

The Perquimans Weekly 35¢

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Inside



John Beers
What DO you do? by Sean Jackson

Page 3



Blanche Berry
is 99 years young and a proud mother

Page 6



"It's only money"
All Over the Map

Page 4

Worship in Perquimans:
Great Hope Baptist
Page 5

DERBY DAY FUN



DAILY ADVANCE PHOTO

There was a good turnout for the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce's premiere Derby Day held Saturday at Albemarle Plantation. A Derby buffet, mint juleps and television broadcasts of the derby were highlights of this Chamber fund raiser.

Open Door opens once more

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

"We the churches of the Perquimans County area declare and establish this constitution to govern and administer the Perquimans County Relief Fund as good stewards of the resources entrusted to us by the Lord Jesus Christ for the assistance of those in need."

Board members and volunteers at the agency now known as The Open Door met last week to reiterate the message of the preamble to the group's original constitution. A ribbon cutting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce was held to celebrate the reopening and reorganization of Perquimans County's ecumenical outreach ministry.

Operated in Winfall, the Open Door provides food and financial assistance to those families who experience emergencies. Rosemary Rosenberg is the agency's director.

The Open Door is a year-round program begun in 1980 in the county by ministers and laypersons. Its purpose is to provide emergency assistance on a short-term basis to those whose needs cannot be met from other sources. According to the agency's constitution, the fund is a cooperative effort of churches to minister to the needs of individuals or families which result from disastrous, difficult, destitute and disadvantaged circumstances



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Volunteers, board members and local officials gathered in Winfall last Wednesday to celebrate the reopening of The Open Door, Perquimans County's ecumenical outreach ministry.

resulting from unavoidable situations.

Churches in the area who support the services by providing volunteer personnel, donating food and giving financial or in-kind support are members of the organization.

In addition to boxes of food which are prepared by trained volunteers to provide balanced meals, the agency may help meet an emergency payment of rent, utilities, fuel or medicine after all other resources have been exhausted. Payment is made by check to the company or department which is owed.

In order to more effectively

provide services to those in need, clients now may be asked to contact the Department of Social Services to see if that agency can assist the family before applying at The Open Door.

The ministry once received operating funds through a thrift shop that was run in conjunction with the emergency assistance center. Problems with the operation of the thrift store prompted the board of directors to close it.

The Open Door operates Monday, Wednesday and Friday mornings throughout the year. Trained volunteers assist Rosenberg in qualifying clients for assistance.

Let us pray



The Perquimans Central School Chorus presented a program of religious and patriotic music as over 200 people from across the county gathered on the courthouse lawn for the National Day of Prayer observance. Ministers and laypersons, young and old joined hands to pray for needs of the country, state and county.

Commission's fate uncertain

By SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The fate of the Albemarle Commission is still uncertain, but the agency did get a reprieve Monday when at least two of the 10 northeastern North Carolina counties who are members of the agency tabled a resolution to dissolve it.

The resolution was composed by county commissioners in five of the counties who met in Pasquotank last week to discuss the agency, which in recent years has had numerous financial woes and is now \$97,000 in debt.

Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory was one of the managers who met to discuss the troubled agency. He recommended to the Perquimans County Commissioners Monday that they approve the resolution. He said all five managers in the meeting were in favor of dissolution, and that three other managers who could not attend the meeting also supported the resolution. Perquimans, Camden, Chowan, Currituck, and Pasquotank managers were in last Tuesday's meeting, as were the managers of Elizabeth City and Columbia.

Gregory told the board he has been one of the main supporters of the commission and its new executive director, Tom Gard, but is concerned about problems and actions at the commission, including the recent firing of the agency's assistant director, Dick George.

"There is a severe problem out there at this time," Gregory said.

The county manager said he believes there should be some type of regional effort to operate those programs that are beneficial to the counties and towns in the region.

Commissioner Shirley Yates questioned Gregory concerning the lack of representation at the meeting by towns who are also members of the commission. Gregory said he was contacted and told that each county manager was responsible for contacting the towns in his or her county. Gregory said he called both Hertford Town Manager John Christensen and Winfall Mayor Fred Yates about the meeting.

Gregory added that while the towns were invited to pay dues and enjoy the services of the Albemarle Commission, they were never by resolution or legislation made a part of the Albemarle Commission.

Yates said immediately after Gregory made his resolution presentation that she thought the issue should be tabled until the June meeting to give commissioners time to study the commission's current problems.

Commissioners Chairman Charles Ward told Gard that he would suggest calling a meeting of all county commissioners and county managers before a decision is made on whether to disban the agency.

"The county managers don't speak for the county commissioners," Ward said.

Ward said there is a need for a regional organization of some kind.

Commissioner Bert Hayes asked Gard what effect tabling action on the resolution would have on the commission. Gard said that he cannot hire a finance officer for the agency because he feels it would be unfair to hire someone with the future of the commission in question.

Hayes later asked why there is discussion about disbanding the organization instead of dealing with the present problems then moving forward.

Ward answered that the commission may have to be dissolved and regrouped because some members of the present commission board of directors may not agree to change the structure of the commission board and its organization.

One of the major concerns about the commission is its 68-member board of directors. Complaints of too many members and too few who attend on a regular basis have cropped up regularly over the years. With such a large body, it seems to most who have spoken out that true oversight is unlikely.

Regionally, Perquimans, Camden, Hyde and Gates tabled the issue. Pasquotank, Dare and Chowan voted to dissolve the commission. Currituck did not discuss the resolution.

The Albemarle Commission, formed 27 years ago as a planning and development organization that also administers regional programs for aging and nutrition, job training and small business loans.

Recently the commission learned that it owed the state Division of Employment and Training \$97,000 for misused Job Training Partnership Act monies. After Albemarle Commission officials asked the 10 members counties to pay off the debt, the county managers called their meeting to discuss the organization's future.

Even if those counties that took no action Monday do not vote to dissolve the commission, it will be difficult to operate without Pasquotank County, the largest county member. In addition to adopting the resolution, Pasquotank County Commissioners voted to give notice to the commission that they intend to withdraw their membership. That action would take two years.

Outside

THURSDAY		FRIDAY		SATURDAY	
High: 70s	Low: 40s	High: 70s	Low: 50s	High: 60s	Low: 40s
PARTLY CLOUDY		CHANCE OF RAIN		PARTLY CLOUDY	

Perquimans County
an
All of Us Care
Community

April's theme:

Value and enjoy our environment
focusing on

Reduce, Reuse, Recycle
Conserve resources

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