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Troopers to patrol school zones

MARGARET FISHER

Each school day, about 2,000 drivers violate the state's school bus stop arm law. Two children were killed while trying to board their bus, states a press release from the N.C. Highway Patrol.

In order to promote school bus safety awareness, the Highway Patrol is conducting its "Operation Stop Arm" this month.

Beginning Monday, Oct. 16 at 5 a.m. and running for five days, the Highway Patrol will be sending out five troopers to cover Perquimans and Chowan counties during school bus operating times in the mornings and afternoons.

"(Troopers) will be looking for folks that operate vehicles in a reckless manner around school buses and at bus stops," said Sgt. C.T. Griffin.

They will also be looking for speeding offenders in school zones, he said.

Last Friday, two people were injured on a bus filled with 27 students in South Mills in Camden County. The driver of another vehicle was charged with reckless driving and failure to reduce speed, Griffin said.

This school year, a woman was

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Who will the winner be?



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Schools superintendents Dr. Allan Smith of Chowan (left) and Dr. Kenneth Wells (right) listen as Communities in Schools of Perquimans Nancy Barrow explains how a car give-away drawing for juniors and seniors at Perquimans and John A. Holmes high schools will work. The Chevrolet Aveo is being donated by Edenton Motors.

Edenton Motors to give student a car

Communities in Schools of Perquimans is introducing an initiative in Perquimans and Chowan counties to help children to strive for excellence in the classroom.

CISP is partnering with Edenton Motors, John A. Holmes High School and Perquimans County High School by offering a 2007 Chevrolet Aveo to a deserving student to symbolize the importance of education.

Stewart Deacon, parent, community leader and general manager of Edenton Motors, is offering the car to a student in one of the two counties because he believes in encouraging students to reach their full potential through education.

In order to meet this challenge, the partnership has come up with the idea Project KEYS (Knowledge Enhances Your Success).

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Herford woman kidnapped

MARGARET FISHER

A Hertford woman drove a man from Elizabeth City to Hertford after he jumped into her car on Saturday.

Lorenzo Hurdle, 45, a homeless man, was unarmed when he approached Nichole Malone, 26, of 402 Woodland Church Road, and told her to take him to Hertford at about 11:30 p.m.

Malone was apparently afraid to resist, said Hertford Police Chief Dale Vanscoy. She drove Hurdle, who was recently released from prison, to the Wilco-Hess convenience store.

As they approached the store, Hurdle allegedly began rummaging through the glove compartment and center console looking for money, Vanscoy said. He allegedly took about \$5 in cash and left Malone with her vehicle when they arrived at the store.

Malone gave police a vivid description of Hurdle and picked him out from police photos.

Hurdle is known by police to travel back and forth between Hertford and Elizabeth City, Vanscoy said. He was spotted and picked up on Sunday by an Elizabeth City detective, said Sgt. John Etheridge of the Elizabeth City Police Department.

Hertford Police brought him back to Hertford where he was charged with common law robbery, or larceny by intimidation without the use of weapons, and

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E 9-1-1- phone lines undergo delay

MARGARET FISHER

When a caller contacts the 9-1-1 Communication Center with an emergency, the expectation is that help will arrive within minutes. So, when technical problems arise within the system, measures are taken immediately so emergency response is not delayed.

That's what happened last week when a hardware card, similar to a motherboard card on a computer, temporarily failed in a switch in Rocky Mount, states a press release from Embarq Corporation.

The problem sporadically affected a number of 9-1-1 centers in eastern North Carolina, including the center in Perquimans County, on the evening of Oct. 2 for nearly two and a half hours. Locally, calls initiated in the Piney Woods exchange with the 297 prefix were not being received by the Communication Center on their

administrative line for about 13 minutes.

However, no emergency calls were placed during the interruption, said Homeria Jennette, director of Telecommunications.

Jennette learned there was a problem when a fireman in Belvidere used a cell phone to call the center after a phone call from a LAN phone didn't go through. The call, placed around 7 p.m., was a routine, non-emergency announcement.

The hardware card was "reseated" immediately by Embarq and a new card was replaced in the system on Oct. 4 at 1 a.m., causing disruption again for some centers.

Programming problems for emergency centers are rare, said Tom Matthews, manager of media relations at Embarq.

"The network is up about 99.99 percent of the time, and an occurrence

like (the one on Oct. 2) is even more rare than that .01," Matthews said.

When work is going to be done that will disrupt service, a notice is sent out to emergency centers so that they can utilize a backup. That was the case this past Monday night when Embarq disrupted service in order to add multiple path alternatives to their routing.

The additional pathways will increase routing diversity for emergency calls, further reducing phone line disruptions, Matthews said.

Interruptions may also occur on-site, as one did on Oct. 4 at about 9 a.m. An ambulance returning to the county after a trip to the hospital called the center to check in by radio. The center's radio operates on a phone line, which was down at the time. Again, there were no emergency calls affected by the downed radio line.

"(Embarq) had it fixed in no time," Jennette said.

1 injured in wreck

MARGARET FISHER

An accident on the corner of Church Street and U.S. Highway 17 resulted in an injury, extensive damage to two vehicles and charges to a driver.

At about 6:50 p.m. on Sunday, Carolyn Spellman, 41, of 122 Dogwood Dr., was making a right turn from Church Street onto U.S. Highway 17. Her 1999 Pontiac Sunfire was hit by a 1996 Chrysler Cirrus driven by Jacquelyn Schmitz, 18, of 131 Maryland Lane in Sunbury.

Schmitz, who was traveling south on the highway, failed to stop at the red light. Upon impact, her car wound up in the median. Spellman's vehicle ended up in the outside lane of southbound traffic.

Schmitz suffered no visible injuries. She was cited for failure to stop at a red light and careless and reckless driving.

Spellman was treated on scene by Emergency Medical Services and taken to Chowan Hospital. Her condition was not known at press time.

Damages to Spellman's car was estimated to be about \$3,500 and to Schmitz's car about \$3,000.

Belvidere fire destroys family farm relics

Fire destroys farm relics

MARGARET FISHER

A fire in Belvidere totally destroyed a barn filled with a winter's supply of hay and horse feed last Thursday.

Preston and Carole Dail owned the barn, located at 260 Hunters Fork Road. Preston Dail had finished mowing his lawn when he returned the riding mower to its spot under a lean-to that was part of a 30-foot by 30-foot barn.

He then went to check on his father who lives nearby. He wasn't gone more than 10 minutes when he began driving back towards his home. Right away, he

spotted a large flame in the direction of his house.

"It can't be my house; I had just left there," he said he had thought when he first saw the flame. As he got closer, he figured it was one neighbor's house, and then another and then he thought it was in the woods.

"I didn't know where the fire was until I pulled up in front of my house," he said.

By that time, about 7:45 p.m., another neighbor, Ken Dail, had already called Central Communications. Within minutes, Belvidere Fire Department, followed by Winfall and Hertford fire departments, arrived.

Preston Dail said fire officials

ascertained that the fire possibly started from a spark lit when a piece of carbon fell off the cooling muffler of the lawnmower. The spark likely caught the dry grass on fire, causing the full gas tank to explode, thereby catching a nearby gas can on fire. Once the fire started, the hay-stocked barn became a roaring inferno.

Carole Dail was in church at the time, and later was called home when her husband thought one of her dogs was missing. It turned out the dog, due to have puppies soon, was safe in a crate.

"Thank God, no one got hurt," Carole Dail said. The barn was full of horse tack and feed, tools and antique tools passed down

from Preston Dail's grandfather. As he recalled to his insurance agent the treasured items that had lined the walls inside the barn, Preston Dail said that tears began to well up as the realization hit that the fire wasn't a dream.

While the cost of the barn and some of the items inside can be recouped by insurance, some of the memorabilia cannot be replaced, nor will insurance cover the hay, feed and plywood boards stored for future projects, the couple said.

This time of year, hay is hard to come by, Carole Dail said. They may have to drive to Greenville to replace the supply.

WEATHER

THURSDAY
 High: 80, Low: 54
 AM SHOWERS

FRIDAY
 High: 64, Low: 43
 PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
 High: 64, Low: 45
 SUNNY