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Schools name top teachers Page 8

"News from Next Door"

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## School bells to ring on Tuesday

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

School bells will start ringing on Tuesday when Perquimans County schools open their doors for the 2009-10 school year.

School officials say no major changes are in store for students this year, however there are a few things parents might need to be aware of.

All kindergarten students at Perquimans Central School (PCS) will receive free breakfasts daily this year under a new initiative from state legislators.

While kindergartners will get to enjoy a free breakfast, there may not be as many kindergartners this year as in the past.

A new state law specifies that only children who turn five years old on or by Aug. 31 are able to register for kindergarten in public schools this year. Legislators voted to move the legal school entry age up from the former cut-off date of Oct. 16 in an effort to reduce dropout rates in later grades and help ensure students are ready for formal school when they begin kindergarten.

The change makes about 13,000 students ineligible to register this year across the state.

In Perquimans County, however, the number is less than 10 so far. School officials say 125 kindergarten students enrolled in PCS last year. This year, 119 had registered as of Aug. 14.

Students arriving at Hertford Grammar School will see that construction of the new outdoor classroom needed to enhance the science curriculum is under way.

Sixth-graders entering Perquimans Middle School must have received a booster dose of Tdap vaccine if five years or more have passed since the last dose of tetanus-containing vaccine. Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter

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## Prosecutors drop murder charges

### Witness testimony in 2006 slaying questioned

By DIANA MAZZELLA  
Staff Writer

Prosecutors dismissed charges in a three-year-old murder case last week after questions arose over whether the right suspect was facing trial.

The District Attorney's Office dropped first-degree murder charges against Darryl

Torrey Elliott before the Hertford man was scheduled to go on trial for the 2006 shooting death of Thurston "Silk" Pittman.

Pittman was found shot to death in a car outside the Brothers and Sisters Club on West Cypress St., Elizabeth City, July 10, 2006.

Elliott, 32, of the 100 block of Lowe Drive, Hertford, was

charged with Pittman's murder nearly two years later — in June 2008 — based on the testimony of a witness who allegedly had information about the shooting.

But according to a document she filed dismissing the charges last week, Assistant District Attorney Nancy Lamb said she recently obtained evidence that called into question

that testimony.

Lamb said she "received credible information first hand that calls into question the identity of the shooter in this case."

What's more, "problems have arisen during trial preparation with a witness who claims that this defendant (Elliott) was the shooter," Lamb said. As a result, "his cred-



Elliott

ibility (the witness's) has been called into question."

The document doesn't state who the witness is, what evidence Lamb obtained or how the witness's testimony was compromised. Lamb couldn't be reached

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BRETT A. CLARK/THE DAILY ADVANCE

Mack Nixon (left), chairman of the Perquimans County Board of Commissioners, listens as Sen. Richard Burr, R-N.C., (right) addresses the crowd on Aug. 12 during the groundbreaking ceremony for the new Fed Ex Ground distribution center located in the Perquimans County Commerce Centre in Hertford.

## Officials cut the ribbon for FedEx Ground

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

The new and enlarged FedEx Ground facility that is scheduled to open Friday features a power conveyor system to unload trucks, better security and is located closer to U.S. Highway 17, decrease traffic congestion in Hertford.

Local and state officials cut the ribbon on the \$3.9 million facility last week including U.S. Sen. Richard Burr, D-N.C., who praised the partnership between FedEx and North Carolina that is resulting in expansions in Hertford and Greensboro as well.

"I believe North Carolina will one day serve as the international hub of

FedEx Air," said Burr. "I believe this region will receive products even faster because of it."

Burr said that while the economy isn't good now, investments by companies such as FedEx Ground will help turn the economy around quicker. He said the state's willingness to transition from the decreasing furniture and textile industries to a 21st century economy is one reason companies choose this state in which to locate or expand.

"There is no company that's not looking at North Carolina as a potential home," he added.

State Sen. Ed Jones also spoke during the ribbon cutting, saying he was pleased FedEx Ground stayed in Per-

quimans County and expanded in an area that needs jobs.

Steve Johnson, managing director of the Carolina region for FedEx Ground, described the new 29,000 square-foot facility as a Cadillac compared with the 1,368-square-foot building used before on Don Juan Road.

"We want to be part of this community forever," he said. "This is a great day for us. Thank you for helping us grow the business."

Gavin Melina, project manager for Hertford Baseline Development LLC, said his company develops new sites for FedEx Ground which he described as "a clean run facility and a good

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## Causeway may open next week

### Ordinance will restrict large trucks on section

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

Construction that has closed the S-bridge and Causeway between Hertford and Winfall since July 6 is expected to be completed ahead of schedule.

North Carolina Department of Transportation (NCDOT) officials indicated Tuesday that construction crews hope to have the Causeway back open by the time school buses start rolling Tuesday. The road was scheduled to remain closed until Sept. 18.

When the Causeway does open, highway officials are also anticipating a new ordinance to be in effect that will restrict vehicles with more than two axles crossing the bridge and Causeway.

Division Engineer Jerry Jennings said an ordinance has been written prohibiting vehicles with three or more axles from traveling over the historic S-bridge and Causeway and is now awaiting a signature by the state traffic

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## Committee to talk about town utility costs

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

Hertford Mayor Sid Eley says he is in the process of forming a committee to discuss citizens' concerns about the town's utility costs.

"I'm asking people from different areas of town, including the mobile home parks, to serve on the committee," said Eley. "I want to try to keep the committee small enough to be informational yet large enough to be productive."

The formation of the committee is in response to complaints and protests from about 70 citizens who attended last week's town council meeting complaining about the town's high utility costs. In addition, several citizens protested earlier by picketing in front of the town hall.

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## WEEKEND WEATHER

THURSDAY  
HIGH: 90 LOW: 75  
ISOLATED THUNDERSTORMS

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 89 LOW: 74  
SCATTERED THUNDERSTORMS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 87 LOW: 72  
SCATTERED THUNDERSTORMS



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## Group: Does Perquimans need farmer's market?

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

Perquimans County Restoration Association (PCRA) wants to hear from you on whether or not a farmer's market should be created locally. A coalition of interested citizens is discussing the possibility of applying for a federal grant to get one started.

Glenda Maynard, site manager of the Newbold-White House which is operated by PCRA, said the group is actively seeking feedback from area residents on whether or not a farmer's market is needed and/or wanted in Perquimans County.

"For many years, several corners of our county have discussed the desire for a farmer's market in Perquimans," Maynard wrote in a press release. "Several months ago, the United States Department of Agriculture Marketing Service announced the availability of competitive grant funds to be awarded through the Farmers Market Promotion Program. The minimum award per grant is \$2,500 and the maximum award is \$100,000. A coalition of interested parties has begun to meet to discuss the possibility of collectively applying for this grant. The group consists of local growers, county rep-

resentatives, non-profit organizations, and businesses."

One of those groups is Historic Hertford, Inc. (HHI).

"I am very envious of family members who live in areas that have large farmer's markets available to them one or two days a week," says Connie Jaklic of HHI. "The variety of produce and other farm products is outstanding. My son and daughter live in very different regions of the country, but both buy all of their produce locally at their farmer's markets. They have available to them organic produce or not, pesticide-free meat products, plants, local crafts, etc. Having a local farmer's mar-

ket is a way to reduce our carbon footprint by buying products from within a 100-mile radius, rather than products that spend days on trucks."

Maynard said the committee is currently in the fact-finding and research stage. They will distribute and collect survey information asking your opinion on where you think it should be. They will also seek potential vendors, consider booth prices, and potential staffing/labor needs.

The committee usually meets the first Monday of each month at 2 p.m. at the NWH. Past meetings have

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