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THE

# PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Gregory steps down as county manager

Darden assumes position

ERIN RICKERT  
Staff Writer

After spending the good part of 17 years as county manager, Paul Gregory is finally passing his duties onto someone else.

"I've got to give up some of the stress," Gregory said. "I've had two heart attacks and I just need to slow down. I am not going to go away, just slow down."

In a farewell gathering Monday night, Gregory's 35 years of achievements and sacrifices were recognized by those close to him.

Gregory, who devoted eight years to teaching and another 10 years as the director of social services before accepting his posi-

tion as Perquimans' second county manager, said he enjoyed all the time he spent working.

Bobby Darden, the assistant county manager will take over Gregory's position Thursday.

"Bobby was hired two years ago to step into this position and he's ready," Gregory said.

Darden was hired in September 2002 and has been working alongside Gregory ever since.

"Paul has brought me along slow," Darden said. "I am looking forward to working with county employees and commissioners and finishing projects Paul has started."

Darden said he envisions the water system and the repair and expansion of Perquimans High School as the main projects of focus for the upcoming year.

Darden said upgrades and renovations to the water system and the high



PHOTOS BY ERIN RICKERT

Scores of well-wishers attended a retirement reception for County Manager Paul Gregory Monday, including former clerk to the board of county commissioners Jeanne White (above). Gregory turns over the county reigns to Bobby Darden (left) Thursday afternoon.

school would take place to help improve water capacity and plan for the growing community.

Gregory was joined by



his family, government officials from Perquimans and the surrounding counties, and a host of friends for Monday's reception, which

was held at the county's new recreation/community center in the Perquimans Commerce Centre.

## Causeway reopens over weekend

Sinking asphalt closes road for three weeks

ERIN RICKERT  
Staff Writer

After three weeks of detour signs and going the "long way around," area residents can once again travel on the Hertford causeway.

The bridge was closed for the second time in two years after a concrete slab that once supported close to 23-feet of the causeway sunk.

Ronnie Sawyer, county maintenance engineer at the North Carolina Department of Transportation, said the sinking occurred gradually over the course of about a year.

During that time, the NCDOT filled low areas with asphalt.

Sawyer said that asphalt was used so often that when the actual repairs were finished Friday, 40 inches of asphalt had been used to temporarily repair the problem.

The causeway, which Sawyer said cost \$40,000 to repair, is the second project of its kind he has seen in his five years with the NCDOT and he said it is possible Hertford will see this again.

"We do not have money for a big project right now," Sawyer said. "Right now we are repairing them [sections of the causeway] as they fall."

The causeway has not yet been added to the NCDOT's Transportation Improvement Program's list of planned construction projected for the next seven years.

Sawyer said he is not sure if or when the causeway will be added.

Sawyer did, however, say that the NCDOT has a traffic control program in place if the problem does reoccur.

## Whitehurst named Teacher of the Year

SUSAN R. HARRIS

Chris Whitehurst once expected to be on stage before audiences playing the music that gives meaning to his life.

But the stage upon which Whitehurst finds himself standing these days is a classroom filled with high school students — students who play at different levels for different reasons. And seeing those young people learn discipline, commitment, teamwork and the value of the arts is worth more to him than all the applauding audiences he may have performed for had he not decided to become a music educator.

The instrumental music instructor at Perquimans County High School was recently named Teacher of the Year for Perquimans County Schools.

Whitehurst started out as a music industry studies major with a concentration in music business administration at Elizabeth City State University. As a requirement of his scholarship at ECSU, Whitehurst had to perform community service, a requirement he fulfilled by working with local high school bands. His love of performing was soon matched by his joy at seeing students grow through music. By the time Whitehurst transferred to East Carolina University after his sophomore year, he knew he was meant to



Perquimans County Schools honored its Teachers of the Year Monday night at the school board meeting. Stephanie Fuller, Chris Whitehurst, Lisa Jones and Rodney Lyons were honored at the school level. Whitehurst was named the district Teacher of the Year.

teach. He began looking for opportunities in the education field, and was hired as the percussion instructor for the PCHS Marching Pirates during his student years at ECU. A full-time music position was open at Perquimans when Whitehurst graduated from ECU in December 1998, and Whitehurst was tapped to fill that spot. He has served as director of bands at the high school since that time, instructing and directing marching band, symphonic band, concert band, jazz ensemble and percussion ensemble, in addition to music theory and music appreciation.

According to letters of recommendation in his Teacher of the Year portfo-

lio, Whitehurst has earned the respect of students, parents, colleagues and those involved in music education for his dedication to his students, willingness to mentor students and music educators, and his commitment to excellence through the growth of each individual student.

While the music groups he directs have earned numerous awards under his leadership, he is known as an instructor who emphasizes personal responsibility, commitment, work ethic and teamwork over trophies.

Whitehurst was chosen from a field of four educators — one representing each of the county's four schools — by a panel of

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Perquimans County Schools Foundation vice president Randy Lassiter takes a swing at the foundation's second annual golf tournament that raised about \$5,000 for support for local students and teachers.

## Duffers swing for public education

With temperatures in the low 80s on a beautiful breezy fall day, more than 100 ladies and gentlemen grabbed their clubs and headed to the golf course in support of public education.

The challenge for the day was more than a hole-in-one, an eagle or a birdie.

"The challenge is to improve educational opportunities for local students," said Foundation vice president Randy Lassiter. "I am not a golfer, but I have sponsored a team in the golf tournament for the past two years, as have many of the Foundation board members. It is a way we are able to devote time and resources to improve education for students in our local schools."

The Foundation received financial assistance from the Coastal Rural Systemic Initiative at Appalachian State University to fund the initial stages of organization. Now, in its third year of operation, board members are working to promote and support academic achievement and scholarly research by students and school employees through scholarship and grant awards.

This year's golf tournament was the second of its kind and board members are anticipating that the golf tournament will be an annual event. Last year's tournament enabled the Foundation to offer a \$1,000 scholarship to a graduating senior and to offer financial

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
High: 76  
Low: 56  
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY  
High: 77  
Low: 58  
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY  
High: 80  
Low: 58  
PARTLY CLOUDY