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"News from Next Door"

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 26, 2018

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STAFF PHOTO BY PETER WILLIAMS

A choral group from Perquimans County High School presents Superintendent Matthew Cheeseman with the lyrics of the song they sang for him at a going away party last week.

Search on for superintendent

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Perquimans County School officials hope to make a decision on a new superintendent by late March and have a person in place by July 1.

Matthew Cheeseman's last day on the job is Jan. 1.

The school board agreed to hire the Wilmington-based Masonboro Group to conduct the search. It's the same company the school system hired when Dwayne Stallings announced he

would be retiring at the end of 2015. In that case, the school board had more than seven months to find Cheeseman as a replacement.

Edwin West Jr., the head of Masonboro Group, admits in this case, time is not a luxury he has.

"The person we want will have to give 60 days notice and we want somebody in place by July 1," West said. "Quite frankly, the transition will be the fastest switch we've done."

In September, The Masonboro Group wrapped up

a search for a superintendent for Hyde County. Hyde hired Stephen Basnight III, who had been principal at J.P. Knapp Early College High School.

West said his firm is small, and they don't seek out contracts for superintendent searches.

"We don't want to do more than one (search) at a time because it's so labor intensive. You're doing a lot of background checks. But we've been blessed over the

See SEARCH, 2

Town grants utility extension

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Town of Hertford utility customers who got a bill this month for 41 days, instead of the typical 30 or 31 days will have a little extra time to pay it before they get their power cut off.

The town board met in a special meeting Friday and agreed it wasn't the customer's fault that the billing period was longer, hence the bill was higher, and those customers shouldn't be punished for the problem. Both Councilman Quentin Jackson and Frank Norman voted to approve the motion. Mayor Horace Reid did not vote, and Councilman Sid Eley was absent.

Without taking action, customers would start getting their power turned off on Dec. 27. With the action of the board on Friday, that will be delayed until Jan. 7. About 300 of the town's 1,000-plus customers got the 41-day bills.

Norman pressed for even more, saying that any customer who was late with their December bill should not have to pay a late fee or any other punishment. Jackson wanted to limit the relief only to those who got a bill covering 41 days. Some customers got a bill for the typical 30 to 31 days and some may have been billed for 36 days.

"If you got the bill (for 30-31 days) and just didn't pay it," you should not get a break, Jackson said.

The late billing was caused by a combination of a few days of very rainy weather and three holidays. Both Jackson and Norman said town customers have come to them with bills that are \$600 to \$700.

The town does offer an energy audit service that

See UTILITY, 3

A holiday visit



SUBMITTED PHOTO

A woman opens a gift left by Santa through an effort by the Albemarle Commission to reach out to seniors who would otherwise be alone at Christmas.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Santa rings his bell before knocking on the door of a senior last week.

Santa comes early for seniors

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Santa Claus paid an early visit to 31 senior citizens in the area who would be spending the Christmas holiday alone.

The seniors share two things in common. They all get home delivered meals five days a week to them at home through the senior nutrition program run through

the Albemarle Commission. They also aren't expecting any family or friends will come visit with them during the Christmas week.

There are about 350 seniors in a 10-county area that get the home delivered meals. All of them got some kind of gift through the Adopt A Senior program. But the 31 who will be alone at the holidays got a little more, said Ashley Lamb, an aging program specialist with the

Area Agency on Aging. This was the third year for the program.

Playing the role of Santa was Gary Lico, a semi-retired TV executive who decided a few years ago he wanted to learn how to play Santa.

Santa only visited the seniors in Chowan, Pasquotank and Perquimans Counties. In the other coun-

See SANTA, 2

Hospitals fear state changes

BY THADD WHITE
 Bertie Ledger-Advance

WINDSOR — Changes proposed to the State Health Plan could be devastating to Vidant Health to the tune of \$40 million.

The message is one being delivered throughout eastern North Carolina by Vidant Health Chief Executive Officer Dr. Michael Waldrum.

Waldrum and Vidant Bertie Hospital/Vidant Chowan Hospital President Brian Harvill sat to discuss the situation this month, and talked of how it could negatively impact small hospitals such as the ones in Windsor and Edenton.

The proposal in question was made by State Treasurer Dale Folwell, and aims to restructure how the N.C. State Health Plan for Teachers and State Employees pays providers in an effort to produce an estimated savings of \$300 million for taxpayers, and \$65 million for plan members annually. The State Health Plan is one of the state's largest purchasers of health care services.

Folwell's restructuring will significantly reduce reimbursements to health care networks, and hit those serving rural areas like east-

See HOSPITALS, 2

Camp Cale gets grant for program

BY PETER WILLIAMS
 News Editor

Camp Cale has received a \$25,000 grant to fund a leadership program to grow high school students into leaders in their communities.

Camp Cale director Matt Thomas said the gift from Ray Bryan Award of the Rye Foundation is the largest the camp has ever received.

"We are surprised, ex-

cited, and humbled by this wonderful news," Thomas said. "I knew we were in the running and there was a good possibility we would get it, but I just recently found out."

The program will be named the "Alpha and Omega Leadership Collaborative" and will target youth in high school in grades nine through 12.

"The major result of

reaching out to kids in our area is to help them become better leaders," Thomas said. "If we get counselors out of it, so much the better. We want this to be more a community thing, instead of a Camp Cale thing. Our goal is to develop student leaders who will make an impact in their schools, churches, communities and beyond."

See GRANT, 2



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Camp Cale Director Matt Thomas (left) has received a \$25,000 grant from the Rye Foundation. Warren Steen is president of the foundation.

NATIVITY SCENE

SUBMITTED PHOTO

A total of 33 people participated in the Hertford Baptist Church Nativity scene this month.

There were two behind the scene helpers and an additional five people who helped build the scenery and transport the animals. The scene included Mary, Joseph, three shepherds, three wisemen, and three angels along with a sheep and a donkey.



SUBMITTED PHOTO

In the Hertford Baptist Church Nativity scene Mary Woodard (left) played an angel and Eby Scaff, Sydney Russell and Elizabeth Conway played wisemen.

