

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

Park skates toward opening

Youth petition gets attention from county board

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

A new skateboard park for local kids is expected to be ready to roll next month.

Built at the Perquimans County Recreation Department adjacent to the parking lot, the outdoor park features two quarter pipes, a grind box and rail. The skate items sit atop a concrete pad that measures 26 ft. by 73 ft.

The total cost of the park was \$40,000 said County Manager Bobby Darden, and was paid for through a 50/50 matching grant through the North Carolina Parks and Recreation Trust Fund. The county's cost was \$20,000.

While most of the construction has been completed, the county still needs to add fencing and adopt a county ordinance detailing rules for use of the unsupervised park. A public hearing on that ordinance is slated for Dec. 1 by county commissioners.

Darden said state statute requires a county ordinance be adopted detailing rules and liability for any unsupervised skateboard park. Since the park is located in the Commerce Centre, owned by the county, and is located within Hertford's town limits, town leaders were asked to sign a resolution, but did not.

Rules for using the park will be posted, and protective gear will be required.

The park is a result of action spearheaded by a bunch of local kids, Darden pointed out.

"Three or four years ago, a petition was signed by kids and presented to the commissioners asking for a skateboard park," he said. "This project came out of that petition from the kids."



NO ONE WAS INJURED when a 2001 tractor trailer driven by Clifton Sessoms, 33, of Powellsville landed in a ditch alongside U.S. Highway 17 North of Hertford last Thursday around 1:10 p.m. The vehicle, registered to Coastal Beverage of Wilmington, was traveling north when Sessoms lost control when attempting to change lanes, ran off the road and overturned in a ditch. Sessoms was charged with exceeding a safe speed by Trooper J.F. Bray.

Perquimans Weekly photo by SUSAN HARRIS

Town late fees to rise

Hertford increases utility bill late fees to cover costs

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Customers who don't pay their town utility bills on time will face higher cut-off fees this winter.

Hertford commissioners agreed last week to raise the utility cut-off fee from \$5 to \$7 effective with the January 2009 bill. Customers who don't pay their January bill on time will pay the higher cut-off fee in February.

In an effort to save town money, town leaders considered stopping sending out second notices to delinquent customers. According to Town Manager John Christensen, approximately 40 percent of the town's utility customers receive second notices which cost the town \$2,500—\$2,700 annually to process and mail those notices.

However, based on the advice of their attorney Ben Gallup, town leaders chose to err on the side of due process instead, and decided to continue sending out second notices, passing the cost on to those who don't pay their bills on time.

The cut-off fee has previously remained steady at \$5 for several years.

Council also approved buying new rollers and radio controls for the bay doors to the fire department in an effort to save money on the cost of heating the garage area.

Often times, when firefighters leave the fire station, garage doors are left open, allowing heat from gas heaters to escape. The new rollers and radio control capability will allow firefighters to close the doors behind them while responding to the fire call in the trucks.

The cost of installing the cost-cutting measure is over \$2,000.

"Sometimes you have to spend money to save money in the long run," commented Christensen.

In other matters last week, town commissioners learned they will be grand marshals for the county's annual Christmas parade slated for Dec. 6. The parade, sponsored by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce, gets underway at 2 p.m.

Town council members will ride in the parade on a horse drawn wagon.

Slideshows

See photo galleries of Perquimans County happenings at dailyadvance.com. Choose photos/videos from the menu bar and click on Perquimans.

Schools get drop-out prevention grant

The local school system will put more emphasis on keeping kids in schools, thanks to a \$150,000 drop-out prevention grant recently from the state.

Perquimans County Schools is one of 42 groups in 30 counties to receive \$5.2 million in grants to help reduce the number of high school dropouts. The grants, which range in size from \$43,360 to \$150,000, were awarded to school systems, schools, agencies and non profits that had originally applied for funding in 2007 but did not receive funding during the first round.

According to Brenda Lassiter, the schools' public information officer, the funds will be used to hire a dropout prevention coordinator and provide focused intervention and prevention goals and objectives through an innovative dropout prevention program.

"The goals are to implement, expand, coordinate and evaluate a comprehensive dropout prevention program; provide academic assistance for at-risk students to maximize their academic potential; and create a more personalized learning environment," said Lassiter.

The coordinator will work directly with students designated as "at risk" of dropping out of school and their families at the middle and high school levels. Approximately 70 students will be served, based on historical data indicating a 10 percent at-risk population in grades 6—12.



Dr. Dwayne Stallings

"This will be a collaborative effort of the Perquimans County School System, parents, students and the faith community, Communities in Schools, and Governor's One on One," she added.

According to the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction, Perquimans County Schools showed a 36.2 percent drop in its annual dropout rate in 2006—2007 from 2005—2006. In 2006-07, 30 students dropped out of local schools in grades 9 through 12 while 47 dropped out in the same age group the year before.

"Identification and intervention will be on-going," said Superintendent Dr. Dwayne K. Stallings. "Focused efforts will be made to reduce in-school and out-of-school suspensions, behavior problems and truancy. In addition, counselors, school nurses, and the school social worker will work collaboratively to help enhance self-esteem and personal skills of students to encourage academic success."

Deer dumpers face fines if found

CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Hunters dumping dead deer carcasses in ditches, on roadways, or on private property may have to pay the price if caught.

According to the North Carolina Wildlife Resources Commission, dumping dead animals or their remains without the landowner's permission is considered littering, a misdemeanor punishable with fines up to \$2,000.

Apparently there is littering occurring around the county now that deer season is in effect.

Thomas Swayne, maintenance supervisor with the local office of the North Carolina Department of Transportation, said his department picks up four

or five deer carcasses a day off the local roadways and out of the ditches running alongside them.

"It's aggravating," said Swayne who is a deer hunter himself. "Looks like the deer carcass calls increase especially at this time of year."

Some of the carcasses picked up have been hit by vehicles, but many are also just the remains of a hunter's bounty, he said.

Gordon Wilder of Belvidere said his dogs have drug home deer carcasses that have been dumped in the ditch on property across the street from his home. Bones, skin, and deer heads are tossed out late at night by illegal dumpers in the Bagley Swamp area, he said.

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HELPING HANDS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

STUDENTS FROM THE UNITED States Coast Guard Aviation Technical Training Center, Elizabeth City volunteered to work at the Newbold-White House on Nov. 8. The Aviation Maintenance Technician Class No. 79-09 performed tasks such as clearing brush around the dock area, spreading oyster shells around the garden area, trimming hedges and replacing split rail fencing. Aviation maintenance technician instructors work with the students and coordinate community service projects.

WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 55 LOW: 34
SUNNY

FRIDAY
HIGH: 50 LOW: 30
MOSTLY SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 47 LOW: 31
SUNNY



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