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PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Land use plan gets update

ERIN RICKERT

Over the course of the next year residents will have a chance to weigh in on changes to the county's land use plan that could help officials guide growth and development in Perquimans during the next seven years.

"It is a comprehensive planning document for land use," said Perquimans County Manager Bobby Darden. "It's a tool for mapping the future and it's an important one, because our growth pressures in the next seven years are going to be unprecedented."

The county recently lifted a six-month subdivision moratorium on developments two lots or larger after receiving a larger than usual demand to build in the area.

Darden said in the last three years alone development of waterfront and interior properties across the county has brought nearly 1,000 newly developed lots to Perquimans.

Since the moratorium was lifted in June the county already has requests to rezone parcels of land for four high-density subdivisions encompassing close to 100 acres and more than 50 lots each.

With the recent demand for subdivision development in the area, Darden said, the land use plan will provide a way to scale back expansion to a level the county can handle.

"It will serve as the community's blueprint for growth," Darden said. "We can decide where we want growth and where we do not want growth."

Darden said work began on phase one of the plan in February and completion of phase two is expected in June 2006.

Currently Perquimans is one of 20 coastal North Carolina counties who under the Coastal Area Management Act must complete a land use plan every seven years.

The act, administered by the Coastal Resources Commission, was established in 1974 to ensure protection of productive and natural resources.

As designated by CAMA, Darden has hired Bill Turner, a representative from Community Planning Collaborative out of Virginia Beach, to help gather data needed to complete the actual planning document in Perquimans.

Darden said Turner, who has completed land use plans in Gates and Kitty Hawk will work alongside other officials during the next few months to catalog everything from soil type to the zoning of land.

Once all the necessary
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PHOTOS BY SUSAN HARRIS

Winfall's population soared Monday, as the town's 4th of July celebration in Winfall Landing Park drew hundreds of people for gospel music, free food, games and fellowship. A huge tent (above) was able to shelter only a small percentage of the huge crowd that filled the park. Others sat in lawn chairs in the shade, on the porch of the municipal building and under numerous umbrellas. A half-mile long line wrapped around the pavillion waiting for the taste treats to come off of a half dozen or so huge grills billowing charcoal smoke into the afternoon air. Traffic control volunteers reported a steady stream for hours.



Residents urged to be ready for active hurricane season

ERIN RICKERT

Anyone who lived in Perquimans County two years ago remembers it — uprooted trees, beach erosion, shattered roofs, standing water, downed power lines, fields of debris — complete destruction.

The name behind the damage, Isabel, and it turned Perquimans upside down when this powerful category 2 hurricane hit the county with nearly 100 m.p.h gusts Sept. 18, 2003.

Now the 2005 hurricane season has started and Perquimans County Emergency Management Coordinator Harry Winslow urges residents to plan ahead so they are better prepared for the active season experts have predicted — with 15 named tropical storms and eight hurricanes.

"Make good decisions about staying or leaving during a hurricane," Winslow said. "Always err on the side of safety."

Winslow said during Isabel many residents chose to stay in the county — leaving many to weather

the storm in their homes once shelters filled over capacity.

As it stands now, Winslow said, Perquimans County Middle School in Winfall is the only shelter lined up for the season with a capacity of about 225.

"We try to wait to open the shelters until after people from the beach pass through," Winslow said. "But shelters go early."

Winslow also reminds residents pets are not allowed in shelters for health and space reasons.

Arrangements must be made early with vets and other pet shelters, but make sure your pet's vaccinations are up-to-date and you have some type of carrier to ensure your pet will be allowed in.

"I recommend people pay attention to reports and if it looks like it is going to be anything like Isabel leave," Winslow said. "If we are in the direct path to be hit, a two or above, we are not going to open shelters. We can't make it a mandatory evacuation, we can just ask you to leave." Winslow suggests resi-

dents follow the marked evacuation route signs on US Highway 17 out of town.

And anyone who does plan to wait the storm out should take several preventative measures to help protect their lives and property.

To guard your home against wind, retrofit your existing roof with hurricane straps, install braces to give additional support to doorways and attach storm shutters to protect windows — this can be done with a simple piece of plywood and some screws.

For protection against flooding move valuables from basements and have the main breaker or fuse box elevated.

Most importantly, because most standard homeowner's insurance does not cover it, the North Carolina Department of Insurance recommends you buy flood insurance.

"It's crucial for policyholders to know about their insurance coverage before a storm hits," said Ken Enscoe, Nationwide Mutual Insurance
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Development plan highlights town's growth potential

ERIN RICKERT

Local merchants recently received some advice not only on how to capture consumers' attention, but how to create a more productive downtown during a special presentation from an area expert.

"We compiled everything to take a picture for you of what downtown can look like," said Robert Murphrey, the coordinator for the North Carolina Small Town Main Street Program.

It was business owners and town officials who met at the Hertford United Methodist Church for the Historic Hertford, Inc. annual meeting to hear Murphrey present the findings of the Business Development Plan.

The plan highlighted six factors including the examination of market conditions and the business climate, which could be major contributors to future growth and development in Hertford's downtown.

Each was based, Murphrey said, on the information collected from surveys filled out by consumers and downtown business owners in May. Information on surrounding real estate potential was also provided by Main Street Program Manager Wendy Jewett.

Through review of the survey data, Murphrey said, he was able to determine Hertford's downtown provides goods and services to a trade area of about five miles with some additional sales from nearby communities.

As with most businesses, Murphrey said, data also revealed summer months are the slowest while October through December bring the highest profit.

"This [month data] indicates that downtown serves primarily a local market and is the primary source for retailing in the area," Murphrey said.

Yet only 34 percent of retail was cited as being
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School meal prices to rise

ERIN RICKERT

Meals for students in three schools in the Perquimans County School system will increase as much as 25 cents with the start of the 2005-06 school year in August.

"With the increased cost of food, supplies, salaries and equipment repairs over the past two years, the child nutrition program is struggling to remain solvent," said Child Nutrition Director Donna Harris. "It is something we didn't really want to do, but we had to do it. We are supposed to be self-supporting. Our funding is dependent on the number of meals we serve."

The change, which affects students in grades 3-12, raises breakfast prices from \$1 to \$1.10 and lunch prices from \$1.50 to \$1.75 at PCMS, PCHS and Hertford Grammar School.

Under the change, passed by the School Board last Monday night, Perquimans Central School prices would remain the same at \$1 for breakfast and \$1.50 for lunch.

Harris said prices at Central School would remain the same because "emphasis is being placed on serving the recommended calories to children per meal, so we will adjust the portions [of different types of foods] that we are serv-

ing younger students."

Students receiving free and reduced lunches will be unaffected by the change, Harris said.

Those qualifying for free lunches will continue to receive their meals as usual while reduced lunch students will continue to pay 30 cents for breakfast and 40 cents for lunch.

Harris said it will be the nearly 38 percent of students who pay for their lunches in full and are in the qualifying grade levels who will really see a change.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
High: 90
Low: 73
SCATTERED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
High: 84
Low: 71
SCATTERED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
High: 86
Low: 71
SCATTERED T'STORMS