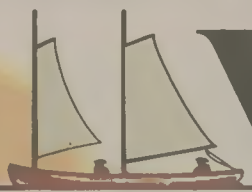


# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 20, 2017



COA to hold 'Pork and Pearls,' 5

SEP 20 REC'D 50 cents

## NTSB releases crash report

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

A helicopter that crashed in a field in Perquimans County this month had recently undergone inspections, but witnesses reported seeing smoke trailing behind it before it crashed.

The National Transportation Safety Board released the preliminary findings Tuesday morning. The full investigation could take a year to 18 months.

The six-year-old Eurocopter was equipped with an on-board audio and video recording system but the unit was damaged by heat. However, the memory device remained intact, according to the report. The unit was sent to the NTSB vehicle recorder laboratory for examination.

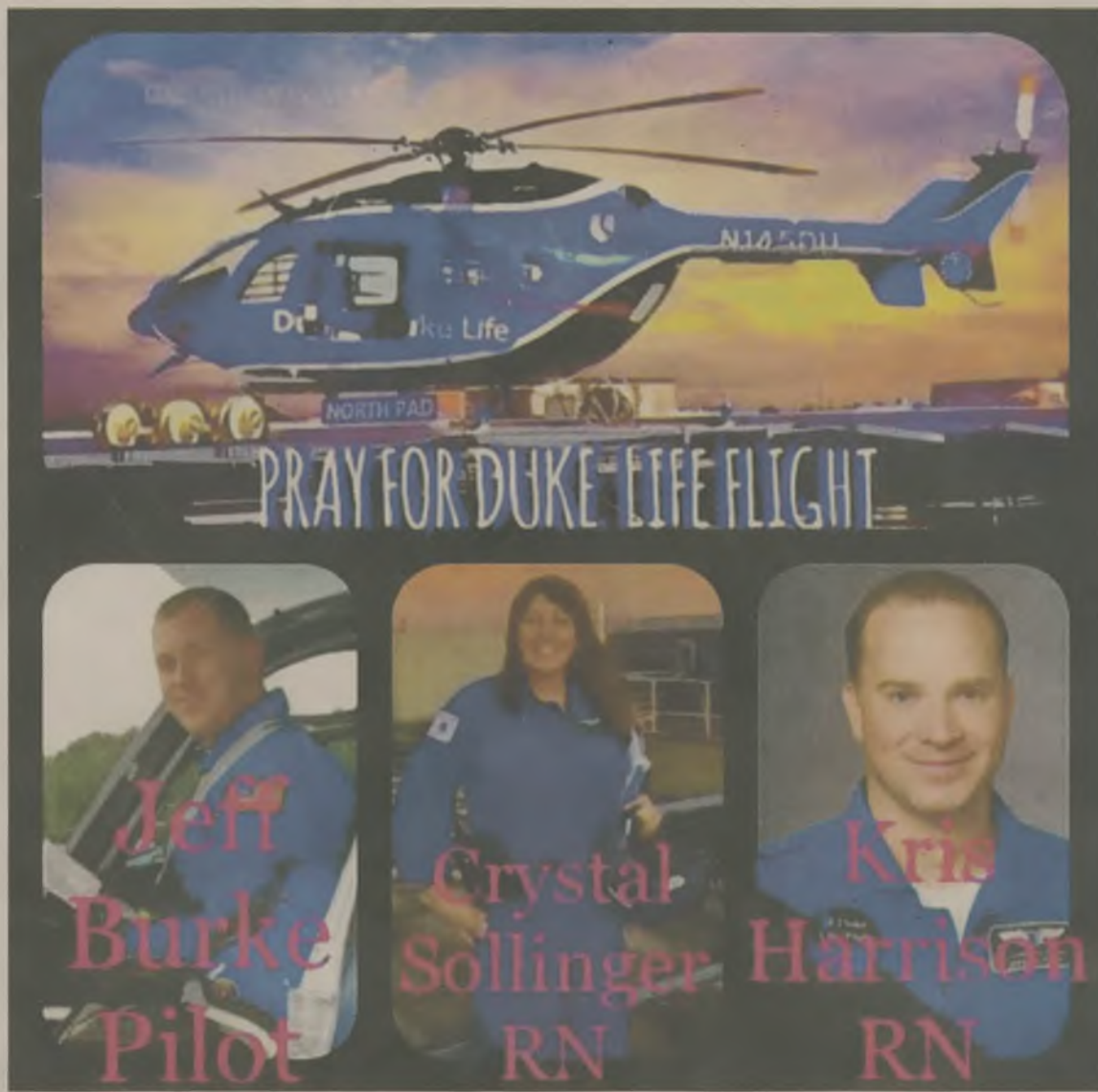
On Sept. 8 the helicopter flew from Johnston Regional Airport in Smithfield where it is based to Elizabeth City Regional Airport and refueled with 70 gallons of fuel.

It arrived at Sentara Albemarle Hospital about 10:22 a.m. At 11:08 a.m., the pilot radioed the company operations center and advised that they were departing for Duke Hospital with two hours of fuel and four people on board.

There were no further communications with the helicopter.

Several witnesses reported seeing smoke trailing behind the helicopter while it was in flight. The smoke was described by some witnesses as "heavy" or "dark," while others reported the color as "black," "dark blue" or "blue." One witness reported that the helicopter was "hovering" and "not traveling forward" while it was a "couple of hundred feet" above the

See NTSB, 4



Duke hospital released photos of the flight crew and the helicopter that crashed in Perquimans County earlier this month.

## Four crash victims remembered

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Services have been held for the four people killed this month in a helicopter crash in Perquimans County this month.

The Duke Life Flight helicopter went down in a field off Swamp Road on Sept. 8. It may be a year before the final report is released, according to Terry Williams, a spokesman for the agency.

Flight nurses Kris Harrison and



BARTLETT

being transported from Sentara Albemarle Hospital to Duke for treatment.

Crystal Sollinger and pilot Jeff Burke died in the fiery crash, according to Duke Health.

Mary Bartlett, 70, an Elizabeth City resident, also died in the crash. She was

transported from Sentara Albemarle Hospital to Duke for treatment.

See VICTIMS, 4

## Firefighters, EMS crews honor the fallen

BY BETH VELLIQUETTE  
The Daily Reflector

GREENVILLE — Members of city and volunteer fire departments and EMS crews stood silently by their vehicles last week as they paid tribute to three Duke Life Flight crew members, who died Friday in a helicopter crash in Perquimans County.

Three hearses carried the bodies of pilot Jeff Burke and nurses Crystal Sollinger and Kris Harrison from the morgue at the East Carolina University Brody School of Medicine at Vidant Medical Center back to the Durham area.

"We embark this morning on the most important mission of our lives, to bring our fallen

brothers and sister home," Duke Life Flight posted on its Facebook page this morning. "Thank you all for your continued prayers, love and support while we carry out this most honorable of tasks."

The helicopter had picked up a patient, 70-year-old Mary Bartlett, from the Sentara Albemarle Medical Center in Eliza-

beth City and was returning to Duke Hospital in Durham, according to news reports, when it crashed in a grassy field near the town of Belvedere. Bartlett also died in the crash.

Jay Morris, deputy fire marshal for Pitt County, said he received a call from a man in John-

See FALLEN, 4

## Draft I-87 plans released

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

The four-way stop on U.S. 17 and Harvey Point Road/Church Street would be replaced with an interchange and access would be limited or eliminated in other areas based on the preliminary design for Interstate 87 unveiled earlier this month.

When complete, the Interstate would link Raleigh with Norfolk. The idea is to mostly use existing four lane roads and bring them up to Interstate standards. But the \$1 billion project has yet to be funded.

This month's plans are just preliminary and designed so cost estimates can be done.

Shane York, a feasibility studies engineer for the NC Department of Transportation, stressed that at this point there will be plenty of opportunities for more public input before the project is finalized. Cost estimates based on the present design may be available by Christmas.

"These designs we are presenting are not the final designs," York said. "We can still move, this and change that and this could take 20 years," he said, pointing out that federal funding hasn't been approved yet.

Property owners along U.S. 17 will likely lose access as they know it. Instead access roads parallel with the

See I-87, 2

## Reward offered in Bosta case

BY LINDELL JOHN KAY  
AND PETER WILLIAMS  
Cooke Communications

Gov. Roy Cooper is offering \$5,000 for information about the 2015 disappearance of a Perquimans County woman whom authorities now believe was murdered.

Karen Rae Bosta, 39, was last seen May 31, 2015, while she was shopping at the Food Lion formerly located at North Broad Street and Coke Avenue in Edenton.

Previous reports indicated Bosta was last seen at a Walgreens pharmacy, but new information places her at the Food Lion prior to her disappearance, Perquimans Sheriff Shelby White said



BOSTA

See BOSTA, 2



Adam Lassiter, Craig Craft and Stan Winslow stand next to a plane loaded with supplies for hurricane victims in Florida.

## Groups seek to help hurricane victims

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Perquimans County is reaching out to Florida's Hurricane Irma victims by air and land this month.

Craig Craft of Craft Air Services set out to Florida last week in a Beechcraft Baron twin-engine aircraft packed with supplies provided by local businesses.

"They took the two seats

out of the back and packed it," Leslie Craft said of the plane.

Craig is flying as part of Operation Air Drop.

They plan on working out of Tallahassee and take the high-value items to just where they're needed and do it quickly. The plane is capable of speeds of over 210 miles an hour.

Bagley Swamp Wesleyan Church is helping coordi-

nate a collection drive that will head out by land on Sept. 24. Michael Stallings of Stallings Farm Trucking in Winfall, has offered the use of one of his tractor-trailers and will provide a driver to take locally collected items to Florida, free of charge.

Pastor James Spaughey of Bagley Swamp understands dollar donations to hurricane funds are important but he said sometimes he

said people just need to feel they are more involved.

"When people can tangibly help, it helps us feel like we're doing something. When you send diapers you bought, it feels like you helped."

And things like diapers is one of the things the church has singled out. The church is not asking for clothing. It is

See HURRICANE, 2

## Principal reflects on improved high school ABC score

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
News Editor

Perquimans County High School didn't just suddenly improve from a "C" to a

"B" school said Melissa Fields, the principal for the past two years.

It took a lot of work and coordination, she said.

"The results demonstrate the impact of hard work,



FIELDS

dedication, and commitment on behalf of the entire Pirate team," she said earlier this month.

She admits at first she didn't think the "B" score was possible at first. But that was the goal of Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman.

"When Mr. Cheeseman challenged the high school to become a "B," I originally thought it was a near impos-

sible feat," she said.

"However after carefully studying the data, we found a path to make it a reality. We set rigorous goals for each area of the accountability model and developed a focused plan to achieve those goals."

At first she said he team looked hard at the master schedule and made sure there was common planning

times for departments. That way, she said teachers had time for Professional Learning Communities (PLCs) to focus on standards, dissect data, and plan for individual student needs.

"We also looked at student scheduling — using data to cluster students by target so they could receive targeted support. Another "out of the box" idea we implemented

was team teaching in Math I. This strategy allowed the teachers to strengthen foundational skills with students while mastering the Math I content."

She said GEAR UP funds were used to hire retired certified teachers to provide additional support for our students in End of Course

See SCORE, 2



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