

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 28, 2023

\$1.50



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HISTORIC GHOST WALK



David Smith portrays the "ghost" of Capt. Benjamin S. Skinner in the sanctuary at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church during the Hertford Historic Ghost Walk Saturday, Oct. 21, in Hertford. About 160 people attended the event over two nights, more than twice the turnout for last year's inaugural event.

PHOTOS BY REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

More than 160 attend 2nd annual event



Edison Ward portrays the "ghost" of Thomas Nixon, a farmer and builder of Elmwood Plantation, at Holy Trinity Episcopal Church, Saturday, Oct. 21, during the second night of this year's Hertford Historic Ghost Walk.

REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

HERTFORD — The 2nd Annual Hertford Historic Ghost Walk drew more than twice as many people as last year's inaugural event.

Although a final count was not yet available earlier this week, organizers said Sunday that between Friday and Saturday, Oct. 20-21, more than 160 came out for the event, compared with 80 last year.

"I have heard a lot of feedback and everybody said they had a wonderful time," said John Long, one of the event

organizers. The Hertford Historic Ghost Walk is put on by Perquiman Lodge 106 AF&AM, and this year was co-sponsored by Holy Trinity Episcopal Church.

Proceeds from this year's walk will go to the Benjamin House in Elizabeth City.

Long noted that Ghost Walk attendees were from Perquimans and neighboring counties. Guided tours were conducted for groups of about 12, and the tours moved smoothly with no long waits at the various sites.

More GHOST WALK | A7

Hertford, county to receive \$6.3M in state budget

Barrow's Alley water project, marine park both to get funding

REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Perquimans County and the town of Hertford received a combined \$6.3 million for industrial and economic development efforts in the newly passed \$30 billion state budget.

Through the efforts of state Rep. Ed Goodwin, R-Chowan, and Sen. Norman Sanderson, R-Pamlico, the budget includes \$1.3 million for increasing water capacity in Barrow's Alley in downtown Hertford and \$3 million for the Perquimans Marine Industrial Park.

In addition, there is \$2 million for the town of Hertford as a share of \$10 million for the five towns that are part of the Harbor Towns Inc. fast ferry and dinner boat project. Other towns in that group are Edenton, Elizabeth City, Plymouth, Mantoo and Columbia.

The Barrow's Alley effort is part of a strategy for growing

downtown Hertford. Apartments are being planned in the area, and additional water capacity is needed to accommodate the growth.

The Perquimans Marine Industrial Park is the county's primary effort in the field of economic development. Construction of a deep water basin at the site is underway.

East Coast Steel Fabricators already has a significant footprint at the park, and the company and county have recently reached an agreement for the firm to purchase four additional acres at the site. A public hearing on that sale is scheduled for next month.

Perquimans County has received a total of more than \$10 million in state grants, state budget appropriations and Golden LEAF Funding for the park.

The county earlier this year sold a five-acre tract to Story's Seafood for a new waterfront restaurant in the Marine Park.

The county has expressed hopes that eventually the park could host businesses employing as many as 400 workers.

Brown endorses Hodges for mayor

REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Mayor Earnell Brown has endorsed Councilor Ashley Hodges, the council's mayor pro tem, to succeed her as the town's top elected official. She also has endorsed two candidates seeking election to Hertford Town Council in the Nov. 7 election.

Brown did not seek reelection as mayor after serving one term in the post. Citing the importance of unity, Brown endorsed Hodges for mayor and backed Rhonda Waters and Keith Rouse for town council.

"There is still much to do to grow Hertford to its fullest potential," Brown said in making the endorsement. "What is required to continue this growth are individuals who understand the needs of Hertford, support unity in the Hertford community and are willing to do what is best for all Hertford



Brown

residents. Therefore, I endorse Ashley Hodges as Mayor, Keith Rouse, and

Rhonda Waters as council members."

Brown said Hertford needs a "knowledgeable cohesive team" to complete what the current council has started. She said that is "a place our children want to return to and raise their families, where mature folks want to live, where there are available homes, employment, social activities, and a clean and thriving environment."

There are two seats on the ballot for town council in the town's Nov. 7 election. Waters, Rouse, Virginia Powell Harvey and Gracie Felton are running for those seats.

More MAYOR | A2

Early voting continues for town elections

REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Turnout on the first day of early voting for the Nov. 7 elections in both Hertford and Winfall was down from two years ago when the towns last held contested elections.

A total of 30 voters cast ballots Thursday, Oct. 19, on the first day of early voting in the two towns' elections. In 2021, 44 voters cast ballots on the first day of early voting, according to county Elections Director Jackie Greene. In 2019, the total of first-day early ballots was 69, Greene said.

As of 10 a.m. Tuesday, the deadline for this story, 58 combined one-stop ballots had been cast in the elections.



Gene Boyce waits in the curbside voting space at the Perquimans County Board of Elections Office Thursday, Oct. 19, to cast a ballot in the Nov. 7 Hertford town election. Early voting continues for the town elections in Hertford and Winfall Monday through Friday from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. and again on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

REGGIE PONDER/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

One-stop voting in the Hertford and Winfall municipal elections is taking place at the Perquimans

County Board of Elections at 601 South Edenton Road Street. Voting at precinct locations will take place on

Election Day, Nov. 7, but not during the early voting period.

Early voting for both town elections continues weekdays at the board of elections office from 8 a.m. to 5 p.m. through Friday. Early voting will also be held at the election office on Saturday, Nov. 4, from 8 a.m. to 3 p.m.

In Hertford, two candidates are vying for mayor: Ashley Hodges, an incumbent town councilor, and first-time candidate Reginald White.

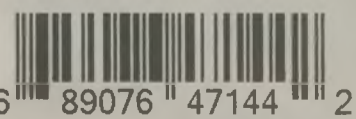
Gracie Felton, Virginia Powell Harvey, Keith Rouse and Rhonda Waters are running for two seats on the Hertford Town Council.

More VOTING | A7

Hertford to buy fire truck without borrowing money

REGGIE PONDER
Staff Writer

Hertford Town Council is



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moving forward with plans to buy a new fire truck without having to borrow any funds for the purchase.

Council took a series of actions at its meeting Monday to authorize the purchase of the truck using \$659,594 from the town's allocation of federal American Rescue Plan funds and \$50,000 in funding provided by the Hertford Fire Department to cover the truck's \$709,594 cost.

The town's total American

Rescue Plan Act allocation is \$673,407.70.

Last month the council approved a preliminary resolution for financing the purchase of a new fire truck. The N.C. Local Government Commission requires the preliminary resolution as a first step toward approving the town's borrowing of the funds.

But town officials decided not to borrow funds for the truck, so town council voted Monday night

to rescind the resolution that had indicated an intent to borrow for the project.

The previous plan called for taking half the cost of the truck from fund balance and seeking a loan for the remainder. Fund balance is the town's reserve that is set aside for items such as emergencies and special capital projects.

Councilor Ashley Hodges said Monday that he is glad the town is not going into debt for the

purchase.

"It has been a long journey to buy the fire truck," Hodges said. "I know the fire department is going to be super excited to get their fire truck."

The actions taken Monday included rescinding the previous resolution for borrowing funds and adopting a new resolution ensuring the ARPA funds will be used in accordance with the federal regulations for how they can be used.