



Community honors veterans in weekend ceremony — 6B

School system cash reserves still lagging

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

The financial reserves of the Edenton-Chowan Schools continue to lag behind the state-recommended figure despite the school system's strides the past two years in slashing the amount it appropriates from its fund balance.

According to a report by Donna Winborne, who audits the local school system's finances, the Edenton-Chowan Board of

Education's governmental funds reported a combined fund balance of \$1,727,903, a \$59,315 decrease over last year. The board's General Fund had expenditures and other uses that exceeded revenues and other financing sources.

Winborne said the financial report for the year ending June 30, 2015, reflects an "unmodified opinion" — what previously was known as an "unqualified opinion" — which is the highest opinion an auditor

can give.

The report noted the unassigned fund balance was \$651,933. Winborne pointed out this was the second lowest unassigned fund balance in the 10 years she has been doing the report for the school system.

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balance in the 10 years she has been doing the report for the school system.

Winborne presented the annual financial report at the board's Dec. 1 meeting.

The financial report includes a statement from the school system's administration regarding the district's financial outlook.

"The ongoing fiscal difficulties and the loss of revenue from state,

See RESERVES, 4A

"I am very proud of the fiscal conservatism shown by this board and by our staff. In addition to cutting over \$400,000 from the budget, we were able to add \$427,337 to our undesignated fund balance."

Rob Jackson
 Schools superintendent

WARM WEATHER BRINGS SMILES TO CANDLELIGHT TOUR

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

The annual Christmas Candlelight Tour was a big success and the unexpectedly warm weather brought out large numbers of locals and visitors to enjoy the self-guided tour of homes, organizers said.

"This was the third best in terms of tickets sold that we've had in the tour's 34-year history," said Gregg Nathan, executive director of the Edenton Historical Commission, which sponsors the event. "I've gotten great comments; I think people really enjoyed themselves."

Nathan said that the number of attendees had declined slightly over last year's tour that included the historic Wessington House and had the advantage of being able to use a portion of a two-year \$150,000 Golden Leaf tourism grant to help promote the tour and other holiday marketing. Nancy Nicholls said that the Tourism Development Authority carried out the marketing cooperatively with the EHC and Destination Downtown Edenton.

But EHC President Sally Francis Kehayes said that even though the crowd may have been slightly smaller the beautiful weather had brought smiles to the faces of those taking the tour.



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

See CANDLELIGHT, 4A

Guests admire the Christmas items in the gift shop at the Penelope Barker House Welcome Center on Friday, the first day of the Candlelight Tour.

Agencies seek to avoid involuntary commitments

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff Writer

A conversation between agencies involved in the involuntary commitment of the mentally ill in Chowan County is helping to create a road map for helping them avoid that fate.

Steps in the process would include getting an area Mobile Crisis team involved at an earlier stage and easing the burden on the emergency room at Vidant Chowan Hospital. Playing a key role would be the development of a Mobile Medication Program in

the community.

Betsy Johnstone of Edenton, who heads the Albarle chapter of NAMI (National Alliance on Mental Illness), said a key question raised during the meeting was, "what kind of follow-up can be done with individuals when they are discharged from psychiatric hospitals so that they (continue taking) their medications and avoid recurring crisis and readmission?"

Johnstone noted that there were two avenues to pursue as conversations and collaboration between agencies continue. The first is to have law enforcement officers give family members Mobile Crisis contact information and have them contact the agency before

See INVOLUNTARY, 3A

Panel backs tighter setbacks in wind rule

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 The Perquimans Weekly

The Perquimans County Planning Board is recommending tighter restrictions on wind power facilities, but not the one-mile setbacks that some opponents want.

The recommendation would require a half-mile setback from any residence. The setbacks from property lines and roads would remain as they are — two and half times the height of the wind turbine, or about 1,500 feet or about three-tenths of a mile.

A subcommittee of the planning

board was recommending the half-mile setback include the nearest property line or right-of-way, not just a half-mile to the nearest address.

"I'm not against the project, but I'm listening to citizen's concerns," said Brenda Lassiter, a planning board member who served on the subcommittee. "I felt like we've comprised and it wouldn't kill the project."

The planning board consists of Paul Kahl, Lewis Smith, Donald Manley, A.O. Roberts and Lassiter. Kahl said he did not vote because as a rule the chairman only votes

in the case of a tie. A.O. Roberts opposed the motion.

The planning board was asked to review the Perquimans ordinance after crowds packed county commission meetings calling for tighter rules.

If adopted, the new rules should not impact the Iberdrola wind power project in Perquimans/Pasquotank counties. It would affect the proposed Apex Clean Energy project that would span the Perquimans/Chowan County line. Apex has not formally sought a condi-

See SETBACKS, 2A

Ferraraccio, Bonner file for county seats

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Editor

Commissioner Greg Bonner has filed for reelection in the 3rd District and Brian Ferraraccio has filed to run at-large.

Bonner, a Democrat, is the first candidate to file in the district. Ferraraccio, a Republican, also is the first candidate to file at-large.

"I have decided to run for county commissioner because there are still many things that need to be done in Chowan County," said Ferraraccio, who mounted an unsuccessful bid last year to unseat Commissioner John Mitchener in the



FERRARACCIO



BONNER

2nd District. "One thing that needs to be done is better transparency," Ferraraccio said. "I, along with many other citizens, find the board's lack of transparency very

See COUNTY SEATS, 3A

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5:30 PM FAMILY SERVICE
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11:00 PM CANDLELIGHT COMMUNION
CHRISTMAS DAY SERVICE
 The Rev. Dr. Rob MacSwain | **10:00 AM**



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