

# THE STATE PORT PILOT

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**CHAIRMAN**—Connie Connaughton, left, is serving this year as chairman of the committee for the Blind and Visually Handicapped for the Southport Lions Club, is shown here with Tommy Gilbert, who was the speaker at the Thursday night meeting.

## Construction A Stabilizing Influence

# Unemployment Rate High But It Could Get Worse

By BILL ALLEN

Insured unemployment is rising at the present time at an alarming rate in Brunswick County following the recent years of spectacular economic growth.

Insured unemployment has more than doubled in the past year and could be around seven percent now, reports David Holden of the Employment Security Commission branch office in Southport.

Holden said that a report from the ESC Bureau of Employment Security Research in Raleigh showed that Brunswick County had an insured unemployment rate of 6.6 percent in September, the latest month for which figures are available.

"I don't want to startle anyone, but it does appear that the unemployment rate in Brunswick County is around seven percent at the present time," he stated. "It is definitely higher now than it was in September."

The Department of Labor reported last week that the nationwide unemployment rate jumped to 6.5 percent in

November, the highest it has been in 13 years. The latest statewide figures show that unemployment in North Carolina has reached 4.8 percent.

Accurate information about the number of unemployed workers at any one time is almost impossible to obtain since comprehensive

data is unavailable.

Government-released percentages basically show the number of "insured" persons drawing unemployment insurance. The percentages don't reflect the number of un-insured persons — job seekers not receiving unemployment insurance — trying to obtain

employment. Some experts believe the government-released percentages should be doubled to obtain a more accurate figure.

Unemployment under 2.5 percent has been considered "normal" until recent years. Now government officials are saying that 5 to 6 percent unemployment is acceptable

to keep inflation down.

Holden said national officials predict that unemployment will level off and the economy will experience a slight upturn this summer. "It could happen here," he added.

Holden said that bureau figures show that insured unemployment in Brunswick County has been moving upward with a single exception since the early summer of 1973 when it stood about 2 percent.

Insured unemployment climbed to 3.1 percent in July of 1973 before falling down to 1.8 percent in September of 1973. "I don't believe the September data is realistic because unemployment goes up and not down after the summer months," Holden pointed out. "Some local influence helped send the percentage down."

Insured unemployment almost doubled between July of 1973 and July of 1974, when it reached 6.0 percent. It climbed to 6.6 percent in September.

(Continued On Page 2)

(Continued On Page 2)

## 'Would Make Job Easier'

# More Funds Sought For Water Projects

An additional \$76,000 grant would make it easier to construct the proposed \$1 million-plus water, sewer and storm drainage project, the Southport Board of Aldermen was informed at a special meeting Tuesday afternoon.

C.E. Davis of Henry Von

Oesen and Associates, consulting engineers for the city, said the \$76,000 was needed "to take care of the entire project as originally planned plus adding drainage for West Street."

If the city can't obtain the additional grant, Davis said the entire three-part project can still be constructed "if everything goes smoothly."

"We don't plan to delete at all," Davis told the board. "We plan to do the most essential work first and work toward the less essential."

Davis suggested that the city take the base bid for the water works as submitted and use desirable alternates. "We will then have enough funds to do the job if we also delete some less essential sewer lines on the outskirts of town and certain streets without houses or houses that could be served from adjacent streets," he pointed out. "These are incidental deductions, but they got us down to the point where we would have enough funds to make an award."

The Von Oesen representative said he believed the city could make do with less than the normal construction contingency in the project. He said he has reduced the construction contingency from five per-

cent of the job to two-and-one-half to three percent, or \$28,000-plus.

"Usually for any type of construction work underground, especially ones close to water, we like to have a higher contingency factor (five percent) than we have,"

(Continued On Page 2)

## For Water Tanks

# Land Payment Said 'Inflated'

Five Oak Island residents have charged that Brunswick County commissioners paid "a greatly inflated price" for property at Long Beach to build an elevated storage tank.

"We are as interested as anyone on this island in a water system, but we don't think anyone should make a 'fast buck' on it at the expense of the taxpayers of Brunswick County," said the letter signed by Royce L. Hewett, Blanch A. Hewett, Bryant Tritt, J.H. Joyce and

A.K. McCallum.

Members of the Old Brunswick County Board of Commissioners voted unanimously and without discussion November 21 to purchase Lots 32 and 33 at Long Beach for the elevated storage tank. Two members of the new board were present when the vote was taken.

After the meeting, commissioners and county officials said the county paid the owners of the property, a

(Continued On Page 14)

## 'Uninterrupted Opportunity' To Speak...Once

# Meeting Rules, Procedures Discussed By Beach Council

By BILL ALLEN

The Long Beach Board of Commissioners approved rules and regulations governing both meetings and public hearings during the regular monthly session Thursday night at Town Hall. The rules and regulations, worked out during a closed executive session in late September, were approved on a 4-to-2 vote after three changes were made following sharp debate.

Commissioners Ellis Dudley, Virginia Christenbury, H.E. Joyce and Nancy Leggett voted to approve the rules and regulations while Mayor E. W. Morgan and Commissioner Russell Morrison were in opposition.

Basically, the rules and regulations give citizens an "uninterrupted opportunity" to present a statement at a meeting upon recognition by the mayor. A citizen can't make a second statement on the same subject "unless called upon by a member of

the council." A citizen can place an item on the agenda by notifying the town manager five days in advance of a meeting "if possible."

Mayor Morgan said he had always opposed any rules and regulations limiting citizen input. He said he voiced his

opinion on the subject at the September meeting and had not changed his mind. The mayor played a tape recording he made at the September meeting to show that his views had not changed.

Morrison said he believed that citizens should be able to

speak as long as they desire at meetings. "I will sit here all night long to hear what citizens have to say," he stated.

The closed executive session the board held to work out rules and regulations was the subject of much discussion at the

Thursday night meeting.

Mayor Morgan and Morrison both said they believed the closed meeting was illegal. Town Manager Frank Kivett, who called the session, said the meeting was legal because the board "discussed personnel — me."

(Continued On Page 2)

## Director Has 'Ambitious Plans'

# Schmidt Resigns Marina Post; Watts At Meeting

H.A. Schmidt, for the past ten years manager of the Southport Boat Harbor, a marine facility operated by the N.C. State Ports Authority, announced Thursday that he is resigning

effective Dec. 15. Schmidt made the announcement as he presided over a dinner meeting at the Lantern at which Mr. and Mrs. Rae Watts were guests of honor. Watts, new executive director of the State Ports Authority, was here to meet members of the advisory board for the Southport Boat Harbor and a few other invited guests.

When he spoke to the group following Schmidt's surprise announcement, Watts made it clear that this decision was reached by the local man and that no pressure had been exerted.

"I am sincerely sorry he has reached this decision," Watts said.

Schmidt recalled that it was ten years ago this week when he was contacted regarding the job as manager of the Southport Boat Harbor and that he was formally

notified of his acceptance two days before Christmas that year. He described his years of service at the local marina as "the happiest of my life" and expressed regret that he is removing himself from further personal participation in its development.

He gave assurance of his continued interest and his conviction that "great things lie ahead for the Southport facility."

During the course of his remarks Watts thanked Schmidt for his service, which has helped bring the marina a long way from its modest beginning, then outlined some very ambitious plans for the future.

"We need to put all of our land area to work," Watts said, detailing some ideas for enlargement and for additional services.

Among them is the con-

(Continued On Page 2)



**RESIGNS** — H.A. Schmidt, left, announced Thursday night that he is resigning as manager of the Southport Boat Harbor. Rae Watts, executive director of the State Ports Authority and principal speaker for the occasion, expressed his regrets and publicly thanked the local man for his good work.

## Holiday House

Holiday House, sponsored by five women's clubs and garden clubs, will be held in the Community Building on Saturday and Sunday afternoons from noon until 6 o'clock.

Exhibits will be received at the building on Saturday morning from 9 until 11:30, giving those in charge time to arrange the building before the doors are opened to the public.

Music will be presented at intervals and wassail will be served from three o'clock each afternoon.