

**UPFRONT PEOPLE / UPFRONT PRICES**

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## Chowan Senior Center poised for repairs

BY MILES LAYTON  
Editor

Two of Edenton's beloved former school buildings received a lot of attention at Monday night's meeting of the Chowan County Board of Commissioners.

Gertha Bond-Thomas of Edenton gave an impassioned speech in favor of preserving the two-story Walker School building on North Oakum Street and the commissioners heard a report from the county manager on plans for repairs to the Senior Center in the former Swain School building, which was damaged last fall by flooding from Hurricane Matthew. "I'm here to express

support for and appeal to the county commissioners for the preservation of Edenton D.F. Walker High School," Bond-Thomas said during the public comment period at the meeting.

Bond-Thomas said she attended the school for all of her formal education that began in first grade and ended when she graduated her senior year of high school in 1965.

"That school was the foundation for many students' education in this community," she said.

"Because of its significance to the community, it should be placed on the National Register of Historic Buildings. This building may be utilized for

*"Think about how important this building has been to the success of this community and the impact it can have in the future."*

**Gertha Bond-Thomas**  
Edenton resident

many purposes and organizations in this community. Some have been stated in previous meetings. Think about how important this building has been to the success of this community and the impact it can have in the future."

For the past several county commissioner meetings, alumni of D.F. Walker High School have spoken in favor of preserving the building.

The commissioners also heard from half a dozen members of the public at a meeting earlier this year in support of repairs to the Senior Center.

The good news for residents concerned about the Senior Center is that the county recently received a check from its insurance company for \$402,546, which covers damages to the Senior Center, Health Department and an emer-

gency communications tower antenna, said County Manager Kevin Howard.

Howard said the Senior Center's portion of that amount comes to around \$392,026 while the Health Department's share is about \$34,100 and the communications tower antenna's portion is \$1,420.

As to the Senior Center, the commission approved Howard's request to split the repairs needed into two separate jobs. He said one project would be to provide the immediate necessary repairs for the building including drywall and wiring while the other project would be for the property's heating and air conditioning system, which services the Swain Auditorium. The former Swain School building houses the auditorium, apartments for older adults and the Senior Center.

Howard said by splitting the projects up, it would be very possible to get the building "up and running" sooner as the HVAC repairs are being completed.

Howard said work on the project can begin within the next 60 to 90 days.

In other business, Chowan County Schools' Superintendent Rob Jackson provided the commission with an update as to the status of capital projects that were approved in fiscal year 2017-18.

During Jackson's report,

See CENTER, 2A

## A GREAT DAY FOR COUNTY



STAFF PHOTO BY REGGIE PONDER

Chowan County and the Edenton Historical Commission sign an agreement authorizing the EHC to restore and exhibit the 1825 Chowan County Jail. Pictured (l-r) are Sally Francis Kehayes and Ben Speller of the Edenton Historical Commission, Chowan Board of Commissioners Chairman Jeff Smith, Dawson Tyler of the Edenton Historical Commission, and Mike Ervin, executive director of the Edenton Historical Commission. Not pictured is Bonita McCall, whose father, the late Glenn Perry, was the last jailer at the jail.

## County, Historical Commission ink restoration deal on historic jail

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Staff Writer

Chowan County and the Edenton Historical Commission last week signed their agreement authorizing the EHC to restore the historic Chowan County Jail and make it available as a public exhibit.

The county retains ownership of

the property under the agreement.

At a signing ceremony Thursday afternoon at the county's Historic 1825 Jail, which is located behind the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse, Chowan Board of Commissioners Chairman Jeff Smith and EHC President Sally Francis Kehayes both said it was a great day for the county.

Smith said the EHC, a private non-

profit, was better suited to manage the historic property than the county government was.

Also on hand for the ceremony were Dawson Tyler and Ben Speller of the EHC, EHC executive director Mike Ervin, and Bonita McCall.

McCall's father, the late Glenn

See JAIL, 2A

## Two-county chase ends with arrests

BY REBECCA BUNCH  
Staff Writer

A two-county chase through Chowan and Bertie counties Friday afternoon ended with the arrest of two of the vehicle's three occupants.



MELTON

attempted to stop a vehicle on Badham Road because one of the occupants is a person of interest in an ongoing investigation.

"The vehicle refused to

stop and fled from authorities," the chief said. "The chase continued down Broad Street to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and on to Highway 17 where the suspects fled into Bertie County."

Those arrested were: ■ Tykavis Requan Melton, 19, of Sandy Terrace Road, Edenton, charged with felony speeding to elude arrest and multiple traffic violations. Melton was released under

a \$5,500 bond.

■ Dremale Vanterpool, 18, of 2125 John Hill Lane, charged with littering.

"A third party was in the vehicle but was not charged with any violations," Fortenbery said.

Fortenbery added that the Bertie County Sheriff's Office, the NC Highway Patrol and the Chowan County Sheriff's Office assisted in the chase and subsequent apprehension of the suspects.

## Edenton businessman faces sex charges

From staff reports

An Edenton man was arrested last week on charges of sexual exploitation of a minor and solicitation of a child by computer, according to the Chowan County Sheriff's Office.

John Lee Allen Gay, 55, of Country Club Drive, was charged in warrants obtained by the State Bureau of Investigation with second-degree sexual exploitation of a minor, third-degree sexual exploitation of a minor, and soliciting a child by computer.

Gay was released on \$65,000 secured bond, according to Chowan County Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin.

The warrant signed by Magistrate Kim M. O'Connor indicates probable cause that Gay received and solicited a visual representation of a 15-year-old male that included "the presentation of the penis of the minor child" and that he arranged to meet for the purpose of committing sex acts.

In an interview with the Chowan Herald Gay acknowledged going on the adult website, Grinder. He said that because there was a statement posted on the site that anyone using it had to be at least 18 years of age he thought only those



GAY

who are legally adults could be communicated with on the site.

Gay said he is represented by attorney

Jack Warmack.

Last month Gay was charged with cocaine possession and driving while impaired.

Shortly after the February arrest, Gay was released on \$10,000 secured bond on the drug charge and \$1,000 unsecured bond on the DWI charge, according to the Sheriff's Office.

John McArthur, investigator with the Chowan County Sheriff's Office, said at the time of the February arrest that investigators had acted on information that Gay had drugs in his possession. In addition, Gay had been observed buying narcotics during the course of the joint investigation by the Sheriff's Office and the State Bureau of Investigation, McArthur said.

When he was contacted by the Chowan Herald shortly after the February arrest, Gay denied having drugs in his possession at the time of that arrest.

## Local man killed in head-on collision

BY REGGIE PONDER  
Staff Writer

An Edenton man was killed in a head-on collision on Virginia Road around 5:30 p.m. Saturday.

Leon Basnight, 59, of Edenton, was pronounced dead at the scene, according to Trooper K.R. Briggs of the N.C. Highway Patrol.

The crash occurred on Virginia Road (N.C. 32) just north of Valhalla and about six miles north of the town limits, Briggs reported.

Daniel Hurdle Jr., 25, of Edenton, was driving a 2011 Toyota Camry north on N.C. 32 and Basnight was driving

a 1989 Chevrolet S-10 pickup truck south, Briggs said.

Hurdle tried to pass another vehicle, and when he realized the pickup was headed in his direction the Camry ran off the road to the left, came back into the road and then collided head-on with the pickup, Briggs said.

Both vehicles were destroyed in the crash, according to the Trooper.

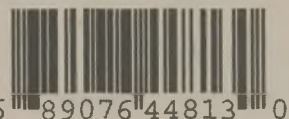
Hurdle was taken to Vidant Chowan Hospital and later was transferred to Vidant Medical Center in Greenville, Briggs said.

Charges are pending, Briggs said.

*Edenton Baptist Church* "Entertaining A Hope"

**Bicentennial Celebration • Sunday, March 26, 2017 • 10:30 AM**

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