



Edenton welcomes the Christmas season, 1B 50¢

State raises county's economy to Tier 2 Improved unemployment rate prompts change

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

An improved jobless rate prompted the N.C. Department of Commerce to reclassify Chowan County as a Tier 2 county for 2011.

The county was ranked Tier 1 last year based on its high jobless rate. Last October, for

example, the unemployment rate stood at 10.8 percent. This October, the rate had dropped to 9.4 percent.

Richard Bunch, executive director of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, said the news was a welcome surprise.

"It's a direct reflection on our business community be-

ing able to continue keeping people employed even in this tough economy," Bunch said.

"We're not out of the woods yet but at least we're beginning to see some light at the end of the tunnel and that's something that hasn't happened for awhile."

A reminder of how far the community still has to go came

from Ricky Coltrain, who manages the local office of the state Employment Security Commission.

"Things are still tough out there for people who are looking for work," Coltrain said.

Coltrain said that his office currently only has 21 job openings and 12 of those are for part-time positions. Not all

of those jobs, he said, are in Chowan County. His office also serves Gates and Perquimans counties.

Tier 1 counties represent the 40 most economically depressed counties in the state and tier 3 counties, the 20 least depressed; tier 2 counties represent the middle 40 counties in the state.

Tier 1 counties receive a

See ECONOMY, 6A

Collaboration seen as key to development

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Collaboration remains key to bolstering the region's tourism, especially during a sluggish economy that has the state eyeing budget cuts, according to Secretary Linda A. Carlisle, N.C. Department of Cultural Resources.

Carlisle visited Edenton last Tuesday morning while attending a Historic Albemarle Tour meeting here that included 34 representatives from 26 sites among 17 counties. The meeting served as an internal rally for the Historic Albemarle Tour as the organization continues efforts to expand on its cultural, historical, and natural sites.

"We have so many sites in a fairly concentrated area that we need that collaboration," Carlisle said. "We need to bring together all of our assets."

Connie Townsend, Historic Albemarle Tour administrative coordinator, echoed that

the group's marketing strategy lies within the power of numbers.

"We're trying to incorporate all the history that we have," Townsend said. "By us grouping together, we can get more bang for our buck."

In addition to encouragement, Carlisle challenged the Tour to increase its membership and revenue. She offered a \$5,000 matching grant to help the cause, Townsend said.

"I get more excited about helping a group that's helping themselves," said Carlisle in a meeting with the Chowan Herald.

She said projected budget cuts mean the Tour needs to become more creative with marketing its sites, particularly in the Tidewater, Va. area.

"We have so many assets here," Carlisle said. "But, how do you make that known? How do you market that - not as a specific location, but to a region?"

In 2012, the Tour will

See CARLISLE, 6A



It's beginning to look a lot like
CHRISTMAS
in Chowan County



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Edenton's Christmas tree moments after the annual lighting held Friday evening (top photo). Santa Claus listens as area children greet him at the annual tree lighting ceremony Friday night (above photo).

New commissioners take office on board

Board retains GOP chairman

From staff reports

Monday night's Chowan County Board of Commissioners meeting marked the start of a new board makeup and a familiar chairman.

Commissioners-elect Jeff Smith, John Mitchener, and Lawrence Ellis were sworn into office as outgoing commissioners Kenny

Goodwin, Jimmy Allgood, and Louis Belfield bid farewell.

"We've had to make some tough decisions along the way and I hope we made the right ones," Goodwin said.

"I do think the board is headed in the right direction," he added.

Belfield agreed that the county is poised for continued improvement.

"I think we've made

See BOARD, 4A

Candlelight Tour, parade set

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

The owners of 10 of Edenton's loveliest homes will open their doors to the public during this weekend's 29th

annual Christmas Candlelight Tour.

Tour co-chairwoman Susan Creighton said organizers have a great tour planned with eight of the 10 homes appearing on the tour for the

first time this year.

Creighton said tremendous interest has been generated. "Pre-sales for this year's tour are larger than we've ever had," she said. "And the weather is

supposed to be just perfect with temperatures in the 50s."

In addition to the homes, the tour, which takes place this Friday

See TOUR, 2A

Town leadership nixes pursuit of trail system

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Town leaders nixed plans that Edenton would pursue



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Knighton

declined to endorse a reso-

lution that would have allowed Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton to apply for a planning grant from the N.C. Department of Transportation.

The planning grant would have enabled the town to hire a consultant to work with the Planning Board, the Recreation Advisory Board, and citizens

to come up with a plan for an accessible bicycle and walking system that would connect established and newer neighborhoods, Knighton said.

It would also have provided an opportunity for the town to work collaboratively with the county to develop a bike path and trail that would have con-

nected rural parts of the county with Edenton - for instance, from West Queen Street to the new fishing pier at the Chowan River Bridge.

Knighton noted that every time she talked with DOT about getting a bicycle path established, "they say, you need a master plan".

If funded, the town would

have received \$28,000 in grant funds and would have been required to contribute \$7,000 in matching funds.

The town had already received an endorsement from the Albemarle Commission's Rural Transportation Planning Organization in support of

See TRAIL, 3A

Friday, December 10th 8am - 6pm

Christmas gifts for men, women & children - jewelry and specialty items \$30 and UNDER!

Precious Pieces

Chowan Hospital Classrooms

A portion of these proceeds will go to Chowan Hospital's United Way Campaign.