

PCHS honors list

Page 3

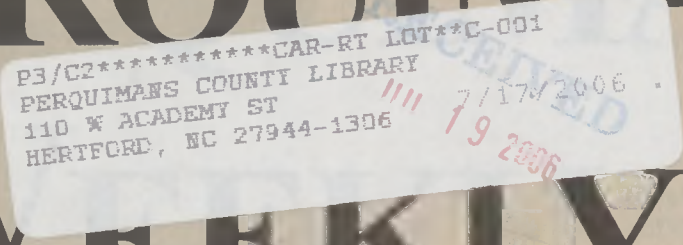
Water safety

Page 5

Wells discusses technology

Page 6

THE PERQUIMMANS WEEKLY



35 cents

July 19, 2006

Vol. 74, No. 29 Hertford, North Carolina 27944

Driver caught at 96 mph

MARGARET FISHER

A Hampton, Va., man was caught driving at 96 miles per hour on U.S. Highway 17 South as his pregnant girlfriend lay on the seat behind him last Friday. In addition, marijuana and drug paraphernalia were found in the vehicle.

Probation Officer Roger Chipps of Hertford was driving north when a car flew past him traveling in the same direction at an estimated speed in excess of 90 miles per hour, said Winfall Police Chief David Shaffer.

Shaffer, who was driving on Wiggins Road, received a call from Chipps and headed out next to the N.C. Department of Transportation plant to wait for the vehicle. He clocked the vehicle traveling at 96 miles per hour at about 1:15 p.m., he said.

He stopped the vehicle with its three passengers at Union Hall Road. The driver, Christopher Akers, 23, of Hampton, told Shaffer he was in a hurry to pick up a relative and take her to the airport in Norfolk, Va.

He also told Shaffer that he was taking his nephew, Charles Phillips, 18, of Wilmington, to Hampton. Akers' 19-year-old girlfriend was seven and a half months pregnant and laying on the back seat without wearing a seatbelt, Shaffer said.

A small glass smoking device was found in one of Phillips' shoes. A search of the vehicle found a small amount of marijuana in a cup in the front seat. Akers allegedly said the marijuana belonged to him, Shaffer said.

Akers was charged with reckless driving to endanger and possession of marijuana less than half an ounce and was placed on a \$1,500 secured bond.

Phillips was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia and placed on a \$500 secured bond. Both were taken to Albemarle District Jail and were later released. Both Akers and Phillips have an extensive criminal record of misdemeanors, Shaffer said.

Another drug incident occurred last Thursday at about 5 p.m. in Winfall. Continued on page

STREET MOVING



Construction has begun on moving Jimmy Hunter Drive south to make way for the new high school gymnasium.

Construction begins on street move

After extensive planning and surveying, construction workers descended on Perquimans High School to begin Phase I of an \$11 million dollar renovation and expansion project.

Wearing reflective clothing and riding dozers, workers began work to relocate Jimmy Hunter Drive to allow room to build a gymnasium for the

high school. The project was tentatively scheduled to begin last fall, but preliminary site work and permits backed up the relocation.

USDA Rural Development provided an \$11,000,000 low interest loan to finance the expansion and renovations for the Perquimans County High School. The loan will

fund a new 970-seat gymnasium, the renovation of the existing gymnasium into a state-of-the-art media and technology center, renovations to the auditorium and the addition of classrooms and administrative offices.

"This project is an example of our county's goal of providing an environment in which students can be Continued on page

Town joins pilot project

MARGARET FISHER

The town of Hertford recently joined with five other towns in a pilot project to improve economic conditions and increase global competitiveness by attracting unique businesses.

The Creative Communities Initiative involves town officials from Hertford, Edenton, Ayden, Murfreesboro, Plymouth and Tarboro in the Foundation of Renewal for Eastern North Carolina's project. FoR ENC has taken an urban growth project and hopes to apply the concept to rural towns.

The idea of a creative community is an abstract one. A creative community doesn't rely on brick and mortar industry to sustain itself, said Laura Williamson, director of Venture-East at FoR ENC. Continued on page

Tax appraisal being conducted in county

MARGARET FISHER

It's not hard to spot the real estate appraisers working their way through the county. They are driving through neighborhoods with revaluation signs on the sides of their cars, peeking behind houses and, in some cases, measuring the perimeters of homes.

Six appraisers from Pearson's Appraisal Service, Inc. in Wilson began the lengthy process of assessing the values of houses in the county beginning in late April. The assessment process is performed every eight years. With the recent boom in real estate, the tax base is expected to increase as it has in surrounding counties.

In Chowan County, for example, the real estate portion of the tax base increased from \$643 million to \$1.85 billion - a 69 percent increase. Historic and waterfront communities were hit the hardest, said Chowan County Manager Cliff Copeland.

"From what I know about Perquimans, I think it will be pretty similar (to Chowan)," Copeland said.

However, an increase in the tax base does not mean that everyone's taxes will go up, said Robert Ezzell, Pearson's revaluation project manager.

"The values are up," Ezzell said. "In general, the better neighborhoods will go up more than your poorer neighborhoods." Also, certain neighborhoods eventually max out in value. If they were near

their maximum eight years ago, they won't increase much, he said.

Ezzell estimates that residents could see an average increase of at least 70 percent, but historic and waterfront areas could experience as much as a 400 percent increase, while the poorest areas could see a 10 percent increase or even depreciate.

Property can be affected nearly overnight by such circumstances as a plant going up, an imposing sign nearby, a foreclosure or auction or a stigma, such as a murder taking place in the home. But usually, there is a general trend which varies from section to section.

"If property appreciates less than the average house, your value will go up, but the tax burden will

not go up," said Frank Heath, county tax administrator. "It all depends on the budgetary needs of the county and community."

In contrast, the tax burden will increase if a property appreciates more than the average house.

The commissioners set the tax rate based on the tax base. If the needs of the county remain the same and the tax base increases, the tax rate will actually decrease. If the needs increase, such as the need to build a new school or medical facility, the tax rate may decrease less or stay the same.

The new values will take effect on Jan. 1, 2008, and notices will be mailed out in late 2007, Heath said.

Phase One of the revaluation project began with Continued on page



PHOTOS BY MARGARET FISHER

Robert Ezzell, county revaluation project manager, takes measurements of a house at Albemarle Plantation. Six appraisers from Pearson's Appraisal Service in Wilson are currently measuring homes and verifying appraisal information with homeowners. The field work should continue through at least January.

Child care now open

Margaret Fisher

Faith Child Care opened its doors last Thursday and celebrated a grand opening on Saturday.

Rebecca Story, director and owner, opened the center with the help of her husband, Paul Story, to provide faith-based curriculum and activities for children between the ages of six weeks to 12 years.

Located in what was formerly East Carolina Bank in the old Be-Lo shopping center, the center provides preschool and after-school care on Monday through Friday from 6:30 a.m. - 6



Four generations celebrate the grand opening of Faith Child Care in the old Be-Lo Shopping Center (in the space East Carolina Bank once occupied). Rebecca Story opened the center to provide faith-based child care for children ages six weeks to 12 years.

p.m. The Perquimans County native said she had no idea Continued on page

Subway comes to town

MARGARET FISHER

There's a new face in

town that's familiar, but somewhat hidden. It's a Continued on page



Subway celebrated their grand opening last Thursday in the Red Apple convenience store on Harvey Point Road near U.S. Highway 17.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY HIGH: 91, Low: 77 ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY HIGH: 93, Low: 75 ISOLATED T'STORMS

SATURDAY HIGH: 87, Low: 72 SCATTERED T'STORMS