

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door"

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Hunter will be suiting up for the COA baseball team, 8

50 cents

Commissioners seek 2 cent tax rate hike

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

County taxpayers may see a two-cent increase in the ad-valorem property tax rate for the next fiscal year.

In the proposed budget submitted to county com-

missioners Monday night, County Manager Bobby Darden said raising the county tax rate from 42 to 44 cents per \$100 valuation would still give Perquimans County a very favorable tax rate compared to other Northeast North Carolina counties.

"With this proposed increase, the typical county homeowner would experience an annual increase of approximately \$35 per year in their county property taxes when considering the value of their home and vehicles," said Darden. "The poor economy continues to

take its toll on the county budget. With no expected significant growth in the tax base and continued stagnant economy-based revenues, there is no financial improvement expected in fiscal year 2012. A tax increase is necessary to move forward with the

capital projects that have been planned for years. The county's reserve fund balances are solid, but not strong enough to accomplish these projects without a tax increase. Even with a two-cent tax increase, Perquimans County still will have one of the lowest tax

rates in the state." Darden said the general fund budget is \$12.2 million, or three percent more than the current year's budget, but still below the 2010 budget of \$12.6 million. Budget requests this

See RATE HIKE, 4

Plant closure may cause loss of homes

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

Every Saturday evening, the residents of Section H, P, and R in Holiday Island gather underneath shade trees and share a meal on picnic tables.

Jokingly referring to their neighborhood as the "Alphabet City", the neighbors talk and laugh as they file through a small building that bears a large "Friends" sign, filling their plates with grilled hamburgers, hot dogs, chips, and cake.

This Saturday evening, however, a look of concern filled their eyes as they discussed the fate of their homes located in what is known as the camping area of the Holiday Island subdivision located near Albemarle Plantation.

The state's Division of Water Quality (DWQ) has confirmed that the board of governors for the Holiday Island Property Owners Association (HIPOA) voted last week to close the wastewater treatment plant that provides sewer service to the residents of Section H, P, and R.

Wastewater disposal and treatment in the camping section has been cited for violations for several years, basically since the state permit was first issued in 1972. The treatment plant has operated under a special order by consent (SOC) since January 2010, then placed under a notice of violation by the state in January 2011 for not meeting required actions agreed to in the SOC. According to the state, HIPOA could face up to \$155,000 in fines for being out of compliance.



STAFF PHOTO BY CATHY WILSON

Michael and Tiffany Thompson, along with children Damien and Mary Jane, moved to Holiday Island about two months ago after leaving the coastal Louisiana area. They lost their first home in Terrebonne Parish, La., during Hurricane Katrina. They later lost their jobs when the BP oil spill damaged the area. Now, they face the possibility of losing their home here if the wastewater treatment plant closes.

Susan Massengale, public information officer for DWQ, said the department received informal verbal notification of the board's vote to close the plant versus trying to correct ongoing problems. DWQ, in turn, requested more details from HIPOA including a formal written notification of the board's decision as well as more information on how they plan to implement the closure and how residents will be removed from the system.

Phone calls by this newspaper to HIPOA's board members for comment were not returned.

Residents are frightened, worried, angry, and many are concerned

that they have nowhere else to go if they are forced to abandon or move their homes because of lack of sewer service from the plant. And health department officials say individual septic tanks can't be used on property such as camping area lots due to space-based state regulations.

Homes in the section range from tag-along campers (some with stick-built additions) to double-wide mobile homes placed on multiple lots. Residents purchase the land lots from individual owners, pay county taxes on the properties, pay assessments for use of the subdivision's common properties (such as swimming pool and

clubhouse), and pay utility bills for water and sewer to HIPOA/utility company.

Nearly 100 wastewater plant customers are expected to be impacted by a closure of the utility plant.

"If this place shuts down, we'll be without a home," said 75-year old Joyce Jenkins, a retired university law library clerk who moved a 70-by-14-foot, 2-bedroom, 2-bath single wide mobile home to three waterfront lots there in 2002. Her home includes a large deck, screened-in room, and a separate small one-room cabin.

"I have not been able to sleep worrying about this," she added. "It just keeps going over and over in my mind. One

of the board of governors suggested we buy a residential property instead, but we have a limited income."

Her husband, a retired insurance salesman, has serious health problems, she added.

"That's another reason why I just can't walk out and leave my mobile home," she said.

Tiffany and Michael Thompson, a young couple who moved to the section just two months ago with their two young children, are buying their 2-bedroom, 2.5-bath home with financing through the owner. They moved to Holiday Island from the Terrebonne Parish in Louisiana after first

See PLANT, 10

PCHS to graduate 126 Friday

By CATHY WILSON
Staff Writer

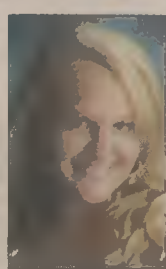
Perquimans County High School expects to graduate 126 seniors Friday night outside on the school's football field beginning at 7 p.m.

Presenting the graduation messages this year will be Valedictorian Samuelle Copeland and Salutatorian Rachel Hudson.

Copeland, son of Mac and Symantha Copeland, leads the class of 2011



Copeland



Hudson

with a grade point average of 4.6083. He seeks to inspire the younger generation to believe in themselves and accomplish their goals.

"It sometimes takes peers to pull out the qualities latent in yourself and if I can do that, it would be a great accomplishment," said Cope-

land. Copeland believes his most important lesson learned in high school is he can be as great as he wants to be...and no one can tell him otherwise.

"I have to be myself and can't change for every new person I meet," he added.

His most cherished memories of high school are those spent with friends.

"I will always remember the times I spent with my friends inside and outside of class. When we get to the fall of this

See GRADUATE, 4

County in bad drought

From staff reports

Perquimans is one of four area counties suffering from severe drought conditions.

"There have not been any reports of water supply impacts."

Tom Reeder
Director, NCDWR

As of June 2, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden, and Currituck counties were each experiencing rainfall

See DROUGHT, 4



FILE PHOTO

Crop duster Craig Craft is seen next to his airplane. Hearing today for windfarm, 2.

Crop dusting affected by wind turbines

By REGGIE PONDER
The Daily Advance

A Perquimans County crop duster said last week that wind turbines present a special hazard to low-flying aircraft — but one that some pilots are able to adjust to.

Craig Craft of Craft Air Services said his company already has some experience working around large-scale wind turbines such as the ones proposed for the Desert Wind Energy Project in Perquimans and Pasquotank counties.

"We do some of it out west in Illinois and Iowa," Craft said. "They have a substantial amount of wind turbines."

Wind turbines are an obstacle that some pilots are unwilling to negotiate, Craft said.

"There are a lot of applicators that just refuse to work around them," he said. "There are a lot of applicators that charge extra to work around them."

Some pilots within a company — his own included — will refuse to fly around wind turbines, he said.

Farmers who have wind turbines on

See DUSTING, 4

ElectriCities: Wind farm won't reduce local rates

By REGGIE PONDER
The Daily Advance

Wind farms will not reduce electric costs in the short run, a North Carolina municipal power executive said last week.

While not denying the potential benefits of wind-generated electricity in terms of providing some kind of alternative to plants running solely on fossil fuels, Ken Raber pointed out that current costs for wind generation are at least twice that of prices for conventional forms of generation such as coal fired plants and nuclear plants.

"It's going to be more expensive. I don't think there's any question about that."

Ken Raber
Senior vice president,
ElectriCities Services

Raber, senior vice president for ElectriCities Services with the N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency, said current rates for electricity generated by onshore

See RATES, 4



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