

# Perquimans Chamber gets new board member

From Staff Reports

One new director was elected and two current directors were re-elected recently to serve on the Board of Directors for the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce.

Jackie Hobbs, of Beechtree Inn in Perquimans County, will begin serving a three-year term on the board.

Current directors Charlie Layden and Henry Norman were re-elected to serve additional three-year terms as well. Norman currently serves as treasurer.

Layden represents Layden's Supermarket in Belvidere while Norman represents the Perquimans County Farm Bureau.

Each new director begins serving Jan. 1. They were introduced during the Chamber's annual meeting held Dec. 8. The board of directors will elect new officers in January.

At the annual business meeting held Dec. 8, Executive Director Sid Eley gave his annual report on what the Chamber has accomplished throughout the year.

In 2015, the Chamber organized and implemented several projects including the annual fundraising banquet and auctions, the Perquimans County Christmas Parade, the Perquimans Expo (including a trade show seminar prior to the Expo), six monthly Conversations Over Coffee breakfast meetings, a county-wide Small Business Saturday Promotion, two week-long holiday sales promotions, Trick or Treat Downtown Historic Hertford, and provided gift bags to all new school system employees in Perquimans County.

In addition, the chamber added or welcomed back 37 new and/or former chamber members, hosted five ribbon cuttings for new businesses, sponsored and attended 10 small busi-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Charlie Layden, Jackie Hobbs, and Henry Norman are three new directors for the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce.

ness educational seminars on a variety of subjects, participated in the 2-day Indian Summer Festival, offered a new benefit for Chamber members for worker's compensation insurance, and promoted Chamber members daily on a variety of social media.

Monthly Chamber newsletters were written and dispersed digitally, weekly email Eblasts were generated and distributed digitally, Chamber members were provided small business tips, and the Chamber's website and event calendar were updated with both photos and editorial copy. Welcome packets were created and given to prospective new Chamber members and the chamber's boardroom was used for monthly meetings by area non-profits and Chamber members for business meetings at no charge. The Chamber also serves as a drop-off site for donations to the Tri-County Animal Shelter year round and Toys For Tots during the holiday season.

This past year, the Chamber removed and replaced wooden windows in the building with vinyl windows,

purchased and installed new computer software to ward off cyber attacks, purchased and installed a new color copier, purchased and installed new credit card payment program accepting chip cards, purchased and installed new computer software to back up office computers weekly/monthly, and designed/constructed a large Selfie frame as a marketing tool to help promote shopping local.

The Chamber also operated and maintained a gift shop offering custom-designed items and souvenirs made locally and promoting the county in an effort to support local artists while not competing with local businesses. The small gift shop generated over \$450 in state and local sales tax.

The Chamber also serves as the county's official state visitors' center and, as such, welcomed nearly 3,100 visitors in 2015, received and processed numerous county/town visitor requests for visitor packets/area and business information, provided information to county residents and newcomers, and referred visitors to various other small businesses,

restaurants, and B&Bs in the area. In addition, the Chamber shipped town and county brochures to various state visitor centers around the state as requested.

The Chamber helped promote local businesses and county souvenirs by co-sponsoring a booth at a professional golf tournament at Albemarle Plantation. Other tourism-related work provided by the Chamber this past year included updating the towns' and county's information on the state's official tourism website, VisitNC.com, assisted with three video productions involving the county including two that eventually aired on a Raleigh television station, and promoted the county and towns on national social media sites.

Chamber staff attended local, regional, and state meetings regarding chamber, tourism, and economic development issues, created and distributed brochures for Belvidere sites & historic districts, and updated/added sites and photographs of

Perquimans County sites to the 2016 AAA Tour Book for North Carolina.

In 2015, the Chamber also purchased drone video and professional photos of the historic S-bridge and Historic Hertford for tourism professional use, provided tours to two groups scoping out the county for future group tours, and welcomed and provided transportation/information to visiting boaters docked at Hertford Bay Marina.

The Perquimans Chamber also hosts the popular Jimmy "Catfish" Hunter Museum, an informational tribute to the county's native national baseball hall of famer visited by over 2,800 visitors in 2015.

In support of the museum, the Chamber gave museum tours, printed 5,000 new rack cards for distribution, assisted and attended

the renaming of the US Hwy. 17 high-rise bridge in memory of Jimmy "Catfish" Hunter, and hosted eight school groups for museum tours.

The chamber serves as the county's Small Business Resource Center. In 2015, the Chamber organized and hosted an informative seminar for small businesses on how small businesses need to prepare for disaster, sponsored/attended workshop on sales tax changes for non-profits conducted by North Carolina Department of Revenue, provided information on its website, and distributed information to potential start-up businesses.

The Chamber also hosts a small Perquimans County Museum complete with photos, historical books and items, and information used for genealogy research.

## At This Blessed Season...



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*Silver Fox*



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