

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Points chase off, running at Northeast. Page 7

"News from Next Door"

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35 cents

Change needed for wind towers

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Next month, county commissioners will consider changing a county ordinance to allow the construction of a temporary meteorological tower that could pave the way for a fu-

berdrola Renewables (IR), a global company that already has wind power projects in 13 states, is currently talking to landowners in the northern part of Perquimans County about leasing land on which to possibly build wind tur-

bins in the area commonly known as "the desert". Before that can occur, however, the company must test the winds in that area to see if the wind could sustain any future wind energy project. On April 5, commissioners will consider changing

language in the county's ordinances that would allow construction of a temporary meteorological tower in that area. Such towers would not be allowed under the county's current ordinance, said County Manager Bobby Darden.

The tower, called a met tower, would be just under 200 ft. tall, 10 inches in diameter, and would serve as a platform for instruments like anemometers, wind vanes, barometers, and thermometer that would measure wind speed, direction, and other atmo-

spheric conditions. A met tower has no moving parts and is not an actual wind turbine. "We're trying to figure out if there is enough wind there," explained Craig Poff, senior business devel-

See TOWERS, 2

Putting Down Roots



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Celly Vandermeulen, Marjorie Rayburn and Jane Barckholtz plant a piece of the Mothervine donated to the growing vineyard at the Newbold-White House.

Mothervine sample planted at NWH

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The small cutting from the historic grape Mothervine growing on Roanoke Island since 1584 was planted recently in the vineyard at the Newbold-White House (NWH).

Volunteers gathered to dig holes and erect the likeness of a "historic trellis" to support the Scuppernong sampling that was donated over a year ago to the Perquimans County Restoration Association (PCRA) by Horace Whitfield, executive director of the Elizabethan Gardens in Manteo.

Marjorie Rayburn, a local retired Extension agent in commercial horticulture and the vineyard's adviser, lead the vol-

unteer effort that installed posts with railings instead of wire and nails to support the arms of the historic grapevine as it grows over the years.

"We built a separate trellis for the planting like one that would have been used to grow the vine back in 1730," Rayburn explained. "The new planting has a good root system on it, so it should do really well."

The Mothervine growing in Dare County is the oldest cultivated grapevine in the world. A Scuppernong grapevine growing from a trunk two feet wide, it is believed to be over 400 years old.

According to themothervine.com, opinion as to the origin of

See MOTHERVINE, 2



Marjorie Rayburn carefully displays the sampling of the historic grape Mothervine that was planted recently at the Newbold-White House.

Former lawyer pleads guilty

Gunther may face 30 years in prison

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Stephen M. Gunther, a Hertford resident who formerly practiced law in Virginia Beach, pled guilty to one felony count of wire fraud March 25 in federal court in Norfolk.

In a federal plea agreement, Gunther admitted taking part in the real estate closings of four homes in 2006 totaling nearly \$1 million using straw purchasers, and failing to identify third parties to the mortgage companies. Those mortgages eventually ended up in foreclosure with the lending institutions losing about \$210,000.

The plea agreement also stipulates that Gunther cooperate with authorities in ongoing mortgage fraud investigations

conducted by the FBI, and in return, the U.S. Attorney's Office agreed not to prosecute Gunther for other alleged federal criminal violations.

Gunther, 39, is scheduled to be sentenced June 21 and could face up to a maximum penalty of 30 years in prison, a \$250,000 fine, and full restitution. His license to practice law was revoked by the Virginia State Bar on March 23. He remains free on a \$25,000 PR bond, court records show.

Court records indicate that Gunther was the settlement agent during the closings on two homes in Norfolk, one in Virginia Beach and one in Chesapeake that involved financing by four separate mortgage institutions: Fremont Investment & Loan, American Home Mortgage, Diversified Mortgage, and

See GUNTHER, 2

Local schools are set to go wireless

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Three county schools will become totally wireless internet environments this spring.

Members of the Perquimans Board of Education recently approved the installation of wireless local area network (LAN) provider equipment in both Perquimans County high and middle schools as well as Hertford Grammar School.

Xirrus, out of Raleigh, will begin installing the equipment in the next two weeks. Installation should take about two days per school.

Once installed, laptop

computers, as well as any other internet-ready devices in the schools, will function from any location within the building.

"This is a pretty big step for us," said Victor Eure, technology director for the schools. "We hope to have it up and running before the end of school (year)."

Out of the eight companies that bid on the project, Xirrus was one of only two companies that actually made site visits in the schools and checked internet signals in each room. The company has also performed the same work in other

See WIRELESS, 2

WEEKEND WEATHER

FRIDAY
HIGH: 71 LOW: 50
SUNNY

SATURDAY
HIGH: 73 LOW: 53
MOSTLY SUNNY

SUNDAY
HIGH: 70 LOW: 50
CLOUDY

Localities compete to return Census forms

From staff reports

Which locality will have the highest percentage of 2010 Census forms turned in: Perquimans County, Hertford, or Winfall?

As of Monday, the three localities are running almost neck and neck in the race to get those forms turned back in by May 1.

According to the U.S. Census Bureau, 38 percent of residents in Hertford have already mailed in their census forms. Thirty-seven percent of county residents have mailed them in as of Monday, and 31 percent of those living in Winfall have done so as well.

Citizens can keep track of the percentage of residents in their localities that have mailed the forms back in thanks to an interactive map launched recently by the Census Bureau.

"We're urging government officials, complete count committees, as well as census partners and stakeholders in North Carolina to issue a Take 10 Challenge."

William W. Hatcher

Regional director for the Census Bureau

The "Take 10" Map of the United States allows site visitors to see the percent of people in the nation, a state, a city or even a neighborhood who have completed and returned their 2010 Census forms by mail. The rates will be updated daily.

"We're urging government officials, complete count committees, as well as census partners and stakeholders in North Carolina

to issue a 'Take 10 Challenge,'" said William W. Hatcher, regional director for the Census Bureau. "The idea is to create friendly competition among states, towns, organizations and even neighborhoods to encourage people to complete and return their questionnaires. In the end, everybody wins."

Nationally, 34 percent of citizens have responded so far, com-

pared with 36 percent in North Carolina.

Comparing the local counties, Pasquotank County leads the way as of Monday with 38 percent, followed by Perquimans and Chowan counties with 37 percent, and Camden with 36 percent. Currituck brings up the rear with 31 percent responding by March 29.

Thirty-six percent of Edenton residents have mailed in their Census forms so far.

Census results are used to determine the number seats in the U.S. House of Representatives for each state, the shape of legislative and local government districts, and how more than \$400 billion in federal funds is distributed annually to communities across the country. The U.S.

See CENSUS, 2

