

# The Perquimans Weekly

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Vol. 67, No. 2

The only newspaper for and about Perquimans County people

Hertford, North Carolina 27944

## Sewer problems don't flush with Hertford man

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

Sewage back-ups into the showers of his rental properties don't flush with Crafton Matthews.

Matthews said that on eight occasions over the last two months, the town's sewage lines have backed up into a single family rental cottage he owns at the end of Perquimans Street overlooking the river. His son's family, occupants of the house, have not been able to stay in the house on those occasions, Matthews said. In addition, the recently-renovated house has damage to the shower unit, vinyl and sub-floor in the bathroom, as well as to the hardwood floors in other parts of the house.

"It smells like a hogpen," Matthews said of the days

when the sewer has backed up into the house. "There's no way anybody could stay in there."

There have also been at least two occasions when the sewage has backed up into the duplex Matthews owns next door.

Matthews said he had spoken with town manager John Christensen on several occasions and has also called the town's maintenance employees several times to come and try to fix the problem.

When the back-up occurred for the eighth time last Wednesday night, Matthews said he went to the home of town councilman Billy Winslow and also spoke with town attorney Walter Edwards. He said Thursday morning he planned to contact an attorney and the health

department before the end of the day.

Part of the problem, Matthews said, was a malfunction at the pumping station on Grubb Street.

In a letter to Matthews dated Jan. 11, Christensen stated that the town had been plagued with faulty equipment supplied by vendors, and had spent close to \$20,000 to improve the sewer system and its reliability.

Christensen also explained that the town's manhole at the end of Perquimans Street is very shallow and its lid is above the level of the rental units' sewer facilities. If the manhole fills, Christensen said the sewage comes up at the lowest point, which is Matthews' rental unit on the river.

"This house would not be

allowed to be built at its elevation under today's building codes, it would have to be built at a level above our facilities," Christensen wrote.

Christensen added that no other properties have been adversely affected by sewage back-ups.

"There are no other properties on that part of the system that have this problem including your own house," Christensen wrote. "Therefore we have not had a problem except at the end of the street where the property is too low."

Matthews' house is located on the same tract of land as the rental properties, at the corner of Perquimans and Grubb streets.

Christensen suggested that Matthews install a back flow device on his sewer line. The device, which costs around

\$15, is designed to only let fluid flow in one direction, and would keep the sewage from backing up into the rental house.

Matthews said that Christensen had told him about the device, but said that he had replaced all the water and sewer lines running to his property during the renovations. Because his lines are properly installed, Matthews contends that the town is responsible for installing any device needed to keep the sewage from backing up into his units.

Christensen also told Matthews that he had not reported all the utility problems through the proper channels which slowed the town's response time.

On one occasion in December, Christensen said,

Matthews stopped a town maintenance worker and reported the problem to him. Just following the report, the worker's father-in-law was killed and he left to be with his family. The information was not passed along, and town officials were unaware of the problem until the next day when Matthews visited the town office to find out why the problem was not fixed. By the time maintenance employees were called in, the pump station controls were destroyed due to flooding, requiring the \$20,000 in repairs. The proper procedure for reporting utility problems is to call the town office during business hours or the communications department after hours, Christensen said.

Matthews did not appear before council Monday.

## HGS, Central building projects almost complete

HGS moves this week; Central move planned for Saturday

By SUSAN R. HARRIS  
Editor

Students, staff and parents will learn some lessons as Perquimans County Schools prepares to occupy the new elementary school in Winfall.

Saturday has been designated Parent Move Day, and many parents and other adult volunteers have already signed up to help begin moving supplies, equipment and furniture into the brand-new facility immediately behind the old Central School. Volunteers will meet at 8:30 a.m. in the main hall of the old school to get organized for the event. The volunteers will hand move all boxes, student desks and other supplies and materials. Maintenance employees will be on hand to assist with moving teacher desks and other heavy items.

Work will stop at 11 a.m. for a hot dog lunch in the spacious new cafeteria, and end for the day around 3 p.m.

Next Tuesday is a teacher work day, so many Central teachers will probably be in their classrooms preparing for students to return on Wednesday.

To prepare students for the move, each class will tour the building and become familiar with the location of their classroom on Friday morning, according to Schools Public Relations Director Brenda Lassiter.

There will also be some changes in student drop-off and pick-up procedures beginning Wednesday. Only the driveway that runs behind the new school will be used for both buses and private vehicles. Neither the drive in front



SUBMITTED PHOTO

The new Central School will open to students next Wednesday when students return from the Martin Luther King holiday and teacher workday. Saturday, parents will help move equipment, supplies and students desks into the building.

of the old school or between the new and old facilities will be available for use due to the preparation for and demolition of the old school, which should begin on Feb. 1.

In the morning, both buses and private vehicles dropping off students should drive to the back of the new building to drop off students. Students in grades 1 and 2 will be housed in the first wing. Head Start, pre-kindergarten and kindergarten students will attend class in the last wing. The center wing is home to the common areas such as administrative offices, cafeteria/multipurpose room, and media center.

Just prior to school dismissal in the afternoons, the buses will arrive and line up on the drive behind the new building. Students riding the buses will exit the rear of the building to board the buses. Private vehicles will not be allowed to enter school proper-

ty until approximately 2:45 p.m., when all the buses have arrived. Once all buses are parked, private vehicles may begin lining up behind the buses. Private vehicles may not travel around the buses, but must wait until all buses are off school property before departing.

In addition, private vehicles may not park on the sides of the road in front of the school.

Winfall Police Chief David Shaffer will be on hand on moving day, and will also assist with traffic control as parents become accustomed to the new pick-up procedures.

Once demolition is complete, the new parking loop and parent drop-off pick-up loops in front of the new school will be constructed as soon as weather and construction completion on the new building permits, according to Schools Superintendent Gregory Todd. Todd said the surfaces of all the drive and parking areas will be installed

at one time, so it may be next school year before the areas are complete.

Todd also said school officials and Kahn Construction Company are working with the demolition contractor to make available the white keystones, two wooden archways and bricks from the old building. Todd said school and construction teams are working together to try to incorporate the archways into the new structure.

Final plans for allowing people in the community who would like to have a brick or other memento from the old building are not in place. However, Todd said that the school's PTA may be able to offer these items at a later date. Information will be available as the demolition and clean-up progress, he said.

In the meantime, the property will be cordoned off from the drive in front of the old school all the way around the building to include the drive



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Hertford Grammar School and school maintenance staffs worked together last week to move the administrative offices and media center into new quarters. The extensive renovation at that site is almost complete.

between the two buildings. No one will be able to enter that area for safety purposes, he said.

Kahn Construction held a preview luncheon and tour of the new facility last Thursday for school and county officials and staff. Todd said an open house and formal dedication of both Central and Hertford Grammar schools will be scheduled at a later date.

Last week, Hertford Grammar staff began moving the administrative offices and media center into their new homes. The media center is housed in what was the school's cafeteria prior to the renovations. The administrative area has been expanded to include the former media cen-

ter. Hertford Grammar moved into the new building, which houses classrooms and a new cafeteria/multipurpose room, earlier in the year.

Todd said buses at Hertford Grammar are presently using both the front loop and the new loop on the west end of the building. He said officials are working to improve bus traffic at that site.

By February, each classroom at both elementary schools will be wired voice, data and video lines. There will be a telephone in each classroom to allow office to classroom communication. The wiring will also allow expansion of technology to the individual classrooms.

## Local fire department receives state grant

From news release

Insurance Commissioner and State Fire Marshal Jim Long announced that a state grant in the amount of \$20,000 was awarded to the Belvidere-Chappell Hill Fire Department. The check was presented to Chief Jimmy Chappell by Max Powell, Deputy Commissioner of the Eastern Regional Office.

"North Carolina is fortunate to have such a large number of dedicated fire and res-

cue volunteers, and I am very pleased to assist their efforts," said Long. "These grants help volunteer fire personnel provide essential services to their communities by allowing them to spend more time training in the latest fire suppression methods, and less time fundraising."

The Volunteer Fire Department Grant Fund was created by the General Assembly in 1988 to help volunteer units raise money for firefighting equipment and

supplies. The funds are matching grants — the state matches dollar-for-dollar, up to an approved amount, monies raised locally to purchase necessary equipment. During Long's tenure, his department has distributed over \$26 million in grant money to fire and rescue departments across the state. The total amount of the grants approved for Perquimans County to date exceeds \$208,000.

"The Department of

Insurance is committed to our fire and rescue volunteers who provide a vital service to the people of Perquimans County," said Long. "We salute these volunteers for their dedication to protecting the lives of others. I am honored that North Carolina is able financially to assist local volunteer fire and rescue departments across the state. I am confident that this grant will enhance rescue operations in Perquimans County."

### Weekend weather

Thursday Jan. 14	Friday Jan. 15	Saturday Jan. 16
High 50s Low 40s	High 50s Low 40s	High 50s Low 40s
Chance of rain	Chance of rain	Chance of rain
Have a great weekend!		