

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Perquimans corn harvest begins with yield higher, price lower

The corn yield is much lower than anticipated, county extension agent Bill Jester stated after the first full week of clear weather when farmers in several areas of the county began to go into their fields.

"The yield may prove slightly higher than last year when we averaged 73 bushels per acre, but the price (of corn) is running 60 to 70 cents lower than last year," Jester said.

The county agent sees the outlook for the future as "not good...with prices turning around" and away from the needed return to the growers. Storing for a later and better market price now looks bleak, he said.

Another factor for the farmer this season "is a year when the cost of production has tripled, while the corn yield is down because of heat and dry weather."

According to Jester, the county growers are producing yields at least 25 bushels below normal, while, faced with price predictions below 2.50 and 2.90, he needs to produce 95 to 100 bushels to break even.

"For most farmers in the county, the

cost of production is much higher than in the Coastal Plains and Piedmont, because we aim for higher yields," he explained. "We fertilize heavily and aim for a crop in excess of 100 bushels. Every farmer's cost is a little different, but on the average, we're going to need a much better crop than we've got."

Grain Dealers Report High and Low Yields

In the Chapanoke area Jimmy Onley of Towe-Pike reports 25 and 30 bushel yields by some farmers. "In this area, it's going to be hard to pay bills on that sort of yield."

"The Chapanoke-Ohisko area has had a dry streak two or three years with low yields. Yet, go four miles distant and a grower may have 120-130 bushel yields of corn. It all depends on the amount of moisture (during the season)," Onley said.

Corn planted earlier this season is not maturing as early in the Chapanoke area, according to Onley. Some farmers are reported slow to harvest because of the wet soil, but larger growers are trying to harvest. "If there is more rain, corn could go down in the field, adding

more loss," he commented.

At the Belvidere Farmers Exchange Dan Nixon reports growers just beginning to harvest, "not even started yet." He sees an average of 60-70 bushels for the area, but "probably worse in parts...some low guys, 30-40."

He reports Belvidere growers as being "pretty disappointed. What hurt it was the excessive heat in June. Fortunately, we have a good soybean crop. It looked like a good peanut crop, but rains definitely have hurt the peanuts."

Moody Harrell reports a variation of 30 to 150 bushel yields in the New Hope-Woodville area. "It depends on how the season hit you, rain was good for some, others didn't have any. With harvest 25 percent complete, the same farmer working land two miles apart is experiencing the wide variation from 30 to 100 bushel yields," Harrell said. He added that it was hard to project what was ahead, "what looks like 100 may end up 75."

At Hertford Supply Broughton Dail said the season was too early for reporting yields, "it just hasn't started here."

Cable television available soon

Albemarle Cable TV "hopes to begin making installations" in Hertford by October 1, Don Vicini, vice president for system development for Compass Corporation of Erie, Pa., said Monday.

Vicini represents the parent company developing the area system and is in the area for conferences and work sessions with Hertford Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox. Hertford will provide the work force for pole conversions (along with Carolina Telephone Company) and other construction necessary for bringing the cable into the area for home viewers. The town will be reimbursed for all labor and costs.

"At the present time we are doing make-ready work for Hertford conversions, getting the poles ready so we can attach our cables to the poles," Vicini said. Upon completion in "two or three weeks" the company will begin attaching cables to the existing poles, enabling Albemarle Cable TV to extend its services to the Hertford area, "making installs in area homes similar to those provided by the telephone company to their subscribers," Vicini said.

Mayor Cox views the availability of Cable TV for Hertford as a progressive and beneficial service. "The town will get revenue from it and the residents will have access to the benefits of cable TV," he said.

The town of Hertford passed a Cable TV ordinance after a Compass Corporation representative appeared before the town board in January. At that time the Pennsylvania corporation had been awarded the cable franchise for the town of Edenton and a request to extend the service to Hertford was made to the board.

The town will earn some \$3,000 a year from the corporation in franchise fees and pole rentals. The fee consists of 3 percent of the corporation's gross revenue, as well as \$5 a year rent for each telephone pole utilized. The system is designed to connect to telephone lines.

Choice of Services

The services offered to Hertford subscribers will be identical to those on the Edenton system, Vicini said. Monthly costs for the services range from \$6.95 to \$24.85.

Four tiers of services include a four star selection, including 23 channels, Home Box Office (HBO), Cinemax (movies with no commercials), Cable News Network, Black Network, ESPN Sports, WTBS-Atlanta and other major cable stations; three star for \$18.85, including all of the foregoing except Cinemax; two star for \$9.85 with everything but Cinemax and HBO; one star and HBO, with 11 channels, \$17.95; and one star with 11 channels, \$6.95.

In addition, there will be a public access channel with local weather, which also can be set aside for any local, non-profit announcements or messages. The system also has access for emergency over-ride. "In the event of a local emergency-hurricane or other similar event, designated persons will be given access to over-ride any channel, where they can be viewed and also relay their message," Vicini said.

The business office for Albemarle Cable TV is located on the old route, 17 Business North, in Edenton. Jay Gear is the systems manager for the Hertford-Edenton area.



Waiting for Sept. 7

Bob Reed, local oil dealer and one of five bowhunters in Perquimans County, has spotted his deer well in advance and probably will on this high perch again in

the early hours on Labor Day, when the deer season begins for bow hunters in North Carolina. For more information on

Bow Hunters, see Joe Lothian's special article on the People Page, inside. (Photo by Mildred Allen)

Town Energy Decision due Oct. 1

The final decision to leave VEPCO and join with the newly created N. C. Power Agency No. 3 in part ownership of nine CP&L generating plants faces the Hertford town board and other area

municipalities meeting here last Wednesday night.

The decision, which if favorable for the switchover could generate \$120 million for the town of Hertford in savings in the

next 20 years, must be made by October 1st. Before that time an ordinance would have to be adopted by the Board and a

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Christensens join firm

Newcomers to Hertford are John and Judy Christensen, son and daughter-in-law of Mr. and Mrs. Chris Christensen, owners of Darden's Department Store.

The young couple, now residing at 116 Front St. with their 20-month-old daughter, Amanda, have joined the staff of Darden's, founded by John's grandfather, the late Vivian N. Darden, in 1910. The announcement was made this week.

John will become manager replacing William Stallings, who died last year. Mrs. Rosa Stallings will continue to be buyer and manager for the women's department. Judy will be employed in the bookkeeping department, replacing Mrs. Thelma Riddick, who is retiring.

Young Christensens, a 1972 graduate of NCSU in mechanical engineering, has been employed in Charlotte since that time with the Duff-Norton Company. Making the decision to change careers and residence was a difficult one, but childhood memories of Hertford and the continuing of the family business were a strong influence, he said.

He remembers best when his grandfather, who was fire chief at that time, "would let me ring the bell on the fire truck. He would pick me up and put me in the driver's seat." Also remembered through the years were the long walks through the back lots along the river and the sound.

It will be a new lifestyle for the new Hertford family—a new work for both parents and a new world to share with young Amanda.



Mr. and Mrs. John Christensen and daughter, Amanda

Hertford set for phone increase

Hertford and Perquimans County telephone subscribers are scheduled to pay the top dollar in an increased cost for services if a proposed Carolina Telephone and Telegraph rate hike is approved by the N. C. Utilities Commission.

An increase of \$5.20 to the current residential rate of \$10.30 for basic services, a total cost of \$15.50, is not expected to become effective until next year after public hearings are held and the commission rules on the request.

Hertford business subscribers, now paying \$25.80 for basic services, would pay an additional \$13 for a total cost of \$38.80.

CT&T filed a request with the state utilities commission for an overall rate increase of about \$47.2 million on Thursday.

"If the request is granted, it would mean an increase of \$3.40 for our smallest exchanges to \$4.35 for our largest exchanges for basic local residential service," said Ted P. Williamson, vice president for Carolina Telephone.

For the Albemarle area, an average of about \$4.35 will represent an increase in the base rate, plus an average of \$1 to be added to Extended Area Service fees.

Also receiving the top increase of \$5.20 in the proposed rates are Coinjock, Edenton, Moyock (who will pay ten cents more in a total cost of \$15.60), Elizabeth City, Shiloh, South Mills, Weeksville and Woodville.

Williamson said that the company's request includes increases in basic local

service rates, installation and change charges, extended area service rates and other supplemental service and equipment rates and charges.

He also said there may be an increase in statewide long distance rates and if that increase should be effective prior to the decision on local rate increases, the local increase could be cut.

"Revenues from long distance service have paid nearly one half of the cost of home telephone service for the past 20 years and any additional long distance revenues will reduce the size of our rate increase request," Williamson stated.

The new rate request comes just four months after a \$18.4 million rate increase was granted to the utility.

CT&T "got only half as much as it needed in its last request," Williamson said. "The company proposed a \$25.5 million increase in August 1980, and later reported that its new revenue needs had grown to \$36.2 million annually by the time the commission heard its case in January 1981."

Williamson cited the commission's action in cutting the rate increase "almost in half" before giving its last approval as the reason for the current request following so closely.

Quiet holiday scheduled

Hertford apparently is set for a quiet Labor Day weekend with no special events planned.

Town, state and federal offices will be closed and there will be no mail delivery.

Regular meetings for the Board of County Commissioners, the Hertford

"We documented thoroughly that we needed increased revenues when our costs were rising rapidly, the cost of borrowing money was getting higher and

our long distance revenues were decreasing," he said.

The commission's April 1981 order stated that CT&T should be allowed to earn 11.09 percent on its service investment, but the company contends that the increases allowed were insufficient and that the allowable return is below what investors expect today.

Williamson said the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) recently authorized AT&T to earn an overall rate of return of 12.75 percent and more than 17 percent on stockholder investment. He contends that investments in the smaller companies are "clearly more risky and require somewhat higher returns."

Competition in the long distance and telephone equipment market was another reason cited for requesting increased rates.

According to Williamson, CT&T plans to spend more than \$96 million in construction of telecommunications facilities in 1981 and \$116 million in 1982.

The Tarboro based company serves some 560,000 customers in 50 counties of North Carolina.

Town Board and the Board of Education, scheduled for the first Monday of the month, will be held Tuesday, Sept. 8.

Due to the Labor Day holiday, THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY is asking all news contributors and advertisers to have their copy in as early as possible.