

Bridging The Gap

DOT will unveil new alternatives for replacing the bridge at Sunset Beach at a citizens' forum February 1. Page 15-A.

What Does The Red Sea Part?

Students from Shallotte Middle and the Cray School advance in the National Geography Bee. Page 1-B.

WBHS Alumnus Shines...

Hoops standout Ricky Daniels scores a season-high 20 points to lead the Wolfpack to victory over FSU. Page 10-B.

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STAFF PHOTO BY DOUG RUTTER

Superstar Signature

Davia Thompson, one of the greatest basketball players ever to come out of North Carolina, signs the jersey of Braeden Baldwin following a Jr. Hornets clinic last week at South Brunswick High School. Thompson, a former star with the N.C. State Wolfpack and Denver Nuggets, was in the county urging kids to stay in school and avoid drugs and alcohol. Story on Page 9-B.

Brunswick Commissioners Considering County Role In Regional Sewer Effort

BY SUSAN USHER

Brunswick County Commissioners took the first step Tuesday toward a possible county role in efforts to develop a regional sewer and stormwater project in the southwestern area of the county.

At the board's direction County Attorney Michael Ramos and County Engineer Robert Tucker are to investigate the "legal and engineering ramifications" of the county becoming a participant with Sunset Beach and Calabash in a southwestern area "stormwater and sewer authority."

Chairman Don Warren, who made the motion, said later that he would personally like to see the county become a partner, "not lead agent," in efforts to develop sewer and stormwater projects on a regional basis. That size system is needed to realize management and financial economies of scale and establish a sufficiently large customer base.

"I'd like to see it happen," said Warren. "Otherwise I don't think it's going to work there or in Leland and Belville on a mass scale."

In previous years, the county has hesitated to become involved in sewer projects, focusing instead on expansion of the county water system.

"What we would like to work toward is a re-

gional authority that would be selling revenue bonds," Warren said. "Not general obligation bonds."

Revenue bonds are repaid with user fees or system profits, while general obligation bonds are guaranteed by a government's ability to levy and collect property taxes.

Warren said that with the area's long-term growth, stormwater projects will have to be included as part of sewer projects.

"If you want to preserve your environment, you'll have to," said Warren.

Sunset Beach and Calabash are already working together to develop a regional sewer system to serve the two towns and some unincorporated areas of the county. The system would be operated by a South Brunswick Regional Water and Sewer Authority, which could readily include Brunswick County as well as the two towns. An authority is quasi-governmental and has the power to levy user fees and charges, make special assessments, issue revenue bonds and condemn land for public use.

An authority cannot hold a referendum for a general obligation bond issue, though any town or county that is a participant in an authority can do so within its own boundaries.

Current plans and designs for the regional sewer project don't include provisions for stormwater runoff management, which the towns believe could hurt public support for the sewer project. Stormwater management was not addressed mainly because limited funds for that purpose were available from state and federal lending/grant agencies.

That is expected to change. With recent reauthorization of the federal Clean Water Act, consulting engineer Joe Tombro told Sunset Beach Council members earlier this month, stormwater management plans will be required of communities and more monies will be available at the federal and state levels.

Tombro also indicated then he anticipated an announcement that Brunswick County would serve as "lead agent" toward a regional stormwater management system that he anticipated would be endorsed by eight local governments from Calabash north.

As evidence of its seriousness about stormwater management, Sunset Beach Council also recently agreed to initiate a study of how to manage stormwater runoff on the island of Sunset Beach.

Tombro attended the commissioners' meeting Tuesday, along with Sunset Beach Mayor Mason Barber and Mayor pro tem Ed Gore.

Shalotte Changes Aimed At Encouraging Growth

BY DOUG RUTTER

Shalotte officials made several key changes to their acreage fees and annexation policy Tuesday in an effort to encourage development within the town limits.

The biggest revisions will allow people who ask for town annexation to pay the same acreage fees as landowners who are already inside the corporate limits.

Existing policy requires landowners outside the city limits to pay

twice as much in acreage fees as property owners inside the town, even if they ask for annexation.

"We're trying to encourage growth, not discourage it," Alderman Carson Durham said. "Shalotte needs to grow. We're small. We need to grow and expand our tax base."

The new policy, which is scheduled to take effect Feb. 1, gives a break to people who agree to become part of the town. They will

save at least \$1,000 per acre, depending on how the property is developed.

Acreage fees, which are collected to help pay for utility expansion, are \$1,000 per acre for conservation and residential uses, \$2,000 for commercial and \$2,500 for industrial.

The fees will remain double for property outside the town limits. Regardless of where the land is located, fees are cut in half if a landowner needs only water or sewer.

Durham said the revisions "give property owners outside the town limits the opportunity to come into the town and pay the lower rates."

Prior to any voluntary annexation, the owner must provide the planning board with a survey of the property, upgrade all streets to town standards and meet all other town codes dealing with subdivisions and utilities.

Another change approved Tuesday gives the town board the option of asking developers in need of water or sewer service to extend lines to their property in phases.

Durham indicated this will protect the town if the developer of a large

subdivision asks for service. Instead of allocating a large amount of sewer capacity at one time, the town could provide it over a long term.

Aldermen also approved a change in the capital reserve fee ordinance Tuesday night. It requires payment before water or sewer service is provided in cases where the town annexes property with existing structures.

While no other action was taken on capital reserve fees Tuesday, Durham asked other board members to consider changing the fee structure so developers are billed based on their impact on the sewer system.

Presently, the town charges minimum fees of \$600 per residence and \$1,125 per business. Larger homes and commercial structures are charged extra based on square footage.

Durham said the town board needs to change the fees and start charging owners based on water and sewer usage.

A small laundromat has a greater impact on the sewer system than a huge warehouse. But under the pre-

(See SHALLOTTE, Page 2-A)

Arctic Blast Expected To End Thursday

BY DOUG RUTTER

Brunswick County residents should be enjoying more seasonable weather by Thursday afternoon after enduring two blasts of Arctic air in the past week.

The second wave of a bitterly cold air mass that drove temperatures into the teens on Sunday was expected to move into the area late Tuesday.

"We're headed back into the deep freeze for 36 to 48 hours," Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday morning. "It's going to come close to being as cold as it was this weekend."

While Canady didn't expect the mercury to fall as low as the 12-degree mark it hit Sunday, he did call for the temperature to stay below freezing for a longer period than it did over the weekend.

"It looks like next week will be much nicer weather than we've had. It looks like we're about to get a reprieve."

—Meteorologist Jackson Canady

Starting Tuesday night, Canady said area residents probably wouldn't see the temperature above 32 degrees until Thursday afternoon. "It's going to be a very intense cold."

The arctic air should be out of the picture by

Friday, allowing the temperature to slowly return to a normal level.

"By next week it looks like we'll be getting back to seasonable weather," Canady said. "It looks like next week will be much nicer weather than we've had. It looks like we're about to get a reprieve."

Over the weekend, the hard freeze and subsequent thaw resulted in a lot of water lines breaks across Brunswick County.

In Southport, the main valve that connects the city water tower to its distribution lines ruptured on Saturday. Workers repaired the valve Monday, and the city never lost water service.

Elsewhere, plumbers were busy early this week repairing ruptured water lines at Brunswick County beach houses.

Local Health Professionals Tell Rose They're Wary Of Clinton Reform Plan

BY DOUG RUTTER

Some Brunswick County health professionals are wary of President Clinton's proposed health care reform, they indicated during a meeting with Congressman Charlie Rose last week in Shallotte.

They said they're concerned about what it will cost taxpayers, how it will affect the quality of health care and the impact it will have on hospitals and doctors in rural areas like Brunswick County.

Rose, a Democrat seeking re-election to the 7th District seat he has held since 1972, met with about 20 health care providers and small business owners Friday at the office of Dr. Charles Locke.

The 11-term incumbent said he wants input from his constituents so he can be a "guided missile" when the health plan comes up for a vote as expected later this year.

Rose indicated he wants to hold more meetings with health professionals as more details about the plan are finalized.

"We are poking at an animal in the dark and we're not sure what it's going to look like," he said last week.

Rose said the president has proposed "a very ambitious program" that would ensure Americans the type of universal coverage that many Fortune 500 companies provide their employees.

"It sounds great," Rose said. "The problem is can we afford it and has it been thought through well enough to keep from totally disrupting the system in place. Most in Congress are not sure it's been thought through."

Rose said he thinks Congress will approve some sort of health care re-

form this year because all members of the House of Representatives and one-third of the Senators are up for re-election.

He said the president has gotten America excited about health reform, and congressmen will not want to face re-election in November without passing a plan.

"You all are looking at the most politically explosive mine field that most Congressmen have ever faced," Rose said. "You don't make radical change overnight and have it work well. I think we have to phase this in over time."

"I think the American people like the basic outline. It's mighty appealing," he continued. "I predict what comes out will not be as ambitious as what the president has proposed."

Clinton has indicated he will increase the tax on tobacco to help pay for a national health care program, but Rose said he's not sure that will provide enough money.

"I don't think you can tax tobacco enough to get all the money that may be needed for this program," he said. "I think when the numbers are all run his program may be too ambitious."

Mark Gregson, chief executive officer at The Brunswick Hospital,

said he doesn't think the country has the economic base to pay for the program.

"None of us are willing to sacrifice the care we provide," Gregson said. "It's extremely disturbing to think of the magnitude of what is being proposed."

Dr. Keith Reschly, a general practitioner in Southport, said he's uneasy about one program for the entire nation. "Who's to say what works in Wyoming is going to work in North Carolina?"

Rose pointed out that each state will have "tremendous leeway" in deciding how the program works.

"I agree with you totally," he told Reschly. "One system is not going to fit the whole country."

Reschly also said the government can't allow unlimited access to health care because it will be abused. "People don't really value things that they don't have to pay for," he said.

"We do have to have limits," Rose agreed.

The congressman said he hopes the health care plan will reduce the number of unreasonable malpractice lawsuits brought against hospitals and doctors. The suits have con-

(See ROSE, Page 2-A)

Three-Way Democratic Contest Set For District 5 Nomination

Entry of two new players has created a three-way contest for the Democratic nomination for the District 5 seat on the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

Dan Davis of Winnabow and W.M. (Bill) Sue of Leland are the latest candidates to file, joining Leland businessman Michael Ballard.

Davis, 45, resides on Rahon Way off N.C. 133. Sue, 59, lives on Sue Circle in Leland and is a former member of the Brunswick County Board of Education. Neither he nor Davis could be reached for comment Tuesday afternoon.

Also last week Pat Purvis Brown, 57, of Waccamaw School Road, Ash, filed for the District 4 seat on the Brunswick County Board of Education. She is a native of Ash and a retired educator, having taught in the California public schools.

Brown is the first candidate of either party to file for the District 4 seat, which is held by Donna Baxter of Boiling Spring Lakes, chairman of the school board.

In Whiteville, 13th District Resident Superior Court Chief Judge William C. Gore Jr. and Judge D. Jack Hooks Jr. filed for re-election.

These candidates filed earlier for nomination to county or district offices:

■ Sheriff: N.C. Highway Patrolman Jerry Dove; Chief Deputy John Marlow; Deputy Lt. Ronald Hewett; and Long Beach Police Sgt. Bill Sisk, Democrats; and Southport businessman James Brown, Republican;

■ Board of Commissioners: incumbent Don Warren, Democrat; and Frances Ludlum Babson, Republican, District 1; incumbent Jerry Jones, Republican, and W.A. "Alfonzo" Roach, Democrat, District 2; incumbent Wayland Vereen, Democrat, District 3; incumbent Tom Rabon, Democrat, District 4; incumbent Donald Shaw, Republican, S. L. Doty, Republican, and Michael Ballard, Democrat, District 5;

■ Board of Education: incumbent Thurman Gause and challenger Olaf "Bud" Thorsen, Democrat, District 1; former school board member George Wilson, Democrat, District 2; incumbent Bill Fairley, Republican, District 3; incumbent Yvonne Bright, Republican, and Glenda Browning, Democrat, District 5;

■ Clerk of Superior Court: incumbent Diana Morgan, Democrat;

■ District Judge, 13th Judicial District: G. Phillip David, Democrat, Whiteville;

■ N.C. House of Representatives: E. David Redwine, Ocean Isle, and Dewey Hill, Lake Waccamaw, Democrat, 14th District (2 seats); Thomas E. Wright Jr., Wilmington, Democrat, 98th District; and

■ State Senate: Ron Taylor, Bladen County, 18th District.

Candidates have until noon Monday, Feb. 7, to file for office.

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