

State okays county debt plan

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

State officials approved Chowan County's debt restructuring plan Sept. 2, easing its cash flow crisis and staving off a state takeover of county finances.

Now that two big debt payments have been extended, the county is expected to be back in the black, starting in November, County Manager Peter Rascoe said.

This will allow the county to cover monthly expenses until next year when two other large loans start coming due.

The approval came in a meeting of the state's Local Government Council.

Loan extension

The LGC was considering a request by the county to extend two loans owed to BB&T from 15 to 20 years, reducing the payment amounts and delaying the due date of the next annual payment.

Getting approval from the LGC at this meeting was the reason behind Rascoe's hotly protested decision to push a revised county budget and realty tax increase through a county commission meeting Aug. 14.

In that meeting the county reduced expenses by 10 percent, eliminating most part-time jobs, and raised realty taxes.

Rascoe said a balanced revised budget was required if the LGC were to approve the debt restructuring. With a \$1.04 million annual loan payment due Sept. 29 and another \$391,000 due April 31, Rascoe said approval at this LGC meeting was essential.

The first loan extended was the \$9.95 million loan for the construction of D.F. Walker School. Its \$1.04 million payment, due Sept. 29, was reduced to \$710,000 and postponed until March 29.

Another loan for \$4.5 million covered the construction of the Northern Chowan Community Center. Its April 31 payment of \$391,000 was reduced to \$258,000. Its due date will remain the same.

Both loans were extended an additional five years.

Positive cash flow ahead

Sarah Long, LGC spokesperson, said that while the county has been operating with a negative cash flow, it has managed to avoid dipping into its legally mandated \$723,000 cash reserves.

Those reserves include what is left of the county's \$20 million "Hospital Fund," \$566,000.

Long said she expects the County to begin operating in the black during the month of November and expressed optimism about the outlook for the remainder of the fiscal year after January, 2009.

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An artist's rendering of the Beechwood Square condo villas illustrate possible home sites.

Beechwood groundbreaking nears

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Construction at the Beechwood subdivision behind Farmer's Foods is set to begin next month.

Sumit Gupta, a developer on the project, said that non-binding reservation agreements for condos at the site are currently being accepted.

"We would like to give locals the first opportunity to get on our priority list," he said.

Those condos are to be located in what will be known as Beechwood Square, the first phase of construction for the subdivision.

Gupta explained that Beechwood Square would consist of 48 luxury condo villas, which will range in size from 1,600 to 1,900 square feet.

"These will not be 'age-restricted,' but will have access to most of the amenities offered at Beechwood," he said. "These (will be) senior friendly units."

The next phase of the project will consist of 49 single family "Garden Homes" plus 12 duplex "Courtyard Cottages," ranging in size from 1,700 to 2,400 square feet.

Those will comprise "The Gardens at Beechwood" portion of the development which will be age-restricted, Gupta said.

Long-term care

Gupta said that a proposed Continuum Care Retirement Community (CCRC) is also being considered for inclusion in the Beechwood subdivision.

He noted that CCRC's "are unique to long-term care" because they offer a variety of levels of care to older adults within a single community.

"While permits are not in hand for the CCRC," Gupta said, "(we) hope to obtain these permits very soon."

Big investment

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton See BEECHWOOD, Page A2 >

Library celebrates grand re-opening

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

After more than six month's closure, librarian Rosalie Miller finally got a chance to show off Edenton's re-modeled Shepard-Pruden Library, Thursday night.

The open house was crowded with library patrons, civic and government officials.

Spotted in the crowd were County Manager Peter Rascoe, Town Manager Anne Marie Knighton, Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Richard Bunch, and former County Manager Cliff Copeland.

The library has added a two-story wing for book stacks and meeting facilities. A new, dedicated children's room was a hit with younger patrons and comfortable sofas and wing-backed chairs graced the reading rooms.

The \$3.6 million renovation doubled the library's square footage while private

contributions added artwork, upgraded furniture, a microfilm reader and wide screen television for the activity center.

For library patron Joan Nizborski, seeing the new library was wonderful. But having it open again was even better. She said she saw the library as an important part of the town's social fabric.

"The library staff were the first people who welcomed me to the town when I moved here fifteen years ago," she said. "It's more than just the building."

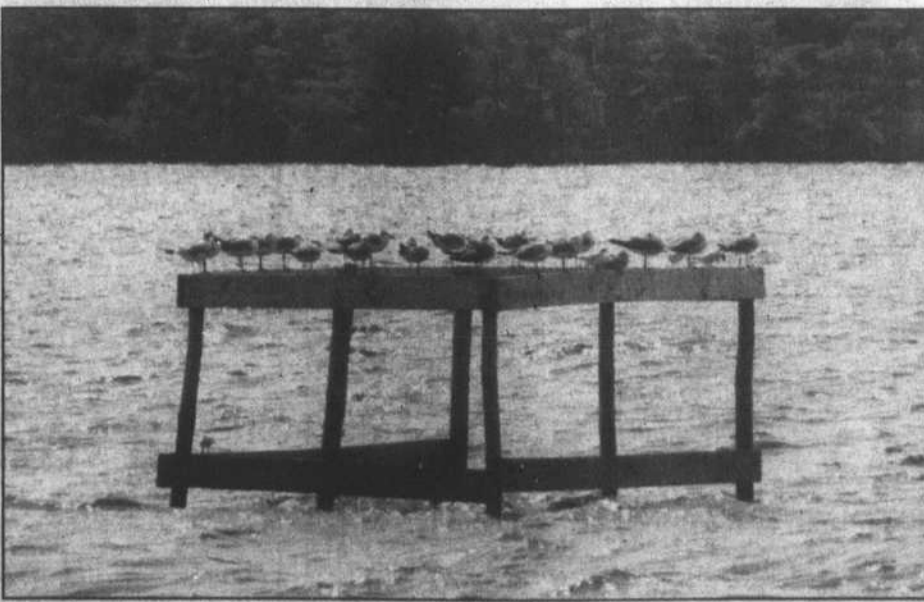
Lou Rogers was impressed with the new children's room.

"I'm just going, wow!" she said. "I see such a change. I love the doll collection. I'm sure the children are going to love it."



Miller

WHAT IS IT? WHO DID IT?



Vernon Fueston

It appeared overnight. A four-sided structure in the Edenton Bay that appears to be a duck blind has local officials curious.

The trouble is no one knows who put it there. Officials with the N.C. Wildlife have said that legally the blind can stay, but think that it is a bad location.

If you have any information about the structure or who put it up, call the Town of Edenton at 482-7352.

New maps may change town's flood zones

Officials do not know how many properties will be affected

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

Some town property owners may need to purchase flood insurance because of new revised maps recommended for council approval.

Kent Pierce with the planning and inspections office, said he does not know how many properties are affected or if more properties will be considered to lie in a flood plain than before the changes.

One benefit to homeowners of the new system will be an easier determination of a property's flood plain status. The new maps are based on aerial photography.

Before the new maps were available, property owners had to hire a surveyor to determine a property's status.

Property insurance does not pay for flood damage, whether a property is located within a flood plain or not.

Only separately purchased flood insurance will cover flood damage.

But property owners whose land is determined to be in a flood plain may be required to purchase flood insurance by their mortgage companies.

Pierce said the changes are part of a standardization required by FEMA and the state.

Localities are required to adopt the new language

Property owners can view the new flood plain maps in the Planning and Inspections Department offices, 108 E. King Street or on line at www.ncfloodmaps.com.

and terminology, revamping the way flood planes are labeled and defined, by Oct. 16.

Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said she will insure the town council meets before the deadline to insure compliance.

The date of the next council meeting — Oct. 14 — may be subject to change, she said.

Knighton said public notice will be limited to a half-page ad in local papers to conserve costs.

Failure to comply with the new flood plain mapping system could make the town's property owners ineligible for flood insurance.

In other business, the planning board recommended council approval of the installation of an ATM machine at 232 Virginia Road.

The property, located next to Burger King, is owned by Southern Bank.

Charles Britton, spokesman for the bank, said the ATM will be a temporary measure.

He said the bank has definite plans to build a branch on the property within three to five years.

The board recommended approval with several conditions, including one requiring the ATM be placed in the back third of the property.

Local 6-year-old dies in automobile crash

By Earline White
Managing Editor

White Oak student Maggie Bunch has been very quiet the past few days — ever since she was told her best friend Ryan was killed in a traffic accident.

Ryan, a quiet 6-year-old with golden blonde hair, was killed and his grandmother injured Friday in an car accident.

Ryan, who lived with his family on Drummond's Point Road was a first-grader and attended Rocky Hook Baptist Church.

He played soccer with the Edenton-Chowan Recreation Department, and was the son of Ethan E. and Tabitha Chappell Benfield.

Grief counselors were at school Monday to talk to students about the accident.

The accident happened on N.C. Highway 32 about three miles north of Edenton just before 3 p.m. Friday. The road was slippery due to heavy bursts of rains brought by Tropical Storm Hanna.

Inez Perry Chappell, of Edenton, lost control of her 2007 Toyota Corolla on the rain-slicked road, skidded

sideways and crossed the center lane into oncoming traffic, a trooper with the N.C. Highway Patrol told *The Daily Advance*.

Chappell was then struck by a 2000 Chevy S-10 pickup driven by Marshall Jordan Jr.

William Ryan Benfield, who was seated in a booster seat behind Chappell, was killed.

Ryan and Chappell, his grandmother, had just spent the afternoon together at the annual Grandparents' Day celebration at White Oak. They were headed back to town when the accident happened.

Chappell was transported to Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville, where she remains as of press time with severe internal injuries.

The other driver, Jordan, suffered a broken right wrist and a deep cut in his left shin.

He was treated and released at Chowan Hospital.

Jordan told authorities that the rain, caused by Tropical Storm Hanna, was moderate at the time of the crash.

Ryan's funeral was held yesterday.