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THE

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Holiday kick-off set for Hertford

Events begin Thursday evening

SUSAN HARRIS

Christmas on the Perquimans in downtown Historic Hertford will offer three days of seasonal activities sure to get everyone in the holiday spirit.

Events get underway on Thursday, when the Perquimans Arts League Gallery hosts an open house from 11 a.m.-7 p.m. In addition to the usual plethora of items on display in the gallery, there will be gift items especially for the holidays.

Downtown will be transformed Thursday evening, as thousands of white lights are turned on during the grand illumination ceremony. Lights on the downtown buildings and on a tree on the courthouse lawn will sparkle beginning at 5:30. Caroling on the courthouse green will add to the festive occasion. In addition, select downtown merchants will be open until 7 p.m. and will offer holiday refreshments to shoppers.

On Friday, the Chamber and Visitors Center will welcome guests to an open house from 9:30 a.m.-4:30 p.m., and PAL will continue its open house, 11 a.m.-3:30 p.m. Again, some downtown merchants will remain open until 7 p.m. to allow shoppers extra time to find that just-right gift and enjoy refreshments.

Saturday will be a fun-filled day as bands, floats, horses and more make their way through the town's streets for the annual Christmas parade. Due to construction at the high school, the parade will this year leave from and return to Harris Shopping Center. Themed "The Joys of Christmas," the parade will step off at 2 p.m.

Zita Ferebee, a local school bus driver who recently earned national recognition for her heroic efforts after a horrific bus accident in October 2005, will be this year's grand marshal.

After the parade, Santa will be in Inteliport for pictures and to hear the pleas of good girls and boys.

Merchants will be open all day Saturday for shoppers. Each has stocked unique items sure to please everyone on Christmas gift lists, from tots to teens to those enjoying a second childhood.

Christmas on the Perquimans is organized and sponsored by the downtown Hertford merchants and Historic Hertford, Inc. The parade is sponsored by the Chamber of Commerce.

Alive with color



PHOTO COURTESY JOHN MATTHEWS

The vibrant golds, oranges and reds of local landscapes are all but gone now, thanks to last week's nor'easter that brought torrential rain and high winds to the area. The lights and colors of the holidays are now beginning to twinkle from homes and lawns across the county.

Schools do not meet AYP goals

MARGARET FISHER

The Department of Public Instruction released preliminary reports on the Adequate Yearly Progress, including the delayed math results. All four public schools in the district did not meet AYP standards, although Perquimans County High School did meet expected growth for 2005-2006.

Hertford Grammar School met 19 out of 21 target areas and a composite score of 68.5 percent. The target groups that did not meet the standards are exceptional children in reading and black students in math. Perquimans Central School, being a feeder school, received the same rating.

Perquimans Middle School met 18 of 21 targets and a score of 68 percent. The three groups that did not meet the standards include free and reduced meal, exceptional and all students in math. The free and reduced group comprises 60 percent of the student population, said Brenda Lassiter, school public information officer.

Because that group is a majority of students, it affects the 'all students' group, she said.

The three schools each received No Recognition. The middle school had been in the Expected Growth level until the math scores were released.

The math tests were new this year and benchmark standards were raised. Scores always drop when the tests are revised and benchmarks are made higher, Lassiter said.

Fourth grade writing test scores are at 35 percent, down from 50 percent during 2004-2005. Seventh grade writing scores are 39 percent, down from 44 percent the previous year. Computer skills dropped from 96 percent to 70 percent at PCMS. Continued on page 2

Hurry to read about unhurried Hertford

County highlighted in tourism magazines

MARGARET FISHER

Two national magazines - Our State and Coastwatch - have recently placed Perquimans County on the map as an interesting place to visit.

The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce helped put the county and historic towns in the lime-light in both publications.

"I worked with (writer) David La Vere two weeks after (Hurricane) Isabelle," said Hertford Town Mayor Sid Eley. "Sylvia (Wyatt of the Chamber) worked with him when he came back this summer."

La Vere wrote the story "Unhurried in Hertford" in

the Fall 2006 issue of Our State Weekends, which featured 13 weekend getaways.

The article features photos of the Perquimans River, Albemarle Sound, downtown shops and Newbold-White House. It winds the reader through the historic and pleasant sites in Hertford, Winfall and Belvidere.

Scattered through the story are some of the fascinating historic tidbits about buildings, people and events. Photos depict downtown shops, the river and Albemarle Plantation's golf course.

Apparently, La Vere didn't notice, this past summer, that Frankie's Hertford Café is no longer open. Nor does he mention some of the newer restaurants and bed and breakfast inns downtown.

He does mention one of the biggest attractions the county has to offer - its pic-

turesque water that draws people to fish and boat. It also tells about another of the county's lures - its friendly people.

A second publication, Coastwatch Holiday 2006 issue, published by The North Carolina Sea Grant College Program in Raleigh, contains a story written by Erin Seiling. The writer focuses on one historical aspect of the county in "Quaker Influence in Colonial Carolina."

Eley said he called Coastwatch and gave them some ideas about different assets of the county and the editor chose the Quaker influence. Eley contacted Sarah Parr, former site manager at the Newbold-White House, to provide information and photos for the story.

The article tells about the history of Quakers in the county and their ideals

and traditions, including how Christmas was not celebrated for many years until the holiday customs infiltrated into the religion over time. It mentions the Up River Friends Meeting and Piney Woods Meeting in Belvidere, where the largest population of Quakers in the county reside. It also explains how the Quakers got their name.

Photos include the historic meetinghouses of the past and present and activities held at the Newbold-White House, built by a Quaker.

Stories such as these draw visitors to the area, Eley said.

"This (publicity) brings people to Perquimans County," he said. "It brings tourists in."

Copies of both magazines are available for sale at the Chamber's gift shop in the Visitors Center at 118 W. Market St.

Local childcare issues presented to state reps

MARGARET FISHER

About 25 current and former child care providers from two counties met last week with representatives from the state Division of Child Development to discuss childcare issues.

The Chowan/Perquimans Childcare Association, formed in August, had requested the visit to present their concerns and questions to the division in order to improve the quality of childcare in both counties, said Arlene Yates, association president and owner of The Learning Center in Winfall.

United within the association, members are in a better position to improve the quality of childcare and address issues that hin-

der being able to offer better services, Yates said.

June Locklear, section chief, and Rob Kindsvatter, director of the division, came to the Winfall Town Hall to address the association's concerns.

Of prime importance to the association is to understand the state's policies. As much as 94 percent of a childcare provider's business is derived through children who are subsidized by the N.C. Department of Social Services. The remainder comes from parents who pay for their childcare services.

Employee wages and benefits are also major concerns. Money allocated through the General Assembly is rationed out to providers across the state,

Kindsvatter said. DSS prioritizes those funds, but about 80 percent of the population are at low-income level.

"The demand is high," Kindsvatter said. "The way we allocate funds is according to law." At present, the state is meeting about 40 percent of its current needs, he said.

Local childcare issues presented to state reps

In the past, money was moved from counties that used less to more needy counties. But today, all the counties use all their money, he said.

Yates said that low wages and a lack of health insurance and retirement benefits are causing high employee turnover as quality workers leave to work at more competitive pro-

grams where wages are higher and benefits are plentiful.

"We just can't afford good health insurance for our people. Childcare across the board is losing people to public schools and Head Start because they can pay more," she said.

Yates is hoping to implement the state's T.E.A.C.H. program which provides partial funding for childcare training, as well as health insurance.

Another concern is when parents have to pull their children out of daycare when they can no longer attend college because of funding time limitations. A single parent attending college may spend two to four or more Continued on page 2

WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 75, LOW: 61
MOSTLY CLOUDY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 74, LOW: 49
SCATTERED T^{STORMS}

SATURDAY
HIGH: 58, LOW: 42
PARTLY CLOUDY