



Methodists set up disaster response center, 6B

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Grad rate slips, but goal remains 100 percent

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson said this week that his main concern about a decrease in the local high school's four-year graduation rate is the effect on the

lives of individual students who didn't graduate within four years of beginning high school.

But a better percentage did graduate within five years, Jackson said, and the school system's goal is for all students to graduate within four years.

"The school system has prioritized every student," Jackson said.

The four-year graduation rate in the Edenton-Chowan Schools this year was 78.9 percent this year, down from 81.5 percent the previous year.

The statewide graduation

rates are an 83.8 percent four-year rate and an 84.9 percent five-year rate.

While the four-year rate in Edenton-Chowan is lower than last year and lower than the statewide rate, Edenton-Chowan's five-year rate is better than last year and only slightly behind the

statewide rate.

Edenton-Chowan posted an 84.3 percent five-year graduation rate this year.

The numbers are certainly a cause for concern but they aren't the most important thing, Jackson said.

"What matters is that there were children who

didn't graduate in June of 2014 who could have graduated if they had made different choices," Jackson said.

A goal of 100 percent graduation was the focus at this year's beginning of school staff convocation

See GRAD RATE, 3A

Library back open on Saturday

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library opened for Saturday hours this past weekend for the first time in some three years.

Jennifer Finlay, library director, said she appreciated the support the library received from Smart Start and Chowan County - support that enabled the library once again to be open on Saturdays.

"I am thrilled that the county has been able to understand that this is an important asset to the community," Finlay said.

Library patrons were excited to find the facility open on Saturday morning.

"I love it," said Barbara Bryant. "I read so fast that if I run out of books during the week I like to come up here on the weekend and pick me up a couple more."

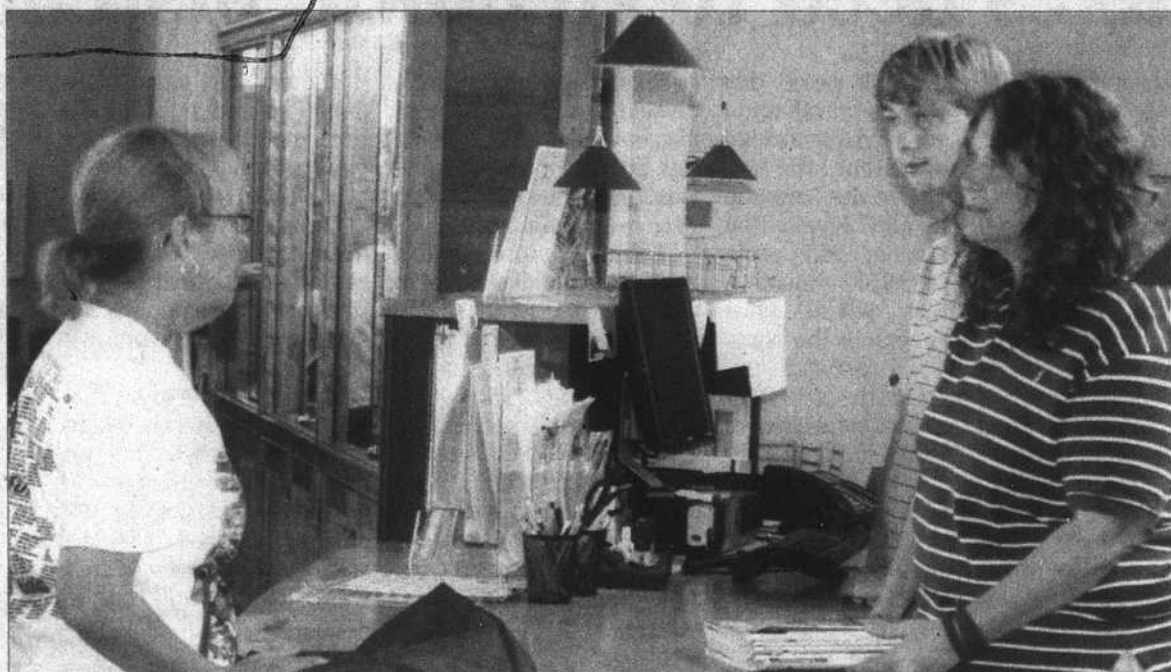
Katie Walters, who had two children with her at the library Saturday morning, said she came before when the library was open on Saturdays.

Walters usually comes on Monday or Tuesday, but if she doesn't make it one of those days her schedule usually doesn't allow her to visit the library on other weekdays.

"So Saturday opening is very exciting," Walters said.

Susan Nixon, director of the Chowan-Perquimans Smart Start Partnership, explained that it was a fairly long process that led to the partnership between Smart Start and the library in opening on Saturdays.

When Smart Start did an early literacy needs assessment for Chowan County that involved surveying parents in the



Library patron Mary Harris speaks with library staff Jennifer Finlay and Josh Ainsley Saturday morning.

community, the survey results indicated that the library was a preferred place for parents to go to receive early literacy services.

In addition, the survey found that Saturday was parents' preferred day for attending early literacy classes.

So Smart Start began talking to the county commissioners about how the groups could collaborate to make it work.

The Smart Start Partnership included in its early literacy plan with the state the need to have the library open on Saturdays. Through its grant funding, Smart Start is collaborating with the county commissioners to enable the library to be open on Saturday.

Nixon said the Smart Start Partnership is providing \$2,800 a year from its grant funds to support the library's Saturday hours.

Mary Harris had been eager to see the Saturday library hours because her job as an office assistant

See LIBRARY, 4A

Budget adjustments keep TAs in classroom

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The Edenton-Chowan Schools have been able to shift items within the local budget to maintain four of the five instructional assistant positions that were lost through the state budget process, Superintendent Rob Jackson said this week.

At the start of school this year, the Edenton-Chowan Schools had 22 fewer positions than in August 2013, Jackson said. Those positions were lost because of budget cuts from state and local sources, he said.

With fewer resources, the school system has had to look closely at how it allocates staff, Jackson said.

One of the positions lost was an assistant principal position. As a result, White Oak and D.F. Walker are now sharing an assistant principal.

"That was a decision that we made because we wanted to put the resources that we had available in the classroom," Jackson said.

Jackson said that so far the shared assistant principal arrangement seems to be working out well for both schools.

In addition to the instructional assistant and assistant principal positions, the school system lost two teachers in the exceptional children's program, eight teachers in the regular education program, one crossing guard and four child-care employees.

Although the school system lost five teacher assistant or instructional assistant positions through the state budget, only one instructional assistant position was actually eliminated, according to Jackson. The position eliminated had been held by someone who left the county to work somewhere else.

The four remaining instructional assistant positions have been continued by shifting items within the local budget, Jackson explained.

For instance, the school system had one teaching position that it maintained as a contingency in case the state held it back because of enrollment, Jackson said. The school system now does not anticipate the state holding that position back, so it is using it to help fund the

See CLASSROOMS, 4A

Local Relay for Life moves to shorter event

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life voted in a community meeting Monday night to shorten the 2015 Relay event to 12 hours because of dwindling participation in the 24-hour walkathon.

April Smith, who attended the meeting as an American Cancer Society representa-

tive from the Greenville office, assured the crowd of 20 or so Relay participants who gathered in the cafeteria at Vidant Chowan Hospital for the community meeting that changing the length of the event would not change what Relay for Life is all about.

This is the first year that Relay for Life - a flagship fundraiser for the American Cancer Society - has allowed deviation from its original 24-hour model.

But as Relay for Life, which is recognized as the largest fundraising event in the

See RELAY, 4A

Chowan GOP opens election HQ

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Jim Robison, chairman of the Chowan County Republican Party, welcomes the party faithful to Friday's opening of the county's GOP headquarters in the Robin Sams Gallery at 315 S. Broad St.



The Chowan County Republican Party has opened an election campaign headquarters in the Robin Sams Gallery at 315 S. Broad St.

Chowan Republicans held a grand opening of the headquarters Friday morning.

Jim Robison, chairman of the Chowan County Republican Party, welcomed a gathering of the party faithful to the opening. Robison said he appreciated Sams making the space available for the headquarters. He and several others remarked that it was hard to imagine a more attractive setting for an election headquarters.

Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, said during the opening that the headquarters

See ELECTION HQ, 4A



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MONDAYS, SEPT. 8TH-OCT 13TH AT 5:30/FINALE OCT. 17 AT 6

The Library's ARMCHAIR TRAVELER SERIES to GERMANY