

# Congressman Pledges Legislation To Reconfigure Lockwood Inlet

BY DOUG RUTTER

Congressman Charlie Rose plans to introduce legislation to open the old inlet between Lockwood Folly River and the ocean and restrict the flow of water through the existing inlet.

The proposal—endorsed by fishermen, local governments and other groups since 1989—is aimed at reducing erosion and improving water quality in the pollution-plagued Lockwood Folly River.

Rose announced his plans during a public meeting Monday night at Holden Beach Town Hall. He said he will introduce the legislation next month and hopes to push it through Congress next year.

"I would hope this is something that's well under way by the end of 1995," Rose said after the meeting. "If it's properly shepherded I don't see why it can't be done fairly quickly."

Rose's pledge comes about two weeks before the Nov. 8 election. The Democrat is seeking re-election to the Seventh Congressional District seat he has held since 1972. His challenger is Republican Robert Anderson.

The proposed legislation discussed Monday would accomplish two things: close off the existing inlet by about 75 percent where it enters the waterway and open the sand-clogged Eastern Channel between Long Beach and Sheep Island.

Eastern Channel served as the inlet between Lockwood Folly River and the ocean until the U.S. Army Corps of Engineers dredged the Atlantic Intraoceanic Waterway in the early 1930s.

Local fishermen and other area residents have pushed for the re-opening of Eastern Channel for the past five years.

They say the existing inlet causes silt to build up in the lower Lockwood Folly River and destroy oyster beds. They also claim the inlet's position restricts water circulation and prevents the adequate flushing of bacterial pollution from the river and nearby creeks.

John Holden, a long-time resident of Holden Beach, proposed unclogging the Eastern Channel in 1989 to help alleviate the pollution problem.

"That is not a new design. That's the way nature had

it before man interfered with it," Holden said Monday night.

Rose said he will draft the legislation so the Eastern Channel will be dredged to a depth of 8 feet.

Once that's done, officials will be able to determine how much the existing inlet needs to be closed off. Rose said rock jetties probably could be used to close off the inlet.

Recent studies by the Corps of Engineers have not determined whether opening Eastern Channel would be beneficial or cost effective.

"All they want to do is study and study and study. Nobody has recommended any solution," Holden said. "I'm the only person who has recommended a solution."

Long Beach Mayor Joan Altman said the town supports Holden's proposal since the existing inlet isn't adequate for most commercial boats and the change may help reduce pollution.

The idea also drew support Monday from Save Our Shellfish, Holden Beach Property Owners Association,

Greater Holden Beach Merchants Association, South Brunswick Islands Chamber of Commerce, N.C. Farm Bureau and Brunswick County Soil Conservation District.

"I'm not here to kick the Corps of Engineers because I've met some good people there," said James Bellamy, SCS district chairman. "But when you ask the Corps of Engineers to admit they've made a mistake you're just fooling yourself."

Rosetta Short of Long Beach, a long-time member of the N.C. Coastal Resources Advisory Council, said she's been "fighting" the Corps since 1976.

"This is what they've done. They've destroyed our natural resources," Short said.

If it's approved by Congress, Rose said the inlet project would probably require federal, state and local funding.

"It's going to have to be passed as a special piece of legislation to modify an existing navigation project which has caused erosion to land and the natural resources," Rose said.

# Man Released After Threatening Officers

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noticed that my shadow was coming in contact with his body," Stewart said. "I knew that if my shadow went beyond his body he would know that someone was behind him. At the point of my shadow reaching his left shoulder, I rushed him."

Seeing his partner close in, Downer grabbed for the rifle as Holden was forced to the ground. An examination of the weapon revealed 23 bullets in the 30-round magazine and another bullet in the chamber, ready to fire.

After witnessing the arrest, Proctor said he was "amazed" at the patience and training exhibited by the officers. He said he was also impressed with the backup response by officers from Sunset Beach Police, Shallotte Police and the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department.

"They saved Mr. Holden's life," Proctor said.

Chief Pritchard acknowledged that Officer Downer would have been fully justified in firing on Holden and praised their handling of the situation.

"My officers used remarkable restraint," Pritchard said. "This was an extremely dangerous situation in which this man had one of my officers in his sights. Officer Downer did absolutely the correct thing in trying to keep the suspect calm. Lt. Stewart did everything he could have done to protect his fellow officer."

Pritchard also shared Proctor's disbelief at Holden's quick release from custody.

"I can't understand why he was released so soon," Pritchard said. "We had already taken two guns, some hunting knives and a machete away from him. He was still in an intoxicated state. We could have had the same situation all over again. I think a serious mistake was made."

Magistrate Elizabeth Lewis said Tuesday she originally set a \$1,000 secured bond on Holden. Later that morning, she said another magistrate called her at home to say that Holden had been taken to Doshier Hospital for observation, where he had apparently "sobered up."

After talking with the other magistrate, Lewis

said she agreed to let Holden go free on an unsecured bond.

"My job in setting bond is to make sure a defendant comes to court," Lewis said. "He has been a lifelong resident. He had never been before me before. I felt he would come to court. From the information I got, his problem resulted from him being intoxicated."

Pritchard said that shortly before the standoff with police, Holden pulled a pistol on a neighbor and threatened to kill him. The man was able to wrestle the gun away from Holden without being injured. It was turned over to Lt. Stewart on the way to Duneside Drive. No charges have been filed in that incident.

Other officers responding to the call for backup included Pritchard, Detective Danny Hunter and officer Eric Lammonds from Ocean Isle Beach; Sunset Beach Police Lt. Sam Grantham; Shallotte Police Chief Rodney Gause and Brunswick County Sheriff's Deputies Keithan Horne and Sgt. Charles Wilson.



JOHN ELDRIDGE'S vacation home at 961 Ocean Boulevard West before Friday morning's blaze destroyed it.

# Beachfront Blaze Takes Two Oceanfront Homes

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West was awakened early Friday morning by his smoke alarm and left his bedroom to investigate, Todd said. When he tried to return, he was driven back by smoke.

After running next door to awaken neighbors in the next house to the east, Eldridge dialed 911 from a cellular phone in his car, Todd said. That home belonged to Bill Mickey of Garner and was occupied by friends of Mickey from Archdale.

The call came in at 4:50 a.m. The first truck arrived on the scene 13 minutes later, said Todd. By then both homes were fully involved in flames and firefighters had to concentrate their efforts on keeping the blaze contained.

In all, more than 40 firefighters from Tri-Beach, Civietown, Shallotte, Ocean Isle Beach, Supply and Long Beach responded to the fire, Todd said.

With a gentle breeze blowing from the north, most of the heat was driven across the dune, setting the grass on fire and charring three wooden walkovers. At times the flames lofted well above the level of the two adjoining houses.

The tan vinyl siding on one house peeled back in sheets, exposing the blue foam insulation beneath. At one point, flames began pouring from the roof as the fire broke into the attic. It was quickly extinguished by streams of water from firefighters behind the building and the large aerial pumper above.

Other firefighters kept a steady stream of water on the two-story wall of wooden siding to the west. Still, the blackened wall continued to smoke long after the main fire was brought under control.

A wind from any other direction would have made matters much worse, Todd said. Flames driven toward the road by an onshore breeze would have prevented firefighters from moving their equipment into position near the burning homes. A strong side wind would have sent the billowing flames directly into neighboring houses.

"Like I've said before, in a case like that, someone will have to go down the road and decide where we should make a stand and try and stop it, because we're going to lose some houses in between," Todd said.

# State Clears Way For Central Sewer System

(Continued From Page 1-A)

will be allowed to use a drained Carolina bay for "additional storage and polishing," Tombro said, but the sand ridge and fringe around the former bay are now classified as wetlands. "It will take some time to work it out," said Tombro. "You don't change anything overnight."

According to the finding, the authority plans a variety of measures

to eliminate or reduce adverse effects on the environment. In addition to the stormwater management plan, these include groundwater monitoring, sedimentation and erosion control, documentation that land-disturbing activities will not release significant amounts of sediment into nearby streams, U.S. Army Corps of Engineers evaluations, consultation with the state's plant conservation program regarding three plants

found in the area that are considered rare in North Carolina, 401 water quality certification and CAMA permitting.

The updated 201 facilities plan for the project includes additional possible mitigation measures that may or may not come to pass, depending on the future directions taken by the system and the cost of implementing each measure.

"We don't know which ones will

or will not come about," said Tombro. "We will apply whatever type of mitigation we can within reason."

Begun by the towns of Calabash and Sunset Beach, the quasi-governmental authority recently added Brunswick County as its third member, represented by Betty Williamson, John Williams and Tripp Sloane, all of Ocean Isle Beach.

## YES OR NO?

# Calabash Talks Referendum On Blythe Purchase

BY ERIC CARLSON

The Calabash Board of Commissioners on Tuesday agreed in principle to the idea of holding a binding referendum in which citizens will be asked whether or not the town should purchase the sewer system that serves Carolina Shores.

After a lengthy discussion, but formal no vote, the board gave tentative approval to the plan, which is to be finalized at their next meeting.

For more than two years, the board has been discussing the possibility of buying the Carolina Blythe Utility Co, which provides water and sewer service to Carolina Shores and some other areas of the town. The purchase was initially considered as the cornerstone for a regional sewerage system to serve Calabash, Sunset Beach and other outlying areas.

That proposal fell through after company owner Billy Burnett refused to negotiate a purchase with engineers hired by the town. The commissioners eventually voted against buying the company at

Burnett's "non-negotiable" asking price of \$4.5 million.

Instead, Calabash and Sunset Beach have joined in forming the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority to provide sewer both towns and other outlying areas. The \$34 million plan calls for the construction of a new joint sewage treatment facility to be paid for with user fees and state and federal grants and loans.

At a special meeting called last May in the absence of Commissioner Edward Schaack, who had previously voiced opposition to the purchase, the remaining board members voted to reopen negotiations aimed at buying Carolina Blythe.

When those discussions failed to meet Burnett's timetable for selling Carolina Blythe, he told the town he would begin looking for other buyers. Even so, the commissioners have continued researching the feasibility of purchasing the company and recently held a town meeting to discuss the issue.

Tuesday night, Commissioner Jon Sanborn reported that no clear public consensus seemed to emerge from that meeting. He suggested that the town hold a referendum to gauge support for the idea of purchasing Carolina Blythe.

Sanborn initially proposed a non-binding vote in which all Carolina Blythe customers would be asked to voice their preference for one of three options: Either the town should buy the \$4.5 million sewer system. Or the South Brunswick Water and Sewer Authority should be encouraged to purchase the company. Or Carolina Blythe should continue operating the sewer system.

Each option included cost estimates for higher customer rates, since present Carolina Blythe customers are expected to pay more for sewer service no matter which option the town chooses.

There was much discussion of whether the referendum should be a binding vote or simply an opinion poll. A question was also raised about whether an informal vote should include only Calabash citizens or all Carolina Blythe customers who live inside and outside the town. Then the board wondered whether the latter two questions ought to be asked at all.

In the end, the commissioners all expressed support for the idea of posing a single question: "Should the town of Calabash buy Carolina Blythe? Yes or no?"

Before holding such a referendum, however, the commissioners informally agreed that a newsletter should be drafted and distributed to all voters, explaining the pros and cons of the proposed purchase.

Officially, the question was tabled for consideration at the board's Nov. 1 meeting.

# Columbus Man Is Arrested In Ocean Isle Beach Gun Theft

A 30-year-old Chadbourne resident was arrested last week on felony charges stemming from the theft of a handgun and a purse from a car owned by a vacationer at Ocean Isle Beach last month, police said Tuesday.

The suspect, David Clay Grice, was picked up in Columbus County by Brunswick County Sheriff's Detective Tom Hunter following an investigation by himself and Ocean Isle Beach Police Detective Danny Hunter.

Grice was charged with larceny of a firearm and breaking and entering a motor vehicle in the theft of a handgun and a woman's purse from the car of a Chapel Hill couple visiting Ocean Isle Beach. The man and wife returned to their car and found a window smashed and the items missing Sept. 20, Hunter said.

The investigation led to Grice after he was arrested last Wednesday (Oct. 19) on a charge of assault with a deadly weapon with intent to kill and communicating threats, Hunter said.

Detectives say the purse was

found buried in Ocean Isle Beach. The gun has not been recovered. Grice has been released on bond.

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**Cooler Temps Are Expected With Average Precipitation**

Brunswick County residents can expect below-average temperatures and normal precipitation over the next few days, according to Shallotte Point weather watcher Jackson Canady.

Canady said Tuesday he expects temperatures to range from 50 degrees at night to 70 degrees during the day with about one-half inch of rainfall over the next week.

For the period Oct. 18-24, Canady measured .71 inches of rain at his home and a daily average temperature of 65 degrees, which is about 2 degrees above normal.

The maximum high temperature was 79 degrees on Oct. 24 and the minimum low reading was 43 degrees on the 18th. The daily average high was 77 degrees and the average nightly low was 54 degrees.

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