

Engineer: Cutting Shallotte Sewer Costs Won't Be Easy

BY DOUG RUTTER

An engineer told Shallotte officials last week there's no simple or inexpensive way to reduce the \$70,000 the town spends each year maintaining and repairing sewer system equipment.

Engineer Street Lee, project manager with McKim & Creed of Wilmington, presented findings from a sewer system evaluation at the town board's meeting last Wednesday.

"I think we're here tonight to tell you there's not an easy, quick fix to lower your operation costs," said Lee, who also is designing the town's sewer system expansion.

Although hesitant to make a recommendation, Lee said the best alternative would be to construct additional force mains between Brierwood Estates and the wastewater treatment plant north of U.S. 17 Bypass.

But with an estimated cost of \$424,000, Lee suggested the town board not act on the proposal until his engineering firm completes a long-range "master plan" that should be done next month.

"We did not find an easy, low-cost solution to that problem, and it needs to hold until we see what the master plan will bring," Lee said.

Town officials agreed. Mayor Sarah Tripp said making improvements before the master plan is finished would be a waste of money.

In drafting the master plan, Lee

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—Street Lee, engineer

said engineers are considering how much wastewater residents and businesses will be generating 20 years down the road and pinpointing ways to serve five major geographical areas.

By waiting for the master plan before proceeding with cost-cutting measures, Lee said the town may be able to tie in the immediate improvements with future sewer service needs.

Town Clerk Mary Etta Hewett said Shallotte spent \$73,872 on maintenance and repair of sewer equipment last fiscal year, and most of that was for the individual pumps installed at each home and business.

Lee said Shallotte's fast growth over the last 10 years has resulted in the town's collection system receiving more wastewater than it can efficiently handle. The town has about 612 customers.

McKim and Creed's report says

the system can operate efficiently with 15 to 20 pumps running simultaneously, but at any given moment there are 30 to 40 pumps running.

The result is increased wear on the pumps, which leads to a variety of problems including corrosion, seal failure, couplings failure and excessive power consumption.

Mayor Tripp said the town would need larger lines to really improve the collection system and lower maintenance costs.

"What we had when we began is like a home when you're first married. Two rooms is fine, but as your family grows you need more. We've grown a lot and those pipes just don't grow," she said.

In evaluating the existing sewer system, Lee said engineers used a computer hydraulic model of the system and considered six alternatives they thought might cut operation costs.

McKim & Creed's report says only one alternative would "provide a meaningful improvement to the hydraulics of the system" by allowing pumps to operate more efficiently.

The recommendation calls for constructing 11,600 feet of 6-inch diameter force main from the existing pump station on Wall Street to the treatment plant on Forest Drive, parallel to the existing force main.

It also includes constructing about 3,000 feet of new 4-inch force main from Brierwood northward to the intersection of Bluff Drive and River Road and 5,500 feet of 6-inch force main to the pump station.

"It will not solve all maintenance problems," said Lee, who did not say how much the town could expect to save by making the improvements.

Alderman Carson Durham said the existing problems show that the town shouldn't have waited so long to do a master plan.

"This is something we should have done years ago. This is hindsight. This shows what a master plan can do for you," he said.

Coastal Carolinas Health Alliance Hosts Peer Day

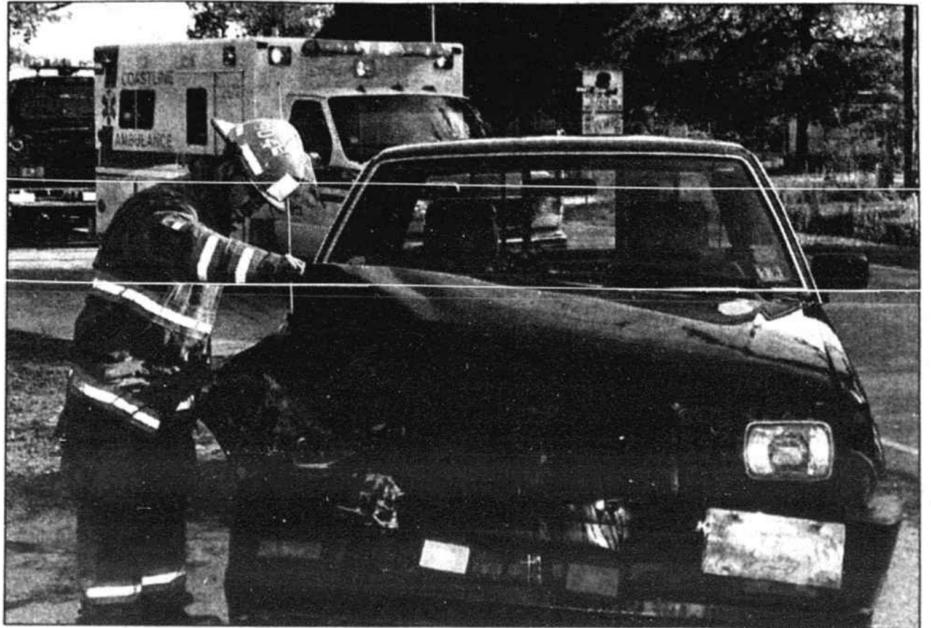
Coastal Carolinas Health Alliance, a not-for-profit corporation made up of health care organizations in southeastern North Carolina, recently hosted its fourth annual Peer Day.

The Oct. 27 event drew 97 representatives of alliance-member hospitals to the alliance office in Leland.

Coastal Carolinas Health Alliance was formed to "improve the organization and delivery of health care services through members of the alliance."

Brunswick Hospital CEO Mark Gregson reported from the alliance's Managed Care Taskforce on trends in managed care systems and reviewed alliance activities. Other alliance peer groups and task force leaders also made presentations.

Alliance members include The Brunswick Hospital, J. Arthur Doshier Memorial Hospital, Bladen County Hospital, Cape Fear Memorial Hospital, Columbus County Hospital, Duplin General Hospital, New Hanover Regional Medical Center, Pender Memorial Hospital and Southeastern Regional Medical Center.



STAFF PHOTO BY ERIC CARLSON

CIVILTOWN Volunteer Firefighter Jackie Griffith examines the damage to a Mazda pickup truck involved in a collision with a Pepsi delivery vehicle on Holden Beach Road Saturday afternoon. The driver was slightly injured, but did not need to be transported to the hospital. The other driver was unhurt. Details of the incident were not available from the N.C. Highway Patrol at press time.

SECOND DRIVER SERIOUSLY INJURED

26 Students Treated For Minor Injuries; Bus Driver Charged

Twenty-six South Brunswick Middle School students were treated for minor injuries at a Southport hospital last Tuesday after their school bus collided with a passenger car at the intersection of N.C. 133 and N.C. 87 and their driver was charged with a yield violation.

Bus No. 141 had 41 pupils on it when driver Corrina Campbell, 39, of Leland, began making a left turn onto N.C. 87 at the Military Ocean Terminal Sunny Point intersection at about 7:20 a.m. The bus was on its way to the middle school on Cougar Drive at Boiling Spring Lakes.

The bus failed to yield the right of way to a westbound 1983 Ford Escort operated by Tammy Lanier Albright, 23, of Winnabow, according to the report filed by State Highway Patrol Trooper D.A. Lewis.

The Albright vehicle struck the 1987 Ford school bus at a point near its right rear axle, with the Escort coming to rest in the middle of N.C. 133, and the bus coming to rest in the northbound lane of N.C. 87.

Southport emergency volunteers used the "Jaws of Life" to free Albright from her vehicle. She was admitted to Doshier Memorial Hospital in Southport for treatment of serious, incapacitating injuries. She has since been released.

The driver of the bus was treated at Doshier for minor injuries, as were 26 of her passengers.

Damage to the bus was estimated at \$2,500, and to the Albright car, \$1,500.

The intersection was the scene of a fatal head-on collision in March 1993. In January a flashing light has been replaced with a full traffic signal.

State traffic engineers have pro-

posed realigning the intersection to give N.C. 87 motorists the right of way and to have all traffic enter the military terminal from N.C. 133 only, but the project has not received funding by the State Board of Transportation.

Plans to realign the N.C. 87/N.C. 133 intersection have also been

linked to a proposal by Martin Marietta Mining to open a quarry off N.C. 133 between the terminal and Carolina Power & Light Co.'s Brunswick Nuclear Plant. Among other concerns area residents questioned the increased volume of heavy truck traffic that would use the intersection.

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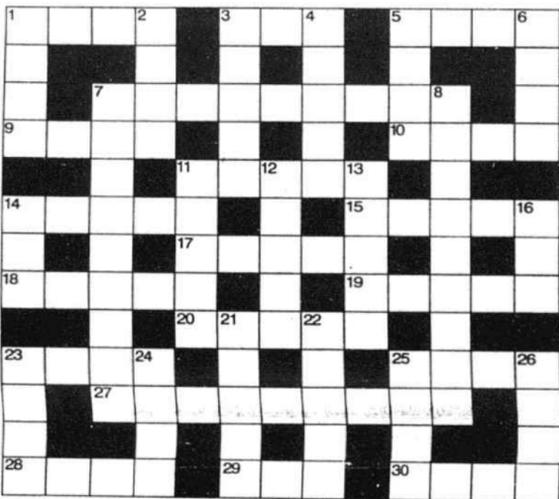
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WEEKLY CROSSWORD



CLUES ACROSS

1. Break
3. Douse
5. Victuals
7. Atmospheric Instrument
9. Converse
10. Bargain
11. Moor
14. Lover
15. Shaft
17. Adder
18. Swell
19. Mannequin
20. Fortunate
23. Throw
25. Cozy
27. Smashed
28. Pay
29. Conducted
30. Tidy

CLUES DOWN

1. Tear
2. Zenith
3. Idler
4. Fold
6. Watch-face
7. Innocent
8. Rebuke
11. Dirty dwelling
12. Savory jelly
13. Robust
14. Fleece
16. For what reason?
21. Pending
22. Massage
23. Melt
24. Footwear
25. Observed
26. Present

(Answers are on Page 8-A)

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