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Church dedication, 6

"News from Next Door"

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Program targets gun violence

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Perquimans students in the seventh and ninth grade will be offered a program early next year on guns and how the wrong choices can have tragic results.



WATSON

Perquimans County High School Resource Officer David Murray will be among the three deputies that teach the class. Last summer he attended a program along with members of the Elizabeth City Police Department and deputies from both Pasquotank and Camden counties.



MURRAY

The Educating Kids About Gun Violence program was originally developed in Fayetteville.



SAWYER

Part of the program includes a 29-minute video called Decision Points that focuses on a young man and bad decisions.

"The whole program shows decision by decision how he strays down the wrong path," Murray said.

In the video the teen goes to a house party and is confronted by a man who has bullied him in the past. In a split decision, he shoots the bully but in the process also kills his own sister.

In the show the young man finds himself in prison and asks, "where did I go wrong?" Then the video shows different decision points in his life where a different decision would have had a better outcome.

"One of the things he (the shooter) could have done was to start communicating with his mother instead of internalizing. He bottled up those frustrations," Murray said. "The whole point of the video is about choices."

Murray made a presentation about the program to the county school board in September. Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman said parents would be sent a notification before any instruction and given the chance to opt out.

While Perquimans County remains a mostly rural quiet place, gun vio-

See GUN, 2

HOLIDAY CHEER



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Top, members of the PQ Pep Squad wave Saturday during the annual Christmas parade in Winfall. For more parade photos, see the Dec. 13 issue of The Perquimans Weekly. Right, Hertford Grammar School Principal Jason Griffin and his daughter Ainsley wave to the crowds Saturday during the Perquimans County Christmas Parade in Hertford. Griffin, North Carolina's Principal of the Year, was the Grand Marshal.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Below, a band performs before a crowd at Hertford's Grand Illumination on Friday on Church Street.



Cole named to authority

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Gov. Roy Cooper named Janice Cole as chairman of the 11-member board that manages the N.C. Marine Industrial Park Authority last week.

The authority owns the 72-acre site in the Perquimans County Marine Industrial Park near the Perquimans Recreation Center. The authority also oversees the marine parks in Wanchese and Engelhard.

If fully developed, officials hope the Perquimans site will attract marine-related industries and employ upwards of 400 to 500 people.

Cole previously served as the United States Attorney for the Eastern District of North Carolina. Cole was also the first African-American and woman elected to serve as a district court judge in the 1st District of North Carolina.

Most recently she served as a member of the Perquimans County Commission, a number of years as chair.

Cole said her new role as chair of the authority means she'll be looking at the bigger picture.

"When I was on the (county) board, we were always looking to get the money to develop it (the Perquimans park)," Cole said Friday.

In her new position as chair of the authority, her job will be to guide the larger authority.

"I'll not just be looking at just the Perquimans site, but all the marine industrial parks.

Cole said her first goal is to put the authority on a solid financial footing and build a reserve account. Until about three years ago, the authority was funded by the state. Now it is expected to be self-suffi-

See COLE, 2

Sheriff White announces plan to run in 2018

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Less than a year after he was appointed to the job, Sheriff Shelby White has announced he will run for it in the 2018 election.

White made the announcement last week.

"I spent my whole life here in Perquimans and I'm dedicated to the county and I love to be able to



WHITE

give back to the county that gave so much to me. I've thoroughly enjoyed my job and I'm determined to provide the best services I can."

White, 39, has been a member of the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office for almost

18 years. When then Sheriff Eric Tilley announced he was retiring in late 2016, Tilley recommended White to replace him. The Perquimans County Commission ultimately confirmed the appointment.

If re-elected, White hopes to enlarge the staff of the department. There are some things he's already been able to accomplish, like upgrading the evidence system.

"We'd like more positions so we can do more things," he said.

White points to the sheer size of the county.

"If you drive from Joppa Road on the north to Webb Street in New Hope, its 45 minutes," White said. At night the department only has two deputies doing road patrol.

The sheriff oversees a department with 15 sworn officer and

three other employees and three bailiffs.

Under Sheriff Tilley, the department had no official person designated as "chief deputy" but for all intents and purposes, White filled that role when Tilley was unavailable. Officially White's title was chief investigator before being named sheriff.

See WHITE, 2

Foreman Bundy bridge closed

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

The bridge on Foreman Bundy Road at the Pasquotank/Perquimans county line is closed to traffic until sometime in late March.

The N.C. Department of Transportation approved a \$727,000 contract with Wilson-based S.T. Wooten Corporation to replace the

bridge.

The old bridge was built in 1960 and has wooden pilings according to Jeff Ballance, the assistant resident engineer for DOT's Division I. It was closed on Monday.

The new pilings will be concrete and measure 70 feet long.

"It will be a much stronger bridge by far," Ballance said.

The old bridge wasn't unsafe, but it had been posted with a lower weight limit because of its age and condition. Ballance said bridges are regularly inspected and based on that, listed on a

priority basis for replacement or repair.

One reason DOT is doing the work right now is to avoid a statewide moratorium on work in the water during the period when some fish spawn.

The moratorium runs from Feb. 15 through the end of June each year.

Anadromous fish are born in freshwater then migrate to the ocean as juveniles where they grow into adults before migrating back into freshwater to spawn. Examples are salmon, smelt,

See BRIDGE, 2

ATHLETIC COMPLEX



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Crews took test borings at the site of the new Perquimans County High School athletic complex last week. School officials hope to start actual construction early next year and complete the football field by August.



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