

County Property Valuation Tops \$4 Billion

BY RAHN ADAMS
For the first time ever, property in Brunswick County was worth more than \$4 billion, jumping \$134 million in the past year, according to county tax officials.

The county's total valuation for 1988 is \$4,012,381,682, up from \$3,878,181,449 in 1987.

That rise—combined with last year's four-cent property tax rate hike—reflected a \$2,479,678.45 in-

crease in the county's 1988 tax levy to \$22,064,561.71. The tax rate is 54½ cents per \$100 valuation.

Carolina Power & Light Co. again was the largest taxpayer in Brunswick County, accounting for more than one-fifth of the county's tax base.

CP&L's property, which includes the Brunswick Nuclear Project near Southport, was valued at \$893.5 million in 1988—up \$25.1 million from

the previous year. The company's 1988 property taxes rose about 11 percent to more than \$4.69 million.

The 1988 "Top 10" taxpayers' list also included, in order, N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency (NCEM-PA), E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co., Pfizer Inc., Cogentrix, Bald Head Island Inc., local developer Odell Williamson of Ocean Isle Beach, Federal Paper Board Co., International Paper Co., and Brunswick

Electric Membership Corp. (BEMC).

The 10 largest taxpayers accounted for more than \$1.4 billion or about 36 percent of the local tax base, and more than \$8.4 million or about 38 percent of the county's tax revenue.

The Top 10 list included two notable changes from 1987. NCEM-PA, a cooperative of towns that own interest in the Brunswick Nuclear

10 Largest Taxpayers For '88

PROPERTY OWNER	VALUATION	TAX AMT.
Carolina Power & Light Co.	\$803,590,056	\$4,694,783.93
N.C. Eastern Municipal Power Agency	231,173,320	1,352,363.92
E.I. du Pont de Nemours & Co.	213,098,639	1,161,387.58
Pfizer Inc.	50,447,364	295,117.08
Cogentrix	43,748,642	255,929.55
Bald Head Island Inc.	24,846,841	145,354.10
Odell Williamson	26,279,722	143,225.29
Federal Paper Board Co.	24,627,920	134,235.82
International Paper Co.	24,286,840	132,363.30
Brunswick Electric Membership Corp.	22,702,636	124,564.36

SOURCE: BRUNSWICK COUNTY TAX ADMINISTRATION OFFICE

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Bolivia Woman County's First Traffic Fatality

A Bolivia area woman became Brunswick County's first traffic fatality of the year Tuesday when she died in a two-vehicle wreck near Southport.

Thomasine Hicks Randolph, 42, of Route 2, Bolivia, was dead at the scene of the 8:05 a.m. mishap at the intersection of the Carolina Power & Light Company access road and N.C. 87, said Highway Patrol Trooper W.H. Thompson.

He said Ms. Randolph, a security guard at CP&L, pulled her 1980 Ford Thunderbird onto N.C. 87 into the path of a 1982 Chevrolet van driven by Virginia Ellis, 36, of Southport.

Not wearing a seat belt, Ms. Randolph was thrown from her car and suffered severe head injuries. Ms. Ellis and her 13-year-old daughter, Christie Ellis, suffered only minor injuries.

No charges were filed in the wreck. According to the trooper, witnesses said Ms. Randolph pulled onto the highway without stopping first.

Thompson said the Thunderbird was a total loss. He estimated damage to the van at \$5,000.

In another local accident, a Supply man was injured Saturday when his car crashed near Bolivia. According to Highway Patrol spokesperson Ruby Oakley, the wreck happened Saturday at 1:30 p.m., 4.6 miles south of Bolivia on U.S. 17.

James Kenneth Johnson, 22, was headed south when his 1985 Mercury ran off the right side of the road, then veered back across the highway and struck a tree, Ms. Oakley reported.

She said Johnson suffered non-incapacitating injuries and was taken by ambulance to The



FIREMEN PREPARE TO BATTLE the Saturday morning blaze that destroyed the Jimmy Pierce residence on U.S. 17 at Thomasboro. According to Fire Marshal Cecil Logan, the fire started in the garage area pictured on the right.

Authorities Suspect Arson In Calabash Restaurant Blaze

No arrests were reported Tuesday in connection with a suspicious fire that damaged a seafood restaurant in Calabash early Tuesday.

Trawlers restaurant, located near the intersection on N.C. 179 and Ivey High Street, sustained no more than \$100 in fire damage, according to Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan. However, he estimated that up to \$1,000 in water damage was done as a result of firefighting efforts.

Logan said late Tuesday morning that the cause of the fire had not been determined, although it was possibly arson. The case is under investigation by the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department and the SBI.

Calabash Volunteer Fire Department was dispatched to the blaze Tuesday around 2:15 a.m., Logan said. According to a sheriff's department report filed by Deputy Don Stovall, the fire was called in by an unidentified woman.

Stovall's report stated that the restaurant was secure when Margaret Mary Christy of Carolina Shores closed the business and left Tuesday around 1:45 a.m. The fire started against exterior woodwork on the north side of the building.

When firemen arrived on the scene, the woodwork, which decorated the cinderblock and cement wall, was burning, Logan said. The fire was extinguished before it could spread to the interior of the building.

Weekend Blaze Destroys Home

BY RAHN ADAMS
A Thomasboro residence was destroyed Saturday in a blaze that fire officials said could have been contained if more water had been immediately available.

About 35 firefighters from six local volunteer fire departments responded to the 9:50 a.m. Saturday fire at the Jimmy Pierce residence on U.S. 17 at Thomasboro, according to Brunswick County Fire Marshal Cecil Logan.

Pierce and his wife, Flora Neil, escaped the blaze without serious injuries. However, their two-story frame house, two automobiles and all but a few of their family's possessions were lost in the accidental fire that started in an attached garage.

"When we got there, the garage area was on fire, and it had burned up to the side of the house," said Calabash Volunteer Fire Department Chief Jerry Prince, who added that he and other personnel happened to be at the fire station when the call came in and were able to respond more quickly than usual.

Both Logan and Prince said that initial firefighting efforts contained the blaze that engulfed the garage, but a limited water supply combined with windy conditions caused the fire to flare up again and rage through the rest of the wood-and-brick house.

"We got it (the fire) knocked down, then ran out of water," Prince said. "In the four or five minutes we had to wait, the wind picked up and caught the fire back up."

Until tanker trucks from other fire districts arrived, the closest water supply was a hydrant about five miles away in Calabash, Logan said. No county water lines and hydrants are located on U.S. 17 south of Shallotte.

Logan indicated that the house might have been saved if "an abundance of manpower and an abundance of water" had been available from the start.

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MARINA STILL ON HOLD

Shellfish Ban Lifted In Lockwood Folly

BY DOUG RUTTER
The ever-changing status of shellfishing in Lockwood Folly River took a turn for the better last week when the lower section was temporarily opened to the harvest of oysters and clams after 10 days of inactivity.

Following analysis of water samples, state officials last Friday re-opened shellfish harvesting in Lower Lockwood Folly River. The section opened includes waters downstream of a line running from Genoes Point on the west bank to Gore's Landing on the eastern shore.

That area of the river had been closed to shellfishing since Jan. 3 when heavy rains and the resulting run-off caused increased counts of fecal coliform bacteria, a naturally-occurring organism used as an indicator of pollution.

Bob Benton, supervisor of the state shellfish sanitation branch, said water samples taken last Wednesday were well below the critical bacteria level. Results of additional samples taken Tuesday, however, were not available at presstime.

In addition to the lower section of the river, Benton said waters upstream have shown recent signs of clearing up. "Overall, it's looking better than it has in the past," he said.

In the second half of 1988, the lower section of Lockwood Folly River saw very little shellfishing action as it was shut down entirely in late August. With the exception of a two-day period in November, the closure remained in effect until mid-December when the waters and shellfish were once again determined suitable for harvest.

Included in the area opened last week are shellfish management areas at Galloway Flats, Spring Branch and Drum Slough, all of which will remain closed to clamming.

In a related matter, shellfish sanitation officials will continue conducting a door-to-door survey in the river basin area through the rest of this week, according to Brunswick County Health Educator Joanne Caldwell.

The purpose of the survey, she said, is to check potential sources of river pollution such as septic tank systems, point source discharge problems and additional sources which may be contaminating Lockwood Folly.

Also, action on a state environmental permit application which would allow construction of a marina on Lockwood Folly River remains in limbo.

(See SHELLFISH, Page 2-A)

Schools In Line For \$50,000 Windfall In Settlement Of Bakeries Bid Rigging

BY SUSAN USHER
Brunswick County's school system stands to receive approximately \$50,000 in compensation for losses that resulted from the rigging of bids to supply breads from 1979 through 1985, according to state Deputy Attorney General John Simmons.

The windfall figure is based on preliminary calculations and was to be checked by the division's accountant this week.

"That's a nice chunk of money," said Simmons. "That's a lot of bread."

The local school system is one of 27 city and nine county systems in eastern North Carolina to share in the \$1.2 million settlement reached with Fox's Holsum Bakery in Wilmington, Franklin's Baking Co. Inc. of Goldsboro, and its subsidiary, Dainty Maid Bakery Inc. of Kinston and American Bakeries Co., formerly of Rocky Mount and Fayetteville.

"I knew we had the potential of being part of the settlement because we were part of the investigation, but until about six weeks ago I didn't know for sure," said William J. Wilbur,

food service director for the Brunswick County Schools. "Then I knew we were going to get it, but I didn't know how much it was going to be so I didn't tell anyone."

Since the food service division was the loser in the bid-rigging, Wilbur hopes the settlement sum will go into its budget. "It should," he said.

The food service division is trying to improve its financial situation this year, with a goal of all school cafeterias operating in the black and ending the year with a sufficient reserve with which to prepare for the

coming school year.

Getting 'Better Price'
The bid-rigging investigation of the bakeries came about, said Wilbur, because "some of us (school food service directors) felt others were getting a better price."

Simmons said each school is to receive 1½ times its actual loss as damages. The balance of the judgement reflects a \$50,000 civil penalty levied against each and \$15,000 in state legal costs assessed each defendant.

(See SCHOOLS, Page 2-A)

Redwine Still In Running For House Majority Leader

BY SUSAN USHER
A vote is expected today (Thursday) on a new position proposed for the State House of Representatives for which Rep. E. David Redwine (D-Brunswick) is among a handful of contenders.

In fact, Redwine believes the post of majority leader may be more important than ever, given the wounds among House Democrats following the unseating of longtime speaker Liston Ramsey.

While the new posts of party leader and whip have not been defined yet, Redwine sees the majority leader post as one of fairly high visibility and with a broad range of responsibility, as that of a facilitator who works with the speaker to communicate the Democratic position on partisan issues and to communicate with the Senate.

When Ramsey was seeking election to his fifth term as speaker, the post was proposed as a compromise with Democrats dissatisfied with Ramsey's leadership style. Since that group joined with Republican representatives to seat Rep. Joe Mavretic of Edgecombe County as speaker, the post may assume new importance as the House moves into what Redwine termed "uncharted waters."

Redwine is being supported for the post by party members in both the Mavretic and Ramsey camps.

Other contenders for the majority leader slot are said to be Reps. Anne Barnes of Orange County, Bruce Etheridge of Carteret County and Toby Fitch of Wilson County.

Redwine, who seconded Ramsey's nomination from the floor and later voted for him, said in doing so he honored a commitment made earlier to Ramsey. As a result, he said, "I think I came out as well as could be expected; I think I will have some kind of position. I've talk-



REDWINE

ed with the speaker and he understands why I did what I did."

Still, he added later, "If doing what you feel is the right thing to do hurts you politically, then it will just have to be."

Redwine said he and Mavretic are personal friends and have had offices next door to each other for four years. However, they have landed on opposite sides of several major issues in recent years, including property tax reform and nuclear waste siting.

Redwine, like other legislators, isn't certain what will happen next or what his role will be. But he said he feels that the House, the "last bastion" for the Democratic Party in the state, has been "shaker to its core."

Describing as something like "a big family fight," he said the hurt feelings will have to heal and that some may never do so.

He views the change of leadership as having the

potential for a better opportunity to evolve, not an absolute.

"Whether that opportunity is realized depends in part on whether opportunities are created for the new young, aggressive leaders to move up through the ranks," he said. "If it helps facilitate that it will be a good thing, it will have been worth it."

But not so if power is once again concentrated in the hands of a few, only "under a different name."

Redwine expects to see the same blurring in party lines in the House as seen at the polls. He anticipates fewer divisions along party lines and instead he expects coalitions to emerge based more on philosophies and issues.

If anything is done along party lines or if there is any party discipline, he expects the GOP to do it, as the stronger party and more cohesive group.

"This is probably the toughest political week I've ever experienced," he said just before leaving for home Friday afternoon. "I hope next week is better."