



'Heritage tourism' hot topic at Rural Roundtable — 4A

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County charting path for 2014-'15 budget Schools seek increase in local funding

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Local education officials met with the county commissioners last week to make the case for increased local funding for the public schools.

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Allan Smith told county officials during a May 12 joint meeting of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education and the Chowan County Board of Commis-

sioners that the school board's appeal for \$188,000 in additional local funding for operating expenses is a "modest request."

The request from school officials represents a 5.5 percent increase over the current funding level.

County Manager Kevin Howard did not include the school board's requested increase in the recommended county budget for 2014-15.

The recommended budget keeps local current expense funding for schools

at the 2013-14 level.

While making the case for local funding, the school officials also asked the county commissioners to stand alongside the school board in protecting the special state funding for small county school districts.

The school district is estimating a \$230,000 reduction in small counties funding from the state, according to Smith.

Smith said Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, has been very supportive of the

effort to restore the small counties money at current levels.

Smith said the county could help the schools by lobbying the General Assembly for restoration of the small counties funding. That source of funding is critical for small counties in northeastern North Carolina, he said.

The school board's local funding request as presented by Smith covers a

See SCHOOLS, 2A

Commissioners mull Hopeline funding

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners continues to contemplate whether to make an exception to its standing practice of not funding nonprofits in order to make a contribution to the Albemarle Hopeline domestic violence program.

During the commission-

ers' May 5 meeting, Commissioner Alex Kehayes, reported that he had spoken with Chowan Social Services Director Clifton Hardison about Albemarle Hopeline.

Hardison was then given an opportunity to address the commissioners. He told the board that the county no longer has a funding stream through the state

See HOPELINE, 2A

Two days left at disaster center

From staff reports

Chowan County residents in need of assistance in the wake of the April 25 tornadoes may apply at the application center in Perquimans County today and tomorrow.

The disaster loan application center was established last week by order of Gov. Pat McCrory. It is located in the Albemarle Commission Building at 512 S. Church Street in Hertford. The loan outreach center is open from 9 a.m. to 6 p.m.

Thursday is the center's final day of operation.

Residents must apply first through the Small Business Administration to determine if they are eligible for State Emergency Declaration funds.

Residents in need of transportation to the Hertford application center can call the Inter County Transportation Authority at 338-4480. Transportation costs to the loan outreach center will be waived.

McCrory last week announced a U.S. Small Business Administration disaster declaration for Beaufort, Pasquotank, Perquimans and their adjacent counties, including Chowan. He also proclaimed a state disaster declaration enabling those who do not qualify for SBA loans to seek state funds to help repair and replace personal property.

"Families and small business owners can take some encouragement that they will have a financing element to help replace some of their losses and begin rebuilding in earnest," McCrory said. "This assistance will help families and small business owners get back to normal after going through some trying times."

The SBA disaster declaration means that residents and business owners in the declared and adjacent counties can apply for

See CENTER, 2A

Relay for Life



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Team Lesley, established to honor the memory of the late Lesley Bell of Edenton, walks the first team lap during opening ceremonies Friday evening at this year's Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life behind John A. Holmes High School. See story and more photos on page 1B.

Edenton Steamers season opens May 27

From staff reports

The Edenton Steamers will host Petersburg to open their season on May 27.

The first pitch will be at 7 p.m. After two days away, the Steamers will return May 30 to host Wilmington.

Look for special coverage of Edenton's hometown summer team in next week's Chowan Herald. The Steamers schedule, roster and other information will be included in next week's paper.

In preparation for the season, the team last week hosted an informational meeting for families interested in serving as Steamers host families.

The team is holding a barbecue and fried chicken fundraiser Friday at the Scout Hut in front of John A. Holmes High School. Plates are \$8 each and will be available from 11 a.m. to 2 p.m. and from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.

Proceeds from the plate sale will help cover travel expenses for the team.



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Local residents attend a meeting on May 13 to learn how they can host players from the Edenton Steamers. The gathering, hosted by members of the Host Families Committee led by Vicky Barrow, was held in the upstairs meeting room at the Shepard-Pruden Library.

School officials pleased with tenure ruling

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

Edenton-Chowan Schools officials say they are not surprised but are pleased by a ruling last Friday declaring the elimination of career status by the state legislature for North Carolina teachers who already have earned it unconstitutional.

Superior Court Judge Robert Hobgood said in his ruling that retroactively eliminating tenure for teachers "amounts to an unconstitutional taking of plaintiffs' property rights in their existing contract," a violation of the state constitution.

Local schools Superintendent Allan Smith praised the judge's findings in the

case. "Even the most casual observer would have predicted (elimination of previously earned career status) is contrary to both the North Carolina and United States Constitutions," he said. "However, this leaves the door open to abolish the ability for teachers to earn career status in the future."

Smith noted that it also appears the ruling will strike down the 25 percent mandate whereby school superintendents across the state must recommend to their respective school boards 25 percent of the teachers in their school system to receive four-year employment contracts.

"Hopefully that (elimination of the 25 percent man-

date) is the case but it will not be clear until the judge issues his written order," Smith said. "We intend to hold off on presenting the list of 25 percent of teachers to be offered a four-year contract until clarification is obtained."

Prior to the judge's ruling Smith had said he would

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2nd Annual
BBQ & CHICKEN PLATE SALE
FRIDAY, MAY 23, 2014

11AM- 2PM
 4PM - 7PM
SCOUT HUT, EDENTON
 In front of J.A. Holmes High School
 For tickets call 482-8080

FREE DELIVERY OF 10 OR MORE PLATES
 Donation \$8.00 plate
 Catered by Leon Nixon Catering
 Proceeds benefit Edenton Steamers Transportation