



SMALLTOWNGIRL
Leslie Beachboard describes a family dealing with COVID-19.

A4



GRACE&TRUTH
Pastor Webb Hoggard says people should look to Jesus.

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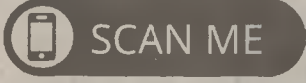


OPINION
William Rowell discusses the way "we talk."

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Greg Atkins declares candidacy for sheriff

3-term sheriff, 1-term commissioner cites experience

THADD WHITE
Group Editor

The race for Bertie County Sheriff took a twist Tuesday morning.

Retired Sheriff and current Bertie County Commissioner Greg Atkins announced he has decided to enter the race.

"I've lived in Bertie County my

whole life and served with the Bertie County Sheriff's Office for most of my adult life, including 12 years as sheriff," Atkins said. "When you are with an agency that long, it becomes part of you."

Atkins, who had originally filed to seek re-election to a second term as Bertie County Commissioner, said his history as sheriff prompted him to enter the fray.

"The office of sheriff is the primary source of public safety," he said. "The safety and security of the people of Bertie County depend on it."

"When a person enters the office of sheriff, they need to go in completely prepared. It isn't a situation where you can take office and then start figuring out what to do next," he continued. "A mis-

take can really be too costly."

Two other candidates have already announced their intention to seek office. They include deputies Timothy Hardy and Tyrone Ruffin. Atkins said he has no animosity for the men or their candidacy, but feels he offers a different set of credentials.

"I believe that the two men who are candidates for sheriff are very

good people, and I consider them friends, but I'm very concerned they are not prepared yet for the office of sheriff," Atkins said. "I felt people needed another choice - someone who knows the job, what it involves and how to carry it out."

Atkins said he will campaign on his record.

"The people of this county know me and know what kind of

See **ATKINS, A3**



CONTRIBUTED PHOTO

From left: Dr. Jenni Corn, Director of Research and Evaluation, NCDPI, Office of Learning Recovery; Dr. Michael Mayer, NCDPI, Office of Learning Recovery; Linda Bulluck, Chief Academic Officer, Bertie Co Schools; Dr. Otis L. Smallwood, Superintendent, Bertie County Schools; and Dr. Lynne Barbour, NCDPI, Deputy Director, Office of Learning Recovery.

BCS, DPI laud summer program

WINDSOR - On Jan. 5, the Office of Learning Recovery, an office within the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, presented to the State Board of Education with their district partners from Bertie County Public Schools.

Together they shared findings from the 2021 summer school extension program. The presentation highlighted successes, challenges and recommendations for future summer programs that best support the students of North Carolina as they continue to recover from the COVID-19 pandemic.

Bertie County Schools Superintendent Dr. Otis Smallwood and Chief Academic Officer Dr. Linda Bulluck had the opportunity to showcase their

summer program, Camp Lit. This program spanned grades K-12 and provided multiple learning recovery and acceleration opportunities to over 330 students.

Some highlights of the summer program included 236 credits earned, 67 credits recovered and 10 students graduated as a result of participating in the summer program.

In addition to the dedicated 50 teachers and staff that worked this summer Bertie County leveraged community partnerships, including East Carolina University Dental Clinic, N.C. Museum of Art and the Bertie County YMCA to name a few.

NCDPI Deputy Director Lynne Barbour said, "It was an honor to

have Bertie County Schools and the northeast Region represented at this high-profile meeting. We were impressed with the level of teacher and staff commitment in designing a welcoming and safe environment for students. They infused the Camp Lit theme throughout the instruction, enrichment activities and classroom environment."

Summer 2022 looks to be as 'lit' as 2021 with district leadership partnering with the Office of Learning Recovery to develop smaller, more intensive programs including summer bridge academies for students in grades K-12 and workforce-aligned career accelerator camps for students in middle and high school.

COVID-19 claims two more lives in Bertie County

LESLIE BEACHBOARD
Managing Editor

WINDSOR - COVID-19 related complications has claimed the lives of two more Bertie County residents.

The COVID-19 positive case count, facility outbreaks and fatalities are still high in Bertie County and throughout the region due to the rapid spread of the Omicron variant.

The Albemarle Regional Health Services (ARHS) provided an update with its weekly surveillance report on Friday, Jan. 28 showing the updated information on vaccines, active cases, fatalities and facility outbreaks.

The report includes Bertie County, and seven other

counties, which are part of ARHS, including Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford, Pasquotank and Perquimans counties.

According to Albemarle Regional Health Services Director R. Battle Betts, Jr., MPA., this will be the last surveillance report issued with the active COVID-19 cases and vaccine totals. Albemarle Regional Health Services will continue to report facility outbreaks and COVID-19 related deaths in a weekly update format, along with other pertinent information.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been the goal of Albemarle Regional Health Services to provide

See **DEATHS, A3**

Free pharmacy coming to Bertie

TYLER NEWMAN
Staff Writer

NC MedAssist's mobile free pharmacy is coming to Bertie and Chowan counties on Feb. 11 and Feb. 18.

The mobile free pharmacy provides individuals and families who are low income with free over-the-counter medicine. NC MedAssist collaborates with community partners to organize free events throughout the state.

Individuals receive items

that include, but are not limited to pain relief, cold, cough and flu medicine, allergy and digestive medications, vitamins and even medicines for children. The primary purpose of this event is to identify participants that may qualify for the free prescription pharmacy program.

If a person does not or cannot sign up for the events online, a pre-made bag of over the counter

See **MOBILE, A3**

Sheriff John Holley encourages Super Bowl safety plans

LESLIE BEACHBOARD
Managing Editor

Americans love a good party, and Super Bowl LVI is one of the most anticipated.

Super Bowl LVI is on Sunday, February 13. To keep drivers and partygoers safe on the roads, the U.S. Department of Transportation's National Highway

Traffic Safety Administration (NHTSA) is teaming up with Bertie County Sheriff John Holley to remind football fans everywhere that Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk.

Whether it's heading out to a restaurant or a Super Bowl party, if the night involves drinking alcohol, make sure there are plans

for a designated driver so everyone arrives home safely at the night's end.

"We want our community members to enjoy Super Bowl festivities, but we also want responsible drivers on the road," said Holley. "If you are planning to be away from home during the Super Bowl, make a game plan to ensure you don't find your-

self without a designated driver if you need one. If you're hosting a party, make sure you take care of your designated drivers. Remind your friends and family: Fans Don't Let Fans Drive Drunk."

Never drive drunk

Whether attending a party, hosting one or going out to a bar, keep safety at the

forefront of the night.

When it's time to leave, make sure the designated driver is actually sober. If he or she has decided to drink, call a sober ride. I

If driving, remember that sober driving isn't the only law that should be followed: Make sure everyone including the driver wears their seat belts.

Bonus Points for the Designated Drivers

The night's designated driver is the real MVP. No matter what, do not drink alcohol - people are relying on the designated driver.

If attending a party or at a bar, enjoy the food, the company and the non-alcoholic

See **SAFETY, A3**

In this edition



GOOD MORNING,
DONNA BARNARD
OF WINDSOR

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