

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

APRIL 9, 2014 - APRIL 15, 2014

INSIDE TODAY!  
Spring Home  
& Garden  
special



APR 09 REC'D

50 cents

## State reports large decrease in dropouts

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The Perquimans County High School dropout rate fell 45 percent last year according to a state report issued last week.

There were 20 students

considered as dropouts in the 2011-12 school year. The number fell to 11 last year. In the Edenton-Chowan school system, the number of dropouts actually rose from 26 to 27. The Perquimans dropout rate works out to be 2.08. The state av-

erage is 2.45.

The same report shows the number of short-term suspensions remain low compared with other school systems. The number included students from ninth grade through the senior year in high school and in-

cluded students who didn't graduate after the traditional four years but remained in school a fifth year to finish.

Dwayne Stallings, the Superintendent of Schools in Perquimans, said the suspensions and the dropout

rate can be linked. Students who were expelled were taken out of the school environment and could feel discouraged about the idea of coming back.

"Over the years the school system has made a real effort to keep students

in school and helping them realize that giving up is not the answer, you have to stay."

North Carolina law doesn't require mandatory attendance once a student

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## SPRING GARDEN SHOW



STAFF PHOTOS BY PETER WILLIAMS

Maycee Hughes (center) puts stickers on a pencil pinwheel held by Ginny Van Donger while Tammy Young (left) looks on during last Saturday's annual Garden Show at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. Hundreds of visitors browsed plants, crafts and food vendors. There were also seminars on a variety of topics. The program was hosted by the Master Gardener programs in Perquimans, Chowan and Gates counties.



A visitor (left) looks over plants available from Hertford's Sunshine Nursery, Saturday. A faded wooden door provides the perfect place to hang butterfly art, as seen at Saturday's annual garden show.

## Low-scoring US 17 project funds possible

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Two intersection improvements on U.S. Highway 17 in Perquimans have a chance of being funded — not because they scored high on state rankings — but because they are relatively cheap and part of a much larger project.

Turning the intersections at New Hope Road and Harvey Point Road into interchanges scored 13 and 12 points respectively on the state's new Strategic Mobility Formula. The highest score possible is 100 points.

The Mid-Currituck Bridge project had 22 points and was the highest ranking one in the Albemarle area. The bridge also carries a pricetag of \$410 million. DOT's share of that is \$173 million. The rest would come from tolls and outside financing and maintenance.

The cost of the Perquimans County projects is about \$29 million for both interchanges, according to Rep. Bob Steinburg (R-Chowan).

"Overall I wouldn't call it chump change, but in the big scheme of the DOT budget it's a very small amount of money."

What may give the projects an edge despite the low scores are they're part of an overall program to create Interstate-44. That's the name used for a posted Interstate that stretches from Raleigh to Norfolk. No official designation of an I-44 has been made.

Instead of starting from scratch, the highway would use existing parts of U.S. Route 64 and U.S. Highway 17.

U.S. 64 already links Raleigh with Williamston and U.S. 17 already connects with Norfolk. To upgrade parts of it to U.S. Interstate standards or at least improve them is the goal right now.

Steinburg said it's unlikely that U.S. 17 in Hertford would ever be considered a true Interstate. Those carry the logo of a shield in blue and red and are restricted access superhighways.

"Eliminating those stoplights will allow a free traffic flow all the way to Norfolk," Steinburg said.

"It's not easy recruiting businesses to come to northeastern North Carolina. The first question

## Some feel other projects more important

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Plans to upgrade two intersections on U.S. 17 in Perquimans County have long been on state list of improvements, but County Manager Frank Heath said there are far bigger priorities out there.

DOT is considering upgrading both Harvey Point Road and New Hope Road intersections to eliminate the stop lights.

"Those have been in the plan a long, long time, but right now I think we have some secondary road needs that should outrank them," Heath said.

Eliminating the lights could shave a few minutes off a three-hour trip from Raleigh to Norfolk, but it could require the elimination of several businesses. Creating an interstate highway from the two cities is a goal of Gov. Pat McCrory and others who see it as a way to spur development in northeastern North Carolina.

Intersections, like U.S. 17-Harvey Point Road, are junctions that do not use grade separation and roads cross directly. Interchanges are junctions where roads pass above or below one another. There are perhaps dozens of different ways to design interchanges including some called cloverleaf, stack, windmill, diamond and divided volleyball.

But interchanges can require a lot of land to build. In the Chicago area, the Project For Transportation Reform cites one involving I-355 and I-55 that needed 150 acres. Another one in downtown used 13 acres. Those involve

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See IMPORTANT, 2

## Baseball fan surprised in Hertford

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

When Norman Sperling set out from California on his latest adventure in his recreational vehicle, Hertford wasn't on the itinerary.

The 67-year-old part-time college astronomy professor had no idea Hertford was home to a museum honoring its own Jim "Catfish" Hunter.

Baseball museums and science centers are the focus of Sperling's life right now. But it wasn't until he was browsing a AAA tour book in Georgia that he saw something about the Hertford museum. He simply had to check it out.

So on Tuesday, he drove his RV to the parking lot between Hertford Baptist Church and the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

He said what he saw was impressive given the space Hertford has to devote to

it. "Every time I go through it (the guide) I always find two or three things I wanted to see. Some are big and some are a very pleasant surprise. I've seen some mu-

seums that are holes in the wall with one picture on the wall."

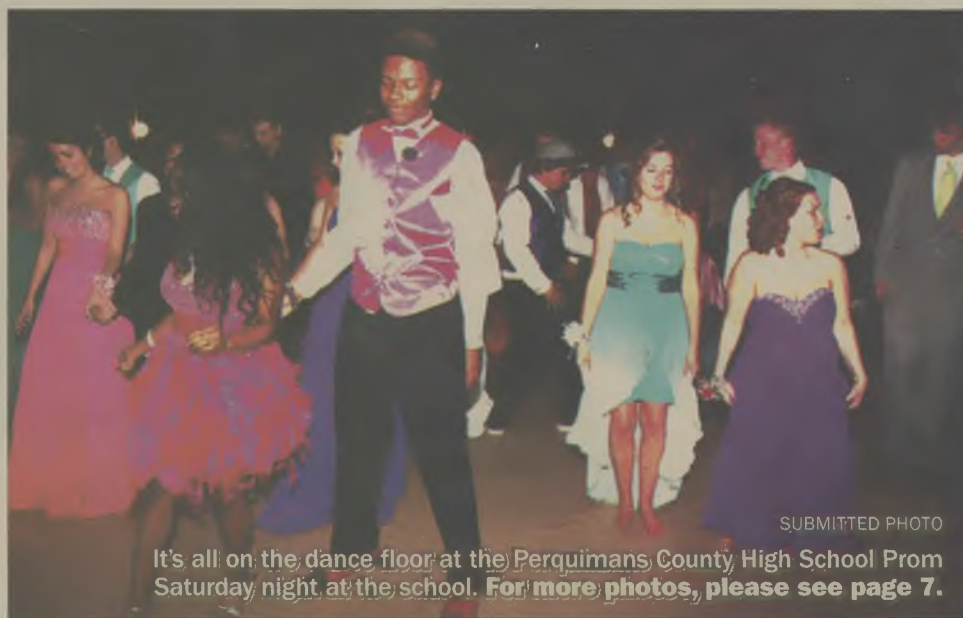
Sperling has a love for baseball in general and for the Oakland Athletics in particular. His home was in Berkeley, Calif., just 12 miles from the stadium



SPERLING

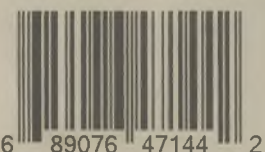
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## PROM NIGHT 2014



SUBMITTED PHOTO

It's all on the dance floor at the Perquimans County High School Prom Saturday night at the school. For more photos, please see page 7.



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