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Wednesday, June 24, 2009

Open Door Church hosts food giveaway

Traffic calming to be implemented B1

Post 40 junior league on a winning streak

FRIENDS, FOOD AND FUN AT FESTIVAL



WILLIAM MILLER

Former Platters star Milton Bullock entertained hundreds Saturday as the headliner for the 11th annual Community Music and Water Festival at Colonial Park.

Sweltering heat did not give reason to skip annual festival on Edenton Bay

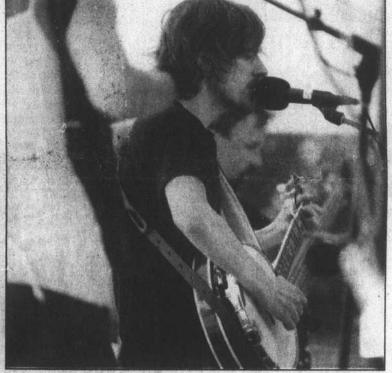
"I think it's a good idea to do this," said DaQuil Alexander, "to just get everybody together for a good time." His brother, DaQuin, chimed in, "I think it's a great idea, to let people get away from the streets."

"I think it's just a fun experience, being here," said Harvey Parker.

"I think it's a great way for people to get together and just have some fun," said Jy'Saun Phelps.

"This is great. We especially love the entertainment," said Angela and Craig Bollenberg of Carrollton, Va. as they listened to headliner Milton Bullock "To Each His Own," in honor of all the fathers in the audience.





Above, Tometila Mata of Winfall looks over prints on sale at the Chowan Arts Council's table during the festival Saturday. At right, musician Danny Daughtridge was one of the many acts that performed for the crowds during the day. Meanwhile, water lovers sailed, kayaked and paddled (with or without) the Periauger.

Food for everyone

Applications up for food stamps as recession deepens **By Vernon Fueston**

Staff Writer

Food stamp usage has increased in Chowan County by 18 percent over the last 12 months, according to figures from the county's department of social services.

Last June the county carried 1,086 food stamp case files covering 2,295 persons. That number has increased to 1,286 cases covering 2,675 people this month according to Cheri Blount, the county's food stamp coordinator.

"It's the economy, that's the number one thing," Blount said of the increase. "Jobs are closing down and utilities are going up. Its just the economy, that's all."

Blount said applications for food stamps have increased even faster than the number of food stamp recipients. She said hard-pressed families are filling out applications to see whether or not they qualify. Many of them are not accept-

Blount said the county was receiving an average of six to nine applications each day last June, or about 100 applications per month.

She said her office processed an average of 160 applications per month during October, November and December.

The number of North Carolina food stamp recipients topped 1.2 million in April of this year according to published reports. That represented a 21 percent increase over December of 2007.

In Chowan County, 18.6 percent of residents live in a family that uses food stamps Regionally, that figure compares with 14 percent in Pasquotank, eight percent in Currituck and seven percent in Camden Counties.

To qualify for food stamps, a two-person family's income must be under \$18,204. For a four-person family, the income threshold is \$29,340.

Clients line up to get their share of limited rental assistance

By Vernon Fueston Staff Writer

It was 9:30 on Friday morning and almost 100 people were waiting in a line that snaked around the Economic Improvement Council's building on Virginia Road, hoping to land a spot on a waiting list for government housing as-

sistance. Inside a tiny, packed foyer, about 10 people waited. All eyes were on the locked a glass door that lead to offices where EIC employees were taking applications.

Tempers were running

"Are you from the newspaper?" one woman asked. "I hope you're going to write about this and how the economy stinks. Somebody needs

The EIC takes applications



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for section eight housing assistance as funding comes available from the government, something that happens

infrequently and irregularly. With stretched federal and state budgets, the last funds the group received came in either January or February, said Horace Reid, an occupancy specialist with the council.

With such a long time between funding checks, most of the information gathered on the previous applications was now pretty much worthless, he said. Too many family's situations have changed.

So the EIC starts a new list and gives out assistance on a first-come-first-served basis.

He said there is plenty of

"With the downturn in the economy like it is, more and more people are finding they need assistance," Reid said as he waived a driver through to an empty parking space.

Reid had to pause his explanation. A manger from the gas company next door was telling him that a tow truck would remove any non-customers from the neighboring



Horace Reid, an occupancy specialist with the Economic Improvement Council, attempts to direct traffic in the council's parking lot as nearly 100 applicants wait to apply for a slot on a Section 8 housing assistance waiting list. If accepted, the applicants will wait an average of six to 18 months to learn if the government will pay all or part of their rent.

parking lot.

He said the council handles applications from Chowan and nine other neighboring counties. When funds come available, the council advertises and puts announcements out in the community for applicants to come in on a given day. Reid said that in better

council might bring about 60 or 70 applications dribbling in to its office between the hours of nine and three.

But with so many people lined up as the doors opened, there was no way of determining the number of applicants they might process.

A flier from the council times and with more even advised applicants to come

funding, a call from the to either the EIC's office in Manteo or Edenton bringing proof of income, birth certificates and social security cards for all family members and photo ID's for any family

members over 18. All adults in a household had to be present and guardianship papers were required

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Business booms in hard times

By Vernon Fueston Staff Writer

While many of Chowan County's key industries and businesses are struggling during a vicious recession, one of the counties largest employers is actually expand-

As the economy slows, new debtor referrals are up for Applied Business Systems, an Edenton debt collection firm that employees 40 workers.

The company works mainly to recover medical bills for hospitals and doctors. even with the increased business, the recession has not been a bonanza for ABS.

Since last summer, those accounts have increased by 18 percent. But the company only charges its customers when it collects money for

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