



Smith answers back-to-school Q & A

From staff reports

Next Wednesday marks the start of the 2010-11 school year. Like other school systems across the state, Edenton-Chowan school leaders have to do more with less. Between an economic climate that has school systems cinching their fiscal belts and Chowan County's own set of financial woes, the Edenton-Chowan schools brace to launch a new year with plenty of need for academic attention. Edenton-Chowan's annual budget stands at \$22.3 million for an enrollment of approximately 2,400 students from pre-K to 12. Some 63 percent of

those students receive free or reduced lunch. The system employs a staff of 199.

In preparation of the new school year, the Chowan Herald posed a Q & A to Superintendent Allan Smith in an effort to enlighten students and parents of the challenges they too will embark as Edenton-Chowan schools pursue academic excellence during difficult times.

Chowan Herald: What can students and parents do to help make a successful transition from summer break to a return to school?

Smith: Getting off to a good start for the new school year can be very important in influencing



Smith

is important to schedule doctor checkups early to ensure that children have the necessary vaccinations and health records in place as required by their schools or if they may be planning to play team sports. Make copies of all your child's health and emergency information for reference. Mark your calendar and

check the schools' websites for important dates and other information - especially back-to-school or open house nights. Be sure to attend so that you and your child can meet the teacher and visit the classroom and school prior to walking in on the first day. Meeting the teacher, locating classrooms, lockers, etc. will help your child feel more confident on the first day.

Review all information and other materials sent home by the school as soon as it arrives. Often there is important information about your child's classes, schedules, activities and other important topics

that will be sent home via the book bag. Check your child's book bag nightly for homework, notes and other information that may be sent home by the teacher. Contact your child's teacher or school with any questions you may have. Be sure to read and confirm dress code and behavior guidelines for each school.

Re-establish bedtime and mealtime routines at least one week before school starts so and talk with your child about the benefits of school routines in terms of needing more rest and not becoming over tired or overwhelmed by school work and other activities. Designate a place to do

homework.

CH: As school districts across the state struggle with adapting to budget woes, what concerns (short-term & long-term) do you have about the impact of financial shortfalls on our school district? What steps have been taken to address these concerns?

S: There are numerous concerns about the impact of the current budgetary challenges. The sudden and deep reduction of local revenues, complicated by severe cuts in state funds over the past couple of years has required drastic measures by the Board

See SMITH, 7A

Levisy to leave Boys, Girls Club

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

The Edenton Boys & Girls Club is losing its leader to a promotion.

Jerome Levisy, chief professional officer (CPO) for the local club, informed his board of directors of his resignation on July 20. His last day on the job here will be Aug. 27.



Levisy

Levisy is leaving to become CPO for Boys & Girls Clubs of North Central North Carolina, headquartered in Henderson.

In his new role, he will oversee club activities in Franklin, Vance and Granville counties as well as a new club in Warren County that is scheduled to open later this year.

See LEVISY, 3A

Council toughens housing standards

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Owners of deteriorating residences inside the town of Edenton will be held more accountable for repairs or risk legal action.

At its Aug. 10 meeting, the Town Council unanimously adopted the Prevention of Demolition by Neglect ordinance encompassing the historic district that pertains to homes and commercial buildings.

Demolition by neglect refers to a situation whereby a property owner has allowed the condition of a home in the historic district to suffer significant deterioration.

That ordinance addresses the enforcement of repairs that need to be made to such exterior features

See HOUSING, 3A



Rise of the machines



PHOTO BY RITCHIE STARNES

FIRST mentors Megan Cherry, (left black T-shirt) and Quinn Wagner, right (kneeling) show a group Thursday at Sheperd-Pruden Library the inner workings of a robot designed by high schoolers. Efforts are under way to bring a team to Holmes High School for next spring's competition.

Robots key to STEM academics

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Step aside jocks. There's a new brand of competition vying for a spot at Holmes High School.

In an effort to promote science and technology among local high schoolers, there's a grassroots movement to start a FIRST (For Inspiration and Recognition of Science and Technology) Robotics Competition (FRC) here that would pit the innovative talents of Holmes' students against other high schoolers. Organizers call FRC a "varsity sport for the mind." It combines the thrill of sport with the

demands of science and technology that creates a simulation of "real world" engineering.

"Knowing the need for more science and technology in Edenton, I thought it would be a good marriage," said local resident John Becker who assembled a group of local leaders with FIRST representatives last Thursday at the Sheperd-Pruden Library.

Participating students must adhere to strict rules, scarce resources and time limits as they prepare to build a robot that can handle an assigned task - one that varies along with the accompanying rules. Students also have to raise funds, design a

team "brand" while developing teamwork skills essential for overall success.

FRC stages games that students must program a robot to adapt for play and control by automated remote. The robots, which have weight and expense limits, are designed and built from a supplied kit within six weeks by a team of roughly 25 high school teenagers along with mentors, educators and volunteers. Competitions are held in March and April.

"You get power tools and sharp objects. It's pretty awesome," said Megan Cherry, a FRC alumni and mentor who now attends Massachusetts

Institute of Technology.

Dean Kamen is the founder of FIRST. He's an inventor and entrepreneur as well as an advocate for science and technology.

Part of FIRST's overall objective is to expose students to science and technology that might not otherwise consider the career path. FRC indirectly promotes engineering for both colleges and industries. To further entice students to the areas of study, FIRST has designated \$12 million for academic scholarships.

Statistics show that only 6 percent of U.S. college graduates are

See ROBOTICS, 4A

Championship run ends, shortfall continues

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Although a postseason surge paid dividends for the Edenton Steamers' quest for financial survival, Saturday night's defeat for the Pettitt Cup Championship concludes the season amid a \$33,000 fundraising shortfall.

Defending champions Forest City took two of three from the Steamers in a 5-0 decisive game. Despite the disappointing loss, team leaders must regroup and continue their run at fiscal solvency. Over the last three weeks, the Steamers have managed to raise roughly \$17,000 of their \$50,000 goal.

In addition to raising awareness of the team's financial plight, the Steamers' strong playoff showing produced added revenue that could add to the donation totals.

"We brought in about \$15,000 that we didn't anticipate in revenues," said Katy Ebersole, team president. "We had great crowds, particularly when you don't have time to promote the games."

Expenses have yet to be deducted from the playoff proceeds, such as travel expenses, Ebersole said.

Teams qualifying for playoffs at their home fields is a new policy enacted last

See STEAMERS, 4A



PHOTO BY PAT GREICINGER

The Edenton Steamers (Teal) congratulate the Forest City Owls for their Coastal Plain League Pettitt Cup Championship victory Saturday night. Edenton lost two out of three to the Owls en route to a runnerup finish to the 2010 season.