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PROGRESS

NEW ENERGY COMES TO THE REGION INSIDE

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, APRIL 19, 2017

APR 19 REC'D

50 cents



Johnson to attend Governor's School, 5

County reviews tighter solar farm rules

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County reviewed a new and tougher ordinance dealing with large solar farms Monday night.

Perquimans County is 30 days into a 120-day moratorium on considering any new solar projects. The four-month pause is to allow

the county planning board time to review the current solar rules so the commission could make changes if needed.

The draft recommendation presented Monday to the commission by the Perquimans County Planning Board limits the size of new solar farms at 20 megawatts. The old ordinance had no

restriction on size. From a practical standpoint, the recommendation would ensure that any future solar development isn't any larger than what Perquimans County already has. Two of the three plants already built are 5-megawatts in size. The third, one on U.S. 17, is about 20 megawatts. The smaller projects use

about 70 acres. That compares to really large projects like one in Currituck County that covers 2,000 acres. The county commission reviewed the draft presented by the planning board and will take the issue up next month at a work session.

The draft ordinance increases the setback between structures and ad-

joining property from 30 feet to 100 feet. It also calls for a drainage study before the projects is build and limits the height of grass or weeds to 12 inches. The old ordinance didn't address those issues. "We wanted to be a little bit more stringent," said Brenda Lassiter, one of the

planning board members. The draft ordinance gets tougher of the buffer between the solar farm and adjacent properties. The old ordinance required a vegetative buffer of trees within three years. The draft ordinance requires developers to give a cash bond equal

See SOLAR, 2

Foster parents needed

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The Perquimans County Department of Social Services needs foster parents.

DSS is planning a meeting pm May 3 for anybody interested in learning more.

As of right now, Perquimans DSS has no licensed foster parents in the county. That means if a local child needs to be placed in a foster home, DSS needs to reach out to neighboring counties to find a place to house them. But even that home for an at-risk child may only be temporary, said Sherry Schrod, a foster care social worker with the local DSS.

"If we have to send a child to say Pasquotank County, we're in a sense 'borrowing' that foster home from Pasquotank," Schrod said. "If Pasquotank needed that home we'd have to move that child somewhere else. Imagine an 8-year-old girl who just got used to her new home and then is moved

See FOSTER, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

N.C. Secretary of Commerce Tony Copeland talks to former Perquimans County Commissioner Janice Cole Saturday during a meeting of the Perquimans Democratic Party at the Perquimans County Courthouse.

Commerce Secretary speaks

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Newly confirmed N.C. Commerce Secretary Tony Copeland spoke to Perquimans County Democrats Saturday about the economic challenges facing rural communities. About 20 people attended his

talk at the Perquimans County Democratic Convention at the Historic Perquimans County Courthouse.

Copeland's family has lived in the region since the 1600s and he grew up attending Piney Woods Friends Meeting. He graduated from Albemarle Academy and then Duke University. He got

his law degree from T.M. Cooley School of Law at Western Michigan University.

Before taking the commerce post Copeland was a partner in the law firm of Williams Mullen. He also served as vice president of the Raleigh-based telecom-

See COPELAND, 2

Water project event planned

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Water quality officials plan to show off their latest efforts in Perquimans and Pasquotank County on April 26.

The "Field Day" is designed for farmers, landowners and officials from both counties and extension agents to show two recent water quality projects.

The test area was the Little River, a water body that separates Perquimans and Pasquotank counties and flows directly into the Albemarle Sound. There is about an eight-mile stretch of the river that is listed as "impaired" in part because the level of sediment and nitrogen is too high.

Part of the reason is historically farm ditches ran directly to the river with no areas to retain the water and allow it to filter out the chemicals and sediment.

Through mostly federal and state grants, some 2,000 feet of drainage and buffers were installed starting in the winter of 2016 on the Perquimans side. About 5,000 feet was created in Pasquotank County. The watershed area that is protected is about 132,000 acres.

Mark Powell, a program and project management consultant with the Albemarle RC&D, said earlier projects on public land have shown that the ditching and retention projects work to lower nitrogen and sediment. The Little River project was to show that it could be done on private land with the cooperation of landowners.

"What we're trying to demonstrate is how to we can work with private landowners,"

See WATER, 2

Jury finds 25-year-old woman guilty of drunk driving

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

A woman who was arrested for drunk driving after leaving the home of Assistant District Attorney

Kyle Jones, was found guilty Wednesday by a Perquimans County jury.

Anne Marie Whidbee, 25, claimed she left Jones' house on New Hope Road last year because Jones had

touched her inappropriately several times and she was afraid. Shortly after leaving, she ran her car into a culvert.

Jones, 31, was not scheduled to testify in the case,

but he did Wednesday morning.

He said he and Whidbee were friends, and she came over for pizza and to watch movies that night. Whidbee had been accepted into the

U.S. Coast Guard and he said the two weren't sure if or when they'd ever see each other again. Both described themselves as "friends."

Whidbee testified she had a boyfriend who lived in Cali-

fornia. The two met when Whidbee worked at Pineapple Café and Chick-fil-A in Elizabeth City.

See DWI, 4

Chamber Expo coming April 27

From Staff Reports

More than two dozen businesses some ready to hire new employees, will be at the annual Perquimans Business Expo and Job Fair on April 27.

The Expo will run from

noon until 4 p.m. at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. Admission is \$1 per person. From 5 p.m. until 7 p.m. there will be a Chef's Challenge. Admission to that is \$10. Money raised from the Challenge will go to stop human trafficking.

Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Sid Eley said the businesses will show off what services they offer.

During the afternoon

Planter's Ridge will demonstrate how to pot plants, there will be a celebration of Perquimans County earning NC Works Certified Work Ready status, the Hertford Print Shop will demonstrate printing techniques, the Master Gardeners will man an "Ask a Master Gardener" table and Kenny Saunders will provide a putting demonstration. Also during the afternoon, the Inner-County

See EXPO, 4



GARDEN PARTY

SUBMITTED PHOTO

Lynwood Winslow, chair of the Newbold-White House Furnishings Committee, adds the finishing touches to an arrangement of recently acquired furnishings and accessories for the house. Ongoing work to accurately furnish the house is one of many projects funded by the annual PCRA Garden Party.



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