

Town of Ayden begins search for new finance director

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

AYDEN — The town of Ayden is in search of a new finance director after recently receiving a resignation notice from its finance director of approximately 10 years.

“Chris (Tucker) will be leaving Ayden at the end of the month,” said Ayden Manager Brandon Holland

Tuesday. “We are currently advertising to fill the position.”

Though the Ayden Board of Commissioners has not confirmed dates for potential workshops or budget planning for the upcoming 2015-16 fiscal year budget, Holland does not anticipate Tucker’s departure affecting the budget process, he said.

When asked to comment on his new position and time in Ayden, Tucker said, “I respectfully decline to comment on either matter.”

Tucker has been employed with the town of Ayden since March 23, 2005. His resignation marks the fourth of the town’s management team to depart for other oppor-

tunities within the last four years.

Former assistant town manager Chris Padgett left his Ayden post for a position as chief planner for the city of Greenville in May 2011. Padgett began his career in Ayden as planning director in 2006 before being promoted to assistant town manager in 2007. The assistant manager position

was left unfilled.

Brad Hufford, the town’s former economic and community planner, left Ayden in October 2013 after an 11-month stint for a position with the Pitt County Development Commission. Stephen Smith, a former contracted consultant with the Wooten Co. and former employee of the Pitt County Planning Depart-

ment, assumed Hufford’s position in June 2014.

Former Ayden Manager Adam Mitchell left for a position as manager of Fuquay-Varina in December 2013. Mitchell had served for the town of Ayden since June 2002. Holland, who previously served in Murfreesboro, began serving as Ayden’s manager in June 2014.

County, state officials talk legislation

DEAN-PAUL STEPHENS
Staff Writer

GREENVILLE — Greenville’s Seahorse Restaurant played host to Pitt commissioners and state lawmakers Friday for the county’s legislative goals retreat.

N.C. Sens. Louis Pate and Don Davis, along with N.C. Reps Jean Farmer-Butterfield, Brian Brown and Susan Martin, all attended the meeting in which Pitt County’s legislative interests in the General Assembly were discussed. The goal of the meeting was to hash out an agenda that reflects the county’s needs.

The meeting mentioned several issues, but focused on a few county commissioners felt had the greatest impact on residents, such as unfunded mandates.

“I think that one speaks for itself,” said County Manager Scott Elliott. “We’ve had this on our goals list for years upon years.”

Unfunded mandates include laws, passed by the state, requiring local governments to spend their own money. Officials believe the state should not have the right to pass off the costs of laws to individual counties.

“States shouldn’t shift responsibility to counties that are unfunded,” Elliott said.

Another issue commissioners want their representatives to tackle has to do with recommitting lottery funds for schools.

During the commissioners’ Jan. 26 capital project workshop, they discussed several school-related projects in the pipeline. With the majority of these projects having to do with construction, commissioners felt funds from the N.C. Education Lottery should be used to cover those expenses.

“Again, this is a repeat from prior years,” Elliott said. “We have lost ... about \$9.3 or \$9.4 million worth of school construction that is badly needed. A big area in Pitt County Schools is deferred maintenance within the schools ... there is a lot of deferred maintenance needed within the school system.”

School maintenance costs the county an annual \$3.53 million.

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LAUREN COLLINS

A new Grifton business, Simply Sweet Frozen Yogurt & Bakery offers freshly made Belgian waffles and 12 flavors of self-serve frozen yogurt. Employee Karla Wright (below) prepares a waffle Tuesday afternoon.

Simply Sweet now open



LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GRIFTON — Simply Sweet Frozen Yogurt & Bakery is officially open for business in Grifton.

Offering Belgian waffles all day long, an assortment of baked goods and 12 flavors of self-serve frozen yogurt, the new business is guaranteed to please every sweet tooth. With prices under \$5, Simply Sweet Frozen Yogurt & Bakery will satisfy every pocket, too.

Simply Sweet, owned by Ed and Shannon Abbott of Hookerton, celebrated its official grand opening at the 521 Queen St. location last weekend. Since the business’ opening, they have already catered to a group visit from the Grifton Senior Center and are in the works of hosting upcoming meetings and events for Grifton School.

The family owned and operated business is aimed at offering qual-

ity foods at affordable prices, while providing jobs to local residents. Of the decision to locate a business in downtown Grifton, Ed and his wife felt their location was “fitting.”

“We live in Greene County, but everything we have ever done has been right here in Pitt County,” Ed said.

The building, previously owned by Wayne Hardee of Grifton, has seen some modifications to accommodate the desired look of Simply Sweet, but the Abbotts opted to keep the building’s original floors.

“Wayne did a good job,” Ed said of the building.

Ed, who operates a hardware store on N.C.11 and previously operated a sweepstakes business at the corner of Highland Avenue and Queen Street, said the couple’s decision to open another business was partly

See SWEETS, 10

District delays re-rating plant, evaluates flow

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GRIFTON — The combined actual and obligated flows to Contentnea Metropolitan Sewerage District are nearing 75 percent of the district’s permitted flow capacity. Despite the recent multi-million dollar plant expansion, discussions for future growth must be held once daily flows reach 80 percent of the permitted capacity.

In addition to an abnormally wet year, the dis-

trict’s average actual flows of 2.14 million gallons per day seems reasonable compared to its permitted capacity of 3.5 million gallons per day. However, obligated but not yet tributary flows combined with actual flows bring the district closer to a percentage that may require the district to begin planning for yet another expansion or at least a re-rating of the plant to accept 4 million gallons per day — the plant’s maximum capacity, according to District Man-

ager Chuck Smithwick.

Members of the Contentnea Metropolitan Sewerage District Advisory Board discussed the potential impacts of obligated flow and future developments to the district during the board’s Jan. 28 meeting.

Undeveloped lots in Ayden and Winterville add up to just less than 500,000 gallons of obligated, but not yet tributary flow to the district, with 151,590 gallons for Winterville and 345,910 for Ayden. As subdivisions,

homes and businesses are platted for development, a formula is used to determine the amount of “obligated” flow the sewerage district must account for in its total percentage of flow, Smithwick said, adding each request for obligated flow must be submitted to the Division of Water Resources.

“This exercise is to make sure that you don’t over-allocate. At no point would

See FLOW, 3

CMSD engineers to oversee Southwest Bypass project

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GRIFTON — Contentnea Metropolitan Sewerage District engineers will have a say in the completion of the Southwest Bypass following a unanimous vote Jan. 28.

Based on the bypass’ proposed tie-in to N.C. 11 near the area of Snow Tractor Supply or Old N.C. 11, the sewerage district’s gravity line will potentially have to be relocated, in addition to a waterline managed by the Neuse Regional Water and Sewer Authority.

See WORK, 6

HONORING BLACK HISTORY MONTH



During Black History Month, we recognize the courage of African Americans who have inspired change throughout our country’s history. From politicians and scientists to writers and musicians to everyday people who spoke out against injustice and made a difference, we celebrate these fearless pioneers. Their brave determination to fight for equal liberties and rights has been an inspiration both at home and around the world.



Falcon freshman finds inspiration in quotes

ANGELA HARNE
Group Editor

WINTERVILLE—Jayla Wooten, 15, strives to be a role model for her peers, while also pushing herself to make her ancestors proud.

“I realize that if I don’t work hard and go the extra mile, my future won’t be bright. I have the opportunity to get a higher education and I don’t take that opportunity for granted,” Wooten said. “We should never forget the ones who paved the way for our freedoms and opportunities and we shouldn’t take anything for granted.

“I want to make future generations and my ancestors proud of me. I don’t want their hard work to go to waste.”

Wooten, a freshman at South Central High School, is the first female and first African-American to serve as the Winterville Youth Council’s vice president.

She is making history.

“I didn’t really think about that, but I feel very accomplished,” Wooten admits when told she was the first female and minority to serve on the council.

Wooten is thrilled at the possibility of serving for another three years through her high school career.

“I am gaining experience and learning leadership skills, which, as I grow up, I will need in life,” she said, adding she is proud of how far the youth council has come. “When it first started no (officers) actually wanted to talk. We were all shy, but now we are used to it and say what’s on our mind.”

In the spring, the Winterville Youth Council will elect its new officers. Wooten plans to run for president.

“I want the youth council to continue to grow and be more known throughout the community and I want more youth involved,” Wooten said.

Wooten’s passions do not end with the youth council.

She began playing tennis at age 7 and immediately fell in love with the game. Last fall, Wooten competed on the girl’s varsity tennis team and finished the season No. 3 behind two seniors. She trains at Baywood Racquet Club with aspirations to one day play at the collegiate level.

“I have two role models: Althea Gibson and Arthur Ashe. They were the first African-Americans in tennis. Today, I look up to Serena and Venus Williams. I watch all of their games,” Wooten said.

For the spring season, Wooten serves as the manager of the boy’s tennis team.

Her favorite subject is math and she aspires to be a nurse practitioner. Wooten’s love of math and science shone through when she was selected as an eighth-grader into the Health Science Academy. Students selected must express an interest in the medical field and maintain a strong GPA.

Wooten is no stranger to the honor roll and principal’s list.

Wooten is also a member of Health Occupations Students of America or HOSA and she plays percussion for the Falcons’ marching band.

She started playing the drums in sixth grade and was named All-County as an eighth-grader. She also plays the piano, which she began at age 6.

A Girl Scout since age 5, Wooten is working toward her Senior Gold award, which is equivalent to the Boys Scout’s Eagle Scout award. She has already earned the Girl Scouts’ bronze and silver awards.

In eighth grade, while serving as a peer helper to exceptional children in gym class, Wooten gained inspiration.

She lead a Girl Scout project where her troop, No. 1378 of Cornerstone Church, welcomed physically disabled and mentally challenged girls to a meeting. The troop taught the girls about Girl Scouts and shared a meal with them.

“I love working with that population and when I got close to the students in gym class, I knew I wanted to lead that project,” Wooten said.

For the past two summers Wooten has worked with physically disabled and mentally challenged youth at Camp Escape, a summer program offered through Greenville Parks and Recreation. Serving as a junior camp counselor, Wooten donated 227 community hours to the program.

As a nurse practitioner, Wooten hopes to one day work with children.

At her church, Koinonia Christian Center, Wooten serves as a teacher in the children’s church working with four- and five-year-

olds.

“I hope to show them that all it takes is to go that extra mile and then you can do anything. It takes hard work to reach your goals,” Wooten said, adding her mother is her inspiration. “I see my mom always working hard. She helps to lead our church events and helps my sister and I with our homework, takes us to practices, Girl Scouts and meetings and is working on her masters (degree).”

Aside from the medical field and youth, Wooten is interested in history and learning about various cultures.

“I have read many stories (about black history) and realized, for my people, they were oppressed. I also realize that without their greatness and determination, I don’t know where we would be,” Wooten said.

Wooten’s grandfather, the Rev. Douglas Cogdell and his siblings were amongst the first African-Americans to integrate Belvoir-Falkland School in 1966. Approximately 40 black students attended the school in its first year.

“Their first year was very uncomfortable and not having any Caucasian friends in the school made their adjustment to the school even harder,” Wooten said, recalling memories her grandfather had shared.

Today, race remains an issue, Wooten said.

“We have come very far from where we were, but I believe we have a ways to go before race will be completely eliminated,” she said.

Watching the media coverage on the deaths of Trayvon Martin and Michael Brown, Wooten said it is “proof racism is a big issue.”

“Racism is still going on and will keep going on until people realize that it is,”



ANGELA HARNE
Jayla Wooten, a motivated freshman at South Central High School, enjoys tennis, helping others and serving as vice president of the Winterville Youth Council.

Wooten said. “One of my favorite quotes by Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. is ‘I look to a day when people will not be judged by the color of their skin, but by the content of their character.’”

Wooten was 7 years old when President Barack Obama was first elected in 2008 and remembers feeling proud when he recited his oath of office.

“Seeing President Obama in office shows my people have come a long way and it shows this generation that we can do anything and get it done,” Wooten said.

In her spare time, Wooten loves to draw and create quote books.

“I love collecting quotes and hanging them on my walls,” she said, explaining her eighth-grade English teacher inspired her quote collection. “Everyday my teacher would write a quote on the board and we would have to copy the quote and then write what we thought it meant.”

Several of her classmates were not inspired by the daily assignment, but Wooten admits she looked forward to English class to read the quote of the day. Some days it was the mere quote that motivated her through the rest of the day.

“I would focus on the quote and aspire to it. They are an inspiration,” Wooten said as she read one of her favorite quotes by H. Jackson Brown. “‘Let the refining and improving of your own life keep you so busy that you have little time to criticize others.’”

When it comes to her life goals, Wooten turns to the quote, “A turtle cannot see a giraffe’s dreams” for inspiration.

Wooten is the daughter of Adrian and Hollie Wooten of Winterville. She is the oldest child of two. Her sister, Kyra, is an eighth-grader at A.G. Cox Middle School and serves as the sergeant-at-arms on the Winterville Youth Council.

Lenoir Memorial enters management agreement with Novant Health

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

KINSTON — Lenoir Memorial Hospital announced its decision to enter a management agreement with Novant Health Thursday.

The decision follows an 18-month process to develop the best partnership to help create a stronger health system for Lenoir Memorial Hospital and the Kinston community, according to Gary Black, the chief executive officer of Lenoir Memorial Hospital.

“Our industry is changing faster than it ever has ... so we are under a lot of pressure to do things better,” Black said. “We think asking for some help from a partner is the right way to do it.”

With assistance from Juniper Advisory LLC, an affiliation adviser, the hospital’s board of directors reviewed the three initial proposals from Novant Health, Duke

LifePoint and Vidant Medical Center. Vidant ultimately withdrew its proposal.

Of Lenoir Memorial’s financial standing, the hospital is in good shape in terms of its balance sheet, however the operations annually lose funds on the income statement, Black said.

“At some point that may effect our balance sheet,” Black said of the financial drive to affiliate. “This decision is more than just about financial issues, it’s about trying to do the right thing for the community over the long term.”

Following multiple site visits and a series of questions regarding a potential partnership, the Lenoir Memorial Hospital Board of Directors unanimously determined Novant Health as the best cultural fit to partner with, according to Ray Collier, the board chairman of two years.

“This is a major movement for our hospital today. It’s a great day for Lenoir Memorial Hospital,” Collier said, extending thanks to board of directors and all parties involved in the process.

Based in Winston-Salem, Novant Health is one of the largest not-for-profit hospitals in state and has exhibited financial stability and enhanced branding opportunities through partnerships with other new affiliated markets, Collier said.

While reviewing the two proposals, Lenoir Memorial set a list of guidelines to determine the best fit for the hospital and Kinston community.

“We wanted a partner that would maintain a full service acute hospital here in Kinston. We wanted to expand services, including physician integration and recruitment; we wanted to

make important financial decisions for this hospital and we wanted to maximize local control and keep control here with our board and county directors,” Collier said. “We’re confident that Novant Health is the right strategic partner for our hospital.

“They share our vision to grow services, protect what we have built here and make sure the community has access to high-quality, affordable healthcare for many, many years to come.”

Novant’s dedication to quality care was a driving force in making them the best partner for Lenoir Memorial.

“We believe this culture of excellence and commitment to patient care will help Lenoir Memorial further strengthen and enhance health care services ... to meet the needs of our community,” Collier said.

Novant is a four-state integrated network of physician clinics, outpatient centers and hospitals with more than 1,200 physicians and 26,000 employees serving more than 4 million patients each year. The system is also one of the top 25 integrated health systems in the United States.

By partnering with Novant, the Lenoir Memorial Hospital will maintain its board of directors, however a Novant representative will attend all open session meetings of the board. Lenoir will also be able to invest its operational earnings back into the hospital and retain its foundation’s earnings to enhance and grow the hospital in the future.

Black will continue his role as chief executive officer of Lenoir Memorial, but will now be a paid employee of Novant. All other team members will remain

in place, Black said.

Novant will monitor, review and make recommendations on administration, nursing, labor management and regulatory compliance, financial operation, business office, materials management, strategic and financial planning, management training and physician recruitment and retention, according to Black.

Lenoir Memorial will maintain its name, but the use of Novant’s branding has yet to be determined, Black added.

An official contract is expected to be finalized in April. The Lenoir Memorial Board of Directors will vote, once again, on the final contract. Once the contract is in place, Lenoir Memorial will undergo an estimated 180-day initial assessment to determine which, if any, services and staff will be added or eliminated, Black said.

Community

Karate classes

Winterville Parks and Recreation is offering karate classes on Thursday nights beginning Feb. 5 at Winterville Parks and Recreation, 2936 Church St. Ext., Winterville. Registration is required 15 minutes before class time. Class times are 6:15-7 p.m. for new students, ages 4-6, from 7-7:45 p.m. for new students ages 7 and up and from 7:45-8:30 p.m. for yellow belts and above. The registration is \$8, plus \$7 weekly. To pre-register, visit youngchampionsofamerica.com.

Miss Grifton pageant

The 2015 Miss Grifton scholarship pageant is seeking young ladies, ages 14-18, who would like to participate in the annual competition. Participants must be a Grifton resident, a reputable role model, unwed and not have children. An informational meeting is at 7 p.m. Feb. 5 at the Grifton Fastax Office, 537 Queen St., Grifton. For more information, call Director Casey Tripp at 252-327-5330.

Tiny art show dinner

The Tiny Art Show's pancake dinner and preview sale is from 5:30-7:30 p.m. Feb. 5 at Emerge, 404 S. Evans St., Greenville, featuring an all-you-can-eat supper of pancakes, French toast, sausage, desserts, mimosas, coffee and more. Cost is \$10 in advance or \$12 at the door. Children, age 5 and under, eat for free. Youth, ages 5-13, tickets are \$5 in advance or \$7 at the door. Have an opportunity to preview and be the first to buy from the Tiny Art Show before it opens to the public. Most art priced at \$5 to \$10, including paintings, drawings, sculptures, ceramics, jewelry and more. Proceeds to benefit the Pitt County Arts Council Educational Scholarship and Outreach Programs, including the Youth Public Arts Project and Art is Good Medicine.

Jerle Turner benefit

A gospel sing and silent auction benefit for Jerle Turner is Feb. 6-7 at Hamstead Acres, 893 Dyke Smith Road, La Grange. The silent auction is at 5:30 p.m. and the music starts at 7 p.m. Cost is \$15. For more information, call 252-531-5530 or 252-747-5095 or visit hamsteadacres.com online.

Museum open house

The Winterville Historical and Arts Society is hosting an open house from 3-5 p.m. Feb. 8 at the Winterville Museum, located in the Cox-Ange House, 2543 Church St., Winterville. The museum houses artifacts and displays that reflect the history of Winterville and Pitt County. Private or group tours can be scheduled by calling 252-321-2660. Admission is free, but donations are appreciated.

Backyard birds

Help the National Audubon Society and A Time for Science perform the first bird survey on the 400-acre conservation campus from 7 a.m.-noon Feb. 14. Count birds along the waterfront trails. For the little ones, craft a pine cone bird feeder to take home. This event is free, but register is required. Register online at atimeforscience.org. Rain date is from 8 a.m.-noon Feb. 15.

Paws gala

A Night to Paws Gala is from 7-11 p.m. Feb. 14 at the private estate of Dr. and Mrs. Greg Davis featuring fine foods, cocktails, live music, raffles and a silent auction. Cost is \$150 per couple or \$80 per individual. Tickets may be purchased online at tinyurl.com/PawsGala. Proceeds to benefit the Humane Society of Eastern Carolina.

Insurance enrollment

Free assistance with ACA Health Insurance is available from 10:30 a.m.-5:30 p.m. Feb. 15, which is the last day to enroll for health insurance and avoid a penalty, at the Edwin W. Monroe AHEC Conference Center, 2000 Venture Tower Drive, Greenville. To schedule an appointment, call 1-855-733-3711. Walk-ins welcome. All assistants are federally certified.

Family night

A Time for Science is hosting its Third Wednesday Family Night from 5-7:30 p.m. Feb. 18 at Chick-Fil-A in Winterville. The theme is "The March Winds doth Blow." Participants will make pin-less pinwheels for outdoor fun in the winds of March. This event is free.

Chamber nominees

The Ayden Chamber of Commerce is accepting nominations of its Citizen of the Year and Business of the Year awards. To nominate an individual or business, visit aydenchamber.com for a nomination form or call 252-746-2266. Nominations are due by Feb. 20 and may be mailed to P.O. Box 31, Ayden, NC 28513. The recipients will be announced at the annual banquet in March.

Astronomy Club

The Carolina Skies Astronomy Club is meeting at 6 p.m. Feb. 21 in the Chia-yu Li Planetarium for a planetarium show, followed by the indoor program, "Jupiter at its Best" at 6:30 p.m. February is the best time this year to observe the giant planet. Enjoy the view through a variety of telescopes. If the sky is cloudy, still come out and enjoy the planetarium. This event is free, but register is required. Register online at atimeforscience.org.

Parking: A top priority in downtown Winterville

ANGELA HARNE
Group Editor

WINTERVILLE — Limited parking is a top concern among Winterville downtown business owners. The need for additional parking downtown was brought to light Thursday at an informal downtown merchant meeting hosted by the town of Winterville.

More than 10 downtown business and property owners attended the meeting, along with the chamber director and Winterville Town Council.

Stephen Penn, Winterville's economic developer, recapped the town's economic development taskforce goals to beautify downtown with benches and greenery, complete a Railroad Street landscape project and construct a multi-purpose wellness center in town.

The town council is also considering a sidewalk improvement project, which, in essence, during construction will limit access into downtown storefronts. The informal merchant meeting was requested by Mayor Protem Mark Smith following a discussion pitched by Councilman Tony Moore to replace the downtown sidewalks with patterned, bricklike material.

Smith wanted to gauge the business owners' take on the project to make sure they were on board and aware of the inconvenience the project may place on their business. Unfortunately, the only information provided to the business owners at Thursday's meeting was that the council is "considering" a sidewalk project. There was no mention that the project may limit access into their stores.

Only one business owner shared an opinion on the proposed sidewalk project.

"I think sidewalks are important and I think (new sidewalks) would be nice and are very desirable," said Buddy Waters, the owner of Waters' Carpet, located on Mill Street.

Smith is OK with moving forward with the sidewalk project, he said following the meeting, explaining he stopped by several businesses before the meeting to discuss the proposed project with the owners.

"Most realize that we will work diligently to not harmfully impact their business and with progress comes a bit of pain," Smith said. "I haven't heard and didn't hear any concerns tonight, so I'm

comfortable with moving forward with a patterned sidewalk."

Smith is under the impression that the town council already allocated funds for the patterned sidewalk. This is not the case, according to Winterville Manager Terri Parker.

The council allocated \$65,000 to replace a portion of the sidewalk on Railroad Street starting at Mary and Vinny's Biscuits and Bagels. The patterned sidewalk project is a completely different project and no funds have been allocated or approved, Parker said.

While Waters supports the sidewalk project, Vickie Wilson of L'Academie De Danse, a dance studio located on Railroad Street, thinks parking in the downtown area is a larger issue.

"I come to downtown every day and the biggest problem I see is parking, especially for the dance studio. Parents have to drop and go because there is no where to park and then our kids are having to cross the street," Wilson said.

Waters agreed. "There is not much parking in our downtown," he said.

Debbie Avery, the director of the Winterville Chamber of Commerce, said, "Parking is an issue." Wilson said, "A major issue. We were allowed to park in the rear of the buildings, but then we were told we were taking the other business owners' spots and asked to find parking out front."

Jane Power with the Winterville Historical and Arts Society asked if any properties are available to expand parking. Elizabeth Hunsucker Burnett and Paula Hunsucker Stafford own a vacant lot on Railroad Street.

"The property is available, but has never been pursued by the town," Stafford said.

Downtown once had angled parking. Visitors now must parallel park in the downtown area. Business owners questioned if angled parking would increase the parking availability.

"I've measured and it takes a one space, but I would rather park at an angle than parallel park," Avery said.

Waters said, "In an ideal world, the Hunsucker property would be great for parking."

Stafford said, "If the town doesn't want to buy it, we are looking at other

avenues for a business."

The appearance of Winterville's downtown is also a concern among business owners.

"It is also not an attractive downtown. I own the carpet business and have a dumpster and bin for cushions (in plain sight), but there is nowhere else to put them," Waters said.

Winterville Councilman Ron Cooper suggested Waters build a wooden fence around the dumpsters to shield them from patrons' sight. A fence may cause havoc for the trash trucks, Waters said, adding he would explore the possibility.

Powers suggested the town explore façade grants or start an in-house program for businesses to participate in. The last downtown improvement grant Winterville secured was in the '90s for \$15,000, according to Moore.

One recommendation of the economic taskforce was to establish a downtown business group, which would be focused and invested in Winterville's downtown, Parker said.

"Our downtown is not very attractive," Avery said, suggesting the streetlights be replaced. "I also like the idea of benches, planters and trees."

Winterville could tap into the town's historical aspects, like the railroad, Wilson said. A West Virginia native, Wilson shared that her hometown drew more than 100 tourists every weekend playing up its coal mining history.

"They offered weekend train rides and dinner theaters," she said.

Moore supported tapping into the town's history and suggested placing historical markers on W.H. Robinson Elementary School, A.G. Cox Middle School and the Ange House. He also suggested constructing a clock by Vinny's to include information about when the town of Winterville became incorporated.

Historical aspects draw people to town, Wilson said.

"And the beautiful thing is that it is all walkable," Power said.

The town could also partner with the Winterville Historical and Arts Society to provide events and entertainment, said Winterville Councilwoman Veronica Roberson.

"The arts attract people to a town — galleries and museums," Wilson said.

If the town constructs a multi-purpose center, officials hope to expand access to the arts for residents and visitors, Parker said. Such a center would be ideal for the dance studios, Wilson said, explaining many have a difficult time locating space to host their recitals.

Avery also suggested the council consider moving the utilities underground when and if the sidewalk project is approved.

The council looked into moving its utilities underground approximately nine years ago and at the time the cost estimate was \$2 million, Smith said.

"It would be beautiful, but that is a hefty price tag. I would love to do it, but don't see it happening in the immediate future," Smith added.

Avery said, "Two million dollars is a lot of money, but so are patterned crosswalks."

Various patterns, which are less expensive, are at the council's disposal, Parker said, adding, in support of beautification efforts, the town secured a grant through the Pitt County Development Commission to purchase banners and way-finding signs.

Thirty banners will be placed on the town's light poles and way-finding signs will direct drivers to the town's parks, government buildings, post office, Ange House, library and more.

"They will help tremendously," Power said, explaining Pitt Community College, where she works, recently added signs and banners to its campus. "It is amazing what they add."

The town plans to host a second informal meeting once the signs and banners are in place.

"This has been great dialogue and a great start," Parker said.

Penn agreed. "We had a lot of input and a lot more discussion than I thought there would be," Penn admits. "I was surprised at the amount of comments about the lack of parking. I didn't realize that it was such a pressing issue. Historical markers explaining some of the town's and buildings' history was another comment that I was happy to hear. I have considered this myself and was excited to hear that others were interested in this as well."

FLOW

Continued from 1

you ever exceed 100 percent from this exercise," said Charlie Davis, an engineer with the Wooten Co.

Davis advised that 12 straight months at 80 percent capacity requires the district to start planning. After 12 straight months of flows at 90 percent, the district would need to begin implementing those plans.

"You have several years ahead of you before you start seeing the 80 percent," Davis said.

Winterville Manager Terri Parker said, "It would behoove us ... to look at our list of obligated but not tributary to make sure that we don't just have stuff sitting out there that's not going to happen for whatever reason.

"Most of what I see on the list (for Winterville) is probably going to happen in some respect, but I do think we'll be taking a look to see if we can reduce."

Smithwick advised the district could increase its permitted capacity to the district's maximum of 4 million gallons per day, but cautioned that operating at

design capacity could impact daily operation of the plant.

To re-rate the plant would require a thorough evaluation of the entire plant to determine it could in fact handle 2-4 million gallons daily.

Grifton Manager Joe Albright questioned if it would benefit the district to re-rate the plant while it is still operating at "peak performance," as opposed to 10 years down the road.

"There's nothing preventing you at any time to look at re-rating," Davis said, adding he believed the district still had time before a decision would need to be made.

In other board news: As part of an effort to

more accurately charge each of the municipal customers, the district implemented a sewer rate study, which will allow the district to shift, over a three-year period, to a flow-based billing structure. Ayden, Grifton and Winterville will then be billed based on the percentage of flow they contribute to the district.

Additional flow meters were installed in Ayden and Winterville to more adequately measure flows from the two towns. The new flow meters came online in June 2014.


"I feel like we have an adequate representation of the volume of water that we are accounting for," Smithwick said, explaining he removed the data prior to June to de-

termine how Ayden, Grifton and Winterville stand as far as actual flow to the district.

Were the district to implement the flow-based structure in the 2015-16 budget, Grifton would be billed for 16.1 percent, Ayden – 42.1 percent and Winterville, 41.1 percent of the 420 million gallons sent to the district in 2014, Smithwick said.


However, it was previously agreed upon by the board to bill Grifton, Ayden and Winterville at 17 percent, 36 percent and 47 percent, respectively, in the 2015-16 fiscal year.

Albright expressed appreciation for the information, as it will provide some insight on what to expect in the 2016-17 fiscal year.



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Opinion

Restoration is theme early in session

The theme of the first week of the General Assembly session could be summed up adequately with one word – “restoration.”

And not just because 170 legislators came back to town for the long legislative session, bringing the political divisiveness that is Jones Street with them.

“Restoration” was the theme of a number of bills filed during the week as the General Assembly returned to work. Many came from Democrats, who want to bring back laws nixed by the Republican-led General Assembly over the past four years. Republicans also want to restore some old ways of doing things that were changed when Democrats controlled the statehouse prior to 2011.

Democrats want to re-enact the state’s version of the earned income tax credit, a perk designed to help low- to moderate-income workers put a few extra bucks in their pockets at tax time. The credit cost the state about \$60 million in tax revenue in the 2013-14 fiscal year, according to Department of Revenue estimates. It was repealed by the General Assembly, effective at the start of 2014, as part of Republican tax changes.

Democrats also filed legislation to restore the Teaching Fellows program, which the General Assembly has phased out over the past few years. Created in 1986, the program recruited high-achieving high school graduates to become teachers and awarded them college scholarships if they agreed to teach in the state for at least four years.

Members of the minority party also want to bring back the educational sales tax holiday, when residents could purchase certain school supplies, clothing and computers free of sales taxes. The holiday was repealed by the General Assembly effective July 1, 2014. Republicans noted that it cost the state nearly \$14 million in tax revenue in 2012, while proponents said it helped parents financially as their kids went back to school.

Republicans who hold large majorities in the House and Senate want to do some restoration of their own. They filed a bill this week to restore partisan elections for N.C. Supreme Court and Court of Appeals seats, meaning those judges and justices would run with party affiliations attached. Those races became nonpartisan back in 2004. Proponents of partisan judicial races say putting party affiliations on the ballot gives voters a little information about who they’re voting for and that voters often know little about judicial candidates. Opponents say the party affiliations of judges shouldn’t matter.

Republicans also filed a bill to give local school districts more flexibility on the start and end dates for the school year to meet educational objectives.

Gov. McCrory and others – Republicans and Democrats – also want to revive a historic preservation tax credit allowed to expire at the end of last year. A bill to do that is expected in the near future.

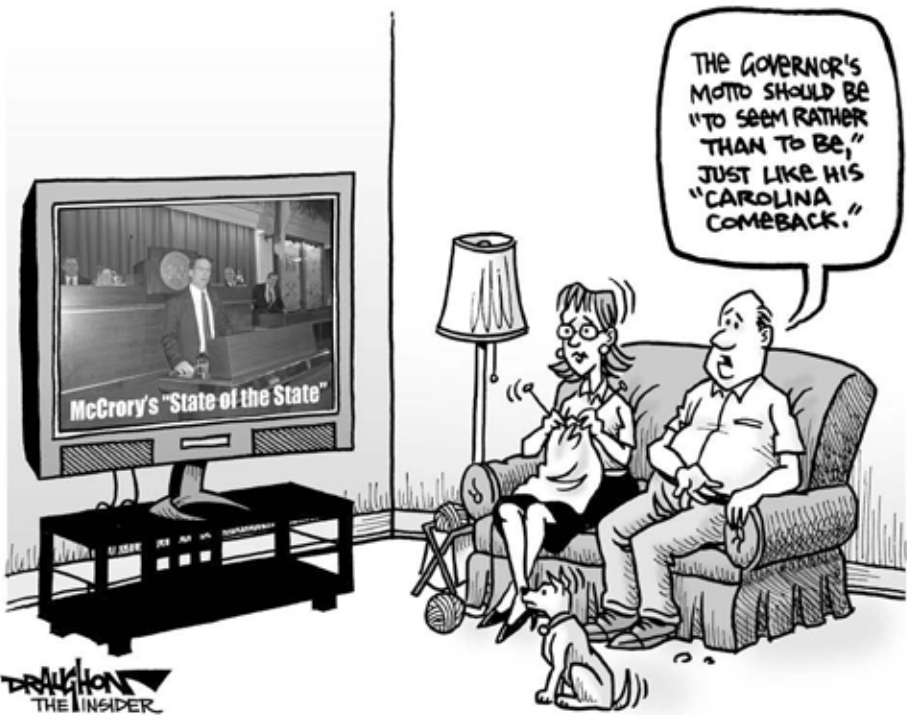
The GOP-sponsored judicial election measure and the historic preservation bill have a chance of passing this session. As for the Democrats’ bills, barring some major change in GOP philosophy, they probably will have to wait until if and when Democrats’ power is restored in Raleigh.

But that’s not going to keep them from trying.

Patrick Gannon is the editor of the political newsletter, The Insider.



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Does war help the economy?

War: A double-edged sword

If history is any indication, the economics of war can be a double-edged sword. For those of us who came of age in the new millennium, the specter of war brings with it the promise of economic instability and for good reason. The massive economic downturn that characterized the latter part of the decade can largely be attributed to the billions wasted on foreign conflicts. For those whose births are predated by the George Bush Jr. presidency, their share in the national debt is a gift from past generations. We have war to thank for this.

There once was a time, however, when war was a driving economic force. For the United States, conflicts like World War II granted a reprieve from the greatest economic downturn in the nation’s history.

And it couldn’t just be any conflict. The size of World War II made it ideal to jumpstart an economy still in the throes of the Great Depression. It introduced this great nation to the illusion of peacetime.

Today, the United States is synonymous with bloated military budgets and multiple spheres of influence, but prior to World War II, the U.S. wasn’t the global hegemony many view it as today. In fact many historians would argue the U.S. was woefully unprepared to fight, even in a moderately sized conflict, let alone one the scope of the second world war.

The prospect of fighting a war on two fronts was a boon for the job market. The government’s increased military spending had a sort of economic snowball effect, simply by putting the nation’s unemployed to work. With more people earning an income, spending increased, putting more money in the economy, which facilitated new private sector jobs.

These days, however, the spoils of war aren’t as evenly spread as they once were. What was once a mechanism to bolster a strong middle class, the theaters of modern conflicts are in resource rich nations for the noble cause of protecting the economic interests of an elite few. Of course, this hasn’t changed war’s reputation as being good for businesses. If we were to use modern indicators that gauge an economy’s strength by the one percent’s bottom line, modern warfare can still, technically, be defined as a means to bolster the economy.

Former vice-president and current war criminal on the lam, Dick Cheney, was one of the Iraq War’s most shrill advocates. His company, Halliburton, as one of the war’s more prominent military contractors, walked away from the conflict with a cool \$39 billion payday.



DEAN STEPHENS
Staff Writer

The simple answer: Yes

If we’re simply discussing the singular aspect of the question, common sense tells us that the infusion of money into an economy has a positive impact.

When the United States fought World Wars I and II we depended upon the industrial complex of America to turn out munitions. Shipbuilding, weapons, tanks, ammunition and other equipment were needed to fight the war. They were produced in this country. All of this required employees. The employees were hired from within the United States. Therefore, the economy was positively affected by higher employment rates and the flow of cash. More employment meant more money in the pocketbooks of consumers during those times in American life.

What also benefits the economy is the multiplier effect of every dollar that is spent. The economics class I had in college recognized that money flows in a continuous circle. When \$1 enters the economy it multiplies multiple times, an obvious beneficial effect to many others that enter the circle. An employee in a munitions factory earns a decent wage. A percentage of that wage goes to taxes that aid the government, a percentage goes for groceries that help the grocer, a percentage goes to finance a home that benefits the bank, a percentage goes for an automobile that benefits a car dealer and the list goes on, until the salary is spent. The grocer’s spending helps others in the economy and the circle continues unbroken.

Some would argue that we no longer have an industrial complex to provide those same jobs. That’s true, but our weapon systems still depend upon workers making things. We still need planes and ships and we have much of our weaponry — which require building from scratch — that need technology to operate with new speed and accuracy. There are still plenty of reasons to believe that war would continue to aid the economy.

Tyler Cowan, a professor of economics at George Mason University, made the argument in a June 13, 2014 New York Times article that economic growth might be hurting because we don’t have a major war.

Cowan wrote, “The continuing slowness of economic growth in high-income economies has prompted soul-searching among economists. They have looked to weak demand, rising inequality, Chinese competition, over-regulation, inadequate infrastructure and an exhaustion of new technological ideas as possible culprits.

“An additional explanation of slow growth is now receiving attention, however. It is the persistence and expectation of peace.”

Information at the website shmooop.com points to preparation to war can also have a positive effect on the Nation’s economy. Despite President Franklin D. Roosevelt’s New Deal program, Ameri-



MITCHELL OAKLEY
Publisher Emeritus

State still outpaces nation

Ever since conservatives won majorities in the North Carolina General Assembly and began reducing taxes, spending, and state regulation, liberals have predicted doom.

Without sufficient government spending, they said, the North Carolina economy would suffer. Businesses don’t place as high a value on cost as they used to, liberals assured us, so efforts to promote growth with lower taxes and regulatory burdens will accomplish nothing. Instead, they counseled more spending on schools, infrastructure, and even public assistance as a stimulus.

The Left’s model for economic development was never coherent. Now, with several years of empirical data about the state’s recent economic performance before us, we can say with rising confidence the Left’s model yields poor predictions. Since the advent of tax cuts, budget restraint, and regulatory reform in Raleigh, North Carolina has outperformed the nation and the Southeast in most measures of economic growth.

The latest data come from the Bureau of Labor Statistics. It has just released preliminary job counts and unemployment statistics for December 2014 as well as revised statistics for prior months. Over the past year, North Carolina added about 114,500 net new jobs, an annual growth rate of 2.8 percent. That was significantly above annual rates of job creation for the nation as a whole (2.2 percent) and the Southeast as a whole (1.8 percent).

It’s more informative to look at these trends over a longer period of time. Consider the various rounds of state budgets, tax cuts, and regulatory reforms that the North Carolina legislature has enacted since the 2010 election. The first ones went into effect in mid-2011. Since that time, the North Carolina economy has added some 300,000 new jobs, which represented an increase of 7.7 percent over those three and a half years. The nation’s growth rate during that period was 6.5 percent. The Southeast’s job-creation rate was still lower than that, at 5.5 percent.

Here’s one way to think about these trends. If our state’s job creation rate had merely matched the regional average, about 88,000 fewer North Carolinians would be employed today. Obviously we can’t say for sure how much the state’s turn to fiscal conservatism in 2011 contributed to the state’s relatively strong economic performance since then. Several of our neighbors have experienced strong growth, too. Of course, some of them have also pursued similar policies, such as fiscal restraint and regulatory reform.

My point is simply that if you listened to the Left’s predictions that North Carolina would lag behind comparable states, you made a bad bet.



JOHN HOOD
Editorialist

See **STEPHENS**, 5

See **OAKLEY**, 5

See **HOOD**, 5

We encourage local citizens to use this column to discuss issues important to you. Our “Forum” is for the public. It can be used to state your opinions about local, state or national issues. Or, you might want to use it to praise a community member. Letters to our forum are generally limited to 150 words. We do reserve the right to edit for facts and for appropriateness. We will also edit to make sure all letters are kept in good taste. Citizens who would like to talk about your community’s issues may email us at aharne@ncweeklies.com or mail your letter to The Times-Leader at P.O. Box 369, Grifton, N.C. 28530.

Obituaries

William Earl Brown

AYDEN—William Earl Brown, 73, of Ayden, passed away Feb. 1, 2015 at Vidant Medical Center. He was born Nov. 12, 1941 in Pitt County to Edward Earl and Ethel Barrow Brown. William was preceded in death by his parents. He retired from E.I. DuPont after 37 years of service as an electrician. He was a loving husband, father, grandfather and friend who enjoyed family time and working on cars.



Mr. Brown is survived by his wife, of 53 years, Wertie Brown of the home; one son, Eddie Earl Brown of Charlotte; one daughter, Jean Brown Wingate and fiancée, Keith of Winterville; two brothers, Walter Brown and wife, Jeanette of Tarboro and Roy Brown and wife, Patty of Greenville. He also leaves behind two grandchildren, Stephen Wingate and fiancée, Marissa and Michael Wingate.

A graveside service is at 3 p.m. Wednesday, Feb. 4 in the Winterville Cemetery, west side of Reedy Branch Road, between Forlines Road and N.C. 903. The family received friends from 6-8 p.m. Tuesday, Feb. 3 at Farmer Funeral Service-Ayden.

Flowers are welcome or memorial contributions may be made to Hollywood Presbyterian Church, 5103 N.C. 43, Greenville, 27858.

Online condolences may be sent to farmerfuneralservice.com.

Arrangements entrusted to Farmer Funeral Service.

Peggy Rose Brown

GRIFTON—Peggy Rose Brown, 86, of Grifton, passed away Jan. 29, 2015 at Vidant Medical Center in Greenville.

She was born on April 11, 1928 in Pitt County to Clarence and Ethel Tripp Reams. Peggy attended Grifton United Methodist Church and was an active member of the Senior Center in Grifton.

She was preceded in death by her husband, Leo James Brown and one son, Danny Lee Brown.

Peggy is survived by her two sons, Lindy Brown and wife, Karen of Raleigh and Tony Brown and wife, Lois of Aiken, S.C.; one daughter, Renee Smith and husband, Neil of Winterville; eight grandchildren; many great-grandchildren and one brother, W.C. “Bill” Reams and wife, Frances of Clayton.

The family received friends from 5 to 6:30 p.m. Feb. 1 at Farmer Funeral Service in Ayden. Burial will be private at Evergreen Memorial Estates.

Flowers are welcome or memorial contributions may be made to Grifton United Methodist Church.

Online condolences may be sent to farmerfuneralservice.com.

Arrangements entrusted to Farmer Funeral Service, Ayden.

Sue Pait Mooring Marsh

NEW BERN—Sue Pait Mooring Marsh, 78, of New Bern died Jan. 26, 2015. Arrangements are incomplete.

Darlene K. McLawhorn

AYDEN—Darlene K. McLawhorn, 58, of Ayden, died Jan. 28, 2015.

A memorial service was held at 3 p.m. Feb. 1 at Farmer Funeral Service. The family received friends from 2-3 p.m. at the funeral home.

Church Briefs

Pancake supper, breakfast

The Grifton United Methodist Church Men are hosting a pancake supper and breakfast from 4:30-7:30 p.m. Feb. 6 and from 7:30-10:30 a.m. Feb. 7 at the church. Eat-in or takeout. Cost is \$7. Milk, coffee and tea will also be served. To obtain a ticket, contact a member of the Grifton United Methodist Men.

Women of praise

The Friends of the Kinston-Lenoir County Public Library presents Women of Praise at 3 p.m. Feb. 8 at the library, 510 N. Queen St., Kinston, featuring Shilena Parks, Bonita Burney-Simmons, Atika Sayfuddin and Lessette Kornegay.

Officials program

Grifton Chapel Church of Christ Disciples of Christ, 378 Main St., Grifton, is holding an officials program at 3 p.m. Feb. 15 with guest speaker Bishop Farries C. Slade Sr., the minister of St. Mark Church of Christ of New Bern. Music by Kinston Community Choir. The church holds service at 11 a.m. on the first, second and third Sunday of each month.

Submit your upcoming church events to
Lcollins@ncweeklies.com
or fax to 252-524-3312.

Church Directory

Apostolic

Cathedral of God's Glory. Call 353-8071 for location.

Ministry of Availability, 8142 Hwy 11 S., Ayden Sunday School at 8 a.m., Service at 9 a.m.

St. Paul Church of Christ Disciples of Christ Church, East Avenue, Ayden. 746-2551.

Baptist

Berean Baptist Church, 2549 Hwy. 102 E., Ayden, 746-8295.

Community Baptist Church, 4094 N.E. College St., Ayden, 746-4377.

Faith Baptist Church, 8090 Hwy. 11 South, Ayden, 746-4882.

Family Baptist Church, 901 Hwy 102 West, Ayden, 355-0811

Freedom Baptist Church, Snow Hill St. Ext., Ayden, 714-9587. Pastor Worth Forbes

Life Gate Baptist Church, New Bern Highway, Ayden, 746-3088.

Christian

Armor of God Christian Church, 4051 Memorial Drive, Winterville, 353-9054.

Ayden Christian Church, 462 W. 2nd St., Ayden, 746-3555.

Bethel Christian Church, 5578 NC11 South, Grifton, 524-5520.

First Christian Church, 579 Queen St./P.O. Box 25, Grifton, 524-5509.

Grifton Chapel Church of Christ, Disciples of Christ, 502 West Main St., Grifton, 524-4001. Services on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd Sunday at 11 a.m.

Riverside Christian Church, Riverside Road, Grifton, 524-4710

Rountree Christian Church, Rt. 1, Ayden. 746-6186

Timothy Christian Church, Gardnersville, 746-4795.

Winterville Christian Church, Cooper St., Winterville, 756-2898.

Church of God

Open Heart Church of God, Hwy 11 & Dennis McLawhorn Road, Ayden, 746-2100. Sunday services at 10:45 a.m. and 6 p.m., Wednesdays at 7 p.m.

Deliverance

Victory Deliverance Center, 133 E. Second St., Ayden, 746-9150.

Episcopal

St. John's Episcopal Church, St. John Community, 2016 Cannon Price Road. Weekly services, communion on 1st and 3rd Sundays

Free Will Baptist

Arthur Chapel United American Free Will Baptist Church, Monk Road, Bell Arthur, 227-3342. Pastor Billy Ray Anderson

Ayden Free Will Baptist Church, East Third St., Ayden, 746-4388.

Bethany Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Winterville, 756-4448.

Black Jack Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 3, Greenville, 752-6485.

Elm Grove Original Free Will Baptist Church, 5403 Weyerhaeuser Rd, Ayden, 746-3534. Dr. Franklin Baggett.

Free Spirit Free Will Baptist Church, Ayden Community Building, 746-2467.

Good Hope Free Will Baptist Church, 425 Grimes St., Winterville, 756-3848.

Grifton Free Will Baptist Church, 299 Contentnea Dr., Grifton, 524-4210. Worship services 11 a.m. 1st and 3rd Sundays. Pastor Jesse L. Wilson.

Grifton Free Will Baptist Church, 674 Wall St., Grifton, 524-5901. Pastor Kevin Woolard

Haddock Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, N.C. 11, Ayden, 746-2479.

Headquarters Original Free Will Baptist Church, 811 N. Lee St., Ayden, 746-4963.

Hillside OFWB Church, 6862 Highland Ave., Grifton. Pastor Michael Lewis. Sunday School 9:45, Worship 11 a.m.

Immanuel FWB Church, 317 Vernon White Rd, Winterville, 756-2670.

Jumping Runn FWB Church, Rt. 1, Hanrahan Rd., Grifton. 1st and 3rd Services 11 a.m., Sunday School 9:45 a.m. Pastor Roy L. Stanley

Liberty FWB Church, 4283 S.E. College St., Ayden, 746-4305. Pastors: Melvin Worthington, Milton Worthington.

Little Creek OFWB Church, 55 Edwards Bridge Road, Ayden (Scuffleton), 746-2767.

Little Creek United American Free Will Baptist Church, N.C. 903, Ayden, 746-4023.

Live Oak UAFWB Church, 1577 Rock Road, Hwy. 118 East, Grifton, 524-5116.

Mills Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Black Jack.

New Deliverance Free Will Baptist Church, 4174 West Ave., Ayden, 746-6299. Pastor J.L. Wilson

Ormondville Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Ayden, 321-8875.

Piney Grove FWB Church, 335 Riverside Rd, Grifton, 524-4945.

Pleasant Hill Free Will Baptist Church, N.C. 43 South, Ayden, 746-2048.

Reedy Branch Free Will Baptist 4457 Reedy Branch Rd, Winterville, 756-3416.

Rose Hill FWB Church, 6236 County Home Rd, Winterville, 746-2415.

Rouse's Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Ayden, 746-2211.

Warren Chapel Church, Winterville, 756-8919.

Waterside Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Ayden, 746-2481.

Winterville Free Will Baptist Church, 489 Cooper St., Winterville, 756-3838.

Zion Hill Free Will Baptist Church, Rt. 1, Winterville, 756-3217.

Zion Chapel Free Will Baptist Church, Sixth St., Ayden, 746-3860.

Holy Church

Mt. Zion Holy Church, Inc., 3325 Ayden Golf Club Rd., Winterville, NC Pastor Ella Murphy.

Morning Star Holy Church, 604 E. Ave., Ayden, 746-4452.

Morning Star A.M.E. Zion Church, 825 Venters St., Ayden, 746-8935.

New Covenant Holy Church, 146 Water St., Grifton, 524-4036 or 524-4159.

St. Rest Holy Church, 154 Hammond St., Winterville, 756-9718.

Methodist

Ayden United Methodist Church, 600 Third St., Ayden, 746-6524. Services at 10:55 a.m. Sunday School at 10 a.m.

Grifton United Methodist Church, 207 McCrae St., Grifton, 524-4179.

Missionary Baptist

Mt. Olive Missionary Baptist Church, 4284 W. Ave., Ayden, 746-2292. Sunday School at 9:30 a.m. Services at 11 a.m. second and fourth Sundays. Pastor Jerry W. Spruell.

Mt. Shiloh Missionary Baptist Church, 230 Boyd St., Winterville. 355-3283. Pastor Dr. Calvin Johnson. Sunday School at 10 a.m., services at 11 a.m.

Non-denominational

Disciples Church of Little Creek, Scuffleton, 746-4235.

Pleasant Plain Church, Rt. 1, Ayden, 746-2482.

Divine Covenant Christian Church, 4383 East Ave., Ayden, 746-3676, Pastor James A. Whitfield.

Located at 5003 Sweet Point Ct., Ayden. Apostle Mary Mahone. 746-8960.

Open Door Ministries, 4584 Reedy Branch Road, Winterville. Pastor Greg Kennedy. 321-2486.

Pentecostal

Ayden First Pentecostal Holiness Church, 300 N. E. College St., Ayden, 746-8493

Grifton Pentecostal Holiness Church, Hwy 118, Grifton, 524-5881

Winterville Pentecostal Church, 604 E. Main St., Winterville, 756-6318.

Presbyterian

Grifton Presbyterian Church, 561 Dawson Rd., observing Sunday worship at 11 a.m. Sept-May and 10 a.m. June-Aug.

Seventh-Day Adventist

Greenville Seventh-Day Adventist Church, 4658 Reedy Branch Road, Winterville, 758-5717. Study: 9:30 a.m., Saturday worship service at 11:00 a.m.

Southern Baptist

First Baptist Church, 628 Third St., Ayden, 746-3556.

Winterville Baptist Church, 145 S. Church St., Winterville, 756-5955.

First Baptist Church, 208 Patrick St., Grifton, 524-5421

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HOOD

Continued from 4

The predictions weren't just wrong — they were far, far off the mark. Texas (11.6 percent since mid-2011) and Florida (9.4 percent) were the only Southern states to experience stronger job creation. If you add the other large states outside the South to the list, only California (also 9.4 percent) surpasses North Carolina.

Most but not all of the best-performing states in job creation have relative-

ly small governments with lower-than-average taxes and regulatory burdens (California is the most prominent exception). Senate leader Phil Berger, former House Speaker Thom Tillis, other legislative leaders, and Gov. Pat McCrory may have incurred the wrath of liberal activists and left-wing editorialists by pursuing a conservative strategy for economic growth, but they weren't really taking a risk. They were applying sound principles and the lessons of modern his-

tory to the problem. Their critics have done little more than chant outdated Keynesian catechisms and engage in personal ridicule.

Realistically, however, what else can liberals do? They can't laud President Obama's economic recovery while calling North Carolina's economic recovery unimpressive, since North Carolina is growing faster than the nation. And while they can cite declines in the state's labor-market participation in an attempt to

wish away inconvenient trends, those monthly statistics derive from a small-sample survey. Broader BLS measures show that even after accounting for workers dropping out of the labor force, unemployed has dropped faster in North Carolina than in all but a handful of states.

So the Left chants and chides even as the state's economic comeback continues.

John Hood is chairman of the John Locke Foundation. Follow him @JohnHoodNC.

STEPHENS

Continued from 4

According to the IBTimes, military contracts, funded by good ol' American tax dollars, were handed out

to the tune of \$138 billion, just waiting to be trickled down to the masses.

So to answer Edwin Starr's timeless question, war is good for business. It's also good for determin-

ing if we as a nation are willing to throw our service members to the proverbial wolves, if you're willing to pay us a few billion. But I'm willing to bet the war hawks and the cynical plu-

toocrats that support them would have sprung for a lot less.

Dean-Paul Stephens is a staff writer and columnist of this newspaper.

OAKLEY

Continued from 4

cans were still stuck in the mud of the Great Depression. Shmoop.com contends, "Only mobilization for a world war would bring an end to the most devastating economic crisis in United States history." Most people continue to credit the New Deal for improving people's lives in the late 40's when,

in reality, it was more likely than not that Roosevelt's investment in the war machine really turned the tide.

Cowan also credits war with quick reactions to solve problems. He uses the Manhattan Project as an example of how the United States produced the atomic bomb in just six short years. Yet, in today's society we don't seemingly have any urgency to take care of our country's

aging infrastructure despite the fact it would mean jobs and money flowing in the economy.

There is another side of the war equation. The loss of human capital can be devastating to a country. The United States, in most recent wars, has had fewer deaths than in previous wars. Our country has also been fortunate not to have war fought on our soil. We have avoided

huge outlays of money to replace buildings, infrastructure, communication or other tangible assets that would be wiped out in an attack.

"Does war help the economy?" The simple answer is "yes" since it doesn't require an elaboration on the human costs of war.

Mitchell Oakley is Group Publisher Emeritus of this newspaper.

Ayden Fire Association approves 1.24-cent tax increase

SAM CLARK
Staff Writer

AYDEN — The Ayden Fire Association unanimously approved a motion to increase the rural fire tax by 1.24 cents Thursday following a public forum. The tax increase is designed to fund the purchase of a new fire engine. This tax will also allow the department to get onto an equipment replacement schedule that will ensure the town’s fire-fighters are not using old equipment.

“By doing this, it’s going to put us replacing ... all four trucks currently in our building by 2031,” said Chief Samuel Jones of the Ayden Fire Department, explaining once payments of one truck are complete, they will roll over into another truck. “This way we will not arrive at a place where there are two trucks in our building that need to be replaced. It will basically put us on a trajectory that by 2031 we will not have any old equipment.”

The department operates four fire engines, including models 1984, 1995, 2006 and 2004. Given that the suggested life of a fire

truck is no more than 20 years, both the 1984 model and the 1995 model are due for replacement, Jones explained. Originally, the state required departments to replace the trucks after their 20th year of use, he added.

“As budget times got lean, that rule was lifted, mainly because rural fire departments were unable to keep up,” Jones said. “However, I think anybody who serves in the fire department would agree that a 20-year lifecycle is pretty fair for a truck. We take great pride in maintaining our equipment, but that being said, 20 years is a long time for a vehicle.”

The new truck is priced at \$436,000. Both the rural fire department and the town of Ayden will, if approved by the Ayden Board of Commissioners, contribute \$48,000 for a down payment. Pitt County is also expected to contribute \$10,000 toward the down payment, leaving a

total of \$330,000 to be financed, Jones explained.

The Ayden Fire Association hopes to secure an interest rate of 1.6 percent “or no greater than 2 percent,” Jones said, adding this will equate to annual payments of \$50,560, which will be split between the town of Ayden and the fire association.

The 1.24-cent tax increase, which brings the rural fire tax up to 5.99 cents, will generate \$27,489 each year. These funds will take care of the \$25,280 annual payment for the truck with a \$2,209 surplus, Jones said.

“The reason we are holding this meeting tonight is that ... the board feels like we should be transparent with the residents who elected us,” said Dale Mills, the president of the Ayden Fire Association. “We certainly value your opinions about where your tax dollars go.”

A large group of citizens attended the meeting with opinions on both sides. Ayden resident Jolly Dail attended the meeting to express his opposition to the tax increase.

“I’m totally against it, the people I’ve talked to are against it and I’m all for safety, but sometimes you can’t always get what you want,” Dail said.

There were also questions from citizens as to why the tax increase needed to be so large. The increase was calculated to be enough to allow the fire department to get onto a payment schedule that replaced equipment when it was time to be replaced, Jones explained.

“We feel this is in the best interest for you as a resident and your taxes,” Mills added. “The longer we wait ... at some point the rural fire department is going to have to replace two or three of these engines at the same time. It’s better that we get on a cycle and replace one at a time.”

Ayden resident Marilyn Dixon questioned whether the department was pursuing any grant opportunities that might further

defray the cost of purchasing a new truck.

“This rural board is seeking grants, not only for this, but other remedies as well — long term planning,” Mills said. “Federal grants, rural development grants, we’re tapping into four different ones right now.”

Not all residents in attendance were against the tax increase. Paula Loftin, a rural resident and member of the fire association, voiced her support for the increase.

“I just want to say as a resident of the rural area, I don’t want to be on the end of a fire call when you show up and your truck does not work. I am in support of the tax, I know I’m on the board, but I’m also a taxpayer,” Loftin said.

Dixon added, “I’m willing to increase (my tax payments), I don’t have much, but for the protection I’m willing to pay this tax.”

Capt. Blake Wingate of the Ayden Fire Department also supported the increase.

“I just wanted to say

that ... right now the fire department’s got some business and the cost of business goes up every day,” Wingate said. “If we don’t look at (replacing the trucks) right now, then the price is likely going to go up ... so as a rural taxpayer I think it’s a good idea to go ahead and jump on it.”

The Ayden Fire Department covers an area of approximately 44 square miles and responds to 325 to 350 calls per year, Jones said.

“If we don’t go ahead and be proactive instead of reactive, we’re always going to be behind the eight ball,” said Assistant Fire Chief Barry Wood of the Ayden Fire Department.

The issue will now go before the Ayden Board of Commissioners, since they are responsible for covering half the cost of the truck, and the Pitt County Board of Commissioners for final approval.

“I know this is a tough pill to swallow ... but you can’t put off a tough decision just because you don’t want to make it,” Jones said.

WORK

Continued from page 1

The relocation of a force main and gravity line on a portion of N.C. 11 initially stirred concerns for the Contentnea Metropolitan Sewerage District, due to potential head loss, which would ultimately create problems for the district’s member entities, Ayden and Winterville.

“With any kind of relocation, I anticipate there being some head loss,” said District Manager Chuck Smithwick. “Any kind of head loss is going to affect those pump stations that are tied into that force main.”

Roger Worthington Jr., a project engineer for the N.C. Department of Transportation, joined the district board Jan. 28

to discuss the potential impacts of the Southwest Bypass.

Four limited liability corporations have been short listed to bid on the bypass project, of which the N.C. Department of Transportation would like to place water and sewer work on the contractor, Worthington said. The goal is to obtain better bids that culminate the overall scope of work of the road project and the associated utilities.

“What we would like is the permission and an agreement with you that you will allow us to move it and put it back in essentially the same functional capacity that it was,” Worthington said, adding the N.C. Department of Transportation will foot the entire bill for the project.

Travis Welborn, the public works director for the town of Winterville, questioned how the N.C. Department of Transportation would address any potential impacts to the substations in Ayden and Winterville.

“The town of Ayden and the town of Winterville both have substations that tie directly into the force main that are going to potentially be affected and there would be costs associated with upgrading the pumps,” Welborn said.

Any costs that trickled down as a result of the relocation of the force main would be covered by the N.C. Department of Transportation as well, Worthington said.

Joe Albright, district

board member and Grifton manager, proposed the sewerage district’s engineers, the Wooten Co., be allowed to review the bypass plans and inspect construction.

“We have a fairly complicated collection system here,” Smithwick said, agreeing oversight from the district’s engineers was ideal. “Any movement we do to this gravity and force is going to cause some potential problems.” Smithwick also voiced concerns about the potential lack of sewer accessibility to the town of Ayden’s industrial park off N.C. 11.

“If we have to move that gravity line to the west, where the service road is, there is some existing gravity that would be affected and potentially affect the existing area that has been planned for the industrial park,” Smithwick said.

Bucky Moore, the president of the Wooten Co., agreed a contract with CMSD would allow for the company to serve the needs of the district on an

hourly rate, bill CMSD, who would then forward the bill to the N.C. Department of Transportation.

“All the costs involved with the work we would be doing would be reimbursable to CMSD through DOT,” Moore explained.

Albright also suggested the district contract with Ward & Smith, who serve as the attorneys for Neuse Regional Water and Sewer Authority, to review the district’s proposed contract with the N.C. Department of Transportation.

“I think we will gain some economies of scales because it will basically be the same contract the attorneys are reviewing for (Neuse Regional Water and Sewer Authority),” Albright said, adding the N.C. Department of Transportation would cover that cost as well.

Moore advised that a portion of the gravity line may need to be shortened and the force main lengthened to avoid head loss, pending the route of

the bypass determined by the awarded contractor.

“We’ll just have to spend whatever money we have got to spend,” Worthington said. “We’re not looking to cause you any harm, but you know, we’re not trying to write a blank check either.”

An official contract could be generated with proper legal language within two weeks, Worthington estimated.

“If it’s not going to cost us anything, this man has satisfied me that they are going to reimburse any money that we would have to spend, and it’s not going to have any negative effects that cannot be taken care of in the work we have got in place ... I, myself, don’t have a problem with it,” said Grifton Mayor Billy Ray Jackson, who serves as a district board member.

Robert Sutton, the director of utilities and public works for the town of Ayden, is confident in the Wooten Co.’s ability to oversee the work and felt comfortable moving forward with a contract, he said.

The board voted unanimously to move forward with developing a contract with the N.C. Department of transportation.

Winterville Manager Terri Parker, a district board member, requested the district board review and approve the final contract at the board’s Feb. 25 meeting.

Ayden Mayor Steve Tripp, a district board member, was not in attendance.

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Education

District awaits county approval to borrow \$26M for capital needs

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GREENVILLE — Pitt County Schools' staff is feeling hopeful about a \$26 million funding request to address the district's growing capital needs.

County staff met with school officials Jan. 23 to discuss the feasibility of borrowing the money to complete a series of projects.

"From that meeting, we all walked out of there feeling really good about the school system's ability to be able to go and borrow this money," said Matt Johnson, the executive director of operations for Pitt County Schools.

Thirty-six capital projects, totaling approximately \$26.14 million, include school renovations and additions, safety and security items, funding for operations and transportation facilities, and deferred maintenance items. If approved, the district aims to complete the projects by 2019, Johnson added.

After gathering more accurate costs, the capital funds priority list is approximately \$100,000 less than previously presented to the board of education, Johnson told members of the Pitt County Board of Education's operations committee Jan. 26.

"We're looking forward to this actually becoming reality and it's looking

better and better for us," Johnson said.

Without funding, several items will continue to add to the school system's deferred maintenance list.

The capital funds priority list is "front loaded," with many of the district's largest projects set to begin first, including the Chicod Phase II Construction project at \$9.59 million, mobile units at Lakeforest and D.H. Conley High School at \$384,000, C.M. Eppes floor joist repair at \$1.06 million and multi-purpose room repairs at Falkland and Elmhurst at \$99,000 and \$825,000, respectively.

Board Chairman Worth Forbes questioned when work would begin once funding was approved.

"Chicod will be almost immediate," Johnson said, explaining drawings are complete for phase II. Floor joist repair at C.M. Eppes is also expected to be an immediate project, Johnson added.

Board Member Sean Kenny questioned if the proposed floor repairs in Falkland's multipurpose room would be completed in the summertime, due to the high use of the room at that school.

Regardless of funding, the school system has plans to address the drainage at the property, Johnson said, adding any work is anticipated to be-

gin just before the end of the school year.

"We've got a plan right now to go in and remove a lot of sidewalks, get the grading back down so it drains to drains instead of draining to buildings," Johnson said.

The district also anticipates beginning work at Elmhurst by early 2016, he added.

Additional items include the district's \$600,000 commitment to the South Greenville gym renovations, which will be added to a contribution from the city of Greenville.

Kenny also confirmed that the district's obligation to the South Greenville gym is no more than \$600,000.

"To me that's a firm number. Not \$601,000, not \$602,000. When we went to that (Greenville) City Council meeting all of a sudden, there were those on the city council that were certainly being given the impression that the schools had given an agreement of doing a 50-50 split," Kenny said, explaining a 50-50 agreement has never been made.

Other big-ticket items include an eight-classroom addition, valued at \$1.9 million at Lakeforest and \$4.2 million renovations to A.G. Cox middle School.

Superintendent Dr.

Ethan Lenker reminded committee members that the borrowing package is still in discussion, meaning the district may only be able to borrow \$10 million, for example, in the first year.

"That may mean Chicod gets started and nothing else gets started for another year," Lenker said, encouraging board members to attend the February meeting with county commissioners.

School board member Caroline Doherty questioned how often the district would be able to borrow money in the future.

The borrowing plan for the proposed \$26 million is expected to be "on the books" for 20 years, according to Lenker, however other debt obligations will come "off the books" during that time.

"As we pay off debt and that comes off the books as we keep going, it gives us that capacity on the other end," Johnson said.

School board member Walter Gaskins said he wished to see Pitt County contractors awarded the proposed projects to keep local money local.

"I'm a Pitt County boy and we have a lot of contractors here in Pitt County. I know we're looking to save money, but we should always give them the first consideration," Gaskins said. "Here in Pitt County

we have a lot of contractors that do an excellent job and do excellent work and they are the ones that I'm going to be looking at for us to spend our money with them because it's their money, too ... we should honor them."

The projects would be bid out in accordance of the law, Johnson said, explaining the lowest responsible bidder would be considered by the board.

Pitt County commissioners also reviewed the project list during the board's budget workshop meeting Jan. 26.

"The number one goal is to assure quality education," said County Manager Scott Elliott.

Pitt County Schools has requested a total of \$26.14 million in the 2015-16 fiscal year. This figure dwarfs the \$9.94 million approved allocation for the current fiscal year.

"When you look at the list, these are the projects that we believe to be the most pressing capital needs of the district," said Brock Letchworth, the public information officer for Pitt County Schools. "The funds would remedy numerous facility improvements needed at schools throughout the county, including long overdue renovations at our two oldest schools (Chicod School and A.G. Cox Middle School). I think the

students, staff and people of those communities will greatly appreciate that.

"The funding would also help us finalize several safety initiatives including cameras on all buses and entry and visitor management systems at all schools. This addresses our top priority of protecting the well being of our students and staff."

Elliott suggested two methods to cover the school system's budget request. This first included borrowing the full amount of money or splitting the amount between two years.

"Alternatively doing a \$10 million one year and a \$16 million the next year," Elliott said. "Again, this will be paid for with no tax increase."

Elliott reminded commissioners that they have the final word on how these school projects will be funded.

"Ultimately, as you're aware, it's your prerogative and your responsibility to fund their capital projects," Elliott said. "You can decide how much, when; it all falls under your capacity."

Pitt County Commissioners will review the district's cost-load schedule at the Feb. 16 county commissioners meeting and consider including the project list for the county's 2015-16 fiscal year budget.

Committee revisits teacher turnover

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GREENVILLE — Pitt County's teacher turnover rate is in line with districts across the state, however a low response rate on exit surveys draws inconclusive results on why teachers are leaving.

At the request of school Board Member Walter Gaskins, Delilah Jackson, the assistant superintendent of human resources for Pitt County Schools, presented an analysis on teacher turnover during the Pitt County Board of Education's human resources committee meeting Jan. 27.

Of the 269 teachers who left Pitt County Schools following the 2013-14 school year, only 35 teachers completed exit surveys. The surveys indicated relocation and retirement as the top two reasons for leaving the district, with others including issues with common core, leadership, career change and testing. Seven of the surveys did not indicate specific reasons for leaving the district.

"Some of our people decided it was time for them to go because they were not maybe willing or did not want to look at a new curriculum," Jackson said, of common core.

Board Member Caroline Doherty said, "Presumably, those people are leaving the field."

Jackson agreed stating testing and common core would be present in other districts outside of Pitt County Schools.

Doherty questioned how exiting teachers received exit surveys and indicated a 13 percent response rate of the 269 exiting teachers was "very poor."

"It's hard to draw conclusions from it," Doherty said.

Teachers receive the exit survey via email once they part from the district, Jackson said.

Pitt County Schools lost an unusual number of teachers to Beaufort and Greene

counties, 11 of which went to Beaufort County and seven went to Greene.

Beaufort County, which has a slightly lower turnover rate than Pitt County Schools with 12.9 percent, does not offer pay steps as rumored, Jackson said. Two veteran math teachers did however leave Pitt County for Beaufort, but the reasoning was not clear according to the analysis, she added.

Three lost to Greene County, which has a 20.89 percent turnover rate, were veteran teachers.

"I don't really see a set pattern," Jackson said of the reasons teachers indicated for leaving the district.

Doherty said, "If we are concerned about our level of turnover, we probably have to somehow get more than 35 out of 269 exit surveys back. Thirty-five out of 269 doesn't get us anywhere close to enough information to draw anything meaningful from."

Turnover in Pitt County Schools correlates with reasons for leaving across the state, Jackson assured.

Responses from the 35 Pitt respondents are in line with districts across the state, however the response rate does not speak for all of the teachers leaving Pitt County Schools, Doherty said.

Committee Chairwoman Mary Blount-Williams asked if the district conducts an exit interview, of which Jackson said, no.

Gaskins requested to also see the turnover rates and reasons for leaving for employees working in maintenance and transportation.

Agreeing with Gaskins, Doherty also believes the district's employee website should also offer an exiting checklist that would not require district staff to compile the information.

"Automate it to make it less time consuming and do it in a way they can do it any time of day or night," Doherty said. "This is something that we ought to be able to handle that way."

School board approves \$3.1M budget increase

LAUREN COLLINS
News Editor

GREENVILLE — The Pitt County Board of Education unanimously approved a \$3.1 million budget amendment Monday, increasing the district's total budget to \$232.2 million.

"This is not a requested increase," said Michael Cowin, assistant superintendent of finance for Pitt County Schools, to the school board.

The adjustment is based on money allocated by law at the state and federal level, he explained.

Approximately 73 percent of the budget is dedicated to instructional programming and approximately 83 percent of the budget covers salaries and benefits for the more than 3,000 district employees, Cowin said.

Of the \$3.1 million increase, \$1.4 million was allocated for state transportation via the state department of public instruction. The amount is determined by an efficiency rating, which is based on the number of

school buses in operation and miles driven. Pitt County Schools typically maintains at least a 95 percent efficiency rating.

The department of public instruction also allocated \$185,000 for Internet connectivity as well as an additional \$232,000 in charter school allocations, which is determined by projected enrollment of public school students to charter schools.

"The state overestimated the enrollment in charter schools for Pitt County students, thereby meaning that we have got more dollars added back to our appropriations," Cowin said.

Additional state funds included \$278,000 for EC developmental day care, \$125,000 in technology fines and forfeitures and a combined \$7,000 for substitute teacher allocations and Read 3D allotments.

A majority of the federal funding of \$586,000 will be used to serve students with disabilities, Cowin said, adding the EC department received

\$223,000 in funding to cover 10 EC teacher assistants.

A \$306,000 increase was the result of a second Medicaid cost report settled within the fiscal year. This is Medicaid billing for services provided to students, all of which goes directly back into the EC program, Cowin said.

"These are very routine. This is no different from any other given year," Cowin said, explaining this budget amendment is in line with those of previous years.

In other school board news:

The district was also issued an unqualified opinion from Carr, Riggs & Ingram LLC, with no indicated material weaknesses, Cowin said.

As part of the audit, the district received, for the 12th consecutive year, the Government Finance Officers Association Cer-

tificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting and the Association of School Business Officials International Certificate of Excellence in Financial Reporting.

The board unanimously approved the audit report.

The board also unanimously approved a resolution authorizing a lease agreement between Pitt County Schools and the Pitt County Board of Education for lease of Hope Middle School and D.H. Conley High School and the financing of debt related to the schools.

In 2004, the schools were funded by Pitt County, and the Pitt County Board of Education entered a lease agreement with the county for the use of the facilities until debt was settled.

The county is refinancing the debt, which is expected to save the school system \$60,000 to \$70,000 a year in financing costs, Cowin said, explaining the resolution allows the original 2004 lease to be amended.



COWIN

Area students excel at Lenoir Community College

KINSTON — Grifton residents Amy Critzer and Michaela Mitchell and Winterville residents Paisley Daley, Ronald Kohake

and Georgianne Smith excelled academically landing on the fall 2014 president's list at Lenoir Community College.

Ayden residents Hunter Jenkins and Christian Tyndall, Grifton residents Robert Fry and Jacquelyn Honeycutt and Winterville

residents Clell Hanson, Kimberly Shackelford, Coty Starkey and Shannon Wainwright excelled to the 2014 dean's list.

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Sports

Rams outlast Chargers in final minutes

BY DANNY STAPP
Group Sports Editor

LITTLEFIELD—Like this year's Super Bowl, Friday night featured two evenly matched teams in conference play that battled to the final minute.

Unfortunately, Ayden-Grifton came out on the wrong side of a 51-47 loss to 2A Eastern Carolina league foe Greene Central, in a game that had plenty of controversy in the final three minutes.

The Rams went to the foul line six different times over the last 2:48 of regulation, twice on technical fouls called on Ayden-Grifton. However, Greene Central was only able to make six of their 12 attempts, missing five straight at one point, leaving the door open for a Charger miracle.

After Tre Wade hit a pair of free throws to make it 50-47 with 25 seconds to go, Ayden-Grifton Coach John Moye called timeout to set up a play for senior Buddy Taylor to take the final shot with 19 seconds left.

Taylor in bounded the ball to Tyler Johnson, who was wide open at the three-point line, with the option to pass to Taylor or shoot. Johnson chose the latter, which was off the mark and Wade hit Greene Central's final free throw with 12 seconds remaining to ice the game.

"Everything in the world worked out perfectly except for the wrong person shot it," Moye said of the team's last shot. "We'd probably much rather have Buddy shoot that."

Senior Jake Wright kept his team in the game with a game-high 17 points on the night, as Wright hit nine of the team's 11 free throws. Wright put up eight free throws through the first three quarters, until his shot finally started falling in the fourth.

"He worked his tail off," Moye said of Wright.

Wright put in back-to-back buckets to make it 44-43 with less than five minutes left in regulation, and then once again made it a one-point affair with his first free throw at the 2:48 minute mark.

Then things got crazy.

Wright's second free throw attempt was waved off for a lane violation and an Ayden-Grifton player received a technical foul for wearing an arm band,

See **CHARGERS**, 10



DANNY STAPP

JAKE WRIGHT DRIVES around Greene Central's Jerome Murriell Friday during Ayden-Grifton's game.



DANNY STAPP

AKIM WARREN-BROCK TAKES on Farmville Central's Jeffrey White (top) Jan. 17 during the Pitt County wrestling tournament.

Pair of Falcons earn first place finishes

BY DANNY STAPP
Group Sports Editor

NEW BERN—It was a productive day for South Central at the 4A/3A Eastern Carolina conference individual tournament Saturday.

A pair of Falcons brought home first place finishes, as Justin Randolph and Akim Warren-Brock swept their opponents in the 195- and 182-pound classifications, respectively, while South Central as

a team finished in third place on the day behind C.B. Aycock and champion New Bern.

Randolph pinned New Bern's Gerald Nesmith in the semifinals before vanquishing D.H. Conley's Tillmon Hardy 22-7 for a technical fall and the victory.

Warren-Brock pinned Conley's Benjamin Bullcock in the first period of the semifinal match up, and then outlasted New Bern's Joshua Pace for a 5-1 win to take the

championship.

Elijah Phillips went 2-2 on the day for the Falcons in the 106-pound bracket, while Jalen Wilson pinned Conley's Chandler Hathaway for a third place finish in the 120-pound classification.

Cameron Lester took third place in the 126-pound match ups, with Daylen Curmon, Brandon Nalepka and Gabriel Pinney all falling to second place in the 132-, 138- and

152-pound brackets.

Although the Falcons fell to New Bern Jan. 28, South Central took down Conley 66-18 and J.H. Rose 60-21 that same night, finishing second in the 4A standings in their conference.

Randolph, Pinney and Curmon all went 3-0 on the night.

South Central awaits to find out which wrestlers will advance to the 4A East Regional round, which is Feb. 13-14 at New Bern.

Chargers dominate conference tourney

FROM STAFF REPORTS
Cooke News Service

DEEP RUN—Six different wrestlers from Ayden-Grifton's squad took home first place finishes Saturday at the 2A Eastern Carolina individual conference tournament.

Eric Agapito, Marcel Reddick, Treyvon Miller, Antonio Cox, Mecca Freeman and senior Jamonie Tolbert all claimed gold medals for the Chargers, as Miller, Tolbert and Reddick each went 2-0 on the day.

Agapito and Freeman ran the gauntlet, finishing 3-0 on the day, while Cox pinned South Lenoir's Clay Elliott in the only 106-pound match on the day.

Ayden-Grifton swept their opponents Jan. 28, taking down Neuse Charter 63-15, North Johnston 51-21 and Princeton 57-15.

The Chargers hosted the first round of the 2A state playoffs against Franklinton Tuesday. Results were unavailable at press time.

Falcons earn 11th straight

NEW BERN—It was the biggest week of the season for the Falcons, and they delivered in every way.

First came South Central's road victory over J.H. Rose Jan. 27, then a non-conference home win over Hertford County the next day and the cherry on top came with a 71-63 victory over New Bern Friday, their 11th straight dating back to December, as the South Central men's basketball team sits alone in first place in the 4A/3A Eastern Carolina conference at 8-1.

Josh Carlton came to life in the second half for all 14 of his points against Rose to lead South Central to a 66-43 victory. Saliek Edwards had nine points, as the Falcons used a big 13-0 run in the fourth to pull away for good.

The Falcons, who edged Hertford County 49-44 Jan. 28, took on Southern Wayne Tuesday. Results were unavailable at press time. South Central visits C.B. Aycock Friday.

South Central continues tear

NEW BERN—These aren't the same Lady Falcons from earlier in the season.

The South Central women's basketball team is showing they still have a lot of fight in them, as the

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Greene Central takes down Ayden-Grifton

BY DANNY STAPP
Group Sports Editor

LITTLEFIELD—The window of opportunity was open, but it quickly shut in the third quarter for Ayden-Grifton.

The Lady Chargers mounted a small comeback effort after halftime against Greene Central, who regrouped to finish off a wire-to-wire 47-25 victory Friday.

The Ayden-Grifton women's basketball team, who dropped their 15th straight game to start the season, trailed by 16 at halftime, but came out firing in the third. The Lady Chargers strung together a 5-1 run, sparked by two

of Caroline Williams' team high 11 points, to make it 30-18 at the 3:44-minute mark. Then all the momentum swung back to the Lady Rams.

"We made a couple of bad turnovers that gave them easy baskets and they pushed it back up. After that, we couldn't make another dent in their lead," said Coach Charles Kessel.

Greene Central closed out the quarter on a 7-3 run of their own before holding Ayden-Grifton to just four points, and one field goal, in the final quarter of play.

The Lady Rams used a strong zone defense throughout the game to

smother starting point guard Kimani Williams and the rest of the offense. Cerita Dixon returned to their lineup for only her second game of the season, with her last game being Jan. 9 at Greene Central. Kessel has liked what he's seen in the progression of Kimani Williams, but thinks that the return of his veteran point guard in Dixon will only help her out more.

"She's not a girl that is comfortable with the ball in her hand every second. She wants to be able to run through, have someone distribute it to her and then she can go to work," Kessel said of Kimani Williams, who

finished with five points. "With Cerita coming back into the fold, I think we'll start to turn it around."

Ayden-Grifton was able to exploit their size advantage inside during the second quarter, where Caroline Williams and LaTavia Brown scored all eight of the team's points. However, both players found themselves under constant attack by the Greene Central defense, who didn't receive as many fouls as Ayden-Grifton for their competitive style of play.

"We didn't get the calls tonight that we would have liked, but it's girls'

See **HOOPS**, 10



DANNY STAPP

CAROLINE WILLIAMS (RIGHT) takes on Greene Central's Khalicia Lee Friday during Ayden-Grifton's game.

SWEETS

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done to pair with the Sweepstakes business, which is no longer open due to legislation changes by the General Assembly. "We had a lot of traf- fic there during the day and people were wanting something to do while they were in Grifton," Ed said. "We had a lot of peo- ple from Greenville and Kinston that never came to Grifton, who would al- ways ask what else can we do while we're in Grifton." Karla Wright, one of Sim-

ply Sweet's 10 employees, hopes the business will get people back out and about in the community, she said. She hopes to see the side- walk traffic reminiscent of small downtowns years ago, Wright added. Wright and her fellow employees do all the bak- ing for Simply Sweet, in- cluding cupcakes, brown- ies, cinnamon rolls, apple turnovers, chocolate chip, sugar and Reese's Cup cookies. Special bulk or- ders can be made with 24 hours notice. The crew also cooks up the business' Belgian waf-

fles. The decision to offer Bel- gian waffles came about after attending a wedding where waffles were served for dinner, Ed admits. Simply Sweet's waffles are cooked onsite and, for an additional charge, patrons can add blueberries or strawberries from the top- pings buffet or simply uti- lize the standard, choco- late, strawberry or caramel syrups offered. Patrons have the option to come in and enjoy the business' free WiFi while waiting for their waffle or call ahead to have it ready

for pick-up. As for yogurt, the hard- est part is picking your fla- vor; the rest is easy. "You just grab your cup, put whatever you want on it, weigh it, pay for it and eat," Ed said. Not only are there eight flavors to choose from, in- cluding death by choco- late, butter pecan, New York cheesecake, moun- tain ripe strawberry, cake batter, cookies and cream, old-fashioned vanilla, red velvet cake and there are also four swirl combina- tions. Although the business

plans to maintain its fla- vors, the Abbotts have already received requests from customers that will likely be rotated in the mix, Ed said. Top off the yogurt is a selection of 18 toppings, including various fruits, cheesecake bites, Oreo pieces, brownie bites, graham cracker crumbs, snickers, peanut butter cups and, of course, sprin- kles. Simply Sweet also sup- ports local by carrying Simply Natural Creamery's bottled white and choco- late milk.

Wright has high hopes for the business. "I hope it works out. I want to see this whole place full and the case emptied every day," Wright said. "When I heard about what they wanted to do here, I was so excited. I'm just glad to be a part of it." Simply Sweet Frozen Yogurt & Bakery is open from 7 a.m. to 7 p.m. Mon- day through Saturday and from noon-6 p.m. Sunday. For more information or to place an order, call 252-524-0544 or email sim- plysweetyogurt14@gmail. com.

GOALS

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General economic de- velopment was another issue commissioners

hope will be on the Gen- eral Assembly's agenda. "Reading the newspa- per, obviously economic development is on the forefront of the General

Assembly for consid- eration," Elliott said. "We are very interested in the JDIG (Jobs Develop- ment Investments Grant) fund."

This program is a state supported fund that pro- vides grants to bolster a region's job creation ca- pacity. "JDIG, at this point in time, is very, very, very ... important to Pitt County," Elliott said. "We're talking with another potential company, per se, and they are in need of JDIG dol- lars to make their projects turn. We're needing some,

if it's possible, almost im- mediate access to JDIG funds." A majority of the pro- posed jobs are in the science and technology fields, according to Elliott. The county has prepared for a science-related job market through its edu- cation system, Commis- sioner Beth Ward added. "I think we have to add ... the importance of the community college and our high schools and our education process," Ward said. "We are focusing on those types of jobs and we've been doing that for

a while. We're in such a good place with that." Farmer-Butterfield was glad she attended the meeting. "I thought it was very productive," Farmer-But- terfield said. "It's impor- tant to take those priori- ties they presented and make it relevant to Pitt County." Pate now has a bet- ter idea of how to better serve those in his district, he said. "There was an honest exchange between the commissioners and the legislative delegation," Pate said. "There was no

animosity or anything like that, which we nor- mally don't expect to have anyhow, but I think it was an open exchange of ideas." Opening a dialogue between state lawmak- ers and local officials is important due to the fact some issues, like the county's need to create a fully redundant 911 sys- tem, tend to go unnoticed by those in Raleigh, Pate added. "I did not realize that that was such a poten- tial worry for them, but I clearly see their point," he said.

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Dr. Gahlot comes to Lenoir Memorial after recently completing a fellowship in Clinical Neurophysiology at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA. She is a gradu- ate of King George Medical College, Lucknow, India where she received her medical degree. She completed an intern- ship and residency at Allegheny General Hospital in Pittsburgh, PA. She is married to Vikram who recently joined Dr. Kirolos at Kinston Cardiology Associates, PA. The Gahlots live in Kinston and have two children.

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CHARGERS

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an odd call considering the arm band had been worn the entire game. Dorieon Suggs, who led Greene Central with 15 points, hit a pair of free throws to regain the Rams' three-point lead, but Wright brought them right back with his final basket. Less than a minute after the first technical, Jahkev- ous Edwards was called for a technical for using profanity after A.J. Davis and Taylor collided near the sideline. However, Greene Cen- tral missed both free

throws, while Suggs only made one of his attempts, making it 48-46. Edwards then went to line, but only converted one of his shots, setting the stage for the game's final stretch, as the Chargers only put up one field through the final four minutes. "We tend to, when the game gets close, mentally check out and the other team starts to check in and we start to do things that we're not coached to do," Moye said. Ayden-Grifton capped a 6-0 run off Malik Boney's three-pointer right before the half to make it 26-22 in favor of the Rams head- ing into the locker room. Ayden-Grifton ran away with their 71-53 victory over North Lenoir Jan. 27, as Taylor led the team with 16 points. Edwards put up 15 to go with 11 from Khalif Harper. The Chargers took on South Lenoir Tuesday. Re- sults were unavailable at press time. Ayden-Grifton travels to Goldsboro Fri- day.

HOOPS

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basketball. Sometimes (the refs) let them be a little more physical," Kes- sel said. Tahliyah Joyner led all scorers with 22 points for the Lady Rams. Ayden-Grifton fell 52-19 to North Lenoir Jan. 27. The Lady Chargers took on South Lenoir Tuesday. Results were unavailable at press time. Ayden-Grif- ton travels to Goldsboro Friday.

PREPS

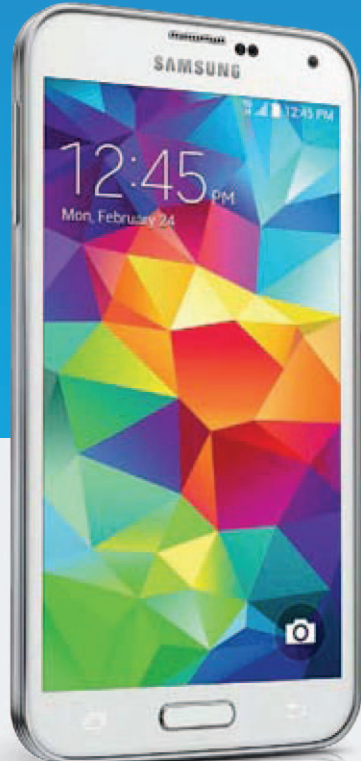
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Lady Falcons tallied three consecutive wins this past week, including their 71-60 win over New Bern Friday. Before taking down Hertford County 54-46 Jan. 28, the Lady Falcons vanquished J.H. Rose 51-39 off 17 points from se- nior Chrystall Jerome Jan. 27. Lindsey McCallum put up 13 points and a trio of triples in the contest. South Central, who has won five of their last six contests, took on South- ern Wayne Tuesday. Re- sults were unavailable at press time. The Lady Fal- cons head to C.B. Aycock Friday.




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