

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

JUNE 9, 2010 - JUNE 15, 2010



Summer Breeze set for Sunday, page 3.

Good year for sports for PCHS, page 9.

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35 cents

HPD investigated for excessive force

DA requests SBI to look into complaints

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The Hertford Police Department is under investigation by the State Bureau of Investigation amid allegations of use of excessive force.

District Attorney Frank Parrish confirmed Tuesday morning that his office requested the SBI investigation involving more than one incident.

A complaint made by the Perquimans County NAACP was received by Parrish on Monday.

"When that complaint was received by my office, I had already made the re-

quest to the SBI," Parrish noted.

Vanora Brothers, chairman of the legal redress committee of the local NAACP chapter, said she could not comment on the matter since it was under investigation.

Parrish would not say which incidents or officers are included in the investigation or complaints.

The investigation follows a May 22 incident during which a Hertford black man was injured during a scuffle with two Hertford police officers who were responding as members of the Hertford Fire Department to a reported gas leak on Dobbs Street. The man, Kenneth Ferrbee, received a cut on his head when he reportedly head-butted one

of the officers who was wearing a fire helmet at the time.

According to police reports, Chief Joe Amos and Sgt. Shawn Swindell responded to the Dobbs Street residence with the fire department and found that the gas leak came from an outside gas meter, which Amos believed had been damaged intentionally. The

homeowner indicated she had experienced problems with a man who was staying at a vacant house nearby, police reports state.

Still wearing his fire turnout gear, Amos found Kenneth Ferrbee in a neighboring house and talked with him. Neighbors in the area told Amos that Ferrbee

See HPD, 10

Child found safe near Causeway

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

The Causeway was closed for about an hour Sunday afternoon while officials searched the adjacent water for a child after a bicycle was found on the grass, a few feet from the Perquimans River.

Police later discovered that the child apparently left the bike on the Causeway and walked home.

Hertford Police Chief Joe Amos said police received a report from a woman who saw a young girl walking a bike on the Causeway just past the S-bridge as the woman was traveling from Winfall to Hertford. However, when the woman returned home via the Causeway about 25 minutes later, the bike was seen lying on the grass beside the road with no girl in sight.

"The caller was concerned about the girl because of the water in that area," Patrolman David Putnam wrote in his police report.

Police searched the ground area and found nothing, and there were no visible signs that anyone had gone into the river or signs of a collision. The bike was not damaged, police reports state.

Area residents and the S-bridge tender were contacted, and there were no reports of a child missing in the area.

"I didn't think anyone was in the water, but you just have to check it," Chief Amos said.

See CAUSEWAY, 10

The top of the class



STAFF PHOTO BY BRETT A. CLARK

The top 10 members of the graduating Class of 2010 at Perquimans County High School include: (front row, from left) Kendall Spough, Bryana Bass, Bradley Miller, Kahliah Gordon, Brittany Cartwright. (Back row, from left) Raeann Gates, Jazmin London, Casey Dail, and Colby Brooks. Not pictured is Savannah Black. Approximately 120 seniors will graduate Thursday evening at PCHS.

Graduation day is Thursday at PCHS

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

As local graduates receive their high school diplomas Thursday, several of them have their sights set on futures that include the medical/health profession.

An estimated 120 seniors at Perquimans County High School will walk across the graduation stage on the school's football field and begin their quest towards the future. Out of the top 10 academic students of the Class of 2010, seven say they plan to seek a future career in some sort of health-related field.

Bradley Miller plans to follow a career path to sports medicine and will begin at either College of the Albemarle (COA) or Elizabeth City State University while Brittany Cartwright and Raeann Gates both plan to attend COA to study nursing. Kahliah Gordon and Savannah Black will attend the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill to focus on a medical major. Jazmin London has her sights set on becoming a pediatrician and will begin with studies at UNC-Chapel Hill as well.

Casey Dail plans to work towards a degree in health sciences next year at Pitt Community College.

While the health-related field seems to be popular with some members of this class, other students plan to enter a variety of studies at selected institutions of higher learning.

Colby Brooks will attend East Carolina University to become a computer engineer and hopefully, one day, design video games.

Salutatorian Bryana Bass wants to become a college professor. She'll start by attending Meredith College.

Kendall Spough, valedictorian, is planning to work towards an aeronautical engineering degree

See GRADUATION, 5

Woman rescued from wreck

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Firefighters and emergency medical personnel had to walk underneath a live electric line to free a woman trapped in a wrecked vehicle on Swamp Road Monday night.

Lewis Smith, assistant chief for Winfall Volunteer Fire Department, said the Mercury Grand Marque traveling on Swamp Road apparently hit a drive-way culvert before striking a utility pole, breaking the pole and causing live electric wires to hang low between the road and the car.

Four people were inside the vehicle at the time of the accident, he said.

Hertford firefighters responded with their crash truck and used extrication equipment to cut the woman out of the vehicle.

She was transported by Perquimans EMS to a landing zone manned by Belvidere firefighters and flown to a Norfolk hospital by Nightingale helicopter.

Perquimans EMS, responding with three ambulances, transported the remaining injured to a nearby hospital.

Albemarle Electric Membership Cooperative responded to the scene quickly and cut the power off, putting 270 area residents in the dark for about three and a half hours.

"It was a real hazardous situation for emergency responders there for a

See WRECK, 2

WEEKEND WEATHER

FRIDAY

HIGH: 88 LOW: 72
PARTLY CLOUDY

SATURDAY

HIGH: 90 LOW: 72
PARTLY CLOUDY

SUNDAY

HIGH: 89 LOW: 74
SCATTERED T-STORMS



Tax up 1 cent on \$11.9M budget proposal

Area still affected by tough economy

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

While preparing the county's budget for next year, it didn't take County Manager Bobby Darden very long to realize that the next fiscal year will be worse than the current one.

"The economic recession continues to take its toll on local governments' operating budgets," said Darden as he presented his pro-

posed \$11.9 million budget to commissioners Monday night.

Revenues such as sales tax, land transfer tax, and building inspection fees remain down because of the economy, so the county has to rely on generating more property tax revenue to anchor the budget. The budget proposes a one cent property tax increase, giving the county an ad-valorem tax rate of 42 cents per \$100 valuation. A one cent tax increase generates about \$165,000 in revenue that will be used to give schools a 3.7 percent increase in operat-

ing funds, pay for a county-wide drainage study, and provide county employees with a 1.5 percent increase in pay.

"The one cent tax increase is not intended to resolve all of the county's budget problems for next year, nor is the increase intended to fulfill every request received by the board of commissioners," Darden pointed out. "The proposed budget still eliminates over \$800,000 in requests for county funding for next fiscal year, which I venture to say is the largest amount of budget reductions ever

made by Perquimans County."

With the one cent tax increase, the typical taxpayer should see their annual tax bill increase by about \$18, Darden said.

Slow growth in the property tax base due to the economy, coupled with sales tax projections at the same current level account for the dim revenue picture needed to support operational costs for the county.

The county's tax base growth slipped to less than a one percent increase from last year, compared to a 10 percent growth just three

years ago. Local sales tax is expected to generate about \$278,500 next year, compared to almost \$600,000 in 2008-09.

County departments will see a number of proposed cost-saving measures imposed including a 20 percent reduction in travel and training budget, over \$200,000 in reduced capital expense requests, eliminating a part time fire marshal position, and cutting out an optional retirement supplement for employees.

The proposed budget calls for a \$75,000 increase

See BUDGET, 5

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