

# Duplin Times

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## Duplin Tour Focuses On Importance Of Conservation

Benjamin J. Fountain's family is the Duplin County conservation family of the year.

The current emphasis on land preservation in farming communities across the nation was reflected in the annual Duplin County soil conservation tour which attracted more than 100 people. The tour was followed by a conservation awards program which named the Benjamin J. Fountain family the conservation farm family of the year.

The attitude toward farm land in the United States has changed drastically in the last half century.

"Slash and burn!" "Wear it out and move on!" "Cut and run!"

Fifty years ago much of the nation's farm land showed the effects of such handling. Millions of acres of fields were deeply eroded and slashed with gullies. Stream channels filled with sediment from eroded fields and trash from logging operations blocked normal drainage.

Abandoned farms with their rotting buildings attested to ruination of the fields. For more than two centuries U.S. farmers tended to plant the same crops year after year in the same fields with little concern for what happened to the land. When the land

"wore out" they moved on. There was always more cheap land to the west.

Many farms in hilly country have fences that have been built on top of buried fences on lowland fields. The earlier fences were buried under the run-off soil from eroding hillside fields. Some exceptions to the general attitude always could be found. One notable exception was in southeastern Pennsylvania, where some of the nation's most productive farms still exist, after more than two centuries of production.

In eastern Duplin County, more than 100 people were on hand as the Fountain family of the Cedar Fork community in southeastern Duplin County was named conservation farm family of the year.

A member of last year's winning family, Furnie Lee Boyette of central Duplin, accompanied the tour. Boyette, operator of a 184-acre grain, tobacco and swine farm, recently was named as one of 10 finalists in the national conservation farmer awards program under the auspices of the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation and the Dupont Corp.

Fountain's 110 acres of crop land "had a couple of eroded spots and needed repair."

"I called the Soil Con-

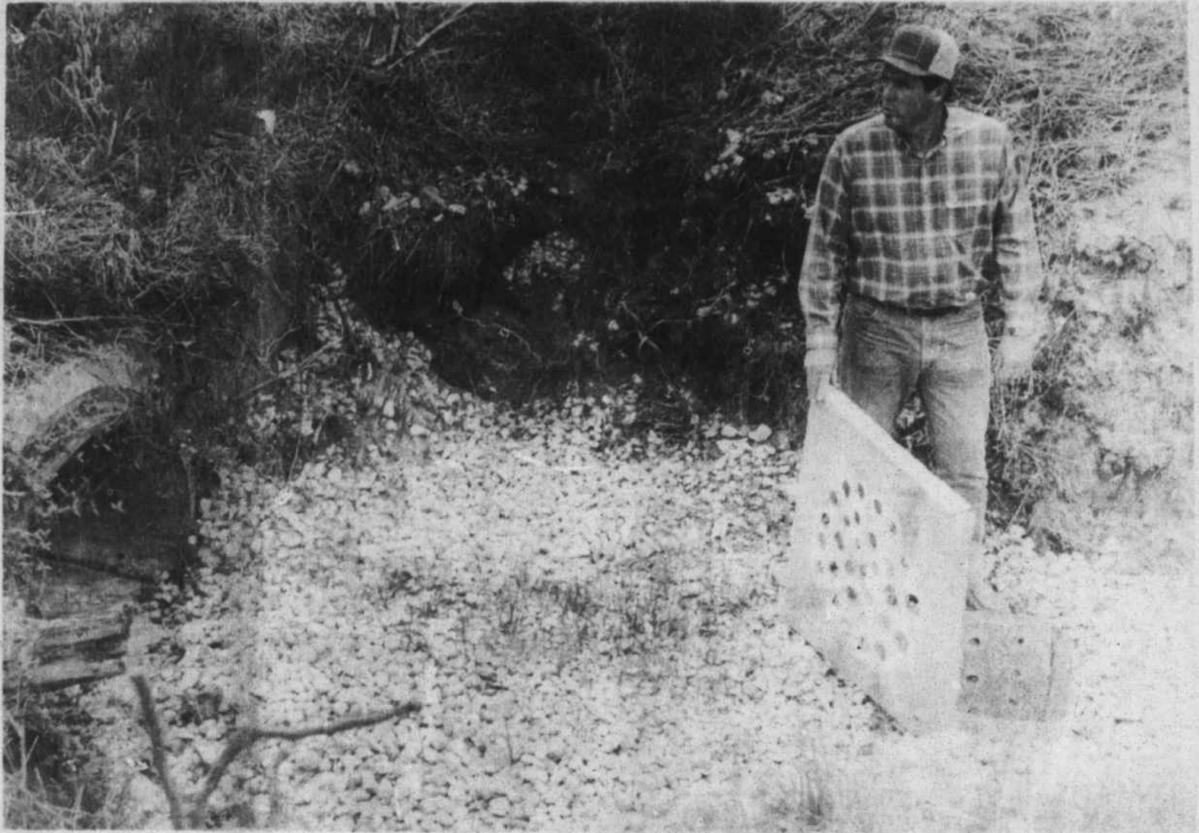
servation Service and they sent a man down to look at it," he explained when asked what prompted him to develop a conservation plan for his farm.

Fountain's rolling land surface erodes easily and the low-lying area makes drainage a problem in wet weather. His problem is typical of the region.

The conservation plan, now virtually completed, called for creation of grassed waterways to carry excess water from the land without gullying fields, creation of grassed field borders to filter sediment and chemicals from water running off fields into drainage lines and streams, tilling fields "on the contour" (around the slope instead of up and down) and use of cover crops and crop residue to hold soil in place.

Under the Agricultural Conservation Program, much of the cost of conservation measures, particularly in critical and watershed project areas, is paid by the federal government. For the Fountain farm, Kenneth Futreal, county soil and water conservation district conservationist, said the total cost will be \$13,957.41, of which the federal share will be \$9,690.17 or 69 percent.

The annual conservation tour was sponsored by the Duplin County Soil Conservation District and the United Carolina Bank.



A stop on the Duplin County soil conservation tour

## Backers Told I-40 Will Take More Time

Southeastern North Carolina's top politicians were told Wednesday night that completion of Interstate 40 to Wilmington may still be a decade away.

At a meeting at the Country Squire in Kenansville that attracted 70 supporters of the project and leaders of the N.C. Department of Transportation, U.S. Rep. Charles G. Rose III, announced that his office was told the Wilmington to Benson freeway will be finished in 10 years.

Secretary of Transportation W.R. Robertson Jr. confirmed in an interview that the DOT plans to recommend adoption of a 10-year plan for completion of I-40 at the Nov. 18 meeting of the N.C. Board of Transportation.

"We hope to be able to complete the road within that time; that is our goal," Robertson said.

Robertson said the six-year timetable sought by I-40 promoters from Southeastern North Carolina is "too short unless we get a lot more money than anticipated."

He called a payment schedule of \$12.5 million annually over 10 years for the road

"reasonable and attainable," although he would not confirm that is the annual funding amount that will be proposed.

State Highway Commissioner Billy Rose said past predictions of \$20 million per year in funding for the \$125 million project are now considered "high."

Eugene Merritt Sr., executive director of the lobbying effort called N.C. I-40 Inc., which sponsored the Wednesday meeting, discounted the dim prediction for completion of the capital-to-coast highway, however.

"I do not believe it's going to take that long (10 years) because there's too much pressure for this highway," Merritt said.

Merritt maintained the road will be funded within four to five years "or less."

There was pressure at the candlelight dinner meeting at the Country Squire restaurant to push for a fast finish on I-40.

Congressman Rose, who gave a rousing keynote speech, called for the political leaders to "get hot, stay hot and make this dream a reality." He said he would like to see the 10-year I-40 schedule discussed by the DOT "cut in half."

Lt. Gov. Jimmy Green, who said he plans to announce his gubernatorial candidacy soon, promised his support for the highway project Wednesday night.

"Until we can have an interstate from the port to the mountains, we're never going to realize the potential of our ports," Green said. He would not comment on specific funding proposals, however, saying, "Frankly, I'm not that familiar with it..."

Local government officials from along the proposed I-40 route talked over sizzling steaks with industry representatives who share their interest in finishing I-40 to the port of Wilmington.

Legislators from across the southeastern region attended, including State Sen. Harold Hardison, Rep. Harry E. Payne Jr., D-New Hanover, Rep. Murray Pool, D-Sampson, and Rep. Ed Bowen, D-Sampson.

Payne, who led the Cape Fear delegation's fight for funding I-40 in the 1983 General Assembly, said he still believes the \$20 million funding for I-40 "is not unreasonable."

"I would consider half of that... somewhat less than (reasonable)," Payne said.

## Consolidation Advice Upsets JK Panel

The James Kenan High School advisory committee objects to a state recommendation to combine James Kenan and North Duplin high schools in a new building.

Members of the committee voiced their objections during a county board of education meeting in Kenansville last week.

The board was to hold a public meeting last week at B.F. Grady School to discuss another state recommendation, the building of a school for kindergarten through sixth grade on the Grady site in northeastern Duplin County.

In early September, Duplin school officials received from the Division of

School Planning of the state Department of Education an outline of a \$10 million plan to replace school facilities and expand school services in the county.

The plan recommended, in addition to the Grady project building between Warsaw and Kenansville a high school for 650 students in grades 10-12. The school would serve the North Duplin and James Kenan attendance areas.

North Duplin is the smallest of the county's four high schools, with 285 students in grades 9-12 in the past school year.

James Kenan, which has only grades 10-12, had an enrollment of 515 last year. It is the only high school in the

county that does not include the ninth grade. Of the 181 ninth graders in its attendance area last year, 106 attended Warsaw Junior High and 75 attended E.E. Smith Junior High in Kenansville.

Committee chairman W.E. Craft of Kenansville said the plan has aroused great interest.

"There's been quite a to-do about it. We're not as much against it at this time but the board of education is not in a position to join the high schools or discuss it properly... It would mean building a new high school and we don't have money for it," Craft said.

Craft said parents in the James Kenan area want the

school built up. It needs more classrooms and a library immediately, he added. "We thought the plan was to add the ninth grade to James Kenan," he said.

Committee member Marie Riddick of Warsaw said, "All I can see is a new building, no new programs, and if that's the case no need for a new high school."

Associate Supt. Gary Sanderson said questions about programs will be answered at the board's Nov. 15 meeting. He said a member of each school advisory committee will be invited to discuss plans at the meeting. He said some of the state planning division people should be present.

Committee member Jimmy Fulford said if the ninth grade were added, the James Kenan enrollment would increase to within 75 of that of East Duplin High School and 30 of that at Wallace-Rose Hill High School.

"That would change the whole outlook of James Kenan," he emphasized. "At present, if you want the ninth grade to practice football or anything else you have to involve three principals — Warsaw, E.E. Smith and James Kenan," he said.

George Ammons, a committee member, said, "We feel James Kenan's been left behind the other high schools because of anticipation of joining the two schools."

## More Students Staying In Schools

North Carolina's public school dropout rate is down for the fifth consecutive year, state officials reported. They credited local school systems

for the decline.

"What they're doing in individual school systems must be working," said Tom I. Davis, spokesman for the

state Department of Public Instruction.

Some systems have worked to identify potential dropouts and provided coun-

seling to encourage them to remain, and have offered vocational studies and remedial work.

The dropout rate among North Carolina high school

students fell to 6.7 percent in 1982-83 from 7.3 percent in 1981-82, according to a report prepared by the State Board of Education Controller's office.

In Southeastern North Carolina, the 1982-83 rate ranged from 1.94 percent in New Hanover County to 7.7 percent in Brunswick County, the only county in the area that exceeded the state average. Columbus County tied the state average of 6.7 percent.

The Duplin County school dropout rate has a roller-coaster effect, up one year, down the next.

During the past school year 6.2 percent of 156 of 2,512 high school students dropped out of school.

During the 1981-82 school year 111 out of 2,638 high school students dropped out for a rate of 4.2 percent.

work of outstanding farmers," Barker said. Barker said 35 states participated in the program this year.

A Du Pont spokesman said soil erosion is estimated at 6 billion tons a year and there are concerns that poor management of water could lead to shortages.

Representatives of Community Funeral Home in Warsaw and Rose Hill appeared before the Town Board announcing plans to meet with the Faison Planning Board. Jeff Houston of the Warsaw Community Funeral Home explained plans to open an office in the former James Jordan home of Faison and the need to rezone the property for commercial use. Town Administrator Neil Mallory advised the town board to set a date for a rezoning public hearing

and begin advertising as required by law while the Community Funeral Homes representatives meet with the Faison Planning Board. The public hearing to rezone the property of the former James Jordan home is set for December 7 at 7:30 p.m.

The Faison Board approved the change of Parker Street to William Thornton Street. Parker Street was the road along the side of Astronaut William Thornton's home in Faison. Water sales to farmers netted the town \$654.92. Commissioner Melvin Rogers reported to the Board. A total of 163,000 gallons was sold and the Board voted to compensate Commissioner Rogers 10 percent of the collected cash from water sales to farmers. Rogers reported more than \$400 had been collected from the sale of water to farmers. The sale of water for agricultural use was supervised by Rogers.

An application for a license to open a game room was approved by the town board. Application was made by A. Ray Strickland and he informed the board the game room will be operated by Moses Strickland.

Steward Precythe was unanimously reappointed by town commissioners to serve a three-year term on the Faison ABC Board.

Notification time was cut from 30 to 10 days on mowing vacant lots in the

town by the Faison Commissioners. The change resulted from complaints by town citizens.

The board unanimously approved a \$50 Christmas bonus for the Warsaw police dispatchers. The dispatchers are used by the Faison police department throughout the year with no additional compensation for their services. Commissioner Rachel Clifton explained to the Board.

A resolution supporting I-40 was approved by the Faison Board. Final funding decisions for I-40 are scheduled to be made this month.

The probationary employment period of town public works employee Dean Norris was extended through January 4 by the Faison Commissioners.

Alan Asbury of Pittard and Perry Certified Public Accountants met with the Faison Town Board explaining the yearly audit report. The Board was informed of a 96 percent collection rate of Faison town taxes. Asbury explained the average collection rate for towns throughout the state is 90 to 93 percent.

Suggestions made by Asbury included the future alignment of expenses and revenues in the water and sewer systems. Operating expenses exceeded revenues in Faison's water and sewer department and Asbury recommended the Board begin plans to raise rates to cover costs.

## Kenansville Farmer Named Finalist In Conservation Program

A Duplin County North Carolina man was among 10 farmers named last week as finalists in a national awards program to encourage soil and water conservation.

The North Carolina finalist is Furnie Lee Boyette of Kenansville, who operates a

184-acre hog, grain and tobacco farm. His practices include a swine waste lagoon and a conservation cropping system.

Three national winners will be announced soon, possibly within 60 days, said Emmett Barker, chairman of

the National Endowment for Soil and Water Conservation. The endowment, a private, non-profit group that formed in 1982, sponsors the program.

Barker also announced that Du Pont would donate "in excess of \$100,000" to help underwrite the awards

program. He said the finalists and the three national winners would receive a monetary award.

"The awards program has been designed to help make both farmers and the general public more conscious of the importance of saving our resources by spotlighting the