

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



STUDENT CHRISTMAS ART, 4

"News from Next Door"

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50 cents

Tier status change may bring more help

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County will be eligible for more state assistance and grants next year because of a change in how it ranks in terms of poverty.

Perquimans and four oth-

er counties will be shifted from Tier 2 status to Tier 1 next year by the N.C. Department of Commerce. Tier 1 counties are considered the most economically distressed and Tier 3 counties have the least number of problems. Perquimans has ranked as a Tier 2 since

at least 2007.

Now as a Tier 1 companies will be eligible for more help when creating jobs in Perquimans and both local and county government should be able to apply for more assistance.

In some cases, the difference between being Tier

1 and Tier 2 is you may not be able to apply for some grants at all.

Being a Tier 2 was especially hard on the school system according to local officials.

Among children age five through 17, the local poverty rate is over 29 percent. It's

that group that school system has to deal with. About 20 percent of Perquimans' population is under the age of 18.

As a whole, Perquimans County has a poverty rate of 20 percent. The overall poverty rate is one of the factors in deciding tier status.

"Your (overall) poverty rate does not always mirror the county's situation," said Superintendent Dwayne Stallings.

"It does make a difference when applying for grants," Stallings said. "Many times a

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Plenty on tap for this weekend

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A light show, parades and a colonial dinner are all on tap for Perquimans County this weekend.

The festivities kick off Friday with the Grand Illumination in downtown Hertford at the courthouse from 6-7 p.m. There will be holiday music and entertainment and a visit by Santa. Children get a free gift and downtown businesses will be open late for the event.

Parades follow Saturday with Winfall's parade kicking off from Perquimans County Middle School at 11 a.m. Perquimans County Middle School principal Andrea Greene and Perquimans Central School principal Melissa Fields will be the dignitaries. The Winfall parade ends at Winfall Landing.

Hertford's parade will follow at 2 p.m. starting at Perquimans County High School looping through downtown and then back to the school.

On Sunday, downtown will host a progressive colonial dinner from 5-9 p.m. Tickets have already sold out.

The Hertford parade will feature a battleship, pirate vessel and a replica of a colonial era boat. As of Monday more than 70 entries had signed up but last minute entries will be accepted, they just won't be judged.

Corbin Cherry was appointed grand marshal of

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GOOD EATS



STAFF PHOTOS BY PETER WILLIAMS

A woman serves up macaroni and cheese Thanksgiving Day at First Baptist Church in Hertford. The program served 500 people in 2012 and delivered meals last week to those who couldn't make it to the church.

An assortment of pies and cakes cover a table at First Baptist Church in Hertford last week. The church hosted a free meal for anybody who wanted one on Thanksgiving.



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Local charter school pitched

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A group that has provided after school programs for Perquimans County children in the past has applied to the state for a license to operate a school for students from kindergarten through fifth grade.

Hattie Sharpe, the contact person listed in a letter of intent application, has declined to comment about the plan for RHEMA Stem Institute. The state has received 170 letters of intent from groups interested in opening a charter school in this round.

Local public school officials have not been involved in the process.

Dwayne Stallings, the superintendent of the Perquimans County Schools system, said he was unaware of the RHEMA STEM school application.

"I have not had any discussions on it," he said Monday.

Deanna Townsend-Smith, a consultant for the Office Of Charter Schools, also has no further details on the RHEMA proposal aside from the letter of intent that was submitted.

The letter includes a mission statement: "To provide a student centered environment where students can thrive in all subjects, realize their innate talents in math, science and technology, pass state-mandated exams

High school seniors take advantage of College Application Week

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

More than 90 Perquimans County High School seniors took advantage of a chance to apply to college for free during a one week period last month.

"If they don't apply, they can't enroll," said Gabby Lassiter, one of the two coordinators of the school's GEAR UP program. GEAR UP stands for "Gaining Early Awareness and Readiness for Undergraduate Programs." It is a national college access initia-

tive funded by the U.S. Department of Education.

Lassiter and Starr Gordon work with both students and their parents to expose them to the idea of attending college. Some students don't have family members who have gone on past high school and the program is designed to break down barriers, both financial and mental that might hold them back.

School staff provided help all that week with the application

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

At Perquimans High last month, 92 students submitted a total of 248 applications, saving a total of \$5,310 in applications fees for students, during College Application Week.

DOT, other agencies reviewing options to replace bridge

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The N.C. Department of Transportation has met to review options for a new

bridge in Hertford, but it may be this month before the comments of the meeting are released.

Teresa Gresham, a private consultant working for DOT, said the post-hearing meeting was held Nov. 18. She said it usually takes a couple of weeks before the summary has been reviewed and approved.

The report includes public comments on the plan to replace the S-Bridge with one of three options. The state will be responding to public comments about the proposals.

The cheapest alternative — \$19.3 million — extends straight off Church Street and ends at a point near Larry's Drive In. It's also the

shortest at six-tenths of a mile.

The most costly — \$31.9 million — also starts on Church Street but uses another swing-span that parallels the existing bridge. This options would give boaters 15-feet of clearance under the bridge which is more than what they have now but half that of the other

two others.

The other two options would be 33 feet off the water at the peak — the same as clearance under the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge.

Alternative E uses Edenton Road Street, would cost about \$27.2 million and is also the longest at a mile long.

DOT held a hearing in

September at the Perquimans County Recreation Center to get public input on the bridge.

The bridge replacement project would use federal funds and therefore must comply with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA). NEPA is a law that

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