



Hunter Safety Team wins first place at district tournament — 6A

482-4418

wednesday, April 1, 2015

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School, county to talk facilities, budget

BY REBECCA BUNCH AND REGGIE PONDER
 Staff Writers

A much-anticipated joint meeting of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education and Chowan County Board of Commissioners is less than two weeks away.

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson announced Friday that a joint meeting between the county commissioners and school board has been scheduled for April 13 at 9:30 a.m. at the Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library. "The county manager has

asked that I draft an agenda and send it to him to work on," Jackson said. Jackson said he planned to ask that a review of the county's finances be included among the agenda items. He also indicated his hope was that the two boards would work toward

creating a multi-year plan to address capital needs and other issues. He said he hoped the plan would cover a three-year period. School board member Gil Burroughs said he felt part of the conversation should be sharing the history of the two boards and their previ-

ous relationship. Burroughs said judging by comments he has heard from some of the commissioners it is clear to him that some "misconceptions" currently exist that need to be dealt with. "I think we need to understand their position and they need to understand ours,"

Burroughs said. "I don't know how we can clear that hurdle." School board member Ricky Browder agreed there were issues to be worked through so that real progress could occur.

See TO TALK, 3A

Officials zoom in on jobs, growth

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

The Chowan County Board of Commissioners at its Commission retreat March 19 agreed on several goals involving economic development, population growth and infrastructure, and took initial steps toward a five-year plan to grow and strengthen the county.

The commissioners touched on a number of points in a brief brainstorming session led by facilitators from the Rural Economic Development Division of the N.C. Department of Commerce. They indicated they would like to develop a five-year plan and reach consensus on some key issues.

A high-tech workforce and local schools as a magnet to draw people to the community were held up as goals. It also was agreed that as much as possible there should be a timeframe established for projects.

In further discussion, the commissioners talked about balancing heritage preservation with growth, taking a do-it-yourself approach at the local level, and having a welcoming attitude toward new residents of the community.

Other topics touched on during the planning retreat were the water system and the need to address an aging infrastructure; consolidation of facilities; regional partnership and cooperation; water quality as it relates to recreation and economic development; recreation and senior citizens; funding for agricultural extension; and accountability for local

See ZOOM IN, 4A

TAYLOR THEATER BUILDING IS ON THE MARKET



BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

The downtown building that houses the Taylor Theater is for sale. The owner, who lives in Connecticut, says he intends to be "an aggressive seller" who would love to see a local person or group purchase the town's movie theater.

The building that houses the Taylor Theater is for sale.

Dr. Mike Montanaro of Connecticut, who owns the building, confirmed Sunday afternoon that he is trying to find a buyer for the historic 1925 building.

Bob Krochmal, who owns and manages the movie theater business itself, said he would love to see someone local buy the building.

Montanaro agreed. He said he realized the importance of having the movie theater in the community's downtown and would love to see it purchased by someone who felt the same way.

"I'm so far away and I'd love to have somebody who lives in the town buy it," he said.

Montanaro said he planned to be "an aggressive seller". He said he paid \$350,000 for the building 10 to 12 years ago.

"I think Edenton is a charming town with a great history and it just appealed to me," he said.

When asked what he might find an acceptable purchase price today, he offered a ballpark estimate of \$260,000.

Montanaro said he had already contacted Charlie Creighton of Colony Tire to see if he might have any interest in purchasing the property. It was Creighton's company that contributed heavily to a community fundraising effort to purchase digital projection equipment a few years ago to enable the movie theater to stay open.

Creighton confirmed the conversation but said he told Montanaro he wasn't interested.

"I'm not going to buy it," Creighton said. "I have no interest in buying it."

STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Schools seek alternative space

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Chowan County and the Edenton-Chowan Schools are looking for a way to save the school district more than \$40,000 a year on office rent.

During the county commissioners' planning retreat on May 19, Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson mentioned the upcoming expiration of the lease at the school system's current administrative office. He said the school system would prefer to occupy county-owned space and not have to pay rent for offices. The schools currently pay \$42,000 a year to rent the office space on West Queen Street.

County Manager Kevin Howard said the only county-owned space available right now that might accommodate the school system's administrative offices would be the old D.F. Walker Building. But Howard added it probably would take at least six months to get that facility ready for the school system to house its offices there.

Commissioner Emmett

Winborne said the Ag Extension Building could accommodate the school offices.

Jackson said that site would be convenient to all the schools.

Howard noted space at the Ag Extension Building would not become vacant until after the departure of the Edenton Police Department from the Public Safety Center, which is expected sometime next year. County and school officials are expected to continue discussing the options over the next several months.

In the meantime, school officials likely will seek a short-term renewal of the current lease.

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TIP funds freeway upgrades

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

The long-term vision of an interstate connecting Raleigh with Norfolk, Va., got a boost in the state's draft Transportation Improvement Program with the inclusion of nearly \$13 million to upgrade a stretch of U.S. 17 in Chowan County to interstate highway standards.

The proposed interstate is championed by Gov. Pat McCrory as part of an economic development strategy of strengthening ties between North Carolina and the Hampton Roads area of Virginia.

Another project billed as strengthening the North Carolina-Hampton Roads connection is the Currituck Mid-County Bridge. The draft TIP includes \$374 million for work on the

bridge.

Planning and design is already underway on that project, which is scheduled for \$86.8 million worth of work in 2019, \$84.8 million in 2020, \$81.6 million in 2021, \$81.6 million again in 2022, \$13.1 million in 2023, and \$13.1 million again in 2024 and 2025.

That leaves \$65.8 million in project funding not included in the 10-year plan.

The bulk of the Mid-County Bridge funding — some \$237.5 million — is slated to come from bond proceeds.

As for the proposed interstate highway linking Raleigh and Norfolk, state and federal officials generally have agreed that the new interstate likely would be 25 years or more in

See TIP FUNDS, 4A

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 Tickets \$10.00
 Sponsored by the Rocky Hock Ruritan's Relay for Life Team
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