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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

BROTHER WOLF



SUBMITTED PHOTO

LOVE, HATE, MURDER AND revenge, forgiveness and redemption – these themes resonate through all great literature and theatre, and will be brought to the stage of Perquimans County High School with the upcoming production of "Brother Wolf." This new play by Preston Lane, originally written for Triad Stage in Greensboro, is a retelling of the great Old English epic "Beowulf." Reset as an Appalachian folk tale, this new version of the ancient story is presented by a cast of storytellers who bring to life the traveling preacher Brother Wolf, the monster Grin Dell, his Maw, and the Speardane family, both narrating the story and stepping into the action as needed, blurring the line between past and present as they use the tale to teach young Enoch to deal with his community's present day tragedy. The play will run April 17 and 18, 7:30 p.m. in the school auditorium. Admission is \$8 for adults, \$5 for students. Tickets are available in advance from cast members and theatre students, as well as at the door.



Hertford sewer rates to rise

Interim increase needed to pay system upgrade loans

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hertford's sewer rates will go up on the next monthly bill.

Members of Hertford Town Council last Monday night approved an interim sewage rate of \$28.35 for up to 3,000 gallons of water used per month with an additional \$6 per 1,000 gallons used afterwards. Town customers currently pay a sewage rate of \$15.65 for up to 3,000 gallons of water used and an additional \$6 per 1,000 gallons used afterwards. An average town customer uses approximately 5,000 gallons per month meaning their sewage bill will increase from \$27.65 now to \$40.36 monthly under the interim rate.

The new interim rate will go into effect with the April bill for usage in March.

The vote passed 3-2 with council members Horace Reid and Anne White voting against the measure.

Town Manager John Christensen said the increase is needed to collect funds now to pay for the first payment on loans obtained by the town to fund the new wastewater treatment system improvement project currently under construction. The first \$150,000 payment on the \$3 million zero interest loan from the State Revolving Loan Fund is due in May 2009.

"I applaud council for taking the positive step of approving the interim rate," Christensen said Tuesday morning.

However, that approval didn't come easily. All council members voiced grave concerns over raising any rate at a time when citizens are already being hit in the pocketbook by a sluggish economy, higher gas prices, and paying more for just about anything needed to get by.

"With the country on the verge of a recession, it concerns me that the only option we seem to be looking at is passing on the added costs to the customers whose budgets are already stressed out," said White.

Reid offered a second option of using the \$5 service fee tacked on to waste collection four years ago supplemented by additional funds from the town's general fund to help pay the

Old base rate:
\$15.65
New base rate:
\$28.35
Additional \$6 per
1,000 gallons of
water used remains
same

debt service payment rather than raising rates. Reid suggested using the general fund money just this year.

"Once that rate increase is in place, chances are it won't ever go down," he added. "We're talking about a greater situation than most people can deal with."

Reid and White also suggested the town cut expenses rather than raising rates. Reid even suggested cutting out salary increases for town employees.

Carlton Davenport, JoAnn Morris and Mayor Sid Eley struggled with raising rates as well, but said loan payments must be made.

"Council in the past was always against raising rates and now we're stuck with doing it," Davenport said. "Maybe we should have raised them more 10 years ago and we wouldn't be in this shape now."

Christensen pointed out that the water and sewer fund is supposed to be self-sustaining with no funds crossing between the town's general fund and the water/sewer fund. In fact, he said, the Local Government Commission, the state's watchdog over local governments, would probably frown on it.

The town was forced by the state to improve its aging wastewater treatment facility, and the town also upgraded its capacity to serve the local commerce center in an effort to help attract economic development in that area. So far, approximately 40 jobs have been created by businesses locating in that area.

Total cost of those improvements and upgrades is \$11.3 million with nearly half obtained in grants and payments. The remaining funds are loans, which must be repaid beginning in May 2009.

In addition to the \$150,000 payment due next May, the town will also have to begin funding its \$170,000 payment on the USDA-RD bond in November 2009. Council will have to address the debt service in the next fiscal budget with the possibility of another rate increase then.

Sunday reception will honor Mobley

A reception honoring Fifth District Representative Annie Mobley will be held Sunday from 3-5 p.m. at the Perquimans County Recreation Center.

The public is invited to the reception hosted by Mr. and Mrs. Blake Harmon and Mr. and Mrs. Donald Morris.

"We wanted to offer the people here a chance to meet her and get to know her," said JoAnn Morris. "It's an opportunity to thank her for all she has done for this area."

Rep. Mobley graduated from Elizabeth City State University with a degree in business education. She furthered her studies at Morgan State University, East Carolina University, and North Carolina State University.

Prior to her election to serve in the North Carolina General Assembly, House of Representatives, she was retired from the position of Chief Court Counselor in the Administrative Office of the Court, 6B Judicial District. She has also taught school in Bertie County and worked as a probation officer for the Supreme Bench of Baltimore and as clerk for the Baltimore City Housing Authority.

Rep. Mobley serves on several committees including aging, agribusiness and agricultural economy (vice chairman), financial institutions, judiciary I, and juvenile justice (vice chairman). She also serves in various other capacities including being sworn in as director for the Southern States representing Women in Government and also serves on its board of directors.

After joining the National Foundation of Women Legislators, she was chosen to travel with a United States delegation to Taiwan, the Republic of China.

Rep. Mobley was appointed by the governor to serve on Jan. 23, 2007.

"As your elected official, I learned quickly how to keep pace with the work, dissect issues and keep my focus on what is most important for the people of this district," stated Mobley in a recent release. "There are so many things government can do to help make life better for

the people of Northeastern North Carolina.

"We need more jobs, better roads, more teachers and more money for education," she continued. "We need to be sure that the people who most need and deserve our help get that help. We need to ensure equitable treatment for all people. We need to protect our children from crime and from those who would prey upon them. We need to provide equal access to good, affordable health care."

Since joining the legislature, Rep. Mobley helped to pass a budget that includes more money this year for expanded prekindergarten programs, more reading tutors in middle school, and programs to help high school students earn college credits at no charge. The legislature also established a new program that in the next fiscal year will give 25,000 students in the state's community colleges and public universities \$4,000 a year grants to help pay for their education.

She sponsored a new law this session that will help protect children in the juvenile court system by establishing a standard procedure for the use of physical restraints. She also cosponsored new laws that require sex offenders to be tested for sexually transmitted diseases and computer technicians or photo developers to report child pornography found in the course of their work.

Reception honoring Rep. Annie Mobley Sunday, 3-5 Recreation Center

Rep. Mobley co-sponsored a law that requires insurance companies to provide mental health coverage equal to the coverage they provide for physical ailments, as well as supported a new law that better protects people who receive long-term care.

The state will spend almost \$2 million to expand the state Health Care Personnel Registry and to establish a rating system for adult care homes. This registry will now include any unlicensed staff people who work directly with patients.

She sponsored bills to give recognition to the famous Tuskegee Airmen as well as to the late Representative Howard Hunter, Jr.

She also was among the sponsors of a bill that required the state treasurer to divest its holdings in companies that do business in Sudan. She was supportive of legislation to make local neighborhoods safer by reducing gang violence, to make voter registration and early voting easier as well as help males in community colleges receive the monitoring they need.

Robbery

Percy Davis's Garage, located at 229 Dobbs Street, was broken into sometime over the weekend.

According to Hertford Police Chief Brian Riddick, someone broke a pad lock on the garage door sometime between Saturday and Monday morning. Entry to the building was gained through the front door.

Police said the only item reported missing is a car buffer.

Investigation is continuing.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 60 LOW: 56
FEW SHOWERS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 74 LOW: 57
SCATTERED TSTORMS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 70 LOW: 53
THUNDERSTORMS

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