

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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"News from Next Door"

35 cents

## Gunman robs Joe's

Hertford police are looking for a lone gunman who robbed a female store clerk at Joe's Place on the western edge of town Friday afternoon.

According to Chief Joe Amos, officers responded to the store around 2:44 p.m. after receiving a report that the clerk was robbed of an undisclosed amount of cash. The clerk was not harmed, and the gunman fled the scene on foot.

The suspect is described as a male dressed in black with a silver tab on a shoe lace. Police said the clerk could not describe the race or age of the robber.

Investigation is continuing. Anyone with information may contact the Hertford Police Department at 426-5587. Callers may remain anonymous.

## Site work begins on FedEx project

Company to get local incentives

CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

Site preparation work has begun for the relocation and expansion of the FedEx distribution center from Don Juan Road to the county's commerce center.

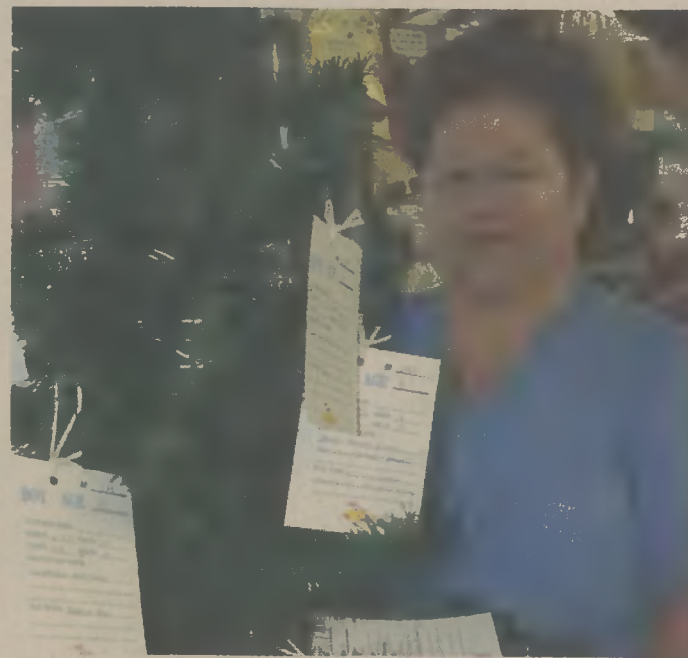
Hertford Baseline Development, LLC recently bought approximately 8.36 acres in the Commerce Centre at \$25,000 per acre. Plans call for the construction of a 28,000 square foot building that will be leased to FedEx. The land and building represent a \$3 million-plus investment.

A smaller FedEx ground distribution is currently located on Don Juan Road  
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## A TIME TO GIVE

Perquimans Weekly photos by CATHY WILSON.

THE MANGER AT HERTFORD Baptist Church and the names still left on the Santa tree at Woodard's Pharmacy remind us that Christmas is about giving. There is still time to choose a name from the tree, sponsored by the Parksville Ruritans, and give a brighter Christmas to a child.



## Town raises electric rates

CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

Town electric customers will see another rate hike in February.

Members of Hertford Council voted to increase electricity cost by 3.5 percent effective with the Feb. 1 billing cycle. Their actions follow continued rate hikes by Electricities, the electricity managing agency that sells power to the town.

Electricities rates will increase 4 percent Feb. 1, costing the town an additional \$108,000 annually.

"The wholesale cost to us is going up. We don't have much of an alternative," said Councilman Carlton Davenport. "The town either has to absorb it or we go up on our rates. The money has to come from somewhere."

Councilwoman JoAnn Morris pointed out that the town absorbed part of a rate hike earlier this year. The motion to increase the electric rate passed 3-2 with councilmen Horace Reid and Anne White voting against it.

This latest increase follows an 8.9 percent hike in 2008. Half of the increase went into effect for local customers in July with the remaining half impacting local electric bills in December.

Town manager John Christensen explained that Electricities is still experiencing increases because their working capital is not sufficient.

"Without a rate increase, the power company can't pay their bills through the middle of 2009," he explained.

An average town electric customer uses about 897 kilowatts per month, Christensen said. With the new rate, that bill should increase from \$127.36 to \$131.79 in February.

Mayor Sid Eley said he hopes the town will look into providing customers budget plans to help with increased electricity costs in the future. He also encouraged town customers to take advantage of the town's free energy audits to find ways to conserve electricity and therefore lowers their monthly costs.

In other matters, council amended the town ordinance allowing wedding chapels in commercial zones with a conditional use permit.

Town Planner Brandon Shoaf also announced that the town recently received a public access grant through the North Carolina Public Beach and Coastal Waterfront Access Program for \$7,720 to build canoe/kayak launches at Missing Mill Park. The town will pay \$1,286 in cash with the same amount being spent in in-kind services for the project.

"This project will be a benefit to the community," Shoaf said.

## Sheriff's deputy subject of SBI probe

SUSAN HARRIS

A Perquimans County sheriff's deputy resigned after Sheriff Eric Tilley requested an SBI probe into allegations that she could have broken the law.

Marlo Reel, an investigator in the Perquimans sheriff's office, resigned Dec. 2,

Tilley said Monday.

Tilley declined to say why Reel resigned but he did confirm she is being investigated by the State Bureau of Investigation for a matter unrelated to her duties at the sheriff's department.

Tilley said he noted some things involving Reel in

early November that caused him concern. Following what he tagged "very preliminary" investigation, Tilley met with District Attorney Frank Parrish and an SBI agent to discuss his concerns. Tilley said as a result of that meeting, he asked Parrish to request an SBI investigation and also

decided to immediately suspend Reel without pay pending the outcome of the requested SBI investigation.

According to Tilley, Reel worked for the Perquimans Sheriff's Office about 10 years, first as a road deputy and most recently as an investigator.

## Area leaders meet with Butterfield Monday

CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

Congressman G.K. Butterfield and his staff listened Monday afternoon as community leaders from four counties shared challenges faced by localities in tight economic times.

While he promised little, the congressman representing District 1 committed himself to inspiring and encouraging citizens in his district and to reinstating respect to the 111th Congress that reconvenes Jan. 6.

"Despite our challenges, we are still a great nation," Butterfield told leaders from Pasquotank, Perquimans, Chowan and Gates counties seated around a table at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. "There is no problem too big that we can't overcome."

The country's two greatest challenges, he said, are terrorism and balancing the federal budget. National leaders will also have to craft energy policies that are not dependent on foreign oil, but focus on renewable energy sources instead

like new bio fuels, wind, and solar.

He listened intently as leaders voiced local concerns ranging from unemployment in Edenton to additional funding for Tier 1 designation in Gates County to United States Department of Agriculture (USDA) bureaucracy in Pasquotank to funding additional police patrols in Hertford.

"We need help to put these people back to work," said Richard Bunch, director of the Edenton Chamber of Commerce. He also said employment benefits should be extended.

Butterfield pointed out that an economic stimulus package is expected to be voted on in Congress the third week in January. That package should include funding for a wide range of infrastructure projects such as water, sewer, recreational trails, bicycle trails: projects that should help put people back to work, he said.

The funds will go directly to state governments. He encouraged localities to ready their projects now

and apply for funding as quickly as possible.

"If you have your project ready to go, the more likely you will get funded," he added.

Butterfield explained that he didn't expect the projects to include matching funding from the localities. Funds would be available for one-time capital projects instead.

Gates County leaders spoke of several concerns including funding school system improvements and repairs, the need for additional funding for distressed counties, increased broadband internet service to the county, and opposition to the outlying landing field sought by the U.S. Navy.

Randy Keaton, Pasquotank's county manager, compared working with USDA funding to a dreaded trip to the dentist.

"I'd almost rather have a root canal than deal with USDA," Keaton told Butterfield. "What they do goes way beyond funding. They get involved in the design status resulting in numerous change orders. It's a

bureaucracy that could be done away with."

Keaton said the USDA even tried to block the funding of a county project by contacting the lending institution involved.

Both Butterfield and his staff members said to notify them if anything like that happens again in the future.

Sid Eley, mayor of Hertford, said funding is needed for additional police patrols. He also encouraged Butterfield to help local "Mom and Pop" store operations.

"The government is giving banks and automobile companies big bailouts," said Eley. "What about our Mom and Pops?"

Butterfield said he voted against both federal bailout plans for that very reason.

"When I heard that the stock market would drop if the bailout plan didn't pass, I said the Dow went down 700 points in my district a long time ago," he added.

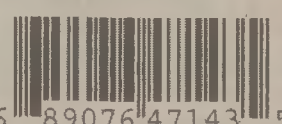
Monday's meeting was one of six meetings held throughout the 23 counties Butterfield represents in congress.

### WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 56 LOW: 47  
CLOUDY

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 71 LOW: 51  
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 64 LOW: 45  
SHOWERS



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