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# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, MAY 3, 2017

50 cents



Lane: Civil debate makes America great, 6

## New solar project OK'd

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The Perquimans County Commission approved a revised plan for a 35-acre solar power project on U.S. 17 Monday night.

Perquimans is under a self-imposed moratorium that bans the acceptance of any new applications for solar power projects until the

county has a chance to review its rules. The planning board has submitted some proposed changes, but the commission has yet to act on them.

However the Conditional Use Request for the White Family Sun Farm was submitted before the moratorium, and scaled down from 75 acres to 35 acres and resubmitted.

The vote Monday was 4-2 in favor. Both Commissioners Charles Woodward and Joseph Hoffer voted against the project. The meeting lasted until midnight.

Heath McLaughlin, the developer of the project, laid out why he thought the project met the county's rules by stressing two issues in the CUP process that deal with issues of "harmony"

with surrounding land uses and questions if the project would produce "substantial" property damages to surrounding property owners.

The CUP process is the same for solar projects, wind projects and electrical substations and other uses. The "harmony" and "substantial

See SOLAR, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Witnesses raise their hands to get sworn in Monday during a hearing on a new solar power project before the Perquimans County Commission.

## JOBS SKILLS PROGRAM HONORED

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A Perquimans County program designed to teach job skills was honored last week as the county was named a NC Works Certified Work Ready Community.

A ceremony was held at the annual Perquimans County Chamber Expo at the Perquimans County Recreation Center.

The NC Works designation came from the North Carolina Chamber Foundation.

Jill Cohen, the director of the Career and Technical Education program for Perquimans County Schools, said the designation is an important milestone for both the school system and the community that supports it.

"From a business standpoint, they can find we are producing people who are work ready based on national work-ready certificates. From an economic development standpoint it allows us to market our community and to show our employers, our workforce development programs and our schools, including our community college, are all on the same page."

Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath, who accepted the plaque, said the efforts are important.

See EXPO, 4



STAFF PHOTOS BY PETER WILLIAMS

Perquimans County Manager Frank Heath accepts a certificate naming Perquimans County a NC Works Certified Work Ready Community last week during the Business Expo held by the Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce. Right, Amanda Pulley addresses a crowd Thursday at the annual Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce Expo



## Water quality issues raised

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Dwayne Hinson said area rivers and the Albemarle Sound are sending signs that something isn't right.

Hinson, a technician with the Pasquotank Soil and Water Conservation Office, said what's not clear is how to fix it. Hinson was one of the speakers at a Field Day Wednesday that involved tours of two projects designed to improve the quality of the Little River and ultimately, the Albemarle Sound.

"We don't know what's going on, but something has changed," Hinson told a group of about 20 people. Some included other soil and water officials, farmers and forestry officials.

He pointed to a significant increase in green algae forming in area waters. That poses health dangers.

"I don't even let my dog go in," Hinson said.

Algae blooms were once a common thing 30 years ago, but it's largely not been a problem until recently.

See WATER, 4



HINSON

## Sprague named ambassador for national effort

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Tanner Sprague, a 10-year-old Perquimans boy who battled cancer, has been named the National Ambassador for the third annual Great Cycle Challenge USA.

During the past two years,

nearly 40,000 riders in all 50 states, pedaled 3 million miles throughout the months of June during the Challenge and raised \$4.7 million to fund childhood cancer research.

For the event this year, Tanner will be the public face for the organization.

Tanner was diagnosed with

osteosarcoma in 2016. It is a deadly bone cancer that affects hundreds of kids each year. He had to undergo surgery and the bone in one arm had to be removed and replaced with a bone from his leg.

Laura Sobiech, a community outreach coordinator for the Challenge, said Tanner

was picked because of his attitude and the attitudes of his parents.

"He's just an awesome kid," Sobiech said. "His family really understands the power of a story and are willing to talk about it to help change

See SPRAGUE, 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Tanner Sprague gives a thumbs up wearing a Great Cycle Challenge jersey recently. Sprague, who was diagnosed with a rare cancer, and has been named the National Ambassador for the biking event.

## Plantation upgrades marina

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Albemarle Plantation residents and some of the staff recently completed an improvement project at the marina.

With the completion of the work, for the first time the Plantation is opening up

the marina to people who don't live there but want to lease boat slips. In addition, the Dockside Café has now reopened after being closed for several years. It too is open to non-residents.

The docks were built in the early 1990s and were starting to show their age, said resident Robert "Jock" Muir.

The main focus was "C" dock. It's also serves as the fuel dock. Muir said over about three months the regular Plantation staff re-

placed the decking. At the same time about 35 resident volunteers took the job of refurbishing the power pedestals.

"Finding volunteers here at the Plantation is never difficult," Muir said. "Our residents volunteer in many community events, projects, civic and historical endeavors throughout Perquimans and Chowan counties."

The pedestals were removed from the dock, cleaned up, taken apart, re-

See MARINA, 2

## GARDEN SHOW



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Katy Shook demonstrates how to propagate new plants from stems Saturday during the annual Garden Show held at the Perquimans County Recreation Center. The event brings together Master Gardeners from across Perquimans, Chowan and Gates counties. Shook administers the local Master Gardener program.



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