

State celebrates record visitor spending

■ County spending by domestic visitors increases by 3.3 percent to \$18.72M

From staff reports

The North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development announced last week that domestic visitors to and within Chowan County spent \$18.72 million in 2013, an increase of 3.3 percent from 2012.

"This increase in visitor spending shows

how important the Hospitality Industry is to Chowan County and the value of collaboration and cooperation within our county to grow this industry," said Keith Nixon, Chowan County Tourism Development Authority Chairman. "We look forward to reaching a wider audience as we continue to invite visitors to experience our rich historic and cultural assets."

Tourism impact highlights for 2013:

- The travel and tourism industry directly employs more than 140 in Chowan County.

- Total payroll generated by the tourism industry in Chowan County was \$2.7 million.

- State tax revenue generated in Chowan County totaled \$890,000 through state sales and excise taxes, and taxes on personal and corporate income. Approximately \$1.15 million in local taxes were generated from sales and property tax revenue from travel-generated and travel-supported businesses.

Meanwhile, Gov. Pat McCrory and De-

partment of Commerce Secretary Sharon Decker announced recently that 95 of the state's 100 counties saw increases in visitor spending in 2013. Data from the North Carolina Department of Commerce's Division of Tourism, Film and Sports Development showed that visitor spending topped \$1 billion in Mecklenburg, Wake and Guilford counties and approached \$1 billion in Dare and Buncombe.

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GRAND OPENING HELD DOWNTOWN



Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan (left) presents volunteer Madison Phillips a framed copy of a proclamation designating him the honorary lightkeeper for the historic Roanoke River Lighthouse.

Schools prepare for Aug. 25 opening

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

Students in the Edenton-Chowan school system will have lots to look forward to as school opens again on Aug. 25, principals from the county's four schools say.

They'll get a taste of what to expect from the new school during Open House events set for tomorrow (Thursday), Aug. 21. White Oak Elementary and D.F. Walker Elementary will hold their Open House activities from 3:30 to 5:30 p.m. Over at Chowan Middle School an Open House is planned from 5 to 7 p.m. John A. Holmes's Open House will take place from 6 to 8 p.m.

White Oak Principal Michelle White said her school is excited about their new playground that will be installed on Sept. 8. Special features will include a rock wall, a new swing set, games and new soccer goals among other things.

The school is also launching a new "Watch Dog" program that aims to interest dads and male role models to volunteer at White Oak for a day.

"The goal of this program is to increase positive male role models for children, and give dads an opportunity to be actively involved in their child's education," White said.

White said that her school already has "an extremely effective" PBIS (positive behavior intervention and support) that promotes positive behavior in order to cut down on negative behavior.

"This program will feature a school wide consistent daily progress report for parents that highlights students' behavior and any

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STAFF PHOTOS BY REGGIE PONDER

N.C. Secretary of Cultural Resources Susan Klutz (center) cuts the ribbon at the 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse, joined by (l-r) Karen Ipock, director of Historic Edenton State Historic Site; Jerry Climer, treasurer of the Edenton Historical Commission; Keith Hardison, director of state historic sites; Madison Phillips, a local volunteer and honorary lightkeeper; Edenton Mayor Roland Vaughan; and U.S. Coast Guard Commander Steven Fachko.

Roanoke River Lighthouse opens to public



Charles Boyette of the Historic Edenton State Historic Site and Wanda Lassiter of Museum of the Albemarle talk shop in front of a set of wooden trunks on the second floor of the lighthouse.

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Local and state officials Friday celebrated the restoration of the 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse as an educational and economic opportunity for the community, region and state.

N.C. Department of Cultural Resources Secretary Susan Klutz also cited the opening of the lighthouse to the public as one more example of Edenton's commitment to historic preservation. Klutz opened her re-

marks at Friday's Grand Opening ceremony by praising the community's pursuit of historic preservation.

"No one does it better than you," Klutz said.

The 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse is "another jewel in your crown," Klutz said.

The lighthouse has been restored and has been furnished with items donated or loaned to the Edenton Historical Commission. The Historical Commission has in turn placed the furnishings on loan

to the Historic Edenton State Historic Site for use in the Roanoke River Lighthouse.

"We were very lucky to receive such unique and appropriate furnishings which help to exhibit the lighthouse as it would have been in the late 1800s," explained Gregg Nathan, executive director of the Edenton Historical Commission.

The items used were selected by the state curator.

Klutz told the crowd

See LIGHTHOUSE, 4A

Three arrested in pickup truck theft

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Three young men from Edenton have been arrested in connection with the theft of a pickup truck — and two of them have been charged in the theft and destruction of two trucks.

The two pickup trucks were destroyed in a bizarre chain of events in Chowan

County late at night on July 29 and early on the morning of July 30.

Jeremy Edward Thomas Travers, 23, of 706 Cabarrus St., and Kelvin Lee Harris, 23, of 1021 N. Broad St., each were charged with two counts of larceny of a motor vehicle, two counts of possession of stolen goods, two counts of conspiring to commit felony larceny, first degree trespass, injury to personal property, felony breaking



HARRIS

TRAVERS

WALKER

and entering, felony larceny, and burning personal property, according to Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin.

Travers was placed in the Chowan County jail under \$41,000 bond and Harris was placed in the Chowan County Jail under \$43,500 bond, Good-

win reported.

Christopher Shaddar Walker, 17, of 706 Cabarrus St., was charged with breaking and entering of a motor vehicle, larceny of a motor vehicle, possession of stolen goods, conspiracy to commit felony larceny, first degree trespass, and injury to real property, Goodwin said.

Walker was placed in the Chowan County Jail under \$16,000 bond, Goodwin said.

"A few people came

forward with information," Goodwin said. "We followed that information and ended up making these arrests."

Goodwin said this was a collaborative effort of the Chowan Sheriff's Office, Edenton Police Department and N.C. Division of Motor Vehicles License and Theft Enforcement Section.

On July 29-20 a Ford pickup truck belonging to Chris Elliott was stolen and burned, and a Chevrolet truck belonging to Simon Rich was

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Tax credit backers lose this year's showdown

■ Steinburg: Historic preservation will be on 2015 agenda

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Backers of the state's historic preservation tax credits program appear to have lost this year's skirmish, but advocates such as Rep. Bob Steinburg and Secretary of Cultural Resources Susan Klutz are looking to next year as an opportunity to reinstate some kind of tax credit or other funding for historic preservation.

Steinburg, R-Chowan, said this week he was disappointed that the General Assembly didn't at least vote to extend the existing historic preservation tax credits through June 30, 2015.

The House had included the preservation tax credits in the budget but the Senate version of the budget

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