

Pro wrestling  
tourney held in  
Edenton Friday

LOCALS DREAM  
OF STARDOM IN  
THE RING C1

"The hardest thing was  
learning to take the  
bumps." — David Phelps



# CHOWAN HERALD

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Wednesday, February 20, 2008

50¢

Two file for first time  
for commissioner seats



John Mitchener



Earl Willis

SEE  
BELOW

## Library opening set for May

By Connie Sage  
Contributing Writer

The new \$3.3 million county public library is projected to open in early-to-mid May.

The existing Shepard-Pruden Library will more than double in size, from 6,326-square feet to 13,104-square feet.

Ground was broken for the new two-story expansion at the rear of the existing building on Nov. 2, 2006, with the library originally expected to open on March 9.

### Grappling with delays

Alex Givens, project engineer for Progressive Contracting Co. of Owings Mills, Md., said the project is behind schedule because of standard construction delays.

He said construction work should be finished by the middle of April. It will then take several weeks to get the library ready to open to the public.

In the meantime, the library, which was temporarily closed on Jan. 15, has been relying on a bookmobile to keep services open to the public.

The bookmobile is open from 10 a.m. to noon and 1-3 p.m., on Tuesdays in the parking lot across the street from the library, and the same hours at the Northern Chowan Community Center on Wednesdays.

Library staff members are working in a College of the Albemarle classroom.

### Loan to help cost

The county received a \$1.8 million loan from the U.S. Department of Agriculture in March 2006. The original construction contract was for \$2.871 million.

Other costs include: \$228,000 in architectural fees, \$10,700 in legal fees, \$92,000 for loan interest, \$152,000 for a contingency fund and \$8,000 for contracted services such as surveys, tree removal and bank fees.

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## Strong winds damage three homes



Earline White/The Chowan Herald

Patty Madry with emergency services looks at damage sustained by James and Pat Carnrite's Country Club Drive home after a wind storm ripped off the tops of pine trees in the yard. Two other homes were damaged during the storm.

David Griffin said that if he had never heard the story about a tornado sounding like a freight train then he would have thought there was a train station in his driveway Monday morning.

At about 6 a.m., a straight line wind storm, which is basically a tornado without the swirling winds, came in off the Albemarle Sound.

Due to the lack of friction over the water, the winds gathered strength, whipping across Country Club Drive,

leaving treetops broken in half like pine straw across lawns, houses and the nearby golf course.

Griffin was in the back bedroom at the time; his wife in the den just outside the bathroom that is now totally destroyed.

"It was so quiet afterwards, like the rain had sucked the wind out," Griffin said. His neighbor's house was left untouched. But two doors down the street two others — a Hayes rental and the Carnrite's home — sustained con-

siderable damage.

Patty Madry, Chowan County emergency management coordinator, and Tony Siebers with National Weather Service in Wakefield were on the scene Monday to make sure gas lines and homes were as stable as possible.

Madry confirmed that the county had never seen a wind storm/ tornado of this magnitude, not in the past 27 years (her tenure) anyway.

— by Earline White

## Run for commissioner heats up

John Mitchener, Earl Willis to run

Gardner, Goodwin file for re-election

By Vernon Fueston / Contributing Writer

John Mitchener, former member of the Edenton-Chowan school board, will run for election to the board of commissioners' at-large seat.

He will compete for the position against Fred Spruill.

Mitchener, 66, is a native of Chowan County. A graduate of Yale Divinity School, Mitchener served for two years in the army and is a Vietnam veteran. He is married with three children.

He is a pharmacist and developer specializing in the revitalization of downtown properties.

"I am running for this position to serve the whole county," Mitchener said. "Chowan County has supported our family pharmacy for three generations. This is one way to say 'thank you.'"

Mitchener cited several

Earl Willis will run for the 3rd District county commission seat currently held by Ralph Cole.

Willis, a native of Wanchese, N.C., is a retired history and government teacher with 32 years of service in the Perquimans County schools. He is a Vietnam era veteran and graduate of East Carolina University.

Willis said he is running because of his commitment to a healthy two-party system of politics in the county.

"It's a continuation of my teaching government and history. I believe it's imperative to have a healthy two party system. I had a lot of people approach me about running for office, and I felt it was time to practice what I preached."

Willis does not feel his

Bill Gardner, Jr. filed this week for a second term representing Chowan County's 2nd district. Gardner is running unopposed.

A 7th generation Chowan County native, Gardner graduated from Virginia Episcopal School and earned a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina at Wilmington. He works as an insurance broker for the Chowan County Farm Bureau.

"I want to ensure that essential services pertaining to the health, safety, and welfare of the citizens of Chowan County are provided in the most efficient manner possible," Gardner said.

He cited the county's new public safety center, a single complex housing police, sheriff's department, 911 service, and EMS's in one location, as an example.

He sees a number of dif-

Kenny Goodwin, incumbent county commissioner with one year's experience, filed for reelection to a seat representing the first district, seat 2. Alex Stallings will oppose him in the election.

Goodwin is a native of Chowan County, a graduate of John A. Holmes High School, and a lifelong local farmer. He is 35 and married with two children.

Goodwin said he seeks reelection, "to help do what's best for the county." He cites recent discussions with the school system regarding improvements to John A. Holmes High School as one of the board's most important accomplishments.

As for challenges ahead, Goodwin sees continued sound management as the board's most important goal. "We need to provide

### Hurricane forced move

The U.S. Department of Agriculture approved a nearly \$11 million, 40-year loan to the town and county after Hurricane Isabel flooded the current police department offices and 911 Dispatch Center on Water Street in 2003.

"We had to leave here twice" during Isabel, said Franklin Jackson, director of the Chowan Central Communications Center, which dispatches calls for local police and sheriff's offices; the Edenton, Center Hill-Crossroads and Belvidere Fire departments; and emergency calls for the town and county's electric and water departments.

The 911 center was evacuated for a dozen hours during the hurricane but moved to a mobile command center and no calls were lost.

Jackson likely won't have to worry about flooding at the new safety center, located on higher ground on W. Freemason Street, across from the Vine Oak cemetery off N. Granville Street.

While the new center is expected to open officially on April 10, Jackson said his goal is to relocate his staff of 11, including eight full-time and two part-time dispatchers, by April 4.

"We'll be moving things at different times so 911 will never go down," Jackson said. His department handled an average 274 calls a day in January, including 64 calls to dispatch fire, rescue and law enforcement personnel.

### Room to grow

Not surprising, each department is looking forward to vacating the cramped

See CENTER, Page A2 >

# Pancake Supper/Auction Friday, February 22, 2008

All you can eat \$9.99/Person