



Albemarle Magazine is on newsstands today

482-4418

Wednesday, November 23, 2011

50¢

SUV crashes into loaded school bus

Teacher wrecks minutes earlier

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Thirty-one elementary school students were taken to the hospital after a sport utility vehicle driven by a man with a revoked driver's license struck the bus they were riding Monday morning, police say.

As of late Monday morning, all but two of the students had been treated and released from Chowan Hospital, according to Michelle Maddox, spokeswoman for Edenton-Chowan Schools. She added that those two were expected to be released soon.

"There were no serious injuries reported at the scene of the accident, however all of the students were trans-

ported to Chowan Hospital for medical assessment. Parents of the students are being notified," Maddox said in a press release after the crash.

Bus No. 101, driven by Jackie Patrick Jackson, 50, of Roper, was carrying students to White Oak and D.F. Walker elementary schools northbound on Virginia Road when a southbound 1996 Jeep Cherokee rear-ended a pickup truck and then veered into the path of the bus at 7:25 a.m., according to Edenton police. David Edward Holley, 21, of Edenton crashed into the left front fender of the bus in front of the Burger King. Holley was also taken to the hospital where he was treated and released for a head injury, police said.

Students aboard the bus range from kindergarten to the 5th grade.

"We got lucky in it ... a

bus full of young 'uns," said Edenton police Chief Jay Fortenbery.

Holley has been charged with driving on a revoked driver's license, failure to reduce speed, driving on an expired registration, expired inspection, and driving with fictitious license plates, Fortenbery said. Other charges could be pending if the vehicle's owner cannot show proof of insurance, Fortenbery added.

Minutes earlier at 7:21 a.m., a teacher at White Oak wrecked her car on N.C. 32 north of town near Brayhall Road, according to the N.C. Highway Patrol. Trooper Steven C. Heath said Darl Dressler, 26, of Merry Hill ran off the left shoulder of the road and struck a ditch. Dressler first ran off the right

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STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE STARNES

Edenton police Chief Jay Fortenbery, left, watches for traffic as Edenton-Chowan School's transportation workers prepare to move Bus 101 after a 7:25 a.m. crash, Monday. Students headed to White Oak and D.F. Walker elementary schools were taken to Chowan Hospital for treatment of minor injuries. A SUV veered into the path of the bus after the driver rear-ended a pickup on Virginia Road.

Board pitches energy plan

BOE, county hold joint meeting

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

School leaders could turn to energy performance contracting as a way to upgrade aging facilities.

In Monday's joint meeting between the Board of Education and the Chowan County Board of Commissioners, school officials shared the concept of the plan that would theoretically spare the system, as well as the county, the fiscal strain of capital improvements. Instead, the energy savings would pay for the project cost.

Adding to the appeal of energy performance contracting, the service providers guarantee the accumulated savings will cover the expense, school leaders explained.

"This is as far away from a bad loan that a bank can get," said Superintendent Allan Smith.

First, the school system would need to incur a loan for the contract between \$750,000 and \$1 million that could be paid back over 20 years or sooner. But, officials agree the payback should occur sooner to avoid prolonged interest fees.

"Twenty years is a long time to incur debt," Smith said.

Currently Edenton-Chowan Schools pays \$450,000 annually toward utilities for its facilities. At a savings of 20 percent, the system could save \$90,000 yearly.

The single procurement contract would include engineering, construction, installation, and maintenance services aimed at energy savings improvements.

School board member

See ENERGY PLAN, 3A

ALMOST ...



STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS J. TURNERY

Edenton sophomore fullback Marcus Jackson (center) rushed for 123 yards and a touchdown in last Friday's loss to Tarboro.

Aces come up just short against state champs

Tarboro 28
Edenton 26

By CHIC RIEBEL
Sports Editor

It could have been one of the greatest victories in Edenton football history.

Instead, the Aces' 28-26 loss to two-time defending 2A state champion Tarboro in an Eastern Regional semifinal Friday night before a standing-room only crowd at Edenton will be remembered as The One That Got Away.

Edenton (11-1) held a 26-22 lead in the early part of the fourth quarter, but the Vikings

(11-2) drove 71 yards in 10 plays to take a 28-26 advantage with 7:08 left to play.

Starting the ensuing possession on their own 11-yard line, the Aces methodically moved the ball down the field for 16 plays until Deshon Fleming was stopped less than a yard short of a first down on fourth down at the Tarboro 29 to turn the ball back to the Vikings with 40 seconds remaining on the clock.

"We felt like it was ours," Edenton junior linebacker Shaq Holley said after the game, working hard to fight back the tears. "It seemed like it was meant for us. We played our hearts out against a good team."

In a remarkably even game, it was almost impossible to tell

which team had played in three straight state title games and which was making its first playoff appearance in three years.

Tarboro, which did not attempt a pass, finished with 242 yards in total offense while Edenton had 293 rushing and 16 passing. Both teams amassed 14 first downs and each lost two fumbles.

"Our guys can hold their heads high, they left it all on the field tonight," Aces coach Wes Mattera said. "But it hurts when you come up short like that. Even more when you know we should have won the game. Some mistakes really hurt us."

Chief among them were a

See ACES, 6A

Bertie's lawsuit dogs Lamb

Group wants closed-session tape

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Chowan's recently hired County Manager Zee Lamb will be leaving Bertie County's same job in much better fiscal shape than when he arrived, but he'll also leave behind a lawsuit aimed at uncovering how he secured a 42 percent raise without taxpayers' knowledge.

A group dubbed Friends of Bertie filed suit April 7 against Bertie County in an effort to force the release of an audio recording of the Aug. 17, 2009 closed session meeting whereby commissioners gave Lamb a pay raise. Lamb's employment contract called for a salary increase from \$101,725 to \$144,000 and an additional \$9,000 annually for travel expenses, up from the original \$3,000. Lamb's salary ranks second in northeast North Carolina behind Dare and ahead of Beaufort.

It wasn't until January 2011 when the School of Government listed the salaries of the state's public officials that Lamb's pay raise became public. Since then, Friends of Bertie have demanded answers about why commissioners grant-

See LAMB, 2A

Perdue touts Career & College Promise



STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS J. TURNERY

Gov. Bev Perdue speaks to students at John A. Holmes High School in Edenton, Friday.

Governor visits Holmes

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Part of an effort to promote her Career & College Promise educational initiative, Gov. Bev Perdue visited John A. Holmes High School in Edenton on Friday to explain the basic principles behind the plan.

After first proposing the initiative in a State of the State address earlier this year, Perdue officially launched the program last week as another alternative for students to get a head start toward college or a vocation, particularly during a distressed economy when college tuition is less

affordable and when high unemployment rates lead to stiffer job competition. The program provides college credit for some and job training for others while they're in high school. Career & College Promise offers a specific preparation that's tuition free to students and will become available in the spring 2012 semester.

"It keeps you from having to pay college tuition for a year," Perdue told the students. "It's up to you if you're going to use this chance."

According to education officials, Career and College Promise offers three "pathways" for students:

- College Transfer - Earn tuition-free course credits toward a four-year degree through North Carolina's

See PERDUE, 6A

