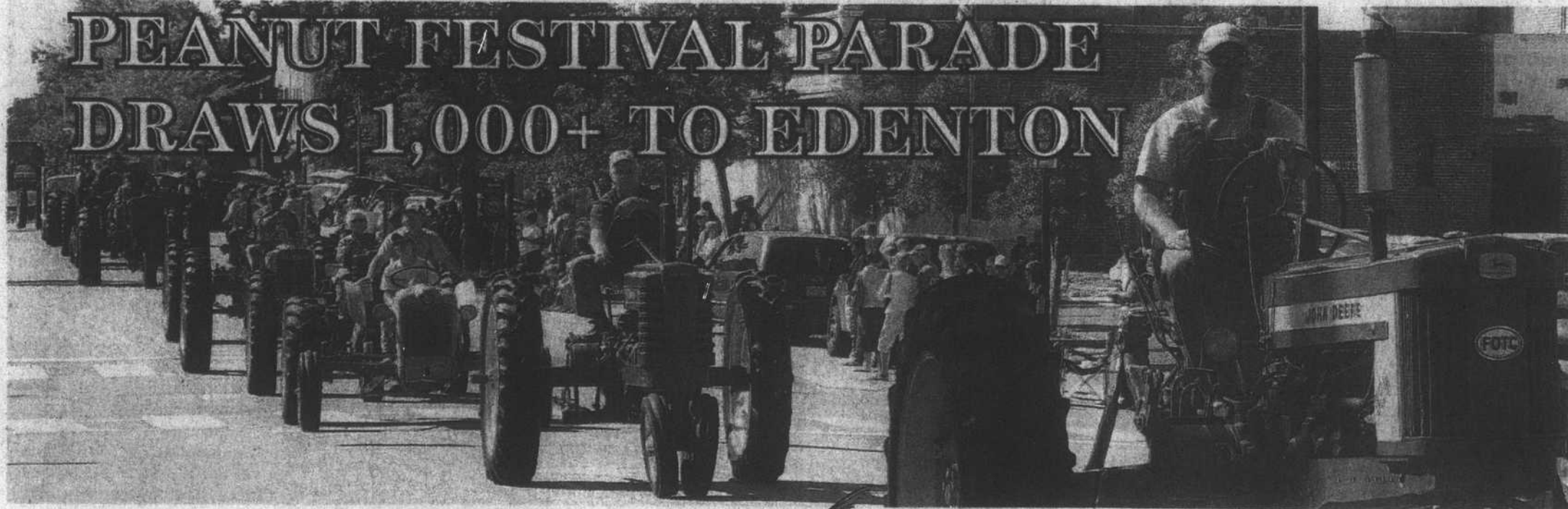


PEANUT FESTIVAL PARADE DRAWS 1,000+ TO EDENTON



CHOWAN HERALD

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Wednesday, October 8, 2008

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ELECTION '08 ON THE BALLOT

Sales tax may increase

The proposed 1/4-cent increase would bring in \$125,000 to \$150,000

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Residents will vote next month on increasing the local sales tax, but at this point the Chamber's director isn't endorsing the hike.

Director Richard Bunch said he is concerned the added tax would hurt businesses already struggling in a tough economy. But he said he wants to hear more from his board members.

The board is scheduled to discuss the issue at its meeting tomorrow morning.

A referendum on the ballot calls for the tax to be raised to 7 cents on the dollar, up 1/4-cent from its current rate.

County Manager Peter Rascoe said the additional funds the proposed 1/4-cent increase would bring in — between \$125,000 and \$150,000 a year — would help meet operating expenses during the next fiscal year.

Jadelle Wagner, manager of Peebles, said, "I don't see it affecting our business a lot" based on current fuel prices.

However, one local business owner, who asked not to be named, felt a little differently.

She said she would not be upset about the proposed increase being implemented if she believed the county commissioners would keep looking for ways to cut expenses in county government.

County's internal review, hunt for missing money over

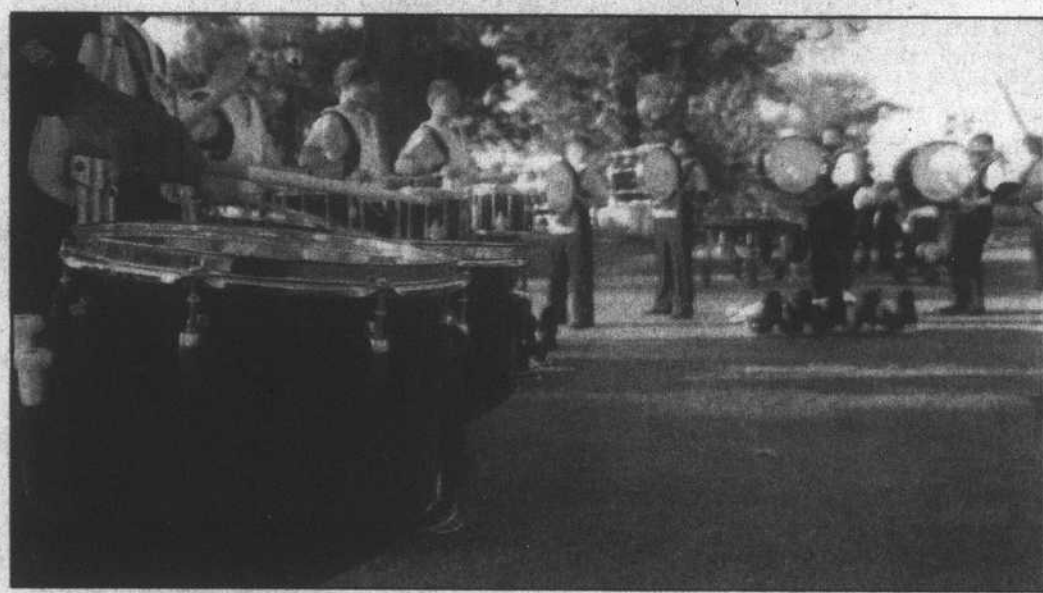
By Earline White
Managing Editor

Of the millions 'missing' from the county's hospital fund, county commissioners approved the transfer of only \$2 million.

This is according to the county minutes of 10-year's worth of meetings.

County Manager Peter Rascoe said that he was finished with the county's

A BATTLE 'TIL THE END



BRETT A. CLARK/THE DAILY ADVANCE

The Perquimans Marching Pirates warm up before the 33rd annual Battle of the Bands. Perquimans won the first-ever "People's Choice" award. See "W. Craven takes top honors," A2.

Two days left to register to vote in November election

Early voting begins Oct. 16 and ends November 1

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

With a presidential election just 27 days away in Chowan, registering to have a say in the world's most powerful democracy is easier than ever.

Election reforms that followed the contested 2000 presidential election now require less information from voters and a chance to vote after the registration deadline has passed.

It's meant to make the process easier, for the voter at least, said Elections Director Rebecca Lowe.

But now the regulations and procedures, while making it easier to get on the voter rolls, are making the job of keeping the process honest tougher for officials.

I haven't registered
For those procrastina-

internal review, in conjunction with the state auditor's ongoing investigation, on where the money was spent.

"Until that state auditor's investigation is complete and a report is issued, we are going to move on with operating the county's business," Rascoe said.

The remaining money was allegedly transferred by former county manager Cliff Coppeland from the hospital fund into the general fund and loaned to individual departments funds for routine day-to-day expenses and to capital projects.

Chowan Finance Officer

tors who miss the Oct. 10 registration deadline, Lowe said all is not lost. She said there is still a chance to cast a vote.

For voters coming to Edenton's "One-Stop" station during early voting, it's possible to register and vote in one visit.

Early voting begins Oct. 16 and ends the Saturday before Election Day.

After that, you're just plain out of luck.

Who can register?
Almost any citizen over the age of 18 can register to vote.

A voter needs only to provide a name, a home address, mailing address, and either a driver's license number or the last four digits of a social security number to register. No proof in the form of identification is required.

The forms to register are available at the elections office, the library, schools, the public health department, and even on line.

Lisa Jones said of Coppeland, "budgeted the revenue, the departments had no idea they were spending more than they were bringing in. Just like the LGC reported, the former manager projected unrealistic revenues."

In the analysis of expenditures from the hospital money 1999-2008, nearly \$11.5 million was transferred into the general fund to cover normal operating expenses.

According to the study, emergency services received \$1.1 million, solid waste \$1.6 million, the school roofs project \$1 million, all from



Lowe

Lowe said that with all this emphasis on making registration easy and painless, the burden has fallen to state officials when it comes to making sure everyone on the rolls is there honestly.

Who can not register?

There are a lot of reasons why a registrant might not be eligible to vote.

He might not be a citizen. He might not live in the precinct. He might be a felon still in the process of parole or probation. (Felons can vote once their sentences and probation are complete.)

Is the system honest?

Lowe said once a voter's application is received, her office does a number of checks.

First, they verify that

See VOTING, Page A2 >

FIRST DISTRICT RACE



Soles

Dana Soles

Age: 53
Date of Birth: Aug. 16, 1955
Political Offices Held: None
Occupation: Construction management
Party: Republican



Winborne

Emmett E. Winborne

Age: 54
Date of Birth: June 29, 1954
Political Offices Held: Former commissioner, 1990 to 1998
Occupation: Farmer and convenience store owner
Party: Democrat

Race pits veteran against newcomer

By Vernon Fueston
Contributing Writer

Voters in the first district will choose between a former commissioner and a political newcomer for a commission seat, Nov. 4.

Dana Soles said his professional dealings with county and city governments around the region have prepared him for taking a role in county government. He stressed government transparency and low taxes as cornerstones of his campaign.

Emmett E. Winborne pointed to his experience as a county commissioner from 1990 to 1998. While he has served on the commission, he is not an incumbent.

He said his candidacy should give voters a chance to elect a commissioner with experience who was not involved in the county budget mess.

County experience

One of Winborne's last acts in office was to vote on a resolution to hold the \$20 million in proceeds from the sale/lease of Chowan Hospital in a fund as a reserve.

The evaporation of that money has saddened him.

"The facts are what they are," Winborne said. "People have approached me, asking how we can get the money back. That's impos-

sible. One of the biggest hurdles the next commission will have to clear is earning that trust back."

Winborne said regaining that trust in the commission would be his first priority.

Private experience

Soles said his most important qualification for a seat on the commission is his business experience, which has him dealing with county and city officials around the region.

"I deal with county commissioners and county managers for a living," Soles said. He said he primarily builds projects for state, county and city governments. "I know how an efficient county is run and how a county in chaos is run."

Soles became the center of some controversy in the county last month when he received a misdemeanor conviction for stealing a watermelon from a local farmer's field.

Expressing regret for the mistake, Soles said he hopes the county's voters will forgive him.

Listening to voters

Both candidates said the county needs commissioners who will listen to their constituents.

Soles said sometimes politicians forget whom they See ELECTION, Page A2 >



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