



STAFF PHOTO BY SUSAN USHER

A 'Risky Business'?

With its east-west orientation, Ocean Isle Beach usually isn't susceptible to erosion from northeasters. But crashing waves Friday night heightened damage from high tides in early December, when these homes at East Second and Asheville streets were declared unsafe. Wesley F. Walker of Rock Hill, S.C., who owns "Risky Business" at No. 500, and his neighbor, Robert Hawkins of Cliffside, are making plans to relocate their homes elsewhere on the island. High tides are expected again around New Year's weekend.

Holden Beach Celebrated, Mourned In '94

BY DOUG RUTTER

Holden Beach celebrated its 25th anniversary, mourned the death of its popular mayor and won an extended battle with the federal government in 1994. All of that in the first four months.

If there was one moment during the year that had a greater impact than any other it was the April 6 death of mayor Wally Ausley, a beloved figure at the beach and across the state.

Ausley's death not only left a tremendous void in the hearts of everyone who knew him, it necessitated changes on the town board.

Gay Atkins, a commissioner since 1981, was appointed mayor and Marlaine Thomas took Atkins' seat on the board of commissioners. Atkins is the first female mayor of Holden Beach and the fifth mayor in town history.

Ausley's death came just days after residents gathered to celebrate the silver anniversary of the town's incorporation. A re-enactment of the first town meeting was held in conjunction with the Day At The Docks festival.

Holden Beach proved that persistence pays off in April, when the town won a year-long power struggle with the Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA) over oceanfront dune renourishment.

The feud between the town and FEMA began in March 1993, when the federal agency agreed to give Holden Beach \$57,000 to repair sand dunes that were damaged during a severe winter storm.

FEMA officials recommended using the money to build dunes at 31 lots that met their qualifications, but town commissioners insisted that the sand would quickly wash away and

the money would be wasted.

The town board came up with its own plan to use the money to save Hillside Drive, and FEMA officials finally agreed to go along with the proposal following a visit to the island.

Wayne's Backhoe Service of Shallotte was hired to pile approximately 11,420 cubic yards of sand along the south side of Hillside, which was closed off to everyone except homeowners needing access to their property.

Holden Beach lost one of its two campgrounds this year. Campground By The Sea closed at the end of 1994 after 25 years in business.

Landowner Davis Heniford announced in August his plans to convert the 159 camp sites into 62 lots for single-family homes. Town officials later agreed to oversee construction of street and water lines in the subdivision, with Heniford footing the bill.

It took a while to work out the details, but town officials were poised by the end of December to coordinate a canal dredging project for the lot owners in Harbor Acres.

The town advertised for bids four times before ultimately hiring Bald Head Island Transportation Inc. to do the work in three separate phases.

The total cost will be around \$82,000, and property owners will be assessed once the work is finished.

There were many comings and goings at Holden Beach Town Hall this year, especially in the building inspections department.

Both Bill Goodman and Claude Spellman worked as building inspectors for a short time before re-

signing. Current inspector Doug Gillette is the fourth at Holden Beach since longtime inspector Dwight Carroll retired in April 1993.

Gus Ulrich ended his second stint as town manager in November. Taking his place was 23-year-old Sean Anderson, a 1994 Appalachian State graduate in his first job as town manager.

Commissioners also hired a new town attorney in July. Elva Jess of Southport replaced Ken Campbell, who had served the town since 1990.

Among the key issues that will carry over into 1995 are proposed changes in lot coverage regulations.

Commissioners are considering amending the rule that prohibits covering more than 30 percent of a platted lot with a structure. The new proposal calls for limiting buildings and other impervious surfaces such as driveways to no more than 30 percent of the usable lot area.

Town commissioners also are expected to discuss in January a proposal to pay \$25,500 for an engineering study to determine if septic tank systems are polluting ground and surface water on the island.

Officials say similar studies con-

ducted in 1987 and 1989 did not provide the information they need to decide if a sewer system is needed.

Coastline Squad Provides Help During Holidays

Coastline Volunteer Rescue Squad answered 67 emergency calls during November, reports squad spokesman Sharon Martin.

Five were for fire standby, 10 were for mutual aid and four were transports. Total mileage for the month was 1,818.

"This year for Christmas we adopted a family that had no heat in their home. They do now," Martin said. Squad volunteers collected money all year for the project and received help from a local fuel jobber to complete the gift.

Chief Jake Jacobs collected more than \$700 from local individuals and businesses for 400 fruit baskets delivered Christmas Eve to shut-ins and residents of Hope Harbor Home, Autumn Care Nursing Center and The Brunswick Hospital.

The squad is looking for a building to use as a thrift shop. Anyone interested in helping should call Minnie Cook at 842-5186.



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