

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Volume 37, No. 5

USPS 428-080

Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, February 5, 1981

20 CENTS

## Search begins for Tri-County Center funding

The search for construction money for the some \$5 million Tri-County Career Center is expected to get underway soon. Finishing touches were completed last week on a prospectus designed to inform funding agencies of the project.

The educational center is designed to meet the advanced vocational and academic needs of students in Perquimans, Gates, and Chowan counties.

Tri-County project director Ken Stalls was expected to meet in Raleigh Wednesday with North Carolina State Superintendent of Schools Dr. A. Craig Phillips and Joe Pell, senior assistant to Governor James B. Hunt, Jr., in order to obtain letters of endorsement for the project.

Stalls said in an interview Monday that once the state officials' endorsements were obtained, the committee would begin sending the summary of the project to private and federal funding agencies.

The steering committee for the Tri-County Career Center met last week and approved the prospectus, which will be printed next week.

The committee has narrowed site selection for the center down to some "possibilities," according to Stalls, but will not make a final decision until construction money is located.

"We do know there are sites available of equal driving distance from the 3 counties," said Stalls.

Membership on the committee has altered slightly as a result of school board elections. Former Perquimans County School Board member George Baker, who did not run for re-election this year, has been replaced by county school board member Preston Stevenson.

Robert Hollowell of Gates County has been replaced by Emily Williams.

The project has so far been awarded some \$73,000 in grant monies appropriated to aid administrative costs and development of the center.

Included in the appropriations was \$20,000 from the Coastal Plains Regional Commission; \$28,304 in federal monies from the Career Education Fund; and \$25,000 from the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation.



## Snow message

A light powdering of snow on Friday lent the opportunity for a bit of windshield graffiti on the back of Winfall resident Alice White's automobile. (Photo by PAT MANSFIELD)

## Funds on tap for expanding county water system

Over a million dollars in funding for the expansion of the Perquimans County Water system has apparently been approved.

County officials will meet with a Farmers Home Administration official tomorrow (Friday) at 10 a.m. in a paperwork session that will make it official.

The funding package includes a state clean water bond grant of \$230,425, an FmHA loan totalling \$480,000, and an additional \$560,000 grant.

A Rivers and Associates representative told the county commissioners on Monday morning that the money would be enough to run new water lines, drill an additional well, and construct another water treatment plant, all of the work scheduled to be included in Phase II of the water project. "We do have the funds to fund the whole project," said the representative of the county's engineering firm based in Greenville, N.C.

In another matter, the board elected to advertise for bids on the extension of the

county office building on Edenton Road in Hertford.

FmHA supervisor Melvia Howell had sought extra space due to cramped working conditions for FmHA employees at a prior meeting. He implied that his superiors were pressuring him to get a commitment for more space, or move his office to another county.

The commissioners have also received notice that the quarters of school administrative personnel are excessively cramped, and on Monday, explored the possibility of solving both problems at once.

Schools superintendent Pat Harrell presented rough drawings for both rehabilitating the county owned Blanchard Building in downtown Hertford, and constructing a new building for the school central office staff on the same lot on which the Albemarle Regional Planning and Development Commission building is located, on Church Street Extended.

Commissioner Charles Ward favored the construction of a new building, arguing that renovating the Blanchard

Building would cost more than new construction.

Commissioner Lester Simpson lined up on the other side of the fence, arguing that perhaps it is time to do something with the Blanchard building.

Obstacles to renovation include the absence of a heating system, a second floor that would require extensive bracing, and the possibility that ceilings would have to be lowered for heating efficiency, Ward said.

"The only thing you've got is walls," said Ward.

Either construction of a new building, or renovation of the Blanchard Building would have given FmHA office personnel more space at the Edenton Road Street building.

But in the end, the commissioners opted by a 3-1 vote (Ward opposed) only to add a wing to the Edenton Road Street building for FmHA offices, and to deal with the school situation at some later date.

Howell has offered one rough estimate of \$15,000 for the work.

Dental insurance and a cost of living

raise for county employees became linked in another discussion.

Earl Britton outlined a proposed Blue Cross dental plan for county employees and following Britton's presentation, social services director Paul Gregory said that the 15 social services employees had informed him that if the plan would mean cost of living salary increases of less than 10 per cent in the coming year they would prefer to have the additional salary.

Gregory said the employees had asked for 12 per cent salary increases plus the dental plan, but that he recommended 10 per cent salary increases plus the dental plan.

Commissioner Charles Ward, however, said that the dental plan amounted to about a 1 per cent pay hike and that he would favor pay increases of 5 per cent with the plan or 6 per cent without.

"That's not much of a raise," responded Gregory.

## Town council

## Plant repairs iced for present

Although the town of Hertford does not have the some \$8,000 needed to repair a faulty compressor at the town ice plant, the council moved at their regular meeting Monday to postpone closing down the operation for good.

The ice plant, located off of Grubb Street in Hertford, has been closed since after Christmas due to the December breakdown of the compressor.

Councilman T. Erie Haste recommended that the board decide to either close the plant or make the necessary repairs. "I was talking to Tommy Miller, and he says that everyday it is down it costs additional money," said Haste, "We either need to move on it now (with repairs) or scrap it."

The board directed Hertford Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox to report fully on the town's ability to make repairs at their next regular meeting in March.

The town council adopted budget amendments in early December which trimmed monies for capital outlay within the ice plant department to \$1,000. There was no change on the \$3,000 allotted that department for maintenance and repair of the building, grounds, and equipment.

In other business, the council formally passed a resolution requiring that Hertford customers absorb Virginia Electric and Power Company's recent 9.6 increase in wholesale rates.

The board had agreed at a previous meeting that the town could not absorb the Vepeco increase, but no formal action was taken.

Hertford customers will not feel the

increase until the March 1 billing, according to Cox, who was notified last week that Vepeco proposes to file yet another rate increase with the FERC sometime in March of 1981, which will also more than likely effect the pocketbooks of Hertford customers.

It is also a possibility that Hertford customers will pay more than just Vepeco's increase if the FERC allows the company to boost wholesale rates again this spring. According to Haste, the town's utilities department should be run like a business, and that means passing on any increase, and then some.

"This time we're holding the increase to a minimum, but next time we need to add some profit," said Haste, "after all, it's a business."

The board also adopted an ordinance allowing a cable television franchise to extend its services to the town of Hertford.

Representatives of Compass Corporation, out of Erie, Pennsylvania, appeared before the council in January to seek contract approval from the commissioners.

Although the ordinance was accepted, the law requires that the council wait until the next regular monthly meeting to sign the franchise contract.

Representing the company Monday was Don Vicini, who claimed that the town of Hertford would be receiving cable TV within the year.

"We have already surveyed the area and mapping is underway now," said Vicini. "Construction can begin within a week of the franchise signing, which

means that certain sections in town could be turned on (to cable) in about 7 months," he added.

Cable TV will offer customers an option of four levels of service. Level one will provide the cable customer with 11 channels, at a cost of about \$7 per month.

Level two will offer 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 about \$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. Level one and two options are also included in package three, at a monthly cost of some \$15.85.

Level four will provide customers with a combination of levels one, two, and three, as well as "Cinemax," a feature that Vicini claimed would offer "two times as many movies as HBO with no duplication."

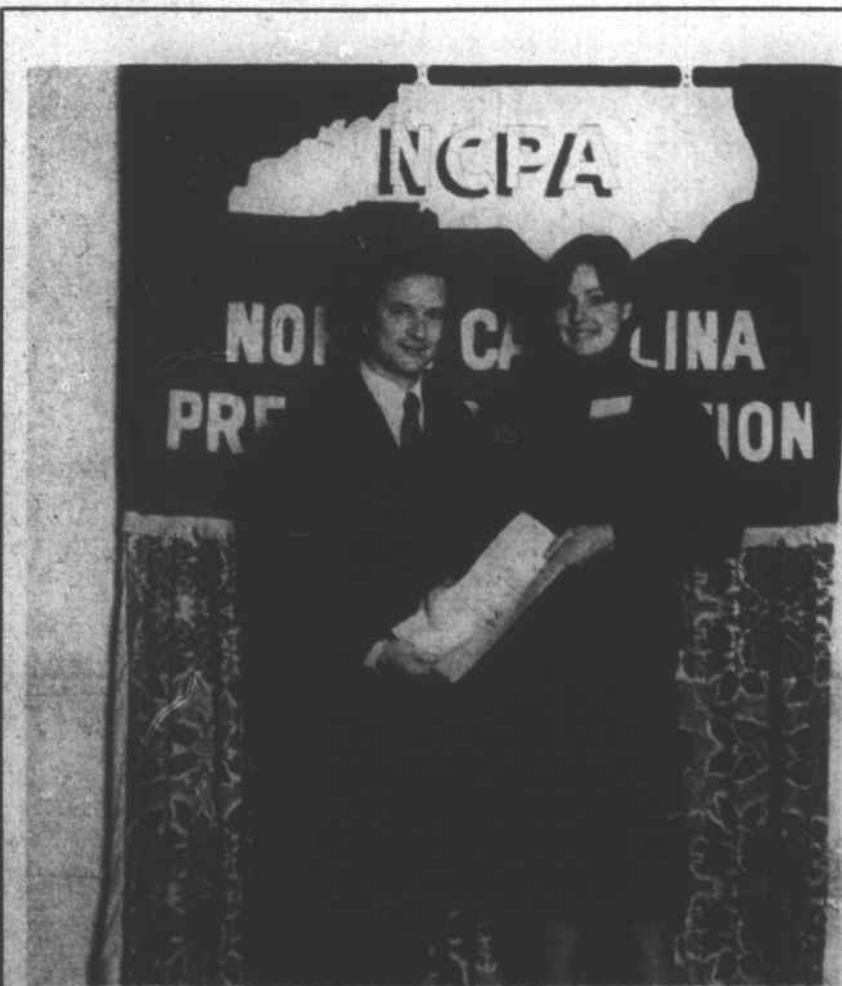
The town of Hertford stands to make some money off of the cable enterprise, as the corporation has agreed to pay both pole rental of \$5 per telephone pole utilized per year, as well as 3 percent of the corporation's gross revenue.

The system is designed to connect to telephone lines, either above or below ground.

The council also:

• Heard an annual report from Hertford Volunteer Fire Chief Charlie Skinner

(Continued on page 2)



## Co-editor wins award

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY co-editor Noel Todd-McLaughlin received a state press award for photography at the annual North Carolina Press Association awards ceremony in Chapel Hill last week.

Ms. Todd-McLaughlin was awarded third place among 54 entries in the weekly newspapers feature photography category for an entry titled, "Mr. Ugly."

The photograph featured one of the many distorted facial expressions that "Mr. Ugly" presented in an appearance at a Perquimans High School variety show-fund raiser for the high school band.

Judges praised both the unique subject, and the technical quality of the photograph.

"A very unusual picture, but pleasing because of its out-of-the-ordinariness. A clear, contrasty picture — good technical quality," wrote the judges of the entry.

## Award presented

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY co-editor Noel Todd-McLaughlin receives a North Carolina Press Association

award from Governor James B. Hunt, Jr. in a ceremony at Chapel Hill.