

Rappahannock Record

Thursday, January 15, 2004 • Kilmarnock, Virginia • Eighty-seventh Year • Number 14 • Three Sections • 50¢

Botched school census adds up for White Stone

by Robb Hoff

WHITE STONE—The town council received an explanation last week regarding a botched school-age children census that could force White Stone to repay up to \$80,000 of the \$124,723 in state sales tax revenues the town received last year.

School superintendent Dr. Randolph Latimore said it appears that census enumerators employed by the Lancaster school board did not use maps to determine the town limits but rather relied on "word-of-mouth" information from individuals who said they lived within the town limits.

As a result, the 2002 school census initially recorded 365 children between the ages of 4 and 19 living within the town. That is more than the entire town population of 356 recorded during the 2000 U.S. Census.

Dr. Latimore said he was contacted by the county auditor about the census error.

"It was an error, unfortunately," Dr. Latimore said. "It was not intentional and we had to correct it."

In October the figure was "corrected" to indicate that 224 school-age children lived in White Stone, which led to a request by the county treasurer's office that the town repay \$38,788 in state sales tax distributed to the town.

Since then, continued efforts to determine the exact number of school-age children living in the town have reduced the 224 figure to an estimate of 95, which could eventually force the town to repay about \$80,000 at \$294 per child.

The results of the school census are used by the county treasurer's office to determine the state sales tax distribution to the town.

Acting mayor David Jones said town officials had contacted the county treasurer's office regarding the big jump.

Councilman Randy Reeves said the figures were confirmed by officials as accurate.

"They said there was no problem and there's nothing wrong with it," Reeves said.

Dr. Latimore acknowledged that he had authorized the results of the census, which was conducted by enumerators under the supervision of Frances Ashburn by approval of the school board.

"It wasn't his fault," councilman Jack Johnson said of Latimore. "It wasn't the school board's fault."

However, Jones said later in the meeting that the responsibility for census accuracy belonged to the superintendent's office and the school board.

No council action was taken concerning repayment of the overpaid revenues.

New town office

Irrington architect William D. Prillaman previewed the design development process for the future town office in the former White Stone Family Practice building. The building is on Rappahannock

(continued on page A9)



Snow falling on Cranes Creek

Residents along Cranes Creek (above) in Northumberland County and elsewhere in the Northern Neck woke Friday morning to light snowfall. Scattered flurries continued throughout the day and patches of snow lingered as temperatures dipped below freezing, marking some of the most winter-like weather this season. (Photo by Robert Mason Jr.)

Irrington gives museum \$20,000 without fiscal documentation

by Robert Mason Jr.

IRVINGTON—Despite an unanswered question, the Irrington town council last Thursday voted 4-1 to give the Steamboat Era Museum \$20,000 as previously budgeted, contingent upon free admission for town residents.

Councilman Norm Mosher noted he couldn't support the measure until museum officials could provide more information regarding finances.

Following a presentation by museum president Larry McAfee, museum foundation board president Bill Westbrook, new director Diane Jordan and other museum board members or supporters, councilman Garry Luckham introduced a motion to proceed with the funding. Council member Kathleen Pollard seconded it.

However, Mosher amended it to stipulate the funding is contingent upon free admission to the museum for residents and children of Irrington. Councilman Bill Evans seconded the amendment and it eventually passed 3-2.

Mosher, Luckham and Evans voted in favor of the amendment. Pollard and councilman Rannie Ransone voted nay. Councilman Robert Pittman was absent.

Meanwhile, Mosher wanted to know how much money the museum has raised to date towards a \$400,000 estimate to design, furnish and equip the exhibit areas, and a \$700,000 fund-raising goal. His questions went unanswered by museum officials present.

"How much has been raised?" asked Mosher. "I don't know," responded Westbrook.

"I don't know," responded McAfee.

The museum treasurer would know, added Westbrook.

Mosher repeated his reservations with allocating money to an organization that doesn't know how much it has raised. He introduced a motion to postpone a decision on the funding indefinitely, or at least until council was informed of how much has been raised.

Otherwise, there's no way to determine the impact of the town's contribution on the total, he said.

The town's \$20,000 gift is to come from lodging tax revenues.

Pollard and Luckham described the town's gift as seed money. The money has been budgeted, said Pollard. Next year, the museum finances could be reviewed, she added.

Museum officials indicated "a great number" of memberships, contributions, leadership gifts and grants have come in, or have been pledged. They also noted that strategic plans are in place indi-

(continued on page A9)

Proposal to update zoning is turned down

by Reid Pierce Armstrong

HEATHSVILLE—A majority of Northumberland's supervisors last week opted not to adopt zoning measures that would match the county's comprehensive plan.

Freshman supervisor Pamela Russell introduced a motion calling on the county to bring its zoning ordinance into compliance with the comprehensive plan. Supervisor Jim Long joined Russell in support of the motion.

Supervisors Ronnie Jett, Richard Haynie and Joe Self voted against the measure. They insisted that zoning changes based on the comprehensive plan would cause

upheaval among citizens.

"If you want to fill this courtroom, tell people you are going to change their zoning," said chairman Ronald Jett after the meeting.

He noted a situation near Kilmarnock where a farm sits on the edge of a village. If the board followed the recommendation of the current comprehensive plan, the property would be rezoned to business, he said.

"They are talking particulars rather than big picture," Russell argued. "The majority of farmland zoned agricultural would remain agricultural. Around town centers some farmland would be changed from agricultural to busi-

ness where the comprehensive plan recommends."

The board has traditionally considered zoning change requests on a case-by-case basis, using the comprehensive plan as a guideline.

"I don't think that's a good idea," Russell said. "It defeats the purpose of having a plan."

In other cases, such as in December when the board amended the provisions for multi-family housing, zoning changes have been reactions to inquiries that may bring undesirable development to the county.

Russell said she made the motion because she encountered so much concern regarding

zoning during her door-to-door campaign for election.

"The plan is for the protection of all, not just one," Russell said. Zoning is the most controversial issue that the board handles because it touches so many people and directly deals with what's happening in their backyards, she added.

The comprehensive plan, however, supports the practice of using the land use plan as a guideline on a case-by-case basis.

In Chapter 3, the land use plan is said to have the following functions:

- It represents the vision community leaders have for future use

(continued on page A9)



The Northumberland board of supervisors last week re-elected (from left) Ronald Jett chairman and Richard Haynie vice-chair. They are standing in front of an "In God We Trust" placard. Last year, the county posted the national motto in its public buildings and schools. During her invocation, Rev. Barbara Cottrell of Shiloh Baptist Church commended the board for making God a part of its monthly meetings.

Dads, businesses to compete in Corporate Pinewood Derby

KILMARNOCK—The race is on. The Northern Neck District of Scouting will hold a Corporate Pinewood Derby in February.

The event is part of the Friends of Scouting campaign. Statistics show it costs approximately \$125 to put a boy through scouting for a year including uniforms, books, badges, medals and camp fees. Any corporation, company or individual may purchase a Pinewood Derby kit for a \$125 contribution to the Boy Scouts of America.

Scouts in Westmoreland and Richmond counties will hold a race on February 21 in the showroom of the Northern Neck Chevrolet Dealership in Montross at 3 p.m. The district thanked Tom Collins and Rita Schools for their support.

Scouts in Northumberland and Lancaster counties will hold a race on February 28 in the showroom of McGinnes Chevrolet Dealership in Kilmarnock at 3 p.m. The district thanked John Bowditch for his support. He was the first to purchase a Pinewood Derby kit and is confident he will win the



John Bowditch (left) of McGinnes Chevrolet in Kilmarnock purchases a Pinewood Derby kit from Northern Neck District Scouting commissioner Sam Bridgeforth.

final race.

First-, second- and third-place winners in the northern and southern counties will each receive a trophy. The first-place winners will have a final run-off on March 30 at Stan's Skateland in Montross prior to the Cub Scouts Pinewood Derby race. The grand corporate winner will receive a larger trophy.

All rules and regulations accompanying the kit must be adhered to. The finished car may not weigh more than 5 ounces and the original wheels must be used.

"Okay, Dads, this is your

opportunity to have a Pinewood Derby car of your very own," said district commissioner Sam Bridgeman. "This is a great way to have a lot of fun and support a most worthy cause at the same time, and it's a tax deduction for your business. We have 48 cars ready for purchase, 47 now that John Bowditch bought the first one.

Pinewood Derby kits will be available for sale through February 14. Make checks payable to Boy Scouts of America. Registration forms and Pinewood Derby kits may be secured by calling Bridgeman at 453-5806.

Based on retesting, Lancaster schools gain full accreditation

by Robb Hoff

LANCASTER—The Lancaster public school division got a "Happy New Year" start to 2004 with news from the Virginia Department of Education indicating Lancaster High School has earned full state accreditation based on Standards of Learning testing.

High school principal Sandra Spears said the high school has made significant progress in its SOL results in a short period of time, which has energized the administration and staff.

"I think the kids are excited, too," Spears said. "They know deep down they can do this, and we just give them the tools to do it."

The full accreditation follows SOL scores recorded last year that designated the high school with provisional accreditation in need of improvement in science. The 2003 results showed the pass rate of students who took the science SOL was 67 percent, short of the 70 percent needed for accreditation.

Dan Keeling of the Virginia Department of Education assessment and reporting division said the SOL science pass rate jumped from 67 percent to 77 percent after students who did not pass the initial tests retook them with passing results.

"There weren't any technical errors in the calculations," said Keeling.

In addition to the increase in the science SOL results, the pass rate in English jumped from 83 percent to 93 percent and the pass rate in social studies and mathematics increased from 70 percent to 71 percent.

High school SOL rates often increase after the initial recording due to retakes by students who are passing classes and not initially passing SOL tests. Needing to earn verified credits toward graduation, they eventually pass the SOLs by retaking tests, added Keeling.

The LHS accreditation was the

final hurdle in full accreditation for county schools. Lancaster Middle School gained full accreditation last year and Lancaster Primary School maintained its accreditation from the year before last.

Spears said the high school also has been identified as one of 12 "Breakthrough High Schools" nationwide by the National Association of Secondary School Principals. Lancaster High was selected based upon student achievement, graduation rates, and college admission rates for schools that have at least 50 percent minority students and at least 50 percent of its students qualifying for subsidized school meals.

Inside

Ready for the challenge: "New" Lancaster school board reorganizes, elects Smith B8

Menhaden pressures: Omega Protein notes concerns about possible legislation A9

Business B4-5 Directory C10-11

Calendar A2 Deaths B3

Churches B2-3 Opinion A4-5

Classified C1-5 Police report B1



Birdhouse builders: B8

Schools B6-7

Sports A7-8

Upcoming A2-3,6

Wildlife notes A8