

Sewer System Engineers Ask For Health Board Endorsement

BY ERIC CARLSON

Warning that fecal coliform levels in waters off Sunset Beach have increased 50 percent in the past nine years, consulting engineers Monday asked the Brunswick County Board of Health to endorse ongoing efforts to build a central sewer system serving Sunset Beach and Calabash.

Engineers Jim Billups and Joe Tombro of Powell Associates, North Myrtle Beach, S.C., outlined the findings of recent environmental studies during a presentation of the sewer system plan requested by the health board.

Coliform bacteria are found in human and animal feces. The presence of such bacteria in groundwater, streams or estuaries is commonly used as an indicator of overloaded septic systems or excessive rainwater runoff from pasture land.

Studies reveal no correlation between elevated coliform levels around Sunset Beach and long-term rainfall histories, said engineer Jim Billups of Powell Associates in a letter to the board. Since the bacteria levels don't fluctuate with rainfall, both runoff and septic failures probably are equally to blame.

The studies also show "extremely elevated" levels of ammonia in test wells on Sunset Beach, "which is a strong indication that septic tanks are not working," Tombro said.

"The conclusion to be drawn is that protection of estuarine water quality will require control of pollution from all potential sources, including stormwater and wastewater point and non-point sources," Billups said.

"If you started this project tomorrow, and worked toward eliminating all septic systems, how long would it take before you noticed an improvement in water

quality?" asked Health Board Chairman Skip Davis.

Tombro said that a similar system was built at Surf City in 1989, when shellfish beds had been closed for several years due to coliform contamination. He said the beds were reopened in 1991 and 1992, indicating that a central sewage system should show positive results "within three to five years."

The board voted to table consideration of an endorsement until its next meeting. Members said they wanted to review materials submitted by Powell Associates.

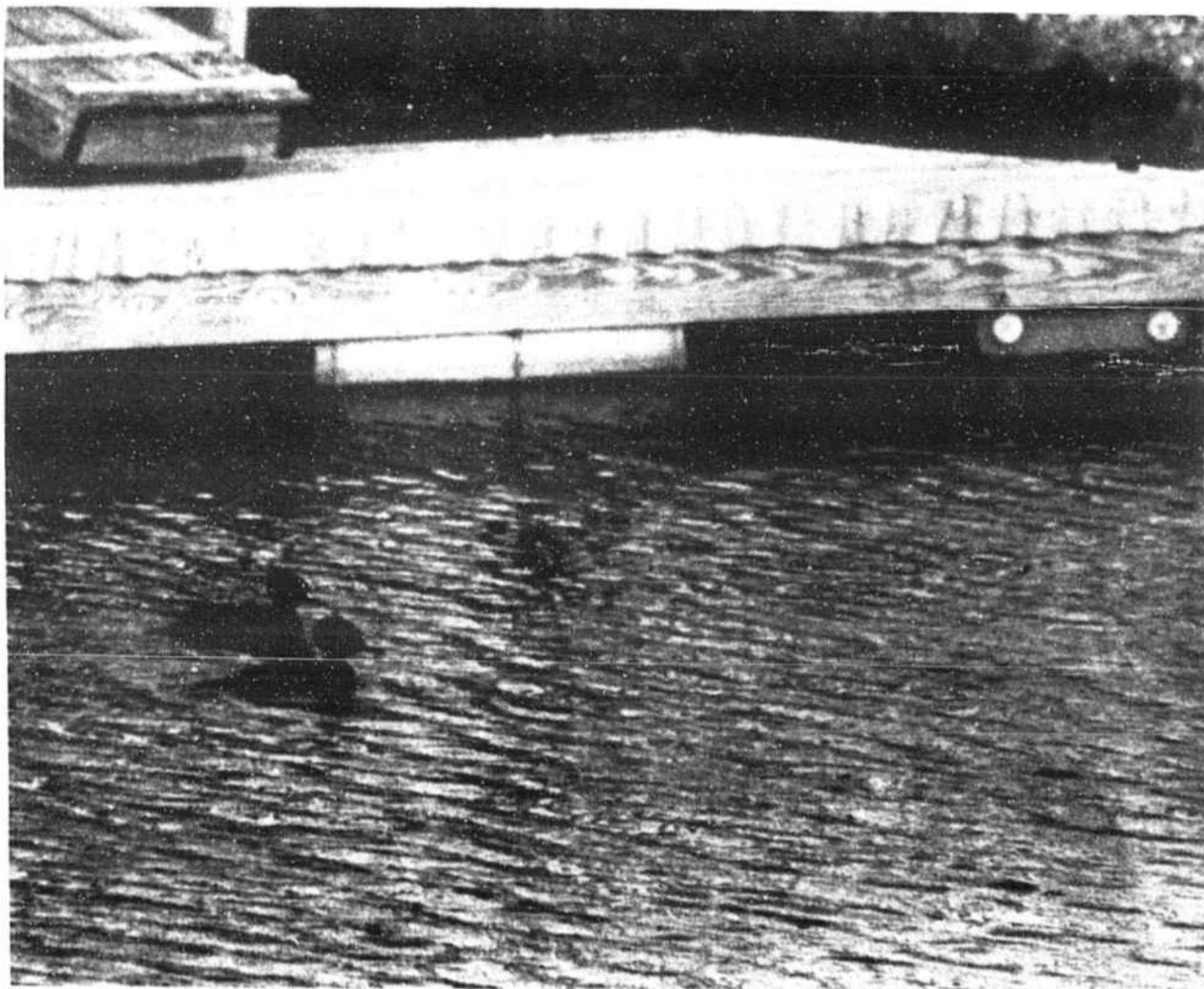
In other business the board:

■ Agreed to form a committee of health board members and county employees that will make recommendations on a proposal to prohibit tobacco smoking in all county buildings.

■ Approved a program to offer Norplant contraceptive

implants through county health department. The system consists of six small tubes surgically implanted under the skin, which administer a controlled dosage of hormonal contraceptive. The implants are said to be 99-percent effective for a period of five years.

■ Heard from Environmental Health Supervisor Andrew Robinson that six local restaurant owners have agreed to join the board's environmental health committee in considering modifications to a proposed food-handler certification ordinance. Serving on the committee will be Alan Harrelson, Big Nell's Pit Stop, Ocean Isle Beach; Carolyn Spencer, Fam's, Ocean Isle Beach; Mildred Crissman, Mimi's Cafe, Southport; Lee Klimas, Quarterdeck Restaurant, Holden Beach; Thomas Bishop, Sandfiddler, Southport; Floyd Kirby Jr., Sizzlin' Sirloin Steakhouse, Shallotte; and Bill Abshire, Dos Amigos, Ocean Isle Beach.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Nice Weather...For Ducks

The chilly winds of winter send most of us human folk scurrying for cover, but they also bring us new feathered visitors from the north. Here a pair of female hooded mergansers enjoys a morning swim along a Holden Beach canal.

READY TO GET THE JOB DONE

Redwine Chairman Of House Business/Labor Committee

State Rep. E. David "Butch" Redwine (D-Brunswick) has been appointed chairman of the 37-member Business and Labor Committee, one of 20 standing super committees by which the N.C. House of Representatives will operate this year.

The committee includes the subcommittees of economic expansion, labor relations and travel and tourism.

"These are topics of interest to all of southeastern North Carolina as well as the entire state, for that matter," acknowledged Redwine, who serves the 14th District along with Dewey Hill of Lake Waccamaw. "I think we will be doing a lot this term."

He expects Gov. Jim Hunt's economic package to be referred to the committee and he said, "I'm sure members will have separate bills with related ideas."

The committee will also deal with the state Family Leave Act and possibly some workplace safety issues.

"I'm going to be meeting with Speaker Dan Blue for a quick review to see what he'll be sending," said Redwine.

He will serve also on the Appropriations Committee's Justice and Public Safety Subcommittee that deals with the budgets of the courts, attorney general's office, prisons, SBI, Highway Patrol and related agencies. He was chairman of that committee last time. "I'm one of the few returning committee members. I suspect that is for continuity," Redwine suggested.

He will serve as vice chairman of

the insurance committee, a panel on which the local insurance man has not served on before or ever sought to serve on, he said. Redwine said his knowledge of the insurance will serve him well. Also, he added, "I've been here eight years now.

People should know by now I would look at how a bill will affect the entire state, not just me or my profession."

Redwine was also named to the Public Employees Committee and a Judiciary committee.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Booster Night Held

Union Elementary School teacher Amy Watkins (left) accepts a check for \$317.16 from Kathy McNeill, manager of the Shallotte Burger King restaurant. The check represented proceeds of Union Elementary's booster night held Jan. 26.

Call TV Toll-Free To Get College Aid Information

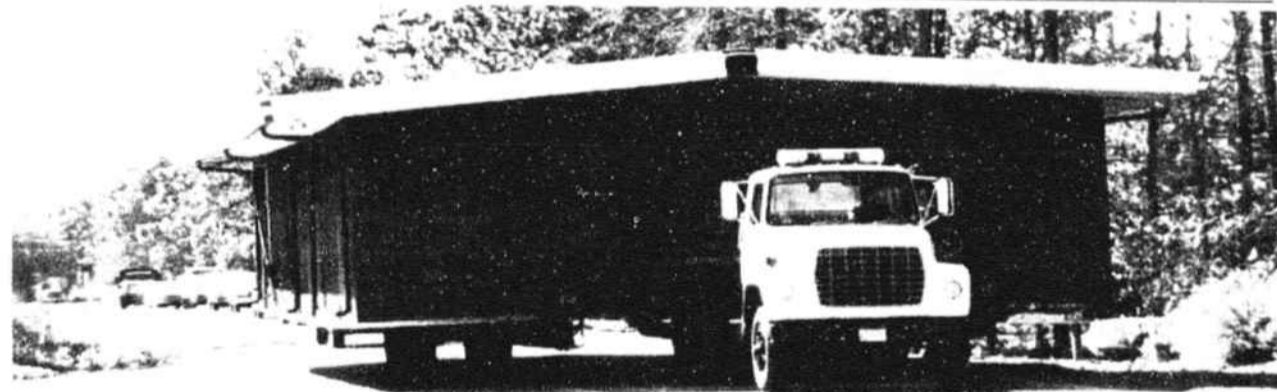
Potential college students and their families can take advantage of a toll-free telephone number next Monday night to ask questions about financial aid and local educational opportunities.

WWAY TV-3 (Channel 5 on AT-MC Cable and Channel 10 on Vision

Cable) will hold a "Financial Aid Phone-A-Thon" Monday, Feb. 15, from 5:30 p.m. to 8 p.m. The program is a cooperative effort of UNC-Wilmington, Cape Fear Community College and area high schools.

Financial aid counselors will staff

a toll-free number during the program, which will also feature live broadcasts from UNC-W. Would-be college students are encouraged to call with questions about what money for college is available to them and what their options are in this area to continue their education.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

A Snail's Pace

Traffic backed up on N.C. 179 south of Shallotte Wednesday afternoon as Tommy Small Movers relocated a double-wide home.

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