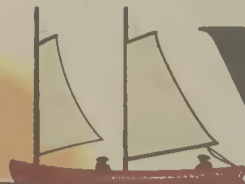


THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



ECU Lady Pirates help Habitat effort, 4

"News from Next Door"

APRIL 8, 2015 - APRIL 14, 2015

50 cents

Schools dropout rate down again

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County Schools have managed to whittle away at the number of students who drop out before they graduate.

According to a recent state report, the school system's dropout rate fell from 2.08 percent in 2012-13 to 1.34 percent in 2013-14. In terms of actual students, the dropout number fell from 11 to seven.

"It's always a positive move when you see the

numbers reducing like that," said Superintendent Dwayne Stallings. "Ultimately we'd like to see that number fall to zero."

He points out that in 2011-2012, 20 students dropped out.

The only area county to make a bigger dent in the dropout rate was Elizabeth City-Pasquotank which had a dropout rate of 1.03 percent. Camden had a rate of 1.96.

Dropout rates rose in both Currituck and Edenton-Chowan. The Currituck

rate was 2.10, up from 1.84 year before. The Edenton rate was 3.08, lower than 3.79 the year before.

Stallings doesn't credit a single change for the decline, but a team approach and multiple programs.

"We feel like we have programs in place at the high school to mentor these students and keep them in the system and that's made a difference."

The school system operates an alternative

See DROPOUT, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Students involved in a mentoring program plant crops last week.

Marina earns 'clean' status

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Albemarle Plantation Marina has become the first in the Albemarle area to earn "Clean Marina" status through the N.C. Division of Coastal Management.

There are now 37 facilities in the state with the designation.

Clean Marina is a voluntary program in which marina operators who choose to participate must complete an evaluation form about their use of specific best management practices.

Bill Denison, the "Marina Governor" and chairman of the marina committee at the Plantation, said the effort has been more than a year in the making.

Denison said many of the requirements for a "Clean Marina" designation were already common practice at the Plantation.

Some of the changes involved having a plan to deal with dog waste. A big part of

See MARINA, 2



'OPERATION CINDERELLA'



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Amber Stallings (right) and her mother Denise sort through prom dresses last week at Perquimans County High School. Amber Stallings collected the clothing to provide free prom dresses to any girl who might not otherwise be able to afford one, not just Perquimans County students. More than 60 dresses remain and will be distributed April 15 in the lobby of the Perquimans County High gym. The dresses will be available during the three lunch periods, 11:10 a.m. until 11:35 a.m., noon until 12:25 p.m. and 12:50 p.m. until 1:15 p.m. and then 3:30 p.m. until 5 p.m.



Meeting to explore sales tax changes

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A consumer education officer with the N.C. Department of Revenue is scheduled to make a presentation this month to discuss how new sales tax laws will impact non-profits.

Rhonda High will speak April 15 from 6-8 p.m. at Carolina Moon Theater, 300 W. Grubb St. The event is sponsored by the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

"In a nutshell the changes are significant," High said. "Some additional services are now taxable and my presentation will cover those."

Some area groups are already making changes.

Lynne Raymond, the president of Historic Hertford, Inc., said that group would no longer sell water and soft drinks at the Indian Summer Festival. It's done so in the past as a way to make a little extra money.

"We don't make enough money on the booths to warrant it," Raymond said. "It's easier to let the food vendors do it."

See TAX CHANGES, 3

Theater group takes new approach with next play

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County has proven it will support local theater based on local history.

In May it will find out if it can support a smaller play that have already been performed elsewhere and don't have the intense local tie.

Tom Loughlin hopes the community will embrace the concept.

Loughlin is directing performances of "Over The River and Through The



Woods" on May 1-3. It's the third production by Carolina Moon Theater.

The first play "A Time to Remember" dealt with life in Perquimans County in the early 1940s and covered the impact of World

War II and the Navy base at Harvey Point. The second play "Times are Changing in Hertford" focused on the period from 1946 through 1957.

They both sold out multiple performances in a mat-

ter of just days. Loughlin thinks part of that is because they were so intensely local. They were also incredibly time consuming to create.

"The first two plays were originals written by Ray Sawyer," Loughlin said last

week. "He and three women spent 200 man-hours writing, editing and re-writing a play."

"What helped sell those plays was people wanted to come and see something that mentioned their great uncle or their grandfather."

"Over the River" isn't about Perquimans County life.

It was written by Joe DiPietro, a New Jersey native about the relationship between a man, his four grandparents and a girl introduced to the young man

to keep him from leaving New Jersey for a dream job. The general theme of the play is about the role the traditional family plays in decision-making.

Loughlin said the play has been popular across the country since it was introduced in 1998.

The play features Matthew Johnson as Nick Cristano, Shelby Danneker as Caitlin O'Hare, Doug Russell as Frank Gianelli, Roxann Pegram as Aida Gianelli,

See APPROACH, 2

First female student joins firefighter program at PCHS

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Sabrina Sablon doesn't view herself as a trailblazer.

She goes through the same fire training every other member of class does at Perquimans County High School.

But she is different in that she's the first female to enroll in the two-year-old program.

The program was started to give high school students the basic training they need to become a firefighter at the age of 18. The purpose was to create a pipeline for students interested in becoming a local volunteer firefighter as well as a career path for those who want to make a career out of it.

Sablon falls into the sec-

ond category. "I just thought it was an interesting career path," she said last week.

The 17-year-old doesn't mind carrying the 50 pounds of gear firefighters wear.

"It's not that heavy, it's evenly distributed," she said.

She also doesn't mind the dirt and dust firefighters have to deal with.

She doesn't even mind the

See FIRST FEMALE, 3



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Students in the Perquimans County High School Fire Technology class, lead by instructor Michael Cartwright, recently practiced search and rescue techniques under simulated smoke conditions. Pictured are Randy Surgeon, Sabrina Sablon, Trey Duncan, Hunter Evans, Logan Basnight, Grayson Stevens and Alden Russell.



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