

JA Holmes principal steps down

Freshman academy implemented during four-year term

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

John A. Holmes High School Principal William "Bill" Moore is leaving. Moore tendered his resignation in a March 23 letter to Dr. Allan Smith, superintendent of the Edenton-Chowan Schools. His final day of work will be Tuesday, June 30.



Moore

Moore wrote that he was "proud of the accomplishments of my team during the last four years."

"I remain committed to always providing the best education for high school students so that they are successful in the work force and/or higher education programs," he added.

In an e-mail to The Chowan Herald, Smith said that Moore "has been an asset to the Edenton-Chowan Schools and has accomplished a great deal in his four years with us. We wish him all the best in the future."

Moore outlined some of those accomplishments in a farewell letter to his staff at Holmes.

He said he was proud of the expansion of the advanced placement (AP) courses program that currently offers eight classes. Three others — AP Spanish, AP Music Theory and AP World History — are scheduled to begin in the fall.

He also praised the staff's efforts to increase community involvement in the school system, and their dedication to their profession.

"Our staff has become recognized for the quality of education we offer daily," Moore wrote. "We have had staff recognized as Chowan County Teachers of the Year for the past two years."

"One member was Regional Teacher of the Year and made it to the final nine in the state competition for N.C. Teacher of the Year."

"Another staff member has been selected NC JROTC Instructor of the Year and will compete on a national level shortly."

In closing, Moore said, "You remain the finest staff I have ever worked with and I am confident you will support the new principal in taking Holmes to the next level by finishing what we started. Remember, there is no 'I' in team."

According to Kerri Albertson, school/community relations director for the Edenton-Chowan Schools, Principal Bill Moore is retired from the U.S. Army, where he served as a Lieutenant Colonel in the Army Reserve.

He has worked in education since 1986.

Citizens meet on county budget

By Vernon Fueston
Staff Writer

Eight citizens, members of Chowan County's citizen advisory board on county finances, sat down for their first real working meeting on balancing the county's budget, March 18.

They met once before to organize the committee but their work on the budget came to a halt when it was discovered that sales tax revenues and cost overruns for electric utilities and insurance had driven the current year's budget \$970,000

in the red. Now the commissioners must balance a budget that takes that into account, an economy in recession and \$715,000 in first-time loan payments that will come due next fiscal year.

Blizzard of numbers
Kenny Goodwin, chairman of the budget subcommittee, and Keith Nixon briefed the committee members on the challenge ahead of them.

Each member was given a packet of basic financial



Commissioners Goodwin and Nixon lead the committee.

information consisting of 24 pages drawn up by the county manager's office. Reading the statements was daunting for some, including those with financial experience.

"It's hard to understand," Goodwin said in response

to one member's questions. "It's backward from what you would see in a private company." The numbers were sobering. "You've taken on a task that a full time salaried person could not take on," one

committee member told Goodwin. "You are not supermen. You can't go pulling mason jars out of the backyard to fix that budget. You took on a headache, no doubt about it."

Board will outline:

- The objectives and priorities for the year.
- What the board considers "vital services."
- What services the board desires to preserve.
- How the board wishes the school district and fire district budgets to be addressed.

The goal
Goodwin explained that after adjusting the county's general fund downward, reflecting cuts made last month to balance this year's budget, the current year's revenues amounted to \$16.3 million.

He said next year, with higher expenses and lower revenues, they have \$15.1 million to work with, a drop of \$1.2 million even if the cuts made in February are continued.

Those figures assume a recession that lasts all the way through June 30, 2010, an assumption recommended by the Local Government Commission, Goodwin said.

What's essential?
Another document given the committee members was a list of county government services divided into two columns, those the law requires the county provide to its citizens and those that are optional.

Goodwin said the list was given to them during a training session at the School of Local Government.

Functions like law enforcement and the medical examiner are required while fire protection and solid waste disposal are optional.

"So, we could just shut down the water department and say, 'too bad?'" asked one member.

"Yes," said Goodwin, adding that though everything is on the table, not everything can reasonably be cut.

Keith Nixon spelled out the big question that the committee will have to answer in making their recommendations to the commissioners.

"We're going to have to decide, are we going to say no to any tax increase?" he said.

"I say no," said one member, "not until you prove to me you are living within your means."

Brainstorm
The next hour could best be described as a free flow of ideas, some that seemed good, some not.

As the evening drew to a close, Goodwin tried to put the county's troubles in perspective.

"We've looked at a lot of area counties and everybody's in the same boat," he said.

Most committee members seemed reassured by the openness of the process.

As everyone rose to leave, one member asked where they could dispose of the plastic water bottles each had been given at the start of the meeting.

"Put them in the basket over there," Goodwin said. "We'll take care of it. For every ton of plastic we keep out of the landfill, we save \$60."

RAISE THE ROOF FOR PRESERVATION

The Cupola House is in dire need of a new shingled roof to preserve its collections and maintain its stability

by Sally Francis Kehayes

Thomas Wood, Jr., president of the Cupola House Association, is fast becoming an expert on shingles — wood shingles — something the Cupola House desperately needs.

According to Wood and experts brought in to assess the damage, the building is in dire need of a new-shingled roof to preserve its many collections and to maintain its structural stability.

On a recent inspection of the Cupola House, Laura Blokker with the Conservation Assessment Program of Heritage Preservation, pointed out the complexities, challenges and opportunities of historic preservation.

"Without a solid roof, every part of the structure and the collections beneath are at risk. Quality, durability and cost will have to be carefully evaluated ..."

The house will undergo repairs once historically accurate, and effective, roofing materials are identified.

The 250 year-old Cupola House is an important anchor to Edenton's downtown providing citizens a quiet spot in its colonial gardens to relax and reflect on the beauty of Edenton.

The Cupola House is one of North Carolina's most significant historic buildings; preservationists often refer to it as one of our Nation's most important colonial dwellings.

Citizens and tourists have a window into the rich colonial past of Edenton through the Cupola House.

"The value of preserving our town and county's rich colonial era history cannot be understated," Wood said.

"It is important to our tourism as well, drawing over 9,000 visitors annually. As a result of Hurricane Isabel, the existing roof leaks which in turn has damaged interior walls, the chimneys and the foundation."

Wood reports that the "Funding has to be in place and decisions made that are best for the Cupola House and its future. It is not an easy task exploring all the shingle roof options. Fortunately, I've had advice from a wide variety of very knowledgeable individuals including Blokker and Reid Thomas of the North



MARY KAY COYLE

Cupola weeders hard at work in the garden, inset, interior wall damage.

Carolina State Historic Preservation office.

Major preservation work on a historic house, such as the Cupola House, provides an excellent opportunity to educate the public about appropriate preservation techniques.

Wood hopes the public will attend the first sharing of information at the April 15th Garden Party and begin learning about this unique preservation undertaking — and wood shingles.

Once the decision on roofing materials is made, the Board of Directors will utilize the matching grant from Save America's Treasures (\$115,000.00).

As the project will total \$300,000, the Cupola House Association continues to seek grant funds and public support.

"Rural communities have a history of helping one another, for example, barn raisings. This is a modern version."

"We hope the community will come out and enjoy raising the roof of the Cupola House through the first of several gatherings to raise funds for the roof," said Thomas.

"The Raise the Roof-Springtime in the Garden Party" will be held at 5:30 p.m. on April 15. Everyone is invited.

Wine, food, music by Glenn and Anita Andersen, and a live auction make up this first community-wide event. Tickets are \$10 and available at the garden gate. Children are welcomed at no charge.

Farmers pleased to end wait for contracts

Peanuts may continue to be big cash crop for Chowan County

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

Leonard Small, Jr. just got the contract he'd been hoping for.

Small, of Chowan County, is a peanut farmer. He also operates Virginia Fork Produce.

He's been farming peanuts and other crops for years but said waiting to get that sales contract had been one of the most stressful times in his life.

"The money won't be nearly as good this year for peanuts as it was last year," he said.

"It will be about \$115 a ton less than we got last year."

Small said the salmonella scare that caused people to stop eating peanuts had also made contracts for growers slower to arrive.

And, he said, a big crop of peanuts last year in North Carolina and South Carolina did not help the situation, either.

The demand, he said, just would not be there this year.

Small said he normally plants 400 acres of the tasty goobers, but only 250 were planted this year.

Taking everything into account, he said, peanut farmers would be lucky to break even this year.

Cotton and soybeans, he said, "are not looking too good right now, either."

This wait has been pretty much the same for other farmers in the area, officials said.

In published reports, Bob Sutter, the N.C. Peanut Growers Association's executive director, has said that the nationwide salmonella outbreak and resulting product recall has "severely" affected state peanut growers.

He said that many of the state's growers should have already received contracts from processors for their crops so they could begin planning for planting season that begins in May. But, he said, only a few contracts have been received so far.

The situation might be different, Sutter told the Daily Advance, if those recalls had taken place during summer months.

