

INSIDE: Chowan Regional Fair canceled...

Bertie \$1
Ledger-Advance
 THURSDAY • AUGUST 20, 2020



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Aid still sought for tornado victims

Donation Center will close

THADD WHITE
 Bertie Ledger-Advance

WINDSOR - Monetary donations will continue to be accepted, but the storm relief donation center will close today (Thursday). Bertie County officials said

early Tuesday morning they had received such an overwhelming amount of support for those who suffered losses during the tornadoes that came from Hurricane Isaias, they will close the Donation Center.

Bertie County opened the

donation center to receive assistance for the more than 500 to 700 people who are in need.

The need arose when tornadoes, spawned from Hurricane Isaias, completely destroyed 26 homes, left eight deemed unsafe for occupancy and damaged 200 others. Two people were killed and at least two dozen injured in

the wake of the storms.

The Donation Center stopped receiving clothing last week, but remained open for other needs. Now, county officials say, most of those needs have been met.

"Due to the overwhelming support for our community, the last day that new donations can be accepted at the Bertie County Storm Re-

lief Donation Center will be Thursday, Aug. 20," a statement from the county read.

While the county will end donation center contributions, the county is still collecting money for those who suffered so much damage as a result of the storm.

The first of donations were

See SOUGHT, 3

Perdue Farms: Good neighbor in time of need

THADD WHITE
 Bertie Ledger-Advance

KELFORD - Perdue Farms is again proving to be a good neighbor in Bertie County.

Perdue, whose local plant is located on N.C. 305 between Kelford and Lewiston Woodville, is donating protein and \$10,000 to local organizations to help those affected by the tornado that destroyed more than two dozen homes in Bertie County.

"We are extremely overwhelmed with

gratitude for the support of Perdue Farms in response to the tornado that severely impacted our county," Bertie County Commission Chairman Ronald D. Wesson said. "The joint support of Perdue and the Albemarle Area United Way for our neighbors who have lost so much is a wonderful example of how committed partners can truly make a difference."

Perdue Farms is committing \$10,000 to the

See PERDUE, 3



DEBORAH GRIFFIN / The Daily Reflector

Bertie County farmers Kirk Copeland, left, and his brother Sid, grow hemp "clones" inside a greenhouse. This method involves taking a cutting from a "mother plant," which then grows its own root system to become an identical copy of the original. Growing hemp presents a whole new set of challenges for farmers. Difficulties the Copeland brothers have faced include leaf spot disease, mold, moths, spider mites and even mice.

Vidant Bertie: Grants aid Bertie, Martin counties

WINDSOR - Vidant Bertie Hospital presented Community Benefit Grants checks to grantees on Tuesday, Aug. 11.

Twenty-three (23) grant applications submitted by local organizations representing Bertie and Martin counties were approved for funding. The organizations all conduct programs and offer services that align with not only Vidant Health's mission to improve the health and well-being of eastern North Carolina,

but the most recent Bertie County Community Health Needs Assessment priorities.

"We are grateful for the wonderful work these organizations do to help community members become healthy and stay healthy," stated Brian Harvill, President of Vidant Bertie Hospital. "Over 25,000 area residents will benefit from the various programs and services presented by the grantees."

See VIDANT, 3

Untapped Harvest: Farmers eye hemp as next cash crop

DEBORAH GRIFFIN
 The Daily Reflector

Hemp, one of the most versatile plants on Earth, seems to be the answer to all the world's woes, from replacing plastic, fiberglass and wood, to being a cure-all for a multitude of ailments — including insomnia, inflammation and seizures.

New hemp products, made from each part of the plant — seeds, roots, stalk and leaves — crop up daily on the national market. Many wonder if this leafy-green plant could be the miracle-crop eastern

North Carolina farmers have been searching for, reviving an industry that has struggled for decades.

Farmers are in a cash crop drought as they have watched their remaining tobacco contacts dry up to a world market. Sage, another crop that promised to fill the void left by tobacco's demise, has been usurped by a synthetic scent product due to hit the market in 2021.

Fourth-generation Bertie County farmer Kirk Copeland said at one time, he had pinned his hopes on sage because of

the dwindling tobacco market. He and his brother, Sid, own Featherstone Farms.

"Due to the world's economy, tobacco is shrinking in North Carolina. We used to grow 800 million pounds in the state. Then it was curtailed to 450 million. And in recent years it has dropped to 250 million," said Copeland.

With America's demand for hemp increasing — the United States is the No. 1 importer of hemp in the world — raising the crop seems to be an obvi-

See CROP, 3

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