

Future of John A. Holmes facility still unclear

Board of Education discusses lack of progress

BY MILES LAYTON
Staff Writer

Like a middle-age man who has fallen off the exercise wagon since New Year's Day but decides to get back to running in March, the Edenton-Chowan Board of Education is ready to get moving again on formulating future plans for a new high school or renovating the decades old John A. Holmes

High School. For months now, a joint committee of school board members and county commissioners has met, listened to experts and discussed the matter. Progress hasn't moved too much, because it is a big decision to make and questions about funding sources remain unclear. Recent meetings indicate a more distant timeline



BROWDER



BURROUGHS



JORDAN

than the near future for any such project.

"I went from being optimistic to pretty disheartened," BOE member Ricky Browder said during the March 2 Board of Education meeting.

BOE Chairman Gene Jordan said when the committee got to the point where a decision had to be made as to when hire an architect, planning slowed because funds must be available to pay for costs that are not expected to be cheap.

"From there, things kind of slowed down to a slog," he said. "I'm not quite as pessimistic as Ricky. I feel better about things. I don't know if the facts support my thinking or not, but it seemed that in talking to commissioners that they are a little more op-

timistic - that's my impression."

Though BOE member Gil Burroughs is not a member of the joint committee, he has attended each meeting the group has held since the committee formed in 2018.

Burroughs looked at Browder before he said, "You took the words right out of my mouth. We've seen that every single time. And my impression from the county manager is that they would be very happy if we ever got around to it. We got to drive this thing. This board has got

to drive this train. The way I look at it, it is our responsibility to figure out what we need and then it is the county's responsibility to see how we get that."

Browder stressed that it is important to get the public involved in pushing this project to fruition.

"They need to be a voice that speaks loudly—if that is the desire of this committee to do something about the facility that we have at the high school," he said. "That's

See FUTURE, 2A

Rizzo to lead Food Pantry

Retired lawyer to start new job as director April 1

From Staff Reports

The Edenton-Chowan Food Pantry Search Committee announced that Joe Rizzo, a native of Long Island, New York, will become director of the non-profit effective April 1.

"We had several talented candidates for the position," said Gerard Cooney, president of the Food Pantry Board, "but the search committee's final choice of Joe Rizzo was unanimous."

Rizzo is a graduate of Amherst College and Hofstra University School of Law. He was the general counsel and director of a hotel chain in New York City and served as an adjunct professor at the State University of New York before retiring several years ago. He and his wife, Shirley, settled in Edenton last year after moving from Hilton Head, SC.

"I'm in a new, beautiful community that maintains a significant organization that provides a valuable service to the region," Rizzo said. "I have the energy, resources, experience and dedication to follow the Board's vision for the future."

See RIZZO, 3A



Girls who attend White Oak Elementary School are accompanied by family members and friends in the community Monday during the school's "Tea for Two" event.

PHOTOS BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

'Tea for Two' celebrates White Oak's girls

From Staff Reports

The girls of White Oak Elementary School took time out of their day to learn how to be the best they can be Monday afternoon during "Tea for Two."

The school's 228 girl students were accompanied by educators, family members and members of the community in the school's gymnasium and cafeteria. They enjoyed some delicious cookies and "tea," apple juice, and some presentations during the event.

The John A. Holmes High School cheerleaders taught the audience a few cheers. They also took questions from the audience, empha-

sizing that practice and getting good grades in school were the keys to their success.

Meredith Wood, an assistant Extension Agent of 4-H Youth Development in Pasquotank County and executive lead director of LimeLight By Alcone, spoke to the girls about pursuing their dreams.

She noted that when she was little, she wanted to be an N.C. State cheerleader. While working hard to achieve that goal, she suffered a setback when she hurt her knee during cheerleading practice. Wood underwent surgery and spent about seven

See TEA, 2A



A John A. Holmes cheerleader teaches girls at White Oak Elementary School how to do a cheer Monday during "Tea for Two."

Residents urge county to rethink project

County holds forum on Valhalla plant proposal

BY NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON
Editor

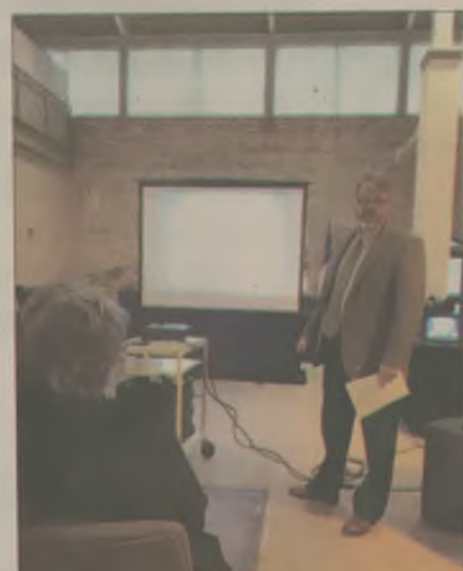
Chowan County residents urged the county to go back to the drawing board in regards to a project that will help the Valhalla water treatment plant become compliant with state regulations.

About 50 citizens, including the Chowan County commissioners, attended a special forum to discuss the

issue on March 7 at the Public Safety Center. Because the commissioners were not going to take any action at the forum, they were not allowed to speak.

County Manager Kevin Howard, who moderated the forum, noted that the state has not approved the project's permit, which would dispose of the plant's wastewater into the Chowan River. Currently, drones are surveying the proposed route of a five-mile pipe before leaves form on the trees, making it harder to

See PROJECT, 4A



NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Greg Churchill, with Rivers and Associates Inc., discusses the Valhalla Water Treatment Plant wastewater project Thursday at the Chowan County Public Safety Center.

Prison safety group meets

Senate committee listens to researchers, prison director

BY MILES LAYTON
Staff Writer

RALEIGH - A new state Senate committee tasked with making prisons safer met Monday for the first time to begin the job of reforming the state's Department of Corrections system.

Led by state Sen. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, the Senate Select Committee on Prison Safety will meet during the next few weeks, after which he hopes to make some initial recommendations.

"I was very pleased with the first meeting, which was generally an overview of the department," Steinburg said. "We will be meeting weekly on Mondays for

See PRISON, 3A

Lawmakers: Funding for schools a priority

Steinburg, Goodwin meet county commission

BY MILES LAYTON
Staff Writer

State Sen. Bob Steinburg and Rep. Ed Goodwin, both R-Chowan, spoke to the Chowan County board of commission about their legislative goals.

Among the initiatives this dynamic duo seeks is acquiring funding for a new school, expanding broadband coverage, supporting Vidant Chowan Hospital in the wake of proposed healthcare changes and potentially expanding the community college reach into the local school system.

As space is tight in this

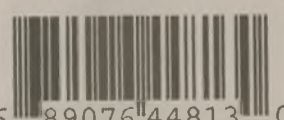
See SCHOOLS, 4A



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