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# Rocky Mount TELEGRAM

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ROCKY MOUNT, NORTH CAROLINA ■ SATURDAY, DECEMBER 15, 2012

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## Well-wishers thank Varney for service

By BRIE HANDGRAAF  
Staff Writer

Assistant City Manager Peter Varney has left a lasting impact on the city and the people of Rocky Mount, City Manager Charles Penny said Friday at Varney's retirement celebration.

"It will be difficult to think about our city without Peter," Penny said.

Varney is retiring this month after 41 years of service in the City Manager's office, but his wife, Lin, said the couple never planned to stay after his internship with

the city.

"He went to (the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill) for graduate school in public administration and he did a nine-month internship in Rocky Mount, but we'd planned to go back to New England afterwards," Lin Varney said. "We never intended for Rocky Mount to be home, but one thing led to another and we stayed because he loved his job."

The 64-year-old's passion for his job never wavered either, habitually putting in extra hours on nights and weekends. Penny said, "There is not a harder working

man," adding that Varney's dedication to his job will be hard to replicate.

"We are not going to try to replace Peter," Penny said. "We can't. We are going to hire another assistant city manager, but we can't replace Peter."

Former City Manager Steve Raper was among the more than 100 current and former city employees, elected officials and residents gathered Friday afternoon for the celebration in the Helen P. Gay Historic Train Station.

See VARNEY, 3A



Telegram photo / Emma Tannenbaum

Peter Varney shares a laugh with Lib and Bill Dawes before his retirement reception on Friday at the Helen P. Gay Historic Train Station. Dawes, a former assistant director of public utilities, worked with Varney for several years in the 1970s.

# UNITED IN HORROR



AP photo

Connecticut State Police lead children from Sandy Hook Elementary School after a shooting Friday in Newtown, Conn.

## Heartbroken town mourns after school shooting

NEWTOWN, Conn. (AP) - A vigil Friday night for the victims of a school massacre in Connecticut brought out hundreds of community members, including some parents who were struggling with mixed emotions after their own children survived the massacre.

With the church filled to capacity, hundreds spilled outside, some of them holding hands in circles and saying prayers. Others lit prayer candles and sang "Silent Night."

Gov. Dannel P. Malloy was among

■ The national debate over gun control began anew in the massacre's wake, 5A

the speakers at the service inside the St. Rose of Lima Roman Catholic church.

"Many of us today and in the coming days will rely on what we have been taught and what we believe, that there is faith for a reason," Malloy said.

Adam Lanza, who was believed to suffer from a personality disorder,

killed his mother at the home they shared and then opened fire Friday inside the elementary school where she taught, massacring 26 people, including 20 children, as youngsters cowered in fear to the sound of gunshots reverberating through the building and screams echoing over the intercom.

The 20-year-old killer, carrying two handguns, committed suicide at the school, bringing the death toll to 28,

See SHOOTING, 3A

## Businesses, schools see future path for growth

By JIM HOLT  
Staff Writer

The message reiterated several times over by speakers Thursday inside the Garner Lobby at N.C. Wesleyan College was clear - the key to economic growth in the Twin Counties lies with the strength of the education system.

Local elected officials, business leaders and school administrators gathered at the college for a summit dubbed "Building a Blueprint For Prosperity" at which the partnerships between the business and education communities were highlighted as a pathway to success.

The event, sponsored by the Rocky Mount Area Chamber of Commerce and PNC Bank, kicked off with a breakfast followed by presentations from the superintendents of the Nash-Rocky Mount and Edgecombe County school districts.

"It's important for us to maintain good relationships with our community colleges so that our students understand that it doesn't stop the day they walk across the stage," Nash-Rocky Mount Public Schools Superintendent Dr. Anthony Jackson said. "They are not finished products at 18 years old. We have to have the will to invest in our students over time, and they have to understand why what they are doing makes sense for what the business community needs."

The focus of the summit was on

See GROWTH, 3A

### TODAY'S HEADLINES

#### PARTLY CLOUDY TODAY



Art by Grayson,  
Englewood Elementary School

High, 58; low, 42.

2A

#### HOUSE TO HOME



Maximize seating for all  
of your entertaining.

SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

#### COMMUNITY

Ice skating, carriage rides and a "Charlie Brown adventure" are just a few of the holiday activities being offered this weekend in the Twin Counties.

3A

#### MY TV BOOK



'Jersey Shore' says see ya.

SUPPLEMENT INSIDE

#### SPORTS

A state school will play today for the Division II football national title.

1B

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