

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## A special report

# Industrial recruitment again becoming a concern

By MIKE McLAUGHLIN

A pair of billboards assail motorists as they approach the town limits of Hertford from either direction on U.S. 17.

"Home of Jim 'Catfish' Hunter," they read, and in smaller lettering, "We invite industry — Excellent sites available."

Featuring the former major league pitcher unfurling one of his famous patented pitches, the billboards are the most visible symbol of the town's efforts to attract industry.

At \$80 per month, they are also the most expensive of the town's efforts. In fact, some might argue that they are the town's only attempt at making itself attractive to industrial development.

The county appears to be doing even less. An industrial development commission headed up by county commission chairman Joe Nowell has not convened in several years.

County residents voted some years back to allow taxation of up to a nickel per \$100 property valuation for the purpose of industrial development.

But that tax has not been collected for some time.

One could easily get the impression that the town and county aren't particularly concerned about attracting industry, despite the billboard.

Yet there are those who express concern. "We need a mixture of small industry to go along with our agricultural base," said Hertford mayor Bill Cox.

Nowell, too, agrees that it's time to revive efforts to lure industry to Perquimans County.

The county began a strong drive for industrial development some 15 years, with the approval of a special tax, Cox said. From there an industrial developer was hired and an industrial park created on Grubb Street extended.

Water and sewer lines were extended to the site, and Don Juan, the apparel manufacturer that is the county's only bona fide factory, moved from the park. Agreements were reached so that land would be available in the event that other concerns wanted to locate on the site.

But the county's industrial developer found employment elsewhere in the early seventies, and interest in industrial

development soon fizzled.

"For the last four or five years there has been little spent on industrial development. There has not been much activity," said Cox.

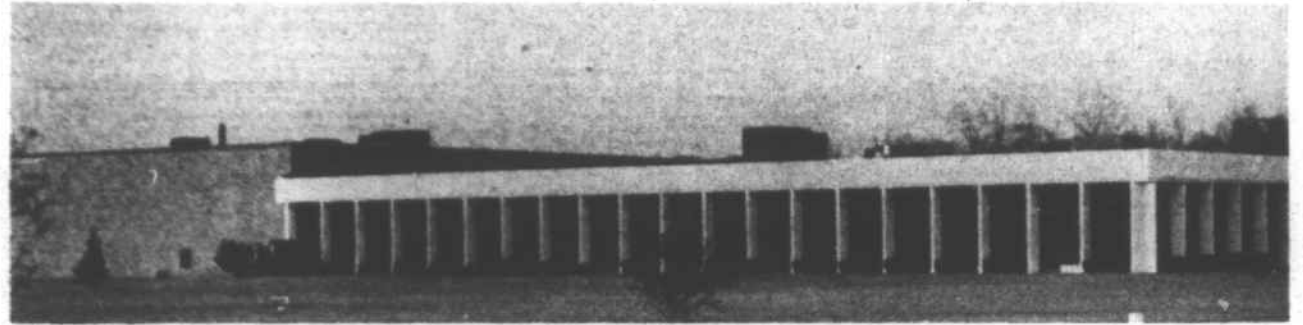
"We just do not have the organizational interest to work for it," he said.

It isn't as though the need does not exist. Besides the small number of public service jobs, the approximately 300 manufacturing jobs provided by Don Juan, and the less than 500 persons employed on the farm, clerking at a shop is about the only thing left.

### Out-migration

Many county residents travel out of the county to work at more lucrative manufacturing jobs in Tidewater, Virginia.

County commissioner Charles Ward estimates that that figure may be as high as 25 per cent. He maintains that the county isn't losing many residents to other areas. "People would rather live here even if they have to drive further," he said.



The county's lone factory

Don Juan, an apparel manufacturer, is the only industry Perquimans County can boast of. But a few public officials are itching to get in the race for a few more factories.

But with gas prices rising, that picture may change, he said.

Ward is working to revive industrial recruitment efforts in the county. He wants to rejuvenate the industrial development commission and get it into the active search for industry again.

Part of the problem is simply finding out who is on the commission, whether or not their terms have expired, and whether or not they want to remain on an active commission.

Ward concedes that it would be easier to start from scratch with a brand new bunch.

But despite the fact that the current economic situation is prohibitive to industrial expansion, Ward maintains that now is the time to begin laying groundwork for the time that the climate is more inviting.

He maintains that the need is urgent. "We've got to get something," Ward said. "The only things we've got that

create any income are logging and farming. We've had a bad farming year and the interest has ruined logging," he said.

The recent closing of the L.R. Foreman lumber mill in Elizabeth City probably put as many as 50 county residents out of work, Ward said, and empty storefronts are becoming more commonplace in the town of Hertford.

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# Tax collections expected to outpace projections

An expected decline in collection of 1980 taxes because of poor economic conditions in Perquimans County has so far not materialized.

The town of Hertford, however, appears to have suffered some decline in tax collections.

The county commissioners had prepared their 1980-'81 fiscal year budget based on collection expectations of 92 per cent, 3 per cent less than the 95 per cent collection projection used in the previous year's budget.

The projection is used as an estimate to determine tax revenue for budgeting purposes.

But more than a million dollars was collected before the first interest penalties were assessed on Jan. 7, and tax supervisor Keith Haskett said collections are running about the same as last year's 97.5 per cent collection rate.

At budget making time last spring, Haskett was among those who thought the collection rate might drop a little. "We all thought so," he said.

But the conservative 92 per cent budgeting figure may mean extra unappropriated income for the county, if payment continues as it has. Each percentage point of the total levy

collected means some \$12,000 in revenue for the county.

For example, if collections were to total 95 per cent, the county would gain roughly \$36,000 over tax revenues budgeted.

The county tax department has also collected some \$42,000 in back taxes since July 1, 1980. That cleared the way for some infrequent taxpayers to pay their 1980 bills, since current tax bills cannot be paid before back bills have been cleared, explained tax office employee Carol Rogers.

In years past, back tax collections have ranged from \$10,000 to \$15,000, she said.

Haskett attributed the increase in collection of back taxes to "extra effort" in the tax office. Writing letters and garnishing wages are two ways of encouraging the payment of back taxes, he said.

So far some 86 per cent of the county tax levy has been collected, and Haskett said that April and May are big months for receiving tax payments.

Four weeks prior to the first Monday in June, the names of delinquent taxpayers are listed in the newspaper for the annual land sale.

There is a big influx of tax money just

prior to the listing in April, and while the list is running in the paper during May, Haskett said.

Hertford tax collector Marvin Hunter said the same is true for that town, but that so far this year collections are running at only 80 per cent of a \$78,705.35 billing.

Taxes, however, do not comprise a large segment of the town's budget. "We don't have a big tax base," said Hunter. He said that the town has had bills for a single month's wholesale power from Vepco that are larger than the entire tax billing for the year.

Since the 2 per cent January penalty was added, Hunter said tax payment have dropped away to virtually nothing.

"The people that are going to pay will pay the penalty and pay it (their tax bills) by advertising day," said Hunter.

Collections are running close to the norm in the town of Winfall. The town does not penalize late taxpayers, said employee and former mayor David Trueblood. Despite that, most town residents pay their taxes on time, he said, and this appears to be little different from years past.

"They're paying about like they usually do," Trueblood said.

## Almost like spring

Recent spring-like weather has brought out the laundry baskets and yard

workers, along with a few perhaps overly-optimistic hopes that the wether

picture will not change for an extended period of time.

## Curriculum guide

# School board gets an education in family life

The subject of family life education was again addressed by the Perquimans County School Board at their regular monthly meeting last week.

The board decided some three years ago to institute a family life curriculum in county schools, in an effort to coordinate related topics currently dealt with in high school biology, health, and home economics classes.

Morris Kornegay, Perquimans County school coordinator of education in grades 7-12, presented a report, compiled by the Family Life Education Committee, addressing possible particulars of the curriculum.

Questions addressed by the committee were, what grade to begin study, who should teach the course, what staff development is necessary and whether a student may opt out of the program because of conflicting beliefs.

According to Kornegay, the committee felt that the program should be instituted in the fourth grade, with focus on boy and girl relationships, as well as growth and development. The units would be taught by the classroom teacher as part of the health curriculum.

The same approach would continue through grades 5 and 6, with the addition of units dealing with such topics as going steady, puberty, and codes of conduct.

The committee has suggested that the curriculum in grades 7 and 8 be taught by the health and physical education teachers. Topics for study on the junior high level would include dating, growth and development, reproduction, heredity and social and emotional problems related to sex.

Portions of the junior high study, such as venereal disease, abortion and contraceptives, would be taught by health professionals, doctors and nurses, according to Kornegay.

On the secondary level, the course would be taught in grade 9 by health and PE teachers, with the expansion of some topics previously taught, such as dating. The 9th grade study would also include aspects of heredity and portions of the unit on social and emotional problems related to sex, as well as identification of the role of the family in today's society.

Likewise, grade 10 would include topics of heredity, reproduction, growth and development. These units will be taught by the biology teacher.

The committee has suggested that the curriculum be integrated into the English courses in grades 11 and 12, since all juniors and seniors are enrolled in language arts classes.

During these two years, the course of study would pertain to marriage, in-

cluding laws regulating marriage, adjustments involved in marriage, and preparation for parenthood.

The committee has suggested that the time devoted to family life study be restricted to one week in grades 4 and 5; 2 weeks in grade 6; 6 weeks in grades 7-10; and 2 weeks in grades 11 and 12.

No extensive staff development would be involved in implementation of the family life curriculum, according to the committee report. Kornegay said that health and PE teachers, as well as biology teachers, have already received adequate training in the subject areas, and that teaching the curriculum on other levels would only involve following a course guideline.

He added that funds for staff development are available through the state department of instruction, should the need for training arise.

Parents should be given the option of denying their children exposure to certain factions of the curriculum, including the units dealing with birth control, abortion and venereal disease, according to the report.

Kornegay said that cost of implementing such a program would be minimal, because a curriculum guide would be prepared by the county staff. Instructional materials, such as audio-

visual aids, are available from the Regional Health Library in Elizabeth City, at a negligible cost.

Kornegay, who stressed that the committee's suggestions were not "absolute," said that he realized that it would be difficult to ask teachers to take on the extra teaching duties.

"It might be too much to ask a teacher to not only teach what they're teaching, but to add 6 weeks of another subject on top of that," said Kornegay, adding "Teachers are pretty well full now."

Attending the meeting was Perquimans County High School Principal William Byrum, who responded to the proposal with mixed reactions.

Byrum said that in particular, he did not feel that high school English instructors should be assigned the task of teaching family life education.

"My other reaction is more general," said Byrum, "and that is, we've got to stop loading education up."

"Everybody has something to teach... we can't keep on adding cups to the pitcher — pretty soon it's going to run over," he said.

Byrum also said that he felt it was "too late" to institute a family life curriculum in grades 11 and 12 because values "are pretty well set at that time."

Another teacher present voiced

compliance with Byrum and commented that she felt that high school students already "knew what was going on."

School board chairman Clifford Winslow said that while he felt teaching youngsters about family life should be the responsibility of parents and the church, neither had dealt with the topic in a satisfactory manner.

The board took no action on the committee's report. Winslow said, "We need more time to study it and look into it."

The family life advisory committee is comprised of Kornegay, Margaret Brothers, Carolyn Rogers, Billy Stallings, Celvin Webster, and Roland Wright.

In other business, schools superintendent Pat Harrell announced that the price of reduced lunches was going to have to go up.

The increase, effective last Wednesday, doubles the previously set 10 cent reduced-price lunch to 20 cents.

In addition, Harrell said that students previously eligible for free lunches may be re-classified for reduced-price meals, and those students eligible for reduced-price lunches may be asked to pay the full 55 cents.

The hike in lunch prices is due to a cut in federal nutrition funds, which were trimmed back at the first of the year.

Harrell said that it was "not feasible for the school food service to absorb the (increased) cost."

The board also agreed to withhold payment of some \$5,600 to Gardner Construction Company for work not yet completed on the newly-built high school addition.

School architect Sam Ashford had recommended to Harrell that the board not pay any portion of the amount due the company until shower stall partitions are installed.

The board also: • Heard several teachers in attendance comment on the "lack of heat" in the high school addition.

• Acknowledged work former artist-in-the-schools Frans van Baars did on a Union School mural and paintings he donated both to the school board and to benefit the high school band.

• Approved the hiring of Carol Dyer as EMH and LD teacher at the high school.

• Approved a list of some 45-50 persons eligible for substitute teaching.

• Heard a presentation on high school remedial programs from Thelma Finch, Jessie Fitch, Brenda Singletary, and Alice Winslow.

The school board will hold its next meeting at 7 p.m. on Monday, Feb. 2, at the county office building on Edenton-Road Street, in Hertford.