



Budget calls for no tax increase

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

After weeks of tweaking, the Chowan County manager submitted a balanced 2010-11 budget at nearly \$16 million Monday night that requires no property tax increase and replenishes the county's depleted reserves.

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners accomplished a few of its fiscal goals with the budget by restoring a 40-hour workweek for county staffers. Commissioners also managed to add roughly \$400,000 to its reserves, an unsuccessful feat in recent years.

The new budget, howev-

er, is not without sacrifices. Commissioners refused to contribute \$600,000 to the Emergency Medical Services enterprise fund to help the department pay for such needs as an ambulance, heart monitors, and radios.

The Edenton-Chowan school system will have to get by on less than re-

quested. Commissioners only approved to give the schools \$270,000 of its requested \$440,000 additional funding over last year's budget. Superintendent Allan Smith said he wanted to restore the previous year's teacher pay cuts.

Commissioner Keith Nixon informed Smith that the schools could have

another \$50,000 toward its request by eliminating the elementary school resource officer. That funding would then have to be removed from the sheriff's budget.

School leaders seemed divided over whether to eliminate the SRO. In the end, the school board preferred that commissioners

make the decision. It has yet to be discussed by commissioners.

Commissioners, previously approved to fund the schools' capital projects with the proceeds from the land transfer tax.

College of the Albemarle will not receive its full

See BUDGET, 4A

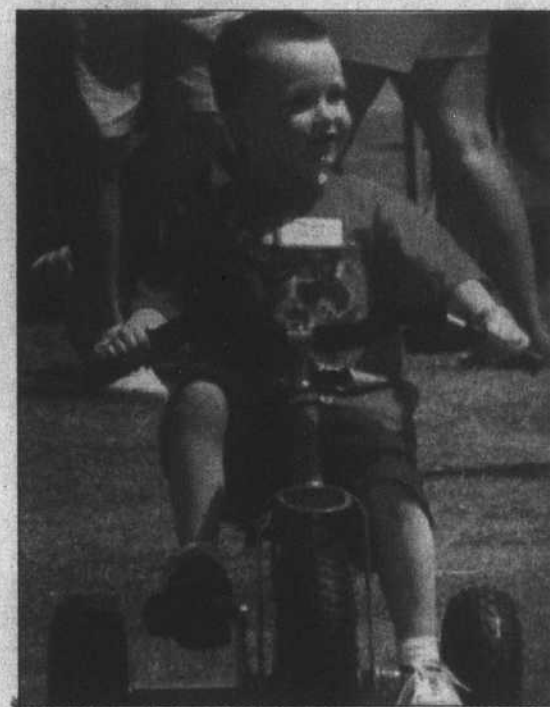
Pig souey!



SUSAN PEIRCE-O'NEILL PHOTOS

One of the most creative aspects of the cook-off at this year's Hog Fest was the Prettiest Pig competition. The winning entry, My Sweet Hog Cookin', was created by Michael Hemenway of Newport.

Cook-off goes hog wild with barbecue spices



Stephen Toney of Edenton won first place in the tricycle and tractor races in the 3-4 year old age group at this year's Hog Fest.

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Eastern North Carolina residents love their barbecue vinegar-based, but that didn't stop them from trying other tangy varieties during Saturday's 4th Annual Hog Fest.

About 70 area residents tasted 20 cup-size portions of barbecue prepared by cooking teams from North Carolina, Virginia, Florida and Maryland in the Kansas City Barbecue Society (KCBS)-endorsed competition.

Sampling new and different flavors made it interesting according to Buddy Oliver of Edenton, who brought his son and grandson with him to the taste-tasting.

"You could definitely tell which ones were cooked by people who weren't from the area," Oliver said. "They were a little sweeter than what we're

used to but it was all good."

Oliver said he didn't try any that made him want to give up his taste for vinegar-based seasoning.

"I guess we're just a little bit spoiled by that," Oliver said, laughing. "And I still think it's the best."

Fellow judge Ronnie Rountree of Edenton said he enjoyed his first-time experience tasting entries too but wished there had been more vinegar-based entries and less sweet-tasting ones.

"I have to admit, the ones I threw out (as possible winners) were the sweet-tasting ones," Rountree said sheepishly. "I wish we'd had a lot more vinegar-based entries to choose from."

When asked if he'd like to be a judge next year, Rountree said he might enter the competition instead.

"If I can get my ducks in a row, I'd like to compete

See COOK-OFF, 8A

Board rejects budget pleas from EMS

Poor collections seen as problem

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

In a 4-3 split vote, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners refused to fund an Emergency Medical Services' request for next year's budget that would fund an ambulance, cardiac monitors, a new radios.

Amid calls for the replacement of dated equipment, the board rejected the request to contribute to the EMS enterprise fund from the county's general fund.

"EMS is being run

as an enterprise fund, asking for a contribution from the general fund, that's not how it's supposed to work," Commissioner Kenny Goodwin said during Wednesday night's work session.

Operated as an enterprise fund, EMS should be self-sustaining. This year's budget, however, has exceeded department revenues by slightly more than \$600,000 and is in need of county funding.

The majority of commissioners were again critical of the low performing EMS, particularly its costly non-emergency transport service that collects

See EMS, 2A

Budget cuts will cost 8 teaching jobs

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Facing the possible loss of more teaching positions next year, the school system is appealing to county commissioners and the governor for relief.

Superintendent Allan Smith is requesting that commissioners consider fully funding the school system's 2010-2011 local current expense budget request.

Smith made the content of the letters public during Monday night's school board meeting. He said that failing some relief

from funding cuts it appeared eight teaching positions could be lost.

The number of teaching jobs lost could reach 13, Smith said, if not for the expected retirement of some personnel. He also reminded his board that 24 positions in the school system were lost last year because of state and local budget cuts. Remaining staff had their salaries cut by 2 percent.

In a letter dated May 3, Smith wrote, "(Our) request for the allocation of \$3,506,956 does not include any

See SCHOOLS, 3B

Man who killed wife six years ago strikes plea deal

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Nearly six years after he fatally shot his wife, Cornelius A. Leary

reached a plea deal Monday for voluntary manslaughter.

One day before a Chowan County jury was to be selected to hear his first-degree murder trial, Leary, 45, struck a plea bargain with prosecutors that call for the defendant to serve between 15 and 19 years in prison, courts records show. Leary is cur-

rently in his sixth year of a 12-year prison stint in New York. Monday's sentence will be served after his current term expires.

Leary was extradited to Chowan County Superior Court Monday to prepare for trial.

Leary killed 45-year-old Anita Leary on Aug. 7, 2004. She lay dead in her Sandy Ridge home for five

days before her body was found.

Anita Leary was a popular waitress who worked at Snooker's Grill and Pizza Hut in Edenton. When she failed to show for work, authorities were contacted. Initial checks at her home found the residence secured, Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said. Officers later entered the

locked home and found Anita Leary's body. She had been shot with a .22 caliber gun.

Cornelius Leary was a suspect early during the investigation after he fled to New York.

It was in New York City where Cornelius Leary was arrested on Aug. 18 after he jumped a turnstile at a subway station, re-

records show. When officers confronted him, Cornelius Leary pulled a weapon - a .22-caliber handgun.

The couple married five months before the fatal shooting. Before they met, Cornelius Leary had been released from prison after serving time for common law robbery. He had served 11 years of a 20-year sentence.



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