

A FIRST FOR COUNTY

# Brunswick Makes State's Top 10 List For 1991 Travel Income

BY SUSAN USHER

Tourists spent nearly \$123 million here in 1991, putting Brunswick County in North Carolina's top 10 in travel-related expenditures.

The information was released by the N.C. Division of Travel and Tourism and included in an article in the February issue of North Carolina magazine. It comes from the U.S. Travel Data Center, an arm of the U.S. Commerce Department.

According to the federal report, the state's share of travel-related expenditures in the Southeast is up after a steady decline over the previous six years. The increase is about a quarter of a percentage point from 1990, to slightly more than 10 percent.

Travel and tourism is North Carolina's second-largest industry and Brunswick County's largest, Annette Odom of the

South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce told chamber members at a legislative update last Thursday night.

The federal center estimates that tourist outlays of \$122.61 million created 2,680 travel and tourism related jobs in Brunswick County, said Odom. "It has a tremendous impact on our area."

Chamber members reminded Reps. David Redwine and Dewey Hill of the importance of tourism to the area and to the state as a whole and urged greater spending for marketing and promotion. In addition to a major marketing program unveiled in 1992, Redwine said Gov. Jim Hunt has proposed an increase of more than \$1 million for travel and tourism in his budget. One audience member termed the increase "a mere drop in the bucket" compared to what other states in the region are spending.

## Top 10 Counties, Travelers' Dollars (In Millions)

1. Mecklenburg.....\$1,515
2. Wake..... 783
3. Guilford..... 452
4. Forsyth..... 292
5. Buncombe..... 269
6. Dare..... 239
7. Durham..... 219
8. Cumberland..... 177
9. Carteret..... 138
10. Brunswick..... 123

The Travel Data Center shows that travel-related expenditures in the state grew about 5 percent in 1991, crossing the \$7 billion mark for the first time. The report states North Carolina's travel and tourism industry generates a payroll of about \$2.1 billion, employs almost 149,000 people and pays more than \$451 million in state and local taxes.

In addition to Brunswick, the other top 10 counties are as follows, followed by estimated tourist outlay and jobs created: Mecklenburg, \$1.5 billion, 33,440 jobs; Wake, \$783 million, 18,130 jobs; Guilford, \$452 million, 9,800 jobs; Forsyth, \$292 million, 5,610 jobs; Buncombe, \$269 million, 6,740 jobs; Dare, \$239 million, 6,790 jobs; Durham, \$219 million, 5,630 jobs; Cumberland, \$177 million, 3,790 jobs; and Carteret, \$138 million, 3,240 jobs.

North Carolina ranks fourth in tourism in a region which also includes Alabama, Florida, Georgia, Kentucky, Mississippi, South Carolina and Virginia. Florida is first, followed by Georgia and Virginia.

Odom said that future figures relating to Brunswick County should be more accurate than in the past, as a result of efforts by the chamber. The agency that compiles the data is looking at new ways of calculation. For instance, proximity to a major airport and being considered a major destination is currently a factor, as are the number of hotel and motel room registrations, neither of which applies directly to Brunswick County.

For future reporting, she said Brunswick County businesses will be allowed to count cottage and condominium rentals as individual units, which should make a significant difference, she predicted.

## Williamson May Be Appointee To State Transportation Board

Ocean Isle Developer Odell Williamson said he expects to hear by the end of this week whether he has been appointed by Gov. Jim Hunt to a seat on the N.C. Transportation Board.

Williamson, a staunch supporter through the governor's successful 1976 and 1980 campaigns, served on Hunt's state campaign finance committee during the past election. Both Williamson and his wife Virginia contributed the legal maximum of \$8,000 each to the 1992 campaign.

"I feel like I could do him a good job," Williamson said in a telephone interview Monday. "I'd like to have it."

Hunt, during his second term as governor, appointed Williamson to the state's Economic Development Board. Williamson joked that as a representative on that panel, "I was probably his cheapest employee," never having accepted per diem pay or sought travel reimbursement.

Williamson was the original developer of Ocean Isle Beach, having bought almost all the island in 1953. He has served six terms in the N.C. House of Representatives and has been Ocean Isle Beach's mayor. He currently serves as the town's utilities and streets commission.

In 1991, Williamson was listed as Brunswick County's sixth highest taxpayer, with properties in his name valued at nearly \$28 million. Williamson said he believes the state's most pressing transportation need at present is "protecting its investment" through highway repairs. "All you have to do to see what I mean is ride (N.C.) 179 from Ocean Isle to Seaside and see how many potholes there are."

The Division 3 DOT Board seat represents New Hanover, Brunswick, Duplin, Pender, Onslow and Sampson counties. An at-large seat is also available.



WILLIAMSON

## Services Jeopardized By Openings: Director

(Continued From Page 1-A)

spect.

"For many, the alternative is a nursing home, which is more expensive. It's not good economically or morally," he said.

Another precarious situation exists in the area of child protective services, where Orrock said half the six-member staff positions remain vacant. State law requires that all reports of child abuse or neglect must be investigated within 24 or 48 hours, depending on severity.

Last month the department investigated 63 reports, he said. Each investigation involves several visits with the family and interviews with teachers, doctors and counselors. Workers are required to update each child's case files and must spend one week out of every six on 24-hour call.

"This is creating a situation where we may not be able to respond in time," Orrock said. "As a result, a child could undergo further harm. That would not only be a tragedy for the child, but the county could be held civilly liable. Once that happens, everybody will be sorry."

Staffing deficiencies in the Medicaid program have contributed to delays in applications that resulted in DSS being fined \$500 by state regulators since December, Orrock said. The department is required to process at least 85 percent of all Medicaid applications within 60 or 90 days or it faces a \$50 per week fine.

Between November and January, Medicaid cases increased by 126 applicants, Orrock said. During that period, the department has operated with two fewer income maintenance caseworkers. For the first time in years, Brunswick DSS dropped below the required processing rate and was fined.

If a Medicaid agency fails to meet the minimum requirements twice in one quarter, it must develop an approved plan to correct the deficiencies. Subsequent violations can lead to stricter levels of enforcement including state takeover of the program.

"We were already carrying more caseload per worker than was recommended in the last state study done in the late 70s," Orrock said. "As a result, clients have to wait

longer. After an hour or two, they get frustrated and agitated and they take their hostility out on workers. That puts more stress on people who are already maxed out."

Orrock feels the problems are only going to get worse. He worries that a false perception that DSS is overstuffed will make it tougher for him to get approval for additional positions he feels will be needed in the upcoming budget.

"I'm in a double dilemma," he said. "If they don't believe I need what I have now, it's going to be a real challenge to convince the board of commissioners that I need more."

Food stamp cases have increased by 168 recipients in the past three months with about 20 percent of county residents receiving some assistance, he said. The Aid to Families With Dependent Children (AFDC) program has added 140 new cases since June.

With no new industries moving into Brunswick County, Orrock does not expect much improvement in the local employment or income outlook. Summer tourism will bring some additional jobs, but most will pay low wages. Consequently, many

workers will remain on food stamps and their funding levels will have to be continually adjusted as weekly paychecks fluctuate.

"That makes more work for the caseworkers than if their clients stayed on unemployment and made the same thing every week," he said. "Right now they're managing. Six months from now, I don't know."

Calling the county manager "a man of his word," Orrock said he believes Clegg is "accepting a charge from the board of commissioners to do a deliberate and thorough examination" of county personnel needs. He said he would not like to be the one to decide what positions are "essential" to county government.

"How would I decide which client is more important than the other?" Orrock said. "Is it better to provide protection to a child or to help an elderly person or to pay a fine or to delay a person's application for AFDC? I can't make those decisions. There's one supreme being that does that."

"If we're not going to provide services, I don't know why we exist."

## Calabash Split Issue Seems Destined For Legislature

(Continued From Page 1-A)

first term in the legislature and said he is better known by longtime Brunswick County residents because he owned a local grocery store for many years.

Redwine said he has been hearing from people on both sides of the issue, "but I haven't kept a running count of who said what."

"I think it's safe to say that a majority of folks in Carolina Shores do not want the split, but District I is a mixed bag. People in District I who have said they want a split have not said exactly what direction they want to take," he added.

"They want to get away from what they feel like is people treating them unfairly, that they're getting

nothing from their tax dollars. There's a perception that natives can't get along with non-natives."

Redwine said that split or no split, it would benefit people in both areas to learn to get along. "We as legislators are jumped on to immediately fix problems, when sometimes only those involved can do that. We just pass legislation—cold, cut and dried. There's lots more going on than just the legal aspect of this."

Soles said despite his determination to introduce the break-up bill, "I would personally like to see them come to an agreement to remain one town."

He added, "I'm just trying to give them the opportunity to see how they like living apart."

## Calabash Nixes Commission For Negotiator

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Calabash Board of Commissioners Tuesday refused to approve a negotiating contract with a Raleigh accountant who was accused of overcharging the town for an earlier study.

Jack Brady, former president of the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association, told the board that nearly all the information contained in a recent rate-base analysis of the Carolina Blythe sewage treatment company was pulled directly from reports available from the N.C. Public Utilities Commission.

Calabash and Sunset Beach jointly paid Raleigh Accountant George Dennis \$9,000 for the study at the request of Powell Associates, engineering consultants for the two towns' proposed sewerage project.

The engineers said the report was

needed to establish how much a private utility might pay for Carolina Blythe, the sewage treatment company that currently serves Carolina Shores and other areas near the town. The purchase of the sewer plant and distribution system is the cornerstone for the first phase of the joint sewer system project.

"Every item in the Dennis report came directly from the PUC report," Brady told the board. "A third-grade math student could have done this report."

Brady said the report's last 36 pages of schedules outlining the assets and expenses of Carolina Blythe are derived directly from the PUC document using standard depreciation schedules. He said the work could easily have been done on a home computer in "maybe 16 hours" at a maximum cost of

\$2,000.

In a Nov. 4 letter to Powell Associates, Dennis said he was billing the towns for 120 hours work at \$75 per hour to prepare the study.

"I'm not an accountant, but I've been in business before. And if my accountant gave me this report and charged me \$9,000, I'd fire him," Brady said. "I certainly wouldn't pay him for another study."

Two weeks ago, at the request of Powell and Associates, the board agreed in a split vote to pay Dennis \$1,500, with Sunset Beach paying a like amount, to establish an asking price for Carolina Blythe.

Dennis also wants the board to agree to pay him a commission of three percent of the difference between the final negotiated purchase price and Carolina Blythe's initial asking price of \$4.5 million.

But the board Tuesday refused to authorize Dennis to negotiate a purchase or to approve his requested commission.

"Everybody on God's green earth knows that company is not worth \$4.5 million," said Commissioner George Anderson. "The motion we passed at the last meeting authorized the expenditure of \$1,500, not his commission."

Hank Mattutat, chairman of the Calabash Citizens' Advisory Committee, said the town may need Dennis's expertise as a negotiator. But he scoffed at the idea of using the \$4.5 million figure as the basis for his commission.

"You have a pie-in-the-sky figure of \$4.5 million and a rate-base study that says the company is worth \$1.5 million to a private utility," Mattutat said. "But the word is out that Carolina Blythe previously offered to sell to another utility company for

\$2.5 million. So the starting figure should be somewhere between \$1.5 million and \$2.5 million."

Consultants say Carolina Blythe would not be worth as much to a private utility as it would to a public entity such as joint sewer authority formed by Calabash and Sunset Beach. Under public ownership, the authority would not have to pay taxes or make a profit.

The board agreed to have Town Attorney Mike Ramos re-write the contract with Dennis, deleting his authorization to negotiate and the suggested commission agreement.

In other business the board:

■Directed Calabash Building Inspector Edward Schaack to inform businesses that the town will begin enforcing existing regulations that require the screening of all dumpsters starting June 1. Under the law, the containers are required to be screened on three sides to a height at least one foot above the top of the container. The open side is not to be visible from the street. Schaack asked the board for guidance after he received a complaint from a property owner about an unscreened dumpster.

■Opened three bids for the curbside pickup of yard debris and the hauling of debris away from the town's collection center. The Greenkeeper Co. was low bidder at \$2.39 per cubic yard.

■Opened three bids for clearing drainage ditches in the town. The low bidder was T.B. Powell at \$3.75 per linear foot.

■Scheduled a public hearing on modifications to section 8 and section 15 of the town's zoning ordinance for March 23 at 6:30 p.m.

## Normal Temps, Rain Forecast

Near normal temperatures and above average rainfall are in the forecast for the next few days.

Shalotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday he expects temperatures to range from the upper 30s at night to the upper 50s during the daytime, with about three-fourths inch of rainfall.

He recorded an "about normal" daily average temperature of 48 degrees for the period Feb. 16 through 22, combining a daily average high of 60 degrees and an average nightly low of 37 degrees. The high for the period was 79 degrees on Feb. 22, contrasting sharply with the low of 25 degrees recorded Feb. 19.

He recorded 37-hundredths of an inch of rainfall.

## Contractor Gets Deadline, Punchlist From BCC Board

(Continued From Page 1-A)

steel fireproofing and repair of damaged areas of fireproofing; exterior insulation and finish system; construction of ticket booths; broom-clean the interior; remove debris surrounding building; grading to stop ponding of water; sidewalks and base for parking and roadway and proceed with asphalt; hanging of remaining doors; roofing, flashing and coping; and at least 30 percent of interior painting; and all items on punch lists for inspections performed to date; and installation of ceiling gypsum board as soon as above-ceiling inspection is performed.

Both Reaves and Michael Sapp,

auditorium manager, said Tuesday that they have seen increased activity at the construction site over the past several weeks. This week workers have been pouring sidewalks and building the framework for ticket booths, among other things.

"Work is progressing," said Sapp. "It's looking better and better every day."

While he has no doubt the auditorium will be completed for PCC's graduation on Aug. 19, Sapp is not as optimistic about it being ready for a May 10 concert by the North Carolina Symphony.

"We haven't canceled it," he said, "but I don't see it happening."

**HOW TO SUBSCRIBE TO**

## THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

POST OFFICE BOX 2558  
SHALLOTTE, NORTH CAROLINA 28459

**NOTICE: Reliable or consistent delivery cannot be guaranteed since this newspaper must rely on the U.S. Postal Service for delivery. We can only guarantee that your newspaper will be submitted to the post office in Shallotte on Wednesday of the week of publication, in time for dispatch to out-of-town addresses that day.**

ANNUAL SUBSCRIPTION RATES BY MAIL:		Sr. Citizen
<b>In Brunswick County</b>		
In Brunswick County	\$6.30	\$5.30
N.C. Sales Tax	.38	.32
Postage Charge	3.68	3.68
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>10.36</b>	<b>9.30</b>
<b>Elsewhere in North Carolina</b>		
Elsewhere in North Carolina	\$6.30	\$5.30
N.C. Sales Tax	.38	.32
Postage Charge	8.18	8.18
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>14.86</b>	<b>13.80</b>
<b>Outside North Carolina</b>		
Outside North Carolina	\$6.30	\$5.30
Postage Charge	9.65	9.65
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>15.95</b>	<b>14.95</b>

Complete And Return To Above Address

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

little type

# BIG RESULTS

Use the Classifieds whether you're buying or selling.

## THE BRUNSWICK BEACON

754-6890

**THE BRUNSWICK BEACON**

Established Nov. 1, 1962  
Telephone 754-6890  
Published Every Thursday  
At 4709 Main Street  
Shalotte, N.C. 28459

**SUBSCRIPTION RATES IN BRUNSWICK COUNTY**

One Year.....\$10.36  
Six Months.....\$5.55

**ELSEWHERE IN NORTH CAROLINA**

One Year.....\$14.86  
Six Months.....\$7.90

**ELSEWHERE IN U.S.A.**

One Year.....\$15.95  
Six Months.....\$8.35

Second class postage paid at Shallotte, N.C. 28459, USPS 777-780. Postmaster, send address changes to:  
P.O. Box 2558, Shallotte, N.C. 28459-2558