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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Isabel repairs continue on bridge fenders

ERIN RICKERT

Work to the fender system on Hertford's S bridge that boasted extended closure of the roadway just two weeks ago is running smoothly, according to officials.

Waff Contracting from Edenton recently began work on the system, which not only serves as a guide for boats, but essentially protects the bridge from

being hit by water traffic. Division Bridge Engineer Chuck Brown said the fender system, or the wooden structure that juts out from the bridge, was extensively damaged in Hurricane Isabel when the storm surge lifted the wood and separated the joints — leaving large gaps between each plank.

Now Waff Contracting is working to replace the entire system.

"It is going to be the same size, shape and configuration as the older fender system," Brown said.

Pat Wemple, an estimator with Waff Contracting, said the company has a crew of four to six men working on repairs from sun up to sun down.

"We are taking off fender timbers and replacing them with new piles and timbers," Wemple said.

The company has been

periodically closing the bridge while school is in session to bring 55-foot pile timbers and the 10–12 inch boards into the work site.

Wemple said the company was concerned they may run into problems with repairs due to the large amount of debris still under the water from Isabel.

"So far it is going okay," Wemple said. "There has not been anything unex-

pected."

Brown said that due to the extensive work that will be done, the project would not be finished until January 2005.

During that time, close to 200 new pilings will be driven underwater to help support the nearly \$562,000 project.

The North Carolina Department of Transportation will cover the cost of repairs because

the bridge is part of US 17.

Brown said the federal highway system will reimburse the NCDOT a percentage of the cost, but he could not say how large a percentage would be returned.

Residents will be notified of any closures related to repairs of the fender system, but Brown said travel on the bridge should continue as usual with only a few delays.

CIVICS LESSON



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Students at Hertford Grammar School participated in a mock election Tuesday. The election was run by the Student Government Association, and included voting and a lessons about the popular vote and electoral college. Results were expected to be released at the end of the school day.

Newbold-White fundraiser set

ERIN RICKERT

Conservation work on the New-Bold White House is expected to resume after proceeds from the Nov. 13 Albemarle Plantation Gala are presented to the historic site.

Ann Jones, site manager at the New-Bold White House, said the famous brick home was tested to determine what areas will receive conservation work once funding is in place.

The Gala will begin at 6 p.m. with cocktails and continue through midnight with dinner, dancing and an auction.

Chris Lane, president of the Perquimans County Restoration Association, said there are only 180 seats at the Albemarle Plantation Clubhouse, so those interested in attending must make their reservations by Nov. 6.

Tickets are \$75 a person and black tie dress is requested.

"I have had a lot of

phone calls," Lane said. "People are hungry for something fabulous."

Organizers held a similar event two years ago and raised \$19,000, but they said this year they hope to surpass that total, and raise \$25,000 for work on the historic site.

Lane said a silent auction with small items will be at the event and a live auction later in the evening will feature larger items like a handmade canoe and a sunset cruise on a sailboat — all donated by individuals in the community.

"The Society of Seven," a band out of Virginia, will close the evening with dancing music from 9 p.m. until midnight.

"I'm a real preservationist," Lane said. "I think it is important to preserve the past for the future of our children."

For more information or to make reservations, contact Ann Jones from the New-Bold White House at 426-3534.

Grant could help upgrade housing

ERIN RICKERT

A Community Development Block Grant could mean better living conditions for some Hertford residents next year.

Hertford Town Manager John Christensen said the town is currently working with The Wooten Company out of Greenville to put together an application to receive money from a federal CDBG grant to repair low to moderate-income housing.

If the CDBG application were accepted, \$700,000 would be available to repair 10-15 homes in the area.

Christensen said Hertford has applied and won the grant four times in the last few years for housing repairs on King, Dobbs and Market streets. This year, they are looking to mainly repair homes on Market and Dobbs streets.

Donald Harvey, project

manager with The Wooten Company, said Hertford would be competing with hundreds of other towns for the grant money.

"There is lots of red tape and bureaucracy," Harvey said. "It is very competitive."

In the meantime, a crew from The Wooten Company will survey Market and Dobbs streets and assess which structures are in need of attention.

Harvey said their assessment would include looking at things like water and sewer problems, crumbling sidewalks and driveways, along with other structural issues.

Once the assessments are finished, The Wooten Company will go door-to-door and speak with the owners and the occupants of each property.

"We will be in the area any time for that [visits]," Harvey said.

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Gustafson to step down as CIS director

ERIN RICKERT

Those who recognize the name Barbara Gustafson know a vibrant individual who has helped shape the community and the school system in so many ways.

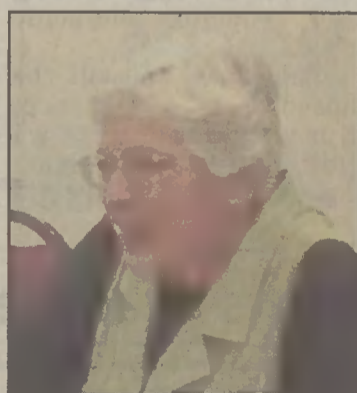
An individual who took upon the challenge of starting the Communities in Schools outreach program and has made it the only functioning program east of Rocky Mount for nearly six years.

She is a person many in the community regret to see stepping down from her position as executive director of CIS this December, when she passes the reins onto someone else in the November Board of Education Meeting.

"I feel like I just need to be home more," Gustafson said.

Gustafson's husband Don was diagnosed with Alzheimer's five months ago and she said she just wants to spend more time with him.

"I have seen the other end of this [Alzheimer's]," Gustafson said as she remembered her more than 15 years as a nurse. "Don needs time with his family while he can appreciate it." Gustafson said most of



Barbara Gustafson

the infrastructure is ready for a new director, and that it was important for her to be around to provide a good transition for her predecessor.

She said the new director would still have the challenge of maintaining a program, as she did, with little or no budget.

This year the CIS program, which relies heavily on volunteers and in-kind donations, was running on only \$14,000 due to state budget cuts of more than \$10,000.

Gustafson said she recalls how she once received a call from the North Carolina Community in Schools office in Raleigh. They had called to ask her if she wanted any free books from First Books, a division of

Random House.

"They asked if I wanted one pallet or two," Gustafson remembers. "I was so excited to get free books I said two, not knowing how many was in a pallet."

Gustafson soon found out that she had volunteered to take more than 4,000 books.

"We had to get a U-Haul to get them all here," she said. "Donations like the books allowed the program to continue."

Gustafson and her family relocated to the area from Jamestown, New York where she spent close to 12 years as a public health nurse.

Upon moving to the area nearly 18 years ago, Gustafson began work as a nurse in the intensive care unit at Chowan Hospital. She and a few others later went on to help start the Brian Center.

At the request of her daughter Janine, Gustafson began work with the community and the schools when she and a few neighborhood volunteers started an after school program, which ran nearly 12 years before its end.

Gustafson said when she

retires in December she will not be out of sight. She said she plans to get a part time job that will allow her more flexibility.

She said she also hopes the extra time will allow she and her husband to continue their work with silver.

The couple, who own Viking Silver Workers in Winfall, had to close shop recently due to complications with Don's illness, but they are hopeful for its reopening.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 68
Low: 52
SCATTERED T-STORMS

FRIDAY
High: 62
Low: 37
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY
High: 58
Low: 41
SUNNY