

County 911 System Silently Pushing Toward 1992 Debut

BY TERRY POPE

Next New Year's Day Brunswick County residents will have two reasons to celebrate as they also welcome in a new 911 emergency telephone system, one which appears to be on schedule with just 12 months to go.

"We're still looking at a projected date, barring any unforeseen problems, of Jan. 1, 1992," said Lee Hitchcock, the county's 911 program planner. "That is our target date."

Hitchcock was hired by the county in October and began work immediately. He most recently had been working with Horry County's 911 program in South Carolina, dispatching as well as laying out of the grid system.

In Brunswick County, Hitchcock is responsible for working with the telephone companies and Brunswick County Planning Department in building an accurate database for the 911 system.

Planners are now checking lists of street names and will be actually driving through the entire county to assign names to roads that have not been given one already by the county.

"We have a lot of duplicate names in Brunswick County," Hitchcock said. "The rule of thumb there will be to try to have no duplicates within the same postal zip code area."

Some street names will have to be changed to meet this requirement. The exact number is not known, he added. Changes to state road names will be done through the legal process while the county can assign names to other streets. State and rural paved road numbers will be dropped.

Residents most affected by the switch will be those living on rural routes. Addresses will be changed to numbered houses and street names which will also give better directions for fire and emergency personnel.

Getting rid of the postal rural routes will be the most noticeable

change for county residents in the next 12 months, Hitchcock said. However, the maps lining the walls of his workspace at the Planning Department show that a lot of work has already silently taken place.

Those maps have divided the county into four quadrants using U.S. 17, N.C. 211 and the Lockwood Folly River as boundaries. Supply serves as a center point of the four quadrants: the northwest, northeast, southwest and southeast. Those names may appear in the new addresses assigned to rural routes.

Once the road names have been squared away throughout the entire county, the Planning Department will next begin working on house numbering in coordination with the 17 county municipalities. Some towns have house numbering systems already in place, such as Southport, Shallotte and the beach towns.

"Where these are already in place, we will use their existing numbering system," Hitchcock said.

All of the work is aimed toward one goal, to develop an automatic location identification feature of the enhanced 911 system. This feature automatically displays the address of the location from where the call is made on the dispatcher's monitor. Residential callers are also identified by name. The 911 monitor will also display the three agencies which have jurisdiction over the address for law enforcement, fire protection and medical emergencies.

"Forty-three different numbers apply," Hitchcock said. That is the number of different fire, police and rescue squads there are in the county.

"Some are really small, such as the Sandy Creek or Caswell Beach police departments where you may have only one car on duty," he added.

In recent months, Hitchcock and county planners have been meeting with representatives from Southern Bell to share information. Southern Bell is the primary installer of the

911 system. The company was awarded the contract to provide the communications equipment. In 1991, the county will build a new 911 communications center and emergency medical services building at the county government complex in Bolivia. The \$1.1 million building doesn't include the cost of the 911 equipment.

Atlantic Telephone Membership Corporation, which has roughly 19,000 subscribers in Brunswick County stretching from Winnabow to the South Carolina state line, isn't actually involved in the planning phase but has served as a friendly ally of the 911 project.

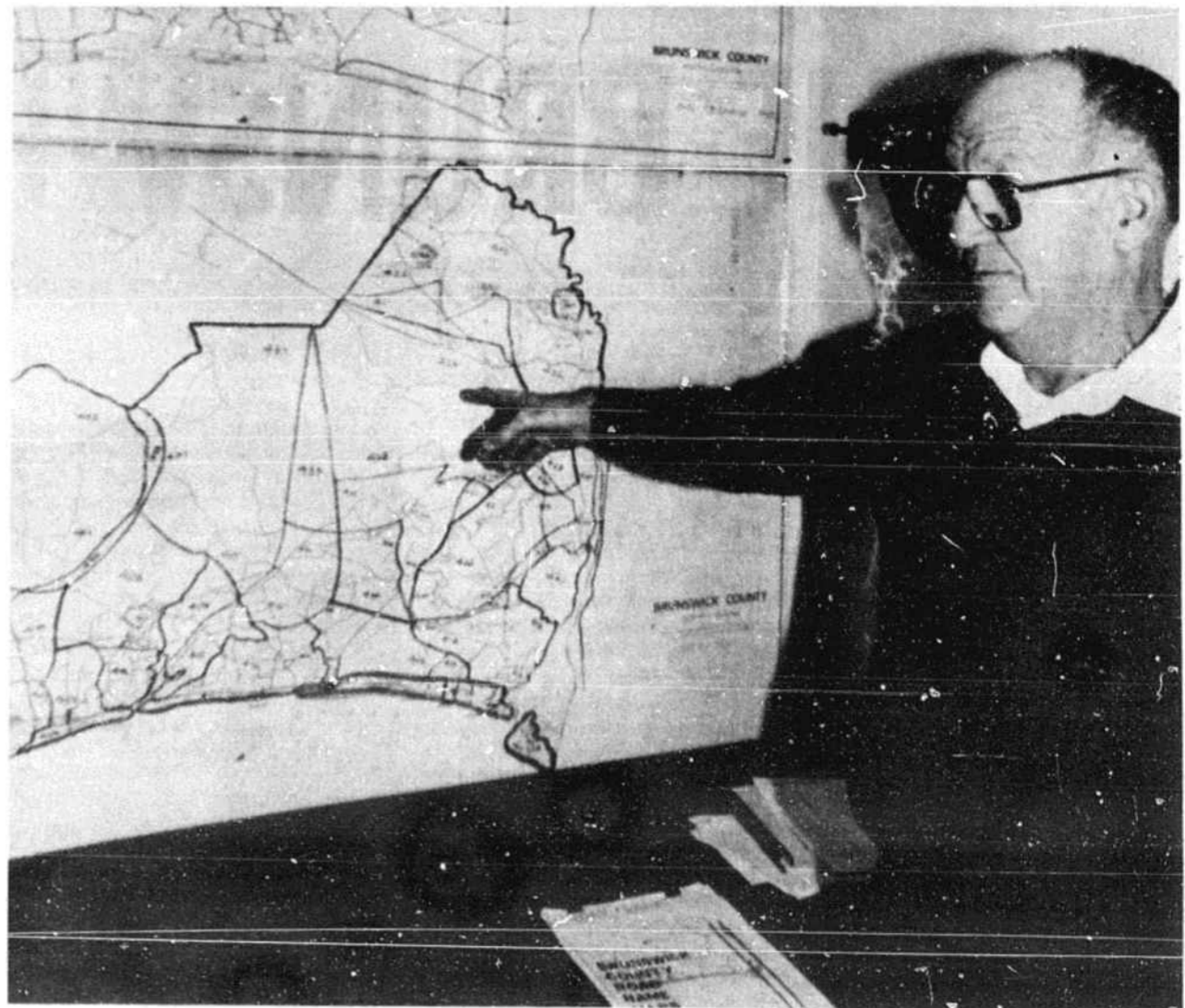
"The biggest changes that will be noticed before the end of the year will be in the rural areas," Hitchcock said. "The RFDs, routes and box numbers will have to be changed to a street name and number over a given period of time. That has to be done by the end of the year."

Hitchcock said all of the changes are being made "with a specific purpose in mind. When a person dials 911, we will know that the responsible agency will be dispatched to the call."

Even when 911 begins operating next January, the planners' work will not be finished. Once the system goes online, it must undergo further refinement. A back-up system must be made to record hard copies of names and addresses for each telephone number in the county.

Among the concerns at this point is how to number the homes along U.S. 17, which stretches through the entire county, close to 60 miles. Should it be given its state name, "Ocean Highway"? And should U.S. 74-76 in the northern part of the county be referred to by its given state name, "Andrew Jackson Highway"?

"Once people see the system in place, I've yet to find anyone who hasn't liked the system," Hitchcock said.



COUNTY 911 PLANNER Lee Hitchcock has mapped Brunswick County into districts for fire, police and rescue response teams, getting ready for the 1992 debut of the emergency communications program.

STAFF PHOTO BY TERRY POPE

Money, Redistricting To Dominate

(Continued From Page 1-A)

budget period. While legislators will be scrambling to identify new sources of revenues for state and local governments, they also will be looking hard at existing programs, said Redwine.

In an era where the state is no longer "flush" with money, we (state legislators) can no longer afford to be sugar daddy to everybody."

In short, he said local governments are not going to be able to rely on the state to continue picking up cuts in federal funding as the "new federalism" philosophy of the 1980s trickles down. And state-funded programs and agencies are going to be called on to justify what they're doing or face cuts.

"I expect some major surgery plus some new —no I'd better not use the 'T-word'—some sort of revenue enhancement package," he said. One possibility is an additional half-cent to one-cent sales tax. A penny of tax is expected to yield about \$500 million in annual revenues, at current spending levels.

Legislators will be looking at, among other things, a proposed "menu" of local option taxes that the state could approve and make available to local governments. These include a real estate transfer tax, which several counties already have in place.

Redwine would like to add another tax to the list, the manufacturer's inventory tax. Worth an estimated \$350 million a year to the state in income, the tax was eliminated at the governor's request several years ago. But the state continues to send to counties the money they would have made from that tax. "The state, not the counties, lost," said Redwine. "We can't afford that anymore."

"If they are interested in providing a service they (local governments) will have to find a way to finance it."

At the same time, he says the state should also back away from mandating programs while not providing the funds to provide them, as is now the case in some areas, such as social services.

He also expects the governor to seek legislators' approval to put to use immediately a \$141 million

"rainy day" fund Redwine said he and other legislators "fought hard" to create.

Some legislators will also be eyeing the Highway Trust Fund as a source of general operating revenues, but not Redwine. He said he doesn't want to see existing highway projects scheduled for construction using Trust Fund monies to be delayed. "I would like to stay in office long enough to see Highway 17 four-laned all the way through Brunswick County," he said. That would be around 1995-1996 unless schedules and budgets are altered.

Redrawing The Lines

State legislators must also come up with electoral redistricting plans that meet the one-man, one-vote standard, trying to avoid legal challenges wherever possible.

While border areas in the west and northeast and inland eastern counties appear to be losing seats, the southeastern North Carolina coastal area should gain a seat, along with the greater Mecklenburg and Triangle-Triad areas in the Piedmont.

House speaker-elect Rep. Dan Blue has not announced his plans for the session. However, Redwine said the term may be split so that redistricting will be handled separately from other business—an option he would prefer. The General Assembly could complete its routine work by late June, then reconvene in September, after final figures are available from the U.S. Census. That could help keep the highly political redistricting process from bogging down other issues, Redwine suggested. "I've never been through a redistricting, but I've heard what it's like," he said.

Brunswick County and Shallotte have written letters challenging 1990 U.S. Census figures, but preliminary data indicates Brunswick County won't qualify to become a self-contained state House district.

Redwine represents the 14th District, which includes one township in New Hanover County and one township in Pender County as well as Brunswick County, with a combined current population of about 70,000 to 75,000. While Brunswick

County showed one of the sharpest rate growths of any spot in the state, up from approximately 35,777 to about 50,681, it still apparently fell short of the 55,000 needed to qualify for a single-seat district.

During the decade Brunswick County gained approximately 15,000 residents, while adjacent Columbus County lost about 1,000.

"That's mind-boggling," said Redwine, noting the difference in activity and revenues the numbers signify.

"That's going to be a real challenge for our county commissioners and board of education over the next 10 years," Redwine predicted.

The growth means, among other things, that Brunswick County is ranked by the state as one of the top counties in terms of ability to pay, especially in terms of support for education. However, current education spending levels don't reflect that ability, possibly because of the county's large number of retirees, who tend to oppose higher taxes, Redwine suggested.

Few Local Bills In

With the start of the session only a few weeks away, Redwine has received few requests to introduce local bills.

Last fall the Town of Calabash asked Redwine to introduce a local bill to annex several areas adjacent to the town, rather than the town following the usual annexation procedures.

Redwine said he hopes to talk with town commissioners at their Jan. 8 meeting to reiterate his position. He has recommended the town try the usual annexation methods before seeking special legislation, citing the problems that setting such a precedent could create.

The Town of Long Beach wants authorization to assess for underground utilities, as a number of other local towns have done. The Town of Holden Beach is asking that a municipal taxing district be set up for canal dredging.

Brunswick County commissioners haven't presented any requests, but have mentioned holding a breakfast meeting with Redwine to discuss legislative issues.

Slockett Says Candidate Refused To Deal

(Continued From Page 1-A)

County District Attorney's office to investigate the process by which the superintendent was selected. "Let's put it this way—I'm not going away. I'm going to make something happen. A rigged election is illegal and invalid."

According to Ken Rogers, Mrs. Worth had told Barbara Rogers "from the first day, 'I want you'."

"Then she started talking about firing Bill Turner and replacing him with her husband or hiring her husband as a consultant, Barbara told Mrs. Worth she didn't do that kind of thing," he continued. "In the end she worked some kind of deal with someone. Somebody promised her something and she went the other way."

Slockett said Mrs. Worth personally told him a deal had been struck. "She didn't try to hide that," he said. Slockett said he understood from Mrs. Worth that black political leaders had agreed to pressure Hankins to fire Turner and hire Randy Worth, who had resigned from the school system in 1985.

Worth began work for the school system in August 1980 as director of plant operations. At the time of his resignation in September 1985, he was central purchasing officer.

However, apparently Hankins would have no part of such a deal. At that point, Slockett maintains, Mrs. Worth was willing to overturn Hankins' selection on the technical grounds that he had failed to college transcripts as required.

Slockett said he first raised concerns about the hiring process at an Oct. 15 meeting at Southport Elementary School, after Ken Rogers questioned the credentials of superintendent-elect P. R. Hankins. "They wanted to sweep it under the rug," he said.

When he shared those concerns, said Slockett, "the board turned me down; they didn't want to deal with it. I felt like the board had made a mistake and should take steps to correct it."

While the advertisement for the position required that transcripts be attached to the application, Hankins had noted on his application that

transcripts were not available. Slockett said and Ms. Baxter confirmed.

Then acting superintendent and a longtime administrator in the local school system, Hankins had at first stated he did not plan to apply for the position. Then, shortly before the deadline, he did apply, at the urging of friends.

Slockett acknowledged he had not noticed the transcripts were not included when he reviewed Hankins' application. Still, he said the application should never have been considered, but should have been discarded as were other incomplete applications.

However, he said he thought the discrepancy should have been caught by either the board attorney, who received all the applications, or then fellow board member James Clemmow, who was assigned the task of investigating Hankins' background.

Slockett said he would like to see the board "face up to it, deal with it, study it and reach a conclusion as to what should be done."

Expect Near-Normal Weather

Near-normal temperatures and rainfall are in the forecast for the first days of 1991.

Shallotte Point meteorologist said he expects temperatures to range from around the mid-30s at night into the mid-50s during the day, with about a half-inch of rainfall.

For the period of Dec. 24-30, temperatures spread across a 44-de-

gree range. Canady recorded a maximum high of 74 degrees, which occurred on the 24th and 30th. The minimum low of 30 degrees occurred on the 25th.

An average daily high of 60 degrees combined with an average nightly low of 46 degrees for a daily average temperature of 53 degrees, which Canady said was about seven degrees above average.

Crime Prevention Projects Slated

Two upcoming activities sponsored by the Shallotte Police Department are aimed at preventing or deterring crime.

Crime Prevention Officer Rhea (Ray) Altizer said the department will photograph children and take their fingerprints in a screening scheduled Thursday, Jan. 10 at 12 noon at the police station on Wall Street.

Also the department plans to offer two-hour briefings on armed robbery to employees of local businesses.

Information on the child identification program and appointments for the course can be obtained by contacting Altizer at the department, 754-6008.

EVEN SMALL ADS GET **BIG** RESULTS IN THE BEACON

GIFTS
All Hand Made
By Local Craftpersons
Excellent Selection
All Reasonably Priced

GINGERBREAD HOUSE
Holden Beach Road
Next to JR's Steakhouse
Shallotte, NC 754-8979

Municipal Leaders Share Goals

(Continued From Page 1-A)

house that it is renovating and turning into the community's first town hall.

Several walls have already been torn down, but there is still work to be done inside and outside the building.

Mayor Galloway said she also would like to see the town put up some street lights before the end of 1991.

"That's as far as I can go right now," she said. "I'd like to get both of those done in the near future."

HOLDEN BEACH
Holden Beach Mayor John Tandy didn't have any projects in mind when asked about the coming year.

But he said he would like to reverse a trend having to do with the way the town has been governing its people.

Tandy said he has received a lot of phone calls recently from residents and seasonal visitors who are worried about ordinances that the town board has already imposed or is getting ready to approve.

"When we absolutely need an ordinance we should put it in," Tandy said. "But we should be keeping the beach a little free of needless ordinances."

Holden Beach Commissioners are presently considering several ordinances, including one designed to protect endangered sea turtles from sources of artificial light on the beach.

Tandy said some people oppose a section of that ordinance that would prohibit people from walking on the strand at night with flashlights. The

code would make it illegal to chase ghost crabs at night, which the mayor says has been going on for the last 40 years.



GALLOWAY



TANDY

HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO **THE BRUNSWICK BEACON**
POST OFFICE BOX 2558
SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28459

TO START THE NEW YEAR OFF RIGHT!

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL:		Sr. Citizen
In Brunswick County	\$6.30	\$5.30
N.C. Sales Tax	.32	.27
Postage Charge	3.68	3.68
TOTAL	10.30	9.25
Elsewhere in North Carolina	\$6.30	\$5.30
N.C. Sales Tax	.32	.27
Postage Charge	8.18	8.18
TOTAL	14.80	13.75
Outside North Carolina	\$6.30	\$5.30
Postage Charge	9.65	9.65
TOTAL	15.95	14.95

Complete And Return To Above Address

Name.....
Address.....
City, State.....
Zip.....

THE BRUNSWICK BEACON
Established Nov. 1, 1962
Telephone 754-6830
Published Every Thursday
At 4709 Main Street
Shallotte, N.C. 28459

SUBSCRIPTION RATES
IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY
One Year\$10.30
Six Months.....\$5.50
ELSEWHERE IN NORTH CAROLINA
One Year\$14.80
Six Months.....\$7.85
ELSEWHERE IN U.S.A.
One Year\$15.95
Six Months.....\$8.35

Second class postage paid at the Post Office in Shallotte, N.C. 28459. USPS 777-780.