

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Hertford going greener

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Turn in your red for blue and go greener in Hertford.

Town residents with the red 18-gallon recycling bins may turn them in for new blue 65-gallon cans on wheels that can be rolled out for curb-side recycling pick up once a week. Town businesses that have the green bins may also receive a blue roll-out can as well.

Residents and businesses that don't currently have recycling bins may receive blue cans as well.

There is no cost for the cans or to recycle.

The town's upgraded recycling program will allow residents and businesses to recycle newspapers with inserts, glass (clear, green and brown), aluminum and bi-metal cans, plastic beverage containers (No. 1 and No. 2), office paper, magazines, paper board (cereal boxes, shoe boxes, etc.) and cardboard (broken down and entirely in cart).

Items no longer have to be separated, but may be dumped all together in the blue can.

According to Town Manager John Christensen, the goal of the upgraded program is to make it easier to recycle so that more folks will do it, and increase the volume of items recycled so that less garbage is disposed of in landfills.

"According to Waste Industries, the company that runs the recycling program, less than 20 percent of our residents participate in recycling with the red bins," Christensen said. "Our goal is to increase the number of participants, as well as increase the amount of volume of recycled items collected."

Brandon Shoaf, town



Perquimans Weekly photo by CATHY WILSON

READY TO ROLL! JOHN Christensen, town manager, and Brandon Shoaf, town planner, prepare to help Hertford residents go greener by upgrading the town's recycling program. Residents with red recycling bins may exchange them for much larger, 65-gallon cans that can be rolled out for curb-side pick up. Residents who don't currently participate in the recycling program may take part in the free program, too. Town businesses and offices may receive the blue cans as well. The upgraded recycling program allows the collection of additional recyclable items. To receive your free blue can, call the town office at 426-1969.

planner, noted that the cost of the new 400 blue cans was paid for by a \$25,000 state grant. The grant funded 90 percent of the cost while Perquimans County funded the remaining 10 percent.

The county also funded the same percentage for a grant to help Winfall begin their curb-side recycling program.

"The only cost to the town is the cost of labor for town employees to deliver the cans to the residents,"

Christensen said. While curb-side pick up for residents is still ongoing in town, such service for local businesses and offices stopped this summer.

In the past, the green bins filled with recyclable paper were picked up from local businesses and offices by the Albemarle Regional Solid Waste Authority. That service, however, was cut out this fiscal year.

Now, businesses and offices can still collect recyclable papers in the green

bins, but must deliver those papers to the area's convenience centers.

With the new blue cans, however, businesses and offices can increase their recyclables and roll the cart out to the curb for the weekly pick-up rather than make the trip out to the convenience center.

To upgrade to the larger blue recycling can, just call the town office at 426-1969.

Pickups will be on Thursdays and cans should be placed curb side by 7 a.m.

County down in revenues

Fees expected to be \$150K short for year; new positions won't be filled

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The economic slowdown is forcing local governments to tighten their fiscal belts in anticipation of future budget shortfalls.

County Manager Bobby Darden said first quarter revenue figures for the 2008-09 budget are down in categories associated with building and real estate: building inspection fees, recording fees and land transaction fees.

"County fee revenues have declined by about 50 percent from the same three month period in 2007,"

County fee revenues have declined by about 50 percent from the same three month period in 2007.

wrote Darden in a memo to county department heads last week. "Based on the first three months of this fiscal year, I estimate that annual revenues for county fees will be about \$150,000 less than original budget projections."

Deed registration fees are down by over 50 percent, he said, followed by building inspection fees which have dropped by a third from the same time last year. EMS fees, or charges collected from answering emergency medical calls, are down by 15 percent.

As a result, Darden has put a hold, for now, on hiring the two and a half new county employee positions approved in this year's budget including a full time administrative assistant for his office, a full time deputy director for communications, and a part time recreation program assistant.

In addition, Darden has suspended all capital outlay requests over \$500 until Jan. 1, unless the item is funded by grant money or is part of a project already in progress.

While most of the county's capital outlay projects are vehicles for the sheriff's department, Darden said those vehicles have already been purchased. But, about \$75,000 of capital outlay items, such as computers, are budgeted but are suspended until Jan. 1.

Property taxes, the county's largest source of revenue, are still coming in as usual, he pointed out. The second largest source of county revenue is sales tax. While those figures are not down yet, Darden is keeping a keen eye on them each month.

"Sales tax money is received three months after it is collected by food and

Hertford also watching expenses

Concerned over possible tight economic times looming in the future, Hertford officials are also encouraging department heads to cut expenses wherever possible.

Town Manager John Christensen said he has discussed the issue of future shrinking revenues with department heads and encouraged them to save money through cost saving measures.

"To date, we have experienced a shortfall in the Powell Bill funds," Christensen said. "The state sent us \$64,448 where we budgeted \$69,000, a five percent shortfall."

Local option sales tax revenues for Hertford are a little ahead of the forecast so far, he said.

"Not knowing how these will be affected in the near future, I have not implemented a hard request to department heads to cut by a set percentage," Christensen said. "Conservation measures are helpful, but can come with a cost to implement."

Real estate and building trends do not impact the town as they do the county because the county collects and retains land transfer taxes.

"Obviously where we are impacted by slower growth is the lack of customers who will help us pay the costs associated with our new water and sewer plants," he explained.

The town's capital outlay projects are already funded with grants so they will continue as budgeted.

As far as personnel matters is concerned, the town currently has two openings: police sergeant and a maintenance worker. Christensen says the police position will be filled, but the town will hold off on filling the maintenance position for now.

Other cost cutting measures being considered include sending out only one disconnect notice for utility bills rather than two, cutting back on heating garage areas, and more efficient scheduling for debris pick-up.

retail establishments," he explained. "The North Carolina Association of County Commissioners budget staff have warned of weakening sales. If sales tax revenues decline, then the county will have to implement additional cost saving measures later this budget year."

The actions taken are precautionary, Darden noted.

"Unfortunately, the economy doesn't look like its going to pull out of this anytime soon," he added. "If this continues, the next budget year is really going to be challenging."

Causeway to reopen, high rise lane to close

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Local highway officials hope to have the causeway back open to traffic by Halloween.

John Abel, bridge maintenance engineer with the North Carolina Department of Transportation, said a second failure near Larry's Drive-Inn at the north end of the causeway kept the road closed a few

days longer than originally scheduled.

The causeway closed Sept. 29 to repair an older section of the roadway along the curve near what's known as the turtle log. A 70-foot long concrete area was built up, and the road was scheduled to reopen Oct. 24.

However, a second failure in front of Larry's caused officials to build up a 65 ft. area there as well. The road closing is advertised as remaining closed until Nov. 21, but Abel says they should be able to reopen by the end of the week.

"As long as we don't see any more failures, we should be able to open no later than Friday, if not sooner," he said. "Hopefully this will take care of the problems for a while."

Abel explained that the pilings underneath the causeway were installed in

the 1920s, and have deteriorated over time, causing the concrete structures underneath the roadway to fail.

River water actually runs underneath the causeway.

In September a year ago, the causeway was closed when the concrete slab underneath the roadway in another area broke, causing the pavement to settle 8-12 inches. Within a few days, a second failure occurred as well, closing the roadway while construction crews rebuilt approximately 150 feet of pavement.

High rise bridge

Transportation officials don't expect repair work on the southbound bridge on U.S. 17 Bypass over the Perquimans River to begin until March 1.

Last month, the N.C. Board of Transportation awarded a \$2.2 million con-

tract to repair the southbound bridge to Lanford Brothers Company Inc. of Roanoke, Va. Work was originally scheduled to begin as early as Sept. 29, with final completion set for 135 days after the start date and no later than April 15, 2009.

The project includes removing the riding surface of the bridge deck and replacing it with concrete overlay.

The two southbound traffic lanes will be directed onto one lane of the northbound U.S. 17 bridge throughout the project's duration. This traffic pattern allows northbound traffic to use one lane of the northbound bridge and southbound traffic to use the other lane. After passing the construction site, southbound motorists will then be directed back to U.S. 17 South.

IRS wants to deliver checks here

Eight county residents are among those who have money coming to them from a federal agency that usually collects money instead.

The Internal Revenue Service is looking for taxpayers who are missing more than 279,000 economic stimulus checks totaling about \$163 million and more than 104,000 regular refund checks totaling about \$103 million that were returned by the U.S. Postal Service due to mailing address errors.

Included in those figures are seven folks from Hertford and one from Winfall.

"People across the country are missing tax refunds and stimulus checks. We want to get this money into the hands of taxpayers where it belongs," said IRS Commissioner Doug Shulman. "We are committed to making the process as easy as possible for taxpayers to update their addresses with the IRS and get their checks."

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 58 LOW: 38
SUNNY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 65 LOW: 41
SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 68 LOW: 47
MOSTLY SUNNY



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