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Subscriber of the Week:  
Ann Copeland

## THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

### Light up

### the night



Perquimans Weekly-Photos by PHIL HARRIS

ALL AROUND PERQUIMANS, HOLIDAY displays light up the night. Soon, the spectacular and the simple will be packed away for another year, when the lights of the season will again shine. Several homes on South Church Street, including one with animated blow-up decorations (above) blink and sparkle with holiday cheer. Downtown Hertford is a sea of white lights, with the traffic signals adding a hint of Christmas red and green.



### County building down, Hertford's up

CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

While new residential construction in Perquimans County is declining, it appears new homebuilding Hertford is rising.

According to figures obtained from the county building inspector's office, 335 building permits were issued in Perquimans County during the 2006 calendar year. The value of new residential construction totaled \$34,831,368.

So far in the first three

quarters of 2007, 234 building permits have been issued in Perquimans County representing \$23,100,564 in new residential construction. No figures were available yet for October, November and December of 2007.

Comparing the first three quarters of 2006 to the same time span in 2007, the county issued 49 more permits in 2006 than this year. The value of new residential construction during the first three quarters of the 2007 calendar year declined, however, by \$5.2 million.

New water taps connecting in the county have also decreased. In 2006, 175 new water meters were installed in the county compared to 109 installed so far in 2007.

The figures for the town of Hertford, however, are on the rise so far this year.

Twenty-seven building permits were issued in Hertford in 2006 including new residential construction valued at \$410,685.

In the first three quarters of the year alone, building permits issued in Hertford have passed last year's 12

month total with 28 including new residential construction value of \$699,755.

There were 21 building permits issued in Hertford during the first nine months of 2006 with new residential construction valued at \$258,485.

Figures show that seven building permits were issued in 2006 for Winfall with no new residential construction noted. So far in 2007, two building permits have been issued for Winfall, but neither is for residential construction.

### Property revaluation notices sent

Overall values up 85 percent

SUSAN HARRIS  
Editor & Publisher

Property revaluation notices are in owners' hands, scorching some and soothing others.

County Tax Supervisor Frank Heath said total property value in Perquimans County topped \$1 billion for the first time at \$1,540,308,300. The value in 2000 was \$829,308,143. Heath said the 85 percent increase stems from new housing, subdivision development and the prices homes sold for in the county in recent years.

Heath said the state requires counties to reassess property values a minimum of every eight years. While some review values every four or six years, Perquimans has historically undergone the appraisal process every eight years. Heath said that with more frequent evaluations, property values don't increase so much with each evaluation and it keeps values more current. He added that there has been discussion at the state level of requiring evaluations every four years.

The state mandates that counties evaluate property at current market values. Properties are evaluated based on sales in specific neighborhoods and sales of like properties in the county.

The county contracted with Pearson's Appraisal Company to perform the revaluation. Pearson's has been working in Perquimans County for over a year studying sales data and tax department records, as well as physically driving through the county accessing property.

Heath said the revaluation notices stated that property owners have 10 days to appeal property values, but that every property owner who calls will be heard, even if holidays prevent owners from calling within the 10-day period. He said owners can continue to call through the first week or two in January.

The process of appealing a property value begins with an appointment for an informal review with Pearson's Appraisal personnel. They can be reached at 426-3199.

A property owner not satisfied with the outcome of the initial meeting may then contact the tax department. The next step would be to appear before the Board of Equalization and Review, which is composed of county commissioners.

Property owners seeking to determine why their property was appraised at a certain amount can get basic information regarding

their property and the property around them at the tax department, Heath said. He said tax department employees are working to get more tax information online also to make it easier for property owners to research property issues.

"They can contact us at any time," Heath said.

The property values will become effective Jan. 1, unless some are changed during the appeals process. The tax rate will be set by county commissioners in June, and tax bills reflecting both the new property values and tax rate will be mailed in late August. Taxes are due and payable as soon as bills are received and are considered delinquent on Jan. 6 of the following year.

#### History

When property was last revaluated in 2000, Bob Pearson of Pearson's Appraisal met with commissioners to let them know that property values were rising at much different rates throughout the county. Pearson proved his point by giving commissioners the value of their property before the revaluation and the estimated value after. Values rose 12-112 percent.

In 2000, values of property along Perquimans' abundant waterfront rose sharply, while some values remained stagnant, and lot values even dropped in Holiday Island because they no longer met health department standards for septic tanks. The overall growth was 18.8 percent.

Based on that growth, commissioners dropped the tax rate from 78 cents per \$100 valuation to 62 cents when the budget was approved in June 2000.

County Manager Bobby Darden said residents can expect a "substantial" decrease in the tax rate when it is set by commissioners in June 2008, but he said until all appeals are heard and a final total valuation is set, and budget requests are submitted and reviewed, it is impossible to determine a rate.

#### WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 64 LOW: 43  
SHOWERS

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 63 LOW: 46  
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 61 LOW: 49  
SHOWERS