



To keep up with times, town needs high speed

BY SEAN JACKSON
Staff Writer

Surfing the Web in Edenton and parts of Chowan County could become more convenient — and faster — soon.

Town councilors heard a second appeal from Net-Change.com on Monday night. The Edenton-based company wants to put an antenna on a town water tower to provide wireless, high-speed Internet service to local customers.

Net-Change spokesperson Jennifer Winston said the antenna would provide service to residents in a swath from Yeopim to Valhalla.

"The performance is going to be a lot better," Winston told council during the board's Finance Committee meeting.

"The upload and download speeds are going to be very fast," Winston added.

An issue of fairness

At least two councilors voiced concerns about the fairness of the deal. Net-Change wants to rent space on the tower for \$200 a month. Other communications companies rent space for as much as \$1,400 a month, Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said.

Net-Change has offered to provide in-kind Internet service to some town departments, including the fire department, the wastewater treatment plant, and North-eastern Regional Airport.

Councilman Steve Biggs said the town should consider the difference in charges before making a final decision. Council could vote on Net-Change's request at its Feb. 13 meeting.

"All I want to do is be consistent," Biggs said.

A valuable tool

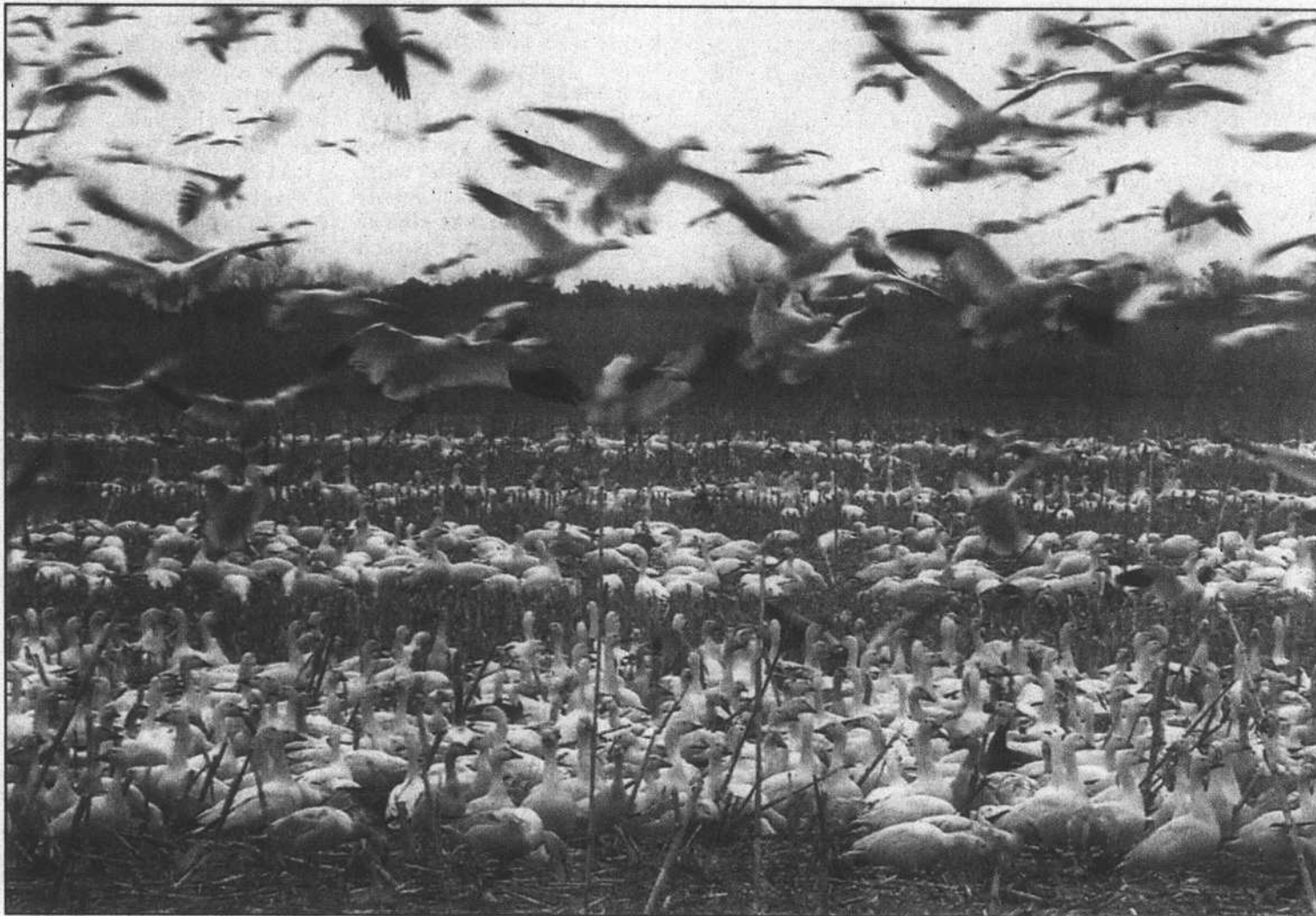
A Net-Change official estimated the monthly cost to consumers for the service could range from between \$40 to \$45 a month.

Business owner Linda Ashley said businesses need the fastest Internet service available in order to survive in the modern workplace.

"You can't conduct a busi-

See INTERNET, Page A2 >

A flock of a similar feather



Joe Albee

Over 3,000 more tundra swans were counted in local wintering grounds in Chowan County.

Record number of tundra swans recorded in Chowan, Washington counties

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

A mid-winter waterfowl inventory taken in early January revealed 3,000 more tundra swans in Chowan than the year before.

Pocosin Lakes in nearby Washington County also reported a record number of tundra swans and snow geese.

On Jan. 3, approximately 4,787 swans were noted in the areas of Yeopim Creek, Edenton Bay and the Chowan River, up from 1,753 in 2006.

Though the numbers continue to rise, officials with the state and national wildlife resource commissions said the inventory typically

rises and falls.

"The numbers simply wax and wane," Joe Fuller with the state wildlife office said. "But there haven't been any noticeable trends in the last 10-15 years. It all depends on the time when the count was conducted."

Seventy to 80 percent of the entire eastern population of tundra swan winter in northeastern N.C. and feed on the surrounding agricultural lands.

"The seemingly influx of swans could be the result of migratory differences," John Stanton, migratory bird specialist with the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service said.

Because weather is such an enormous factor in the path of a migratory bird,

Mid-Winter Waterfowl Inventory

In Chowan County — Yeopim Creek, Edenton Bay, Chowan River

Jan. 2007 — 4,787	Jan. 2005 — 961
Jan. 2006 — 1,753	Jan. 2004 — 2000

— Source: Joe Fuller, N.C. Wildlife Resource Commission

flyways (four specific routes across the country that migratory birds follow; N.C. is a part of the Atlantic Flyway) experience population increases at different times. This year the chilly weather may have prompted the swans to stay in the state a little longer.

"Magnitudes of tens of thousands of swans would certainly be noteworthy, as compared to 3,000, but overall the population of tundra swans are fairly stable, approximately 26,000, the same it's been for the past seven years," Stanton said.

At Pocosin Lakes the increased number of waterfowl spurs interest in the site where the Navy's proposed site for an outlying landing field would remove the bird's

wintering habitat.

"As 26,000 tundra swans and 78,000 snow geese have reminded us, the Pocosin Lakes National Wildlife Refuge is an internationally important site for these birds," said Derb Carter, attorney representing the environmental interests in the case against the Navy's plans for an OLF.

Officials are pleased however that the numbers remain stable, showing that strategies to manage the population are working.

"It's always difficult to strike a balance to provide a variety of species of birds for human enjoyment while allowing hunting and harvesting," Stanton added.

Another count of waterfowl will take place in the spring.

Kay Newsom perishes in Cape Colony fire

BY EARLINE WHITE
Staff Writer

When Roy and Kay Newsom's only son, Jeff, was killed over 20 years ago it began a downward spiral for the couple.

Grief stricken, the couple that once bubbled with life, no longer shared the same enthusiasm.

Years later, when Kay was diagnosed with macular degeneration eye disease and fibromyalgia, the spiral continued.

Her husband, "Rudy", piddled on, making birdhouses in the backyard, but he too carried a sad reminder of his son, and the daunting task of caring for his wife who had become legally blind.

On Thursday at approximately 3:10 a.m., tragedy struck the family once more.

A fire that began in the Cypress Drive home quickly spread and Kay Newsom who was known in the community as a sweet, giving person, was tragically caught in the flames.



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

An electric space heater may have caused an early morning fire that killed a Chowan resident.

The cause of death was smoke inhalation and thermal injury. She was 59.

Also lost in the fire was Newsom's beloved dog Boo Boo.

This was the second fatal death by fire in approximately five years, Chief Westbrook with the Edenton fire department said.

The probable cause of the

Cypress Drive fire was an electric space heater, Westbrook added.

"By the time Roy knocked on my door the flames were already really big," neighbor Jennifer Forward said.

Roy Newsom suffered serious injury after trying several times to combat the flames and retrieve his wife. But the heat and flames only pushed him

away. Newsom was treated at the burn center at Norfolk General.

"It's a tragedy," Clara Belangia, first cousin to the victim said. Belangia and her brother, Spencer, paused outside of the charred home on a drizzling Thursday afternoon.

See NEWSOM, Page A2 >

Forum focuses on school needs

Holmes renovations among discussed topics

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Editor

They spoke of crowded classrooms, deteriorating schools and lack of modern equipment that could be partially addressed with a \$2 million bond referendum.

The speakers, representing region one at a public school needs forum Thursday at John A. Holmes High School, shared their concerns with an audience of about 125 area residents.

The forum was sponsored by the Education: Everybody's Business Coalition, which is working to ensure passage of the referendum.



Chesson

Holmes has great needs

It is Holmes High School, according to Dr. Allan Smith, superintendent of the Edenton-Chowan Schools, which among our schools is in greatest need of improvement.

Smith said during an interview while the other three schools in the system face challenges relating to near-capacity enrollment, Holmes has had only patchwork repairs done over the past 30 to 40 years.



Dowd

He said critical needs at the Holmes site include a new media center, a new gymnasium and a new auditorium. Other items that need attention are additional classroom space (some students are currently attending classes in mobile units behind the school), a larger band room and cafeteria.

Getting bond on ballot

Smith said that getting the bond issue on the November ballot is something that state education officials will be working hard to do after the state General Assembly reconvenes this Thursday.

"This is something that we have been working on for a while now," Smith said, noting that he has already received assurances from the county government that they too recognize the importance of seeing an improved Holmes High School.

Smith said that a public facility needs document drafted in December 2005 outlined needs at the high school totaling \$20,267,256. And, he noted, costs have only gone up since then.

In preparation for moving forward with the project, the school system has had architect's renderings prepared showing how the school could look once improvements are made.

"We are committed to making sure that this redesign happens whether the bond issue passes or not," he said. "We are

See FORUM, Page A2 >

INDEX

A Local
Land Transfers A4
Opinion A6

B Sports
Recreation News B1
Nascar B2
School B3,4

C Community News
Upcoming Events C2
Society C4
Obituaries C6
Church C7, 8

D Classifieds
Employment D1
Service Directory D2
Buy/Sell/Trade D4

