



Consumers spending local dollars elsewhere, merchants say

by NOEL TODD McLAUGHLIN

It would probably be stretching it to describe the town of Hertford as "bustling," even during peak shopping hours.

Although by no means "dead," the lack of activity in the downtown shopping district has closed some doors for good, and many businesses that remain open are worried about the future.

While the floundering economy is often cited as the culprit in declining sales, some area merchants don't think inflation is entirely to blame.

Blossoms of spring

Spring is blossoming out all over Perquimans County and its hard to imagine more beauty. Hertford resident Jean Winslow provided these close-up shots. At left, two dogwood blossoms, symbols of the resurrection, show their lovely faces in time for Easter season. Below, parrot tulips are caught in the process of unfurling their blossoms.

T. Erie Haste, Jr., owner of Hertford Hardware, claimed that one of his biggest problems was competing with large discount chains in surrounding communities. "Recent trends show that people are going to shopping centers rather than staying at home," said Haste, who maintained that prices at large chains are as much or more than those locally.

"So-called discount houses may run special prices on a few items to attract customers, but in general, I think prices here in town are just as cheap, if not cheaper," he said.

And a problem arises, according to Haste, when that local dollar is not spent at home. "We are totally dependent on local people for our business. We are not dependent on tourists, or people from other communities, though we do have some (trade from surrounding towns)," he said.

"One of the reasons we need to keep that dollar at home is to allow merchants to continue to offer a variety of merchandise," he added.

Haste said the the cost of his mer-

chandise had doubled in the past five years, and that it was becoming increasingly difficult to maintain a variety in his inventory.

"The economy and people not shopping at home have really played havoc (on local business)," said Haste.

John Beers, co-owner of J.C. Blanchard's, said he thought people were looking elsewhere because of a lack of variety. "The merchandise is available, but some say that Hertford doesn't have the selection," said Beers.

In the middle, then is local business, which can't offer variety without the hometown dollar, which is being spent elsewhere because the selection is more varied.

Talmadge Rose, the other half of the Blanchard partnership, said the only solution to the catch-22 situation is to bring in more stores. "The situation won't change until Hertford gets more businesses," he said. "People want a variety."

Rose recounted a time when the town of Hertford offered several places to

purchase men's clothing, and "business was good."

"Simon Rutenburg had a clothing store (located where Divers Jewelers is now), and Darden's sold men's clothes, and J.C. Blanchard's sold men's clothes.

"Rutenburg decided to close down, and almost the minute he closed his doors, you could see your sales drop," said Rose.

Although Beers and Rose would not say whether or not they were going to remain in business, they did admit that they were relinquishing their contract with John Deere because the corporation evidently wanted the store to increase their John Deere inventory. But Beers said they could not purchase any more than they had been, "because of fewer customers," among other reasons.

"We need something that will attract people to town," said Beers, who added that the as yet incomplete waterfront park on Grubb Street might be one such attraction.

Chris Christianson, proprietor of

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Winfall council seeks release from utility

By JACK GROVE

A four month petition drive by Winfall residents unhappy with electric services provided by the town of Hertford resulted Monday night in the enactment of a resolution by the Winfall Town Council.

The resolution asks the Hertford Town Council and Albemarle Electric Cooperative to negotiate sale of Hertford electric facilities in Winfall to AEMC.

Mrs. Sheri Williams, who headed the petition drive, presented 90 signatures requesting that the action be taken.

The drive began last November after Hertford announced a 15 percent utility increase. Although Hertford Mayor Bill Cox stated that the increase would not affect Winfall customers, other reasons were given for the requested switch, including:

- Poor service (principally low voltage)
- That Hertford pays neither property taxes nor gross receipts taxes to the town of Winfall, while AEMC does.
- AEMC, headquartered in Winfall, could provide more timely service.

The Winfall resolution is to be

presented to Hertford and AEMC officials this week.

In another matter, Winfall residents may soon join other area residents in having the option of hooking up to cable TV.

Councilmen heard Donald C. Vicini, general manager of the Compass Corporation of Erie, Pennsylvania present the cable proposal.

If a formal contract with the company is signed by the town, residents who want the system could receive twelve channels for "mini" service at \$6.95 per month; an additional ten for "super" service at \$9.85 per month; and two additional movie channels for "premium" service at a \$15 monthly cost.

Hertford, Edenton and Chowan County have already signed agreements with the company.

Vicini pointed out that each municipality will receive three percent of the gross revenues generated by the company in their respective service areas.

The council expects to take formal action on the proposal at their next regular monthly meeting.

In other action the council:

- Approved the drafting of a contract with William Stallings to install a water line connecting deadends between Williams and Water Streets;
- Agreed to accept a sign from the Perquimans County Restoration Association advertising the Newbold-White house, the sign to be placed on the property of William Nixon at the north end of the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge;
- Approved a resolution lending the town's support to a program for the research and restoration of area waters in Region "R" which would be conducted and funded by the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Community Development;
- Heard Mayor L.R. Morgan announce that the town's application for a federal grant for redevelopment housing had been turned down due to federal budget cuts.

Civic league takes prize

Perquimans County communities and civic organizations came up winners in the Albemarle Area Development Association Community Development Awards banquet last Thursday.

The Snug Harbor Civic League, which celebrated its 10th anniversary last year, took first place in Category II of the 10 county competition.

Claude Jones, a Tyrell County resident and chairman of the community development committee, read a long list of activities that organization has conducted, including:

Monthly covered dish suppers, seminars on topics ranging from estate planning to caring for lawns and shrubbery, a sunrise Easter service, community clean-ups, a crime watch

program, and support for a community church.

The club offers "an opportunity for members to grow and develop," said Jones.

Mrs. Alvis Jordan, program chairman for the club, prepared the application for the competition. "I was shocked out of my shoes," she said of her reaction to the news that the club had won.

The award carries with it \$250 in prize money. Mrs. Jordan said the money would be used for some civic improvement in Snug Harbor, and would probably go to purchase paint for volunteers to spruce up the club house.

Another local club, the Perquimans County Jaycettes, took third place in the same category.

The Jaycettes won recognition for their educational seminars, various community projects, their work for the Jaycees Burn Center and the March of Dimes, and their coordination of visits by the Red Cross Bloodmobile.

Club president Patsy Miller said it had not been determined what the club would do with the \$100 cash award that came with the recognition, but was certain the club would return it to the community in some fashion.

"We won it for community support so we're definitely going to put it back in the community," she said.

Jimmy "Catfish" Hunter, a former major league pitching star and a resident of Perquimans County, was the keynote speaker at the banquet, held at the American Legion Building in Edenton.

"If you want development to come here, everybody's going to have to pull together," said Hunter.

Hunter said that the area has everything to offer, including hunting, fishing, and "the best people anywhere."

He said that development is needed primarily to provide employment op-

portunities for young people in the area.

But he cautioned against accepting any old industry, just because it would provide jobs. "If business is going to come in, let's make sure it's for the betterment of the community," Hunter said.

The crowd was thirsty for old baseball lore, though, and Hunter had plenty of it to offer.

One question was on purported friction between the New York Yankees recently acquired superstar, Dave Winfield, and their long-time glamour boy, Reggie Jackson.

It was widely reported in the media that Jackson was jealous because Winfield was making more money.

Hunter, who coaches pitchers during spring training, lent his insight to the situation. "I was getting ready to leave spring training when Jackson said to me, 'Hey, come here a minute. Don't you think I'm better than Winfield?'"

Hunter hemmed and hawed a little bit, but Jackson had the paperwork to back it up. He compared his stats to Winfield's on a year to year basis, and came out smelling like a rose.

"On paper, you're a lot better," Hunter confessed.

"Yeah, that's what I'm going to tell George," Jackson responded.

George Steinbrenner is the Yankee owner and controls the club's purse strings.

The grand finale of the evening was the drawing for door prizes — 24 baseballs autographed by Hunter.

Two communities in the county had earlier received honorable mention for their efforts. Belvidere was recognized as an enterprising community in sponsoring youth activities, and Woodville was honored for its activities designed to serve the needs of youths and adults in the community.

Police try pedaling

The Hertford Police Department has taken to the streets with pedal power.

The force has put into use a \$200 10-speed bicycle in an effort to conserve energy, promote fitness, and become more "visible," according to Hertford Police Chief Marshall Merritt.

"It (riding a bike) gets you closer to the people," said Merritt.

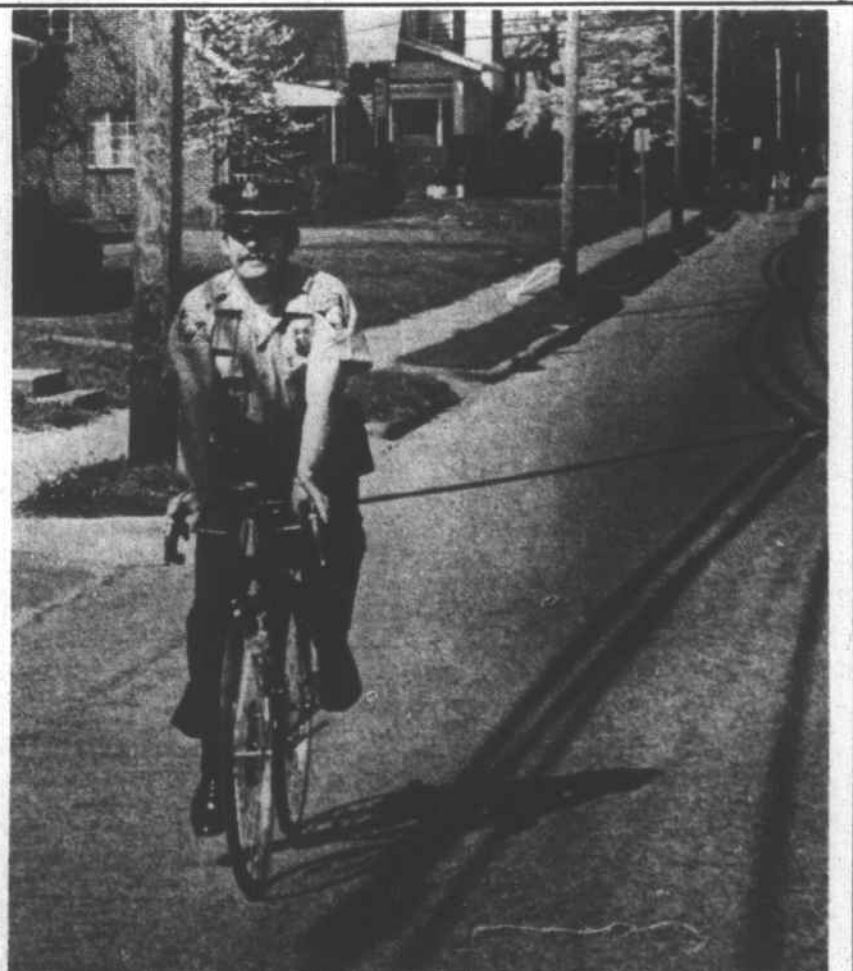
The department utilized a bicycle to patrol an area plagued by a rash of burglaries some 4 years ago and according to Merritt, the incidences stopped. "I don't know if patrolling on a bicycle was the reason, but it couldn't have hurt," he said adding that several metropolitan police departments have begun using bicycles for similar reasons.

Bicycling also saves petrol, a factor that may have some influence on the department's small operating budget. Department vehicles presently get about eight miles to the gallon, so every eight miles put on the bike saves a gallon of gas. Some 80 miles have already been put on the bike, according to Merritt.

The bicycle will not be used to patrol unless another officer on duty is handy to an automobile, said Merritt, who admitted that pedal power would have little effect in an emergency situation.

He maintained, however, that his officers could get from the center of town to any given point within the city limits in "about six minutes," depending on the physical condition of the policeman. He said using the bicycle would also be beneficial in promoting and maintaining fitness among officers.

Giving area youngsters an op-



Officer Mike Jasielum on bike patrol

portunity to observe the proper use of a street legal bicycle could set a much needed example, according to Merritt.

Although the department's bicycle is somewhat modified to fit the needs of an on-duty officer, equipped with mace as a dog deterrent, a plate to hold a baton and flashlight, and a ticket book clipped to the rear, Merritt said the bike could be considered a model of required safety features.

Day-time riding requires only that the cyclist give proper hand signals

when turning, stopping or slowing down, said Merritt, who added, "A bicycle is subject to the rules of the road like an automobile and we can legally stop people for failing to give proper signals."

He also pointed out that it was illegal to ride a bicycle on the sidewalks in the downtown district.

When riding at night, Merritt said the law required a white light in front, a rear red light, and reflectors on both front and rear wheels. Although not required, Merritt suggested placing reflectors on pedals for added safety.

This week

•PCHS students are building futures in the construction world — see page 2

•Recreation therapy is among the many tricks up the sleeve of the new county Focal Point director — see page 3

•A brand new girls' track team is off and running — see page 9

Weather word

Fair and dry Thursday and Friday, lows in the 40s and highs in the 60s to low 70s, chance of rain on the weekend

