



The items recovered from an attempt to smuggle contraband into Bertie Correctional Institute.

## Contraband

From A1

band into the prison."

The packages, another of which was found in the suspect's pocket, contained tobacco, marijuana and cell phones.

Shareef Tamir Griffin, 29, of 948 West Bear Grass Rd. in Williamston was charged with attempting to furnish tobacco to inmates, attempting to furnish cell phones to inmates and possession with intent to sell and deliver marijuana. He was confined to the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail under a \$10,000 secured bond.

Windsor Police Sgt. Justin Jackson, Det. Eddie Hoggard and Officer David Lafon assisted with the case.

## Grant

From A1

plications, with appropriations from the North Carolina General Assembly following last year's hurricane and tropical storms.

"Bertie County's leadership has worked very hard to seek support for our citizens since the first flood waters rose in Sept. 2016," said Bertie County Chairman Ernestine Bazemore. "Bertie County Commissioners and Windsor Officials met during the initial recovery period to develop a united strategy to appeal to both federal and state leaders on behalf of families and businesses impacted by Hurricane Matthew and Tropical Storm Julia."

"In May, our leadership met with the Golden LEAF Foundation to seek support for replacement of the library, cooperative extension offices, EMS Station One and funding for university support to study the worsening flood events impacting Windsor and Bertie County," she added.

According to the Bazemore, the meeting occurred at the Bertie Early College campus with Golden LEAF Executive Director Dan Gerlach and his staff, where local officials outlined the priorities for unmet needs, which were not addressed fully by Federal Emergency Management Association (FEMA).

"Windsor Mayor Jimmy Hoggard, Commissioner Tammy Lee, Commissioner Ron Wesson and I spent nearly two hours with Golden LEAF officials pressing hard and advocating for disaster recovery funding. We have continued this effort working together to pursue every dollar from federal and state sources to assist our citizens," said Bazemore.

In June, the Golden LEAF Foundation approved the first two grants for Bertie County including \$72,707 to study the Cashie River Drainage Basin through a research project with North Carolina State University, and a \$500,000 grant to support planning, engineering and design of a joint use facility for the library and the cooperative extension office.

In August the Bertie County Commissioners approved a contract to purchase 2.9 acres at the intersection of Sterlingworth and Camden Streets for this facility.

Also in October, the board approved design team, MHAworks, an architectural firm from Greenville, to lead this effort.

"We have momentum, enthusiasm and a lot of positive energy pushing the recovery process for Bertie County and the town of Windsor. I am grateful to our staff and everyone involved who works so hard to ensure this success continues for our community," closed Bazemore.

The press release also noted that the town of Windsor will receive \$311,720 to replace a pump station damaged by flooding.

## Bridge is closing

**RALEIGH** – The North Carolina Department of Transportation will close the Alligator River Bridge between Tyrrell and Dare counties to all vehicle traffic and boat navigation for one week in January.

The closure will be in place from 12:01 a.m. on Wednesday, Jan. 10 through Tuesday, Jan. 16.

It will allow crews to perform major renovation work on the bridge's swing-span drawbridge.



The Rev. Laura Early leads the crowd in a blessing of the Aulander Christmas tree.

## Christmas

From A1  
which both celebrated the season and served as the official lighting of the Christmas tree.

Mayor Pro-Tempore Bobbie Parker thanked everyone for coming out to participate. She spoke in the stead of Mayor Larry Drew, who attended the event but couldn't provide his traditional welcome because of a bout with a cold and laryngitis.

"On behalf of the mayor, we are delighted to have everyone in attendance," Parker said.

Aulander Commissioner Tommy Hale also welcomed the crowd.

"We're glad everyone came," he said. "We're sorry the rain messed up the parade, but we wish you all a Merry Christmas."

Chief (Ret.) Randy Cherry, who served as chair of the Christmas Parade Committee, said he was disappointed the parade couldn't go on, but wanted to recognize those who would have served as Grand Marshals.

"On behalf of the parade committee, we're

sorry it rained on our parade," Chief Cherry mused. "We'll be back strong as ever next year."

Cherry then recognized Sgt. Major (Ret.) Johnnie Ray Farmer and Col. Tony Hale, the two who would have served as the parade's Grand Marshals.

"This is a great honor and I really appreciate it," Sgt. Major Farmer said.

Sgt. Major Farmer said as he traveled the world he always told people he was from Aulander, and that he always had to explain where it was. He also said he was proud to call Aulander home.

Col. Hale said he had the same conversations as he traveled to 46 countries around the world. "I always began by telling them I was from a small town in eastern North Carolina with one stoplight," he said. "And I always said Aulander was a great place to grow up."

The Singing Morticians then sang several Christmas songs, in-



Chief (Ret.) Randy Cherry presents plaques in recognition of parade Grand Marshal's Sgt. Major (Ret.) Johnnie Ray Farmer (above) and Col. Tony Hale (below).



cluding "Mary, Did You Know?," "I Can Only Imagine," "Silent Night" and others.

A few students from Aulander Elementary STEM School sang a song as well.

The Rev. Laura Early then led the congregation in a blessing of the Christmas tree.

Hale then lit the tree as snow began to fall outside.

## Powellsville

From A1  
elected officials for the town.

Commissioner Carlyle Hoggard was elected for another term serving the town, and was present to be sworn in just one month after quadruple bypass surgery.

Commissioners Hattie Askew and Gerald Waters were sworn into their official roles for the first time.

The newly elected officials filled the slots of Mayor Peele and former Commissioner Joseph Watford.

After the swearing-in ceremony Mayor Peele made several comments about Watford.

"Joseph Watford served more than 20 years and knows the town's systems better than anyone. We will continue to use his knowledge with the system," said Mayor Peele.

"Thank you to the citizens for supporting me and the town for the last 20 years. It has been a joy," added Watford.

"Congratulations to the new commissioners, and thank you to former Commissioner Watford for your 20 years of service," said Bertie County Commis-

sioner Tammy Lee.

"History has been made in Bertie County today; and just think, in two years we will be here again," said Bertie County Board of Elections member Michael Freeman.

Mayor Peele introduced his wife, Linda, his children, grandchildren, family and church family from First Baptist Powellsville.

"It is an honor to be

seated next to this gentleman (Peele). I look forward to working with the newly elected officials," said Commissioner Hoggard.

"I hope to make Powellsville better than what it is. What happened to the town of Powellsville last year broke my heart. We still have problems in the town, but it has come a long way," said Commissioner Waters.

"I consider this to be an honor. To God be the glory. I will do my job to the best of my ability. If you give it to me, I will try to do my best," said Commissioner Askew.

Askew then introduced her family and friends present at the meeting.

After the meeting was adjourned, refreshments were served in celebration of the event.



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