

Rural neighbors miss on city water, sewer

Continued from page 1A

drop in your sink you'll see a blue spot." He also expressed concern for the children who attend nearby Berryhill Elementary School, because of the water.

Mauney describes the problem as something for which neither the city of Charlotte nor Mecklenburg County will take responsibility.

"We're sitting out here in an 'invisible wall,'" he said. "The county won't do anything, and the city won't either."

Mauney and other residents have expressed their concerns to Warren Turner, city councilman, as well as

Charlotte Mayor Pat McCrory.

"Pat sees what's wrong with it too," Mauney said of McCrory. "He said he can't see why it's taking so long." He said McCrory has commissioned Turner to act on the residents' behalf to get the matter solved.

Turner, who represents City Council District 3, said it may take three to four years to have the matter resolved, and said a planned closed session meeting may determine the outcome.

"This meeting may close some doors or open some," he said. "There are a lot of pieces to the puzzle."

Mecklenburg was previously responsible for water

and sewer services for the unincorporated areas, but that responsibility was handed over to Charlotte after three subdivisions

near Dixie and Berryhill were incorporated and given access to city water services. The subdivisions — The Palisades, Youngblood and The Vineyard — are newer, upper-income neighborhoods. Charlotte is now responsible for providing

water and sewer in the county.

Barry Shearin, chief engineer with Charlotte-Mecklenburg Utilities, said a concrete plan must be put in place before the city can start providing water services to Dixie/Berryhill. He said residents in other unincorporated parts of the county have approached the city about water services, and there are two options.

One is to place an extension on the nearest water line, which Shearin said is effective if residents are within 1,000 feet. Many Dixie and Berryhill residents, however, live miles

away from the nearest water line, and Shearin said a plan that shows growth and development must be implemented in order to justify creating an extensive water system.

Shearin said he has met with residents twice.

"We've heard the request," he said. "Our goal is to go with growth and development. We don't put water systems in areas where there is not projected growth."

Shearin said developers often play a key role in

obtaining water services for the properties involved, as was the case with The Palisades, Youngblood and The Vineyard. While he believes Dixie/Berryhill residents may have met with developers, Shearin said he has not seen a plan that will make their dream a reality.

Kent Main of the Charlotte-Mecklenburg Planning Commission said there is a long-term plan for Dixie and Berryhill, including addition of utility services to the area, but declined further comment.

Eastern N.C. less likely to be insured

Continued from page 1A

and vice president of the North Carolina Institute of Medicine.

"Once in the emergency department of a hospital, the uninsured's medical bills are often shared by everyone. This is a classic example of why it is in the public's best interest to find solutions to the high numbers of unin-

sured in our state."

Urban counties did better on coverage, with Mecklenburg with 14.8 percent uninsured, Durham at 16.1 and Orange at 16.3. Rural Duplin and Hyde were at 26.9 percent and 26.2 uninsured, respectively.

"Having access to estimates of the percentage of local residents without

health insurance enables institutions such as public health departments, hospitals and physicians to plan for meeting the needs of the uninsured population," Holmes said. "It also allows policymakers to determine where to best target their efforts. Counties with lower average income and a higher proportion of workers

employed by small business tend to have lower rates of health insurance coverage."

The report, including the uninsured rates for children and adults for all 100 North Carolina counties, is on the internet at www.shepscenter.unc.edu.

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