

Recreation Department set to relocate

Ag Center offers better offices

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Add the Recreation Department as the latest county office on the move, which probably won't be its last.

No longer will the Recreation Department be located at the former D.F. Walker School campus

on N. Oakum Street that is also the future hub for College of The Albemarle's Edenton Chowan campus. In a 6-1 vote, the Board of Commissioners voted to relocate the department into the vacated space left by the departed Farm Service Agency, which as of last year moved to Hertford as part of a cost savings consolidation by the U.S. Department of Agriculture.

Efforts are under way to

move the department into the county's Agricultural Center at 730 N. Granville Street.

"The current location (N. Oakum) is lacking in appearance and professionalism that this new location would provide," said County Manager Zee Lamb who recommended the move.

Lamb said the new location would also be more efficient in terms of utility costs.

Jason Petersen, recreation director, spoke before the board at its Feb. 4 meeting and detailed problems such as repeat vandalism, a blighted environment, and a lack of office privacy. He welcomed a possible move, but added that he could continue to work at the current site if the board so decided.

"We don't get excited to come to work because of our office; we get excited because of the work we

do," Petersen said.

Board Chairman Keith Nixon, the lone dissenting vote, said he preferred the recreation department remain where the gym is located. He also questioned storage space for athletic equipment at the ag center as well as potential parking issues.

"I have a concern moving from that campus," Nixon said. "We need to look long-term."

Other concerns included

whether vandalism at the campus would worsen once the Recreation Department vacates. Also, by not being on the campus, there are concerns of a disconnect between administration and gym activities.

Board Vice Chairman Jeff Smith, a farmer, said he preferred the Agricultural Center remain designated solely for agriculture.

See MOVING, 3A

Extension loses county director

Smith takes job with Avoca

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Chowan County lost its agricultural agent to the private sector.

Friday marked the last day on the job for Tim Smith as the local director for the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service. After two years at the helm, Smith began his new gig Monday as an agronomic manager for Avoca, Inc. in Merry Hill. There he'll oversee the company's expanded sage production.

Smith said he labored over the decision to change careers because he wasn't unhappy with his job.

"I wasn't out job hunting or anything like that," Smith said. "But, it was too good an opportunity to turn down."

Smith, a native of Chowan where he and his family will continue to live, said the Extension afforded him a great job.

"The Extension is such a great organization to be a part of," he added. "It's meaningful work and you feel you are bettering the community."

Amid plans to increase its acreage for sage production, Avoca reached out to Smith to serve as a liaison between the company and producers so he can provide useful information to the growers. Avoca has already increased its sage production over the last three years with more expansion still ahead, which requires more support, Smith said.

Smith, 35, called the opportunity at Avoca an ideal match with his strengths. Although the new post provides Smith the chance to advance his career and provide greater financial security for his family, leaving the local group at the Extension still stings.

"The right decision is not always the easiest," Smith said.

Local farmers will not have totally bid farewell,

See EXTENSION, 2A



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Investigators probe arson cases

Three fires set over two days

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

State and local Authorities suspect arson in three fires set within two days, two on the same night.

Firefighters were back on the scene Thursday morning of last Monday night's (Feb. 4) fire of the former White Oak Elementary School after shifting winds apparently reignited smoldering embers, according to Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin. A passerby called 911 around 8 p.m. last Monday after flames were seen erupting from the roof of the vacant school on Dillard's Mill Road. While firefighters from all three

See FIRE, 3A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Charred remains is all that's left of the former White Oak Elementary School after someone torched the vacant building Feb. 4. Firefighters returned to the scene Thursday after embers reignited.

Yillio takes businesses by storm

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Yillio, a social global positioning system, provides mapping information to users on the go in real time. It's available on iPhone applications with an enhanced version coming in the next few weeks.



Social GPS serves mobile users

By RITCHIE E. STARNES
Editor

Social media's next big deal is among us.

Imagine traveling the highway with plans to stop for lunch along the trip. Where, what, and when to eat just got more convenient courtesy of Yillio. Yillio is a social GPS that informs users on the go of establishments and events along their route. In real-time, merchants are able

to post (short, concise, relevant) messages on top of Yillio's map so drivers, commuters and shoppers can see what's happening along their route.

A group with ties to Edenton, but prefers to remain below the radar at this time, has launched Yillio. Many businesses in Edenton have already signed on with the local Chamber of Commerce extending the opportunity to its members. By signing on, a business can put their establishment on the map with an easily updated message board at no charge. The self-reporting opportunity

is the latest technological cyber creation that enables a merchant to receive real-time advertising.

"We want to put Edenton on the map and keep people coming downtown," said Win Dale, Chamber director.

As Edenton continues to promote its 300th anniversary, the timing to list local businesses and events couldn't be better. Whether it's anyone of seven business categories - office, restaurant, hotel, retailer, gas station,

See YILLIO, 2A

Changes on the horizon for GED testing

Program to become more challenging

By REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Testing for a GED will likely become more difficult and expensive beginning in 2014 with the introduction of new test that requires knowledge of technology.

College of The Albemarle stu-

dents at the Edenton campus who

are currently enrolled in its General Educational Development testing program are scrambling to compete their work before the end of this year. That's when the current battery of tests developed in 2002 will end and a new, computer-based series of tests will be implemented. Scores from the current batch of tests will not be transferable and paper-based tests will no longer be adminis-

tered.

"The big push for us is trying to get the word out that the tests are changing," said Tim Sweeney, director of Basic Skills and Transitional Studies for COA. "This whole year we are doing everything we can to prepare students to go ahead and complete their tests before December 31. The clock is ticking here."

Joanne Eddy, director of the Adult Learning Center at the

Edenton campus, said that an average of 125 students fill their GED classes each semester.

Currently, the GED tests focus on five content areas - social studies, science, math, reading and writing.

The new series will align with the common core standards currently followed in the state's high schools. The four content areas

See GED, 2A

Carolina Cash 5 winning ticket sold here

From staff reports

A Wilco Hess station in Edenton sold a Carolina Cash 5 winning lottery ticket Saturday night.

A Perquimans County

woman won \$85,377 in the lottery drawing.

Jean Castle of Hertford purchased the winning ticket at the station located at 301 Virginia Road, according to Ryan Ken-

nemur, public information officer for the North Carolina Education Lottery.

Kennemur said that after taxes Castle would receive \$58,057 in winnings. Castle picked all five of

the winning numbers, he said. She beat odds of one in 575,757 to win, he said.

Kennemur said that the Wilco Hess station would receive a \$2,000 retailer incentive for selling the win-

ning ticket.

The station manager said Tuesday morning that she had not yet received official notification of the winning ticket's sale there.

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