

# The Shoreline

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A Shoreline Community, Pine Knoll Shores, N.C.

Town Hall 247-4353

## Town Reaches Agreement To Purchase Water System

The Town of Pine Knoll Shores has reached an agreement with Utilities, Inc. to purchase the water system which serves the Town, putting itself on the threshold of bringing to a conclusion the more than 10-year effort to acquire control of the water network.

Mayor Joan Lamson reported on July 28 that both parties to the agreement had signed a letter of intent for the Town to purchase the system for 3.75 million dollars. The purchase will be financed by bonds to be floated by the United States Department of Agriculture, which in 1995 authorized a bond issue in the amount of 4 million dollars. The authorization was scheduled to run out this November.

The bonds will carry an interest rate of 4.125%, which, Mayor Lamson said, is the lowest rate the USDA had seen in more than 35 years. The USDA is well known for financing, through bond issues, municipal projects such as water systems for small towns and rural areas.

Mayor Lamson said the agreement includes a provision for Carolina Water Service, the operating arm of Utilities, Inc., to continue to manage the water system for a period of two years, with an option under which the management agreement could be renewed for an additional year. The fee for the management services has not yet been set.

The mayor expects the purchase transaction to be concluded by the end of September and that the water company will be self-sustaining, particularly in light of the favorable interest rate on the bonds. The mayor expects an adjustment to water rates but the amount is yet to be determined. She pointed out that one of the great advantages of local ownership is that the control of water rates will be in local hands.

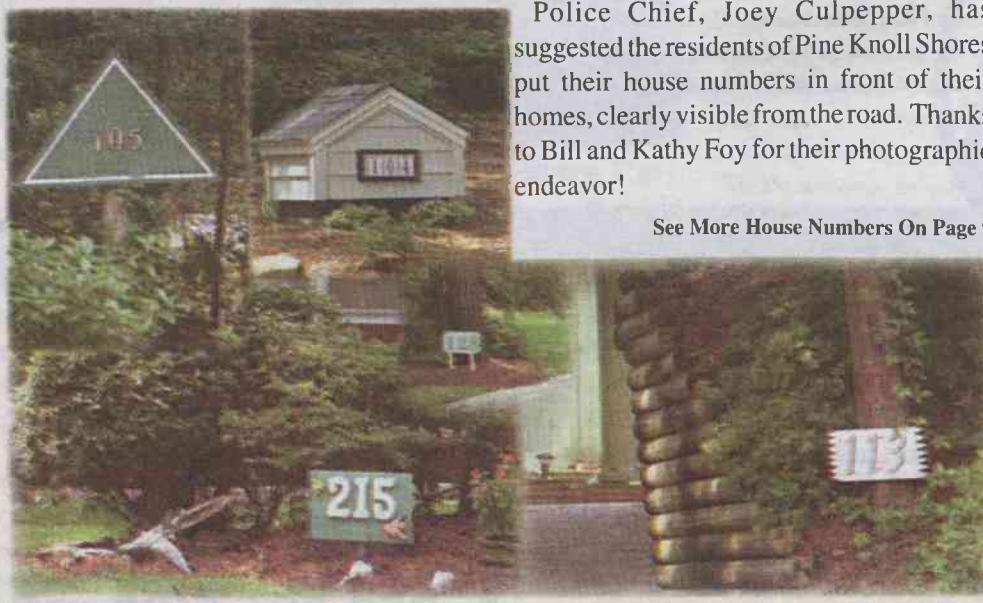
Initiated by a previous administration, the drive to purchase the water system has been the subject of court battles for a decade. Negotiations began in earnest in June when Mayor Lamson, Commissioner Bill Ashland and Richard Kelly of the Town's Water Committee traveled to Chicago to make an offer to Utilities, Inc. Several offers and counteroffers later the agreement was reached on July 22, with the letter of intent being signed a few days later.

Mayor Lamson said the transaction from private ownership to Town ownership should be seamless without any noticeable effect on water service. She took note of the years of effort put into the water system situation by former administrations. "Without the good work of former Mayor Robert Gallo and his team on legal issues," she said, "we wouldn't be where we are today."

## Imagination Flourishes in PKS

Police Chief, Joey Culpepper, has suggested the residents of Pine Knoll Shores put their house numbers in front of their homes, clearly visible from the road. Thanks to Bill and Kathy Foy for their photographic endeavor!

See More House Numbers On Page 9



Deadline for September issue is Wednesday, August 24. Deadline for October issue is Wednesday, Sept. 21. Articles always welcome!



Visitors get a feel for the 32-foot waterfall in the Mountain Gallery of the new aquarium now under construction. (photo by Sherry White)

## Aquarium on time, on target

Construction of the new aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores is on target and within budget. As of June, the project is nearly 65 percent complete. Aquarium Director Jay Barnes recently led a tour of the site for some 25 local officials and aquarium advisory committee members.

While construction is ongoing, the aquarium continues to operate offices and holding facilities in Atlantic Station Shopping Center. In-house planning for the grand reopening in May 2006 is well underway, and interpretive and identification panels, graphics and other supportive exhibitory elements will soon go into production.

Prior to reopening, more than 30 new full-time aquarium positions will be available in departments such as animal care, dive operations, education, exhibits, maintenance, security, administration, retail operations and special events. For available positions, job descriptions and application procedures, monitor the aquarium's website at [www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com). Click on Pine Knoll Shores, then on Volunteers & Jobs.

According to a study by Dr. Michael

Walden and William Neal Reynolds of NC State University, the expansion of the North Carolina Aquarium at Pine Knoll Shores will have a significant economic impact on Carteret County, as well as the surrounding counties of Craven, Jones, Onslow and Pamlico.

There are two categories of economic impact: the one-time impact of construction of the new aquarium, and an annual impact from additional staffing, additional visitors and additional space rental for public/private events. Combination of data from these two categories results in a total annual economic impact in the five county region of \$6.1 million in income and 193 jobs.

While construction is taking place, the aquarium continues to offer programs and field trips from its off-site location in Atlantic Station Shopping Center. Trips such as canoe outings, onboard collecting cruises, Cape Lookout explorations, Newport River excursions and other activities are ongoing. For dates, times and details, click on the Programs & Events link on the Aquarium website at [www.ncaquariums.com](http://www.ncaquariums.com), or call 247-4003.

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