

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



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"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 2, 2015

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Schools to sue over court surcharge fees

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County Schools officials are taking a \$5,000 chance they can get \$173,000 back from the state.

The school board agreed last week to join nearly three dozen other school districts in suing the state for a pot of money they say is being improperly transferred

to the prison system, not the schools.

"It's pretty much a no-brainer," said Susan Cox, the chairman of the school board. "When we asked how much it should cost and the answer was less than \$5,000, it was an easy choice."

The N.C. Constitution says fines and forfeitures paid to the courts must go to local school systems.

But in 2011 the General Assem-

bly passed a law that created a \$50 surcharge on motorists who plead guilty to having improper equipment on their vehicle.

The surcharge in the Justice Reinvestment Act was treated separately from fines and forfeitures and went to house misdemeanor inmates, not the schools.

Perquimans County Sheriff Eric Tilley said his deputies typically don't write minor citations for im-

proper equipment violations.

The sheriff said his deputies may pull someone over for an equipment violation, but typically say "get this fixed."

Tilley said someone caught speeding might plead guilty to the lesser charge of improper equipment in order to get the speeding ticket dropped. Improper equipment isn't considered a moving violation, and pleading guilty to

it won't raise car insurance rates. Being found guilty of speeding can raise rates.

Tilley said District Attorney Andrew Womble has a policy not to accept an improper equipment plea if the person was speeding at 70 miles per hour or more.

Tilley said he has no idea how much money is involved locally,

See LAWSUIT, 3

Jones to seek office

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Kyle Jones made it official Monday — he will seek a second four-year term on the Perquimans County Commission.

He'd previously said he was leaning toward another term, but hadn't made the final decision. On Monday he cleared that up.

"I am running for re-election because at this juncture our county desperately needs continuity of leadership."

Normally county commission candidates have until February to file for office, but the General Assembly moved up the 2016 election and the filing period started on Tuesday. It runs until noon of Dec. 21.

Two other sitting commissioners — Janice Cole and Matt Peeler — who are up for election this year

See JONES, 2



Santa and one of his elves made an early visit to Hertford last week in a boat.

PHOTO BY CHUCK PAGELS



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Jessiah Brown, a 10th grade student at Perquimans County High School, drew this Christmas scene about his deliveries. More artwork from students and letters to Santa will be published in the Dec. 23 issue of The Perquimans Weekly. The deadline to submit a letter is Dec. 9.

Holiday events coming

From Staff Reports

Organizers are keeping their fingers crossed for good weather this year as preparations continue for Grand Illumination Friday night and Saturday's Perquimans County Christmas Parade in Hertford and Winfall Parade in Winfall.

Grand Illumination takes place on the courthouse green at 6 p.m. The Winfall Parade starts at 10 a.m. Saturday and the one in Hertford is at 2 p.m.

The Perquimans County Chamber, the sponsors of the Hertford event, is expecting six marching bands, nine decorated floats and more than a half dozen marching/walking units including the Lil Divas from Elizabeth City.

The theme is "A Candy Land Christmas."

Represented in this year's parade will be four out of five U.S. military branches in addition to two American Legion posts. The U.S. Navy will be represented by a replica battleship and commander of the Norfolk

See PARADES, 2

Area high school conferences under review

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County athletes may soon find themselves in a new conference — one that doesn't include Camden, but could include John A. Holmes in Edenton.

The N.C. High School Athletic Association is in the process at looking at conference alignments.

Perquimans is presently

in the Coastal 10, a conference with 10 schools including some very small ones. Ocracoke, the smallest, has just 53 students in high school compared Camden with 571. The enrollment at Perquimans County High is 531.

Pairing similar-sized schools is one of the goals of the NCHSAA, but so is geography.

Susan Cox, the chairman

of the Perquimans County School Board, is also secretary of the Coastal 10. She admits whatever happens it won't be greeted warmly by everybody.

"Realignment is complicated," she said. "It's a pain and when you get through it, most people are not happy."

The NCHSAA looks at realignment every four years now.

Back in 1969-70, Perqui-

mans was classified as a 2-A school and was in the Albemarle Conference with Ahoskie, Edenton, Gates, Northampton, Plymouth, Scotland Neck and Williamston.

Twenty years later, the Albemarle Confederate was made up of Perquimans, Camden, Currituck, Gates, Manteo, Northampton County-West and Weldon.

Carolina Preps, an on-

line resource for coaches, developed one view of how realignment will look. It put Perquimans in the same conference with North Edgecombe, South Creek, Northampton County, Riverside, Tarboro, Plymouth and Edenton.

Under the Carolina Preps scenario, Camden, the largest member of the Coastal 10, would be in a conference with Mattamuskeet, Man-

teo, Columbia, Creswell, Cape Hatteras and Gates County.

Cox said she can't speak for others, but Gates County may not like it.

"From Gates to Columbia is a pretty long haul," she said. "The general mood is the smaller schools want to play smaller schools."

Cox is opposed to having

See CONFERENCES, 3

Town of Hertford looking to curb electrical demand

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A typical Hertford power customer is paying \$11 a month less for electricity and customers have ways

to knock it down another \$20 to \$24 if they join the effort to voluntarily limit their peak demand.

The \$11 average savings was the result of a deal with Duke Power whereby Hertford and other municipal utilities sold back their financial interest in Duke's nuclear plants.

Town Manager Brandon Shoaf said he's heard from some customers who say

that's been a welcome relief for them.

But in speaking with to a Chamber Conversations Over Coffee meeting last month, Shoaf said bigger savings lie in efforts to reduce the town's peak demand.

"Load management will be a big opportunity for the town and for our customers," Shoaf said.

The town doesn't generate

any electricity, but it buys it wholesale and turns around and sells it to customers. When the Town of Hertford gets a bill from Duke Power, it lists the number of kilowatt-hours used that month, but it also contains a peak demand charge. The annual peaks typically come on the hottest day of summer and the coldest day of winter.



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Hertford Town Manager Brandon Shoaf talks about utility rates last month at a "Chamber Conversations Over Coffee" event.

See ELECTRICITY, 2



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