

# Merry Christmas!

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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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The Christmas tree at the Newbold-White House visitor's center is one of the many trees that Steve Davenport brought across the state from a mountain Christmas tree farm.

## Davenport hauls NC trees

ALICE BREWIN

Many will gather around a fresh-cut Christmas tree with our family and friends today. Children will excitedly look to see what surprises Santa has left them. Newlyweds will tease each other about their tree's sparse decorations. Perhaps some retirees will fondly recall each special ornament and its giver.

Steve Davenport will probably recall the many trips he has made hauling Christmas trees from the western part of the state to the east.

Davenport, a lifelong trucker, has been transporting fresh-cut Christmas trees to the area since 1980.

Davenport calls both Hertford and his eighteen-wheeler home.

A full truckload of trees is an awesome sight, and a lot of work. With help from his three children, Bo, Kelly, and Kristy, Davenport distributes his load to several retailers in the area who specialize in premium, graded Christmas trees.

According to Davenport, his children have all been helping out "ever since they were big enough to tote one." This is no small feat, for it involves getting up before the break of day, sometimes working in very cold conditions.

Davenport is quick to point out that the large chain stores in the area do not carry his trees, those trees are the ungraded variety. Smaller outlets like Hertford Hardware and Davenport's daughter Kristy provide the filet mignon of the Christmas tree world to those who want the best.

The ungraded variety, those trees that don't qualify as premium due to shape, branch fullness and overall appearance, are thrown to the side, destined for sale at some large, retail grocery or lumber store.

While these trees are capable of spreading Christmas cheer, some people just want a better, or perhaps bigger, tree. Davenport is happy to provide Hertford with such a tree.

## Christmas tree facts

According to the North Carolina Christmas Tree Association, North Carolina is a top contender in both Christmas Tree production and quality.

Some facts about the industry and the Fraser fir:

- North Carolina is ranked second in the nation in number of trees harvested and first in nation in terms of dollars made per tree.

- The NC Fraser fir has been judged Nation's best and chosen for the official White House Christmas tree 8 times (more than any other species).

- NC Tree Growers produce over 50 million Fraser Firs each year.

- The Fraser fir was named for John Fraser, a Scottish botanist who explored the southern Appalachian Mountains of North Carolina in the late 1700s.

- The Fraser fir is a pyramid-shaped tree that reaches a maximum height of 80 feet and a trunk diameter of 1 1/2 feet.

- The Fraser fir grows naturally only in the southern Appalachians, above 3,000 feet. The cool temperatures and lots of rainfall of the North Carolina high country are what causes the Fraser fir to keep its needles throughout the Christmas season.

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## Main Street brochure earns state accolades

A brochure produced by the Hertford Main Street Program earned accolades from the N.C. Main Street Program.

The local promotional piece, titled "Come Home to Hertford," was honored by judges with a Certificate of Special Recognition in the Best Printed Promotion Item category.

Competition categories reflected the four points of the Main Street Program: organization, design, economic restructuring, and promotion. Entries were judged by a panel consisting of staff from the state Main Street program, Division of Community Assistance's local planning program, North Carolina Arts Council and others.

"We continue to be excited by the quality of work taking place in Main Street communities across North Carolina," said Office of Urban Development Director Rodney Swink following the judging. "This year's award winners set a new standard for excellence and are models for anyone interested in seeing the very best in downtown development."

The need for a brochure was noted by Hertford Main Street Manager Belinda Washlesky. There was no printed material promoting Hertford, and a county brochure printed by the Chamber of Commerce was outdated and supplies were low.

With a \$3,500 Rural Tourism Development Grant from the Department of Commerce, North Carolina Division of Tourism, Film, and Sports Development, the Hertford Main Street Program took on the responsibility of creating a tri-fold, full color "Come Home to Hertford" brochure. The grant required a \$1,200 match, which was provided by the Chamber of

Commerce, Historic Hertford Business Association, Perquimans County, Antique Dealers Association of Perquimans County, Phios Corporation, and Perquimans County Restoration Association.

The Town of Hertford kicked in the last \$105, and the Hertford Main Street Program spent \$4,805 to have 40,000 brochures printed. Seeing opportunity, the Chamber paid an extra \$560 for another 10,000 copies.

Main Street Promotions Committee members Harriette Woodard and LuAnne Pendergraft worked with Washlesky on the project. Current and historic photographs were collected, staged and chosen, and the copy was written. The design firm Janelli's was hired to complete the project.

The next partner involved was Albemarle Plantation. It had to be shown that there was an innovative and creative plan to distribute the brochure outside the state of North Carolina. Albemarle Plantation agreed to distribute the new brochure at annual real estate trade shows across the country. They also agreed to send the brochure out in response to thousands of requests per year that they receive as a result of these shows.

The "Come Home to Hertford" brochure is now available, not only through Albemarle Plantation, but also through all North Carolina Welcome and Visitors Centers, and 29 Historic Albemarle Tour sites. In addition, local Visitor Centers, Chambers of Commerce, and other businesses carry the brochure, which has already resulted in increased tourism and business development

## Santa's helpers arrive by van, truck, car

### Christmas 365 members make Christmas merrier for those in need

SUSAN R. HARRIS

When Santa sent his elves to Perquimans County last week, there was no reindeer and no sleigh. His helpers arrived in a caravan of cars, trucks and vans, hauling more than a sleighful of food, toys and clothing to those with special needs this Christmas.

Santa's emissaries were members of the Elizabeth City-based Christmas 365 Club, a community-based organization composed of the staff and friends of Walson Funeral Home, Inc.

Two families in Perquimans, including James and Ruth Burke in Winfall, got visits from club members last Wednesday evening. The elves spilled from vehicles, bearing boxes of gifts — groceries, personal items, clothing and toys — and making Christmas brighter for two families with health problems.

The Burkes' smiles were as warm as their bungalow as they welcomed their guests and made

room for three large boxes of goodies. No one left the spic-and-span home without receiving a hug and words of thanks from the grateful couple.

Then it was off to visit more families for members of the 365 Club. Before they called it a day, members had visited 10 families in Camden, South Mills, Winfall, Hertford and Elizabeth City. Club members spent 17 days collecting the items distributed. They got as much as they gave, they said, as

its desire to be a voice and integral part of the communities in Northeastern North Carolina. During 2002, 576 families have received assistance through Christmas 365 programs. Members seek to help those in need, especially those who have no other resource.

In addition, Christmas 365 awards scholarships to area high school students.

Those who made the Santa trip this year were Club President Elnora McCoy, Vice President-Treasurer Miracle Perry, Sgt.-at-Arms James Hoggard, Edna Godfrey, Estelle Felton, Gloria Thomas, Roy Lee Spence, Audrey Ferebee, Oscar Etheridge and Reggie McCoy.

Social services agencies and community members assisted the group with choosing families to visit.

For information on Christmas 365, its mission and how you can help, call 335-4584.



Members of the Christmas 365 Club visit James and Ruth Burke in Winfall, helping Santa to make Christmas a little merrier for the couple, both of whom are experiencing health problems. The Burkes were one of 10 Northeastern North Carolina families visited by the "elves" last Wednesday evening.

they saw the tears, the laughter and the thankfulness of the families they served.

Christmas 365 doesn't just help people at Christmas. The group works 365 days each year with fund raisers and collection drives to help those who are displaced, homeless, hungry, elderly and in emergencies.

The club has been in existence for 30 years, but last year changed its focus and direction because of

## WEEKEND WEATHER

CHRISTMAS DAY  
 High: 63  
 Low: 35  
 RAIN/THUNDER

THURSDAY  
 High: 47  
 Low: 30  
 MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
 High: 44  
 Low: 32  
 PARTLY CLOUDY