

## PUBLIC HEARING ON CHOWAN COUNTY'S PROPOSED BUDGET TO BE HELD TODAY AT 6 P.M.

### Most recent revised budget option posted

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

The county's finance department posted a working budget proposal that includes changes suggested by its commissioners.

That budget will be the starting point for discussions to be held at a public meeting of the commissioners.

The revised budget is almost \$3.5 million smaller than the county's original budget requests listed in Option E, one of five options proposed by County Manager Peter Rascoe. Option E would have preserved county pro-

grams and spending with few changes.

The proposed budget comes \$413,000 short of balancing the budget without triggering an increase in property taxes.

But the new budget is hardly a done deal.

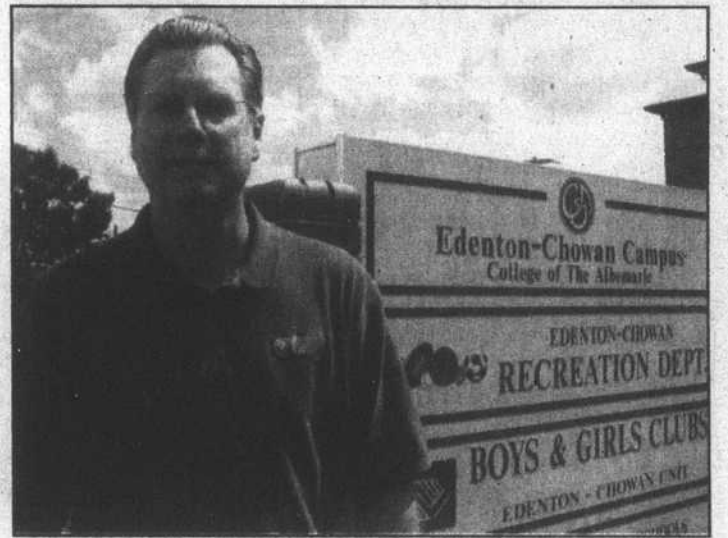
Several of the commissioners indicated they could not support some of the cuts made to the county's central communications center, the library and recreation departments, among others.

The budget will be discussed today in a public hearing to be held in the COA's Culinary Arts Center.

### Proposed cuts listed in Option E

Schools	\$911,000
School Capital Reserves	400,000
Social Services	373,000
Recreation	184,000
Sheriff's Department	176,000
Public Safety Department	95,000
Jail Operations	92,000
Library Operations and Debt	80,000
Animal Control	71,000
Senior Center	62,000
Central Communications (911)	58,000
Data Processing	49,000
Administration and Finance	47,000

### Recreation focus to remain "quality of life"



VERNON FUESTON/THE CHOWAN HERALD

Robbie Laughton, director of the Edenton-Chowan Recreation Department has done his part to help with the county's current fiscal crisis, cutting the department's proposed budget from \$534,000 to \$350,000. "The hardest thing I have to worry about is the kid who can't afford to do an activity."

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

As Chowan's commissioners search for discretionary dollars to cut from the county's budget, Robbie Laughton knows his department has been the subject of more than a little scrutiny over the last year.

With the county's budget more than \$3.9 million out of balance, the recreation department's \$534,000 budget request listed on the county's budget option E makes a tempting target as pencils are sharpened.

But Laughton is a believer in his department's value to the

"We provide activities for a lot of kids who would put their energies into destructive things," Laughton said. "Our leagues bring constructive organization into a kid's life."

Charged with the care and maintenance of 13 ball fields and 9 tennis courts, the youth programs Laughton supervises serve over 3,000 kids who play on 1,200 teams and 1,100 other organized activities.

Laughton said Chowan's recreation program is one of the largest in the area, partly because of the scope of what the department tries to do.

He said Chowan, as North Carolina's smallest county, has tried to run its sports through a central department rather than just providing facilities and leaving the organizing to private leagues and clubs.

He said the system has been a success.

"There has never been a push to going outside of our department to do these kinds of things," Laughton said, "and I guess that is a testimonial."

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## Remember ... Thank ... Support America's Unsung Heroes

### Memorial Day 2009

By Rebecca Bunch  
Staff Writer

Hundreds of local citizens crowded the grounds around the Chowan County Veterans Memorial Monday morning to remember lost loved ones and friends.

Capt. Edward Gibbons, of the Elizabeth City Coast Guard Base, was the keynote speaker.

He spoke of the sense of sacrifice and duty that has been heightened since 9/11 and the resulting combat overseas.

"Everyone in this audience has been touched in some way," he said. "The last eight years have given us many heroes. Many have given their lives, or limbs, in service to their country."

Gibbons, commanding officer for the USCG Aviation Logistics Center at the base, also spoke about the sense of pride that his men feel as they strive to make each aircraft as safe as possible for their comrades to fly.

The call to order, and greetings, were offered by Cmdr. Dale Wright, American Legion Post 40. He also introduced the speaker, Capt. Gibbons.

The invocation and benediction were given by Rev. Roscoe Poole, Jr., Post 40 chaplain.

"The National Anthem" and "God Bless America" were performed by Jerry Swanner.

Service wreaths and memorial wreaths were laid by organizations including the Legion and the DAR.

The American flag on the grounds was flying at half-mast, waiting to be raised by the Post 40 Honor Guard at the conclusion of the service.

Roy Mollenkopf and Larry Privott performed "Taps".



BLAIR CURRIE

### "And the days dwindle down to a precious few!"

As the process of attrition takes it toll, the above line might be applied to the surviving World War II veterans.

As a tail gunner on B-17's, James Bond of Edenton flew on 23 missions over Nazi Germany.

He received many awards in recognition of his bravery, including the Air Medal with three clusters.

Bond is a modest man who smiles

when complimented on his service to his country, but to many locals and friends, he is an honored exemplification of an unsung hero.

Pictured above, James Bond is complimented by Coast Guard Captain Edward Gibbons, the guest speaker at Edenton's Memorial Day service hosted by the American Legion Post 40 at the Chowan County Veterans Memorial Monday.

## Unemployment rate remains unchanged in state

### County jobless rates to be released Friday

North Carolina's unemployment rate held steady in April at 10.8 percent, according to statistics released Friday, May 22 by the N.C. Employment Security Commission.

Employment made a small gain, while the number of un-

employed workers slightly decreased.

"Our state's unemployment rate has remained pretty steady over the past three months," said ESC Chairman Moses Carey.

"And while a gain in employment is nice to see, this global recession continues to affect many citizens in our state.

"The ESC will continue to provide services to those needing assistance with job search and the filing of unemployment insurance claims."

Seasonally adjusted employment increased by 26,857 workers to 4,087,728. Unemployment decreased by 815 workers, to 492,785. The number of workers who were unemployed, but actively seeking work, remains near an all-time high.

Since this time last year, unemployment has increased by 234,421 people. Employment is down by 171,865 workers since April 2008. The state rate in April 2008 was 5.7 percent.

Seasonally adjusted, total non-farm industry employ-

ment, as gathered through the monthly establishment survey, decreased by 7,900 jobs over the past month and has decreased by 203,200 since April 2008 - to 3,947,400.

The largest over-the-month increase occurred in Educational & Health Services (+4,100). The largest decrease was manufacturing (-4,600).

The next unemployment update is scheduled for Friday, May 29, when the county unemployment rates for the month of April will be released.

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

When a series of recent budget proposals for Chowan County suggested cuts to a number of county services, few of those changes drew more fire than a proposal for eliminating its senior citizens nutrition programs and another for cutting funding for the county's senior center all together.

But with an initial budget request of over \$190,000, excluding the cost of its space in the county-owned Swain building and the lack of any federal or state mandate to provide senior services at all, the center was an attractive

place to look for cuts.

After trimming its budget request by \$61,000 to \$129,000, most of the center's funding seems safe for now, though the commissioners are still reviewing the county budget.

Connie Parker, the center's director, hopes the day never comes when the county's elderly have to do without the support her program provides.

Probably the best known of the center's services are its nutrition programs, which Parker said include home delivered and congregate (served at the center) meals.

The center doesn't prepare food for its clients. That is

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VERNON FUESTON/THE CHOWAN HERALD

Virginia Byrum receives instruction on using a stationary bicycle from the senior center's director, Connie Parker.

## Senior Center continues providing during crunch

By Vernon Fueston  
Staff Writer

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