



"Building Communicative Bridges  
in A Tri-Racial Setting"

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## LUMBEE RIVER E. M. C. OPENS MEETINGS TO THE CONSUMERS

by Bruce Barton

Red Springs--Responding to a motion which was presented at the annual meeting of the members of Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation on October 20 at Pembroke State University's Performing Arts Center, the board of directors opened the meetings of the board to the consumers at their monthly meeting Tuesday afternoon.

The vote was reportedly unanimously. This writer, editor of this newspaper, and a consumer, had made the motion at the annual meeting that "the board of directors open the meetings of the co-op to the consumers under the auspices of the Open Meetings Law of North Carolina." The motion, which was in the form of a recommendation, carried overwhelmingly by the members.

The motion could not be official until or if the board of directors amended existing policy which prohibited attendance to the meetings.

It was the first meeting of the directors under J.W. Hunt, the new president of the board of directors.

The meetings were opened to the consumers by deleting two provisions which restricted attendance by the consumers by insisting that members "request to attend and observe (the meetings) either in writing or by telephone prior to the meeting and that no more than three members could attend and observe any one meeting due to space constraints the first three members so requesting being given the opportunity..."

The new policy as adopted by the directors simply states that "LREMC members may attend and observe meetings of the board of directors with a proviso that 'A majority of the directors present may close the meeting at any time to member attendance, whenever, in the judgement of the board, any matter to be deliberated upon or discussed requires private deliberations.'"

This writer considers it "a victory for the consumers and affirmation that the board of directors does in fact listen to the consumers whom they represent."

### WHAT PRECIPITATED THE ACTION?

Approximately a year ago trespassing charges were pressed on this writer, although they were later dropped by the co-op, when I refused to leave a meeting.

At the time Derl Hinson, the general manager said, "The LREMC board has chosen for years to hold its deliberations in private."

by Connee Brayboy

Accomplishing any kind of professional goal is always a struggle. For an Indian in Robeson County it is often an even more difficult task. In spite of monumental opposition. Indians have continually unwritten history. It is often the Lumbee Indian who is the first to reach professional heights. In almost all areas you will usually find an Indian busily working his way to the top.

The recent appointment of Ronnie Hunt to assistant general manager of Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation is one of those success



Ronnie Hunt, assistant general manager, Lumbee River Electric Membership Corporation. [Connee Brayboy photo]

stories. This appointment gives Hunt the distinction of being the highest ranked minority in cooperative history administratively.

Said Hunt, "I've never felt that being an Indian was a disadvantage to me. Of course I've had to work harder...had to prove over and over again that I could do the job. You understand that failure on my part would be a negative reflection on an entire group of people. We know that we can perform, sometimes it is necessary to convince others."

Hunt has come up through the ranks at the Red Springs, NC-based electric cooperative. He began his career at LREMC as office manager in January 1977. In 1979 he became manager of office and staff services. He has learned the operation of a rural electric cooperative from the inside. He has continued to apply what he has learned and adds his own personal touch of concern.

"I believe in the basic concept of a co-op," he said. "When rural cooperatives were established in the early 1940s, they were designed to provide a much needed service to rural areas. Not only to provide this service, but to provide it at the lowest possible cost to the consumer."

Hunt came to the co-op from Southern National Bank in Lumberton where he served as operations officer. He was supervisor of the balancing section of the bank. During his senior year at Pembroke State University he worked at SNA at SNA. Upon receiving his B.S. Degree in Business, he became assistant operations manager and moved from that position to operations manager.

His training in financing has proven invaluable at LREMC. His new duties include: insuring that financial needs, both capital and operational are met and system objectives are achieved through the accounting system; overseeing a data processing program which will assure the most efficient processing of data needed for system operations, planning and control; managing the resources available to the member records, member information and assistance and word processing sections to achieve the agreed upon results in all areas covered by the Corporate functions delegated to each section; overseeing the development of practices and procedures necessary to achieve uniformity of effort, including compliance audits which will significantly increase effectiveness and assure

## A CLOSER LOOK... at Ronnie Hunt

## Recount Scheduled in Pembroke Mayor's Race

LUMBERTON--The Robeson County Board of Elections decided Monday night to hold a recount in the mayor's race in Pembroke, despite assertions by the elections board attorney that the allegations raised by a citizens group and one of the defeated candidates in the mayors race seemed "to be frivolous."

Sam Dial, who was defeated by a scant 10 votes in the mayors race, challenged the votes of Teddy Jacobs, James Lucas, Sarah Lucas, Merlin Bryant Oxendine and Belton Smith, Jr. Said Dial, in his letter, "The above names have lived outside of Pembroke longer than the required time to be eligible to vote in the town election."

Interestingly enough, neither Sam Dial nor Rev. Dawley Maynor, chairman of the citizen group, were present at the meeting.

The meeting which was scheduled for 6 p.m., did not actually begin until 6:55 p.m. A meeting before the meeting seemed to be where the action was as attorney Joe "Pete" Ward, representing the board of elections, and Dexter Brooks, representing the interests of Pembroke, and elections officials tried to iron out seeming procedural differences about what the meeting was supposed to be about.

According to a Pembroke source, Harbert Moore, chairman of the Robeson County Board of Elections, had notified a number of the interested parties in the matter that a recount and an examination of allegations raised by the citizens group would take place.

Seemingly the procedural questions were raised because Moore expanded the investigation of the Pembroke voting

beyond allegations raised by Dial and Maynor. Also, Moore extended the time for Dial to submit any further allegations until the close of today (Thursday).

Maynor, among other allegations, charged that Ms. Evelyn Cummings was appointed to serve as an assistant at the Pembroke polls when in fact she was a resident of Raft Swamp Precinct. And that Mary Catherine Canady abridged a number of electoral laws by helping people vote, seemingly most of the incidents involved curbside voting.

Maynor also challenged the same voters that Dial did.

The elections board decided also to look into the fact that the tabulator, registration books and poll books did not come up with the same number of votes cast in the hotly contested election.

The tabulator showed that 759 votes were cast but the poll books only showed 742 ballots cast.

In spite of their large margins of victory incumbents Larry Brooks and Milton Hunt have not been certified as winners in the council races either. And James A. "Pete" Jacobs will also have to wait until Tuesday to see if his victory over Dial and former Mayor Reggie Strickland will be upheld.

The board of elections has scheduled the recount for Tuesday, November 24, beginning at 7:00 p.m. at elections headquarters in Lumberton.

According to a number of sources close to the rhubarb it appears that most of the discrepancies have been resolved by the internal investigation undertaken by the elections board.

## Public Hearing Scheduled

A public hearing on a rule governing state recognition of Indian tribes will be conducted by the N.C. Commission of Indian Affairs in Fayetteville on Thursday, Nov 19.

The commission is proposing to amend an administrative rule governing groups petitioning for state recognition as Indian tribes. The proposed amendment deletes

the requirement that members of petitioners be "one quarter blood Indian."

The hearing will be conducted at the Cumberland County Association of Indian People Center on Downing Road, Fayetteville, from 3 to 5 p.m. and from 6:30 to 8:30 p.m. Oral and written testimony will be taken at the hearing.

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## Jim Lowry named State Purchasing Agent

Jim R. Lowry

Jim R. Lowry, president of Lowry Chevrolet, Inc., in Tryon, has been named State purchasing officer by secretary of the Department of Administration Jane Smith Patterson.

Lowry, 36, will begin his duties as director of the division of purchase and contract Dec. 1.

The Robeson County native is a 1966 graduate of NC State University in Aeronautical Engineering. Lowry was an aircraft research engineer with Lockheed Aircraft in Georgia for three years and was affiliated with General Electric Computer Division in South Carolina, Florida and Charlotte, before becoming self-employed in the automobile dealership in Tryon.

A Lumbee Indian, Lowry is chairman of the North Carol-

ina Commission of Indian Affairs. He was the founding chairman for the Metro-Indiana Native American Association in Charlotte and has received the Distinguished Service Award from that Association.

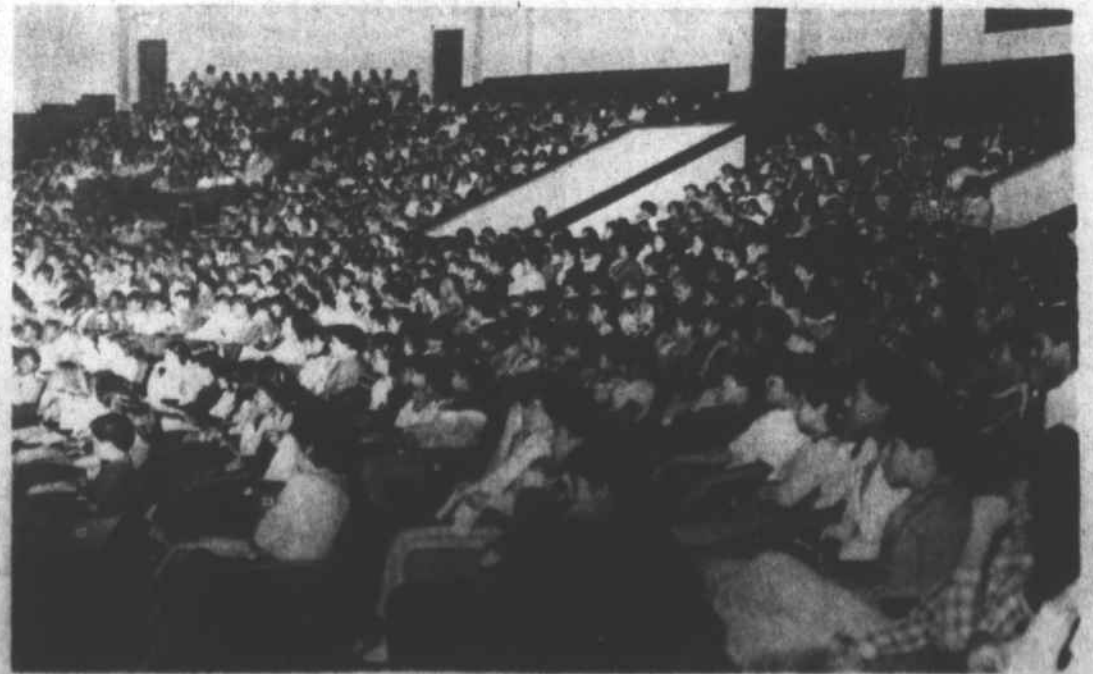
"Governor Hunt and I are very pleased that Jim has agreed to come to work for this administration in this very important position," stated Secretary Patterson. "He is a hard-nosed business man, an excellent manager, and has the technical background that will be very important in the purchasing position," she added.

"Governor Hunt and I have also gotten to know Jim Lowry very well through his work as chairman of the Commission of Indian Affairs. He has shown an understanding of government, and demonstrated the ability to think clearly and rationally through complex problems. He is the kind of person we wanted in the position of state purchasing officer, and we are pleased he will be joining us in Dec.," Ms. Patterson added.

As State Purchasing Officer Lowry will be in charge of the division which purchases all supplies, services and equipment used by state institutions and state agencies, including the public schools. He will report to deputy secretary for government operations J.K. Sherron.

Lowry's salary will be \$41,676.

## COUNTY BAND WORKSHOP A SUCCESS



"This is fantastic," stated Barbara Thomas, Cultural Coordinator with the Robeson County School System. "It is so great to see these school students enjoy and learn from the music workshop given by the PSU Music Department." The Music Workshop was presented by the PSU Band, Singers and Swingers and

Chair. Under the direction of Dr. William Frits, the Band played traditional and pop tunes to a near packed house (shown above). The Singers and Swingers sang a more popular array of tunes, while the Choir, under the direction of Dr. Harold Slagle, sang the more reverent selections. Some 1500 Robeson County

students took part in the morning presentation coming from as far away as Perinton. "I think the program went very well," stated Dr. Robert Ramirez, Chairman of the Music Department. "This is just one of the attractions the Music Department has planned for his year." Other PSU Events include a Christmas Concert on December 3, 1981.

## Public Hearing Scheduled

Lumberton--The county commissioners have scheduled a public hearing for Monday, December 7, to receive input from the public concerning the proposed redistricting plan for Robeson County.

The commissioners decided to hold the public hearing to conform with the mandate of the 1965 Voting Rights Act. Robeson County is one of 39 counties in North Carolina subject to the federal law.

## Indian Caucus meets Tuesday

The Robeson County Indian Caucus will meet Tuesday November 24, 1981 at the Pembroke Court House at 7:30 p.m. Important issues will be discussed, everyone is invited to attend.

## HAPPY THANKSGIVING

Bruce Barton

Connee Brayboy  
Garry L. Barton  
Ricky Barton  
Angela Jacobs  
Connie Gleave