



Ag FAIRS ASSOCIATION  
HONORS TOPPIN — 1B

# Council rejects proposed solar farm

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

The developer who proposed a solar farm north of Edenton's town limits on North Broad Street has expressed disappointment about the town council's rejection of a conditional use permit that would have allowed a 5 megawatt, 45-acre solar farm to be placed at

115 Butternut Lane. The developer, Heath McLaughlin of Blue-Green Energy, was joined in that opinion by the family of Rebecca Warren, who for generations have owned the Shanonhouse Farm property located in the town's extra-territorial jurisdiction.



VAUGHAN

Among them was Caroline Warren Banka of Durham, who spoke during a public hearing held prior to votes on four findings of fact that took place at the council's monthly meeting on Feb. 9.

In turning down issuance of the permit the town council

did not support a positive finding on the questions of whether the proposed project would adversely affect adjoining property values or be in harmony with the area in which it would be located.

"I was disappointed with their refusal to grant the CUP," Banka said. "I kinda felt that some of the council members maybe had

come into the meeting having already made up their minds."

Banka said she felt the council's decision not to support a project providing clean energy through the presence of the solar farm was "short-sighted".

She said that McLaughlin and the family did everything possible to reassure those living near the

proposed solar farm that it would be a good fit with the residential/agricultural zoning in the neighborhood. Addressing those concerns, such as agreeing to have a setback that was 1,250 feet from Butternut Lane and 750 feet from North Broad Street, would have made the project "more complicated,

See SOLAR FARM, 4A

## Singing Valentines



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Members of the Albemarle Sounds pay an impromptu visit to the offices of the Chowan Herald on Friday to deliver a Singing Valentine to the newspaper's female employees. The quartet spent the afternoon making several stops in Chowan, Pasquotank and Perquimans counties, singing "Let Me Call You Sweetheart" and other favorites to lucky Valentine recipients. The Singing Valentines was a benefit for the voice music programs in the three counties' school districts.

## Burroughs pushes Watersport Center

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

During the Feb. 9 monthly town council meeting Gil Burroughs unveiled a proposal by the Edenton Yacht Club for a Town Park Watersports Center.

"This gives you an overview of what we'd like for you to consider," he said.

The center would be established in Colonial Park in the vicinity of the 1886 Roanoke River Lighthouse and the former Northeast Commission building. The plans call for establishment of a 50' x 20' sailboat storage and multi-purpose room contained in a single building, 30' x 15' kayak storage, and an area to be used for a fixed canoe-kayak-sailboat launch as well as seasonal sailboat and kayak storage racks.

The plan also calls for

*"This gives you an overview of what we'd like for you to consider."*

**Gil Burroughs**  
Member, Edenton Yacht Club

the creation of an area that would hold 30 parking spaces as well as a covered picnic area that could accommodate 50-60 people.

Burroughs said that in addition to serving the needs of water sports enthusiasts the plan would give the yacht club a "visible presence" on the downtown waterfront.

To help move the effort forward, Burroughs said, the club would be willing to make a \$40,000 donation in support of the idea.

Councilman Steve Biggs thanked Burroughs and other members of the yacht club for their years of volunteering to teach kids to sail safely and for continuing to promote sailing and other water-related sports on the waterfront.

## County cash reserves continue to grow

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Editor

Chowan County grew its reserves in the General Fund during the 2014-2015 fiscal year.

The available fund balance in the General Fund — the figure watched closely by the N.C. Local Government Commission, the monitoring agency that tracks local government finances in the state — was \$6.94 million or 40.9 percent as of June 30, 2015.

That represents a growth from \$5.67 million at June 30, 2013, and \$6.39 million at June 30, 2014.

The available fund balance as of June 30, 2014, was 34.7 percent.

The county received an "unmodified opinion," which is the desired result, in the audit report present-

ed by Martin & Starnes at the county commissioners' Feb. 1 meeting.

Although the Local Government Commission monitors the available fund balance, the county commissioners pay particular attention to the undesignated fund balance, which represents the reserves available in the General Fund after commitments such as debt service and College of The Albemarle capital funding are accounted for.

Chairman Jeff Smith noted at the meeting that the available fund balance as defined by the Local Government Commission includes some things the county views as designated.

The county's undesignated fund balance at June 30, 2015, was about \$4.4 million or 26.5 percent. The county

commissioners have established a policy not to let the undesignated fund balance in the General Fund dip below 25 percent.

The undesignated fund balance at the end of the 2013-2014 fiscal year was slightly above 25 percent, so the county grew its undesignated reserves from June 30, 2014 to June 30, 2015.

Citing the growth of the county's undesignated fund balance, Commissioner Emmett Winborne led the board and audience in a round of applause. Winborne said he believed the audit report was a great report and showed that County Manager Kevin Howard and former Finance Director Willie Mack Carawan had done a great job man-



WINBORNE

aging the county budget.

Noting that just a few years ago the county was in the midst of a financial crisis, Winborne said the steps necessary to rebuild the county's fiscal

health had not been easy for the county commissioners or the county staff.

But while it hasn't been an easy road, the county finally seems to be getting to where it needs to be, he said.

The audit report also looked at figures such as revenues and expenditures.

Total General Fund revenues in 2014-2015 were \$16.1 million. Total General Fund spending during that

See RESERVES, 4A

## Icy roads shut schools, delay other activities

From staff reports

The snowfall predicted for Friday did not pose the threat that had been expected, but icy conditions on Monday morning did pose some hazards for motorists.

Due to slick road conditions,

Chowan County Government Offices delayed opening on Monday until 10:30 a.m.

Citing icy road conditions in the area, the Edenton-Chowan Schools were closed Monday for all students and 10-month employees. Twelve-month employees were asked to

use caution and report on a three-hour delay if it was safe to do so.

The school released early on Friday. The county closed its offices at noon on Friday. The Shepard-Pruden Memorial Library also closed at noon Friday and was closed Saturday.

