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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Ballance backs Bush on Iraq war

BEN DECK
The Daily Advance

Congressman Frank Ballance, D-N.C., told Democrats in Perquimans Saturday he stands behind President Bush's decision to use force in Iraq.

"Early on I was not in agreement with the war, because I though we should have gone through the U.N.," Ballance said. "Once the President declared war, my debate ended."

Speaking in the county courthouse during the annual convention of the Perquimans Democratic party, Ballance said he believes he is obligated as a government official to support the war as long as U.S. troops are in harm's way.

But Ballance reserved the right to critique the President once the war is over. When asked whether he believes the war may damage world opinion of the U.S., Ballance said "I think there will be an opportunity to debate that issue."

Ballance also said he believes there should have been more debate in Congress before senators and representatives voted last fall to give Bush blanket authority to initiate hostilities with Iraq. The vote took place before Ballance took office.

During the 2002 campaign, Ballance said he would have voted against President Bush's request for authority to use force against Iraq. In late December, Ballance said he was more "content" with the way Bush was handling problems with Iraq.

Ballance also hit on familiar Democratic themes while talking with the Perquimans chapter of the party, and he took a much stronger line against the current administration while doing so.

"This is where I can disagree with the president — on domestic issues," Ballance said.

Ballance said there is a "war" in Congress over issues such as education, Medicare funding and Bush's tax cut. The tax cut will strip \$19 billion in the next 10 years from farmers and \$35 million from veterans — groups which can ill-afford to lose the money, Ballance said.

Ballance also said key programs like Bush's education initiative — No Child Left Behind — have not received needed money. The education reform requires schools to improve the performance of under-achieving students but provides less than 40 percent of the money needed for the requirements, he said.

The heart of the issue is Bush's propensity for making campaign promises and failing to provide money for them, Ballance said.

"He's very good on the stump," Ballance said.



Master Sgt. Margie Saunders



Private Stanley M. Saunders



Private Michael L. Saunders Jr.

Saunders family has 3 members in Middle East

SUSAN R. HARRIS

When Michael Saunders watches the news about the war in Iraq on television, his heart is always in his throat. For Michael and his wife, Dorendana, have two sons who, from all front reports, are on the front lines of Operation Iraqi Freedom.

And his sister, Margie, is deployed to Saudi Arabia.

Saunders himself spent over 20 years in the U.S. Air Force, serving in both Desert Shield and Desert Storm. But he was about 80-100 miles from the front lines, unlike his

sons, who are serving with the Army's 101st Airborne and 3rd Infantry.

Stanley, a 1999 graduate of Perquimans County High School, and Michael Jr., known by the family as Lee, who graduated in 2001, both enlisted in the Army upon graduation.

Stanley spent time at Camp Vilsech, Germany, Kosovo, Bosnia and Ft. Campbell, Ken. before deploying to Iraq with the 101st Airborne the first week in February. He is an electrical generator mechanic.

Lee's first duty station was in South Korea. He was back stateside in Ft.

Stewart, Geo. for one month before shipping out with the 3rd infantry division the last week in January. He is with the engineer battalion.

"I'm just taking everything one day at a time and just pray for my sons, that's all," Saunders said.

Saunders has received one letter from each son and he does have an address for them, so he is able to write back.

While Saunders and his wife, and the couple's three other children, Nathan, Darwin and Wendra, miss Stanley and Lee terribly, Saunders believes the war is necessary.

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County saves \$450K with two loan refinancings

ROBERT SHILES
The Daily Advance

Perquimans County taxpayers could see a savings of as much as \$450,000 thanks to the county's refinancing of two bank loans used to finance major capital projects.

County commissioners last Monday held a public hearing to finalize the refinancing request that will be presented to the state Local Government Commission last week for review and approval. The public hearing was required by state law.

The two bank installment loans are currently held by Branch Bank & Trust Company, and according to Perquimans County Manager Paul Gregory the county is definitely going to benefit from the refinancing.

The first loan of \$4.25 million — to be repaid over 15 years — was taken out in 1996 to fund work on the county's water system. The refinancing is for the remaining debt of \$2,982,222, and the rate of interest will be 3.14 percent — down from the current interest rate of 4.92 percent.

Gregory said that the loan was used to construct the new Bethel water plant, build a 1 million-gallon ground water storage tank, and construct a 300,000-gallon elevated water storage tank to serve Holiday Island and Albemarle Plantation. The county is now in the process, Gregory added, of using

the loan for renovating the county water treatment plant in Winfall.

"On the loan for water projects, we'll save \$300,000 to \$400,000," the manager added. "The savings over the next eight years of the loan will be enough to pay for the purchase of a 300,000 gallon elevated water tank for Durant's Neck."

The second loan — \$2 million to be paid back over 10 years — was taken out in 1998 to help fund the construction and renovation of county school buildings, Gregory said. The remaining \$1,207,230 debt will be repaid at 2.5 percent interest — down from the current interest rate of 4.43 percent.

Gregory said that the loan has been used to help build the new Central Grammar School in Winfall, and for the construction of an addition at the Hertford Grammar School. That loan was also used to fund renovations at Hertford Grammar School.

Gregory said the county will save between \$40,000 and \$50,000 by refinancing the second loan at this time.

The manager noted that current low interest rates made refinancing the loans attractive to the county.

"The county will definitely benefit from the refinancing of these loans," Gregory said. "It's a good deal."

The county voted Monday to pay Davenport and Company \$3,000 for the company's assistance with seeking lower loan rates.

SunTrust Mortgage comes to town

SUSAN R. HARRIS

A national company with a local heart.

That's how Dianne Hardman sees SunTrust Mortgage, Inc., the latest business to open its doors in Hertford.

Hardman, the senior loan officer/builder service representative for SunTrust, said that company employees do everything they can to find a loan that's right for each customer.

With over 250 loan programs to offer, SunTrust seeks to provide opportunities for everyone in a community. The company offers loans for purchase, refinance, construction, investment, and renovation. They can close conventional, VA and FHA loans, as well as second mortgages and equity lines. They provide from \$10,000—\$4 million to borrowers, including those who may qualify for many options and those borrowers who may have special needs, such as low-income families.

"We really strive to do whatever we can to get a loan approved," Hardman said. "We have a loan to fit every customer's needs."

SunTrust is located in Hall of Fame Square and is open Monday—Friday, 9 a.m.—5 p.m. Officers are also available for night and



The Chamber of Commerce welcomed SunTrust Mortgage, Inc. to Hertford last week with a ribbon cutting on Wednesday. The business is located in Hall of Fame Square.

weekend appointments.

In addition to Hardman, the staff includes loan administrator Laurie Shepherd and loan administrator assistant Janice Stringfellow.

Hardman is pleased with the office location in Hertford.

"Hertford is a beautiful town that's getting ready to blossom and we see a lot of opportunity here as far as growth," Hardman said. "We'd like to be a part of that growth."

The town's central location between Edenton and Elizabeth City allows SunTrust to offer services across the area.

Hardman said one program that may benefit both potential homeowners and the community is an FHA

renovation loan that can help buyers purchase and renovate one of the area's historic or older homes and turn the property into a beautiful, comfortable dwelling. This not only allows more people to become homeowners, but also revitalizes neighborhoods, Hardman said.

She will hold a seminar open to realtors and the public on May 7 about this FHA program.

The company opened its doors on March 4, and held an open house, including a ribbon cutting sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce, last Wednesday.

To find out how SunTrust can help with home financing or equity needs, call 426-2200.

Newspaper, American Legion team up for local troop support

SUSAN R. HARRIS

American Legion Post 126 and The Perquimans Weekly have joined forces to support servicemembers stationed in Iraq.

Both groups are seeking information on servicemembers with ties to Perquimans County who are now forward deployed. The newspaper is requesting photographs and family information, and will share this information with the Legion.

Photographs and brief biographical information submitted to the newspaper will be shared with the Legion to be posted on a Hometown Heroes wall at the Legion hut.

On May 9, the Legion will host an open house to honor the troops who are deployed and show support for their family members.

Supplies to be shipped to the military troops are also being collected at The Perquimans Weekly office through May 9. Small packets of baby wipes, prepaid international phone cards,

toothbrushes and other toiletry items, unsealed letters, sunscreen, chapstick and other non-food items are accepted. The supplies will be taken to the American Legion for forwarding to troops.

Call the newspaper at 426-5728 for information.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 62
LOW: 52
RAIN

FRIDAY
HIGH: 62
LOW: 46
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 66
LOW: 49
PARTLY CLOUDY/WIND