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Northeast Partnership stripped of funding, responsibilities

Restructuring in wake of critical state audit

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

While the Northeast Partnership still exists on paper, it was essentially dismantled last week by the board that funnels state funding into its coffers.

The Northeastern North Carolina Regional Economic Development Commission

unanimously approved a total elimination of public funding for the Partnership during a meeting in Edenton on May 17. As of July 1, the Commission would take full control of the roughly \$1.4 million it gets annually — money that had been transferred to the Partnership in recent years.

"No more money should go to the Partnership at all in the future," Vann Rogerson, the Partnership's vice-president, told Commission members.

An audit released by state Auditor Leslie Merritt in April cited numerous flaws in

"Everything is going to be squeaky clean."

-NCREDC
Attorney Jean Carter

the Partnership's accounting practices, including hefty bonuses for agency officials and the lack of accountability for how other monies were being spent.

Jean Carter, the Commission's new attorney, said those practices should be a thing of

the past after the Commission adopted plans to restructure the organization and strip the Partnership of many of its former responsibilities.

"Everything is going to be squeaky clean," Carter said.

In disabling the Partnership's future control over the public funding it receives, the Commission adopted nine recommendations from its newly formed organizational committee, including:

- A memorandum of understanding between the

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Sean Jackson/The Chowan Herald

Northeast Partnership Vice-President Vann Rogerson, standing, goes over a recent financial support with Northeast Regional Economic Development Commission members, from left, Ernie Bowden, Zeno Edwards, Mack Nixon, and Bob Spivey during the Commission's May 17 meeting in Edenton.

Attorneys come to Boyle's defense

Former clerks label conflict of interest allegations 'personal'

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

A group of attorneys who worked as law clerks for U.S. District Court Judge Terrence Boyle on the way to earning their degrees are launching a campaign to defend the record and reputation of the federal appellate court nominee.

Boyle, 60, of Edenton, was nominated to the 4th Circuit Court of Appeals by President Bush just over a year ago. It was Bush's second nomination of Boyle, and the third overall for Boyle, who was initially nominated for the same post by President George H.W. Bush in 1991.

A recent article published by Salon.com claimed that Boyle broke a conflict-of-interest law by ruling in nine cases involving corporations in which he had stock interests.

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Tourism boosts local business

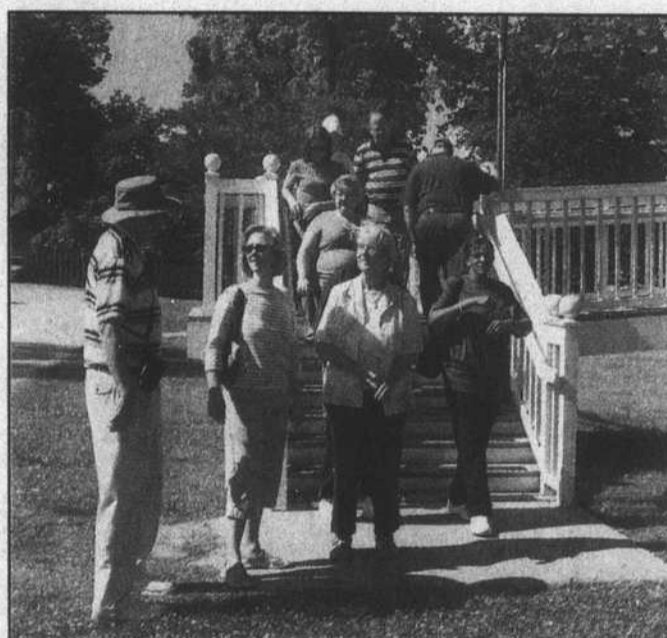
National tourism week sharpens focus on growing industry

BY EARLINE WHITE
The Chowan Herald

When the manufacturing industry in North Carolina fell victim to companies transferring business interests overseas, economists and North Carolinians alike looked to tourism as a means to boost the economy. And tourism has been a solid draw — and provided an economic boost for the state so far.

According to the National Tour Industry Association (NTIA), in 2005, domestic travelers spent \$14.2 billion across the state and directly supported 185,200 jobs for North Carolina residents. The tourism industry contributed \$3.75 billion to the state's payroll in 2005. Over 60 million visitors traveled to North Carolina in 2005, making the state eighth in the nation following California, Florida, Texas, Pennsylvania, New York, Ohio and Michigan in person/trip volume.

Last week in honor of National Tourism Week, the Chowan County Tourism Development Authority, in



Nancy Nicholls

Seventy five locals took part in a complimentary trolley tour of historic downtown Edenton given by the Edenton Visitor's Center last week. Above, many locals wait outside the Visitor's Center to board the trolley.

cooperation with Historic Edenton State Historic Site (Visitor's Center) hosted, complimentary Trolley Tours through Historic Edenton.

Sharon Keeter has been working as the interpreter for the tour for eight years now. Last week she led 114 people on the trolley tour (including the 75 complimentary tours given on Tuesday) for the hour-long drive through the historic downtown district. (Fifty-three people took advantage of the walking tour offered, including 13 complimentary tours offered on Tuesday. The Visitor's Center also sold 17 self-guided walking tour brochures last week.)

Keeter said, "I think people who have lived here all their lives would be surprised by what they would learn by simply going on the trolley

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Edenton petitions Gov. Easley for fair share of surplus

\$150,000 was withheld from town in 2002

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Edenton Town Council is formally asking Gov. Mike Easley to return more than \$150,000 in municipal reimbursements that the state withheld from the town in 2002.

With a unanimous vote Monday night, councilors adopted a resolution requesting that state lawmakers return the monies it took that year to balance the state budget. The request stems from the fact the state has a working \$2 billion budget surplus. Legislators arrived in Raleigh early this month for a short session that includes hammering out the next fiscal year budget.

"I'm not sure what our chances are of being successful," Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said.

However, Mayor Roland Vaughan said state Rep. Lucy Allen, D-Franklin, and state Sen. Janet Cowell, D-Wake, are both reportedly prepared to enter legislation asking the General Assembly to return the monies it pulled from municipal appropriations four years ago.

Councilman Willis Privott was confident that Allen, a former president of the N.C. League of Municipalities, would do all she could to have the funds returned.

"She's a live wire," Privott said of Allen.

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Easley



Louise Sprull was among those taking a trolley ride last Thursday. Directly behind her was Bobbie Jo Bryant.

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Repeat offender among weekend drug arrests

From Staff Reports



Bembry

Three felony arrests were made this weekend by Edenton Police Department officers as the result of a drug raid, and two suspicious incidents observed on the street.

On Friday Officer Derrick Knox of the Edenton Police Department stopped a vehicle in the 200 block of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Ave. after observing suspicious activity.

Kelcey Rendell Boston, 27, of 911 Cabarrus St. in Edenton was ar-

rested and charged with possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana after Officer Knox located felony amounts of the substance in the vehicle. Boston was placed under a \$5,000 secured bond in the Chowan County Jail. Boston made his first appearance in court yesterday.

On Saturday afternoon, after a two-month long investigation by the Edenton Police Department and NC National Guard Counter-Drug Task Force, officers from the Edenton Police Department, Chowan County

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General Assembly officially confirms Culpepper to N.C. Utilities Commission

BY SEAN JACKSON
The Chowan Herald

Edenton attorney Bill Culpepper officially became a member of the state Utilities Commission last week after his former colleagues in the General Assembly confirmed his nomination.

Culpepper was appointed to his post on the 7-member commission in November by Gov. Mike Easley. He stepped down from his District 2 House of Representatives seat in January. The Senate confirmed his nomination to the utilities committee with a 48-1 vote on May 17.

"I am pleased that the General Assembly completed the confirmation process early in the current session," Culpepper said Monday, "and I look forward to con-

tinuing to serve in the interesting and challenging position of state Utilities Commissioner."

Easley also approved Culpepper of any wrongdoing in receiving a \$2,000 political donation from the BellSouth Political Action Committee less than a week after being appointed by the governor.

His term expires on June 13, 2013.

Culpepper, 59, was appointed to his House seat in 1993, and won election to that post six times prior to vacating that seat to join the utilities panel.



Culpepper



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