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10 CENTS PLUS TAX

Murphy Wants Change In Local Sales Tax Allocations

The basis of allocating local sales tax money to counties should be changed to provide better distribution of the funds to rural counties, state Rep. Wendell Murphy, D-Duplin-Jones, said this past week.

Murphy said he does not know how he will vote on a House bill to authorize an additional 1-cent local sales tax. The bill calls for allocating funds based on where they are collected — as they are now distributed — and not based on population.

Murphy told the Duplin County Municipal Association last week in Rose Hill that Duplin County now receives about \$1 million a year. If the allocation basis were changed from collection source to population, Duplin would gain \$500,000, he said.

Counties with large shopping centers such as New Hanover obviously receive some local sales tax money

that "rightfully should go to Brunswick, Pender and Duplin counties," he said. "I assure you I will be looking for ways to change this inequity."

Murphy's predecessor, Douglas Clark, had promoted a bill to distribute sales tax revenue on the basis of population. But Clark's proposal made little headway in the General Assembly against the opposition of urban legislators. Murphy defeated Clark in the 1982 Democratic primary.

Wallace Mayor Melvin Cording, a board member of the N.C. League of Municipalities, said that group supports the bill to add a penny to the sales tax.

He asked Murphy to support the bill, but Murphy said he does not know how he would vote on it. "When you have to spend 50 cents to get 25 cents, you might be adding too much of a burden to Duplin County," Murphy said.

Cording responded, "Any little bit will help."

Magnolia Mayor Melvin Pope said, "I agree with Murphy. If you throw a drowning man a string, he may think it'll help, but he's still going to drown. What we need is a plow line."

Murphy also said the General Assembly is moving slowly on annexation.

He said a House bill which would make annexation subject to approval of those affected seems to be fairer than a competing Senate bill which would continue to permit annexation without voter approval. The Senate bill would stiffen requirements for providing notice of annexation and for providing services to the annexed areas.

"The financial well-being of city and county governments is a matter of great concern in the legislature and I doubt that any drastic measure affecting this will be approved," Murphy said.

While saying he still supports the safe roads bill, Murphy said, "In my opinion the safe roads act could create the biggest logjam of untried cases our court system has ever seen."

He said plea-bargaining and consent judgments now allowed in drunken driving cases "would be removed under the new law, resulting in a great many jury trials. This increased activity could necessitate more judges, more prosecutors and court employees."

He said Rep. Billy Watkins, D-Granville, chairman of the House Appropriations Committee, has filed a bill to provide the courts an extra \$5 million over the next two years to meet those costs.

Asked about the possible closing of Seaboard System's Wilmington-Rocky Mount rail line, Murphy told the local officials, "I will resist evacuation of the rail line in every way possible."



DUPLIN MUNICIPAL MEETING - Rose Hill Mayor Ben Harrell and Rose Hill Commissioner Felton Rackley confer with Representative Wendell Murphy at the Duplin

Municipal Association meeting Tuesday night at the Rose Hill Restaurant last week. Also in the picture is Robert Hyatt, Wallace town administrator.

Board Debates Ambulances

The Duplin County Board of Commissioners last week agreed to have a broken-down ambulance repaired after an extensive discussion about buying a new one.

Frank Brinson, emergency services coordinator, told the board the engine "blew out" while the 1976 ambulance was carrying a patient to Wilmington. The ambulance has been driven 81,000 miles.

The ambulance has been used to transfer patients from Duplin General Hospital to hospitals in other counties. The county also owns an older ambulance that has been driven about 200,000 miles and a 1981 ambulance that has been driven 82,000 miles.

The board decided it should consider replacing the old ambulance before replacing either of the newer vehicles. Brinson estimated the cost of repairing the broken-down vehicle at about \$1,200.

The state will pay 25 percent of the cost of a new ambulance for the Beulaville

Rescue Squad, which is fourth on the state priority list, Brinson said. New ambulances cost from \$23,000 to more than \$30,000, he said, depending upon how much equipment is purchased with the new vehicles.

Duplin County furnishes ambulances to the rescue squads, although some of the squads have some ambulances purchased with local funds. Duplin County owns nine of the 14 ambulances in the county, Brinson said.

In other business, tax supervisor Frank Moore said assessed valuation of real property in the county has increased \$5,814,100 in the past year, about half the \$10 million-a-year increase of recent years. He attributed the lower rate of increase to bad economic conditions.

Moore said he will have the total valuation figures ready for the board this week. It needs the figures to determine how much money each cent of the property tax level will bring.

No one appeared for a second hearing on revenue sharing. The board expects

to receive \$461,000 in federal revenue-sharing funds for the remainder of the fiscal year.

Representatives of the newly organized Duplin General Hospital Foundation told the board they have found strong support for the hospital everywhere in the county. The foundation was formed to raise funds from contributions and grants for equipment and improvements to the hospital.

Foundation members Marjorie Overman of Wallace, Charles Ingram of Warsaw and Violet Phillips and Amos Brinson of Kenansville said the committee agreed with the board's hiring of a consulting firm to study the hospital situation.

Other members of the group are Arliss Albertson of Beulaville, William Buckley and Robert L. Smith of Wallace, Dr. Alice Scott of Pink Hill, Betty Lanier of Rose Hill, W.L. Hennessee of Faison, Hazel Ruth Kornegay, Gerald Quinn of Warsaw, and G.F. Landen of Chinquapin.

Ten volunteer organizations or individuals from Duplin County will be entered in the 1983 governor's statewide volunteer awards program, said Walter Erv, director of aging and volunteer programs.

They are: Faison Volunteer Fire Department, organization category; Coles Chapel of the Lyman area of southeastern Duplin, religious volunteer; James Hilton Lanier of Wallace, administrator-coordinator; N.H. Carter of Wallace, individual human services; Harriett Farnior, school volunteer; the Rev. W. Aubrey Jones of Wallace, one-on-one category; Charles F. Cates & Sons Inc. of Faison, business and industry volunteer involvement; Kelley Byrd, a teacher at B.F. Grady School, youth volunteer; Dorothy Evans Shue of Wallace, individual community volunteer leader; and Margaret Hunter.

The board reappointed Doris Sitterson of Kenansville to the jury selection committee.

Destroy Plant Beds After Transplanting

By Emily Killete

Blue mold cases have been reported across the state and as close to Duplin as Sampson County, J. Michael Moore, Duplin Agricultural Extension tobacco agent, said. A guard against blue mold is destroying the plant bed as soon as transplanting is complete, Moore pointed out.

"Most of the reported cases of blue mold have been on plant beds not treated with Ridomil," Moore, Duplin AES tobacco specialist said. "We (NC Agricultural Extension Service) are encouraging farmers to disk and destroy the plant beds as soon as they have been depleted or the owner and the area farmers have finished transplanting. Plant beds can harbor diseases such as blue mold and insects. The build-up of the disease on the plant bed will eventually move to the field." A chemical recommended by Moore for the treatment of blue mold is Ridomil. According to Moore, Ridomil has been marketed since 1979, the last year in which Duplin's tobacco crop suffered substantial damage from blue mold.

"It is time for the second application of Ridomil to plant beds," Moore said. "And, I think it would be advisable for the farmer to apply the second application of Ridomil even if the plant bed is depleted and ready to be destroyed." Along with checking plant beds and transplanted tobacco for blue mold, Moore suggests farmers be on the look-out for the cutworm and the bud worm. "This year farmers will be having higher than normal problems with cutworms and wireworms because of the late season and cool weather. The 1983 'Tobacco Information' booklet can be a good source of information on treatment of the early season insects." The "Tobacco Information" booklets are published annually by North Carolina State University and avail-

able at the local Agricultural Extension Service offices.

"In order to produce and sell a quality tobacco crop this year, farmers will need to harvest ripe leaves and prepare them well for marketing in order to draw a good price," Moore said. "And, the first step in producing a good, uniform crop is not over-applying nitrogen after transplanting." Moore foresees a normal growing season for tobacco if the weather continues in its present trend. However, he added, if weather conditions changed to last summer's pattern of temperature and rainfall, a lighter than normal tobacco crop can be expected by area farmers. "By the calendar, farmers are about two weeks behind the planting season," Moore said. "But, according to the season, farmers are right on time. I think you have to farm with the weather and those producers who had the early tobacco plants have been hurt by the late cold snaps."

According to Moore, cold temperatures lead to early flowering in young tobacco plants. Many Duplin farmers who purchased tobacco plants from Georgia and South Carolina have reported early flowering this season, Moore said. To avoid early flowering, Moore suggested area farmers depend on local plants to complete transplanting.



GUARD AGAINST DISEASE - Duplin Agricultural Extension Agent J. Michael Moore stressed the importance of guarding tobacco crops against disease by destroying plant beds as soon as transplanting is complete. Plant beds can harbor harmful diseases and insects which will eventually be transmitted to the crop field, Moore said. Moore is pictured above in a plant bed overtaken by weeds and ready to be disked.

Wallace Sewage Station Delayed For Lack Of Funds

An anticipated shortfall in revenue will prevent the Town Board of Wallace from going ahead with a sewage pump station project until July, when the next fiscal year begins.

Bids on the project were opened May 3, but the board is afraid to let a contract because of the money problem.

About half of the estimated \$70,000 shortfall stems from the state's discovery that the J.P. Stevens Co. plants are just outside the Wallace city limits, Mayor Melvin Cording told the board last week on Wednesday.

The discovery means the town will not receive about \$30,000 to \$35,000 as its share of state franchise taxes on the plants. This is money the town has been receiving and that it had included in its budget estimates, Cording said.

The remainder of the shortfall stems from the sharp reduction in Stevens plant operations during the past year, which reduced the plant's use of water. Stevens is the town's largest water customer. The cutback in plant operations cost the town about \$35,000 in anti-

cipated water revenue, Cording said.

The board hopes to obtain an extension of time on the low bid until after July 1, when the new fiscal year begins. Town attorney Richard Burrows told the board bids usually are good for only 30 days. Burrows also told the board it cannot legally let a contract this fiscal year and pay for it out of next year's funds.

The board's main concern is that the low bid was nearly \$21,000 under the next lowest bid. It fears if the project must be rebid, the low offer would be much higher than the low bid of \$28,599.40 from R&B Contracting Co. of Princeton.

The second-lowest bid was

\$49,500 from TransCon Group Inc. of Rocky Mount.

Cording said the \$31,800 in revenue-sharing money expected in the next fiscal year will be used to pay for the lift station.

The board also faces a decision on increased accident and health insurance premiums for town employees. The Blue Cross-Blue Shield individual insurance premiums will increase from \$35.39 per month to \$51.64 per month and the family coverage from \$97.67 to \$143.14 per month July 1. The town pays the premiums for its employees, who pay the difference between individual and family coverage.

A \$100 deductible plan is being considered. With the

first \$100 of medical care paid by the employees, the individual premiums would increase to \$44.48 and the family coverage to \$123.71 per month.

The insurance company reported paying benefits of \$59,744 to town employees and their families last year compared with premiums totaling \$46,928.77.

The board delayed action on a request for a no-parking zone in front of a mail drop box on Main Street while it obtains the opinions of merchants in the area about losing parking spaces.

Sealed bids will be opened at 2 p.m. June 24 at Town Hall on a lot on West Stevens Street that was declared surplus property.

341 Youths Register To Vote

The Duplin County Election Board's in-school voter registration effort netted 341 new registrations, Carolyn Murphy, board secretary, said last week.

Later in each school year the board directs registrars

to the county's four high schools to register students. This year the registration was for people who will become 18 years old by Nov. 18, date of the municipal elections.

Mrs. Murphy said regis-

tration was down this year. Usually about 500 register. "We're not sure if there's a lack of interest because the only elections here this year are the municipal ones," she said.

Registration numbers by

schools were: East Duplin 101, James Kenan 122, Wallace-Rose Hill 50 and North Duplin 68.

The municipal election filing period will be from noon Sept. 16 to noon Oct. 7. Registration books will close at 5 p.m. Oct. 10.

Duplin To Keep School Program

A special federal reading and mathematics instruction program will be continued in the 1983-84 school year in Duplin County schools.

The program is authorized by Chapter 1 of the federal Education Consolidation and Improvement Act. During the 1982-83 school year, 2,295 students have been involved in the program. About 8,600 students are enrolled in Duplin County schools.

The 1983-84 program has a budget of \$862,675, which will provide for 34 teachers, two less than in the current year.

Under the program, economically deprived children in grades 4 through 12 who score in the bottom 45 percent of those tested on the California Achievement Test receive special help in reading and children in grades 7-9, special help in mathematics.

Fourth- through eighth-grade pupils receive 30-45 minutes of special instruction in reading or mathematics laboratories. High school

students receive special instruction every other week during study hall or English class periods.

While it is a federally funded program, local boards of education can approve or reject it. The Duplin Board of Education approved the program at their meeting last week.

The board also approved a proposed vocational study program for 1983-84. The proposed vocational program budget is \$1,119,116 of which \$347,903 would come from local funds and \$771,213 from state appropriations. The proposed program would offer 14 subjects. Fifty-three teachers would be employed.

The board expects an enrollment of 4,445 students in the vocational division from grades 7-12.

Subjects and anticipated enrollments are: pre-vocational, 676; industrial arts education, 653; agricultural education, 428; marketing and distributive education, 173; health occupations edu-

cation, 1,312; carpentry, 117; masonry, 120; mechanics, 120; drafting, 47, and three classes for handicapped students, 42.

Two houses built by vocational students at North Duplin and Wallace-Rose Hill high schools will be offered at auction sales June 25.

The Wallace-Rose Hill students built a 1,232-square foot, three-bedroom house with horizontal hardboard siding. It will be offered for sale at 10 a.m. on the school grounds.

The North Duplin students built a three-bedroom house with vertical cedar siding, fiberglass shingles and plasterboard walls. The sale will be held at 2 p.m.

The board will meet at 8 p.m. on the first Tuesday of June, July and August and return to its twice a month schedule in September. It also will hold only one meeting in December.