



U-TURN RAISES SAFETY CONCERNS
PAGE 1B

Councilor Britton dead at 64

Sickle cell anemia cited as cause

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Edenton Town Councilwoman Phyllis Britton, 64, died Sunday afternoon at Brian Center Health and Rehab in Hertford.

Britton's brother, William Madry of Greensboro said Sunday evening that

Britton, who represented ward 3, died of sickle cell anemia.

Sickle cell anemia is a genetic disorder predominantly found in those of African and Mediterranean heritage. Madry said Britton had



Britton

been diagnosed with the condition as a child. Her parents, he said, were told she would most likely not live past the age of 13.

But Britton, a Chowan County native and graduate of Elizabeth City State University, proved them wrong, Madry said.

"She was my heart," Madry said of his sister. "I always admired how she was so tenacious in dealing with the disease. She

had just turned 64 on Nov. 17. I am going to miss her so much."

Mayor Roland Vaughan agreed. He said he always respected the way Britton worked so hard to serve those she represented on the council despite the challenges posed by her health.

"Phyllis was very brave in the face of the illness that she dealt with over the years," Vaughan said.

"We will miss her now that she's gone."

Mayor pro tem Steve Biggs chaired the administrative committee on which Britton served. Biggs said that while there were times Britton was unable to attend meetings due to ill health she stayed in close contact with him regarding council business.

Britton's attendance at council meetings had become sporadic due to her

illness and she had lost her ability to drive, said Anne Marie Knighton, town manager. Last year, Britton traveled to a N.C. League of Municipalities meeting only to fall ill shortly thereafter, Knighton added.

Biggs said that Britton took care to do a good job for those she represented, never using her ill health

See BRITTON, 3A

County returns to tier 1

More options available

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

One year after being elevated to a tier 2 economic ranking, the state has reverted Chowan County to a tier 1, or among North Carolina's most economically distressed.

Chowan County ranks 30th in the state as the most economically distressed, said Tim Crowley, N.C. Department of Commerce spokesman.

"The two things that affected Chowan County this year is the lower ranking population growth and the 12-month average of the unemployment rate," Crowley said Thursday. "Chowan fell 29 places in population growth while falling from 46th to 57th in unemployment (an average of 10.5)."

In 2011, Chowan ranked 42nd as the most economically distressed, or a borderline county between tier designations, Crowley said. Tier 1 represents the state's top 40 economically distressed counties.

"A lot of times the border counties will end of moving the next year," Crowley said.

Wednesday's news came as no surprise to area leaders familiar with the county's demographics.

"Unemployment coupled with no growth in the last (U.S.) Census doesn't bode well for us," said Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan. "It's hard to swim upstream in this economic climate."

Richard Bunch, executive director of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce, also pointed to the county's lingering jobless rate and inability to attract new growth.

"We're still stagnant in our employment - we can't get it below 10 percent," Bunch said.

He added that the influx of residents who have migrated from southern Virginia to North Carolina's northeast corner have not reached Chowan County yet.

Chowan's unemployment rate for October stood at 10.8 percent, compared to 9.8 a year ago, according to the N.C. Division of Employment Security

See TIER, 3A



©2009 The Chowan Herald
All Rights Reserved



LOOKING A LOT LIKE CHRISTMAS

Annual Christmas tree illumination draws crowd, visit from Santa



PHOTOS BY REBECCA LOWE

Edenton's official Christmas tree (above) stands tall by the waterfront amid Friday evening's annual illumination. A generous crowd watched in delight as Mayor Roland Vaughan flipped the switch to signal the start of the holiday season. There were carols and a visit from Santa (top) that followed.

Spear will not seek re-election

Lawmaker won't try for next term in new district

By PETER WILLIAMS
Staff Writer

State Rep. Timothy L. Spear, the Washington County Democrat who has also represented Chowan, Dare and Hyde counties in the Legislature since 2006, said Sunday that he will not seek re-election next year.

In a two-paragraph statement released via e-mail, Spear said family considerations had convinced him not to seek a fourth term.

"After much thought and consideration I have decided not to

seek re-election to the North Carolina House of Representatives next year," Spear said in the e-mail. "I am looking forward to spending more time with my wife and family, especially our five grandchildren. Also, I need to dedicate more of my time to help and assist my elderly parents, both of whom are in declining health."

Spear, who won election three times, expressed thanks to those who had supported him in the past.

"It has been my honor and privi-

lege to serve the people of House District 2 as their Representative for the past six years. I am very grateful for the vote and generous support I have received from everyone during my past election campaigns," he said.

Spear, a retired clerk of Superior Court in Washington, was appointed to the 2nd House District seat in January 2006 to replace William Culpepper III, who had resigned to take a seat on the State Utilities Commission.

It is not clear what role redistricting played in Spear's decision not to seek re-election.

Under the redistricting plan



Spear

See TIM SPEAR, 2A

Chowan Hospital tweaks name

Vidant to replace UHS

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

By the end of next month Chowan Hospital passersby will notice a slight change in the medical facility's name.

Vidant will precede Chowan Hospital on the signage as the facility's parent company adapts to a new name. University Health Systems of Eastern Carolina announced Wednesday it will change its name to Vidant Health effective Jan. 25.

"For years, the name University Health Systems has stood for the highest level of care in eastern North Carolina," Jeff Sackrisson, president of Chowan and Bertie hospitals, said in a statement. "As we continue to evolve and strengthen our integrated system, the time has come to evolve our name as well."

The announcement came Wednesday during a media briefing near Pitt County Memorial Hospital, which is owned by the private, nonprofit health system.

UHS will change the

See HOSPITAL, 9A

County OKs bonus

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

After four years without a pay increase, Chowan County employees got an early Christmas present in the way of a bonus.

At its Monday night meeting, the Board of Commissioners voted unanimously to give each of its 200 employees a \$200 bonus before the year's end. Because of the county's economic meltdown in 2008, which left Chowan on the brink of bankruptcy and state takeover, none of the county's employees have received a raise.

"Citizens have had to suffer. Employees have had to suffer," said Commissioner Emmett Winborne. "This is a small token, but well overdue."

Chowan has managed to return to fiscal solvency.

See BONUS, 3A