

The Perquimans Weekly

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Be safe on Halloween

Halloween is here and trick-or-treaters will be roaming neighborhoods across North Carolina in search of goodies. Insurance Commissioner Jim Long reminds everyone that despite the fun of Halloween, it is also one of the most dangerous nights of the year.

"Pedestrian injuries, burns and falls account for the majority of injuries on Halloween," said Long. "As Insurance Commissioner and Chair of the North Carolina SAFE KIDS Coalition, I am dedicated to preventing childhood injuries and helping homeowners avoid costly insurance claims on their property."

Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said the town will observe trick-or-treat hours Saturday, 2-5 p.m. He said that last year's incident-free Halloween celebration during daylight hours prompted him to set similar hours this year. He said children should be accompanied by adults or older, responsible teenagers as they make their way through town.

Perquimans County Sheriff Ralph Robinson said those who trick-or-treat in the county should obey all traffic laws, and extra care should be taken for traffic stops and starts.

The North Carolina SAFE KIDS Coalition is dedicated solely to the prevention of unintentional childhood injuries. The North Carolina Department of Insurance is the lead agency for the state coalition and is one of more than 200 local and state SAFE KIDS coalitions in the country. To learn more about SAFE KIDS, call your local coalition or contact the NC Department of Insurance's Office of the State Fire Marshal at 1-800-634-7854.

Commissioner Long, SAFE KIDS and local law enforcement offer the following Halloween safety tips:

Children and parents

Inspect all Halloween treats before eating.

Avoid wearing masks that will hinder children's vision. Apply face paint or cosmetics directly to the face.

Carry a flashlight and use retro reflective tape on costume to see and be seen easily.

Wear a flame-resistant costume in which children can easily walk and avoid tripping. Wear only shoes that fit. Adult shoes are not appropriate for trick-or-treaters as they can trip and fall.

Carry only flexible props such as knives and swords; remember anything that children carry can injure them if they fall.

Stay on the sidewalks, do not cut across yards - lawn ornaments and clotheslines may be invisible in the dark.

Cross only at corners and look left-right-left before crossing. Never dart out from between parked cars.

Homeowners

Turn all outside lights on. Leave them on all night to deter vandalism.

Repair walkways, railings and steps leading to your home. Keep walkways and steps clear of decorations and debris such as fallen leaves which tend to get slippery when damp.

Don't use candles in Halloween decorations which may come in close contact with trick-or-treater's costumes.

Move cars, bikes, planters and items normally left outside to a locked garage or inside the house to deter theft or vandalism.

Swimming pool owners, be sure the pool's cover is secure, gates are locked and lights are on around the pool.

Candidates' forum draws small crowd

Local candidates share basic platforms

By SEAN JACKSON

With a crowd of more than 50 county residents on hand, local political candidates addressed their platform issues during a Meet the Candidates forum at the county courthouse last Thursday night.

The event was sponsored by the Hertford Business and Professional Woman's Club.

One hand for the event were the four candidates running

for three slots on Perquimans County's Board of Commissioners, the two candidates for sheriff, Clerk of Court Gail Godwin, two superior court judge candidates, and the two candidates for the N.C. House of Representatives' 86th District seat.

After preliminary remarks by HBPW members, county commissioner candidate Ben Hobbs opened the forum. Hobbs, a Republican, is running against incumbents Mack Nixon, Evelyn Stubbins and Charles Ward — all Democrats — for a spot on the county board.

All candidates were asked to address their qualifications and intentions for making a

difference in their respective offices, if elected Nov. 3. Each candidate was given five minutes to speak.

Hobbs, who served two terms as a member of the Perquimans County Board of Education, said that he would ensure that county tax dollars were spent wisely.

"I don't have a (spending) program, but I do have an idea of what I want," said Hobbs. "I think taxes should be as low as possible."

Hobbs also said that industrial growth is a necessity, but that growth should not hinder the county's current quality of life.

"It is not progress if we lose quality of life," he said. "We do

need more jobs. I think the Commerce Centre is the right way (to increase jobs.)"

Growth in the tourism industry, Hobbs said, is another way to increase the county's tax base.

Nixon, running for his third term on the board, followed Hobbs. Nixon touted the board's record of securing funding for capital projects at Hertford Grammar and Perquimans Central schools — more than \$9 million — without a tax increase.

"We're not going to spend money unless it's absolutely necessary," he promised.

Nixon said that the Commerce Centre is expected to receive a letter of intent

from a prospective occupant "any day" and that industrial growth will continue through the efforts of the county commissioners.

Nixon said that he has assisted on a number of ongoing projects and would like to serve another four years to see those projects completed.

Stubbins, a retired educator who is running for re-election after serving three years on the board, cited two priority issues — welfare reform and county youth — as her cause for running.

WorkFirst, she said, is reducing the county's funding-assistance cases, but residents

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DONATION CHALLENGE.

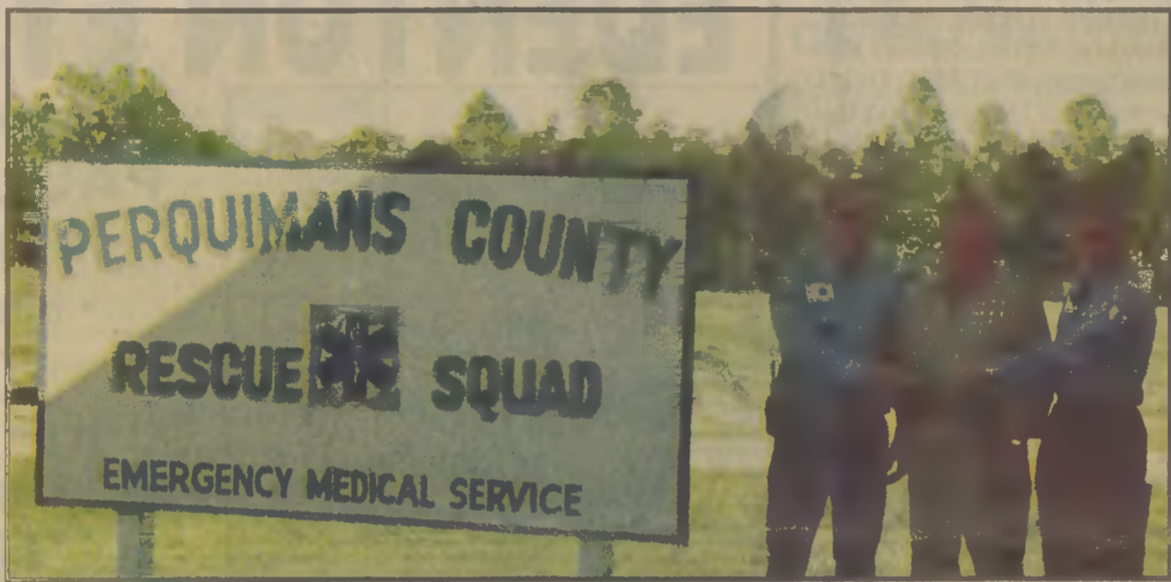


PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Frank Polanish of Albemarle Plantation issued a challenge to county residents to match his \$650 contribution to the Perquimans County Rescue Squad. Polanish displayed his boat last spring at a yard sale sponsored by Plantation residents to benefit the volunteer rescue squad. He pledged to give a portion of the proceeds on the 21-foot skiff to the rescue squad if the boat sold as a result of the yard sale. The boat deal was completed recently and, true to his word, Polanish called the squad and made his donation to squad treasurer Billy Winslow (left) and Captain Mary White. Winslow and White said the donation will be used to help equipment ambulances with vital equipment.

Hertford would benefit from state bond OK

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

Editor

Hertford officials have endorsed a statewide bond measure that could bring grants and low-interest loans to help offset the cost of the town's needed \$4.8 million water and wastewater upgrades and expansion.

"North Carolina's towns and cities need to address critical needs now before it's too late," said Hertford Mayor John G. Beers. "These bonds will keep our water safe and clean and help spread economic prosperity to all areas of the state."

The statewide bonds would provide \$800 million in loans

and grants to local governments to build new water and sewer treatment facilities, expand capacity to new businesses and homes and upgrade deteriorating facilities. The bonds would also provide \$200 million to connect underserved areas to natural gas lines. Beers said Hertford could qualify for some of the bond funds.

Town Manager John Christensen said state bonds could make funding Hertford's utility upgrades less costly for its residents.

"When the voters approve the bond issues, that money could be a potential source for

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Four go for three county board seats

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

Editor

Three Democratic incumbents and one Republican challenger will vie for three available seats on the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners Tuesday.

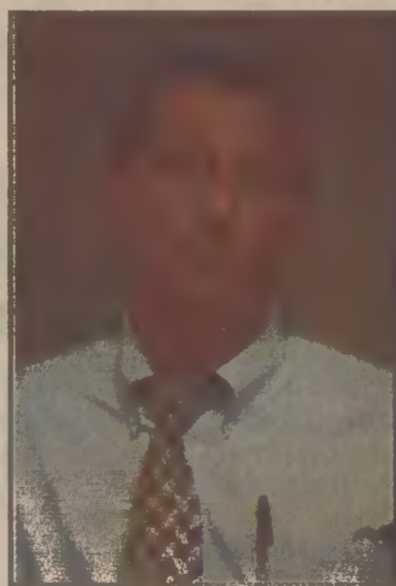
Ben Hobbs will take on Mack Nixon, Evelyn Stubbins and Charles Ward, the three incumbents.

Each candidate was asked a series of questions regarding why they are seeking office, what qualities they bring to the board that would make them good members, and the role of local government in economic development, paving private roads, wastewater treatment and garbage pick-up. Each candidate was asked to rate Perquimans County government on a scale of 1-10 with 1 being poor and 10 being superior. Their answers and their personal profiles in reverse alphabetical order.

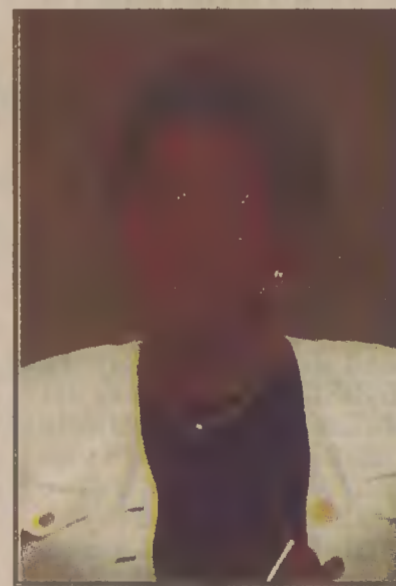
Present commissioners chairman Charles Ward



Ben Hobbs



Mack Nixon



Evelyn Stubbins



Charles Ward

served on the board from 1980-1984 before being re-elected in 1994. Ward, 60, is a Perquimans County High School graduate who left the county to attend apprentice school at Newport News Shipbuilding before returning to the area in the 1970s. The merchant and his wife, Alice Jeanne, live in Bethel.

Ward is seeking another term on the board for what he said others might think is a corny reason.

"I think a lot of Perquimans County and I try to do what I can to try to help," Ward said. He said in light of his contacts on the state level through various boards and commissions, he can help the county in ways that those without those contacts may not be able to.

He believes one of the qualities that make him a good commissioner is his financial skill. "I try to spend the county's money just like it was my own," Ward said. "I try to make sure that we get all the

services we need and at the same time not get too extravagant."

Ward said the tax rate has remained steady during his present tenure on the board, and part of the reason is because he and the other commissioners have turned down some requests for funding.

"You have to say no to frivolous things or else you'd have to raise taxes every year," he said.

Government should play a large role in economic development, according to Ward.

"I think it needs to play a big role, the county and the state (governments) both," Ward said. "I was really instrumental in getting this industrial park. That's one reason I'd like to see another term, I'd like to see the park begin development. We're working closely with three or four businesses now. But the county has to have the services ready, the infrastructure likes roads." Before the land

purchase for the commerce centre, Ward said the county lost potential businesses because a suitable site could not be found with a willing seller.

Ward said garbage collection is a county function and that wastewater is presently a state function. However, he said that local governments may eventually have to get involved with wastewater because of new environmental rules. He said if septic tanks are not allowed in years to come, local governments may be forced to stop development or adopt county-wide sewage plans.

Roads, he said, are a state function. The commissioners routinely pass along requests for county roads to be taken over by the state to DOT.

Ward would rate Perquimans County government a 9.

"I serve on a lot of boards, but the county commissioners in Perquimans County work

just as good as anything I've ever been associated with," Ward said. "We have diverse backgrounds, but we get together in one accord. I'm proud to be a part of it."

Retired educator Evelyn Stubbins, 55, had just planned to serve out the unexpired term of David Bines to which she was appointed by the county commissioners. But she found that she enjoyed her foray into public office and opted to run her first campaign this year.

"I have this wealth of experience from the last three years," Stubbins said. "My original intent was just to fill the term. Once I got involved, I really found that I enjoyed it. I feel I can help do things by being on the board."

One of the qualities Stubbins feels makes her a good commissioner is that she strives to help all people, and has no personal agenda.

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