

# Town Survives Split-Up Threat, Elects New Mayor

BY ERIC CARLSON

The town we know as Calabash was threatened with extinction in 1993. But it managed to survive with a continued effort to build a new sewer system while holding a surprisingly quiet election campaign that resulted in the selection of a new mayor and three new commissioners.

The year began with the presentation of a study by a Raleigh accountant suggesting that the Carolina Blythe sewage treatment system might not be worth its \$4.5 million asking price, at least not to another private utility company. Engineers pointed out that the facility would be worth more to a municipality, which would not have to make a profit or pay as much in taxes.

In late January, State Sen. R.C. Soles dropped a bombshell on the town when he announced that he would introduce legislation to split Calabash into two towns along district lines. He said the move was in response to growing animosity between residents of old Calabash and the residential golfing community of Carolina Shores. Despite hearing only three people out of 200 speak in support of his bill at a February public meeting, Soles said he would stand by his vow to introduce the bill, calling it "the best way to get their attention."

In March, representatives of Carolina Blythe told the board that the \$4.5 million asking price for the utility was "not negotiable" and that the company would no longer deal with any consultant hired by the town to ne-

gotiate a purchase price. Blythe executive Coleman Burnett insisted that the town's hired engineers had not evaluated the purchase option fairly in their recommendations to the board.

At the same meeting, the commissioners voted unanimously in favor of a resolution informing Sen. Soles that "his efforts to split the town are not in the best interest of Calabash." The senator later ignored their wishes and introduced legislation that would remove Carolina Shores from Calabash if a majority of voters in either district approved the split in a referendum.

Later that month, Calabash and Sunset Beach were joined by Holden Beach, Ocean Isle Beach and Shallotte in a request to Gov. Jim Hunt for state funds to study the feasibility of a regional sewerage system to serve all five towns. Four mayors and 18 town board members met in Bolivia to hear engineers explain the advantages of forming a joint system and to discuss ways of attracting state money to pay for it.

In late April, the board asked Town Attorney Mike Ramos to take legal action against a Shallotte lawyer for alleged sign violations on property he owns in Calabash. But instead of waiting for the court papers to arrive, Attorney Benedict Del Re filed a lawsuit against the town claiming that building inspector Edward Schaack had harassed him, trespassed on his property and offered

to take money for designing improvements that would allow him to pass a building inspection. Schaack denied the allegations, which attorney Ramos called "meritless."

As the state legislative session drew to a close, Sen. Soles asked a N.C. House subcommittee to withhold action on his bill to split Calabash, citing evidence of relaxed tensions between the two districts.

After briefly considering an additional allocation to hire a town manager, the commissioners dropped the idea and adopted a 1993-94 budget that maintained the previous year's tax rate.

As plans for the proposed sewer system were modified to eliminate Carolina Shores from the service area, the board discussed the idea of canceling a promised referendum on the project. The idea was tabled repeatedly as commissioners considered a new offer to sell Carolina Blythe from owner Billy Burnett. While the asking price remained the same, Burnett told the board he would finance the entire purchase in a way that would allow the town to provide sewer service without seeking outside funding.

In mid-November, the board sponsored a public forum to explain three options for sewerage: the joint system with Sunset Beach, the Carolina Blythe purchase and a new proposal to create a Calabash sewage district.

A new board took office Dec. 14 with incoming Mayor George Anderson praising his predecessor Douglas Simmons for his service and devotion to the town during four terms of office. Also sworn in were new commissioners Forrest King, Teddy Altreuter, Edward Schaack and Alvin Leisey Jr.

As the year drew to a close, the town received an unwanted Christmas gift when the Farmers Home Administration announced that Calabash and Sunset Beach would not qualify for the \$4.1 million in grants they had sought to help pay for the sewage system. But the project lives on as engineers work with the new board to explore other financing options.

## Tutor Training Scheduled For Sat., January 22, 29

The Brunswick County Literacy Council will conduct a free tutor training workshop on Saturday, Jan. 22, from 9 a.m. to 4 p.m. and continuing on Saturday, Jan. 29, from 9 a.m. until 4 p.m. at the Town Creek Recreation Park Community Building on U.S. 17 near Winnabow.

Susan Eggert will lead the 12-hour workshop on the Laubach method of reading.

For more information or to pre-register, call 754-7323.

# Brunswick Faces Same Public Health Dilemmas, Issues As State And Nation

BY LYNN CARLSON

Public health issues making local headlines in 1993 reflected larger statewide and national problems.

### Smoking Regs

A proposed countywide crack-down on cigarette smoking went down in flames in mid-October, after six months of study and revision by a committee of health professionals and laymen, smokers and non-smokers.

The law would have banned smoking in all workplaces and buildings without separate ventilation systems to serve smoking and smoke-free areas.

A majority of people attending a September public hearing on the proposal said they oppose governmental controls on where people may smoke.

Brunswick County Board of Health members Dr. Brad Kerr, Dr. Jeffrey Mintz and Nurse Pat Nutter voted in favor of the regulations, but lost out to members Don Warren, Bruce Quaintance, Patrick Newton and Arthur Knox, who opposed the measure. Dr. Harry Johnson abstained, saying he is against smoking as a public health hazard but was uncomfortable with strict governmental control of the issue.

Cigarette smoking was banned from public areas of the Brunswick

### Certification Nixed

In January, Brunswick County restaurateurs rose up in opposition to a proposed plan to certify all food service workers. A program outline was drafted by a committee of restaurant owners and workers and was taken to public hearing in June. At the hearing, most speakers said they opposed the proposed \$500 fine proposed for non-compliance. In November the health board, which had undergone several membership changes since the idea's introduction in January, voted down the proposal.



County Government Complex.

### Rabies Scare

In September, Ash resident Raymond Ludlum shot a raccoon later determined to be Brunswick County's first confirmed case of rabies since the current statewide epidemic began. The next week, three children, two adults and two unvaccinated dogs were exposed to a second rabid raccoon, also in Ash, and underwent treatment to protect themselves against the virus.

### Sewers, Septic Tanks

In April, the health board unanimously endorsed the concept of a combined regional central sewer and stormwater runoff management system for southwest Brunswick County.

It joined eight other governmental entities in seeking state funds to study the possibility of such a system; the funds were not appropriated in 1993.

### Chairman Resigns

In late May, the health board chairman, Ocean Isle Beach chiropractor Dr. H.J. "Skip" Davis, resigned, citing personal reasons. He was succeeded by Shallotte businessman Maliston "Moe" Stanley, a health board member who has been active in minority health promotion efforts.

Money Matters

Early in the year, fees were doubled for many animal control, clinical and environmental services offered by the health department. In October, the health board voted to ask the county commissioners for \$137,000 to upgrade the department's nursing programs.

granted a grace period of one year before the crack-down, agreed not to send letters to property owners and arranged to meet and talk with real estate agents about the issue.

In June, a group of real estate agents warned the health board that strict enforcement of occupancy rules would have a dire effect on the local tourist economy.

In July, state officials said the septic tank rules would be enforced statewide.

### Money Matters

Later in the month, the board

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