



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

First Impressions

Students from Beth Gurganus's pre-kindergarten class at Union Primary School enjoy a tour of the Brunswick Beacon last week. Pressman William Manning (rear) took the group through the process of laying out and printing a newspaper.



PHOTO CONTRIBUTED

Jump Rope For Heart

Bolivia Elementary School second graders (front, from left) Ashley Hux, Clint Brewer and Chad Scott jump rope to raise funds for American Heart Association research and education programs. They were among 50 to 60 students at the school who participated in the Jump Rope For Heart benefit, said campaign chairman Bill Potts. The three are students in Shelley Payton's physical education class.

New Small Business Director Left Road For A Challenge Closer Home

BY SUSAN USHER

When Michael Edward Royal accepted the job of Small Business Center Director at Brunswick Community College, he was ready for change, to leave the road behind.

Now he's preparing for possible shifts in direction for the center.

"The feedback I get from the businesses will determine the direction the center moves in," he said in an interview last week between telephone calls from prospective new business owners. "What we do will be designed around the needs of this county."

Royal won't rely on his personal knowledge to make that determination. After several weeks of familiarizing himself with the center's resources and operations, Royal has begun designing a survey he intends to distribute to small businesses across Brunswick County.

A native of Southport and a resident of Boiling Spring Lakes, Royal is the second person to serve as center director. He succeeds Velva Hall Jenkins of Winnabow, who moved into the new BCC post of assistant dean of continuing education last year.

She was hired in 1986 to bring the Small Business Center into being. It began operation in 1987 and is presently funded by a Department of Community Colleges grant of \$54,000. It still offers the same basic services as then: one-on-one counseling, seminars and workshops targeted at the needs of small businesses, and resource materials that can loaned out or used in-house.

The center also co-sponsors local observance of Small Business Week (May 1-7 this year) and the Small Business Awards presented annually at a dinner that week.

Royal also appears on a radio show, "Minding Your Business," which airs live on WCCA every first Tuesday at 2:30 p.m.

The center director serves as counselor, sounding board and referral agent for clients with widely varying needs—so diverse it's unlikely any one person has all the answers.

On this particular afternoon a caller interested in opening a day care facility asks for census data on children in a particular section of the county; another is interested in opening a landscape tree nursery. For a third caller, Royal offers to set up an appointment with an accountant willing to give an initial consultation at no charge.

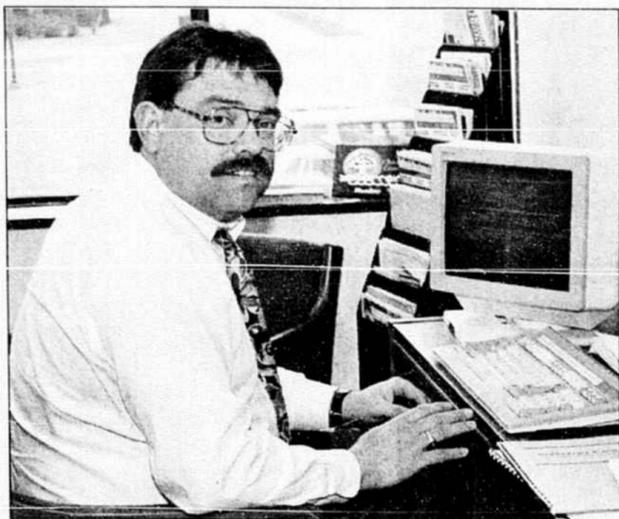
"You don't really need to know what the answers are if you know where to find them," he says.

While trying to assess client needs, Royal said he is also "moving quickly" to bring himself up to speed on the job, to identify as many resources and sources of information as possible related to all areas of small business start-up and operation.

An internal survey by the South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce last year indicated members had a high interest in time and stress management and hiring and firing issues. Royal doesn't know yet if small businesses in other sections of the county share those same concerns.

It may not matter if interest is sufficiently high in the South Brunswick area. Royal is looking at the possibility of moving center workshops away from the BCC main campus in Supply and scheduling them in outlying communities. He is eyeing other ways also for breaking a pattern of low attendance at past center-sponsored workshops.

"I think there are some things we can do to turn that around," he said.



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

AS THE NEW director of the BCC Small Business Center Michael Royal offers a network of resources to help individuals start new businesses as well as give existing businesses some of the support they need to survive.

"Among other things I'm looking at the possibility of taking workshops to more remote areas, not just to the BCC main campus."

Depending on interest and/or funding, other tentative projects on Royal's idea board include instituting a business-to-business partnership program, updating and expanding the center's collection of resource material, possibly in cooperation with the BCC and public libraries; publishing a small business directory, developing a newcomer incentive package and instituting a "lunch 'n' learn" series.

"The main thing is I think I need to be able to help people who want to start a new business and also help established businesses," he said. "Our goal is to have businesses that start remain in business. We're trying to change the odds."

A message pops up on his computer screen from a Small Business Center on the other side of the state: "X has a client interested in purchasing clothing directly from the manu-

facturer for a wholesale outlet. Urgent."

Royal sees the computer as one of the center's most flexible and useful tools, a means of reaching every Small Business Center in the state.

"If a client has a specific need that I haven't dealt with, somewhere in the system there's someone who has," he said.

In meeting its objectives, he thinks the Small Business Center has the potential to "dramatically affect" Brunswick County's double-digit unemployment rate through support of small business start-up and expansion.

Good communication with clients and providing them current and useful information are critical to that success.

A business-to-business partnership, for instance, would link a new business with an established business in the same or similar line, but in a different market area, possibly in an adjacent county, in a mentor-

ing-type relationship. "Because they are in the same line of business, they would be able to offer more specific advice than we can provide at the center," he said.

While upgrading the center's reference collection, Royal also wants to make it more accessible to the public. One option might be to work with the Brunswick County Public Library to establish a mini-collection in each branch, with space for Small Business Administration pamphlets as well.

The proposed small business directory, suggested to Royal by the center's advisory council, would list all small businesses in the county and the services or goods they provide.

If the center is to help fledgling businesses, it needs to be an early point of contact in the county. Royal wants to offer a service or gift as an incentive for new or proposed businesses to contact his office.

A lunch 'n' learn series would offer events during the noon lunch hour, with participants bringing bag lunches, an alternative to the longer programs the center offers.

Royal doesn't mind the sharp learning curve involved in a new job; it's good to be home full time. He started with the Small Business Center on Jan. 3, off the highway for the first time in at least eight years.

Except for a brief stint as area representative for wholesale lighting fixture sales in the Tampa Bay, Fla., market for Progress Lighting, he had been a territory manager with Fasco Industries Inc. of Fayetteville since 1986.

The job kept him on the road in eastern South Carolina and North Carolina, calling on professionals and wholesale distributors in the electrical and building construction fields. It meant being away from his home and family in Boiling Spring Lakes.

"I had gotten to the point I wanted to be home more and I couldn't be," said the former Fasco regional Top Gun, Most Improved Performer and Million Dollar Club member. "To be honest with you, I haven't missed it. I think that is because I was really ready to make the change."

In addition to a background in corporate sales and marketing, Royal brings to the job a significant plus: his familiarity with Brunswick County and its people.

After graduating in 1973 as a member of the first senior class of South Brunswick High School, he went to work for one of the area's largest employers, Du Pont's Cape Fear Plant in Leland. Later he joined Pfizer Chemical Co. in Southport, now Archer-Daniel-Midlands.

When he left Pfizer in 1981, Royal entered the Walker College of Business at Appalachian State University at Boone. In August 1984, he earned a bachelor of science in business administration, with a major in marketing and a minor in management. During school he served as a resident assistant, as business manager of ASU's student

newspaper as a senior business intern, and gained hands-on experience in market research and distribution analysis.

His sales ability didn't go unnoticed even then; he received the top salesman award in a cruise fundraising project held by his sales and marketing fraternity.

Royal's first job out of college was in inside sales as a manufacturer's representative for J.G. Fairbanks and Associates of Charlotte. Approximately a year later, he moved on to Fasco.

Excited about his new post, Royal has no regrets over changing careers.

"Everywhere, at the college and in the community, everyone has really welcomed me and made me feel comfortable," he said. "I used to drive about 50,000 miles a year. I got to meet people, but I didn't have the camaraderie of coworkers. Now I do."

His voice assumes a more serious note as he adds, "I'm really excited about this, about being able to contribute something to the county."

William Temple Allen, CPA, P.A.

Income Tax Preparation/
Representation
(federal and all state returns)
Accounting and Bookkeeping
Services
Computerized Payroll
Tax and Estate Planning
Former IRS Assistant Director
Technical Division, Washington, D.C.
25 Years Tax Experience



Ragpach Row, Calabash
579-3328

Dr. Christopher J. Moshoures

is pleased to announce
the opening of his
new office location
for the practice of
Optometry and Diseases of the Eye.



Vision Square
4830 Main Street • Shallotte
754-2020

Steamers Lounge

8 EAST SECOND ST., OCEAN ISLE BEACH
579-0535 - FULL ABC PERMITS

Now Open For Lunch & Dinner
11 AM-2 AM, 7 DAYS A WEEK
and late night breakfast Fri. & Sat. at 1 AM

WEDNESDAY NIGHTS

Shag Lessons at 7 PM
DJ is Marty Callaghan
99¢ Spaghetti Dinner

FRIDAY & SATURDAY NIGHTS

Our DJ is Marty Callaghan

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 27



See the NASCAR
Winston Cup GOOD-
WRENCH 500 live from
Rockingham with your
friends on our wide-
screen TV at 12 noon!

15¢ Buffalo Wings & Drink Specials