

# The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

Vol. 64, No. 29 The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people Hertford, North Carolina 27944

## Bertha blasts North Carolina coast

### Hurricane weakens before reaching county

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**  
Editor

Utility company and emergency personnel breathed a sigh of relief early Saturday morning when the worst of Hurricane Bertha had passed.

"We were super, super lucky," said Perquimans County Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Tilley.

Tilley said as of Monday, no major property damage had been reported to his office. He said he had received unofficial reports of damages to piers along the river.

Tilley said Perquimans County was lucky that the storm weakened before hitting the area. Had it not lessened in strength, Tilley said the damage here could have been devastating.

Many people in Perquimans County lost electricity at some point during the storm. Power company officials said tree limbs falling on power lines accounted for most of the outages. North Carolina Power also lost its Winfall substation. Most customers' power was restored by lunchtime Saturday, however some were without electricity until Saturday evening.

Town of Hertford Utilities Director Parker Newbern said he shut down the town's electricity around 7:45 Friday evening. The decision to pull the plug on the electric system came after the Hertford Fire Department responded to four fire calls at one time, taxing the unit's resources. Once the power was shut off, the calls about sparking transformers immediately stopped, Newbern said.

In addition, Newbern said his decision was based on the fact that there were many people walking and driving through town. With downed power lines in several areas, keeping power flowing to the downed lines was hazardous, he said.

"We just felt that it was the

right thing to do," Newbern said. "You've got to do what you think is best for the safety of the people of the town of Hertford and the electric system."

Both Newbern and Hertford Fire Chief Sid Eley said if a building had caught on fire with the high winds, the result could have been devastating. Houses are so close together in some parts of town that fire could have spread rapidly and would have been extremely difficult to contain.

Eley said firefighters responded to several alarms and manned the station throughout Friday night as a precaution.

Both primary and secondary lines were downed in Hertford, Newbern said. After riding the town thoroughly early Saturday morning to check all the town lines and make sure they were clear of debris, town maintenance crews began re-energizing the system around 7:15 a.m. All four of the town's circuits were restored by 10:30, with only spot outages after that time.

Dorris White, General Manager of Albemarle Electric Membership Corporation, said she worked by candlelight taking calls about power outages and keeping her crews informed. Most damages to EMC lines occurred due to fallen limbs, she said. The outage at the North Carolina Power substation in Winfall also affected EMC customers.

EMC crews worked throughout Friday night cutting limbs off lines. High winds kept them from being able to remove some that required the high bucket until the storm had passed completely, she said. All power was restored by Saturday afternoon.

"It went a whole lot better than I thought it was going to," White said.

North Carolina Power customers were also without power, some for over 12 hours.

While municipal officials were preparing for the impending storm by operating water systems all night Thursday to make sure tanks were filled before the storm hit



PHOTO BY BRIAN VANDERLIET, THE DAILY ADVANCE

Perquimans County escaped major damages when Hurricane Bertha hit Friday night, according to Emergency Management Coordinator Todd Tilley. Downed tree limbs caused the most problems here when they fell on power lines, leaving many without electricity. Yards throughout the county were piled

with tree limbs during the weekend, as residents began the clean-up. Town of Hertford Maintenance Director Parker Newbern said the town will try to pick up all storm debris this week. Signs were flattened and crops sustained some damage, but the extent of that damage won't be known until harvest time.

and preparing crews, the Emergency Management Team mobilized for action.

Tilley said he met with the team initially at around 5:30 Thursday afternoon. A second meeting was held Friday morning. Around 4:30 Friday afternoon, the decision was made to open a shelter at Hertford Grammar School at 7 p.m. Over 100 people spent the night at the shelter.

The team also opted to close the causeway at 7 p.m. Friday

due to high water and debris across the causeway.

Tilley said there were a few problems at the communications center with the battery back-up system, but the problem was shortly fixed.

In addition to wind and rain, Tilley said he had received an unofficial report that a tornado touched down in the vicinity of Woodland Circle. Friday afternoon, a tornado warning was issued in Chowan and Perquimans counties. Unofficial reports

were received that a tornado was spotted in the Bethel area.

Now, Hertford maintenance crews are working to remove the mounds of yard waste that are piled up along the streets. Newbern said he is looking at possibly getting some additional equipment and manpower to help with the clean-up.

"Our manpower is taxed right now," he said.

The town hopes to have all the yard waste up by Friday.

### County declares state of emergency

By **GINGER LIVINGSTON**  
The Daily Advance and  
**SUSAN R. HARRIS**  
Editor

Perquimans County Commission Chairman Mack Nixon declared a state of emergency in the county Friday night in an effort to keep people off the streets and stop the sale of alcohol.

The declaration was made shortly after 10 p.m. at the request of Hertford Town Manager John Christensen.

"We had a high number of tree limbs come down and people were walking around and we were worried about the sale of alcohol," Christensen said.

The fallen tree limbs brought down a number of live electric lines and people were not heeding police warnings to stay off the street, Christensen said. Hertford Maintenance Director Parker Newbern said that the number of people on the streets and the safety concern that posed was one factor in his decision to cut electric power earlier in the evening.

Apparently the threat of a hurricane didn't concern some Hertford night spot owners and their patrons. The unnamed businesses continued to operate despite the power outage.

Nixon said Hertford Police Chief Bennie Murphy feared there might be safety problems and wanted to stop the sale of alcohol at the night spots and other businesses.

Christensen said once the state of emergency went into effect most people got off the street.

Not all people, however. One man who was standing on the corner of Market and Edenton Road streets was injured when he was struck on the head with a bottle.

### It's about us

The All of Us Care Organization is a group of Perquimans County residents who are interested in preserving a safe and nurturing environment for all area residents. As part of this effort, a random telephone survey will be conducted July 29-Aug. 2. The committee is interested in soliciting area residents' thoughts and opinions regarding prevention of problems associated with violence, personal safety, alcohol and other drug use, and social issues. The interviews will take about 10 minutes and will be conducted by Perquimans County High School students.

If you have questions about the survey of the All of Us Care Organization, call Brenda Lassiter at 426-5741.

## Open Door Ministry consolidates services

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**  
Editor

The Open Door Ministry wants to keep its doors open.

The interchurch, interdenominational outreach ministry provides food and financial assistance to those qualifying and operates a thrift store. But volunteers are needed to keep the ministry viable and serve those who need emergency assistance.

"Like every other organization, we need volunteers desperately," said board member Jon Strother, the minister at Hertford United Methodist Church.

Carol Cooper, acting director of both the food pantry and thrift shop, echoed Strother's plea for volunteers.

"The volunteers we have now are just stretched," Cooper said.

The ministry began almost 20 years ago in Winfall when congregations from churches across the county realized a need to offer emergency assistance. The concept of the volunteer organization is neighbor helping neighbor through a difficult period. It is based on



The Open Door Ministry has consolidated its food pantry, financial assistance and thrift store operations at the headquarters on Highway 37 in Winfall.

the Bible premise of being your brother's keeper.

In 1983, the food pantry and thrift store moved to Hertford. Before July of this year, the food pantry operated out of a building owned by Willis Jessup on Highway 37 in Winfall, while the thrift store remained in the old ice plant in Hertford.

In an effort to become more

efficient, the board of Open Door voted this summer to move both components of the ministry to the Winfall location. The building will be set up with the food pantry on one side and the thrift store on the other, Cooper said. The thrift store was closed for the month of July to facilitate the move. The board plans to reopen on Aug. 3 at the Winfall office.

The Open Door accepts referrals from the Department of Social Services, Catholic Social Ministries and churches, Cooper said. Food and financial assistance to pay necessary costs such as rent and utility bills are available through the food pantry. Cooper said the ministry seeks to provide help to those who may have been laid off from a job or a mother who has taken her children and left an abuse household.

The thrift store is open to everyone. Anyone may purchase items from the store, which may include clothing, small appliances, baby needs and toys. Proceeds from the sale of items at the thrift store are returned to the operating budget to provide financial assistance.

Cooper said there is always a need for food donations at the food pantry. Non-perishable items are accepted at the Winfall office and through many county churches. Cash donations may be made the same way.

Gently used items are accepted at the thrift store.

Cooid the ministry welcomes any donations of items that are in good repair and are useful.

In addition to the present services, Cooper said the board is preparing a community resources guide which will contain information about parenting and services available to local residents.

All these services require many hours of volunteer work. Anyone with a few hours to spare is asked to call Cooper at 426-5261 or Strother at the church at 426-5467.

### Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 90s	Low: 70s	High: 90s	Low: 70s	High: 90s	Low: 70s
PARTLY CLOUDY		PARTLY CLOUDY		PARTLY SUNNY	