

GOP reversing course on government role in rural broadband?

BY SAM HIEB

Carolina Journal News Service

RALEIGH — For many years, North Carolina has been a battleground over government-backed broadband services. The issue seemed to be settled in 2011, when the Republican-controlled General Assembly passed the Level Playing Field Law, which severely restricted local governments' ability to get into the

broadband business.

Fair enough, some legislators say — but what about local governments simply paving the way for private providers to bring broadband service to rural areas?

"I do see a distinction from allowing cities and counties to provide the infrastructure in underserved areas. I do see that as different from being the actual provider," said Rep. Josh Dobson, R-Avery, who is

the sponsor of House Bill 431, which would authorize counties and cities to build and lease facilities and equipment to help provide adequate broadband services to rural areas. "It does not allow, nor would I support — allowing counties and cities to get into the broadband business."

H.B. 431 — titled the FIBER NC Act — would grant counties and cities the authority to use property taxes

to construct such facilities and equipment. The bill requires local governments to conduct a feasibility study, adopt a resolution supporting the action, and post a public notice 10 days before any meeting which would debate and discuss the resolution.

Opposition to local government broadband businesses typically has been a Republican issue, who've used million-dollar losses

by muni-broadband providers in Salisbury and Mooresville as examples.

But Dobson doesn't see it that way.

"I know there are some who see this as an ideological issue of government getting involved," Dobson told Carolina Journal. "I don't necessarily see it that way because it's only the government providing the infrastructure. One out of every two students in Avery Coun-

ty that I represent does not have access to internet in their home. And that's just unacceptable to me. I have not done my job when one out of every two students does not have access to the internet. We have to have an all options on the table approach."

Meanwhile in the Senate, Majority Leader Harry Brown, of Onslow County,

See BROADBAND, 2B

Barley & Vine opens in Hertford

Church St. shop sells beer, wine by the bottle

BY MILES LAYTON

Staff Writer

HERTFORD — Saturday was the type of brisk, but sunny day where the mind seeks solace in a bottle of wine.

Not a moment was to be wasted on drinking a common glass of red or white Kool-aid grown in California's corporate vineyards and purchased from the shelf of the town's grocery store. Instead, it was a time for a vintage vine that conjures up a mind for good conversation as the taste buds rejoice in a bottle of wine purchased from Barley & Vine.

Located at 125 N. Church St., in Hertford, the shop sells a variety of affordable wines as well as offers a sample of originality with its antiques, vintage items, art on the wall.

Wine lovers or just folks who want to get out the house, make time to go to store that's open between noon and 6 p.m. Wednesday through Saturday. You can pick up a good bottle of wine without having to deal with some pretentious connoisseur who gushes on about grapes and oakly flavor when all you want is a clean glass of chardonnay that doesn't taste like medicine.

If wine isn't your thing, they have beer too — really good craft beer. Some of the North Carolina brews make you want to ask the

bottle, "Where have you been all my life?"

If that sexy bottle from Highland Brewing answers "Asheville," you're not crazy unless you ask a follow-up question about how many licks it takes to get to the center of a Tootsie Pop. Perhaps this is a better question that the bottle may be able to answer — which county is the largest producer of barley in the Tar heel State?

"Perquimans County is the largest producer of barley in the state," said James Smith, who co-owns the shop with his wife, Sharon. "When one of the farmer's brought us this barley, he told us the story about how they harvest the barley and it gets sent out to the roasters who do the malting before it goes to the breweries. This beer then comes back to us — Highland Brewing uses 100 percent barley from Perquimans County. That's Starchaser White's story."

On that note, Barley & Vine sells mixed six-packs, so you can experiment to find the right taste when searching for 5 o'clock somewhere.

"People can come in and mix a six-pack of things they want to try and then maybe come back to try something else," Smith said.

Maybe when songstress Christina Aguilera sang, "It keeps getting better" she was talking about how Barley & Vine sells food from Layden's Country Store in

See HERTFORD, 2B



PHOTOS BY MILES LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

Edenton's McDonald's had its ribbon cutting Friday to pay homage to the recently completed renovations that cost around \$1 million.

McDonald's celebrates \$1M renovation

Fast food restaurant looking to hire

BY MILES LAYTON

Staff Writer

The familiar smell of McDonald's hamburgers was in the air as the ribbon was cut to commemorate the restaurant's reopening and renovations Friday.

During the past few months, the popular fast food restaurant remained open — drive thru only — as renovations were underway until recently when the store opened its doors to reveal a new look. The new design motif features a blend of stone and wood, renovated restrooms, televisions that cap off a definite feel of space inter-played with more natural light.

Outside, the store has stonework and cedar siding. The playground is gone, and there is new landscaping.

Though the restaurant features including kiosks where customers can place



Shelia Schultheiss paints a boy's face Saturday at the McDonald's on Virginia Road, in Edenton, as part of the fast food restaurant's grand opening.

orders and a beverage bar that doesn't mean folks lost jobs — quite the contrary.

"I've added staffing — 10-15 positions for the restaurant. And we're ac-

tually hiring more," said George Taylor, proud restaurant owner. "Even with the kiosk, a lot of people think we are taking away jobs, when we are actually add-

ing more, because we need more people in the kitchen, prep people — that's been good since we opened back up as well."

Taylor said when he went through the application process to become an owner, the company pitched stores for him to consider buying.

"I was looking at Charlotte and also Edenton — once I visited Edenton, I decided that if I can make the deal, it would be Edenton all the way. I was really drawn in by the people and the community that I saw," he said.

The only company Taylor has ever known, he's been working for McDonald's since he was 16-years-old. A true American success story, Taylor started his long career as a dishwasher. Today, Taylor, 48, owns the McDonald's in Plymouth and acquired the store in Edenton last winter.

Prior to eastern North Carolina, Taylor worked 32

See MCDONALD'S, 2B

First National Bank employees volunteer

From Submitted Reports

Four employees of First National Bank volunteered their time and resources for a very productive morning at Habitat's renovation at 803 Bond St., Edenton. Rushing to beat the impending rain, Karyl Rhodes (Kitty Hawk), Jeremiah Taylor (Williamston), Brad Gallinoto (Greensville) and Kimberly Westbrook (Hertford), helped install windows, as well as prime and paint trim, ceilings and walls.

Under the expertise of Walter Black, who also volunteers at the Habitat Re-Store, more windows were installed than expected which allowed volunteers to take Wednesday off. The group were scheduled to continue window installation with a team of volunteers from Youth Builds, Elizabeth City on Thursday and complete other tasks on Friday.

Many thanks to the "bankers" who arrived ready to do whatever was necessary and had the skills to do so. Be still my heart — Gallinoto use to



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Bankers from near and far recently installed some windows for Chowan-Perquimans Habitat for Humanity.

paint for a living and started on the ceilings, which is a task which most folks avoid at all cost.

"We are grateful for organizations that support their employees' desire to help Habitat serve the community through a 'hand-up, not a hand-out,'" said Sally Holloway, of Chowan-Perquimans Habitat for Humanity.

GRAND REOPENING



NICOLE BOWMAN-LAYTON/CHOWAN HERALD

The Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce helped Sugar Bears Candy and Gifts celebrate its grand reopening with a ribbon-cutting at the store's South Broad Street location recently. The chamber held its after hours event at the shop owned by Jeanne Wilson.

Shafranov joins eye center

From Submitted Reports

Dr. George Shafranov has joined the staff at Albemarle Eye Center / Precision Eye Care in Edenton.

Before coming to North Carolina, Shafranov worked at Yale University where he was the director of Glaucoma in the Department of Ophthalmology and Visual Sciences. He served as both an associate professor and a clinical associate professor.

Shafranov specializes in the diagnoses and treatment of diseases, injuries (or trauma) to the eye, as well as glaucoma and cataracts.

He is accepting patients in Albemarle Eye Center/Precision Eye Care offices in Edenton, Elizabeth City and Kitty Hawk.

At its Mark Drive location



SHAFRANOV

in Edenton, the business offers LenSx® laser cataract removal, advanced technology lens implants, LASIK vision correction, complete optical services, Botox and Juvéderm and glaucoma and diabetic screenings.

To schedule an appointment, call 1-800-755-7535.