

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Some problems are too big to face alone. We're here to help.



"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2021

\$1.50



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Foundation makes Christmas merrier for 100 residents with event in Winfall



PAGE B1
Northeast NC trade center to begin classes in January



PAGE B3
After 20 years in Japan, couple enjoys holidays back in N.C.

PERQUIMANS COUNTY
514 S CHURCH
HERTFORD NC 279

KEYS to safe schools



REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Celebrating K.E.Y.S.' \$3,400 donation to Perquimans County Schools on Dec. 16 are (l-r) Sgt. David Murray of the Perquimans County Sheriff's Office; K.E.Y.S. board members Sherie Cartwright and Stacey White; Perquimans County Schools Assistant Superintendent James Bunch; K.E.Y.S. founder Bridget Jernigan; and Perquimans County Sheriff Shelby White.

\$3.4K donation to aid Hertford Grammar

Funds will buy metal detector and 3 hand wands for elementary school

From staff reports

Local school safety nonprofit KEYS has donated more than \$3,400 to the Perquimans County Schools to improve school safety.

On Dec. 16 Keeping Every Youth Safe founder Bridget Jernigan and two KEYS board members presented a check for \$3,410.66 to the Perquimans County Schools in a brief ceremony outside at the schools' central office.

Jernigan said the funding will be used to purchase a metal detector and three

hand wands for Hertford Grammar School.

KEYS' sole mission is to raise funds for safety needs in the Perquimans County Schools for which there is not sufficient funding in the district's capital outlay budget.

In the aftermath of an incident earlier this month in which a student brought a loaded firearm onto a school campus in Elizabeth City, Jernigan asked Perquimans County Schools Assistant Superintendent James Bunch if there were any immediate safety-related needs in the Perquimans Schools. He told her a metal detector was needed for Hertford Grammar, along with three wands.

Jernigan and Perquimans Sheriff Shelby White worked together to obtain the \$3,410.66 package price for the four items.

KEYS had on hand \$2,600. The contributions that made up that amount included some donations that were originally for a ball that had been planned as a fundraiser but was canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

The remaining \$800 for the project was raised by Jernigan and board member Sherie Cartwright. They contacted five local business owners who, between them, covered the balance. KEYS

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Hertford council appoints Cole interim manager

Former judge, US attorney looking forward to challenge

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer



COLE

a permanent town manager," Brown said.

One of the challenges Cole will have as interim

Hertford Town Council voted Tuesday, Dec. 21, to appoint local attorney Janice McKenzie Cole to be the town's interim town manager.

The appointment is effective Jan. 1. Cole will serve as the assistant town manager from Dec. 23 until she assumes full management responsibilities Jan. 1.

Cole, a former U.S. Attorney, district court judge and Perquimans County commissioner, said Wednesday that she is looking forward to the new role.

"It's a challenge and I welcome a challenge," she said.

Cole said she was approached by town officials and asked to consider the interim town manager position. While she was glad to accept the post, she is not interested in the permanent town manager's job.

Hertford Mayor Earnell Brown was enthusiastic about Cole's appointment.

"Judge Cole's credentials, experience and reputation make her eminently qualified to move Hertford forward as we search for

manager will be ensuring that town government implements all processes and procedures that need to be in place. Hertford also is looking at the potential for significant growth and development and will need to have infrastructure in place to accommodate it, she said.

Cole will work with Town Manager Pam Hurdle until Hurdle's retirement takes effect on Jan. 1. Hertford officials paid tribute to Hurdle in a press release.

"The Town Council and staff thank Manager Pam Hurdle for her more than 23 years of service to the town of Hertford," the release states. "The town is grateful for her dedicated work and wishes her all the best in retirement."

Hurdle, who was appointed town manager in October 2018, announced her retirement in August.

See COLE, A3

Region's first case of omicron variant detected in Chowan

Cooper: New variant will be dominant in NC by mid-Jan.

BY JULIAN EURE
The Daily Advance

The region's first case of the coronavirus variant that federal health officials say is now the nation's most dominant has been found in Chowan County, the region's health director said last week.

Battle Betts Jr. said in a press release Dec. 21 that the omicron variant was detected in a laboratory-confirmed case of COVID-19 during a routine sampling of cases last

week. He noted that while not all lab-confirmed cases are "typed" to determine their strain, some are sampled to find out which strains "are circulating in a community."

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention reported last week that omicron is now the dominant strain of the coronavirus in the U.S., accounting for 73% of new infections. North Carolina Gov. Roy Cooper said last week that state health officials anticipate omicron becoming the dominant strain in North Carolina by mid-January.

See OMICRON, A3

Johnson named co-Bearer of Shield at ECSU

Honor given to transfer student with highest GPA

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Hertford resident Anna Nicole Johnson believes furthering her education will help her do the best possible job as director of 911 emergency communications in nearby Washington County.

Johnson, who also works part-time as an emergency dispatcher in Perquimans, graduated from Elizabeth City State University this month with a bachelor's degree in criminal justice and a 4.0-grade point average.

At ECSU's fall commencement she was co-recipient of the newly created Bearer of the Shield honor, which recognizes the transfer student with the highest cumulative GPA.

The other co-recipient was Alexis Nicole Harper of Princeville. Bearer of the Mace honors, which go to the non-transfer student with the highest cumulative GPA, went to Taylor Dawn Pierce of Edenton.

Johnson is not content with her current level of academic achievement, though. She has applied to master's degree programs at East

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PHOTO COURTESY ECSU

Co-Bearer of the Shield Anna Nicole Johnson of Hertford (center) poses for a photo at Elizabeth City State University's 2021 winter commencement ceremony with Chancellor Karrie Dixon (left) and ECSU Board of Trustees Chairwoman Stephanie Johnson.

Perquimans providing temporary 911 service in Gates

Gates manager: 911 staffing shortage prompted move

From staff reports

GATESVILLE — Because of staffing shortages at the Gates County 911 center, Perquimans

County's 911 center is also temporarily providing dispatching services in the neighboring county.

Gates County Manager Tim Wilson said the Gates County 911 Communications Center enacted its mutual aid agreement with the Perquimans County 911 Center on Friday, Dec. 17.

Under the agreement, the Gates County 911 Dispatch Center has temporarily relocated to the 911 center in Perquimans and Gates telecommunicators began working at the Perquimans center at 6 p.m. on Dec. 17.

"Because of the urgent need in

the providing of this critical service, this move happened quickly, which didn't allow for advance public notification," Gates County Manager Tim Wilson said in a press release Wednesday.

Wilson emphasized the move was temporary to ensure continuity of services.

"As soon as qualified personnel are hired to fill the existing dispatcher vacancies that necessitated this move, 911 dispatching services will relocate back to the Gates County 911 Dispatch Center," he said.

He did not provide a timetable for when Gates expects the per-

sonnel will be hired.

The main difference Gates County residents will notice during the change is that all 911 and administrative calls will be answered "Perquimans County 911," Wilson said.

"While this is what a caller will hear, Gates County telecommunicators are still very involved in the call-taking and dispatching process," he said.

Wilson said that regardless of where the dispatching service is provided, Gates citizens will continue to receive professional dispatching service.

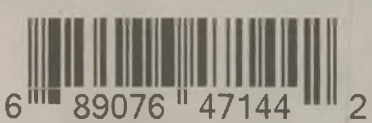
"Jointly with two telecom-

municators from Perquimans, the employees are managing all administrative and 911 calls, as well as all radio traffic for first responders in both counties," he said.

Wilson said Gates officials are especially thankful for Perquimans County officials' help. Perquimans "has made this sudden change as seamless as possible," he said, adding there have been no disruptions to 911 service.

"A positive outcome of this situation is that our 911 Communications staff are updating our

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