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# PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

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## Council orders Harris to act on building

### Property owner must repair or tear down Grubb Street structure

MARGARET FISHER

A prominent landowner has been ordered to repair or tear

down one of his properties located on Grubb Street.

Clark Harris of Elizabeth City was told by Hertford Town Council members that he has until Feb. 28 to substantially improve or demolish the old Don Juan shirt factory and surrounding buildings he owns at 600 and 602-604 Grubb Street.

Councilors held a quasi-judicial public appeals hearing on Nov. 14 prior to the regular coun-

cil meeting to hear testimony, look at evidence and deliberate concerning the property.

The order was based on the town building inspector's report made in early 2003.

"We are, of course, disappointed with the town's decision," said Harris' attorney, Kenneth Haywood of Raleigh. "We continue to believe that the amount of time is an unreasonable amount of time (to repair or demolish the

building)."

Izell Jackson, the county's building code administrator, made an initial inspection of the exterior of the property and what he could see of the interior on Nov. 14, 2001. Doors wouldn't operate properly, windows were broken, plumbing and electrical didn't meet minimum building standards and a large crack in the cinderblock gave evidence of instability in the building's struc-

ture, Jackson stated during testimony.

Jackson said he revisited the site on Feb. 26, 2003.

"I observed the same condition as before," Jackson said. "There were no improvements at that time."

On Aug. 7, 2003, Jackson returned to take photos, which he submitted as evidence to the

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## Skills, Inc. opens new facility

MARGARET FISHER

An Elizabeth City job rehabilitation center for the disabled opened a new computer lab in October to provide better training and employment services to six counties, including Perquimans.

Skills, Inc., a nonprofit Community Rehabilitation Facility located in Pasquotank County's Commerce Park, opened a new building to house the computer lab. They also partnered with the Northeastern Workforce Development Board to provide basic computer training and have become a Job Link Career Center.

The new handicap-accessible facility is providing vocational evaluations, employee and community employment development services and job development and coaching.

Skills receives referrals from Vocational Rehabilitation Division in Elizabeth City, said James Reel, Skills' executive director.

"If you want to work, we spend as much time as it takes," Reel said.

From July to September, Skills helped six clients from Perquimans County, Reel said. "That's pretty normal," he said.

Transportation, at a cost of about \$40,000 a year, to the Skills facility is available through the Inter-County Public Transportation Authority.

Out of the 36 people that were hired to do custodial work, three come from Perquimans County, he said. In-house custodial contracts pay \$9.16 an hour.

Skills, founded in 1982, finds jobs for about 80 to 100 disabled people a year, Reel said. There is only limited transportation provided at a reasonable cost to the custodial job sites, he said.

Trainees are taught basic job skills, and are paid \$6.50 to \$7.50 an hour to produce specialized items. They produce up to 6,000 specialty pallets, 5,000 heavy duty overseas shipping crates and 2 million

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## BUS ACCIDENT



Daily Advance photo by JUSTIN FALLS

There were no major injuries when a vehicle side-swiped bus 74 Monday afternoon on Harvey Point Road, according to school officials. There were 12 Central School students and driver Diane Kirby aboard at about 3:40 p.m. when the accident occurred. Administrators quickly arrived at the scene, along with emergency personnel, who checked out all students before they were picked up by their parents.

## Chamber celebrates grand openings, expansions

MARGARET FISHER

Chamber of Commerce officials have been busy recently, celebrating ribbon cuttings for new programs and businesses, as well as business expansion.

### RCDEI

A grand opening took place at Harris Shopping Center for two new programs - a merchandise distribution center for the disadvantaged and job training center.

The programs are available at the Restoration Community Development and Empowerment Initiative, where about 100 people received free clothing and personal care and paper products on Nov. 5.

Area churches had pre-screened the applicants to ensure they qualified, said Pearlie F. Smith, executive director of RCDEI and pastor of New Testament Church.

The distribution program is modeled after a program in Greensboro called Welfare Liason, Smith said. The donated goods are trucked from the Greensboro church to Hertford. Only the freight charge is paid by RCDEI. Expenses are paid by com-

munity donations, church members and out of Smith's pocket, she said.

The job training program includes employability skills such as self esteem, how to apply for and maintain a job, and what to do during a job interview.

"The two programs work together," Smith said. "We don't want to give them things for a day. We teach them."

Up to 15 students can utilize the computer classes at the center.

"It's a way to just help our community," Smith said. "The way our program works is to collaborate with the churches."

RCDEI, a nonprofit organization, was founded in 2002 after the death of Smith's five-year-old son. Her loss sparked a desire in her to reach out to the community and help others to

empower themselves to be economically self-sufficient.

### Dozier's

Dozier's Florist celebrated the grand opening of its permanent floral arrangements shop featuring seasonal decorative accessories on Nov. 11.

The new shop is located next to their floral business in the former BJ's hair styling salon.

"It's more focused on artificial or permanent things for decorating your

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PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Southern Belles celebrated its grand opening of an antique mall and flea market with more than 100 vendors.



PHOTO COURTESY ARTHUR MITCHELL

About 100 people received free personal needs merchandise at Restoration Community Development and Empowerment Initiative on Nov. 5. A ribbon cutting took place that day to celebrate RCDEI's two new programs, a distribution center for the needy and job training center.



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Dozier's Florist opened a seasonal decorative accessories showroom on Nov. 11.

## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 62, Low: 28  
PARTLY CLOUDY/WIND

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 46, Low: 28  
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 50, Low: 30  
MOSTLY SUNNY