

See our  
 Indian Summer  
 and  
 Hearth and Harvest  
 Festivals insert  
 this week!

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 cents

## County to buy voting machines

Perq. was one of only six counties using paper ballots

LEAH ALLEN  
 Correspondent

County Commissioners approved the purchase of at least 21 voting machines at the cost of \$85,000 to \$90,000 in their September meeting last Tuesday. The voting machines should be available for use in time for the primaries next May.

Paul Smith, chairman of the Board of Elections, cited the difficulty of keeping precinct chief judges as his argument for the replacement of the paper ballots with voting machines. Several chief judges have refused to take the position again because of the hassle involved with the use of the paper ballots, he said.

"They (chief judges) are appointed every two years, and several people have turned the position down," said Eula Forbes, county elections supervisor.

Perquimans is one of only six counties still using the paper ballot system in North Carolina. Stiff regulations surround the counting and movement of traditional paper ballots. Larger precincts require many boxes for the paper ballots, which can be cumbersome to move. The new voting machines will each fold up to fit into a suitcase, making them easier to transport.

It has also become more difficult to secure volunteers to count the ballots, said Smith. After the polls close, the ballots have to be counted. Some precincts do not complete the counting until 3 a.m. The new voting machines will produce a count as soon as the polls close.

"I didn't know it was such a hassle for chief judges," said Commissioner Ben Hobbs. "For me, that was a valid reason (for purchasing voting machines). No one had brought up that argument before."

When Pasquotank County went to voting machines, there were extensive lines on election day. But local officials say Perquimans residents can expect the change from paper ballots to machines to go more smoothly.

"We're going to have demonstrations throughout the county," said Forbes. "Materials and pamphlets (about the use of the voting machines) will be available in the library and other public places."

If voters learn to use the machines the voting process will go faster, causing less congestion, Forbes said.

The company from which the county is purchasing the machines recommended the purchase of 30 machines. The board thought that number was excessive, but will purchase at least 21 machines and have 30 available on voting day in order to determine the exact number needed by the county.

## Hunter loses battle with ALS

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
 Editor

Thanks, Mr. Jimmy. The three words scribbled on a baseball and left near the grave of James Augustus Hunter Sunday pretty much say it all for those in Perquimans County.

A horde of former little leaguers remembered his coaching style, the way he could make the ball hit the bat in batting practice so a struggling kid could get a hit, as they choked back tears behind dark glasses at his funeral. Thanks, Mr. Jimmy.

There were those among the estimated 1,200-1,500 paying their last respects Sunday at the public graveside services in Cedar Wood Cemetery remembering the benefit supper at Jimmy Hunter's shop that helped them with medical bills or rebuilding their home after a fire. Thanks, Mr. Jimmy. Eulogizing the man loved and admired from East Coast to West was a man privileged to meet Hunter, his childhood hero. That baseball fan, now an adult and minister of Hunter's church, found out that his hero was as fine a man as he



James Augustus Hunter, known in baseball circles as "Catfish" and in Perquimans County as "Jimmy," was famous in the dugout for his fastball and in his hometown for his generosity and integrity.

appeared to be on the surface. Thanks, Mr. Jimmy.

The last out of the 1963 state championship game no doubt replayed in the minds of some who stood in the warm September sun. With a young, skinny pitcher with a huge smile and deadly accuracy on the mound, the team brought home a state championship trophy. Thanks, Mr. Jimmy.



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Floral memorials adorn the top and foot of the monument to Jim "Catfish" Hunter on the Perquimans County courthouse green. The 53-year-old Hall of Fame pitcher lost his battle with ALS Thursday in his home in the Bear Swamp community of Perquimans County. He was buried Sunday in Cedar Wood Cemetery. (Please turn to page 7.)

## New E911 finish date is April

LEAH ALLEN  
 Correspondent

The county's enhanced 911 communications program is scheduled for completion by April 2000, according to an update given to county commissioners last Tuesday.

Perquimans residents have been waiting for program implementation for a long time. The project began in December 1993, with an anticipated completion date of March 1997. Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory cites staff changes and training for the delay.

The cost of the project has also increased. The original contract of \$302,985 has been enlarged by the purchase of additional equipment, software, and training to \$418,643.72. Over \$56,000 is still owed by the county for the project.

The protracted project has included aerial mapping of the county. At the beginning of the project, Gregory said the county could anticipate losing acreage in some tracts while gaining in others because there are those tracts of land in the county that have not been surveyed in many years, or use landmarks as boundaries.

The final component of the project is assigning street addresses to properties. When the project is ready for implementation, everyone in Perquimans County with a rural route will have a new address.

This new program promises to speed emergency response time by a few seconds.

"In any type of real emergencies all seconds count," said Pasquotank County Central Communications Director James "Pee Wee" Edwards. Edwards said Pasquotank went on E911 in 1992. The features of E911 can mean the difference between life and death.

"It's fantastic. There's nothing like it," said Elizabeth City Fire Chief Roy Spell. Spell said that E911 gets firefighters to the scene faster, and in a fire situation every second counts.

E911 also has other beneficial features. When a 911 call is made under the new system, a

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## Festival Day '99 a success

SUSAN R. HARRIS  
 Editor

Saturday's weather fit the name of one of the day's festivals well — Indian Summer.

The 18th annual Indian Summer Festival and 3rd annual Hearth & Harvest Festival drew steady crowds throughout the day to both downtown Hertford and the Newbold-White House.

The day began on a bitter-sweet note as the Perquimans County High School Marching Pirates presented their 1999 show, which is titled "Play Ball! A Tribute to Catfish Hunter," to open the Indian Summer Festival. With the flag on the courthouse lawn flying at half mast in the background and an arrangement of flowers on top of the monument to Hunter on the courthouse lawn, the band played. Band director Chris Whitehurst requested a moment of silence in Hunter's honor during the show, and ended the concert with "Amazing Grace."

"It's been a great day but it's also bittersweet because we have lost a friend. Catfish is Hertford," said Mary White with the Historic Hertford Business Association.

The Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Foundation had already rented a booth for the festival before Hunter's death Thursday, and opted to go ahead with the sales in the hope that someone else could be spared an untimely end due to the horrible disease. Sales of the T-shirts, golf shirts, baseball shirts, hats and totes were brisk all day.

The festival featured a variety of outstanding entertainment from soloists to bands to games for the young at heart. Activities ended at that venue with a street dance featuring Carolina Beach Club.

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## Hertford combines planning, zoning boards

LEAH ALLEN  
 Correspondent

After three months on the agenda, the Hertford Town Council unanimously voted to combine the Planning Board and the Zoning Board of Adjustment Monday night in regular session.

The decision will become effective next month when the council meets to appoint members to the combined board.

Previously, each board had seven members.

"We have had trouble finding people to serve on both boards," explained Councilman Billy Winslow.

The Planning Board is an advisory board that is appointed by the Town Council. The board is responsible for looking into zoning ordinances and making recommendations to the Town Council.

The Board of Adjustment is a quasi-judicial board responsible for hearing variances appealed from the zoning administrator, John Christensen. A variance is a petition for a one-time modification of the ordinance. The board's decisions can be appealed to a superior court.

The Planning board meets about every month, and the Board of Adjustment meets only about four times a year. Members on the combined board will be responsible for the business of both the Planning Board and the Board of Adjustment. Members will be paid \$10 per meeting.



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

The younger set at Indian Summer Festival Saturday enjoyed the booth that offered hair painting. Linda Mewborn creates another colorful do.



PHOTO BY SAM WOLFE, THE DAILY ADVANCE

Helen Heriford of Edenton spins thread the old-fashioned way at Saturday's Hearth & Harvest Festival at the Newbold-White House. Heriford was one of several crafters at the festival.

### WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
 High: 70s  
 Low: 60s  
 MOSTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY  
 High: 80s  
 Low: 70s  
 MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
 High: 80s  
 Low: 70s  
 MOSTLY CLOUDY