



West Craven Highlights

News From Along The Banks Of The Neuse



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Winter Wonderland

After an eerie winter of 80-degree days and then ice storms two days later, people were left wondering when winter would finally decide to show up. Old Man Winter removed in doubt when snow blew in Friday and blanketed the area with between four and eight inches in most places. In the background, several birds were found

out on a limb after the snowfall. In the foreground, a bit of winter-time snow sculpture by Mother Nature, with help of a few evergreen trees, adds to the beauty of the winter scene. The storm gave students and many adult a day off from their normal activities. (Ric Carter photo)

Four-Laning Of U.S. 17 In Roads Bill

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

A proposed highway bill is unique because if it becomes law it spells out specific projects to be constructed, says one of the bill's authors.

Sen. Marc Basnight told the Board of Directors of the Highway 17 Transportation Association Monday that the bill would provide \$8.6 billion for roads improvements, including \$625 million for improvements to U.S. 17 from the Virginia to the South Carolina border.

The bill also calls for the construction of the U.S. 17 bypass in New Bern, four-laning U.S. 17 from Wilmar to Bridgeton. The New Bern project would cost about \$100 million, the Wilmar-Bridgeton project about \$29 million. The bill also calls for U.S. 17 to be four-laned from the Martin-Beaufort line to Chocowinity at a cost of \$81 million.

Included in the bill is a bypass around Washington and four-laning sections of the highway in the Martin-Beaufort-Craven corridor. Belhaven might also get \$35 million for road projects. And if the bill is passed a bridge might be built over the Pamlico River in eastern Beaufort County.

Basnight met with the Highway 17 Transportation Association directors at the Holiday Inn in Washington.

The bill would fund the projects mostly through a 5/4-cent-per-gallon tax increase on gasoline and a 2 percent title fee. The bill also asks for a study on toll roads, but Basnight said he preferred a direct tax because it returned 100 percent of money collected for road improvements and 30 percent of money from tolls goes toward collection expenses.

The bill puts eastern North Carolina on the "brink of finalization of four-laning U.S. 17 from state line to state line," said Basnight.

The bill names the projects and if it becomes law they would have to be under construction in 12 years, said Basnight. Basnight said work on the bill had been going on for 18 months and he thought the bill would be well received in the Senate. He said he did not know what response it would get in the House. The bill was pre-filed Thursday and many legislators have not seen it, said Rep. Howard Chapin, who also attended the meeting.

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Nude Man Discovered Injured Near Church

A man believed present at a shooting was in stable condition Monday after he was found Sunday standing nude outside an abandoned house beside the West Vanceboro Church of God.

The Craven County Sheriff's Department believes Ricardo Ranez, 33, was present at a shooting at a trailer park on Antioch Road on Saturday but was not injured.

"We have nothing to lead us to believe he hurt anybody or was injured by anyone else," said sheriff's investigator Ken Fillingame.

Ranez was being treated this week for multiple injuries at Craven Regional Medical Center, said a hospital spokesman.

A Vanceboro resident called Lt. J.C. Woolard of the sheriff's department about 11:15 a.m. Sunday and reported someone was indecently exposed.

When officers arrived they found Ranez standing by the abandoned house near the church on N.C. 43. Ranez was incoherent, said rescue workers

who took him to the hospital. He was said to have been talking about a shooting. He was able to tell rescue workers from the Vanceboro Rescue Squad that he was Mexican. Rescue workers and volunteer firemen searched the area for others who may have been with Ranez.

"He was not in control of his faculties," said Fillingame.

Officers think Ranez may have witnessed a shooting that left one man slightly injured after an argument at Sandy Ridge Mobile Home Park ended in gunfire.

Juandela R. Lung of 9-A Sandy Ridge Mobile Home Park received emergency room treatment for a gunshot wound to the right side at Craven Regional Medical Center and was released, said a hospital spokesman.

She was injured when Mario Peralta Soto, 21, of the mobile home park, allegedly fired a .22-caliber weapon into his trailer after an argument with an unidentified roommate.

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Morris Gets New Post With Greenville District

Jackie D. Morris, Carolina Telephone's manager of network switching in Tarboro, has replaced Grady C. Strickland as district commercial manager in Greenville.

A district commercial manager, Morris will be responsible for the operation of the company's business office in Greenville and for customer relations in the exchanges serving Washington, Aurora, Ayden, Bethel, Farmville, Fountain, Snow Hill, Williamston, Columbia, Creswell, Hamilton, Plymouth, Robersonville, Windsor, Bath, Belhaven, Swan Quarter and Engelhard.

Strickland has been reas-

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Jackie Morris



Nature sketched this study in black and white on creek after snowfall

(Elmo Carveran photo)

Snow Inches Its Way Into County

By MIKE VOSS
Editor

In a winter that might best be described as a question mark in eastern North Carolina, Friday's weather could be best described as an exclamation point — it snowed!

In the Down East area, Friday's storm forced the closing or late opening of schools, some industries and governmental offices — giving children and many grown-ups a day off.

Public works crews were

out in the snow trying to keep roads open and electrical power on. Scattered blackouts were reported, but most were brief.

Vanceboro Town Clerk Carolyn Ipock said she was not aware of any major problems caused by the storm in Vanceboro.

The snow followed an ice storm that preceded it by a week. There were spring-like temperatures in between.

Up to four inches of snow fell between 2 a.m. and 8 p.m.

in the surrounding areas. Forecasters called for the snow to become heavier around noon and taper off in the afternoon and evening.

Highway Patrol officials in New Bern and surrounding areas reported few problems with traffic this morning. "Everything has been going pretty good. As long as people are careful out there there won't be any problems," said one trooper.

Sgt. S.M. Compton of the Beaufort County Highway

Patrol office said it was "all quiet" in the area last Thursday night. Trooper R.L. Hawley said last night that roads would be closed only in extreme cases. Patrol officials asked people not to drive unless it was necessary.

Weather observer Walter Jackson said up to 4 1/2 inches of snow fell in the Craven County area by 8 a.m. and that the temperature rose from a low Friday of 21 degrees to 25

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Carolina Telephone To Spend \$978,000 In Area During Year

Carolina Telephone's 1989 construction plans call for spending \$978,000 near Vanceboro for a new long-distance service cable made of fiber-optic fibers, the state-of-the-art material in telecommunications, said a company news release.

The new cable, slated to be placed into service in June between New Bern, Vanceboro and Washington, is part of Carolina Telephone's plans to spend more than \$119 million on construction this year in eastern North Carolina.

"We have more than \$1.3 billion invested in equipment and

facilities in eastern North Carolina. To continue to meet the communications needs of our customers, we will undertake this year a construction program that is estimated to cost \$119,123,000," said Wayne Peterson, president of Carolina Telephone.

About half of that will be used to provide for growth, said Peterson. The company expects to add about 26,500 telephone access lines this year, which would make its year-end total approximately 774,000.

The remainder of the construction budget is set for replace-

ment and modernization of equipment and facilities.

Peterson said Carolina Telephone has been replacing its electromechanical central offices with computerized digital offices at an accelerated pace since 1985. During 1989, the company will spend more than \$32 million for its central office replacement program.

The company will place into service 26 new digital central offices this year. When those are in service, 87 percent of the company's customers will be served by this technology.

"Our 1982 long-range plans cal-

led for all switching offices to be changed out to the new digital technology by the year 2000. We were able to get a few steps ahead of that schedule during the last three years and how hope to substantially improve on it," said Peterson.

The digital centers offices require less maintenance and provide faster call processing, improved voice and data transmission and Custom Calling Features.

During the year, Carolina Telephone plans to spend approximately \$19 million for long-distance facilities, including

more than \$6.9 million for the construction of 12 fiber-optic transmission systems to handle long-distance calls.

Fiber-optic technology is the most advanced means of telecommunications transmission. It uses lasers to transmit information over hair-thin glass fibers. One pair of glass fibers can transmit 8,000 telephone conversations at the same time.

"Carolina Telephone is using more and more fiber-optic cable to expand our network facilities and to meet increasing demands for more sophisticated and complex communications services,"

said Peterson.

The allocation budgeted by Carolina Telephone for fiber optics is growing, from \$6.3 million in 1988 to \$8.6 million planned for 1989. At the end of 1988, the company had more the 705 miles of fiber-optic cable, which is expected to climb to 987 this year.

To keep pace with the growth of its service area and to provide new services, the company will spend more than \$36 million during 1989 for local outside plant facilities. Major outside plant projects exceeding \$25,000 will

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