



**INSIDE TODAY!**  
**Indian Summer Festival preview**

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Wednesday, September 2, 2015

## Panel backs revised wind energy amendment

BY REGGIE PONDER  
 Editor

The Chowan County Planning Board last week recommended a text amendment to the county's wind energy ordinance that adds stricter regulations but does not include the one-mile setback and other specifics from the board's April proposal.

For instance, the recommended text amendment does not use the 35 dBA (decibels) noise limit that was included in recommendations from the planning board in April. The limit in the current version of the recommended amendment is 55 dBA.

In addition to the limit itself, however, the recom-

mended amendment also includes a requirement that a baseline dBA value be established for the noise currently existing at the site.

The revised recommendation also calls for the noise measurement to be taken at the property line of a non-participating landowner. A previous version put forward by County

Planner Elizabeth Bryant had the measurement being taken at any occupied building or residence on the non-participating landowner's property.

Members of the planning board said they thought the property line measurement would provide a higher level of protection from noise.

The text amendment as

proposed by Bryant and modified during discussion by planning board members at the board's Aug. 26 meeting passed with Chairman Marvin Hare and board members Bobby Winborne and Linda Peterson voting for it, and board member Jim Leggett abstaining. Leggett's abstention counts as a 'yes' vote.

Board member William Monds, who had been excused from voting on the text amendment because of discussions with Apex about a potential land lease involving some of his property, did not attend the meeting. Board member Jim Robison left the meeting.

See AMENDMENT, 4A

## MUSICIANS MUSTER TO SUPPORT PARKER

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
 Staff Writer

Saturday night in downtown Edenton was all about Martin Parker.

Friends, family and well-wishers crowded a benefit at the Edenton Coffee House to hear some of Parker's bandmates from Out 'n the Cold join other musician friends of his to pay tribute to the popular drummer who remains hospitalized at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville after suffering a severe stroke just over a month ago.

Among them was Justin Holland, who first suggested the benefit to Anita Andersen as a way to help raise funds for Parker. Andersen books the talent and acts as emcee for the live Friday night shows at the coffee house. Andersen grabbed the idea and ran with it.

"Martin has never met a stranger," she said as she greeted the crowd on Saturday night. "I'm glad we can do this to help him."

Andersen said Monday that the results of the fund-raising efforts were "extremely successful in both financial and moral support for Martin, Quinton and the family."

"It absolutely exceeded all our expectations," Glenn Andersen added.

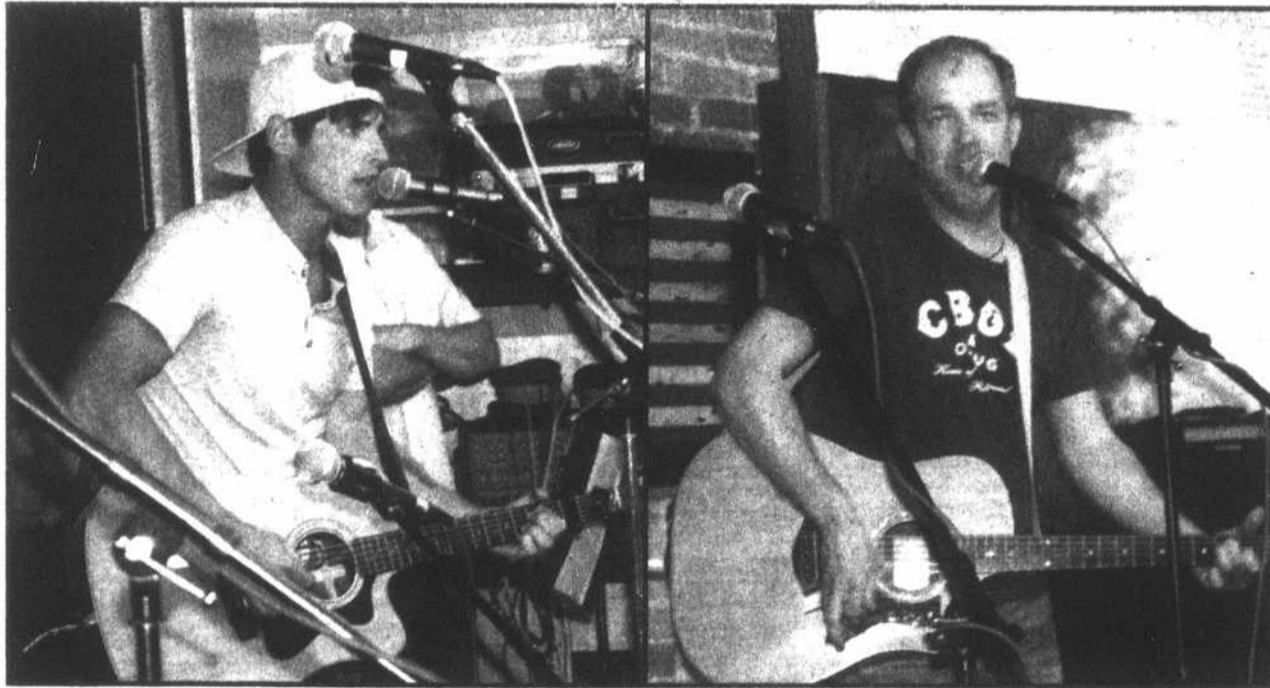
Among the special guests performing in the show Saturday night was Parker's son, Quinton, a musician in his own right. He expressed gratitude for all the love and support that have come his dad's way since his stroke.

Wes Lassiter of Banjo Island introduced a special song he had written in Martin's honor, "Gotta Have the Groove," based on one of Parker's most often-repeated pieces of advice to



STAFF PHOTOS BY REBECCA BUNCH

Musicians friends of Martin Parker sing the Beatles tune "With a Little Help from My Friends" near the end of Saturday evening's benefit at the Edenton Coffee House. See more photos from benefit at [DAILYADVANCE.COM](http://DAILYADVANCE.COM).



Justin Holland (left photo) performs his original composition, "Slow Jammin' Love Song," in tribute to Martin Parker, recalling how Parker has always encouraged his fellow musicians to record their own songs rather than cover those of others. Chuck Hodges performs at Saturday's benefit for Parker.

## Schools maintain teacher assistants

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
 Staff Writer

Officials in the Edenton-Chowan Schools say they have no plans at this time to cut jobs — preferring instead to wait and see the finalized budget adopted by the N.C. General Assembly.

The legislature last week signed a continuing budget resolution but has yet to adopt a final budget.

"The school system does not have any current plans to lay-off personnel in advance of the state budget being approved," Superintendent Rob Jackson said. "I remain hopeful that the state will fully fund teacher assistants and the drivers education program."

School board chair John Guard said he and other school board members fully support Jackson's recommendation on handling the situation.

"We're gonna go on faith," Guard said, "and keep things as they are for now."

The approach here differs from the decision made in some other school systems to let teacher assistants go because of uncertainty about the state budget. For example, the Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Board of Education last week voted to let go nine teacher assistants.

Guard said that while the school board obviously would not have a decision from the legislature in time for its Sept. 1 meeting he hoped that things would

See ASSISTANTS, 2A

## Town plans to lower electric rates

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
 Staff Writer

Town of Edenton utility customers can expect to see a decrease in their electric bills starting in October, according to town officials.

Consultants for Raleigh-based Booth & Associates LLC have recommended that the town implement an average 9.4 percent reduction for all customers, with those rates remaining constant for the next 3 years. The town has an estimated 3,300 residential customers.

"Rates are effective Sept. 15 and new rates will be reflected in customer's bills received on or after Oct. 10," said Glenn Andersen, director of electric utilities for the town. "All new rates will be posted on the Town of Edenton website after they are approved by the town council at its next meeting on Sept. 8."

Mayor Roland Vaughan said that he welcomed the news since the rate decrease will benefit the citizens and businesses in the town.

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**Glenn Andersen**  
 Director, electric utilities

"The sale of generating assets by Electricities to Duke Energy will finally bring across the board rate reductions to our municipal electric customers, both residential and commercial, thereby putting more money in the pockets of our citizens and businesses," he said. "It's been a long time coming but now we can enjoy competitive rates for the next three years at a stable rate per kilowatt hour."

To illustrate the difference in monthly cost to customers, Andersen said that under the old rate a

residential customer's average cost would be \$137 for a thousand kilowatt hours. In contrast, the same kilowatt hours at the new rate would cost a customer \$123.95.

Andersen noted that the rates charged for Small General Service (Small Commercial Businesses), Public Housing (Housing Authority) and Large Power (Industrial or Customers with large demand) are also being reduced.

"Cost reduction for these customers depends on energy use, so percentages will vary, however, the average reduction for these customers is also approximately 9.4 percent," Andersen said.

Utility customers who are charged special rates — such as those with solar panels on their rooftops — and Coincident Peak customers — those who generate their own power during "peak" system conditions will also see a difference.

"The details of the changes to these rates are more complex, and affect less than 10 customers in the town of Edenton," Andersen said. "If the customers affected by these rates have any questions, they can contact me directly."

Andersen said that the electric rates charged by the Town of Edenton have held steady since 2009,

## Chowan loses more than 5th of workforce

From staff reports

Labor statistics show Chowan County has lost more than a fifth of its labor force since the recession hit in 2008.

Chowan reported 107 fewer unemployed in May 2015 in comparison with pre-recession numbers, but the county also saw 1,492 workers leave the local workforce since the start of the recession. That's a 20.9 percent decrease in workforce, nearly mirroring the 20.8 percent drop in the number of unemployed.

Only three counties in the state have seen a greater percent loss in labor force during this period.

Neighboring Washington County lost 1,430 workers — 22.1 percent of its workforce.

Nearby Tyrrell County lost 546 workers — 25.2 percent of its workforce.

The biggest percent loss in workforce was in Graham County, which lost 1,496 workers — 31.8 percent of its workforce.

Meanwhile, Mecklenburg County has seen a 22.6 percent increase in its workforce, Wake County a 20.9 percent increase,

### SIGNIFICANT DROP

■ Only three counties in the state have seen a greater percent loss in labor force.

Union County a 20.8 percent increase, and rural Johnston County — located just east of the Triangle area — has seen a 16.5 percent increase.

Area unemployment rates for May:

**Chowan** — 7.2 percent, 1.3 percent over the state rate; employment down 1.3 percent during the past year

**Bertie** — 7.6 percent, 1.7 percent over the state rate; employment down 0.2 percent during the past year

**Gates** — 5.6 percent — 0.3 percent below the state rate; employment up 1.2 percent during the past year

**Perquimans** — 7.5 percent, 1.6 percent over the state rate; employment down 0.9 percent during the past year

**Washington** — 8.7 percent, 2.8 percent over the state rate; employment unchanged during the past year.



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