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Wednesday, April 5, 2017

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Chowan officials look to Ag program to revive COA campus

BY REGGIE PONDER
 Staff Writer

Supporters of College of The Albemarle's Edenton-Chowan Campus have high expectations for a planned agriculture program to grow enrollment at the struggling campus.

Although official plans for the new agriculture curriculum have not been completed, the college's Board of Trustees has its eyes on

a fall 2018 rollout for the program. COA officials are working with representatives of N.C. State University to fashion a seamless transition from a COA agriculture program to NCSU, which is considered one of the nation's premier research and teaching institutions for agriculture.

Both Edenton and Elizabeth City have been mentioned as possible locations for the agriculture program,

but most of the attention early on was directed toward Edenton because of its position as an epicenter of the region's robust agricultural industries.

Recently, however, college officials have discussed locating the program on COA's Main Campus in Elizabeth City.

The prospect of landing an agriculture curriculum comes at a critical time for the Edenton-Chowan Cam-

pus, which COA officials recently reported has been losing some \$230,000 a year.

It is also a time of transition for COA as the college prepares to welcome Robert Wynegar as its 10th president on April 17. Wynegar comes to COA from Western Nevada College, where he has been vice president for academics and student affairs.

Backers of the Edenton-Chowan Campus are eager

to work with Wynegar, who led a turnaround at struggling campuses of Western Nevada and expressed enthusiasm for a similar effort at Edenton-Chowan during a visit to the campus as part of the presidential search process.

The Edenton-Chowan Campus was the only one of the college's four campuses that was not selected for a new facility or overhaul project under COA's

\$6.59 million allocation from the state's Connect NC bond program. COA also is relocating the electrical technology program from Edenton-Chowan to the Main Campus in Elizabeth City this fall and has plans to move the heating, ventilation, and air conditioning (HVAC) curriculum to Elizabeth City next year.

The moves are part of

See COA, 7A

DOGGED DETERMINATION



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The Chowan County Emergency Response Dive Team recovered a handgun tossed into the Chowan River from a fleeing vehicle involved in a recent police chase through two counties.

Dive Team recovers handgun tossed into river during high speed chase

BY MILES LAYTON
 Editor

Keen eyesight and dogged police determination helped law enforcement agents discover a firearm that was tossed into the Chowan River during a recent high speed police chase through two counties.

The Chowan County Emergency Response Dive Team recovered a gun Sunday afternoon, March 26, that was maybe a hundred feet or so from the Edenton boathouse pier.

Detective John McArthur, Chowan County Sheriff's Department, found the handgun in water about 7 feet deep, a short

hop away from the Chowan River bridge. He said though the water was somewhat clear near the surface, visibility was an issue toward the river's bottom.

Edenton Police Chief Jay Fortenbery said the gun has been sent to the State Bureau of Investigation for extensive analysis. He said not only does law enforcement hope to recover finger prints from the weapon, but other indicators that may tell if the gun was fired and who owns it. Fortenbery said the firearm can be tracked in many different ways that could assist law enforcement in any ongoing investigation that they may be pursuing.

"We have sent the gun to the SBI for comparison to recovered shell casings from other shootings and if we get a match, additional charges will follow," Fortenbery said.

The firearm's recovery arises from an incident began March 27 when police officers 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 traveled down Broad Street to Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Avenue and onto Highway 17 and into Bertie County.

Tykavis Requan Melton, 19, of Sandy Terrace Road, Edenton,

was charged with felony speeding to elude arrest and multiple traffic violations. Melton was released under a \$5,000 bond.

Dramale Vanterpool, 18, of John Hill Lane, was charged with littering because he allegedly threw the firearm from the vehicle into the river.

Despite speeds that approached 90 mph during the chase, Edenton Police Officer J. Burkett's mind was very focused when he saw the gun being thrown from the fleeing vehicle, McArthur said. Burkett marked the spot so that law enforcement agents would be able to

See HANDGUN, 5A

Commission to consider moratorium on solar

BY MILES LAYTON
 Editor

The Chowan County Commission is considering a moratorium on solar farms.

During Monday's meeting, the Board voted unanimously to hold a public hearing during their regularly scheduled May 1st meeting to consider an ordinance implementing a 60 day moratorium.

The committee was formulated to consider the County's current use table (Table 5-1, available online at chowancounty-nc.gov/vertical/sites/%7B10E82D50-AAE0-43D7-A98A-42E82683885E%7D/uploads/Article_5_Permitted_Uses.pdf).

Specifically, the committee will consider what uses are subject to review by the commissioners through the conditional use permit procedure versus the uses that are subject to review by the Planning Board through the special use permit procedure, County Attorney Lauren Womble said. This review will include several uses, including solar farms. The committee will make recommendations regarding possible amendments to this table, specifically which board should review specific types of uses, she said.

That committee may also make recommendations to change the county planning committee's role to be more advisory in nature so as to allow the commission — an elected body — to make final decisions regarding major zoning issues. The Board, during their consideration of a moratorium on solar farms, may ask the same committee to work with staff to develop recommen-

See SOLAR, 5A

Steinburg: new Jesse Helms conservative icon

BY MILES LAYTON
 Editor

State Representative Bob Steinburg took aim at the NCAA, the General Assembly, the media and the Left in the wake of a reversal of a law that took bathroom politics to the national stage.

Late last week, legislators approved a new bill that repeals House Bill 2 and bans until 2020 local governments from passing their own nondiscrimination measures that would extend protections to the LG-BTQ community.

By eliminating the requirement that certain public accommodations are based on biological sex rather than gender identity, the bill resets the clock to the time and place before this issue



STEINBURG

See STEINBURG, 3A

Relay for Life poised to 'Paint Your World Purple'

BY REBECCA BUNCH
 Staff writer

This year's Chowan-Perquimans Relay for Life will include many familiar events and one important new one. Relay will start at 6 p.m. Friday, May 19 and end at midnight rather than the familiar Saturday morning finish.

Co-chairs Sheryl Alligood and Lynn Knapp announced the change Monday night during the kickoff event for Relay — a dinner honoring cancer survivors and their caregivers that was held at Edenton Baptist Church.



STAFF PHOTO BY REBECCA BUNCH

In this Chowan Herald file photo, residents of Chowan and Perquimans counties join to walk the Friday night survivors' lap at the opening of Relay for Life.

The theme was "Paint Your World Purple!"

Knapp noted that neighboring Bertie County has done well with the new, shorter format for Relay.

"They have had good results," she said.

Alligood said that the new format would be a help to those

who might find their participation in Relay in conflict with other activities they have planned for the weekend of May 19 when Relay is scheduled to take place at the track at John A. Holmes High School in Edenton.

"If they have plans to do something on Saturday (May 20) they can participate in Relay on Fri-

day night and still have the rest of their weekend free for other things," Alligood said.

Currently 15 teams have signed up to take part in the annual effort to raise funds for cancer research and ultimately a cure for the deadly disease.

"We'd love to have five more teams," Knapp said.

Knapp and Alligood said they wanted to especially recognize the longest running team in the local Relay — the Rocky Hock Ruritans — and Jack Evans, whose Rocky Hock Opry cast produced shows twice a year that allowed the team to make by far the largest donations to the Relay fundraiser.

Evans died recently but the co-chairs said they were touched that his wife Frances and his son Steve had stepped up to con-

See RELAY, 2A



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