

Legislative Commission Studying Moratorium On Fishing Licenses

BY DOUG RUTTER

The state legislative commission that deals with seafood may ask the General Assembly to place a two-year moratorium on the issuance of commercial fishing licenses during the upcoming short session.

State Rep. David Redwine of Ocean Isle Beach, co-chairman of the Joint Legislative Commission on Seafood and Aquaculture, said Tuesday he thinks the panel will recommend a freeze once the details have been worked out.

"Everyone I've talked to, including the commercial fishermen, thinks it's a good idea," Redwine said. "The idea of having a moratorium I'm convinced is a good idea."

The legislative commission discussed the proposal and heard from state fisheries officials and commercial fishermen during its meeting last Thursday in Wilmington, Redwine said.

"We didn't feel we had enough information at that meeting to do anything," Redwine said, adding that the group could take action at its May 11 meeting in Raleigh.

By then, Redwine said the N.C. Division of Marine Fisheries should have more information for the commission on the cost of shellfish and crab licenses and a freeze on "major" commercial fishing regulations.

Fishermen now pay \$15 for a shellfish and crab license. Redwine the N.C. Marine Fisheries Commission has suggested the shellfish and crab licenses be separated and fishermen be charged \$15 for each.

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—Rep. David Redwine

"That concerned me, doubling the cost like that," Redwine said.

Redwine also said the legislative commission needs more information on a proposed freeze on the adoption of "major" regulations during the two-year moratorium.

"We don't know what is considered major and what is considered minor and that needs to be clarified," Redwine said.

"With those kinds of questions still unanswered we decided not to recommend anything that day," he added.

The Marine Fisheries Commission (MFC) last month recommended a two-year freeze on the issuance of commercial licenses. Fishermen who already have valid licenses would be exempt from the proposed moratorium.

During the two-year period, the MFC suggests that the Division of

Marine Fisheries study licensing, the status of fish stocks and developments in other states that affect North Carolina's commercial fisheries.

"This move will enable the division to look at the amount of gear in the water and the number of people involved in different fisheries," N.C. Fisheries Director Bill Hogarth said last month.

Said MFC Chairman Bob Lucas, "We've got to go in a new direction. We have got to be bold. The old system will not work, and we have got to find a better one."

The proposed moratorium has been endorsed by a 42-year-old trade group that represents the state's commercial fishermen, seafood dealers and processors.

In an April 27 letter to the joint

legislative commission, the N.C. Fisheries Association (NCFA) asked the group to recommend a two-year freeze to the General Assembly during the upcoming session.

The association also requested that during the two-year period, no new major regulations be considered by the Marine Fisheries Commission, said NCFA Executive Director Jerry Schill.

"This time limit will allow us to work with the state's regulatory agency to work on a long-term plan to effectively conserve our fisheries resources, as well as preserve our coastal commercial fishing families and heritage," Schill said.

Schill said most commercial fishing licenses are held by recreational anglers, and there are concerns about the number of licenses being

sold to fishermen moving to North Carolina due to restrictions in their home states.

"The (NCFA) board simply feels that the present system is broken and it needs to be fixed," Schill said.

"While NCFA commits time and

resources on coming up with solutions, we also think it's only right that a moratorium also be placed on any new major regulations during that period so we can place our energies on real solutions to solving the fisheries management dilemma."

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SHALLOTTE PLAZA SHALLOTTE



BY DAVID RUTTER

West Wins Data Processing Contest At Community College

West Brunswick High School won the tenth annual Brunswick Community College Business Data Processing Contest April 28 at Brunswick Community College.

The three Brunswick County high schools competed in the categories of keyboarding, computerized accounting, software application, business communications, financial management and office simulation. The business department faculty at Brunswick Community College served as judges for the contest.

BCC Director of Business Programs Joyce Hewett coordinated the contest with the assistance of BCC business instructors and the high school business teachers. The presentation of the awards was held in Brunswick Community College Odell Williamson Auditorium. BCC President W. Michael Reaves and Hewett presented the awards to each individual student winner and to the overall school winner.

Winning in the keyboarding category were: first place, Walter Pigg, WBHS; second place, Jeremie Varnam, WBHS; and third place, Mary Osborne, SBHS. Computerized accounting winners were: first place, Angela Perkins, NBHS; second place, Rebecca Hughes, WBHS; and third place, Thelma Osborne.

In the software applications competition, winners were: first place, Brandy Caps, WBHS; second place, Jennifer Hardee, SBHS; third place, Megan Grissett, WBHS.

In a new category introduced to the contest for the first time this year, business communications, the student winners were: Patricia Shannon, SBHS, first place; Monckia Gause, WBHS, second place, and Melanie Phillips, WBHS, third place.

Crystal Baker of North Brunswick High School won the first place prize in the financial management category. Heath Watkins of NBHA won second place. Third-place awards winners tied with both Hope Gray of WBHS and Lisa Defino of SBHS getting that distinction.

In the office simulation category, teams of three competed from each of the three high schools. South Brunswick High School captured the first-place prize in that category. West Brunswick High School placed second, while North Brunswick High School finished in third place.

In addition to the morning competition and awards ceremony, a lunch was provided to contest participants, compliments of Hardee's in Supply. Textbook publisher Glencoe-McMillan contributed to the trophies' purchase.

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