

UPCOMING HOME GAMES
GAMES START AT 7PM | AT HISTORIC HICKS FIELD
NEXT HOME GAMES
JUNE 17 Peninsula Pilots | JUNE 19* Holly Springs Salamanders *Friday Night Franks.
Buy One, Get One Free
June 20 Morehead City Marlins-Baseball on the Beach
June 23 Peninsula Pilots | June 24 Home Run Derby, Admission by Donation
Call 482-4080 For More Information | WWW.EDENTONSTEAMERS.COM

Commissioners hear appeals for school funding

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

An instructional assistant at D.F. Walker Elementary School appealed for more funding for the local schools during the public hearing Monday night on the 2015-2016 Chowan County budget.

Brenda Ward, who iden-

tified herself as an instructional assistant at D.F. Walker, said she thought the school system had not been looked at as seriously as it should have been. Teachers are spending more money out of pocket on supplies every year, and positions are being cut, she said.

County Manager Kevin Howard's recommended

budget included a six-cent increase in the property tax rate. The recommended budget increases funds for school capital outlay by some \$400,000, but does not increase funding for school current expense. The current expense budget is the money the school system uses for instructional and operational needs.

The county's current property tax rate is 70 cents per \$100 valuation.

At a special meeting on the budget during the last week of May, Howard announced administrative adjustments that brought the tax rate increase down to 4.5 cents. And the commissioners during that special meeting gave tentative

backing to a plan that would increase the property tax rate by two cents.

Each cent on the property tax rate is expected to generate about \$132,700 in revenue.

A two-cent increase in the property tax rate would amount to an additional \$2 on the annual tax bill for every \$10,000 of assessed

value of property. On a \$200,000 house, for instance, it would mean \$40 more on the annual county property tax bill.

Howard has reported to the commissioners that Emergency Medical Service revenue shortfalls and the rising cost of employee

See BUDGET, 3A

John A. Holmes High School graduates 176

■ Class of 2015 earns record \$4.3 million in scholarship funds

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Carolynn O'Kelley had a straightforward proposal for the John A. Holmes High School Class of 2015 as graduates prepared to enter college, the military or civilian jobs amid a challenging season in the society and the economy.

"Go out into the world and fix it," said O'Kelley, the school's Teacher of the Year for 2014-2015. "Go out into the world and do better, and be better, as we all know you can."

JAH presented diplomas to 176 graduates Saturday morning in a ceremony at the school's athletic complex.

O'Kelley challenged the graduates to make good decisions about what would be next for them.

"We are all one decision away from a very different life," O'Kelley said.

She referred to the graduates as "my kids" and spoke about how the students at the school are like family to her.

"Part of who I am today is because of you," O'Kelley said.

At the beginning of her remarks, O'Kelley asked the graduates to take 10 seconds just to breathe and to enjoy the moment.

"Today I have nothing but praise and love for you," O'Kelley said, underscoring the significance of

See GRADUATION, 4A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

The 2015 graduates of John A. Holmes High School turn their tassels during the graduation ceremony Saturday morning at the school's athletic complex.

STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Bryant Lee Chappell, Class of 2015 valedictorian, addresses the class Saturday morning during the graduation ceremony.



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Adriana Rojas, class salutatorian, addresses the Class of 2015 Saturday morning during the graduation ceremony.



Council approves Hotel Hinton parking agreement

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

Despite reservations expressed by some downtown business owners, town council members voted unanimously at their June 9 monthly meeting to approve a lease agreement making 84 parking spaces available to the Hotel Hinton.

The spaces are located behind the historic structure - which most recently served as a governmental office building for Chowan County - in the town's mu-

nicipal parking lot between East Eden Street and Court Street.

The agreement specifies that the spaces "are to be used (by SAGA, the developer) in connection with the development and operation of the Hotel Hinton project and for no other purpose for a term of 84 years and a lease payment of \$500."

Should the hotel ever close, town officials said, the agreement would become null and void and the town would once again take control of the parking

spaces. The vote followed a public hearing during which several local merchants said that while they understood the value of the project in terms of bringing additional revenue to the town they had concerns about the impact of so many downtown parking spaces no longer being available for use by their customers. Town officials have estimated that the hotel would add between \$12 million and \$13 million in revenue to the tax base once it is up and running.

The project is also expected to create 50 new jobs, most of which town officials expect to be filled by local citizens.

Under the current arrangement, there will be a total of 70 public parking spaces available with 54 of them located in the parking lot behind stores in the downtown area.

Heather Newingham, co-owner of the Christian Book Seller, said retailers on Broad Street feel that a lack of adequate parking already exists. She said that

allowing the hotel to lease 84 of the existing spaces would only make the situation worse.

"For 10 years, I've talked to the police department about doing more to enforce the 2-hour parking," Newingham said. "That's always been a complaint of mine (insufficient parking)."

Newingham said that taking away parking places behind the hotel building would force older customers to walk further to get to her store, making it likely they would decide to stay

home. She added that having construction workers and others associated with the Hotel Hinton project park in the existing parking lot would add to the congestion once work gets underway at the site.

"The construction will hurt us," she said.

Larry Sellers, who co-owns retail space in the downtown area, had a different take on the situation.

Sellers said that statistics show the majority of hotels

See PARKING, 4A

Town approves sale of energy generation assets

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

During its monthly meeting on June 9 the town council voted unanimously to approve an agreement years in the making that is expected to lower utility rates for its customers.

The following morning Mayor Roland Vaughan and Town Manager Anne-Marie Knighton signed documents authorizing an asset purchase agreement and power purchase between the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency and Duke Energy Progress, Inc.

"As of 8:30 this morning, we're all signed up," Vaughan said later that day.

During the council meeting Knighton called the finalization of the agreement "a historic and momentous

occasion".

Edenton is one of 32 NCEMPA member communities required to sign off on the \$1.2 billion transaction.

ElectriCities, the management arm of NCEMPA, has worked for years to finalize such a deal whereby Duke would purchase the power agency's shares of four power plants resulting in lower electric rates in participating communities.

Knighton described the deal as "a complex trans-

See ASSETS, 4A

Herald plans corrected version of graduate photos

From staff reports

The Chowan Herald's graduate photo pages for the John A. Holmes High School Class of 2015 in the June 10 edition of the newspaper left out a number of graduate photos from this year's class while including some photos of last year's graduates.

Because of the importance of high school graduation as a milestone in the life of the student and the student's family, the Chowan Herald is working with

the high school staff and a photography studio to put together a correct version of the graduate photos. The details have not been finalized but the newspaper expects to run the new version in the June 24 edition.

"While these errors certainly were unintentional, the Chowan Herald understands the importance of graduation to individuals and families and regrets any confusion, inconvenience or disappointment the mistakes in last week's

edition might have caused for graduates, family members, advertising sponsors or others in the community," said Reggie Ponder, news editor of the Chowan Herald. "We look forward to resolving this situation as best we can by running a correct version of graduate photos for the Class of 2015. The newspaper appreciates the community's support of the graduates and the local schools, and we intend to be a good community partner ourselves."



©2009 The Chowan Herald
All Rights Reserved

Free Admission
BBO plates or by pound for sale after 4pm
other concessions all day
www.hogfestedenton.com



AMERICAN LEGION Saturday, June 20, 2015
9TH ANNUAL HOG FEST
Open to the public 9am 'til
• Music Saturday
• Arts & Crafts Show
• All Vehicle show
• People's Choice
Judging begins at 4pm. Must be in line at 3:45pm to judge.

OPENINGS STILL AVAILABLE!
Cookers, Cars for Car Show, Crafters
Judging for Whole Hog is open to the public
-PEOPLE'S CHOICE