

## Another Link Missing

# Railroad Closes Bridge Trestle Across Albemarle Sound

Another link in the chain connecting Northeastern North Carolina with the rest of the state was lost January 5 when Norfolk Southern Railroad closed the trestle across Albemarle Sound.

Area leaders have expressed concern that even if the railroad continues to provide needed service to business and industry, the closing weakens the chain holding the northeast with the rest of the world.

Steve Eisenach, who works with corporate planning with Norfolk and Southern, said one of their engineers inspected the bridge

January 4 and determined it unsafe for trains to use.

"We felt we could no longer guarantee safety. The bridge has a lot of wood that is old and rotten. My guess is that it would cost around \$19 million to fix it," Eisenach said.

The railroad representative said the possibility of a car float or ferry has been considered, but initial cost of \$9 million and heavy operating expenses did not make the possibility viable.

Norfolk and Southern closed the trestle under a temporary embargo, but Eisenach said he feels

certain his company will file for permanent abandonment with the Interstate Commerce Commission.

The company claims its action is unrelated to previous stated intentions to file for abandonment, but is based on safety factors.

Railroad service will be provided to points between Edenton and Norfolk, five trips weekly, by a local train originating and terminating at Norfolk.

Service to and from Plymouth and south is the same. Former rail users between Plymouth and Mackeys will be served by the

Plymouth switcher, available as needed.

Eisenach said the trestle served between 10 and 20 active customers. One of the biggest arguments to keep the bridge open was to transport grain to market. But Eisenach said grain customers in 1986 were half the number of 1985 and that most local grain was marketed to the south.

Dennis Terry, director of economic development with the Albemarle Commission, has been a leader in the fight to keep the span open.

Terry said, "The railroad wants

to get rid of the trestle. Their interest is not the same as ours in northeastern North Carolina. We are in an area so isolated, as far as our transportation network is concerned, and the last thing we need is to see what little we have taken apart. This is just one more link northeastern North Carolina has to the rest of the world that's been cut off."

Terry has written county government agencies and local legislators to suggest that an active ad hoc committee be established to pursue alternatives.

Weyerhaeuser representative Keith Hundley also opposes the closing. "This creates problems for an area already facing a lot of problems. We have been part of a fight to keep north and south movements across the sound and looked at every alternative known to man. We want to make sure northeastern North Carolina, our friends and neighbors continue to grow," Hundley said.

Speaking on the possibility of a ferry, Hundley said the possibility looked good for a while, but appears now not to be a viable solution.



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## The Public Parade

### Public Support Needed

We agree with Senator Marc Basnight that the incoming legislature needs to do something about revision of regulations controlling insurance in North Carolina.

Automobile insurance coverage is full of inequities, casualty rates have gone through the ceiling in many areas and malpractice coverage has become so expensive as to limit the practice of medicine in many areas of the state.

The answer to these problems will not be easy to find; and, once found, will be very difficult to get passed into law. But it is time to start trying.

As good a place to start as any is with the unfairness of the present automobile insurance system. Under state law, all motorists are required to carry liability coverage. But according to the magazine published by the independent agents association, about 20 per cent of North Carolina drivers continue to pay punitive liability insurance rates, a situation which becomes worse as rates go up.

Two things are wrong, as we see it. One has to do with "recoupment surcharges" and the other with the North Carolina Reinsurance Facility.

Here is how the recoupment deal works. You may have had 30 years of accident-free driving under your current liability policy. Then you have a minor fender-bender which, although you were sober and driving at a legal rate of speed, was your fault. The damage was \$480, or only slightly more than the annual premium you have been paying all these years.

If this accident is charged to your insurance, your carrier will assign you two points, increasing your premium charge \$120 a year. By acquiring those two points, you will be assessed a "recoupment surcharge" of \$120. The premium increase and surcharge would total \$240 and run for three years. As a result, you would pay \$720, if not more, in increased premiums and surcharges to help a company recoup a \$480 loss.

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**JAYCEE MEMBERS**—(from left) Richard Bunch, regional director, Betz Ricks and Kel Elmore kick off the club's annual jelly drive by asking "How about a case instead of a jar?" Jan. 19 begins National Jaycee Week and members will be soliciting sales from local businesses. WZBO will host a radiothon Tuesday. Goal of \$1,200 will go to the Burn Center at Chapel Hill Memorial Hospital.

## Church Day Care Fights State Ruling

By JEANETTE WHITE

The Rev. Ashby Browder of Immanuel Baptist Church sees the fight waged by his day care center as the last bastion before loss of parental rights.

Immanuel's center is one of 11 church-run facilities ordered to close or comply with a ban on spanking.

Browder said, "In the 15 years the church has been operating a center, I can count the number of spankings on one hand. My greatest concern is what this will mean to individual homes. The issues are parental authority, parental rights. We as a church



Rev. Ashby Browder

are fighting a battle for parents."

Browder received a letter from the state September 30 instructing the center to cease operations within 30 days unless policies on discipline were revised. Church policy is that a child may be spanked with prior knowledge of his parents.

"If we have a serious, reoccurring problem with a child, we discuss the issue with the parent. If the problem continues, we spank with the parents permission. Then we talk with the child, counsel him, reassure him of our love and concern and pray with him in a way he understands. God never chastens us in anger, but with love," Browder said.

The director of the center administers spankings with a paddle.

"I know there is a way to abuse a child, and know about that problem. But the Dept. of Human Resources has taken this too far," Browder said.

The pastor said the ruling enforced by the state means that every private citizen who keeps as many as two children for pay must meet day care regulations.

The homes must be licensed, inspected and allow no spanking. For instance, if Jane Doe has a small child of her own and keeps

two others while their mothers work, Mrs. Doe cannot discipline her own child by spanking while the other two are in her home.

"There are over 6,500 registered homes in the state and more are unregistered. People are in violation of this and don't realize they are breaking the law," Browder said.

His church has received support from individual homes in the area, urging him to help in this fight. "They stand alone and have to comply. We are fighting for them," the preacher said.

Even though only 11 church-run centers are involved in the fight, Browder says scores more are in violation of policy. The outcome of litigation on these 11 will determine if others are cited.

The churches threw the ball back to the state when a Charlotte attorney filed a petition seeking a hearing. Now the churches must wait for the state to set a date.

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## Roses Chain Considers Opening Edenton Store

Chowan shoppers may soon have more space for browsing if plans underway by two companies materialize.

Lois Williams of the real estate division of Roses Stores, Inc., in Henderson, says her company is hoping to locate a major store in Edenton if a building can be secured.

"We're working on it and would really like to be in Edenton. It's our type of town," Ms. Williams said.

Roses is interested in the building which houses McCrory's formerly TG&Y. Ms. Williams said McCrory's bought the TG&Y Company last year and entered into a lease with Lat Purser and Associates of Charlotte, owners of the store.

Purser is attempting to buy McCrory's lease, Williams said, and if successful would enlarge the local store to 54,000 square feet.

When questioned on whether or not employees of McCrory's would be retained by Roses, Ms. Williams said, "That would be up to the personnel department. We will be looking for employees with experience in merchandising and obviously those people have that."

## Land Use Plan Presented

A 75-page document, representing the Edenton Land Use Plan 1986 Update, was presented to town council Tuesday night by a representative of L.E. Wooten and Co.

The update, developed over the last year, outlines the capacity of the town's present facilities, such as utilities and schools.

"What we have here is a policy document," the company representative said.

The plan envisions the town's growth, encompassing an additional 6,500 acres in the future. Council members will study the

If the venture is successful, Roses should be making official announcement of their plans by the end of the month.

Information from Edenton Chamber of Commerce Executive Director Kathleen Miller says that ongoing efforts have been made by two separate developers to construct shopping centers with an "anchor store", such as a Roses or K-Mart's, as well as a supermarket. One of these developers has planned a shopping center at the intersection of NC 32 and US 17.

When asked if a supermarket is negotiating with her for a site on property she owns near Golden Corral, Mrs. Judy Earnhardt Adams of Greenville said, "I'm not at liberty to say at this time. It would be out of order to make any comment at all."

An official of S and R Grocery on West Queen Street said a rumor that his store may be moving is untrue.

Mike Self, assistant general manager for S and R Stores, said, "Not to my knowledge (are we moving). We have a lease on this building and I don't know why we would move."

document and vote on its adoption at the regular February meeting.

In other business, the council:

- Approved the purchase by C-4 Media of cable facilities from Albemarle Cable TV upon a third and final hearing;

- Witnessed the swearing-in of town office employee Linda Edmundson as interim Town Clerk;

- Approved the use of town office space by the Chowan Arts Council;

- Approved the purchase of a new sanitation truck at a price of \$48,721 from low bidder Cavalier

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## Boards Seek Pre-Clearance Resolution

State Attorney General Lacy Thornburg could promise no easy solution when local officials traveled to Raleigh Friday in an effort to resolve a suit filed by the U.S. Justice Department against Chowan Board of Elections and Board of Education.

The justice department has charged 22 counties in the state with consistently failing to comply with the Voting Rights Act of 1964. The act is designed to prohibit discrimination against minorities in the voting booth.

Chowan officials have said the

county believes it failed to comply with the act when town and county school boards merged and changed from two five-member boards to one seven-member board without pre-clearance from the justice department.

If the county can obtain pre-clearance now with a written request, the problem will be solved. If the justice department denies the request, the county will be involved in litigation to resolve the issue.

Thornburg suggested that the 22 counties ask for clearances indi-

vidually.

Local representatives who met with Thornburg were County Manager Cliff Copeland, Board of Elections Attorney Bill Culpeper, School Board Attorney Chris Bean and Chowan Supt. of Schools John Dunn.

Dunn said, "The attorney general said his office was willing to help resolve the case and suggested we follow up on the justice department's idea that we try and resolve this with the request for pre-clearance."



**HISTORICAL DONATION**—Emily Irby, branch manager of NCNB presents a check for \$400 to Jack Pruden, (right) Chairman of the Edenton Historical Commission and George Alma Byrum, Chairman of the Commission's Finance Committee representing the bank's annual contribution. Pruden commented "This is sort of out of the blue for us." Byrum added, "This will start our business fund drive for 1987."