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Billy Bass sworn in as Edenton fire chief

Hopes to work with community on fire prevention

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON
Editor

Long-time Edenton firefighter William "Billy" Bass Jr. was sworn in as fire chief Friday in front of a standing-room only crowd at town council chambers.

Bass has been with the fire department for 29 years. Among his many accomplishments with the department is being the town's first responder certified through the state and work-

ing on state HAZMAT team. He also has served as the training officer.

Bass began working with the department when he was 22 years old, first as a volunteer and then full-time.

"This is much more than a job," he said. "It is a way of life. I've grown up here. I've been measured and trained by some of the best guys around the area."

Bass also thanked the firefighters now under his leadership.

"I now have a great group of guys who I have the privilege to work with alongside and now have the honor to

lead," he said.

The firefighters work 24-hour shifts 10 days a month, which can put strain on relationship.

"There are many people here today that I would like to thank for their help and support over the course of my firefighter career," Bass said. "I thank my wife Jennifer for putting up with me for 29 years. Many people don't realize what our schedule like... Working 24-hour shifts, 10 days a month, we miss a lot of birthdays, Christmases, holidays and special events."

"On top of all that, we train several nights a month and

are constantly being called away to actually fire calls in the middle of the night — sometimes in the middle of dinner, ballet recitals and even a best friend's wedding. I know sometimes, Jennifer must have felt like a single parent.

"But knowing I have her support to continue my education and do the job I love for the last 29 years has made it worthwhile."

Bass also thanked his three daughters for their support.

"I missed a lot of birthdays, holidays and school

See BASS, 2A



NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Edenton Fire Chief William "Billy" Bass Jr. (center) speaks while Mayor Roland Vaughan (left), Fire Department Chaplain David Lafon, and retired captain Gary Swanner listen Friday at the town council chambers.

County OKs loan for ambulance

State honors county's work on 350th celebration

BY MILES LAYTON
Staff Writer

Chowan County Commission's agenda at Monday's meeting included recognition from governor's office, the purchase of an ambulance and a report from the Recreation Department.

First up, the board received a copy of a proclamation from Gov. Roy Cooper that was made in honor of the county's yearlong 350th celebration. Bob Hopkins, site manager of Edenton State Historic Sites, and Nancy Nicholls, Tourism Development Authority director, displayed the nicely framed proclamation acknowledging the work the community has done to pay tribute to its history.

In other news, commissioners approved a loan from BB&T intended for the purchase of an ambulance that will cost around \$130,000.

County will put down nearly \$66K as payment toward the principal for the financing agreement that calls for two years to pay off the balance of the ambulance — not new but refurbished and built to last.

County Manager Kevin Howard said a new ambulance would cost about \$200,000. Plans for the ambulance's purchase were set in motion during last summer's budget cycle.

In other matters, Recreation Department co-directors Shannon Ray and Brian Chappell offered a report that details the activities offered by the Edenton-Chowan Recreation Department. Unlike Chowan County, many places near and far don't offer Sunfish classes, swimming lessons, football, cheerleading, volleyball and award-winning state champion Little League softball. Kids can learn how to run a 5K (3.1 mile) race or go to

See LOAN, 2A



PHOTOS BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Amy Roberson, owner of Finders Keepers, speaks after receiving the first Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year award. The award was presented by Deborah Lee (right), former chamber

Chamber holds annual banquet

Community member honored for outstanding work

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON
Editor

A strong supporter of Edenton's small businesses and downtown area received the first Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce Small Business of the Year award at the chamber's annual banquet.

Past Chamber president Deborah Lee presented the award to Finders Keepers owner Amy Roberson at the banquet held Thursday at American Legion Post 40.

The chamber created the award in an effort to recognize a company that is locally owned and operated.

"These entrepreneurs are dedicated to the economic growth and quality of life," Lee said. "This award will



Chip Pruden, 2018 Chamber president, shakes the hand of 2019 president Rachel Johnson after receiving a plaque Thursday during the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce banquet.

recognize a strong business that positively influences the county, has economic viability, has innovative products and services, provides exemplary customer service encourages and provides professional development of staff."

Lee said Roberson is a walking billboard for Chowan County by always

promoting and showing up for activities and events.

"Inside this retail shop if you walk in it's a service-based business, but you will find a community section where they advertise other local businesses in Edenton," Lee said of Finders Keepers. "They provide space for small businesses to rent where they

might not otherwise have been able to afford a workplace."

Roberson, an Edenton native, said she was surprised and honored to receive the first small business award.

"Thank you very much," she said. "I just I put my heart and my soul into my business."

Roberson told the audience about a line from Rachel Hollis' book "Girl, Wash Your Face," in which Hollis writes, "You are more than what you have become."

"For some reason that line just really suck out to me, because I feel like today's effort is never enough," Roberson said. "You're always better than where you are right now, and you always need to be striving for what's next. I feel like that's what I try to

See BANQUET, 4A

Layton, Ford to lead board

Chowan County residents to lead foundation

From Submitted Reports

The board of advisers of the Chowan Community Funds Foundation announces a new advisory board president and vice president.

Lynne Layton was named board president. She is a Chowan County native, John A. Holmes High School and Peace College graduate and a local mortgage lender with BB&T. She married her high school sweetheart and has two grown children and a grandson.

Dr. Robert Christian Ford was named board vice president. He is the

See BOARD, 3A

Edenton receives \$110K grant

Will fund Queen Anne Creek bulkhead replacement

From Submitted Reports

Edenton is among 12 coastal communities that will get more than \$1.1 million in grants to improve public access to coastal beaches and waters, Governor Roy Cooper announced recently.

See GRANT, 7A

NC First Lady Kristin Cooper visits Edenton

Took Harriet Jacobs tour, attended slavery forum

From Submitted Reports

North Carolina's First Lady Kristin Cooper, members of the African American Heritage Commission (AAHC), and North Carolina's ninth Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green, visited Historic Edenton State Historic Site on Thursday, Jan. 31.

The group was treated to a wonderful luncheon

at The Table at the Inner Banks Inn. The group then was taken on a guided Harriet Jacobs Tour by Interpretation Coordinator Andrew Cole, with the Historic Edenton State Historic Sites.

The Harriet Jacobs' guided walking tour explores five places mentioned in Jacobs' narrative "Incidents in the Life of a Slave Girl." Site Manager Bob Hopkins presented Cooper with a copy of the Jacobs' narrative.

The group was then invited to Beverly Hall, the home

of Edenton town councilor Sambo Dixon, where they had a chance to relax before attending the Africa to Carolina Community Meeting at the 1767 Chowan County Courthouse.

The Africa to Carolina Initiative serves to identify, acknowledge and mark sites in North Carolina where enslaved Africans disembarked directly from the African Continent. The AAHC chose to initiate this initiative after receiving a

See COOPER, 2A



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Interpretation Coordinator Andrew Cole (right) takes first lady Kristin Cooper (second right), members of the African American Heritage Commission (AAHC), and North Carolina's 9th Poet Laureate Jaki Shelton Green (left) on the Harriet Jacobs' tour Thursday in Edenton.



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