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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Trades program helps youth find skilled jobs

MARGARET FISHER

Four young people from Perquimans County graduated from a basic construction skills program last month. Three of them were hired in the construction field.

William Perry, Jaquan Sutton, Issac White and Joshua Felton graduated from the NorthEastern Workforce Proficiency Institute's Construction Trades Program in Elizabeth City.

The six-month program, funded by the Workforce Investment Act and private donations, trains youth ages 16 to 21 in construction skills. Nine students from Pasquotank, Chowan and Perquimans counties graduated from two sessions that ran throughout last year beginning in February. This was the first graduating class in the program.

Seven of the students found employment in the construction field. The other two graduates are working on their G.E.D.,

said Sheryl Lange, youth program manager.

"To see (the students') faces, to see what they accomplished - they're really excited about going to work," Lange said.

Some of the students began by qualifying for a program offered by HOPE Community Development Corporation. That program offers five weeks of training for youth who are no longer attending school, whether or not they graduated, and are unemployed. These young people were targeted to help them pick up the pieces in their lives and become employable.

The HOPE program, funded by Workforce Development through a grant administered by Perquimans County Communities in Schools, teaches youth basic skills, such as how to fill out job applications, dress for an interview and converse with potential job managers. They also learned job skills and earned a paycheck. From there, some of

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JUST ME AND MY PAL



PHOTO BY SUSAN HARRIS

Rand Culver and his pal enjoyed a stroll through Hertford recently courtesy of his grandmother, Gail Culver.

Drop-out rates down, but still highest in area

MARGARET FISHER

While the dropout number and rate for Perquimans County High School decreased in 2004-2005 from the previous year, the rate is the highest in seven counties.

There were 36, or 5.92 percent, dropouts in the reporting year, down from 46, or 7.34 percent, the preceding school year.

Of six surrounding counties, Currituck's rate came closest to Perquimans at 5.84 percent. Pasquotank County's rate was 5.52 percent, Chowan County was 4.67 percent, Gates County was 4.19 percent, Camden County was 3.83 percent and Dare County was lowest at 2.81 percent. The state average was 4.74 percent.

Compared by numbers, Perquimans ranks fifth out of seven with Pasquotank having the highest dropouts at 112 and Camden the lowest at 20.

"The climate of caring teachers and administration had really paid off in

that we reduced our numbers by 10," said PCS Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter.

Lassiter attributed the high rate during 2003-2004 possibly to a new administrative staff that year.

The majority of dropouts were in their junior year, while about one-third of dropouts in the state were in the ninth grade and between the ages of 16 and 19.

Statewide, dropout rates for each minority group - American Indian, Hispanic and African-American - were higher, respectively, than the overall average for the state, but the total rate of the three groups declined.

In Perquimans, the students who dropped out were divided in half, male and female. There were 29 whites and seven African-Americans who dropped out during the reporting year. About 19 of them dropped out because of low attendance. Twelve

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ECSU E-learning workshops benefit elementary science



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Kindergarten teacher Michelle Aydlette uses methods she learned as part of an Elizabeth City State University E-learning program to teach science to her students.

MARGARET FISHER

Science teachers at two Perquimans schools are learning how to teach hands-on science projects to other area teachers.

By participating in Elizabeth City State University's E-Learning Science Workshop, fifth grade teacher Leslie Bell and kindergarten teacher Michele Aydlette have become facilitators to their peers and are earning Continuing Education Units, as well.

Claudia Twiford, director of instructional technology at ECSU's Division of Education, said that next year's requirement to test third, fifth and eighth grade science has created a need to focus on science

concepts.

"Some of the principals and superintendents wanted us to come up with an idea and design it," Twiford said.

The program that the university designed has been taught to core facilitators like Bell and Aydlette, who are then teaching other teachers how to implement the ideas in their classrooms.

The E-Learning program is privately funded by an approximately \$114,000 grant through the University of North Carolina providing about \$5,000 of science equipment per school. The grant provides for hands-on science kits that each school would have had to purchase or do without because they

are expensive, Twiford said.

Kits can be used to supplement textbooks. ECSU purchased kits that have not been purchased previously by the participating schools. Kits include properties of objects for grades K-2, soil and rocks for grades 3-5 and landforms for grade 5. Most of the kit contents are reusable and refills cost less than \$50 per grade level, Twiford said.

Teachers from Perquimans, Gates and Halifax counties, along with a core of curriculum specialists and instructional technical designers from ECSU, College of The Albemarle, Port Discover, Museum of the Albemarle and the Department of Public Instruction, devel-

oped and collaborated on the program during the fall.

They began implementing the program with their peers in January through an interactive video conference on ECSU's Blackboard Internet software. Lead teachers participating in the program model their facilitators and are then teaching other teachers, while implementing the skills they learn in their own classrooms. In turn, those teachers can also become lead teachers.

"Our goal is to reach 21 counties over a period of a year and a half," Twiford said.

Bell is training and collaborating with third through fifth grade teach-

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Onley, Tilley are Democratic candidates for Clerk of Superior Court

(Editor's note: Each candidate for a contested local office was sent a questionnaire asking them to discuss their qualifications for and knowledge about the office which they seek. This week, we begin with the Clerk of Superior Court race. Answers appear exactly as submitted.)

Experience related to the post which you seek:

Onley: Having worked in the Clerk of Court's office for the past 15 years, I have extensive training on the day-to-day operations of the office. I have the necessary administrative skills to lead the office as I was assigned the task of being in charge when the previous Clerk of Court was out of the office. I have

received training in all the different aspects of the office through the Administrative Office of the Courts. This training includes judgment abstracting, jury payment, financial management, escheats, structured sentencing, and civil case processing systems, as well as attending Assistant and Deputy Clerks of Court Conferences. Training conferences included the adoption process, estates, guardianships, foreclosures, incompetencies, juvenile cases and land partitions.

Tilley: Deputy Clerk of Superior Court (June 1989-Dec. 1992), Magistrate (Jan. 1993-Aug. 2005), Clerk of Superior Court (Sept. 2005-present), Former member



Sheila H. Onley, 38 Presently Assistant Clerk of Court

Family: Husband Aubrey E. Onley Jr., children Ryan, 9, Darin, 6

Education: Graduated Perquimans High School, 1985 with academic diploma, 3rd in class



Todd W. Tilley, 37 Presently Clerk of Superior Court

Family: Single, custodial guardian of niece, Bailey, 16

Education: Graduated Perquimans High School, Bachelor of Science in Criminal Justice

of NC Judicial Council Why are you running for clerk of court?

Tilley: The Clerk of Superior Court is a servant of the people of Perquimans County, and serving the people of this county is something I take very seriously, something I enjoy greatly and something I have been doing my entire life, both professionally and on a volunteer basis. Holding the position of Clerk of Superior Court has been a goal of mine since I started my career with the courts in 1989, and something I have worked hard to prepare for during my court career. I feel that my experience, education and commitment to serving the citizens of this community make me well

qualified to hold the position.

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 73, LOW: 56
ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 76, LOW: 60
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 82, LOW: 61
ISOLATED T'STORMS