

EMS worker helps with water rescue

From staff reports

Harriet Dehart had an unforgettable experience last week when she was part of a challenging — and dangerously chilly — rescue near the Sound Bridge on N.C. 32.

Dehart, an Edenton resident who works for Washington County's Emergency Medical Service, was on an ambulance returning to Creswell from Vidant Chowan

Hospital when her partner on the ambulance noticed spotted the immediate aftermath of a single-car accident on a slick road during the Feb. 12 snowfall.

"My partner saw the splash," Dehart recalled last week. "We watched it happen. We didn't see the car go in; we just saw the splash."

The accident occurred around 3:45 p.m. and was part of a rash of nine ac-

cidents that occurred in Chowan County during an hour and a half period of snowfall.

Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin reported last week that a Dodge Charger ran off the road just north of the Sound Bridge on Highway 32 and became submerged in a canal.

The driver of the Dodge was transported by ambulance to Vidant Chowan

Hospital.

At presstime the identity of the driver was not available.

Dehart explained that she and the other Washington EMS workers called dispatch and reported the accident.

They asked the driver if she was hurt. She replied she wasn't hurt but her foot was stuck.

"She just couldn't get out," Dehart said.

Initially, the water level was about halfway up the car door.

The EMS workers tried to get the driver out of the car and onto the roof, but at first were unable to.

Dehart said that fortunately, Gates County Sheriff's Deputy Bernard Brooks — who lives in Chowan County — happened by the scene and offered his assistance.

Brooks helped in trying to coach the driver onto the roof, Dehart said. The driver started to become somewhat upset because the water level was rising and water was beginning to seep inside the car, Dehart said.

When the water got to the inside of the window, Dehart tried to hold onto the door while pulling on the driver

See RESCUE, 4A

Council backs Dixon recusal

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

The town council voted unanimously at its Feb. 11 monthly meeting to allow Councilman Sambo Dixon to recuse himself from discussions or votes regarding the selection of a new site for the Edenton Police Department.



DIXON

Dixon owns a house on North Oakum Street that is contained in Option 2 on the list of four possible sites the council is considering. While it is not his personal residence, the fact that he owns it legally precludes him from taking part in any discussions or votes on the matter as long as Option 2 remains on the table, according to an opinion from the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

"A town council member generally has a duty to vote. (He or she) may be excused only on matters involving their own financial interest or official conduct," said Frayda S. Bluestein, professor of public law and government at UNC-CH.

Bluestein noted that some types of issues affect board members as citizens in the same way that his or her fellow citizens are affected — for example, in the case of tax rates or utility rates.

"The more directly a matter affects a particular board member, the more consideration must be made for whether it is a conflict for that particular person," she said.

Bluestein added that while the voting statute that governs actions by town council members does not specifically address whether a person who is excused from voting must also refrain from commenting on the issue.

"In a quasi-judicial matter, such as a conditional use permit or variance, the law is clear that a person with a conflict cannot participate," she said.

State, local officials welcome new firm

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

The work of Edenton and Chowan County officials — including the Edenton-Chowan Partnership — in helping Standard Medical Acceptance relocate its headquarters here is a model for economic development in rural areas statewide, Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker said Monday.

"Welcome to North Carolina," Decker told William D. "Bill" Lanzen, chief executive officer of SMA, during a ceremony welcoming the firm to Edenton, Chowan County and North Carolina. "We're very glad that you are here."

The company, which will be relocating its operations center from Manhattan to the second floor of Edenton's Town Hall building, is expected to create 32 high-paying jobs in the community over the next three years.

SMA is described as a technology leader in the valuation and collateralization of healthcare receivables for leading banks.

Lanzen said that when he first visited Edenton he was struck by something different — something he couldn't quite put his finger on — about the place and its people.

"From that point forward it just moved on, and here we are six months later," Lanzen said.

He said it was a remarkable accomplishment for the community in just a six-month period.

Decker called local leaders the "unsung heroes" of economic development.

The state sets policy, and has made important progress in areas such as tax reform and regulatory reform, Decker said.

"But economic development happens at a local level," Decker said. "You are the guys who at the end of the day have to make it work."

Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, called SMA's location in Edenton "a precursor of things to come."

"Northeastern North Carolina has got a tremendous future," Steinburg said. "I have no doubt about that."

Steinburg praised the Edenton-Chowan Partnership.

"This group is doing yeoman's work," Steinburg said. Tax reform and regulatory reform set the right foundation, he said, "but at the end



THOMAS J. TURNEY/THE DAILY ADVANCE

Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan (left) signs the lease agreement with the President of Standard Medical Acceptance, Inc. William Lanzen at the Welcome Ceremony and Reception for the Standard Medical Acceptance Corporation, Monday.

of the day somebody is going to have to sell this thing."

That's where local officials and local economic developers come in, he said.

Lanzen thanked the Edenton-Chowan Partnership for its help and support. He said Frank Miglorie of the Edenton-Chowan Partnership had been "stalwart" throughout the company's relocation process.

"I can truly say that if it weren't for him we probably wouldn't be here today," Lanzen said.

Lanzen described the Support Center, a Raleigh-based community development lender, as a big part of the reason the company is coming to Edenton.

"They really had faith in us earlier in our life cycle than most people would," Lanzen said of the Support Center.

Lanzen praised the joint effort of state and local officials from Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker and Gov. Pat McCrory to town and county officials and organizations such as the Golden LEAF Foundation.

"We're glad to be here," Lanzen said. "We're looking forward to being here a long time."

Lanzen said he believes the firm's location here is the beginning of even more jobs coming here.

"What a remarkable journey this has been for us at SMA," Lanzen

said. It has been remarkable, he said, from the start of the company in New York and now "the remarkable journey in North Carolina."

Decker said she is excited that SMA is here and also excited that the partnership between local officials, state agencies and nonprofits in bringing the firm to Edenton and Chowan County will be a model for the rest of the state.

Entrepreneurial initiatives such as SMAs are really the future of job growth in rural North Carolina, Decker said.

Asked whether local incentive packages — such as one recently

See SMA, 2A

Commissioner Mitchener files for reelection

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Chowan County Commissioner John Mitchener has filed for reelection.

Mitchener has represented District 2 in seat 2 since 2010.

"I ran mainly to try to understand how we got in the financial mess that we're in," Mitchener said, referring to his successful bid in 2010.

Mitchener filed Feb. 12. Earlier last week, Commissioner Jeff Smith filed for reelection in District 1.

Both Mitchener and Smith are currently serving their first terms on the board.

The filing period for county commissioner, sheriff and clerk of court ends at noon on Feb. 28.

Mitchener served on the county's school board from 1982 to 1994. He chaired the board from 1990 to 1994.

He said that when he ran the first time he didn't understand why the county wasn't having its audit report presented in an open meeting the way the school board did.

The county now has the

public presentation of the audit report, he said.

"There is a lot that has changed," Mitchener said. "We learned through the school of hard knocks about internal checks and balances that should have been in place that were not."

This year, he's running because the county has a lot of work to do in rebuilding its

infrastructure, he said.

Mitchener said there is maintenance that has been deferred that needs to be addressed. There is a lot of work that needs to be done at the two-story Walker Building on Oakum Street, at Swain Auditorium and at other facilities around the county.

A fire station for the southern part of the county also is a high priority, Mitchener said.

In Chowan County, open seats are clerk of court; sheriff; county commissioner District 1, seat 2; county

commissioner District 2, seat 2; and county commissioner District 3, seat 2.

The filing period for the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education begins June 27 and ends July 25. Board of Education Seats open this year are District 2, seat 1; and District 3, seat 1.

The filing period for the Soil and Water Board runs June 2-7. There are two positions available on that board.

Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin and Clerk of Court Mike McArthur have both filed for reelection.



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Friday, February 21, 2014
 COCKTAILS 6PM DINNER BUFFET 7PM

CHOWAN COUNTY
Ducks Unlimited Banquet
 Tickets: \$60 available at door includes buffet & membership.

American Legion Post 40
 Catering provided by
 Topside Restaurant and Catering
 FRIED SHRIMP & OYSTERS,
 TUNA BITES, ROAST PORK LOIN

Door Prizes, Gun Auction,
 Prints, Decoys and More!