

Memorial Day Service — Monday 11 a.m. at the Chowan County Veterans Memorial

Town electric rates to increase this fall

By Earline White
Managing Editor

Due to increased fuel costs, town residents can expect a seven-to-eight percent increase in their electricity bills this fall.

Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton confirmed yesterday that she will recommend that the council raise the electric retail rate in September.

N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency, the

agency governing 32 regional municipalities including Edenton, is currently refinancing its debt and attempting to manage the rising fuel costs.

"A couple of years ago the agency raised rates by two percent to compensate for the cost of mining and transporting coal," Knighton said. "It was thought that the increase would be temporary."

This year the agency itself is raising rates

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Local creates 'green' home to save money

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once again.

So the town can expect to have a corresponding rate increase, Knighton said.

Residents can note the current rate on their monthly bills under the 'fuel adjustment charge.'

Knighton said that the plan however is

to roll the fuel adjustment charge back into the base rate, which will eliminate the cost breakdown comparison for participants.

The average household in Edenton uses 1,000 kilowatts per month for a cost of \$109.

With a seven percent rate increase that same household can expect their bill to increase to \$117 per month, Knighton said.

Residents are urged to begin energy conserva-

tion methods, including the usage of CFL bulbs.

Those with questions about their monthly bill are encouraged to call Town Hall.

In other business:

■ Council approved donating the 1888 Fresnel Lens from the Roanoke River Lighthouse to the state.

It will cost \$75,000-\$100,000 to repair the

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Boat industry workers hit hardest by recent layoffs

More than 50 employees lost jobs during four cutbacks

No guarantee that layoffs are over, one owner says

By Earline White
Managing Editor

A depressed economy, high fuel prices and the housing slump were cited as reasons for several recent layoffs in Chowan County.

Carolina Classic last week eliminated 17 positions to reduce costs and size the staff appropriately to market demand, Mac Privott said.

"It's a slow economy right now," Privott added.

"There are no plans to cut more jobs, but that's never a guarantee."

All affected employees were notified last week.

Sixty positions remain at Carolina Classic, Privott confirmed.

The layoff came one week after a similar cut at Albemarle Boats.

Thirty five positions were terminated at Albemarle Boats.

"The marine industry, including Albemarle Boats, is in the midst of one of the most challenging times in the industry's history," Daniel Kubera, spokesperson for Brunswick/Albemarle Boats said.

Regulator Marine laid off 22 people on April 8, according to Rex Anderson, human resource officer for Regulator.

And Ashley Welding had to lay off seven of their 28 employees due to the slow down in the boating industry.

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A total of 525 residents were jobless in Chowan County in March, according to the state Employment Security Commission. The county's unemployment rate remained at 7.1 percent — higher than the state and national average at the time.

"We are not planning any more lay offs," Linda Ashley with Ashley Welding said in an e-mail Tuesday, "and are actively seeking more diversity in our customer base to prevent this situation in the future. Laying off employees is a gut-wrenching decision for an employer. It keeps you awake at night, but there are times when there doesn't seem to be an alternative.

"As we all know, the country does seem to be in a bit of a recession right now, and certain industries seem to be hurting more than others. All three boat companies have had lay offs, and I'm sure they hope they are through cutting back — we hope they are too. I know that our county's unemployment rate is higher than it was a year ago — which puts a lot of people out looking for jobs.

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"How will Chowan County fare? I don't think we will see more lay offs, but I also don't think this will be a banner year for most businesses," said Ashley, who is the Chamber of Commerce president.

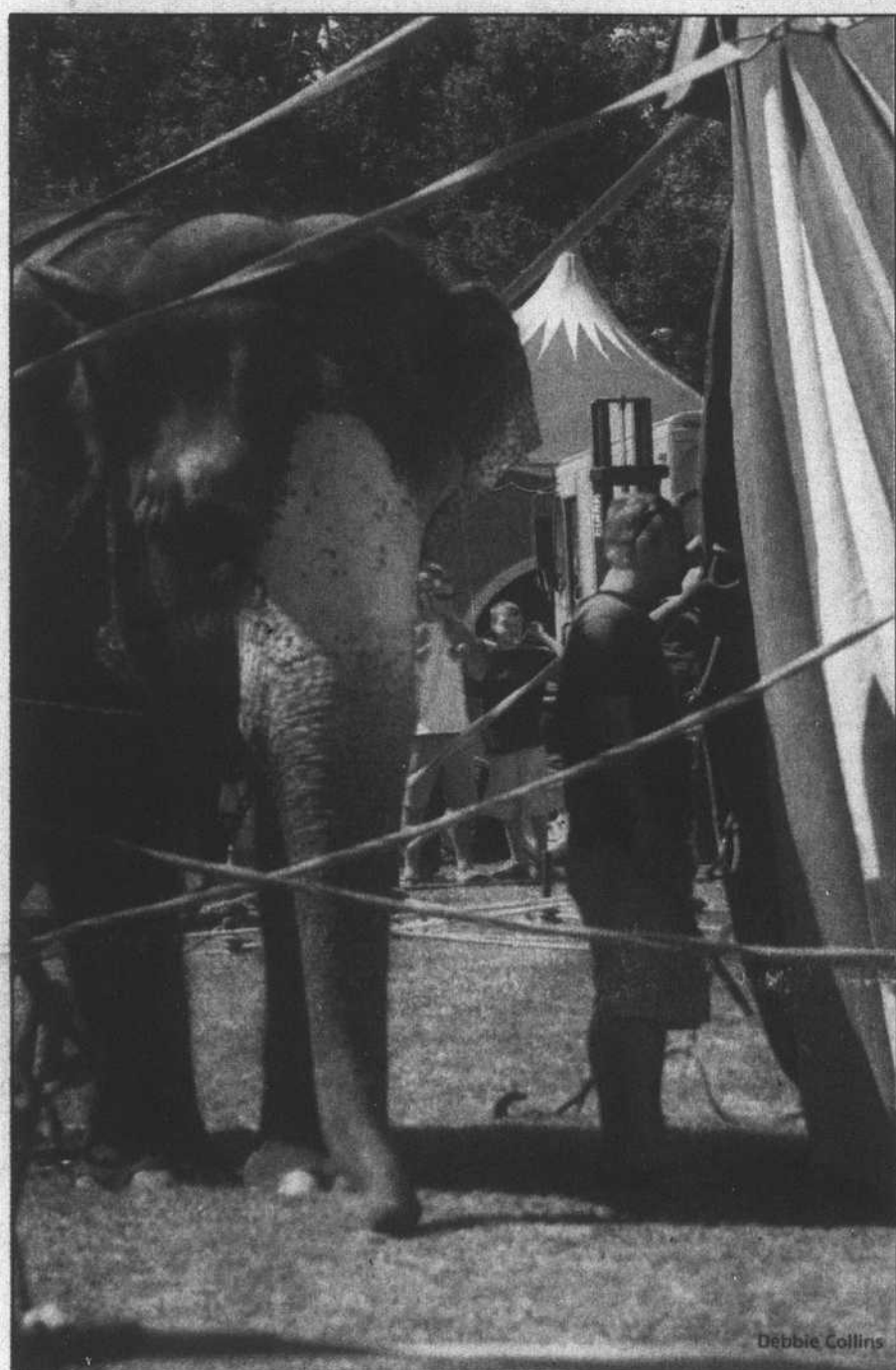
"Chowan should fare about the same as other northeastern counties with very little industry — it will be a tight time for many of us. Some businesses will continue to do well and may even add employees — like agriculture, medical or food related businesses — but others that depend on a booming economy or moderate gas prices — will feel the pinch.

"As far as advice for displaced workers — if they have a skill, they should try to market their skill within this area or within an acceptable driving distance. I hope they don't have to leave the area to find work.

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"Some may have an opportunity for re-employment as the economy starts climbing out of this downturn — and some ar-

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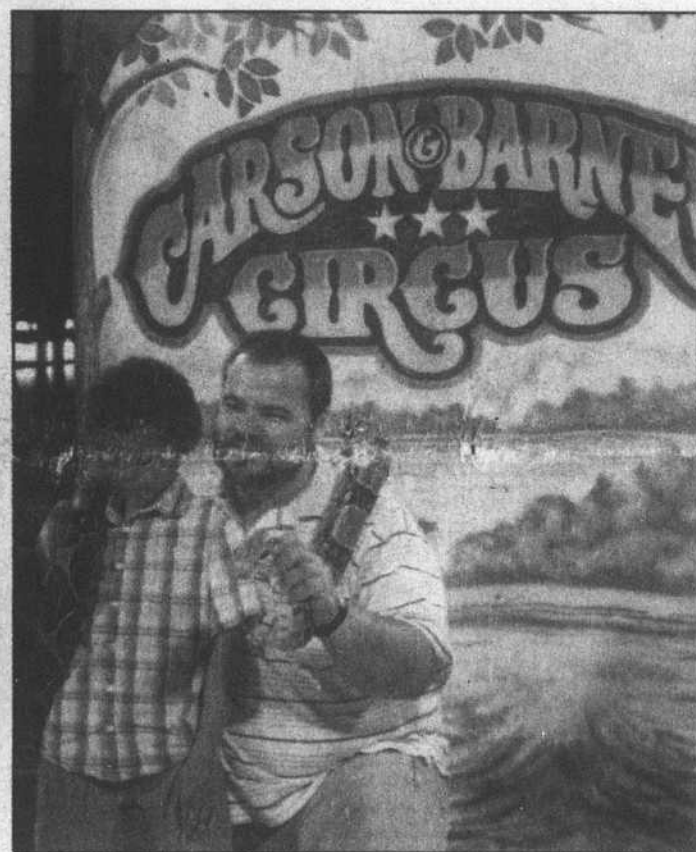


Debbie Collins

Timeless tradition

For the first time in many years in Chowan County, kids of all ages were treated to a true three-ring circus Sunday.

Held at the American Legion Post 40 fairgrounds, the Carson and Barnes Circus featured animals, acrobats, clowns, entertainers from all over the world and even a glimpse into how elephants are used to raise the big top.



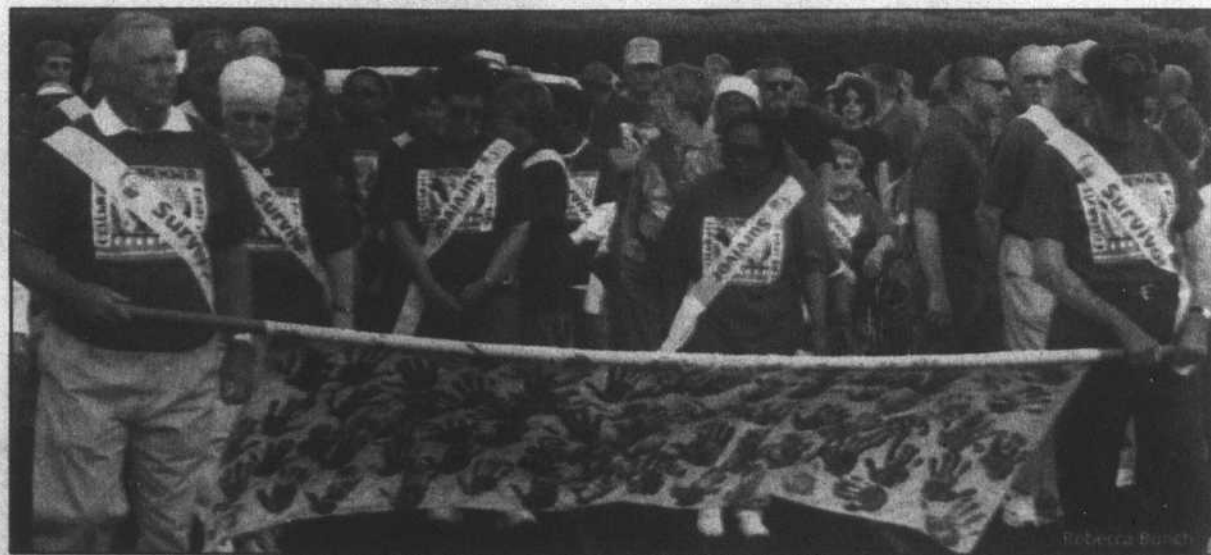
From left, this elephant's hard day of work is over after pulling up the tent to begin the day's festivities. George and Seth Sotiropoulos pose for a photo with a huge boa. There were also opportunities to ride ponies, camels and elephants.

Local Relay for Life donations down \$8K

Downturn in the economy makes fundraising tough

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A huge crowd gathered Friday night for the Relay for Life kickoff — the survivor lap.

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

The Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life raised \$154,592 this year putting it over \$8,000 below its stated goal of \$163,000.

Relay Chair Debbie Burroughs said the slowing economy definitely had an impact on their ability to raise funds.

"It was tough," she said. "We lost several of our corporate sponsors and some who have had teams in the past did not do so this year.

"Everybody's having it hard. I think we did really well, considering what we were up against."

Relay treasurer Frances Hammer said that other supporters had to cut their normal contributions in half.

"We really appreciate the fact that they made the effort to donate at all, given how the economy is right now," she said.

The number of teams was down as well.

Burroughs said that last year 23 adult teams and five kid's teams participated in the event compared to 18 adult teams and six kid's teams during the Relay that just ended.

She added that this year's goal, set by the American Cancer Society, may have been too ambitious, given how things

like gasoline prices have continued to rise and that so people have lost jobs due to layoffs.

"I would like to commend everybody who participated this year," Burroughs said.

"Even though we did not meet our goal, I think everyone who did take part gave it all they had."

The top fundraisers among teams were Rocky Hock Ruritans (\$32,525) and Woodland Warriors (\$20,186.63).

Individuals raising the most money for Relay were Kathleen Hynes, Marcia Evans, JoAnn Parks, Frances Evans and Jack Evans.

Reminder:
The Chowan Herald office will be closed Monday in observance of Memorial Day. Submission deadline remains Friday at 12 noon.



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