

Welcome Center Budget Discussion Underway

By JACK GROVE

A new welcome center on U.S. 17 near the Virginia border may cost local governments more than they expected. At a meeting in Elizabeth City last week, a proposed budget of \$70,200 for equipment and the first year of operating costs was presented.

Representatives from Edenton, Roper, Plymouth, Elizabeth City, Hertford, Kitty Hawk, Winfall and the Counties of Chowan, Washington, Pasquotank, Perquimans, Tyrrell and Camden were in attendance.

The center was first proposed by state Senator Marc

Basnight last year. It will be located about three miles south of the state line and will serve both highway traffic and boat traffic on the Dismal Swamp Canal.

Area representatives attended a meeting in Raleigh last summer with Basnight, Representatives R.M. (Pete) Thompson and Vernon James and a Department of Transportation representative.

Agreement was reached for the DOT to build the \$500,000 facility and provide maintenance while localities would fund its operations for the first year.

The budget calls for Elizabeth City-Pasquotank to

provide 42 per cent of the funding; 10 per cent each for Edenton-Chowan, Hertford-Winfall-Perquimans and Albemarle Commission; Plymouth-Washington, six per cent; Columbia-Tyrrell, four per cent; Dare, eight per cent; Gates, one per cent; Hyde and Camden, two per cent each; and Currituck, five per cent.

Don Flowers, executive director of the Albemarle Commission, said at the meeting, "What we've been trying to do is get the traffic into this region. We've got a big untapped potential in the Albemarle Sound."

The welcome center would

provide state visitors with information on the history, accommodations, docking facilities and recreational facilities of the area.

Hertford Mayor Bill Cox led a discussion of the budget and funding proposal. He told the group, "I think we are committed for the first year of funding. What you see here tonight is the maximum budget."

A one-time only item in the budget is \$15,000 for equipment. The remaining \$55,200 provides for full-time and part-time staffing and non-personnel expenses such as telephone, uniforms, office supplies and insurance.

Discussion centered around ways to reduce expenses such as the use of volunteers to staff the center. Bill Owens of the Pasquotank Board of Commissioners commented, "It's sure a lot cheaper to use volunteers." He said that there were many good volunteer organizations in his county as in other counties.

Richard Bunch, executive director of the Edenton-Chowan Chamber of Commerce wasn't so sure. "As for volunteers, it would be hard to coordinate," he said.

Cox said that he felt that a mix of paid staff and volunteers would be good. He said

that for security of staff personnel, two or more should be at the center at all times.

Flowers said that he had had discussions with officials in Virginia concerning the center and they might agree to provide some of the funding. "The state of Virginia is very interested in coming in on this," he said.

In a telephone interview Monday, Basnight said the center is a "pilot project." He said that the rest of the state's welcome centers are on interstate highways, are funded by the state and disseminate information to visitors on attractions statewide.

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One Thing And Another

A lot of water has flown from Queen Anne's Creek since we were last along the Public Parade. And a lot of things have happened.

For one thing -- one big thing -- there was back in January another close encounter with cancer, our wife's third, requiring major surgery and weeks of recuperation, the last two at the beach.

It was during those weeks that we again came to have a renewed appreciation for all those unnoticed things a woman does around the house. We learned that a lot more was involved than three meals a day. We discovered that the dishwasher not only has to be loaded, but unloaded; that the wash has to be emptied into the dryer and then properly folded and put away; that the bed has to be made just as regularly as it is unmade, stamps have to be procured and letters written, rugs vacuumed and furniture dusted.

And every day a new cycle begins.

But every day the load became lighter as word from the doctors and reports from the hospital improved; as first the oxygen was dropped, then the stomach pump removed and finally the intravenous feeding suspended. Homecoming was a big day, but one which found us completely turned around -- getting up first, preparing and serving our wife breakfast in bed, then helping her to get dressed and sit up awhile as she felt like it.

Now, happily, all that is behind us. The two weeks at the beach helped both mentally and physically. Our houseplants had survived almost four months without care, the utilities were intact and all the appliances up and running. Even our mockingbirds were back, fighting over territory among the dunes.

Meanwhile, here in Edenton things had not been standing still, least of all those in which we are especially interested. Things had gone so well at the Chowan Herald that we are almost persuaded they do better without us. On the city, work was progressing nicely on the new waterfront park and crews were about to begin converting the old Swain school building into an apartment-community center complex.

There is some unfinished business, of course. The city's new waste treatment plant seems to be going the way of all such ventures, delays, compounded with added costs; and, here at the Chowan Herald, an 18.1 per cent increase in our postage rates, effective this week, along with April 15 and income taxes, threaten to take all the pleasure.

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Democrats Plan Local Convention

Chowan County Democrats will hold their county convention on Saturday, April 9 at the new courthouse at 1 p.m. County Democratic Chairman W.T. Culpepper, III said Wednesday, "All Democrats are invited and urged to attend."

Convention business will be conducted by delegates elected at the recent precinct meetings. Convention keynote speaker is expected to be state Representative R.M. (Pete) Thompson.

Democrats across the state will hold county conventions on the same day. Delegates to the state and district conventions will be elected at the county convention. District conventions will be held on May 21 and the state convention will be held June 18.

The county convention is the second step in electing delegates to the Democratic national convention in July.

Democrats who are interested in running for delegate to the national convention must file a "Notice of Candidacy" form by April 24

for district level positions and by May 23 for at-large delegate positions, state party chairman Jim Van Hecke has announced.

Fifty-three out of 82 committed delegates will be elected at the district conventions. The remaining delegates will be elected at the state convention in Raleigh.

"We expect to send a great delegation to Atlanta, a group that represents our party's constituencies," commented Van Hecke.

Prospective delegates may obtain Notice of Candidacy forms from Everett Ward at state headquarters, 919-821-2777.

The allocation of North Carolina's delegates and alternates, based on results from the March 8 presidential primary for the First District is Jesse Jackson, 4; Albert Gore, 2 and Michael Dukakis, none. Alternates are one each for Jackson and Gore.

Statewide, Gore has 23 (10 alternates); Jackson, 20 (eight alternates); and Dukakis, 10 (one alternate).

Fire Lane Parking To Draw Fines

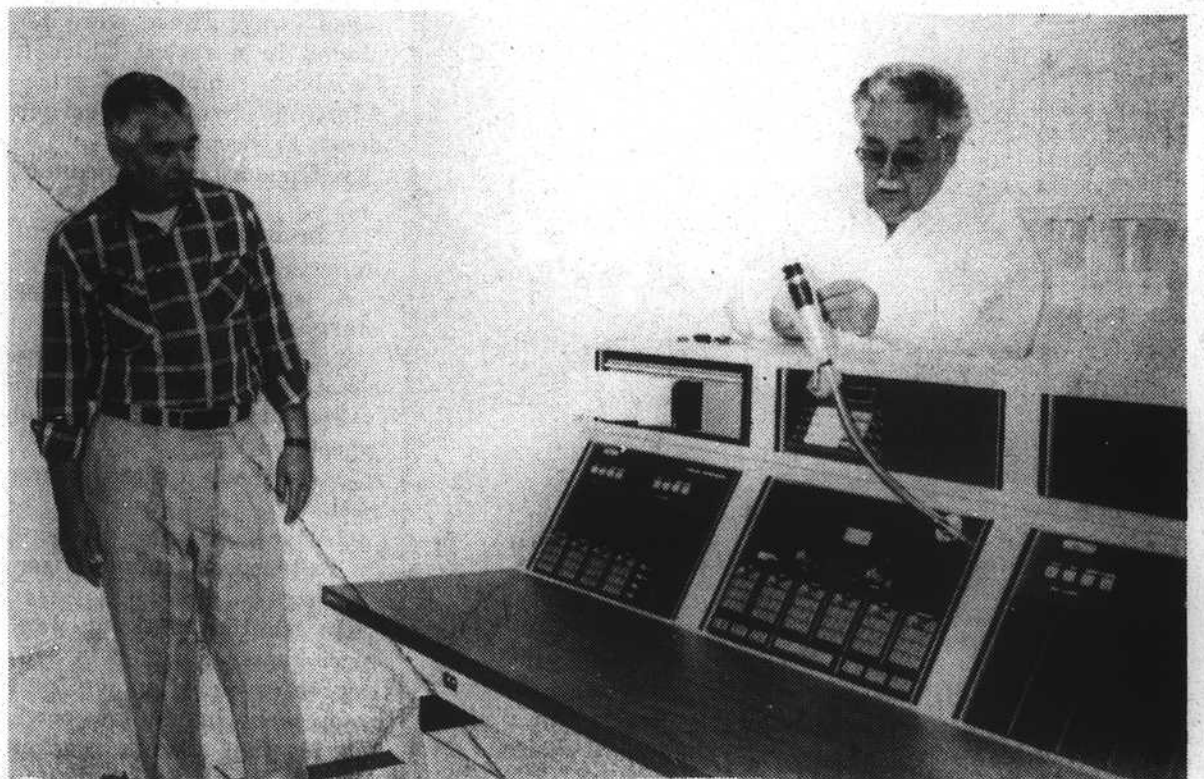
Motorists will be warned for now but illegal parking will cost them \$5 per incident after a grace period expires at the Northside Shopping Center. A new fire lane has been painted in front of the laundromat, Winn Dixie and Maxway stores.

State law mandates these fire lanes for access to stores. Fire lanes have been established at Edenton Village Shopping Center and behind stores on the east side of

Broad Street downtown.

Enforcement has been underway at the Edenton Village location for several months but the Northside and downtown lanes are new. Edenton Fire Chief Lynn Perry said that, in cooperation with the Edenton Police Department, warning tickets at Northside were being issued starting last Friday. Enforcement begins tomorrow.

Warning tickets are cur-



911 CONSOLE -- Louis White, left, looks over the new emergency communications console delivered to the Edenton Municipal Building Wednesday morning. The new system is scheduled for operation this month. White is the dispatcher supervisor for the town-county system.

Postal Hike Trickle Down

Rate Increases Are Announced

Due to the sharp increase in postal rates which went into effect this week, The Chowan Herald regrets to announce that its subscription rates will go up on May 1, the first in-

crease in about three years.

Subscription renewals occurring before May 1, however, will be at the old rate.

While the Post Office Department was increasing letter mail rates by 13.6 per cent, it was boosting second class charges, which apply to newspapers, by 18.1 per cent. In addition, we are now required to do a great deal more pre-sorting and labeling than previously, increasing our mailroom costs considerably.

Beginning May 1, out-of-state subscription rates will be increased from \$12.50 per year to \$15. Of that increase, higher postal rates account for \$1.87 per year and the increased cost of handling makes up the rest. Six month subscriptions out-of-state will go from \$7.50 to \$8.

Likewise, in-state rates will increase from \$11.55 per year to \$12.60, while six-month subscriptions in-state will remain at \$7.56.

Our total circulation has increased during the past

year by several hundred, due in part to the campaign put on

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Breakins Reported

Sheriff Fred Spruill said Wednesday that two breakins in the county are currently under investigation.

The first was reported last Thursday at the "One Step Up" on B Lane just north of the U.S. 17 Bypass. A window was broken and thieves stole \$325 in stereo equipment and miscellaneous items. Spruill said that no cash was taken.

Another breakin occurred at the Veterinary Diagnostic Laboratory on Paradise Road over the weekend. Entry was gained through a broken window.

The sheriff said that desks were rifled but that nothing was taken. Damage to doors where entry was attempted was estimated at \$150.

Fire Hits Cotton Mill

An early morning fire did "a minimal amount of damage" at the Edenton Cotton Mill Tuesday, according to Edenton Fire Chief Lynn Perry. He set the damage to about \$500.

The fire started beneath an electric motor in the baler room at the north end (rear) of the building. It spread underneath flooring and was partially contained by subfloor sprinklers.

After answering the 4:30 a.m. alarm, firemen cut a hole in the floor to reach the fire, working in a four foot

crawl space.

Perry said that employees manned hoses and fought the blaze pending the arrival of the fire department. Employees at the mill have an organized fire brigade and receive training assisted by the Edenton department. The purpose of the brigade is to contain any fire or extinguish it while the fire department is en route.

The fire chief said that after discussion with mill officials Tuesday, a decision was made to install a trap door where the hole was cut to aid access in case of future fires.



TEEN CENTER TV - Tim Jones, (middle) President of the Chowan-Edenton Optimist Club, presents Recreation Director Robbie Laughton (left) with a check to purchase a large screen TV for use at the Teen Center held at the Recreation Department. At right is Mark Noneman, Optimist Club member.