



West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



VOLUME 12 NO. 1

JANUARY 6, 1988

VANCEBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

PHONE 244-0780 OR 946-2144

(UPSP 412-110)

25 CENTS

SIX PAGES



Fleeing A Marshy Home

(By Carter photo)

Like so many game birds, mallards don't like to be watched while dining. This small flock was spied as it had breakfast on the edge of

Runyon Creek. One step too close and they launched themselves straight into the sky, disappearing around the bend upcreek.

Weyerhaeuser Accident Leads News From '88

One Dies, Eight Injured; Company Is Cited Later

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

An industrial accident at the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill between Vanceboro and New Bern that killed one man and injured eight was the top news story in the West Craven Highlights coverage area during 1988.

Other top news stories were the plight of Northwest Craven Water and Sewer District customers, Vanceboro's annual Strawberry Festival and renovation of that town's community center.

Accident

A New Bern man was died from injuries he sustained when a tank ruptured May 17 at the Weyerhaeuser pulp mill, spewing a hot mixture of wood fiber and bleach over him and several other workers. Lonice E. "Butch" Thomas Jr., 37, died May 18 from complications from suffocation.

Eight others were injured, including workers who attempted to help those covered by the mixture. Two workers were critically injured.

The company was later fined \$560 and was cited for not providing safe conditions by the N.C. Department of Labor. The Department of Labor report contends Weyerhaeuser failed to adequately inspect equipment for damage and that proper maintenance was not carried out on the equipment involved in the accident.

Several fire and rescue units from throughout the county were called to the scene.

The mill had been shut down for about a week for routine maintenance. The plant was being brought back on line and workers were working on a pump near the 60-foot-tall tank

(See TOP 10, Page 2)

Warfare Range Hardware Bought

Proposal Not Approved, But Marines Spend Money

The Marine Corps said budgetary and timing reasons are reasons behind its purchase of millions of dollars of computer equipment for use at its proposed — and controversial — and as yet unapproved electronic warfare range on the state's east coast.

Computer hardware for the \$15 million combat-training system, Tactical Aircrew Combat Training System (TACTS), would be used for part of the Marines' proposed Mid-Atlantic Electronic Warfare Range (MAEWR) was bought more than a year ago — before a study of the MAEWR's effects on the surrounding environment was completed.

A public hearing on the environmental studies of the range is expected in January. (See related story on this page).

Military officials said it was necessary to spend the money —

plus \$10 million in other finished work — as part of the budgeting and purchasing process.

The purchase of the TACTS equipment was confirmed by Lt. Col. Paul J. Lowery, assistant director of operations at Cherry Point Marine Corps Air Station. He said the equipment is being stored.

"We have been in the budgeting process since 1981 for the Mid-Atlantic Electronic Warfare Range and the TACTS that is to be a portion of that has been ongoing in the procurement process at the same time," said Lowery. He said the Corps paid for the manufacturing of the equipment between 1 1/2 and 2 years ago, with the latest payment for

the computer hardware made in the last six months.

Lowery said the TACTS communications subcontractor has been put on hold until the environmental impact statement is finished.

"We cannot sit here and wait until the EIS (environmental impact statement) is done before we go to budgeting and before we try to initiate the procurement process. If we did, we would never get a project done before it was obsolete," said Lowery. The construction of the project is expected to be finished by the end of this year. Payment is being made in phases during different stages of construction.

"Understand that the military

budgeting process, just like anything else that Congress budgets, takes a while. You've got an environmental process that goes along, a permit process for the construction sites and all these kinds of things," said Lowery.

Coordinating the processes is a monumental and hard task, he said.

Money for TACTS comes from Operations Navy Procurement and if the project is "short-circuited" the military is "out a lot of money." If that happened, the equipment would be placed somewhere else but not on the East Coast. Lowery said the North Carolina coast is "the place to put it" in the east.

"The guys who fly the airplanes and confront the enemy, that go to places like the Indian Ocean, the Mediterranean Sea, the Persian Gulf — where people

(See AIR SPACE, Page 5)

Military Activities Reviewed By Panel

The first meeting of the N.C. Coastal Resources Commission's Military Activities Task Force was to have been held today in Washington to review environmental problems related to military activities.

The meeting was called by James W. Hamilton of Jacksonville, chairman of the Military Activities Task Force and a member of the Coastal Resources Commission. It was to start at the Holiday Inn at 10 a.m.

State, federal and local environmental officials will review some of the environmental problems along the coast which involve military activ-

ity. They include excessive noise caused by aircraft, military air traffic and the effects of military operations on coastal wildlife.

The 25-member task force includes military officers of the Air Force, Marines and Navy, as well as local and state government officials and others involved in coastal issues.

The public was invited to the meeting.

A staff member of the West Craven Highlights attended the meeting and a report of the meeting will be published in next week's edition of the West Craven Highlights.

Phone Improvements Slated For Vanceboro, New Bern Customers

TARBORO — Carolina Telephone & Telegraph Co.'s construction plans for this year include the installation of about 45 miles of fiber-optic cable in the New Bern-Vanceboro-Washington corridor at an estimated cost of \$978,000.

The project is scheduled to begin in June and end in October.

The system-wide plans for the future included substantial investment of capital to extend the company's fiber-optic network, said company spokesman G.T. Pate.

Pate, the firm's public relations executive, said, "Many of the valuable services that our customers will want in the near future are today acronyms and phrases familiar only to telecommunications people. They in-

clude such terms as HDTV, ISDN, enhanced security and alarm, picturephone and open network architecture.

"Fiber-optic technology is the most efficient means of expanding Carolina Telephone's network facilities to serve a growing customer base and meet increasing demands for more sophisticated and complex communications services."

Pate said that Carolina Telephone gained nearly 35,000 telephone access lines in 1988, which brought the company-wide total to about 748,000 lines.

"The integration of fiber optics and digital switching by Carolina Telephone is creating a state-of-the-art network for our custom-

(See PHONE, Page 5)



Workers installing fiber-optic cable

Jobless Figures Increase

The rate of unemployment increased in Craven, Jones and Lenoir counties during November but declined in Hyde County, according to the state Employment Security Commission's estimates.

The commission said Craven County's rate in November was 3.6 percent, compared with 3.4 percent in October. Jones County's rate was estimated at 4.2 percent in November and 3.4 percent in October.

Lenoir County had 1,120 people jobless in a work force estimated at 29,560 in November, for an unemployment rate of 3.8 percent, the commission said. In October the rate had been 3.6 per-

(See JOBLESS, Page 5)

Four Are Slightly Hurt In Three-Vehicle Wreck

A three-vehicle accident in Washington Wednesday injured four people, including a Vanceboro woman and her children, and caused almost \$9,000 in damage to two cars and a truck.

Police spokesman Joe Stringer identified the injured as Vicki Baskins Brown, 29, of Vanceboro, and her three children, Jessica, 7, John, 2, and Jenny, 11 months.

A spokesman for Beaufort County Hospital said Jessica was treated in the emergency room and released. The others did not seek medical attention.

Stringer said the accident occurred about 8 a.m. Wednesday at the intersection of Fifth and Market streets. He said Mrs. Brown was driving her 1983 Mercedes east on Fifth Street when her car and a 1977 Cadillac driven by Evelyn Eakes Winslow, 48, of 108 Pantigouch Drive, Washington, collided as Ms. Winslow attempted to make a left turn.

Stringer said a 1987 Chevrolet pickup driven by Sandra Edwards Latham, 31, of 811 Aycock St., also collided with Ms. Winslow's car.

Patrolman Michael Spruill charged Ms. Winslow with making an unsafe movement. Damages were estimated at \$1,500 to her car, \$7,000 to the Mercedes and \$300 to the pickup.

West Craven Girls Avoid Sweep By Trojans

TRENTON — The West Craven girls basketball team avoided the sweep and posted their best-ever start by defeating Class 1-A opponent Jones Senior in a non-conference basketball game Tuesday night while the Jones boys recovered from a two-game skid in the ninth annual Washington Daily News Holiday Basketball Tournament with a 86-66 triumph.

Chundra Croell and Linetta Bryant scored 15 points each as the Lady Eagles remained unbeaten at 9-0 with the victory.

In the boys' game, four players, led by Johnny Gatlin's 19 points, scored in double figures but West Craven fell to 2-7.

Jones Senior won the junior varsity game. No other details were provided.

In other non-conference games Tuesday involving Coastal teams, Havelock swept a pair from Kinston, East Carteret pulled a home sweep against Pamlico County, and D.H. Conley and North Lenoir each split in varsity outings.

In the West Craven-Jones girls' game, Croell started the first quarter by swishing two three-pointers and the Lady Eagles rolled to a 25-4 lead at the end of the period.

"We're not even averaging 25 points a quarter," West Craven coach Liz Cox said. "It surprised me that we scored that many."

Bryant keyed the defense with 10 steals as West Craven scored several baskets off its transition game.

Michelle Swinson scored a season-high 14 points while Tera Jones added 12 and Diane Brimage 10 for the Lady Trojans.

In the boys' game, Edward Murphy scored 27 points as Jones Senior, 7-3, turned a close game at the half (35-26) into a rout (64-36) by outscoring the Eagles 29-10 in the third quarter. Most of the Trojans' baskets came as a result of their transition game, West Craven coach Lorenzo Jones said.

Lee Becton had 14 points, Tony Jenkins added 12 and Craig Coward 10 for the Eagles. Roger Croell scored a season-high 18 points while Donald Harper added 13 for Jones Senior.

HAVELOCK — Kinston used a full-court press to rally against

Havelock in the boys' game but Mark George scored on a missed free throw with 32 seconds left and Kinston missed the back end of a two-shot foul with no time left as the Rams earned a 74-73 squeaker over the Vikings.

The Havelock boys improved to 5-4 overall while the Lady Rams emerged 8-1 overall with a 47-37 victory. No other details were available. Kinston won the junior varsity game 69-57, dropping the jayvee Rams to 2-3.

FARMVILLE — Glenda Hardy scored 19 points, Nikki Adams added 15 and Conley's trapping defense in the second quarter keyed a 19-8 run as the Valkyries blasted Farmville Central 66-43 to improve to 8-2 overall.

(See EAGLES, Page 5)