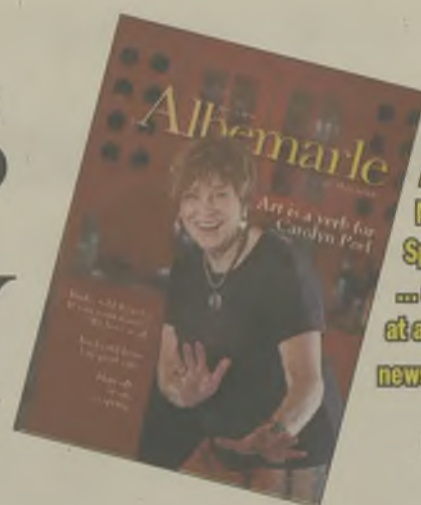


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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## Bridge hits a new snag

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

An issue over the comparative height of a new bridge to replace the 86-year-old swing span in Hertford has delayed work on the project for now.

The discrepancy comes down to less than two feet, but any major design changes could result spark new review by the historic preservation group and others that must sign off on the plans.

Jay McInnis, the project engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, said he believes the differences can be hammered out in the next 30 days.

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DOT has marketed the new fixed-span option to replace the S-Bridge as having 33-feet of clearance for boats. That's the same as the posted clearance for the U.S. 17 bypass bridges and about 27 feet more than the S-Bridge now provides when it is open to vehicle traffic.

When it came to the final meeting to approve the plans, the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers raised a concern over the height of the bridge as it appears in the preliminary designs.

Turns out that while the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge does have a posted clearance of 33 feet, the actual distance between the water and the bottom of the bridge during normal conditions is 35 feet. That's based on the final "as-built" drawings for the bridge.

That means unless the new bridge is built at least that high, a boat might be able to pass safely under the Bypass bridge and not be able to make it under the new bridge.

Some of it boils down to how you measure the level of the river.

The DOT had been basing their preliminary designs for the new bridge on the level of the river as they measured it over a recent 36-hour period.

The U.S. Army Corps was looking at the "mean high water" figure. That's a number that is determined by NOAA — the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration.

McInnis said DOT had

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SUBMITTED PHOTO

A numbered print of an original artwork of the mural shows how the image looked when it was originally painted. The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce still sells copies of the print.

## TIME RUNS OUT FOR DOWNTOWN MURAL

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A downtown mural that depicted the history of Perquimans County and included a Confederate battle flag is gone.

In the end it wasn't the controversial flag that brought the mural down, but instead the artwork itself was so deteriorated it was causing damage to the brick wall the mural was painted on.

The mural has been a part of Hertford for the past 30 years, but Erie Haste Jr., the owner of Hertford Hardware Store on Church Street, said it had to go.

"The mural had deteriorated dramatically even more so than it appeared to be when you just

"The mural had deteriorated dramatically even more so than it appeared to be when you just looked at it," Haste said last week. "It was pulling some of the mortar out of the brick joints and with the winter we've been having it was causing more and more problems with leakage."

Erie Haste Jr.  
Owner, Hertford Hardware Store

looked at it," Haste said last week. "It was pulling some of the mortar out of the brick joints and with the winter we've been having it was causing more and more problems with leakage."

Haste is open to talking to people about replacing the mural with an exact replica of the old one or something else. He's also OK with the idea of leaving just a

plain wall.

People had talked about restoring the mural, but the only way to fix the wall would be to remove the mural.

"When I heard that a matching grant was available, I talked with others about it," Haste said. "We determined that restoration (of the mural) would only be practical if the wall was fixed first."

The fact that simply pressure washing the wall was enough to remove about 80 percent of the mural was proof that it was in disrepair, Haste said.

If crews can get five straight days of warm, dry weather, they can complete the work of putting a special adhesive mortar on the wall to preserve it the wall, Haste said. By Monday, it appeared the

work was nearly done.

The mural was designed by Rebecca Spivey, an art teacher and wife of a Quaker minister who was serving at Piney Woods Friends Meeting in the 1980s. She pitched the idea of doing something showing the history of the county, and Haste said he agreed. The work took about 18 months.

In addition to the Confederate flag, the mural showed the historic Eagle Hotel which once stood across the street from the hardware store and the Newbold-White House. There was also the silhouettes of a Quaker couple, a tribute to Jim "Catfish" Hunter, the Turtle Log and boys floating down the river.

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## Black leaders see chance for positive change

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Black leaders in Perquimans County say the end of a mural that depicted a Confederate battle flag creates an opportunity for the community to unite.

Winfall Mayor Fred Yates, a former president of the Perquimans County NAACP, said the mural itself was great, but the flag could be viewed as offensive.

Yates said the NAACP approached the owner of Hertford Hardware about a dozen years



ago asking him to get rid of the flag. Yates said Erie Haste Jr. declined to remove the mural calling it "history."

The NAACP took no more action.

"We didn't call for a boycott or anything," Yates said. "There was nothing you could do. It's a privately owned business."

But Yates believes blacks and some whites have chosen not to patronize the business because the flag offends them.

Blacks make up about 26 percent of the population of Perquimans County, but in the Town of Hertford, blacks represent about 48 percent of the population and whites are 46 percent. There are only two hardware stores in the Hertford area.

"A lot of people have com-

mented to me that they won't shop there, but when it comes down to it, I don't think that makes much of a difference either," Yates said. "People here have seen it so much they don't even look that way anymore. I am sure it's cost them some business, but he (Haste) chose to go that way."

The mural does present Hertford in a bad light to people from outside the area, Yates said.

"It gives the county a black eye every time somebody comes

See POSITIVE, 8

## Mural's artist never sought to offend community

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The Confederate battle flag on a mural in downtown wasn't a statement that some people are saying it was, according to the artist who designed and executed the artwork.

Rebecca Spivey said it was simply to fill a blank space.

"As I designed the mural there was a great big empty space in the top right corner," she said last week, from her home in Asheboro. "I thought, 'what can I put there?' Then I thought the Confed-

erate flag was a historical thing and it was colorful.

"In my innocence at that time I didn't know it was a racist symbol and upset people. To me, it's part of history."

When people did complain, Spivey said she was more than willing to paint over the Civil War flag.

"I wanted to repaint that side and put an American flag draped over that side," she said. "Around the borders of it I wanted to put in black letters 'together we stand, divided we fall, together we

See ARTIST, 8



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Rebecca Spivey poses in front of a list of artists that took part in the mural painting in 1983.

## Medical helicopter now based closer to Perquimans

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The basing of a medical helicopter in Edenton should mean the time it takes to get help in Perquimans County will be cut in half.

The Air Methods helicopter is now housed at

the Northeastern Regional Airport in Edenton. Emergency officials can call for aerial transport now, but given the weather it could take 20 minutes for a helicopter to get on site from either Greenville or Norfolk.

Sometimes weather keeps the aircraft on the ground altogether or makes the trip take longer, said Jarvis Winslow, Perquimans County's emergency management director.

"Personally, I think

it's great," Winslow said. "They (Air Methods) can be anywhere in Perquimans County in 10 minutes. That's pretty quick. The 20 minutes can seem like an eternity."

The EC-135 helicopter used by Air Methods has a cruising speed of 158 miles per hour and a top speed of 178 miles per hour. According to the company that makes the aircraft, the EC135 is currently providing roughly 25 percent of the world's total emergen-

cy medic services flights. More than 500 aircraft have been delivered.

Winslow estimates air services are called fewer than 10 times a year in Perquimans County. Virtually all of the cases involve trauma from some kind of accident. Patients are typically flown to either Norfolk or Greenville, the two nearest trauma hospitals. That option remains with the addition of the Air Methods chopper.

As of last week, the

Edenton-based helicopter has been on-call 24 hours a day and operates independently from the hospitals that provide the care.

"We are not tied to any particular hospital area," said pilot Jon Berge.

Jim Huffman, a flight medic with Air Methods, said the helicopter carries "everything our big critical care trucks have, but condensed down to a little bit smaller."

The Air Methods crews currently are staying in

temporary quarters. The company plans to build an office building to house the staff.

The on-duty staff at all times consists of three crew members and a mechanic. The crew includes a pilot, nurse and paramedic.

Air Methods is headquartered in Englewood, Colorado. According to the company's website, it has operations from Alaska to Key West, Fla.

The Chowan Herald contributed to this report.



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