

THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY



"News from Next Door"

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 30, 2023

\$1.50

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 New Ambassadors program to help 'grow' more teachers for district



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 In 12 Days of Christmas, Dec. 25 just starts the feast



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 Hartman: We're called to carry light of Christ into the new year

A bigger Open Door



KESHA WILLIAMS/THE PERQUIMANS WEEKLY

Kim Stites, program manager at the Open Door Food Pantry of Perquimans County, stocks shelves in the pantry's new, expanded location at 293 Creek Drive, Hertford, on Dec. 21 in preparation for its planned opening on Wednesday. A ribbon cutting and open house for the new 3,200-square-foot facility, co-hosted by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce, will be held Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m.

Food pantry to open at new site Wednesday

Ribbon cutting at 293 Creek Drive site planned for Friday

KESHA WILLIAMS
 Staff Writer

Eating healthier is about to get easier for Perquimans County residents who use

the local food pantry. The Open Door Food Pantry of Perquimans County is slated to open in its new location at 293 Creek Drive, Hertford, on Wednesday at 10 a.m., 18 months after a nearly \$500,000 renovation project began on its new building, the former Highway 55 restaurant.

An open house and ribbon cutting for the new facility, cohosted by the Perquimans Chamber of Commerce, will be held two days later, on Friday from 11 a.m. to 1 p.m. During the third week of December, volunteers were busy transporting non-perishable food from the food pantry's former site at 220

D Ocean Highway South, Hertford, to the new facility. They also were stocking shelves in the new facility and inserting shelves into freezers. At 3,200 square feet, the new pantry will have more than twice as much space as the former facility.

More **PANTRY** | A2

Mars Creamery lets Burtons give back



PHOTO COURTESY MARY BURTON

Mary and Jim Burton opened their new hand-scooped ice cream shop, Mars Creamery, located inside Suite F of the Hall of Fame building in Hertford, in October.

SAVANNAH HESS
 Correspondent

As the weather grows colder, local residents are looking for treats to put them in a festive mood. Mars Creamery hopes to become your next go-to place for sweet treats. Mars Creamery is a hand-scooped ice cream shop located inside Suite F of the Hall of Fame building in Hertford. It's owned by husband and wife Mary and Jim Burton.

The business offers a variety of products such as

scoops of ice cream, sundaes, banana splits, shakes, coffee, tea, hot chocolate, and canned sodas. It also offers around 22-24 flavors of ice cream including peppermint, mocha almond fudge, and orange swirl as well as several toppings. "Our most popular item is definitely our banana splits," says Mary Burton. "Customers can choose three scoops of ice cream in any flavor, up to three sauces, whipped cream, a cherry, and the banana."

More **CREAMERY** | A2

Man convicted of 1998 PQ robbery pardoned by gov

FROM STAFF REPORTS

A man convicted of a robbery in Perquimans County in 1998 when he was a teenager is one of four people pardoned by the governor on Wednesday.

Gov. Roy Cooper signed a "pardon of forgiveness order" for Tramayne Jomar Hinton and three other ex-offenders — Portia Bright-Pittman, W. Samuel Fagg, and Fleming Ragas — according to a press release from Cooper's office.

The governor also commuted the prison sentence of Darnell Cherry, who was 16 when he was convicted of second-degree murder and robbery in the death of Robert Earl Edwards Jr. and the robbery-shooting of Sonja Williams in Bertie

County. Cherry, who had already served 26 years in prison and was projected to be released in January 2035, had his sentenced commuted to time served. The commutation takes effect Jan. 3, The Associated Press reported.

According to Cooper's office, Hinton was 16 when he committed the robbery in Perquimans County for which he was convicted. He pleaded guilty to common law robbery in December 1999 and was sentenced to a minimum prison term of 13 months and maximum term of 16 months. His sentence was suspended for 36 months during which time Hinton was placed on probation.

More **PARDON** | A6

Three mental health agencies to merge

Trillium to merge with Eastpointe, Sandhills Center

FROM STAFF REPORTS

The N.C. Department of Health and Human Services has approved the consolidation of three private nonprofit agencies that manage mental health care services in nearly half the state's counties, including all counties in the northeast.

DHHS Secretary Kody H. Kinsley approved the consolidation agreement between Greenville-based Trillium Health Resources and Eastpointe Human Services based in Beulaville in Duplin County on Monday. The approval also includes consolidation of Eastpointe and Sandhills Center, which is based in West End in Moore County.

The consolidation, which takes effect Jan. 1, creates a

service region operated by Trillium that will include 46 counties stretching from the coast to the Piedmont, according to a DHHS news release. For members and providers, the consolidation will occur on Feb. 1.

Trillium and the other agencies are local management entity-managed care organizations that manage the care of individuals with substance use, mental illness and intellectual/developmental disabilities who are either uninsured, underinsured and served by Medicaid.

The agencies work with community agencies, licensed independent practitioners and hospitals to help low-income residents obtain care. The LME-MCO system grew out of the dissolution of the state's public health care system formerly managed at the county level.

More **TRILLIUM** | A6

Towns get new mayors, county buys land for new school

FROM STAFF REPORTS

Editor's note: Today, The Perquimans Weekly takes a look back at some of the top stories in the county during 2023.

Perquimans County was busy in 2023 as residents of Hertford and Winfall elected new mayors, the county and town of Hertford both approved new budgets that

increased property tax and utility rates, and the Lady Pirates volleyball team made another deep run into the state playoffs.

Hertford and Winfall both saw changes in leadership in the Nov. 7 municipal election. In Hertford, Ashley Hodges was sworn in as the town's new mayor and Keith Rouse and Rhonda Waters took their oath of office as new members of Town Council during a Dec. 4 meeting.

"We have great schools, affordable property, state programs have made huge investments in infrastructure the past couple of years and we are seeing renovations all over town," Hodges said in an interview prior to taking

office. "We love the small-town character and all the things that make it great. But we don't want to be complacent and we want to be looking to the future and new ideas."

In Winfall, Preston White was sworn in as the town's new mayor and Cynthia Gale White Cunningham and Arnetta Ormond were sworn in for four-year terms as town councilors.

"My vision is this is a fresh start for the town," White said in an interview after his swearing-in. "I know people don't accept change sometimes, but change is good."



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Hertford town council candidates Keith Rouse (left) and Rhonda Waters (center) and mayoral candidate Ashley Hodges pose for a photo while doing some last-minute campaigning for the Nov. 7 municipal election outside the Perquimans County Library. Rouse, Waters and Hodges all won their bids for office in the November election and were sworn in for four-year terms in December.

More **REVIEW** | A6

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