



**OBX's  
Mojo  
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headlines  
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## Officials oppose charter school cap lift

### Pupil funding concerns cited

By **REBECCA BUNCH**  
Staff Writer

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education voted unanimously at its March 7 meeting to oppose state Senate Bill 8, a plan that would lift the cap on the number of charter schools in the state and

no minimum student enrollment.

Currently, the state allows no more than 100 charter schools. The Senate bill would lift the 100-school cap and do away with the rule that requires charter schools serve a minimum of 65 students.

Citing concerns that a lifted cap would lead to a spree of charter school openings and further cloud pupil funding

at public schools, local school officials sided with the House's amended version.

The bill has been sent to the state House of Representatives after it passed its final vote in the Senate on Feb. 24 by a 33-17 vote. State Sen. Ed Jones, D-Halifax, whose district includes Chowan County, also voted against the bill.

House Bill 247, an amended version includes

a requirement that new charter schools have at least 50 students enrolled before opening; the Senate bill does not require a minimum or maximum number of students before a school can be established.

The House Education Committee is now considering both bills. A hearing was scheduled for Tuesday (after press time) at the state Legislative Office

Building in Raleigh.

In presenting the resolution to the school board, Superintendent Allan Smith said, "The charter schools bill has picked up steam; it could be on the Governor's desk soon."



Smith

Smith noted that of great concern was a provision in the Senate Bill that would remove a current enrollment requirement for charter schools.

"There is a concern that without that floor (requirement) we're going to have a proliferation of charter schools," Smith said.

The board's adopted resolution expresses concern about the potential loss of

See **SCHOOL, 2A**

## DOT plans to close N.C. 32 for new bridge



PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES

Plans call for the N.C. Department of Transportation to replace the bridge over Queen Anne Creek along N.C. 32, pictured here, during the summer of 2012. The replacement will close the stretch of road for 74 days and require emergency responders to use Hayes Plantation as a detour.

### Emergency responders to use Hayes Plantation

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**  
Editor

Motorists who depend on N.C. 32 east of downtown Edenton will need to find a 74-day detour next summer while the N.C. Department of Transportation replaces the bridge over Queen Anne Creek.

Part of DOT's Transportation Improvement Plan (TIP), the state plans to secure the lowest bidder by November for the bridge replacement, according to

Sterling Baker, DOT's division maintenance engineer. Work will begin in the summer of 2012 and after the school year concludes. By closing the road, instead of building a temporary bridge, DOT will save nearly twice as much as the costs of the new bridge.

"The road closure option saves \$1,200,000 in construction costs alone. This does not include the savings of relocating only a few power poles, obtaining much less right of way, and having far

less environmental impacts than the original option which included a temporary detour bridge," J.D. Jennings, DOT's division engineer wrote Feb. 9.

In addition to more costs, a temporary bridge for continued traffic during construction would add two more years to the project, Jennings stated.

Emergency responders and routine police patrols will be forced to use the gated-community of Hayes Plantation as an alternate

route. Plans call for a siren-activated gate at Soundside Road for emergency vehicles. Those vehicles will also be forced to use the wooden bridge entrance at Colonial Park.

The detour will also impact the Northeastern Regional Airport as well as the surrounding residential and industrial areas.

"(DOT) is aware that any closure is an inconvenience but it is a necessary hardship that we must sometimes endure," Jennings wrote.

## Bill denies transfer of electricity revenue

Edenton tax rate could increase 6 cents

By **REBECCA BUNCH**  
Staff Writer

The Edenton Town Council voiced opposition at its March 8 meeting to N.C. House Bill 117.

The bill, filed on Feb. 16 by Reps. Leo Daughtry, R-Johnston, and Rep. William Wainwright, D-Craven, would deny municipalities the right to transfer revenue from its electric systems to their general fund.

A public hearing will be held today (Wednesday) in the N.C. General Assembly in Raleigh.

Mayor Roland Vaughan and Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton plan to attend.

See **HOUSE BILL, 4A**



Vaughan

## Group protests Lamb raise

By **REGGIE PONDER**  
Staff Writer

Former Pasquotank County Commissioner Zee Lamb is at the center of a controversy in Bertie County over his salary as the county manager there.

Lamb, who served as a county commissioner in Pasquotank from the late 1980s through the mid-'90s, received a salary increase of more than \$42,000 in a contract renewal in August 2009, according to Bertie citizens who have organized to protest the raise.

Last week the citizens' group

See **LAMB, 4A**

## Robotics team races for donations

By **RITCHIE E. STARNES**  
Editor

After six weeks of six-day workweeks aimed at building a robot and a

minibot, the John A. Holmes & J.C. Penny Team No. 3493 Retro-Robot Squad now faces its next challenge - raise enough money to attend the competition.

The team of high schoolers and mentors completed the task of assembling a robot for Holmes' first entry in next month's USFIRST Robotics Competition in Raleigh, shipping the ma-

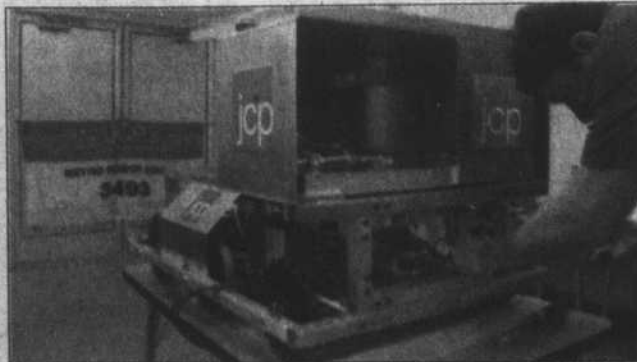
chine Feb. 22 per contest rules. Guidelines call for the construction and programming of the robot to be done within six weeks. But despite the demanding task, the team must raise \$3,000 to cover travel expenses for the April 7-9 competition at Dorton Arena.

"One vital element is missing - namely the estimated \$3,000 it will take to

enable the 15 student team members and six mentors to get to and participate in the three-day competition and return to Edenton," said John Becker, team mentor.

Efforts to reach the final fiscal hurdle include students selling candy and gasoline raffle tickets. Organizers hope the efforts

See **ROBOTICS, 3A**



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jim Lewis, of NUCOR Steel and chief engineering mentor for the John A. Holmes Retro Robot Squad, inspects the team's designed robot set for US FIRST competition next month in Raleigh.

**DINNER & CONCERT**  
ROCKY HOCK COMMUNITY CENTER  
ROAST PORK DINNER - \$15.00 PER PERSON

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OPRY BOYS QUARTET  
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