

Newbold-White spring clean-up

Page 3

Warm weather brings mosquitoes

Page 4

Student art winners

Page 8

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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35 cents

## Schools slash pre-kindergarten numbers

ERIN RICKERT

Perquimans County school officials announced plans Monday to reduce pre-kindergarten enrollment by nearly 50 percent after larger-than-anticipated numbers enrolled in next year's program.

Schools Superintendent Kenneth W. Wells said funding challenges paired with the rising pre-K and

kindergarten enrollment forced the decision to reduce pre-K offerings.

"We have been operating a high-quality pre-K program in Perquimans County for the past five years with the goal of serving as many students as we could accommodate," Wells said.

Because pre-K programs are not funded in the same way as kindergarten through 12th grade, Wells

said by law the school system is not required to provide the community with pre-kindergarten services.

"With the increased enrollment in kindergarten, first and second grades, the only alternative is to reduce the slots available for the pre-K program," Wells said.

At the close of pre-k registration Friday, Wells reported 82 children had registered for classes at

Perquimans Central School — already up 10 from the 72 the school served last year.

This is in addition to the more than 30 students Wells said often register late or apply as transfers during the summer months.

In response to these numbers, Wells said only 40 students will find a spot in the school's pre-K program.

"It is regrettable we are in this situation," Wells

said. "We would like to be able to offer more, but we are not required to, it is not funded and there is not enough space."

On May 20 and 23 faculty will meet to screen applications based on whether students meet certain criteria, which includes review of any educational disadvantages, their economic situation and their potential to qualify for free and reduced lunches.

Families whose children qualify should be notified by mail shortly after the screening process is complete.

Wells said during these meetings, students will be chosen for all 40 slots and there would be no considerations for transfers.

"We had talked about this day coming," Wells said. "It just hit us quicker than we thought."

## Once saved by CPR, Layden teaches it

New program focuses on children

ERIN RICKERT

Dianne Layden owes her life to a simple medical procedure practiced nearly everyday across the country.

Cardiopulmonary resuscitation, a combination of rescue breathing and chest compressions, saved Layden's life as an infant one cold January day in 1952 after a bad reaction to penicillin caused her to suffer a seizure — stopping her breathing and turning her skin blue.

In rural North Carolina, her father, Elton D. Layden would administer the life-saving procedure, using the knowledge and certification gained as a former Army medic later turned surgical technician.

"He saved my life with it," Layden said. "And it saves peoples' lives everyday."

Now 54 years old, this Belvidere resident has not only followed in the medical footsteps of her father, but she now works as an instructor for the Red Cross, teaching and certifying residents in the eight counties the Greater Albemarle Chapter of the Red Cross serves.

On Monday, Layden even introduced a new program to the area recently created by the American Red Cross that brings CPR instruction straight to the home.

Carolyn Self, director of programs and services for the Greater Albemarle Chapter, said "CPR Parties" are the newest way to provide groups of six to 10 men and women with an opportunity to learn vital child safety skills in the comforts of their own living room.

Topics covered in the three-to-five hour party can include everything from first aid for a choking infant to CPR techniques for infants, children and adults.

There, videos demonstrate real-life situations

Continued on page 8

## FISH TALES



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

Brothers' Tommy Byrum, 86, of Winfall and Hercules Byrum, 84, of Gates County enjoy an afternoon of fishing at Winfall Landing Park. The two, who grew up in Perquimans County, spent hours teasing fish with crickets, worms and minnows to no avail Monday. The two reported the only fish they caught, which both referred to as the "big one," got away, snapping Hercules' line in the process.

## Local survey could define future growth

ERIN RICKERT

Over the next three weeks, residents and tourists in Hertford's downtown shopping district will be given a chance to participate in a project that could help officials assess the potential for future growth and economic development in the area.

The project, actually referred to as The Business and Development Plan, will initially require a series of three different surveys be completed so area specific data from the surveys may be analyzed and conclusions can be shared with business owners.

Robert Murphrey, the coordinator for the North Carolina Small Town Main Street Program for the Office of Urban Development and the individual heading the project, said data from the surveys should provide Hertford with information concerning everything from current and future market conditions to financing options for businesses.

Results of the surveys will be presented at the annual Historic Hertford Inc. meeting slated for 6:30 p.m. June 21 in Hertford United Methodist Church.

These business owners, committee members and those interested from the public will sit in on discussion by Murphrey regard-

ing the survey findings.

"It's a pretty comprehensive type of process," Murphrey said. "We look at everything from where they [businesses downtown] are today and where they can go in say the next four to five years."

Murphrey said for the last two years he and others on his team have gone in to more than 50 towns to provide the service.

"[Though] it has helped some more than others," Murphrey said. "most towns where we have gone in and done this have seen economic improvements."

Wendy Jewett, Hertford Main Street Program Manager, said when she met Murphrey at a conference recently she knew she wanted to try his plan in Hertford.

Since Hertford's Main Street Program is only four years old, Jewett said she felt Murphrey's plan could help Hertford revisit recent economic growth as well as offer suggestions for positive future growth in the downtown.

"This should give us information to maximize the usage for our downtown, to keep it vibrant," Jewett said.

During the process consumers shopping downtown will have a chance to fill-out an 11 question long survey, created by

Continued on page 9

## County to be part of statewide initiative

ERIN RICKERT

Hertford may soon be one of the stops featured on a proposed birding trail that may span the entire state by 2008.

The trail, like many across the country, is in response to one of the fastest growing recreational activities in the nation — recreational birding or avitourism.

Spearheaded by the North Carolina Sea Grant, Audubon North Carolina, North Carolina State University Cooperative Extension and the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, the proposed birding trail will be put together in three parts: the coast, piedmont and mountains, with the

coastal component being developed first.

And while the trail will not contain any "trails" in the traditional sense, it will include a series of roadside stops selected for their bird watching characteristics.

Lena Gallitano, interim coordinator of the North Carolina Birding Trail, said over the past few months she has been planning for the introduction of the coastal portion of the trail — accepting nominations for stops in counties all across the region.

In Perquimans County, Hertford Main Street Program Manager Wendy Jewett nominated both Missing Mill Park and Henry C. Stokes Jr. Rotary Centennial Park.

Yet because the project is



PHOTO BY ERIN RICKERT

These ducks, seen wandering at the boat launch near Punch Alley, along with more than 60 other species of bird could bring thousands of tourism dollars to Hertford as early as 2006.

still in its early stages a specific date Jewett would Gallitano could not provide

Continued on page 9

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
 HIGH: 67  
 LOW: 53  
 SHOWERS

FRIDAY  
 HIGH: 62  
 LOW: 52  
 MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
 HIGH: 71  
 LOW: 56  
 PARTLY CLOUDY