

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door"

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Facey recalls hub-bub over Hubble telescope, Page 4

Jacot jumps from Pirate ship into Dolphin waters, Page 8

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JUN 10 2009

35 cents

Hertford tax, utility rates on hold School board prepares for budget cuts

Employees to pay \$40-monthly for health care

By Cathy Wilson
Staff Writer

HERTFORD — Hertford property owners will not see a tax increase or utility rate hike in next year's town budget.

Monday night, Town Council approved a \$1.5 million general fund budget for 2009-10.

The plan, which takes effect July 1, keeps the town's property tax rate at 35 cents. That means someone with a \$100,000 house will pay \$350 in Hertford

property taxes and \$410 in Perquimans County taxes next year.

Town employees will not receive a salary increase, two vacant positions in the public works department will not be filled, and for the first time, employees will have to pay \$10 a week for health insurance.

"Health insurance costs from Blue Cross and Blue Shield for the employees increased by 21 percent as compared to last year's (cost) increase of 6.6 percent," Town Manager John Christensen said in his budget message to council members. "The town currently pays 100 percent of the employees' health insurance costs.... This \$10 is approximately half of the

overall increase."

Christensen called the \$40 monthly payment "more favorable" than the town's other options of imposing furloughs, layoffs, or raising taxes.

The budget also includes a 57 percent increase in property and liability insurance costs because of the town's new wastewater and water treatment plants and new vehicles. The town's cost for workers' comp insurance also increased 83 percent because of employee claims, Christensen noted.

Christensen said the proposed budget is a continuation of council's commit-

School board prepares for budget cuts

System could see reduction in workforce; meeting today about state cuts that may "have a negative impact on services"

By Cathy Wilson
Staff Writer

Local school officials are scrambling to prepare for possible state budget cuts that may cause the school system to lay off some teachers and resource personnel.

The Perquimans Board of Education is scheduled to meet today (June 10) to discuss personnel issues including having a plan in place in the event reduction in force of school personnel is needed.

"It is possible that a new state budget with additional cuts in public education will have a negative impact on services provided in Perquimans County Schools," Superintendent Dr. Dwayne Stallings wrote in a letter to school employees June 1.

"Our resolve is that if the state budget is as severe as predicted, we will try to impact as few employees as possible. However, if the

budget is finalized anywhere near the proposed version we now have access to, it will be necessary to look at position allotments and implement some type of reduction in force."

Increased class size and additional cuts, including losing low-wealth and small-school funding for Perquimans, would result in eliminating funding for teacher assistants and resource personnel, he noted.

"Other provisions within the proposed legislation would dramatically reduce the services we now provide students," Stallings added. "Let me reiterate that these are all possibilities; however, they are very real possibilities."

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Stallings

Row, row Riverfest



PERQUIMANS WEEKLY PHOTOS BY CATHY WILSON

Drizzling rain, cool temperatures and overcast skies might have kept the large crowd away, but the weather didn't damper the spirit of river enthusiasts who attended Saturday's Riverfest in Hertford. About a dozen kayakers paddled from Belvidere to Hertford to arrive just in time for lunch. Many other activities took place at Missing Mill Park, and the periauger sailed from the town dock. Entertainment was provided on the courthouse green downtown. Organizers hope it will become an annual event. More PHOTOS on Page 10



Albemarle Plantation listed among best retirement locations

By Cathy Wilson
Staff Writer

Albemarle Plantation has been named one of America's 100 best master-planned communities in "Where to Retire" magazine.

According to the magazine, the Perquimans County gated community ranks 64th out of 100 communities around the United States. Florida tops the list with 23 communities included, Arizona adds 14, and North Carolina has 10 developments listed among best places to retire. In North Carolina communities, only Hendersonville's Cummings Cove tops Albemarle Plantation.

The magazine's editors evaluated several hundred

communities according to costs, location and range of lifestyle amenities. Most of the communities are open to residents of all ages, while 41 are termed active-adult communities, meaning residents must meet minimum age requirements.

"Master-planned developments offer the types of amenities that contribute to interesting, active and fulfilling lifestyles," said Publisher Karen Northridge in a press release. "Secure, well-maintained and with amenities like clubhouses, fitness centers and social clubs as well as golf and tennis, our '100 Best' give retirees much more than a house."

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Board deadlocks on minimum housing plan

Nixon: No money to enforce new law

By Cathy Wilson
Staff Writer

A proposed minimum housing ordinance that would have helped rid the county of substandard properties was rejected by county commissioners last week.

Commissioners voted 3-3 on the ordinance June 1, which basically killed the ordinance for the time being despite no opposition voiced during a public hearing held last month. The vote was split — men against the ordinance with the women on the board voting in favor.

County Manager Bobby

Darden said the ordinance can be reconsidered at a later date.

Explaining his negative vote, Chairman Mack Nixon said the county didn't have the money to enforce the ordinance.

"We've laid off a code enforcement officer," he pointed out. "Why have an ordinance on the books that we can't enforce?"

He reminded board members that the county had set money aside years ago to tear down dilapidated housing.



Nixon

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Mother, daughter to be prosecuted

Case involves White '07 shooting death

By Cathy Wilson
Staff Writer

District Attorney Frank Parrish will prosecute a mother and daughter together on first-degree murder charges in connection with the June 2007 shooting death of Thomas White.

Parrish, whose office usually prosecutes local cases using assistant prosecutors, said he will personally prosecute this case at the request of the alleged victim's family. Jennie Lee White, 61, and daughter Katherine Ann White, 43, are both charged with first-degree murder in the death of Jennie's husband in their Mill Drive home on June 22, 2007.



Parrish

White was apparently shot and killed with a single gunshot to the head while he slept in his bed, police said. He reportedly suffered from prostate cancer and post-traumatic stress disorder.

Parrish said he sought and received permission from the court to try the two women together rather than have two separate trials. Both cases were declared non-capital cases early on, he added. Parrish hopes to schedule the

trial mid-August.

Attorney Sam Dixon represents Jennie White while Katherine White is represented by Wayland Sermons, Parrish said.

"Right now, we are trying to work out a court date that is agreeable with all of us," he said. "We expect to have to summons a lot of jurors."

Police were called to the White home around 1 a.m. June 23 to investigate a possible breaking and entering and an unresponsive subject. Upon arrival, sheriff's deputies found the dead man in his bed.

Jennie White told police that she and her daughter had been at the Moose Lodge

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WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY
HIGH: 85 LOW: 72
ISOLATED T-STORMS

FRIDAY
HIGH: 87 LOW: 70
FEW SHOWERS

SATURDAY
HIGH: 84 LOW: 70
FEW SHOWERS



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