

## Regional water study backed

Albemarle Commission director Don Flowers outlined his plans for a region-wide permanent water quality study at a Monday night meeting of the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners.

Brandishing a map of the entire Albemarle Sound basin, Flowers re-emphasized what everyone already knows — water quality is a concern in the entire region.

"We're going to see how much we can get from CAMA (Coastal Area Management Act)... We'll go to the state legislature if we have to," Flowers said.

He said that CAMA money should be available for the project since the 10 counties Flowers hopes to involve represent 50 percent of the entire area under CAMA's authority.

In fact, Flowers maintained that the project would be ideal for CAMA backing. "I can't think of anything more worthy or more appropriate," he said.

He said the project has the backing of governmental officials across the entire region, and is something that everyone agrees on, which enhances its chances for success.

The governor's office should also be interested in coming to the aid of the Northeast, Flowers maintained. "For the last four or five years the money just hasn't flowed in here," he said.

Following Flowers' address, the commissioners adopted a resolution supporting the effort. The board also

approved a grant request of its own that may be worked into the overall plan.

In another matter, T. Erie Haste, Jr. sought a resolution supporting the continuation of the Coastal Area Management Act without legislative changes. Senator Melvin Daniels (D-Elizabeth City), is attempting to pass legislation that would remove real property from the jurisdiction of CAMA, and would establish a fund to reimburse property owners who are unable to build on lots due to CAMA regulations.

Haste said that the legislation would undo much of the progress made by CAMA in the last seven years.

Commissioner Welly White said the board would be in a better position to act if it had the legislation before it and could hear Daniels' justification. No action was taken.

The Hertford Town Council called a special session on the matter Tuesday morning.

The board also:

- heard a report from Keith Haskett that 89 percent of the 1980 tax levy had been collected so far, the same as last year at this time;

- decided to discuss allegations of misuse of county vehicles by water department employees with maintenance supervisor Russell Chappell, and;

- approved landscaping on the courthouse green to be headed up by Hertford resident Jean Winslow.



## Fire consumes 2,000 acres

N.C. Forest Service employees worked all night Sunday to contain a forest fire that burned some 2,000 acres of land off Old Tram Road in

northwest Perquimans County. The fire started Sunday afternoon and burned across land belonging to both Larry Larabee and Harrell En-

terprises, according to Bill Crain, of the Forestry Service district office. Some 30 men fought the blaze, using tractors and pumper trucks, and

brought it under control early Monday morning, Crain said. He said, though, that the fire is still dangerous because of high winds and smoldering peat.

## Lowly ground pea caught in midst of price dispute

by MIKE McLAUGHLIN

Planters Peanuts began contracting quota peanuts for the coming growing season at \$600 per ton last week, an increase of almost 32 percent.

The increase was a landmark in that for the first time since the 1940s, the government support price for quota peanuts had not acted as a ceiling on peanut prices, according to Perquimans County Extension Chairman Bill Jester.

The figure may not, however, be high enough to offset rising production costs, according to Jester and area peanut farmers.

Jester has called a meeting of growers for Thursday night (tonight) to discuss the matter further.

The dispute started when the USDA opted not to increase support prices this year.

That decision led to the formation of the Virginia-North Carolina Peanut

Growers Coalition, which sought to band together growers from both states to demand \$800 a ton from shellers for contracted quota peanuts.

The new organization threatened to plant no quota peanuts if their price demand wasn't met. Membership was said to be as high as 90 to 100 per cent in Virginia and parts of North Carolina.

Farmers here, however, committed only about 30 per cent of their allotment to the coalition, according to county peanut grower Ed Nixon.

Some 60 Perquimans County farmers attended a Gates County meeting soliciting membership in the coalition recently, and some of them signed up.

Thomas Nixon, another county grower, was among them. Nixon, however, wasn't terribly disappointed with the recently announced price increase.

"We took \$455 for the year that just went by and if we get \$600 it wouldn't be

too bad," said Nixon.

"If a farmer raised a normal crop he wouldn't make too much money — but he wouldn't go broke at it," he said.

Jester said the contracting price appears to be much better than it has been in the past. "It represents a major breakthrough from the standpoint of the growers," said Jester.

"It may not be as much as many growers need but it's a major improvement," he said. "I think you'll see many growers planting peanuts at least up to quota at \$600," Jester said.

But Jester has prepared production costs figures for the county of just over \$600 a ton, no profit included. Seed will be up 30 to 60 percent because of the peanut shortage, he said.

Many seeds will be of lower germination than in previous years as well, Jester said.

Ed Nixon did not commit any of his peanut acreage to the coalition, but is in sympathy with its goals — higher peanut prices.

He said that Planters had asked for production cost estimates from the North Carolina Peanut Growers Association and the organization had given them a figure of more than \$600 per ton, not including profits.

Nixon argued that the \$800 figure the coalition was demanding might be more than the market would bear.

But he said the \$600 currently being offered is little more than a start. "It's not what we were looking for," Nixon said. "For the average peanut grower in North Carolina it will be below production costs."

A \$700 figure had been established as a fair price by the peanut growers association, he said. The coalition has now adjusted its goal and is calling for a

28 percent production cutback.

"Possibly, if it's a strong enough movement, the shellers will come out with an additional price," Nixon said.

He felt that farmers should at least wait a little longer before signing contracts. "I hope they don't rush out and sign right now because several more companies will be coming out with contracts," Nixon said. He predicted, however, that their prices would be close to Planters.

Nixon and Jester agreed that the coalition probably had at least some impact on increased prices from the shellers.

"It's the first time we've had this many farmers grouped together like this," Jester said.

But Nixon said that at \$455 per ton, very few peanuts would have been planted anyhow, coalition or not.

Despite the increase in prices, though, Jester did not anticipate a stampede of contract-signing growers.

"A lot of these growers are glad to see the higher prices but not many will rush out and sign a contract right away," he said.

To provide information for farmers wrestling with whether or not to contract their peanuts, Jester has scheduled a meeting Thursday night at 7:30 at the extension office on Edenton Road Street.

An N.C. Peanut Growers Association member will be there, as well as a representative of the coalition and probably a buyer, Jester said.

He will distribute production cost estimates and there will be a question and answer session.

Perquimans County has 135 peanut growers and ranks 11th in the state in peanut acreage.

## Communities may soon be watching for thieves

According to Tony Young, a field representative of the N.C. Department of Crime Control and Public Safety, the key to a good community watch program can be summed up in one word — neighborliness.

Young addressed a group of about 20 county residents Thursday night at the Perquimans County Courthouse, offering

them tips on making their homes more secure, and on putting the good neighbor concept to use in crime control.

Young told the group that community watch has a better chance to succeed in rural areas of the state because concern for the property of one's neighbor is such a vital aspect.

Much of his hour and a half lecture, though, was spent talking about security measures.

Young said that many locks are designed only for privacy, and perform virtually no security function. "We suggest you use a deadbolt lock with a one inch throw," said Young. Such a lock is credit card proof, he said.

If there is glass within 40 inches of the lock, Young recommended a double cylinder dead bolt, which must be opened with a key from both the outside and the inside.

When replacing a door, use a solid wood or steel, rather than the hollow core doors that are not sturdy enough to be secure, he said.

"Those sawdust and glue doors are pretty good doors," said Young. "They'll hold up pretty good — it generally takes two kicks to get in."

The thumb turn window lock is also less than ideal for preventing burglaries. "All it does is keep your window from rattling," Young said. He recommended drilling holes at a downward angle through the sashes in both corners where the top and bottom windows meet. The

holes should go all the way through the inside sash and deeply into the outside sash.

Then slide a nail in each of the holes. The potential thief cannot see what is keeping the window from sliding up, and must break out the pane to get in. "It makes 'em take time and make noise," said Young, "and it slows 'em down."

He warned, however, that the holes must be drilled large enough so that the wood doesn't swell around the nail and close the window for good.

Young said that sliding glass doors are a classic security gap. Not only are they easy to take off the tracks, but they provide a wide exit space for the thief to carry out his ill gotten gains.

He recommended screwing two woodscrews in to the upper horizontal track, making sure that you leave enough space for the door to slide.

Use a broomstick in the door to keep the lock from being popped open.

Making the would-be-burglar think you're at home is another preventive ploy. Young advocated the use of timers that turn lights and radios on at specified times. He also said that a radio tuned to a station that programs a lot of talk shows can also provide a smoke screen.

Keep the radio loud enough so that voices can be heard, but not so loud that it sounds like a radio.

"A lot of people we're dealing with are young people," said Young, adding that in 1979, 60 per cent of those persons



Tony Young

arrested in North Carolina for certain crimes, including housebreaking, were 24 years-old and under.

"We're not dealing with professionals. We're dealing with people we ought to be able to outsmart," Young said. "All of it depends on the local community, on people caring about each other," he said.

Many of Young's observations were obvious, but probably bore repeating. For instance, he said not to keep keys under doormats or flowerpots. If a person feels he has to have a key outside he should keep his at his neighbor's house and his neighbor's at his house, Young said.

He also advocated marking property and displaying stickers in cooperation with Operation ID. "That tells young people that if they steal, we can identify it, and get a conviction," said Young.

In a final word on break-ins, Young told members of the audience to think about how they get into their houses when they're locked out, and figure out how to keep other people from getting in that same way.

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## School lunch prices may leap

by NOEL TODD McLAUGHLIN

Perquimans County school lunch prices could double next year if the Reagan administration's proposed 47 percent cut in food service is approved.

In his February address to the nation, Reagan proposed a some \$1.6 billion reduction in child nutrition programs, including the following cuts which would have local impact:

- elimination of all reimbursement for meals served to non-needy (or paying) pupils;

- elimination of all USDA donated foods for meals served to paying pupils;

- reduction of reimbursement for reduced price meals by some 50 percent;

- elimination of the standard deduction included in the revised income poverty guidelines for free and reduced price meals;

- required verification of income levels on 10 percent of all applications received for free and reduced meals;

- elimination of the food service equipment assistance program, which had been funding up to 75 percent of all school kitchen appliances;

- elimination of the summer food service program for children;

- and, elimination of the special milk program.

According to Ann G. Smith, associate director of the North Carolina Division of Child Nutrition, Reagan's cutbacks would mandate an increase in lunch

prices by at least 100 percent.

"We perceive that approximately 60 percent of school children will be required to pay 2 to 2½ times as much for lunch next year if these cuts are approved — 55 to 60 cents for reduced price meals and \$1.15 to \$1.40 for paying students," said Ms. Smith.

Students in Perquimans County presently pay 60 cents for a full-priced lunch in grades K-3; 65 cents in grades 4-8; and 70 cents in grades 9-12.

Reduced-price lunches went up from 10 cents at the beginning of the year to 20 cents in January, when the county was required to overhaul the income scale qualifying families for aid.

While Reagan maintained that his cuts would affect all but "the truly needy," Perquimans County child nutrition division director LaClaire Rogerson said she was out to prove that the entire county should be perceived as such.

"I am going to show that this county should continue to be designated as 'severe need,'" said Mrs. Rogerson, who added that between 77 and 78 percent of all county students presently qualify for free or reduced meals, and that Reagan's cuts would reduce this number by at least one-half.

While Mrs. Rogerson maintained that there were some areas that the nutrition program could do without, namely federal equipment assistance and the

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### This week

A pilot in the old Army Air Corps reflects on his glory days — see page 3

Little Miss and Mister pageant winners continue the county's cute kids' tradition — see page 8

The agricultural extension office warns against buying bargain corn seed — see page 9

### Weather word

Chance of precipitation on Thursday, lesser chance Saturday, Friday fair. Highs near 80 with overnight lows in the 50s.