



'Wings over Edenton'
ready to take flight — 1B 50¢

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BUDGETS FACE MOUNTING PRESSURE

County mulls property tax hike with wary eye : Town facing \$62K revenue deficit in 2015-16 budget

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Early indications show Chowan County officials might be willing to raise the property tax rate to fund pressing school needs — but not enough to pay for all the high-priority items the schools are requesting.

Although County Manager Kevin Howard has not yet submitted his recommended budget to the county commissioners, the preliminary working document com-

missioners have begun reviewing would call for a tax rate of 91.5 cents per \$100 valuation — a 21.5-cent increase over the tax rate in the current budget.

One cent on the county's tax rate generates about \$132,000.

Much of the pressure on the budget this year comes from the local school system, which is seeking to replace worn-out heating and cooling systems and take care of

See COUNTY, 4A

BY REGGIE PONDER
AND REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writers

The Town of Edenton is facing a projected \$62,000 revenue shortfall in the 2015-2016 budget from loss of privilege license fees — a shortfall that Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton told the town council she didn't see any way to make up without a tax increase.

The shortfall was discussed during the

Finance Committee report at the council's April 27 work session.

Town officials are hoping the General Assembly will adopt some kind of mechanism to replace the lost revenue.

"That's really probably our only hope except for a tax increase," Knighton said.

Knighton said Monday that it would take a property tax increase of about 1.5 cents per \$100 valuation to make up for the

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MAY PLAY DAY



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Smart Start Director Susan Nixon sports a big smile, while Laura Wilkins helps her granddaughter Angel pick a good book or two during May Play Day. Saturday morning. See more photos from May Play Day on page 1B and online at DailyAdvance.com.

Air Methods drops airport base

BY REGGIE PONDER AND PETER WILLIAMS
Staff Writers

Air Methods is no longer operating a medical emergency helicopter from a base at the Northeastern Regional Airport.

"The airport commission is very disappointed," Edenton Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton said Monday.

Junius A. Frederick, regional business development manager for Air Methods, confirmed the local closure Monday, but referred other questions to the corporate communications staff. The Chowan Herald was unable to speak with the corporate communications staff before presstime.

The 24-hour emergency medical heli-

copter had been based at the Northeastern Regional Airport since March 2014. An EC-135 twin-engine helicopter was housed in a hangar at the airport.

The helicopter provided the potentially lifesaving service of enabling a patient to get to a high-level treatment center within the one-hour critical period for emergency response.

Air Methods is headquartered in Englewood, Colorado.

According to the company's website, it has operations from Alaska to Key West, Fla. The company has more than 300 bases of operations in 48 states.

Perquimans officials say the decision

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Morris takes reins at Extension

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Mary Morris is Chowan County's new director of Cooperative Extension.

Morris, who became director on April 1, said this week she was enjoying the new job.

"We have got a great staff in this office," Morris said.

Katy Shook, the area horticulture specialist, had been serving as interim director for more than two years.

Shook did a great job as interim director, Morris said.

Morris was the family and consumer sciences agent for Bertie County for the past eight years. Since November 2013 she also has been working in Chowan.

Although she is no longer officially working in Bertie, she is finishing up a few programs she started over there. She will be finished with all her work in Bertie by the end of this month, she said.

Family and consumer sciences is what was



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Mary Morris, shown standing at the door of her office, is the new director of Chowan County Cooperative Extension.

traditionally known as "home economics," Morris explained.

Morris, a 1990 graduate of John A. Holmes High School, graduated from East Carolina University in 1997 with a degree in health education. She earned a master's degree in health education from ECU last year.

She is married to Stu-

art Morris. They live in the Rocky Hock community and have two children who are students at Chowan Middle School.

After earning her bachelor's degree she spent eight years in Southport. When her kids were born, she stayed at home with them until they were

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Chief seeks to reassure residents

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

During an April 28 North Edenton Community Watch meeting Police Chief Jay Fortenbery urged citizens to serve as extra sets of eyes and ears for law enforcement in their neighborhood.

"We want to work with everybody to have a better quality of life for all our citizens," he said. "Working with our young people is one of the things I strive to do, teaching them to be good and stay out of trouble."

But LoriAnn Curtin said she continues to be troubled by the presence of drug dealing and prostitution in her neighborhood. She said that she sees cars — the same ones sometimes



FORTENBERY

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