

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



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Officials warn of growing fox population, 7

"News from Next Door"

JUNE 5, 2013 - JUNE 11, 2013

50 cents

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County to hold the line on property taxes

By PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County will hold the line on property taxes and give county workers a 2.5 percent raise, but water service will be more expensive based on \$12.7 million budget presented Monday night.

County commissioners will also see a \$1,200 annual

raise plus a bump from \$50 per meeting to \$75.

County Manager Frank Heath proposes to hold the line on property taxes at 44 cents per \$100 in value. That's a



Heath

rate that's lower than all four of the counties in the area and 15 cents lower than the rate in Camden, a county of similar size.

But Heath pretty much held the line on new spending. The county's property value was virtually stagnant last year and offered virtually no extra revenue. Some department budgets have been cut slightly.

"The lagging economy, and in particular the real estate market, continues to take its toll on the county budget," Heath told the commissioners at their monthly meeting. "In consideration of this fact, an effort was made to cut expenditures from at least some of the line items in every county department. These cuts, along with

marginal improvement in sales tax projections, limited growth in real property tax base, and continuing Medicaid hold-harmless money have allowed Perquimans County to hold the tax rate at 44 cents per hundred dollars of value."

The commissioners had no comment on the presentation Monday night. They spent six days in April and

May in eight budget meetings where they looked over each individual department budget one by one and asked questions.

The public gets a chance to voice its opinion at a public hearing set for June 17 at 7 p.m.

In addition to a pay raise, county employees should

See PROPERTY, 10

Farmers asked to vote for leaders

By PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Starting this month more than 2,200 farmers in Perquimans and Chowan counties will be asked to nominate new leaders for the farm service agency that helps set local policies.

DISTRICT MAP

See map of farm districts and who represents each — 2

The two county farm service agencies were merged in October as part of an effort to cut federal spending. Four other North Carolina offices that were within 25 miles of another agency and had two or more employees faced the same fate last year.

The office in Chowan County was closed and consolidated with a FSA office at 512 S. Church St., in Hertford.

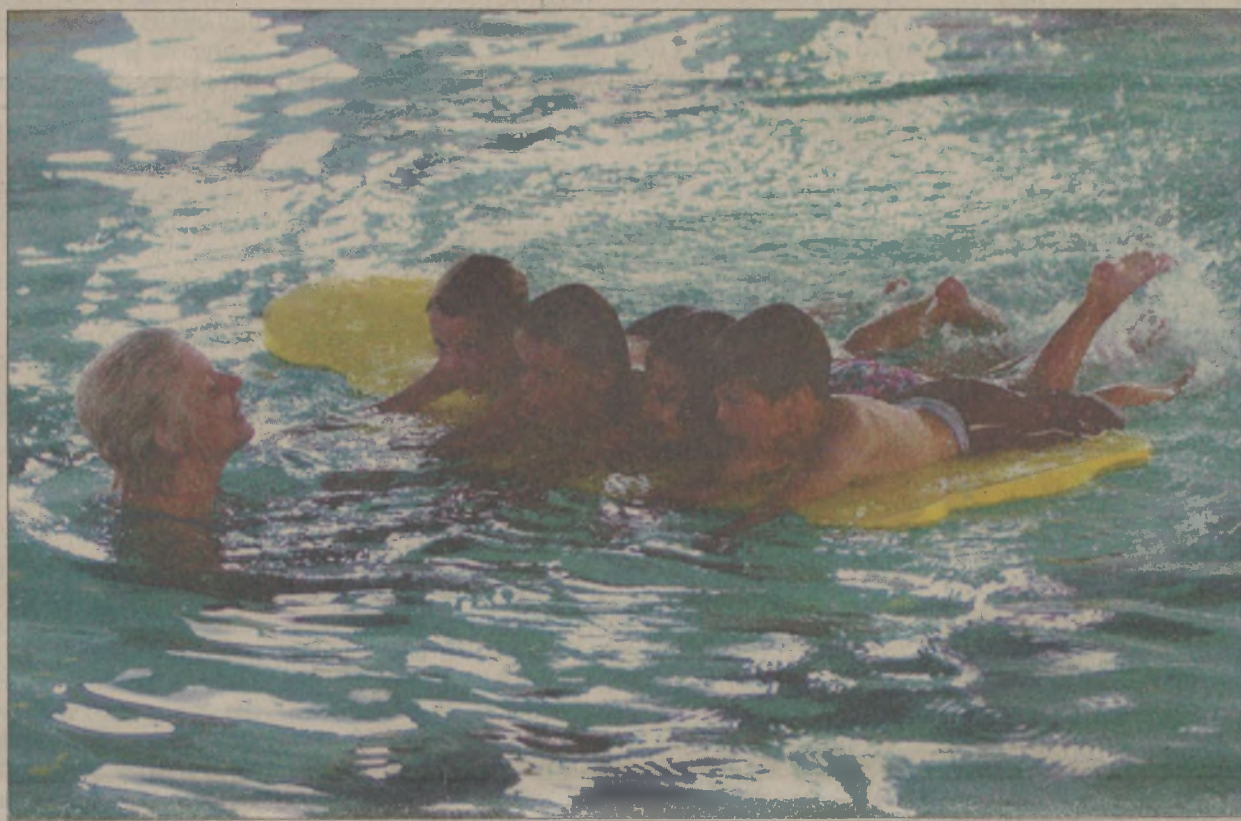
Now Denise Gregory is the county executive director for those two counties plus Camden, Currituck and Pasquotank. The first consolidation happened in 1995.

"The Perquimans and Chowan County farm communities, of course, are vital to North Carolina's agriculture," Gregory said. "This new arrangement enables the Perquimans-Chowan County Farm Service Agency to serve producers more effectively."

Consolidating Chowan and Perquimans into one district required

See FARMERS, 2

KIDS LEARN WATER SAFETY



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Riley Lorber, Lauren Taylor, Adrianna Eisenhower and Wyatt Ward use a foam flotation mat to help keep them afloat while they practice kicking their legs toward instructor Wendy Kobiela at a swim class last week at the Albemarle Family YMCA in Elizabeth City.

Program expands to two weeks

By PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

More than 150 kindergarten students from Perquimans Central School now have a skill that may not get them into college, but it could save their life.

They got an introduction to swimming and water safety during a two-week program at the YMCA in Elizabeth City. The facility is the nearest indoor pool to Perquimans County.

Melissa Fields, the principal at the school, views the Water Turtles program as a big success.

"Over the course of eight days, students transformed from nervous and scared of water to confident and successful in the pool," Fields said. "Many students who had little or no experience with swimming learned the basics, while students with previous



Joshua Townes floats on his back with help from swim instructor Beverly Grout at the Albemarle Family YMCA in Elizabeth City last week.

experiences refined skills over the course of the lessons. In addition to the water lessons, students also learned patience, following directions, and teamwork. The smiles

on their faces in the pool and their sleepy eyes on the way home showed us what a great experience

See PROGRAM, 8

Boating accident kills two

From staff reports

A Perquimans County man and a man from Chowan County were killed Friday in a boating accident at the mouth of the Yeopim River.

Pronounced dead at Chowan Hospital shortly after the accident were Daniel Manke, 50, of Hertford, and Blaine Weyant, 48, of Edenton, according to law enforcement authorities.

Another boater in the accident, Edward White, 47, of Hertford, was released at Albemarle Hospital after being flown there from the scene by a Coast Guard rescue crew from Elizabeth City, according to N.C. Wildlife Resources Commission Officer William Laton.

Laton said he is still trying to determine what caused the accident. No charges are pending, he added.

"We're still investigating everything, looking at all the evidence, putting pieces of the puzzle together," Laton said.

The accident happened around 1:45 p.m. Friday when the boat ran aground in the Yeopim River, according to a news release from the Coast Guard.

Perquimans County first responders assisted the Coast Guard in treating White at the scene. They took him to Albemarle Plantation where he was airlifted to the hospital, according to Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley.

Chowan County Sheriff Dwayne Goodwin said

See ACCIDENT, 10

New center will serve county's growing number of seniors

By PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

More than 4,800 Perquimans County residents are age 55 and older — 36 percent of the total.

Add to that 2,000 more people who will be turning 55 in the next 10 years and that's one of the reasons county officials see the new Perquimans County Senior Center as an important thing for the area.

The center was dedicat-



ed last week. "We had the opportunity to show our seniors how important they are to us and we did it," said Janice McKenzie-Cole, the chair of the Perquimans County

Commission. To date the project has cost about less than \$300,000. For a 9,450-square-foot space, county leaders say it's a bargain — \$31 a square foot.

STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Peggy Winslow plays piano while Mary Walker watches at the grand opening of the Perquimans County Senior Center on Harvey Point Road on Thursday.

For the residents, it was a welcome change from the smaller, older space on Grubb Street in Hertford.

Monday night County Commissioner Benjamin Hobbs gave the credit to Cole for bringing the issue and the availability of the building to the attention of the board.

"If it weren't for her, I don't think this building

would have been on our radar," Hobbs said. "We got a lot of bang for the buck."

And the dedication isn't the end of the commitment. County Manager Frank Heath wants money in next year's budget that will pay to pave the parking lot and install some bricks to the exterior to improve the looks. The present parking lot is gravel.

There is also room to expand in the future. The county owns the land reaching back to a tree line behind the center.

Several officials, including Commissioner Matt Peeler, applauded the work of county officials that

came before them.

"It's paid for," Peeler said. "When we're done with this kind of project, we're done with it. It's paid for."

For Kathy Suntato and her husband, who were at the dedication Thursday night, things like the senior center will actually help attract new residents and the money they invest.

Five years ago they looked at Hertford as well as Edenton and Elizabeth City for their final move. They had lived in Pennsylvania and New Jersey. They saw the senior

See CENTER, 8



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Canal Front 116 Whitetail Ct, Hertford	3 Bedrooms, 2 Baths Sunroom	Boat Dock Minutes from Albemarle Sound	Detached Garage w/Electric Storage Building	2 Decks Overlooking Canal Listed at \$139,000	Featured Property of the Week www.forbesuc.com 252-426-1380
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