

Labor Commissioner Candidate Gets Off To A Running Start

BY TERRY POPE

When Bob Bingham of Boone says he is "running for office," he uses the phrase quite literally.

Bingham and his family were at Ocean Isle Beach last week where the businessman took time off from a summer vacation to officially open his campaign for commissioner of labor.

He kicked off his campaign last Tuesday morning by running five miles on the beach strand.

"It's a symbolism of energy," said Bingham, who plans to run five miles in each of North Carolina's 100 counties while on the campaign trail.

Bingham left Brunswick County last Wednesday to prepare for another five-mile run in Whiteville.

The candidate owns a real estate company and restaurant in Boone, where he is also vice-chairman of the Watauga County School Board. He is also a past president of the N.C. Young Democrats Club and currently serves as vice-chairman of the N.C. Human Relations Council.

Using a campaign slogan of "School 'n (sic) Skills For Better Jobs," Bingham said he will focus on the need to prepare the state's growing work force for the 1990s.

"One great big thing that's being neglected is the education of our work force," Bingham said. He added that North Carolina is facing an influx of high-tech jobs, but is falling behind in training and preparing the growing work force for such technical jobs.

Of the 11 major functions of the Department of Labor, Bingham said the most important is overseeing the apprenticeship and training programs. He would also like to see vocational education programs stepped up in both the public schools and community colleges.

His only opponent now is incumbent Commissioner John C. Brooks.

Bingham said most people know very little about the Department of Labor or what its functions are.

"I'd like to do some things that will let people know what the department is responsible for," he said.

The department is responsible for enforcing the wage and hour laws, overseeing apprenticeship and in-house training programs and inspecting elevators, amusement rides, boilers and pressure vessels. It also works with communities to upgrade employee skills through the Jobs Partnership Training Act.



BOB BINGHAM and his wife, Elaine, were at Ocean Isle last week, where the candidate for State Commissioner of Labor officially opened his campaign.

Tobacco Markets Open With Growing Optimism

Brunswick County tobacco farmers came home in good spirits last week from Whiteville, Chadbourne, and Tabor City, where their first tobacco harvests were exchanged for bigger checks than last year.

The 1987 flue-cured tobacco marketing season opened July 28 in some states to the south, but Aug. 4 was opening day for the border belt that includes parts of North and South Carolina.

North Carolina markets include Chadbourne, Tabor City, Whiteville, Lumberton, Fairmont, Clarkton and Fair Bluff.

Many county farmers take their leaf to Whiteville. Wadus Jones of Ash was there opening day and said he sold 7,000 pounds for \$10,000, an average of \$1.43 per pound.

"I didn't think it was fantastic," he said. "Last year I got as much as \$1.40, but I sold a lot for 90 cents, too. We really need \$2 a pound to make any money."

Jones noted the cost of leasing land, hiring help, and buying fertilizer, herbicides and other supplies, was increasingly high.

"Tobacco is better this year than last," he added.

Jeremy King, son of Lyle King, also of Ash, said he went to market with his dad and they felt prices were better this year.

"The Japanese boycott of the Georgia crop helped," he said, "and crops are short everywhere, but north of us they're shorter than ours, so that helped, too."

Good news across the border belt was confirmed by statistics from the Tobacco Market News in Raleigh.

Ed French said over the first eight sales days the average price was \$1.4259 per hundred, with 17.8 million

pounds sold and only 0.5% going to stabilization.

"At the same time last year, the average price was \$1.2748 per hundred, and 13.4 million pounds were sold," he said. "Five percent went into stabilization in 1986," he added.

Conditions generally were looking up this year, according to *The 1987 Tobacco Edition*. The decline in the value of the U.S. dollar has caused domestically grown tobacco to become more affordable for foreign buyers than in previous years.

The average price was \$138.71 per hundred on the Aug. 4 opening of the border belt markets, about \$14.01 per hundred above last year's opening.

Some domestic cigarette companies have revised their policies toward foreign leaf during the past year, being more inclined to buy in America.

Frank Resnik, president of Philip Morris, told tobacco farmers the company's expanded commitment to American tobacco will result in increased purchases of 30 million pounds in 1987.

Philip Morris supported passage of the Tobacco Improvement Act of 1986.

However, the tobacco program is somewhat threatened by the recent publicity concerning the possible use of non-approved pesticides in the production of domestically grown tobacco.

The reported use of such chemicals as dicamba, 2,4-D, and several insecticides in this country have caused concern.

Nevertheless, the 1987 tobacco crop has the potential for being one of the best marketing seasons in recent history, says *The 1987 Tobacco Edition*.

Systems 'Go' On Calabash Water And Charter

BY MARJORIE MEGIVERN

After lengthy discussions on one of them, the Calabash town council approved two resolutions Monday, proceeding with the first phase of a water system and seeking a change in the town charter to allow staggered terms for council members.

The council agreed several months ago to begin a water system with a line up River Road, where several restaurants are located. A number of citizens attended a town meeting, protesting the assessments of property owners on that road that would precede construction.

Nevertheless, the council asked Jerry Lewis and Associates of Shallotte to make a proposal for as much water line as could be built for \$30,000, the amount the town has in savings for the project.

Action to approve a resolution to levy assessments came reluctantly, as Council Members Suzi Moore and Robert Weber expressed concern over public antagonism to the project.

"What if we build the first phase and nobody else wants water?" asked Moore at Monday's meeting.

"What if they won't pay?" Weber wondered. "The whole system will cost \$150,000, and where would we get the money?"

Council Member Pati Lewellyn

noted, "Several people have talked to me about the water project and they all wanted it yesterday."

Moore said, "You just know about half the people on River Road wouldn't pay the assessment. You might as well start the paper work on them now."

But Town Attorney Mike Ramos spoke persuasively of the need to stand firm. "I suggest you go ahead and send a letter to the property owners, along with a copy of the resolution, and have a public hearing, instead of having people come in here squawking about it," he said.

"Public officials have to consider the long-term benefits of the system, even if the people don't think they want it now," he went on. "You have a civic responsibility to shove this

thing down their throats, if you honestly think it's in the town's best interests."

The council then voted to authorize Lewis to make preliminary drawings, send informative letters to property owners, and continue with the original plan to hold a referendum on the subject.

"If the referendum passes, you can do the whole project at once," Ramos advised.

A special meeting will be called soon with Lewis to determine the cost of the first phase of the system.

In voting to pass a resolution of intent to change the town charter, council members began a process that will involve a public hearing on Sept. 14. Notice of the hearing must be published by Sept. 5.

The change, as presented by Ramos, would take effect with the 1989 election of council members,

and would allow for electing three members to serve two years and two members to four-year terms.

The three candidates with the least number of votes would fill the two-year positions. The top two vote-getters would serve four years, as would the mayor. Elections would be held every two years.

In other business the council:

- Hired Terry Willetts fulltime as electrical inspector;
- Denied a variance requested by Virginia Pittman to place a mobile home on a lot already occupied by her home, because of zoning regulations and the age of the mobile home;
- Requested Ramos to investigate a variance request by the Eiks organization to meet in a building inside the city limits, which is contrary to zoning regulations;
- Authorized Town Clerk Janet Thomas to purchase three stop signs.

Class To Dispel Fears About Math

Afraid of math?

A series of six classes offered by Brunswick Technical College will help mathphobics overcome their fears.

Nancy Davis and Paula Devine are instructors for the class, which began with registration on Aug. 10 at the college's Southport Annex. It meets Mondays and Wednesdays through Aug. 26.

Adults may select a 3 p.m. to 5 p.m. schedule or a 7 p.m. to 9 p.m. slot. A \$15 registration fee is charged.

During the course, needs of individual class members will be identified. An understanding of why humans avoid change, fear change and can successfully bring about change will be discussed, along with the importance of planning and reaching goals.

More information is available from the college's continuing education department in Southport.

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