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Chill chases PCHS students from class

Old man winter blew a chilly breath of air on Perquimans County early this week and the cold weather caused an early dismissal at Perquimans High School on Monday.

Schools superintendent Pat Harrell said that trouble with the heating system in the new addition to the building required the closing of the school after lunch.

Harrell said that maintenance personnel tried all morning to get the temperature up in the building but to no avail. "It was cold," said Harrell of a situation that saw temperatures hovering at between 45 and 50 degrees in the building.

The heat pump system in the addition is tied in with the boiler that heats the old two-story portion of the building. It was

installed at a total cost to the county of \$64,000 by Coastal Refrigeration, and has required some adjustment since then.

"The contractors have been down to make adjustments," confirmed Harrell. "It's not unusual for a new system to need adjustments but the contractor has been slow in responding," he said. The system is still under warranty.

Harrell told school board members Monday night that the problem might be that the boiler is too small to handle the system in extremely cold weather.

And the weather in the early part of the week could easily have been labeled extreme. Elizabeth City Flight Service recorded a low of 13 degrees on Monday night, but according to flight service attendant Sam Long, a brief respite from the chill was expected Tuesday af-

ternoon, with some precipitation that night.

But by this afternoon (Thursday), the mercury is expected to begin another downward trek. Long said the weather would probably be even colder this weekend than it had been in the early part of the week.

In the event of snow, Harrell said that every effort would be made to have announcements on area radio stations WCDJ, WBXB, WGAI, and WCNC by 6:30 a.m.

In deciding whether or not to close schools, Harrell takes an early morning ride on area roads with school transportation supervisor W.O. "Red" Elliot. He also contacts the weather bureau in Norfolk, the Coast Guard, and the N.C. Highway Patrol.

Winter landscape

The sun sets over a frozen field between New Hope and Woodville. A bare tree

reminds us that winter is here, as if recent cold weather would allow us to forget. (Photo by MIKE MCLAUGHLIN)

Town of Hertford may soon tune in to cable TV

Hertford residents will be afforded the option of tuning into a total of 23 television channels and their choice of current hit movies within a year.

Representatives of a cable television franchise appeared before the Hertford Town Council at their regular monthly meeting Monday. And although the town took no formal action because contract details have yet to be resolved, it appears that cable TV is on its way to town.

Representing the Compass Corporation, out of Erie, Pennsylvania, was Vincent T. Ridikas, who promised commissioners that cable service could

be a reality in less than a year.

The corporation has recently been awarded the cable franchise for the town of Edenton, and Ridikas said extending service to the town of Hertford would "only involve extending our trunk cable."

Ridikas told the council that the town of Hertford could staff to earn some \$3,000 a year from the corporation in franchise fees and pole rental.

He explained that the fee consisted of 3 percent of the corporation's gross revenue, as well as \$5 a year rent for each telephone pole utilized. The system

is designed to connect to telephone lines and Ridikas explained that the television cable was adaptable to above as well as underground phone lines.

Cable TV will offer customers an option of four levels of service, according to Ridikas. Level one, or "basic service," will provide the cable customer with 11 channels, at a cost of \$6.95 per month.

Level two, or "Miniplus," will provide reception of independent television stations from all over the country, as well as the 11 channels offered in the basic service. Level two will cost the consumer \$9.85 a month.

Level three consists of Home Box Office, which affords TV viewers an opportunity to select from a package of current motion pictures each month.

Both level one and level two advantages are also included in level three, at a monthly cost of \$15.85.

The fourth level, or "Super Service," will provide customers with a combination of levels one, two, and three, as well as "Cinemax," a feature which allows for the reception of 23 channels in all.

Other services to be provided by the cable corporation include the rental of

optional converters, auxiliary tuners, remote control devices, and FM cables which will expand radio reception to some 20 stations, according to Ridikas.

In other business, the town council agreed to apply for a \$25,000 grant from the Agency on Aging which would allow the town to hire a director for the senior center for one year.

"I see it as a great opportunity to get this senior center active in the community," said Hertford Mayor Bill Cox to the commissioners.

While county recreational director Mac Sligh supervises all activities at the

senior center, Cox said that there was definitely a need for a "professional director who could devote all time to the senior center."

It was announced that the town councils of both Hertford and Winfall would meet with the county commissioners on Monday, Jan. 12, at 7 p.m. at the Courthouse, in order to discuss the matter of funding the recreational program.

The council also appointed Robert Riddick to the Planning Board, and tabled the appointment of an alternate to that board until the next meeting.

Marching band to play for governor

The Perquimans County High School Marching Band will high-step to the state capital Saturday, Jan. 10, where they will march in Governor James B. Hunt's 1981 Inaugural Parade.

According to county band director David Ziemba, Perquimans is one of several North Carolina high school marching bands invited to perform for the governor and other state officials during the inaugural ceremonies.

The 90-minute parade will begin at 1:15 p.m., following noon inaugural ceremonies during which oaths of office will be administered to the governor and the council of state. The

swearings-in will also be followed by the inaugural address, as well as a 19-gun salute to Hunt.

The parade is expected to move south along Wilmington Street from Lane Street to Martin Street where it will head west onto Martin, then north onto Salisbury Street and proceed back to the state legislative building along Salisbury.

Gov. Hunt and the Council of State will review the parade as it passes the east side of the Capitol on Wilmington Street.

Ziemba, hopeful that many Perquimans County residents will turn out for inaugural ceremonies, said that the band had added a new

score and flag routine to its repertoire.

"The kids are really excited about going (to Raleigh)," said Ziemba, "and have been working hard."

Following the parade, Gov. Hunt will hold a reception at the Governor's Mansion where the public will be greeted by Hunt, the Lt. Governor, and other members of the Council of State.

Hunt said the inaugural festivities had been planned around a weekend to allow for the participation from school children and working people.

"We want this to be a 'people's inaugural,'" said Hunt in a recent news release urging statewide attendance at the inauguration.

County hears expensive river monitoring plan

The price tag appeared a little too steep on an East Carolina University proposal for monitoring area rivers preferred at a Monday meeting of the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners.

Dr. Charles Oreor, a professor at ECU, estimated that the cost of running a year long monitoring program in Perquimans County would be from \$20,000 to \$30,000.

An Elizabeth City State University professor had maintained at a prior meeting that a testing program such as that described by Oreor could be run for some \$8,000, utilizing manpower and a boat volunteered by the district health department.

The price estimate from the East Carolina professor appeared to catch the board by surprise.

"We're very concerned about our rivers but it's just beyond our means to do something about it," said commissioner Lester Simpson.

After Oreor had left the meeting, though, Hertford waste treatment plant operator Roy Perkins said that for the past five years he had been running all of the tests advocated by the doctor with the exception of two. Perkins said he had the

equipment and capability of running the other two tests as well.

Perkins volunteered his services in running the tests, and the board expressed an interest in having his findings over the past five years analyzed as well.

Asked if he had noted extreme changes in water quality in the river over the past five years, Perkins responded in the negative. "From all the tests I've run — all of our tests are real good. They are well within the limits established by the Environmental Protection Agency," he said.

Oreor had said, however, that for monitoring purposes water samples must be taken at specific times, such as after storms. "In a thunderstorm, you'd have to monitor the initial flush of water, then follow it over the peak," said Oreor. "It's geared to water flow patterns rather than a strict time basis," he said.

Oreor said that if ECU were contracted to do the study, he would utilize all available information, as well as results of monitoring, to provide a digestible package of information on the rivers. "I would use all the help I could get to present you as complete a picture as possible," he said.

Simpson, however, said that the county could not afford to take on such a project on its own, and advocated getting more counties involved in the study.

Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission planner Bill Phillips said the board should contact those persons involved in the Chowan River study to find out where their funding is coming from.

The county has been promised a state grant that is expected to be in the neighborhood of \$5,000.

But even if a study of the rivers is initiated, it will be no more than a first step in a long road to improving water quality. Oreor stressed that the monitoring program would only show the condition of the river during the period of study. Water samples would have to be taken three or four times a year over the next several years to indicate any gradual changes taking place.

Commissioner Marshall Caddy put the problem in perspective. "The real easy job is what we're doing now. What's going to be hard is after we find out what the trouble is."

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Fire extinguishers

With recent cold weather, area fire departments continue to respond to a barrage of chimney fires. Here Carlisle

Sawyer of the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department hoses down a chimney fire with assistance from David Phillips. The

fire occurred at the home of Helen Felton of 212 Grubb Street on Monday afternoon.