

CHOWAN HERALD

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Bailout money will help with JAH repairs

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Depending on the final stimulus package okayed by Congress, the Edenton-Chowan Schools could receive as much as \$800,000 from the proposed bailout funds, local officials say.

And if they do, they want to be ready to put those funds to use quickly and efficiently, making the most pressing repairs at John A. Holmes High School.



Smith

Key priorities identified include a conversion to natural gas, replacing a faulty electric panel in the gym, repairs to masonry and windows on the front of the building.

"Our intent is not to use the funds for cosmetic purposes," Smith said.

He added that the school system had tried to wait until funds for a major renovation were available, "but we can't put them (repairs) off anymore."

Outlining needs

Last Monday night Brad Bass, maintenance director for the school system, briefed the school board on the most pressing needs at Holmes.

Bass divided the needs list into four categories:

- **Efficiency** — Replace broken kitchen dishwasher, lighting (retrofit throughout), improve energy management systems, conversion to natural gas.

- **Health and Safety** — Replace electrical panel in gym, redo front classrooms, upgrade restrooms in performing arts area, replace carpet in band room, improve parking and accessibility in front of the building

- **Integrity** — Deal with serious problems with masonry, windows on the front of the building, gym roof, and underpinning in portable classrooms

- **Security** — Reinforce doors, improve surveillance, and upgrade fire alarm system.

Following up

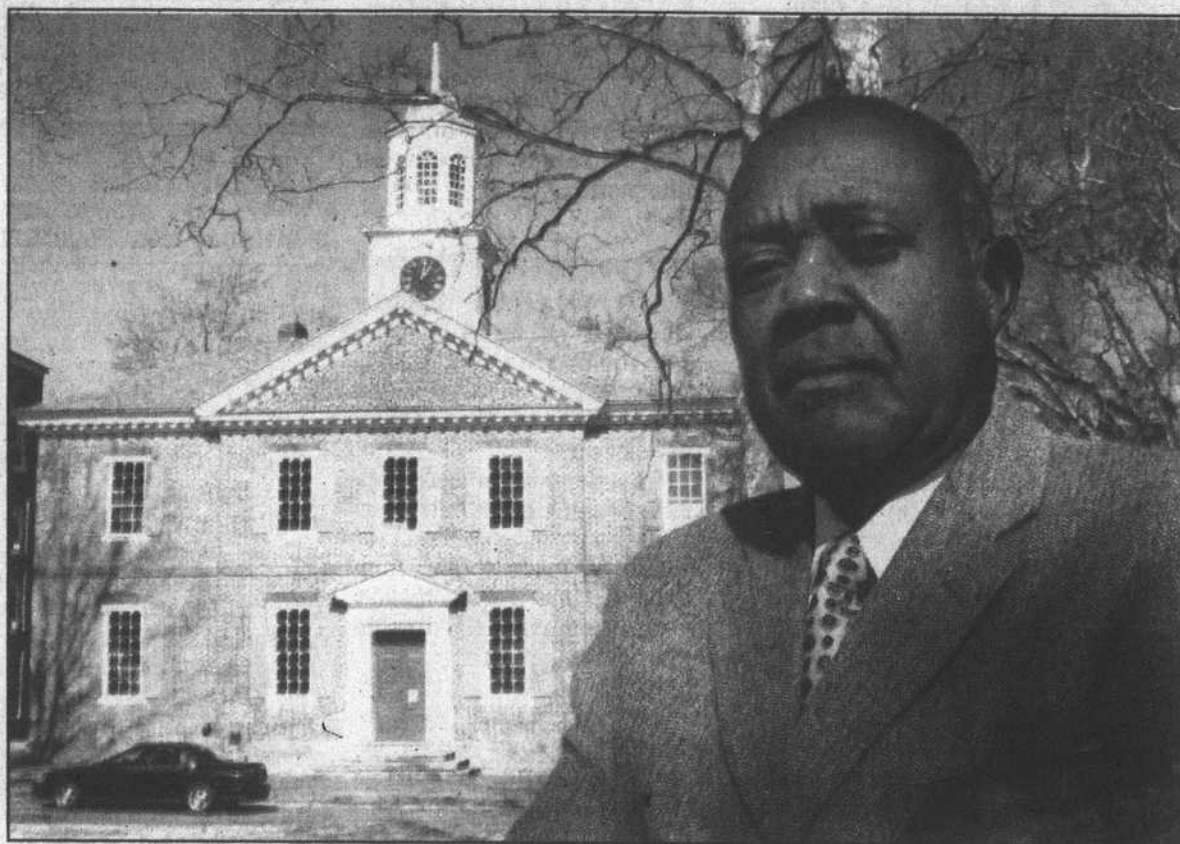
Dr. Smith agreed, at the board's request, to find an architect to assist with those portions of the project that could not be handled in-house.

Smith said that a major renovation effort at Holmes is most likely five-plus years away due to the downturn in the economy.

In other action, the board:

- Learned that James Bell, a former N.C. Teacher of the Year from the Edenton-Chowan Schools, has resigned to accept a state-level education job.

Louis Belfield tells of his participation in one of the Civil Rights Movement's pivotal demonstrations



VERNON FUESTON/THE CHOWAN HERALD

Louis Belfield once participated in the 1960 Greensboro lunch counter sit in. The demonstration was one of the earliest and most pivotal of the Civil Rights movement. Today, he serves on Chowan County's Board of Commissioners.

By Vernon Fueston
Staff Writer

It was 49 years ago this month when Louis Belfield, a college student at North Carolina's Agricultural and Technical State College, got the chance to help make history.

Belfield said he recalls sensing something extraordinary was happening when four A&T students decided to occupy seats at a Woolworth's lunch counter in Greensboro.

It was something he wanted to be a part of.

Growing movement

"It was a feeling that this was the time to change things," Belfield said. "It was an old system that needed to be done away with."

The demonstration wasn't anything planned by civil rights leaders. Four young men, Ezell Blair, David Richmond, Joseph McNeil and Franklin

served for whites.

Having made a purchase, they weren't trespassing. There was no law concerning blacks at the lunch counters, only longstanding custom.

The waitresses refused them service and notified the store's manager, C.L. Harris. Harris decided to leave the protestors alone, but called the police as a precaution. He assumed the protest would run its course.

It didn't.

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DEFIANCE ON THEIR FACES

McCain, simply took action themselves.

Inspired by the teachings of Dr. Martin Luther King, they decided to stage a non-violent protest that would both shock and prick the social conscience of a nation.

Their plan was simple.

On Feb. 1, after making a purchase at the stand up lunch counter designated for black customers, the four simply walked over and sat down on stools re-

County to sell surplus property

By Vernon Fueston
Staff Writer

The county's annual surplus property sale takes on a special significance this year as the county struggles to balance its budget and adjust its cash flow to meet \$881,000 in new debt payments this fall.

Going on the auction block are three pieces of real estate, 11 vehicles, a mobile generator, boat motors, lockers, exercise equipment, office equipment, office furniture and even an ATM machine.

The real estate, valued at \$450,000 consists of a rescue squad building on Gliden Road, the Chowan Community Building located across the street from Chowan Middle School, and the County Agricultural Building site, 2.26 acres of land inside the town limits that was once the site of Chowan Hospital.

Officials said the property will be sold at auction with a 10-day upset period following the sale. No bids for less than the tax appraisal will be accepted.

The county will also sell 11 vehicles including two buses, a converted ambulance once used for drug abuse education programs, an inmate transfer van and two vehicles seized in drug cases.

On the block

Gliden Rescue Squad bldg
Chowan Community bldg
Agriculture building site
2 buses, 2 vehicles
Converted ambulance

Among the other items headed for the auction block are the kinds of things one might expect to find at a government auction.

There is industrial and maintenance equipment like a John Deere front-end loader and a mobile generator, as well as office furniture and machines.

But other items probably come with a story, like the courthouse's old jury box chairs and a set of 1,500-watt stadium lights.

And there is the unexpected, like eight boat motors and an ATM machine (yes, the ATM machine is empty).

The commissioners are still deciding whether or not to hold a public auction or use one of several on-line services devoted to selling government surplus.

An announcement is expected in the form of a published public notice sometime in the next few weeks.

Many support euthanasia bill

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Local animal rights activists are mixed about the new proposed bill in support of humane euthanasia in the state's animal shelters.

More than 40 area animal lovers have signed a petition at the Sound Pet store in Edenton in support of the bill.

The legislation, HB 27, known as the Humane Euthanasia for Family Pets act, or Davie's Law was introduced last week in the state House of Representatives.

The measure requires that homeless dogs and cats being kept in shelters in the state be put down by lethal injection.

More than 30 shelters across the state, including the Tri-County Animal Shelter in Tyner, still use gas chambers except in the case of puppies and older animals.

State law prevents the use of carbon monoxide gas in those cases because those animals are too young or too old to be able to inhale a sufficient quantity of the gas for the practice to be effective.

Other measures

Advocates of the bill say it would not only be more humane but less

dangerous for staff in these shelters due to chronic exposure to the toxic gas.

And, they point out, the bill under consideration would not require that counties dismantle or destroy the existing gas chambers, resulting in additional expense to communities that have them.

But in published reports, N.C. Coalition for Humane Euthanasia board member Alice Singh says that may not be enough to get the measure the consideration it deserves.

"I would love to see it pass, but I think it will get held up in committee ... North Carolina just doesn't move that quickly on animal issues for some reason."

Signing up

Among those in Edenton who've supported the proposed law by signing the petition are Terri Fox and her husband Richard.

The Foxs currently own a dog and a cat, and said that every animal they've ever taken into their home "has come from the street or the shelter."

Terri Fox said that while she understands homeless animals can-

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'Beach Plan' may bring higher rates

Chowan County received 6.5% increase by state insurance commission to cover hurricane damage

By Vernon Fueston
Staff Writer

Chowan's commissioners are being asked to help fight a dramatic increase in coastal insurance rates by a state-run insurance program called "The Beach Plan."

The Beach Plan was originally conceived as a place of last refuge for coastal property owners seeking insurance against hurricane damage, said Bobby Outten, the attorney for Dare County.

He spoke to the commissioners at their monthly public meeting, Feb 2, urging them to join a lawsuit filed by Dare County and Nags Head. The suit seeks to force the state's insurance commission into new hearings, reconsidering the increases.

Outten said the rates unfairly target coastal residents, hitting them twice for the same risk.

He said the state first levied a 10 percent increase on policies covering wind and hail damage, a move he said was intended to force property owners out of the state's Beach Plan and into private insurance.

Then in December, the insurance commission approved increases on the policies of between six and 29 percent in order to cover the growing cost of hurricane damage.

Chowan County received a six and one-half percent increase.

But Outten said things are not working quite the way the state intended. He said the cost of private insurance outside the Beach Plan is still so expensive that the plan remains virtually the only game in town.

That leaves the vast majority of homeowners with two price increases. But Outten said those owners will also have to contend with an important rule change shielding insurance companies.

Those new rules raised the deductible for storm damage from \$1,000 to \$2,000

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Pancake & Sausage Supper/Auction Friday, February 20, 2009

5:00pm - 7:00pm

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Organized by Rocky Neck Rurians