

CHOWAN HERALD

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Wednesday, October 1, 2008

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Jobless rate hits 9.4%

■ National jobless rate 6.1%; for state, 6.8%

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Chowan County had 9.4% unemployment in August, the highest jobless rate among counties of comparable size in eastern North Carolina.

The August figure means that in the county, with a labor pool of 7,247 potential workers, almost 700 of them are looking for employment.

"This is a tough economic cycle, it is affecting everybody in one way or another," Chamber Director Richard

Bunch said.

Bunch said layoffs at local businesses due to the economic slowdown, combined with those who lost jobs at George C. Moore and other businesses that closed, have created the situation.

The high unemployment here, he said, has begun impacting local churches, the Food Pantry, and other organizations that help support those in need as donations are down too.

In recent months the Food Pantry has sometimes had no choice but to turn people away because they have not

had enough food to meet the demand, Director Ray Wells said.

Temporary drop

The next highest jobless rate here in recent years occurred in July 2000 when the rate was 10.01 percent, said Ricky Coltrain, manager of the Edenton Employment Security Commission office. However, he said, the next month the rate dropped back to 3.2 percent.

Bunch said he feared the current rate would climb to

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ELECTION 2008



Goodwin

Kenny W. Goodwin

Age: 36

Date of Birth: June 13, 1972

Political Offices Held:

Completing first term on county commission

Occupation: Farmer

Party: Democrat



Stallings

Alex Stallings

Age: 23

Date of Birth: April 3, 1985

Political Offices Held: None

Occupation: Emergency medical technician

Party: Republican

JOBLESS RATES

Dare —	3.8
Camden —	5.2
Gates —	5.5
Tyrrell —	6.3
Perquimans —	6.8
Hertford Co. —	6.9
Pasquotank —	7.1
Bertie —	7.8
Washington —	7.9

Peanut Festival Saturday

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Praying for good weather isn't just something farmers do.

It's also something organizers of the annual Peanut Festival take seriously. This Saturday will be no different.

Denise Partin, a past festival chair, said, "On Peanut Festival day, you hope and pray it doesn't rain and all the planning that was done pays off."

Not that rain is the only challenge.

"You would think after 33 years we would have this down pat, but it's something new every year with different obstacles.

"It is awesome, though, to see how many volunteers it takes to put on a Peanut Festival and, on the day, see it all come together."

Partin, who has been involved with the festival for the past seven years, started helping at the drink booth when her son, Michael, became a band student in the sixth grade.

Over the years, Partin's responsibilities expanded. She went on to become president of the Band Parents Association and to chair the

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PEANUT FESTIVAL

Parade Time: 11 a.m.

Route: Starts at the waterfront, ends at Edenton Fire Department

5K Peanut Run: Queen Anne Park, 8 a.m.

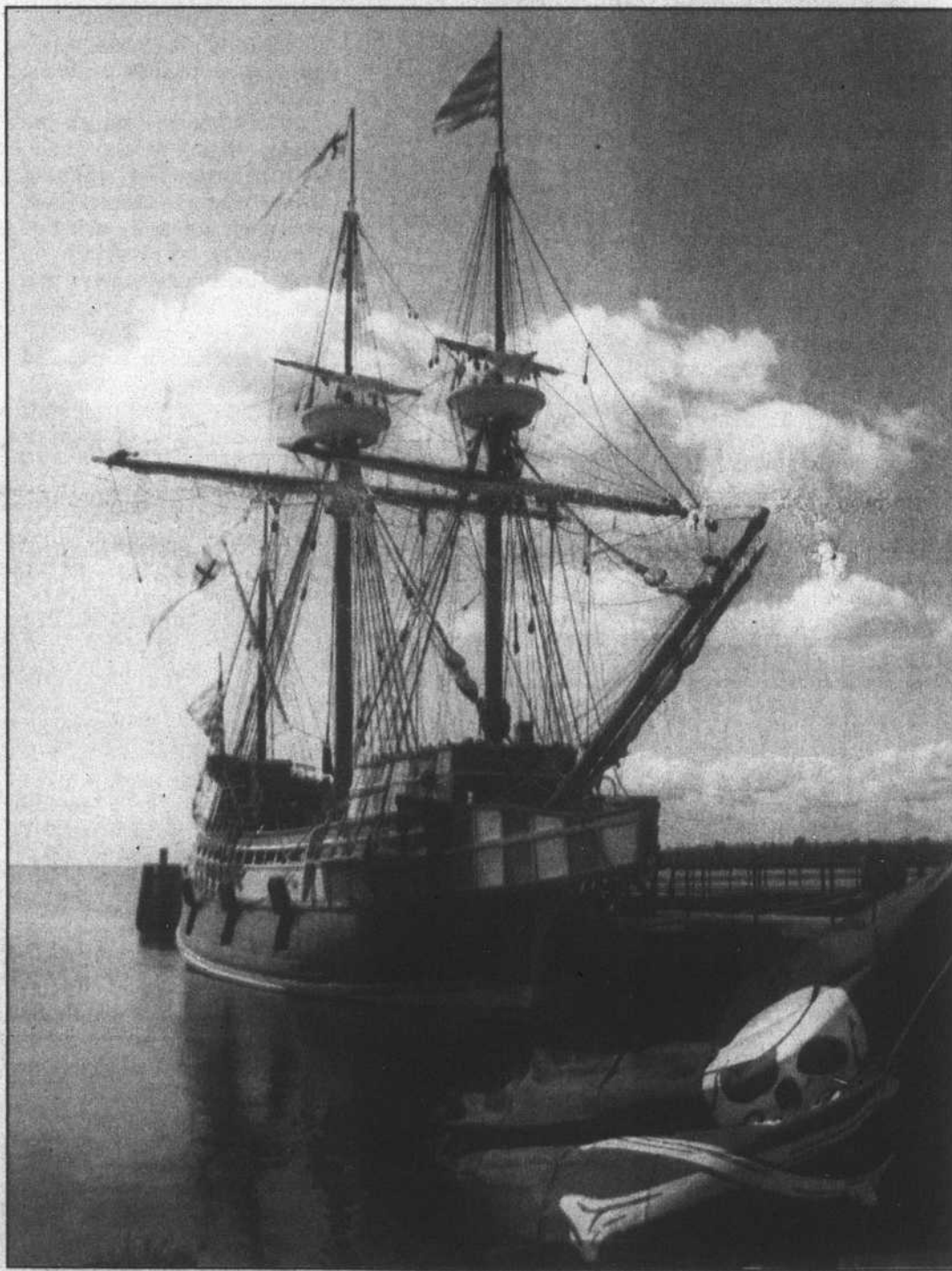
Craft show: Holmes lawn, 8 a.m. until 2 p.m.; 20-plus crafters scheduled to participate

Battle of the Bands: Holmes, 4 p.m. \$7/person



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SAILING VESSEL OPEN FOR TOURS



Vernon Fueston

The Elizabeth II will be docked at the Edenton waterfront during the Cupola House 250th anniversary celebration through Saturday. It will sail back to Manteo Sunday.

Local seniors voice opinions on bailout

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

It's hard to wrap your mind around just how much money \$700 billion is.

It's even harder to understand the issues that politicians in Congress are grappling with in an effort to save the country's teetering economy.

But a handful of local senior citizens had strong feelings they wanted to express as they sought shelter from the cold and rain on Thursday at Chowan County's fairgrounds.

Their opinions differed on who was to blame and

the role partisan politics is playing in the process.

But none of the five seemed concerned about their own retirement plans or a devastating downturn in the economy and none felt confident enough to propose a solution, preferring to leave the matter to public officials.

Come together

Mildred Bond said she doesn't own any stocks or bonds and doesn't depend on them for her retirement. Even so, she worries about the direction the country is taking.

"I don't know where we're

going," she said. "I just think we need to get together and fix the economy."

Patiently waiting

Jim Aylesworth doesn't believe the crisis will hit him hard personally. He's retired from a job with the state's traffic services department and believes his state pension is safe.

"My house, my car, all that stuff is paid for. I'm not looking to borrow any more money for anything," he said. "I really believe it's not going to affect anybody in the middle class."

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Candidates talk experience, development, finances, water

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

Kenny W. Goodwin stresses the lessons he's learned during his 20 months as a county commissioner while Alex Stallings says his outsider status gives him an edge in November's election.

Goodwin also emphasized his opposition to another realty tax increase next year, but will "push for more big-box stores" and other commercial development in the county to bolster tax revenues.

Stallings says he will fight to cut county expenses and wants the county to address the sulfur taste in county water.

Goodwin and Stallings are running for one of two seats in Chowan's first district, which includes the communities of Rocky Hock, Tyner and Arrowhead Beach.

Running on experience

Goodwin has been on the commission since February of 2007. He said it's been a growth experience.

"It's been kind of like walking through a field and stepping on a nest of ground bees," Goodwin said of his experience following the disclosure of Chowan's financial crisis.

In hindsight, Goodwin said trusting the advice of more experienced leaders was a mistake.

"I've learned you can't believe everything you're told. I want documentation," he said.

A fresh perspective

Alex Stallings acknowledges he has no experience with public office, but in the current situation, he believes that may even help him.

Stallings said his life experience places him in touch with average voters in his district and gives him insight into handling the county's fiscal crisis.

Stallings said that like a lot of young people, he managed to get himself in debt three years ago and has had to fight his way out of the situation.

Then he found himself working at a new job for less money but managed to work his way out of it.

"I think the county did the same thing. They bought a lot of things on credit and the income didn't come in as projected," Stallings said.

Cutting expenses

Stallings said he would work to bring spending under control, if elected.

"There's money that can be saved all over," Stallings said. "You can't just look at the big picture. It's that paper clip that gets thrown away in the trash can that you need to look at."

Stallings said before he can identify specific cuts he needs to get on the board and learn more about the county's operations.

He said the process will require tough decisions and vigilance.

"It's things like the county vehicle folks see riding up and down the road, back and forth five times each day.

"People want to know why, and they deserve an answer," he said.

Increasing the tax base

Goodwin said putting the county's finances back in order would be the first item on his agenda. He said he and the other commissioners were working on the problem, but he couldn't

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You can help Now!

Chowan Hospital Foundation

Through the Community Care Clinic of Tyner, the Chowan Hospital Foundation helps provide needed healthcare services to the indigent, uninsured and the underinsured, **FREE of charge.** Your tax-deductible donation to the Chowan Hospital Foundation will help us continue to provide quality health services to those most in need. For more information or to give, call 482-6440 or write P.O. Box 629, Edenton, N.C.