

# COG Tour Brings Area Leaders To Brunswick

**BY SUSAN USHER**  
A group of 25 local government officials from across the Cape Fear region took a combination visual-verbal tour of Brunswick County last week, with an emphasis on the impact of water and tourism.

Michael deSherbinin, executive director of the county's Resources Development Commission told the group that tourism and retirement are key factors in the county's rapid growth, while completion of a countywide water system will help the county keep pace with that growth and related economic developments.

Brunswick County is the second fastest-growing county in the state behind Dare, with an average annual growth of 7.5 percent, deSherbinin said.

"A lot of things came together for the county in the mid-70s," he said, including location of several major industries here. The county water system was initially developed to serve Pfizer Chemicals Inc., and has since been expanded with \$37 million in general obligation bonds approved in what deSherbinin termed the largest such bond referendum in the state's history. Now undergoing testing and due to go into operation sometime this month is a new 24 mgd surface water treatment plant.

"Water is critical to our development," deSherbinin noted, including development of the county's industrial park in Northwest Township, where over \$2 million in improvements are underway with the help of a federal grant.

Because of the tourist season, he noted, water and other utility ser-

VICES must be built to service a clientele much larger than the county's permanent population. During the season, the county population doubles beyond its usual 50,000-plus, and on the peak day of the year can triple.

He was speaking to the group in the county commissioners' chambers at the Brunswick County Government Center. While local tax dollars financed water system improvements, deSherbinin noted that no local funds have been used to date to develop the 163-acre complex. A master plan calls for expansion of office and storage space in the near future, another indicator of county growth.

Tourism has also spurred another type of development. deSherbinin said the county has 10 golf courses in play now and at least six more that should be completed within the next two years, information that prompted gasps from several in the group.

Major, self-contained companies spurred the county's initial industrial

development, he said, with CP&L, Pfizer Chemicals, Dupont and soon Cogentrix the "four backbones of the county." They paid 70 percent of all county taxes last year.

Yet, according to deSherbinin, projects of that size come along about once every 10 years. The Resources Development is instead expecting the county's future development to rely more heavily on smaller businesses that would locate in an industrial park with an existing infrastructure.

The county also sees an increasing number of demand for service jobs as agriculture and commercial fishing dwindle in economic importance in the county and manufacturing and tourism steadily increase, he noted. Last year tourism was a \$100 million business for the county.

But water will help the county develop a competitive edge in seeking added industry, he said, noting, "We have to base our future on developing manufacturing and promoting tourism."

# Sunset ABC Board Wants To Build Self-Service Store

**BY ETTA SMITH**  
The manager of Sunset Beach's ABC store thinks he can make more money to donate to the community if the store can stop giving it money for awhile.

Manager James R. Brosius said the Sunset Beach Alcoholic Beverage Control Board, which operates the store, has requested that the Brunswick County Board of Education, the Sunset Beach Town Council and the Shallotte Volunteer Rescue Squad allow the board to discontinue state-mandated quarterly distributions long enough to save money to build a bigger, self-service store.

He estimates it would take two years to save the \$25,000 needed for the project. Last year the store earned profits of \$12,483, but paid out \$9,000 in contributions.

The Brunswick County Board of Education has already refused his request, while the Sunset Beach Council voted Monday to meet with the town's Alcoholic Beverage Control board on the matter.

Brosius said Shallotte Rescue Squad Chief Janice Hargis told him the squad is willing to waive its contributions, a commitment he must get in writing before stopping

payments.

Brosius said the Sunset Beach ABC Board wants to build a cinder block self-service store on the property where the existing store stands, setting it farther back on the lot to provide more parking area.

Brosius contends a self-service store would make more profit, and he'd subsequently be able to contribute more to those recipients.

"We are just asking that we be allowed to discontinue the quarterly payments long enough to raise the money," said Brosius. "A self-service store could net 15 percent more profits than the conventional type," he said.

When the Shallotte ABC store changed to self-service, its profits increased, he said, because people buy more if they can browse. In his store all of the merchandise is kept behind the counter and a cashier takes the order from customers.

He added that five cents of every bottle he sells goes to the contributions. So he figures that being able to sell more would allow him to pay the boards back the money they missed in contributions.

The store is located on the Sunset Beach causeway.

# Relay Areas Give 'Good' Week's Work To Oystermen

**BY SUSAN USHER**  
Hand-relaying of thousands of oysters began paying off a second time on Jan. 27, when local shellfishermen began harvesting oysters planted last spring.

"There are right many of them out there," said Larry Holden, owner of Holden's Seafood at Shallotte Point,

as the areas opened the first day.

However, there would have been more oystermen out last Tuesday had it not been for the weather, said Marlene Varnam. She and her husband Carson run an oyster house at Varnamtown.

A sprinkling of snow was on the

ground and temperatures were in the low 30s when the boatmen—and women—left the docks.

"It was too cold," she said. "A few went out, but not like there would be in good weather."

The added supply of local oysters wasn't expected to affect prices. Holden and other wholesalers were paying \$10 per bushel, the basic price for the season. On the retail market, the oysters resold for \$13 to \$14 a bushel.

bushels were planted in the Shallotte River and another 1,450 bushels in a new relay area in the Ocean Isle-Sunset Beach area: Old Channel, Still Creek and the Eastern Channel.

For local fishermen, 1986 was the third year of the hand-relay program.

Holden said he was pleased all the areas were opened at once by the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries.

"If they had only opened one, everybody would have crowded in there at once," he said. "This way everybody kind of stays in their own backyard and it gives everybody a good week's work."

But then, he predicted, local oysters will once again become a scarce commodity.

# Five People Injured In Two-Car Accident

A Southport woman has been charged with driving left of the center line and failing to wear a seat belt following an accident in which she and four others were injured.

Louise Mitchum, 26, was charged Jan. 28 after a vehicle she was driving collided with a car driven by Mark O'Brian Inman, 19, of Southport. The accident occurred at 5:20 p.m. about a mile north of Southport on N.C. 87.

According to the N.C. Highway Patrol report, Mitchum's 1975 Jeep crossed the center line, ran off the left shoulder of the road, and then came back on the roadway and collided with Inman's 1987 GMC truck.

Mitchum; Karen Sellers, 16, of

Bolling Spring Lakes; Jason Bennett, nine, of North Myrtle Beach, S.C.; and Melissa Hynes, 7, of Southport, were taken to Dasher Memorial Hospital in Southport following the accident. Mitchum, Sellers and Bennett were all listed in serious condition at the hospital, according to the report.

The report said Inman was also injured and taken to the hospital.

# Holden Beach Can't Stop Gun Shop From Opening

**BY ETTA SMITH**  
When the Holden Beach Planning and Zoning Board recommended some changes in the town's zoning ordinances last June, its members never thought to include prohibiting gun shops.

And now the town can't prevent two Holden Beach police officers from opening one in about three weeks, according to a member of the planning and zoning board.

Board Member Sid Swarts said commissioners never took action on the board's recommendations. But if they had, it wouldn't have prevented the proposed shop from opening because the list of businesses restricted didn't include gun shops.

Opposition to the shop's opening surfaced after George Adkins and Jeff Williams were issued a town permit two weeks ago. The two said they plan to open the shop in about three weeks, regardless of the opposition.

Swarts said, "We never even considered restricting that type of business on the beach. It never occurred to us that anyone would consider opening one."

Word of the store's opening prompted resident Connie Boyte to circulate a petition that she hopes will show how many residents are opposed to the permit being issued.

She said the petition reads, "We are opposed to issuance of the permit because it's not in the best interest of Holden Beach. We feel it's in violation of the spirit and intent of the zoning ordinances and was probably an oversight when the ordinance was adopted."

Boyte said she passed out a couple of the petitions last week, and she isn't sure how many signatures have been collected.

"I just don't think Holden Beach is the place for this type of business,"

she said. She added that the petition is not an attempt to discourage free enterprise.

Swarts said the changes recommended to commissioners last June would have prohibited gasoline stations, theaters, bowling alleys, pool halls, cab stands, dry cleaning and laundry, and printing establishments on the island had they been approved.

He said that if the town wants to prevent certain types of businesses from opening it needs to pass an ordinance that says that.

He added that he wouldn't make any kind of decision regarding whether a certain type of business should be restricted without hearing the arguments of everyone involved.

Planning Board Chairman Alan Holden said, "It's ironic that town ordinances won't allow you to have guns on Holden Beach, but you can sell them."

Adkins said he and Williams plan to open the store in the old Holden Beach Realty office located on Jordan Boulevard. The area is zoned for commercial establishments.

He added that he was unaware anyone was opposed to it until he read an article in The Brunswick Beacon last week. He and Williams decided to open the establishment because there are a lot of sportsmen in the area and no place to buy hunting and shooting supplies, he said.

He said the store will sell handguns, rifles and shotguns, ammunition and shooting supplies. They will also repair guns. Adkins said all guns in stock will be stored nightly in a vault.

"We have all the federal, state and local licenses needed to open," he continued. "And as far as we have been able to determine it's a legitimate business."

# McNeil To Speak

Dr. John McNeil of the Columbus County Historical Society will speak at the Feb. 9 meeting of the Brunswick County Historical Society.

The meeting will be held at 7:30 p.m. in the fellowship hall of Shallotte Presbyterian Church, Sellers Drive.

The public is invited, a news release indicated.

# Correction

Keith D. Inman of Shallotte was incorrectly identified as Delno Inman on page 9-B in the Jan. 29 issue of The Brunswick Beacon.

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