

The Perquimans

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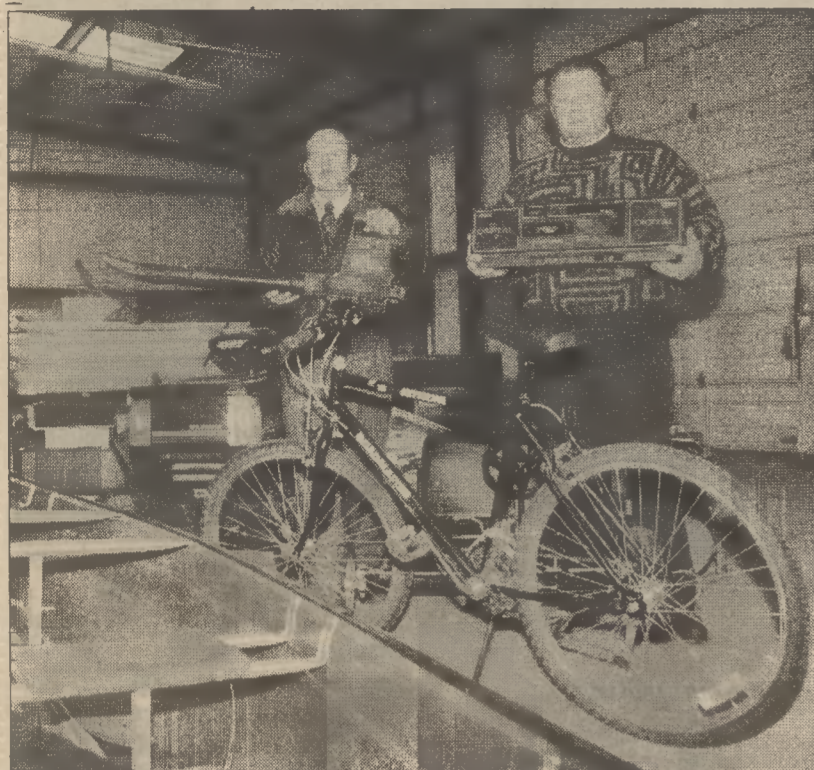


PHOTO BY GINGER LIVINGSTON, THE DAILY ADVANCE
Perquimans County Sheriff David Lane (right) and chief deputy Dean Cartwright display some of the items stolen from the Durants Neck area since early December. The items were recovered last week from a Norfolk, Va. residence. Two Norfolk men have been charged with the robberies.

Stolen property recovered

Canoe, mower among items thieves took

By GINGER LIVINGSTON
The Daily Advance

A routine traffic stop in Pasquotank County two weeks ago led to last week's recovery of stolen property from burglaries in Perquimans County and Norfolk, Va at a Norfolk residence.

A Pasquotank County deputy sheriff stopped Jonathan Len Shanks, 22, of 8007 Carlton Street and Michael Henry Dibella, 19, of 212 Newell Avenue, both of Norfolk, Va., on Feb. 5 for a traffic violation, Perquimans Chief Deputy Dean Cartwright said. The men were pulling a

trailer loaded with a canoe, air compressor and riding lawn mower. The deputy was suspicious and asked the men where they were coming from, Cartwright said. They said they had left 501 Soundside Drive in Perquimans County.

The deputy radioed the Perquimans County dispatcher to check the address, which did not exist. However, since none of the items were reported missing, the men were let go, Cartwright said.

Several days later the Perquimans County Sheriff's Department received a report that the canoe, air compressor and riding lawn mower had indeed been stolen. The items were taken during a string of break-ins in the Durant's Neck community that started in early December.

Using information collected

during the traffic stop, Perquimans deputies tracked the men to the Carlton Avenue address where local police officers found the canoe. The canoe's owner, who lived in the area, was driven by the house, where he confirmed the canoe in the men's possession was his, Cartwright said.

Later, Norfolk officers got permission to search the house and found dozens of missing items including the canoe, lawn mower and air compressor. Other items confiscated included televisions, VCRs, microwaves, bicycles, a go-cart, tools, liquor, blankets and pillows. Many items were from a string of Norfolk break-ins.

Shanks and Dibella were arrested on burglary warrants from Perquimans County. The Norfolk Police Department is

charging each with four counts of grand larceny. The Perquimans sheriff's department plans to serve each man with seven warrants charging each with second-degree burglary.

The arrests of Shanks and Dibella illustrate the importance of promptly reporting stolen items, Perquimans Sheriff David Lane said.

"There are some people who say, 'It's probably gone for good, no need to report it,' but then when they hear we've made a large recovery they'll say, 'Maybe it's been found,'" Lane said. "There could have been other items we stepped over (when we searched the residence for stolen items) because we didn't have the report."

Lane said robberies should be reported immediately.

State gets waivers to implement welfare reform

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The federal government has okayed waivers that allow North Carolina to fully implement the state's welfare reform program, tagged Work First.

Work First, proposed by Gov. Jim Hunt, focuses on responsibility, not entitlement. Implementation of the program will mean reduced cash benefits and sanctions against those who refuse to take responsibility for themselves.

"We have to send a strong message that you're responsible for your family," said Lynn Garrison of the N.C. Department of Human Resources.

Perhaps the most sweeping change in the program is the contract recipients must sign outlining requirements for receiving Aid to Families with Dependent Children, or AFDC. Parents must make sure their school-age children attend school regularly, get regular medical checkups for their children, keep their children properly immunized, look for and accept work, get training or attend classes that will help them find and keep a job, carry out their plan to move off welfare, and cooperate with child support enforcement.

Any violation of the contract will result in immediate sanctions. Monthly AFDC payments will be reduced by \$50 per month for three months for the first violation. The fourth violation reduces monthly payments by \$75 for 12 months.

Refusal to sign the contract means AFDC will be denied.

Work First requires people to get a job within 12 weeks of receiving their first AFDC check. They must be working - paid or unpaid, in short-term training, or a combination of both for at least 30 hours per week.

Work First raises the family asset limits to \$3,000 and vehicle value limit to \$5,000 for AFDC and food stamps. Lack of dependable transportation is one of the major barriers to work, and increased savings will make it easier for welfare recipients to become and stay self-sufficient.

AFDC benefits are capped. No benefits will be provided

for additional children born after the mother has been in Work First longer than 10 months. A first-born child of a dependent minor in a family already on welfare is exempt, but the teenage mother must live at home or under approved supervision and must stay in school to earn a high school diploma or GED.

Families with both parents living together will no longer be penalized. They will be eligible for the same benefits as single parents.

Mothers must cooperate in getting child support from the fathers of their children. Adults who do not cooperate must work in order to receive AFDC for their children.

Families that receive AFDC are automatically eligible for food stamps. This saves time for parents and caseworkers, so that caseworkers can spend more time helping parents find jobs and less time on paperwork.

Work First is being implemented in phases. In the first phase, now in progress, the work requirement for AFDC qualification will apply to parents with school-age children, two-parent families, and parents who already are working at least 30 hours per week. Other families will be phased in as resources are available. While the state has set a target population, all those who apply for AFDC actually fall under Work First and must comply with the other requirements, Garrison said.

AFDC is limited to two years for those in targeted Work First groups. Families can reapply for AFDC after three years. Families can continue to get Medicaid and food stamps at the end of the two-year period if they qualify.

At the end of two years, adults who have complied with their personal responsibility contract and, through no fault of their own, cannot find a job may apply for an extension of AFDC. A local review board will consider requests. The state Department of Human Resources will have final sign-off.

Former recipients may apply to their local review board if they lost their job during the three-year waiting period through no fault of their own.

THE WHITE STUFF AGAIN



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Just before 3 p.m. Friday, it happened again: Perquimans got its third shot of ice and snow in 1996. About 1-2 inches fell before the precipitation stopped Friday evening. Once again, folks, like Adam

Swindell, got out the shovels to clear wide-walks. The Farmers' Almanac says not to put away those snow boots, we've got the biggest storm of the season coming on March 1.

Vaughan oversees local Work First

Over 60 AFDC recipients now targeted

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Stephanie Vaughan is a young, energetic social worker with the Perquimans County Department of Social Services. She'll need that energy, because Vaughan is the department's Work First coordinator.

Right now, Vaughan is working with about 70 parents targeted in the first phase of Work First.

One of the largest obstacles facing most AFDC recipients who must look for work is a lack of education and training and little or no work experience, Vaughan said. Add to that a lack of transportation, and placing individuals within 12 weeks can become a major headache.

Her first task when assigned a case is to determine her client's level of education and job skills. She then refers the client to appropriate agencies for education and training if necessary. She works closely with Employment Security, the Perquimans Learning Center, COA and ECSU, and

vocational rehabilitation centers. Vaughan tells her clients what they need to do to enroll in school or find work, but she doesn't make the contacts for them. That's up to the clients.

"We're pushing responsibility," Vaughan said.

Some of those targeted in the first phase of Work First are already upgrading their job skills with volunteer work at nonprofit agencies such as the Albemarle Commission. Some are getting teacher assistant experience through the Head Start program or after-school tutorial programs. Work-study at COA and ECSU are also Work First client options.

Social services pays for child care and offers transportation through the Intercounty Transit System to those clients in Work First and other programs.

Lack of jobs in the county will hinder AFDC recipients' efforts to find jobs. According to a release issued by the Edenton Employment Security office earlier this month, the January unemployment rate for Perquimans County was almost 6 percent.

The biggest change Vaughan sees in the reform program is that AFDC recipients no longer have choices.

There were many opportunities for education and job skills development before Work First, but no real incentive for clients to take advantage of them.

It was also difficult to reduce benefits for failure to comply with the policies because of the waiting periods and notification schedule required. Now sanctions will be swift and sure.

According to Perquimans' AFDC supervisor Kitty Phippen, there are over 360 families, almost 1,000 people, in Perquimans County receiving AFDC benefits.

The welfare price tag

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The price tag for welfare programs is high, even in a county as small as Perquimans.

According to the audit report published by the county last week in this newspaper, the amount spent on human services was over \$1.66 million during the 1994-95 fiscal year. The figure represents about 29 percent of the total county expenditures for the year.

The budget print-out detailing expenditures in specific line items for the 1994-95 year shows that Perquimans County spent \$169,473 in AFDC; \$244,073 in Medicaid and \$263,662 in day care. Salaries and benefits for employees took another \$477,662 budget bite. Other costs, such as renting office space in Winfall, telephone, postage, supplies and travel, amounted to \$57,467.

Not all of the budget funds come from local ad valorem tax collections. The county does receive reimbursements from state and federal allocations. However, the entire \$1.66 million budget does come from public sources.

How much money the Work First program will save the county can not be determined. Numbers in each welfare program change from month to month as people find jobs, lose jobs, or have children who qualify for assistance.

Work First was implemented without its waivers in July. In its first five months, the governor's office said over 9,200 welfare recipients found jobs. Work First also helped move more than 11,200 parents into jobs and off of welfare rolls.

The state expects to save over \$25 million this year.

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 60s	Low: 40s	High: 60s	Low: 40s	High: 60s	Low: 40s
PARTLY CLOUDY		PARTLY CLOUDY		CHANCE OF RAIN	