

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

JUNE 23, 2010 - JUNE 29, 2010



Students, athletes awarded for their hard work over the past school year, Pages 4, 7

35 cents

## PCHS owes \$258K for power

School was under billed 26 months

By CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

Perquimans County High School owes Hertford more than \$258,000 in electricity costs after the town incorrectly billed the school for

the past 26 months. Hertford Town Manager John Christensen said the town under billed the school \$258,889.18 over a 26-month period after a town employee entered an incorrect billing multiplier when the school's new gym was constructed. At that time, the school's entire electrical system was re-

configured, consolidating four meters into one. Christensen notified Dwayne Stallings, division superintendent, of the error last month. In a May 24 letter signed by Stallings, Wallace Nelson (board of education chairman), Bobby Darden (county manager) and Mack Nixon (county board

of commissioners' chairman), the school system asked town officials to forgive the debt. Town council voted last week not to forgive the debt, but will allow the school system to repay the debt in installments over 26 months, according to town policy. The payment to make up for the under billing would

be nearly \$10,000 a month in addition to the school's regular electric bill which will increase with the correct billing multiplier now included. The school's first repayment installment is due by July 10. "Council understands that the impact of repaying an under billing couldn't

come at a worse time," said Christensen. "However, forgiving the bill would, in effect, pass the burden on to the other electric customers. The town's revenues were short by over \$258,000 which certainly impacts the soundness of our electric fund. It would also set

See BILL, 9

## The Girls of Summer



PHOTOS COURTESY PHIL HARRIS  
Little girls playing coach-pitch softball through the Perquimans County Recreation Department wear ribbons, poka-dots, and lots of color as they enjoy summer activities on the ball field. Colorful ribbons always help during infield play as Hayes Darden (top photo) fields the ball. Hallie Bruce-Ross (left) is colorful in her blue and pink. Check out the polka-dot socks on Belle Pierce (right)!



## One-cent tax increase OK'd

County approves \$11.8M budget

By CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

County commissioners approved an \$11.8 million budget Monday night that includes a one-cent tax increase. The increase raises the ad valorem tax rate to 42 cents per \$100 valuation. Several changes to the budget were approved before adoption including eliminating one school resource officer position

with the sheriff's department. The \$42,000 budget reduction was requested by both the sheriff's department and the school system, said County Manager Bobby Darden. The position cut is at Perquimans Middle School. The approved budget also includes an additional \$49,000 for the department of social services which is federal stimulus funds unspent for food and nutrition administration in fiscal year 2010. Other changes include an increase in water tap

See TAX, 3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

State Sen. Ed Jones (center) congratulates Hertford officials on being accepted into the N.C. Small Towns Economic Prosperity (NCSTEP) program. Attending the awards ceremony from Hertford were: (l-r) Town Manager John Christensen, Mayor Sid Eley, Economic Developer Dave Goss and Town Planner Brandon Shoaf.

## Hertford STEPs into prosperity program

By CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

Hertford officials have taken the first step towards implementing a new long-term effort for economic growth in the area. Town leaders recently attended a two-day orientation for the N.C. Small Towns Economic Prosperity (NCSTEP) program in Raleigh.

The N.C. Rural Economic Development Center announced April 29 that Hertford will be a part of the program that helps revitalize small towns through a combination of community coaching, economic planning, and targeted grants. Hertford Mayor Sid Eley, along with Town Manager

See STEP, 8

### WEEKEND WEATHER

FRIDAY  
HIGH: 92 LOW: 76  
ISOLATED T-STORMS

SATURDAY  
HIGH: 91 LOW: 75  
SUNNY

SUNDAY  
HIGH: 91 LOW: 76  
SCATTERED T-STORMS

## Babyvine flourishing; Mothervine suffering



PHOTO COURTESY OF MELODY LECKIE AND THE OUTER BANKS SENTINEL

The Mothervine, located in Manteo, apparently was damaged recently by a herbicide sprayed by an electrical contractor. A cutting from the Mothervine is growing in the vineyard at the Newbold-White House.

By CATHY WILSON  
Staff Writer

While the baby seems to be doing just fine, its mother is suffering. The baby grapevine, a small cutting taken from the age-old Mothervine and planted this spring in the vineyards at the Newbold-White House, is flourishing. The Mothervine growing since 1584 on Roanoke Island, however, reportedly has been damaged by chemicals. According to the Outer Banks Sentinel, the historic suppersong grapevine growing in Manteo has

survived many natural disasters like hurricanes and droughts, but man-made chemicals sprayed on it earlier this month are causing part of the vine to wither and die. Plant experts have examined the mothervine to determine the extent of damage after it was sprayed by an herbicide. "Thought to be the oldest living grapevine in the Americas, portions of the plant have been steadily dying after a contractor sprayed a combination of chemicals on a small vine that had begun to climb a nearby utility pole," report-

ed the Outer Banks Sentinel. "The contractor worked for Dominion Power which has quickly stepped up to the plate and taken responsibility." Botanists have visited the site to assess the damage and to try to stop the apparent spread of the chemicals moving towards the grapevine's trunk. The paper reported that the chemicals used in Manteo were Garlon3A and Milestone VM, both approved by the EPA but are not to be used on tobacco or grapevine plants.

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