



Butterfield warns of 'painful' cuts

Congressman to help local initiatives

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

Congressman G.K. Butterfield, D-N.C., told community leaders during a visit to Edenton last week to anticipate painful budget cuts in the year ahead. Butterfield, who stopped

in Edenton during an area swing, said that Congress has committed to cutting the federal deficit that now stands at \$14 trillion.

He said Congress is committed to cutting the budget by \$1 trillion, regardless of the impact. He said that philosophy has the support of many Americans who are tired of the government spending more than it takes in.

"A lot of people are saying, no new spending," Butterfield said.

"Please know that the future is not going to be terribly encouraging for municipalities," Butterfield added. "Tough times are ahead for those of us who are policymakers, too. But I hope that working together we (Americans) can climb out of this hole we are in."

"We've got a lot of difficult decisions to make," he continued, adding that he was trying to get input from his constituents prior to returning to Washington.

Butterfield also defended the use of stimulus funds. "I can tell you if (the American Reinvestment Act) had not passed, we would be in a depression. We are not where we would

like to be, but we are seeing some signs of improvement."

Closing the trade gap was another issue Butterfield addressed. In response to a question from Councilman Willis Privott, Butterfield said Congress needed to do everything possible to make it less appealing for American businesses to move overseas.

"We need to create dis-

incentives for American businesses to take jobs away," Butterfield said.

The problem as it currently stands, Butterfield said, is that an American company might be able to hire a Chinese worker, for example, at \$6 a day as opposed to the \$80 a day the company would have to pay an American to do the

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Chamber presents annual awards

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

Community spirit was clearly the byword at this year's Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce awards ceremony.

Held at the Chowan Golf & Country Club last Thursday evening, the ceremony honored the recipients of 5 awards — the Destination Downtown Main Street Champion; the Snooky Bond Excellence in Tourism Award; the Marvin S. Barham Humanitarian of the Year Award; William P. "Spec" Jones Volunteer of the Year Award; and the John A. Mitchener, Jr. Business Person of the Year Award.

The recipients were:



Jean Brown — recipient of the Destination Downtown Main Street Champion Award. Brown, who operates Byrum's Gift Shop, a family-owned business, was praised by Destination Downtown Edenton Director Jennifer Harriss for her dedication to promoting

See **CHAMBER, 7A**



STAFF PHOTOS BY LESLIE FOREHAND

Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce board member April Layton (top, left) presents the William P. "Spec" Jones Volunteer of the Year Award to Pat Fagan during the Chamber's annual awards ceremony, Thursday. Earl Nixon and wife Abi (bottom right) were jointly awarded the John A. Mitchener Jr. Business Person of the Year Award during the event. The Nixons are co-owners of W.E. Nixon Welding & Hardware.



Jack Evans (center) surrounded by members of the Rocky Hock Opry cast, holds the Marvin S. Barham Humanitarian of the Year Award.



Hospital's MRI facility now open

\$1.5 million Open Bore MRI replaces mobile unit

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**
Editor

Chowan Hospital began treating patients at its new \$1.5 million Open Bore Magnetic Resonance Imaging facility last Wednesday, marking the hospital's latest medical facility upgrade.

Instead of patients having to wait for the availability of a twice weekly mobile MRI unit contracted by the hospital, the recently completed free-standing imaging building will be able to handle patients daily. The open MRI is larger in diameter than a conventional MRI, thus less intimidating for those uncomfortable with tight quarters. It's also faster and provides a clearer resolution.

Jeff Sackrison, hospital president, called the addition essential for today's healthcare.

"It gives us the availability of MRI services every day, 24-7," Sackrison said. "The minute a doctor says MRI, you want it then."

"It's a tool doctors need to have in their kit to provide healthcare to a community," he added.

MRI uses a magnetic field and radio waves to create images of organs and structures inside the body. Doctors use images from the exams to make diagnoses. A patient lies on a table that slides

See **MRI, 3A**

Cheros serves last meal

Eatery closes amid sluggish economy

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**
Editor

A waterfront eatery is the latest downtown business to close in the wake of a sluggish economy.

Cheros closed its doors Thursday after eight years, marking the third Edenton business in a week to announce closings.

Owners Lisa and John Douglas declined to comment about going out of business, even as workers carried furnishings from the restaurant.

A visibly shaken Lisa Douglas darted away when asked to talk about closing the West Water Street restaurant

best known for its tasty chicken salad that had been touted in Southern Living.

News of the closing first surfaced last Monday, but when asked then, Lisa Douglas denied any plans of closing. She added, however, that an announcement would precede a closing.

Before declining comment, John Douglas said the sour economy in a town saturated with restaurants in relation to its population was too much to bear for the establishment.

He warned that other downtown businesses are teetering on a similar fate in the face of financial uncertainty.

Cheros had begun to try different remedies to jumpstart its business. Most recently, Cheros served a Sunday brunch when no other downtown restaurant was open for business.

While it appeared to have a respectable lunch crowd, evening attendance seemed to dwindle.

Several months ago, Cheros quit serving mixed drinks, opting to offer beer and wine as its only choices of alcoholic beverages.

John Douglas explained that mixed beverage sales failed to offset the cost of the state-required liquor license and tax per bottle.

Just a few weeks ago in an interview with the Chowan Herald, Lisa Douglas said there were fewer holiday parties this past holiday season.

In March 2004, Lisa Douglas lost her business partner to a sudden death. Nancy Hagan, who was a well respected caterer, died at age 44.

In addition to a closed sign, there are signs posted outside the building that housed Cheros, advertising a clearance and property sale.

Rick Ebersole, co-owner of Waterman's Grill, said that while overall sales have been down

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Planet Video, Edenton's only video store, to close

By **REBECCA BUNCH**
Staff Writer

Planet Video customers expressed disappointment after store officials announced last week that it would soon be closing.

Store manager Val Bridgett said she thought the downturn in the economy as well as competition from Netflix and Redbox had played a role in management's decision to close the store, located at the Edenton Village Shopping Center. Last Tuesday, store employees posted signs that read "store closing, everything must go."

Bridgett said no exact closing date has been set. At this point, she said, store employees are just trying to deal with a surge of customers buying everything from marked down videos to television sets and fixtures from the store.

"Everything is for sale, all of it," said Bridgett,

"I was shocked when I saw the (closing) signs. I think it's terrible. I think Redbox and Netflix are just ruining everything, and the bad economy isn't helping either."

Brenda Lawson

Regular customer of Planet Video

who marked her 10-year anniversary with the store on Jan. 13.

Customers shopping for bargains at the store said they hated to see Edenton's only video store close its doors. They also expressed concern that the announcement comes on the heels of Griggs Lumber closing, and rumors that other local businesses are experiencing financial straits that could net additional closings.

Brenda Lawson of

Edenton said she and her husband have been regular customers at Planet Video.

"I was shocked when I saw the (closing) signs," Lawson said. "I think it's terrible. I think Redbox and Netflix are just ruining everything, and the bad economy isn't helping either."

Nikki Edwards, also of Edenton, said that as a regular customer she

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