

THE ROBESONIAN

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Fairmont budget keeps tax rate

BOB SHILES
STAFF WRITER

FAIRMONT — In her first budget as acting town manager for Fairmont, Finance Director Linda Vause appears to have pleased the town commissioners.

In a short budget work session Tuesday, Vause said they gave high marks to her proposal calling for the tax rate to remain at 69 cents per \$100 of property value, no increase in user fees, and no employee layoffs. Employees, however, will go without a raise for the

No layoffs, or employee raises

third consecutive year. "It's going to be a very tight year," Vause said. "But the commissioners had few comments on the budget proposal and appeared to like it."

Vause said the commissioners have cancelled two upcoming budget work sessions they had planned and given the green light for a public hearing on the budget to be held June 21. A special meeting will be held on the last day of June to approve the budget, which

takes effect July 1.

Vause said the \$2.8 million budget includes a general fund balance of \$1.8 million and a water and sewer fund of about \$1,059,850. It also includes a \$44,667 appropriated general fund balance, Vause said.

Vause said that the commissioners have agreed to sell some properties now owned by the town, and will discuss at their June 21 meeting how to go about the process. Some of the properties to be

disposed of are the result of foreclosures. Others became town property through other means, such as donations, Vause said.

"Why are we holding these properties? Lets get them back on the tax books," she said.

Vause said her proposal includes the money needed to provide for preventive maintenance of town equipment and infrastructure, including water and sewer lines and the town's sewage plant.

"This hasn't been done in

"It's going to be a very tight year. But the commissioners had few comments on the budget proposal and appeared to like it."

— Linda Vause, acting town manager

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Republican lawmakers confident on budget

Trying to prevent veto by governor

GARY D. ROBERTSON
ASSOCIATED PRESS

RALEIGH — Republican legislators were counting on at least four House Democrats Tuesday to approve a new \$19.7 billion budget proposal to avoid long negotiations with the Democratic governor who is critical of their education spending.

The Senate significantly changed its version released last week of a state government spending plan through mid-2013 as a compromise with House Republicans after negotiating a deal for days. GOP leaders are optimistic they'll attract enough House Democrats to vote for the final product by the end of the week to avoid a potential veto showdown with Gov. Beverly Perdue.

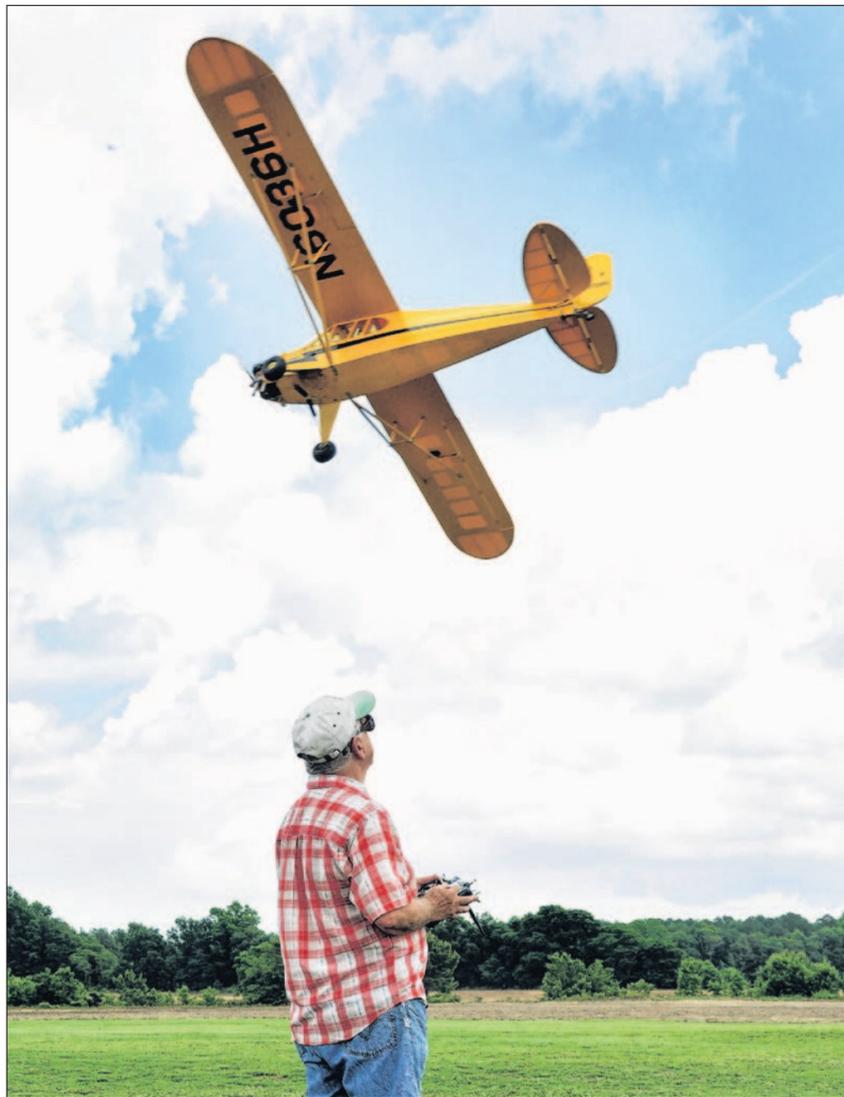
Five House Democrats voted for their chamber's version of the budget four weeks ago, raising hopes among Republicans that they could get at least four of them to support a final budget compromise. Four would be needed to get the three-fifths of the House members necessary to



TILLIS

See BUDGET Page 3A

Flying high



STAFF PHOTO BY ABBIGAIL OVERFELT

Richard Harding flies his model airplane Sunday at the Davis Bridge Aeromodelers Parnell Field on Davis Bridge Road in Parkton. Harding, a retiree from Fayetteville, is the owner of a replica of the 1946 Piper J-3 Cub airplane that bears the same numbers as the plane he learned to pilot at age 16. Harding has been pursuing his model aircraft hobby for about 60 years.

Democrats replace Powers on BOE

Douglas picked as replacement

BOB SHILES
STAFF WRITER

LUMBERTON — Lumberton attorney Tiffany Powers won't be serving a second two-year term on the Robeson County Board of Elections.

The Executive Committee of the county Democratic Party last week chose Lisa Douglas, a surgical receptionist with Southeastern Regional Medical Center, to join incumbent board member Joshua Malcolm as the party's top two choices for two seats to be filled on the local three-member board. Powers was the only other candidate considered for one of the two Democratic seats.

The switch from Powers to Douglas will make no difference in the racial makeup of the board. Both women are black.

The power of the Elections Board is determined by which party holds the Governor's Office. The lone Republican currently serving on the board is Steve Stone. Stone is again his party's nominee to serve another two-year term.

John McNeill, chairman of the county Democratic Party, said Tuesday that he has forwarded the local party's nominations to David Parker, chairman of the N.C. Democratic Party, in the order that the three candidates received the most votes — Malcolm, Douglas and Powers. Parker will in turn submit the names to the state Board of Elections, the body that will ultimately make the appointments to the Robeson County board, McNeill said.

"This year, I did something different. I let the (eight) Executive Committee members decide who they wanted to serve on the Board of Elections,"



DOUGLAS

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3 robberies target Hispanics

ALI ROCKETT
STAFF WRITER

LUMBERTON — City police are looking for gunmen they say robbed, assaulted and shot at nine people — injuring two — on Sunday morning in three incidents they believe are related. All nine victims were Hispanic, according to police reports.

According to a police report, Jose Rivera, 40, William Martinez, 39, and

Selena Esperanza, 28, were at the home of Francisco Losano, 45, on Warwick Mill Road, at approximately 12:19 a.m. on Sunday when two men, one wielding a gun, entered the home and demanded money.

The gunman fired at the group, striking Rivera in the leg. The assailants took \$2,400 and two wallets.

About two hours later, at 2:27 a.m., a gunman robbed Carlos Evan Felano, 23, and Jose Luzas, 28, in their home on

Cherokee Street, according to a police report. Felano was shot in the foot and kicked in the face.

The assailant stole \$400 and a wallet.

At 3:24 a.m., Juan Ines, 29, Victor, Amaya, 18, and Ruperto Amaya, 38, were forced out of their mobile home on Elizabethtown Road and into the yard by a man with a gun demanding money, according to a police report.

WEATHER



95/70

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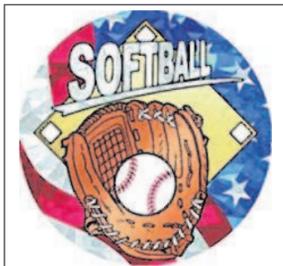
- Mary Lou Huske, 85, Charlotte
- Stacy Watson, 97, Fairmont
- Julia Rushin, 85, Red Springs
- Margaretta Harper, 91, Lumberton
- Louise Dobbs, 77, Douglasville, Ga.
- Alphonza Bain Sr., 71, St. Pauls
- Brenda Deese, 66, Fairmont
- Annie Bryan, 77, Dublin

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SPORTS

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The Robesonian sports staff announces its softball coach of the year.

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