

# Study: employees 'frustrated' over pay

Workers paid below regional averages

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

A much-awaited study revealed that 43.5 percent of Chowan County's employees are paid below the minimum of a proposed salary range consistent with the region.

Nearly one year after the Board of Commissioners hired Virginia-based Springsted to conduct a salary study for its employees, the firm presented its findings Monday morning that included a recommendation for changes within the county's pay structure. It offered two options to remedy the problem, including one that would cost taxpayers \$521,409.

"Because salaries are below average market rates, the County experiences difficulty hiring and retaining employees in certain positions," the report stated. "The County also experiences turnover in many positions that are paid at a higher rate by comparable organizations with which the County competes for employees."

County leaders did not

seem surprised by the findings.

"It was what I was expecting," said Keith Nixon, commissioners' vice chairman. "Most of the time when they do these studies, they come back with some-



Nixon

thing like this. It concerns me though that we weren't competitive."

County Manager Zee Lamb said he too was not surprised.

"Anytime you have one of these studies, you have compression issues," referring to the logjam of employees below the firm's salary expectations.

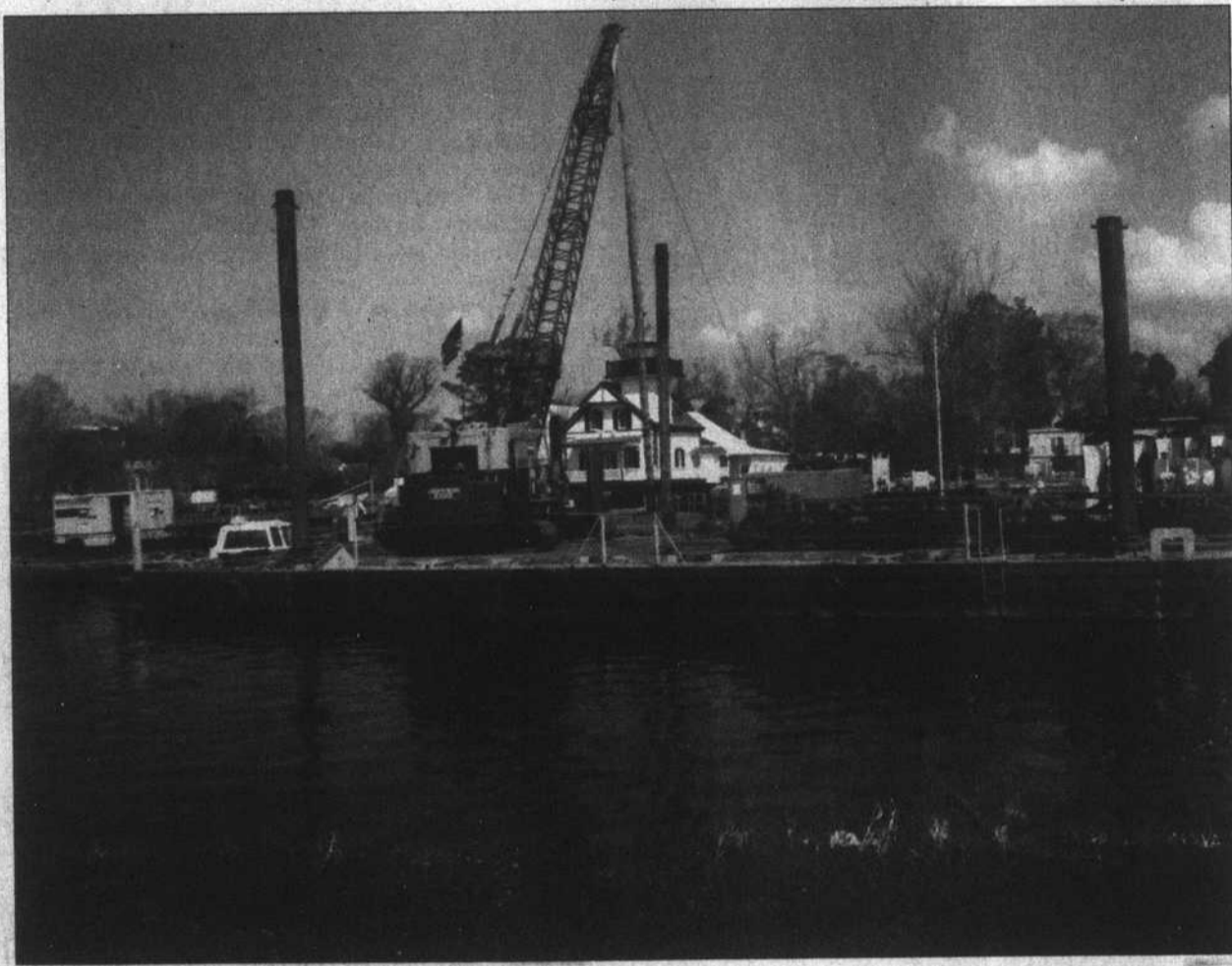
Nixon said, however, that Chowan does not suffer

from high employee turnover nor does it have trouble recruiting employees. He attributed the county's retirement system as most appealing to employees.

Nixon also questioned whether the more affluent Currituck County, one of the counties part of the study comparison, was a fair inclusion.

See SALARY, 4A

## FINDING the LIGHT



STAFF PHOTO BY RITCHIE STARNES

A crew with Waff Contracting uses a crane on a barge to install pilings in preparation of moving the 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse over the water. The Lighthouse sits in the background.

## Funds found for Lighthouse completion

Public will have access

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

Less than a week after it was announced that a lack of funds would prohibit public access to the renovated 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse, funds have been identified to complete the project.

By mid-May state officials expect to have sufficient funds in hand to complete work on the Lighthouse on the downtown Edenton waterfront. Mark Cooney, director of capital projects for the N.C. Department of Cultural Resources, said Thursday that on March 6 the Joint Legislative Committee for Government Operations approved a proposal from the state Office

of Budget and Management to fund \$62,250,000 worth of repair and renovation projects for state agencies.

"The Roanoke River Lighthouse, specifically, phase II, in the amount of \$454,000, was included in their proposal," Cooney said. He added that he too was surprised of the funding developments.

Cooney said the funding would allow for the completion of the restoration of the three-story, 2,000-square-foot lighthouse to its original condition.

Cooney said that the scope of phase II would include restoration of the interior spaces of the lighthouse, access structures, new HVAC systems, new fire/smoke detection systems, hazardous material testing and abatement, and lighthouse lens and lens base restoration.

"We plan to work closely with

the Edenton Historical Commission and the state Historic Sites curators to furnish the interior spaces and provide interpretive exhibits based on a period from 1886-1900," Cooney said.

Cooney said that at this point in the process a completion date for this final phase of the project has not been determined. However, he said that, "upon completion of the phase II restoration project, interior furnishings and exhibits, the Lighthouse will be open to the public."

Original estimates called for \$709,000 to complete phase II. Cooney said Monday that the lighthouse restoration "is not your typical project" and that in giving the estimate the department aimed high. He said that labor and materials costs would not be as high as the department

See LIGHTHOUSE, 2A

## Library could be forced to reduce days

Funding remains down, use up

By RITCHIE E. STARNES  
Editor

Supporters of the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library warn that if the county again fails to fully fund the facility, the library will be forced to close another day a week.

As Chowan County department heads prepare their annual budgets for the 2012-13 fiscal year, Friends of the Library are also gearing up a campaign to bring awareness to the library's financial plight and its value to the community. Already closed on weekends,

See LIBRARY, 4A

### By the Numbers

Annual budget costs for Pettigrew Libraries:

**CHOWAN**  
Cost of Materials: \$500  
Total cost: \$142,076

**PERQUIMANS**  
Cost of Materials: \$13,787  
Total cost: \$144,256

**TYRRELL**  
Cost of Materials: \$6,779  
Total cost: \$90,000

**WASHINGTON**  
Cost of Materials: \$16,100  
Total cost: \$150,000

## VC loss to get review

Subcommittee to examine findings

By REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

A proposal to close the Edenton Visitor Center two days a week may be getting a second look.

A subcommittee named last month to study a report that contained that recommendation as well as other state cost savings on attractions it funds declined to support the proposal that would close the local Visitor Center on Sundays and Mondays. Another recommendation to close the Museum of the Albemarle in Elizabeth City was also put on hold.

See VC, 4A

## Three more local sterilization victims are identified

Perdue urges victims to come forward

From staff, wire reports

North Carolina officials have verified more victims of the state's now dis-

graced forced-sterilization program, including three more from Albemarle area counties.

To date, the N.C. Justice for Sterilization Victims Foundation has verified 111 people who were sterilized in 48 counties through a program operated from 1929 to 1974 by the former N.C. Eugenics Board.

Two of those victims have been verified as Perquimans County residents. Another has been veri-

fied as a Camden County resident. A fourth has been verified as a Chowan County resident.

Jill Lucas, a spokeswoman for Gov. Bev Perdue, declined to provide the names of the four verified victims in local counties, citing confidentiality concerns.

However, Elaine Riddick of Hertford is apparently one of the Perquimans victims. Riddick, who was sterilized by the Eugen-

ics Board in the 1960s after giving birth to a child at age 14, has been an outspoken public advocate for the program's victims.

According to the foundation, Lenoir County has the highest number of procedure-to-victim matches with 18. Meck-



Riddick

lenburg, which had the highest number of procedures of any North Carolina county, follows with 10 verifications. However, Buncombe, Scotland and Hertford counties ranked in the Top 10 for number of procedures but have no matches.

Locally, Pasquotank County had the highest number of procedures — 39 — but no verified matches. Perquimans had the second-highest num-

ber of procedures — 36 — with two matches. Gates County had the third-highest number of procedures — 41 — but no verified matches. Chowan had 23 procedures with one match; Camden had 17 procedures with one match; Dare had nine procedures and no matches; and Currituck had six procedures and no matches.

Perdue said in a news

See EUGENICS, 7A



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