

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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PRESIDING — Baxter Williams of Currituck County, (left) chairman of the AADA Highway Committee, presides over the recent meeting of the group while Levin Culpepper, representative from Pasquotank County, listens.



STRATEGY DISCUSSED — Shown discussing the action taken by the AADA Highway Committee, which included priority setting, are (l. to r.) Bud Amburn of Edenton, Levin Culpepper of Elizabeth City, and Mayor Bill Cox of Hertford.

Highway Committee Establishes Priorities

By KATHY M. NEWBERN

Priority setting was the order of business when the Albemarle Area Development Association's (AADA) Roads Committee met June 28 at Angler's Cove Restaurant in Perquimans County.

The 10 counties in Region R are represented on the AADA Roads Committee. At the June 28 meeting, all counties were represented except Camden and Washington. Perquimans County's representative is Joe Nowell, Jr., a former member of the State Highway Commission and a current County Commissioner.

After much discussion, the committee came up with four priorities and several recommendations at their recent meeting. All present were in agreement that the four-laning of U.S. 17 from the Virginia line to Elizabeth City was the first priority that should be worked toward collectively. Levin Culpepper, representative from Pasquotank County, voiced his support of this project and presented several arguments favoring endorsement by the group. Culpepper admitted that there is a need for a better road from northeastern North Carolina to Raleigh, but added that "it is not in our best interest for us to support road projects from our area going outside." He added, "Our greatest need is for us to improve roads in our area." Culpepper further explained that he sees a trend of growth pushing south from the Tidewater, Va. area into northeastern North Carolina. He predicted that growth will reach our area "in 10 years." In addition to U.S. 17, Culpepper cited roads 168, 158 and 64 as roads that are going to lead to the development of North Carolina. Culpepper also brought out economic factors by explaining that well over 1,000 people in the Pasquotank area commute to jobs in the Tidewater area daily.

Nowell added that in a recent visit to

Raleigh, he talked about upcoming projects in North Carolina relating to road improvements. He said that according to information he received, the only major project in the area that had chance for funding under the present administration was U.S. 17. Nowell further explained that four to five years of work has already been invested in the U.S. 17 project. When the project was first considered, Nowell added, the estimated cost was at \$27 million. Now that cost is close to \$35 million. Nowell said he felt that if the U.S. 17 project was approved, other road improvements would then become necessary due to the amount of traffic funneled into the area.

Discussion continued and members emphasized the importance of being "heard in Raleigh" on road improvements. Bud Amburn of Edenton made a motion that the committee go on record endorsing the U.S. 17 project. That motion passed unanimously. He then made a motion that the committee solicit support of the Southern Albemarle Association for better highways in northeastern North Carolina. That motion passed and the AADA Roads Committee chairman, Baxter Williams of Currituck County, was asked to appoint a sub-committee to meet with a committee from the Southern Albemarle Association for that purpose.

Members appointed to serve on this joint committee, representing AADA, were Levin Culpepper, Baxter Williams, Joe Nowell Jr., and Marc Basnight from Dare County. It was pointed out that several counties belonging to AADA are already members of the Southern Albemarle Association, which historically has gotten support for improvements to bridges, ferries, and roads in its area.

Before adjourning, the committee came up with three additional projects to support in addition to the U.S. 17 project. These included U.S. 158, N.C. 12 and U.S. 64 from Jamesville to Plymouth.

State Auditor Honored

Henry L. Bridges, who has served as Auditor for the State of North Carolina 30 years, was recently honored by his supporters and friends at a fund raising dinner held on the campus of Elizabeth City State University.

Bridges was appointed to the position of State Auditor in 1947 to fill an unexpired term and has been reelected ever since for eight con-

secutive terms, the last in 1976.

The duties of the State Auditor include conducting a thorough financial audit of each state agency and institution to determine that all receipts are properly deposited and that all expenditures are made in accordance with law; to develop, implement and monitor all accounting systems within State Government; and to conduct operational audits

to determine if operations of state agencies are being handled in the most efficient and effective manner.

Bill Owens of Elizabeth City served as Toastmaster for the fund raising event. Words of welcome were presented by ECSU Chancellor Dr. Marion D. Thorpe with remarks by Lorimer Midgette. Phil Sawyer introduced the guest speaker, the honoree, Henry L. Bridges.

Winfall Residents Evacuate

By KATHY M. NEWBERN

The Fourth of July was unexpectedly interrupted for the residents of Winfall just after 8:30 p.m. Monday when they were asked to temporarily evacuate their homes due to a chemical leak at Albemarle Chemical Company, located in Winfall.

The leak, reported as nitrogen liquid fertilizer with high contents of ammonia, was discovered by Larry Stallings, Assistant Manager at Albemarle Chemical Company. Stallings reported the leak to Charles Skinner Jr., Chief of the Hertford Fire Department. Skinner then reported the incident to the Perquimans County Dispatcher who alerted the Winfall and Hertford Fire Departments to report to the scene.

According to Wayne Winslow, Chief of the Winfall Fire Department, a 5,000-gallon tank containing the liquid, which "fortunately was not full," developed a leak. Employees of the chemical company were trying to pump the liquid out for transport when the tank's valve broke. At that time, fire officials were called to hose down the toxic vapors. Fire officials added that there was at no time, any danger of fire.

The evacuation of residents in the immediate area began shortly after firemen arrived on the

scene. The families returned to their homes shortly after 11 p.m. Fire officials reported the vapors were under control by 10:30 p.m. Chief Skinner added that the evacuation was a safety precaution and was not a "mass migration."

All residents in the area evacuated and returned to their homes without injury. One member of the Hertford Fire Department did receive some injury when he fell in a ditch containing a large amount of the liquid. He was hosed down with water on the scene by another fireman and then taken to Albemarle Hospital where he was treated and soon released.

Thomas Johnson, Manager of Albemarle Chemical Company, explained that the investigation into the cause of the leakage was continuing this morning at press time and he therefore could not give out any information. He said there was no available information as to the amount of liquid that leaked from the tank. Winfall Fire Chief Winslow did however estimate the escaped liquid at between 1,700 and 1,800 gallons. Johnson did express his appreciation to the efforts of the fire departments and Perquimans County Rescue Squad and the neighbors in the area for their actions during the "unfortunate accident."

Assisting at the scene were the Hertford, Winfall, and Belvidere-Chappell Hill Fire Departments. The Inter-County and Bethel Fire Departments were available on stand by and the Edenton Fire Department was contacted for additional air packs for use by firemen. Also at the scene was the Perquimans County

Rescue Squad which administered oxygen to firemen as it was needed. Members of the Highway Patrol and the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department assisted as well as many individuals who helped direct traffic away from the escaping vapors. Winfall Fire Chief Winslow commented,

"Everything went smoothly thanks to Belvidere and Hertford Fire Departments and the Rescue Squad. We are thankful for all the assistance."

Hertford Fire Chief Skinner said, "We assisted Winfall as we were needed. There was real fine cooperation and response from all agencies."

Highway Meeting Planned

RALEIGH — Plans are underway for a massive, statewide effort to obtain public comment and involve the general public in the planning process to improve the State's highway system.

North Carolina Department of Transportation officials report that 14 separate public meetings will be held during July and August to provide the general public with an opportunity to participate in the annual "update of the Highway Improvement Program."

One such meeting is scheduled to be held in Hertford on Monday, Aug. 8. The specific location and time for the meeting as well as the name of the chairperson will be published at a later time.

The Highway Improvement Program is a planned and programmed course of highway construction that

balances anticipated revenues against estimated highway project costs in the coming years. The Highway Improvement Program is the department's basic planning document and includes projects on North Carolina's rural primary and urban highways (generally U.S. and N.C. numbered highways).

"This year's effort to obtain public input and increase public participation in the highway planning process is the most extensive in the Department's history," commented Secretary of Transportation Thomas W. Bradshaw Jr.

"We encourage and actively seek public participation in these meetings," said Bradshaw. "I have instructed my staff to record all public comment at these meetings so that the suggestions and concerns voiced by our citizens can be made

known to the full Transportation Board for its consideration," added Bradshaw.

In three previous years an average of seven annual meetings were held to seek public input. This year's effort of 14 meetings doubles the average number of meetings held in 1974, 1975, and 1976.

The public meetings will be held in each of the State's 14 highway divisions, and will be chaired by a member of the North Carolina Board of Transportation.

In addition to the Hertford meeting, meetings will also be held in the following North Carolina cities: Monroe, Lincolnton, Henderson, Lexington, Wilson, Lumberton, New Bern, Wilmington, Carthage, N. Wilkesboro, Asheville, Sylva and Burlington.

Police Chief Is Named

By a unanimous vote, The Hertford Town Council appointed Marshal Merritt as Chief of the Hertford Police Department at their Tuesday night meeting. Merritt replaces retiring Police Chief Ben Gibbs who served in that capacity for 17 years. The appointment became effective July 6. Before that announcement was made, however, a problem of concern to the local police was brought to the attention of Council members.

A group of 15 concerned citizens appeared before the Council to register a complaint over disturbances by teenagers prowling in yards and on porches at late night and early morning hours. The group explained that they wanted it to be known that a complaint had been

registered and further occurrences of this nature would be reported to the local authorities. A motion was passed by the Town Council to have Mayor Bill Cox seek answers as to the questions of the rights of the property owners and legal action available to them. This motion carried unanimously.

Mayor Cox commented, "I think the solution to this is all of us, including the police, working together. I don't think we've got a problem so big that we can't handle it."

The newly appointed Chief of Police expressed a willingness to work with the citizens to bring the problem under control.

Merritt, a native of Red Springs, N.C., has lived in Hertford the last eight

years. He has been a Hertford police officer for three of those years. He holds an Associate degree in Police Science and has completed a number of courses at the Elizabeth City Police Academy. He and his wife, Frances, reside in Woodland Circle and have two sons, Paul, age 11; and John, age 7.



ASSUMES DUTIES — Marshal Merritt has assumed the duties of Chief of the Hertford Police Department as of July 6.

Council Meets

RALEIGH — The North Carolina Secondary Roads Council met June 28 for its final official meeting.

The Council approved additions, abandonments, and improvements to North Carolina's secondary roads.

Each of the 14 members received a letter of appreciation for serving on the Council, signed by Governor James B. Hunt Jr.

The Governor wrote to E. V. Wilkins of Roper, "You have worked hard to finalize the improvement priorities for secondary roads for each county in your Division." Governor Hunt also urged Wilkins to "continue to assist with the secondary roads program."

Wilkins represents Division One which includes Bertie, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Hertford, Hyde, Martin, Northampton, Tyrrell, Pasquotank, Perquimans, and Washington counties.

The members of the Secondary Roads Council were appointed by Governor Hunt in March. The Council was abolished by the 1977 General Assembly. Responsibility for secondary roads will now be vested with a new 24-member Board of Transportation.



DAY OF CELEBRATION — A day of celebration, the Fourth of July, began in Perquimans County Monday with a parade. One featured parade participant, the Perquimans County Marching Unit, is shown in the above picture at left. After a variety of other events and activities including a flag pageant, fried chicken supper, countywide church service, and Fun Festival, the day came to a close with a fireworks display. (Staff photos by Kathy M. Newbern)