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## REGIONAL

## East Spencer deals with financial freeze

By Brian Powe  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

EAST SPENCER — East Spencer is in a financial deficit so severe that officials have decided to put a freeze on the town's money.

As of Jan. 10, the town will be on a six-month spending

freeze.

Until the end of the fiscal year, June 30th, there will be no money spent, saving that which is for "police cars and any materials needed by the water-sewer department."

Diane Cotton, town administrator, told the East Spencer Board of Aldermen last

Monday, "We're not buying anything we don't need to buy."

She said, "Until I can go back to the board and say we have money again, the freeze is on."

Cotton said that cuts will be severe. She explained that the long-distance phone service of many town offices will be cut

off until they are able to handle the cost.

Pete Teague of the Dixon & Odom Accounting firm in Salisbury, shared some information about an audit of the town's finances. Teague said that this is East Spencer's third consecutive year in the red and the auditor's report

read a "growing concern" opinion.

"Again, the numbers and trends call into question the town's ability to continue as things are going," Teague said. "It's a solvency issue. The town is not going under but it also could not continue indefinitely with these trends."

Some of the prevailing problems were discussed at Monday's aldermen meeting. The reports show that the town has a low fund balance, is losing more water than it is earning back in charges, lags in tax collections and seems to rely too heavily on Powell Bill

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## Rowan tackles homelessness

By Brian Powe  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — Rowan County has a huge problem with homelessness. So, a local group and county officials have joined forces to tackle the problem.

A year ago, Rowan County commissioners proposed a Blue Ribbon Committee on housing create an organization geared toward eradicating the problems the county faces with homelessness.

As the organization's plans continue to emerge, Frieda Nikolai, the coordinator of the yet-to-be-named organization says the "big picture" is taking people from a homeless state to home ownership.

"The basic principle is taking homeless people, putting them in transitional housing, and giving them the support they need to move on and get their own house," Nikolai said.

"You should not take a person who is homeless and place them in a rental property and walk away from them. If they need a job, if they need transportation, help in finances, let's help them understand that."

The organization is expected to benefit many African Americans in the area who have found out that Salisbury can be a difficult housing market for the homeless. Nikolai sees the homeless situation as something much larger than people who are living on the street or in shelters.

"Homeless can mean more than the people who stay at the homeless shelter," she said. "You might find people living with other members of the family."

"I'm not sure that the only people we are talking about are ones who go to the shelter," she continued. "There are people who stay at the family crisis center, and there are senior citizens who may be living under one duress, who might be happier living alone."

Gunnar Fromen, who also sat on the Blue Ribbon Committee, offered some concerns and considerations about the program.

In his report on available funding, the Central Carolina Bank officer said that low-income families can get loans to buy houses if they have dependable employment and good credit.

But Fromen claims that this is not where the notable problems begin. "The people experiencing problems are those who haven't had steady employment and are often overextended on credit," he said. "We believe that the local financial institutions have a need to assemble a pool of loan funds for qualified first-time home buyers."

"A lot of people either perceive themselves as not qualifying, or they feel intimidated by having to come in and approach a bank about borrowing money. We have put on programs about how to borrow money. You advertise it and the turnout is modest."

According to Fromen, some

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## Art fit for a King



PHOTO/SUE ANN JOHNSON

Portland Abel, 11, tries her hand at art Monday during Kids Day Out, part of the Martin Luther King Day celebration in Salisbury.

## Martin Luther King Day brings out best for parade

By Brian Powe  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — Hundreds of Rowan County residents crowded the streets of Salisbury Monday for the annual Martin Luther King, Jr. parade.

Representatives from area schools and businesses marched through the community commemorating the life of the slain civil rights leader.

Old and young clapped and cheered with pride as they walked the streets under this year's theme, "Helping Somebody — We Can All Make A Difference."

Jerome Banks, leader of the Trojan Legion Drill Team from Knox Middle School, said the event was an enlightening

experience for African Americans.

Banks, whose 65-member drill team led this year's parade, said he felt honored just to be asked to participate. To lead the event was exhilarating, he said.

"It made me feel good," Banks said. "I did not realize that the community had so much respect for me and the drill team."

"It's great just knowing that all these parents trust me as the leader of their kids. This makes me appreciate what I'm doing when some of my old students recognize me and the team and come up to speak to us."

Banks also led his drill team in a call and response chant

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## Professional women still face barriers

By Brian Powe  
FOR THE CHARLOTTE POST

SALISBURY — Are professional females still trying to solidify prominent, permanent positions in this nation's workplace?

A female instructor at Hood Theological Seminary in Salisbury says that the corporate respect level for the professional African American woman is still in question, even in the '90s.

Professor Dora Mbuwayesango, originally from Zimbabwe, thinks that the professional woman is ever attempting to validate herself in America's male-dominated work force.

The Ph.D. candidate from Emory University said "As a woman, I am constantly having to validate myself. And furthermore, my dilemma is triple-fold. I must validate myself first because I am a woman, then because I am a foreigner, and lastly because I am young."

The professor of Hebrew Bible and Old Testament Literature believes that although her particular situation is unique because she teaches biblical literature and about the things of God, nevertheless the same dilemma is present regardless of what a woman's profession is.

As the struggles of pioneering women continue to change every aspect of American life, the woman's liberation movement of the late '70s not only concerned itself with social equity, but altered changes within the church and its theological issues as well. Since that time, women have demanded to have a say about their theories about God without settling for gender-orientated ideas.

"I studied biblical issues, initially because I thought it was interesting," the graduate of Harvard Divinity School said. "Religion and the Bible was fascinating to me, especially the Old Testament, because it spoke more to me culturally."

Mbuwayesango, who has taught at several colleges and universities from South Africa to Atlanta, says that she is constantly confronted by propaganda against women.

"The males of this society would be surprised if they would give more women a chance. Coming from being a majority in South Africa to a minority status here was an educating thing for me," she said. "Although we went through our experience with colonialism in Africa in the '80s, I never thought I was considered inferior, and I never had to compete with males or whites who had a separate education. In Africa, it didn't matter how I looked or what gender I was, but when I arrived in the United States, my race and gender mattered very much. I felt like I was intruding in a world where I was not supposed to."

Mbuwayesango, who speaks five different languages, says the worse thing that could happen to an individual is to allow himself or herself to be contained.

"A lot of my professors would tell me, 'You're not going to make it in this class.' Or they would look at me with disdain because I was an African woman," she said.

"The only thing that saved me was that I knew this is what I wanted to do. I guess I wasn't supposed to surpass an American, a white person, or a male. But through it all, I would not allow myself to be contained nor let the oppressive situations that I faced dictate how far I would go in life."

## Attorneys to present case in S.C. death row inmate's request for a new trial

By John Minter  
THE CHARLOTTE POST

Attorneys on both sides of S.C. death row inmate Sterling Spann's case are scheduled Friday to have all written arguments to Circuit Judge John Hays so he can issue a final ruling on Spann's request for a new trial.

Spann, 34, denies killing Melva Neill 15 years ago and presented evidence in a November hearing indicating another S.C. inmate committed the crime.

Spann contends the murder he was sentenced for was committed by a serial killer. The murders occurred within 12 miles of each other in western York

County in and about Clover. All three victims were strangled and sexually assaulted.

Spann was already in jail on charges in the Neill murder when the third murder occurred on Nov. 16, 1981.

Spann, then 19, was sentenced to die for the Neill murder and has been on death row for 15 years.

Supporters plan a vigil Saturday at 1 p.m. at the Clinton Chapel AME Zion Church in York. The vigil is sponsored by David Miller, a student from Presbyterian College, who has joined forces with the Sterling Spann Task Force.

Miller said he wants all interested groups and individuals to come to the vigil Saturday.

Spann's attorney, John Blume of Columbia and Assistant Deputy Attorney General Donald Zelenka will each provide Hays a brief on the hearing before the judge rules on the new trial request.

In the November hearing in York, two forensic pathologists and forensic psychiatrist testified that Neill's murder was one of three 1981 murders of elderly white women in a four-month period done by one serial killer.

Pathologist Werner Spitz and psychologist Emanuel Tanay concluded the three murders were committed by the same serial killer.

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