

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

FEBRUARY 26, 2014 - MARCH 4, 2014

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50 cents

Board agrees to tenure/pay formula

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County School Board agreed Monday to a system that decides which teachers will be offered a \$500 pay raise.

The N.C. General Assembly has directed local school boards to make the offer to

25 percent of their teachers. In exchange for the money, those teachers would lose tenure and instead be given a four-year contract.

Half of the Perquimans County teachers polled by the school system said they don't want the deal. Even the school board went on record Monday that they

didn't think it was fair to reward some teachers when many are deserving.

"Educators in Perquimans County Schools are greatly valued and do an exemplary job for our students," the board said in a statement following the vote. "Selecting one quarter of our educators just doesn't

seem fair."

Still the board agreed to the criteria they will look at when considering who will get the offer.

The matrix was developed based on input from teachers, as well as a focus group that included the four teachers of the year, principal of the year Melissa

Fields and school board member Susan Cox.

"This is about as fair as it gets," Cox told the board Monday.

There are 84 teachers who are eligible to be considered and the school system can only pick 21 for the raise.

The criteria includes

seven items. Three would disqualify a teacher from consideration. They include teachers who have had a discipline issue documented in their file for the period from 2010 through 2013. Also teachers who have been placed on a mandatory

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Most teachers excel in testing

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Virtually all of Perquimans County's teachers are "proficient" in what they teach and more than 70 percent can be considered "accomplished" or "distinguished" according to a state report released last week.

However the local performance is slipping compared to the two previous years.

The N.C. educator effectiveness data looks at standards like demonstrating leadership and knowing content. Each standard is measured on a scale from "not demonstrated" — the worst — on up to "distinguished."

In the middle is the category of "proficient" That means an educator has demonstrated basic competence of the standard. Only one Perquimans teacher failed to make that level in 2012-13 and instead was considered "developing." The other 117 teachers ranked as proficient or higher.

Statewide, the combined number of teachers ranking at either "accomplished" or "distinguished" ranged from 46 percent to 62 percent across the five categories.

In Perquimans it was 71 percent to 76 percent.

The numbers used to be much better.

In 2010-11, the percentage of Perquimans teachers who placed in the top two categories ranged from 89.8 percent to 95.4 percent. The next year, the range was from 80 to 88.7 percent.

Superintendent Dwayne Stallings said some of the decline is due to more rigorous evaluating on the part of local supervisors. Another factor is the adoption of the new common core standard,

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COUPLE PLAYS KEY ROLES IN AVIATION

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A husband and wife team from Perquimans County hold key leadership roles in an organization that promotes the country's agricultural aviation industry.

Craig Craft is treasurer of the National Agricultural Aviation Association and Leslie is the president of the Women of the National Agricultural Aviation Association.

Together they are Craft Air Services, a company with two planes based out of a field in Belvidere.

Leslie Craft admits she's shy about talking about her industry because it's received some unjust criticisms.

"Not everybody loves what you love and in general a lot of people don't understand agriculture or they take it for granted," she said.

On the local front right now, planes are doing the job of applying fertilizer on crops in the field because the ground is far too wet for other equipment to do it. That can be critical for farmers.

There's a specific time-



SUBMITTED PHOTOS

Craig and Leslie Craft operate Craft Air Services. One of the two aircraft owned by Craft (top) is loaded recently. The system is used for seed and dry fertilizer.

table on when fertilization needs to take place as well as weed control and planting.

"If it's wet and farmers miss their window of opportunity they may not be able to plant," Craft said.

She grew up around agriculture. In a column in the trade magazine "Agriculture Aviation" she writes about Perquimans. She's a 1993 graduate of Perquimans County High School.

"We grow corn, wheat, soybeans, peanuts, cotton

and cute children," she writes.

"Growing up in a farm family was one of the greatest experiences of my life. I think back to special days of getting off the school bus and hitching a ride to the field to be with my Dad. I would ride for hours. The days were filled with sometimes one-sided conversations, one story after the other. Then my Dad would ask 'do you ever breathe?'"

I'm still blessed to have him and his humor around

and I still enjoy riding a round or two with him."

But she said farming has dramatically changed over the past years and continues to evolve. That's something that non-farmers may not grasp but those in the agriculture aviation industry have to.

They used to be called "crop dusters" but what they apply now isn't a dust, it's a liquid. Craft said most people would be amazed just how little

See CRAFT, 4

Four more file for public office

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A Hertford town board member is seeking a seat on the Perquimans County school board while a school board is trying for a post on the county commission.

In addition, Stanley Nixon also filed for the county commission, meaning there are four people running for three available seats.

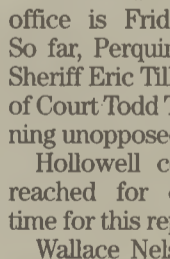
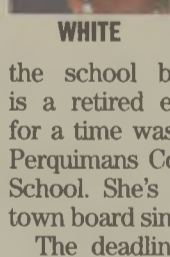
In-cumbent Ralph Hollowell filed Tuesday morning so four people are running for three seats on the school board.

Anne White, a member of the town council since 2002, has filed to run for a seat on the school board. White is a retired educator and for a time was principal at Perquimans County Middle School. She's been on the town board since 2002.

The deadline to file for office is Friday at noon. So far, Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley and Clerk of Court Todd Tilley are running unopposed.

Hollowell could not be reached for comment in time for this report. Wallace Nelson now sits

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Group wants Boys, Girls Club

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A group is moving forward with plans to develop a Boys and Girls Club in Hertford.

The need for something for youth to do has been highlighted by studies and by elected officials and members of the community.

Now the Boys and Girls Club of America is involved. Steve Morris, director of organizational development for the group, had his first meeting Tuesday with a 15-member steering committee.

The drive was spearheaded by Pastor Arthur Manigault of Spirit & Truth Ministries and Dave Goss, a lay leader at Hertford United Methodist Church.

The two churches joined together in May to hold a block party involving residents of the Covent Garden neighborhood and church members. The need for youth activities was one of the things many people there mentioned.

The Methodist church has offered the use of a 5,000-square-foot home it owns at 211 Market St. to house the club rent-free. It will cost about \$150,000 a year to operate it, according to Morris. Goss said they'd like to start some program as early as this fall if the funding is available.

At this point Goss said the group is reaching out to the com-

munity to get input and gauge support for the plan.

Boys and Girls Clubs typically target youth between the ages of 6 and 18. Goss said the Hertford club would initially be geared more to high school-age children. There are already two clubs in the Albemarle area, one in Elizabeth City and another in Edenton. Morris said the Hertford club would partner with one of them in the early stages of development.

Goss said the program doesn't have to be solely focused on the Hertford area.

"We know churches have facilities they can use and a lot of them have transportation," Goss said.

If the club can partner with

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Some may be missing out on county reverse-911 system

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Newer residents and people who recently added a cell phone line may be missing out on a system that alerts them of dangerous weather and other emergencies.

Perquimans County has had an emergency notification system to send out automated phone messages since October 2007.

Now it's been upgraded to accommodate e-mail and text messages.

Residents who were a Centu-

ryLink customer prior to April 2010 don't need to do anything more, but those who were added after that do. The process only takes a few minutes and can be done over the phone by calling 1-866-939-0911 or registering on-line. There is a link to Code Red, the service provider, on the county's web site in the lower left corner. The site is <http://www.perquimanscountync.gov/>

Kyle Janovsky, a technical support specialist for CodeRED said

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