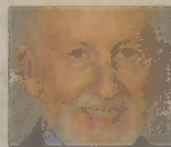


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SCAN ME

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Bertie Ledger-Advance

Thursday · January 13, 2022

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Wintry precipitation possible in ENC on Sunday

Authorities urge caution with home heating

BY ARIYANNA SMITH
Staff Writer

The National Weather Service on Wednesday issued a hazardous weather advisory for eastern North Carolina warning that wintry precipitation was possible later this week.

Meteorologist Casey Dail of the Weather Service office in Newport said it was

still too early for specifics, but a low-pressure system is bringing cold temperatures to the area and could add in moisture later this week into Sunday. "There is potential for precipitation to start as rain, snow or a wintry mix before it transitions to rain on Sunday afternoon."

The advisory stated a storm system late this weekend has "the potential to bring a period of wintry precipitation to eastern North Carolina with some light

snow accumulations possible before snow changes to rain."

The weather service forecasts a 70 percent chance of precipitation in Bertie County. Snow is expected before 10 a.m. followed by rain and snow between 10-11 a.m. The forecast high is 46 degrees and a low of 30 on Sunday. It will be mostly cloudy throughout the day.

Martin County has a forecast high of 44 degrees and a low of around 32. There is an 80 chance of precipita-

tion with snow likely before 10 a.m. followed by rain in the afternoon.

Overnight low temperatures are expected to remain below freezing through the weekend.

The Department of Transportation is preparing for the wintry weather starting Thursday, officials said. Bridges and overpasses in Martin and Bertie counties will be treated on Friday.

Tim Hass, NCDOT

See WEATHER, A5



Snow on Jan. 3 shut down a section of Interstate 95 near Fredericksburg, Va. A wintry mix is possible Sunday in eastern North Carolina.



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

Vidant Bertie Hospital, 1403 S. King St., Windsor, will be among Vidant facilities making the transition to the ECU Health branding starting in the spring.

ECU Health branding coming in spring

Bertie hospital among facilities that are part of new configuration

The Ledger-Advance

The new year will bring a transformation in how health care is delivered in eastern North Carolina.

The joint operating agreement between East Carolina

University's Broad School of Medicine and Vidant Health officially went into effect Jan. 1 and the two entities are finalizing plans on how they'll share delivery of care to the 1.4 million residents of eastern North Carolina.

Under the joint operating agreement, the medical school and health system will remain separate legal entities, but will integrate under

a new, shared brand known as ECU Health.

The ECU Health logo will be revealed in the spring and the rebranding process for most Vidant entities and ECU Physicians practices will begin shortly after, Vidant and ECU announced earlier this month.

Rebranding is expected to take months to complete. New signage will go up in

late spring or later, websites will be modified and other identifiers will get the ECU Health logo. By late summer, a brand advertising campaign will begin.

"The new year marks an important and exciting chapter for health care in eastern North Carolina," said Dr. Michael Waldrum, CEO of

See ECU HEALTH, A5

Drug trafficker gets 25 years in federal prison

Feds: Leary bought drugs, supplied local dealers

The Ledger-Advance

A Bertie County man who for five years headed a drug trafficking organization that supplied illegal drugs in communities across the region has been sentenced to 25 years in federal prison, a press release from the U.S. Attorney's Office states.

Levar Anthony Leary, 41, was convicted in August of trafficking cocaine, crack cocaine, and methamphetamine and conspiring to commit money laundering, U.S. Attorney Michael Easley said Wednesday.

According to Easley, U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina, Leary organized and led a drug trafficking organization from 2016 to early 2021 that distributed cocaine, crack cocaine, methamphetamine, heroin and marijuana throughout north-

eastern North Carolina.

Easley said Leary and his "associates" used a hotel, nightclub and convenience store in Bertie to distribute narcotics and launder money. Narcotics agents were able to track and observe Leary travel across the country, including to California, Texas, Florida and Georgia where he obtained large quantities of illegal drugs and returned to North Carolina, Easley said.

Some of those assisting Leary's drug trafficking organization have already been convicted and sentenced, Easley said. They include Johnny Earl Jordan, who was sentenced to six years; Fred Rudolph Robbins Jr., sentenced to 7½ years; and Alexander Leander Williams Jr., sentenced to 11 years.

As a result of the investigation, law enforcement seized numerous vehicles and properties that Easley

See PRISON, A5

Filing period set after judges OK GOP redistricting plan

Full court now expected to consider the case

The Ledger-Advance

Candidate filing for North Carolina's 2022 primary elections will resume at 8 a.m. on Feb. 24, the N.C. State Board of Elections announced on Wednesday.

The announcement comes a day after a three-judge panel upheld state legislative and congressional district maps approved in November by the GOP-controlled General Assembly.

The ruling is expected to be considered by the full state Supreme Court.

"State Board of Elections staff will immediately begin preparing for the continuation of the candidate filing period, including securing a location to ensure the health and safety of staff and candidates," Karen Brinson Bell, State Board executive director, said. "We will provide all details to the public as soon as possible at NCSBE.gov and through an announcement distributed to the media."

Filing for local, state and federal offices was halted

Dec. 8 by the court when it decided to take up a challenge by voting rights groups that said the new districts were unconstitutionally gerrymandered to favor Republicans. The new filing period will end at noon on March 4 under a new court order and elections are scheduled for May 17.

Many candidates were able to file Dec. 6-8. Those candidates do not have to refile.

Meanwhile, a separate court order on Tuesday ordered the suspension of any challenges to candidates for

U.S. House, N.C. House and N.C. Senate, until final resolution of the litigation in the redistricting cases.

A challenge was filed against congressional candidate Madison Cawthorn of Asheville on Monday, and the State Board was planning to appoint a panel to hear that challenge on Wednesday as required by state law.

In accordance with the court's order, the State Board canceled its meeting, and consideration of that pending challenge is postponed until resolution of the

redistricting cases.

The Associated Press reported on Tuesday that a panel of three Supreme Court judges refused Tuesday to throw out redistricting maps drawn by the General Assembly, rejecting arguments that the lines were illegal because they were politically stacked for the GOP.

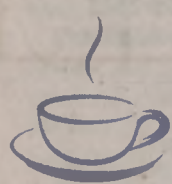
The unanimous decision by the three trial judges, which followed a quick trial last week, will be appealed by the advocacy groups and voters — some backed by a national Democratic group

— who challenged the new congressional and legislative lines in court.

The state Supreme Court, which will have the final say on the maps, had ordered the trial judges to rule by Tuesday, apparently to discourage further delays in the 2022 election schedule.

"At the end of the day, after carefully and fully conducting our analysis, it is clear that plaintiffs' claims must fail," Superior Court Judges Graham Shirley, Nathaniel Poovey and Dawn Layton wrote in the nearly 260-page order.

In this edition



GOOD MORNING,
THANK YOU FOR READING!

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