

The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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Old Neck on National Register

Community earns recognition as significant historic area

By **SUSAN R. HARRIS**
Editor

Preseverance paid off for a group of Perquimans County residents and natives. After four years of organizing, planning, fundraising and applications, the group received notification that the National Register of Historic Places now includes the Old Neck Historic District.

"It's quite a coup that this is listed as an agricultural historic district," said Stephanie Bandy, site director at the Newbold-White House. "It's rare that the National Register would list an agricultural district. We should be real excited about that. It's kind of a big deal."

Encompassing over 3,300 acres, the district begins at the foot of the U.S. Highway 17 bypass bridge and extends southeast almost 4 miles, roughly paralleling the east side of the Perquimans River. The district is bounded in part by U.S. 17 to the north, and Union Hall Road and Sutton's Creek to the east.

Old Neck Road and New Hope Road are the primary east-west arteries within the district, with Union Hall Road running north and south.

Among the structures of significance to the county's history located in the district are the Francis Nixon Plantation, the William Jones Plantation, the Fletcher-Skinner-Nixon Plantation, Cove Grove, the



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

The Thomas Nixon Plantation is included in the Old Neck Historic District. After four years of planning, researching and fundraising, the District's nomination was accepted into the National Register of Historic Places.

Miller-Skinner House, the Matthew Towe Farm, the Benjamin S. Skinner Jr. Farm, the former Willow Branch School, the Miller-Bundy Farm, the John C. Bundy Jr. Farmstead, the Winslow Farm, the John Newbold Farm and the Thomas Nixon Plantation.

Beth Skinner Taylor, whose family has owned Cove Grove since it was built by Benjamin Skinner around 1830, chaired the Old Neck Historic District at the request of Albert Eure of the Perquimans Restoration Association. Taylor said many

Old Neck residents, former residents and descendants of those who built Old Neck's historic buildings supported the effort to establish the district. The committee was able to raise enough money through two events, one at Cove Grove in 1993 and a second at Riverside in 1994, to obtain matching funds to pay the \$8,000 consulting and researching fee necessary to write the nomination for Old Neck.

The actual work was done by Drucilla H. York, and architectural historian with Local

History Associates in Greenville, with the assistance of local historian Raymond Winslow Jr. The two had previously written the book "The Historic Architecture of Perquimans County, North Carolina."

In addition to the architectural and agricultural significance of the Old Neck District, York noted the social history of the area. Many of the homes are still owned by descendants of the builders. Many of those who built the homes were also related to each other. In addi-

tion, much of the overall landscape has remained much as it was in the 19th century.

"In many North Carolina coastal areas today, the rural landscape is marred by housing and strip developments along the road and waterfronts," York wrote in her nomination. "The integrity of the Old Neck Historic District, however, sets it apart from other rural areas within the Albemarle region and makes it an outstanding example within North Carolina."

The Chamber of Commerce has set up a committee to assist and support the establishment of historic district throughout the county. Taylor thinks the Chamber is on the right track.

"One of the things we said from the very beginning is we've got the Newbold-White House, but you've got to have something else," Taylor said. "We must expand and promote the history of the county."

Preserving and promoting the county's history can also translate into a stronger economy, according to Sandra Smith, Executive Director of the Chamber. Smith said cultural tourism is the fastest-growing industry in North Carolina.

Bandy added that cultural tourists stay twice as long and spend 2.5 times more money than other tourists.

With that in mind, the Chamber recently received \$5,000 in matching funds from the Northeast Partnership to develop a new heritage and tourism brochure.

"Chowan and Pasquotank counties have both capitalized on their historic significance," Smith said. "Perquimans needs to do the same."

Chamber honors volunteers

By **SEAN JACKSON**
Correspondent

Parker Newbern and Susan Harris were named Volunteers of the Year by the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce during last Tuesday night's annual banquet.

Harris, editor of The Perquimans Weekly, and Newbern, Hertford's Public Works Director, are volunteers who work diligently to promote and improve the county but who expect nothing in return," said Paige Eure outgoing Chamber vice president.

"Write this down," Harris said as she accepted her award. "It's the first time you have seen me speechless."

Newbern, who serves as president of the Albemarle Firefighters Association, could

not attend the banquet because the firefighters were holding their annual banquet the same night. He was presented with his award by Chamber Executive Director Sandra Smith at the Chamber office on Wednesday morning. Like Harris, he was completely surprised by the honor.

Eure said last year was very successful for business recruitment. The chamber held 13 ribbon cuttings in Perquimans County. Newly-appointed Chamber president Laurence Chappell said he hopes this year will be just as successful.

The keynote speaker for the banquet was Rick Watson, executive director of North Carolina's Northeast Partnership. Communication and commitment are two keys

to building a better future for Perquimans' residents, Watson said.

He urged business leaders and county and town officials to stay focused and know what the majority of their citizens want.

Watson said Perquimans already has an abundance of resources that, if used properly, could help improve residents' quality of life.

"The Newbold-White House has tremendous potential from an historic perspective along," Watson said.

He said a museum honoring Hertford native and baseball legend Jim "Catfish" Hunter, in close proximity to the Newbold-White House, would maximize two of the county's more notable resources.

"There are plenty of



Parker Newbern and Susan Harris were named Volunteers of the Year by the Chamber of Commerce last week.

resources to draw upon for a successful future. They key is communication."

Also recognized during the banquet were new board members Rhonda Gregory, J. Carlton Cole, Kristy Peters,

Chris Lane, and Robert Baker Jr.; and outgoing members Larry Swindell, Alice Jean Winslow, Eure, Anna Wrae Smith and Billy Nixon. Swindell served as president in 1996.

Hertford gives stamp of approval to tennis court grant

By **SEAN JACKSON**
Correspondent

Todd Hunter's request to seek a state grant for new tennis courts in Hertford was approved by the Town Council Monday at the council's regular meeting.

Hunter, the county's recreation director, told the council that his plans are to build the new courts directly behind the library. The existing courts are not regulation size, Hunter said.

The site, presently owned by the town of Hertford, will be leased to the county for no less than 20 years to meet the specifications of the grant. Council members approved

the lease on the condition that the land be used for the construction of the courts only.

According to Hunter, the old courts could be temporarily used as a parking facility until a time when the Senior Citizens Center finds the funds to expand.

Hunter told council that consultants have quoted \$57,000 as the price to build the new courts, including lights, a 10-foot fence surrounding the courts and a regulation sized surface made of asphalt.

The council also heard Robert Baker's report on new developments with the county's economic development commission.

"The shell building is on track," said Baker, who is Executive Director of the Perquimans County Economic Development Commission. "The incubator building is back on track. The clients are coming in to look at these buildings. We think we may have worked out some terms that are favorable to the community."

One resident spoke to the council concerning the town's present state of having several dwellings and buildings in a condition of terminal disrepair.

"We can't do anything until he (the county's building inspector) inspects a building

or a dwelling and makes a decision," said Walter Edwards, town attorney. "The

law is very well defined. It's not like we haven't been doing anything."

Outside

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

Perquimans County
an
All of Us Care
Community

February's theme:

Know That You Count

focusing on
Tolerance
Cooperation
Responsibility
Teamwork
Win/Win

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