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THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



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S-BRIDGE REPAIR PROJECT ON TRACK

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

If the weather cooperates N.C. Department of Transportation officials hope to complete repairs to Hertford's S-Bridge by the end of the next month.

Crews have completely removed the asphalt driving surface and the metal deck from the swing-span. As that went on, rusted metal I-beams were removed and replaced with new beams.

John Abel, the bridge program manager for N.C. DOT's Division I, said the next step will be to work on both ends of each bridge.

Able said they want to make sure the bridge can safely open and close even when warm weather might cause the metal to expand.

With the bridge closed, traffic, including school buses, has to be rerouted over the U.S. 17 Bypass Bridge. Before work on the S-Bridge started, DOT adjusted the timing of the traffic signal on U.S. 17 and Church Street to give cars more time to get onto U.S.17.

So far, that plan appears to have eliminated much of the long delays some had feared, according to John

See S-BRIDGE, 3



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS
Crews from the N.C. Department of Transportation remove and replace steel beams as part of the S-Bridge project in Hertford on Monday. The repairs are expected to keep the bridge closed until the end of March.

Internet survey launched

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Hertford-based Albemarle Commission is conducting a survey of the 10-county area to find out what level of broadband Internet service is really out there.

Director Cathy Davison said once the commission gets the full picture and finds out what people want and need, it can work with industry and government to fill in the gaps.

"As part of our ongoing planning and economic development work for the region, we realized that we couldn't leave broadband access and infrastructure out of the equation," Davison said.

Davison believes having broadband services isn't a luxury, but something the region must have if it expects to attract new industry and help existing businesses expand.

There are pockets of the 10-county Albemarle Commission region that have no Internet service at all and some areas with only very slow service.

Davison found that out when she and her family moved to off New Hope

See SURVEY, 2

WHITE SWORN IN



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Superior Court Judge J.C. Cole (above, right) hands Perquimans County Sheriff Shelby White his badge last week during a swearing-in ceremony.



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Perquimans County Sheriff Shelby White (left) raises his right hand while resting his left on the Bible held by his mother Gail during a swearing-in service last week.

House speaker issues letter

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The leader of the N.C. House has issued a statement suggesting his initial questions about the Amazon wind farm have been largely answered. Speaker Tim Moore (R-Cleveland) was one of 10 North Carolina lawmakers that sent a letter to President Donald Trump's pick for Secretary for Homeland Security. The letter says the Amazon project should never have been built, and argues it will harm the Navy's ability to use a radar facility in Chesapeake.

The letter to Gen. John Kelly sparked a protest from local elected officials who support the wind farm. On Jan. 24 Moore and nine other lawmakers took a tour of the Amazon project and met with local leaders.

The same day, Moore released a statement.

"I appreciate the time and input of everyone who participated in the tour today," Moore said. "This was a valuable learning experience for me and my House

See STATEMENT, 2

Roanoke building fiber system

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

An electrical co-op that includes small parts of northern Perquimans and Chowan counties has started building a \$4 million fiber optic network to link substations together.

While the initial goal is improve the performance and reliability of the local electric distribution system, the longer-term benefit may be faster Internet service to customers in the Roanoke Electric Cop-

op region, said Marshall Cherry, chief operation officer of Roanoke Electric.

The fiber will link the system's 12 substations together. The same fiber can provide the backbone for an Internet system.

"This will be a game changer for our electric utility operations, as it will allow us to significantly reduce system losses and improve outage management," said Roanoke Electric Co-op CEO Curtis Wynn about the main focus of the expansion. "Also, with this world-class broadband technology comes new opportunities to bolster economic development and improve the local economy.

"The potential benefits

of having high-speed Internet can go a long way toward enhancing the quality of life, especially in our underserved rural communities."

Albemarle EMC, a Hertford-based co-op that serves Chowan, Perquimans, Pasquotank, Camden and Currituck counties, has no similar plans.

"Albemarle EMC has no plans to own fiber infrastructure," said Chris Powell. "We intend to stay within our area of expertise, which is providing reliable, affordable electricity. We believe the companies that currently offer Internet locally are better positioned to

See ROANOKE, 2

BOAT RAMP



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Crews from Waff Construction drive sheet piling into the Perquimans River to create a cofferdam Wednesday. Once complete the water will be pumped out and a boat ramp will be built.

