

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, MARCH 11, 2021

\$1.00



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Meet Pappy, a Tri-County Animal Shelter Pets of the Week



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Pirates defeat North Pitt Panthers



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Officials Discuss Agreement to Reopen Schools

BY CAROLINA JOURNAL NEWS SERVICE

N.C. Senate leader Phil Berger, R-Rockingham, says lawmakers are negotiating with Gov. Roy Cooper, a Democrat, on a plan to reopen schools.

Berger, in a news conference Tuesday, March 9, with Sen. Deanna Ballard, R-Watauga, offered no specifics about the plan. Berger had scheduled a news confer-

ence Monday, but he canceled it because of the ongoing negotiations with the governor.

An announcement on an agreement, he said at the time, could come later that same day. Cooper, in a news conference later Tuesday to up-



BERGER



COOPER

date people on COVID-19 and vaccinations, said he's continuing to work with lawmakers on a plan to reopen schools.

"We have been talking," Cooper said. "We all share the goal of getting our children back into the classroom."

He said it must be done safely, however, and he had not seen legislation, only saying something may come "soon."

A compromise on school reopening would render moot Senate Bill 37, which would direct all public school districts to reopen for in-classroom instruction. Parents would still have the option of remote learning under the bill. Cooper vetoed the measure Feb. 26. An attempt to override Co-

per's veto fell short by one vote.

Berger said he and Cooper have been talking on the phone about the issue for a week, and that House Speaker Tim Moore, R-Cleveland, is aware of the discussions.

"We seem to be very close to an agreement in principle," Berger said Tuesday. "If we have an agreement it will be

See **SCHOOLS**, A2

APG Names O'Brien as Publisher of TDA, Weeklies

O'Brien to oversee papers in EC, Chowan, Perquimans

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Sean O'Brien has been named publisher for The Daily Advance, the Chowan Herald and The Perquimans Weekly, Robin Quillon, president of Adams Publishing Group in Eastern North Carolina, announced this week.

As publisher, O'Brien, currently general manager for the three newspapers, will continue to oversee all editorial, advertising and circulation operations at the three publications, Quillon said.

"I am very pleased to announce the promotion of Sean to publisher of The Daily Advance and its sister weeklies, The Perquimans Weekly and Chowan Herald," Quillon said. "Sean is a true leader. His rich experience in this business has earned him the respect of his peers and the community in which he lives — he is a true newspaper professional in every aspect. His dedication to excellence in journalism shows by his determination to be the very best. I have no doubt that he will succeed in his new responsibilities."

O'Brien said he's looking forward to his new role with the three newspapers.

"I have been with our group for over 15 years and I've seen a lot of exciting changes during that time," O'Brien said. "Combined with our core products and our ability to utilize our websites and social media, our audience and reader engagement has never been higher than it is today."

"I look forward to what the future holds and remain excited with the direction our industry has taken," O'Brien continued. "I would like to thank our readers and advertisers for being loyal to what we do best: allowing us to provide news coverage in the place we all call home."

O'Brien was named general manager of the three newspapers in February 2020. Prior

See **O'BRIEN**, A3



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"Social work makes that possible by allowing me to be the 'bridge' between the school, community, and families we serve."

Latonia Johnson

Perquimans Schools Chief Academic Officer of Student Services

Planting Seeds in the Lives of Others

Johnson talks about being a social worker

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

National School Social Work Week is this week, so the Perquimans Weekly wanted to touch base with Latonia Johnson, who has worked 23 years as a social worker.

Perquimans Schools Chief Academic Officer of Student Services Kanika Griffin sent me this tip Saturday morning — much appreciated.

Johnson has served 14 years with Perquimans County Schools — last 12 years as a school social worker/homeless coordinator or liaison along with two years as a school-based mental health counselor.

A licensed clinical social worker, Johnson has earned a bachelor's degree in Social Work/Sociology from Elizabeth City State University, a master's degree in Social Work: Norfolk State University, and a doctoral degree in Human Services from Capella University.

Remember Rolling Stone magazine when it was relevant. Well, let's do Rolling Stone question and answer format

Why do you want to be a social worker?

I feel that my gifts are to foster relationships and provide support to others outside of the traditional teach-



SUBMITTED PHOTO

Perquimans Schools' social worker Latonia Johnson is in the spotlight during this week's National School Social Work Week. For 23 years Johnson has worked as a social worker with the past 14 years serving the school system.

er role. Social work makes that possible by allowing me to be the "bridge" between the school, community, and

families we serve. Describe, in general

See **JOHNSON**, A3

ROUND-UP

Chili Dawgs and Crossroads

BY MILES LAYTON
Editor

A round-up of all things Perquimans County... Perquimans County Board of Elections Director Holly Hunter has resigned to take a new job in Virginia, according to County Manager Frank Heath. Her last day was Thursday, March 4.

Hunter started part-time in 2016 and full-time in 2018 at the Board of Elections. Newspaper has asked the Board of Elections for Hunter's letter of resignation.

There is no word as yet as to who is/will be serving as interim director of the Board of Elections.

In other news, Hertford Town Clerk Lashonda Cartwright of Bertie County has tendered her resignation after only a few weeks on the job. Her last day was Feb. 27. Newspaper has asked for her letter of resignation.

Before Cartwright's hire, she worked as an administrative assistant at the Windsor-Bertie Chamber of Commerce.

Prior to Cartwright, Town Clerk Shoniqua Powell resigned in September.

After Powell resigned, Town Manager Pam Hurdle served as clerk until Cartwright was hired.

To date, Hertford Town Hall is seeking a new police chief, public works director and now a town clerk.

In November, Public Works Director Dwan Bell was hired as Elizabeth City's Public Utilities Director. In February, Police Chief Dennis Brown was hired by the City of Hamlet; his last day with Hertford being March 31.

Speaking of Town Hall, I need to clarify that Hertford is not necessarily going to eliminate its police

See **ROUND-UP**, A3

NTSB: Pilot May Have Shut Off Wrong Engine

4, including pilot, killed in 2017 helicopter crash in Belvidere

The Associated Press

RALEIGH — The pilot of a Duke Life Flight helicopter that crashed in northeastern North Carolina in 2017 may have accidentally shut off one of the aircraft's engines just before the second malfunctioning engine failed, federal investigators said.

An investigation by the National Transportation Safety Board suggested pilot Jeff Burke likely got confused by an array of emergency indicators about a problem

with one of the engines, news sources reported Friday. In their final report on the crash, which was released last month, NTSB investigators said damaged roller bearings in the No. 2 engine likely caused the engine to malfunction during flight.

The helicopter was en route to Duke University Hospital in Durham from Sentara Albemarle Medical Center in Elizabeth City on Sept. 8, 2017, when it crashed in a grassy field outside the town of Belvidere on the Gates-Perquimans county line. In addition to Burke, flight nurses Kris Harrison

See **PILOT**, A3



KEITH BAKER/WRAL

This aerial view shows the wreckage of a Duke Health System medical helicopter that crashed near Belvidere, Friday, Sept. 8, 2017. Four people, including the pilot, were killed.