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Storm sweeps through Friday

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Local firefighters and rescue workers were kept busy Friday afternoon when a severe thunderstorm caused a multi-system failure at Brian Center Health and Rehab on Don Juan Road.

Terri Wilcher, Brian Center administrator, said lightning struck a generator outside the building, but damage from the lightning strike caused failures in their fire and security alarm systems, phone system, and computer system. Lightning even blew out personal television sets for six of their residents.

Smoke from the blown televisions caused personnel to move 23 patients from one section of the building to a safer area. No injuries were reported.

"As soon as an area was noted to be in trouble, we moved residents out of that section into a safer area of the building," said Wilcher. "We could smell smoke, but there was no
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Night out



PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Drew Holcombe, 6, grins widely as Lt. Brad Owens with the Hertford Fire Department fits him with helmet and hose during National Night Out recently. Holcombe is from Moyock and was visiting his grandparents in Holiday Island.

FEMA releases names of county residents

A federal agency is releasing personal information on nearly 2,000 county residents who filed for federal disaster assistance following Hurricanes Bonnie, Floyd, and Isabel.

The Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) mailed letters and called local residents to inform them that a federal court has directed it to release certain personally identifiable information on them. The information normally is protected under the Privacy Act and the exemption, for personal privacy under the Freedom of Information Act (FOIA).

Addresses of residents who filed with FEMA are included in the order and were scheduled to be released to a Florida newspaper Aug. 14. Once that information is released to the newspaper, the agency is required to release the information to subsequent FOIA requesters.

In Perquimans County, 10 applicants filed following Hurricane Bonnie in Aug. 1999, 53 applicants filed following Hurricane Floyd in Sept. 1999, and

1,991 applicants filed following Hurricane Isabel in Sept. 2003.

The court ruling is related to a FOIA request from the South Florida Sun-Sentinel, the Pensacola News-Journal and The News-Press of Fort Myers, Fla.

In response to the request, FEMA supplied a breakdown of the types of assistance provided to individuals and households by state, county and zip code, but refused to produce the names and addresses of the individual applicants due to Privacy Act concerns.

The media organizations appealed and the court ordered the agency to release the addresses, but allowed it to withhold the applicants' names. FEMA will not release other kinds of Privacy Act information including disaster applicants' names and Social Security numbers.

However, if matched with the addresses, the previously released information would reveal in great detail, information about each individual applicant, such as the amount of assistance pro
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\$ how me the money

Over 1,000 in county have unclaimed fund\$

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

More than 1,000 Perquimans County residents, businesses and churches have cash or other unclaimed property waiting for them in the state treasury.

According to the North Carolina Department of the State Treasurer's official unclaimed property website, www.nccash.com, 931 of those have Hertford addresses, 43 live in Winfall, and 58 hail from Belvidere. Each has something of value that has gone unclaimed and ended up in the state's escheat program. Properties can be bank accounts, insurance policies or payments, stocks or bonds, paychecks, utility deposits, or contents of safe deposit boxes.

Some folks are hesitant to contact the state for their cash - scared it's a scam or trap of some sort to lure in delinquent taxpayers.

"The web site is not a scam, and it is not a trap," said Sara Lang, communications director for the

Department of the State Treasurer. "NC Cash holds money and property that North Carolinians have lost because of a move, a change in address or simply because they forgot about it."

The large number of holdings from Perquimans County is believed to be due to address changes from rural routes to street addresses.

Out of the listings from Perquimans County, Lang said 25 have \$1,000 or more involved in each claim.

Fenton Cartwright is one name listed in that top 25. After being contacted by The Perquimans Weekly, he found his property to be an old life insurance policy that had matured. The address on the policy was a former address of his where the house has since been torn down. He is in the process of claiming his insurance proceeds.

Brian Center Health and Rehabilitation Center is also on the top 25 list. Administrator Terri

How to find your unclaimed \$\$\$

To check the website for your name or your relatives' names, simply click on www.nccash.com. On the home page, look to the right under the words: "You may be richer than you think". Click on the blue words: "Click here to search by city".

Type in your town: Hertford, Winfall or Belvidere where it says city. Where it says last name, type in the first letter of your last name. Click on search.

If you have funds in the account, your name will appear.

In the event that you have lived in other states and want to check to see if you have unclaimed property there, www.missing-money.com is a free website listing all the states that participate in the program. In the site, simply click on the darkened words: "participating states". A map detailing which states are available will display. Simply click on the state you want to search. Follow that individual state's directions to locate unclaimed property. Good luck!

Wilcher didn't know about the unclaimed health insurance check until

contacted by The Perquimans Weekly, but she believes it may be a payment for a patient, and if so, will help a family that might be struggling to pay. She, too, is looking into claiming the check.

An elderly couple on the list, who requested not to be named in the paper, indicated they were aware of the funds held by the state in their name, but chose to leave it there so they wouldn't spend it. That one couple has stocks, bank dividends, several health insurance refund checks, and more than a half dozen other checks waiting to be claimed.

This paper tried to contact most of those listed on the top 25 list. Many have no phone numbers listed in the phone books, one has a discontinued phone number, others did not return phone calls, and one politely said she would investigate the matter. Even checking county real estate tax records has not helped provide leads to their whereabouts.

One couple on the top 25 list, Bonnie and Paul Patterson, sold their home on White Hat Road and moved to Arizona. Our efforts to get a phone number or email address for that couple have gone unanswered.

Those not contacted by the paper, but listed in the top 25, include: Bessie Dillard, Casper Riddick,

Eleanor Riddick, Frances Perry, Josephine Barclift, Angela Scott, Archie and Patricia Miller, Raburn Cahoon, James K. White, Lorenzo and Nell Alexander, Gladys Smith, Claude Fenton, and Eric Holley.

If the property owner is deceased, their estate or heir may claim it.

"There are additional verification steps, but our staff can assist with this process," Lang explained.

The state has in place safeguards that prevent fraud or someone from trying to claim property that does not belong to them.

"The claim process is designed with necessary checks to ensure that the money goes to its rightful owner," said Lang. "Verification documents and our experienced staff aid in this important process."

While the claims are under \$1,000, there are many more county residents and businesses listed on the website. Perquimans County Clerk of Court is listed, as is New Haven Baptist Church. Other businesses listed include Bateman's Amoco, Goodwin's Carpentry, Coastal Carolina Family Practice, Darden's Department Store, Family Care Pharmacy, Hertford FCX, Holiday Island Inc., Jimmy's BBQ, and Starlight Mfg.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 99, LOW: 78
ISOLATED T'STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 95, LOW: 72
ISOLATED T'STORMS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 87, LOW: 69
MOSTLY SUNNY