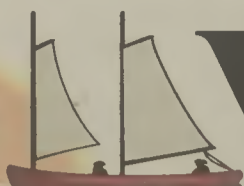


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Volleyball, Football pick up wins, 7

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 23, 2015

SEP 2

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50 cents

## Jackson parents plead guilty, get 2 1/2 years

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The parents of five brothers accused of having sex with their sister for 10 years accepted a plea bargain Monday on reduced charges.

John Jackson, 66, plead guilty to two counts of felony child abuse. His wife Nita, 55, plead guilty to two counts of felony

child abuse with sex act. Both received sentences of 31 to 47 months in prison. The total maximum charge for the two counts could have been about 14 years and if convicted on all nine counts, the punishment could have been far worse.

While accepting the plea, Superior Court Judge Cy Anthony Grant Sr. made it clear thought the punish-

ment should be more.

"I don't think you should ever be free again," Judge Grant told the couple. He

called the situation "the lowest, most despicable case I've heard. It makes me shudder to think about



JOHN JACKSON



NITA JACKSON

District Attorney Andrew Womble told the court the plea was offered to spare the victim who

would have to testify at a trial. The parents will get credit for the time they have already served, about eight months.

Womble set out aggravating factors in the case, including the fact that the parents tried to thwart efforts by law enforcement to talk to the victim and the brothers. They eventually moved to Colorado to evade the investigation,

The acts also violated a position of trust involving a young child. The girl was four and half years old when the abuse started and is about 17-years-old now.

The parents originally were released on bond after their arrest in May 2014. They were jailed again in February when more

See JACKSONS, 2

## Boards consider wind power regulations

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A three-member subcommittee of the five-member Perquimans County Planning Board will review the county's rules governing commercial wind towers.

### IN A RELATED STORY

■ Changes made to Chowan wind ordinance — 2

The next full planning board meeting is set for Oct. 13, but the three-member committee will meet prior to that, said Brenda Lassiter, one of the committee members.

The other members of the subcommittee are Donald Manley and Paul Cale.

Both Cale and Lassiter said they would go into the discussion with an open mind.

"I've got a lot of e-mails with a lot of attachments," Cale said. "I'll make the promise we'll have a workshop meeting to get them the attention they deserve. I don't have an opinion one way or another. But I'll guarantee that we'll not make everybody happy. I don't see where the ball will bounce, but somebody is not going to get what they want."

Lassiter also isn't sure what the planning board will do.

"I don't want to say I'm in favor of this one or not," Lassiter said. "I'm going to do what I think is in the best interests of the people of Perquimans County."

Crowds packed the last meeting of the planning board over the wind

See WIND POWER, 2

## ALS WALK



FILE PHOTO

A sea of people walk down Grubb Street last year for the Jim "Catfish" Hunter ALS Walk in Hertford. The event is back this Saturday at Perquimans County High School. Registration is at 8 a.m. and the event starts at 9 a.m.

## ECSU officials set out goals

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Two officials from Elizabeth City State University laid out the school's "Pathway to Prominence" strategy last week and urged area businesses to take advantage of the school's internship program.

Chancellor Dr. Stacey Franklin Jones was scheduled to address the Chamber Conversations Over Coffee event, but was called out of town.

In her place were Provost Dr. Van Newkirk and Alyn Goodson, the school's attorney. Newkirk was the associate provost for academic affairs at Alabama A&M before taking the ECSU job



GOODSON

in July. Goodson had been ECSU's deputy council and was promoted in November when Hermanda "Bernetta" H. Brown was terminated.

Goodson said ECSU is focusing on the 21-county area of northeastern North Carolina.

One by one the nearly 30 people attending the meeting at the Perquimans County Extension Center were asked to speak to how ECSU has touched their lives. The vast majority had stories to tell about how they themselves attended

the school or had children who did — or both.

Goodson said the first step on the "Pathway" has been completed. The goal was to make ECSU the most affordable academy success

See GOALS, 2

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Elizabeth City State University Provost Dr. Van Newkirk speaks at a Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce meeting last week at the Perquimans Extension Center.

## Electric relief is coming

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Hertford electric customers should expect to see about a 7 percent decrease in rates under a deal that allowed the town to sell off assets in Duke Power power plants.

The town expects its average wholesale costs will drop by 15 percent as result of the agreement, but town board members want to hold some of that money back to make improvements and repairs to the electric system. He said the town's utility has been operating on a bare bones budget for years and that's not sustainable.

"We do have system and equipment needs, about \$1 million over the next 10 years," said Town Manager Brandon Shoaf. "The electric fund is roughly 80 percent depreciated — meaning it's really old."

He said the list of things that need replacing includes everything from transformers to wire to poles and trucks.

The town council agreed to hold a public hearing on Oct. 14. Board meetings are usually held on Mondays but some members will be Winston-Salem for League of Municipalities meeting on Oct. 11.

The town has hired a consultant — UFS — to work on the rates. Shoaf said the company is working now on the actual rate schedules. Shoaf hopes the new rates will be in place by the October billing cycle.

Thirty-two cities belong to the N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEMPA) and serve more than 275,000 residential and commercial customers. NCEMPA cities include Rocky Mount, Wilson, Smithfield, Lumber

See RELIEF, 3

## State warns of algal blooms

From Staff Reports

RALEIGH — State officials are urging people to avoid contact with toxic algal blooms in and around the Albemarle Sound after tests revealed that the algae contains a toxin that can be harmful to people or animals.

North Carolina has had no reports of adverse health effects in people associated with these algal blooms. The algal blooms have turned up in waters in Bertie, Chowan, Hertford, Perquimans and Washington counties.

Staff in the state Division of Water Resources' Washington Regional office sampled the algal bloom in the Chowan River on Wednesday and sent the sample to the N.C. Department of Health and Human Services, or DHHS, for toxin testing. DHHS has completed its test results, which show that the algae contain microcystin that can be harmful to people who come into contact with it.

Algal samples collected from the Chowan River have been identified by DENR biologists as *Microcystis aeruginosa*, a colonial bluegreen alga. This alga is visible as green specks distributed throughout the water column but most noticeable

when it collects on the surface forming thick films and swirls.

While it is safe to boat or fish in the affected areas, the N.C. Division of Public Health routinely encourages the public to avoid contact with large accumulations of the algae and prevent children and pets from swimming or ingesting water in an algal bloom.

State health and water quality officials reiterate the following steps to safeguard pets and children from any potentially harmful algal bloom:

\* Keep children and pets away from water that appears bright green, discolored or scummy. Do not

See ALGAL, 3

## GET FIT PROGRAM



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Participants in Perquimans Get FIT go through Zimba moves Saturday at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. More than 70 people signed up by the deadline. The program runs through November. Albemarle Regional Health Services partnered with the recreation department to get funding from the Chowan Hospital Foundation to put on the program.

