

# THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



Letters to Santa, A7, B1-8

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STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

Kaley Kiffner gets a hug from this year's NC Teacher of the Year Lisa Godwin last week when Kiffner was named this year's Regional Teacher of the Year.

## Kiffner wins regional honor

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

For the second year in a row, a teacher from Perquimans County has been named the region's best.

Kaley Kiffner, a science teacher at Perquimans County Middle School, found out she had been named Regional Teacher of the Year on Thursday. Kiffner won the award over

teachers in 20 school districts in 17 counties in the northeast region.

The event was a well-orchestrated surprise. The assembly in the gym was billed as a pep rally to the school's successful sports teams.

Kiffner admits she had no clue. She had been told the winner of the regional award wouldn't be announced until Dec. 20.

Instead Kiffner was wor-

ried that the pep rally might interrupt a classroom activity she had already planned.

"The kids were having a 'virtual field trip' through the 3M company."

They got to see real scientists working in real labs.

The time for the pep rally was moved back.

On hand for the assembly was Lisa Godwin from Onslow County, this year's state Teacher of the Year. To

keep news of Kiffner's selection for the regional honor a secret, Godwin was dressed in the PCMS Tiger mascot outfit, complete with the Tiger head.

As part of the surprise, the event featured a game where teachers had to pin a carrot on a snowman while wearing the blindfold. Once the blindfold was on Kiffner,

See KIFFNER, A2

## Bridge project to cost \$56.9 million

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

Replacing Hertford's S-Bridge will cost nearly \$57 million, \$25 million more than the most recent estimates and some \$39 million more than the estimates of what the state wanted to build.

The good news is the closure time for traffic between Winfall and Hertford may be cut down to eight months from two years. Also the new swing bridge will look nearly identical to what the old bridge looks like except it will be wider and there will be a bridge over the causeway.

DOT wanted to build a fixed 33-foot-high bridge for an estimated \$18 million to \$20 million.

Many residents flatly said "no" and after years of debate, DOT agreed to build another swing bridge.

The NC Department of Transportation opened the three bids on the project this month and the \$56.9 million option offered by McLean Contracting was considered the best, if not cheapest option. State DOT funds are paying for



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A computer generated rendering shows what the new S-Bridge will look like.

the bridge.

A bid by PCL Constructors was \$1.6 million less, but the closure of the road would have been longer. The most expensive bid was \$69.8 million by the Archer Western, the same company that did the bridge replacement project in Elizabeth City.

The Elizabeth City project, which took about seven years,

ended up costing \$62 million.

Until the bid opening, the DOT public estimates on the Hertford project were about \$32 million.

Awarding the Hertford can't be finalized until the consulting parties and state and federal agencies sign off on the deal. David Hering, a DOT engineer working on the project, said he hopes that can happen before

the end of the year.

Hering is assigned to the design-build part of NC DOT. The division awards points to designs that may cost more, but will have other benefits. It lets the contractor's design team find a way to "think outside the box."

In the case of Perquimans a

See BRIDGE, A2

## Grant to fund sewer repairs

■ The sewer grant from Golden LEAF will allow the town to make repairs to sewer collection lines.

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

The Town of Hertford is getting a \$637,000 grant to make sewer system repairs.

It's also getting three pickup trucks for the price of one thanks to a separate grant by USDA.

The sewer grant from Golden LEAF will allow the town to make repairs to sewer collection lines.

The grant was part of \$14.3 million the foundation provided recently to help towns recover from Hurricane Matthew. The General Assembly made the money available to Golden LEAF because it had systems in place to quickly distribute disaster funds.



SHOAF

Hertford Town Manager Brandon Shoaf said the town's sewer collection system is aging, but the massive rains from Matthew made it worse. In a 24-hour period, the town was hit with 16 inches of rain.

"We had issues with the system, and Matthew found all the weaknesses and destroyed them," Shoaf said.

"Some of them date to the 1920s, and with Covent Garden, I am not sure if there has ever been any upgrades in places."

Pipes separated which caused erosion and groundwater was able to enter the wastewater system. That caused sinkholes which damaged roads.

The grant will fund the replacement of 2,200 liner feet of sewer line, including nine manholes and replacing 52 service lines.

Some 2,700 square yards of asphalt will be milled up and replaced.

The town has to provide a \$50,000 matching grant as a contingency fund.

The work will take place on Dobbs Street, Market Street, Covenant Garden and Grubb Street.

Residents might start seeing some work in January. Shoaf hopes the project can be wrapped up by April.

See REPAIRS, A2

## Debate remains over merits of project

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

The \$57 million price tag to replace Hertford's S-Bridge drew almost universal shock from most residents.

The news that the closure time for traffic might be cut down to eight months drew universal praise.

"That's awesome," said Susan Cox about the eight months. "They'd been talking about two to three years at some point."

"An eight-month closure is a problem because you dramatically see differences in cars when the bridge is closed. Any closure is a problem."

*"An eight-month closure is a problem because you dramatically see differences in cars when the bridge is closed. Any closure is a problem."*

Susan Cox

Owner, Carolina Trophy

Cox owns and operates Carolina Trophy and said her business doesn't get hurt as much as others when traffic is cut off.

She said you could even see it when the bridge was closed recently for about three months when repairs were made.

"But heck, eight months is

a lot better. That's a difference between two or three years. With eight months, you will save some businesses."

"The (higher) cost is not a good thing. But it's not just the Hertford business district."

She's a former educator and chairman of the Perquimans County School Board. When the S-Bridge is out of service,

the schools have to divert buses over a longer distance every school day. And Cox said the business lost because of a closure would impact what the county gets in sale tax.

"The closure is a big thing. It affects the economy of the whole county."

Charles Woodard, the owner of Woodard's Pharmacy, said eight months is an improvement. He also feared if the traffic is shut down for years, many businesses would also shut down.

The \$57 million price tag doesn't bother Chris Lane.

"Absolutely I think it's worth

See DEBATE, A2

## Hunter to run for House seat

BY JON HAWLEY  
 The Daily Advance

A second Republican has announced plans to seek election to the N.C. Legislature next year in the new six-county House District 1.

Candice "CV" Hunter, 45, of Hertford said Friday she plans to file for the GOP primary in the district that now includes Chowan, Perquimans, Tyrrell, Bertie, Washington and Camden counties.

Hunter, a marketing company owner and former TV anchor, joins former state ferry director Eddy Goodwin as the only announced candidates so far for the



HUNTER

announced he's seeking election next year in the newly drawn Senate District 1. Also seeking the Senate District 1 seat is Clark Twiddy, a Republican from Dare County.

Hunter, a former Miss Currituck who spent her later high school years in Camden and Currituck counties, explained Friday that she returned to northeastern North Carolina earlier this year to care for her father. Prior to then, she worked in both Norfolk, Virginia, and

Cincinnati, Ohio, as a television news anchor before launching her own marketing company.

As she reconnected with the area and learned about its problems, including the loss of population due to lack of economic opportunity, Hunter said she decided to run for public office.

"I came home because this is where I want my family to be and it's where I know I can make the biggest difference," Hunter said in a press release. "I'm going to work tirelessly to earn each and every vote across the district, and I'll work just as hard in Raleigh to help create opportunities for my constituents next year."

Hunter declined to engage in a detailed discussion about her platform and

See HUNTER, A2

## FIRE VETS RETIRING



SUBMITTED PHOTO

At the end of the year, 150 Years of experience will retire from the Hertford Volunteer Fire Department. From left to right- Greg Benton with 28 years, Billy Layden with 38 years, Bob Reed with 41 years and Parker Newbern with 43 years. They were honored for the bravery and dedication to the fire service and town citizens on Saturday night.



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