

## SUPPORT YOUR COMMUNITY

Polar Plunge A8  
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4-H chili luncheon, Not-So-New-Newlywed game B2

# CHOWAN HERALD

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## Policeman arrested for assault

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

An Edenton police officer has been arrested for assaulting two individuals, apparently in the line of duty, in September of 2006 and again in July of 2007.

Derrick Wayne Knox was arrested by the State Bureau of Investigation, February 17 and charged with assaulting two men, DeShannon Kenta Stepney and Thomas Allen Dail, Jr.

Knox is charged with assaulting Stepney with his service weapon, inflicting serious injury on Sept. 24, 2006. A separate complaint charges him with assaulting and striking Thomas Allen Dail, Jr. with a taser, discharging the weapon on July 13, 2007.

Knox, 38, a resident of Windsor, was released after posting an unsecured \$5,000 bond on the charges related to the alleged assault on Stepney and a second unsecured bond for \$500 on charges related to Dail.

Knox was suspended with pay on Feb. 12 while the police department conducts independent investigations of charges filed by the SBI.

Edenton Police Chief Jay Fortenbery issued a statement the same day as Knox's arrest saying, "The Edenton Police Department is committed to taking the steps necessary to insure the integrity of the department and the safety of the community. We take these charges and any complaints regarding officer conduct very seriously."

## Weather slows Hwy. 32 project

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Adverse weather conditions are to blame for the delay in completing the widening of Hwy. 32, officials say.

But work at the site is expected to resume soon.

Bob Capehart, of the NCDOT office in Edenton, said weather that lead the ground to be wet, then freeze, then thaw was "just too bad" to allow ground preparation and paving at the site to continue this winter.

Currently, Capehart said, the project's contractor, Barnhill Contracting of Tarboro, is expecting to resume work at the site after the first of April.

Paving at the site, Capehart said, is scheduled to start again after the first of June when the "rainy season" has ended.

"Our intention is for See HWY. 32, Page A2 >

## Extreme Home Makeover to help Edenton family

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Next Friday, when Ty Pennington shows up to knock on an unsuspecting family's door, he will be standing at a home in Edenton.

Pennington, popular television host of Extreme Makeover: Home Edition, and his team, will be assisted by Edenton Builders, Inc. in planning and building a new home here in just one week.

Until then, the identity of the

family receiving the home will remain unknown.

What is known is that they were one of five families considered.

John Norris, owner of Edenton Home Builders, said in a news release issued by the show that it was "an honor" to be chosen to participate as the builder.

In keeping with this season's theme of "Heroes Helping Heroes," Norris said, "with the help of heroes in the form of community subcontractors, sponsors and vol-

unteers, a special family will have a new home, inside and out.

"We're counting on community volunteers to provide their time, support and resources to help ensure the success of this life-changing project," he said.

A pep rally for volunteers and subcontractors will take place this Friday at 8 a.m. at the Edenton United Methodist Church Family Life Center, 225 Virginia Road.

Until then, individuals or companies can visit [www.extremehb-](http://www.extremehb-heroes.com)

heroes.com for information on the construction schedule, online donations and other items of interest.

If you're not able to volunteer, but would like to donate money toward the construction costs, please send a check to "Edenton Builders Extreme Family", c/o Edenton Builders, Inc., 307 S. Broad St., Edenton, N.C. 27932.

One hundred percent of donations received from local residents will be used for the project taking place in Edenton.

## HOME IS WHERE THE HEART IS ...



Hope Downing, Arvilla Horton and Tim Phelps inside Downing's home on E. Fremason Street being built by Phelps' construction company. Downing and Horton are the recipients of new custom-built homes from a Community Block Grant received by the county from the state.

## State provides two families with new homes

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

Two Edenton women and their families are receiving brand new, custom-built homes through a state program to rehabilitate low and moderate-income housing.

The homes are being constructed after officials determined that the buildings had deteriorated beyond repair.

Construction on the homes will cost the state \$61,000 each and will be deeded free and clear to the families after they live in the homes and make eight years of mortgage payments.

Hope Downing and her husband had hoped to remodel their home, which caught fire in 1999. They did not have insurance on

the structure.

The family has been living in the home without heat, a working kitchen and inside doors for four years now, hoping to fix up the structure. But when her husband died, the project was suddenly beyond her reach.

Arvilla Horton bought the home she was renting when it was foreclosed on in 2000. At the time she had high hopes of fixing the place up and building sweat equity.

The men's fellowship from her church, Warren Grove Baptist, had planned to help her with the repairs.

But recently discovered damage and decay in the floor joists meant the house just wasn't

See GRANT, Page A2 >

## County commissioners face budget challenges

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

As a summer deadline looms large, Chowan's county commissioners will be searching for ways to balance their budget in the face of falling revenues and new debt to be serviced.

The commissioners must present a balanced budget by state law before June 1. This year's budget will be the first adopted since the county learned it had spent its way through \$20 million in reserve funds over four

years.

That budget will have to pass scrutiny from the state's Local Government Commission, which will be looking carefully at how the commission plans its cash flow and estimates expected revenues.

The county's previous budgets ran consistently in the red, borrowing money from reserves to cover the shortfall. Overly optimistic revenue projections have been widely blamed for the deficits.

The county must also

meet the first payments on \$14.3 million in new debt for construction of its public safety center and library expansion project.

Those new payments have been renegotiated, lengthening the loan period and making interest-only payments on several loans. Even so, an additional \$633,000 in new payments will be added, tripling the amount it paid for debt service this year.

Another problem facing the commissioners has yet to be quantified. With the

nation's economy in recession, tax revenues are expected to fall, but by how much is anybody's guess.

The county took in \$17 million in taxes and other revenues last year.

Among the revenue items most sensitive to an economy in recession are the county's local option sales tax, which brought in \$3.3 million last year, and its land transfer tax, good for \$475,000.

Another sensitive item could be \$691,000 in permits and fees, many of which are

affected by any slump in building and construction.

The county's biggest revenue item, \$9 million in property taxes, will not decrease, at least on paper.

But the commissioners are certainly watching the collections rate on those taxes as the recession continues. Last year the county carried \$181,000 in delinquent property taxes and charged \$60,000 in property tax penalties.

County commission chairman Eddy Goodwin See BUDGET, Page A2 >

## Public comment period questioned by Town Council

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Should the Edenton Town Council open the floor for public discussion at the beginning, or the end, of its meetings?

That issue was discussed during council's monthly committee meetings Monday night, and will likely come before the full council for ac-

tion at next month's meeting.

Currently, an opportunity for public discussion occurs at the end of each meeting.

However, some boards offer time for the public to speak at the beginning, or the end, or both, as officials pointed out.

Councilman Jerry Parks observed that having the discussion at the beginning of the meeting would

allow citizens to speak before council acted on an issue in which they might have a particular interest.

"I'm okay with having it (public discussion) at the beginning," said Councilman Willis Privott, "but I don't know that we need to do it twice."

Currently, the only opportunity for the public to speak before action is taken by council at a meeting

comes if a public hearing is held.

In other action, council committees discussed the need for developing policies governing special events held at the waterfront, as well as ideas for making more boat slips available there.

They also discussed selling a parcel of land the town owns. That property has an appraised value of \$16,000.

## BURR VISITS EDENTON; DISCUSSES VA CLINIC, STIMULUS PACKAGE AND OBAMA

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

Senator Richard Burr paused on a whirlwind tour through the region Wednesday, attending a reception at the town's municipal building and sitting down for a discussion about regional and national issues.

### VA CLINIC COMING

Burr has been a big proponent of bringing a veterans clinic to northeastern North Carolina and is widely expected to play a key role in choosing between the two most likely locations for the facility, Edenton and Elizabeth City.

But Burr said progress on the clinic is at a standstill for the moment. He said the president's choice of General Erik Shin-

seki as the new VA director bodes well for the project.

"The VA is going through the process of changing from one administration to the next," Burr said. "General Shinseki is supportive of a clinic in the northeast."

Burr also said he believes that where the clinic is placed is critical to its success. He said the clinic needs to be farther from Norfolk and Tidewater Virginia rather than closer.

If the clinic is placed too close to Virginia, he said many North Carolina veterans will bypass the facility, defeating its purpose.

### ECONOMIC CRISIS

When asked about national events, Burr said the country's recent financial crisis See BURR, Page A2 >



Artist Burton Jones, right, presents a picture of the Roanoke River Lighthouse to Sen. Richard Burr, center, while Edenton Historical Commission director Becky Winslow looks on.

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