



ASCS Director Appointed

A new county Agricultural and Soil Conservation Service executive director began work June 16.

Kettrell Strickland is the first full-time permanent director the agency has had in approximately 4 1/2 years.

He fills the position formerly held by the late Ralph Price of Shallotte. Ada Varnum had served as acting director for 2 1/2 years. Prior to that, because of ill health, Price had worked part-time for two years before his retirement.

The new executive director describes himself as a "farm boy from Solemburg." He and his wife, the former Lisa Benton of Sampson County, are living at Holden Beach.

Rearred on a family farm in Sampson County, Strickland, 25, earned an associate of arts degree in field crops technology from N.C. State University in 1982. Prior to joining ASCS in December 1985, he worked on the family farm.

"I fully intended to farm," he said, but then opted for a change of career after several years back on the farm and an accident involving a combine in which he lost a hand.

"I wanted to establish a career," he added, "but I also wanted to continue to work with farmers. They're a unique group."

This is his first appointment following completion of a six months ASCS training program that took him to various counties across the state.

As head of the county office, Strickland works under the direction of county ASCS committee members Carl H. Holden, W. Elon King and Robert E. Smith, implementing farm programs established by the U.S. Department of Agriculture and overseeing day-to-day operation of the ASCS office.

Farm programs are currently going through some rapid changes, he said, and times have also been hard

for farmers. Price support for participating farmers is probably the most important of the ASCS programs to the farmer right now, he added.

Strickland also administers the tobacco program; an emergency feed assistance program that provides feed at reduced cost in the event of a disaster that cuts off normal supply; and various conservation programs aimed at reducing soil loss to wind and water erosion, preserving wetlands and improving water quality.

The office is located in the Agriculture Building at the Brunswick County Government Center in Bolivia.

While new at the job and with much to learn, Strickland said local farmers he's met have been very supportive and seem to understand.

His attitude may have something to do with his acceptance.

"Service to farmers is what we provide," said Strickland. "My highest priority is serving the farmers of Brunswick County."

BRUNSWICK COUNTY'S ASCS office has a permanent, full-time executive director for the first time in nearly five years. Above, Director Kettrell Strickland goes over the county's only peanut allocation with Ada Varnum, who was acting director the past 2 1/2 years.

Rescue Squad Sells Shrimp

Town Creek Volunteer Rescue Squad will serve fried shrimp dinners beginning at 11 a.m. Saturday, July 19, at the squad building, said Laura Coulter, secretary.

In addition to shrimp, the menu will feature coleslaw, potato salad

and hushpuppies. Plates are \$3 each. A bake sale is also planned.

Proceeds are used to support operation of the rescue squad.

The squad building is located on U.S. 17 at its intersection with N.C. 87 South of Winnabow.

County Medicaid Said Error-Free

Brunswick County is among 73 counties whose social services departments are sharing the credit for helping improve the state's administration of its federal Medicaid program.

The state was recently cited by the U.S. Department of Health and Human Services for reducing errors in its Medicaid program. During the period of April-September 1985, only 1.4 percent of the payments for those eligible were made in error. This is below the national tolerance level for error of three percent for the same period.

Brunswick was one of 73 counties that had no reported errors during the period, a record success rate, according to Barbara D. Matula, state Medicaid director. County social services departments determine the eligibility of individuals for Medicaid services.

Medicaid provides health care to low-income elderly, disabled and blind citizens, or to families with dependent children. The program is financed by a combination of federal, state and county funds.

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