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Computers get CPR in PCHS class

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

Editor

CPR is giving old computers new life at Perquimans High School.

Students in C.D. White's computer engineering technology class are operating on outdated computers and turning them into up-to-date machines. Then, the computers are placed in classrooms for use.

The CPR program was initiated by ExplorNet, a 501-(c)(3) non-profit corporation in North Carolina with a mission to improve and expand technology-based learning in North Carolina's schools, particularly rural and low-wealth schools. The ExplorNet Learning Project uses a public-private partnership approach to encourage communities to coordinate resources from government, businesses and individuals for maximum effectiveness and minimum public expenditure.

The local program got a boost Monday when State Senator Marc Basnight presented the school system with a check from the General Assembly for \$12,000 to help fund the program during a luncheon attended by school, business and community representatives.

According to Dave Boliek, president of ExplorNet, the CPR program has many positive benefits. First, it gives students hands-on training in technology, a very promising career option for students. CPR also advances a communi-



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

State Senator Marc Basnight (back row, left) presents a \$12,000 check from the North Carolina General Assembly to PCHS computer engineering technology teacher C.D. White and his students (left to right) Paul Spence, Joey Manning and Joey Harrell, for the ComputeRecycling Project.

ty's economic development efforts by providing needed job skills.

"There is more computer power in your car today than there was in the first lunar landing," Boliek said to illustrate the explosion in technology over the past 30 years.

Boliek said the business community had been asked to donate old computers for use in schools, but often the machines were not usable because they were obsolete or broken. Through CPR, the old machines can be updated and allow more student access to technology. In addition, students can in many cases now fix and maintain computers already in place.

CPR makes efficient use of available funds, Boliek said. While new computers can cost several hundred or even thousands of dollars, students can

rebuild and upgrade computers for \$300-800 per unit.

Last year, there were six CPR sites with 106 students rebuilding 250 computers. This year, there are 51 sites with 1,300 students and they anticipate rebuilding 4,000 computers. Local school boards have saved an estimated \$4.3 million. The legislature has spent only \$1 million on the program.

"Kids get skills. Schools get computers. Communities become more attractive for economic development," Boliek said, explaining that CPR is a win-win program.

"I'll tell you, this is the most exciting thing I've seen in seven years," White said. "ExplorNet has done a super job. It's a very positive program. There's nothing but good in this ExplorNet program."

Three students, all seniors in White's class, told how the program has helped them. Paul Spence, Joey Manning and Joey Harrell have difference plans following graduation in June — one will go to NC State, one has enlisted in service, and one will go to a technical school — yet all said the program will help them meet their career goals.

Basnight said that he will suggest the creation of a subcommittee under appropriations to address technology needs. He said the state must use technology to the fullest. He added that the state must do a better job of balancing the needs of rural areas.

School board chairman Wallace Nelson praised the students and staff in the county for looking for non-traditional ways to meet education's changing needs.

Commissioners reluctantly OK mobile home park in Bethel

Developer's adherence to park ordinance leaves board no choice put to OK

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

Editor

Backed into a corner with little maneuvering room, the Perquimans County Commissioner approved the plat for Burnt Mill Mobile Home Park Monday.

The vote came after a protracted discussion punctuated with finger-pointing, second-guessing and hesitation to approve the park even though its development is moving in accordance with regulations set by the commissioners.

Pete Proctor, a Bethel resident who lives near the mobile home park being developed at the 5-mile Y, said a soils specialist connected with N.C. State University had shared with him concerns about drainage and septic tank installation in the park. Proctor declined to name the specialist with whom he spoke.

Brent Wise of Benchmark Surveying, speaking on behalf of developer Phillip Harrington, countered that PPCC District Health Department has approved the development. He said PPCC personnel felt that the soil is adequate for septic tanks in the 32-lot park. Wise added that the health department will check each lot individually prior to the installation of septic tanks.

Herbert Mullen, attorney for Harrington, told commissioners that Ralph Hollowell, a certified soil scientist with PPCC, approved the site.

"Your certified, registered soil scientist, Ralph Hollowell, has approved this," Mullen said.

County manager Paul Gregory confirmed that both Hollowell, a PPCC supervisor, and specialist Johyn Morgan had reviewed the site.

Commissioner Ben Hobbs said it appeared that the differences in opinion over the drainage and capacity of the lots to support septic tanks were professional conflicts between soil scientists. He said the commissioners had to approve the park because the developer followed county ordinances.

Bert Hayes made a motion to approve the park; however, he added that he was doing so reluctantly and only because the developer had followed the county ordinance.

Silence followed the motion. "Let me say this, I don't know what Mr. Mullen has in mind, but I suspect we'll hear from him in another venue," county attorney John Matthews said, alluding to possible legal action if the board did not approve the plat.

Gregory said that per the county regulations, no construction should have begun

until it was approved by the commissioners. However, the planning board has traditionally allowed development to begin in compliance with regulations pending final approval. There has been no problem with that procedure in the past, Gregory added.

He also reminded commissioners that their approval of the park only allowed construction to continue subject to county ordinance. Mobile homes cannot be moved into the park until all obligations of the developer are met.

Shirley Yates complained that the planning board did not inform commissioners when the mobile home park request was received.

Gregory responded that he would take the blame for the commissioners not being aware of the proposed park. He added that in order to keep the situation from repeating itself, the commissioners now get copies of planning board minutes. He said the only mistake the planning board made was to allow the developer to proceed prior to the board's approval.

The mobile home park ordinance adopted by the county in 1987 is stringent, and Harrington is being required to put in county water, septic tanks, paved streets, street lights, parking pads and fire hydrants in addition to a 10-foot buffer zone of green planting around the park. The park ordinance is much stricter than the subdivision ordinance.

Matthews told commissioners that planning board members are volunteers who work hard and devote a lot of time to their duties. He said they proceeded as usual with the mobile home park request, followed the rules and didn't anticipate the opposition to the park.

Finally, Hobbs seconded fellow Republican Hayes' motion to approve the park. Hobbs said the developer followed the ordinance and hinted that there could be legal repercussions to the county if the park was not approved. In the end, there were no dissenting votes.

Hayes ended the discussion by saying that the fault for the mobile home park development belonged to the commissioners, not the planning board, health department or any other entity. The park was developed in accordance with the county's ordinances, he said.

Last month, commissioners chairman Charles Ward appointed Gregory, Matthews, Shirley Yates and himself to a committee to review the county's mobile home park ordinances after several neighbors of the Burnt Mill park voiced opposition to its development, citing land devaluation and environmental concerns.

Among those options banded about by commissioners in December were requiring a minimum lot size of one acre, imposing impact fees, allowing doublewides only and total size restrictions.



Daily Advance photos

Both Perquimans varsity basketball teams celebrate hitting the jackpot in The Daily Advance Four-County Holiday Basketball Classic last week. The Lady Pirates slipped past Edenton before the Pirates knocked off host Camden in two existing, down-to-the-wire contests. For game wrap-ups, please turn to page 3.

County meeting time will not change

By SUSAN R. HARRIS

The county commissioners will continue to hold their regular monthly meetings at 3 o'clock in the afternoon.

Commissioner Ben Hobbs said he was concerned that the board's mid-afternoon meeting time made it inconvenient for many people to attend the monthly business sessions. He added that some people cannot leave work to attend board

meetings.

ARchie Miller said that often the audience disperses at 5 o'clock even if the board is still in session.

Charles Ward, who sat on the board when there were both morning and evening meeting times, said he noticed no difference in attendance regardless of the meeting schedule.

Bert Hayes, who also brought up changing the meet-

ing time early in his term of office, said the idea of changing the time is to offer the opportunity for more people to attend, not to determine whether more would actually attend.

County Manager Paul Gregory explained that in the past, the commissioners met on both the first and third Mondays of each month. One meeting was held at 10 a.m. and the other in the evening.

The decision was made to meet only once, he said, because there was not enough business for two meetings. The 3 p.m. time was chosen so that county employees having to appear before the board were already in town. He said the board also decided at that time that accommodation would be made for residents wishing to appear before the board who could not arrive at 3 p.m. He has had no requests for that accommodation, he added.