

Chamber Members Tell Yelton Brunswick Needs Sewer System

BY ERIC CARLSON

Local business leaders Tuesday told County Manager Wyman Yelton that the need for central sewer systems is their biggest concern for the area's future economic health and said the county commissioners should take the lead in providing the service.

Speaking at a breakfast meeting of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, Yelton said the question of central sewer service seems to be on the minds of many people throughout the county.

"I've heard the word sewer brought up many times," Yelton said. "And I've heard the word expensive brought up right along with it."

After a brief address to the group, Yelton asked chamber members to "let me know what's on your minds" regarding issues facing Brunswick County.

Calabash real estate broker Charles Walters said one of the biggest problems facing his industry is the increasingly strict requirements for septic tank approval.

"A lot of lots that perked a few years ago won't perk now," Walters said. "It's a serious problem."

Marshall Tatum, owner of Jimmy's Pantry in Calabash, said that expansion of the county water system has brought with it an increased need for sewer service.

"It's one of our biggest concerns," Tatum said.

Sunset Beach Mayor Mason Barber agreed, saying the county needs a long-range plan for dealing with both wastewater and stormwater runoff.

"You can't hardly fish around here anymore," he said. "If we don't do something to clean it up, we're going to be out of the tourist business. But we can't just go from town to town building sewer systems. We need county leadership," Barber said.

While not making any promises, Yelton took notes of each member's remarks and said he would study the issues raised.

"You're not the first one to tell me that," he said to Barber.

Health care was another concern of several chamber members, who

noted that the influx of retirees to the area is likely to put increasing demands on the local health care system.

"We need to plan ahead on health care for the elderly," said Margaret Keller of Cardinal Care nursing home. "We need to be sure we maintain services here so people won't have to go to New Hanover County."

Yelton agreed, calling medical care one of his "number-one" concerns.

Sunset Beach Town Council member Cherri Cheek said that although Brunswick is an extremely diverse county, there is one concern shared throughout the area.

"We may have different opinions about a lot of things, but we all care about our children," she said. "One thing the county commissioners could work on for the entire community is to improve education."

In his opening remarks, Yelton urged chamber members to stay involved with county government and to let elected officials know what their concerns are. He said he had been "very busy" the past few months gathering input from different geographical areas and interest groups.

Yelton said Brunswick County is fortunate to have a number of advantages that were not available in Sampson and Wayne counties, where he previously served as county manager. He cited as examples the area's mild climate, its beaches, its healthy infrastructure, its proximity to a major airport and numerous recreational opportunities.

"One thing that's not mentioned that needs to be mentioned more is just how happy the people are almost all the time," Yelton said. "I come from an area where that's not the case. People were not having fun. They were never relaxed. Here, there's a vacation atmosphere. It's more laid back."

Before adjourning the meeting, chamber president-elect Joe Stanley expressed the organization's appreciation for the work of outgoing executive vice-president Bill Dearman, who will be moving to a similar position in Kentucky next week.



COUNTY MANAGER Wyman Yelton addresses members of the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce at a breakfast in Shallotte Tuesday morning.

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'Nothing Definite' Yet In Probe Of Calabash Robbery

Authorities say they have a few suspects, but "nothing definite yet" in their investigation into the recent armed robbery of a telephone executive and his wife by two masked men who lay in wait for them inside their Calabash Home.

An undetermined amount of cash, a pistol and more than \$5,000 worth of jewelry were stolen when Russell Price, general manager of Atlantic Telephone Membership Corp., was forced at gun point to open a safe in his bathroom Sept. 16.

Detectives say Price and his wife Patsy Ann were "terrorized" in their home on Thomasboro Road for nearly an hour by two men wearing ski masks and gloves who tied them up, taped their mouths and threatened to kill them if they refused to lead the robbers to more money.

"We're still processing evidence and we've got a couple of suspects we're working on, but we don't have anything definite yet," said Det. John Ingram, who is heading

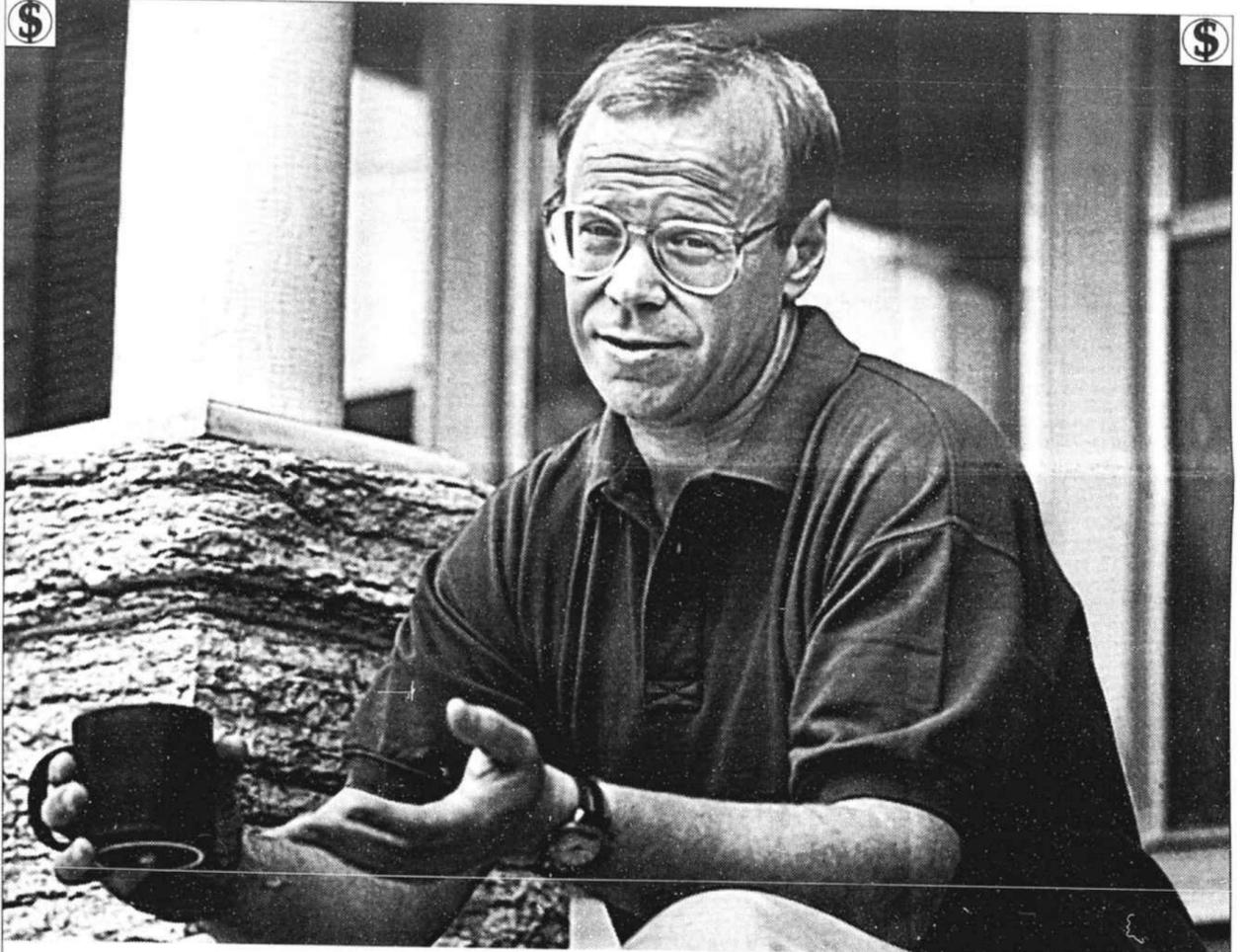
the investigation.

Because of the masks, the Prices were unable to provide an accurate description of the two men who escaped in one of the couple's cars and abandoned it in a vacant lot about two miles away. Police assume that the pair quickly jumped into another vehicle and fled the area.

Ingram would not speculate as to whether or not the robbers live in Brunswick County or are acquainted with the Prices. He said the robbery does not necessarily suggest that residents need to be concerned about the threat of a similar occurrence elsewhere.

"Still, people need to be more cautious about leaving their homes unlocked," Ingram said. "They should also be aware of any signs of forced entry. It always pays to be careful."

Price was surprised by a gunman in his living room after entering through an unlocked garage door at about 9 p.m.



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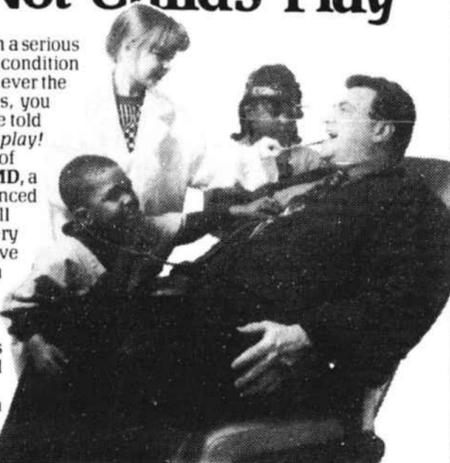
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