

Actions deplete
Aces' wrestling
ranks Page 8A

Read Letters
to Santa
Pages 1B-10B

Schools to seek Race to Top funds

By Rebecca Bunch
Staff Writer

During a special meeting Thursday the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education voted unanimously to join other school systems in the state by seeking funds associated with the federal "Race to the Top" initiative.

Thursday's impromptu meeting was necessary so the school district could beat the Jan. 5 deadline for application submissions. To be considered for the federal funding, the school board is required to submit a memorandum of understanding (MOU) to the state with the signatures of Superintendent Allan Smith, Ricky Browder, board chairman, and Beth Gagnon, local chapter president of the North Carolina Association of Educators.

As of Thursday, Gagnon had not yet heard from her



Smith

See RACE on Page 2A

County to reap Rural Center grants

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Chowan County and the town of Edenton stand to benefit from a series of grants, courtesy of the North Carolina Rural Center.

The Rural Center announced Thursday that the agency will award \$5 million among 34 grants spread across the state, part of an effort to create jobs and improve community development in rural areas. Another initiative behind the grant is to provide access to clean water or upgrade wastewater systems.

"It's part of an ongoing effort to improve the rural counties in North Carolina," said Garnet Bass, director of communications for the center. "The purpose of the grants is to create jobs in areas that have been hit hard economically."

Grant proceeds were made possible by appropriations of the N.C. General Assembly and voter-approved bonds. The Rural Center's board of

See GRANT on Page 3A



6 89076 44813 0

©2009 The Chowan Herald
All Rights Reserved

Peace on earth



BRETT A. CLARK/THE DAILY ADVANCE

Top: Boys dressed as shepherds sit around a fire as participants in the "Angels and the Shepherds" Christmas scene at Center Hill Baptist Church's panorama called "The Greatest Gift, Sunday."



BRETT A. CLARK/THE DAILY ADVANCE

Right: This scene is titled "Jesus and the Children," one of several scenes in Center Hill Baptist Church's panorama held Sunday at the church.

Ex-con: Inmates need 2nd chance

Whitehurst hopes to open halfway homes

By DIANA MAZZELLA
The Daily Advance

When an inmate is released from Pasquotank Correctional Institution, he leaves with a set of clothes, an in-state bus ticket and \$50. That's not a lot to try and start a new life with, particularly when you're at the bottom of the hire list and the world is much changed from when you were first locked up.

Darren Whitehurst knows first hand just how hard it is to start over after spending time in prison. A former college baseball player, Whitehurst spent 10 years incarcerated for drug-related offenses after getting hooked on crack cocaine.

While in prison, Whitehurst earned a degree in counseling from East Carolina University. Today, he's a car salesman at Toyota of Elizabeth City, a minister at Saunders Grove Missionary Baptist Church and owns his own lawn-care business.

Whitehurst, 42, is far from the typical former

See WHITEHURST on Page 2A



JUSTIN FALLS/THE DAILY ADVANCE

Darren Whitehurst, associate pastor of Saunders Grove Missionary Baptist Church, seen in this photo Monday, Dec. 14, is helping to start halfway houses in Martin and Chowan counties for former prison inmates.

See FUNDING on Page 3A



CHOWAN HERALD PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Linda A. Carlisle, secretary of the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources (left), joins Madison Phillips, historian and volunteer, on the porch of the Roanoke River Lighthouse. Phillips took Carlisle on a tour of the 18th century structure during her first visit to Edenton, Thursday.

Schools net dropout prevention grants

Edenton-Chowan receives third grant

By Kristin Pitts
Staff Writer

Local school districts that fall below the state's average graduation rate have been awarded grants that area superintendents hope will deter at-risk students from

dropping out.

The Edenton-Chowan and Perquimans school districts both received \$175,000 grants from the North Carolina Committee on Dropout Prevention.

The Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Public Schools received \$65,000.

On average, North Carolina schools graduate 71.7 percent of their students,

according to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction's Web site. Edenton-Chowan, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank and Perquimans all fell below that rate for the 2008-09 academic year.

According to DPI, Edenton-Chowan's graduation rate was 70.6 percent, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank's was 69.3 percent and Perquimans' was 64.4 percent.

Although this January will mark the first year that Elizabeth City-Pasquotank will benefit from the grant, this will be Edenton-Chowan's third dropout prevention grant, and Perquimans' second.

Edenton-Chowan Superintendent Allan Smith and Perquimans Superintendent

See DROPOUT on Page 3A

"Come Join Us As We Celebrate
Our Lord's Birth"

ST. PAUL'S, 101 W. CHURCH ST.
Father Thomas M. Rickenbaker, Rector

ST. PAUL'S EPISCOPAL CHURCH

invites you to their

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES

5:30 PM CHILDREN'S SERVICE

10:30 PM SPECIAL CHRISTMAS MUSIC

11:00 PM CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION