

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Letters to Santa Claus See page 3

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"News from Next Door"

DECEMBER 23, 2009 - DECEMBER 29, 2009

## Old fuel leak found near water plant

### Town of Hertford says water is safe

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

A 35-year-old fuel leak has contaminated soil near Hertford's water plant. The soil has been removed, soil and water testing has been completed 50 feet in every direction, and town officials say the town's water supply is safe.

Town Manager John Christensen said soil contaminated with gasoline was found recently when contractors dug trenches at the town's new

water plant to lay pipe for storm drains.

"When they were piling the dirt, they could smell fuel in the dirt," Christensen said. "We sampled and tested it, found out it was fuel, and we notified the state. The test results came back that it was above the limits for contaminants allowed by the state, so the state considers this as a fuel spill which locked us into action regulated by the state."

The town has hired S&ME, an engineering firm out of Raleigh, to assess the situation.

Christensen said an underground fuel tank that was out of service since the late 70s and eventually removed years

ago apparently is the cause of the contamination.

"I talked to people who would know about it back then and was told that the fuel tank was leaking back years ago, so we think that is where the fuel came from," Christensen explained.

S&ME has tested soil and bored test wells as far as 50 feet

*"When they were piling the dirt, they could smell fuel in the dirt... We sampled and tested it, and we notified the state."*

John Christensen

"The state will look at the results and tell us what we have to do. Hopefully, this will be

from where the contaminated soil was discovered to check for contaminants in groundwater. Those samples have been sent to the lab and results will be sent to the state.

"Right now, we're waiting for that report," Christensen said.

the end of it."

As required by law, Christensen said residences within 1,000 feet of the contamination were sent a letter asking if any wells were located on the properties.

"There should not be any wells unless someone had one years ago," he added. "Everyone is on town water."

Christensen said there is no possibility of the contamination seeping into the town's water supply.

"The town gets its water from wells located on South Edenton Rd. Street," he said. Those wells are about 3/4 of a mile away from where the contaminated soil was found.

Christensen pointed out that the fuel-laced soil was present at the site for over 30 years with no problems found in the town's water supply.

"It's pretty localized," Christensen said of the fuel's presence in the soil.

So far, the town has paid \$26,900 for boring samples, hauling away soil, and paying the engineering firm.

Christensen said S&ME will apply to the state's fuel storage tank clean up fund for reimbursement for the town. Because Hertford's contamination is small, Christensen said the town may not qualify for funding reimbursement by the state.

## County ponders new EMS location

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

County commissioners are considering purchasing the Albemarle Membership Electric Corporation (AEMC) building as a new home for the county's emergency services.

County Manager Bobby Darden said commissioners recently appointed a four-person committee to meet and negotiate with AEMC board members for possible acquisition of their facility located in Winfall. The committee consists of commissioners Mack Nixon, Tammy Miller-White, Ben Hobbs and Charles Ward.

"Our main intention is for an EMS facility first, but we'll look at other emergency and public safety departments as well," Darden added.

AEMC plans to build a new office building and attached warehouse on 38.5 acres of land located on the corner of U.S. Highway 17 and Creek Drive, across from Andy's, according to information provided by Chris Powell, director of public relations.

Plans call for the electric co-op to build a 20,000 square foot office building featuring two drive-thru payment lanes. The office will be attached to a 40,000 square foot warehouse and pole yard.

AEMC officials hope to begin construction in 2010 with completion in 2011.

## Santa visit



Four-year-old Tyler Long, of Tyner, makes sure Santa knows his Christmas wishes just in time for Christmas Eve. Tyler was among many local children paying a visit to Santa who was taking down their holiday wish lists at Inteliport in Hertford recently.

PERQUIMANS WEEKLY PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

## Schools receive variety of honors

From staff reports

Two local schools are being recognized on the state and national level for excellence.

Perquimans Middle School (PMS) received a School of Distinction designation and Perquimans High School is one of nearly 2,000 high schools in the nation included in an article by the U.S. News and World Report naming the best high schools in America.

According to Perquimans County Schools Public Information Officer Brenda Lassiter, the middle school has been on the list of Schools to Watch,

an IMPACT Model School, and was tagged a School of Distinction by the North Carolina Department of Public Instruction after testing results back in June.

Through the Schools to Watch initiative, schools across the state are identified that are well on their way to meeting the criteria for high performance. Three things are true of high-performing middle-grades schools:

\* They are academically excellent—challenging all students to use their minds well.

\* They are developmentally responsive—sensitive to the unique developmental challenges of early adolescence.

\* They are socially equitable—these schools are democratic and fair, providing every student with high-quality teachers, resources, and supports.

As an IMPACT Model School, PMS received \$242,000 in federal funds which is being used to provide technology for the classrooms and enhance staff development.

"Updating equipment and providing mini-laptop computers in mobile labs is an integral component of student achievement," said Principal Jamie C. Liverman. "Students must have the tools needed to be successful in the ever-expanding global society."

Earning the status of School of Distinction in 2009 gives students, staff and par-



Liverman



Bunch

## Consultant to measure level of gang activity

By Cathy Wilson  
Staff Writer

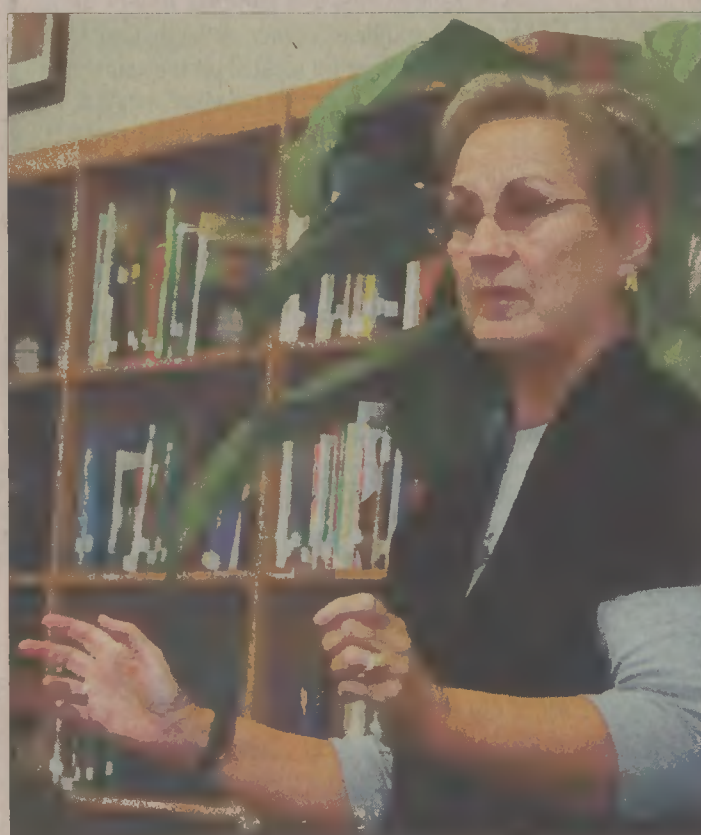
Linda Hester is trying to determine the level of gang activity in the area.

Hester is a research consultant currently conducting a gang assessment for Perquimans County. The assessment must be done in order for the county to receive funding from the Governor's Crime Prevention Council to help combat and prevent gang activity here.

She spoke recently to county commissioners and also helped the Perquimans County Ministers Council fill out a community survey in an effort to determine the community's perception of gang activity in the county.

"I have asked for police reports for 2007, 2008 and 2009 from both the local police departments and the sheriff's department," Hester told commissioners recently. In addition, Hester said reports from the Juvenile Crime Prevention Council, incarceration reports, and even reports of school violence will be considered.

Members of the local ministers' council filled out 26 surveys earlier this month, answering questions regard-



PERQUIMANS WEEKLY PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Linda Hester explains the community survey to members of the Ministers' Council for Education. Council members filled out the survey, which is part of the local gang assessment currently being conducted by Hester.

ing seeing graffiti or young people in the area dressed in colors, jewelry, or displaying hand signs that may be gang

related.

The survey also asks if the ministers think drugs are available in or near their com-

munities, if they think there is a significant increase in the number of physical confrontations within the past 12 months, and if they think racial incidents have increased.

Surveys also ask if the participant feels there has been an increased presence of weapons in the community, and if they know of any drive-by shootings in the community.

Hester said the surveys can be done at local churches if church members are interested, and students at Perquimans County High School are scheduled to participate in the survey during second semester, she said.

"That is quite a distinction of support shown by the local school," Hester noted.

The county's Gang Prevention Steering Committee is set to meet in January with a community forum scheduled sometime in the first quarter of the year, she said.

The assessment is slated to be completed in March.

Gang activity, she pointed out, is usually youth based, age 11-23, include a small band of people, all related, with most growing out of it in their early 20's, especially in rural counties.

See GANGS on Page 12

See AWARDS on Page 12

### WEEKEND WEATHER

CHRISTMAS DAY  
HIGH: 57 LOW: 40  
SHOWERS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 52 LOW: 35  
AM CLOUDS, PM  
SUN

SUNDAY  
HIGH: 58 LOW: 39  
SUNNY



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