

CHOWAN HERALD



Halloween costume kids flock to downtown for Friday's safe, trick-or-treat, 5A 50¢

482-4418

Wednesday, November 3, 2010

Board narrowly hires Parker for manager

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

In a 4-3 split vote, the Chowan County Board of Commissioners narrowly approved hiring Paul Parker as its new county manager.

Commissioners Kenny Goodwin, Keith Nixon and Emmett Winborne voted against hiring Parker. Only Goodwin explained his dissenting vote during Monday night's board meeting. "We spent a lot of money

advertising the position and there are a few applicants that I would like to have interviewed," Goodwin said. "The result may have been the same, but I'd like to have interviewed them nonetheless."

Parker had been serving as interim county manager since July 1 after Peter Rascoe left to become town manager of Southern Shores. Since his arrival, Parker said he wanted the permanent job and would

take it for the same rate of pay as interim at \$75,000 annually.

Parker said Tuesday that he does not interpret the split decision as a vote of no confidence.

"I don't feel that way at all," Parker said. "I think Kenny (Goodwin) ex-



Parker

plained it. They voted with their principles and that has been to use their money wisely."

Chowan County spent roughly \$3,500 on its county manager search and received 70 applicants from both the private and public sector. None were interviewed for the job, unlike the case with the county's interim search, Parker said. Parker assisted with the county manager search process as he has with other

job openings.

Despite the expense of the manager search, Chowan hires Parker at the same salary of \$75,000, making him the lowest paid manager in the region. Only county managers in Gates (\$78,930), Camden (\$80,902), and Perquimans (\$82,470) counties are paid comparable salaries. Parker has also been provided free rent at a county-owned house.

Parker previously served as an assistant county man-

ager and thrice as interim county manager in Pender County.

Although Parker's hiring was not official until Monday night's vote, news spread throughout the community over the last week that he would get the job. Parker's wife has been seeking a job here and the couple has been shopping for a house, sources said. Efforts to reach Nixon and Winborne were unsuccessful.

Nicole damages millponds, crops

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Although Chowan County seemingly escaped the wrath of Tropical Storm Nicole, floodwaters from the deluge washed away parts of the area's millponds and crops.

Federal Emergency Management Agency officials inspected Bennett and Dillard's millponds and projected damages to be around \$120,000. Although estimated losses are not yet available for damaged crops, early projections show significant losses for cotton and peanuts.

Floodwaters washed away surroundings grounds after levees broke, also damaging boat landings and structures at the parks.

It may be weeks before Chowan County officials learn when it may receive compensation to make the necessary repairs. After determining the preliminary damage assessment, state emergency management officials will confer with FEMA for a declaration and funding, according to County Manager Paul Parker.

Chowan has no plans of making any repairs until it receives funding, Parker said. Once the county receives funding, there will only be enough to make the repairs.

"They (FEMA) will only pay for bringing the place back to a condition before the damage occurred," Parker said.

Meanwhile, the county has cordoned off the damaged area to warn visitors of the hazard. "We didn't want to



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

More than 14 inches of rain from Tropical Storm Nicole washed away portions of the grounds at Bennett's Millpond as seen here.



close the park. People still want to fish," Parker said.

As far as the storm's damage to crops, that estimate is still a work in progress.

"We still don't have a firm grasp because the crops are still in the ground," said Heather Lifsey, county extension director. "We really want to know until we get every-

thing out of the ground. "Anytime you get 14 inches of rain in that span of time (two days), you're going to have damages," she added.

Early estimates suggest that cotton experienced a 30 percent loss. Lifsey said. When the storm arrived, cotton was blooming and peanuts were hanging on the vine, she added. Peanut farmers are still bringing in their crops.

"Some are not able to get 2,000 pounds an acre, which is not good," Lifsey said. Damages to sweet potatoes will not be known until after the crop is stored, Lifsey said.

While FEMA handles structural damage, agriculture is treated separately with aid coming from the Farm Services Agency, Lifsey explained.

Some farmers have crop insurance that would pay them for their loss. Other affected farmers, however, will depend on FSA. Any aid will likely come in the form of low interest loans, instead of monetary compensation, Lifsey said.

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Women shoot, rob man

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Two women have been charged in the shooting and robbery of a local man Friday night, according to the Chowan County Sheriff's Office.

Shellie Harmon, 28 of Tip Toe Road in Edenton and Heather Byrum, 32, of Happy Home Road in Tyner, have been arrested for the shooting of George Hendricks, 52. Deputies were called to Hendricks' North Broad Street home at 9:13 p.m. where they found the victim with a gunshot wound to the right shoulder, said Chief Deputy Andy Bunch.

Hendricks was taken to Chowan Hospital where he was stabilized before being transported to Pitt Memorial Hospital in Greenville where he remains, Bunch said. Hendricks is listed in serious, but stable condition, Bunch added.

The women turned

See SHOOT, 2A

Declining members pinch golf club

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Amid dwindling memberships and a fiscal pinch, the Chowan Golf and Country Club eliminated its general manager position and plans to close its dining room at month's end.

A steady decline in annual memberships prompted club officials to find ways to immediately cut expenses. By the end of November, the country club will no longer serve dinner Friday and Saturday nights or brunch on Sundays.

"We eliminated the general manager's position because of finances," said Nelson Smith, vice president of the board of directors. "We've had to cut expenses."

"We've been losing members over the last few

See CLUB, 2A

MSHC: Client received ad proof before mailing

By RITCHIE STARNES
Editor

A representative with the advertising agency that created the controversial campaign mailer that depicted Nazi re-enactors for state Rep. Tim Spear, D-Washington, said the client received a copy for final approval and before its mailing.

MSHC Partners of Washington, D.C. admits that it erred when it used

a photo of World War II German soldiers (re-enactors) instead of American troops when creating a flier for Spear. The firm had used a stock photo for one side of the ad while the flip side touted Spear as military friendly. Last Wednesday, a company representative said MSHC forwarded a proof to its client for final approval, but he did not know if the client was Spear or the N.C. Democratic Party.

"Typically, we send the ad to the client for review," said Mike Brown, a senior account executive with MSHC. "Most of the time, they focus on the text and not the photo."

"Typically, we send the ad to the client for review."

Mike Brown
Senior account executive, MSHC

"I don't know why it wasn't caught, actually," he added. "The burden, however, is not on the client."

Representatives with the state Democratic Party refused the Chowan Herald's repeated re-

quests to address its campaign ad approval process. Instead the party released a statement via email that blames MSHC.

"As our vendor stated yesterday (last Tuesday), they made an unfortunate error in their art department on this mailer," said Andrew Whalen, executive director of the N.C. Democratic Party. "We have apologized, and a follow up piece is being mailed to those who received the mail piece with the unfortunate error."

Subsequent calls by the Chowan Herald to MSHC Partners about who at the Democratic Party approved the ad and when

have gone unreturned.

Spear previously said he never saw the ad until he received it in the mail along with 10,000 other area residents. He also said that the Democratic Party handled the ad arrangements. The mailer stated that the ad had been authorized by both Spear and the N.C. Democratic Party.

On its company website, MSHC touts its campaign mailers as key to the Democrats election success in 2006 and 2008, including the presidency.

Spear also previously acknowledged that he has relied on the firm in the past.



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