

Respondents Want More Emphasis On Drug, Alcohol Dangers

Questions posed in the Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce attitudinal survey asked respondents to grade specific public school programs or to rate the emphasis given certain activities.

"A" or "B" responses, above average, were considered favorable perceptions; "C" responses were considered neutral and "D" and "F" scores, below average, negative. Percentages below are based on the total number of surveys returned; the number of persons answering each question varied.

■ An overwhelming 84.2 percent believe the schools should put more emphasis on the dangers of drugs and alcohol, while 13.6 percent don't. Respondents also listed drug and alcohol use as one of the major problems facing the schools.

■ Nearly 60 percent believe the schools do not place sufficient emphasis on sex education and AIDS prevention, while 33 percent think emphasis is sufficient. Forty-eight people gave no response.

■ About 36 percent (243) rate as average the schools' teaching of the basic skills of reading, writing and mathematics, while an equal number gave it either a "D" or "F". Only 170 (25.4 percent) awarded an "A" or "B".

■ Overall, 37 percent believe the schools do an average job of teaching creative thinking and curiosity, while 25 percent rated it above average and 35.4 percent rated it below average.

■ Most believe the county schools aren't doing a very good job of teaching "skills necessary for the 21st

Chambers Tried To Reach 'Cross Section'

The Southport-Oak Island Chamber of Commerce, working with sister South Brunswick Islands and North Brunswick chambers, distributed surveys in February to 1,636 people who live and/or work in Brunswick County.

In an attempt to reach a cross section of the community, surveys were distributed to a variety of small and large businesses; to parents of school children in various classrooms; and to local and county government workers and social service program participants.

Of those receiving surveys, 43.5 percent, or 668, returned completed questionnaires. Almost 90 percent of those who responded had completed a high school education or beyond and nearly 30 percent were college graduates. Forty percent said they were professionals, and 69 percent said they were residents

of households with two parents. Thirty-three of the 668 live outside the county. The survey did not ask how long respondents have lived in the county, whether they have school-age children, their race, sex or age. The survey did ask about the type of community activities in which respondents are involved.

Along with obtaining general demographic data, the survey's questions explored perceptions about the public's general evaluation of the schools, of specific academic programs and of extracurricular activities; perceptions of the problems facing the schools; reasons why some who work in the county live elsewhere or are considering moving elsewhere; and opinions concerning the criteria with which respondents judge school systems.

The chamber anticipates repeating the survey every three years.

while 42.8 percent, give it below average marks and 21.8 percent, above average.

■ Nearly one-third (32.9 percent) rated the schools' programs for children with special needs as below average, 31.1 percent, average, and 27.9 percent, above average. Fifty-three of the 668 respondents didn't mark an answer.

■ Nearly 60 percent (58.3 percent) agree the schools "should put more emphasis" on academic success while 36 percent think current emphasis is sufficient and 2

percent think there's too much emphasis.

■ More than four out of 10 (40.5 percent) rated as below average the emphasis placed on life skills such as balancing a checkbook, applying for a job, being a wise consumer, etc., 36.2, average, and 16.7 percent, above average.

■ Most rated the schools' climate with regard to safety of students and employees as average or better. Specifically 35.4 percent rated it average, 34.1 percent above average; and 18.3 percent below average.

■ A large majority (66 percent) said they think the schools' emphasis on sports is appropriate, while 19.6 percent said too much emphasis is placed on sports and 10.6 percent said too little emphasis is placed.

■ Respondents weren't nearly so cohesive regarding adequacy of emphasis on non-sport extracurricular activities such as cultural arts, academic clubs/competitions. Slightly over half (52 percent) thought more emphasis is needed, while 41.7 percent believe emphasis is appropriate and 2.2 percent believe too much emphasis is placed.

Respondents were also asked if they live in Brunswick County but are considering moving to another county, to check all the reasons that apply. Of the 668 respondents, 56.6 percent responded. Of those 253 said gave "job opportunities" as a reason and 209 listed "public school quality".

Other reasons given included adult education opportunities, cultural and social events, extended family living elsewhere, children's activities and cost of living.

Administrator, Dredging Proposals Opposed At Calabash Budget Hearing

BY ERIC CARLSON

It was a hot night for such a cool reception to the draft 1994-95 budget Tuesday as the Calabash Board of Commissioners took the heat from residents for proposing a 53 percent increase in the town's tax rate.

A crowd of about 250 people, nearly all from the Carolina Shores area of District II, packed the fire house for a public hearing on the proposed budget.

If adopted, the plan would nearly double the amount of tax money collected by the town, requiring a tax rate increase from 9.5 cents per \$100 valuation to 14.5 cents. The budget would allocate \$672,612 in spending, more than double the amount budgeted last year.

Due to a recent countywide revaluation, property tax values in the town have increased from \$91.6 million in 1993 to \$114.770 this year.

No formal votes were taken of audience members at the hearing. But judging from the many, sometimes loud comments, there seemed to be widespread support for the idea of drawing down the town's \$343,000 savings accounts to help reduce the tax rate. There were also calls for an increased donation to the town's volunteer fire department.

But most of the comments voiced by the crowd were in opposition to spending proposals included in the budget draft.

"How can we think of running a sewer company when we can't even get the ditches cleaned out in Carolina Shores?"

—Commissioner Al Leisey

The loudest protests came over a plan to spend \$62,000 for the town's share of a study that would gauge the probable economic impact of dredging the Calabash River.

Commissioner Jon Sanborn, the finance committee member who chaired the hearing, said the town has already signed a contract with the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers to conduct the feasibility study and will be required to pay an initial \$17,000 installment by June.

If the project is deemed to be economically viable, the town would be expected to pay \$140,000 to \$150,000 for the next phase of the project, Sanborn said. The town hopes to recover half of its initial \$62,000 outlay through a state grant.

Commercial fishing boats and other large vessels are finding it increasingly difficult to navigate the shoaling river channel. If the proposed dredging project is approved, the Corps of Engineers would continue to perform maintenance dredging to keep the channel at a prescribed depth.

The crowd, mostly retirees who have recently moved to Calabash,

was less than sympathetic to the idea of paying to maintain the channel that give the downtown fishing village access to deep water.

"Why are we spending \$62,000 for a study that not one person in this room needs or wants?" asked Ed Niedoba of Carolina Shores. "Who's going to benefit from this? The shrimpers? How many of you have a boat in that river?"

No hands were raised. One man went so far as to suggest that the town breach its contract for the study and sacrifice the \$17,000 initial payment.

Many in the audience also voiced opposition to the hiring of a town administrator. The budget allocates \$75,000 for the administrator and another employee to handle the expected workload generated by the expansion of administrative services.

"I have a problem with hiring a town administrator," said a man in the audience. "There's nothing for him to administer. We have no services. No police. No sewer. No garbage pickup. What's he going to do?"

Another man said that a recent survey of town needs placed the hiring of a town administrator last out of 23 suggestions.

But Commissioner Al Leisey insisted that Calabash needs someone to manage its affairs, especially if the town intends to get into the sewerage business with the planned purchase of Carolina Blythe Utility Co. He said the town needs an expert in municipal services to advise the town on the advisability of such a deal.

"Until we get a manager running this place, I'm not voting to spend money for a pig in a poke," Leisey said. "How can we think of running a sewer company when we can't even get the ditches cleaned out in Carolina Shores?"

Jack Brady, former president of the Carolina Shores Property Owners Association, advised the commissioners "not to lose sight of the fact that we are still a small community." He suggested that the work toward adopting a "lean and mean" budget.

"I think we all came to live here because of the quality of life. Because it's a nice place to live," Brady said. "If you keep passing budgets like this, we're going to become a minor metropolis."

The Calabash Board of Commissioners will meet again Tuesday, June 28, for the purpose of voting on each line item of the budget.

Alexander Suit Is Filed In North Carolina Court

(Continued From Page 1-A)

Shaw and Jones voted to eliminate the salary of the clerk to the board and appointed the county manager's secretary, Kelly Barefoot, to fill the position.

Although Barefoot was a registered Democrat, the Alexander lawsuit claims she "had Republican ties and was perceived to be a political supporter of defendants Holden, Shaw and Jones."

Alexander claims in her lawsuit that the commissioners took the actions against her "because of her political affiliation and activities and because of her race."

The lawsuit demands that Alexander be reinstated and paid back wages, interest and damages for all benefits she would have received. It seeks compensatory damages from Brunswick County and the commissioners and punitive damages from Holden, Shaw and Jones.

Alexander is currently employed in the clerk's office of the Town of Boiling Spring Lakes.

When you leave the Brunswick shores, take the Beacon with you!

County Department Heads Lobby For Funding Boosts

(Continued From Page 1-A)

In his budget message, the manager reported that the cafeteria is expected to incur a deficit of \$40,000 this year. He included only three months operating money in the budget, anticipating that the operation will be turned over to a private company within that time.

Smith said losses in his department are the result of meal prices being set too low. The cafeteria is required to provide three daily meals to each jail inmate for only \$8.25 a day, a price that has not changed in five years, he said. Meal prices for the department of social services nutrition programs were set at \$2.53 each this year, a reduction of 33 cents below what was charged in 1992.

The cafeteria's cash flow was further hurt by County Manager

Wyman Yelton's order to raise prices and reduce portions served to county workers at the cafeteria. Prices were reduced again after walk-in business fell off dramatically in response to the changes.

"I think the prices (in the cafeteria) are fair now, but we were hurt and a lot of people haven't come back," Smith told the board. "But the big problem is the prices are too low on these other meals. Those prices are staying the same or going down. My food costs keep going up."

The commissioners agreed to have McGinnis look into the prices paid for meals prepared by the cafeteria.

In another budget matter, McGinnis presented the board with a new payroll classification plan that would establish minimum and maximum salaries for each county posi-

tion, with interim pay grades based on the length of employment with the county.

McGinnis told the board that the pay plan would implement his recommended three-percent, across-the-board, cost-of-living salary increase for all employees except the sheriff and register of deeds.

The classification plan establishes an annual salary range from a minimum of \$10,876 for a starting housekeeping assistant to a maxi-

mum longevity pay rate of \$67,168 for the county engineer and the director of fiscal operations.

Correction

An article in the June 16 issue of *The Brunswick Beacon* about the search for a new Volunteer and Information Center director inadvertently omitted the name of the agency's founding director, Paul Wayne Reeves of Shallotte.

Typical Weather Is Forecast

Temperatures and rainfall should average near normal over the next few days, Shallotte Point meteorologist Jackson Canady said Tuesday.

He anticipates temperatures ranging from the upper 60s at night into the upper 80s during the daytime, with about three-quarters inch of rainfall.

That sounds a little cooler and wetter than the period of June 14 through 20, when the daily average temperature was 80 degrees, about 4 degrees above average.

Canady said a high of 97 degrees was reached on the 20th, and the low of 68 degrees occurred June 19.

The average daily high was 91 degrees; the nightly average low, 70 degrees.

He measured 71/100 of an inch rainfall.

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