

Filling The Gap

The Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park down in Dare County is rapidly moving from the drawing board. It should be a reality in the not too distant future. Coupled with this project is a \$50-million plan to stabilize Oregon Inlet with a channel of 19 feet in depth.

Natives in the area are somewhat apprehensive about all the goings on. Some are outright opposed to the local-state-federal project which will boost the area's ability to handle large quantities of goods from the sea.

Naturally it will change the way of life in the sleepy village. Anything that brings in an industry with a 500 person payroll is going to have spin offs which might be offensive to some. Nevertheless, once the dirty work of construction and the costly start-up is completed, this project could well be the salvation of the Dare County fishing industry.

One never makes progress by adhering to the status quo. Little progress is made at moving ahead just to cover inflation. It takes giant steps to get a piece of the real action.

With the Chowan River algae mess crippling the fishing industry along the Public Parade, just think what our economy would be like if a few years ago diversification in the form of hog production had not been started. Frightening, isn't it? The Wanchese Seafood Industrial Park might be considered in a few years to have made similar impact on the Dare coast.

Among those who are enthusiastic about the prospects is Jim Ruhle. He fishes for swordfish, something unheard of just a few years ago.

C. A. Phillips, who meanders along the Public Parade in the capacity as president of Edenton Cotton Mill, Inc., and chairman of Chowan County commissioners, is chairman of the Wanchese Harbor Commission. He took us on a field trip last Saturday, along with J. D. Peele of Peele Brothers Fishery and Sheriff Troy Toppin.

Walking past the "Darana R", at the dock, Mr. Peele asked a deck hand if he knew Phil Ruhle, whom he had met on a trip to Seattle, Wash., a few years ago. He learned that Mr. Ruhle's son, Jim, owned the boat.

In a few minutes the younger Ruhle introduced himself and told us about swordfishing. On an eight-day trip his boat had landed a total of 19,000 pounds of fish—11,000 pounds being swordfish. The swordfish was sold on the New York market for \$2.50 per pound. Only one species of shark is marketable but his boat landed 8,000 pounds which sold for a much lesser figure.

The elder Ruhle, former skipper of the Tar Heel research vessel, "Dan Moore", developed the long line method of fishing for swordfish. His son usually fishes a 28-mile line baited with Boston mackerel. On an average outing the boat will use \$3,000 worth of bait.

Fixed overhead of the boat alone is \$200 per day and once the dressed fish are back at the dock Mr. Ruhle must pay the freight back to the New York market.

As the cost of fishing increases it is not likely that the price consumers are willing to pay will increase in direct proportion. The Ruhles are looking for a better way and the seafood industrial

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CAR HITS POLE — A 1968 Chevrolet was heavily damaged last Friday morning when it struck a telephone pole at the intersection of U.S. 17 and Highway 37. The driver, Mary Perry, Route 1, Hertford, was not seriously injured. She was taken to Chowan Hospital for emergency treatment. State Trooper P. J. Mitchell investigated the 7:55 A.M. mishap.

Board Clarifies Decision

"In view of the public interest that the matter has generated," Edenton-Chowan Board of Education last Thursday night felt compelled to make their position clear on the transfer of Holmes Principal Bruce McGraw to a Central Office position.

The crux of a statement, prepared in "executive session" and read by Chairman Eugene Jordan immediately following in an "open session," was that the board finds "no fault with either Dunn or McGraw concerning a personnel matter clearly within the jurisdiction of the superintendent and his area of responsibility." To this end, the board has chosen to continue their silence on provisions surrounding the position change, as required by the terms of an agreement.

Following the public announcement, Chairman Jordan, on behalf of the board, entreated the "support of every person in

Chowan County, if we are to get the best education for children - and that is our goal." Speaking further, Jordan acknowledged that "we may not agree with some people as we go along and after deliberation this (decision) may not be popular; but we feel that this is the best and this is our decision."

Below is the complete text of the board's statement, prepared in the presence of Attorney W. J. P. Earnhardt, Jr., and Supt. John Dunn and released to a room filled with McGraw supporters:

"On March 19, 1979, the board was asked to approve an agreement between the superintendent, John B. Dunn, and the principal of John A. Holmes High School, Bruce McGraw, whereby McGraw was to be transferred from his office as principal to a position of equal dignity in the Central Office of the system. The agreement between

the two administrators had been signed by each of them and both had had the advice of legal counsel in doing so. We approved the transfer based upon Dunn's recommendation and McGraw's consent. The terms of the agreement required us to keep silent with regard to its provisions and we have done so.

"However, in view of the public interest that the matter has generated, we felt compelled to make our position clear. We find no fault with either Dunn or McGraw concerning a personnel matter clearly within the jurisdiction of the superintendent and his area of responsibility. We can only hope that the public, faculty and students affected will lay the matter to rest in order that all may continue their constructive efforts toward the improvement of public education in Chowan County."



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Vepco Rate Hearings Concluded In Raleigh

Hearings concluded Friday in Raleigh before the N. C. Utilities Commission in its review of Vepco operations and rates.

Portions of testimony during the last two days of hearings were directed at the state of economic expansion in Vepco's North-eastern North Carolina service area.

Electric rates were said to be only one of many factors affecting industry decisions on site location and expansion, according to a report submitted by the executive director of the Economic Development Divisions of the N. C. Department of Commerce.

In addition, the affect of electric rates was often an "insignificant" factor in these decisions among non-energy intensive industry, according to the report.

Prepared at the Utilities Commission's request, the report discussed the impact of Vepco rates upon economic development in the company's service area.

It has been argued that the area had a record of depressed industrial development. In rebutting this contention, the report stated, "In actuality, on a per capita and percentage basis, this area is doing relatively well" with regard to industry investment.

According to the department's records, from 1972 to 1977, the state as a whole had a \$951 investment per person in new and expanding industry. The Vepco service area had a higher per capita investment of \$1,390.

The report concluded, "Using

"Herring Run" Set Saturday

A recent piece in the New York Times noted that on May 6, 1954 - 25 years ago this month - Roger Bannister, an English medical student, became the first person to run a mile in under four minutes. It was one of history's great sports

these indicators, it would appear that the area, as a whole, has not experienced that bad a record in investment performance."

Employment and industry have been substantial growth in recent years according to state Bureau of Employment Security figures submitted by Tom Jarvis, former vice president of Vepco's North Carolina operations.

"Manufacturing employment has grown three times faster in our service area than the state as a whole. Job opportunities have increased with the influx of 36 new industries and expansion of others," he said.

The Friday proceedings concluded two weeks of formal hearings in Raleigh where the Public Staff presented six expert witnesses and Vepco presented eight to argue their respective cases.

Previously, a series of hearings were held in Ahoskie, Elizabeth City, Williamston and Roanoke Rapids where statements were taken from approximately fifty members of the general public on the matter.

Final legal briefs will be submitted by the parties involved by the first of July. The commission will report its findings sometime thereafter.



'TRANSPORTATION GETS US TOGETHER' — Gov. Jim Hunt, left, receives a National Transportation Week button Tuesday from Secretary of Transportation Tom Bradshaw prior to speaking to an assembly to 500 NCDOT employees in Raleigh. Recognizing the importance of transportation is improving the quality of life in North Carolina through balanced economic growth, Gov. Hunt commended all transportation department employees for their contributions to transportation progress and increased efficiency. National Transportation Week concludes May 19.

Sheriff Toppin Re-Elected To ALOA Post

NAGS HEAD — Chowan County Sheriff Troy Toppin of Edenton was re-elected first vice president of the Albemarle Law & Order Association here Friday night and some 225 people in attendance were given an overview of the Edenton-Chowan Alternative School.

Keynote speaker for the annual spring meeting to the 10-county association was Sec. Herbert L. Hyde of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. He was introduced by Sheriff Toppin.

Mrs. Clara Boswell, principal at the alternative school which has received federal funding through

ALOA, explained accomplishments of the school. She also introduced staff members and Dr. John Dunn, superintendent of Edenton-Chowan Schools.

Mrs. Boswell also expressed her appreciation for the support given

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SPRING BANQUET AT NAGS HEAD — Edenton and Chowan County was well represented at the spring banquet of Albemarle Law & Order Association, held Friday night at the Carolinian at Nags Head. In the upper left photo are J. D. Peele, Chowan County commissioner; Sen. Melvin Daniels, Reps. Vernon James and Charles Evans; and C. A. Phillips, chairman of Chowan County commissioners. In the picture at right, Sheriff Troy Toppin is flanked by Rep. Walter B. Jones of the First



Congressional District and Sec. Herbert Hyde of the Department of Crime Control and Public Safety. Sec. Hyde is shown in the bottom left picture talking with Dist. Atty. Tom Watts. Others are: Mrs. C. A. Phillips, Mrs. J. D. Peele, Mrs. L. F. Amburn, Jr., and Mrs. Clara Boswell. Police Chief W. C. Ownes of Elizabeth City, who was re-elected president, is shown with Glenn Hassell, an Edentonian who is project director for the association.

Rate Ceiling Is Requested

Sen. Melvin R. Daniels, Jr., D., First Senatorial District, Friday filed Senate Bill 949 calling for a utility rate ceiling for North Carolina.

Sen. Daniels' bill would establish that electric utility rates for consumers who are supplied with electricity by smaller companies serving North Carolina shall be no more than 5 per cent above the average rates for all North Carolina electric utilities.

The bill states that the Public Utilities Commission shall calculate annually the average rates charged by the small-area utility companies serving no more than thirty counties, and determine that their rates do not exceed by more than 5 per cent the rates of the major suppliers serving larger areas.

Sen. Daniels stated that there is grave concern by the consumers in many areas of the state where companies are charging rates that are varying from 12 to 44 per cent higher than North Carolina's two major electric utility companies.

For additional information or interview, call Raleigh (919) 733-5882.

