



SCHOOL FACILITIES AT A CROSSROADS

County, school board to meet soon on needs

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Chowan County officials will meet soon with Edenton-Chowan Schools officials to plan much-needed replacement of heating and cooling systems and other critical projects at local schools.

Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson made a presentation on school capital needs during the Chowan Board of Commissioners planning retreat Thursday. The commissioners held the daylong planning session at the Inner Banks Inn in Edenton.

"This is the kind of dialogue that we need."

Jeff Smith

Chairman, Chowan Board of Commissioners

The county commissioners at the retreat established as a goal the development of a comprehensive plan to update school facilities in cooperation with the school board.

Jackson said he wanted to ensure county officials that they would receive in a timely manner all the information that is needed to make informed decisions. He said he was grateful for the opportunity to present to the commissioners information about the school system's long-range capital needs.

Jackson said he understands the commissioners have to make difficult decisions.

Referring to the local school system as "the most powerful economic development engine in the county," Jackson cited numerous critical repairs needed to keep that engine running smoothly.

The commissioners at times questioned how the situation had gotten this bad — sometimes wondering aloud if it had resulted from ill-advised priorities in school capital funding.

For instance, when Jackson mentioned that students and visiting athletic teams can't take showers in the locker rooms at the high school, Commissioner Keith Nixon noted the county had spent money on the offices at the high school. Would showers have been more

See TO MEET, 4A

Lions hear critical school needs

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson detailed for the Edenton Lions Club Monday night a laundry list of facilities needs that he said had gone unaddressed for decades.

"It hurts my heart. What kind of message are we sending to our children?"

Rob Jackson

Superintendent, Edenton-Chowan Schools

The county commissioners, who are legally responsible for funding the needs of the school system, could rightfully claim they were not aware of the dire condition in a number of areas within the county's four public schools, he said.

With level funding of just \$200,000 provided virtually every year by county government, Jackson said, school officials in the past had simply prioritized the needs of the school system to meet the \$200,000 level and set the remaining needs aside to be added to the school system's budget requests another year.

As a result, Jackson said, there are existing infrastructure needs such as heating and cooling, showers that don't work, locker rooms that are neither heated nor cooled, and a high school auditorium badly in need of improvements.

"It hurts my heart," Jackson said. "What kind of

See CRITICAL, 3A



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Rob Jackson, superintendent of Edenton-Chowan Schools, uses a PowerPoint presentation to discuss school needs and funding during an Edenton Lions Club meeting Monday in the fellowship hall at Edenton Baptist Church.

Vaughan to seek re-election as mayor

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Mayor Roland Vaughan announced Monday afternoon that he plans to seek re-election.

At the end of his current term, Vaughan said, he will have served the town as its mayor for the past 20 years.

If voters return him to office, he said, it would be for one final four-year term.

"And you can print that," he said, laughing.

Vaughan noted that he took more time than he normally does to make the decision in which his wife, Peggy Anne, was a partner.

He said that as 2015 approached they began talking about the idea more often.

His wife, he said, knew how much the office meant to him and how seriously he took his responsibilities as mayor. He would never do it, he said, unless he felt he could give the job a 100 percent effort.

One day recently, he said, his wife looked at him and asked, "You want to do it, don't you?"

"Yes" was his answer. "So here I am," the mayor said.

But the decision to run again also incorporated another decision — that this would absolutely be the final time he would seek re-election.

"My wife and I decided that 20 years was gonna be enough," he said, noting that there are things he and his wife would like to do, such as travel, that have continued

to take a backseat to his role as mayor. At their age, he said, he and his wife can't postpone those things indefinitely.

His love of serving the town as mayor is one of the reasons he wants to stay on the job a while longer, Vaughan said.

And there are others. He said he is proud of the town staff and the job they do and is proud to be from a town as well maintained as Edenton. He also praised Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton for her outstanding leadership skills.

"Given the modest amount of money we have in our budget," Vaughan said, "they do a



VAUGHAN

remarkable job."

Vaughan said he felt he too brought certain strengths to the table when it came to helping the town.

"I know a good number of key people in state government and the North Carolina League of Municipalities that I have been able to access when necessary," the mayor said.

"And finally," he said. "I have a desire to serve this community that has been so good to me and my family since my childhood. That's the number one reason."

Vaughan said he was gratified to see the local economy

See MAYOR, 3A

Renewable energy credit backed by area lawmakers

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

The state legislators representing Chowan County back extending the state's renewable energy tax credit.

Indeed, Sen. Erica Smith-Ingram, D-Northampton, who represents a district that includes Chowan, is a co-sponsor of the bill that Sen. Paul Lowe, D-Forsyth, introduced last week that would extending the renewable energy tax credit. The proposed legislation allows individuals and companies that have constructed, purchased, or leased renewable energy property a tax credit equal to 35 percent of the cost of the property, during the taxable year.

Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, noted he had not seen the specific language of proposed legislation for this session, but said his expectation at this point is that he will be supporting it.

"I have supported it in the past and I'm likely to support it again," Steinburg said of the



LOWE



SMITH-INGRAM



STEINBURG

Wind developer finds friends in Perquimans

BY PETER WILLIAMS
The Perquimans Weekly

While some Chowan County residents are raising concerns about building wind turbines, guests at a Perquimans



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County Chamber of Commerce breakfast meeting last Wednesday seemed to focus on the economic benefits it could bring.

The purpose of "Chamber Conversations Over Coffee" morning meetings is to get business owners and agencies that work with them together monthly to learn more about what each other does and how they can work together.

The format calls for a speaker

to talk for about 15 minutes and then provide the audience time to ask questions. Don Giecek, senior development manager for Apex Clean Energy, was the first speaker at the first breakfast event.

The Charlottesville, Va., company is proposing to build a 10,000-acre wind turbine project that will straddle the Perquimans-Chowan line.

Giecek described the \$500 million project, which would

include between 100 and 150 turbines, each about 600 feet tall.

In Chowan County, the project known as Timbermill has created some controversy, including a call for a moratorium on wind turbine development. The chairman of the county's planning board also has called for a complete review of the county's land use rules when

See DEVELOPER, 3A

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Sponsored by the Rocky Hock Ruritan's Relay for Life Team
Tickets \$10.00
SATURDAY, APRIL 18th, 7:30PM
E.A. SWAIN AUDITORIUM EDENTON, NC
Tickets Available at various locations or call 252-221-4875 or 252-340-3438. Email rockyhock opry@live.com