

CHOWAN HERALD

Emerging young leaders, moms feted by sorority — 6A

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Steinburg defends school budget, calls for local action

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Rep. Bob Steinburg last week responded to local school officials' criticism of the state's 2013-14 education budget in part by raising the question of whether the local school district should have tapped its reserves in order to retain four teacher assistant positions.

Schools is receiving more than \$170,000 less from the state for teacher assistants than had been included in the school district's "planning allotment."

The Edenton-Chowan Board of Education last week voted to eliminate four teacher assistant positions for the 2013-14 school year.

Steinburg, R-Chowan, said in a written statement

submitted to the *Chowan Herald* that the local school district has had at one time or another during each of the past four years a \$2.4 million reserve. He said the reserve is not required by the state but



SMITH



STEINBURG

added it's a good practice.

"Not all of that money is restricted, so there should be enough for an ample cushion when needed," Steinburg said. "Perhaps the four teacher assistants who were fur-

loughed last week could have been retained by drawing upon this reserve."

But Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Alan Smith said this week that while the school district reported a June 30, 2012, fund balance of a little more than \$2.4 million, the schools had to dip into fund balance during the past fiscal year in order to balance the budget.

"We spent more money than we brought in this past year," Smith said.

It is widely regarded as imprudent to use fund balance for recurring expenses, and the board has wisely chosen to avoid doing that as much as possible, Smith said.

A big problem with using fund balance to cover the

See BUDGET, 4A

School open house

From staff reports

The start of school in Chowan County is right around the corner.

While students will not be back in class until Aug. 26, open house events at local schools have been slated for Aug. 22.

"Faculty and staff of Edenton-Chowan Schools are rapidly preparing for the arrival of students," according to a statement published on the school district's website. "Each school is excited to welcome parents and students to open house as we embark on another awesome school year."

If you have questions about open house, call the appropriate school.

Open house will be held Aug. 22 from 3:30-5:30 p.m. at White Oak Elementary School and D.F. Walker Elementary School; from 5-7 p.m. at Chowan Middle School; and from 6-8 p.m. at John A. Holmes High School.

Meanwhile, teacher workdays are slated to begin Aug. 19.

The school district's teacher convocation will be Aug. 20.

Farmers Market gets offer

From staff reports

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners last week voted to offer a spot on the grounds of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Center as a site for the Edenton Farmers Market.

The commissioners' Planning and Enterprise Committee had recommended that the county make the extension center site available to the farmers market.

Meanwhile, the farmers market plans to conduct another survey before deciding whether to relocate.

A memo about two weeks ago to market participants from Vero Brentjens, director of the market, indicated that the two options at this point are moving to the grounds of the N.C. Coop-

See MARKET, 4A

HOTEL SAVED



POSTCARD COURTESY OF CLAUDIA DEVINEY/PNC

This postcard shows the Hotel Hinton in its heyday. The hotel building, constructed in 1926, most recently served as the Chowan County Office Building.

County agrees to Hotel Hinton sale

BY BOB MONTGOMERY
The Daily Advance

Chalk up a win for history in Edenton.

Chowan County Commissioners have agreed to sell the former Hotel Hinton for \$125,000 to an Outer Banks developer who plans to rehabilitate the 87-year-old brick structure next to the Historic 1767 courthouse on East King Street.

The building has been advertised for sale since April, and was marketed by Preservation North

Carolina.

The hotel is the latest among several properties being sold by the county in an effort to unload debt.

The former Hotel Hinton had been used by the county for offices for the past couple of decades before the county moved to its new complex about two years ago.

At least three suitors showed serious interest in buying the 32,000-square-foot, commercially zoned site from the county, said Claudia DeViney, PNC's executive director.

At a special meeting Thursday, the commissioners agreed to sell to Saga Construction & Development of Kill Devil Hills. The agreement has not yet been finalized, DeViney said.

Commissioners Chairman Keith Nixon said he was impressed with Saga's presentations, and is hopeful the company can turn the site into a tax-producer for the county.

"Our main goal is to facilitate downtown activity," Nixon said.

Nixon said Saga will conduct a six-month due diligence study to determine the best and most

feasible uses for the old hotel.

"I'd like to see mixed use — retail on the bottom floor, accommodations, rooms on the upper floors," he said of his preference.

Some residents have suggested a boutique, retail shops, a restaurant, condominiums and a conference center.

"I can't tell you how happy this has made us at Preservation NC," DeViney said, noting that the property — in the heart of the historic district — has drawn interest from

See HOTEL, 4A

Residents, officials discuss Edenton PD location

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

A group of about 60 local residents met with police and town officials on Aug. 6 to discuss the future location of the Edenton Police Department.

During the meeting, facilitated by Chowan County Planner Landin Holland, citizens had the opportunity to break into focus groups where they talked about the town's Neighborhood Redevelopment Action Plan and looked at different options within the vicinity of North Oakum Street for locating the new police station.

"It's a good way for everyone to work together," Holland said.

Mayor Roland Vaughan called the decision on where to locate the new station "one of the most critical decisions" to be made since he's been the mayor of the town.

Participants were cautioned not to focus on a particular site but to look at the overall impact on a neighborhood should the police station be located there. The police station, they were told, was just



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Chowan County Planner Landin Holland answers a question from Pat Grother (seated) during a community meeting held to gather citizen input about the relocation of the Edenton Police Department.

one element to be considered.

Once they broke into focus groups, participants at each table were asked to identify assets and issues within each of the four areas being considered for the new police station. They were also asked

to list what they desired to see happen with regard to neighborhood redevelopment. A group leader was then named to report back to the entire group at the end of the exercise.

Well-known existing buildings

such as the John R. Page Lodge, John A. Holmes High School and the old D.F. Walker School were identified as assets. Other assets were identified as the sense of community that exists within the North Oakum Street area.

In addition to listing a safe neighborhood with better lighting as among their desires, citizens also expressed a wish for a more pedestrian-friendly and bicycle-friendly environment.

"From Freemason all the way to Walker Street is very dark," said Trey Taylor. "Having a community center would be good for the Oakum Street area, too."

Illegal activity — including drug sales and use, and prostitution — was the biggest concern among all the focus groups.

"Fighting and guns, we know are here too," said Casey Atstupenas.

A desire for good jobs and a good education for all kids was mentioned, as was the idea that having the police station in a neighborhood setting would allow children

See POLICE, 4A

