

The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

County to borrow \$4.25M for water system

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

The Perquimans County Commissioners voted Monday to borrow \$4.25 million from BB&T to finance improvements to the county water system.

A public hearing advertised for Monday at 2:45 p.m. drew no response from county residents.

Unlike financing with bonds, the county will not pledge its total assets, including its property taxing power, as security for the loan. Instead, the loan will be collateralized only with property that is now a part or may become a part of the Bethel water plant. If for any reason the county should default on the loan, BB&T would be entitled to foreclose only on those assets pledged as security against the loan.

The loan will be paid back over a 15-year period at an average interest rate of 5.27 percent. The initial rate is 4.19 percent. The rate will change at set intervals during the loan period to a rate of 12.38 percent in years 14 and 15.

The state's Local Government Commission was scheduled to review all paperwork involved with the water system improvements and loan documents on Tuesday afternoon.

To finance the loan repayment, county water rates will rise effective Aug. 1. Customers who use 2,000 gallons per month will see a \$4 increase in their water bills. Those who consume 3,000 gallons per month will see a \$6 rise. For those who use 4,000 gallons per month, the rate will increase \$8.

Large consumers will see a larger dollar jump. Customers using 10,000 gallons of water each month will now pay \$48.30, a \$20 increase. For those using 20,000 gallons, the bill will rise from \$50.30 to \$79.80.

Tap fees will also increase. Fees will rise to \$800 for 3/4-inch line, \$1,500 for a 1 inch line, and \$2,000 for a 2 inch line. The charges are presently \$425, \$500 and \$825, respectively.

The rate increases are the second imposed since the county water system began operation in 1976.

Commissioners anticipate that the loan will be repaid solely with profits from water sales. Loan repayment will not come from tax proceeds.

In order to complete the plant upgrade, the county must purchase additional land near the Bethel plant. The county has spoken with Bethel Fire Department officials regarding purchasing the property presently used as the department's fire station. Another option is to purchase a suitable site for future fire department relocation and trading deeds with the department.

No decision was made during the water renovation and loan discussion; however, the commissioners did convene in closed session to discuss land acquisition Monday.

STATE CHAMPIONSHIP BOUND!



PHOTO BY BRIAN MCLAUGHLIN, THE DAILY ADVANCE

The biggest celebration ever held on a Lady Pirates softball field took place Friday evening after the Perquiman squad defeated Williamston 7-0 in the third round of state playoffs, earning the right to play for the state championship. The

Lady Pirates will play in a double elimination tournament at Walnut Creek Softball Complex in Raleigh. The team's first game is Sunday at 2 p.m. against Surry Central High School. The tournament will continue on Monday.

County's rich history could fuel economy

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

Preserving Perquimans County's history with an eye towards tourism is high on the agenda of the Perquimans County Historic Commission.

The commission is working under the auspices of the Chamber of Commerce to help coordinate efforts by groups in Perquimans County, including the Perquimans County Restoration Association, to establish historic districts to be included in the National Register of Historic Places.

The first goal of the commission is to get areas in the Belvidere, Bethel, Durants Neck, Hertford, Old Neck and Winfall communities nominated for the national register. The group does not intend to establish districts with property rights restrictions. That means that homeowners will continue to have control over their properties.

Benefits of having community districts accepted in the national register may include building pride and spirit among county residents, preserving the most endangered historic homes, improving the quality of life in general, providing potential benefits to historic homeowners and bringing in tourism dollars, according to commission members.

The process to achieve placement on the register will take considerable time, commission members say, in part because an inventory catalog of homes and sites must be developed by a historic archives consultant before register application. Funds must be available to pay for this process before the effort can move forward.

To help with funding, a fundraiser tagged "Picnic on the Perquimans" has been scheduled for July 28. Final details of the day are not set.

Studies have shown that tourism is one of North Carolina's largest and fast-growing industries. With over 100 sites that should qualify for National Register status, Perquimans County has the potential to see its economy fueled by preservation leading to tourism.

For information on the commission's work, call the Chamber at 426-5657.

Blessing of the fleet is Saturday

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

A day of fun is planned for Hertford Saturday when the Downtown Association sponsors "Pirates on the Perquimans."

The day will kick off at 10 a.m. on Church Street. The Perquimans Arts League will showcase talent with an art show and sale. There will also be a boat show.

DJs Mickey and Aaron Phelps will provide entertainment, while vendors will offer pizza, oriental food and seafood. One vendor will offer banners.

At 11 o'clock, activities will move to the boat ramp behind municipal building for the blessing of the fleet. Boaters are invited to attend the ceremony and decorate their boats in Pirate theme. Julie Bunch and Kregan Winslow will sing at the blessing ceremony.

At noon, the drawing for the Chamber of Commerce fire-



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

A modern-day Perquimans County pirate, who happens to favor Emily Christensen, is just one of the sights one may see Saturday during Hertford Downtown Association's Blessing of

the Fleet. Activities will be held at the waterfront park behind the municipal building and downtown Hertford. Sidewalk sales, vendors, entertainment and fun are on tap for the event.

works raffle will be held.

Martial arts students from Dragon Combat Martial Arts Academy will perform at 1:30 under the direction of Sensei Pete White.

At 2:30, the local alternative band Solar Corpse will take the stage.

Church Street will be closed during the festivities.

Activities such as "Pirates on the Perquimans," the annual Easter egg hunt and the

community Christmas program are all organized by members of the Hertford Downtown Association with support from the Chamber of Commerce. The purpose of sponsoring these events is to bring people to downtown Hertford to shop and to foster a sense of community among county residents.

Downtown business areas in many towns have vanished over the years with the con-

struction of malls and other alternative shopping areas, and the construction of highways that bypass the heart of many small towns. An effort is underway in many areas to revitalize the downtown business districts.

The Hertford Downtown Association formed three years ago to preserve and promote the businesses and beauty in historic downtown Hertford.

Hertford taxes may increase

Town Manager John Christensen will recommend budget cuts and a tax increase to the town council for Hertford's 1996-97 fiscal budget.

Christensen said Tuesday that the Local Government Commission is requiring that ElectricCities members curb transfers from their electric funds to their general funds. To meet this mandate, Christensen said he will recommend that council okay a 2 cents tax increase, eliminate a

presently unfilled officer's position in the police department and privatize garbage collection.

The town manager said there has been some confusion over garbage privatization. Some residents believe that there will be a per-household user fee if the town opts to privatize. That is not the case, Christensen said. Garbage collection will be handled through the general fund no matter which option council chooses.

Christensen will recommend a general fund budget of \$925,450 to council. There are separate budgets for the water and sewer and electric departments, which are self-sustaining.

Council will hold its June meeting on Tuesday, June 11 at 7:30 p.m., a change from its usual Monday meeting date. Christensen expects a decision on garbage collection at that meeting. There will be a budget hearing on June 17 at 7 p.m. at the town hall.

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 80s	Low: 60s	High: 80s	Low: 60s	High: 80s	Low: 60s
MOSTLY CLOUDY		MOSTLY CLOUDY		MOSTLY CLOUDY	