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Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Schools will get over \$4 million if bonds pass

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**
Editor

The Perquimans County School Board cannot tell people to vote for the \$1.8 billion state school bond referendum on Nov. 5, but the school system can disseminate information on local needs and what the passage of the referendum would do locally.

titated to ensure that the state's limited resources will be best utilized.

In his commentary, the state treasurer states: "It is an inherent responsibility of the State Treasurer to speak to the issues of this financial magnitude. Given the fact that the traditional pay-as-you-go practices of the past are simply not viable today; and, likewise, since raising taxes is not an acceptable alternative, the proposed bond package represents the only realistic and credible strategy we know to provide the needed resources. Collectively speaking, the bond package may well represent what we in North Carolina will do in the foreseeable future about meeting the needs of public education and transportation.

"The question most voters will likely ask is: 'Will my State taxes be increased if these bonds pass?' The short answer is: 'No, not if the General Assembly commits itself not to raise taxes and then follows the traditional manner of prioritizing available resources.' This is to say, since the

Constitution provides that moneys for the repayment of State debt shall be set aside before other appropriations are approved, and since a balanced budget is also mandated, the General Assembly will have no option except to prioritize and allocate the remaining resources among the other programs of State government."

Voters, then, must trust their elected officials in Raleigh to pay the bonds without raising taxes. Not raising taxes is not a part of the referendum. Legislators will still have the authority given them by the voters and state constitution to raise taxes if they see fit to balance the budget.

According to figures provided by both Boyles and the local school system, Perquimans County stands to receive over \$4 million if the referendum passes.

On the local capital needs list for schools is the replacement of Central School in Winfall. It is rated a critical need both locally and by the state. Studies have determined that renovation of the facility is not economically feasible. The replacement price tag is over \$7 million.

Capital needs studies prepared on behalf of the school system also show needs of over \$3.6 million at Hertford Grammar School and \$6.1 million at Perquimans High School. Other needs amount to \$1.2 million. The report outlined anticipated needs over the next 10 years.

Perquimans County is ranked in the bottom quartile of the state's public schools in ability to locally fund schools, but ranks in the second quartile in actual spending, showing substantial local effort to provide for the needs of students.

Juvenile detention center location protested by residents

By **GINGER LIVINGSTON**
The Daily Advance

Over 40 residents turned out to ask the Winfall Town Council to revoke its support of a \$1.8 million juvenile detention facility scheduled to be built in the town.

The residents, led by Perquimans County Commissioner candidate Bert Hayes, presented a 191-signature petition asking the council to withdraw its support. The residents presented the petition at the council meeting last Wednesday night.

The residents said the proposed site, located on county-

owned property behind the N.C. Department of Transportation maintenance facility on U.S. Highway 17 bypass, is too close to a residential neighborhood filled with elderly people.

The protest came one month after the town council held a joint public meeting with Perquimans County Commissioners and Division of Youth Services representatives and two weeks after the county commissioners voted to sell the property to the state.

The proposed facility would house 24 youths who are awaiting adjudication.

"They say it's already done but I don't believe it will pass if we band against it," Beulah White said.

"It's not a done deal. The fact is 191 people have signed a petition against it," Hayes said.

Former Winfall Town Council candidate Wayne Hurdle said most people who attended the last meeting were against the facility even if they did not voice their opposition. Hurdle said while the people should have spoken up, he thinks the town council made assumptions about the people's feelings.

Hurdle said he believes most Winfall residents are not against the idea of a secured facility for juveniles but do not like it being so close to a residential neighborhood with many elderly residents.

Mayor Fred Yates picked up on Hurdle's statements and asked the audience how many people would like to see the facility outside of Winfall but in Perquimans County. Nearly half the people at the meeting supported that idea.

Yates said the council needs to speak with its town attorney, who was on vacation and not at the meeting, to explore the legalities of the situation.



With that in mind, the Perquimans County Schools system has printed fliers outlining capital improvement needs in the local school system and hosted a public meeting last Thursday evening to present information on the issue.

State Treasurer Harlan E. Boyles has also issued an information report regarding both the school bonds and \$950,000 highway bonds. Both items will be voted on in November.

Boyles' report states that if the school bond referendum passes, money derived from the sale of

bonds will be placed in the public school building bonds fund, then allocated to counties to pay for public school capital outlay projects. Of the \$1.8 billion at issue, \$30 million will be allocated as grants to counties that have a small county school system. Consideration will be given to whether the counties demonstrate both greater than average school construction needs and high property tax rates.

In a report subsection, Boyles states:

- The state's borrowing capacity can more than accommodate the total amount of the bonds without increasing per capita debt too high in relation to other states or otherwise jeopardizing the state's coveted Triple-A credit rating in the eyes of the financial community.

- If approved by the voters, the borrowings should be well received and the debt should be issued at the lowest possible interest rates, thereby minimizing interest costs.

- North Carolina's infrastructure needs are considered serious and, left unaddressed, will become critical soon.

- Pay-as-you-go financing cannot totally resolve the state's capital needs.

- And, while the proposed bond referendums address some of the problems, the state still has no long-range capital financing plan and no mechanism in place to produce one. A system for evaluating and prioritizing needs must be in-

Will the passage of the school bond referendum raise state taxes?

"The short answers is: No, not if the General Assembly commits itself not to raise taxes and then follows the traditional manner of prioritizing available resources."

Harlan E. Boyles
State Treasurer

SHOOTING DOWN THE BARONS



The Pirates shot down the Red Barons of Gates County Friday night, collecting a 36-14 conference win along the way. Complete details are on page 6.

Flooded again

Josephine dumps more water on county

It hasn't exactly been the great flood, but people in Perquimans County can probably sympathize with Noah as yet another storm from the tropics poured more water on an already drenched landscape last week.

Tropical storm Josephine moved through last Tuesday, bringing heavy rains. Fortunately, Josephine didn't bring the damaging winds her predecessors hurricanes Bertha and Fran brought.

Highway flooding, especially along back roads and low-lying areas, was the main problem in Perquimans County. Water washed across roadways in several places, making travel slow.

Parade set

The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce Christmas parade committee has announced that the county's holiday parade will be on Saturday, Dec. 7 at 2 p.m. The theme is Christmas: The Birthday of a King.

All types of entries are being accepted for the holiday parade.

For entry forms or information, please contact Diane Stallings at 426-5723 (work) or 426-7250 (home) or Susan Harris at 426-5728 (work) or 426-5307 (home).

Hertford firefighters answer record number of calls

The Hertford Fire Department has recorded a record number of responses for the year with 113 to date.

The 26 volunteer firefighters have responded to 29 structural fires. Of those 29 calls, 18 were in the Hertford coverage area and 11 were mutual aid calls from other departments in the county.

Because Perquimans County has seen a large number of both winter and summer storms, the department has responded to 19 electrical lines down. They also responded to 22 alarms resulting from the malfunction of private alarm systems. Eleven vehicle fires were also logged by the department.

The response team of the fire department has been



called to 13 car wrecks, where team members assisted rescue personnel.

tions, the average annual number of responses has already been surpassed.

The volunteers are offered

more than 100 hours of department training and drills each year in addition to the fire calls they answer.

Outside

THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
High: 70s Low: 50s PARTLY CLOUDY	High: 70s Low: 50s CLOUDY	High: 70s Low: 50s RAIN