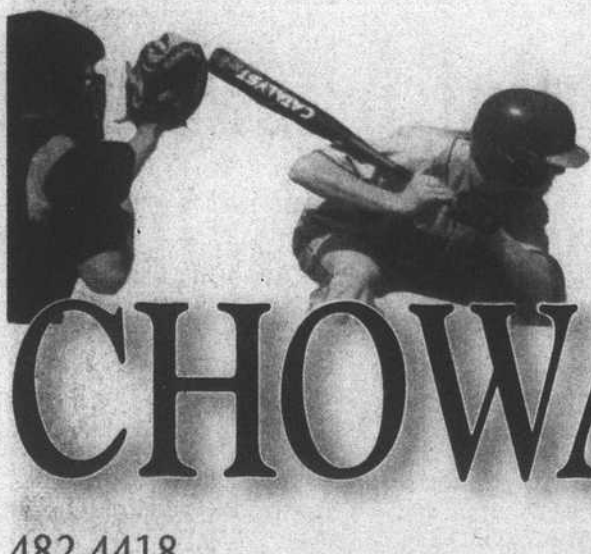


Holmes varsity baseball team hopes to turn season record around **A8**

Regulator Marine to triple facility size **A2**

Designer creates plans with feet, teeth **B1**



CHOWAN HERALD

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Residents urged to serve on boards

By **Connie Sage**
Contributing Writer

*Help wanted.
No pay.
Must work well with others.
Benefits: Making a difference.*

Town Council is looking for Edenton residents willing to devote time, energy and expertise to serve on local boards or commissions.

Up to 10 vacancies may be open this spring for volunteers to serve on the:

- Airport Commission
- Board of Adjustment
- Historic Preservation Commission
- Planning Board
- Recreation Advisory Board

Several residents — Lisa Baker on Historic Preservation, Edna Harrell on the Board of Adjustment, and Gwen Brown and Mike Dowd on the Recreation Board — have served two terms and are ineligible for reappointment.

Another half dozen board members have completed one term and may or may not be interested in a second term.

Bottom line: Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton and the Town Council want more applications from folks who are interested in taking an active role in their town.

"The main thing is a willingness to learn and relevant experience," Knighton said.

That doesn't mean an applicant has to be a planner to be on the Planning Board, for example, or have a pilot's license to serve on the Airport Commission. But he or she does need to have an interest and must reside within the town limits.

Council will appoint new members in May for previous terms that expire June 30.

It's easy to apply. Go online to www.townofedenton.com, click on "News and Information," and scroll down to "Boards and Commissions Vacancies" for an application.

Or, stop by Town Hall and pick up a brief form.

It's easy to complain about what the town does or doesn't do.

Here's the perfect opportunity to have a say. And to give back to the community.

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High-flying time



Vernon Fueston

Kristie Holley enjoys a high ride on the swings at Colonial Park. Holley, like many others, took advantage of the spring-like weather last week. Friday's anticipated high of 75 degrees will bring about more outdoor fun.

Economic pinch leaves Chowan unemployment, food stamps up

By **Connie Sage**
Contributing Writer

The number of local residents without jobs continues to climb, with the unemployment rate reaching seven percent in January, compared to the state average of 5.3 percent and 4.8 percent nationally.

The Chowan County unemployment rate was 6.8 percent in December, according to the state Employment Security Commission.

A total of 527 residents were jobless out of a workforce of 7,500 here in January, the latest available figures, compared with 495 in a labor force of 7,273 in December.

Chowan County isn't alone in feeling the growing economic pinch.

The jobless rate increased in all but one of North Carolina's 100 counties in January, according to statistics released last week by the state Employment Security Commission.

"It's all around us but it doesn't make me feel any better," said Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton. "A lot of good, hard-working people lost their jobs due to global decisions."

The area is still reeling from the loss of more than 300 jobs between August 2006 and June 2007 when both George C. Moore and Edenton Dyeing and Finishing Textile closed.

Moore moved its operations to El Salvador; the dye plant went out of business.

County Manager Cliff Copeland said he was not surprised by the increase in unemployment, but is disappointed.

"You fight the battle and hope

INSIDE

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- Regulator to add 26 jobs within two years **A2**

for success," he said. "We can do things to make our town attractive, but we can't push a button and bring a business here."

Richard Bunch, executive director of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, said local officials are open to a number of possibilities to add jobs.

"We have some wonderful assets here," he said, "marine trade skills, the airport, the marine industrial park that's being discussed for the dye plant, and the retail job market."

He applauded the local medical community and boat manufacturers for their part in keeping the local economy humming, as well as work that's being done locally to retrain laid-off workers.

"Thank goodness some of those people are in job training," Bunch said. "The textile business won't come back."

New Skills

Fifty-seven former George C. Moore employees enrolled in Workforce Investment Act training through the local Employment Security Commission office to obtain new skills.

Seven of those completed training, nine found jobs without completing a WIA program, and 41 are still in training, said Stella Brothers, WIA case manager.

Another 14 employees whose jobs went away at the dye plant also are enrolled in WIA, she said.

WIA provides training pro-

AT A GLANCE

Chowan County Unemployment rate Annual Averages 1998-2008

1998:	3.0 percent
1999:	3.1 percent
2000:	4.0 percent
2001:	5.5 percent
2002:	6.0 percent
2003:	5.3 percent
2004:	4.6 percent
2005:	4.9 percent
2006:	5.0 percent
2007:	6.3 percent*

*estimated

grams for up to two-years, which might include obtaining a GED diploma or enrolling in a boat-building course or other educational options.

At least 70 workers from either Moore or the dye plant also receive Trade Adjustment Act benefits if their unemployment ran out and if they're enrolled in a school.

As the economy slows, not only are the unemployed coming to the local employment office for help, so are the "underemployed," those who might be earning minimum wage but are looking for higher-paying jobs, or those in part-time jobs seeking full-time work.

"People are coming in looking for something closer and better paying," said Ricky Coltrain, ESC/JobLink manager. "They're competing with the unemployed because of the price of gas."

Food stamps up

Another indicator of a softening economy is the increase in the See **NUMBERS**, Page **A2** >



"Today's generation doesn't seem to see the annoyance that offensive language causes." — Greg Bonner on loud music

Chief Bonner on noise, trash, town parking

By **Vernon Fueston**
Contributing Writer

Responding to concerns raised at a March 14 Marketplace Guild meeting, Chief Gregory Bonner addressed merchant's complaints about noise, litter, and parking.

On some issues, Bonner indicated that stiffer penalties and increased enforcement might be required. On others, he defended his department's procedures and promised increased vigilance.

On the issue of noise, Bonner said there were limits to what can and should be done.

"Noise complaints have been mainly regarding loud mufflers and music," Bonner said. "That's been an issue for a while. I thought it had quieted down but apparently some citizens are still concerned."

"We have been enforcing it. It's mainly the younger teenagers that find it entertaining."

Bonner said the department tries to warn offenders and, if necessary, address the question with parents before issuing citations.

Noise complaints

Loud mufflers are one issue, but loud music raises other, more complicated issues. Offensive lyrics pumping at high volumes from cars prompt many of the complaints Bonner receives. He said there are limits to what his department can do.

"We treat (offensive music) the same way we treat a loud muffler," Bonner said. "Today's generation doesn't seem to see the annoyance that offensive language causes."

Bonner said that such issues couldn't really be addressed as a public obscenity issue. The courts have been reluctant enough to act on obscenity charges when the vulgarity comes from the individual.

With today's heightened sensitivity to free-speech issues, he said the outcome of a case where the defendant did not directly express the obscenity would be doubtful at best.

Trash in the streets

On the issue of trash and litter, Bonner said the culprits are not just young people.

"You find blatant litter violations at highway on and off ramps. It's not just the young adults doing it."

"The fines are really high, \$250 minimum. That's not including the cost of court. You can end up with \$400 in total costs (for a littering ticket)."

Bonner said that parking in the downtown area may require action by the merchants themselves, among other remedies.

"Employees downtown take parking spaces all day while they work," Bonner said. "Consumers can't find available parking."

See **BONNER**, Page **A2** >

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