

Sixty-two percent of surveyed parents say students should wear uniforms

School officials will discuss issue Oct. 29 **A2**

CHOWAN HERALD

ACES TAKE NCC CROWN

Team heads to regionals in Greenville this weekend **B1**

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Mayor says Farm Fresh may not come to Edenton Commons

Developer may be luring other grocery chains

By **Connie Sage**
Contributing Writer

Mayor Roland Vaughan said this week that it doesn't appear likely that Farm Fresh is interested in opening a store in the proposed

Edenton Commons shopping center.

The developer has taken down the Farm Fresh sign at the site, he said.

And while Lowe's Home Improvement representatives attended the Oct. 1 meeting of the Planning Board, which recommended approval of the shopping center, Farm Fresh did not.

"If Farm Fresh won't

show its hand when Lowe's is on the ground, what's it going to take?" Vaughan asked.

Farm Fresh is reviewing its store development plans and has no information to release at this time about the Edenton location, Farm Fresh spokeswoman Susan Mayo said on Tuesday.

Town Council approved a conditional use permit a

year ago for Norfolk, Va., developer Jon Wheeler to build the shopping center off of Hwy. 32 North, which he said would include a Farm Fresh.

Wheeler was required to get town approval for a revised site plan after Lowe's Home Improvement said it was interested in becoming a co-anchor at the shopping complex.

Wheeler said at this month's Planning Board meeting that he has a letter of intent with Lowe's home improvement but not with Farm Fresh.

He had no comment Tuesday about Farm Fresh.

Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton said that at the developer's request, she has

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Town Councilors debate need for another Lowe's review **PAGE A2**

BELOW

Town Manager Knighton recommends hiring consultant for plan to keep downtown competitive

Road repair on horizon

By **Rebecca Bunch**
Staff Writer

The Chowan County Commissioners will spend more than \$900,000 during the coming fiscal year to repair damage to roads at Drummond's Point and Indian Trail.

County Manager Cliff Copeland said he would be glad to see the work get underway.

"We certainly appreciate the patience of our citizens because both of these roads are in very bad shape," he said. "We also appreciate DOT for putting the plans in place to get these roads fixed as quickly as possible."

Unhappy residents had repeatedly complained during public meetings that construction crews and heavy equipment moving to and away from new construction were causing damage to their road and their vehicles.

One Indian Trail resident, Les Kersey, said that during a 90-day period about 45,000 tons of materials were moved over those two roads at speeds of 50-55 mph.

"We had multiple road breaks (in the asphalt) on both roads," he said.

Kersey, who led an effort among his neighbors to speak out publicly about their concerns, said he felt that county officials, in particular Copeland, had been responsive to the concerns they aired.

The secondary roads construction funds were appropriated during a special meeting Oct. 9.

Repairs to Drummond's Point Road are scheduled to

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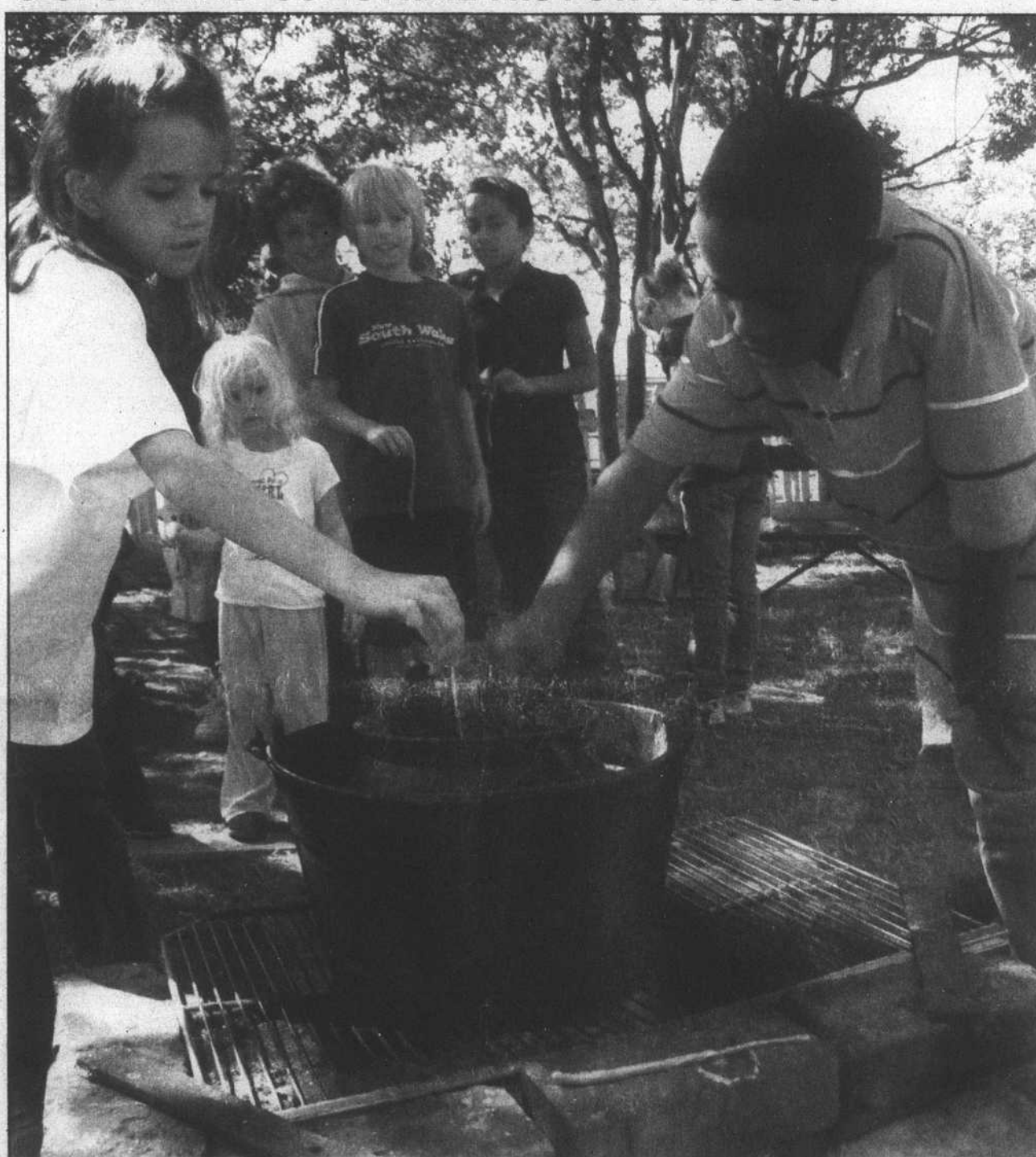
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OCTOBER IS COLONIAL HISTORY MONTH



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Fourth graders Cydney Sanders and Tessaun Basnight dip candles at the James Iredell State Historic Site's Colonial History Days in celebration of October as Colonial History Month. Hundreds of school children from Chowan, Perquimans and Pasquotank counties venture to the site to learn about colonial dress, games, food and chores as part of their N.C. History curriculum.

Strategic plan needed to protect Edenton's downtown

By **Connie Sage**
Contributing Writer

To remain competitive, a strategic blueprint is critical for downtown, said Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton, who will recommend that a consultant be hired to draw up a plan.

"The whole downtown needs to be looking strategically to become a more vibrant, more lively, more significant part of the economy," she said.

It is particularly imperative that downtown start positioning itself now, she said, because of anticipated town growth.

A final permit has been issued for the 1,600-home Sandy Point subdivision; the proposed 38-acre Edenton Commons shopping center comes before Town Council for approval on Nov. 13.

At a crossroad

The town's Main Street program also is at a crossroads. Jennifer Harriss, executive director of Destination Downtown Edenton, which oversees

the Main Street program, resigned on Sept. 28.

In a letter to the board, Harriss said it was "impossible for the Destination Downtown board to fully support its mission under the current configuration."

"I think Jennifer had a problem with the Main Street program being housed at the Chamber (of Commerce) when the Chamber board voted to support Edenton Commons," Knighton said. Opponents of the proposed shopping center claim it could destroy downtown businesses.

While Knighton and Mayor Roland Vaughan lauded Harriss for her work, Vaughan said the Main Street board had not been vocal about Edenton Commons and "didn't issue a statement in support or opposition to" the proposed shopping center.

Terry Waff, who chairs Destination Downtown, said there is "no reason" why downtown Edenton "can't survive a Lowe's. We want to keep the businesses we have downtown and we want to bring in more."



Harriss Knighton

Taking a stance

Waff is a former downtown business owner and a member of the town Planning Board.

Five of the six town Planning Board members, including Waff, recommended the proposed Edenton Commons shopping center on Oct. 1, which includes a Lowe's home improvement store, and sent it on to the Town Council.

Vaughan said the Destination Downtown board needs to have a clearer vision of what the Main Street program is and "to take strong positions when necessary if there is going to be any impact on downtown, either positive or negative."

Harriss could not be reached for comment.

Edenton is one of 53 communities chosen by the North Carolina Department of Commerce since 1980 for a Main

Street program, modeled after one developed nationally by the National Trust for Historic Preservation.

Its purpose is to restore prosperity and vitality to downtowns and neighborhood business districts.

Edenton, which was added in 2003, spends \$45,000 a year on an executive director's salary, marketing, travel and office expenses to promote its downtown.

State advisors step in

After Harriss resigned, Knighton said she contacted the state's Main Street Center in Raleigh and asked that a representative come to Edenton to advise the Destination Downtown board, especially about the proposed Edenton Commons.

"Are there other communities who have dealt with this successfully that we can get lessons from?" she asked. The meeting will be held here Oct. 30.

Knighton said the town has always invested in its downtown.

"We have a strong historic

Gangs & gang activity forum to be held

Eighty gang-related incidents over past two years

By **Sean Jackson**
Staff Writer

Edenton has the potential for a gang problem in the future, but right now it's just a matter of dealing with "wannabes," officials said last week.

A consultant hired by a local gang-abatement group said she has found little evidence of organized gang activity in town.

But that's not to say it couldn't crop up down the road, Linda Hester told group officials.

"There's been some new activity since August," Hester said.

Most of the activity over the past couple of years was the product of wannabes, Hester added. While more assessments are to be undertaken, Hester outlined some steps to curb the violence and crime — which she said is chiefly the product of youths ages 13 to 22.

A public forum is scheduled for tomorrow (Thursday) night at the D.F. Walker School gym on North Oakum Street in Edenton to discuss the consultant's review.

A second forum is set for Nov. 1 at the Northern Chowan Community Center in Tyner. Both meetings will begin at 7 p.m.

Hester's assessment suggested that the following action plans could be undertaken to stem the problem:

- Forming community watch groups
- Create a tip line for law enforcement
- Requiring school uniforms
- Establishing parenting programs

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