

CHOWAN HERALD



Mattera takes head football job at Thomasville — 6A

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Wednesday, February 5, 2014

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Local and state crews work to dig out of snow

From staff reports

Town of Edenton, Chowan County and N.C. Department of Transportation employees — along with a number of volunteers and concerned citizens — worked extra hard last week to help the community dig out from the unusually heavy snowfall.

DOT Division One Engineer Jerry Jennings explained that the state's top priority was to clear major roads first. Later, crews moved on to secondary roads.

Asked about concerns expressed by some residents that plowing the major roads left deep snow blocking entrances to secondary roads or driveways, Jennings reiterated that the focus first is on clearing the traffic lane on the main road. After that, workers do come back and try to clear intersections, he said.

DOT also put out brine ahead of time on main roads to make clearing easier.

Major highways in Chowan County were clear as of



The Cupola House can be seen in the background as snow is being cleared from South Broad Street after a recent snowfall.

Friday afternoon. Secondary roads were mostly clear with possible icy spots as of Friday afternoon, according to the N.C. Department of

Transportation. The N.C. Highway Patrol reported no serious accident in Chowan last week or this week, and only a few

minor mishaps on secondary roads Friday as more motorists began to venture out. The Chowan County Sher-

iff's Department reported to the county commissioners that between Tuesday and Friday the department responded to 52 calls for ser-

vice and assisted 26 motorists. The department pulled out 21 cars that were stuck in wintry conditions. There were five of the traffic mishaps that required Highway Patrol or rescue response.

Sheriff Wayne Goodwin explained that the department was able to switch over to four-wheel drive vehicles for all on-duty officers during the snowy conditions.

During the county commissioners' meeting Monday night, Commissioner Emmett Winborne commended the county's emergency responders — both staff and volunteer — for their work during the storm last week.

Winborne said the sheriff's department, fire departments and emergency medical services all had a great response and he is well satisfied with the emergency services in the county.

Volunteers from the Crossroads Fire Department kept the station manned around the clock, he said.

"I didn't want those

See SNOW, 2A

Electric deal could lower rates

BY JON HAWLEY
The Daily Advance

In a historic move aimed at lowering utility rates across eastern North Carolina — including in Elizabeth City, Edenton and Hertford — Electricities is entering exclusive talks with Duke Energy Progress to sell the N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency's shares in four power plants.

If a deal can be reached, and federal and state agencies approve it, electricity customers across eastern North Carolina who have been saddled with high electric rates for three decades could finally see some relief.

Electricities, which provides management services for NCEMPA, has been in "low-level" talks on selling the four facilities since 2010, according to Elizabeth City City Manager Rich Olson, who represents the city on the NCEMPA Board of Commissioners.

On Monday, Olson said those talks advanced and Electricities called together the board for a meeting in Wilson.

Following that meeting, Olson said the NCEMPA board approved entering into exclusive negotiations with Duke Energy Progress overselling NCEMPA's share in plants jointly owned with the Charlotte-based firm. Duke Energy acquired majority ownership in those plants in 2012 when it completed its merger with Progress Energy, creating Duke Energy Progress.

See RATES, 4A



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Fundraising effort garners pair of awards

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

A hugely successful fundraising effort and the couple behind it are both being honored by the North Carolina Main Street program.

The Save the Taylor Theater campaign has earned Destination Downtown Edenton an Award of Merit in the category of Best Fundraising Effort. Jeanne and Patrick Cumby, who spearheaded the fundraising campaign that netted in excess of

See AWARD, 4A



CHOWAN HERALD FILE PHOTO

Four hundred ticketholders purchased soup and a mug during the Nov. 30, 2012 kickoff party for the Save the Taylor Theater campaign. The highly successful effort raised \$8,000 toward the cost of purchasing digital projection equipment to keep the business open. The North Carolina Main Street program has recognized the effort to save the theater by awarding a Best Fundraising Award to Destination Downtown Edenton and a Main Street Champion Award to Jeanne and Patrick Cumby who spearheaded the campaign.

Water valve breaks at downtown intersection

From staff reports

A broken water valve near the intersection of South Broad Street and East King Street Saturday made for a long, wet day for Town of Edenton staff and an out-of-town contractor — and a temporary boil water advisory for some water customers.

The water had to be shut off for a while along East King Street between Court Street and Oakum Street.

The boil water advisory has been lifted.

The break occurred

around 8 a.m. Saturday and the repair work went on until shortly after midnight.

Public Works Director John Norris explained that the water valve broke in the process of shutting off the water supply to the Hotel Hinton building on East King Street in the wake of a broken water pipe at the building.

Norris attributed the break to a combination of the extreme cold and the age of the valve.

Norris said the Public Works Department had expected to relax a bit over

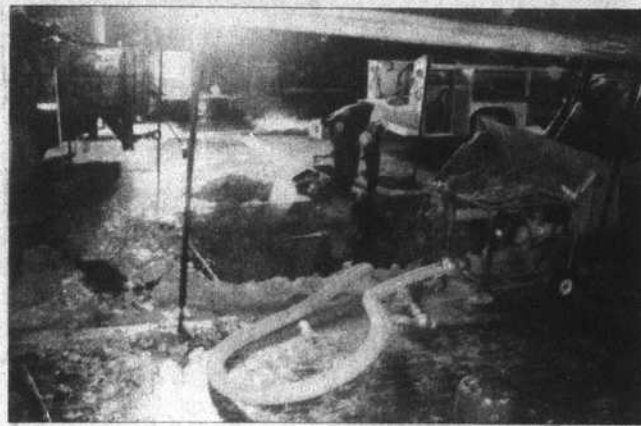
the weekend after working extra hours last week in snow-clearing activities.

Instead, workers — including the director — were at the site of the valve break throughout the day Saturday.

Around 9 p.m. Norris noted he had been at the site more than 12 hours and had eaten three meals there.

There were six town employees at the site of the break Saturday, along with employees of the water valve contractor.

See WATER, 2A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Water valve contractors from Clayton work to replace a broken water valve on East King Street Saturday night under the supervision of Public Works Director John Norris.

Developer gets more time on Hotel Hinton purchase

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The company planning to renovate the former Chowan County office building on East King Street now has more time to evaluate the costs and options in refurbishing the structure — but remains upbeat about the prospect of reviving the building as a downtown hotel.

Sumit Gupta of SAGA Development Inc. said last week that the company would appear before the county commissioners to request an extension of the due diligence period.

Monday night, the commissioners agreed to a 90-day extension.

The company and the

county last year entered into a contract on the building, which also is known as the historic Hotel Hinton.

Right now, SAGA is moving forward on securing tax credits and developing cost estimates. Evaluating an historic building such as the Hotel Hinton takes time, Gupta said.

"But we remain fully committed to this project," he added.

It was in large part the historic character of the building and its vintage charm that attracted the developers to the structure in the first place.

Gupta explained that he and his partners have been working on the design plans and strategy for the Beechwood development

in Edenton. But the recession took its toll and that project was put on hold, he said.

Meanwhile, Claudia Deviney of Preservation North Carolina showed the developers the historic Hotel Hinton Building, and right away they recognized it as something special.

"My first thought was something has to be done here," Gupta said. He said he immediately saw a need and an opportunity to bring value back to the community through that building.

Gupta said that as the firm evaluates the project, a few points either way on return on investment will not make or break it. The

See HINTON, 2A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

The Hotel Hinton building, which most recently served as a governmental office building for Chowan County, is shown here in the melting snow on Friday morning.

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