

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Hoops teams back in action

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Farm-City Banquet set

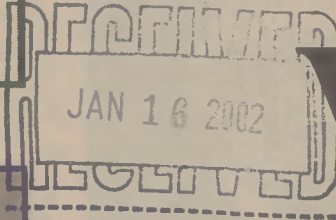
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Superintendent's art awards

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January 16, 2002

Vol. 70 No. 3 Hertford, North Carolina 27944



County finalist for jet practice field

Officials, residents do not want airfield here

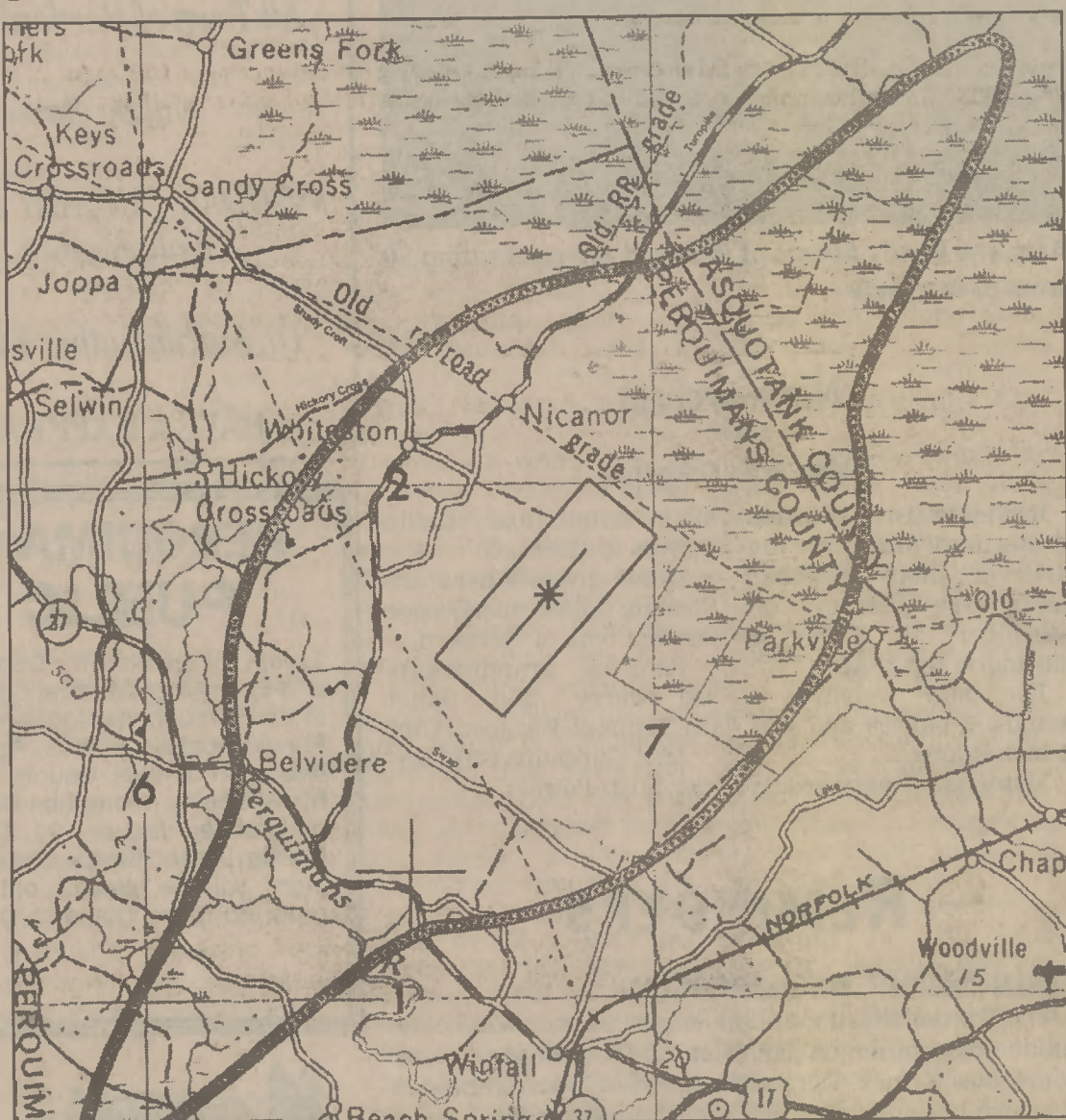
SUSAN R. HARRIS

The loudest noise in Whiteston today is tractors plowing fields, a souped-up Chevy taking off from a side road or the occasional tractor-trailer coming through.

But that may change if the community is chosen as the site of a military outlying landing strip.

Perquimans is one of seven finalists to serve as an outlying landing field to support Navy and Marine Corps air stations if those sites are chosen as the main base for the Super Hornet, slated to replace the Navy's Atlantic fleet of F-14 Tomcat and earlier model F/A 18s.

According to information supplied by the Department of the Navy, Atlantic Division, the landing field would support F/A 18 E/F Super Hornet aircraft based at Naval Air Station Oceana in Virginia Beach, Va., the Marine Corps Air Station Beaufort in Beaufort County, S.C. and the Marine Corps Air Station Cherry Point in



The Belvidere-Whiteston area of Perquimans County is being considered by the Navy as an outlying landing field to support three Navy and Marine Corps air stations if those stations are chosen as the main base for the new Super Hornet aircraft. The map above shows the estimated area of influence (outlined area), site location (asterisk) and airfield (rectangle). Local officials and many residents oppose the airstrip.

Havelock.

The decision on where to base the new aircraft has not been made.

Chief Petty Officer Patrick Schuetz, a Navy Atlantic Fleet Public Affairs spokesman, told The Daily Advance that the outlying landing field would serve as a place where pilots could practice landings and takeoffs. The OLFs, as the Navy calls the landing fields, are needed to eliminate some of the air traffic over already busy airbases, Schuetz explained.

OLFs usually occupy anywhere from 2,000 acres to 53,000 acres.

The Navy spokesman said most of the personnel associated with the airstrip would likely be military.

He also anticipated little construction around the strip.

"They arrange for restrictive easements or limitations on land use around the facility... There may be a few support buildings and some refueling tanks," Schuetz said.

"The number of jobs it might bring to the area would depend on its proximity to a major facility."

Residents and public officials across Perquimans are opposed to the airstrip.

"I think probably the

only way to stop it is for everybody to get behind it (contacting Navy and state and federal government officials with negative comments)," said county commissioners chairman Ben Hobbs.

Hobbs said in addition to the noise the airstrip would generate, the site would no longer be taxable, cutting the county's revenues.

It would also take farmland out of cultivation, affecting the personal incomes of those farming in the agricultural community.

Hobbs said the county will hold a public meeting Jan. 16 at 7 p.m. at the courthouse to discuss the issue. He said the commissioners will then likely pass a resolution of opposition at the board's Jan. 28 work session.

He added that residents can voice their opposition individually by sending written comments to Commander, Atlantic Division, Naval Facilities Engineering Command, 1510 Gilbert St., Norfolk, Va. 23511, Attn: Code BD32FP (Mr. Fred Pierson), telephone (757) 322-4935, fax (757) 322-4894 by Feb. 8.

The Navy requests that written comments clearly describe the specific issues or topics the commenter

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Sheriff, clerk of court, commissioners to seek re-election

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The filing period for the May 7 primary election will open Feb. 18 — if the U.S. Justice Department approves North Carolina's redistricting plan.

Traditionally, the filing period opens in January, but was delayed because the state has not received approval of its new districts from Justice.

Perquimans County Board of Elections Director Eula Forbes said last week that the state has preliminarily set the filing period from Feb. 18 at noon until March 1 at noon, pending preclearance from the Justice Department.

Local offices up for grabs include clerk of superior court, sheriff, and three seats on the board of county commissioners.

Clerk of Superior Court Gail Godwin said last week she does plan to file to keep her job, as does Sheriff Eric Tilley.

"I enjoy my job and I want to stay here," Tilley said last week.

The commissioner's seats open are currently filled by Evelyn Stubbins, Charles Ward and Ben Hobbs.

Hobbs, the board's present chairman, said he will seek re-election. Ward, however, said he has not made up his mind whether he will run again.

"I really haven't thought much about it," Ward said. "It's been running through

my mind, but I haven't decided yet."

Stubbins said she is still considering whether she will seek re-election.

Requirements to run for local office include having established residency in the county. Forbes also said that state statute dictates that a candidate cannot have changed party affiliation within 90 days of the filing date.

Forbes said no deadlines for voter registration have been set by the state either.

"The state has not handed down our calendar of events," she said.

That decision, too, will be made after the Justice Department.

In the meantime, those who are not registered, those who have moved from one precinct to another, those who wish to change party affiliation, or those who need to make other adjustments in registration may get the appropriate forms at the Board of Elections office, library, DMV, Department of Social Services, Employment Security Commission and other public agencies. Forms may be left at the agency for submission, may be mailed to the Board of Elections office at P.O. Box 336, Hertford, NC 27944, or may be dropped off at the Board of Elections office in the Cooperative Extension Building on Edenton Road Street.

Residents to form SPCA here

70 gather for organizational meeting last Tuesday

SUSAN R. HARRIS

About 70 people showed up last week at a meeting to gauge interest in organizing a Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals in Perquimans County.

Organizer Andrea Boone said she was overwhelmed with the response at the meeting, and the contact made with her by some who could not attend the meeting last Tuesday.

During the meeting, Boone presented information she has gathered about issues related to animal control and humane treatment of animals. The group also formed ad hoc committees to study the formation and operation of a non-profit, by-laws and fund raising, Boone said.

"It is time for the citizens of Perquimans County to step forward and demand humane treatment of stray and abandoned animals," Boone stated in the first visual of her PowerPoint presentation.

Boone has long been a proponent of humane treatment of animals. She has raised funds and gathered supplies for animal shelters, and has rescued unwanted animals, both through adoption and through turning strays in

to groups who rescue abandoned and abused animals.

She is especially concerned in Perquimans County about the facility that serves as an animal shelter, the low budget for animal control, the fact that the county program is not conducive to adoption, and the lack of county sponsorship of state-mandated rabies clinics.

Perquimans County's animal control budget has actually fallen over the past three years, from \$34,851 in fiscal year 2000 to 29,910 in FY 2002. Only \$125 of that amount is in the food line item. Salary and benefits for the part-time animal control officer take up about \$23,000 of the total budget.

Chowan County, which has a state-of-the-art animal control facility, budgeted \$212,863 in 2002 for animal control.

Boone's vision is to form an SPCA to facilitate the humane treatment of stray, abused and abandoned animals. The goals of the organization will be to foster adoption of animals; assist with spay, neuter and rabies; to educate all generations; and to generate interest in upgrading the existing shelter to a new, state-of-the-art facility.

The current shelter, owned and operated by the county, is not adequate, Boone said. There is no way inside the concrete block building located next to the Town of Hertford sewage treatment plant to separate sick and well animals, dogs and cats, young

animals with their mothers from the general population, and aggressive animals from non-aggressive animals. There are no areas to walk animals or allow them to run, nor is the local shelter manned.

The immediate and long-term goals of the SPCA will likely include bringing the current shelter up to a reasonable, clean and humane standard; implementing an adoption program; providing low cost spaying and neutering; providing the county with manpower assistance for a low cost rabies/shot clinic; educating local residents about animal control problems and their solutions; building a new shelter; and hiring adequate full-time animal control officers.

Another concern of Boone is the fact that the county has not held a rabies clinic in 9-12 years according to information from a local veterinarian who performed the clinic. State law requires the county to hold at least one clinic per year.

Many who attended the meeting were surprised and outraged about the county's animal control facilities and procedures, Boone said. Several indicated that they will contact county commissioners and/or write letters to the editor to encourage support for better facilities and more funding for animal control.

Boone said the group will look at operating an SPCA that cooperates with the county animal

control department to improve the situation for animals. Fund raising ideas include animal licensing, an increased budget from the county, grants awarded to non-profits, gifts and donations, and holding fund raising events. Currently, those who met are asking local businesses to allow "doggie jars" to be placed on their counters to generate some start-up funds. Inteliport has provided free dial-up service — spca@inteliport.com — and East Carolina Bank has provided a free checking account.

Boone is available to make presentations at civic meetings. She can be reached at the email address or at 264-3558.

The SPCA group will meet on Feb. 12 at 7 p.m. at the county library.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 61
 Low: 39
 PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
 High: 53
 Low: 33
 PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
 High: 47
 Low: 30
 PARTLY CLOUDY