

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Boy's Basketball Coach Johnson marks 500th career victory, 8

"News from Next Door"

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REGION GRANTED TRADE ZONE STATUS

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans and six other counties in northeastern North Carolina now have international status as part of a Foreign Trade Zone (FTZ) based at the Port of Virginia.

The U.S. Department of Commerce signed off on the deal in late November and Virginia and North Carolina

officials announced it last week.

Getting FTZ status for the northeast has been a huge goal for Sen. Bob Steinburg, (R-Chowan), and he welcomed the news that it's finally a reality.

"Somebody told me this is probably the biggest economic news in our region in at least the last four de-



STEINBURG

acades, maybe longer," Steinburg said.

Foreign Trade Zones (FTZ) are areas geographically inside the United States, but are legally considered outside its customs territory. Companies that locate in FTZs can benefit by using special procedures to encourage U.S. activity by reducing, elimi-

nating, or delaying duties.

Cathy Davison, the director of the Albemarle Commission, said on a scale of 1-to-10, the FTZ announcement ranked at the top of the scale.

While the Port of Virginia may seem far away, Davison said it's really not.

Davison said it is 61 miles from the Portsmouth Marine Terminal to the Perquimans County Industrial

Park. The industrial site in Isle Of Wight, Va. is only 29 miles, but it's down a two-lane road. The Franklin (Va.) Industrial Park is 58 miles from the Portsmouth facility. The one in Southampton Industrial Park is 54 miles from a port.

And Steinburg said the North Carolina sites have a big advantage - availability and cost.

"They (Virginia port of-

icials) are in the position where they have land available, but it's very limited and very expensive," Steinburg said. "Here is the northeast we have lots of land and it's cheap."

Also included in Trade Zone 20 are Camden, Chowan, Currituck, Gates, Hertford and Pasquotank counties. Combined they add

See TRADE, 2

Football stadium plans proceed

Editor's Note: This is the first story of a two part series.

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County High School should have a new 1,000-seat football field by the start of the 2018 season.

Donations, not tax money, should be enough to get the first phase completed.

"I fully expect you should see a football stadium across from the high school in about 15 months," Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman said last week.

The project won't be as costly as the original \$6 million plan that included a track, soccer field and tennis courts but it's a start to show the project is moving forward.

In 2010 Dr. William Nixon, a Perquimans native who now lives in Wilmington, offered to give the school system 32 acres across Edenton Road Street for the sole purpose of building an athletic complex. Originally Nixon set a five-year deadline to make the athletic complex a reality, but he has since granted a five-year extension.

The latest donation comes from an anonymous source that has agreed to pay \$250,000 to build a field house with bathrooms. The largest gift is \$600,000 donated by the late Charles Ward.

"This is not Texas football," Cheeseman said. "I don't mean that in a bad way. They are building high school stadiums that cost \$50 million or \$60 million but they also have high schools with 5,000 or 10,000 students."

PCHS has about 1,500

See STADIUM, 2



Santa Pays a Visit

STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS
Santa and an elf (a very large elf at that) wave from a boat recently to motorists on the Hertford causeway.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A design shows the proposed Perquimans Marine Industrial Park with a man-made boat basin. The Perquimans County Recreation Center is located to the right at the foot of South Granby Street. A new boat ramp will be located to the left at the foot of North Granby Street.

S-Bridge closing Jan. 9 for repairs

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The N.C. Department of Transportation will be closing Hertford's S-Bridge to both vehicular and boat traffic from Jan. 9 until at least the end of March.

DOT will remove the asphalt-wearing surface and replace it with a wooden deck using 6x12 inch timbers. The wood will weigh about half of what the asphalt weighs and put less strain on the gears and support structures. The repairs are a stopgap measure to buy time until a replacement bridge can be built.

DOT engineers hope that can start sometime in late

See BRIDGE, 2

Officials hope for funding of industrial park

Editor's Note: This story concludes a two part series.

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

If the federal government starts looking for "shovel ready" infrastructure projects to boost the economy, Perquimans County has one ready and waiting.

The 72-acre Perquimans Marine Industrial Park has the land, the utilities and the state and federal permits just ready to go, said Bob Peele, the director of the N.C. Seafood Industrial Park Authority.

"This project is about as shovel ready as you can be," Peele said last week.

The issue has been money. It would cost about \$22 million to

fully complete the project with a 350-foot-long, 10-foot deep man-made boat basin with direct access to the Perquimans River. It would cost about \$7 million to build the first phase. Perquimans County recently struck out with a grant \$5 million request from Golden LEAF for the first phase.

See FUNDING, 2

Search is on for a new sheriff

From Staff Reports

Potential candidates for Perquimans County Sheriff have until Dec. 30 to submit an application.

Sheriff Eric Tilley is retiring in on Jan. 30.

The Perquimans County Commission is looking to replace him. The person will

need to be a resident of Perquimans County and have the qualifications to serve as sheriff.

"Our board is committed to a fair, nonpartisan process that results in the best sheriff for the county," said Kyle Jones, the chairman of the county



TILLEY

See SHERIFF, 3

Janice Cole scholarship could grow

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Donors are invited to help ensure that a scholarship honoring Janice McKenzie Cole continues for generations to come.

Cole stepped down this month after six years on the Perquimans County Commission. The last four were as chairman of the board.

The Janice McKenzie Cole Mentoring Scholarship was created by fellow commissioner Kyle Jones. Jones funded the first year and plans to continue to



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Janice Cole (center) poses with Brenda Lassiter, executive director of the Perquimans County Schools Foundation Inc. and Bob Clinkscales, the chairman of the foundation board. The foundation will administer a scholarship in Cole's name.

See SCHOLARSHIP, 3



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