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HONORING THOSE WHO SERVE



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

County Commissioners Chair Mack Nixon, state Senator Robert L. Holioman, Hertford Mayor Sid Eley and Winfall Mayor Fred Yates place a wreath in honor and memory of U.S. military men and women in Winfall Landing Park during a Veteran's Day program last Thursday.

Schools get report cards

Three county schools earn state ABCs recognition

Report cards went home with children across North Carolina this week.

But the grades don't reflect students' individual achievement, but rather rate the student's school based on criteria established by the state's ABCs of Public Education.

And Perquimans schools performed well, with Central and Hertford Grammar earning School of Distinction recognition, while the high school was named a School of Progress. While the middle school did not earn recognition under the ABCs criteria, students there met 100 percent of the target goals for the federal No Child Left Behind legislation. In addition, students at Perquimans Middle School demonstrated sustained student academic growth, demonstrating the highest student proficiency in the past five years.

"The data reflected in the report card is for the

2003-04 school year," said Perquimans County Schools Superintendent Dr. Kenneth W. Wells. "We encourage parents to study the school report cards to learn more about our schools and how they can be more involved in strengthening the programs which exist."

Report cards went out to parents across the state on Tuesday. The report cards include data on a variety of subjects such as class size, student performance on end-of-grade tests, number of teachers, number of years of experience of certified staff and number of classrooms that have access to technology.

Locally, students in grades 3-8 performed higher overall than students across the state, scoring 85.2 percent proficient in reading and 89.4 percent proficient in math. The average for students across the state was 84.3 percent proficient in reading and 88.5 percent proficient in math.

At the high school, students scored higher than the state average in some areas and lower than the

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Medical program started for needy

ERIN RICKERT

Health care for northeastern North Carolina's indigent and uninsured may be easier to come by with a new assistance program run through the Albemarle Hospital Foundation.

The Community Care Clinic, created in June, provides medical and pharmacy services, five days a week, free of charge for individuals in need.

Aiding Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Dare, Gates, Perquimans and Pasquotank counties, the clinic assists residents in the Albemarle Hospital's seven county service area, an area populated by more than 123,000 people, nearly 25,000 of whom are indigent or uninsured and require the clinic's services.

Through the clinic, the Albemarle Hospital Foundation offers residents assistance with three programs: a primary care clinic, dispensing pharmacy and a patient assistance program.

To qualify for these services, patients must meet certain financial guidelines before receiving care.



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Caring volunteers staff a clinic to help the area's indigent and uninsured. Locally, the program runs at the RHEMA Ministries building on Don Juan Road every second Wednesday of the month from 9 a.m.-noon.

"What I envision is to help those people that fall through the cracks," said Phil Donahue, vice president of fund development at Albemarle Hospital and director of the Albemarle Hospital Foundation. "Our mission and reason for existing is to provide health care for individuals in need."

Donahue helped start the original regional Community Care Clinic in Elizabeth City this summer, and in the short five months it has provided service, two satellite clinics were opened in Gates and Perquimans counties.

These satellite clinics, however, are only equipped to offer residents the patient assistance program.

This is a program that provides individuals with long-term medication by helping them apply for pre-

scription assistance through major pharmaceutical companies.

Perquimans, the county with the highest poverty rate out of the seven, just opened its clinic doors in September.

Located in the RHEMA Ministries building in Hertford, it operates from 9 a.m.-noon the second Wednesday of every month.

Hattie Sharpe, president of RHEMA Ministries Institute, said even though the clinic has only been open a short time, five people came to set up a prescription assistance plan last week and she expects more to come in the future.

Donahue said the smaller satellite clinics will be open longer and offer more once there is a higher demand.

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Telecommunications upgrades improve emergency dispatch service

ERIN RICKERT

As flashing lights on the Zetron Radio System alert telecommunicators to an incoming call, Homeria Jeanette adjusts her headset and prepares herself for the voice on the other end of the line.

For 22-years she has brought the sick ambulances, directed fire engines to five alarm blazes and assisted police in catching armed robbers.

As the Director of Telecommunications for Perquimans County, Jeanette has been around for many of the changes the communication center has undergone.

Since her work began in the 80s, Jeanette has not only aided thousands of residents, she has witnessed several key equipment upgrades in the department and seen a significant growth in the county's use of 911 communication.

"We have had a tremendous increase [in calls]," Jeanette said. "When I first started we were lucky to see 800 calls a month. Now we have close to 3,000."

Jeanette said she remembers employees working the midnight shift only receiving about 20 calls a month — now there are nearly 500.

Figures to date even calculate an increase of 2,999 calls to 911 during this year alone.

Yet, the increase in calls is not the only hurdle Jeanette and the eight other employees who work

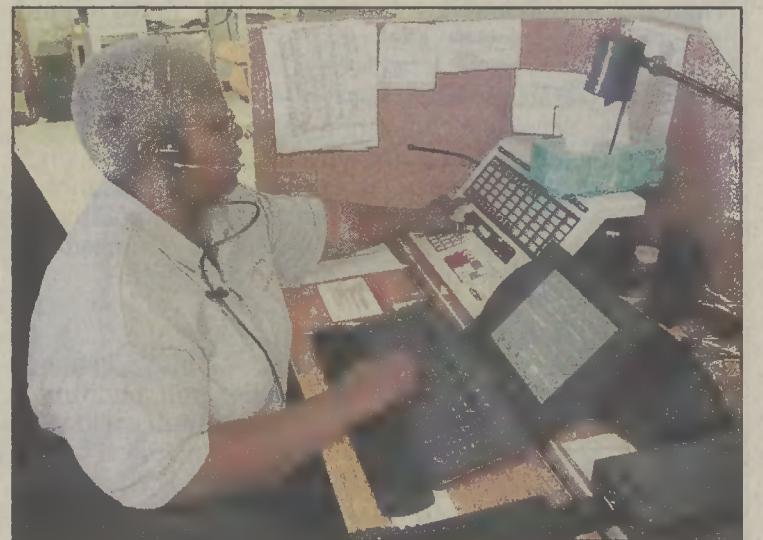


PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Homeria Jennette operates telecommunication equipment at the Perquimans County Telecommunications Center on Grubb Street.

in the communication center face. As new improvements are made in the field, employees must work to upgrade and quickly understand new advances.

Four years ago, Jeanette and her employees were using a pencil, paper and fold out maps to take down information and direct emergency services to distress calls.

Now three stations fully equipped with touch screen telephones, Zetron radio systems and computers that allow employees to pin point the exact location of callers while printing out a map they can fax to emergency services in route, fill their office.

A more than \$29,500 Dictaphone Freedom Recorder received last month through wireless funding now replaces the

Dictaphone Guardian they purchased in 1994.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 66
Low: 49
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
High: 68
Low: 48
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
High: 65
Low: 51
MOSTLY CLOUDY