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Gas prices soar as Easter nears

ERIN RICKERT

Gas prices are reaching new highs across North Carolina after averaging \$2 a gallon last week.

Due in part to the increased price of crude oil, fear of terrorism and market speculation, Tom Crosby, vice president of communication for AAA Carolinas said gas prices in the Carolinas have been climbing by more than a penny a day since early March.

Traditionally, gas prices begin to rise in late spring and continue to rise throughout the summer due to the increase in travel and demands for gasoline.

Crosby said now with the traditional spring increase in pump prices underway, North Carolinians are spending more than ever at gas stations across the state.

According to a AAA fuel gauge report, gas prices are already up more than 30 cents a gallon since last Easter.

One year ago the average price of regular unleaded gasoline was \$1.722 per gallon and as of Monday it had risen to \$2.036 per gallon.

Gas prices will most likely continue to increase, Crosby said, until Memorial Day as the warm weather demand sets in.

He said prices could stabilize between now and Memorial Day if Saudi Arabia follows through on its pledge to supply an extra 500,000 barrels of crude oil a day starting April 1.

Crosby reminds consumers that a typical vehicle getting 20 miles to the gallon traveling no more than 15,000 miles a year would only experience a \$3.60 increase a week with current prices.

"There is no need to buy a different car or change routines," Crosby said. "Prices may be a problem only if there were a drastic dollar increase."

AREA PUMP PRICES

As of Monday, prices rounded to the nearest cent, of regular unleaded gasoline at some Perquimans County stations:

One Stop, Grubb Street, Hertford \$2.10

Layden's Supermarket, Belvidere Road, Belvidere \$2.09

Trade Mart, Church Street, Hertford \$2.09

Red Apple, Harvey Point Road, Hertford \$2.10

Layden's, Winfall Boulevard, Winfall \$2.09



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Nell Davis (left) and Geri Layden of the Belvidere Ruritan Relay for Life Team make purple ribbons which the team is selling for \$5 each to raise money for cancer research. Davis is undergoing daily chemotherapy treatments for an aggressive form of breast cancer.

Relay teams raising money

ERIN RICKERT

Editor's note: This is the first in a series on Perquimans County-based Relay For Life teams. Throughout the month of March and into April, The Perquimans Weekly will bring our readers the stories of area teams and the driving force behind their efforts to help support the fight to eliminate cancer.

While the yellow Lance Armstrong "live strong" bracelets are being sold all over the country to aid cancer research, a local effort is going on right here in Perquimans County.

Started as a fundraiser by the Belvidere Ruritan Club's first-ever Relay For Life team, purple cancer awareness ribbons began popping up on mailboxes and front doors all over the county March 8.

Similar to the bracelets, the large weatherproof ribbons can be purchased for \$5 with all the proceeds going toward cancer research.

For the Belvidere Ruritan Club, the effort is of great importance after one of its members was diagnosed with cancer last August.

Nell Davis, 53, discovered she had a severely aggressive form of breast cancer after going in for a routine mammogram just months earlier.

Now as Davis works to complete the last few weeks of her daily chemotherapy treatments, she and her co-captain Geri Layden head the team's ribbon fundraiser.

In May, Davis's team and the four other teams in Perquimans County to date, plan to participate in the Relay For Life event.

Held across the globe for years, the event is designed not only to celebrate survivorship, but hope, all while raising money for research and programs sponsored by the American Cancer Society.

In the months before the race, each team holds its own unique fundraisers to raise money that will later be donated toward cancer research.

It is Davis's hope that with the community's help, the Ruritan team could raise close to \$1,000 with its ribbon campaign — later presenting it to the American Cancer Society at the end of fundraising May 4.

Davis said with the help of local businesses, club



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Layden's Supermarket on Belvidere Road in Belvidere is just one of the places to purchase a purple ribbon to help fund cancer research.

members are working to create the nearly 200 ribbons it will take to meet

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Hertford eyes growth concerns

Moratorium on large subdivisions implemented

ERIN RICKERT

Hertford officials are hopeful a two-year moratorium on larger subdivisions will give them time to develop a plan to accommodate the sudden influx of requests by developers to build in the area.

Town Council approved the moratorium on subdivisions 10 lots or larger last week after mulling requests to build from Page Development and Timberline Land Company in their February meeting.

Council members were faced with requests by Page and Timberline for the addition of close to 150 lots on Edenton Road Street and another 300 lots on the corner of Harvey Point Road and US Highway 17, thus stealing more than half the capacity of the town's \$5 million sewer plant slated for completion in 2007 and violating capacity limitations set by the state.

"Under the special order by consent, we have a certain amount [of capacity] we have to protect," said Hertford Town Manager John Christensen. "The moratorium protects that capacity the SOC allows us until the plant is finished. It gives us time to look at new growth projections."

Christensen said when the town began to consider upgrading the five decade old sewer plant in 1999 plans were based on only a 2 percent growth increase per year.

"Now that we are in the last stages of design and ready to construct [the sewer plant]," Christensen said, "we are finding our growth far exceeds the 2 percent."

Christensen, along with engineers are now working together to anticipate growth and plan future capacity expansion, which

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 58
LOW: 47
PARTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 67
LOW: 51
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 71
LOW: 55
THUNDERSTORMS

Winfall brings technology to its residents

ERIN RICKERT

Area residents without access to computers or Internet may benefit from a Technology Center recently installed inside the Winfall Town Office.

Equipped with four computer stations, basic software and wireless Internet connections, computer services are available to residents from 10 a.m.-noon and 1-5 p.m. Monday-Friday.

"There are a lot of homes that don't have computers," said Winfall Mayor

Fred Yates. "What we are trying to do is close out that digital divide."

Winfall was able to provide the service to residents after being chosen as one of 15 towns to receive the computers through the expansion of a revitalization grant the Town of Roper's Window on the World Technology Center received months earlier.

Bunny Sanders, mayor of the Town of Roper, said the grant called for Roper to choose 15 of the more than 30 towns in northeastern North Carolina with a population of less than

1,500 people to mentor.

Through this they were able to provide the town with government surplus computers and updates to the computers for a small fee.

Gloria Mason, town clerk and finance officer said Winfall was able to obtain the five computers, one for office use and the other four for resident use, through the grant.

Mason said the \$1,250 needed for Roper to update the computers and \$788 to purchase workstations for the computers was taken from the balance left over

from constructing the town's Municipal Building.

Because town employees monitor workstations, parents and children interested in using the facilities are required to sign an agreement not to misuse materials.

While the use of the workstations is free, Mason said residents who wish to print anything out on the computers must pay the town 25 cents per copy.

"If we are going to be a service to the community," Yates said, "this is a step in the right direction."