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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Winter storm slaps county

Cold bursts at Central School

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Central School Principal Billy Stallings got a surprise when he returned to school Monday morning: about 2 inches of water in the art room, hallway and multipurpose area of the school.

The arctic air that settled into the county last week and through the first part of this week caused a hose bib in an outside wall at the school to freeze and burst, according to schools Superintendent Ken Wells.

All maintenance workers were dispatched to the facility, where they capped off the affected pipes and began to remove the water from the building.

The operation of the school was not affected by the problem, Stallings said. He added that the clean-up was well-organized and quick, which allowed the school day to continue as usual.

"The re-routing of students and staff was the biggest factor as we worked to ensure optimum safety for everyone," Stallings said. "The real challenge is ahead as we begin repairing the damage caused by the water."

Because of the extreme cold, Wells and Maintenance Director Richard O'Neal decided last Wednesday to run the heat in all four schools on a 24-hour basis. Wells told school board members Monday night that with the frigid temperatures and the condition of the heating systems in some of the school buildings, he and O'Neal opted to leave the heat on to try to prevent any cold-related problems and because it would have taken so long to re-heat the buildings when students returned.

Maintenance personnel visited the buildings throughout the weekend checking for signs of any problems. Maintenance worker Pete Mansfield checked Central School Saturday evening, when he found some pipes that had exploded. He capped off the pipes and reported what had happened to O'Neal.

No other weather-related problems were reported in the schools.

Wells did tell board members that if another like storm hits, a decision will have to be made on whether to have school, even if there is no snow or ice causing transportation concerns. He said that when single-digit temperatures hit the area, there is a concern about children standing at bus stops, heating effectively and other student and staff safety concerns.

Bitter cold, snow blanket area

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Bitterly cold temperatures and 3-5 inches of snow hit Perquimans last week, keeping many county residents inside.

A couple of days of below-freezing temperatures paved the way for the snow, which came early Thursday morning and stopped about midday.

The mercury stayed below 30 degrees on Thursday, dipping into the teens with a wind-chill factor around zero at some points during Thursday night. Friday saw it rise to almost the freezing point, before

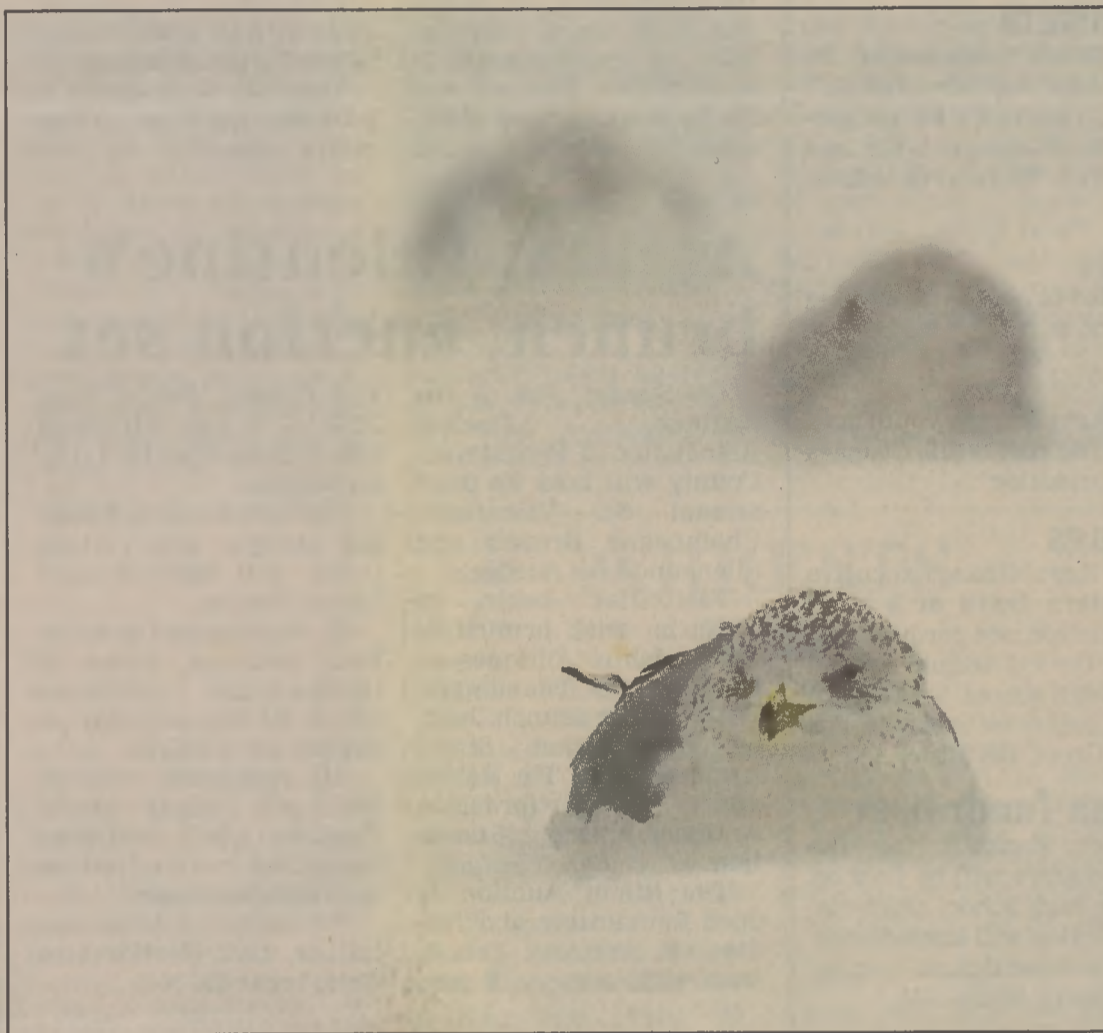
Schools schedule make-up days

SUSAN R. HARRIS

The school calendar changed Monday as administrators and staff determined how best to fit make-up and teacher work days into the schedule after missing last Thursday and Friday due to snow.

Make-up days will be Friday, Feb. 7 and Thursday, March 13, which were formerly teacher work days. The February day was optional, the March day, required. Jan. 23 and 24, the days missed last week, then became optional teacher work days. March 14 is now a required teacher workday. Superintendent Ken Wells gave the new schedule to the board Monday night and asked if they had any concerns with it. He told the board that the dates chosen for make-up days were on the original calendar as proposed make-up days. He added that he does not want to have to use spring break as make-up time because some families make plans over the scheduled vacation week. However, if more winter weather comes, he added, spring break days may have to be used as make-up days because there are not many other days that can be used before the end of the school year.

The board is not required to act on scheduling make-up days, so no vote was taken. However, no board member expressed any objections to the dates.



Daily Advance photo

A bird looks for something to eat on the snow-covered ground last week. Frigid temperatures, icy roads and snow kept most people inside from Thursday through the weekend.



Schools superintendent Ken Wells congratulated all four county school principals (left to right) Dwayne Stallings, John Dublin, Edward Williams and Billy Stallings for completing the Principals Education Program Principals as Technology Leaders.

Principals complete technology training

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Perquimans County school principals have become more involved in implementing technology programs at their schools thanks to training they received through the Principals as Technology Leaders program.

Offered through the Principals Education Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, the technology course helped principals learn more about instructional use of technology in the classroom and strategies to improve the use of technology.

Superintendent Ken Wells said each principal spent at least 60 hours in addition to attending the training sessions reviewing technology uses and

strategies in their individual schools.

The four were among about 40 principals and administrators attending the session, which was brought to the Northeast Region, meaning that school systems did not have to pay the cost of a three-four day stay in Chapel Hill, where PEP courses are usually taught.

Wells said the technology program was developed through a grant from the Bill Gates Foundation.

Technology continues to play an ever-increasing role in classrooms. Internet research, computer programs to reinforce textbook lessons, presentations using computer programs such as Microsoft PowerPoint and more are a component of the curriculum in schools today, and are critical teaching tools.

Storm brings no major problems

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Driving in Perquimans was hazardous from Thursday through the weekend, but Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy said his officers investigated no accidents in town during the storm.

"I was very pleased," Vanscoy said. "Most people stayed home and the ones who did get out were very cautious. I was impressed."

Sheriff Eric Tilley said his officers investigated a few minor incidents, such as cars sliding into ditches, but no major accidents were reported or investigated. He said he told his deputies to curtail patrols across the county during the storm so that they would be ready to respond from a central location in the event of an emergency.

While Elizabeth City is still suffering from the effects of burst water mains, both Hertford and county spokespersons said we were more fortunate here.

A pipe did burst at Central School sometime Sunday night, but no other major problems were reported.

Hertford Town Manager John Christensen said Tuesday that a couple of transformers went down from the heavy load, but were repaired and back in service.

Christensen added that the town has had no water mains to burst. Maintenance employees have capped off leaking water lines, he said, in response to frozen and bursting water pipes in pri-

plunging once again in late afternoon. The cold stayed until Tuesday, when temperatures were forecast to rise to the 40s.

State road maintenance crews worked Wednesday night and Thursday salting, sanding and clearing main roads.

Driving conditions closed schools and some government offices and businesses on Thursday, with schools remaining closed on Friday. While the work of the state crews, sunshine and traffic cleared some roads, frigid temperatures and nightfall kept many secondary roads hazardous through the weekend.

Although most of the white stuff was gone by this week, by press time on Tuesday, there were still patches of snow throughout the county, especially in shaded and low-lying areas.

As late as Tuesday, the Perquimans River was covered with a layer of ice in some spots. Hertford Town Manager John Christensen said he picked up a piece of ice and skipped it across.

"It just kept going and going," he said.

vate homes and businesses. "We're lucky," Christensen said. "I'm pleased."

Likewise, County Manager Paul Gregory said the county had no problems with its water lines. He did say that water levels were down, but he and Water Department Supervisor Russ Chappell believed that was from residents keeping faucets dripping to try to keep pipes from freezing. By Tuesday, the water levels in the tanks had risen about four feet, he added.

Gregory said water department employees had repaired little leaks throughout the county, but that those types of repairs are not unusual with the blast of sustained cold weather over the past week.

"We've been real fortunate," Gregory said.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 45
Low: 40
LIGHT RAIN

FRIDAY
High: 57
Low: 42
RAIN

SATURDAY
High: 57
Low: 42
SHOWERS