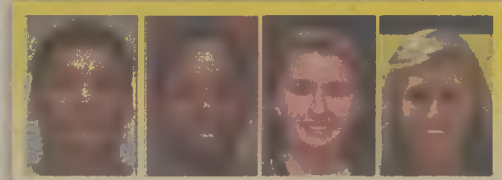


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Perquimans teams hold down Manteo, 8

"News from Next Door"

DECEMBER 11, 2013 - DECEMBER 17, 2013

50 cents

## ILLUMINATION FACES ODD WEATHER



PHOTO COURTESY CHUCK PAGESL

Lamb Basnight listens to the Albemarle Chamber Players, while diners eat during last week's progressive dinner. See more photos from the progressive dinner and illumination on page 9.

## Many activities, events moved to later date

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Unusually warm weather greeted visitors Friday for Hertford's Grand Illumination. What followed caused the postponement of one parade, the canceling of another and provided a cold and wet atmosphere for a third event.

It didn't start that way. Temperatures Friday were in the 60s for the Grand Illumination in downtown Hertford. While several hundred people showed up, organizers said the crowd was smaller than last year.

"It was too warm for people to be thinking about Christmas," said Sid Eley, the executive director of the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

But being too warm wasn't a problem Saturday. The threat of heavy rain forced the cancellation of the Winfall parade and the postponement of the one in Hertford. The Hertford event is now set for 2 p.m. Saturday.

But the weather didn't stop Sunday's 18th century progressive dinner. Eighty five people bought tickets for the inaugural event and nearly all of them showed up.

The dinner took on a historical theme and featured the four-member Albemarle Chamber Players and other musical acts including a children's choir.

It featured food at Hertford Baptist Church, Hertford United Methodist Church, Holy Trinity



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Matthew Woodard catches a ride on the shoulders of his father, Drew, during the Grand Illumination in downtown Hertford, Friday.

Episcopal Church, Church Street Grill and The Carriage House. Brew 2 Rescue provided some of the food.

The menu included pork loin, sweet potatoes, collards, a peanut salad and apple pie.

"It went very well," said Eley, who came in the role of Jonathan Phelps, a town leader back in the

1700s. "People were telling me they really enjoyed it and want to come back next year."

If there is money left over, most will be donated to the churches involved in Sunday's event, Eley said. Some will be used to provide seed money for the event next year.

The weather did prevent the

carriage rides that had been planned on Sunday.

Alvin Mizelle, the organizer of the event, said they offered to refund money to ticket holders who missed out on the ride, but nobody accepted it. Tickets were \$30.

"People seemed content with what they were able to do and they didn't want the money."

The dinner was missing some of its warmth. The plan was to include bonfires in front of each of the venues. The wood was stacked at each location in anticipation and when volunteers left to get the barrels to burn it and came back, the wood was gone. Witnesses reported seeing two women in a SUV pull up and take the wood.

"It's probably just as well because we probably couldn't have burned it because it was so wet."

Mizelle said supporters were able to see some things they'll change next year. Instead of just a one day event, it may run over three days.

"We really can't accommodate more than 100 people, and some of the places really can only seat 50."

It's also possible that the event will be held just after the holidays instead of before. The weeks before Christmas are already packed with area activities so an event after Christmas might have more appeal.

"All in all we're very pleased with the event," Mizelle said.

## Arrest made in one robbery

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Hertford police have arrested one of two suspects in an October armed robbery and are searching for another suspect in a second robbery last week.

Deals R' Us, a business in a retail shopping center off U.S. Highway 17, was robbed Wednesday afternoon about 4 p.m.



WOODARD

On Friday, police got a call from a bail bondsman who was detaining a suspect in another robbery. Joe's Place Beach Bingo was robbed Oct. 19.

Dennis Byrd of Byrd Bail Bonding was holding Marvin Woodard, 31, because Woodard had his

See ROBBERY, 2

## Audit: County reserves growing

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Perquimans County has managed to amass \$4.4 million in unrestricted reserves over the past several years, according to the audit released this month.

The county is required by state law to keep an eight percent reserve in case of emergency. The \$4.4 million figure represents 36.4 percent.

County Manager Frank Heath said the county has

See AUDIT, 5

## Long-time Extension director retiring after 33 years

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The best way to reach Lewis Smith these days is by calling his cell phone.

Yet after Jan. 1 he'll be able to turn the phone off.

Smith is retiring as Perquimans County Director of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service.

He knows of no immediate plans to replace him or

fill the position he's been he's been filling as interim director in Pasquotank County.

So for now, a cell phone is his lifeline.

"Back when I started with extension in 1980 we didn't have a computer at all. Everything was done on paper. I don't think kids today would fathom this, but I didn't have a telephone except for the one at the of-

face."

If he was out in the field — something he was often as a crop agent — and he wanted to call somebody he'd drive around until he could find a phone. Often that might be in the shop of a local farmer.

"If somebody was there, I'd ask to use it and if they weren't I'd use it and tell them about it later. It was sort of an unwritten rule."

In 1986 he was issued a two-way radio so he could radio back to the office if he needed to.

"I didn't have a cell phone until around 1995," he said. The changes in telephone technology are a small sample of what Smith has seen in his career. Farming and the N.C. Cooperative Extension



SMITH

Service itself have seen big changes.

The extension service still has an office in all 100 North Carolina counties, but it's seen dramatic cuts in funding. Smith said the annual budget is \$20 million less than it was and some extension offices haven't replaced personnel.

"Bertie has lost three agents positions that won't be filled. I think we'll see more of that. Right now Chowan has an interim director and Camden has no director at all. We've got some big holes in this northeast area."

He's been filling one of those holes as interim director in the Pasquotank

See SMITH RETIRES, 2

## State superintendent tours schools

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The top education official in North Carolina spent much of the afternoon last week touring two Perquimans County schools and getting feedback from both students and teachers.

Over a three-day period, June Atkinson also made stops in Pasquotank and Halifax counties.

The Perquimans tour included visits to both Perquimans Central School and Perquimans County High School. Local officials showcased how they use technology to enhance learning.

Mike McLaughlin, a spokesman for the N.C. Department of Public Instruction who accompanied Atkinson, said the trip to Perquimans wasn't a spur of the moment decision.

Atkinson said she was invited to visit by Wallace Nelson, the 2013 local school board advisor to the State Board of Education and a Perquimans County school board member.

"I was truly impressed by the technology being used in Perquimans to help students compete successfully with other students from across North Carolina and the world," Atkinson said last week. "It's even more impressive given



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Perquimans High teacher Amy Craffock (left) speaks with State Schools Superintendent June Atkinson about how students in her class use technology, last week. Atkinson also visited Central.

