

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Your community in photos, Page 7

"News from Next Door"

AUGUST 28, 2013 - SEPTEMBER 3, 2013

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## GLITCH HURTS SOME DRAWING FOOD STAMPS

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A statewide computer system that was supposed to streamline the process of getting social services has instead slowed it down for some.

It was billed as "NC FAST" but one county official called it "NC SLOW." NC FAST stands for Families Accessing Services through Technology. It's been in operation since last last year for some counties and still

has problems. Perquimans County handles food stamp cases for 1,350 households, according to Susan Chaney, the director of the program. Those already on the food assistance program must recertify every

six months in order to stay on the program.

"We do have some backlogs but nothing that I would consider extreme. Last month for instance we only had two overdue applications and they were only overdue by two

days."

Perquimans adopted the new system for food services in December and was required to add Medicaid on July 15. That, Chaney said, is when the real problems started.

"Cases got stuck in the

system. The state is working fast and furious to get it fixed, but it's dealing with all 100 counties and hundreds of thousands of people on benefits."

Chaney has been

See FOOD STAMPS, 6

## Summer festival coming Sept. 6-7

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

In nine days spectators can enjoy something Lynne Raymond and other volunteers have been working on since February.

The 32nd annual Indian Summer Festival kicks off with music downtown on Sept. 6 and wraps up that Saturday. Visitors may stay for just hours or perhaps both days, but volunteers will be there throughout.

"We actually start setting up that Thursday," Raymond said.

She estimates that 100 people will volunteer in some fashion during the annual event.

"We're still looking for help with parking. We run volunteers in shifts so nobody has to work both days. But we need two people at every soda station and we have five or six soda stations."

Something as large as the festival takes on a life of its own after three decades. The date — the first Saturday in September — has long been established.

"We had some people who want to change it. But what do we change it to? If we had it two weeks later it could still be hot and we still could get a hurricane," Raymond said.

Many of the vendors have the festival in their regular schedule, and a change on Hertford's part would disrupt that.

"We've been doing it for 32 years now and only had

See FESTIVAL, 6

## Students back in class



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Calianna Bemby gets right to work coloring in her first-grade class at Perquimans County Central School.

## YEAR'S ENROLLMENT REACHES 1,811

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

All but 72 of the 1,811 Perquimans County students enrolled this year returned to class Monday for the start of a school year that will include a longer calendar and fewer teachers.

The school system estimates the final enrollment number will be about 1,811 for kindergarten through 12th grade. There are an additional 52 students who are expected to enter pre-kindergarten in the coming days.

The start of the new year did not come without a hitch. Buses were late at both Perquimans Central School and Hertford Grammar School. Some of the bus delays were expected since the county school board agreed to split the bus routes for the two schools. For the past four years, the school system had combined them in an effort to save money. As a result, bus drivers were taking new routes on Monday,



Parents and students walk toward kindergarten at Perquimans Central School on Monday.

said Brenda Lassiter, the spokeswoman for the school system. The delays ranged between 30 minutes and an hour.

"School officials are thankful for the patience of our parents and students as we began the school

year, especially with the overflowing parking lots as they arrived to the school facilities," she said.

"Overcrowding in our parent pick-up and drop-off areas is a

See SCHOOL, 4

## Study: County aging faster

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Perquimans County needs to be prepared for a rapidly aging population and all that entails, health officials told local leaders last week.

Health officials presented a snapshot of data Wednesday afternoon on a new Community Health Assessment for Perquimans County and the region.

Shelia Pfaender, a public health consultant, presented the Perquimans County data.

Perquimans County may have seen its growth peak for now and caring for an aging population may be the biggest challenge it faces.

"Your heyday has just ended in terms of growth," she said.

In some cases the numbers in the study were so small it was tough to determine if an increase or decrease was significant and Pfaender presented those in the color blue.

"Blue comes up in your county a good bit," Pfaender said.

She said the blue numbers were unstable because of the small sample size and recommended against drawing too

See HEALTH, 2



PFAENDER

## Blood donors needed

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The Red Cross is hoping for a strong turnout at a blood drive Sept. 5 at the Perquimans County Recreation Center.

Summertime and holidays usually mean fewer people donate blood.

"We have a demand of 500 to 600 units a day just to meet demand," said Kristen Hatfield, a spokesperson for the regional Red Cross. "That's seven days a week. We're hoping that people really come out for this drive

since it comes a few days after Labor Day."

The local drive is from 2 p.m. to 7 p.m. To schedule an appointment on-line you can visit [www.redcross-blood.org](http://www.redcross-blood.org) or you can call 1-800-RED-CROSS.

The blood types most urgently needed are O-negative, A-negative and B-negative. Hatfield said there is a good chance if your blood type is one of those, you will have family members who also carry that type. People are encouraged to bring family members.

O-positive is the most common blood type. Not all ethnic groups have the same mix of these blood types. Hispanic people, for example, have a relatively high

See NEED DONORS, 6

## Fire training program moves forward

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Perquimans County is moving forward with plans to add a firefighter program to the high school curriculum.

Local school officials and representatives from local fire departments met with officials of the N.C. Department of Public Instruction and the N.C. Fire Marshal's office last week to review the program. Monday night the local school board voted to hire Michael Cartwright to head the program. It's scheduled to start Sept. 23.

Cartwright has been with the Elizabeth City Fire Department since 1983. He

See FIRE TRAINING, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

David Barbour, an education consultant for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction, speaks with school officials and representatives of local fire departments at Perquimans County High on Thursday.



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## Indian Summer Festival - Historic Hertford

CRAFTS, FOOD, ENTERTAINMENT, BEER GARDEN & MORE

Free Street Dance Friday Night - The Rhondels

Sept. 6th, 6 to 10:30 p.m.

Sept. 7th, 9 a.m. to 4 p.m.

