

McCrorry to Edenton: 'Happy Birthday'

By REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Gov. Pat McCrorry extended birthday wishes to Edenton Saturday.

"Happy birthday," McCrorry said as he began an address to the crowd assembled on the 1767 Courthouse Green for the Governors' Day event, part of Edenton's 300th anniversary celebration.

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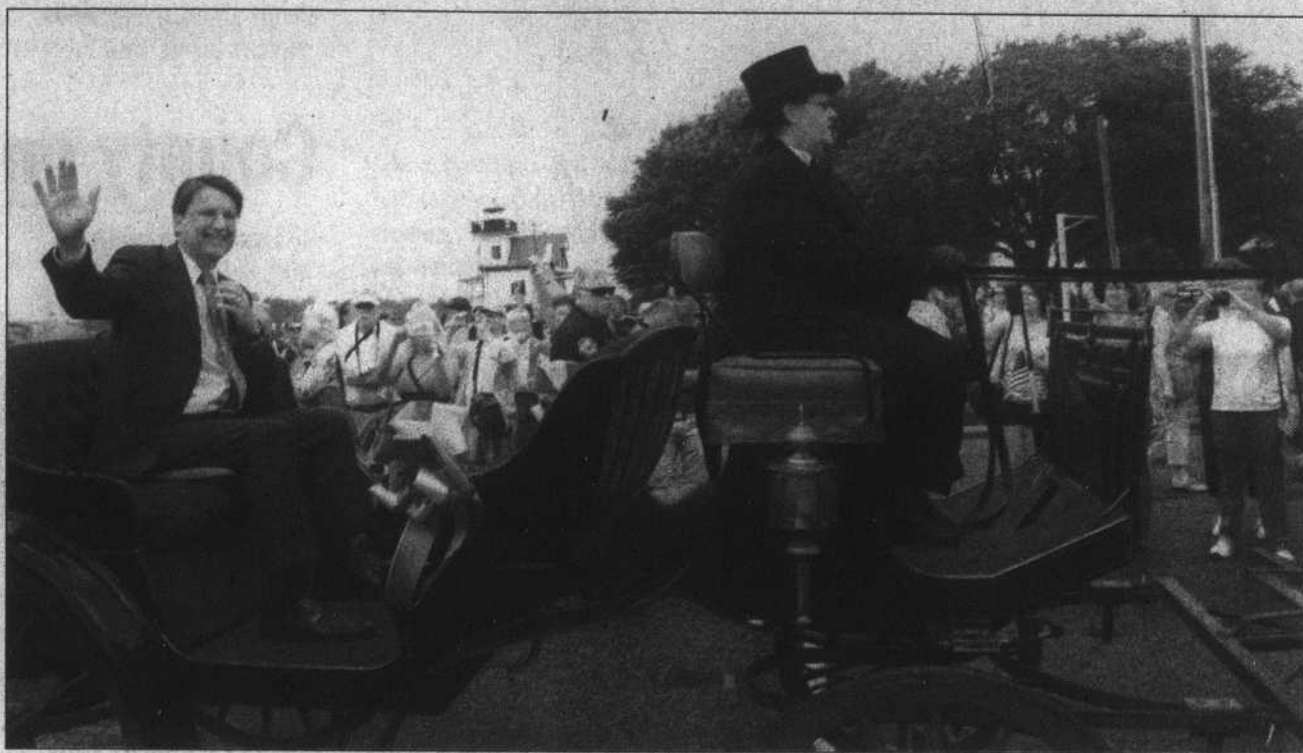
Officials pleased with event — 3A

Locals, visitors enjoy big day — 1B

McCrorry also welcomed the town's namesake, Gov. Charles Eden, to the day's festivities. Eden, who was appointed governor in 1713, was portrayed by a history interpreter in period costume.

"It's great to have the governor back in town," McCrorry said, referring to Eden.

The celebration began at the town docks around 11 a.m. Saturday, when McCrorry greeted Eden — por-



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Gov. Pat McCrorry waves to the crowd assembled at the downtown Edenton waterfront as a carriage takes him to the 1767 Chowan Courthouse where he addressed a crowd of several hundred citizens, Saturday.

trayed by the historical re-enactor — as the colonial governor arrived at the town docks aboard the Silver Chalice wooden sailing boat.

"Governor, you have aged well," McCrorry said as the colonial figure stepped off the Silver Chalice.

There were brief periods of rain but the weather gen-

erally was comfortable for the occasion.

McCrorry referenced the threat of rain as he walked toward the town docks.

"All right — the rain is

going to stop," McCrorry said hopefully, smiling and waving to the gathered crowd.

McCrorry's colonial counterpart remarked that

the day should not be just about looking back at the town's history. "We can look forward to the future of this wonderful state and this wonderful nation," he said.

McCrorry told the group assembled at the waterfront that it was an honor to be part of the 300th anniversary event.

"We are so honored to have your town be such an important part of our history — not only of the history of our state but of our nation as well," McCrorry said.

McCrorry said he was impressed with the role Edenton has played in history, with the way it has preserved that history and with the planning that has gone into the 300th anniversary celebration.

McCrorry and the Eden re-enactor rode in horse-drawn carriages to the 1767 Courthouse for the day's main ceremony.

McCrorry talked about the role of women in Edenton's colonial

See MCCRORY, 3A

Ponder named Herald editor

From staff reports

Reggie Ponder, a reporter for The Daily Advance since 2008, has been named editor of the Chowan Herald.

Ponder, 49, will replace Ritchie Starnes, who resigned the position last month to take a job in Charlotte.

Ponder has been serving as interim editor of the Herald while retaining his duties as education reporter for The Daily Advance. He joined The Advance in August 2008 as the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank County government reporter and was reassigned to education coverage earlier this year.

Ponder said he is excited about the new opportunity in Edenton.

"I love community newspapers and have looked forward to being an editor of a great community paper," he said. "The Chowan Herald is the perfect place to live out my passion for community and for community news."

He previously reported for community newspapers in Henderson, Fremont and Louisburg.

A native of North Carolina, Ponder is a 1986 graduate of Wesleyan College in Rocky Mount. He and his wife, Jane, have a son, Nathan, 25.

He will assume his new



Ponder

Tata seeks to find solution for hydrilla spread

By REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The state's top transportation official said Saturday that he will talk to ports officials this week about how the state can stop the spread of hydrilla in waterways.

Secretary of Transportation Anthony Tata, who was in Edenton Saturday for the Governors' Day event as part of the town's 300th anniversary celebration, said he will talk to the State Ports Board about hydrilla during the board's meeting this week.

One of the members operates barges and should be especially knowledgeable about the potential impact on barge traffic,

Tata said. Tata said keeping waterways navigable is an important part of his job.

"Our river waterways are so important for commerce and recreation and tourism," Tata said.

Tata acknowledged that the N.C. Department of Environment and Natural Resources, through its Division of Water Quality, is the lead agency in dealing with hydrilla.

But because there is a potential transportation impact to the aquatic weed, his department also will pay attention to the



Tata

problem, Tata said.

One of the current emphases in state government is addressing issues through a cooperative effort of state agencies, according to Tata.

"We have great teamwork," Tata said.

Residents of Chowan County's Arrowhead Beach community have been on the vanguard in sounding the alarm about hydrilla — a non-native aquatic weed that if left untreated can choke waterways and harm both commercial and recreational pursuits.

The aggressive water plant was the main topic of discussion at a recent meeting of the Arrowhead Beach Property Owners Association.



STAFF PHOTO BY THOMAS J. TURNEY

While not always visible at the surface, a nuisance weed called hydrilla has invaded the Chowan River, and if left untreated threatens to choke waterways and cause problems for both commercial and recreational purposes.

Arrowhead Beach residents who have been following the hydrilla problem stress that recreational boaters can help

prevent the spread of hydrilla by cleaning boats, motors, trailers and any

See HYDRILLA, 4A

Lamb presents county budget proposal

By REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The 2013-14 recommended budget that Chowan County Manager Zee Lamb presented to the commissioners Tuesday maintains the property tax rate, water rates and solid waste fees at the current level.

Chowan's property tax rate is 68.5 cents per \$100 valuation. The recommended budget is

subject to a public hearing and action by the Chowan Board of Commissioners. State law requires the county to adopt a balanced budget by June 30.

The solid waste fee is \$13.50 a month for town residents and \$15.50 for those who live outside the town limits. Lamb ex-



Lamb

plained that town residents pay \$2 a month less because the town operates its own recycling program.

The recommend budget projects \$9.99 million in property tax revenue, which is based on a 97.6 percent collection rate for real and personal property and 85.1 percent for motor vehicles. That collection rate is based on audited figures for 2011-12.

Combined with an anticipated \$416,000 in collection of prior

years' delinquent taxes and penalties, the total projected property tax revenue is \$10.4 million or 64.4 percent of general fund revenue for the county.

There is an anticipated \$1.65 million in sales tax revenue, which is 10.2 percent of general fund revenues.

Water sales and fees are projected to generate \$1.4 million. Solid

See BUDGET, 4A

Officials confident in future of partnership

By REGGIE PONDER AND WILLIAM F. WEST
Staff Writers

Local and state officials say there are confident the Edenton-based Northeast Commission will remain strong amid moves to reorganize the state's economic development efforts.

Senate Bill 127, which has already been approved by the Senate, eliminates the state's seven economic development commissions and delegates their func-

tions to the N.C. Department of Commerce. The bill further directs the commerce department to place an employee in eight newly created economic development zones across the state.

The bill was in committee in the House as the Chowan Herald went to press.

State Sen. Harry Brown, R-Onslow and the primary sponsor of SB 127, has said he believes the legislation will remove an ineffective layer of bureaucracy

from business recruitment and force N.C. Commerce Department officials to work outside of Raleigh.

Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan, chairman of the Northeast Commission's board of directors, said he and other members of the board embrace the idea of reorganizing the



Vaughan

Department of Commerce. Vaughan said that for at least a decade, spending on economic development has increased, but roughly the same numbers of North Carolinians remain out of work. At the same time, the take-home pay of North Carolinians with jobs has declined.

"That's clearly the model of a failed program," he said.

Vaughan said if reorganization does take place, the Northeast Commission is ideally suited to con-

tinue working to promote economic development in the agency's 16-county service area that stretches from Dare to Halifax. He said the commission's staff has been in place for many years and that many of those employed helping develop the regional economy grew up here and are familiar with the region's nuances, strengths and weaknesses. The commission also does good work in one of the most

See COMMISSION, 4A



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