

Celebrate freedom and democracy

Have a happy 4th of July!

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 Cents

The week at a glance

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By Tracy E. Gerlach
The Daily Advance

Bill catches up

A \$193,000 bill Perquimans County has avoided paying to the state Department of Transportation for more than four years has caught up with officials here.

The unpaid bill has been forwarded to the state Attorney General's office to be resolved, a spokesperson for the DOT said last week. The bill, for work performed by DOT to move water and sewer lines during highway improvement work to U.S. Highway 17, was forwarded to the state's legal division after the DOT received no response to three different invoices were sent to the county.

Poverty drops

The percentage of people living in poverty in Perquimans County dropped by 2.89 percent in Perquimans County between 1980 and 1990, according to an analysis of 1990 census figures by the North Carolina Rural Economic Development Center. Statewide, the number of people living in poverty decreased by only 10,000 in the 1980s, compared to a decrease of 158,000 in the 1970s.

Hertford budget adopted

Hertford residents were still interrupting the council's final vote on the 1992-93 budget Monday to call for a zero increase.

But the town board, claiming to have cut the budget as low as it could to continue operating the town, unanimously adopted the spending plan as recommended.

The budget represents a \$26,321 increase in the general fund and an 8 cent decrease in the tax rate. The town was able to reduce the tax rate based on an anticipated increase in tax revenues next year from a total revaluation of all county property. The revaluation is expected to generate an additional \$35,139.34 for the town, Town Manager Bill Cox said.

New life in downtown

Two new businesses have purchased buildings and plan to open soon in downtown Hertford.

A Norfolk-based book company is expected to move into the former Eagles variety store, and Paul Jr. and Anna Smith have purchased family-owned W.M. Divers and Sons Jewelers.

Ramp fee considered

Administrative obstacles have kept the Hertford Town Council from implementing a fee for users of the town's boat ramp, but discussions last week indicated that the issue is still being explored.

Two things have held up the implementation of a fee — whether the fee would outweigh the cost of collection and whether to charge residents and non-residents equally.

Landfill vote slated

The Perquimans County Board of Commissioners is expected to act officially on an ordinance forming a regional landfill authority at one of its next two meetings, County Administrator N. Paul Gregory said.

Fourth loses spark

The Perquimans County Jaycees will not hold their annual fireworks display this year due to a lack of membership and funding, president Bobby Winslow said.



Photo by Susan Harris

Birthday celebration

Brian Center residents, family members, staff and volunteers gathered Monday evenings to celebrate Brian Center's fifth anniversary. A covered dish supper, fellowship and music by the New Beginnings

gospel music ministry completed the festive mood set by the balloons and flowers decorating the dining hall.

Face of downtown gets new wrinkle

Smiths purchase Divers Jewelers

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

It's not an opening or a closing, but the face of downtown Hertford is set for a new wrinkle.

Paul and Anna Smith finalized a deal last Wednesday which made them the new owners of W.M. Divers & Son Jewelers on Church Street.

"I am so excited," Mrs. Smith said about the business venture. "I just can't wait to get in there full-time. I'm going to give the place a facelift."

Divers has long been a fixture in downtown Hertford. The Smiths purchased the business from the granddaughter of the store's founder, Toni Divers Stallings. Stallings told The Perquimans Weekly in late December that she would consider getting out of the business if sales did not improve.

Mrs. Smith's enthusiasm about

owning her own business is not dampened by Stallings' earlier negative report.

"All I see are positives," Mrs. Smith said. "I see no negatives at all. I believe that the store can be successful. I plan to offer a wide variety of jewelry and gifts and provide good customer service. People want to shop here if they can find the products and services that they desire."

The Smiths are now getting a crash course in the jewelry business. Mr. Smith is learning jewelry and watch repair so that the store can once again offer the service on-site. The couple plan to learn to operate the engraving and embossing machines to further expand on-site offerings.

"I want to carry a wide variety of merchandise," Mrs. Smith said. "I'd like for people to come in and find the

perfect gift for every occasion. I plan to have party supplies, Helen Steiner Rice cards, all sorts of things."

The planned facelift and changes in the business will not take place overnight, Mrs. Smith said. Because the business will not close during the change-over, the couples' plans may take some time.

"I hope people will be patient with us during our learning period," Mrs. Smith said. "Our plans won't all be realized overnight, but people will notice new window displays, decor and merchandise each time they visit. It will take some time, but it's going to be wonderful."

The only bothersome aspect of the business purchase for Mrs. Smith is working out her notice in the Perquimans County Tax Department. She is counting down the days until she can dive head long into creating the store of her dreams.

Group works together to fight project crime

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

An open discussion between a diverse group of Hertford Residents may result in beefed up efforts to halt trespassing and the associated problems on Wynne Fork Courts property.

Six members of the Hertford Housing Authority Residents Association met at their request with Hertford town councilmen, Mayor John G. Beers, Town Manager W.D. "Bill" Cox, Hertford Police Chief Aubrey Sample, Perquimans County Sheriff Joe Lothian and owners of mobile home parks at the intersection of U.S. Highway 17 Bypass and Wynne Fork Road Monday night to discuss solutions to problems residents say are spilling over from the mobile home parks into their neighborhood.

"Everything that goes on over there (in the parks) seems to come over here (Wynne Fork Courts)," said Elaine Stepney, the residents association president.

Allegations of drug dealing and firing guns by mobile home park residents were lodged by the residents association. Residents maintain that park residents are perpetrating these crimes on Wynne Fork Courts property. More police presence and better background checks on park rental applicants were requested by the association to help stop the open drug dealing, weapons discharge and trespassing that has Wynne Fork residents concerned for their safety.

"Everything that goes on over there (in the mobile homes parks) seems to come over here (Wynne Fork Courts)."

Elaine Stepney
President, Hertford Housing
Authority Residents Association

"Most of these women are afraid," Stepney said of the Wynne Fork Courts residents, most of whom are single mothers.

It's not only safety, but the knowledge that drug dealers are using the children who reside in the neighborhood to run drugs that has residents concerned.

"The small kids are peddling the stuff," said an unidentified association member. "They're using the small kids to run this stuff from one to another."

Leroy and Katie Lightfoot, Jim White and Charles Ward, owners of the mobile home parks across from Wynne Fork Courts, all said they screen rental applicants and have written contracts signed. They also reported making periodic checks to make sure renters adhere to policies.

The Lightfoots, who own rental property in both Perquimans and Pasquotank counties, inspect their properties each month to make sure the homes and grounds are clean, according to Mrs. Lightfoot. Violated rules result in evictions, she said.

"I've got one lot right now that's va-

cant, and right now I've turned four people down," said White.

Ward added that although he, like the other park owners, tries to make sure that tenants adhere to regulations, he has encountered legal difficulties in his quest to evict some tenants.

"You don't have any rights if you own property, I'll guarantee you that," Ward said. "The renters have all the rights."

Both Lothian and Sample said the owners are sometimes unaware that mobile homes are being subleased or that people other than those listed on the lease are residing on the property. "They (unauthorized tenants) go (home) late and leave early," said Lothian. "You (property owners) have no way of knowing that."

The law enforcement officials also backed Ward's assertions of encountering legal difficulties over evictions.

Two measures were agreed upon as first steps toward alleviating the problems in the neighborhood — broader rental applicant screening and increased police patrol.

The park owners accepted an offer by the residents association to assist with screening. Both the association and law enforcement officials agreed

State audit recommends changes

Personnel, policies top list

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Changes will be in store for Perquimans County Schools if the superintendent and board of education adopt recommendations set forth by the state auditor's office recently.

A performance audit completed last month at the request of the system superintendent Randall L. Henion focused on organization and staffing in the schools' central office.

The report outlines problems in eight areas — central office structure, policies and procedures, job descriptions, performance evaluations, communication, maintenance, purchasing policies and workshop expenses.

Current central office structure is not the most effective for a small school system, the report maintains. The superintendent's wide span of control, staff reporting responsibilities and unclear lines of authority are noted as snags preventing effective decision-making and good communication.

Lack of an organizational chart and failure to develop a system for documenting employee workloads has, according to the report, made it difficult to justify staffing needs or measure productivity or accountability. In turn, management is unable to document either a need for additional staff or put a finger on any areas of overstaffing or inefficiency.

The report suggests limiting the superintendent's span of control with a proposed organizational chart redirecting some reporting responsibilities.

Staffing changes recommended were combining the maintenance and transportation departments and assigning only one supervisor. Richard O'Neal and Lloyd "Pete" Riddick are presently maintenance and transportation supervisors, respectively. Also recommended was reclassifying the co-principals at Perquimans Middle School — Henry Felton and Morris Kornegay — to become principal and assistant principal. A cost savings of \$45,133 would result from the changes, along with the elimination of confusion over authority, the report states.

Implementing the audit's recommended changes could result in further staff reduction at a later date.

The lack of clearly written, specific policies and procedures also hampers operations. The board anticipates adopting the recently completed policies and procedures manual this month.

Problems caused by the lack of specific job descriptions include confusion over reporting responsibilities, confusion over job duties, improper organizational placement and inconsistency in job titles.

"The majority of existing job descriptions were written for the individual in the position rather than for the position," the report states.

Also lacking is cross-training. To correct the situation, job descriptions should be prepared and appropriate salary ranges assigned. Cross-training should also be implemented.

The central office should develop job-specific performance evaluations to be used at least annually. A review of personnel files found that some employees have never been evaluated. Employees should also know their specific duties and responsibilities. Assistance for those performing below par and procedures to remove employees for failure to perform should be established.

Lack of communication has led to blurred lines of authority at the central office. Clearly drawn lines of authority should be laid down, and expectations explained, the report states. Further, instructional supervisory staff should be required to set a school visitation schedule and respond to individual requests for help.

Ineffective time management is a problem in the maintenance department, according to the audit. Although the department has a computerized work order system for job scheduling, the audit found that it is not being fully utilized. Frustrations over the responsiveness of maintenance to address needs on the school level were common on both staff interviews and surveys.

A time management system to include estimating and tracking time requirements for all work orders to measure employee productivity, maintain control over manpower resources and ensure accomplishment of maintenance plan goals was suggested. In addition, the auditors recommended a review of the current work order system to provide better internal controls over managing maintenance jobs, resources and personnel.

An examination of sample vouchers indicated that purchasing policies were not being followed by all employees. Reduced purchasing control resulting from credit card use by several employees was also noted.

The development and implementation of policies and procedures was recommended, along



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