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Wednesday, March 15, 2017

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UPFRONT PEOPLE / UPFRONT PRICES

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STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

Neighborhood residents were invited to come lay some ceremonial bricks at the site of the new Edenton Police Station last week. Construction at the site on North Oakum Street is progressing on time, according to officials with A.R. Chesson Construction, and is expected to be completed on time by the first of May.

Chesson earns safety award as police station finish nears

BY REBECCA BUNCH
Staff Writer

When crews from A.R. Chesson Construction began work at the site of the new Edenton Police Station they had no idea that while wrapping up the project they would become the recipients of special recognition from the North Carolina

Department of Labor.

Last Friday the company received a 2017 NCDOL Million Hour Award presented by Commissioner of Labor Cherie Berry after completing 4,394 days without a lost-time accident. The period of time covered by the award was from January, 2005 through Jan. 12, 2017. Berry noted that it may have

taken the company seven years to achieve the honor because of its small size but said the recognition was no less deserved.

"That is such a unique achievement," she said. "You put safety above everything."

Company owner Al Chesson said he couldn't be prouder and credited his

company's Corporate Safety Officer Andy Holliman and the mindset of those who work for Chesson's.

"It is the policy of A.R. Chesson Construction to provide a safe working environment for all of its employees and subcontractors," Chesson said. "This is

See CHESSON, 4A

FACING CRITICAL ISSUES



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson points out damage to walls during a tour of John A. Holmes High School at the beginning of Monday's joint meeting of the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education and the Chowan County Board of Commissioners.

County officials mull future of John A. Holmes high school

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Chowan County officials expect to decide soon how they plan to address critical facility issues at John A. Holmes High School.

That was the upshot of a joint meeting Monday night between the Chowan County Board of Commissioners and the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education.

Edenton-Chowan Schools Superintendent Rob Jackson described the school board as being "at a crossroads" in regards to the high school. The board needs direction from the county commissioners regarding whether the county supports replacing the current high school completely or renovating the existing facili-

ties.

The estimated cost of renovating the existing two-school classroom building on the campus, combined with replacing the remainder of the high school, is \$41.9 million.

The county's existing debt will be paid off around 2024, which would free up about \$2 million in debt payments for possible financing of the high school replacement project. But county officials caution that there are other significant facility needs at College of The Albemarle's Edenton-Chowan Campus and elsewhere.

Jackson told the county commissioners that school officials are looking for direction in the upcoming budgeting process.

Board of Education Chairman Gene Jordan said school officials

were looking for a way forward in the short term and in the long term. The board is at a fork in the road and needs input from the county commissioners to know which way to go, Jordan said.

The most pressing issue at the high school is the replacement of half of the heating and cooling units at the high school and replacement of the boiler, which leaks in places and is wearing out.

Members of the two boards saw the boiler - complete with water on the floor from the leaks - during a tour of the high school at the beginning of the meeting. The tour also revealed light fixtures that do not work, steps that are not handicapped-ac-

See SCHOOL, 4A



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Robert Wynegar addresses a forum at the Edenton-Chowan Campus of College of The Albemarle on Thursday. Wynegar is one of the four finalists for president of COA.

Final candidate for COA president visits campus

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

Robert Wynegar told a group of community leaders in Edenton Thursday morning that just as he went to Western Nevada College because of - rather than in spite of - the challenge of working through the problems that college was having, he relishes the thought of helping College of The Albemarle move from being a very good college to being the best college in the country.

Wynegar was the final candidate for president at COA to visit the college's campuses. Each of the four candidates visited Edenton-Chowan and the other three campuses of COA for community forums and also met with the college's Board of Trustees.

The trustees are slated to meet this week to deliberate on the selection of a new president. President Kandi Deitemeyer has departed to serve a large community college in

Charlotte.

The selection of a new president comes at a critical time for the college's Edenton-Chowan Campus, as it addresses important facility needs, the deteriorating condition of the two-story former D.F. Walker School Building - an important landmark for the local black community - and the possibility of a new curriculum offering at the campus in sustainable agriculture.

Wynegar told the audience in Edenton that he believes he has done the things he went to Western Nevada to do.

"Now I'm ready for a new challenge," Wynegar told a forum in the Culinary Arts Building on COA's Edenton-Chowan Campus.

Wynegar said he was glad he had been hearing the word "leadership" in questions at COA rather than the word "management," because "it means the college is thinking

See COA, 4A

County's new finance officer has hospital experience

BY REGGIE PONDER
Editor

A longtime employee of the local hospital has been named finance officer for Chowan County.

Cathy Smith began work on Feb. 27 as the county's fi-

nance officer. The post had been vacant nearly a year following the departure of Willie Mack Carawan.

Smith worked at the local hospital for 33 years, most recently as staff accountant. She retired from the hospital in December 2015 and after that worked at Waff Contracting while finishing a bachelor's degree in in accounting at Elizabeth City State University.

She graduated from ECSU in December.

The new job offers her the opportunity both to use her skills in accounting and to learn about local government accounting.

"It's definitely different in terms of the accounting aspect of it," she said.

Smith will be attending classes at the School of Government at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill to earn finance officer certification. She said she is excited about attending the classes at the School of

Government.

She said she's enjoying the work in the county office.

"It's a lot to learn, though," she added.

Smith and her husband, Jim, live in Chowan County. She moved here as a child in 1978 and has lived here ever since.

"I consider myself local now," Smith said.

When she's not working Smith enjoys spending time with her grandchildren.



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Cathy Smith is the new finance officer for Chowan County. She started work for the county on Feb. 27.

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