

THE PERQUIMAN WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Watch leads to drug arrest

SUSAN HARRIS
Editor & Publisher

Sitting and watching netted an arrest for the Sheriff's Department earlier this month.

Investigator Shelby White said he had kept an eye out on what he tagged "a known drug area" in the county, an area he didn't identify.

While he was watching, he noted suspicious activity on Feb. 15, and subsequently stopped a vehicle operated by Christopher Darnell, 47, of 250 Deep Creek Road. Darnell got out of the vehicle at White's request and consented to have the car searched.

A canine was brought in and indicated there was something near the console. White said a bag containing 14 grams of marijuana was found. Further searching revealed another bag with 1.2 grams of marijuana, a bowl for smoking marijuana, and a box on the floor of the back seat containing electronic scales, sandwich bags, drug paraphernalia and a sandwich bag containing 71.5 grams of marijuana seeds. White said marijuana seed are very small, about the size of celery seed, so the amount of seed could have resulted in a very large marijuana crop had the bag not been confiscated.

Darnell was charged with possession of drug paraphernalia; maintaining a vehicle for the purpose of manufacturing, selling, and/or delivering a controlled substance; and possession with intent to manufacture, sell, and/or deliver a Schedule VI controlled substance. Bond was set at \$2,500 secured.

Rain doesn't end severe drought

While we are still listed as suffering from a severe drought locally, Perquimans County is up slightly in rainfall so far this year.

According to Tommy and Sherry Harrell's unofficial rain collection data, which is used by local agricultural officials, the county has received 4.92 inches of rain so far in 2008. Last year, the county received 4.84 inches of rain in January and February.

Most of this year's rainfall has come in February with 4.06 inches falling. Less than an inch of rain fell in January.

One year ago, 3.05 inches of rain fell in January while 1.78 fell in February.

According to the North Carolina Drought Management Council, Perquimans is one of 13 counties suffering from severe drought. Statewide, 22 counties are suffering from extreme drought, and 64 counties suffer from exceptional drought conditions.

A TIME TO TEACH

RECEIVED FEB 27 2008



EFFLEY D. HOWELL SR. brought his Thankful Heritage African American History Museum to Perquimans County recently. Presentations were made at both the middle and high schools.

Howell brings history to Hertford

You've heard it said many times during your life...there is a season and a time for everything.

Effley D. Howell Sr. believes it is his time to teach. Howell founded the Thankful Heritage mobile African American history museum in 1993 and since then has been providing an aid for teachers to better understand the Black History that is within American History.

The indelible and important display is full of history and heritage from ancient Africa through today.

Education and awareness are experienced through collectibles and memorabilia. The extensive collection depicts every aspect of African American life experiences, positive as well as negative imagery.

Displays include historical artifacts on black history, civil rights and genealogy. The oral presentation focuses on information and interactive discussions to enhance the understanding of the importance of Black History Month.

The mobile museum was made

available to the community, middle and high school students in Perquimans County Schools and was sponsored by Perquimans High School and Communities In Schools.

"The ultimate purpose of the different seasons in one's life is growth. Growth in terms of knowledge, experience and ability, both physically and spiritually," said Principal James Bunch. "I trust the Thankful Heritage Museum provided growth in knowledge for our students."

S bridge, causeway future considered

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

State transportation officials are trying to decide what to do with the historic S-bridge and the causeway leading to it.

Areas in the causeway are sinking from settling and have been for years, causing North Carolina Department of Transportation officials to repair and rebuild the road over and over again.

According to minutes of a meeting held between DOT officials, local public officials, and a consulting firm in September, the movable-span S bridge, built in 1929, has a low sufficiency rating, and now many parts that might need replacing are no longer readily available. They must be special ordered and custom made instead. In addition, the existing bridge does not meet current codes including the radius of the curves, and the width of the bridge, and the width of the causeway. The bridge costs approximately \$100,000—\$125,000 to operate and maintain annually.

DOT Transportation Improvement Program project R-4467 proposes to correct differential settling issues from the S-bridge to state Route 37 (the causeway), and to replace the S-bridge.

Sterling Baker, division maintenance engineer for DOT, said the project is still

in the planning stages and has been included in the draft 2008-2015 TIP. Right of way issues are tentatively scheduled to be addressed in 2014 with \$5 million budgeted towards the project in 2015. The remaining \$10 million needed for the project remains unfunded in the 2008-2015 plan.

A study to determine options for the half-mile project is currently being conducted by Kimley-Horn and Associates, Inc. The first step in the process was conducting the meeting with local officials last fall.

DOT and Kimley-Horn representatives met with members of Hertford Town Council, town employees, Hertford police, Winfall Town Council, Albemarle RPO, county commissioners and county employees, school leaders, and emergency management officials to give background information on the project and gather input on potential issues and alternatives for the complex project.

The causeway provides exclusive access to Hertford on the north end of town. When the road is closed, as it has been several times when DOT repaired settling issues in the past, the detour takes traffic 4.1 miles along Church Street to US 17 Bypass. When traffic is detoured, business in both Winfall and downtown Hertford declines, school

buses travel longer distances to deliver students and travel more often over the high rise bridge on US 17 Bypass, and EMS responders have time added to their response times to emergency medical calls in the northern end of the county as they leave from the station in Hertford.

Some of the suggestions that came out of the meeting with local officials included replacing the bridge with a moveable-span bridge that looks as similar to the existing one as possible, and replace the causeway with a low bridge; replace the bridge with a non-movable span bridge that moves the channel slightly to the north, and replace the causeway with a low bridge; replace the bridge and causeway with a bridge that is low over the current bridge location and cuts a new channel for boats at the point in the existing causeway where the width of the peninsula is narrowest.

If the causeway is reconstructed, and the S-bridge remains the same, the height of the causeway roadway might not tie in with the height of the road over the S-bridge. If the bridge is replaced with a non-moveable bridge, it would need to be high enough for boat traffic yet low enough not to impact the Historic Hertford district.

Officials at the meeting

indicated that the causeway can not be maintained in its present condition because it will continue to sink. It might be possible to replace the causeway on piers in the same location, but it would need to be high enough not to flood, but low enough to look more like a road than a bridge.

While all local officials are concerned about the safety of the causeway, some also voiced concern over the possibility of losing such sentimental and historic elements surrounding the project area including the view, the turtle log, the Cyprus trees, and the historic S bridge which is considered eligible for listing on the National Register and pictured on the Hertford town seal.

Several officials also voiced concerns that the causeway would have fewer problems if truck traffic was restricted. The current weight limit on the bridge (19 tons for single vehicles and 24 tons for trucks) is correct according to the DOT formula based on the 2007 bridge inspection.

The next step in the study will be to collect data, develop several conceptual alternatives and perform analysis. Once that is completed, NCDOT officials will meet with local officials and communities again some time this year to present the alternatives.

Tax rebates okayed

Returns must be filed to get funds

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

So, what are you going to do with your check?

The country's Economic Stimulus Act of 2008 was passed recently, putting more than \$152 billion back in the hands of 128 million American households including those in Perquimans County. The tax rebates and temporary tax incentives for businesses are designed to stimulate the sluggish economy and to help local businesses grow by creating jobs this year.

Individuals are eligible to receive up to \$600, \$1,200 for couples. A minimum of \$300 per person and \$600 per couple would be available to taxpayers with at least \$3,000 of earned income. The rebates are available for individuals making less than \$75,000 and married couples that make less than \$150,000 filing jointly. The rebate will be phased out for taxpayers making more than those limits.

In addition, everyone is eligible for an additional \$300 per child. For example, a married couple with two children could receive a tax rebate of up to \$1,800.

Those who receive Social Security benefits are also eligible for the tax rebate as well as those who receive certain veterans' benefits.

Payments are slated to go out through late spring and summer, but you must file your 2007 taxes first.

Terry Chappell, with Chappell Accounting in Winfall, said he expects more people to file this year, especially those who have not had to file in the past due to lower incomes.

"We've already been receiving calls, and have had people coming by asking questions," Chappell said. "They're lining up."

Tax incentives for businesses include a temporary change to the tax code that allows American businesses that buy new equipment this year to deduct an additional 50 percent of that cost in 2008. Small businesses placing less than \$800,000 of equipment into service would be able to immediately deduct up to \$250,000, nearly doubling the previous deductible amount.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 49 LOW: 35
SUNNY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 61 LOW: 47
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 54 LOW: 34
MOSTLY SUNNY