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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Hertford grocer charged with sales tax theft

RALEIGH - A Hertford grocer was arrested Thursday and charged with six counts of embezzling state and Perquimans County sales tax.

Barbara Ann Davenport, 63, of Box 5423, Lot 18A, Holiday Island, is accused of collecting over \$29,000 in state and county sales taxes between November 1991 and July 1993, but failing to report and pay the tax to the state Department of Revenue.

Davenport, co-owner of Stancil's Bi-Rite Market at 226 Dobbs St., Hertford, with her husband, Stancil Van Davenport, was released under a \$39,000 secured bond after appearing before a Perquimans County magistrate. Her first appearance on the embezzlement charges was scheduled for Friday in Wake County District Court.

The Davenports also face three misdemeanor charges of failing to file state individual income tax returns from 1991-1993. Jean Kossoff, a spokeswoman for the state Department of Revenue, declined to say how much income tax the Davenports owe.

If convicted, Stancil Davenport, 66, could be sentenced to up to six years in prison.

Barbara Davenport, who allegedly kept the grocery business' books, faces up to 96 years in prison on the more serious embezzlement charges.

The Davenports could also be fined.

The Davenports were charged after an investigation by a special agent with the Revenue Department's Criminal Investigations Division cooperating with an auditor in revenue's field office in Elizabeth City.

Recycling program expands

The Perquimans, Chowan, Gates Solid Waste Management Authority is expanding its office paper recycling program to include businesses. Funds were made available through grants and county funding.

Businesses interested in participating in the program should call Anne Blindt, Recycling Coordinator, at 297-3300.

DINO-BUNNY OR BUNNY-SAURUS?



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Ruby Lassiter can claim the distinction of having the most unusual Easter display in the county. A dinosaur with bunny ears - by whatever name - makes quite an unusual holiday display. See for yourself by taking a drive down Pennsylvania Avenue in Hertford.

Lighfoot comes out of retirement

She stayed in a classroom for over 30 years. Then after escaping to the world of retirement, Katie Lightfoot enjoyed visiting the Perquimans Nutrition Site for lunch, taking the time to talk with friends and neighbors. As a matter of fact, she liked it so much, she applied to become the new site director when the position became available.

Through the Elderly Nutrition Program, headquartered at the Albemarle Commission, adults 60 years of age and older can go to the senior center each day and receive a hot lunch. Both Lightfoot and Darlene Harrell, Nutrition Program Director for the Albemarle Commission, say that the nutrition site offers much more than just a nutritious meal.

"A lot of our seniors live alone," Harrell said. "Coming to the senior center gives them a reason to get up in the morning and to get dressed. It gives them something to look forward to each day."

To top off the food and fellowship, a variety of services, including health counseling, blood pressure checks, musical programs, exercises, holiday parties and films are offered.

Rides are provided for those seniors with no means of transportation.

The program was established in 1965 under the Older Americans Act. Funding is provided through federal, state and local governments. Perquimans County pays 74 cents

toward the cost of each meal. The program is open to all citizens age 60 and over and his or her spouse, regardless of income.

The program does request donations toward the cost of each meal. There is a voluntary, confidential donation request of 50 cents per meal.

Even those who cannot get to the nutrition site can take advantage of the food and fellowship offered through the program. A network of volunteers deliver meals to the homebound each week day.

There are two delivery routes in Hertford and one in Winfall. Harrell said there is always a need for additional volunteers to assist with the delivery program. Routes generally take one hour or less to deliver.

"None of these services can be successfully arranged without the continued participation of our faithful and loyal volunteers," Lightfoot



Nutrition Site Manager Katie Lightfoot (right) checks in with home-delivered meals volunteers Lloyd and Katherine Reese as the Reese's prepare to take hots meals to the homebound.

said. "They are special to us, but we need more of them."

In addition to making sure everyone gets served and completing her paperwork each day, Lightfoot said her new job allows her to do one of her favorite things: She gets to help other people every day. Whether running a small errand, helping to address envelopes for mailing or taking visitors along on her weekly visits to Brian Center, where she is a volunteer, Lightfoot said she enjoys her role at the site.

For Lightfoot, retirement has taken on a whole new meaning - one that fits her perfectly.

U.S. 17 4-lane project delayed again

Wetlands planning continues for \$9 million widening

By GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Advance

The widening of U.S. Highway 17 to four lanes between Hertford and Edenton continues to be delayed as N.C. Department of Transportation officials develop a plan for offsetting wetlands destruction along the construction route.

The project, originally set for bid last June, is now scheduled for bidding this June.

No work can take place until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approves NCDOT's mitigation (replacement) plans for damaged wetlands. NCDOT's division of planning and environment is waiting to receive the plans from an outside consultant assisting with the project.

When wetlands are damaged or destroyed by highway construction, the Corps of Engineers requires NCDOT to restore or replace wetland property at another location, said Frank Vick, manager of NCDOT division of planning and environment.

NCDOT plans to restore a section of the Great Dismal Swamp in Gates County to mitigate or offset the 20.4 acres of wetland being destroyed by the project.

"We did not anticipate developing a mitigation plan to the degree the Corps of Engineers is requiring," Vick said.

But NCDOT knew the Corps of Engineers was toughening its standards in 1992, said Wayne Wright, chief of the regulatory branch of the Wilmington Corps of Engineers office.

Wright said he thinks some NCDOT officials were hoping the importance of the U.S. 17 project would sway the Corps of Engineers into accepting the mitigation plan.

"I think they were (hoping) to some degree because we were in the habit in the past of accepting (general) plans to facilitate construction," Wright said. "What we found was mot of those plans in the past haven't worked very well."

NCDOT submitted its first mitigation plan to the Corps of Engineers in February 1994. It was a general plan that officials knew did not meet new Corps of Engineering standards. They submitted the paperwork to get a sense of what the agency required, said Barney O'Quinn, assistant manager of planning and environment.

NCDOT did not anticipate needing 12 to 18 months to develop the plan, Vick said.

"I wish we knew that in 1993," he said. "It (stricter regulations) got us on some projects that were already in the works. We're trying to catch up."

The project, which will construct over eight miles of highway from the Hertford bypass to just beyond Shannonhouse Road in Edenton, will cost between \$9-13 million.

Victor Barbour, NCDOT contract officer, said the 1995 Transportation Improvement Plan budgets the project at \$9 million. The \$13 million figure includes the total project cost which includes engineering and other work already paid for.

If bids are let in June, the project is scheduled to be finished in the late fall of 1997.

The one-year delay should not impact other U.S. 17 bypass expansion plans, Charles Casey, NCDOT project design services engineer, said.

Construction of a four-lane bridge over the Chowan River is scheduled to go out for bid in June 1996. Bidding for the U.S. 17 Bypass project through Edenton will begin approximately six months later, he said.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 70s Low: 50s RAIN EARLY	High: 70s Low: 50s SUNNY	High: 70s Low: 50s SUNNY

Highway Patrol urges caution

The North Carolina Highway Patrol urges Easter holiday travelers to play it safe.

Last year, 21 people were killed on the state's highways in 1,427 collisions during the Easter holiday.

Tips for safe driving include not drinking, obeying speed limits, checking out a vehicle before departing on a trip, allowing plenty of travel time, and stopping often to prevent fatigue. NCHP also reminds motorists to buckle up before taking off.

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