

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Inside Today

See our annual Progress & Review edition.

50 cents

"News from Next Door"

MARCH 20, 2013 - MARCH 26, 2013

County to stick with insurance pool, look at options

By PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

For now Perquimans County will keep dancing with the one that brought them — a county consortium that handles health insurance claims for hundreds of area government workers.

Chowan County on the other hand has announced it's leaving the party for cheaper rates elsewhere. Both Perquimans and Pasquotank officials say they're keeping their options open.

Chowan was the original member of what became the Northeast Albemarle

Health Group. In 1990 it grew to include Pasquotank and Perquimans counties and employees of Albemarle Regional Health Services. The group collects premiums and pays claims like a health insurance company would. It handles the day-to-day claims for drugs and doc-

tor visits and pays for them from premiums collected within the group. An outside umbrella policy is the safety net for truly catastrophic problems.

When the consortium was formed the only other viable option was to buy commercial insurance and that was considered

too expensive. By forming a group, the governments felt they could profit during the good years and weather the bad ones together and save tax dollars. As a group with more than 750 employees, it could spread the liability out. By itself Perquimans County has about 91 workers.

Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath said with the arrangement comes an understanding that some years claims will be high and some years they won't. He said there is strength in numbers.

In the past five years,

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Lawmaker opposes plan to derail green requirement

By PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor



Steinburg

Legislation that could derail plans for wind farms like the 20,000-acre Desert Wind project in Perquimans and Pasquotank counties is being re-drafted according to a local member of the General Assembly.

Rep. Bob Steinburg, R-Chowan, said last week he'd spoken to the bill's chief sponsor, Rep. Mike Hager, R-Rutherford, about his concerns. As it stands, Steinburg opposes the bill.

Hager's HB-298 would remove a requirement that public utilities buy or generate a portion of their power from renewable energy sources.

The \$750 million Desert Wind project is on hold in part because the developer Iberdrola Renewables, hasn't found a company willing to contract for the power that will be produced.

Under the 1998 law, North Carolina says investor-owned utilities in North Carolina will be required to meet up to 12.5 percent of their energy needs through renewable energy resources or energy efficiency measures by 2021. Rural electric cooperatives and municipal electric suppliers are subject to a 10 percent requirement. The bill means utilities can either build renewable energy resources themselves or buy power from those utilities that do. There is a third option to cut demand through load management and lighting options.

"The goal with the bill is to wean these companies off subsidies, but I will tell you this Desert Wind projects is one in which I have great confidence," Steinburg said. "I know Mike Hager. His office is right across the hall from mine. I've spoken to him about it."

"We've got to make a decision," Steinburg said. "These people (like Iberdrola) are going to build projects somewhere. If they perceive that North Carolina doesn't want them, they are going to take their investment dollars and go elsewhere."

In addition to the Desert Wind project, Steinburg said he also supports one proposed in Camden and Currituck counties.

Perquimans County Manager Frank

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STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Police Chief Douglas Freeman speaks at Hertford Grammar during a Drug Abuse Resistance Education meeting in the school's library earlier this month.

Program takes a twist at grammar school

By PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Sit in for a few minutes, and you can see that the DARE program at Hertford Grammar School isn't what you were taught back in the 1980s.

With the help of the Hertford Police Department, the school is giving new life to Drug Abuse Resistance Education.

Critics of the original DARE program claim it was ineffective at best. True opponents said it actually ended up with more students using drugs, alcohol and cigarettes.

Four years ago the national DARE adopted the "keepin' it real" curriculum. The group says it is evidence-based, culturally grounded substance use prevention program. "Real" teaches the

"Back then there were three main things, alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes. Now, we're incorporating other things, like making good decisions, choosing good friends and ways to deal with stress."

CHIEF DOUGLAS FREEMAN
 On changes in DARE program over the years

importance of cultural differences and similarities in the effectiveness of communication strategies and norms surrounding substance use.

It a nutshell, Hertford Police Chief Douglas Freeman said the new program does a better job.

He first became certified as

a DARE trainer when he lived in Onslow County in 1997.

"Back then there were three main things, alcohol, marijuana and cigarettes," Freeman said last week.

"Now we're incorporating other things, like making good decisions, choosing good friends and ways to deal with stress."

The "getting it real" part is because creators of the program went out and talked with real students and got their stories. Stress was a big issue for kids.

"We're teaching kids how to calm down, sit back and think through things before they make a hasty decision," he said. "That's something everybody can use."

And so far, the program has been free. At first Freeman planned to use money confiscated in drug deals. That's

how he acquired a K-9 officer for the police force. But when DARE organizers realized the program was starting after eight years, they gave the materials to the school for free for this year. Freeman already had the training.

"Now it touches on the health effects, but not only the criminal aspect, but how the substances effect you both mentally and physically," Freeman said.

HGS Principal Linda White said one of the things she likes about the program is it's scripted. All fifth graders get the training, but not at the same time.

"Every classroom gets the same information," White said. "I think it's really positive."

The school is using DARE as part of a larger plan to be bully free.

Jobless to get tips, a ride to fair

By PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Some potential employees in Perquimans County looking to go to a job fair in Elizabeth City this month will have a few more tools for their job search plus a ride to get there.

Free transportation is available to take Perquimans County residents to a business expo and job fair at the K.E. White Center on March 26.

The trip is sponsored by the Hertford Small Town Economic Prosperity (STEP) program.

Steven Magaro, the organizer of the event, said the hope is to break down barriers, both physical and otherwise for people who want to work but can't find a job.

The STEP program did a similar field trip last fall to a large job fair in Virginia Beach. One of the lessons learned was just taking people to meet potential employers doesn't make the person prepared for the interview and what happens next.

"Some people ques-

tioned bringing people up there without giving them more tools in their tool bag," Magaro said last week. "The challenge is getting everybody coordinated to put something like that on."

This time around, the Hertford STEP group worked with the Edenton Employment Services and provided transportation to a re-employment seminar on writing an effective resume on Tuesday in Edenton.

Participants for the March 26 event should reserve a space now by

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VOLUNTEERS NEEDED



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Dorothy Matthews speaks to Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath in her home in Winfall on Tuesday. Heath was delivering meals to seniors. More volunteers are needed for the Meals on Wheels Program. For more information, call 426-7093 extension 230.



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<p>252-426-1380 • www.forbesuc.com</p>	<p>Abemarle Plantation</p> <p>106 Flat Creek Ct, Hertford</p>	<p>Gourmet Kitchen</p> <p>Eat-in Kitchen w/Breakfast Nook</p>	<p>Formal Dining Room</p> <p>Lots of Storage Space</p>	<p>3 Bedrooms, 2.5 Baths</p> <p>Master Bath w/Walk-in Shower</p>	<p>Spacious Deck</p> <p>Listed at \$389,000</p>	<p>Featured Property of the Week</p> <p>www.forbesuc.com 252-426-1380</p>
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