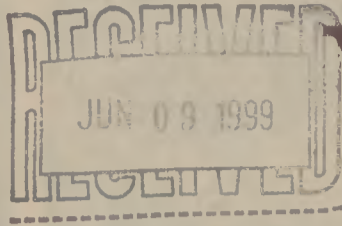


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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

June 10, 1999

Vol. 67, No. 22 Hertford, North Carolina 27944



35 cents

Flag Day ceremony planned for downtown

From Staff Reports

A very special American flag will be flown in downtown Hertford on Flag Day.

On June 14, Aaron Hoffer, Cub Cadet, U.S. Navy Memorial, will present a flag previously flown at Utah Beach, at the American Cemetery on Omaha Beach and at Arlington National Cemetery to local veterans. The veterans will then raise the 8'x12' flag across Church Street.

A roll call of veterans killed during World War II will follow the flag raising. Then a bell will be rung 21 times by Hoffer.

In addition to having flown at significant sites in Europe and Washington, D.C., the flag received blessing from priests from the American Battle Monuments Commission at the American Cemetery and at the chapel of the church at St. Mere' Eglise. The church is known for the paratrooper hanging on the steeple during D-Day operations.

The Flag Day observance will begin at noon when Hoffer leaves Holy Trinity Episcopal Church with the flag, accompanied by Hertford police officers as color guards. The procession will walk to the courthouse square.

Boy Scout Troop 163 of Elizabeth City and 4-Hers from Perquimans County will hand out flags and display a banner commemorating the Army's birthday, which is also June 14.

Master of ceremonies will be Marine Corp veteran Charles Skinner.

Handicapped parking will be available on the courthouse side of Church Street.

For further information, call Jack Hoffer at 264-3813.

Local chamber earns state honors

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce has earned accolades from the N.C. Technological Development Authority, Inc.

The Chamber was tapped to receive the TDA's Chamber of Commerce of the Year Award. According to written information received from TDA by the

Chamber, the award honors individuals and organizations that have made significant contributions to the development of the small business community and the state.

The award will be presented on June 22 at the Governor's Entrepreneurial Awards Ceremony in Raleigh.

"The Chamber has worked diligently to make a difference in this community through contributions to small busi-

ness and heritage tourism development," said Executive Director Sandra Williams Smith. "It is gratifying for the efforts of our staff, board and volunteers to be recognized on this level."

The Chamber was one of the first local organizations to acknowledge the economic benefits of heritage tourism to the community. Along with the Perquimans County Restoration Association, the

Chamber has been instrumental in efforts to gain attention from state and federal agencies to receive assistance with heritage tourism development. The Chamber put thousands of dollars into the research and reports required to be completed and submitted in order to get the county's historic districts included on the National Register of Historic Places. The Old Neck and Belvidere districts are among only a

handful of rural districts in the nation. The Chamber was also an integral component in organizing and promoting the Historic Hertford Walking Tour and the Perquimans County Driving Tour.

In addition, Smith has attended numerous small business and tourism development workshops and leadership conferences in an effort to remain on the leading edge of economic development for the area.

COUNTY SONG ILLUSTRATED



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Mary White, owner of The Wishing Well in downtown Hertford, was named winner of the contest sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce to illustrate the cover of the cassette for "Beautiful Morning," the song the chamber adopted as the county song recently. White painted her conception of the words to the song on a stool, which was made by local carpenter Bobby White. She presented the stool to Jon Strother, author of both the lyrics and music to "Beautiful Morning." The chamber is having the song produced with financial assistance from Albemarle Plantation.

County changes EDC by-laws

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

The county's second economic developer will be directly answerable to the county manager.

That was the result of a change in the EDC by-laws the commissioners okayed Monday. Further, the by-laws now state that the executive director serves at the pleasure of the board. That stipulation means that the county would not have to show cause to fire the employee.

The former by-laws made the executive director of the county's economic development department answerable to the Economic Development Commission. The commission is a board with volunteer members appointed by the county and towns of Hertford and Winfall. County Manager Paul Gregory and at least one commissioner, chairman Charles Ward, thought the executive director should be answerable to the manager.

Ward said the county's first economic development director, Robert Baker Jr., sometimes could not be contacted for several days, but was not answerable to anyone.

"Everyone has somebody to be answerable to," Gregory said when commissioners Bert Hayes and Shirley Yates questioned the move. Gregory said all department managers report directly to him and he in turn reports to the board of commissioners. Like the economic development director, Gregory said he also serves at the pleasure of the board.

Hayes said the county will have a difficult time finding a new executive director, especially a seasoned professional, because he will have "zero latitude." He said the employee should be on the same level as the county manager.

Yates likewise expressed concerns, stating that the job description seemed elementary.

The commissioners initially advertised for someone with experience in economic development and planning who could also serve as assistant county manager. Problems finding someone to fit that description has led the board to readvertise for an economic developer only.

Ward said three of 16 original applicants were interviewed, but were not what the board was looking for.

Tax rate to remain constant for 6th straight year

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

County residents will pay the same tax rate they've been paying for five years if the commissioners approve the budget submitted to them by County Manager Paul Gregory Monday.

Gregory's budget calls for a tax rate of 78 cents per \$100 valuation for the sixth year in a row.

Taxpayers will get a chance to speak on the \$7.4 million budget during a public hearing on June 21 at 7 p.m. in the commissioners' meeting room of the courthouse annex.

Gregory attributed the flat tax rate to good planning by the commissioners.

"Good planning by the commissioners has over the past 8 years put us where we are today; and good planning will allow for the continuation of the positive direction Perquimans County now takes," he stated in his budget message.

Gregory said that slow, positive, progressive growth in the county's commerce center and heritage tourism development are the directions the county

should take. He said that the county must maintain the lifestyle, character and natural environment, which together are the reasons people choose to live in Perquimans.

"It is ... very important that every person living in Perquimans County become a true stakeholder in economic development through both business/job creation and heritage (historic) tourism," Gregory summed up his message.

The only negative note in the budget message was a \$10 increase in the per household solid waste fee to \$75. The county expects to spend \$416,366 through its solid waste fund and \$303,840 for sanitation.

The largest chunk of revenue will come to the county from property taxes, over \$3.7 million; sales taxes, \$1,267,810; and social services grants of \$874,000. The county also expects to sell its first lots at the commerce center, which is expected to bring in \$105,000.

Schools will receive the lion's share of local funds, with over \$2 million going to education. The schools will receive a county appropriation

topping \$1.3 million for current expense, added to an estimated \$96,000 in fines and forfeitures.

In capital outlay, the schools will get \$192,000 from sales tax and \$58,000 in general fund appropriations for a total of \$250,000. This is the second year of an agreement between the county and school board that the schools' capital outlay budget will not exceed \$250,000. The agreement was reached when the county agreed to borrow over \$2 million for facilities replacement and renovation.

Repaying loans for renovations and replacements will cost \$368,868 next year.

The Department of Social Services will use \$1.7-plus of the \$7.4 million budget. Salaries will account for \$538K, with Medicaid expected to use \$400,000. Child day care is the only other six-figure line item at \$220,726. Gregory reminded commissioners that there are both state and federal mandates on the social services budget.

Law enforcement will gobble over \$374,000. Salaries will take the largest chunk of those funds, at \$223,912. The depart-

ment plans to use \$10,000 of its drug forfeiture funds to join a task force. The department also brings in revenue of about \$28,000 in fees.

Maintaining the county's buildings will take over \$368K. The amount includes utilities, all maintenance, salaries, insurance and bonds, and equipment and building repair.

Emergency medical services expenses will exceed \$300K. Full time salaries will run about \$114,500, with part-time help at \$45,000. A new ambulance will run the capital outlay expense to over \$85,000. The EMS does bring in about \$80,000 in ambulance fees.

Collecting the county's biggest revenue source will cost over \$271K. The tax department will receive that amount next year. Over \$26,000 of that budget will be used to upgrade and replace equipment in conjunction with the mapping and other projects. The county will also complete the mapping project in 1999-2000, which will run \$15,600. That should be the final payments on the almost decade-long project.

The communications department, formerly dis-

patch, will cost \$257,000 to operate. Aside from salaries at \$119,823, the largest line item is \$45,000 for repair on the county's communications tower. The department will also spend almost \$30,000 on equipment needed to fully implement the E-911 system.

Another item in the budget is \$250,000 to be spent for water and sewer construction in the commerce center. The costs will be offset by a \$150,000 state grant and a \$100,000 Rural Center grant.

Economic development will cost \$204,750.

Under special appropriations, the county will spend \$253,560 on jail fees and the library will get just over \$100K.

The water system, which has a separate budget, will receive and spend over \$1 million. The sale of water and taps and connections should bring in \$986,417 of that amount.

In addition, the over \$1.75 million will be spent through phase III of the water system renovation and expansion currently underway.

A copy of the budget is available for inspection in the county manager's office during normal business hours.