, effective communication between agencies responding in emergency situations such as hurricanes is critical. With that in mind, many communities, including ours, are working on ways to strengthen their ability to stay in contact regardless of the circumstances.

Now, communication between emergency service personnel within Chowan and with surrounding counties will be vastly improved as a new radio communications tower is currently being erected in Valhalla.

In September of 2004, the US Department of Homeland Security through the NC Department of Crime Control & Public Safety (CCPS), awarded Chowan County with a grant of \$978,000 to erect a radio communications tower

See TOWER On Page A2



Chowan County Sheriff Fred Spruill stands before a tower similar to the one currently being built locally. Contributed Photo