

The Courier-Times



HOME WIN!
Rocket volleyball
teams claims victory
in home opener **A6**



GAME 3:
Find out how the
Rockets did in their
3rd game of the
season Friday at
GW **A6**



CELEBRATE:
Recognizing 100
years of 'Ordinary
Women, Extraordi-
nary Service' **B1**

ON THE LIST:
Roxboro police pro-
vide this week's Most
Wanted List **A3**

THE WORD:
Personians reveal
Labor Day holiday
weekend plans **A2**

THE POLL:
What college foot-
ball team will fare
best this year **A4**

DEATHS

Nancy Reaves Hawkins,
55
Oxford
Jamie Moore Noell, 60
Oxford
See page A9

INDEX

AGENDA	A2
CLASSIFIED	B8-9
COMMENTARY	A5
COURT	B6
DO YOU KNOW	A2
COMMENTARY	A5
EDUCATION	B2
FAITH & WORSHIP	B4-5
LEGAL MATTERS	A2
LEGAL NOTICES	B9
LIFESTYLE	B3
LOOKING BACK	A2
NASCAR	A9
MOVIES	A2
OBITUARIES	A11
OPINION	A4
REALTY TRANSFERS	A11
SPORTS	A6-8
TV LISTINGS	B7

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Piedmont Community College sets new hours

Piedmont Community College (PCC) has announced new campus hours for both its Person County Campus and its Caswell County Campus. The changes are a part of the college's commitment to campus safety for all campus users. The Person County Campus hours are: Monday through Friday, 6:30 a.m. until 10:15 p.m.; Saturday and Sunday, 8 a.m. until 8 p.m.

The Caswell County Campus hours are: Monday through Thursday, 7 a.m. until 10 p.m.; Friday, 7 a.m. until 4 p.m.; Saturday, 8 a.m. until 4 p.m. (for class only, Building P); and Sunday, campus closed. These hours will be subject to change to accommodate class schedules outside the college's normal operating hours. "As part of our emphasis on college safety, we find it neces-

sary to establish hours of operation," said Dr. Walter Bartlett, PCC president. "We are the community's college, and we want the public to take advantage of all that the college offers them in terms of learning, cultural, and recreational opportunities. We also do not intend to block access to our meeting facilities, the PCC Nature Trail or our new Rockness Monster disc golf course. What

we do want to do is make sure that our campuses are safe places for all students, staff and visitors who use our facilities." The college is in the process of installing a gate at the College Drive entrance to the Person County Campus; that gate will be locked when the college is closed. The college also is making other changes to enhance campus safety. Exterior lights have been

upgraded to save energy and provide additional lighting in parking lots and exterior corridors. PCC students now receive photo identification cards and are required to display them while on campus. PCC faculty and staff also will have photo ID cards. "We appreciate the cooperation of the public in helping us make PCC a safe and inviting place for everyone," said Bartlett.

City Lake, crops beginning to need some rain

BY PHYLISS BOATWRIGHT
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Although farmers are feeling the effects of a dry, hot summer, the City of Roxboro is "nowhere near" invoking drought restrictions on city water customers. Andy Oakley, Roxboro Public Services director said City Lake was about 24 inches low, the normal point at which the city begins pumping from Lake Roxboro, which Oakley said was "running full." He said the city was "in real good shape" regarding water supplies, and added that, with "one good rain" the pumping from one lake to the other would be halted. Person County received a sprinkling of rain Friday morning, but it was nowhere near enough to help local farmers. Derek Day, Person County Cooperative Extension Service director, said that, with tobacco farmers now "about a third of the way" finished with their harvest, some measurable rain within the next few days would be very helpful.

"We need some showers on the tobacco so it will ripen, and we can go ahead and get it cured," Day said Friday. He added that farmers were not looking at "a stellar year" on any crop, and said soybeans were particularly vulnerable right now. "The beans need rain within the next five to 10 days," he said, if crops were to be salvaged. There is some hope on the horizon, however, said Day. He said the tropical depression that was spinning off the Gulf Coast Friday could bring some much-needed rain to the Piedmont area by Tuesday. The National Weather Service on Friday was predicting a 60 percent chance of thunderstorms in Person County on Monday and a 50 percent chance of showers on Tuesday. Day said Friday morning's showers covered much of the county, but only brought about three tenths of an inch of rain. Although farmers here are watching the skies and hoping

See **DRY**, Page 10



City Lake has dropped 24 inches below normal due to the dry conditions of late.

TIM CHANDLER | COURIER-TIMES



Area tobacco farmers are hoping for rain to help ripen their crops.

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Commissioners likely to make decision on VIPER tower Tuesday

Planning board recommends an altered text amendment

BY TIM CHANDLER
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The Person Board of County Commissioners will revisit a proposed request from the North Carolina State Highway Patrol (NCSHP) to erect a 480-foot VIPER (Voice Interoperability Plan for Emergency

Responders) communications tower on county-owned land off of Critcher-Wilkerson Road near Roxboro Christian Academy when it meets Tuesday. The commissioners' meeting is set to begin at 7 p.m. in their boardroom in the Person County Office Building on Morgan Street. The meeting, normally held on the first Monday of the

month, was moved to Tuesday due to the Labor Day holiday. Last month, commissioners, by a 3-2 vote, opted to have the county planning board review a proposed text amendment to the ordinance restricting the height of towers in the county before giving its final approval on the

See **VIPER**, Page 10

More than 8% of N.C.'s public school staff eliminated since '08

Person County Schools has experienced a 13-percent employment reduction since 2008-09 school year

BY GREY PENTECOST
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According to data recently released by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, North Carolina public schools have lost about 16,677 positions and laid off around 6,096 people since the 2008-09 school year, more than eight percent of staff, due to state budget cuts. Loss of positions and reductions in force in Person County

Schools (PCS) account for 101 of those cuts, as the number employed with PCS has dropped from 800 to 699, a 13 percent reduction, since the 2008-09 school year. While the loss of jobs in education has been met with increased student enrollment in the state overall, enrollment in PCS is declining, said Schools Supt. Dr. Larry W. Cartner. Looking at state totals, the 2011-12 year showed the largest number of positions eliminated

(6,307.5) and the largest number of layoffs (2,418.1). However, PCS' year of the most employee and position losses in that four-year time period was 2009-10, when the district or system lost a total of 70 positions. "That didn't make it any easier for us to lose 55 more this year," said Cartner, "but we had tried to anticipate and go ahead and make those reductions." While some of PCS' reductions over the years could be made through attrition, some of them

meant that employees were laid off, those numbers categorized as "reduction in force (RIF)." Cartner said made more reductions through RIF this year (25) than in any of the previous years. Next year isn't looking any more promising budget-wise. The state reversion, or money PCS had to send back to the state, this year was \$1.4 million. Cartner said the reversion would be \$1.6 million for the 2012-13 school year; and that there was nowhere left for PCS to make the cuts but

in employees. If the system has to revert that amount next year, he said, it would be "difficult and painful." Cartner said the "tremendous" gains PCS educators have made over the last four years were all the more impressive considering the tough circumstances the budget reductions have created. "This county has a real jewel in its public school teachers and administrators," said Cartner. He added, "I hope the public knows that."