

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

MARCH 4, 2015 - MARCH 10, 2015

Lady Pirates' season ends at Gates - 7



50 cents

Weather forces schedule changes

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A second week of snow closed schools for most of last week and forced organizations and civic groups to cancel or postpone activities.

The Perquimans County Schools resorted to a rare Saturday session to try and make up some of the work. In two weeks students had class just three days, including last Saturday's session.

Even Saturday wasn't the same.

Typically students are in school for seven hours. The Saturday session lasted four and a half hours, and more than a third of students didn't attend.

In the case of Perquimans Central and Hertford Grammar School, just 508 of 867 students—58 percent—attended class on Saturday. The turnout for the entire district, including the middle and high school, was 61 percent.

Other groups were also grappling with the weather. On paper, it was supposed to be a busy month at the Perquimans County Library. It wasn't.

Severe weather forced the library to postpone or cancel some programs, including some involving Black History Month.

"We had a ton of programs and thought our (attendance) statistics were going to be way up for the month, but that didn't happen," said Librarian Anita Bennett.

"We were going to attend a Central School program at Louise's Meeting Place, that got canceled," Bennett said. "A black history program on Feb. 24 got canceled as well. It's just been crazy. It was supposed to have been a wildly busy week, but none of that stuff happened."

The Hertford Grammar School chorus was scheduled to perform on Feb. 17. That got canceled, but will be rescheduled at some point.

See AFTERMATH, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

School maintenance crews clear slush from a storm drain in the parking lot of Perquimans County High School Thursday morning. School was canceled for the day.

Sports plans scrambled

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

In a perfect world, a coach would get weeks and weeks to practice with their team to hone their skills and develop strategies before the first game.

David Nobles doesn't live in that world.

Nobles is not only taking over as head coach of the Perquimans County High School girl's softball team, he's had little time to get them prepared for the start of the season this week.

"Practice? What practice?" By state rules, students can't practice sports if they don't attend school that day

See SPRING, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Brooke Wheeler practices bunting Saturday at Perquimans County High School. While spring may be a few weeks away, spring sports are scheduled to start this week.

Tornado drill planned statewide today

From staff reports

While snow may be on the mind of many, Perquimans County Emergency Management officials are urging residents to think about tornados and severe thunderstorms this week.

As part of Severe Weather Preparedness Week in North Carolina, Perquimans County will participate in a statewide tornado drill to-

day at 9:30 a.m. Test messages will be broadcast on National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration weather radio and the Emergency Alert system.

"While the spring is the peak tornado season, severe thunderstorms can strike quickly throughout the year," said Jonathan Nixon, Perquimans County's emergency services director. "The best way to be ready is to plan and prepare. It's

critical to have emergency plans in place, put together an emergency supplies kit and listen for weather alerts."

Last April, nine tornados touched down in one day in Beaufort, Bertie, Chowan, Currituck, Greene, Halifax, Pasquotank, Perquimans and Pitt counties, killing an 11-month old child in Chowan County and injuring 28 others. More than 300 homes were dam-

aged or destroyed.

In 2014, the National Weather Service issued 81 tornado warnings for North Carolina and recorded 36 tornados that killed one and injured 34 people.

Emergency management officials recommend having a weather radio that broadcasts alerts from the National Weather Service

See TORNADO, 2

Habitat gains SECU support

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A non-profit foundation wants to team up with Habitat for Humanity to expand affordable housing across the state.

Officials of the State Employees Credit Union Foundation and the state Habitat organization have signed an agreement creating the SECU Habitat Challenge.

The challenge will provide an investment of \$10 million over a three-year period for HHNC to build one new or renovated Habitat home in each of the state's 100 counties.

Habitat can provide low cost housing because volunteers and the new homeowner do much of the labor. The homeowner still has a mortgage, but the money typically goes back to the Habitat group that provided the money for materials. That can take 20 to 25 year to recoup the investment.

Under the challenge once the home is built and the deal is closed, the SECU would acquire the mortgage interest free and immediately reimburse the local Habitat group for the up-front cost.

There is one Habitat organization that covers both Perquimans and Chowan counties. Typically it's been able to build one home per year in either Chowan or Perquimans. Last year a home was completed on Dobbs Street in Hertford. The next is scheduled for Chowan County.

Under the terms of the SECU agreement, Habitat is to develop a plan for implementation by the end of May.

Regan Westra, a Hertford resident and president of the Chowan-Perquimans County Habitat group, said local officials are still trying to determine how the SECU Foundation offer will work.

"The Habitat affiliates only received a notice to give us a 'heads up' that negotiations had been taking place between the state Habitat and the SECU and that a notice would be going out to the press. The affiliates haven't been asked to take any action at this time. When we have more specific information and an actual request for action or a

See HABITAT, 2

Weekly wins 3 awards

From staff reports

CHAPEL HILL — The Perquimans Weekly captured three awards Thursday at the 2015 North Carolina Press Association Winter Institute and Awards Banquet in Chapel Hill.

The newspaper won first-place award in the non-daily division for newspapers with a circulation under 3,500. The Perquimans Weekly also won two second-place awards in advertising.

The news award was for coverage of tornados that struck Perquimans County in April.



ALEXANDER WILLIAMS

The judges said the coverage included "good use of photography and solid reporting." Peter Williams is news editor of the paper.

Advertising representative Beverly Alexander won second place for the best black and white restaurant/entertainment ad. Alexander also won second place for best community

See PW AWARDS, 2

Church kicks off soup kitchen

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Hertford United Methodist Church kicked off a weekly soup kitchen last week with more food than customers.

Snow the day before mean downtown traffic, both vehicle and pedestrian, was far less than a normal Wednesday. In all, about a dozen diners took part in the inaugural free meal.

"We thought about canceling, but we figured we could use the practice," said organizer Marjorie Rayburn.



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Marjorie Rayburn hands a bowl of soup to Claudia Brothers Wednesday at a soup kitchen set up by Hertford United Methodist Church. Rayburn is a member of the church and Brothers is an area resident who volunteered to help out. The kitchen will be operated every Wednesday from 11:30 a.m. until 1:30 p.m.

See SOUP KITCHEN, 2



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