

Pirates win conference openers

Page 7

Student news

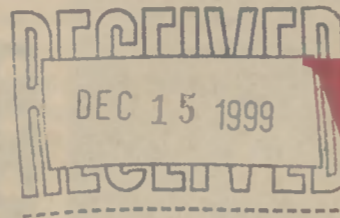
Pages 8, 9

Police learn, teach car seat safety

Page 6

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Two men charged with rape after party

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Two Perquimans County men face rape charges after allegedly sexually assaulting a woman at a party earlier this

month.

Jerrell Christopher Jones, 21, of Rt. 6, Box 202, Hertford, and Jimmie Delane Ritter, 17, of Rt. 6, Box 198, Hertford, were charged on Dec. 4 with first degree rape. Bond for both was set at \$75,000 secured.

During a first appearance in court on Dec. 8, the two requested a bond reduction, according to Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley. Ritter was released the same day under a \$25,000 bond secured by property according

to records at Albemarle District Jail. Jones was still detained on Dec. 13, according to jail personnel.

Tilley said the alleged victim, who he said is not a juvenile, told law officers she attended a party in the

Woodville community on Dec. 3. Jones and Ritter also attended the party, she said. The victim said she fell asleep and awakened to find Jones and Ritter sexually assaulting her. One man was allegedly holding her down, while the other

raped her, Tilley said. The alleged incident occurred either late Friday evening or early Saturday morning, the sheriff said.

Jones and Ritter are scheduled to appear in criminal district court on Jan. 12.

New leaders take charge

Wiggins is county board chair; Eley sworn in

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

A changing of the guard has taken place in Perquimans over the past two weeks.

Shirley Wiggins was chosen by her fellow board members to chair the county commissioners last week. Wiggins' election makes her the first woman to hold the seat. She served as vice chair in 1999, while Charles Ward was chairman. This year, Wiggins is will lead the board, with Ward as vice chair.

In Hertford Monday, an emotional John Beers moved from the town's board table to the audience for the first time in 36 years as Sid Eley was sworn in as mayor.

"Don't let anybody pull anything over on you," Beers advised Eley before handing over the gavel.

Beers was first elected to council in 1963, serving 28 years on council and two terms as mayor.

"This has been a life saver for me because it's taught me a lot about Hertford and its people," Beers said. He added that he was proud to have served the town, and thanked his family for their support as he served the community. Beers, whose wife, Betty Jean, and daughter, Mary Lindsay, were in the audience, received a standing ovation from a packed board room.

Also stepping down was veteran councilman Billy Winslow, who opted not to seek re-election after serving for 28 years. He thanked the residents for the opportunity to serve and said he will continue to be interested in the town. Later in the meeting, Winslow was chosen as the board's at-large representative on the Perquimans County Economic Development Commission.

Both men received rocking chairs from the town. Their wives were presented with poinsettias.

Eley was joined by several family members, including his wife, Candy; son, Teddy; brother and sister-in-law; aunt; and cousins.

Please see MAYOR, page 6

SPREADING HOLIDAY CHEER



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Kindergarteners in Mrs. Ward's and Mrs. Lothian's classes spread holiday cheer in downtown Hertford and at the Brian Center Monday with lively Christmas carols, jingle bells and enthusiastic, "Merry Christmas!" wishes.

Town holds firm on impact fees

Ward: Group will likely not build motel

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Hertford won't get a motel.

That's what developer Charles Ward told the town council Monday after council refused to back off its water and sewer impact fees.

Ward, who said he represents a group trying to raise money to build a motel on U.S. 17 Bypass between Jackson Wholesale and the Perquimans Village Shopping Center, said the estimated \$54,000 in impact fees will halt the \$2 million project.

"If ya'll can't help us we've just got to knock it in the head or move to another town," Ward said.

The group includes both Ward and his step-son Michael Winslow, part-owner of Jackson Wholesale. A feasibility study shows that Hertford is not a destination, and therefore is not a good place to put a motel, Ward said. However, the group chose to continue to investigate the possibility of building a franchise motel here.

Ward said that although the study showed that the only motel that would work in Hertford is a budget motel, the group is trying to build a Comfort Inn because of its attractiveness. However, Ward said budget prices must be charged for the rooms.

The impact fee for the proposed 60-room motel would be \$54,000. That amount is \$550 per room for sewer and \$350 per room for water, or \$900 per

room. The town implemented impact fees on development to help offset the cost of water and sewer expansion and upkeep. The fees must be paid for lots in subdivisions, also.

Ward said that property tax on a \$2 million motel would help defray the town's costs. At the present rate of 49 cents per \$100 valuation, a \$2 million property would bring in \$9,800 per year in property tax. (Note: The county is in the middle of a revaluation, with new values scheduled to be implemented in January. Traditionally, the property values have risen and the tax rate decreased after a revaluation.)

The town has discussed an economic development incentive plan which would refund 85 percent of property taxes back to qualifying developments for 5 years. If that plan were to be implemented for the motel, the group would receive back \$8,330 per year, or \$41,650 over 5 years, based on the present tax rate.

"I'm very interested ... in having a motel in Hertford," Mayor Sid Eley said. He suggested that the economic development package be used for financial relief for the motel developers. Eley also asked if spreading the fee over a 5-year period would help.

But Ward did not want to explore other options. He said the group will meet again Thursday to discuss the motel construction, but he does not think they will opt to move for-

ward, at least not in Hertford. He indicated the group may decide to build in Elizabeth City.

Councilman Horace Reid questioned Ward about his willingness to move the project to Elizabeth City, a town with higher impact fees than Hertford. Ward said it would be feasible because of the greater likelihood of higher occupancy in Elizabeth City.

While all council members expressed interest in the motel, none moved to waive the impact fees.

"I think that the impact fee is just a cost of doing business," said Carlton Davenport. He added that if the economic analysis for the motel is close enough that the \$54,000 in fees may decide whether it is built or not, perhaps the time is not right for a motel in Hertford.

New councilperson Jo Ann Morris said that if the town waived the fees, a precedent would be set that could cause problems with other development in the future. Davenport agreed.

"Once you waive it (the fee) then you may as well not have it," he said.

In addition to the impact fees, the motel would pay a \$25,000 tap fee for a 6-inch water and an 8-inch sewer connection.

Later in the meeting as the board reviewed the 1998-99 fiscal audit performed by Rhonda Gregory, CPA, it was noted that Ward is the town's 10th largest taxpayer. Albemarle Village is first on the list.

"If ya'll can't help us, we've just got to knock it in the head or move to another town."

Charles Ward
Partner in a proposed motel in Hertford



Daily Advance photo

New Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley poses in his car Tuesday. Tilley, who served as chief deputy under Ralph Robinson, who died late last month, was tapped to take the late sheriff's place by the Board of Commissioners last week.

Tilley tapped for sheriff

SUSAN R. HARRIS
Editor

Eric Tilley is The Man.

The 36-year-old Perquimans High School graduate became the county's top law enforcement official last Monday when the county commissioners named him sheriff.

"I accept the challenge. I hope I can do as good a job as Ralph (Robinson). I hope I can fill his shoes. He left some big ones," Tilley said upon his appointment. He was accompanied at the meeting by his wife, Sherry.

Tilley served as chief deputy for about 15 months under Ralph Robinson, who died on Nov. 28 after having served just under one year of his four-year term. Robinson had been appointed sheriff by the county commissioners effective Aug. 1, 1998 to complete the term of David Lane. Tilley was also sworn in at that time. He went to work full time on Sept. 1, 1998.

Tilley has come full circle — and up a few steps — since beginning his law enforcement career in 1987. His first job in law enforcement was as a deputy for the Perquimans County Sheriffs Department under then-sheriff Joe Lothian.

The deputy left the local department in November 1992 to accept a job as an Elizabeth City police officer. In early 1996, his career brought him back to work in Perquimans as a surveillance officer with the state department of probation/parole. Last year, Tilley completed the circle when he agreed to become Robinson's chief deputy. Last week, he took the step up to sheriff.

When Tilley started his circular career, the sheriff had three deputies — Tilley, Robinson and James Logan. Now, there are seven deputies. Serving at present are Nathan

Zachary, Marlo Reel, Lee Price, David Layne, Ersal Overton Jr. and Jeffery Johnson. With Tilley's promotion, there is one position open. In his first decision as sheriff, Tilley told the commissioners upon his appointment that he would opt for a patrol deputy instead of hiring a chief deputy.

The county has had one deputy working at night for a long time," Tilley said. "It's clearly not protecting the citizens and clearly putting that deputy at risk. At this point, a road deputy would service the county better."

Tilley said he has a couple of candidates who have already been through Basic Law Enforcement Training in mind for the slot.

Last week, Tilley hit another scheduling snag when Price broke his leg while playing with the children at Hertford Grammar School. Price serves as D.A.R.E. officer. Tilley said Monday that Price cannot work patrol duty for at least 8 weeks, but may be able to return to the classroom to keep the D.A.R.E. program going before that time.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 62
Low: 42
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 52
Low: 34
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 55
Low: 37
SCATTERED SHOWERS