

County offers incentives

Page 2

Income tax assistance offered

Page 3

Seniors present projects

Page 4

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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

35 cents

Dryer fire empties nursing home

Staff safely evacuates facility

MARGARET FISHER

A fire in a gas dryer caused 21 residents of a nursing home in

Winfall to evacuate for more than 24 hours last Wednesday.

At about 4:50 p.m., Brenda McPherson, manager of Country Oaks Manor at 464 Two Mile Desert Road, called 9-1-1 and reported the smell of smoke in the facility's kitchen.

The residents walked or were

taken to a mobile home located on the premises by the time Winfall and Belvidere fire departments and emergency personnel arrived.

Firefighters could see flames at the back of the building and were able to put the fire out in about five minutes, said Winfall

Fire Chief Gerald Christian.

The fire actually started in the laundry room, but smoke had entered the kitchen through the heating duct. The fire and damages were completely contained in the laundry room, said Fire Marshal John Long. No damage extended into the rest of the

building.

Firefighters searched the attic from the outside of the building to make sure the fire was completely out. Access to the attic above the laundry room from the inside was not possible because the opening into the space was

Continued on page 9

Court security studied

MARGARET FISHER

Local officials met with a court safety official from Raleigh last week to discuss ways to improve security at the old courthouse.

They also approved a motion, suggested by attorney Janice Cole, to forward a five-year plan to develop a judicial center to county commissioners.

Ford Heath, safety and health consultant with the Administrative Office of the Courts, brought a list of recommendations to the local court security committee.

About 10 committee members, including District Judge J.C. Cole, law enforcement, county and court representatives and a citizen, were present.

Ford's responsibilities include the health and safety of court employees in all 100 counties.

"In light of recent volatile courthouse incidents, my office has been tasked with making recommendations to insure that maximum security measures are in place in our statewide courthouses," Ford wrote in a memo to committee members.

Todd Tilley, clerk of court, told members that Perquimans County Criminal District Court cases alone averaged around 50 to 60 every two weeks about 17 years ago. Now there are more than 150 each week.

The county is in the top five, percentage-wise, in the state for number of court cases, Ford said.

While the upstairs courtroom in the annex building has been made secure, the old courthouse, like others across the state, was not originally designed with security in mind.

Continued on page 2

Day of celebration



PHOTO BY MARGARET FISHER

Travis Mitchell, president and chief executive office at Rejoice Radio National Network in Dallas, Texas, was the featured speaker at the Martin Luther King Day service Monday afternoon.

Jubilee focus of King program

MARGARET FISHER

The Perquimans County NAACP sponsored a celebration of Martin Luther King Day that began with a motorcade procession through Hertford and ended with a stirring event in Winfall on Monday.

Jubilee Day and Martin Luther King Day was celebrated by more than 100 people at Melton Grove Baptist Church after about 30 cars made their way from Missing Mill Park to the church.

"It was good participation," said Winfall Mayor Fred Yates.

The guest speaker was Travis Mitchell, president and chief executive officer at Rejoice Radio National Network in Dallas, Texas.

In explaining the purpose of the Jubilee, Estelle Felton compared the Jubilee day set aside for the Jewish nation by God to remember their freedom from

Continued on page 7



Winfall Mayor Fred Yates speaks to Rev. Charles Eason, speaker at a Martin Luther King Day breakfast Monday.

Public forum looks at school needs

MARGARET FISHER

School officials from the region will be meeting in Edenton tomorrow to explain to state representatives the condition of their school facilities.

Education: Everybody's Business Coalition will be holding a public forum on school facility needs that will be open for the public to attend and give input.

"Our coalition, which includes education groups and the business leadership of our state, believes we have reached a 'Crisis in the Classroom' with regard to the deplorable conditions that too many of our students and teachers face daily in public school facilities," said Jo Ann Norris, chairwoman of the Coalition and associate executive director of the Public School Forum.

School officials across the state will be seeking a state bond referendum, similar to the \$1.8 billion bond referendum that was authorized by the General Assembly and approved by voters 10 years ago.

A portion of that money is what paid for the building of Perquimans Central School, said Brenda Lassiter, Perquimans County Schools public information officer.

PCS Superintendent Kenneth Wells will be presenting the needs of the four county schools before

Continued on page 2

Rig loaded with wrecks turns over near Hertford



No one was injured in a truck wreck last week.

MARGARET FISHER

A tractor-trailer pulling four smashed vehicles to a salvage yard toppled over while the driver was making a turn last Wednesday.

The driver, Reginold Vincent of Boykins, Va., was charged with driving left of center, said Trooper K.R. Briggs of the N.C. Highway Patrol.

At about 1 p.m., Vincent was heading towards Hertford on Center Hill

Highway and made a right turn onto Cedar Stretch Road near Beech Springs Road.

Briggs said Vincent told him that the vehicle turned over on its own as he made the turn. The vehicles remained chained to the truck during the incident.

The rig, owned by Rudy Lozano of R.L. Trucking in Tyner, was carrying flattened vehicles, including a bus, to a wrecker in Chesapeake, Va.

The vehicles were taken off the rig and placed on a lot near the accident scene. The rig was towed back to Tyner. The following morning, another truck was brought in to take the vehicles away.

Damages to the tractor-trailer were about \$15,000 according to the trooper's report. Lozano said the truck is repairable.

A court date for Vincent is set on Feb. 14.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 52, LOW: 41
FEW SHOWERS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 56, LOW: 29
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 43, LOW: 29
SUNNY/WINDY