

# CHOWAN HERALD

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## Deputy indicted by SBI

21-year veteran officer charged with nine counts of sexual offenses

By Earline White and Vernon Fueston  
Staff writers

William Greg Whitehurst, 47, was indicted by a grand jury Monday and charged with three counts of second degree sexual offense, three counts of indecent liberties with a student and three counts of sexual activities with a student.

The charges are based on an alleged incident occurring in 2005 when Whitehurst was working as a school resource officer at John A. Holmes.



Whitehurst

Whitehurst began with the Chowan County Sheriff's Office 21 years ago as a patrol officer under the tenure of former sheriff Fred Spruill.

Whitehurst later worked in civil processing then as an SRO.

Whitehurst was recognized as the Law Officer of the Year in 2004 by the American Legion Post 40.

The allegation of sexual misconduct was reported directly to the State Bureau of Investigation in Elizabeth City, sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said in a press release dated Monday.

According to the release, Goodwin was made aware of the allegations in October 2008.

Whitehurst turned himself in to the SBI Monday afternoon, authorities said.

Whitehurst has been placed on administrative leave pending a full internal investigation.

Due to the SBI's pending investigation, Goodwin declined to say more.

Whitehurst could not be reached for comment.

## Bomb threat called to courthouse

The first ever bomb threat to the Chowan County Courthouse on Broad Street was called in at 3:05 p.m. Monday afternoon during Superior Court, Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said Tuesday.

Occupants of the building were evacuated immediately. A search of the property did not reveal any such threat, Goodwin added.

Authorities are currently subpoenaing phone records to determine from whom and where the call came.

Metal detectors and limited public access to prevent such happenings were put in place at the courthouse following a shooting inside the Northampton County Courthouse in 2006.



## HUNDREDS CELEBRATE PETS AT DOWNTOWN FESTIVAL



Top, Chan Collins, an engineer with the Edenton Fire Department, and his English bulldog, Diesel. Above left, Michelle Maddox with her pet Boston Terrier, Penelope. Above right, Bill Stafford gets a kiss from Lexis. Stafford was an exhibitor at Pet-A-Palooza, Saturday at Colonial Park. PHOTOS BY VERNON FUESTON

About 200 pet lovers converged Colonial Park in Edenton for Pet-A-Palooza, Saturday.

A pet parade featuring 55 pets and about 100 owners kicked off the event, sponsored by Destination Downtown Edenton and the Edenton Recreation Department.

Kids got a chance to do crafts, jump rope, take train rides and meet the Steamer's Sam the Clam. There was a pet pageant and awards for dogs with the best costume, the largest and smallest dog, best-behaved, best trick and best Saint Patty's Day spirit. Vendors of pet-related products

and services were on hand as well as refreshments from the John A. Holmes High School Drama Club. The Tri-County Animal Shelter was on hand with animals available for adoption. Over 50 companies contributed items for pet goodie bags and a raffle.

## Conservatives plan tea party to protest tax hike

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

Edenton conservatives will hold a tea party protest on the Chowan County's courthouse steps expressing their displeasure with increased government spending and the taxes they say are sure to follow.

Bob Steinburg, Chowan County's Republican Party chairman said Americans for Prosperity is sponsor-

ing the event in North Carolina.

The group will be holding similar "tea parties" across the state on April 15.

Other movements are planning simultaneous protests in all 50 states and the District of Columbia, Steinburg said. The group has 10 rallies planned around the state.

Edenton's selection as a protest site has roots in North Carolina history. Pe-

nelope Barker organized a tea party at the home of Elizabeth King in 1774, protesting the British tax on tea.

The event, where 51 women signed a pact not to purchase tea, was the first political action by women in the colonies and predated the Boston Tea Party.

Steinburg said the event is not just a Republican protest.

"We're all taxpayers," he

### IF YOU GO

WHAT: Edenton Tea Party  
WHERE: Steps of 1767  
Chowan County Courthouse  
WHEN: April 15 at 5 p.m.

said. "Basically, what we are trying to do is increase awareness across the state and locally about taxation

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## NCDOT studies N.C. 137 bypass around Gatesville

By CAL BRYANT  
Roanoke-Chowan  
News-Herald

GATESVILLE — If preliminary plans move forward, Gatesville may become the only small town in North Carolina with a population of 300 to have not one, but two bypasses.

County Manager Toby

Chappell said he has received information from the North Carolina Department of Transportation in regard to possibly constructing a NC 137 bypass. That bypass is specifically designed to re-route heavy truck traffic.

Chappell said earlier this week DOT's proposal was only in its infant stages.

"DOT's intention is to

get the heavy truck traffic away from the heart of downtown," Chappell said. "Specifically, it's designed to help protect the old Gates County Courthouse. Years of heavy trucks rumbling by the old courthouse have resulted in structural damage."

According to DOT's preliminary plans, that truck

traffic may bypass Court Street on one of two alternative routes, both beginning on the western edge of Gatesville.

• #1 (Northern Bypass) 0.9 miles from the NC 137/Lewis Mill Road intersection to US 158 Business (East Maple St.). Estimated cost: \$4.5

See BYPASS, Page A2 >

### ECONOMY WATCH

## Jobless at highest level ever

Locals plan job fair for April 3

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

With unemployment in Chowan County at an all-time high 12.8 percent, local leaders are taking a proactive position to address the problem.

Over the past several weeks, a committee has been meeting to put together plans for a community Job Fair that will take place early next month.

"We need to be successful, to help our people find some jobs," said Chamber Director Richard Bunch.

And, last Thursday morning, a representative of Sen. Richard Burr, Molly Maxson, met

with local business Roundtable leaders to discuss about local and regional economy held port back

to the senator on their concerns about the state of the economy (see related story).

They also offered suggestions about local needs that could be addressed with the use of stimulus funds.

### Sharp decline

Chowan County is not alone in seeing an increase in the number of those who have lost jobs.

According to the state ESC office, unemployment rose in all 100 counties in North Carolina for January, the most recent month for which figures are available.

Hardest hit in the region was Dare County, which posted a 17.3 percent jobless rate. The loss of many construction jobs has negatively impacted other related industries there.

Bertie came in at 12 percent, followed by Perquimans at 11 percent, and Pasquotank at 10.6 percent.

### Offering hope

The local Job Fair was the idea of Pastor Chris Jones of the Cape Colony Church of Christ.

Jones, a relative newcomer to the community, reached out to the local business community to offer his church as a place where the event could be held.

The Job Fair will take place there from 9 a.m. until 2 p.m. on Friday, April 3.

The church is located at 831 Soundside Road, past the airport.

Jones contacted Chamber Director Richard Bunch, who welcomed the idea of partnering with the church.

The Chamber, along with the local ESC office and College of the Albemarle, agreed to serve as sponsors.

A Job Fair planning committee was quickly put together.

So far, 12 businesses/organizations have agreed to participate in the event.

They are: Food Lion;

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EDENTON-CHOWAN  
KIWANIS CLUB'S  
22nd Annual



SATURDAY, MARCH 28, 2009  
11:00 AM - 5:30 PM  
EDENTON SCOUT HUT

Tickets \$7.00 per plate

For Tickets: Lynn Perry 331-5393, Frank Jones 482-0305 or Greg Bonner 331-5212

Proceeds For Scholarship Fund, Terrific Kids & Other Youth Programs