

Homes, businesses to be impacted by new bypass

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

Fourteen county homes and 10 businesses may need to relocate or lose property for a bypass around Edenton to Highway 17, according to one of three DOT-proposed routes.

The bypass will divert truck traffic from the Alabarle Sound Bridge away from downtown Edenton along one of three proposed routes according to DOT maps.

The proposed bypass is expected to run over a three-mile route and have two 12-foot lanes.

"It will be almost like a

little Edenton beltway," said Richard Bunch, president of Edenton's Chamber of Commerce.

Bunch said the bypass should encourage trucks to bypass the town, but should have little effect on commercial traffic to Edenton's downtown district shops.

The first proposal, called

the Soundside Alternative, would take bridge traffic off Hobbs Lane until it crosses North Broad Street, where it intersects with Highway 17.

A second alternative, the Peanut Drive Option, would branch off from Hobbs Lane and connect with North Broad Street at the inter-

section of Broad Street and Peanut Drive.

The third option, the Paradise Option, would also branch from Hobbs Lane, cut across farmland and enter the town limits crossing Old Hertford Road and then North Broad Street.

Bunch said the Chamber supports the Soundside Op-

Homes impacted
Paradise Option - 6
Peanut Drive Option - 14
Soundside Option - 2

Businesses Impacted
Paradise Option - 3
Peanut Drive Option - 10
Soundside Option - 0

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Schools fail to meet AYP

Only 38 percent of schools state-wide met goals

By Earline White
Staff Writer

All of Chowan's schools have failed to meet adequate yearly progress goals in math for the third straight year.

Students at Walker met 81 percent of the targeted goals; CMS students met 75 percent; Holmes met 76.5 percent.

Willie Koonce, director of testing for Edenton-Chowan Schools, believes that the recent revision of the test may be a factor behind the failing scores.

The math test was revised two years ago.

"The state changed the test and simultaneously raised the bar for the students," Koonce said.

Only 38.8 percent of schools statewide met the AYP standards in math.

To meet future AYP goals, Edenton-Chowan has established multiple interventions at each school.

There are reading and math intervention teachers for the lower grades as well as locally-driven initiatives for exceptional children.

Federal Title I funding provides for supplemental education services/after-school tutoring for eligible at-risk students.

"Our goal is to meet individual needs," Audrey Bunch, pre-K-8 director of curriculum with Edenton-Chowan Schools said Monday.

The local school system is in its third year of a school improvement plan, mandated by the federal No Child Left Behind Act after failing to meet AYP targets for two successive years.

Reading scores for elementary and middle schools across the state will be reported this fall.

Holmes did not meet reading AYP targets in 2007-2008.

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'MONKEY' ESCAPES BURNING HOME



Bill and Rhonda Jordan with their cat, Monkey, and Chowan Animal Hospital employee, Hillary Hancock. Monkey was rescued from a devastating house fire by fireman Kevin Wright and revived with oxygen by EMS personnel Angela Toppin and Annette Pendleton.

It was one of those events when the best you can say is, "It could have been worse."

After a devastating house fire, Bill and Rhonda Jordan's pet cat, Monkey, is alive thanks to fire and EMS workers.

The family was watching a movie on their television July 30. It was a stormy evening with lots of lightning when, at about 8:30, Rhonda saw smoke billowing outside the kitchen window.

Lightning had started a fire in the garage.

The Jordans have four cats, two of them were inside the house at the time. Rhonda called 911 and Bill left the door open for the cats as they rushed outside.

Outside, Rhonda was still speaking with the 911 operator when she realized her cats had not left the house.

"I was yelling, 'my cats are dead' and the operator was telling me not to go back into the house," Rhonda said. "I could hear the windows popping and blood-red flames were coming out."

She said the fire department was there in no time at all, something that really impressed her. But the house was engulfed.

Bill and Rhonda watched it burn for four hours.

At one in the morning, fireman Kevin Wright came out of what was left of their home with Monkey, their 14 year-old cat. Bobbette, Monkey's 13 year-old kitten escaped the house when the firemen entered.

"It was a moment like one of those Norman Rockwell paintings," Bill said. "They were both covered with soot, but it was just beautiful."

But Monkey looked dead. EMS technicians Angela Toppin and Annette Pendleton gave the cat oxygen until it regained consciousness.

Toppin said the cat was breathing when she got it, so she refuses to call what she and Pendleton did a resuscitation.

The Jordans don't care. They still call it a miracle.

Three weeks later, Monkey still coughs from the smoke inhalation, especially when she snarls at Max, one of the Jordans' other cats. When she does that, Rhonda said she knows Monkey is on the mend.

— by Vernon Fueston

Here they come! School's in session Monday

No additional cuts or cancellations of services will be necessary

By Kerri Albertson
E-Chowan Schools

Local schools expect slightly fewer than 2,400 students to come through the doors Monday morning.

And some students will be in for great surprises.

At White Oak Elementary, students will be greeted by a new principal, Amy Steinert, who joined the Edenton-Chowan Schools this summer.

Bus drivers will be calling the students on their routes this weekend to advise their riders of the time and place of pick up.

To increase fuel efficiency, bus routes are being consolidated and "collapsed" this year, although, in compliance with state regulations, no student will walk more than two-tenths of a mile to a bus stop, and those in primary grades will continue to be picked up at their homes.

Meanwhile, to get energized before school, teachers and staff gathered for the schools' annual convocation last Thursday at the Northern Chowan Community Center.

Employees were greeted and encouraged by North Carolina Rep. Tim Spear and state Sen. Edward Jones.

Regional Teacher of the Year Sonya Rinehart, who teaches social studies at John A. Holmes High School, encouraged her colleagues to follow the "FISH!" philosophy (Be There; Play; Make someone's day, and Choose your attitude), and threw stuffed animals shaped like fish and octopi into the audience to punctuate her message.

Superintendent Allan Smith reassured attendees that, although the current financial situation was serious, the relationship between the county and the school system remains strong.

Smith asserted that no additional personnel, cuts or further cancellations of services will be necessary.

The school system experienced a reduction in force



D. F. Walker TA Sadie Riddick and Media Specialist Nancy Heiniger caught "FISH" fever during the Edenton-Chowan convocation last week.

in the spring, after state funding allotments for the 2008-09 school year were less than expected.

Smith said that these earlier cuts, while painful, made it possible to weather the local reduction in funding.

In the year about to begin, Smith said, "Class sizes may be a little larger but will be well within the prescribed limits."

"The number and types of field trips may have to be curtailed, but basic instructional supplies, equipment, and essential resources will be provided."

CHOWAN COUNTY'S FISCAL CRISIS

Higher taxes expected Residents angry over tax hike

By Vernon Fueston and Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writers

Five of seven county commissioners say they believe a realty tax rate increase will probably be necessary next year.

The commissioners comments came after passing a 9-cent increase Thursday night.

With the first debt payments for the public safety building and library expansion due next year, County Manager Peter Rascoe said commissioners will be faced with another shortfall.

That deficit amounts to as much as a 6.5-cent tax rate increase next year unless other steps are taken or conditions change.

The 9-cent per \$100 realty tax hike enacted Thursday will mean an extra \$180 in taxes on a \$200,000 home.

The good news

But Rascoe did have good news for the commissioners.

He said savings had been achieved by canceling leased office space used by the county and renegotiating debt payments for the Northern Chowan Community Center and D.F. Walker Elementary School.

The total of all those budget savings, \$1.79 million, dropped the tax increase under Rascoe's second budget option from 8.5 cents to 6 cents.

Taking the budget savings into account, Rascoe said the commissioners could opt for a 9-cent hike and restore some services originally slated for cuts.

A 9-cent tax increase was the option selected unanimously by commissioners.

The new budget calls for a 10 percent across the board cut for all departments and personnel cuts in the county's maintenance, recreation and inspections departments.

Cuts readjusted

Money was allotted to restore six lost jobs to the Department of Social Services. A seventh position there was vacant at the time of the cuts and will remain so.

Cuts remain in county contributions to area non-profit groups, but the county's senior citizens and senior nutrition programs will continue.

Chowan's schools also had a \$112,000 budget increase, originally cut by the county, returned.

Commissioners predict

County Commissioners Jerry Downum, Louis Bellfield, Harry Lee Winslow and Jimmy Alligood all said

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By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

All but a handful of the 22 residents who spoke at the county budget hearing were outraged that their taxes might increase or that the county's reserves were severely depleted.

The meeting, which received heavy media coverage from television and area newspapers, took place before a standing room-only crowd in the 800-seat auditorium.

Those attempting to say anything positive were met with deafening boo-

ing and hissing about the budget from the audience.

Some in the audience did express sympathy for the tight spot in which the county manager and commissioners now find themselves.

Speaking out

Commissioners Jimmy Alligood, Bill Gardner Jr. and Jerry Downum were booed when they tried to address comments from the audience.

Businessman Paul Waff found himself booed as well when he tried to remind the audience, "We're all in this together."

Another speaker, John Sams, said he was against all the proposed budget options. Sams said that in the past the county government had been operated as a "benevolent dictatorship with Cliff (Copeland, past county manager) running the show."

Loud clapping erupted from the audience when he added, "You (citizens) are in charge. These people (indicating the commissioners) work for you, not for the county manager."

Many, like Mi-Tek manager Fred Powers, asked the commissioners to delay making a decision, calling the vote too important to rush.

He asked them to think about those who have already lost their jobs because of the budget shortfall.

"It is a horrible thing," Powers said, "to have to look at your friends and neighbors and say, 'You can't come to work anymore.' You all have to do the right thing and that may mean not making a decision tonight."

And Josette Carter chided the commissioners for relying too heavily on the former county manager and not enough on themselves.

"We as citizens are being compelled to pay for a crime we did not commit. Where is

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