

New Finance Officer Attracted By Challenges Of County Growth

BY SUSAN USHER

Wallace H. Harding, Brunswick County's new finance director, calls his move from Orange County to the fastest growing county in the state "a career advancement" and an opportunity to live in an area he likes, the coast.

It's also, he added in an interview Monday, "an opportunity to get into some new and exciting things."

Along with new challenges, the 40-year-old Wake County native gets an increase in pay from \$36,144 to \$38,098.

Orange, in the Piedmont area of the state, had, in 1980, a population of 77,065, more than twice Brunswick's 35,777 census. However, its 1981 property valuation was only slightly larger than Brunswick's, at \$1.8 million to \$1.7 million.

Orange County is basically concerned with "traditional county functions," the functions any county assumes as an arm of the state government.

But Brunswick County, because of its 13 small municipalities and rapidly urbanizing unincorporated areas, is moving beyond the traditional and into services more typically provided by municipalities, he indicated.

Not the least of these is an ambitious \$30 million county water system with a trunk line that, when completed, will run from the north to both the south and corners ends of the county. The county is aggressively working to extend service to numerous customers directly, either through extensions into subdivisions or direct tap-ons, as well as to wholesale customers such as towns



WALLACE H. HARDING
County Finance Officer

and industries.

Juggling 1985-86 budget preparations in two counties, Harding worked his last day in Orange County Friday and began work at the complex in Bolivia on Monday.

Harding said he thinks he brings to the county a "fresh set of eyes," an open-minded approach and a variety of finance-related experiences on which to draw.

In a recent Durham Morning Herald article, Orange County Manager Kenneth Thompson praised Harding's achievements during his three years there. Under Harding's leadership since March 1, 1982, he said, the county had earned the highest possible rating for financial

records, recognized by "certificates of conformance" for the past two years.

Thompson also credited Harding with streamlining county auditing procedures and establishing an aggressive investment program for the county.

Before taking the Orange County post, the Auburn University graduate worked as assistant chief of the Fiscal Management Section of the N.C. State Treasurer's Department.

In that capacity, he traveled the state providing technical assistance to local governments. Those stops included Brunswick County, about six years ago shortly after Dennis Harrison, the man Harding succeeds, had begun work as county finance officer.

Orange County, recalled Harding, was the first test of all the advice he'd given to local governments.

"I had spent five years telling them what to do. I didn't know whether I could do it."

He found he could, but in the process Harding said he "mellowed" somewhat.

"As a consultant I didn't have to familiar with the personalities and the politics."

He learned the art of compromise—at least to the extent allowed by the law and general accounting principles.

"It means being at least receptive to a request to do something," he said, to trying a different way of handling something.

On that early visit to Brunswick County, Harding said he liked the area.

"I told him to give me a call if he ever decided to leave."

"He didn't, but I found out anyway," Harding added.

So far the county has "rolled out the red carpet" for him, Harding said.

He says the staff of the finance department is its biggest asset. Har-

ding also is impressed with his employers, the county board of commissioners.

"I like them. They asked a lot of good questions," he said.

Harding said he hopes his wife and two sons, a senior and a junior in high school, will relocate to the county in June. In the meantime he'll be return-

ing to Orange County on weekends.

He also is looking around Brunswick County for a suitable home and for job opportunities for his wife, a certified public accountant presently employed as associate director of operations analysis at N.C. Memorial Hospital in Chapel Hill.

Shallotte Middle Lists Honor Students

Shallotte Middle School recently announced the students who have earned academic recognition for the fourth six weeks' grading period. Students on the principal's list earned all As for the six weeks, while students on the honor roll earned no less than a B.

Fourth Grade
A honor roll—Amy Calson, Robin Campbell, Robin Hewitt, Heather Horne, Sean Hughes, Irene Johnson, Susan Kirby and Tara Somerset.
B honor roll—Adam Abbott, Keane Bellamy, Jason Booth, Lauren Boyce, Aaron Butler, Geoffrey Byrd, Elizabeth Calson, Renee Clark, Kim Clemmons, Patricia Clemmons, April Cumber, Christy Dwyton, Marty Earwood, Amanda Eakin, Kelly Edwards, Michael Fowler, Julie Anna Gallaway, Norris Gause, Emily Gore, Scott Gore, Willie Gore.

Also, Yates Gupton, Keith Holden, Laurel Keese, Scott Lewis, Ashley Marshall, Cathryn Mintz, Wendie Moore, Darrilyn Morgan, Kristina Poulos, Caroline Roberts, Mary Miller Russ, Natasha Scott, Terry Stanley, Jenny Jo Stout and Hope Varnam.

Fifth Grade
A honor roll—Jeffrey Babin, Kim Baxley, Damaris Bettinger, Caroline Carlisle, Leah Cheers, Pamela Deirie, Ebony Grissett, Jacob Hagg, Hamilton Lee, Lori McLamb, Tikhia Morgan, Chris Smith and Kevin Williamson.
B honor roll—Mark Aubrey, Sonja Baines, Ginger Bland, Bridget Briles, Matthew Roseman, Alvin Burney, Cleon Butler, Tony Calson, Barry Chadwick, Tracy Clemmons, Amy Cooper, Jody Dale, LaGrant Evans, Tara Evans, Cheryl Gore, Amber Grissett, Pamela Grissett, Martha Hewitt, April Hill, Bridget Hill, Latonia Hill, Tarshill Hill.

Also, Heather Hughes, Gina Hutchens, David Ingle, Lloyd Jackson, Elbert Johnson, Aldwin Lance, Tracey Kirby, Sony Leggett, Tammy Marlow, Wanda Morgan, Terry Szwara, Becky Oxendine, Renee Pickett, Ben Robinson, Jessica Robinson, Elizabeth Robertson, Daniel Russ, Meg Small, Eric Smith, Dawn Smith, Penny Todd, Donnie Warren and Sarah Williamson.

Sixth Grade
A honor roll—Kelvin Barnes, Chris Bland, Chris Byrd, Perry Culppepper, Eliza Herndon, Rita Holmes, Chris Phelps, Jennifer Russ, Tonia Trest and Jessica Turner.

B honor roll—Matt Abbott, Kerri Barbee, Cedrick Bates, Heather Holick, Bobby Bonwith, LaTanya Brannon, Rebecca Huffkin, Marshaeco Burney, Wendell Cheers, Wesley Chestnut, Timmy Clemmons, Kim Dixon, Mary Earwood, Amy Edge, Alex Gore, Erika Farr, Allen Hewitt, Robin Hewitt, Victoria Hill.

Also, Shane Holden, Richard Lancaster, Jennifer Long, Michael Nelson, Amy Nichols, Jensen Norris, Regina Norton, Michelle Robinson, Marcia Seagle, Michelle Sellers, Stacy Shaw, Cindy Shipper, Chad Sivee, Joe Smith, LaTonya Smith, Karen Stannaland, Delena Stout, Maria Todd, Christa Tompkins, Melissa Ward, Sandy Ward and Dorely Yandke.

Seventh Grade
A honor roll—Kelly Baxley and Stephen Lancaster.

B honor roll—Tania Butler, Robin Calson, Lori Gore, Raymond Howard, Nichole Johnson, Kristi

Lewis, Louisa Lewis, John Malpass, Sherry Nichols, Elizabeth Thomas, Amy Williams, Tiffany Ready and Tammy Williamson.

Eighth Grade
A honor roll—Kristen Boyles, Kelly Ward and Jennifer Vow.

B honor roll—Eric Branson, LaFaye Bryant, Angie Clemmons, Jeremy Danford, Robert Faircloth, Craig Fogle, DeDee Gause, Marcella Gause, Alicia Gore, LaShonda Grissett, Bryan Hewitt, Larry Hewitt, Jessica Horne, Tina Jefferson, Eric Kirby, Betty Knies, Mike Marshall, Kathy McMullen, Charlene Moore, Elizabeth Stummon, Penny Stummon, Kelly Stannaland, Becky Stanley, Sallie Stohler and Patricia Tippet.

Ninth Grade
A honor roll—Stuart Carter, John Austin Hewitt, LaShanda Jenrette, Terri Jenrette, Robin Leonard, Terri Moore and Teresa Smith.

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