

CHOWAN HERALD

FREE MONEY
Over 300 Chowan Co. residents have unclaimed money and property **A2**

Wednesday, August 22, 2007

482-4418 50¢



NO TIME FOR TEARS
Rev. Thomas Biggs retires from Cape Colony church after 34 years **C7**



BROKEN ROD ... NO PROBLEM
Handyman Earl Johns becomes fishermen's best friend **C1**

Ten retailers give preliminary OK to Edenton Commons

Developer pursuing T.J. Maxx, Marshalls, Ross and others

By **Connie Sage**
Contributing Writer

Ten retailers have made preliminary commitments for the proposed Edenton Commons Shopping Center, including Lowe's home improvement center, Farm Fresh supermarket, Family Dollar, a drugstore, and casual dining and fast-food restaurants, according to the cen-

ter's developer. Any agreements with the chains, including Farm Fresh and Lowe's, are conditional pending town approval, said Jon S. Wheeler, president of Wheeler Interests Investment Real Estate in Norfolk, Va. Lowe's and Farm Fresh supermarket are planned as anchors for the center.

If the shopping center is authorized this fall, Wheeler said there could be a minimum of 30 tenants in the complex, and another 10 along the perimeter. Twenty retailers are actively

interested in the center, including a casual Mexican restaurant, fast-food restaurants not already located in Edenton, and two banks; half have signed letters of intent or are negotiating contracts. An off-price retailer, such as T.J. Maxx, Marshalls or Ross, also is being pursued.

"We're trying to sell them on this market and why they need to be in Edenton," Wheeler said. T.J. Maxx and Marshalls are owned by the TJX Companies, a Massachusetts corporation with eight chains and more than

2,300 stores in the U.S., Canada and Great Britain. Ross Stores, based in California, own 771 Ross Dress for Less stores in 27 states and Guam.

Pebbles to stay downtown
Pebbles department store is not being lured from its downtown location, Wheeler said, because "we are not trying to undermine the existing retail base in town."

The local Pebbles, owned by Stage Stores in Houston, Texas, earlier this year signed a two-

TIMELINE	
Aug. '06	Shopping center approved
Winter '06	Lowe's expresses interest
May '07	Lowe's submits preliminary OK to developer
July '07	Developer buys complex site
Sept. 10, '07	Revised site plan expected to be submitted to Planning Board
Oct. 1, '07	First public hearing
Nov./Dec., '07	If approved, goes before Town Council
January '08	If OK'd by town, construction could begin
Sept-Oct '08	First phase of shopping center completed
Nov. '08	Stores open

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Schools don't meet AYP, again

Schools will offer some free tutoring for students

By **Earline White**
Managing Editor

Edenton-Chowan Schools failed to make adequate yearly progress at each of its schools for the second year in a row.

Preliminary data released last week shows that all four schools failed to close achievement gaps among different groups of students, as mandated by the No Child Left Behind Act of 2001.

But school officials are remaining positive.

"Reading and math scores were higher at D.F. Walker and Chowan in 2006-2007 than the previous year," Superintendent Allan Smith said.

Under the act, schools that receive Title I funds must meet certain guidelines. Schools are required to group students based on race, family income, English proficiency and other factors and test them in reading and

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HARVEST TIME



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Yvonne Holley, 71, of Center Hill, has been working in the field since she was six years old. "I helped my family pick for different farmers," she said. Last week she picked, along with seven other ladies, for James Copeland of Virginia Road. Despite the heat, Holley said she would stay until the work is done. "Since my husband died I've had to hustle to fend for myself."

Southern Bank gets green light in downtown

By **Sean Jackson**
Staff Writer

Town officials have given the OK for a downtown bank to expand, paving the way for the demolition of existing buildings.

The Town Council recently approved plans by Southern Bank to reconfigure a large chunk of the block at the corner of South Broad and West Queen streets.

While officials said they'd reviewed the plan extensively for nearly a year, at least two residents said the expansion was not good for their neighborhood.

"It's going to be a very tight sight," architect Art Swords said during a public hearing last week.

Mayor Roland Vaughan noted that the town would have a three-year status review period, should any concerns about traffic and parking at the site continue to crop up.

"I think that (review period) might bring some com-

fort to people's concerns," Vaughan said.

At least two residents who spoke during the public hearing voiced concern about the bank's expansion, which will involve the demolition of a building on the end of the west side of South Broad Street to make way for the new bank.

"You're pandering to special interests," Bob Zembraski said, "and the interest in this case is the bank."

Barbara King, who lives across the street from the two lots that will become the home of the new Southern Bank, said commercial growth has steadily whittled away at the neighborhood in the 13 years she has lived there.

"We value the strong sense of community that is alive and well on our block," King said.

Council unanimously approved rezoning one of the two lots from residential to commercial. Councilman Sambo Dixon recused him-



Art Swords, architect

After having been reviewed for over a year, Southern Bank got unanimous Council approval for a new building.

self from the vote, saying Southern Bank is one of his clients. Dixon is an attorney.

Traffic, design plans
Bank customers would use an entrance off of South Broad to park or use a drive-through window, Swords said.

Motorists would then use a driveway next to the Wozelka House to exit onto West Queen Street.

Officials said that plan was the best one brought to the table, and was reviewed

by state Department of Transportation officials.

Vaughan said the review period would help ensure that the proposed traffic plan remains the best option.

"If that turns out to be a quagmire on that corner," he said, "that will be a matter for future discussion."

The two-story bank will have a historic look mirroring much of the downtown business district. In addition to the council and town Planning Board, Edenton's

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HOMEOWNER'S INSURANCE

Rates may not scare buyers

By **Rebecca Bunch**
Staff Writer

Some Realtors say they don't expect a 25 percent increase in homeowners insurance rates to scare away new homebuyers — at least for now.

In fact, they say, a recently sluggish home sales market is beginning to pick up steam.

Getting into place

Broker Thomas Gregory of ERA All Seasons Realty said that he hasn't had any prospective homebuyers ask him about the increase.

"August is typically the time of year that people are moving to 'get in place,' like teachers who are coming in for a new year of school," he said.

"So sales are starting to pick up again,"

Gregory added that people moving to the community do not feel real estate prices are too high here.

He said he doubts they would find the new insurance rate increase unreasonable either, given Chowan County's close proximity to the North Carolina coast.

Instead, he said, he thinks locals are more likely to be the ones who feel that the new across-the-board rate hike for those living in an area classified as "coastal counties" is unfair and unreasonable.

"I think they're the ones who are going to have a problem with it," he said.

"People moving here are used to paying more for things, so I don't think it will be as much of a concern" for them.

Taxes bigger concern

Broker Nancy Winslow of Century 21/Top Sale Realty agrees.

"We do have people ask us about the insurance rates locally," she said, "but typically we're pretty far along in the process before that issue gets raised."

"Taxes seem to be a lot more of a concern, at least

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CRAB FEAST

SEPTEMBER 8TH, 2007
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8:00-9:30 MUSIC
\$20-ADVANCE; \$25-AT GATE
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