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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Dispatch department must move by Dec. 31

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The county communications center will be homeless in December.

County Manager Paul Gregory said Sprint sent the county a letter stating that the lease between the county and Sprint for space in the telephone substation on Grubb Street will end Dec. 31.

Gregory admitted that he at first thought the Sprint move was in response to the county's refusal to sign a lease or purchase agreement for new E-911 equipment with Sprint. After talking with some people in the company and other government agencies using Sprint facilities, however, Gregory said he does not believe that is the case.

"We're not the only ones (this is happening to)," Gregory told commissioners. "This is happening all over."

Last month, Sprint representatives appeared before the commissioners to discuss E-911 equipment options with the county. The system the county needs will cost \$225,000 to purchase, about \$300,000 with maintenance and service agreements over a 5-year period, Sprint officials said.

Leasing the same equipment will cost \$7,438 per month for a 60-month lease, or a total of \$446,000 over 5 years. The lease includes equipment, training, service and maintenance, Sprint said.

The advantage of leasing is the ease of upgrading to new technology, according to

Sprint. If the county purchases equipment, it will be up to the county to replace the equipment to upgrade, even if technology advances quickly. With a lease, technology upgrades can be negotiated as part of an amended lease, officials said.

The Sprint representatives said most agencies are opting for rental programs due to the rapid changes in technology.

But the commissioners were not convinced that spending an additional \$200,000 was the right move. Commissioners Chairman Charles Ward said he thinks the county should go out for bids on the equipment to see if the lease and purchase agreements from Sprint are in line with the market.

Commissioner Mack Nixon agreed. He said he can not tell

if either Sprint price package was in line with industry standards without more information.

The board opted to ask for bids from other companies before making a decision.

Communications Director Homeria Jennette was at Monday's meeting. She and Gregory said drawing up a bid proposal is an overwhelming job, and Jennette has sought advice from a consultant to help prepare a bid package.

In the meantime, the county must find a new home for the communications center. Options mentioned Monday included a new building to be constructed near the rescue squad building and space to be vacated over the next 18 months by the building inspec-

tion department.

Jennette said there are a lot of needs in the communications department that are unique to its dispatching duties. She reminded commissioners that there must be restroom and kitchen facilities in the department because communications employees cannot leave for meals. They must be near the telephone console at all times. She said computer floors need to be installed in the new headquarters to handle all wiring under the floor, and there will also need to be sufficient storage space for the equipment.

Ward said an important factor in locating the department should be the safety of employees who work alone 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

Gregory said some county space will become available once the new health department is finished. That building must be renovated to house social services, then the social services building will be ready for occupancy with some minor renovations, he said. All that could take quite some time, he said.

The commissioners will discuss the issue in a work session Monday night. The session is in preparation of a joint meeting between the county, Winfall, Hertford, the school board, and several departments and boards within those agencies to discuss long-range planning and ideas for the county. The meeting is set for March 5 at the Albemarle Commission Building.

Pilot died from crash injuries, autopsy states

NTSB: Crash off Turnpike Road in December due to pilot error

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The pilot of the plane that crashed in Perquimans County in December died of injuries sustained in the crash.

Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley said he received the autopsy report from Pitt County Memorial Hospital for pilot Gordon Montgomery last week. The report states that the 76-year-old died of extreme injuries resulting from the plane crash. The report said that Montgomery's right coronary artery was 76 percent narrowed, but that the problem "played no part in his death." Forensic Pathologist M.G.F. Gilliland, M.D. performed the autopsy.

Tilley said the autopsy is consistent with the conclusion of the National Transportation Safety Board that Montgomery lost control of the plane. Jeff Kennedy, an investigator with the Transportation Safety Board, concluded that the crash was the result of pilot error. No word has been received from the Federal Aviation Administration.

Just over 72 pounds of Montgomery's 250-pound body was recovered at the crash site just off Turnpike Road, where the plane went down the afternoon of Dec. 14. Tilley said the plane hit the ground and burned. A study of the crash site and parts of the plane indicated that Montgomery's head hit the instrument panel with great force. He was identified from the circumstances of the accident and dental records.

Investigators discovered that Montgomery had spent



A 76-year-old Florida man died in a fiery plane crash off Turnpike Road on Dec. 14. An autopsy report indicates the pilot died of injuries sustained in the crash. The National Transportation Safety Board said pilot error caused the wreck.

over \$70,000 putting two engines on the Piper in May, but the plane was not insured. Tilley said members of Montgomery's family called here recently to let Tilley know they are making arrangements to have the crash site cleaned up. The sheriff said the wreckage still litters the area.

The crash occurred during what was apparently a familiar flight for Montgomery. Investigators found that Montgomery flew from his home in John's Island, Fla. to his second home in South Dartmouth, Mass. regularly. He was known to fly into

Edenton, stay overnight, gas up and then fly the second leg of his trip.

The sheriff's department was first aware of a plane crash when a hunter called around 2:30 p.m. on Dec. 14 to report that a plane was grounded and on fire near a drainage ditch off Turnpike Road. Firefighters from Perquimans County and the Newland Fire Department in Pasquotank County extinguished the plane's flames.

Tilley said he received a call from the Edenton Municipal Airport around 3 p.m. on the day of the crash to be on the

lookout for a small blue and white plane headed north from Florida. The plane was reportedly scheduled to land at the Edenton airport, but had been lost on radar.

Montgomery reportedly left Vero Beach, Fla. at 9:55 a.m. heading toward Massachusetts. As he approached Edenton for a landing, Perquimans Sheriff's Investigator Nathan Zachary said, he was told by Edenton air traffic control to circle and hold altitude at 3,000 feet.

Records indicate Edenton airport controllers lost radar contact with Montgomery

momentarily and then picked him up again at an altitude of 2,200 feet.

What happened from that point, however, is still unknown. Parts of the plane sank as much as 5 feet into the ground in an open field near the Perquimans-Pasquotank border near the mouth of the Dismal Swamp.

Sheriff's officers from Perquimans and Pasquotank counties kept watch over the 50-yard crash area for two days to keep the site secure for National Transportation Safety Board and FAA investigators.

Grants sought to clear rivers

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The streams in the county are surprisingly clear, according to Rodney Johnson with Albemarle RC&D.

Johnson said fewer problems than expected surfaced during the recent assessment of the county's waterways. Still, the estimated cost of clearing problem areas tops \$111,000.

RC&D and Soil Conservation officials completed the survey, and looked for areas with highest impact on homes and drainage systems to prioritize recommended clearing and snagging projects.

Johnson said the recommendation is to snag areas in the upper Perquimans near Belvidere and around Mill Creek in Parksville first. The cost of those two projects would be \$52,400. The county will seek a grant to cover \$34,900 of the cost.

Remaining areas needing snagging include Deep Creek, Goodwin's Mill, Upper Bethel Creek, Upper Yeopim Creek, Racoon Creek, Upper Sutton's Creek, Upper Little River, Bagley Swamp and Burnt Mill. Heavy beaver activity was found in the Bethel, Sutton's Creek and Bagley Swamp areas.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 66
 Low: 47
 PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
 High: 76
 Low: 50
 PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
 High: 64
 Low: 40
 SCATTERED SHOWERS

Weekend silent auction benefits Main Street Program

The Antique Dealers Association of Perquimans County will hold its second annual silent auction, a benefit for the Hertford Main Street Program, Saturday, Feb. 10, from 10:30 a.m.-6 p.m. and Sunday, Feb. 11, noon-5 p.m. The auction is open to the public, with viewing and bidding both days. The inventory at auction will include a 9-foot

church pew, Edison Victrola, waterfall wardrobe, Art Deco china closet, Limoges china, two secretaries, an Empire mantle, an Eastlake loveseat, and at least 100 more antique and collectible items, including tables, lamps, mirrors, chairs, glass and linen.

A hearty Champagne Brunch will be offered on Sunday, noon-3 p.m. Tickets are

available in advance (\$5 per person) at Hertfordshire Antiques, Fancy That Interiors, Riverwalk Gallery, Country Flair and Hertford Hardware (My Corner Antiques). The Brunch menu will feature smoked turkey, country ham rolls, salmon pate, pasta salad, crudites, fruits and cheeses, sinful desserts and other items.

Beverages include champagne punch, sparkling punch, tea and coffee. At 5 p.m. there will be a drawing of brunch tickets, for door prizes consisting of \$200 worth of gift certificates from antique shops. Papillon Linens will present a free seminar on the history, care and preservation of vintage linens at 3 p.m. on Sunday.

All three events take place at

Hertfordshire Antiques in downtown Hertford. Bidders may register for a bidder number and view and bid in writing, on bid forms attached to each item on Saturday and Sunday, until 5, at which time all bids are final. Payment will be accepted in the form of cash or personal check, and no buyer's premium will be added on. For further information, call 426-3640 or 426-8222.