Money, Material Available For Artificial Reef Program

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County stands at the head of the line to reap the benefits of a double boost to the state's artificial reef program announced this week, local fishing interests are predicting.

Monday evening in Raleigh, Gov. James Martin and R.D. Sanborn, president of Seaboard System Railroad, announced the donation of 200 boxcars to the state for use as artificial reefs. The announcement was made at a dinner at McKimmon Center for that purpose.

"The boxcars are available immediately," said Roy Carden, spokesman for the N.C. Department of Natural Resources and Communi-ty Development. "We just don't have the money to put them in the ocean."

But that problem was solved Tuesday, said Rep. David Redwine. A bill appropriating \$300,000 to the state's reef program in the Division of Marine Fisheries cleared the House after earlier passing the Senate.

Those were some of the final pieces to a puzzle local sports fishermen had been working on for months.

A few days earlier the Brunswick County Fishing Club received permits from the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to create six new reefs at distances from 3.2 miles to 18 miles offshore.

The permits will eventually be transferred to the Long Bay Artificial Reef Association, a non-profit organization created by the Brunswick County and Oak Island Fishing Clubs and Brunswick Bay Reef Restoration Inc.

"Everybody's in pretty much agreement the first drops should be off Brunswick County since we don't have any active reefs," said Bill night.

English, a director of Brunswick Bay Reef Restoration Inc., a fishing club in the south end of the county.

Redwine said Jim Brown, the Marine Fisheries employee who coordinates the reef program, had told him Brunswick County is in "good shape" to qualify for the first of the drops.

"We've got the need because we don't have any reefs, we have an active group that has permits in hand. It's a matter of getting it through the bureaucracy and getting everything together."

Carden said the boxcars require little, if any, modification for use as artificial reefs. The wheels must be taken off.

The state plans to ask the U.S. Marine Corps for its cooperation in using heavy freight helicopters to make some of the drops, Carden said. If so those boxcars would be cut in half.

Others will be transported by rail as close to the drop sites as possible. Carden wasn't aware the Brunswick County Fishing Club had permits for six new reefs.

"To our knowledge no permits have been issued for new reefs yet," he said. "But we're in a position to add to some reefs we already have in place."

Seaboard has not committed to donating additional boxcars, but Carden said the state is hopeful that additional cars will be available from Seaboard and perhaps other railroads as they wear out and are discarded.

English and his wife were among the local fishing enthusiasts who attended the dinner in Raleigh Monday

Others included Mr. and Mrs. Dale McDowell of Bolivia and several other members of the Brunswick County Fishing Club, Junior and Allison Hughes of Shallotte Point, Mr and Mrs. Bill Price of Ocean Isle Beach, Mr. and Mrs. Leslie Tubb of Long Beach, Rep. David Redwine and Brunswick County Commissioner Jim Poole.

McDowell is secretary and former reef committee chairman of the Brunswick County Fishing Club, which created the first artificial reef in the state off Lockwood Folly Inlet in 1971. The last material was dropped on the reef in 1974. It and two other reefs off the county coastline-one near Yaupon Beach and another shared with South Carolina, are now inactive.

Lack of funds to make the drops and lack of suitable material had been pointed to as the major obstacles to establishing a county reef program.

But for now, said Redwine, "it looks like we're in good shape.

Efforts to develop a chain of reefs offshore of Brunswick County have received aid from numerous sources. Redwine has included \$3,500 in his 'pork barrel'" appropriations for the

project, the county has donated \$25,000, and several towns across the county also have contributed.

Also, Pfizer Chemicals Inc. has donated two boilers that will be dropped offshore to improve the existing reefs.



Unexpected Visit

Residents of the R.H. Holden subdivision at Holden Beach were awakened last Tuesday morning to the site of a large showboat staring through their windows. The barge and "Mike R" tug ran aground in the Intracoastal Waterway just south of the Holden Beach

front seat at tonight's (Thursday)

meeting of the Holden Beach Com-

munity Watch at 7:30 p.m. in the

Endangered species project leader

Melinda Welton with the N.C.

Wildlife Resources Commission, will

present a slide program on the con-

Shallotte Lumber's

town hall.

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Damage was minimal at both bridges and the barge was pulled from its resting spot Thursday. The "Mike R" is owned by Circle R Marina in Morgan City, La.

bridge, after previously striking both the Sunset Reach

and Ocean Isle Beach bridges late Monday afternoon.

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Turtle Talk On Agenda At Holden Beach The loggerhead sea turtle will take

along the N.C. coast.

Ms. Welton, a 1979 graduate of the University of Connecticut, has worked with endangered species projects along the east coast in Connecticut, New Jersey and Florida

It is estimated as many as 700 nests will be found this summer along the N.C. coast by the time nesting ends in servation of loggerhead sea turtles early August. To date, three nests

have been found on Holden Beach, the most southern community participating in the program.

STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPI

The conservation program is financed primarily by those N.C. residents who contributed on their N.C. Income Tax returns to the Nongame and Endangered Species Fund. Tonight's program is open to everyone.

Tax-Reduction Package Before Assembly

Some bills stalled and others sped liable for damage their erosionforward last week as the General Assembly moved toward a mid-July closing.

On this week's agenda were consideration of a large tax cut package and a bill that would repeal the property tax and replace it with a higher sales tax.

The tax cut compromise bill would cut taxes by about \$123 million in fiscal 1986-87. It would phase out about one-third of the inventory tax and about one-third of the intangibles tax,, exempting money on depost and on hand, along with short-term cash balances held by stock and bond brokerage firms. It would eliminate about 96 pecent of inheritance tax returns and cut the income tax for low and moderate income persons.

Three votes, on separate days, are required for adoption of the package, which Gov. James Martin has asserted doesn't go far enough in providing tax relief.

However, Rep. David Redwine, in his weekly report, said he believes it is a "very responsible approach" that will provide funds for economic growth and education.

He also said he has received summer 1986 sessin. us calls about the proposal to

control devices cause to adjacent property. Though it received the committee's approval a week earlier, Soles agreed to hold the bill in committee after several senators voiced concerns that property owners would be restricted from protecting their own property. The bill had already gained approval from the House.

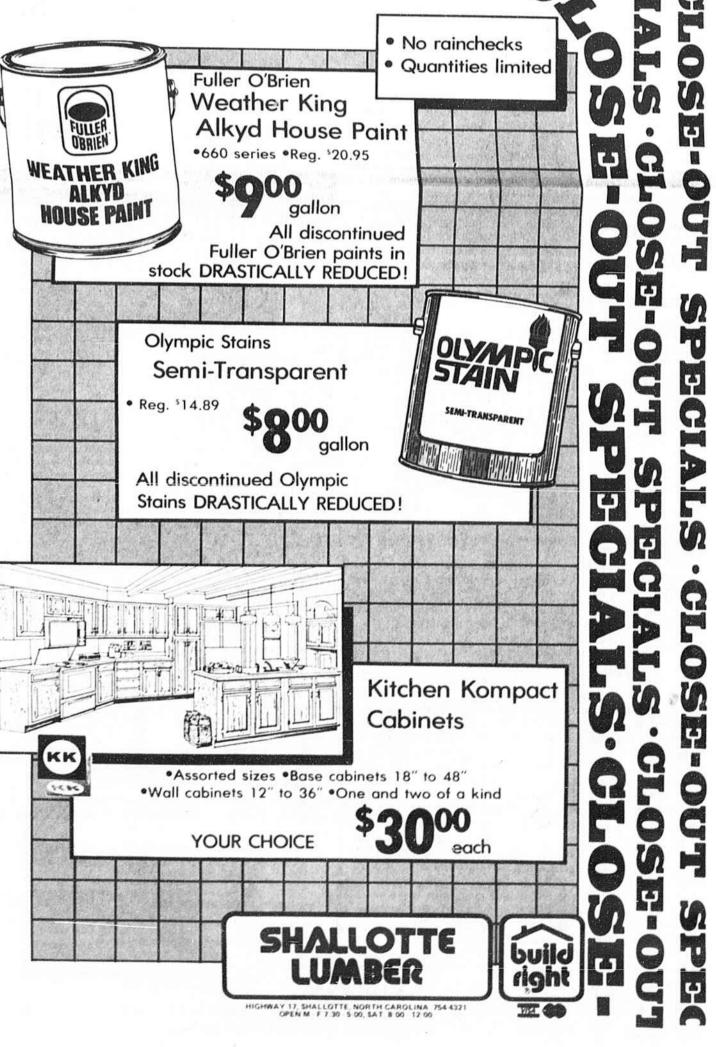
adopted a bill that would allow lowincome telephone customers to save \$1 a month on their bill by not paying the new long distance access charge. An addendum would allow local telephone companies a tax credit for the difference between the amount they would have collected without the exemption, and the amount actually billed low-income customers.

would determine the eligibility requirements for low-income status.

A House-approved bill that would strengthen the existing Open Meetings law by providing penalties for violations has been held up in the Senate Judiciary I Committee and isn't expected to be acted on until the

In action last week, the House

The State Utilities Commission



replace the property tax with an eight-percent sales tax. The bill's sponsor has asked the bill not be considered this session, but made the object of a blue ribbon sudy panel.

"I agree with this position," said Redwine, 'and I have maintained from the beginning that we need to study this interesting proposal."

By some estimates, Brunswick and New Hanover counties would lose millions of dollars in revenue under the proposal, but a majority of counties would experience gains in revenue.

Meanwhile, a bill affecting coastal property owners remains held up in the Senate Judiciary IV Committee chaired by Sen. R.C. Soles Jr. of Tabor City

The so-called "seawall bill," would make oceanfront property owners

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The bill passed the House on a 94-14 vote, with Rep. Redwine voting in favor.

"I supported this bill because we do need to insure as best we can an open government."

The bill, introduced by Rep. George W. Miller Jr. of Durham, would allow the courts to void actions taken in illegal secret meetings and would allow participants in such meetings to be fined all or a part of the court costs, attorney fees incurred by both parties and a civil penalty, the total not to exceed \$500. Opponents have claimed the bill would discourage good candidates from seeking public office.

The Open Meetings law provides 19 reasons for boards governing public agencies to conduct business behind closed doors, but doesn't penalize those who violate the law

