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# PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

## WINTER WONDERLAND



PHOTO BY TINA ENNIS

Thursday night brought a dusting of snow, but not enough to affect schools, businesses and traffic. However by mid-morning Friday, it began to snow in earnest, sending students home after eating and early lunch and causing some businesses to close. About 1-2 inches fell here, staying around for a couple of days thanks to bitterly cold temperatures. Most of the snow was gone by Monday afternoon, when temperatures warmed. Another blast of arctic air is forecast for later this week.

## County approves new salary schedule

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Santa came on New Year's for county employees, when the county commissioners implemented a new salary schedule.

The schedule was implemented by a vote last Monday night in regular session, and no commissioner voted against the measure.

According to County Manager Paul Gregory, one reason the county contracted for a salary study and implemented the new schedule was to raise the salaries of those employees on the lower end of the salary scale.

The schedule, he said, provided significant raises for some employees and

made the county competitive with other counties such as Chowan, Gates, Hertford and Northampton. While salaries in the upper pay grades and steps may not be as high as those in counties such as Pasquotank and Currituck, Gregory said in general employees who live in the county may realize about the same pay when travel expenses are factored in.

In fact, at least one county employee who left to accept a position in a surrounding county has called and indicated a desire to come back.

"We are competitive with the counties in the area," he said. "It was a good step in the right direc-

tion."

Employees in the law enforcement, emergency medical and maintenance areas may have seen the most significant raises, Gregory added.

All county employees received raises, although some did not see hourly increases, and in fact, about 15-18 employees may have seen their hourly pay decrease.

That is because with the new salary schedule, the commissioners also changed the county work day from 7 1/2-8 hours.

"The vast majority are very, very happy," Gregory said.

He added that several employees have called his office to thank the commis-

sioners for implementing the policy, although he did say that there have been some "minor upsets" over the overall effects of the new 40-hour work week.

When budget work begins over the next few weeks, commissioners will "take a good, hard look at raises" for next fiscal year, Gregory said, in light of the raises given on Jan. 1. Because of the new schedule and its full implementation, county employees may not get a raise in the new budget.

"After that, the personnel policy will kick back in," Gregory said, adding that that means step, cost of living and merit raises will again be handled per the county personnel policy.

## Bowles visits Hertford

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Erskine Bowles, a North Carolina businessman and former White House Chief of staff, made a short visit to Hertford Monday afternoon, speaking with about 30 people at the courthouse.

The visit was publicized as a forum to discuss housing, business and economic development issues, sponsored by the Northeastern Community Development Corporation and the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

However, Bowles spoke about his stances on healthcare, the economy and education, and what he will do if elected to the U.S. Senate. "I think I can make a big, big difference for this part of the state," Bowles said.

Bowles said he has 35 years' experience as a business person, with his share of both successes and failures. He learned from both, he said, and can use what he has learned from personal experience to help stimulate the economy.

He said there is a need to create good, high-wage jobs. Bowles said he would support no future trade agreements while those presently in effect are not enforced.

He added that the \$103 million deficit in the balance of trade with China is a major economic problem with the United States.

Bowles said another priority for Bowles, he said, would be healthcare.

"We have the best healthcare in the world, but the healthcare system needs reform," Bowles said.

Americans spend 14 percent of the GDP on healthcare.

"No other nation in the world spends over nine percent," he said.

There are 44 million Americans with no health insurance.

He said healthcare reform needs to take place on a step-by-step basis until it is fixed.

"I think we have a real obligation to do something there," he said.

Healthcare reform will require working across party lines, and Bowles thinks he can do that, he said.

While Bowles said he believes in high standards in education he believes that the No Child Left Behind legislation may in reality be "no child left untested."

He said the program has a good intent, but is one-third underfunded, needing at least \$6 billion more to implement.

He sees a focus on early childhood programs, smaller class sizes, valuing and paying teachers, schools construction, after-school programs, increased Pell grants and an investment in college as necessary to education improvement.

On a national level, Bowles was asked to head the Small Business Administration by President Clinton in 1993, and served as Deputy Chief of Staff for the president from October 1994 to December 1995.

Bowles returned to Charlotte for a brief period of time in 1996, but was asked to return to Washington by President Clinton in December of that year to serve as his Chief of Staff. Since his resignation in 1998, Bowles has returned to Charlotte and resumed his responsibilities in the business sector.

Bowles said while in Washington, he worked across party lines to help balance the national budget. He was successful and actually helped create a budget surplus, even while increasing education funding.

"Our priorities were to invest in the future of this country," he said of those from both parties with whom he worked on the budget.

"I want to be there when you call me," Bowles said.

## Periauger keel-laying ceremony set for Friday at Maritime Museum

Next Friday, construction will begin on the long-awaited periauger, a colonial era logboat that will be home-ported in Hertford.

A keel-laying ceremony is set for Jan. 16 at 1:30 p.m. at the N.C. Maritime Museum's Watercraft Center in Beaufort.

A keel laying traditionally involves the placement of the first timber of a new vessel to be constructed. Museum Director Dr. David Nateman will officiate at the ceremony. A reception in the museum auditorium will follow.

The boat is expected to be completed by mid-April.

The construction of the periauger is a joint project with the Perquimans County Restoration Association, which operates the Newbold-White House Historic Site, and East Carolina University's

Program in Maritime Studies. Other partners include Perquimans County, the Town of Hertford and North Carolina's Northeast Partnership.

The periauger will be located in Historic Hertford harbor following completion and eventually at the Newbold-White House Historic Site as part of its hands-on educational programming.

In colonial America, settlers traveled the waterways in common ships called periaugers — the pick-up trucks of those days. Historical references indicate that for many colonial settlers, the periauger was the vessel of choice, especially on the sounds and rivers of North Carolina.

No surviving examples for these characteristic

workboats used by colonists in North Carolina in the 17th and 18th century are known to exist; therefore the design for this 30-foot vessel was researched for over a decade using descriptions and illustrations of that period.

Among the documentary evidence discovered about the ship was a reference to a periauger in the 1751 estate of Abraham Sanders, the builder of the 1730 Newbold-White House.

Through this history-making project, the periauger will be built and reintroduced to the waterways.

Periauger is a generic term for a two-masted ship made of a dugout and split cypress log with split keel and propelled by both oars and sails. Some periaugers could carry large cargos and travel up small streams and rivers where deeper

draft vessels could not.

The PCRA raised \$37,000 in private donations and the North Carolina Department of Transportation's Enhancement Program committed \$55,623 for the project.

Michael B. Alford, former curator of maritime research for the N.C. Maritime Museum in Beaufort, designed the periauger. Assisting in the research was Dr. Larry Babits, maritime archaeologist with East Carolina University's Program in Maritime Studies. The project boatbuilder is Craig Wright, formerly of Goshen, Conn., who built the 28-foot gaff cutter on which he lives.

Local volunteers spent hours last winter hand-crafting many of the ancillary pieces of the periauger

project, including the masts, sweeps, rudder and jib.

The work took place in unoccupied space at the Perquimans 2020 Business Incubator on Harvey Point Road. Lead builders Gerry Zell, Kent Carper and John Ernst, along with Frank Aubert, Dick Haas, Ted Huffman, Monty Spindler, Don Johnson and Bill Jackson, spent well over 1500 manhours on the local portion of the building project.

Jim Burns donated much of the equipment used by the Perquimans building crew.

The public may watch the construction of the periauger in the N.C. Maritime Museum's Watercraft Center Monday — Friday, 9 a.m. — 5 p.m. There is no admission charge to visit the muse-

um.

Contact the museum for information at 252-728-7317 or email maritime@ncmail.net.

## HOLIDAY WEATHER

THURSDAY  
High: 35  
Low: 23  
EARLY FLURRY

FRIDAY  
High: 29  
Low: 23  
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY  
High: 35  
Low: 26  
PARTLY CLOUDY