

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Inside Today! Letters To Santa - 6A, 1B-8B

"News from Next Door"

DECEMBER 25, 2013 - DECEMBER 31, 2013

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Lack of state support concerns economic officials

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Economic officials expressed concerns last week that the northeastern part of the state is being left out when it comes to North Carolina's efforts to attract jobs and industry. Richard Bunch, regional

marketing manager for the Northeast Commission, addressed the Perquimans County Economic Development Board on Thursday. Also speaking was Dave Goss, the Perquimans County economic development director.

The county has depended on the Rural Center in

the past for some economic help, but that is effectively gone. Instead the state set up the Rural Infrastructure Authority.

It's lead by Patricia Mitchell, the assistant secretary of the new Rural Economic Development Division of the Department of Commerce.

"She was here a couple of weeks ago," Goss told the board. "She's aware of our situation, but I'm not sure the governor is."

There are 15 members on the RIA and Gov. Pat McCrory, Senate Pro-Tem Phil Berger and House Speaker Thom Tillis each appointed five of them. None came

from the Albemarle area. One of McCrory's appointments was a Bertie employee of the N.C. Department of Commerce. One of Tillis' appointments is a farmer from Washington County.

"It gives you some idea how we're perceived," Goss said. "We've got to struggle to make ourselves seen."

The Northeast Commission is facing the loss of all funding as of June and will have to find other ways to advance its' mission, Bunch told the group. He said the commission was formed about 20 years ago because area counties were finding

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Bugniazet assumes new library position

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

After three and a half years heading the Perquimans County Library, Judi Bugniazet is taking on new role that will keep her in touch with Hertford but give her broader authority.

Bugniazet has assumed the role of director of the Plymouth-based Pettigrew Regional Library system. The network includes four libraries, including the ones in Perquimans and Chowan counties as well as Tyrrell and Washington counties. She now has responsibilities over all four.

For now she spreads her time between the two jobs until the Hertford position is filled. And she'll have plenty of say in deciding who does that.

"My replacement is decided by the director of the library system — that's me — and the committee, but the director is in charge of hiring."

The Pettigrew system pays for the local librarian but the bulk of the funding responsibilities lies with the county.

Bugniazet said she plans meeting with Perquimans County officials again in January and she's also reopened the application process to draw more applicants. An advertisement posted on-line lists the salary at \$37,125 a year. The qualifications include a Master's degree in library science from an American Library Association-accredited institution; minimum three years of public library experience; supervisory experience and be eligible for certification by North Carolina Public Library Certification Board.

"It's a bad time a year to post jobs like this. We're usually swamped with resumes. Hopefully after the holidays we'll get more."

Bugniazet holds bachelor degrees in drama and English from UNC-Asheville and a master's degree from UNC-Greensboro.

One thing Bugniazet didn't get to do in her three and a half years in Hertford is something she still wants to do, now as regional director. She wants to see a new library in Perquimans County.

The issue is money. The plan is for a new library

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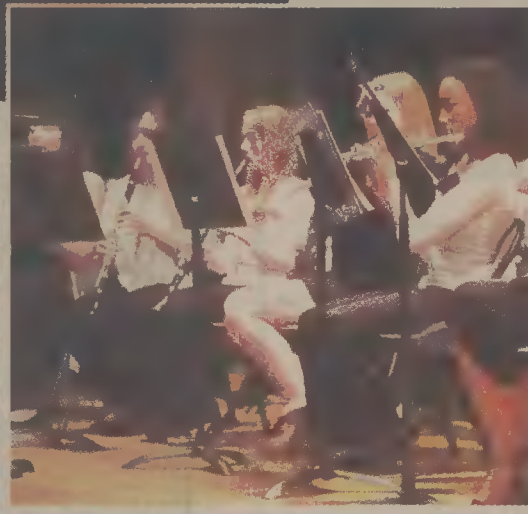
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STUDENT CHRISTMAS PERFORMANCE



PHOTOS BY CHUCK PAGELS

The Perquimans County High School Band and Chorus present their annual Christmas Concert in the school auditorium, Tuesday, Dec. 17. In addition to a concert of music for the holidays, there will also be a display of student art work by the high school art classes.



Court: Teacher wrongly fired

■ Appeals court agrees Joyner treated unfairly

BY WILLIAM F. WEST
The Daily Advance

The N.C. Court of Appeals has agreed with a lower court that a former Perquimans County school-teacher was wrongly denied tenure before being fired, calling the Perquimans school board's decision-making in the case "arbitrary and capricious" and based on "vague and unsubstantiated allegations."

In a decision released Tuesday, a three-judge panel unanimously rejected the Perquimans Board of Education's appeal of a Superior Court judge's ruling that teacher Vanessa Joyner was treated unfairly when she was fired in May 2012.

The 18-page ruling, written by Appeals Court Judge Chris Dillon, agrees with Superior Court Judge William R. Pittman's ruling that Joyner should be rehired, granted tenure and awarded back pay.

Joining Dillon in the

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Crowd bids farewell to agriculture director

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

More than 150 people turned out last week to say thanks to a man who has helped lead an industry worth more than \$103 million a year.

Lewis Smith is retiring as of Jan. 1 as director of the Perquimans County office of the N.C. Cooperative Extension Service. His departure also leaves a vacancy in the Pasquotank County office. That's a post Smith has also been filling on an interim basis since Travis Burke left almost three years to take the regional post. After

Jan. 1 both positions will be vacant and the future of the extension service is in flux.

Agriculture, not including forestry, is the single largest moneymaker in Perquimans County with gross income of about \$63 million. Smith has been the point man for the state for farmers seeking information or help. The Pasquotank income figure is \$45.3 million. In Perquimans County alone, agriculture makes up about 68,000 acres.

The two-hour going away party Wednesday at the Perquimans County Recreation Center was



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Lewis Smith holds his granddaughter Abigail while speaking to guests at a retirement party held for him at the Perquimans County Recreation Center Wednesday.

the past 18 years, came up with the skit and performed it. It went to the tune of the original show about Sheriff Andy Taylor from Mayberry from the 1960s. It's a show that remains in re-runs more than 50 years later and Smith is a fan. The original song starts with "well take down your fishin' Griffith Show.

lighthearted. It included an adapted version of the theme song from the Andy Griffith Show. Jewel Winslow, who's worked under Smith for

See SMITH, 4

Nelson reflects on serving on state education board

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County may not have a lot of political clout in Raleigh, but for a year it had a voice on the state board that oversees education in North Carolina.

Now Wallace Nelson steps down as of this month and has the time to reflect

on that service.

Nelson is a long-time member of the Perquimans County School Board who in 2012 was honored as the N.C. School Boards Association's Raleigh Dingman award winner. With the honor came a one year term as a non-voting member to the N.C. State Board of Education.

Nelson said he made it

clear early on that he simply wouldn't be warming a chair during the two days each month the board met in Raleigh.

"I kept telling them you're going to get tired of hearing this before the end of the year," he said.

What he found was the



NELSON

voting members of the state board listened and often asked Nelson for his input on issues.

"I can say that during this last year they've heard how I felt," Nelson said. "I was free to express my concerns about how policies effected small rural school districts. They really

embraced me and gave me the opportunity to speak my mind."

There are 13 voting members on the state board, including the lieutenant governor and the state treasurer and 11 members appointed by the governor. Nelson was one of seven non-voting members. The

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