



## Ches Chesson becomes first local state swim champion

Brought home gold and bronze medals

Received formal appointment to U.S. Naval Academy



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Ode to Holmes' Coach Bill Billings one year later

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# CHOWAN HERALD

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## Three schools deemed safe

John A. Holmes did not apply for 'super safe' status

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Three local schools — White Oak, D.F. Walker, and Chowan Middle — are among those identified in North Carolina as "Super Safe Schools" for the current school year.

John A. Holmes High School elected not to compete for the special recognition.

"There are a number of these award opportunities available for schools," explained Holmes Assistant Principal Mary Lyons, "and administrators have to choose which ones they'll pursue because they are time-intensive, and it wouldn't be possible to apply for all of them."

This marks the fifth consecutive year that Chowan Middle School has qualified for the designation.

Representatives from the winning schools will be honored at an awards luncheon later this week.

"This is a big task they take on each year," said Karen Tynch, director of Safe and Drug-Free Schools, for the local school system. "(The program) is competitive, it is voluntary."

According to the state Department of Public Instruction Web site, its School Safety and Climate Division "established the Triple 'S' School award to recognize public schools' exemplary efforts to ensure the safety of students and staff."

As part of the process, each school is required to prepare and submit a portfolio that documents the safety procedures in place at their location.

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education honored the winning schools Monday night at their monthly meeting.

Holmes High School pursued a similar voluntary recognition initiative for its senior project program, noted Mary Lyons, assistant principal.

Both the entire school program and Ashley Barrow's Alleycat Angels individual project were honored by the State Board of Education last spring, she said.

### The board also:

■ Heard a presentation by Pam MacLagan, who oversees the Reading Recovery initiative in the

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## Locals honored for heroism, volunteerism, business savvy



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Deanna Chesson, far right, works with clockwise, Curtis Johnson, Hannah Nixon, Emma McCarthy, Haley Koppelman and Noah Evans on their team's OM spontaneous responses. Chesson, who coached and judged the event, feels most comfortable when volunteering.

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Deanna Chesson provides transportation for the Aces Swim Team and organizes swim meets including tournaments and regional competitions. She plans and carries out athletic banquets and is a soccer mom extraordinaire.

She is a member of the board of directors of the Chowan Hospital Foundation and serves as a tennis and soccer coach and instructor. "And after all this," said Robbie Laughton who presented Chesson the award said, "she still finds time to help with Relay for Life, her church, and hosting a foreign exchange student this year at the high school."

For these community efforts, and so many others, she was named William P. "Spec" Jones Volunteer of the Year at the annual Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce

awards dinner Thursday night.

Other recipients were Murray Nixon, winner of the John A. Mitchener Jr. Business Person of the Year Award and Winston Blackledge, who received the Marvin S. Barham Humanitarian of the Year award.

Nixon built his very first freezer, icehouse and fish room in 1972, noted presenter Travis Ellis. By the fall of 1974 the business had grown significantly and had become known as Murray Nixon Fishery. Today, 40 employees make their livings working there.

Nixon retired in 1984. By the mid-1990s he had become involved with a new enterprise, Nixon Family Restaurant Inc., which now employs a staff of 35.

Among his other achievements, Nixon served two terms on the North Carolina Marine Fisheries Commission board and in 1992 was a



Nixon



Blackledge

recipient of the Governors Award for outstanding volunteer service.

Blackledge was honored for saving the lives of Dean Hefernan and his son William in June during a near-drowning incident.

"The chamber is proud to honor our youngest award winner to date," said Richard Bunch, chamber director, as he handed the teenager his award. "He is certainly very deserving of this honor."

The awards ceremony ended with a special presentation to County Manager Cliff Copeland in recognition of his 29 years on the job. Copeland recently announced he will be retiring later this year.

## Lowe's engineers meet with town officials

Town's next step is to send specs for buildings, bonding

By Connie Sage  
Contributing Writer

Town officials met with Lowe's engineers last week to discuss the home improvement store's infrastructure requirements at the proposed Edenton Commons Center.

"I'm assuming it's all part of their process of going forward," said Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton.

The town, however, still has not been told definitively if, or when, the shopping center or Lowe's will be built.

"They're not saying anything official; they're still doing due diligence," Knighton said.

"We've learned, and the residents understand, it's never

a done deal until it's a done deal."

Knighton, along with local public works, electric and planning departments, and soil and conservation district officials, walked around the proposed shopping center site with two engineers from Free-land and Kauffman of Greenville, S.C., last Wednesday.

"When a project gets a conditional use permit, they want to know where's the sewer line, what kind of tie-in do you require for a water line," and other details about basic services, Knighton said.

The engineers also met with Department of Transportation officials to talk about highway requirements and improvements, including a traffic light at the shopping center. The town also defined bonding requirements.

Town offices this week were

"We've learned, and the residents understand, it's never a done deal until it's a done deal."

—Anne Marie Knighton



to send the engineering firm additional information about the town's standards specifications for building projects, including its bonding requirements.

"To me, it's the next step," Knighton said. The shopping center has its conditional use permit. "Now they actually start developing the plans and make things happen."

The Town Council approved plans last November for the proposed shopping center on Hwy. 32 north, near the Albe-marle Ford dealership.

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## Money in budget for fire stations

Two stations could cover Sandy Point, Drummond's Point, Cape Colony and Country Club

By Connie Sage  
Contributing Writer

The county's 2008-2009 budget will include money to lay the groundwork for two fire stations in the southern part of the county, County Manager Cliff Copeland said.

One station likely would cover the Sandy Point and Drummonds Point area and a second station could handle calls in the Cape Colony and Country Club Drive section.

"We're certainly committed to do what we can as quickly as possible," he said.

A draft report of the entire county's fire protection needs was submitted by a consultant last week. A final report is expected to be completed within the next month.

A single fire station would be insufficient to cover the southern end of the county, Copeland said.

But Les Kersey, who lives off of rural Locust Grove Road, said it may be possible to build one station if fire district designations are changed.

The fire districts, which are based on road mileage from a fire station to homes or businesses, are set by the state fire marshal's office.

The insurance industry uses the districts in establishing its rates. Five-mile district insurance premiums tend to be lower because stations are likely to be closer to a dwelling.

There currently are two five-mile fire districts covering the town and county's 233-square miles, which include 173-square miles of land.

The Center Hill Crossroads station, 12 miles north of Edenton on Hwy. 32, responds to calls in the northern end of the county. The nearby Belvidere/Chappell Hill Fire Department responds to calls in Perquimans County and parts

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## Resident numbers needed for county emergency plans

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Chowan County is part of the FirstCall Interactive Network that alerts local residents, via telephone or e-mail, about impending emergency situations.

However, said Emergency Management Coordinator Patty Madry, that service can only be made available to those whose contact information is known to the network.

"That means," she said, "if you have an unlisted number, a cell phone number or an e-mail address that they do not have, you cannot be notified in case of an emergency."

That is something Madry would very much like to remedy.

"We would like to see every citizen in Chowan County able to be alerted should a tornado, hurricane or other emergency situation come into play," she said.

The service is available in English or Spanish.

Those with unlisted phone numbers can sign up in one of three ways — email, phone or Internet.

To sign up via e-mail, go to [unlisted@firstcall.net](mailto:unlisted@firstcall.net).

To register your unlisted home or cell phone, call the network's registration line, (866) 484-3264.

To initiate Internet registration, go to [www.firstcall.net](http://www.firstcall.net) and click on unlisted registration.

Any numbers provided to the network are kept confidential and only messages authorized by county officials will be sent.

Anyone who would like more information about FirstCall may contact Patty Madry at 312-9829.