

# THE CHOWAN HERALD

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## Business recruiter promises to leave post by June 30

Northeast Partnership CEO Rick Watson was dogged by ethical questions about relationship with 'Moonlight Bandit'

## 'Good cop' charged in felony drug case by ALE

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

Edenton Police Chief Greg Bonner said Tuesday that he was surprised to learn that one of his officers, Nicole Gardner, was the target of an ALE probe. That probe, which included surveillance of Gardner, led to her arrest last week. Gardner, 24, was fired Jan. 26, the day after 52 capsules of oxycontin allegedly in her possession were seized by ALE agents.



Gardner

Bonner said that Gardner had been considered an excellent officer with a lot of potential.

"She was dependable and had established a strong community support," Bonner said. "I wouldn't have had any reservations in allowing her to be a shift leader in the absence of one of the sergeants."

Gardner was arrested in Edenton on Feb. 14 by state Alcohol Law Enforcement Agent Rodney Parker and charged with illegal possession of the prescription painkiller oxycontin. She was placed under a \$10,000 secured bond and was released that same day, according to court documents.

Gardner was hired by the town as a patrol officer in September 2004. At the time of her arrest, she was charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver a schedule II controlled substance.

Her next court appearance is set for May 1. Assistant District Attorney Michael Johnson

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## A sprinkling of snow



Sean Jackson/The Chowan Herald

Crocuses just coming into view in the Cupola House gardens received a frosty surprise Monday morning when they were briefly covered by a coating of icy snow. Local residents got the best of both worlds - a chance to enjoy seeing a beautiful snowfall but one that went away as quickly as it came, and didn't interfere with workday travel.

## Incumbents file for re-election to county commission seats

Alligood, Goodwin and Belfield ask voters to return them to office

BY SEAN JACKSON  
The Chowan Herald

In addition to Edenton Police Detective Rhonda Copeland and Chowan Deputy Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin, a pair of hopefuls seeking to replace retiring Sheriff Fred Spruill, voters will also find some familiar names on the ballot.



Goodwin

sioners filed to run last week.

Commissioners Jimmy Alligood (District 2, Seat 2), Louis Belfield (District 3, Seat 2) and Wayne Goodwin (District 1, Seat 2) all filed for

re-election last week. Sheriff's Deputy Dwayne

Goodwin and Edenton Police Det. Sgt. Rhonda Copeland both filed for Spruill's post. Dwayne Goodwin and Copeland will square off in the May 2 Democratic primary elections.

In addition, area candidates who have filed for various offices include: State Rep. Tim Spear, D-Washington County, is seeking to win his first election for the District 2 seat he was appointed to in January; Attorneys Van Johnson of Elizabeth City and John Flore III of Currituck and assistant district attorney Eula Reid have filed to replace retiring Chief District Court Judge Grafton G. Beaman;

According to Chowan Board of Elections Supervisor Rebecca Lowe, candidates have until noon on Tuesday, Feb. 28 to file for the primary elections.



Alligood

BY EARLINE WHITE  
The Chowan Herald

North Carolina's Northeast Partnership CEO Rick Watson announced last Wednesday that he is stepping down, effective June 30.

Watson's decision was made public during the Partnership's regular monthly board meeting. Winfall Mayor Fred Yates, who serves as vice-chairman of the board, read the announcement.

Watson's decision to resign capped months of speculation about a potential conflict of interest over his ties to Carolina Crossroads, an entertainment theatre district planned for construction in Roanoke Rapids. Watson, who had announced last fall that he planned to leave the Partnership next year to become involved in the project, originally said he planned to continue working for the Partnership until 2007.

However, Watson said last week he could no longer ignore the impact that ongoing negative press coverage might have on efforts by the Partnership to continue to attract new businesses to the region.

"The negative publicity for our clients (would) be detrimental to the northeast," Watson said during a tele-

phone interview with *The Chowan Herald* Wednesday afternoon. "If those news entities would give the partnership some relief by my leaving (the Partnership) then I would do that so that it could continue (successfully)."

Recent news reports of lukewarm support voiced by many of the county commissioners within the 16-county North Carolina's Northeast Partnership area were not a factor in his decision to leave, Watson told the paper.

"I have talked personally with 10 or more of the commissioners and they were supportive of me and my work. By far it was not the majority of commissioners (who shared concerns over his involvement with the Roanoke Rapids project planned by musician Randy Parton and his wife Deb. Their production company, Moonlight Bandit, will oversee construction)."

Watson's June 30 resignation will result in his departure from his Partnership job six months earlier than he had originally planned. He said that he expects his remaining months leading the Edenton-based organization will be busy ones. He noted that among the projects being

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Mia Noble/The Chowan Herald

Northeast Partnership CEO Rick Watson (facing) and his wife Brenda are shown here during the festivities that accompanied the November 2005 groundbreaking for the Roanoke Rapids entertainment complex being planned by musician Randy Parton and his wife Deb.

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## Town of Edenton to conduct an experiment with recycling plan

From Staff Reports

The Town of Edenton will be experimenting with its curbside recycling program today (Wednesday) on the west side only.

This will be for recyclables only; no garbage will be picked up. Instead of using the flat-bed truck to collect and separate recycled materials at residents' curbs, the Town will be collecting recyclables utilizing a rear-end garbage truck.

The recyclables will not be separated by town employees, as is the practice now. Instead, the experiment calls for Tidewater Fiber, a company special-

izing in recycling, to "handle" the separation. Tidewater Fiber will place a trailer at the Public Works facility on W. Hicks Street. The Town will utilize its transfer station to unload the recyclables directly to Tidewater's trailer. Tidewater owns and operates a recycling facility in Virginia, where the Town's recyclables will go.

"Currently the Town has to take the separated recyclables we collect to Elizabeth City, and pay a vendor to accept the materials," said Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton. "The time and labor it takes to transport the materials will be a saving. But it is hoped that not

having to sort materials at the curb will afford the Town the ability to collect recyclables from both sides of town, once a week."

The Town collects recyclables from the east side on the first and third Wednesday of the month and the west side on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month.

"Don't be alarmed when you see the Town collecting recyclables in a garbage truck," Knighton added. "If the experiment is successful, we will likely have special signs made for the truck to remind the public that the materials will indeed be recycled."

## Citizens show support of local physician

BY EARLINE WHITE  
The Chowan Herald

A caravan of community members rallied in support of Dr. Joel Crist Reynolds of Edenton as he went before the NC Medical Board in Raleigh last Thursday, where he appeared on charges brought by the board last November.

"Most (of the community members) testified about factual information," said Katherine Carpenter, NC Medical Board attorney. "And Dr. Reynolds brought a lot of written documentation of support as well."

The board acted to stay any suspension of the urological surgeon, which allows Reynolds to maintain his practice without interruption.

"I think that Cris Reynolds is a very good doctor and important to the healthcare of Chowan County and surrounding areas," John Dowd said Tuesday about his appearance in Raleigh on behalf of Reynolds. Dowd, a local Realtor, serves as chairman of the Chowan Hospital Foundation.

Rev. Thomas Rickenbaker also attended the hearing and said, "Cris is both a friend and a parishoner at St. Paul's...when my mom came here and was ill and down, Dr. Reynolds was very supportive of my mother and me. I am a loyal friend and if my presence would help him during this time, I would be there."

Dr. Reynolds was back at work on Monday and could not be reached for comment.

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