

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

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Winfall faces serious financial concerns

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The town of Winfall ended the 2007-08 fiscal year June 30 with a negative general fund balance with no reserve fund for emergencies or unexpected expenditures. But, thanks to a real estate tax hike, town officials say the general fund is now healthy.

Sharon G. Edmundson, director of the Fiscal Management Section of the Local

Government Commission (LGD), notified Mayor Fred Yates on Feb. 5 that, as of June 30, the town's overall financial condition had "continued to decline to what is now an unacceptable level."

The town's financial problems require immediate corrective action, she added.

"Because of the serious financial and budgetary problems that exist, the governing board should develop a financial plan outlining how it in-

tends to control expenditures and operate within its available resources," Edmundson wrote.

Yates said council has amended the town's budget ordinance, readjusting expected revenues that have not materialized, and making cuts where necessary.

"Do we have a surplus like Hertford and the county has? No," said Yates. "We don't have much commercial tax base. We have no other funds

to draw from other than taxes. It's the residential taxes that drives the town of Winfall. It's hard times for everybody and we're going through tough times here. But, we're watching it (budget) day to day, and any expense that's not necessary, we're not doing it."

Members of the LGC met with town staff Feb. 24 and are confident in the steps that have been taken by the town in addressing the state's concerns.

General Fund

According to the LGC, Winfall ended the last fiscal year \$8,545 in the hole, giving the town a negative 1.95 percent reserve fund available for emergencies.

The LGC, part of the state's treasurer's office, requires local governments and municipalities to keep at least 8 percent of their general fund in reserves (about one month's expenditures) in order to stay fiscally responsible and

in compliance with the Local Budget and Fiscal Control Act.

The previous year, Winfall ended the year with a general fund balance of \$58,888, providing the town a reserve fund totaling 14.71 percent of its general fund.

"In the general fund, the percentage of fund balance available for appropriation relative to expenditures ap-

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Local artisan still practicing her crafts at the century mark

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The old saying goes that quilters never grow old, they just go to pieces. Emily Harrell defies both.

At the age of 100, she is still quite together and still quilting, sewing and creating needle lace with nimble, skilled hands that crafted her first quilt 92 years ago. Each day, Harrell can be found stitching and quilting five to six hours a day in the work room located in her daughter's home in Elizabeth City.

Her bobbin's always full as she stitches the colorful pieces of fabric into various projects including lap quilts for children needing comfort in times of trouble.

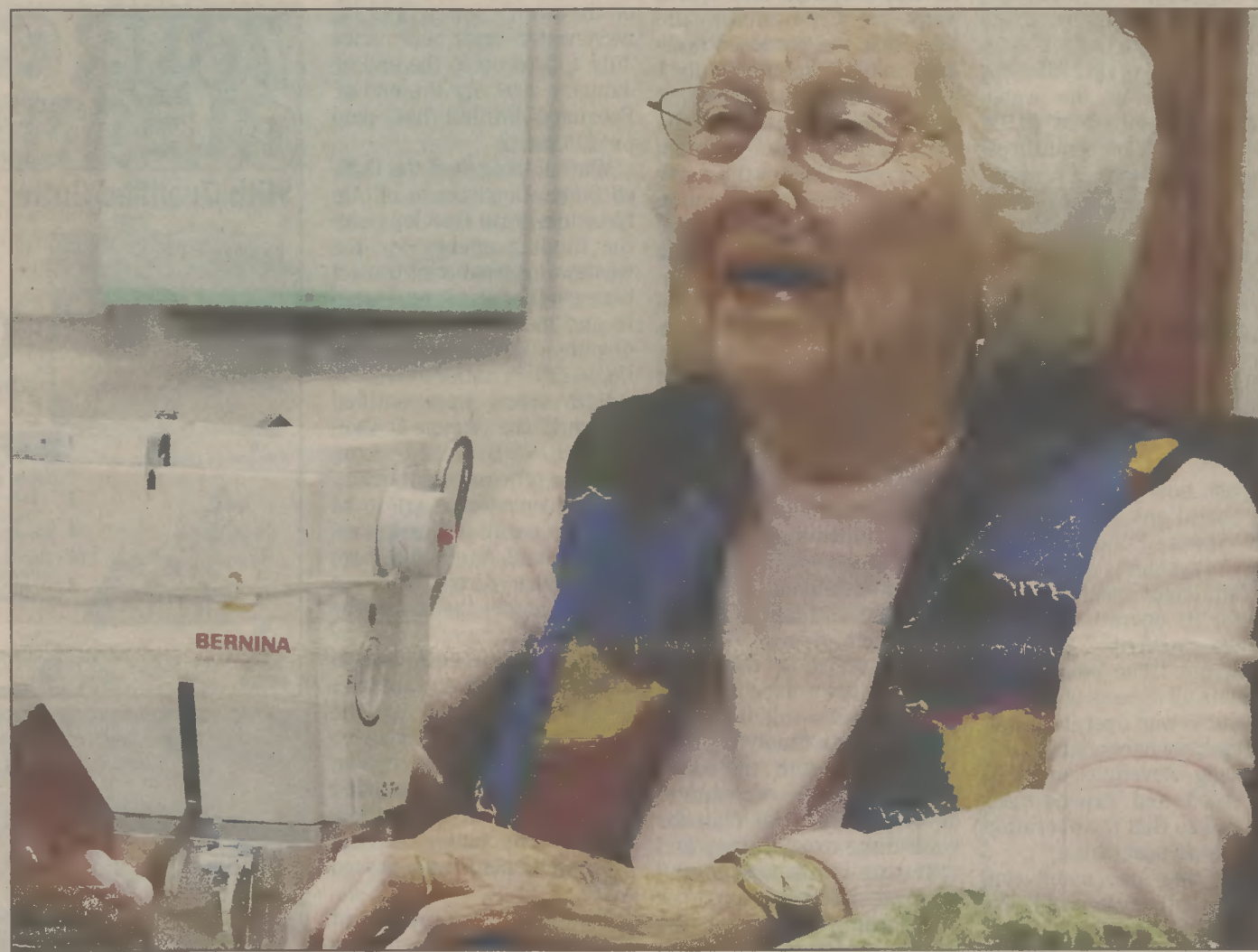
"She has one speed on her sewing machine — wide open," jokes her daughter Peggy Anderson with whom Harrell has lived since Harrell's Perquimans County home was destroyed by Hurricane Isabel in 2003.

"My husband says she's always in here sewing and strowing," Anderson laughed, referring to the strings of fabric strewn around Harrell's busy sewing machine.

"I'd quilt all day or make lace, if I could," Harrell said. "But I don't make as much lace these days. My hands are getting so now, they don't work too good."

You'd never know it to look at the work she turns out. Quilts of various designs, colors, and sizes were on display last month during her 100th birthday party and she is preparing for her own personal exhibit included in this year's quilt show by the Colonial Quilt Lovers Guild scheduled April 18-19 at Knobbs Creek Recreational Center.

Anderson says her mother is known throughout north-



PERQUIMANS WEEKLY PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Emily Harrell celebrated her 100th birthday last month. She is a former Hertford seamstress who made wedding gowns, bridesmaids and prom dresses. She is an avid quilter and crafts Armenian needle lace five or six hours a day.

eastern North Carolina and in Tidewater Virginia for her skills with any needle.

"She's been teaching and demonstrating crafts for many years," Anderson pointed out. "Her ability to inspire others to try new crafts is well known across the state."

Harrell has received numerous awards for her Armenian needle lace in local, district and regional competitions as well as two first place awards in national needlework competition.

The Armenian needle lace is created by Harrell using a small sewing needle tying

knots into delicate string. She adds it to dollies, pillowcases, or uses it wherever lace is appropriate.

She also has the distinction of having a piece of her lace in the Archives of the Smithsonian in Washington, DC.

Harrell said she learned how to make the lace from the maid of a friend back in 1927. She watched the Syrian girl tie knots using a sewing needle while on break one day. Curious, Harrell watched and learned from the housekeeper, and finally mastered the craft after staying up all night practicing.

The next day Charles Lind-

bergh crossed the ocean in his historic solo airplane flight, she remembered.

She worked for many years as a seamstress, learning her sewing skills from her mother. Harrell ran her own sewing shop in Hertford, creating memories for many young women with her handmade wedding gowns, bridesmaids and prom dresses.

"I guess the most unique thing that occurred while I was making wedding dresses was the dress I made for the bride who found the dress she wanted in Norfolk," Harrell said. "But, she couldn't afford it, so I went to Nor-

folk to look at the dress, then sketched it on paper, embellishing it. I hand-sewed over 2,000 beads on that dress. Every night after dinner, I'd sit down with that dress on my lap, sewing beads. My husband was so happy when I finished it."

Her complete dedication to the brides she helped dress over the years is evident in her memory of the night when fire destroyed her house in 1976.

"When we realized the house was on fire, we jumped up and ran out the house," Harrell said.

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County seeks funding for jobs

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Senator Ed Jones and Representative Annie Mobley don't need to be sold on the fact that local jobs need to be created.

But county officials aren't taking any chances. They brought state elected officials in Friday and made the county's pitch for economic stimulus funds to help create jobs for Perquimans County residents, 60 percent of whom have to find work outside the county.

During a luncheon meeting in the county's recreation/community center, the two state politicians listened intently as County Manager Bobby Darden and others highlighted a proposed marine park in the county's commerce centre, school improvement projects, water projects, and community facility projects.

In addition, county officials relayed residents' feelings on such issues as the S-bridge/causeway, the impact of the state holding local lottery and public school funds, and opposition to proposed increases for insurance premiums and deductibles in coastal counties.

While neither politician could say the county would receive the funds requested, both voiced support of the county's economic development efforts.

"I met with the governor last Friday and I left your proposal in her hands," said Mobley, who represents Perquimans and the rest of the Fifth District in the House of Representatives.

"It's very important that

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 62 LOW: 49
ISOLATED T-STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 68 LOW: 51
MOSTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 66 LOW: 49
SCATTERED T-STORMS



Hertford Town Council says no to consumers using credit cards

Start-up costs \$8,000 too high now; maybe next year

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

You won't be able to pay your utility bills by credit card in Hertford.

At least not this fiscal year. Last Monday night, members of Hertford Council tabled the idea of allowing credit card payments because of the start-up cost involved.

Town Manager John Christensen explained that the

town would face a start-up cost of \$5,600 to establish credit card payments in the town office for an estimated \$100,000 worth of credit card business in a year.

In addition, the town would also have to pay about \$2,000 in fees when customers paid by credit card the first year, making the total first year costs for the town around \$7,800.

"It would increase the means for payment," Christensen said, but noted the large amount of money it would take to get the ball rolling.

Council members agreed, saying the town couldn't af-

ford to spend that money now.

But the group did say they may look at the issue of taking credit card payments again when preparing next year's budget.

In other matters last week, council followed the recommendation of the town's planning and zoning board by approving a zoning change that will allow funeral homes in the C-4 zoning district.

Planner Brandon Shoaf said the zoning change was requested by Perquimans County because a funeral home is interested in siting in the Commerce Centre.

Cole earns Liberty Bell

A local attorney will receive a prestigious award on behalf of the North Carolina Bar Association (NCBA).

According to "North Carolina Lawyer," a publication of the NCBA, Janice McKenzie Cole will receive the 2009 Liberty Bell Award presented annually by the Young Lawyers Division of the NCBA for her part in strengthening the American system of freedom under law.

Cole will be the first African-American woman to receive the award that will be presented May 1 in conjunction with the NCBA's annual Law Day festivities in Raleigh.

In 1990, Cole became the first woman and the first African American to serve as a district court judge in the

First Judicial District, and four years later, was the first black woman in the state to be named a U.S. Attorney for the Eastern District.

She returned to private practice in 2001. She recently served as a member of the U.S. Electoral College.

Cole previously served on the Governor's Crime Commission, the domestic Violence Commission, the Z. Smith Reynolds Foundation Advisory Panel, the Elizabeth City State University Foundation Board of Directors, the North Carolina Child Care Commission, and the North Carolina Progress Board.

She also served on the NCBA's Board of Governors.

She is married to District Court Judge James C. Cole.