



Deputy honored as officer of the year

From staff reports

Deputy Sheriff "Scooter" Basnight was teary-eyed and speechless as he was honored as the 2009 Chowan County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year Thursday evening.

Surrounded by 100 of his closest friends and emergency services personnel, Basnight was described as gentle, kind, consistent, dependable and humble.

Basnight credited the grace of God for allowing him to accomplish so much in the field in just 12 short years. Community involvement, professionalism and moral character are among

the traits considered for the honor.

"If you need me, I will come out," is a phrase commonly heard by Basnight's working comrades. His dedication and skill on the job, with the help of his K-9 Rico, were said to be unquestionable.

Among the other honorees at the 39th annual Chowan County Emergency Services Appreciation Banquet were Deputy Kenneth Miles White as the Chowan-Edenton Optimist Club Friend of the Youth; Capt. Gary L. Swanner as the Fireman of the Year; Angela Owens Hassel as the EMT of the Year.

Special recognition was given to 20-plus-year veteran magistrate and 27-year veteran firefighter Carlton Jackson, who will retire from the county this year.

"After being up all hours of the night for 48 years, it's time to stay home," Jackson said as the crowd gave him a standing ovation.

State Rep. Tim Spear, D-Washington, was the guest speaker for the American Legion Post 40-sponsored event. Spear spoke about recent House bill activities that affect emergency responders, such as the qualified youth firefighter act, accredited intra-county

emergency management teams and enforcement of search and rescue animals' rights.

"Nine-eleven changed America," Spear said. "That day we came together and recognized not only the law enforcement officers but all emergency responders."

Spear, who began his career in law enforcement said, "I've had the assaults, the ups and downs. I got the T-shirt 'been there, done that'. It is a pleasure to be your voice in Raleigh."

The nearly two-hour event concluded with a meet-and-greet with the attendees and honorees.



CHOWAN HERALD PHOTO BY EARLNE WHITE

Deputy Sheriff "Scooter" Basnight was speechless as he was honored as the Chowan County Law Enforcement Officer of the Year.

A light of hope



STAFF PHOTOS BY BRETT A. CLARK

Josh Brown, 18, Chelsea Krahenbill, 17, and Brianna Cornelius, 18, who sang the song "I'm OK" in the program, listen to closing remarks, Thursday during Albemarle Hopeline's 2nd-Annual Edenton-Chowan Candlelight Vigil at the Edenton waterfront.



Director of Albemarle Hopeline, Pat Youngblood, gives "Thoughts and Reflections." Left: Spectators sit with candles lit.

Insurance agent charged with embezzlement

From staff report

Joseph Preston Alligood, 32, 762 Okisko Road, Elizabeth City, was arrested last week and charged with 13 counts of embezzlement by an insurance agent, according to the N.C. Department of Insurance.

An independent agent,

To report suspected fraud

Call the Department of Insurance Criminal Investigations Division at 919-807-6840.

Also, information is at www.ncdoi.com

Alligood's insurance agency in Edenton is now closed. He owned his agency from 2007 to 2008.

According to the investigation, Alligood allegedly submitted insurance premium

paperwork on behalf of new customers, but always with some missing information. When the insurance company returned the premium paperwork, Alligood allegedly kept the refund. Alligood is accused of embezzling at least \$9,564.

Alligood was processed by the Chowan County Sheriff's Office and was placed under a \$36,000 unsecured bond. He is scheduled for trial in late January.

The Department of Insurance employs 20 sworn law enforcement officers dedicated to investigating claims

of insurance fraud. So far in 2009, these criminal investigators have seen more than 241 cases successfully closed with more than \$9.7 million in restitution and recoveries, 67 criminal convictions and 123 arrests and 92 cases pending in court.

An estimated 10 cents of every dollar paid in premiums goes toward the payment of fraudulent claims. To report suspected fraud, contact the Department of Insurance Criminal Investigations Division at 919-807-6840.

Callers may remain anonymous.

250 people vote early in election

From staff report

About 250 local residents have cast ballots so far in one-stop voting for the Nov. 2 election.

A total of 3,406 citizens who reside in the city limits of Edenton are eligible to vote in the non-partisan, municipal election.

"I think it's going well," said Board of Elections Supervisor Rebecca Lowe. "The contested race that we have is bringing people out."

The contested race Lowe referred to is to determine who will serve as councilman-at-large on the Edenton Town Council.

Currently, that seat is held by Jerry Parks. Parks is being challenged by political

newcomers George Grother and Bob Quinn.

Lowe said that many people are attracted to the idea of one-stop voting to avoid having to stand in line on Election Day.

"I don't think it takes them very long this way," she said. "Maybe two or three minutes."

The board of elections office has mailed 17 requested absentee ballots, seven of which were sent to military personnel stationed overseas.

"They have until five o'clock on November 2 for the ballots to be back in our office," Lowe said. "They can be returned by mail or hand-delivered but we have to have them back by then."

Former Chowan official charged

Gardner arrested on three drug charges

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

A probable cause hearing for former Chowan County Commissioner Bill Gardner Jr. on a felony drug possession charge has been moved to Superior Court.

A court date has not yet been scheduled. Gardner is being represented by Edenton attorney Hackney High, from the law firm of High & Crowe LLP.

The action came during a first appearance in Chowan District Court Tuesday morning before Judge Grafton Beamon of Elizabeth City.

A court official said related misdemeanor charges against Gardner would likely be heard in December or January, but no date has been set.

Gardner, 43, was arrested Oct. 8 and charged with felony possession of cocaine,

misdemeanor possession of marijuana and drug paraphernalia, an arrest report stated.

Gardner's arrest came after Chowan County Sheriff's Deputy Larry Ambrose pulled over Gardner's car on Country Club Drive shortly before 11 p.m.

Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said Ambrose took the action because he suspected the driver of the vehicle of being under the influence of alcohol or drugs.

Goodwin added that Ambrose found a white, powdery substance in the car, along with marijuana and drug paraphernalia.

The report also stated that Gardner was in possession of a handgun at the time of his arrest, however, he was not charged for having the weapon.

Goodwin said that the white substance found in Gardner's vehicle had been forwarded to the SBI for analysis.

Gardner served District 2 on the Chowan County Board of Commissioners from 2004-08. Current commission board chair Eddy Goodwin defeated Gardner's re-election bid in the May 2008 Republican primary.



Gardner



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Antitrypsin deficiency is an inherited condition that increases the risk for certain types of lung diseases, especially among those who use tobacco.

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