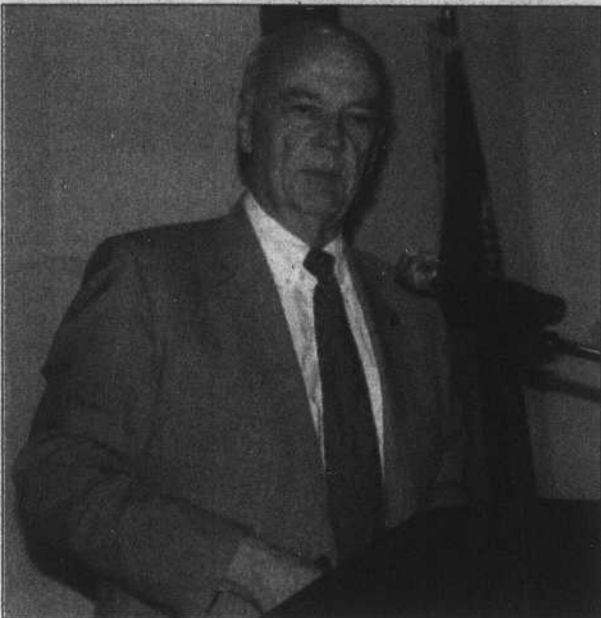




POLAR PLUNGE, 1B

Leaders pin recovery on tourism

PHOTO BY RITCHIE E. STARNES
Secretary of Commerce J. Keith Crisco speaks at Friday's annual State of the Region, sponsored by North Carolina's Northeast Commission. The event was held at the Senator Bob Martin Agricultural Center in Williamston.



Albemarle eyes National Heritage Area

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

As northeastern North Carolina continues its crawl out of the national economic recession, look for tourism to be a major catalyst toward a recovery.

That was the general message of Friday's annual State of the Region event held at Williamston's Bob Martin Agricultural Center and sponsored by North Carolina's Northeast Commission. Regional leaders packed the arena to hear the forecast for economic development in their respective com-

munities and what stands to be the fiscal catalyst for the coming year. Much of that optimism is pinned on the continued development of tourism.

Tourism continues to hail as the area's primary economic driver among those that headlined the program. State Secretary of Commerce J. Keith Crisco told the crowd of a few hundred that tourism represents a \$1.3 billion value, up 9 percent over the last two years, to the state's northeast corridor.

"We're in a position to get more out of tourism," Crisco said.

Before she introduced guest speaker August R. Carlino to discuss a tourism-related fea-

sibility study, state Secretary of Cultural Resources Linda Carlisle took time to remind the group that two of the region's tourism facilities face closure and operational reductions.

"So many of our assets are under attack," Carlisle said.

Last week a staff research panel for the N.C. General Assembly recommended that the Museum of Albemarle in Elizabeth City be closed and that the Historic Edenton Visitors Center hours of operation be reduced two days a week. The panel cited "low visitations" in relation to overhead costs.

When Carlisle asked the crowd if they agreed with the

See TOURISM, 2A

Etheridge files for seat in District 1

Currituck official to face Steinburg

By CINDY BEAMON AND RITCHIE STARNES
Staff Writers

CURRITUCK — Currituck Commissioner Owen Etheridge filed Monday as a candidate for the 1st District seat in the N.C. House of Representatives — a move that will create a Republican primary race.

Etheridge said Friday, that four terms as county commissioner sets him apart from two other candidates

who have filed for the House seat so far.

"I think I have a real opportunity to be effective from day one," said Etheridge.

Etheridge joins fellow Republican Bob Steinburg of Edenton and Democrat Bill Luton of Pasquotank in seeking election to the seat currently occupied by state Rep. Bill Owens, D-Pasquotank. Owens is retiring from the General Assembly at the end of his term after serving since

See ETHERIDGE, 2A

LOCAL CIVIL RIGHTS PICKETING TURNS 50



PHOTO COURTESY OF CHOWAN COUNTY SHERIFF'S OFFICE

Then Sheriff Troy Toppin supervises a 1973 demonstration near the downtown waterfront. Eleven years earlier, Edenton became home to Civil Rights protests whereby African Americans were denied the same access as whites.

Mitchener's, theater targeted

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Fifty-year-old faded-yellow copies of The Chowan Herald reveal only sparse details about African American protestors picketing segregated businesses in Edenton. Police reports yield less.

While the Civil Rights Movement was producing plenty of newsworthy events throughout the segregated South, local efforts for racial equality were kept mostly quiet.

"They wanted to keep it repressed. But, my daddy always believed that he needed to keep

the press informed in surrounding towns," said Goldie Frinks Wells, whose father Golden Asro Frinks became Edenton's most prominent Civil Rights activist.

It was the Frinks' West Peterson Street home that became a makeshift headquarters for planning and strategies. It was there that Golden Frinks, active in the NAACP, began targeting businesses for nonviolent demonstrations. He even summoned

for police protection for his picketers.

His daughter said Frinks relied more on the area's youth to engage in the picketing. Many adult blacks feared economic backlash for their involvement, especially those dependent on jobs and credit. So, they passed on protesting, but they allowed Frinks to use their children for the cause. And Frinks accompanied them during the pickets.

"(Frinks) spent a lot of time in jail," recalled the Rev. Jerald Perry, who at 11 years old first started picketing. "My parents

See CIVIL RIGHTS, 3A

Parrish attorney: Dismiss filings

Maxwell: DA not 'criminal sword'

By WILLIAM F. WEST
Staff Writer

A month after a half-dozen citizens began filing court

petitions calling for his suspension or removal from office, District Attorney Frank Parrish

Parrish

has filed a response that asks a judge to dismiss the complaints.

Parrish's attorney, James Maxwell of Durham, claimed in court documents filed Monday that the district attorney is not guilty of willful miscon-

See PARRISH, 4A

FSA closings move forward

From staff reports

The U.S. Department of Agriculture (USDA) plans to proceed with closing more than 100 Farm Service Agency offices, including here in Edenton, according to Congressman G.K. Butterfield, D-NC.

Butterfield expressed disappointment in the decision. He had previously penned a letter to USDA Secretary Tom Vilsack urging him to reconsider the proposal to close FSA offices in Chowan, Hertford, and Warren counties due to the high volume of farmers who rely on their services.

"These offices are indispensable to thousands of farmers in my district,"

See FSA, 3A

Two more GOP candidates file for office

From staff reports

Another challenger has filed to run in the race for a seat on the Chowan County Board of Commissioners while a political newcomer wants to be the next Register of Deeds.

Republican Ronald Cummings, 63, filed Monday to challenge incumbent Democrat Emmett Winborne for District 1, according to the Board of Elections. On Tuesday, Jackie Laverty, 50, filed to run as the GOP challenger for the Register of Deeds. Laverty said she hopes to use her paralegal and realtor experience as a foundation for the office.

"I believe my broad experience and training both in real estate and as a paralegal will assist me

in continuing to improve the customer service experience (at the Register of Deeds office) through broader online capabilities and other measures," Laverty said.

Laverty will oppose incumbent Democrat Sue Rountree who has also filed for re-election.

Cummings, who is the GOP's precinct chairman at Center Hill, was out of town and unavailable for

See FILING, 3A



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Jackie Laverty gets assistance Tuesday from Board of Elections Director Rebecca Lowe in filing for the Register of Deeds office currently held by Sue Rountree.



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TUESDAY, MARCH 13TH
 11AM to 2PM & 4PM to 7PM
RELAY FOR LIFE Benefit Lunch & Dinner
 BBQ & FRIED CHICKEN
 6 PM 'til 7 PM Dinner Music by "Big Daddy" Sam Morris
LEON NIXON'S CATERING
 SPONSORED BY ROCKY HOCK RURITAN RELAY FOR LIFE TEAM
 FOR TICKETS OR INFORMATION PLEASE CALL 340-3438
 DONATION \$8.00