

# Duplin Times

## PROGRESS SENTINEL

VOL. XXXVII NO. 25      USPS 162-860      KENANSVILLE, N.C. 28349      JUNE 23, 1983      16 PAGES THIS WEEK      10 CENTS PLUS TAX

### Budget Vote Will Increase Duplin Taxes

Duplin County residents will face a property tax increase of 5 cents per \$100 assessed valuation for the next fiscal year. The new rate will be 75 cents.

While the county commissioners failed to vote on a tax resolution as they have done in previous years, the increase was mandated in the 1983-84 fiscal year budget, which the board approved in a split vote late Tuesday night.

Minutes of the budget meetings of recent years show the board has usually first approved a tax rate resolution and then a separate budget resolution.

Making the budget motion was Chairman W.J. Costin of Warsaw. Dovie Penney of Wallace seconded it. Others voting for the resolution were Allen Nethercutt of Chinquapin and Calvin Turner of eastern Duplin.

Opposing the budget was D.J. Fussell of Rose Hill. "I'm opposed to the tax rate increase," Fussell said. "If we cut the fat out, we won't need a tax increase."

The increase will bring in about \$320,000 next year. The full levy will fund 14.84 million of the \$8.3 million budget, based on a 95 percent collection rate and an assessed property valuation of about \$674 million.

If 100 percent of the levy were collected, revenues would total \$5,055 million. Each penny of tax levy will bring in \$64,000 at the 95 percent collection rate.

The county usually collects more than 95 percent of its levy, with anything above average going into a reserve fund.

Under the new rate, a person with \$50,000 worth of real and personal property will be billed \$375 this fall in county taxes, up from \$350 last year.

The new budget is about \$200,000 less than the budget approved a year ago for the current fiscal year, but that budget included revenue-sharing money. Because of the uncertainty surrounding the federal revenue-sharing program, no funds from that source were included in the new budget.

If Congress appropriates new revenue-sharing money,

some will go to the school system and to James Sprunt Technical College in Kenansville. The county expects to receive \$431,000 in the current fiscal year, which ends June 30.

County officials try to maintain a cash reserve of \$500,000. The reserve has been depleted to just under half that amount.

The new budget provides no money for Duplin General Hospital, although the county will have money available in reserve funds and through an intensified effort to collect delinquent taxes.

"We need to see what develops (at the hospital) over the next few months," Costin said. "We need to see what support the physicians will give the hospital. The new physicians will support it if they stay any length of time. The lease is up in September and it's hard to make any decision right now."

Mrs. Penney said, "We spent tax money to get the consultant's report and we should follow that report as closely as possible."

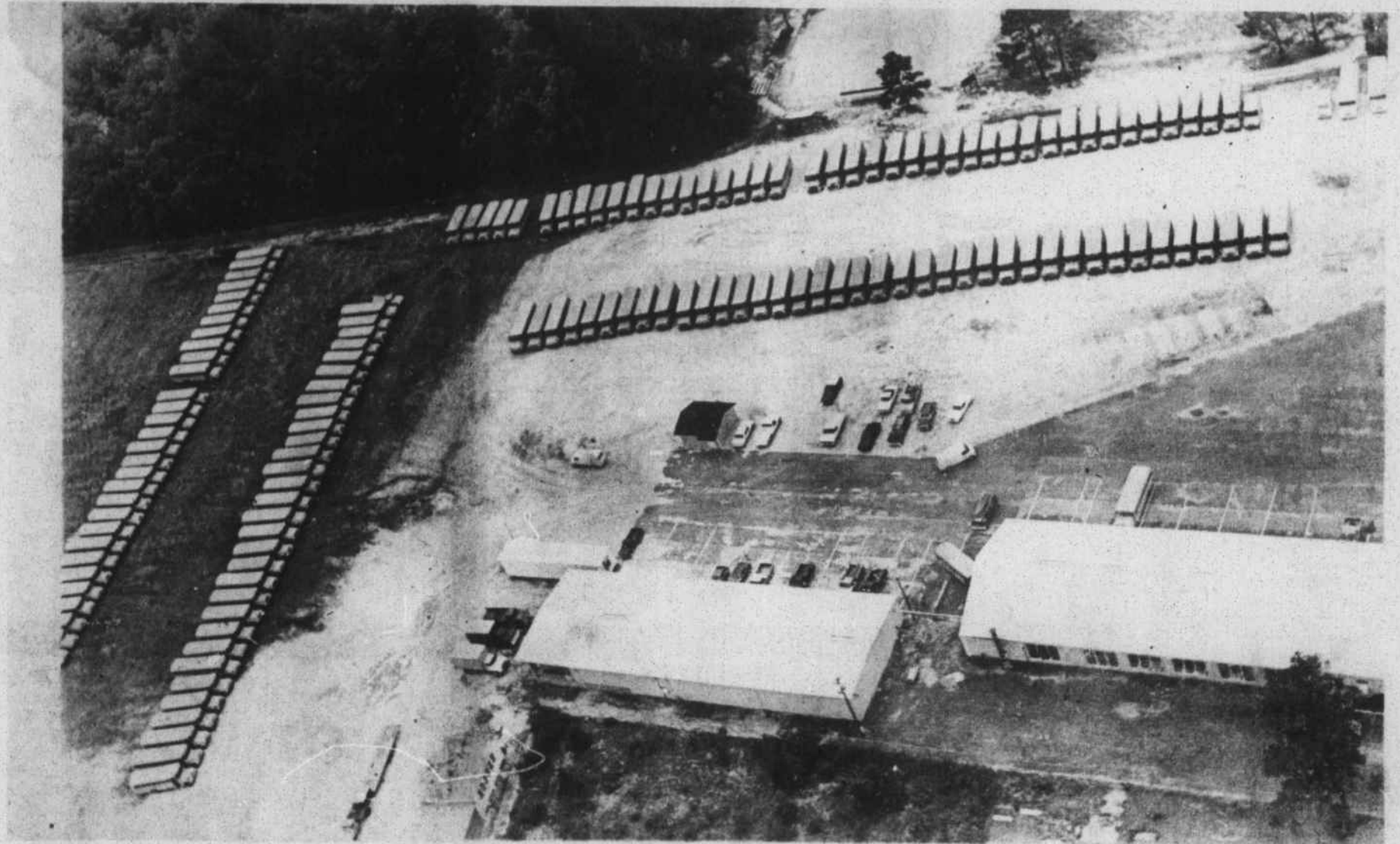
County Manager Ralph Cottle said the budget provides a pay increase only for employees who have served for four years without an increase. It provides \$5,000 for an employee reclassification project to be undertaken in January by the N.C. Institute of Government.

The board rejected the Sheriff's Department's request for six new automobiles and the county industrial development commission's request for one car. It reduced a \$5,000 budget increase request for the Mental Health Department to \$1,500, providing the department with \$96,500 for next year.

The Sheriff's Department will be authorized to replace some failing television cameras and monitors at the county jail.

The county school system will receive \$1,890,586 for operating expenses, the same as in 1982-83. The system's capital budget will be reduced to \$200,000 from \$235,664 requested.

James Sprunt Technical College will receive \$282,550 for operations and \$46,364 for capital projects.



SCHOOL IS OUT...BUSES WAIT. Duplin County School buses are all lined up at the county garage in Kenansville. They are awaiting repairs and the first day of school. The Duplin unit has 138 buses running spares. The buses run about 120 million routes during school and about 10 extra or miles a year transporting students.

### Rose Hill Won't Budge Tax Rate

The town's 1983-84 fiscal year budget of \$477,300 will reduce expenditures \$29,400 from the current fiscal year.

The budget, adopted Tuesday night, retains the tax rate of 70 cents per \$100 of assessed property value.

The owner of property valued at \$50,000, for example, will be billed \$350 in town taxes this fall. That property owner will also receive a bill for \$375 in Duplin County property taxes, based on a 75 cents per \$100 of property value. The total city and county taxes on the \$50,000 property would be \$725.

The tax rate of 70 cents per \$100 of property value would bring in \$115,500 if the full amount were collected. Officials estimate the town will

receive 90 percent of the taxes, amounting to \$103,950, said Town Clerk C.G. Fussell. The town's assessed valuation is \$16.5 million.

The new budget assigns \$81,000 of the property tax returns to the general fund and \$22,000 to the debt service fund.

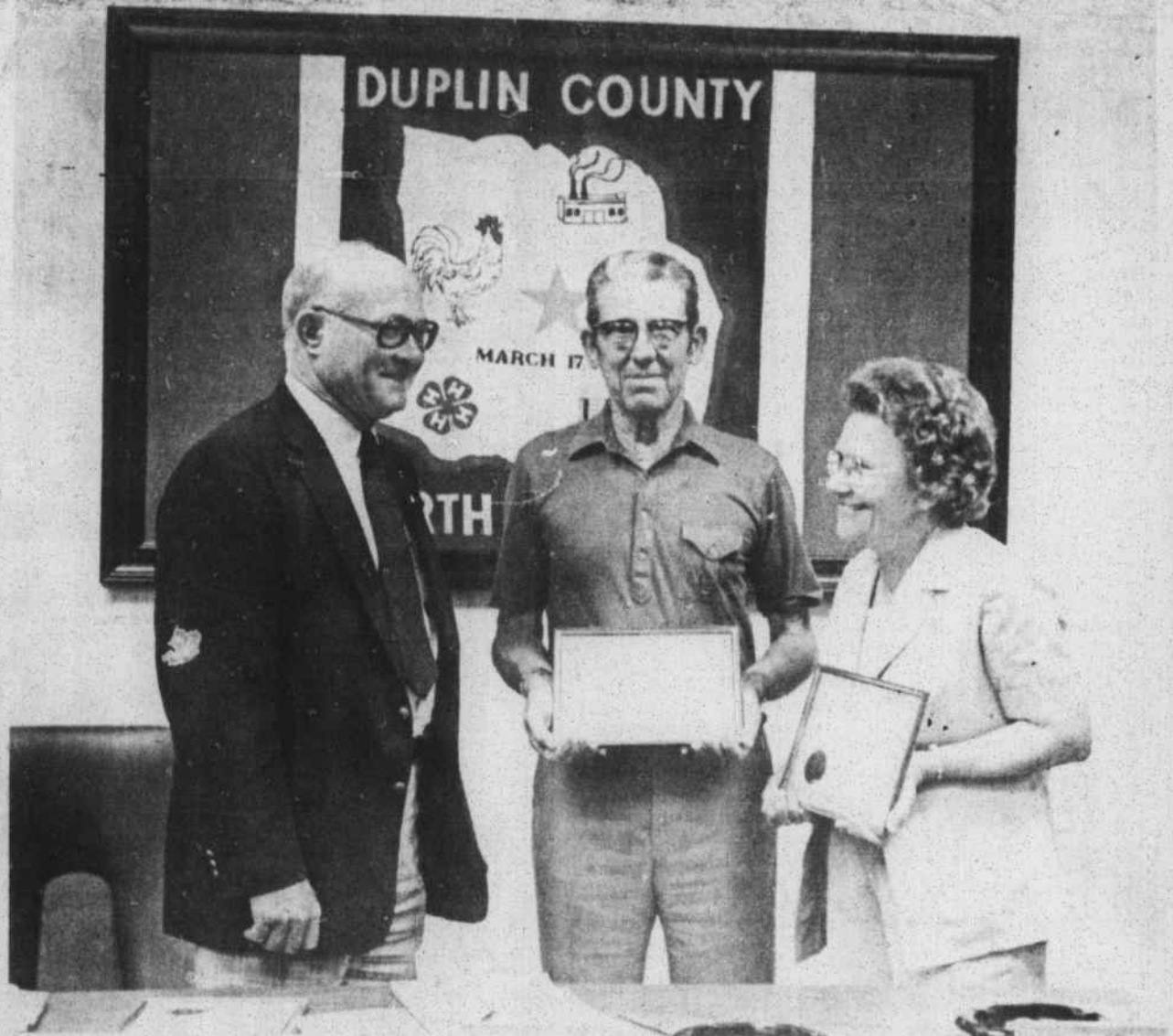
The new general fund of \$223,300 is \$11,100 higher than the 1982-83 general fund.

Other major funds are these: \$140,500 for water and sewer services, financed from services fees and carry-over money; \$32,000 for streets, financed with \$31,000 in state Powell Bill allocation plus \$1,000 in carry-over money; \$22,500 in debt service, financed from \$22,500 in property taxes and carry-over money; and \$59,000 for public safety, health, transportation, recreation, library, environment and a garbage truck body, finance from revenue-sharing money and carry-over money.

Major general fund income, in addition to the property tax, will be \$39,000 in garbage collection fees; \$30,600 from the local-option sales tax; \$26,000 in carry-over money; \$16,000 from the state franchise tax; \$3,000 from the state intangibles tax; \$6,000 in delinquent tax collections; \$10,000 from federal revenue sharing, and \$4,000 from sales and gasoline tax refunds.

Major general fund expenditures will be \$71,400 for police; \$39,000 for sanitation; \$24,000 for streets; \$18,000 for town employee payroll taxes and retirement; \$15,000 for the town administrator; \$13,000 for the fire department; \$7,200 for town employee health insurance; \$7,000 for the recreation department; \$5,000 for utilities, and \$4,500 for the library.

Major water and sewer expenditures will be \$41,473 for capital outlay; \$48,527 in salaries; \$20,000 for new equipment; \$10,000 for utilities; \$5,000 for contracted services, and \$4,500 for professional services and audit



COUNTY EMPLOYEES RETIRE. Duplin County Commission Chairman Bill Costin presents certificates of appreciation to two county employees, Seba Dempsey who worked at the county landfill and Mary Boney a public health nurse who worked with the Duplin County Health Services.

### Freezer Firm To Start Operating This Year

Millions of pounds of frozen meat, mostly poultry, will begin moving through the port of Wilmington in the next year if plans of a freezer storage firm materialize.

Williams Refrigeration of Federalsburg, Md., is constructing a 65,000-square-foot freezer storage plant adjacent to the Seft & Co. turkey processing plant near Wallace.

The plant is expected to begin operation by mid-October. The \$3.7 million plant will be able to store 17 million pounds of meat, company president Charles Williams said Thursday in a telephone

interview from Federalsburg.

It will have the capacity to freeze 180,000 pounds of produce or meat at zero degrees in 48 hours, Williams said. The freezer will maintain a zero degree temperature in the storage area but can drop the temperature to 10 degrees below zero, he said.

Once the plant is in full operation, Williams said, he expects 12 million to 20 million pounds of frozen products, mostly poultry, will move into export trade through the Wilmington port each year.

"We're negotiating with

people on this right now," he said. "There are many things to work out, but we think they will work out. WE've had experience working with other ports from or freezer storage plant in Sumter, S.C."

The new plant will permit expansion of the region's already large poultry industry by providing freezer capacity for storage within an economically feasible distance of processing plants, Williams said.

Although the plant will employ only 15 to 20 people, Williams said, he expects its presence will increase employment opportunities in

the area. At the Sumter plant, the company works with Swift, Rose Hill Poultry Corp., House of Raeford and Holly Ridge Farms, he said. The Sumter plant also freezes blueberries for area producers.

"We expect Swift will be one of our major customers when we get going here," Williams said.

Construction superintendent Thomas Troggio said the project has been set back by the unusually wet winter.

"We started here in February but couldn't do anything really constructive until about a month ago," Troggio said.

### Sewage Treatment Upgrading To Begin

Improvements to the Wallace sewage treatment plant will begin late this year and be completed about the end of 1984, if preparatory steps go according to plan.

Mayor Melvin Cording said Monday the project's cost will be slightly more than \$1 million, of which the town's share will be about \$109,000.

Local officials were informed Friday that funds for the project were available immediately from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The EPA grant will be approximately \$880,000.

Officials of the N.C. Division of Environmental Management briefed the mayor and a representative of the town's engineering firm on the grant Monday.

Cording and the representatives of Henry von Oesen Associates of Wilmington, the town's engineering firm, will return the application to the state by Friday.

The Town Board approved the application resolution Monday night.

"We hope to advertise for bids by Sept. 15," said Bill Burnett, an environmental specialist with the engineering firm. "It will take about 15 months to do the work."

Thomas V. Fahnstock of the state Department of Natural Resources and Community Development said the Wallace project will be financed with "recaptured funds."

"That is money turned back from other projects," Fahnstock explained. Wallace was No. 24 on the state priority list.

Burnett said innovative technology will be featured in a biological aerated filter, a system developed and tested in France. The unit in Wallace will be the first one in a system of this size east of the Mississippi River, he added. This part of the project will cost about \$25,000. Because it is innovative technology, he said, the EPA will pay 85 percent of its cost and the state and city, 7 1/2 percent each.

If anything goes wrong with this part of the project, the federal government will pay the full repair or replacement cost, he added.

The project will increase the sewage treatment plant's capacity from 500,000 to 600,000 gallons per day. It will upgrade the effluent discharge, which should improve water quality of Rockfish Creek into which

the treated sewage is discharged.

Holding tanks will be constructed to provide retention capacity for storm sewage flow. With the tanks, the plant will be able to spread treatment of the excessive storm flow over several days, enabling it to avoid severe overloads that lower the treatment quality.

Burnett said because the plant is on the Rockfish Creek flood plain southeast of Wallace, a protective berm will be built around it.

Cording said the plant was built 17 years ago. At that time, it was supposed to have had sufficient capacity to serve Wallace for 30 years.

The town's population increased more rapidly than expected, however, and industrial demand increased.

### Duplin Red Cross Meeting

The Annual Meeting of the Duplin County Chapter of the American Red Cross will be held on Thursday afternoon, June 30, 1983 at 4 o'clock in the Fellowship Hall of Grove Presbyterian Church in Kenansville.