

Hewett Sweeps All Precincts To Win Sheriff's Race

BY ERIC CARLSON

It wasn't easy. But in the end, it wasn't even close. After a hard-won primary, an impressive fundraising effort, an effective advertising campaign, scores of public appearances and an eleventh-hour attempt to discredit him, Deputy Lt. Ronald Hewett won the resounding approval of voters Tuesday to earn the job of Brunswick County sheriff.

Hewett received 11,331 votes, more than any other candidate in any race. His opponent, Southport businessman James Brown, attracted 6,201 votes.

He was the top vote-getter in every one of the county's 22 precincts, winning by margins ranging from 56 percent in Southport II and Bolivia to 86 percent in Shallotte.

His overall margin of victory, 65 percent to Brown's 35 percent, was the largest of any race in the county.

Loud cheers erupted in the packed Democratic Party headquarters Tuesday night as unofficial totals began to come in shortly after the polls closed at 7:30. Supporters began congratulating Hewett and declaring him the winner a short time later, as precinct workers phoned in reports of Hewett's apparent victory margins.

For the next three hours, Hewett shook hands and received hugs and pats on the back from scores of well-wishers, who were already addressing the young deputy lieutenant as "Sheriff Ronald."

"I want to take the opportunity to thank the citizens of Brunswick County for their overwhelming vote of

confidence," Hewett said in an interview after the official vote tally was complete. "I look forward to giving the people of this county one of the finest sheriff's offices in the state, one that is open, positive and progressive."

Hewett said that upon taking office, he would immediately fulfill one of the promises he made during his campaign.

"The doors of the Brunswick County Sheriff's Department will re-open 24 hours a day on Dec. 5, with new telephone lines added to give the citizens the access to law enforcement they expect and deserve."

Addressing another of the major primary campaign issues for both candidates, Hewett said he met Monday with officials of the federal Drug Enforcement Agency, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and the FBI to discuss coordinated drug enforcement efforts.

"They have given me the green light in leading drug dealers to their red light," Hewett said.

Calling himself "humbled and grateful for the tremendous show of support" for his campaign, Hewett promised to remain as accessible as sheriff as he was during his years as a deputy.

"I want the people of Brunswick County to feel as comfortable calling me tomorrow as they did yesterday," he said. "I'm the same Ronald Hewett and I will always place their needs first and foremost."

The mood was decidedly less upbeat at Republican headquarters, where Brown reportedly left early and was unavailable for comment.

At age 31, Hewett may be North Carolina's youngest sheriff, a position he has sought since he completed basic law enforcement training and joined the Holden Beach Police Department in 1983 as North Carolina's youngest law enforcement officer.

Hewett was deputized by Sheriff John Carr Davis later that year. While working as a full-time patrol officer (See NEW BRUNSWICK SHERIFF, Page 2-A)



HEWETT



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Election At A Glance

SHERIFF

✓Ronald E. Hewett . . . 11,331
James Brown 6,201

COUNTY COMMISSIONER

DISTRICT 1
✓Don Warren 7,929
✓Douglas Simmons . . . 8,655

DISTRICT 2
W.A. (Alfonza) Roach 7,792
✓Jerry Jones 8,712

DISTRICT 3
Wayland Vereen 7,359
✓Leslie Collier 9,160

DISTRICT 4
✓Tom Rabon, Sr. 9,412
Theron Leonard, Jr. . . 7,243

DISTRICT 5
✓W. M. (Bill) Sue 8,602
Donald Shaw 7,825

BOARD OF EDUCATION

DISTRICT 1
✓Olaf (Bud) Thorsen . . 9,163
M. Rozell Hewett 7,279

DISTRICT 2
✓Clara Carter 9,160
Eugene Hewett 7,195

DISTRICT 3
✓William (Billy) Carter 8,233
Eugene Hewett 7,953

DISTRICT 4
J. Bryant Pergerson . . 7,595
✓Pat Purvis Brown . . . 8,307

DISTRICT 5
✓Glenda C. Browning 8,569
Yvonne Lewis Bright 7,509

SOIL & WATER DIST. SUPERVISOR

✓James D. Bellamy, Jr. 7,596
R. C. (Ray) Gilbert . . 5,145
✓Harold C. Robinson . 7,322

7TH CONGRESS. DISTRICT

(Brunswick County only)
✓Charles G. Rose, III . 8,559
Robert C. Anderson . 8,278

Election results by precinct on Page 2-A

Inside...

- Birthdays.....2B
- Business News.....10-11C
- Calendar.....10D
- Church News.....12-13A
- Classified.....1-9C
- Crime Report.....11A
- Court Docket.....11D
- Fishing.....5D
- Golf.....7D
- Obituaries.....12A
- Opinion.....4-5A
- People In The News.....6B
- Plant Doctor.....7B
- Sports.....1-7D
- Television.....8-9D

3 REPUBLICANS, 2 DEMOCRATS

GOP Regains Its Majority On County Board

BY ERIC CARLSON

Republicans regained a majority on the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners Tuesday in an election that gave no clear signals about the mood of voters toward either incumbents or party affiliation.

The board's current chairman, Democrat Don Warren, lost his bid for re-election to former Calabash Mayor Douglas Simmons.

Incumbent Democrat Wayland Vereen was soundly defeated by Republican newcomer Leslie Collier, who will be the first woman on the board in eight years.

Meanwhile, Democrat Commissioner Tom Rabon had little difficulty overcoming a challenge from little-known Republican newcomer Theron (Woody) Leonard.

But at the same time, incumbent Republican Jerry Jones was returned to office in a win over W.A. (Alfonza) Roach, while incumbent Republican Donald Shaw lost his seat to former two-term school board member W.M. (Bill) Sue.

Voting did not seem to be significantly

affected by the recent controversies over school funding and the support some commissioners' gave to those opposed to Martin Marietta Aggregates plan to open a limestone mine near Southport.

Two commissioners who voted to appeal a jury's \$5 million increase in the school budget were returned to office.

One board member who voted against passing the law that stopped the mine from opening was re-elected, while another lost. The board's most outspoken supporter of anti-mining activists was defeated, while another commissioner who voted against the mine won re-election.

So while voters may not have sent a consistent message about the board's performance, they did agree to add some new faces and alter its leadership.

Although none of the newly elected Republican commissioners would say who they will choose to be the next board chairman, its most experienced member said he would accept (See TWO, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Crowning Achievement

Renee Ward of Long Beach is crowned Miss Brunswick County 1995 by outgoing queen Ashley Summerlin in Saturday night's annual pageant. Looking on (from left) are Miss North Carolina 1994, Dana Ann Stephenson; Angela Alley, second runner-up and Miss Congeniality; and Kristian Pulliam, first runner-up. The pageant story and more photos are on Page 12-D.

4 DEMOCRATS, 1 REPUBLICAN

Voters Elect All-New Slate To County School Board

BY SUSAN USHER

"It's time to start to work" was Clara Carter's first response Tuesday night after winning the District 2 seat on the Brunswick County Board of Education. "We've talked the talk and now it's time to walk the walk."

The retired Union Elementary School principal wasn't talking about just the four Democrats and one Republican elected to the board.

The Brown's Landing resident won by the largest margin of the five, garnering 12 percent more of the vote cast in the District 2 race than her opponent Eugene Hewett of Cedar

Grove, a longtime trustee of Brunswick Community College.

"I challenge all of the people who voted for change to work together now to make it happen," said Carter.

She anticipates no problem in the new board members working together just as they have campaigned amicably. "I believe we basically, no matter which party we belong to, generally have the same goals, the same general agenda," she said.

Joining her on the board in December are fellow newcomers Olaf "Bud" Thorsen of District 1, a juvenile court counselor; William

"Billy" Carter of District 3, a former county manager; Republican Pat Purvis Brown of District 4, another retired educator; and Glenda Browning of District 5, a businesswoman, parent activist and PTA volunteer.

Some of the broad goals they shared during the campaign have been better schools that provide a higher quality of education, the strong need to involve parents in their children's educations, better communication with the board's varied publics, and establishing a better working relationship between the school board and board of commissioners. Those two boards have been embroiled in a two-year

controversy over the county's role in funding and oversight of the school system.

While none of the members-elect have ever served on a school board, all five bring specific knowledge of the school system and its operation from the differing perspectives their careers have provided. All five have been regulars at school board meetings throughout the campaign.

While Billy Carter's past focus has been on finance and management and Browning's on parent involvement, for example, career educator Clara Carter said her initial emphasis (See SCHOOL, Page 2-A)

TWO HIGH-RISE, ONE DRAWBRIDGE

Sunset Beach Bridge Options Down To 3

BY SUSAN USHER

Three options for replacing the single-lane pontoon bridge leading to the island of Sunset Beach will be presented to the public at an informal workshop Tuesday, Dec. 6, from 4 p.m. to 8 p.m. at the Jones-Byrd Pavilion at Sea Trail Plantation.

Engineering consultants for the project have narrowed the options to a 65-foot fixed span on either the western corridor (Alternative W-1), basically the same option DOT chose as its preferred alternative several years ago, or the center corridor (C-1) by the existing bridge, or a center corridor mid-level 30-foot bascule, or drawbridge (C-4).

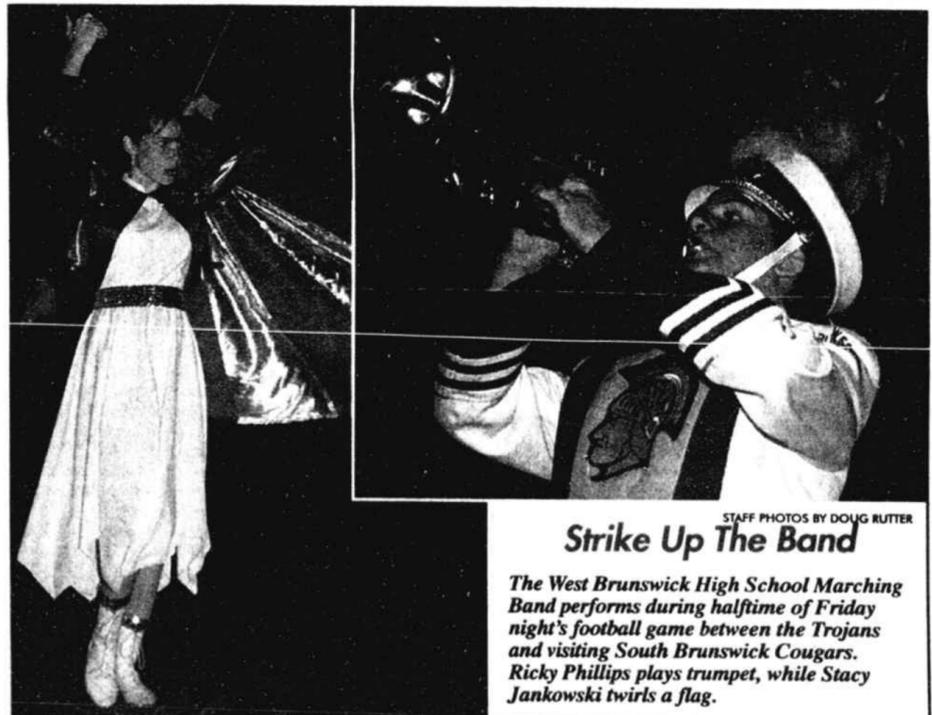
"We looked at a number of parameters, primarily the traffic needs and travel demand and how the project served the traffic. Our overall goal is to provide safe and reliable transportation," said David Griffin, project manager with Greiner, Inc.

"I wouldn't say we're more or less in favor of one of the three alternatives over another at this point. Each has its pluses and minuses."

Consultants ruled out all 15-foot bascule options for safety and reliability reasons because of the frequency of bridge openings required. Ferry and tunnel options went because of their obvious impracticality and cost. Also eliminated were other corridor options that created complicated left turns or the potential for long lines of waiting traffic or disrupted residential neighborhoods, said Griffin.

Griffin said a mid-level bascule would not have to be opened as frequently as a low-level bridge, but more often than a high-rise. It also has aesthetic appeal. The lower grade more easily accommodates bicycle and pedestrian traffic than the other options.

A center or western high-rise (See WORKSHOP, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTOS BY DOUG RUTTER

Strike Up The Band

The West Brunswick High School Marching Band performs during halftime of Friday night's football game between the Trojans and visiting South Brunswick Cougars. Ricky Phillips plays trumpet, while Stacy Jankowski twirls a flag.