

Retiring Sheriff Looks Forward To Changing Gears

BY ERIC CARLSON

For the past few months, when people asked Brunswick County Sheriff John Carr Davis how many days remained before his retirement, he would flash his characteristic grin and throw the number back without a moment's thought.

If it was after lunch, he could tell you to the half-day. It's not that he was necessarily eager to leave the department he served for nearly two decades and headed for more than 11 years.

But nobody ever called Sheriff Davis indecisive. Once his mind was made up, he started looking forward to a new life—as a civilian.

"There are a lot of things I'll miss, and there are a lot of things I won't miss," Davis said Monday as he rocked back in the old familiar chair behind the desk he

will officially vacate Nov. 30.

"I guess what I'll miss most are the people, like (Chief Deputy) John Marlow, who I've had such a good working relationship with for a long time," Davis said. "But I'm not going to miss those phone calls in the middle of the night. Or having a siren go by and wondering if one of my men is in trouble."

Although he modestly claims he hasn't "done anything outstanding" as sheriff, Davis said, "I think I'm turning over a good department to Ronald (Hewett). I feel confident he'll handle it."

It was Sheriff Davis who hired Hewett as a deputy in 1983, shortly after he was sworn at the Holden Beach Police Department as North Carolina's youngest law enforcement officer.

Hewett has high praise for his old boss and says it

was Davis who allowed him to juggle a full-time patrol deputy's schedule so Hewett could earn a degree in criminal justice at UNC-Wilmington.

And it was Sheriff Davis, in 1990, who convinced Hewett to take a new position of Drug Abuse Resistance Education Officer.

"He didn't want it at first. Ronald can be a little hard headed, you know," Davis said with a smile. "But he was a line sergeant at the time and it came with a promotion to lieutenant. I told him to take it and he did. He's done a good job with it. He did a good job wherever I put him."

Hewett won't officially assume the job of sheriff until Dec. 5. But Davis needs to step down by the end of November to avoid losing a month of retirement benefits. (See DAVIS, Page 2-A)



RETIRING SHERIFF John Carr Davis.

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STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Stars, Stripes And Smiles

Blair Canady (left), age 7, of Russtown and Michael King, 8, of Sunset Beach proudly display two of the new flags donated to Union Elementary School in honor of Veterans Day last week. The ladies auxiliary of Calabash Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 7288 presented flags to be hung in each of the school's 29 classrooms along with Pledge of Allegiance cards for every student. Shown with the students are Mae Maloney, "Americanism" chairman for the post, and second-grade teacher Robin Gaskins.

Sheriff-Elect Discusses Plans For Department, Names DARE Successor

BY ERIC CARLSON

As Brunswick County Sheriff's deputies look forward to seeing one of their own take charge of the department, one question has lingered: Who will Sheriff-elect Ronald Hewett choose to succeed him as the county's new Drug Abuse Resistance Education (DARE) officer?

After all, it won't be easy to replace the man voted United States DARE Officer of the year for 1993.

In an interview with the *Beacon* Tuesday, Hewett named his successor in the post and discussed some of his plans for leading the department during the next four years.

Former Henderson County Deputy Sgt. Cliff Eubanks, who has supervised the DARE program in and around the western North Carolina city of Hendersonville since 1990, will become Brunswick County's new DARE officer shortly after Hewett takes office Dec. 5, the sheriff-elect said.

Hewett called Eubanks "highly experienced, excellent with children, devoted to the job," and said he felt confident his replacement "will be an asset to the department and to the school system."

"I think everyone will be pleased with him and will feel that the DARE program is in very capable hands," Hewett said. "He has a good law enforcement background. He's had SWAT team training. And he's the kind of guy who will attend ball games and show up at after-school activities."

Hewett said he has known Eubanks since 1990, when they met as members of the N.C. DARE Officers Association. He said Eubanks will retain his rank of sergeant and will assume other law enforcement duties as a deputy sheriff.

Although he would not reveal any detailed plans for personnel changes in the department, Hewett said he will re-organize shifts and positions to allow 24-hour staffing of the sheriff's office "beginning at 9 a.m., December 5." He said the department's doors will remain open round-the-clock, with a uniformed deputy manning the front desk at all hours.

Hewett said he also plans to alter work schedules "to

have more ranking supervisors available when they are most likely to be needed." Captains and lieutenants "will be out after 5 p.m." along with shift supervisors and road deputies, he said.

He also promised to upgrade the department's telephone system to make it easier for citizens to contact investigators and department administrators.

In discussing his plans for improving law enforcement in the county, Hewett said he has already begun contacting state and federal agencies to enlist their cooperation with the sheriff's department.

"We will especially be targeting repeat offenders and trying to get them into federal courts, where they will receive stiffer sentences," Hewett said. "My goal will be to put career offenders out of business. It's not going to be done overnight. But we're going after them."

Toward that end, Hewett plans to form a "drug and violent crime task force" to focus on homicides, rapes, assaults and other violent crimes. He said forming the task force will help the department qualify for some of the state and federal funds being channeled toward local police departments to combat violent crime.

He also expects cooperation from federal agencies in prosecuting drug offenders and other violent criminals.

(See EUBANKS, Page 2-A)

Swearing-In Ceremony Scheduled For Dec. 5

Brunswick County Sheriff-elect Ronald Hewett will be sworn in at 9 a.m. Monday, Dec. 5, in the public assembly building at the county complex in Bolivia.

Chief Resident Superior Court Judge William C. Gore Jr. will administer the oath of office in a ceremony that will include a color guard of local police officers.

District Attorney Rex Gore will preside over the ceremony and introduce the participants.

All sheriff's deputies, their families and citizens of the county are invited to attend.

Beacon Has Early Deadlines, Publication Date

Because of the Thanksgiving holiday, *The Brunswick Beacon* will publish a day earlier next week and all advertising and news deadlines will be a day earlier.

All real estate advertising must be placed by 5 p.m. Thursday, Nov. 17, and classified advertising must be ordered by noon on Monday, Nov. 21.

The newspaper will be available in racks and at dealer locations Tuesday. Mail subscribers in Brunswick County should receive their paper on Wednesday. Other subscribers should get their papers about the same time as usual since post offices will be closed for the holiday on Thursday, Nov. 24.

The *Beacon* office will be closed Thursday, Nov. 24.

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Revised School Bonus Pay Plans Spark Questions By School Board

BY SUSAN USHER

Revised plans by several school staffs for distributing bonus pay didn't pass the Brunswick County Board of Education's muster Monday night, and sparked questions about the effectiveness of the program.

The school board plans to meet next Tuesday, Nov. 22, at 3:30 p.m. at the central office in Southport to discuss specific questions with representatives of Lincoln Primary, Shallotte Middle and Supply Elementary schools.

In voting that included both certified and non-certified employees, staffs of Lincoln Primary and Shallotte Middle schools chose to shift their use of some bonus money from staff training to awarding individual pay bonuses on a point system, a move that especially concerned board member William Fairley. The board wasn't sure if Supply school's plan reflected a similar change or not, and wanted to check before acting.

"I'm going to object to any plan that changes the distribution of money," Fairley vowed.

"I didn't like it either," said Shallotte Middle School Principal Sandra Robinson of her staff's choice. "But it

hits them in their hip."

Staff voting at Shallotte was influenced partly by their experience the previous year, when 20 percent of the money was set aside for staff development but wasn't needed for it. The school's students subsequently posted the greatest improvement of any school on end-of-grade testing.

At Shallotte Middle non-certified staff are involved in activities that do influence student achievement, she said, from calling parents of absentee students to monitoring halls to insure a safe environment.

Part of the problem, said board member Polly Russ, is offering staff development opportunities that are suitable for the non-certified, non-classroom employees at high schools and middle schools. Most of the non-certified staff at elementary schools are classroom teacher assistants.

Fairley also questioned individual school's plans to award points for teachers attending PTSA meetings or making parent contacts, efforts he believes should already be part of any teacher's job.

(See SCHOOL BOARD, Page 2-A)

County-Schools Funding Dispute To Get More Statewide Attention

BY SUSAN USHER

Statewide interest continued this week in the funding dispute between the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners and Brunswick County Board of Education.

Brunswick County Superintendent of Schools Ralph Johnston and school board Chairman Donna Baxter left Tuesday morning to address the N.C. School Boards Association at its annual meeting, which continues through Wednesday at the Four Seasons Holiday Inn in Greensboro.

"They're mainly interested in the process," Johnston said Monday night. The superintendent and school board chairman from Greene County were asked to make a similar presentation.

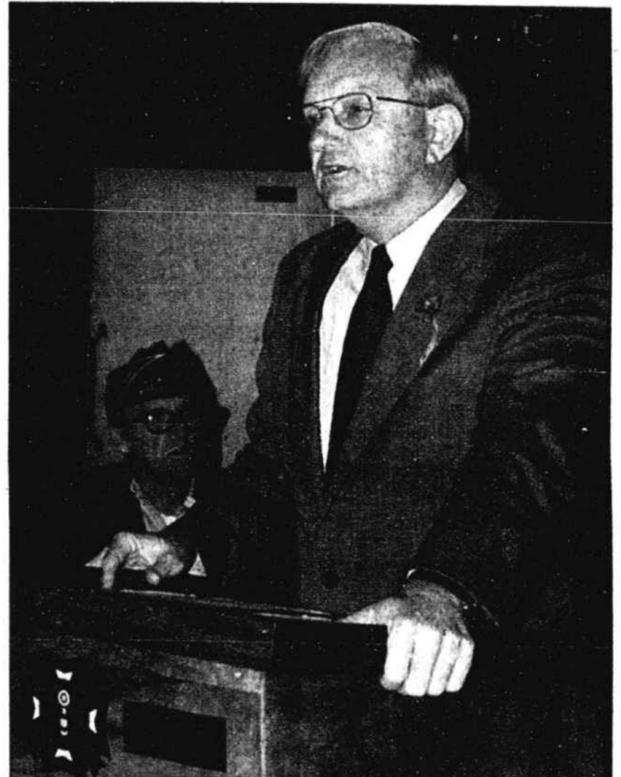
Don Warren, chairman of the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners, was asked to speak on the

funding dispute at the state county commissioners' association annual meeting in Asheville in August. Since then the association has agreed to consider lobbying the state legislature to grant separate tax-levying powers to boards of education, an idea initiated by the Brunswick County Board of Commissioners.

The move comes in response to a recent statewide trend in which more and more school boards are challenging the adequacy of county financial support of their local school systems.

In July the Brunswick County Board of Education appealed the commissioners' budget allocation of \$9.2 million and then rejected an offer of settlement. A month later a jury awarded the Brunswick County Schools the full \$14 million it sought, but the schools

(See FUNDING, Page 2-A)



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

Veterans Remembered

Col. Virgil Batten, veterans services officer for Brunswick County, addresses a Veterans Day gathering last week at Holden Beach Veterans of Foreign Wars Post 8866. Himself a veteran of 30 years in the U.S. Air Force, Batten described war as "an ugly, destructive and fearsome thing" and praised veterans for their willingness to sacrifice "and sometimes pay the ultimate price" in defense of our country. "As long as we have freedom, we must have someone ready to defend that freedom. Which means we will always have veterans to thank and remember," he said. "It is fate to be born free. It is a privilege to live free. It is a responsibility to die free."