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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Friday is Perquimans Night for Steamers

SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

Folks from Perquimans County will be the special guests Friday night when the Edenton Steamers take on the Durham Braves at historic Hicks Field in Edenton.

Friday has been tagged by Steamers management as Perquimans County Night. Sponsors of the event are Rhonda Gregory CPA, Woodard's Pharmacy, Hertford Savings Bank, Dozier's Florist, Centura Bank, Tommy's Family Restaurant, Albemarle EMC, Charles Ward Inc. Auto Parts, Hardware and Tires, Captain Bob's Restaurant and The Perquimans Weekly. Sponsors have free tickets to the game.

Gates open at 6 p.m. for the 7 o'clock game.

For information, call 482-4080.

EARLY MORNING STROLL



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Betty Crawford, Helen Murray and Norma McMullen take advantage of the relative cool of early morning to get some exercise. The high temperatures and oppressive humidity of the last couple of weeks has sent many people into seclusion with the air conditioner running full blast. This weekend, severe thunderstorms hit both Saturday evening and around midnight Sunday.

Chamber delegation travels to Raleigh to pick up state award

Perquimans County took center stage at the North Carolina Technological Development Authority's Fourth Annual Entrepreneurial Awards Ceremony last month.

The local chamber was presented the Governor's Award for the Chamber of Commerce of the Year. Accepting the award on behalf of the chamber were Membership Chairman Carol LeRoy and Vice President Mary White. Also on hand for the occasion were Perquimans County Commissioner Bert Hayes; Hertford Town Councilman Sid Eley; local entrepreneurs and developers of Hall of Fame Square, Randy and Lynn Lassiter; owner/operator of Inteliport, named Small Business of the Year by the chamber, Steve Lane; 2020 Vision Coalition representative and manager of the small business incubator project in progress, Leo Higgins; and small business owners Donald and Barbara Gustafson.

The prestigious award commemorates the chamber's outstanding contribution to the community's economic prosperity and success.

"The Chamber of Commerce of the Year Award is indeed an honor," said White. "The Perquimans Chamber of Commerce continually strives to create incentive programs that boost entrepreneurial success. This chamber doesn't just build businesses, it builds better communities."

White said the chamber's efforts have been successful because individuals and other groups, including local governments, have worked together to improve the economic outlook for Perquimans County while preserving its rich history and natural resources.

The local chamber was established in 1963. In the last two years, the organization has been changing the way business is done in the community. Recognizing the potential for the community to capitalize on the heritage of the historic Albemarle region, the chamber worked closely with other community leaders, elected officials and organizations to gain recognition for historic districts in the National Register of Historic Places. As a result, Perquimans is now one of only a few areas in the nation with three districts listed in the National Register.

As these efforts were underway, the chamber also worked to turn potential and plans into programs and profits. Motoring and walking tour booklets were developed to guide visitors through Perquimans County to view the beautiful historic homes, stately churches and architecturally significant government and business buildings.

Perquimans County was recently chosen by the state to be a pilot community for the Heritage Tourism Development Program. They are now working with the state and federal governments to capitalize on their historic treasures.

"I am very proud to be a part of a district with such vibrant

Chamber refocuses

Chamber members learned that the organization had earned the Governor's Award for the Chamber of Commerce of the Year just as the group's board of directors began the process of long-term planning.

The Chamber was poised to make presentations to the three local government units — the county and the towns of Hertford and Winfall — this spring. The group was asking for financial support in light of the economic development and recruiting tasks the chamber performs. Executive Director Sandra Williams Smith resigned just as these presentations were scheduled, citing poor health. Board members made the presentations.

The chamber board found that it was broke and in debt, and immediately began a process of audit and review of all records. In addition, the board felt that the group's focus should be squarely on local economic development and small business support.

Through the efforts of board members who have given many hours to the audit and review process, the chamber should soon be ready, officers say, to get back on an even financial keel and put programs in place to support and encourage local business.

entrepreneurial spirit!" said Hayes. "The Perquimans Chamber of Commerce has been instrumental in revitalizing the economy of the area. The citizens of the community are grateful to the chamber for their innovative ideas and their diligence in pursuing their goals for the Perquimans County area."

Eley said, "This 1999 Governor's Award for the Chamber of Commerce of the Year is well-deserved. It applauds the success of an organization that embraces and nurtures entrepreneurial development and growth in the Perquimans County area."

The 1999 Governor's Award for Entrepreneurial Contribution, sponsored by the NCTDA, Inc., was presented to recipients in recognition of the extraordinary vision and achievement of North Carolina businesses. Honorees were recognized in five categories: entrepreneur, entrepreneurial company, local economic developer, chamber of commerce and First Flight Venture Center Tenant of the Year.

The North Carolina TDA, Inc. is a non-profit corporation with a mission to create jobs across the state by stimulating the development and commercialization of scientific and technological innovations in the state's entrepreneurial companies. It is governed by and 18-member board of directors.

DOT installs curb, gutter on Dobbs Street

SUSAN R. HARRIS
 Editor

Private companies contracted by NCDOT are installing curbing and guttering on the section of Dobbs Street in front of Hertford Grammar School.

Town Manager John Christensen said the town asked DOT for help maintaining Dobbs Street due to the heavy bus traffic on the street. DOT could not offer help for the city-owned street, but agreed to maintain that portion of the street from Edenton Road Street to Woods Lane if the town would dedicate that portion of the street to the state. Woods Lane is the road on the west side of the school. The stretch of Dobbs Street on the east side of Edenton Road is already state-maintained as it is U.S. Highway 17 Business.

Meanwhile, town crews were a block over on Pennsylvania Avenue repairing a leaking water line.

Also underway is the town's extensive electrical upgrade. Christensen said contractor crews are still working on the



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Contractors were on the job bright and early Tuesday morning to install curb and gutter on the portion of Dobbs Street in front of Hertford Grammar School.

project. He said the town has opted to delay the voltage switchover until October. Bids for the project were lower than anticipated and will allow the

town to complete more of the project than initially planned. Materials for the additional work caused the delay. Lines will be buried in the Brown

Acres neighborhood, which Christensen said is always a problem area during storms due to the large pine trees in the area.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 90s
 Low: 70s
 Mostly Sunny

FRIDAY
 High: 90s
 Low: 70s
 Mostly Sunny

SATURDAY
 High: 90s
 Low: 70s
 Mostly Sunny

State approves tougher DWI laws

Repeat offender, underage drinking penalties upped

From Staff Reports

The consequences of impaired driving in North Carolina continue to get tougher.

The general assembly passed laws that impose harsher penalties for both repeat offender and underage drinking drivers.

"Once again we are sending the message loud and clear that if you drink and drive in North Carolina you will be punished," said Lieutenant Governor Dennis Wicker. "Repeat offenders and underage drinking drivers can

expect to face some of the toughest laws in the nation. I believe these new laws are going to continue to help make our roads safer."

The new laws impose a .04 blood alcohol content standard on all first-time convicted drunk drivers for a period of 3 years. If a driver is convicted again, the driver will face a zero tolerance standard for a period of 7 years.

Also, ignition interlock devices will be mandatory for all repeat offenders. Once a driver gets his or her license back after a second conviction, the interlock device will be required for 3 years. Ignition interlock devices will also be mandatory for any driver convicted with a blood alcohol content above .16.

"Repeat offenders are responsible for destroying or ending too many lives of our citizens," Wicker said. "The tough new laws are going to be important tools to help law officers get these repeat offenders off our roads."

Underage drinkers will face tougher penalties as another new law will make possession of beer or wine by anyone under 21 to be a class 3 misdemeanor. The current law imposed a \$25 fine on 19 and 20 year olds in possession of beer and wine.

Finally, the legislature approved allowing Alco-Sensor results to be admissible in cases dealing with the violation of a limited driving privilege as proof of the presence of alcohol.