

The Perquimans Weekly

35¢

Vol. 65, No. 5

The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people

Hertford, North Carolina 27944

PCEDC makes downtown pledge

County economic board donates to downtown study

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Economic Development Commission voted to help with the cost of a downtown Hertford renovation plan, and issued a challenge to businesses operating in the district.

PCEDC members voted unanimously to match up to half of the additional \$275 needed to pay for the plan if businesses in the downtown area will contribute the other half.

To be completed by the East Carolina University Regional Development Institute, the \$750 plan will offer suggestions for the renovation of downtown Hertford to include one block on Church street and 1/2 block on both Market and Grubb streets. Items to be covered by the report include brick or tile sidewalks, lighting, underground wiring, parking, landscaping and planters, benches and trash receptacles.

The town of Hertford paid \$375 toward the cost of the plan, with the Chamber of Commerce donating an additional \$100. With the PCEDC match agreement, business owners will be asked to chip in a total of \$137.50 for the project.

Dowd & Twiddy Insurance Inc. became the first business contributor with a donation received in the Chamber office Friday, according to Chamber Executive Director Sandra Smith.

The town organized a Hertford Downtown Revitalization Committee last year to look for ways to improve the aesthetics in the business district. Committee members hope that funds can be found to implement the study, bringing more shoppers and businesses to the district. At present, there are three buildings out of which no businesses are operating: the Morgan building, the Darden Department Store building and the building formerly occupied by Youthland.

SNOWMAN SURVIVES HIGH TEMPS



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Aaron Lane's Church Street snowman has amazingly survived warm temperatures over the last week. No doubt Aaron and younger brother Derrick hope their snowman will be joined by the real thing before winter is over.

Fire destroys historic home

Family of five loses everything in Monday blaze

By STEPHANIE SWANSON
The Daily Advance

A family of five lost their home and possessions Monday after the chimney of their wood-burning stove caught fire and burned their house to the ground.

Blake Stokely said he was inside his pre-Civil War, two-story farm house with one of his sons, Patrick Blake, 3 1/2, when he restoked the fire in the stove around 10:30 a.m.

"My son was playing in another room and I was working on the computer," he said. "I smelled something and went into the kitchen, but didn't notice anything. I started upstairs and I could see flames up side the chimney."

Stokely said by the time he grabbed his son and ran out of the house, flames were coming out of the house's second-floor windows.

Durant's Neck Volunteer Fire Department Chief Jimmy

Spivey said the first group of firefighters arrived at approximately 10:45 a.m. "Flames were coming out of the roof when we arrived," he said. Spivey said about 30 volunteer firefighters from the Durant's Neck, Hertford and Inter-County departments and the Perquimans County EMS responded, but the entire house and its contents were lost.

"It appears the blaze started between the first and second floors around the chimney from the wood stove," Spivey said, adding the exact cause is still unknown. Stokely also said he did not know what caused the blaze, adding that he had never had problems with the stove in the approximately five years his family had lived in the house.

Stokely, an employee at

Apricot, Inc., his wife Debbie — who is one-month pregnant — and their children, Andrew, 12, Christina Glynn, 10, and Patrick Blake are staying with Stokely's father, Paul.

"I smelled something and went into the kitchen, but didn't notice anything. I started upstairs and I could see flames up side the chimney."

Blake Stokely
Fire victim

The Stokely's family and friends are asking the community for donations of clothing, furniture, linens and cookware. The children's clothing sizes are a boy's 18 shirt, 16 pants and 7 1/2 shoe; a girl's 14 pants and shirt, 12-14 dress and 4 shoe; a baby's 4-5T and 10 1/4 shoe. The parents' clothing sizes are a man's XL shirt, 40 waist 34 length pants and 11W shoe; and a woman's 2XL shirt and pants and 8W shoe. Donations can be sent to the Stokelys c/o Paul W. Stokely, Rt. 1, Box 277, Hertford, N.C. 27944.

Stubbins tapped to fill county seat

Evelyn B. Stubbins was sworn in as Perquimans County's newest commissioner during the board's regular meeting on Jan. 2.

for opening school on Jan. 8. But before buses could begin making their rounds, more snowfall, coupled with low temperatures, caused school officials to close school for the day. Continued snowfall and low temperatures kept the schools closed on Jan. 9.

County and town offices and some businesses closed around 2 o'clock Monday afternoon as snow continued to fall and secondary roads iced over.

The town of Hertford undertook a massive tire cleanup on town property at the waste treatment plant. The Gates County Correctional Facility provided inmate labor for the project.

The NAACP sponsored its annual Martin Luther King Jr. Day celebration.

Perquimans County Planning and Economic Development Director Robert Baker asked for input and support from Chamber of Commerce member's at the Chamber's annual banquet on Jan. 11 at Pavo's Restaurant.

Former Chamber Executive Director Mary Harrell was honored for 13 years of service to the Chamber during the

evening.

Helen Shaw, Thomas L. Riddick and Archie Miller became the first candidates to file for public office in the May primary. Shaw and Riddick filed for school board; Miller for board of county commissioners.

Jerry Zachary took God's admonition to love his neighbor at face value, sponsoring a benefit concert at St. Paul A.M.E. Zion Church to assist three families who lost homes to fire.

Water standing at the intersection of Church and Dobbs streets was blamed for several flat tires as drivers couldn't tell where the curb ran along the streets.

Town Manager John Christensen said the town had done everything short of tearing up the drain pipes to alleviate the problem, roots from trees and bushes planted near the town's storm drain pipes grew into the pipes. Leaves and other debris became packed against the roots, creating a blockage.

After snow and flooding abated, the town did get the problem fixed.

Habitat kicks off fund raiser

By SEAN JACKSON
Daily Advance Correspondent

Motivated by the chance to change lives, the Chowan-Perquimans Chapter of Habitat for Humanity kicked off its first fund-raising drive Friday.

On the eve of their initial drive, members of the new organization were given a pep talk by Alex Miller, associate retail regional director of Habitat for Humanity's Southeast region.

"From my perspective, you don't have anything to worry about," Miller told the group gathered Thursday night at Hertford United Methodist Church. "What you've started here is a responsibility that you won't outlive."

The Chowan-Perquimans group kicked off its "Golden Nail: campaign today with a goal of raising \$15,000. They plan to sell 3,000 bags of golden nails, with donations starting at \$5 per bag. And, according to one volunteer, they would like to start on their first project by June.

Miller said the average cost of a house built by Habitat is \$37,000. He said Habitat does not have any set plan of fund-raising across the country, but that each local chapter must find the best style of fund-raising to fit its own needs and resources.

"You will build houses and you will change lives," Miller said. "I have seen it change lives. And that is what I'm here for. I hope that is what you're here for, too."

"You know in your community what the potential is for your affiliation. You will get a fair number of contributions once you get the first one built," he added.

Miller's advice to the group ranged from foreclosure policies to land purchasing. He said that Habitat is at its zenith now, building 33 houses per day across the country and internationally. Most of the houses built by Habitat, Miller said, are for single-parent families, most often headed by the mother. But the default rate on these homes, he assured the group, is at less than one percent.

"Usually low income families don't have reliable transportation. If it comes down to 'Should we buy land in the city?' or 'Should we buy land in the country?', I would say buy as close to the city as possible," he told the group when questioned about proper locations. Jobs, Miller said, are easier to be found in the city as well but he added that it is a good idea to take any land donated to the chapter.

"I want you to start out like you can hold out," he said. "That's what my grandfather used to tell me. This is your organization. You're here

Selection group looks for owners

Families interested in becoming owners of Habitat for Humanity homes in the two-county area may find out more about ownership at informational meetings in Edenton and Hertford.

The Family Selection Committee of the newly-organized Chowan-Perquimans Habitat for Humanity is beginning its selection process with these informational meetings. The first will be held at the Perquimans County Public Library on Tuesday, Feb. 4 at 7 p.m. The Shepard-Pruden Library in Edenton will host the second meeting on Tuesday, Feb. 11 at 7 p.m.

There are a number of important requirements for selection for ownership of a Habitat home, according to Libby Haley, Selection Committee chairperson. The partnering family currently must reside in substandard housing. Income for a family of four must be in the \$7,800-\$20,000 range annually, higher for larger families. The family must agree to put in 500 hours of "sweat equity," either working on construction or participating in a number of courses relating to successful home ownership. Friends and relatives may assist the family.

Families who purchase Habitat homes generally make a minimum down payment. Thereafter, the mortgage on the interest-free, 20-year loan runs about \$250 per month, including taxes and insurance.

The local board of Habitat expects to receive full affiliation by this spring and to start a house this summer.

The Gold Nail campaign is currently underway to raise money for Habitat projects. Volunteer labor from the community helps make Habitat homes affordable.

tonight because you care about the social issue of housing."

Habitat for Humanity is a ministry of the Christian churches in the area and joins a movement begun 20 years ago in Georgia. Habitat has provided some 12,000 homes in the United States.

Perquimans County
an
All of Us Care
Community

January's theme:

Lend a Hand
focusing on
Generosity
Helpfulness
Hospitality
Charity
Service
Unselfishness

Incorporate these Healthy
HABITS into your daily
life and help make our
community a better place
to live!

For All of Us Care information,
contact Dr. Randall L. Henion,
Perquimans County Schools,
426-5741

Notes from '96

A look back at stories
from The Perquimans
Weekly one year ago
this month

Stubbins replaced David Bines Jr., who died in October 1995. Stubbins was appointed to fill Bines' unexpired term.

The storm that hit the Albemarle area on the evening of Saturday, Jan. 6 was apparent Sunday morning when the ground was covered with a white blanket.

Although most of Saturday's snowfall had been washed away by Sunday afternoon, the storm continued to hold its grip on the area, producing high winds, rain, snow and extremely cold weather.

Perquimans was one of the area school districts that announced a two-hour delay

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 30s Low: 20s RAIN		High: 40s Low: 30s CHANCE OF RAIN		High: 40s Low: 30s MOSTLY CLOUDY	