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"News from Next Door"

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## Groundbreaking for athletic complex set

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

A symbolic groundbreaking will be held Saturday at 2 p.m. for a new athletic complex at Perquimans County High School.

The new facility is across the street from the high school on 32 acres donated by Dr. William Nixon. Nixon is a Perquimans native.

Nixon is expected to be on-hand Saturday along

with family of the late Charles Ward.

Ward, a businessman and long-time county commissioner, left \$600,000 in his will for either an athletic complex or a new library. County commissioners decided to use it for an athletic complex since they had already financed the library.

An anonymous donor also stepped forward. Originally the donor pledged \$250,000 towards the field house, but

later amended the gift to say the donor would build and pay for the field house and no dollar figure was attached to the gift.

Actual construction should start in mid to late April and school officials hope the football field will be ready for the start of the football season on Aug. 17.

Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman said he's excited to see things moving forward. The school

system had been talking about an athletic complex for about eight years. It was 2010 when Dr. Nixon first made the offer of the land. Cheeseman started work as superintendent in January 2016.

What school officials are working on now is just the first phase of a larger plan. Phase I will include a football field, bleachers, press box, lighting, a field house and restrooms and conces-

sion stands.

The larger plan will include practice fields, a soccer field, outdoor running track and tennis courts. The high school doesn't have an on-site soccer field right now. It uses soccer facilities at the Perquimans County Recreation Center, which means that field isn't available for youth teams.

The high school also doesn't have a track, so local athletes can only com-

pete at away meets.

The schools put parts of the first phase out for bid last week and is still reviewing the results.

For now Jim Davison, the school's maintenance director, said a lot has to happen in the right order between now and August.

"I will be supervising some of it, then there will be a general contractor super-

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## Top Democrat talks with voters

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

State Democratic leaders no longer take voters for granted, and know they must earn the support from now on out.

Wayne Goodwin, the chair of the state Democratic Party, made the promise to listen more to what voters are saying in a gathering last week at the historic Perquimans County Courthouse. The meeting was part of a Rural Listening Tour that took Goodwin to Wilson, Elizabeth City and Currituck County in the same day.

"I see a tremendous value in town hall meetings," Goodwin said.

He said while some areas of the state have prospered "beyond expectations" while rural areas have not. Sadly he said some elected leaders only visit those rural areas when they are running for office.

He said the Democratic Party also has to recognize that it needs to field candidates across the state.

"Voters need a choice," he said.

He said the state party has made strides in organizing more precincts throughout North Carolina, but more work is needed.

"Every day should be considered election day," Goodwin said. "Our Democratic Party has learned we can't rest on our laurels."

In Perquimans County, there are 4,066 Democrats, 2,660 Republicans and 3,168 voters listed as unaffiliated. But he said what matters is the numbers than actually vote.

Several of those who did attend Tuesday's session at the courthouse pointed out there weren't



Wayne Goodwin, the head of the N.C. Democratic Party, speaks to party members last week at the Perquimans County Courthouse.

many young people there. The meeting started at 2:30 p.m. and one speaker pointed out young people are working at that hour.

But Goodwin said through the Internet, the party can reach out

to younger voters in a fashion they embrace.

Goodwin admits he never planned on being head of the party, and was happy with his job as Insurance Commissioner until he

lost the general election in a bid for a third term.

"It's not something I planned on, but you roll with the punches and do your very best," Goodwin said.

## Schools ready for walkouts

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

Perquimans County School Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman said the schools are working to ensure that students are safe if they walk out of class Wednesday to show support for those killed at a school in Florida last month.

"We want to hear their voice and we want that voice to be honored," Cheeseman said.

But ultimately he said the school system wants to make sure students are safe in the process.

"If they walk, we want to ensure they are safe," Cheeseman said.

Some student leaders are planning a walk to the flag pole at PCHS at 10 a.m. on Wednesday. The demonstration is supposed to last for 17 minutes, for the 17 people that died in Parkland.

Cheeseman said he's communicated with leaders at the other three schools in the district to also make sure any demonstrations there are conducted in a safe way.

"It's a great opportunity for students to advocate for a cause," Cheeseman said.

There is a national movement for schools to host walkouts today at 10 a.m.

## Chamber hosting business Expo Friday and Saturday

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

The Perquimans County Chamber of Commerce will present a two-day event this weekend with a Saint Patrick's Day theme at the annual Expo at the Perquimans County Recreation Center.

Sid Eley, the executive director of the chamber, said visitors will see more new things and there will be more local entrepreneurs.

People will also be able to buy some of the things they see.

On Friday the event starts at 4 p.m. with vendors and then from 5 p.m. until 7:30 p.m. there will be The Chef's Challenge. For a \$10 ticket visitors can taste and vote on the best.

On Saturday the event runs from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. Admission is free.

Among the vendors will be Small Town Trendz, Talico, Elle

Lynn Boutique, It's

Different Jewelry, Courtney Marie Boutique, Color Street Nails, Camp Cale, White's Dress Shoppe, Hertford Printing & Signs, It Works!, Peebles, Lip Sense, Elizabeth Designs, and Valerie Caple Inspires.

Jennifer Byrum from Woodard's Pharmacy will be there with her "Made in North Carolina" display. Tarlie, one of the newest stylists at Cha'pel's Hair Gallery will also

have a booth.

Saturday's event includes spring fashion shows from White's Dress Shoppe, Small Town Trends, Elle Lynn Boutique, Camp Cale, Courtney Marie Boutique and Peebles with brands like HEYBO and Simply Southern. Shows are scheduled throughout the day, beginning at 10 a.m. Also on Saturday from 10 a.m. until noon, the Tri-County Animal Shelter, will be having an Adopt-a-Thon. The High Achievers

4H group will be at the Expo from 10 a.m. until 4 p.m. with a demonstration with the United States Equine Rescue League. They will be bringing miniature horses.

The Durant's Neck Volunteer Fire Department will be at the Expo with a fire truck and provide a live demonstration of firefighting techniques.

Inside the recreation center the

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## Schools pilot new 'moving' classrooms

From Staff Reports

The Northern Albemarle Community Foundation (NACF) funded a \$40,000 grant to Perquimans County Schools Foundation for a "moving" classroom.

The project — "Moving Minds Through Physical Movement And Activity" — equipped two classrooms

with the appropriate fitness equipment for students to use during the innovative teaching and learning process.

The classrooms and instructional delivery is designed for student engagement through movement. The concept is designed to improve attention, information storage, information retrieval, enhanced coping and improve academic success.

Teachers recently held an open house for the two



Nancy McGowan (left) of Hertford was recently recognized as the 2017 Chowan, Gates and Perquimans County Extension Master Gardener of the Year. Joining her in the photo is program president Nancy Dougherty, also of Hertford.

## McGowan named Gardener of Year

BY PETER WILLIAMS  
 News Editor

Nancy McGowan of Hertford was recognized recently as the 2017 Chowan, Gates and Perquimans County Extension Master Gardener of the Year.

NC State Extension Master Gardener volunteers are trained to provide unbiased, research-based information on gardens, lawns and landscapes.

Katy Shook, the extension director who heads the local program, said McGowan was honored for all

the hours she put into the program in the last year.

Master Gardener volunteers get special training as part of the program and in exchange they agree to volunteer to help others in their community.

In 2017, 52 local Extension Master Gardener volunteers contributed more than 2,500 hours of horticulture education service to the three counties.

Projects included the "Ask a Master Gardener" call in service, community

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