

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Hertford, Perquimans County, N.C., Thursday, September 16, 1982

20 CENTS

## Town adopts 15% utility cut

The Hertford Town Council voted unanimously to approve a 15 percent cut in residential electricity rates, effective for next month's billing, at their regular monthly meeting Monday night.

Seventeen Hertford residents and merchants crowded into the council room to witness the vote, which had followed about an hour of discussion between the citizens and the councilmen.

The citizens complained of enormous increases in their utility bills in recent months — some of them claiming their bill had doubled — though the rate the town charges for electricity hasn't changed since October, 1981.

Others expressed dismay over recent newspaper reports that Hertford residents pay one the highest electricity rates in the state, a statement which the council didn't deny.

The council's vote will change the present charge for electricity from \$85.31 per 1,000 kilowatts to 73.51 per 1,000 kilowatts. Commercial rates will remain unchanged.

The council decided on the reduction during a work session held last week.

"This should make our rates more competitive with other areas," noted Mayor and Town Manager Bill Cox, who added that the commercial rate — lower than the residential rate — was already comparable to those charged in Edenton and Elizabeth City.

Cox admitted that the town's action was somewhat overdue. Since the town began receiving a portion of its power from the North Carolina Municipal Power Agency No. 3 earlier this year, they have had a reduction in their cost of fuel, a reduction they haven't passed on to the town's customers. This is the first reduction in rates since the town joined NCMPSA.

Cox explained that they hadn't passed on the savings, which he said has been evident for about the last two months, because the price the town pays for power had only begun to stabilize in recent weeks. Nevertheless he admitted "we have been a bit slow in reducing our rates."

Councilmember Jesse Harris added, "I can only speak for myself, but I think we've been a little slack in

what we've done tonight. This is something we should have done four months ago."

Concerning the comparatively high price of Hertford power, reported by other newspapers, Cox said, "historically, our rates have been higher," because the town uses utility revenue to fund the town's general operations.

Cox defended the use of utility money — roughly \$150,000, he reckoned — for town operations by saying that if the town were funded wholly by property taxes, electricity rates would decrease about 25-30 percent, but property tax rates would increase 75 cents per \$100 valuation to about \$2.25 per \$100.

Some of the residents at the meeting were upset at what they believed was an unexplainable increase in their electricity use. Some said that even though they had cut down on their usage, their meter readings increased several hundred kilowatts.

One resident, Billy Nixon, said that from discussions with persons familiar with utilities, the only way this could have happened was if the meters, rather than being read each month, were read only every few months and estimated the rest of the time. Low estimates, he had been told, would make his kilowattage rise when the meter was finally read.

Cox said the meters were being read each month, and explained that the increase in some resident's usage was probably caused by recent hot weather, along with an additional three to five days on the bill due to late billing.

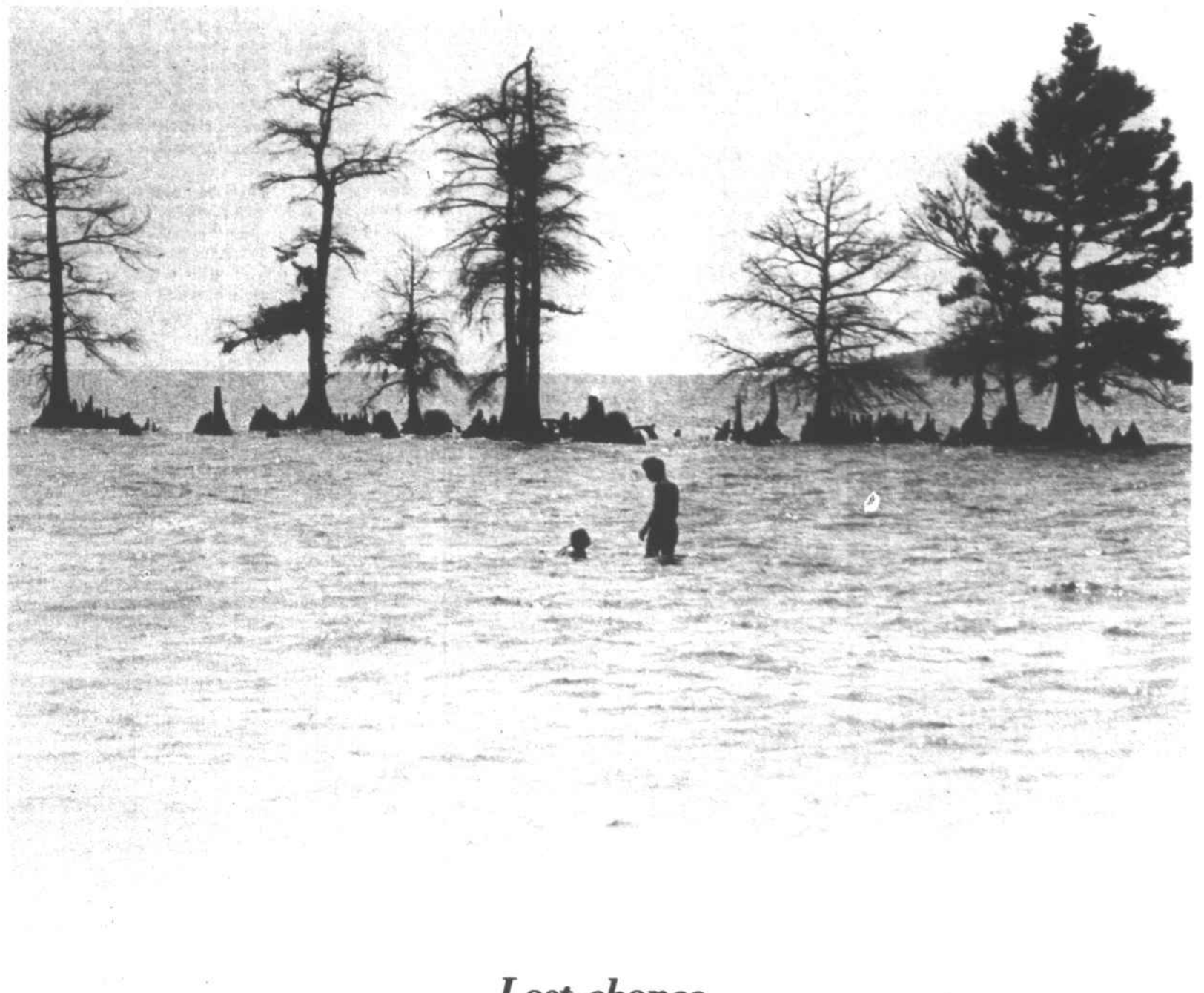
In other action, the council:  
•Appointed Assistant Fire Chief Pete Riddick to fill the unexpired term of retiring chief Charlie Skinner, effective October 1.

•Agreed, on Skinner's recommendation, to sign a mutual fire-fighting aid agreement with Edenton.

•Voted to hold a public hearing on October 11 at 7:30 on changes in the parking ordinance.

•Approved a \$100 donation to the county Industrial Development Commission's Committee of 100.

•Reappointed Police Chief Marshall Merritt as Chief of Police, and approved a police department policy giving Merritt the authority to allow officers to drive police vehicles home while standby.



A couple wades in the Albemarle Sound at Holiday

Island for what may be their last swim of the season. But

the weather service predicts warm, hazy weather for the

weekend, so perhaps they'll have another chance.

### Last chance

### Phase II

## County accepts bids for water project

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners approved bids to three contractors at their regular meeting Tuesday to construct Phase II of the county's water system.

Work will begin on the \$1.22 million project as soon as the contracts are signed and approved by the parties involved — which include the board, the contractors, the Farmers Home Administration, and the state government.

According to Ron Sessoms, county

water system consultant with Rivers and Associates of Greenville, the signing should be completed in about six weeks. Once the contractors have the green light, Sessoms expects the work to be completed by mid-summer.

The project, several years in the making, calls for three wells to be dug on a county site near Winfall, a water treatment plant constructed, and pipes carrying the new water to several locations not now served by the county system, including Holiday

Island.

The board granted the contract to dig the wells to Water Systems Inc. of Virginia Beach, Va. for \$53,189.97. The contract states the work must be completed within 90 days of the signing.

The board awarded the contract to lay new pipe to Hendricks-Barnhill Co. of Greenville for \$567,961. That work must be completed within 365 days of the signing.

The contract for preparation and

building the treatment plant was awarded to Peters & White Construction Co. of Chesapeake, Va. for \$494,400. They also have 365 days to complete the work.

Sessoms said that the work should be completed "in a lot less time than that."

The money for the project is funded partially by a loan from FHA, a grant from FHA and a grant from the North Carolina Clean Water Bond Act.

## Schools to receive accreditation teams

The Perquimans County school system is in the process of making more dreams come true this week as they host an on-site inspection of Perquimans High School and Perquimans Union School by visiting teams from the Southern Association of Colleges and Schools.

If all goes well, and the school officials feel confident it will, the teams will recommend that the two schools be accredited by the SACS, as were Perquimans Central Grammar and Hertford Grammar Schools and the system's central office last

spring.

One team visited the high school and sat in on each teacher's class Tuesday, while another team will go through the same process at Union School today.

During their visitation, the team members judge the each school's performance in light of their completed self-studies, which explain the schools' strengths and weaknesses, and detail long- and short-range plans for the schools' improvement.

At a banquet held Monday for the high school's accreditation team, School Superintendent Pat

Harrell expressed his excitement at the coming visitation to the school's teachers and the county officials present.

Recalling the television commercial for "Baseball Fever: Catch It," Harrell said, "For the last two years, this schools system has had accreditation fever, and we've all caught it."

Harrell added that with reports from local representative in Raleigh that future funding for schools "is not very bright," this accreditation drive will help the system "take a look at maximizing the resources we have."

Reminiscing, Board of Education Chairman Clifford Winslow noted that having spent his school years in a one-room school a mile-and-a-half walk from his home that taught seven grades, "all makes me appreciate Perquimans County schools even more."

"This is another step," he said, "in the completion of a dream that Perquimans County has had."

The visiting teams will complete their written evaluation of the schools and present their recommendations to the state accreditation committee by October, at which time the schools will find out whether they have made the grade.

The visitation team members for the high school are: Roy Rowe, assistant superintendent

for instruction at Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools; Wilma Flood, English teacher at Northeastern High School in Elizabeth City; Robert Truitt, principal at Gates County High School.

Also John Perry, superintendent of Gates County schools; Johnny Phillips, principal of Lexington High School; Marjorie Stutzman, librarian at John Holmes High School in Edenton; Hattie Blue, consultant for the Division of Vocational Education, State Department of Public Instruction; Barbara Riccardio, professor of foreign languages at the College of the Albemarle.

Also Linda Nichols, health and physical education teacher at Chowan Junior High School; Augusta White, consultant for the Division of Vocational Education, Home Economics at the SDPI; Louise Sutton, professor of math at Elizabeth City State University; William Holley, professor and chairman of art education, East Carolina University.

Also Dorothy Thomas, associate professor of biology, ECSU; Cleveland Hawkins, director of vocational education, Elizabeth City-Pasquotank Schools; Gaynor White, director of exceptional education, Camden County Schools; Lee Bass, English teacher at John Holmes; and Linda Hoffer, social studies teacher at Gates County High School.

## U.S. 17 improvement priorities study released

A consultant to the state Department of Transportation recommends the four-laning of U.S. 17 through Perquimans County as a middle priority item in its study of the U.S. 17 corridor.

The consultant, Kimley Horn & Associates, also recommends the four-laning of the Hertford bypass as a low priority, long range project.

Those recommendations were presented to the state Board of Transportation at its meeting in Raleigh September 10. The consultant also recommended the eventual four-laning of U.S. 17 from Virginia to South Carolina, at an estimated cost of \$450 million.

Of the three projects proposed for Perquimans County, the Hertford-to-Edenton four-laning would cost of \$10.8 million, the four-laning of the highway from Hertford to where the four lane now ends near the county line would cost \$7.2 million. No cost estimate was given for the four-laning of the Hertford bypass.

Categorizing future projects as either Priority 1, Priority 2, Priority 3 or Long-range, the consultant listed the Hertford-to-Edenton and Hertford-to-Pasquotank County projects as "Priority 2," and the Hertford bypass as "Long-range."

All future projects in the Albemarle area west of the Chowan River — including bypassing Elizabeth City and four-laning the road from Edenton to the river —

were labeled either "Long-range," or "Priority 2."

The recommendations followed about a year of study of the corridor, including analyzing traffic pattern, conducting surveys of the residents, and holding public hearings.

"Although no formal action was taken by the transportation board at this time," said Secretary of Transportation William Roberson, "the information provided by the study will assist the board in future programming of U.S. 17 improvements in a timely manner for the greatest regional benefit."

### This week

The Perquimans Pirates lost a disappointing game last Friday night. Turn to page 14.

### Weather

Warm and muggy through the weekend, with a chance of showers each day. Highs in the mid-80s and lows in the mid-60s.



School Board Chairman Clifford Winslow speaks during the accreditation banquet held at the high school. Seated beside him are, from left, high school

Principal William Byrum, accreditation team chairman Roy Rowe, and School Superintendent Pat Harrell.