

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Hertford power group near agreement

Thursday may mark the beginning of the end of a three-year travelog to and from Wilson for Mayor Bill Cox.

The day also may open the door to control of rising costs for Hertford electrical consumers and begin a savings account for the Town of Hertford, which could total \$120 million over a 20 year period, or by the year 2003.

The mayor and members of the Hertford town board plan to join other municipality members of N.C. Power Agency No. 3 for a possible vote by the

agency's board of commissioners for joint ownership of Carolina Power and Light Company generating plants.

The vote follows a three-year feasibility study, initiated by Electricities 1 and 2, and concluding with what now is known as N.C. Power Agency No. 3. Cox has been on the board of directors from the beginning of the feasibility study, representing Hertford, a participating municipality.

"At the present time, the Hertford

town board is committed only to the feasibility study," Cox said last week when the meeting for the possible vote on joint ownership with CP&L was announced by the negotiating agency. "The town board must vote to participate in the purchase before I vote as a member of the board of directors. He said, however, he felt the board would vote in favor of the plan.

The proposal, now in its final stage for negotiation, is for NCMPA 3 to purchase undivided ownership interests in nine

generating units owned by CP&L.

The purchase would involve the eventual issuance by the power agency of \$4 billion in electric revenue bonds, but the arrangement would save the 36 member municipalities in excess of \$1.5 billion through the year 2003.

In effect, Hertford, and other members of the group, is buying a piece of CP&L. The group can afford to charge cheaper prices for its power because it is a non-profit organization — it doesn't have to pay stockholders dividends. In addition,

they are eligible for loans at a reduced interest rate.

Hertford and the other municipalities involved own and operate their own electric distribution systems. All are members of Electricities of North Carolina, a statewide service association. NCMPA 3 is a municipal corporation for which Electricities provides professional management services under contract and at cost.

A separate agreement negotiated with Veeco would allow 14 agency members

who now buy Veeco power to transfer that load to the power agency. Veeco would transmit agency power over its system to those 14 municipalities.

The projected savings represent the difference between the cost of power if the cities were to continue to purchase it at wholesale rates from the private companies, and the cost of power produced by agency-owned generating facilities.

Tax exempt revenue bonds account for the difference.

Hertford named excellent town

Hertford once again has been named a Community of Excellence.

For the third consecutive year the N.C. Department of Commerce stamp of approval has been placed on the efforts made by local industrial planners for economic development in Perquimans County.

Meeting last Wednesday at the ARPDC Building were Roger Critcher, Gary Shope, and C.G. Wright, members of the visitation team from the state Department of Commerce, with Mayor Bill Cox, Wayne Ashley, John Beers, Joel Hollowell, chairman of the industrial commission, Pat Harrell, and Arden Holdridge, Regional Planner for the Economic Development Commission.

Dempsey D. Burgess, Director of Occupational Education at the College of The Albemarle, and Jack Runion, VEPCO Economic Development Administrator, also met with the group.

According to Mayor Cox, the primary concern this year was the industrial site and its identification within a standard format of concise information of interest to clients seeking industrial expansion.

Shope told the group a state helicopter has been made available to the Department of Commerce for transporting clients to industrial sites, and every effort would be made to encourage exploration of this area.

The Community of Excellence program was begun by Governor Hunt in an effort to locate industry throughout the state, especially in the Northeastern, Eastern, and Western parts of the state by encouraging local communities to prepare for industrial growth.

The Perquimans County Industrial Development Commission was created by the county commissioners approximately 15 years ago, according to Mayor Cox. In 1969, a group of private individuals formed an Industrial Development Corporation to provide money to assist industrial expansion in this area.

Both organizations are working together to promote industrial development and were involved in the expansion of the Don Juan Manufacturing Corporation at its present site.



Red tape

This stack of papers, held by Mayor Bill Cox, may represent town control of future electrical rate increases for

Hertford consumers. The mayor and members of the town board go to Wilson Thursday to vote with other municipal

members of Power Agency No. 3 for possible joint ownership of Carolina Power and Light generating plants. The

papers are accumulated documents during a three-year feasibility study.

The visitation team was presented with an Industrial Site Profile for the Town of Hertford and Perquimans County prepared by Mayor Cox and Ms. Holdridge for distribution through the state office. A general area brochure, prepared in cooperation with the College of The Albemarle, also was included.

The profile contains a letter of intent to sell the tracts of land contained in the one hundred acre industrial site, which adjoins the Don Juan Manufacturing Corporation property off Grubb Street Extended. Also included are aerial photographs, maps and drawings showing essential data.

Following the meeting, the visitation team visited the industrial site and met briefly with Stewart Anderson, vice-president of operations for the Don Juan Corporation.

At the conclusion of the meeting, Shope commended Mayor Cox and Ms. Holdridge on the preparation of the Industrial Profile and the group for its overall efforts in maintaining a community of excellence.

Police apprehend local burglary suspect

A major break-in and theft of 23 pistols valued at \$2,700 was reported to Hertford police Monday morning by Erie Haste at Hertford Hardware.

Following an intensive all-day search by the five man police force, one man was arrested at 10:15 p.m. and was charged with breaking, entering and larceny. Nineteen of the 23 pistols were recovered.

Arrested and charged was Kent Wayne Felton, 18, of 206 King Street. A second suspect is reported still at large by Chief Marshall Merritt.

The Monday morning break-in followed the pattern of a break-in last week at Pitt Hardware where four rifles, four pistols and 1,000 rounds of am-

munition were stolen. The rifles were recovered.

Entry to Hertford Hardware was made through an unlocked door on the south side of the building and by forcing a second door open "to get inside the building proper and gain access to the gun room," Merritt said. Pliers and cotton work gloves, both stolen from the store, were used to break open the locked gun cabinet, according to Merritt. "After that, they removed approximately 23 pistols from their boxes and from the store," Merritt said.

Haste reported the break-in at 8:15 a.m. Monday, and all officers were involved in the investigation and pursuit until the arrest of Felton on King Street late Monday night. The recovered pistols were found in a cardboard box, stashed in some weeds at the end of Brace Street on the edge of the woods.

Participating in the search and arrest were Ptl. Mike Jasielum, Cpl. Robert Morris, Ptl. Brooks Hart and Ptl. Robert Harvey.

The police department will continue the search for the second suspect.



Melons for sale

A young Hertford boy catches up on his reading while selling watermelons at the Big Star store in Hertford.

Telephone rates may increase again

Telephone rates may increase \$3 to \$4 per month for local consumers if the Utilities Commission approves a \$47 million rate hike Carolina Telephone and Telegraph Co. has indicated it will request during August.

CT&T vice president Ted P. Williamson said the case probably will not be heard until early next year.

If the commission approves the rate hike, it will mean increases in telephone holders' local service rates, extended area service rates, installation and change charges and other supplemental service and equipment rates and charges. No increase will be sought in telephone rental fees.

Customers of CT&T living in larger towns, such as Fayetteville and Rocky Mount can expect to pay \$4 more than their previous rate, while Hertford residents can expect about a \$3 increase.

The company last received a rate hike about a year ago. However, the company only received half of the amount it sought. It was not able to earn a return

"acceptable to investors," and inflation were some of the several reasons Williamson cited for the company's additional request.

"We need to invest about \$100 million in new capital each year to meet our customers' needs and you can do that only if you can pay a fair return to those who supply that capital."

Williamson said he does not expect the request to be received well by the customers or the public staff of the utilities commission, a consumer-oriented group that reviews cases. He continued saying he suspects the commission will oppose our case "right vigorously...But that's their mission. It should be that way."

Robert Fischbach, executive director of the public staff said he does not know the details of the request. He said once CT&T files the request, it will be studied. "We will take a hard look at it as we do every case," he said. The public staff will then make its recommendation to the Commission.