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A rainy pitstop

Swans swoop and settle in a field near Woodville.

Hertford town council makes no decision on VEPCO refund

By SUSAN HARRIS

Reporter Roy Lucas of the DAILY ADVANCE sparked a heated debate at the Town Council meeting Monday night with his probing questions about the VEPCO refund, money which council still has not decided what to do with.

Some \$119,000 refunded from VEPCO in overcharges has not been returned to the town's power customers, and discussion on what to do with the funds has been tabled since last fall.

Reporter Lucas questioned the council on why no decision had yet been made concerning the refund.

Council is waiting to review "the whole financial picture," said Mayor and City Manager Bill Cox, before making a decision regarding the funds. They contend that time is needed to review the impact of the new contract with Carolina Power and Light in order to make a wise decision.

"I don't think it would be the proper

time" to make the decision, stated Councilman Jessie Harris.

Harris also remarked that at present customers are seeing a decrease in their electric bills. This drop, however, is due to lower fossil fuel charges. It is not a refund of the VEPCO monies.

Cox disclosed, "I haven't made up my mind."

Mayor Cox and Councilman John Beers reported their satisfaction with the results of the power agency meeting they attended.

Electric rates for the past two months have dropped by two to three percent, and another decrease is expected in February when updated rates will be imposed.

"That figure should increase to anywhere between five and seven percent savings," Cox stated. The new rate is expected to be made public within seven days.

Councilman Beers approached the council about purchasing mobile scanners for use by the police

department. Beers believes the units will "add to the efficiency of the police department."

By implementing use of the scanners in each squad car, the department will be able to monitor the fire department, rescue squad, and State Highway Patrol channels. This monitoring should provide faster response of the department in its assistance of these agencies.

Purchase of the units from Copeland Communications at a cost of

\$873 for five units was unanimously approved by Council.

In old business, Mayor Cox reported that no final decision has been handed down from the State Highway Department on the proposed new welcoming signs on Highway 17.

Cox also reported that construction on Missing Mill Park will begin as soon as weather permits.

With no further business, Council adjourned to go into executive session to discuss police matters.

Due to budget cuts

County board expects shortfall in social services budget

D.F. Reed, county finance director, told the county Board of Commissioners that he expects the county budget for social services to fall short as much as \$14,000.

The shortfall was caused by increased outlays for Medicaid along with decreases in the federal and local budgets, Reed said. Reed and county Social Services Director Paul

Gregory have anticipated the shortfall for the last few months.

According to Gregory, the shortfall was caused by increased hospital costs — which place a greater demand on Medicaid — and delayed changes in federal laws that would have decreased the Medicaid expense. The county budgeted anticipating those changes, but the

budget has been delayed in Congress.

In addition, the social services budget is lower than what the state recommended. The state's recommendation of \$59,365 was rejected by the county commissioners, who opted for a \$56,112 budget.

Reed believes much of the expected shortfall, if not all of it, can be covered by revenue sharing money,

which the county received after the county's budget had been adopted and money saved from belt-tightening in administrative expenses at the social services office.

In other action, the board:

•Met with Melvin Howell, district supervisor for Farm Home Administration, and Ron Sessoms of Rivers and Associates, the county's consultant for the Phase II plan water project.

Sessoms presented the county's plan to Howell, who must review it before approving the county's application for a FmHA loan to complete the project.

Sessoms hopes that advertising can begin for bids on the project — which

will entail digging wells, building a water treatment plant and laying pipe for an addition to the county's water system — sometime in late winter or early spring.

•Heard from Forest Service District Supervisor Bill Miller, who suggested that the county consider adding a full-time employee to assist forester John Hurdle in granting burning permits.

New permits laws have made it more difficult for Hurdle to do the necessary inspections during the peak burning seasons in the spring and fall. Miller added that the new employee would also be able to do forestry management.

The board indicated that it would consult with Chowan County to see

whether the two counties might share the extra cost.

•Adopted a new salary for county sheriff. The salary will be decreased about \$2,000 to \$15,348. The salary change will not go into effect until December 1, when the newly-elected sheriff will take office.

•The board indicated that if Julian Broughton is re-elected sheriff, his old salary will be reinstated, but if there is a new sheriff, he will start at the new salary.

The board reasoned that if a new sheriff is elected, it would be unfair to give him the same salary grade as Broughton, since Broughton has received several grade increases in the 16 years he has been in office.

County quilters raffle their wares

When it comes to warmth and charm, perhaps the next best thing to sleeping with someone else on a cold winter night is sleeping with a nice, snug quilt on your bed.

The Perquimans Quilters have completed their latest masterpiece in cold weather comfort, and are offering people the opportunity to take it home with them for just one dollar.

The Quilters are putting the final touches on a quilt which they will raffle off at \$1 a ticket.

The quilt will be displayed in Darden Department Store sometime early next week. Solid green and navy blue with green calico print and a solid green back, the quilt measures 9½ feet-by-7 feet and is worth roughly \$500, according to Paige Underwood, county extension homemaker and organizer of the club.

Along with the quilt, the winner of the raffle will take home a matching pair of quilted pillow shams and one quilted throw pillow.

It is enough to make you want to turn down your thermostat.

Tickets for the raffle can be purchased at Dardens, from the members of the club, or by contacting Underwood. Club members expect the drawing for the prize to be held sometime in February.



Members of the Perquimans Quilters put the finishing touches on their quilt. Clockwise from far left they are: Lib Harris, Olivia Madre,

Bonnie Nixon, Grace Blanchard, Ethel Winslow, the club secretary, and Thelma Rogerson, club president.

The Quilters — which began in September 1980 with a group of Perquimans County members of the regional Quilter's Guild — has been working on this quilt since last September.

The club's 24 members will use the proceeds of the raffle for several new projects, including quilting seminars, guest speakers, quilting demonstrations and trips to quilting shows.

Someday soon they hope to sponsor a quilt show of their own in Perquimans County. One member of the club, Olivia Madre, has a quilt on display at the Museum of the Albemarle.

School Board takes a stand on state legislative proposals

Change teacher tenure, oppose 12th grade option

The Perquimans County Board of Education adopted a resolution which recommends that a state legislative study commission oppose a proposal to make the twelfth grade optional, approve a proposal to change teacher tenure laws, and approve a proposal to continue regional education centers throughout the state.

The resolution directs school superintendent Pat Harrell to write letters to each member of the study committee explaining the school board's position.

The legislative committee is made up of members of the state legislature, who are considering proposals to make the twelfth grade optional, to change school teacher's tenure — now set as automatic tenure after a three-year probation period — and to discontinue regional education centers, which act as local branches of the state school system.

Each proposal was offered to the state legislature as a cost-cutting maneuver.

In other action, the board:

•Approved a motion authorizing Harrell to be the board's representative in applying for federal impact aid money — money given to school systems as compensation for tax money not received from the families of federal employees — usually military personnel — who attend school but do not pay local taxes.

The county has previously received between \$12,000 and \$15,000 a year, but federal budget cuts have reduced this item severely.

•Adopted a resolution indicating that the county school system would like to join the proposed Eastern Regional Education Consortium, a group of northeastern North Carolina

school systems organized by East Carolina University to improve school systems in the region.

The next meeting of the Board of Education will be on January 18 at 7 p.m. at Perquimans Central Grammar School.

This week

A former Hertford resident recalls a perfect form tackle. See page three.

Weather

Rain today, partly cloudy Friday and Saturday. Lows in the low 40s today, dropping to the 20s Saturday. Highs in the low-50s

