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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Five plead guilty to drug charges

THE COLORS OF FALL



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MATTHEWS

This year's late fall has presented a colorful holiday approach. Reds, yellows and golds dot the landscape. This golden yellow tree at the home of Mrs. Walter Edwards Sr. on Dobbs Street is one of the most beautiful around.

■ Ford brothers expected to pull stiff sentences

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The fancy cars and gold jewelry are being replaced by prison blues for a handful of county men who pleaded guilty to drug charges in federal court in Raleigh Monday.

Barry Lorenza Ford, 39, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess and distribute cocaine base (crack) and agreed to forfeiture of any of his property which was derived from or used to facilitate drug trafficking crimes, according to federal prosecutor Jane Jolly.

Willie Louis Ford, 36, pleaded guilty to the same charge and will also forfeit property derived from or used to facilitate drug trafficking crimes.

Jolly said neither man was sentenced Monday, but that Barry Ford faces a mandatory term of 20 years to life. Because of his prior convictions on drug charges, Willie Ford faces a mandatory life sentence.

Later in the day, both James Robert Miller, 27, and Fronzy Levell Miller, 31, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute cocaine base (crack) and agreed to forfeiture. Both men face mandatory 10 years to life sentences and fines of up to \$8 million.

Ponce Lemont Lee, 30, pleaded guilty to distribution of cocaine base (crack) and agreed to forfeiture. He faces a mandatory 5 years to life sentence and fines of up to \$2 million.

Neither the Millers or Lee were sentenced, but prosecutor Christine Dean said sentencing should occur within 60 days.

On October 30, Rodney Lightfoot, 30, pleaded guilty to conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute crack cocaine and agreed to forfeiture. Nicole Montressa Lightfoot, 24, pleaded guilty to distribution of crack cocaine to a pregnant individual. Neither has been sentenced.

Jolly said she expects to travel to Elizabeth City Thursday for the arraignments of James Louis Riddick, 52, and Delaware Khan Hunter. Riddick and Hunter are charged with conspiracy to possess and distribute crack cocaine and distribution of crack cocaine.

The cases stemmed from a long-term, joint investigation by local, state and federal law enforcement agencies. A federal grand jury sitting in Raleigh handed down sealed indictments on the individuals in August. All were subsequently arrested.

a downtown booth. Raffle tickets will also be sold for \$1. The first prize is \$100 in cash. The second prize will be an assortment of gift certificates from downtown merchants. Third prize is an afghan. The drawing will be held around 4 p.m.

The Cancer Society will hold its annual made-from-scratch bake sale.

The Perquimans County Athletic Boosters will sell nachos, popcorn and novelties. Grand marshal for the parade will be Don Slater, weather forecaster from WAVY-TV channel 10.

The parade will feature five bands, floats, baton twirlers, a drill team, cheerleaders, horse and more. Bands include the award-winning Marching Pirates of Perquimans High School, the Perquimans Middle School Eighth Grade Band, Northeastern High School, Creswell High School and Elizabeth City State University.

Santa Claus will leave his sleigh at the courthouse to hear the wish lists of local boys and girls.

Parade entries are still being accepted. For information or an entry form, call Diane Stallings at 426-5723 or Susan Harris at 426-5728 (business numbers).

Officials: We're not finished

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

They've won a battle, not the war.

That's the response of the local sheriff to the guilty pleas of the Ford brothers and others suspected of playing a role in the Fords' alleged drug trafficking ring in Perquimans County.

And they're still armed for battle.

"It goes to show that the system does work," Lane said about the pleas entered in federal court. "It sends out a message that if you deal with drugs, it can come back to haunt you."

"This is just the beginning," he continued. "We're going to keep on working as hard as we can."

Lane is not just talking about his department. He said both the sheriff's department and Hertford Police Department will continue joint efforts to eliminate drug dealers.

"It just shows what can happen when all agencies work together in a cooperative effort - local, state and federal (agencies)," Hertford Police Chief Bennie Murphy said.

Murphy said those indicted in the Ford case presented a large problem in the county.

Although neither Lane nor Murphy was in office at the time the investigations began, both applauded the efforts of those who spearheaded the investigation, and both supported the operation when they signed on with their respective agencies.

Quandra Demone Downing, 19, was also indicted, but is still at large. He is charged with conspiracy to possess with intent to distribute crack cocaine and distribution of crack cocaine.

According to evidence gathered since 1991 and presented at the first appearances of the group in federal court in Elizabeth City in August, Barry Ford was the apparent leader of a suspected drug organization primarily selling and distributing crack cocaine in Perquimans County. The other nine were thought to hold various positions within the organization.

Holiday celebrations begin in downtown Hertford Saturday

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

City sidewalks
Busy sidewalks
Dressed in holiday style
In the air there's a feeling of Christmas.

The words to the well-known carol will describe Hertford Saturday when a festive atmosphere will usher in the holiday season.

Volunteers will kick the day off around 10 a.m. when they assist residents on North Church Street to string tiny white lights on trees and shrubs from the S-bridge to the downtown block.

All those living on North Church Street are urged to support this effort by making certain you have lights and extension cords.

For information, contact Bert Hayes at 426-7800.

The Stand Up Band will begin playing downtown at noon. The Christmas parade will step off from Perquimans High School at 2 p.m., arriving downtown at approximately 2:30. After the parade, the Rockin' Willie Band will take center stage. The Stand Up Band and Rockin' Willie Band were engaged by the Hertford Downtown Merchants Association.

Parade route changes; traffic patterns altered

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Traffic patterns will be altered in Hertford Saturday to accommodate the parade and downtown events.

The parade will follow a different route this year. Entries will leave the high school and go down Edenton Road Street to Grubb Street; follow Grubb Street to Church Street; turn right onto Dobbs Street; follow Dobbs back to Edenton Road Street and end up at the high school.

Santa will get off his sleigh downtown, so those who wish their children to see Santa and his reindeer should park on the north side of town. Santa will not be on the sleigh on Dobbs Street.

Those wishing to drop off

parade participants at the high school should enter Jimmy Hunter Drive from Edenton Road Street, then turn right onto Ainsley Drive to leave. Jimmy Hunter Drive and Ainsley Drive will be one-way streets on parade day for the safety of participants. The gates to Cedar Wood Cemetery will be locked at 10 a.m. The Hertford Police will be patrolling the area.

All cars should be removed from the downtown block of Church Street by 1 p.m.

The downtown block of Church Street will be closed to traffic immediately following the parade.

Changes in traffic patterns and street closings have been approved by the Hertford Police Department.

The Chamber of Commerce, sponsors of the Christmas parade, will take orders for the Perquimans County afghans at

County in need of office space; options to be considered

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Commissioners will meet soon to discuss building needs and projections, county manager Paul Gregory said this week.

Gregory will present some options to the board to help

alleviate overcrowding and consolidate related services.

Gregory said the most feasible plan he will submit to the board will be to add on to the extension building. In addition to providing space, that would allow federal farm agencies to move into the extension building with other agriculture-

related services.

The county is already negotiating with Carolina Telephone to rent a portion of its Grubb Street building to house the dispatch department.

Space in Winfall has been rented for more than two years to house social services' over-

flow.

The county had considered purchasing the King Street annex of the high school from the school board for renovation into office space. But Gregory said refurbishing only a portion of the building would cost about \$850,000. He will not recommend it.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 50s Low: 40s COOL	High: 50s Low: 30s FAIR	High: 50s Low: 30s FAIR