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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Hawkins earns regional honor

ERIN RICKERT

Perquimans County Middle School Principal Melvin Hawkins was named the 2005 Northeast Region Wachovia Principal of the Year Thursday, after competing against 13 other principals for the honor.

Hawkins, who goes down



Melvin Hawkins

in history as the first principal in the school system to receive the award in the 22 years educators have vied for the honor, was unassuming of the announcement.

"I was shocked,"

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Local is victim of scam

ERIN RICKERT

A pair of con artists claiming ties to the federal government recently scammed a New Hope resident out of more than \$900, officials said Monday.

Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley said two white males were reported to have entered the resident's home the afternoon of Feb. 8.

While there, the two promised the resident receipt of a \$40 check from the federal government monthly for life as long as

they made an initial payment of \$60 and allowed the men to take some measurements of the inside of the home.

Believing the men's story to be true, the resident proceeded to collect a \$20 bill from a nearby table and another \$20 from their wallet - later venturing to another room to retrieve the remaining \$20 as the male suspect taking measurements looked on.

After the resident returned to the living room with the full \$60, the second suspect kept the victim distracted as the male taking

measurements cleaned \$900 from the same room the victim retrieved the \$20 from earlier.

"They were just trying to do whatever they could to find out where the money was," Tilley said.

Phone lines running to the victim's home were also cut, allowing the suspects ample time to get away.

Tilley said though the victim did not see the men's vehicle, they were able to provide a description of each suspect.

The male taking measurements is thought to be somewhere between 50 and

60 years old, 5'10 tall, 170-190 pounds with glasses, gray hair, beard and mustache.

The second suspect is described to be between the ages of 25 and 30, 6 feet tall and approximately 160-180 pounds.

Tilley said anyone who has seen individuals matching either of these descriptions should call 911.

While Tilley said this is the first report of its kind in the area he warned residents to be cautious of who they let into their homes.

Safe schools get safer

ERIN RICKERT

Though three of the four public schools in Perquimans County were honored with the state's Super Safe Schools award last week, officials continue to add technology to improve the school's security.

LobbyGuard, a close to \$6,000 program newly installed in the offices of all four schools, now allows guests to print out visitor badges through the use of a sign-in kiosk.

"Safety has always been a priority of mine and it [LobbyGuard] is just another tool to maintain a safe campus," said Dr. Kenneth Wells, Perquimans County Schools superintendent.

Wells said the new kiosks not only allow each of the school's check-in procedures to be uniform but it formalizes the process as well.

Prior to last week, each of the four schools in the system ran different check-in policies requiring visitors to sign in and do everything from wear a plastic badge or sticker to nothing at all.

Now, the LobbyGuard system walks guests at all schools through step-by-step instructions on a touch-screen computer as they do everything from get their picture taken to scan their driver's license.

Once visitors finish, the date, time and reason for



PHOTOS BY ERIN RICKERT

Officers volunteer at park

Erin Rickert

Nearly 20 members of the River City Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police braved high winds and 30 degree weather to assemble Missing Mill Park's long awaited playground equipment Friday.

Bundled in winter gear and equipped with stacks of paper diagrams, these volunteers tackled a maze of playground pieces, which lay strewn like a life-size jigsaw puzzle across the lawn.

With rubber mallets and socket wrenches clamped tightly in numb fingers, their teamwork assembled each ladder, shelter and floor, filling grounds that

Members of the River City Chapter of the Fraternal Order of Police braved wind and cold to assemble playground equipment at Missing Mill Park Friday (above). Aly Storms, the granddaughter of Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy and Elizabeth City officer Robin Vanscoy, takes a break on the new equipment (below) as her grandfather tightens a bolt.



had been absent of playground equipment since 2002.

"Our biggest thing was

showing that we are involved with the community we serve," said John

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Replaced tower improves radio communications

ERIN RICKERT

Construction of the county's 500-foot communication tower, destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2003, was finally completed last week.

Perquimans County Manager Bobby Darden said insurance covered the initial \$205,725 it cost to construct the tower and an additional \$10,000 was added to position emergency response antennas up an extra 100-feet and clear trees at the tower's Winfall location.

This repositioning placed the Sheriff Department and fire departments at 500 feet, while rescue was placed at 480 feet in an effort to help improve reception.

"There is much better

clarity now," said Homeria Jennette, communications director. "It is even better than before the tower went down."

Jennette said in the nearly two years emergency response was forced to wait before the tower could be replaced, reception was so poor many times dispatchers had to repeat themselves several times before they were heard - providing slower response to emergency situations.

This was because the county was leasing space on a private tower and another smaller tower near Perquimans County High School - both of which were less than half the size of the former 500-foot tower.

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PQ grad returns from Iraq

ERIN RICKERT

Michael Evans left Hertford just nine days after graduating from Perquimans County High School in 2001, never thinking he would one day find himself in the midst of war.

Joined by his tearful mother Debra as he boarded the bus to Army boot camp, 18 year-old Michael left that June day for direction in his life.

Months after completion of boot camp, this now skilled combat engineer, would travel with the Army overseas to

Schweinfurt, Germany where he would meet and marry Mrarina, the love of his life, in November 2003.

And after two short deployments in Kosovo and Bosnia - this newlywed couple would be faced with a reality no one expected just three months before Michael was scheduled to return home.

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Family offers reward for information on missing local man

SUSAN HARRIS

Kevin Fields will turn 47 Saturday, and the greatest gift his mother could get is some information on her son, missing since May 2002.

For almost three years, Marjorie Fields has been on a relentless search for information leading to what she calls a "resolution" to the disappearance of her younger son.

To try to encourage those who may know what happened to Kevin to come forward, she is offering a \$5,000 reward for information leading to the arrest and conviction of a person or persons responsible for his disappearance.

"We feel like we have come a little further in the investigation (of Fields' disappearance) and we're hoping this will cause someone to come forward to

give us additional information," said Perquimans Sheriff Eric Tilley.

Fields has not been seen since July 6, 2002.

Mrs. Fields said her son called her often on the cell phone she gave him one Christmas. He called her on Friday, July 5, 2002 at her job, and told her he'd call her back that night. He never called, and the messages on the phone stopped at 12:30 on Saturday, July 6.

Mrs. Fields began to worry as the days went by and there was still no word from her son. He had begun keeping in contact with his family, and yet no one had heard from him.

Mrs. Fields, a former Hertford resident who now lives in Wilmington near her older son, Brad, and Kevin's father, George, who has since passed away, contacted authorities.

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Kevin Fields has been missing since July 2002.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 40
LOW: 32
WINTER MIX TO RAIN

FRIDAY
HIGH: 45
LOW: 32
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 48
LOW: 30
PARTLY CLOUDY