

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

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Teacher earns grant, 4

"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, JANUARY 10, 2018

50 cents



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

From on top of the U.S. 17 Bypass Bridge, downtown Hertford is covered with snow while the Perquimans River was mostly frozen.

Bitter storm eases grip

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

The headline proclaimed "County buried under snow."

The issue of the Perquimans Weekly was dated Feb. 14, 1980. The smaller subhead said "15-20 inches."

The story starts out "Some folks said it was the heaviest since 1927. Others said it was the worst of the century. But no one will argue last week's snow wasn't big."

The headline in The Daily Advance that week simply said, "Snow of the century paralyzes Albemarle."

That was then and this is now. There may be debate about if the storm that hit Perquimans County last week was "historic" but this might be the kind of storm that today's kids tell their kids about and their grandkids.

This one has a name: Grayson. It was caused by a pressure system and brought an explosive blast of frigid air and hours of snow and ice. The snow and ice stopped, but even Monday morning, the low temperature was 7 degrees. During the days after the storm, temperatures dipped to below zero a few times.

Winter Storm Grayson's rapid intensification near the U.S. East Coast may have been the most explosive develop-



An issue of The Perquimans Weekly in 1980 describes the heavy snow that fell that February.

ment on record for the western North Atlantic, according to The Weather Channel.

Normal average temperatures are in the 50s and 30s during the first week of January.

The sudden blast of winter may have kept many people home instead of trying to brave the roads, said Jonathan Nixon, Perquimans County's Emergency Management Director.

When the storm first hit Wednesday, a motorist did hit the sides of the U.S. 17 Bypass bridge. The driver was transferred to the hospital, but Nixon was unclear about the driver's condition.

For the most part, motorists didn't venture out much. But people still need medications, and a clerk at Woodard's Pharmacy said they were pretty busy Friday. Snow didn't keep them closed Thursday as well.

"You'd be surprised at the number of people," she said.

"People want to get their newspaper and they want to get their medicine," she said.

But getting a newspaper was an issue because papers couldn't be delivered. That started to change Sunday and Monday.

EMS vehicles still ventured out, but at one point Nixon said they couldn't respond fast.

"We normally go 60 miles per hour, and now we're going 20 mph," Nixon said Friday. "It's going to take longer."

School buses weren't carrying kids. Perquimans Schools did open Jan. 2 after the holi-

See SNOW, 2

County upgrades EMS system

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Perquimans County opened the New Year by being certified to provide a higher level of Emergency Medical Services.

The Perquimans County Commission made the decision last spring to invest about \$300,000 to make it happen. Half of that amount was for equipment and supplies. The other \$150,000 was earmarked to fund additional trained staff for the second half of the fiscal year.

"I am really proud of the staff, as this transition has been a major undertaking for the entire team," said Jonathan Nixon the director of the Emergency Services department.

Over the past few months the department has hired three Paramedic Shift Supervisors along and acquire the new equipment and supplies. The shift required the approval of the N.C. Office of Emergency Medical Services.

The county had to upgrade training.

Until now, the county had been operating as an Advanced EMT level agency even though it did have some paramedics on staff. The upgrade means paramedics aboard ambulances will be able to do more procedures, and administer life-saving drugs that they haven't been able to use in the past.

While the process may have taken less than a year, the vision to do it was on the minds of county commissioners for years, said County Manager Frank Heath.

"One major focus of our commissioners' board retreats over the past five years has been a goal to offer the Paramedic level of care for our citizens. That goal has been realized thanks to the hard work of the EMS staff and the planning of past and present boards."

Last Tuesday night the county commission approved the appointment of 10 people as part-time/fill in paramedics, Advanced Emergency technicians or part-time/fill in emergency medical technicians.

Two more people were promoted to

See EMS, 2

Schools to add Jayvee football

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

Prospects for Perquimans County High School football are looking up.

For the last few years, the Perquimans varsity football program has lacked a feeder program of young talent coming up and learning skills. Next year the school will offer a Jayvee team as well as varsity.

There are other good signs. The Perquimans Recreation Department was able to field youth teams last fall. The youngest were 7-8 years old. The oldest were ages 11-12. It's been years since that's happened.

The Perquimans County Middle School team also finished their season undefeated

Even with the jump from middle school to high school has been complex if the there is no junior varsity system at the high school level.

But that's a big jump in a child's physical development, said Superintendent

See FOOTBALL, 2



STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

A man dresses up to shovel his driveway on Edenton Road Street on Friday.

Perquimans Arts League buys vacant building on Church Street

BY PETER WILLIAMS
News Editor

To some it's just a big vacant building with no plumbing, electrical service or heating and air.

To The Perquimans Arts League it's a blank canvas, and more importantly, a per-

manent home.

The organization bought the vacant building at 133 N. Church St. in late December.

Sheryl Corr said Stephen Smith, the previous owner bought it in 2010 and made some renovations for "big ticket items" like the roof and the windows, but stopped short.

The fact that there is no wiring, plumbing or HVAC can be viewed as a plus, not a minus, Corr said. PAL can shape the space in any way

they want.

"It is a blank canvas," she said. "Now we need a lot of money."

Over the history of the building, it's housed a grocery store and a lawyer's office among other things.

Between a donation by the former owner and money they already had saved, PAL had the money to buy the building without borrowing money.

The two floors combined represent about 5,500 square feet. The current location

has about 800.

PAL was founded in 1995. Since at least 1998, it's operated out of a rented space in the Hall of Fame Building.

Corr said owning a building will give PAL something never had just renting one.

"We can now go after economic grants because we own the building," she said.

Two key things the new building has that the old one doesn't is large window space on Church Street, and plenty of space to hold classes.

Without a large space to hold classes, PAL used the Perquimans County Recreation Center. But if PAL wanted to run a class during a time when the rec center would normally be closed, it had to pay the county staff keep it open. That meant it had to charge more for classes, and may have priced some out of the market for some people.

Once complete, PAL will be in the position of renting out the gallery for people wanting to hold events.

"I think once people see we're there they will see downtown coming alive and more people may look at starting a business here," Corr said.

Corr said PAL has a building committee that is looking up how best to use the space.

PAL also has the opportunity to make sure they don't make the same mistakes other art groups have.

Any donations can be sent to PAL at P.O. Box 134, Hertford.

