

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door"

DECEMBER 31, 2014 - JANUARY 6, 2015



Interact Club pitches in to help, 3

50 cents

Plantation to host May pro tourney

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Professional golf is scheduled to return to Albemarle Plantation in May for what should be a far larger tournament with a \$200,000 purse.

The Plantation teamed up with the NGA tour for the first pro event in June. Volunteer turnout and corporate sponsorship was strong, but the field of golfers fell far short of expectation. Instead of 100 golfers, just 13 showed up. By the weekend, golf pro Kenny Saunders had rustled by a field of 50 players.

For the event May 25-31, another tour — eGolf — will be providing the talent.

"We decided not to go with them (NGA) again because we weren't sure if they could recover so quickly," Saunders said. "They didn't do anything wrong, it's just that they didn't guarantee purses and everybody bailed and jumped ship to other tours.

"In our view it was a total success other than the number of golfers," Saunders said. "The sponsors were all happy and there was a buzz around the Plantation and the Food Bank was happy because they got \$7,500 and it was fun."

Once again Biggs Cadillac Buick GMC will be the big corporate sponsor.

Both the NGA and eGolf are considered third tier tours. The top level is the Professional Golf Association (PGA) and Web.Com is considered as the second level. One thing that may play in the Plantation's

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TAYLOR PERFORMS AT CAROLINA MOON



PHOTO BY CHUCK PAGELS

Joel Taylor performs a song in December at the Carolina Moon Theater in Hertford. In the background is a video screen which was added this year to add to performances at the theater. See full story on page 2.

County makes solid progress

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County was able to complete or at least start some long-awaited projects in the past year.

The New Year holds the promise for even more.

The school system was able to put tablet computers into the hands of hundreds of students in 2014 thanks to a \$864,000 grant from Golden LEAF.

The county got \$308,000 from the Golden LEAF as well and is in the process of securing the permits to build an industrial-sized boat ramp near the Perquimans Marine Industrial Park. That project should be completed by the end of 2015. The ramp will benefit both recreational boaters as well as smaller marine industries that need a way to get larger boats in and out of the water.

The Town of Hertford is wrapping up construction on a new nine-slip marina behind town hall with money from the STEP Program. The project should be complete in January.

Potentially the biggest news of 2014 was the award of a \$1.5 million grant to the county to start phase one of the marine industrial park. The county hopes to use that money as leverage to raise the remaining \$4.5 million needed for the first phase.

The industrial park is designed to bring hundreds of jobs and millions of dollars of investments to the county.

On the local political front, there was some musical chairs. A Hertford town board member left that board to take a seat on the local school board and a school board member opted not to seek another term there and instead ran for and won a seat on the county commission.

Anne White opted to give up her seat on the Hertford town board in favor of seat on the school board. Sid Eley, a former Hertford council member and mayor, was appointed to fill White's seat.

White took her seat in July along with Amy Spaugh, a former school board member who opted to return after taking some time off and Ralph Hollowell who sought a second term.

The Perquimans County

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Town: Expert to look at Duke power deal

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Hertford Town Board agreed this month to hire an expert to look over a deal that would allow the town to sell its share in Duke Energy-Progress power plants to get out from some of the debt.

Hertford and 31 other cities and towns in eastern North Carolina own shares in five Duke Power generating assets.

The combined debt of about \$1.9 billion forces the

municipalities to charge a rate higher than what customers of Duke and Dominion Power pay.

Duke is willing to pay \$1.2 billion for the shares owned by the North Carolina Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA). Hertford, Elizabeth City and Edenton are all members of the agency.

Hertford Town Manager Brandon Shoaf said he looked at some industry



SHOAF

experts who could study the offer. In the end he found that one of them, Bob Pender, was looking to study the package for a number of other small towns. Pender offered a price not to exceed \$5,000.

"It comes down for money for us," Shoaf said of Pender's fee.

Pender, a Florida resident, has 35 years of experience in dealing with utilities as both a consultant and in

a management role. For 19 of those years he was a principal and senior director for R.W. Beck. Edenton has also hired Pender.

Shoaf said the town hopes to wrap up Pender's study by the first of March, but he said it could be 2016 before customers start seeing some rate relief.

The deal cleared one major hurdle when the Federal Energy Regulatory Commission (FERC) approved the plan.

The towns and cities originally got into the agreement

because they saw it as a way to lock in cheap power. It didn't work out that way.

Instead with the 1979 nuclear accident of Three Mile Island and a changing attitude toward nuclear power, costs soared as did municipal power bills.

The \$1.2 billion deal with Duke Power is designed to ease the debt burden and bring rate relief to electric customers. To make sure that's actually going to be the case, Hertford is hiring

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Developer sees bright future for more solar projects in area

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Solar power projects like the two being developed in Perquimans County may become more and more common in the not so distant future, predicts a spokesman for the company building the projects.

Frank Marshall believes that as the U.S. electrical

energy network becomes decentralized and better battery technology comes on line, larger power plants will be phased out in favor of smaller, greener power sources that are closer to the customers they serve.

That's a stark change from the past 100 years where the model has been to build large coal or nuclear power plants and then transmit power to the customers that may be hundreds of miles of way.

"We can't afford to have centralized power distribution anymore," Marshall said. "It has served us well up until this point, but it's go-

ing away."

The U.S. Energy Information Administration estimates about 6 percent of all power that's generated is lost during transmission. The further it goes, the more energy is lost in the process.

And Marshall thinks solar can play a role in the future energy system, especially once battery technology matures.

"We have great relations with Duke, not that we haven't had disputes. I have to say that utilities have done an exceptional job

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STALLINGS RECEIVES TDA HONOR



FILE PHOTO

Amber Stallings hammers a shot over the net in a match this year against Northeastern High School. Stallings has been named The Daily Advance's 2014 Volleyball Player of the Year. See full story on page 7.

