



## HOLMES RENOVATION PROJECT

### Need and timing are critical

Architectural plans to be secured by March

By Earline White  
Managing Editor

A solution to overcrowding, inadequate services and old technology at the high school is what administrators and politicians are hoping to find.

And soon. Renovations at John A. Holmes have been a topic of concern for many years and the need to find the light at the end of the tunnel is reaching a critical point.

"We are past the point of not serving the immediate needs," Superintendent Allan Smith said during a joint meeting with school and county leaders Monday afternoon.

"We have spent a little over \$5 million in renovations over the past six years. I cannot go to you and recommend going any further with short-term renovations until we know what we'll be doing long-term," Smith said.

The high school is made up of 13 buildings on 26 acres.

Only the main building, the adjacent wing, gym, library and Armory have water facilities.

When students are taking classes in the modular units near Park Avenue, they must go into one of the main buildings to use the restroom and hurry if it's raining — there's no breezeway.

The cafeteria is cramped. The gymnasium locker rooms are an embarrassment. The gym itself has to be locked during some games to avoid exceeding the fire code. And the auditorium can hold only half of the student body.

Holmes needs at least 10 additional classrooms and approximately 200 more square feet of space if it is to

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**The Herald office will be closed today from noon to 2.**

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# Putting on the final touches



Ginny Culpepper gets help from Paul Waff decorating her live 8-foot Christmas tree in time for this weekend's tour.

Photos by Earline White/The Chowan Herald

By Earline White  
Managing Editor

Ginny Culpepper admits that she is guilty of espionage this holiday season, as far as decorating for the Candlelight Tour goes anyway.

Every time her King Street neighbor Tracy Whichard brings a box into the house from the car, Culpepper is peeking through the slits between the curtains.

(Of course by now Whichard knows that she's being spied on and puts on a bit of a show for Culpepper and occasionally Ann Rosenblatt from Court Street.)

With only one more day until the Christmas Candlelight Tour, the Whichards are busying themselves with last-minute touches.

Eldest daughter Ellie is cleaning out the chimney for Santa; Tracy is sweeping the second story landing; son William and middle child Kate are covered in glitter from working on a special surprise in the rumpus room.

Culpepper meanwhile has recruited friend Paul Waff to help decorate her tree.

"I'm not doing any more than normal," Culpepper said.

"I've always been big on

Christmas. It reminds me of my family and friends all getting together and daddy putting up the tree."

Culpepper pointed to a gap in the tree where nothing was hanging.

She reached for an ornament given to her by Mary Anne Cahoon after Culpepper's first year of teaching, then an angel made by her son Gardner when he was about 7, then a pinecone ornament made by her dad when he was in third grade.

"I especially like the tour this year," Culpepper said handing a Santa head to Waff to perch on top of the tree.

"I've helped friends in the past with the tour and I myself have been on it before, but this year it's like touring a neighborhood — you get to see nearly everything within a couple of blocks."

Tracy and Bill Whichard had been asked to be on the tour before but never had enough courage with small children, Tracy said. "This year we decided to go for it and have fun."

Having fun could be code for shopping as Whichard admitted to buying a lot of decorations and things for the tour.

Husband Bill remained silent but smiled when Tracy men-

tioned that.

Tracy has been flipping through magazines for months to get ideas and Bill has been told that his job is to gather smilax from the woods.

Harry Rosenblatt is particularly thankful for friends with smilax so hunting through the woods for it won't be necessary.

"I'm sure I'll panic at the last minute but having helped friends on past tours, the people who come through are so nice I am excited about being part," Ann Rosenblatt said.

The Rosenblatts are one of two Jewish families who will be taking part in the holiday tour this year. They hope to shed some light on the holiday for Christians who may be curious about it.

"We anticipate lots of questions and we'll have a computer set up that will have information about Hannukah."

"It is not as important a holiday for the Jewish community as Passover but very popular especially amongst the kids," Harry Rosenblatt said.

Even though the Rosenblatt grandchildren will not be in town for the tour the house will be ready for them, and for you, this holiday season.



Harry and Ann Rosenblatt light a menorah to prepare for Hannukah and the holiday tour.

## CANDLELIGHT TOUR

Where: Water, Oakum, King, Court Streets

When: Friday and Saturday, 4 to 8 p.m.

How Much: \$25

Ticket locations: Acoustic Coffee, The Barker House, The Visitor Center and the Arts Council

For Details: 482-7800

# New plans for fair, school calendar in 2008

## Ticket price increase, new floor for ag. barn

By Sean Jackson  
Staff Writer

Expect a couple of changes at next year's Chowan County Regional Fair.

With increased gas prices and inflation, gate prices could increase for the popular September fair at the American Legion Fairgrounds on West Queen Street, Legion official E.C. Toppin said.

"That decision will be made in early 2008 after meetings with midway management," Toppin said, adding that Playworld Amusements will return as the midway operator next year. Prices were \$12 at the gate

(\$10 in advance) this year.

This year's fair was one of the most successful ever, Legion officials have said.

The biggest change will be a paved pavilion, replacing the dirt floor formerly used by animals at the fair and other events at the fairgrounds.

Installing a cement floor will allow the site to comply with a law recently passed by North Carolina lawmakers.

That law requires a six-month waiting period for use of such dirt-floor sites by humans after animals have used the site — to allow for the dissipation of any e-coli bacteria.

"With cement, it can be sanitized and then is OK for use," Toppin said.

A concrete floor could allow the Legion to host more events at the fairgrounds, officials said.

The upgrade will cost about \$15,000.

"We have the money for this improvement in a reserve account," Toppin said. No date has been set for when the work on the project would begin.



Toppin

## Conference to be held in a.m.

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Parents who've hustled from work to be on time for parent-teacher conferences, take heart: relief is on the way.

The calendar for the upcoming school year calls for at least one of the parent-teacher conferences to be scheduled in the morning rather than the afternoon.

"This idea would bring parents to the schools at 8 or 9 in the morning, rather than from 4 to 6 in the afternoon," said Dr. Allan Smith, superintendent of the Edenton-Chowan

Schools.

"We felt this might benefit working parents."

Families will also be affected by another change called for in the new calendar approved by the Board of Education Monday.

That change calls for all of the county's schools to convert to a six-week grading period for students.

Currently, the high school follows the six-week plan with the other schools adhering to a 9-week grading period.

School is scheduled to begin Aug. 25 and end June 10 with graduation scheduled for Friday night, June 12.