

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

THURSDAY, FEBRUARY 3, 2022

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Honoring trailblazers



PHOTOS BY REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Family members of the late Robert L. Harvey Sr. gather around a plaque designating the police building behind Hertford Town Hall as the Robert L. Harvey Sr. Building. Pictured (l-r) are Belvine Vaughan, Kharie Johnson, Missy Johnson, Iesha Gay, Antone Whidbee, Xavier Whidbee, Laparker Harvey, Robert Harvey III and Robert Harvey Jr.

Buildings named for Reid, Harvey

Former Hertford mayor, late police officer honored

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

The town of Hertford honored two trailblazing Black public servants Sunday afternoon by naming buildings after them.

The Community Center at 305 W. Grubbs St. was designated as the Horace Reid Jr. Building in honor of the first Black mayor of Hertford and the police building behind Town Hall was designated the



Teton Reid speaks about his father, former Hertford Mayor Horace Reid Jr., at a ceremony Sunday afternoon dedicating the Community Center in honor of the former mayor.

Robert L. Harvey Sr. Building in memory of one of the early Black police officers in town.

At the dedication ceremony for the Reid Building, former Hertford Town Councilor Annie White described Reid as "calm, cool and collected."

White said Reid took things step by step, first "observing and learning" as a councilor and later serving as mayor pro tem.

"And then finally some of the most influential people in our community — they were not all Black — convinced him to serve as mayor," White said.

She said that although he was the first Black mayor of Hertford, Reid always

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County receives less snow in 2nd storm

No incidents reported during storm that dumps inch of snow

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Perquimans County saw snow, high winds and bitterly cold temperatures this past weekend but escaped any serious incidents.

"We didn't have any major issues reported," said Perquimans County Emergency Services Director Jonathan Nixon.

Nixon said there were no reports of wind damage or major utility outages during



PHOTO COURTESY MISSY MIMLITSCH

Snow and ice frosted plants in Hertford this past weekend.

the storm late Friday and early Saturday that dusted the county with just one inch of snow, he said.

That compares to the snowstorm the weekend of Jan. 21-22 in which various parts of Perquimans re-

ceived between 3.5 inches and 7 inches of snow. The county didn't see any major incidents during that storm either.

"We were very fortunate," Nixon said.

Nixon said N.C. Department of Transportation crews checked roads throughout the county, and by noon Saturday all roads had been plowed and were drying.

"Any roads that had the slush on them, they touched them with the plow so they would go

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ARHS: At-home testing may cloak COVID case totals

Agency will no longer report case counts, vaxx data

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Because of the growth in at-home testing and lab delays in reporting results, the total number of COVID-19 cases across the region is likely larger than what the regional health department has been reporting, an agency spokeswoman acknowledged last week.

Albemarle Regional Health Services doesn't get the results of at-home COVID-19 tests, which are growing in use, especially now that the federal government has started distributing them online. While at-home tests allow consumers to find out quickly if they have COVID, they can cloak the true number of COVID infections in an area.

Because ARHS doesn't receive the results of positive at-home tests, "the numbers that we report are not show-

ing the true burden of illness we are seeing in our communities," ARHS spokeswoman Amy Underhill said. "We are also seeing delayed reporting in our systems — labs and providers cannot keep up getting the data into the reporting system because there are so many cases right now."

ARHS announced later in the week that it no longer will report active case counts or vaccine totals in its weekly surveillance report. ARHS Director Battle Betts noted that the growth of at-home testing and the expansion of state reporting on vaccinations had made it more difficult for ARHS to collect and report accurate data.

"During the COVID-19 pandemic, it has been the goal of ARHS to provide accurate and timely data to keep our communities up to date," Betts said in a press release. "As time moves on, it is apparent to us that the data we are collecting is no longer exact

See COVID, A3

NC Treasurer: Hospitals' charity care falling short

Report lists Chowan, OBX hospitals as 'least generous'

BY PAUL NIELSEN
The Daily Advance

Vidant Chowan Hospital in Edenton is one of several nonprofit hospitals across North Carolina that state Treasurer Dale Folwell claims is falling short of providing free or reduced medical services for the poor.

As part of their tax-exempt status, nonprofit hospitals are supposed to waive fees for poor patients — known as charity care — but they set their own standards for how much to waive.

Folwell released a "N.C. Nonprofit Hospitals Bill the Poor" report during a press conference last week that was critical of a majority of nonprofit hospitals. State Rep. Ed Goodwin, R-Chow-



FOLWELL

an, and state Rep. Howard Hunter, D-Hertford, were two of four General Assembly members who accompanied Folwell at the press briefing which was livestreamed.

Folwell's report has Chowan Hospital and St. Luke's Hospital in Columbus tied for first in providing the "least generous" charity care among 110 nonprofit hospitals listed. The Edenton hospital's charity care as a percentage of operating expenses was just 0.15% in fiscal year 2019.

Vidant's Outer Banks Hospital was second on Folwell's "least generous" list at just 0.3% in 2019.

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PCS officials update school board on safety measures

Bunch: Bus drivers feel supported by administrators

BY REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Perquimans County Schools officials said last week the district remains steadfastly focused on school safety.

Assistant Superintendent James Bunch presented a brief report on school safety measures to the Perquimans Board of Education on Jan. 24.

Board member Matt Peeler said he would prefer to receive the safety update in closed session to prevent details about security from being disseminated to the public.

But board member Amy Spough said she thought a presentation in public was fine since it was general information and wouldn't divulge any sensitive matters related to safety and security.

Bunch said he planned to keep the update general in nature. He

said safety measures include:

- All schools use a buzz-in system at entrances — people can't simply walk into the school buildings.
- Each school has a panic alarm.
- Each school uses an electronic "lobby guard" system that requires visitors to enter driver license info and provides them an identifying sticker to wear while they are in the building.
- School resource officers are assigned to each school.
- Each school has a threat assessment team.
- Communications systems at all schools have been updated and upgraded.

• New surveillance systems have been installed at schools.

• The schools conduct emergency drills periodically.

Bunch also reported briefly on school bus discipline. Drivers typically contact parents to discuss concerns about behavior on the bus, he said.

When necessary the drivers refer discipline matters to the principal, he added.

Peeler asked whether bus drivers feel they are being supported by administrators in decisions they make about discipline.

Bunch responded that he believes drivers do feel they are supported by administrators.

In December, local school safe-

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

Keeping Every Youth Safe founder Bridget Jernigan explained that at time that 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.

The nonprofit plans to raise additional funds to purchase classroom door locks.

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