

## Educator files EEOC complaint

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

A former school administrator has filed a complaint with the Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) amid allegations that school leaders have derailed her career after repeated favorable evaluations.

Derek Felton claims his wife, Mary Felton, has been the victim of bullying and harassment as a form of retaliation after she complained about being passed over for a promotion and subsequently demoted. After first working for the Edenton-Chowan school system as an assistant principal for John A.

Holmes High School for four years, Mary Felton was reassigned to Chowan Middle School as a guidance counselor.

"(Superintendent Allan Smith) demoted my wife from administration," Derek Felton said. "He demoted her without due process." He declined to discuss

the specific complaint filed with the EEOC, citing an ongoing investigation.

Personnel confidentiality prohibits school administrators from discussing personnel matters.

The Feltons have alleged a series of complaints in a March 4 letter to the school board, specifically charges of repeated forms of ha-

arrassment for the past eight months. Those charges are aimed at Smith and Michelle Maddox.

Hackney High, attorney for the school system, sent a March 12 response to Derek Felton indicating that he would investigate.

"Although the Board of Education has serious questions as to whether

you have standing to file a complaint under Board policies 5125 and 5130, I will investigate your complaints," High wrote.

High also asked for any supporting documentation, adding that the probe would be conducted within 15 days of the complaint.

See EEOC, 4A

## It's a Clean Sweep



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Volunteers joined Boy Scout Troop 164 and the Chowan Edenton Environmental Group on Saturday as part of the Clean Sweep of Edenton. They spent half of the day picking up litter throughout town.

## National Guard claims state, region honors

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

The N.C. Army National Guard here in Edenton is a finalist for the U.S. Army Award for Maintenance Excellence after earning top honors in the state and region.

Already earning first place in North Carolina and a region that includes nine Southern states as well as Puerto Rico and the Virgin Islands, Edenton's Company A 690th BSB National Guard Armory is on the threshold of national recognition as one of three finalists. Military brass recently descended onto Edenton to conduct an inspection to determine if the local armory would advance toward the Army's top honor. National honors will be announced in June.

"They're looking at unit readiness and our involvement in the community," said Lt. Carrie Peterson.

Armory personnel had been furiously working to prepare for the inspection. While only two unit members can be found daily at the facility, 71 soldiers conduct

See HONORS, 4A

## Consultant: Increase water rates

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

By the summer of 2012, the town of Edenton should increase its water rate, according to a consultant's recommendation.

Cavanaugh & Associates made the recommendation at the March 9 Town Council meeting. The firm had been requested to conduct a water audit and rate study in cooperation with the American Water Works Association.

Will Jernigan presented the study's findings on behalf of the firm at the board meeting.

Jernigan said that based on current indicators, if the town fails to adopt what he termed "uniform, gentle, gradual" increases, down the road it will find its expenses outweighing its revenues.

As a result, the town's

ability to fund capital improvement projects would be adversely affected.

The result, he said, would be "rate shock" for utility customers with a huge jump in rates required to keep the town from operating in the red.

"We definitely want to avoid rate shock," said Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton.

Jernigan recommended that the town adopt a plan that would allow it to gradually raise the water use rate for residential customers from \$6.35 to \$7.70 per month.

A similar increase for large-scale users would also need to be enacted, Jernigan said.

Jernigan said that the recommended increase was based on a conservative approach that projected flat usage and flat revenue over the

next five years, and an increase of 1.5 percent in each annually after that.

The proposed plan, in addition to enabling the town to meet capital needs, would also allow it to keep a positive fund balance, have good debt service coverage, keep its fixed and usage fees in line with other systems in its region, and maintain current revenue stability, Jernigan said.

Jernigan also discussed ways the town could make its water system more efficient.

Those strategies would include determining how much water the town was losing through such things as meter loss and theft, leakage from pipes, and inaccurate meter readings.

Councilman Steve Biggs questioned how much loss was typically the result of theft.

Jernigan said that more often loss was the result of customer meter inaccuracy.

"That's where the loss is," Jernigan said.

Recommendations in the report were for the town to utilize testing production meters, gather and analyze water data monthly and to work to improve the accuracy of customer meters.

Ongoing active leak detection was recommended in the report as a best-management practice for controlling water loss, Jernigan said.

Knighton said that the study was funded by a grant from the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center, Inc. in Raleigh.

In accordance with the terms of the grant, the town council was required to vote on adopting the findings in the report. The Council unanimously adopted the findings.



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Lt. Carrie Peterson steps out of the cab of a military vehicle as Capt. Neely Mahoney takes notes. Soldiers at the local National Guard Armory were preparing for an inspection.

## Health assessment is under way in Chowan County

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

Eighty randomly chosen Chowan County residents



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will receive special visits from health care personnel and volunteers this Friday.

The visits will be carried out between 2 p.m.-7 p.m.

They are part of an effort by Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS), area hospitals and Healthy Carolinians groups to collect informa-

tion on the health of local citizens.

Similar visits will be taking place in Bertie, Perquimans and Gates counties through March 23. Visits have already been carried out in Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties.

The information collected will be used to determine the current state of

health in the community, and what residents feel are the most needed services and programs.

The survey, which is conducted every four years to determine health trends and any needed changes in services, will consist of basic questions such as whether people feel they are getting good service locally relating to

their health care needs, according to Nancy Morgan, part-time coordinator for Three Rivers Healthy Carolinians, which serves Chowan and Bertie counties.

Some trends are already predictable, Morgan said. "For instance, we know that we are seeing a lot of diabetes in the area," she said.

"All of the information that is collected will be used in a confidential way," said Jill Jordan, education director and public information officer for ARHS. "There will be no way to identify anyone" participating in the survey.

Anyone having questions about the survey may contact Jordan at 338-4483.

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