

# Steinburg

From 1 violent attack on prison staff by inmates attempting to escape from Pasquotank Correctional Institution in October. The attack resulted in the deaths of two correctional officers, a prison sewing plant manager and a maintenance worker.

Four inmates were subsequently indicted on first-degree murder charges in the prison employees' deaths, and District Attorney Andrew Womble has announced he'll seek the death penalty if the inmates are convicted of capital murder charges.

According to Steinburg, correctional officers have made detailed allegations during his conversations with them. One is that prison administrators have allowed inmates to use sheets to cover up security cameras, creating "tent cities" where they can assault weaker inmates with impunity.

The correctional officers' other allegations include:

- \* That prison employees caught a female assistant supervisor having sex with an inmate, and nothing happened when they reported the incident.

- \* That administrators dress down correctional officers in front

of inmates, undermining their authority and inmates' respect for them.

- \* That correctional officers lack ways to discipline inmates, including restricted use of solitary confinement.

- \* That correctional officers are often told not to write up incidents; officers allege that reducing costs seems to take priority over discipline.

- \* That administrators side with inmates over officers; Steinburg said one officer told him an inmate claimed to have the personal cellphone number for N.C. Director of Prisons Kenneth Lassiter and would report the officer to Lassiter.

- \* That prison officials knew there were inmates with violent records working in facilities operated by N.C. Correction Enterprises, the prison-run entity that manufactures safety vests, metal signs, furniture and other products. Steinburg said prison officials allow questionable inmates to work at Correction Enterprises to maintain production and profits.

Commenting on the latter charge, Steinburg also claims Pasquotank Correctional Institution Administrator Felix Taylor knew inmates

convicted of violent crimes were working at PCI's sewing plant. The plant's supervisor, Veronica Darden, and the correctional officer assigned to provide security at the plant, Justin Smith, were two of the four prison staffers killed during the failed inmate escape.

Steinburg also claimed that some 30 prisons, including Hyde Correctional Institution, failed to file mandatory "Daily Institutional Reports" in early November. Those reports keep system officials up to date on prison occupancy and other vital statistics.

"If they're lax on this, you can imagine what other protocols they're lax on," Steinburg said.

Steinburg said the officers he's spoken to have not made "vengeful" comments or demanded certain prison officials be fired. They're also not seeking raises, he said. They're more concerned about a lack of staffing and safety conditions in the prisons, he said.

"So many would get out tomorrow if they could," Steinburg said, noting prisons used to be considered a great source of employment in northeastern North Carolina's poor, rural counties.

Asked about Steinburg's allegations,

Department of Public Safety spokeswoman Pamela Walker referred to a Dec. 7 press release from the N.C. Division of Corrections detailing the steps the division has already taken to improve prison safety and oversight.

In the release, Department of Public Safety Secretary Erik Hooks noted DPS has taken the following actions:

- \* Permanently shut down the sewing plant at Pasquotank Correctional Institution, and suspended the operations at the Lanesboro Correctional Institution metal plant and the Caledonia Institution cannery, pending safety and security reviews.

- \* Removed more than 250 inmates with "violent offender profiles" from work assignments under Correction Enterprises;

- \* Made inmates convicted of violent crimes against law enforcement or other government officials permanently ineligible for work assignments that give them access to "cutting and/or impact tools;";

- \* Asked the National Institute of Corrections, which is based in Washington, D.C., to independently review operations at Pasquotank Correctional Institution. The NIC visited PCI in Novem-

ber and is expected to provide a report with its recommendations this month.

Asked about Steinburg's allegations, other area lawmakers expressed some skepticism about them, but shared the goal of prison reform.

"From the information I have, that's not correct," Sen. Erica Smith, D-Northampton, said of claims about a "secret society" of management and problems with prison oversight. She noted that Hooks is working on an internal audit of prisons and their programs and security levels, and she awaits those findings.

Asked how confident she was in prison administrators, Smith said she wasn't familiar with Pasquotank Correctional Institution. Nor did she express concerns with the management of Bertie Correctional, which is in her district.

Instead, she described her concern with Bertie as one of understaffing, which is believed to be a factor in the murder of Sgt. Meggan Callahan earlier this year. An inmate beat Callahan, an Edenton resident, to death with a fire extinguisher. Smith also said she believes Hooks and Lassiter have shown strong management so

far in initiating prison reforms.

State Rep. Howard Hunter III, D-Hertford, wrote in an email he had read Steinburg's column. He said he couldn't confirm its claims, but agreed with investigating the prison system.

"I've heard some of these horror stories he's speaking of, but you have not heard them directly from employees of the prison system," Hunter said. However, he continued, "I agree with Rep. Steinburg that we need a system-wide investigation and I believe it should start with upper management and work its way down."

Administrators should be held accountable if they're not protecting employees or have committed crimes, he said. Hunter also said he's concerned that prisons are not only understaffed and officers underpaid, but also there's "inadequate training for guards" and a "lack of security if riots and attempted (prison) breaks occur."

Steinburg has already announced that he doesn't plan to seek reelection to his seat in the 1st House District next year. He instead plans to run in the newly drawn 1st Senate District.

# Snow

From 1 pared by the National Weather Service:

- \* Flashlight and extra batteries;
- \* Extra food and water such as dried fruit, nuts, granola bars and other food requiring no cooking or refrigeration;
- \* Extra prescription

- medications;
  - \* Baby items;
  - \* First-aid supplies;
  - \* Heating fuel;
  - \* Emergency heat source;
  - \* Fire extinguisher; and
  - \* Extra pet food.
- Make sure a carbon dioxide detector is working and the out-

side vent is clear of leaves and debris.

"Driving is not recommended during winter storms unless necessary. Even if the roads look clear, black ice could be a threat," said Bertie County Sheriff John Holley.

If driving is necessary, make sure all ve-

hicle fluid levels are full and make sure the lights, heater and windshield wipers work.

Persons who venture out should carry a winter storm survival kit with the following supplies:

- \* Mobile phone and charger;
- \* Blankets;

- \* Flashlight with extra batteries;
  - \* First-aid kit;
  - \* Knife;
  - \* Non-perishable food;
  - \* Extra clothing;
  - \* Tow rope;
  - \* Tool kit; and
- Pets should be brought indoors, and any outdoor animals

should be given extra blankets and straw for warmth.

After the snow stops dangers can still be present. Temperatures during the day on Thursday are only expected to reach 34 degrees and will dip to around 12 degrees Thursday night.

# Year

even higher.

"Brick and mortar openings include convenience stores, hair salons, restaurants, a hunting supply store and more," he said.

And there's more to come.

"We are still patiently waiting on Abrams to open beside the ABC

Store in Windsor," Hoggard said.

In addition to the expansion in local business, there has been the ever-growing tourism industry in the county. That industry suffered a mild setback in 2016 because of flooding, but is expected to have rebounded fully by the end of 2017.

"One of the areas in which the county can really expect growth in the next few years is in tourism," Hoggard stressed. "We have always gotten a lot of visitors for hunting and fishing, and they spend money in our stores and restaurants.

"We expect those numbers to continue to

go up," he continued. "This year we started getting visitors to our tree houses in Windsor. In fact, it is hard to find an open weekend to rent the tree houses."

There are plans to build more tree houses, as well as the addition of a state park in the Bal Gra area, which will lead to more tourism.

"We also already have great tourist attractions including the Historic Hope Plantation and Scotch Hall Preserve," he added.

Hoggard said the Windsor/Bertie Chamber will continue to work with others to grow the county's tourism.

"The Chamber works

hand-in-hand with town and county officials to promote our area to prospective businesses," he said. "We are here to provide information, and to answer any questions about our community.

"We love to show others why this county is a great place to live, work and play," he closed.

# Contraband

phones to inmates.

The two were placed in the Bertie-Martin Regional Jail, each under a \$35,000 secured bond. They made their first appearance in Bertie County District Court today (Wednesday).

Chief Lane said his department is doing the best it can to stop the distribution of contraband into the prison.

"This is a reoccurring problem at Bertie Correctional Institute,"

he said. "This officers of the Windsor Police Department are doing an outstanding job of preventing contraband from entering the prison with what can only be described as little or no help from the N.C. Department of Public Safety (NCDPS).

"Just small changed could make a huge difference," he added. "Cutting back the woods line would produce a better sight line for correctional officers. Motion detect-

ing cameras and an outer fence would also provide an extra, and much-needed, buffer."

Despite those concerns, the chief reaffirmed his commitment to providing safety at BCI.

"The Windsor Police Department will continue to work tirelessly to stop the influx of contraband in hopes of providing a safe environment for the correctional officers working at Bertie Correctional Institute," Lane closed.

# Assault

Street in Windsor, was charged with assault inflicting serious bodily

injury for his role in the attack of the victim. He was placed in Bertie-Martin Regional

Jail under a \$25,000 secured bond, and made his first appearance in court Wednesday.

**BERTIE COUNTY TAX OFFICE 2018**  
**IMPORTANT INFORMATION ON TAX LISTING**  
 NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN

**ALL PERSONS WHO, ON THE DATE AS OF WHICH PROPERTY IS TO BE LISTED, OWN PROPERTY SUBJECT TO TAXATION MUST LIST SUCH PROPERTY WITHIN THE PERIOD SET FORTH IN THIS NOTICE AND ANY PERSON WHO FAILS TO DO SO WILL BE SUBJECT TO THE PENALTIES PRESCRIBED BY LAW.**

Bertie County has a permanent, real estate listing system. The Tax Office will automatically list real estate for the owner.

(Important note: taxpayers are required to list buildings and other improvements to real property having a value in excess of one hundred dollars that have been acquired, begun, erected, damaged, or destroyed since the time of the last listing on January 1, 2017. If a building permit was obtained for new construction please verify with the tax office that the record has been updated to reflect the addition.)

The tax office no longer mails individual abstracts, (listing forms), for real property. For 2018, you will receive a listing form only if you listed personal property in 2017, or if it is a new account for real property.

Taxpayers are required by law to annually list all taxable personal property including but not limited to mobile homes, boats, motors, unlicensed vehicles, motorcycles, 4 wheelers, golf carts, airplanes, business equipment, business furniture and fixtures, tools, farm equipment and multi-year permanent tagged trailers. This does not include registered motor vehicles that have a current license tag.

**NOTE: IF YOU HAVE MADE NO CHANGES TO YOUR REAL PROPERTY SINCE JANUARY 1, 2017 YOU ARE NOT REQUIRED TO FILE A LISTING FORM.**

The only location to list taxes in Bertie County for 2018 will be in the County Commissioners Room of the County Office Building at 106 Dundee Street, Windsor, NC. **NOTE: IF YOU REQUIRE ASSISTANCE WITH LISTING TAXES PLEASE VISIT THIS LOCATION.**

LISTING OF 2018 TAXES WILL BEGIN ON Tuesday, JANUARY 2nd, 2018 AND CONTINUE THROUGH WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 31ST, 2018. THE LISTING OFFICE HOURS WILL BE 9:00A.M. TO 4:00 P.M. MONDAY THROUGH FRIDAY IN THE COUNTY COMMISSIONERS ROOM ON THE FIRST FLOOR OF THE COUNTY OFFICE BUILDING AT 106 DUNDEE STREET, WINDSOR, NC, OR BY APPOINTMENT.

**IF THERE ARE ANY QUESTIONS REGARDING THIS INFORMATION PLEASE CONTACT THE BERTIE COUNTY TAX OFFICE.**  
 TELEPHONE: (252)794-5310  
 FACSIMILE: (252)794-5357  
 P.O. BOX 527  
 WINDSOR, NC 27983